PG Edition of Netherlands series — Complete eBook

PG Edition of Netherlands series — Complete by John Lothrop Motley

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

PG Edition of Netherlands series — Complete eBook....1
Contents....2
Table of Contents....126
Page 1....135
Page 2....136
Page 3....138
Page 4....139
Page 5....140
Page 6....142
Page 7....143
Page 8....144
Page 9....145
Page 10....146
Page 11....147
Page 12....148
Page 13....149
Page 14....150
Page 15....151
Page 16....152
Page 17....153
Page 18....154
Page 19....155
Page 20....156
Page 21....157
Page 22....158

Page 23.....159
Page 24.....160
Page 25.....162
Page 26.....163
Page 27.....164
Page 28.....165
Page 29.....166
Page 30.....168
Page 31.....169
Page 32.....170
Page 33.....171
Page 34.....172
Page 35.....173
Page 36.....174
Page 37.....175
Page 38.....176
Page 39.....177
Page 40.....178
Page 41.....179
Page 42.....180
Page 43.....181
Page 44.....182
Page 45.....183
Page 46.....184
Page 47.....185
Page 48.....186

Page 49.....187
Page 50.....188
Page 51.....189
Page 52.....190
Page 53.....191
Page 54.....192
Page 55.....193
Page 56.....194
Page 57.....195
Page 58.....196
Page 59.....197
Page 60.....198
Page 61.....199
Page 62.....200
Page 63.....201
Page 64.....202
Page 65.....203
Page 66.....204
Page 67.....205
Page 68.....206
Page 69.....207
Page 70.....209
Page 71.....210

Page 72.....212
Page 73.....214
Page 74.....215

Page 75.....216
Page 76.....217
Page 77.....218
Page 78.....219
Page 79.....220
Page 80.....221
Page 81.....222
Page 82.....223
Page 83.....224
Page 84.....225
Page 85.....226
Page 86.....227
Page 87.....228
Page 88.....229
Page 89.....230
Page 90.....231
Page 91.....232
Page 92.....233
Page 93.....234
Page 94.....235
Page 95.....237
Page 96.....238
Page 97.....239
Page 98.....240
Page 99.....241
Page 100.....242

Page 101.....243
Page 102.....244
Page 103.....245
Page 104.....246
Page 105.....247
Page 106.....248
Page 107.....249
Page 108.....250
Page 109.....251
Page 110.....252
Page 111.....253
Page 112.....254
Page 113.....255
Page 114.....256
Page 115.....257
Page 116.....258
Page 117.....259
Page 118.....260
Page 119.....261
Page 120.....262
Page 121.....263
Page 122.....264
Page 123.....265
Page 124.....266
Page 125.....267
Page 126.....268

Page 127.....269
Page 128.....270
Page 129.....271
Page 130.....272
Page 131.....273
Page 132.....274
Page 133.....275
Page 134.....276
Page 135.....277
Page 136.....278
Page 137.....279
Page 138.....280
Page 139.....282
Page 140.....283
Page 141.....284
Page 142.....285
Page 143.....286
Page 144.....287
Page 145.....288
Page 146.....289
Page 147.....290
Page 148.....292
Page 149.....293
Page 150.....294
Page 151.....295
Page 152.....297

Page 153.....298
Page 154.....299
Page 155.....300
Page 156.....301
Page 157.....302
Page 158.....304
Page 159.....305
Page 160.....306
Page 161.....307
Page 162.....308
Page 163.....309
Page 164.....310
Page 165.....311
Page 166.....312
Page 167.....313
Page 168.....314
Page 169.....315
Page 170.....316
Page 171.....317
Page 172.....318
Page 173.....319
Page 174.....320
Page 175.....321
Page 176.....322
Page 177.....323
Page 178.....324

Page 179.....326
Page 180.....328
Page 181.....329
Page 182.....330
Page 183.....331
Page 184.....332
Page 185.....333
Page 186.....334
Page 187.....335
Page 188.....336
Page 189.....337
Page 190.....338
Page 191.....339
Page 192.....340
Page 193.....341
Page 194.....342
Page 195.....343
Page 196.....344
Page 197.....345
Page 198.....346
Page 199.....347
Page 200.....348
Page 201.....349
Page 202.....350
Page 203.....351
Page 204.....352

Page 205.....353
Page 206.....354
Page 207.....355
Page 208.....356
Page 209.....357
Page 210.....358
Page 211.....359
Page 212.....360
Page 213.....361
Page 214.....362
Page 215.....363
Page 216.....364
Page 217.....365
Page 218.....366
Page 219.....367
Page 220.....368
Page 221.....369
Page 222.....370
Page 223.....371
Page 224.....372
Page 225.....373
Page 226.....374
Page 227.....375
Page 228.....376
Page 229.....377
Page 230.....378

Page 231.....379
Page 232.....380
Page 233.....381
Page 234.....382
Page 235.....383
Page 236.....384
Page 237.....385
Page 238.....386
Page 239.....387
Page 240.....388
Page 241.....389
Page 242.....390
Page 243.....391
Page 244.....392
Page 245.....393
Page 246.....395
Page 247.....396
Page 248.....397
Page 249.....398
Page 250.....399
Page 251.....400
Page 252.....401
Page 253.....402
Page 254.....403
Page 255.....404
Page 256.....405

Page 257.....406
Page 258.....407
Page 259.....408
Page 260.....409
Page 261.....410
Page 262.....411
Page 263.....412
Page 264.....413
Page 265.....414
Page 266.....415
Page 267.....416
Page 268.....417
Page 269.....418
Page 270.....419
Page 271.....420
Page 272.....421
Page 273.....422
Page 274.....423
Page 275.....424
Page 276.....425
Page 277.....426
Page 278.....427
Page 279.....428
Page 280.....429
Page 281.....430
Page 282.....431

Page 283.....432
Page 284.....433
Page 285.....434
Page 286.....435
Page 287.....437
Page 288.....438
Page 289.....439
Page 290.....440
Page 291.....441
Page 292.....442
Page 293.....443
Page 294.....444
Page 295.....445
Page 296.....446
Page 297.....447
Page 298.....448
Page 299.....449
Page 300.....450
Page 301.....451
Page 302.....452
Page 303.....453
Page 304.....454
Page 305.....455
Page 306.....456
Page 307.....457
Page 308.....458

Page 309.....459
Page 310.....460
Page 311.....461
Page 312.....462
Page 313.....463
Page 314.....464
Page 315.....465
Page 316.....466
Page 317.....467
Page 318.....468
Page 319.....469
Page 320.....471
Page 321.....472
Page 322.....474
Page 323.....475
Page 324.....476
Page 325.....477
Page 326.....478
Page 327.....479
Page 328.....480
Page 329.....481
Page 330.....482
Page 331.....483
Page 332.....484
Page 333.....485
Page 334.....486

Page 335.....487
Page 336.....488
Page 337.....489
Page 338.....490
Page 339.....491
Page 340.....492
Page 341.....493
Page 342.....494
Page 343.....495
Page 344.....496
Page 345.....497
Page 346.....498
Page 347.....499
Page 348.....500
Page 349.....501
Page 350.....502
Page 351.....503
Page 352.....504
Page 353.....505
Page 354.....506
Page 355.....507
Page 356.....508
Page 357.....510
Page 358.....511
Page 359.....512
Page 360.....513

Page 361.....514

Page 362.....515

Page 363.....516

Page 364.....517

Page 365.....518

Page 366.....520

Page 367.....521

Page 368.....522

Page 369.....523

Page 370.....524

Page 371.....525

Page 372.....526

Page 373.....527

Page 374.....528

Page 375.....529

Page 376.....530

Page 377.....532

Page 378.....534

Page 379.....536

Page 380.....538

Page 381.....539

Page 382.....540

Page 383.....541

Page 384.....542

Page 385.....543

Page 386.....544
Page 387.....545
Page 388.....546
Page 389.....547
Page 390.....548
Page 391.....549
Page 392.....550
Page 393.....551
Page 394.....552
Page 395.....553
Page 396.....554
Page 397.....555
Page 398.....556
Page 399.....557
Page 400.....558
Page 401.....559
Page 402.....560
Page 403.....561
Page 404.....562
Page 405.....563
Page 406.....564
Page 407.....565
Page 408.....566
Page 409.....567
Page 410.....569
Page 411.....570

Page 412.....571
Page 413.....573
Page 414.....574
Page 415.....575
Page 416.....576
Page 417.....578
Page 418.....579
Page 419.....580
Page 420.....581
Page 421.....582
Page 422.....583
Page 423.....584
Page 424.....585
Page 425.....587
Page 426.....588
Page 427.....589
Page 428.....590
Page 429.....591
Page 430.....592
Page 431.....593
Page 432.....594
Page 433.....595
Page 434.....596
Page 435.....597
Page 436.....598
Page 437.....599

Page 438.....600
Page 439.....601
Page 440.....602
Page 441.....604
Page 442.....605
Page 443.....606
Page 444.....607
Page 445.....608
Page 446.....609
Page 447.....610
Page 448.....611
Page 449.....612
Page 450.....613
Page 451.....614
Page 452.....615
Page 453.....616
Page 454.....617
Page 455.....618
Page 456.....619
Page 457.....620
Page 458.....621
Page 459.....622
Page 460.....623
Page 461.....624
Page 462.....625
Page 463.....626

Page 464.....627
Page 465.....628
Page 466.....629
Page 467.....631
Page 468.....632
Page 469.....633
Page 470.....634
Page 471.....635
Page 472.....636
Page 473.....638
Page 474.....639
Page 475.....640
Page 476.....641
Page 477.....642
Page 478.....643
Page 479.....644
Page 480.....645
Page 481.....646
Page 482.....647
Page 483.....648
Page 484.....649
Page 485.....650
Page 486.....651
Page 487.....652
Page 488.....653
Page 489.....654

Page 490.....655
Page 491.....656
Page 492.....657
Page 493.....659
Page 494.....661
Page 495.....662
Page 496.....663
Page 497.....664
Page 498.....665
Page 499.....667
Page 500.....668
Page 501.....669
Page 502.....670
Page 503.....671
Page 504.....672
Page 505.....674
Page 506.....675
Page 507.....676
Page 508.....677
Page 509.....678
Page 510.....679
Page 511.....681
Page 512.....682
Page 513.....683
Page 514.....684
Page 515.....685

Page 516.....686
Page 517.....687
Page 518.....688
Page 519.....689
Page 520.....690
Page 521.....691
Page 522.....692
Page 523.....693
Page 524.....694
Page 525.....695
Page 526.....696
Page 527.....697
Page 528.....698
Page 529.....699
Page 530.....700
Page 531.....701
Page 532.....702
Page 533.....703
Page 534.....704
Page 535.....705
Page 536.....706
Page 537.....707
Page 538.....708
Page 539.....709
Page 540.....710
Page 541.....711

Page 542.....712
Page 543.....713
Page 544.....714
Page 545.....716
Page 546.....717
Page 547.....718
Page 548.....719
Page 549.....721
Page 550.....722
Page 551.....724
Page 552.....725
Page 553.....726
Page 554.....727
Page 555.....728
Page 556.....729
Page 557.....730
Page 558.....731
Page 559.....732
Page 560.....734
Page 561.....735
Page 562.....736
Page 563.....737
Page 564.....738
Page 565.....739
Page 566.....740
Page 567.....741

Page 568.....742
Page 569.....743
Page 570.....744
Page 571.....745
Page 572.....746
Page 573.....747
Page 574.....748
Page 575.....749
Page 576.....750
Page 577.....752
Page 578.....753
Page 579.....754
Page 580.....755
Page 581.....756
Page 582.....757
Page 583.....758
Page 584.....759
Page 585.....760
Page 586.....761
Page 587.....762
Page 588.....764
Page 589.....765
Page 590.....766
Page 591.....767
Page 592.....768
Page 593.....769

Page 594.....770
Page 595.....771
Page 596.....772
Page 597.....773
Page 598.....774
Page 599.....775
Page 600.....776
Page 601.....777
Page 602.....778
Page 603.....779
Page 604.....780
Page 605.....781
Page 606.....783
Page 607.....784
Page 608.....785
Page 609.....786
Page 610.....787
Page 611.....788
Page 612.....789
Page 613.....790
Page 614.....791
Page 615.....792
Page 616.....793
Page 617.....794
Page 618.....795
Page 619.....796

Page 620.....797
Page 621.....798
Page 622.....799
Page 623.....800
Page 624.....801
Page 625.....802
Page 626.....803
Page 627.....804
Page 628.....805
Page 629.....806
Page 630.....807
Page 631.....808
Page 632.....809
Page 633.....810
Page 634.....811
Page 635.....813
Page 636.....814
Page 637.....815
Page 638.....816
Page 639.....817
Page 640.....818
Page 641.....819
Page 642.....820
Page 643.....821
Page 644.....822
Page 645.....823

Page 646.....824
Page 647.....825
Page 648.....826
Page 649.....827
Page 650.....828
Page 651.....829
Page 652.....830
Page 653.....831
Page 654.....832
Page 655.....833
Page 656.....834
Page 657.....835
Page 658.....836
Page 659.....837
Page 660.....838
Page 661.....839
Page 662.....840
Page 663.....841
Page 664.....843
Page 665.....845
Page 666.....846
Page 667.....847
Page 668.....848
Page 669.....849
Page 670.....850
Page 671.....851

Page 672.....852
Page 673.....853
Page 674.....854
Page 675.....855
Page 676.....856
Page 677.....857
Page 678.....858
Page 679.....859
Page 680.....860
Page 681.....861
Page 682.....862
Page 683.....863
Page 684.....864
Page 685.....865
Page 686.....866
Page 687.....867
Page 688.....868
Page 689.....869
Page 690.....870
Page 691.....871
Page 692.....872
Page 693.....873
Page 694.....874
Page 695.....876
Page 696.....877
Page 697.....878

Page 698.....879
Page 699.....880
Page 700.....881
Page 701.....882
Page 702.....883
Page 703.....884
Page 704.....885
Page 705.....886
Page 706.....887
Page 707.....888
Page 708.....889
Page 709.....890
Page 710.....891
Page 711.....892
Page 712.....893
Page 713.....894
Page 714.....895
Page 715.....896
Page 716.....897
Page 717.....898
Page 718.....899
Page 719.....900
Page 720.....901
Page 721.....902
Page 722.....903
Page 723.....904

Page 724.....905
Page 725.....906
Page 726.....907
Page 727.....908
Page 728.....909
Page 729.....910
Page 730.....911
Page 731.....912
Page 732.....913
Page 733.....914
Page 734.....915
Page 735.....916
Page 736.....917
Page 737.....918
Page 738.....919
Page 739.....920
Page 740.....922
Page 741.....923
Page 742.....924
Page 743.....925
Page 744.....926
Page 745.....927
Page 746.....928
Page 747.....929
Page 748.....930
Page 749.....931

Page 750.....932
Page 751.....933
Page 752.....934
Page 753.....935
Page 754.....936
Page 755.....937
Page 756.....938
Page 757.....939
Page 758.....940
Page 759.....941
Page 760.....942
Page 761.....943
Page 762.....944
Page 763.....945
Page 764.....946
Page 765.....947
Page 766.....948
Page 767.....950
Page 768.....951
Page 769.....952
Page 770.....953
Page 771.....955
Page 772.....956
Page 773.....957
Page 774.....958
Page 775.....959

Page 776.....960
Page 777.....961
Page 778.....962
Page 779.....963
Page 780.....964
Page 781.....965
Page 782.....966
Page 783.....967
Page 784.....968
Page 785.....969
Page 786.....970
Page 787.....971
Page 788.....972
Page 789.....973
Page 790.....974
Page 791.....975
Page 792.....976
Page 793.....977
Page 794.....978
Page 795.....979
Page 796.....980
Page 797.....981
Page 798.....982
Page 799.....983
Page 800.....984
Page 801.....985

Page 802.....986
Page 803.....987
Page 804.....988
Page 805.....989
Page 806.....990
Page 807.....991
Page 808.....992
Page 809.....993
Page 810.....994
Page 811.....995
Page 812.....996
Page 813.....997
Page 814.....998
Page 815.....999
Page 816.....1000
Page 817.....1001
Page 818.....1003
Page 819.....1005
Page 820.....1006
Page 821.....1007
Page 822.....1008
Page 823.....1009
Page 824.....1010
Page 825.....1011
Page 826.....1012
Page 827.....1013

Page 828.....1014
Page 829.....1015
Page 830.....1016
Page 831.....1017
Page 832.....1018
Page 833.....1019
Page 834.....1020
Page 835.....1021
Page 836.....1022
Page 837.....1023
Page 838.....1024
Page 839.....1025
Page 840.....1026
Page 841.....1027
Page 842.....1028
Page 843.....1030
Page 844.....1031
Page 845.....1032
Page 846.....1033
Page 847.....1034
Page 848.....1035
Page 849.....1036
Page 850.....1037
Page 851.....1039
Page 852.....1040
Page 853.....1041

Page 854.....1042
Page 855.....1043
Page 856.....1044
Page 857.....1045
Page 858.....1046
Page 859.....1047
Page 860.....1048
Page 861.....1049
Page 862.....1050
Page 863.....1051
Page 864.....1052
Page 865.....1053
Page 866.....1054
Page 867.....1055
Page 868.....1057
Page 869.....1058
Page 870.....1060
Page 871.....1062
Page 872.....1063
Page 873.....1064
Page 874.....1065
Page 875.....1066
Page 876.....1068
Page 877.....1069
Page 878.....1070
Page 879.....1071

Page 880.....1072
Page 881.....1073
Page 882.....1074
Page 883.....1075
Page 884.....1076
Page 885.....1077
Page 886.....1078
Page 887.....1079
Page 888.....1080
Page 889.....1081
Page 890.....1082
Page 891.....1083
Page 892.....1084
Page 893.....1085
Page 894.....1086
Page 895.....1087
Page 896.....1088
Page 897.....1089
Page 898.....1090
Page 899.....1091
Page 900.....1092
Page 901.....1093
Page 902.....1094
Page 903.....1096
Page 904.....1097
Page 905.....1098

Page 906.....1099
Page 907.....1100
Page 908.....1101
Page 909.....1102
Page 910.....1103
Page 911.....1104
Page 912.....1106
Page 913.....1107
Page 914.....1108
Page 915.....1109
Page 916.....1110
Page 917.....1111
Page 918.....1112
Page 919.....1113
Page 920.....1114
Page 921.....1115
Page 922.....1116
Page 923.....1117
Page 924.....1118
Page 925.....1119
Page 926.....1120
Page 927.....1121
Page 928.....1122
Page 929.....1123
Page 930.....1124
Page 931.....1126

Page 932.....1127
Page 933.....1128
Page 934.....1129
Page 935.....1130
Page 936.....1132
Page 937.....1133
Page 938.....1134
Page 939.....1135
Page 940.....1136
Page 941.....1137
Page 942.....1138
Page 943.....1139
Page 944.....1140
Page 945.....1141
Page 946.....1142
Page 947.....1143
Page 948.....1144
Page 949.....1145
Page 950.....1146
Page 951.....1147
Page 952.....1148
Page 953.....1149
Page 954.....1150
Page 955.....1151
Page 956.....1152
Page 957.....1153

Page 958.....1154
Page 959.....1155
Page 960.....1156
Page 961.....1157
Page 962.....1158
Page 963.....1160
Page 964.....1162
Page 965.....1163
Page 966.....1164
Page 967.....1165
Page 968.....1166
Page 969.....1167
Page 970.....1168
Page 971.....1169
Page 972.....1170
Page 973.....1171
Page 974.....1172
Page 975.....1173
Page 976.....1174
Page 977.....1175
Page 978.....1176
Page 979.....1177
Page 980.....1178
Page 981.....1179
Page 982.....1180
Page 983.....1181

Page 984.....1182
Page 985.....1183
Page 986.....1184
Page 987.....1185
Page 988.....1186
Page 989.....1187
Page 990.....1188
Page 991.....1189
Page 992.....1190
Page 993.....1191
Page 994.....1192
Page 995.....1193
Page 996.....1195
Page 997.....1197
Page 998.....1198
Page 999.....1199
Page 1000.....1200
Page 1001.....1201
Page 1002.....1202
Page 1003.....1203
Page 1004.....1204
Page 1005.....1205
Page 1006.....1206
Page 1007.....1207
Page 1008.....1208
Page 1009.....1209

Page 1010.....1210
Page 1011.....1211
Page 1012.....1212
Page 1013.....1213
Page 1014.....1215
Page 1015.....1216
Page 1016.....1217
Page 1017.....1218
Page 1018.....1219
Page 1019.....1220
Page 1020.....1221
Page 1021.....1222
Page 1022.....1224
Page 1023.....1225
Page 1024.....1226
Page 1025.....1227
Page 1026.....1228
Page 1027.....1229
Page 1028.....1230
Page 1029.....1231
Page 1030.....1232
Page 1031.....1233
Page 1032.....1234
Page 1033.....1235
Page 1034.....1237
Page 1035.....1238

Page 1036.....1239
Page 1037.....1240
Page 1038.....1241
Page 1039.....1242
Page 1040.....1243
Page 1041.....1244
Page 1042.....1245
Page 1043.....1246
Page 1044.....1247
Page 1045.....1248
Page 1046.....1249
Page 1047.....1250
Page 1048.....1251
Page 1049.....1252
Page 1050.....1253
Page 1051.....1254
Page 1052.....1255
Page 1053.....1256
Page 1054.....1257
Page 1055.....1258
Page 1056.....1259
Page 1057.....1260
Page 1058.....1261
Page 1059.....1262
Page 1060.....1263
Page 1061.....1264

Page 1062.....1265
Page 1063.....1266
Page 1064.....1267
Page 1065.....1268
Page 1066.....1269
Page 1067.....1270
Page 1068.....1271
Page 1069.....1272
Page 1070.....1273
Page 1071.....1274
Page 1072.....1275
Page 1073.....1276
Page 1074.....1277
Page 1075.....1278
Page 1076.....1279
Page 1077.....1281
Page 1078.....1282
Page 1079.....1283
Page 1080.....1285
Page 1081.....1286
Page 1082.....1287
Page 1083.....1288
Page 1084.....1289
Page 1085.....1291
Page 1086.....1292
Page 1087.....1293

Page 1088.....1294
Page 1089.....1295
Page 1090.....1296
Page 1091.....1298
Page 1092.....1299
Page 1093.....1300
Page 1094.....1301
Page 1095.....1302
Page 1096.....1303
Page 1097.....1304
Page 1098.....1305
Page 1099.....1306
Page 1100.....1307
Page 1101.....1308
Page 1102.....1309
Page 1103.....1310
Page 1104.....1311
Page 1105.....1313
Page 1106.....1315
Page 1107.....1316
Page 1108.....1317
Page 1109.....1318
Page 1110.....1319
Page 1111.....1320
Page 1112.....1321
Page 1113.....1322

Page 1114.....1323
Page 1115.....1324
Page 1116.....1325
Page 1117.....1326
Page 1118.....1327
Page 1119.....1328
Page 1120.....1329
Page 1121.....1331
Page 1122.....1332
Page 1123.....1333
Page 1124.....1335
Page 1125.....1337
Page 1126.....1339
Page 1127.....1340
Page 1128.....1341
Page 1129.....1342
Page 1130.....1343
Page 1131.....1344
Page 1132.....1345
Page 1133.....1347
Page 1134.....1348
Page 1135.....1350
Page 1136.....1351
Page 1137.....1352
Page 1138.....1353
Page 1139.....1354

Page 1140.....1355
Page 1141.....1356
Page 1142.....1357
Page 1143.....1358
Page 1144.....1359
Page 1145.....1360
Page 1146.....1362
Page 1147.....1363
Page 1148.....1364
Page 1149.....1365
Page 1150.....1366
Page 1151.....1367
Page 1152.....1368
Page 1153.....1369
Page 1154.....1370
Page 1155.....1371
Page 1156.....1372
Page 1157.....1373
Page 1158.....1374
Page 1159.....1375
Page 1160.....1376
Page 1161.....1377
Page 1162.....1378
Page 1163.....1379
Page 1164.....1380
Page 1165.....1381

Page 1166.....1382
Page 1167.....1383
Page 1168.....1384
Page 1169.....1385
Page 1170.....1386
Page 1171.....1387
Page 1172.....1389
Page 1173.....1391
Page 1174.....1392
Page 1175.....1393
Page 1176.....1395
Page 1177.....1397
Page 1178.....1398
Page 1179.....1400
Page 1180.....1401
Page 1181.....1402
Page 1182.....1404
Page 1183.....1406
Page 1184.....1407
Page 1185.....1409
Page 1186.....1411
Page 1187.....1413
Page 1188.....1415
Page 1189.....1417
Page 1190.....1418
Page 1191.....1420

Page 1192.....1421
Page 1193.....1422
Page 1194.....1423
Page 1195.....1425
Page 1196.....1427
Page 1197.....1429
Page 1198.....1431
Page 1199.....1432
Page 1200.....1433
Page 1201.....1435
Page 1202.....1436
Page 1203.....1437
Page 1204.....1439
Page 1205.....1440
Page 1206.....1441
Page 1207.....1442
Page 1208.....1443
Page 1209.....1445
Page 1210.....1446
Page 1211.....1447
Page 1212.....1448
Page 1213.....1450
Page 1214.....1451
Page 1215.....1452
Page 1216.....1453
Page 1217.....1454

Page 1218.....1456
Page 1219.....1458
Page 1220.....1460
Page 1221.....1462
Page 1222.....1463
Page 1223.....1464
Page 1224.....1465
Page 1225.....1467
Page 1226.....1468
Page 1227.....1469
Page 1228.....1471
Page 1229.....1473
Page 1230.....1474
Page 1231.....1475
Page 1232.....1476
Page 1233.....1477
Page 1234.....1479
Page 1235.....1480
Page 1236.....1481
Page 1237.....1482
Page 1238.....1484
Page 1239.....1485
Page 1240.....1486
Page 1241.....1487
Page 1242.....1488
Page 1243.....1489

Page 1244.....1490
Page 1245.....1491
Page 1246.....1493
Page 1247.....1494
Page 1248.....1495
Page 1249.....1497
Page 1250.....1498
Page 1251.....1499
Page 1252.....1500
Page 1253.....1501
Page 1254.....1502
Page 1255.....1504
Page 1256.....1505
Page 1257.....1507
Page 1258.....1508
Page 1259.....1509
Page 1260.....1510
Page 1261.....1511
Page 1262.....1512
Page 1263.....1513
Page 1264.....1514
Page 1265.....1516
Page 1266.....1517
Page 1267.....1519
Page 1268.....1520
Page 1269.....1521

Page 1270.....1522
Page 1271.....1523
Page 1272.....1524
Page 1273.....1525
Page 1274.....1526
Page 1275.....1527
Page 1276.....1528
Page 1277.....1530
Page 1278.....1531
Page 1279.....1532
Page 1280.....1533
Page 1281.....1534
Page 1282.....1535
Page 1283.....1536
Page 1284.....1537
Page 1285.....1538
Page 1286.....1539
Page 1287.....1541
Page 1288.....1542
Page 1289.....1543
Page 1290.....1544
Page 1291.....1546
Page 1292.....1547
Page 1293.....1549
Page 1294.....1550
Page 1295.....1551

Page 1296.....1552
Page 1297.....1554
Page 1298.....1555
Page 1299.....1556
Page 1300.....1558
Page 1301.....1559
Page 1302.....1560
Page 1303.....1561
Page 1304.....1562
Page 1305.....1563
Page 1306.....1565
Page 1307.....1567
Page 1308.....1568
Page 1309.....1569
Page 1310.....1570
Page 1311.....1571
Page 1312.....1572
Page 1313.....1573
Page 1314.....1574
Page 1315.....1575
Page 1316.....1576
Page 1317.....1577
Page 1318.....1579
Page 1319.....1580
Page 1320.....1581

Page 1321.....1583

Page 1322.....1585
Page 1323.....1586
Page 1324.....1587
Page 1325.....1588
Page 1326.....1589
Page 1327.....1590
Page 1328.....1591
Page 1329.....1592
Page 1330.....1593
Page 1331.....1594
Page 1332.....1595
Page 1333.....1596
Page 1334.....1597
Page 1335.....1598
Page 1336.....1599
Page 1337.....1601
Page 1338.....1602
Page 1339.....1603
Page 1340.....1604
Page 1341.....1605
Page 1342.....1606
Page 1343.....1607
Page 1344.....1608
Page 1345.....1609
Page 1346.....1610
Page 1347.....1611

Page 1348.....1613
Page 1349.....1614
Page 1350.....1615
Page 1351.....1616
Page 1352.....1617
Page 1353.....1619
Page 1354.....1621
Page 1355.....1622
Page 1356.....1623
Page 1357.....1624
Page 1358.....1625
Page 1359.....1626
Page 1360.....1627
Page 1361.....1629
Page 1362.....1630
Page 1363.....1631
Page 1364.....1632
Page 1365.....1633
Page 1366.....1634
Page 1367.....1635
Page 1368.....1636
Page 1369.....1637
Page 1370.....1638
Page 1371.....1639
Page 1372.....1640
Page 1373.....1641

Page 1374.....1642
Page 1375.....1644
Page 1376.....1645
Page 1377.....1646
Page 1378.....1647
Page 1379.....1648
Page 1380.....1649
Page 1381.....1650
Page 1382.....1651
Page 1383.....1652
Page 1384.....1653
Page 1385.....1654
Page 1386.....1655
Page 1387.....1656
Page 1388.....1657
Page 1389.....1658
Page 1390.....1659
Page 1391.....1660
Page 1392.....1661
Page 1393.....1662
Page 1394.....1663
Page 1395.....1664
Page 1396.....1665
Page 1397.....1666
Page 1398.....1668
Page 1399.....1669

Page 1400.....1670
Page 1401.....1671
Page 1402.....1672
Page 1403.....1673
Page 1404.....1675
Page 1405.....1676
Page 1406.....1677
Page 1407.....1678
Page 1408.....1679
Page 1409.....1680
Page 1410.....1681
Page 1411.....1682
Page 1412.....1683
Page 1413.....1684
Page 1414.....1685
Page 1415.....1686
Page 1416.....1687
Page 1417.....1689
Page 1418.....1690
Page 1419.....1691
Page 1420.....1692
Page 1421.....1694
Page 1422.....1696
Page 1423.....1698
Page 1424.....1699
Page 1425.....1700

Page 1426.....1701
Page 1427.....1702
Page 1428.....1703
Page 1429.....1704
Page 1430.....1706
Page 1431.....1707
Page 1432.....1708
Page 1433.....1709
Page 1434.....1711
Page 1435.....1712
Page 1436.....1713
Page 1437.....1714
Page 1438.....1715
Page 1439.....1716
Page 1440.....1717
Page 1441.....1718
Page 1442.....1719
Page 1443.....1720
Page 1444.....1721
Page 1445.....1722
Page 1446.....1724
Page 1447.....1725
Page 1448.....1726
Page 1449.....1727
Page 1450.....1729
Page 1451.....1730

Page 1452.....1732
Page 1453.....1733
Page 1454.....1734
Page 1455.....1736
Page 1456.....1737
Page 1457.....1739
Page 1458.....1740
Page 1459.....1741
Page 1460.....1742
Page 1461.....1743
Page 1462.....1744
Page 1463.....1745
Page 1464.....1746
Page 1465.....1748
Page 1466.....1749
Page 1467.....1751
Page 1468.....1753
Page 1469.....1755
Page 1470.....1756
Page 1471.....1757
Page 1472.....1758
Page 1473.....1759
Page 1474.....1760
Page 1475.....1761
Page 1476.....1762
Page 1477.....1763

Page 1478.....1764

Page 1479.....1766

Page 1480.....1768

Page 1481.....1770

Page 1482.....1771

Page 1483.....1772

Page 1484.....1773

Page 1485.....1774

Page 1486.....1775

Page 1487.....1776

Page 1488.....1777

Page 1489.....1778

Page 1490.....1779

Page 1491.....1780

Page 1492.....1781

Page 1493.....1782

Page 1494.....1784

Page 1495.....1785

Page 1496.....1786

Page 1497.....1787

Page 1498.....1788

Page 1499.....1789

Page 1500.....1791

Page 1501.....1792

Page 1502.....1793

Page 1503.....1794
Page 1504.....1796
Page 1505.....1797
Page 1506.....1798
Page 1507.....1799
Page 1508.....1800
Page 1509.....1802
Page 1510.....1804
Page 1511.....1805
Page 1512.....1806
Page 1513.....1807
Page 1514.....1808
Page 1515.....1810
Page 1516.....1812
Page 1517.....1813
Page 1518.....1814
Page 1519.....1815
Page 1520.....1816
Page 1521.....1817
Page 1522.....1818
Page 1523.....1819
Page 1524.....1820
Page 1525.....1821
Page 1526.....1822
Page 1527.....1823
Page 1528.....1824

Page 1529.....1826
Page 1530.....1827
Page 1531.....1828
Page 1532.....1830
Page 1533.....1832
Page 1534.....1834
Page 1535.....1836
Page 1536.....1838
Page 1537.....1840
Page 1538.....1842
Page 1539.....1843
Page 1540.....1844
Page 1541.....1846
Page 1542.....1847
Page 1543.....1849
Page 1544.....1850
Page 1545.....1851
Page 1546.....1852
Page 1547.....1853
Page 1548.....1854
Page 1549.....1855
Page 1550.....1857
Page 1551.....1858
Page 1552.....1859
Page 1553.....1860
Page 1554.....1861

Page 1555.....1862
Page 1556.....1863
Page 1557.....1864
Page 1558.....1866
Page 1559.....1867
Page 1560.....1869
Page 1561.....1870
Page 1562.....1872
Page 1563.....1873
Page 1564.....1875
Page 1565.....1877
Page 1566.....1878
Page 1567.....1879
Page 1568.....1881
Page 1569.....1882
Page 1570.....1883
Page 1571.....1884
Page 1572.....1885
Page 1573.....1887
Page 1574.....1889
Page 1575.....1890
Page 1576.....1891
Page 1577.....1892
Page 1578.....1893
Page 1579.....1895
Page 1580.....1896

Page 1581.....1898
Page 1582.....1899
Page 1583.....1900
Page 1584.....1901
Page 1585.....1902
Page 1586.....1903
Page 1587.....1904
Page 1588.....1905
Page 1589.....1907
Page 1590.....1908
Page 1591.....1909
Page 1592.....1910
Page 1593.....1912
Page 1594.....1913
Page 1595.....1914
Page 1596.....1915
Page 1597.....1916
Page 1598.....1918
Page 1599.....1919
Page 1600.....1920
Page 1601.....1921
Page 1602.....1922
Page 1603.....1924
Page 1604.....1925
Page 1605.....1926
Page 1606.....1927

Page 1607.....1928
Page 1608.....1930
Page 1609.....1931
Page 1610.....1932
Page 1611.....1933
Page 1612.....1934
Page 1613.....1935
Page 1614.....1936
Page 1615.....1937
Page 1616.....1938
Page 1617.....1939
Page 1618.....1941
Page 1619.....1943
Page 1620.....1944
Page 1621.....1945
Page 1622.....1946
Page 1623.....1947
Page 1624.....1949
Page 1625.....1950
Page 1626.....1951
Page 1627.....1952
Page 1628.....1953
Page 1629.....1954
Page 1630.....1955
Page 1631.....1956
Page 1632.....1958

Page 1633.....1959
Page 1634.....1960
Page 1635.....1962
Page 1636.....1963
Page 1637.....1964
Page 1638.....1965
Page 1639.....1966
Page 1640.....1967
Page 1641.....1968
Page 1642.....1969
Page 1643.....1970
Page 1644.....1971
Page 1645.....1972
Page 1646.....1973
Page 1647.....1975
Page 1648.....1976
Page 1649.....1977
Page 1650.....1978
Page 1651.....1979
Page 1652.....1980
Page 1653.....1981
Page 1654.....1983
Page 1655.....1984
Page 1656.....1986
Page 1657.....1987
Page 1658.....1988

Page 1659.....1989
Page 1660.....1990
Page 1661.....1991
Page 1662.....1992
Page 1663.....1993
Page 1664.....1994
Page 1665.....1995
Page 1666.....1996
Page 1667.....1997
Page 1668.....1998
Page 1669.....1999
Page 1670.....2000
Page 1671.....2001
Page 1672.....2002
Page 1673.....2003
Page 1674.....2004
Page 1675.....2005
Page 1676.....2006
Page 1677.....2007
Page 1678.....2008
Page 1679.....2009
Page 1680.....2010
Page 1681.....2011
Page 1682.....2012
Page 1683.....2013
Page 1684.....2014

Page 1685.....2016
Page 1686.....2017
Page 1687.....2018
Page 1688.....2019
Page 1689.....2021
Page 1690.....2022
Page 1691.....2023
Page 1692.....2024
Page 1693.....2025
Page 1694.....2026
Page 1695.....2027
Page 1696.....2028
Page 1697.....2030
Page 1698.....2031
Page 1699.....2033
Page 1700.....2035
Page 1701.....2036
Page 1702.....2037
Page 1703.....2038
Page 1704.....2039
Page 1705.....2041
Page 1706.....2043
Page 1707.....2045
Page 1708.....2047
Page 1709.....2048
Page 1710.....2049

Page 1711.....2050
Page 1712.....2051
Page 1713.....2053
Page 1714.....2055
Page 1715.....2056
Page 1716.....2057
Page 1717.....2058
Page 1718.....2059
Page 1719.....2060
Page 1720.....2061
Page 1721.....2062
Page 1722.....2063
Page 1723.....2065
Page 1724.....2067
Page 1725.....2068
Page 1726.....2069
Page 1727.....2070
Page 1728.....2071
Page 1729.....2072
Page 1730.....2073
Page 1731.....2074
Page 1732.....2075
Page 1733.....2076
Page 1734.....2077
Page 1735.....2078
Page 1736.....2079

Page 1737.....2080
Page 1738.....2081
Page 1739.....2083
Page 1740.....2084
Page 1741.....2086
Page 1742.....2087
Page 1743.....2088
Page 1744.....2089
Page 1745.....2091
Page 1746.....2092
Page 1747.....2094
Page 1748.....2096
Page 1749.....2097
Page 1750.....2098
Page 1751.....2099
Page 1752.....2100
Page 1753.....2101
Page 1754.....2102
Page 1755.....2104
Page 1756.....2105
Page 1757.....2107
Page 1758.....2108
Page 1759.....2109
Page 1760.....2110
Page 1761.....2111
Page 1762.....2112

Page 1763.....2113
Page 1764.....2114
Page 1765.....2115
Page 1766.....2117
Page 1767.....2118
Page 1768.....2119
Page 1769.....2120
Page 1770.....2121
Page 1771.....2122
Page 1772.....2124
Page 1773.....2125
Page 1774.....2126
Page 1775.....2127
Page 1776.....2128
Page 1777.....2129
Page 1778.....2130
Page 1779.....2131
Page 1780.....2132
Page 1781.....2134
Page 1782.....2135
Page 1783.....2136
Page 1784.....2137
Page 1785.....2138
Page 1786.....2139
Page 1787.....2140
Page 1788.....2142

Page 1789.....2143
Page 1790.....2144
Page 1791.....2145
Page 1792.....2146
Page 1793.....2148
Page 1794.....2149
Page 1795.....2151
Page 1796.....2152
Page 1797.....2153
Page 1798.....2155
Page 1799.....2156
Page 1800.....2157
Page 1801.....2158
Page 1802.....2159
Page 1803.....2161
Page 1804.....2162
Page 1805.....2164
Page 1806.....2165
Page 1807.....2167
Page 1808.....2168
Page 1809.....2169
Page 1810.....2170
Page 1811.....2171
Page 1812.....2172
Page 1813.....2173
Page 1814.....2174

Page 1815.....2175
Page 1816.....2177
Page 1817.....2178
Page 1818.....2179
Page 1819.....2180
Page 1820.....2181
Page 1821.....2183
Page 1822.....2185
Page 1823.....2187
Page 1824.....2188
Page 1825.....2189
Page 1826.....2190
Page 1827.....2191
Page 1828.....2193
Page 1829.....2194
Page 1830.....2196
Page 1831.....2197
Page 1832.....2199
Page 1833.....2200
Page 1834.....2201
Page 1835.....2202
Page 1836.....2203
Page 1837.....2204
Page 1838.....2205
Page 1839.....2206
Page 1840.....2207

Page 1841.....2208
Page 1842.....2209
Page 1843.....2211
Page 1844.....2212
Page 1845.....2213
Page 1846.....2214
Page 1847.....2215
Page 1848.....2217
Page 1849.....2219
Page 1850.....2220
Page 1851.....2222
Page 1852.....2224
Page 1853.....2225
Page 1854.....2226
Page 1855.....2227
Page 1856.....2228
Page 1857.....2229
Page 1858.....2230
Page 1859.....2231
Page 1860.....2232
Page 1861.....2233
Page 1862.....2235
Page 1863.....2236
Page 1864.....2237
Page 1865.....2238
Page 1866.....2239

Page 1867.....2240
Page 1868.....2241
Page 1869.....2242
Page 1870.....2243
Page 1871.....2245
Page 1872.....2246
Page 1873.....2247
Page 1874.....2248
Page 1875.....2249
Page 1876.....2250
Page 1877.....2251
Page 1878.....2252
Page 1879.....2253
Page 1880.....2254
Page 1881.....2256
Page 1882.....2257
Page 1883.....2258
Page 1884.....2260
Page 1885.....2262
Page 1886.....2263
Page 1887.....2264
Page 1888.....2265
Page 1889.....2267
Page 1890.....2269
Page 1891.....2271
Page 1892.....2273

Page 1893.....2274
Page 1894.....2275
Page 1895.....2276
Page 1896.....2277
Page 1897.....2278
Page 1898.....2279
Page 1899.....2280
Page 1900.....2281
Page 1901.....2282
Page 1902.....2284
Page 1903.....2285
Page 1904.....2286
Page 1905.....2287
Page 1906.....2288
Page 1907.....2289
Page 1908.....2290
Page 1909.....2291
Page 1910.....2292
Page 1911.....2293
Page 1912.....2294
Page 1913.....2295
Page 1914.....2297
Page 1915.....2298
Page 1916.....2299
Page 1917.....2301
Page 1918.....2302

Page 1919.....2303

Page 1920.....2304

Page 1921.....2306

Page 1922.....2307

Page 1923.....2308

Page 1924.....2309

Page 1925.....2311

Page 1926.....2313

Page 1927.....2314

Page 1928.....2315

Page 1929.....2317

Page 1930.....2318

Page 1931.....2319

Page 1932.....2320

Page 1933.....2321

Page 1934.....2322

Page 1935.....2323

Page 1936.....2325

Page 1937.....2326

Page 1938.....2327

Page 1939.....2329

Page 1940.....2331

Page 1941.....2332

Page 1942.....2333

Page 1943.....2334

Page 1944.....2336

Page 1945.....2337
Page 1946.....2338
Page 1947.....2340
Page 1948.....2342
Page 1949.....2344
Page 1950.....2345
Page 1951.....2346
Page 1952.....2347
Page 1953.....2348
Page 1954.....2349
Page 1955.....2350
Page 1956.....2351
Page 1957.....2353
Page 1958.....2355
Page 1959.....2356
Page 1960.....2357
Page 1961.....2359
Page 1962.....2360
Page 1963.....2361
Page 1964.....2362
Page 1965.....2363
Page 1966.....2365
Page 1967.....2367
Page 1968.....2369
Page 1969.....2370
Page 1970.....2371

Page 1971.....2373
Page 1972.....2374
Page 1973.....2375
Page 1974.....2376
Page 1975.....2378
Page 1976.....2379
Page 1977.....2380
Page 1978.....2381
Page 1979.....2382
Page 1980.....2384
Page 1981.....2386
Page 1982.....2387
Page 1983.....2389
Page 1984.....2391
Page 1985.....2392
Page 1986.....2394
Page 1987.....2395
Page 1988.....2397
Page 1989.....2398
Page 1990.....2399
Page 1991.....2400
Page 1992.....2401
Page 1993.....2402
Page 1994.....2404
Page 1995.....2405
Page 1996.....2406

Page 1997.....2407
Page 1998.....2408
Page 1999.....2409
Page 2000.....2410
Page 2001.....2411
Page 2002.....2412
Page 2003.....2413
Page 2004.....2414
Page 2005.....2415
Page 2006.....2416
Page 2007.....2418
Page 2008.....2419
Page 2009.....2420
Page 2010.....2421
Page 2011.....2422
Page 2012.....2423
Page 2013.....2424
Page 2014.....2425
Page 2015.....2426
Page 2016.....2427
Page 2017.....2429
Page 2018.....2431
Page 2019.....2432
Page 2020.....2433
Page 2021.....2435
Page 2022.....2436

Page 2023.....2437
Page 2024.....2438
Page 2025.....2439
Page 2026.....2440
Page 2027.....2441
Page 2028.....2443
Page 2029.....2444
Page 2030.....2446
Page 2031.....2447
Page 2032.....2448
Page 2033.....2449
Page 2034.....2450
Page 2035.....2451
Page 2036.....2452
Page 2037.....2453
Page 2038.....2454
Page 2039.....2456
Page 2040.....2458
Page 2041.....2460
Page 2042.....2461
Page 2043.....2462
Page 2044.....2463
Page 2045.....2464
Page 2046.....2465
Page 2047.....2466
Page 2048.....2467

Page 2049.....2468
Page 2050.....2469
Page 2051.....2470
Page 2052.....2471
Page 2053.....2472
Page 2054.....2473
Page 2055.....2474
Page 2056.....2475
Page 2057.....2476
Page 2058.....2477
Page 2059.....2478
Page 2060.....2479
Page 2061.....2480
Page 2062.....2481
Page 2063.....2482
Page 2064.....2483
Page 2065.....2484
Page 2066.....2485
Page 2067.....2487
Page 2068.....2489
Page 2069.....2490
Page 2070.....2491
Page 2071.....2492
Page 2072.....2494
Page 2073.....2495
Page 2074.....2497

Page 2075.....2498
Page 2076.....2499
Page 2077.....2500
Page 2078.....2501
Page 2079.....2502
Page 2080.....2503
Page 2081.....2504
Page 2082.....2505
Page 2083.....2506
Page 2084.....2507
Page 2085.....2509
Page 2086.....2510
Page 2087.....2512
Page 2088.....2513
Page 2089.....2514
Page 2090.....2515
Page 2091.....2516
Page 2092.....2517
Page 2093.....2518
Page 2094.....2520
Page 2095.....2521
Page 2096.....2522
Page 2097.....2523
Page 2098.....2524
Page 2099.....2525
Page 2100.....2526

Page 2101.....2527
Page 2102.....2528
Page 2103.....2529
Page 2104.....2530
Page 2105.....2532
Page 2106.....2533
Page 2107.....2535
Page 2108.....2536
Page 2109.....2538
Page 2110.....2539
Page 2111.....2540
Page 2112.....2541
Page 2113.....2543
Page 2114.....2544
Page 2115.....2546
Page 2116.....2548
Page 2117.....2549
Page 2118.....2550
Page 2119.....2551
Page 2120.....2553
Page 2121.....2554
Page 2122.....2555
Page 2123.....2556
Page 2124.....2557
Page 2125.....2558
Page 2126.....2559

Page 2127.....2561
Page 2128.....2562
Page 2129.....2563
Page 2130.....2565
Page 2131.....2567
Page 2132.....2568
Page 2133.....2570
Page 2134.....2572
Page 2135.....2574
Page 2136.....2576
Page 2137.....2578
Page 2138.....2580
Page 2139.....2582
Page 2140.....2584
Page 2141.....2586
Page 2142.....2588
Page 2143.....2589
Page 2144.....2591
Page 2145.....2592
Page 2146.....2593
Page 2147.....2594
Page 2148.....2595
Page 2149.....2596
Page 2150.....2597
Page 2151.....2598
Page 2152.....2599

Page 2153.....2600
Page 2154.....2601
Page 2155.....2602
Page 2156.....2603
Page 2157.....2604
Page 2158.....2605
Page 2159.....2606
Page 2160.....2607
Page 2161.....2609
Page 2162.....2610
Page 2163.....2611

Page 2164.....2613
Page 2165.....2615
Page 2166.....2616
Page 2167.....2617
Page 2168.....2618
Page 2169.....2619
Page 2170.....2620
Page 2171.....2621
Page 2172.....2622
Page 2173.....2623
Page 2174.....2624
Page 2175.....2625
Page 2176.....2626
Page 2177.....2628
Page 2178.....2629

Page 2179.....2630

Page 2180.....2631

Page 2181.....2632

Page 2182.....2633

Page 2183.....2634

Page 2184.....2636

Page 2185.....2638

Page 2186.....2640

Page 2187.....2641

Page 2188.....2642

Page 2189.....2643

Page 2190.....2644

Page 2191.....2646

Page 2192.....2647

Page 2193.....2648

Page 2194.....2649

Page 2195.....2650

Page 2196.....2651

Page 2197.....2652

Page 2198.....2653

Page 2199.....2654

Page 2200.....2655

Page 2201.....2657

Page 2202.....2659

Page 2203.....2661

Page 2204.....2663
Page 2205.....2665
Page 2206.....2666
Page 2207.....2667
Page 2208.....2668
Page 2209.....2669
Page 2210.....2670
Page 2211.....2671
Page 2212.....2672
Page 2213.....2673
Page 2214.....2674
Page 2215.....2675
Page 2216.....2676
Page 2217.....2677
Page 2218.....2678
Page 2219.....2679
Page 2220.....2680
Page 2221.....2681
Page 2222.....2682
Page 2223.....2683
Page 2224.....2684
Page 2225.....2685
Page 2226.....2686
Page 2227.....2687
Page 2228.....2688
Page 2229.....2689

Page 2230.....2690
Page 2231.....2691
Page 2232.....2692
Page 2233.....2693
Page 2234.....2695
Page 2235.....2696
Page 2236.....2697
Page 2237.....2699
Page 2238.....2700
Page 2239.....2701
Page 2240.....2702
Page 2241.....2703
Page 2242.....2704
Page 2243.....2705
Page 2244.....2706
Page 2245.....2707
Page 2246.....2708
Page 2247.....2709
Page 2248.....2710
Page 2249.....2712
Page 2250.....2713
Page 2251.....2714
Page 2252.....2715
Page 2253.....2716
Page 2254.....2717
Page 2255.....2718

Page 2256.....2719
Page 2257.....2721
Page 2258.....2722
Page 2259.....2723
Page 2260.....2724
Page 2261.....2725
Page 2262.....2727
Page 2263.....2728
Page 2264.....2729
Page 2265.....2730
Page 2266.....2731
Page 2267.....2733
Page 2268.....2735
Page 2269.....2737
Page 2270.....2738
Page 2271.....2739
Page 2272.....2740
Page 2273.....2741
Page 2274.....2742
Page 2275.....2743
Page 2276.....2744
Page 2277.....2745
Page 2278.....2746
Page 2279.....2747
Page 2280.....2748
Page 2281.....2749

Page 2282.....2750
Page 2283.....2752
Page 2284.....2753
Page 2285.....2754
Page 2286.....2755
Page 2287.....2756
Page 2288.....2757
Page 2289.....2759
Page 2290.....2760
Page 2291.....2762
Page 2292.....2764
Page 2293.....2765
Page 2294.....2767
Page 2295.....2768
Page 2296.....2769
Page 2297.....2771
Page 2298.....2773
Page 2299.....2774
Page 2300.....2776
Page 2301.....2778
Page 2302.....2780
Page 2303.....2782
Page 2304.....2783
Page 2305.....2785
Page 2306.....2787
Page 2307.....2788

Page 2308.....2789
Page 2309.....2791
Page 2310.....2792
Page 2311.....2793
Page 2312.....2794
Page 2313.....2795
Page 2314.....2796
Page 2315.....2797
Page 2316.....2798
Page 2317.....2799
Page 2318.....2800
Page 2319.....2801
Page 2320.....2803
Page 2321.....2804
Page 2322.....2806
Page 2323.....2808
Page 2324.....2809
Page 2325.....2811
Page 2326.....2812

Page 2327.....2814
Page 2328.....2816
Page 2329.....2817
Page 2330.....2818
Page 2331.....2819
Page 2332.....2820
Page 2333.....2821

Page 2334.....2822
Page 2335.....2823
Page 2336.....2824
Page 2337.....2825
Page 2338.....2826
Page 2339.....2827
Page 2340.....2828
Page 2341.....2829
Page 2342.....2830
Page 2343.....2831
Page 2344.....2832
Page 2345.....2833
Page 2346.....2834
Page 2347.....2835
Page 2348.....2836
Page 2349.....2837
Page 2350.....2838
Page 2351.....2839
Page 2352.....2840
Page 2353.....2841
Page 2354.....2842
Page 2355.....2843
Page 2356.....2844
Page 2357.....2845
Page 2358.....2846
Page 2359.....2847

Page 2360.....2848
Page 2361.....2849
Page 2362.....2850
Page 2363.....2852
Page 2364.....2853
Page 2365.....2854
Page 2366.....2855
Page 2367.....2856
Page 2368.....2857
Page 2369.....2858
Page 2370.....2860
Page 2371.....2861
Page 2372.....2862
Page 2373.....2864
Page 2374.....2865
Page 2375.....2866
Page 2376.....2867
Page 2377.....2868
Page 2378.....2869
Page 2379.....2870
Page 2380.....2871
Page 2381.....2872
Page 2382.....2874
Page 2383.....2875
Page 2384.....2876
Page 2385.....2877

Page 2386.....2878
Page 2387.....2879
Page 2388.....2880
Page 2389.....2881
Page 2390.....2882
Page 2391.....2883
Page 2392.....2884
Page 2393.....2885
Page 2394.....2886
Page 2395.....2887
Page 2396.....2889
Page 2397.....2890
Page 2398.....2891
Page 2399.....2893
Page 2400.....2894
Page 2401.....2895
Page 2402.....2896
Page 2403.....2898
Page 2404.....2899
Page 2405.....2901
Page 2406.....2902
Page 2407.....2903
Page 2408.....2904
Page 2409.....2906
Page 2410.....2907
Page 2411.....2909

Page 2412.....2910
Page 2413.....2911
Page 2414.....2912
Page 2415.....2913
Page 2416.....2914
Page 2417.....2915
Page 2418.....2916
Page 2419.....2918
Page 2420.....2919
Page 2421.....2920
Page 2422.....2921
Page 2423.....2922
Page 2424.....2923
Page 2425.....2924
Page 2426.....2926
Page 2427.....2927
Page 2428.....2929
Page 2429.....2930
Page 2430.....2932
Page 2431.....2933
Page 2432.....2934
Page 2433.....2935
Page 2434.....2937
Page 2435.....2939
Page 2436.....2940
Page 2437.....2941

Page 2438.....2942
Page 2439.....2944
Page 2440.....2946
Page 2441.....2947
Page 2442.....2948
Page 2443.....2950
Page 2444.....2951
Page 2445.....2953
Page 2446.....2954
Page 2447.....2956
Page 2448.....2957
Page 2449.....2959
Page 2450.....2961
Page 2451.....2962
Page 2452.....2964
Page 2453.....2966
Page 2454.....2967
Page 2455.....2969
Page 2456.....2970
Page 2457.....2971
Page 2458.....2973
Page 2459.....2975
Page 2460.....2976
Page 2461.....2977
Page 2462.....2978
Page 2463.....2979

Page 2464.....2980
Page 2465.....2981
Page 2466.....2982
Page 2467.....2983
Page 2468.....2984
Page 2469.....2985
Page 2470.....2986
Page 2471.....2988
Page 2472.....2990
Page 2473.....2991
Page 2474.....2992
Page 2475.....2993
Page 2476.....2994
Page 2477.....2995
Page 2478.....2997
Page 2479.....2998
Page 2480.....3000
Page 2481.....3001
Page 2482.....3002
Page 2483.....3003
Page 2484.....3004
Page 2485.....3005
Page 2486.....3006
Page 2487.....3008
Page 2488.....3009
Page 2489.....3011

Page 2490.....3013
Page 2491.....3014
Page 2492.....3015
Page 2493.....3016
Page 2494.....3018
Page 2495.....3019
Page 2496.....3020
Page 2497.....3022
Page 2498.....3023
Page 2499.....3024
Page 2500.....3025
Page 2501.....3027
Page 2502.....3028
Page 2503.....3029
Page 2504.....3030
Page 2505.....3032
Page 2506.....3033
Page 2507.....3034
Page 2508.....3035
Page 2509.....3037
Page 2510.....3038
Page 2511.....3039
Page 2512.....3040
Page 2513.....3041
Page 2514.....3042
Page 2515.....3043

Page 2516.....3044
Page 2517.....3046
Page 2518.....3048
Page 2519.....3049
Page 2520.....3051
Page 2521.....3052
Page 2522.....3053
Page 2523.....3054
Page 2524.....3055
Page 2525.....3057
Page 2526.....3058
Page 2527.....3060
Page 2528.....3062
Page 2529.....3064
Page 2530.....3066
Page 2531.....3068
Page 2532.....3069
Page 2533.....3071
Page 2534.....3073
Page 2535.....3074
Page 2536.....3076
Page 2537.....3078
Page 2538.....3079
Page 2539.....3080
Page 2540.....3081
Page 2541.....3082

Page 2542.....3083
Page 2543.....3085
Page 2544.....3087
Page 2545.....3089
Page 2546.....3090
Page 2547.....3092
Page 2548.....3094
Page 2549.....3095
Page 2550.....3096
Page 2551.....3097
Page 2552.....3099
Page 2553.....3100
Page 2554.....3101
Page 2555.....3102
Page 2556.....3103
Page 2557.....3104
Page 2558.....3105
Page 2559.....3106
Page 2560.....3107
Page 2561.....3108
Page 2562.....3110
Page 2563.....3111
Page 2564.....3112
Page 2565.....3114
Page 2566.....3116

Page 2567.....3118

Page 2568.....3120

Page 2569.....3122

Page 2570.....3124

Page 2571.....3126

Page 2572.....3128

Page 2573.....3130

Page 2574.....3132

Page 2575.....3134

Page 2576.....3136

Page 2577.....3138

Page 2578.....3140

Page 2579.....3142

Page 2580.....3144

Page 2581.....3145

Page 2582.....3147

Page 2583.....3149

Page 2584.....3150

Page 2585.....3152

Page 2586.....3153

Page 2587.....3154

Page 2588.....3156

Page 2589.....3158

Page 2590.....3159
Page 2591.....3161
Page 2592.....3162
Page 2593.....3163
Page 2594.....3165
Page 2595.....3166
Page 2596.....3167
Page 2597.....3168
Page 2598.....3169
Page 2599.....3170
Page 2600.....3171
Page 2601.....3173
Page 2602.....3175
Page 2603.....3176
Page 2604.....3178
Page 2605.....3180
Page 2606.....3182
Page 2607.....3183
Page 2608.....3185
Page 2609.....3186
Page 2610.....3188
Page 2611.....3189
Page 2612.....3191
Page 2613.....3192
Page 2614.....3193
Page 2615.....3195

Page 2616.....3196
Page 2617.....3198
Page 2618.....3199
Page 2619.....3200
Page 2620.....3202
Page 2621.....3203
Page 2622.....3204
Page 2623.....3206
Page 2624.....3208
Page 2625.....3209
Page 2626.....3210
Page 2627.....3212
Page 2628.....3213
Page 2629.....3214
Page 2630.....3215
Page 2631.....3217
Page 2632.....3219
Page 2633.....3221
Page 2634.....3222
Page 2635.....3224
Page 2636.....3226
Page 2637.....3227
Page 2638.....3228
Page 2639.....3230
Page 2640.....3231
Page 2641.....3232

Page 2642.....3234
Page 2643.....3236
Page 2644.....3238
Page 2645.....3239

Page 2646.....3241
Page 2647.....3243
Page 2648.....3245
Page 2649.....3246
Page 2650.....3248
Page 2651.....3250
Page 2652.....3252
Page 2653.....3254
Page 2654.....3255
Page 2655.....3256
Page 2656.....3257
Page 2657.....3258
Page 2658.....3259
Page 2659.....3260
Page 2660.....3261
Page 2661.....3263
Page 2662.....3265
Page 2663.....3266
Page 2664.....3267
Page 2665.....3268
Page 2666.....3269
Page 2667.....3270

Page 2668.....3271
Page 2669.....3272
Page 2670.....3273
Page 2671.....3275
Page 2672.....3277
Page 2673.....3278
Page 2674.....3279
Page 2675.....3280
Page 2676.....3281
Page 2677.....3283
Page 2678.....3284
Page 2679.....3286
Page 2680.....3288
Page 2681.....3289
Page 2682.....3290
Page 2683.....3291
Page 2684.....3293
Page 2685.....3294
Page 2686.....3295
Page 2687.....3296
Page 2688.....3297
Page 2689.....3298
Page 2690.....3299
Page 2691.....3300
Page 2692.....3301
Page 2693.....3302

Page 2694.....3303
Page 2695.....3304
Page 2696.....3306
Page 2697.....3307
Page 2698.....3308
Page 2699.....3309
Page 2700.....3310
Page 2701.....3311
Page 2702.....3313
Page 2703.....3314
Page 2704.....3315
Page 2705.....3316
Page 2706.....3318
Page 2707.....3320
Page 2708.....3322
Page 2709.....3324
Page 2710.....3326
Page 2711.....3328
Page 2712.....3330
Page 2713.....3331
Page 2714.....3333
Page 2715.....3335
Page 2716.....3337
Page 2717.....3339
Page 2718.....3340
Page 2719.....3341

Page 2720.....3342
Page 2721.....3343
Page 2722.....3344
Page 2723.....3345
Page 2724.....3346
Page 2725.....3348
Page 2726.....3350
Page 2727.....3351
Page 2728.....3352
Page 2729.....3354
Page 2730.....3355
Page 2731.....3356
Page 2732.....3357
Page 2733.....3358
Page 2734.....3359
Page 2735.....3360
Page 2736.....3361
Page 2737.....3363
Page 2738.....3364
Page 2739.....3365
Page 2740.....3366
Page 2741.....3368
Page 2742.....3369
Page 2743.....3370
Page 2744.....3372
Page 2745.....3374

Page 2746.....3376
Page 2747.....3377
Page 2748.....3378
Page 2749.....3379
Page 2750.....3381
Page 2751.....3383
Page 2752.....3384
Page 2753.....3385
Page 2754.....3386
Page 2755.....3388
Page 2756.....3389
Page 2757.....3390
Page 2758.....3391
Page 2759.....3392
Page 2760.....3394
Page 2761.....3395
Page 2762.....3396
Page 2763.....3397
Page 2764.....3398
Page 2765.....3399
Page 2766.....3400
Page 2767.....3401
Page 2768.....3403
Page 2769.....3404
Page 2770.....3405
Page 2771.....3406

Page 2772.....3407
Page 2773.....3408
Page 2774.....3409
Page 2775.....3410
Page 2776.....3411
Page 2777.....3412
Page 2778.....3414
Page 2779.....3416
Page 2780.....3418
Page 2781.....3419
Page 2782.....3421
Page 2783.....3423
Page 2784.....3424
Page 2785.....3425
Page 2786.....3426
Page 2787.....3427
Page 2788.....3428
Page 2789.....3429
Page 2790.....3430
Page 2791.....3432
Page 2792.....3434
Page 2793.....3435
Page 2794.....3436
Page 2795.....3437
Page 2796.....3438
Page 2797.....3439

Page 2798.....3440
Page 2799.....3441
Page 2800.....3442
Page 2801.....3444
Page 2802.....3445
Page 2803.....3446
Page 2804.....3447
Page 2805.....3448
Page 2806.....3449
Page 2807.....3450
Page 2808.....3451
Page 2809.....3453
Page 2810.....3455
Page 2811.....3456
Page 2812.....3458

Page 2813.....3460
Page 2814.....3462
Page 2815.....3463
Page 2816.....3464
Page 2817.....3465
Page 2818.....3466
Page 2819.....3468
Page 2820.....3469
Page 2821.....3470
Page 2822.....3471
Page 2823.....3472

Page 2824.....3473
Page 2825.....3474
Page 2826.....3475
Page 2827.....3476
Page 2828.....3477
Page 2829.....3478
Page 2830.....3480
Page 2831.....3481
Page 2832.....3482
Page 2833.....3484
Page 2834.....3485
Page 2835.....3486
Page 2836.....3487
Page 2837.....3488
Page 2838.....3490
Page 2839.....3492
Page 2840.....3494
Page 2841.....3495
Page 2842.....3496
Page 2843.....3497
Page 2844.....3498
Page 2845.....3499
Page 2846.....3500
Page 2847.....3502
Page 2848.....3503
Page 2849.....3504

Page 2850.....3505
Page 2851.....3506
Page 2852.....3508
Page 2853.....3509
Page 2854.....3511
Page 2855.....3512
Page 2856.....3513
Page 2857.....3515
Page 2858.....3516
Page 2859.....3517

Page 2860.....3519
Page 2861.....3521
Page 2862.....3522
Page 2863.....3523
Page 2864.....3525
Page 2865.....3527
Page 2866.....3528
Page 2867.....3529
Page 2868.....3530
Page 2869.....3531
Page 2870.....3532
Page 2871.....3533
Page 2872.....3534
Page 2873.....3535
Page 2874.....3536
Page 2875.....3537

Page 2876.....3539
Page 2877.....3540
Page 2878.....3542
Page 2879.....3543
Page 2880.....3544
Page 2881.....3545
Page 2882.....3546
Page 2883.....3547
Page 2884.....3549
Page 2885.....3551
Page 2886.....3553
Page 2887.....3554
Page 2888.....3555
Page 2889.....3556
Page 2890.....3558
Page 2891.....3559
Page 2892.....3561
Page 2893.....3562
Page 2894.....3564
Page 2895.....3566
Page 2896.....3568
Page 2897.....3569
Page 2898.....3570
Page 2899.....3571
Page 2900.....3572
Page 2901.....3574

Page 2902.....3575
Page 2903.....3576
Page 2904.....3577
Page 2905.....3578
Page 2906.....3579
Page 2907.....3580
Page 2908.....3581
Page 2909.....3582
Page 2910.....3583
Page 2911.....3584
Page 2912.....3586
Page 2913.....3588
Page 2914.....3589
Page 2915.....3591
Page 2916.....3593
Page 2917.....3595
Page 2918.....3596
Page 2919.....3597
Page 2920.....3599
Page 2921.....3601
Page 2922.....3603
Page 2923.....3605
Page 2924.....3606
Page 2925.....3607
Page 2926.....3608
Page 2927.....3609

Page 2928.....3610
Page 2929.....3612
Page 2930.....3613
Page 2931.....3614
Page 2932.....3615
Page 2933.....3616
Page 2934.....3617
Page 2935.....3618
Page 2936.....3619
Page 2937.....3621
Page 2938.....3622
Page 2939.....3623
Page 2940.....3625
Page 2941.....3626
Page 2942.....3628
Page 2943.....3630
Page 2944.....3631
Page 2945.....3632
Page 2946.....3634
Page 2947.....3636
Page 2948.....3638
Page 2949.....3640
Page 2950.....3641
Page 2951.....3643
Page 2952.....3644
Page 2953.....3645

Page 2954.....3646
Page 2955.....3648
Page 2956.....3650
Page 2957.....3651
Page 2958.....3653
Page 2959.....3654
Page 2960.....3656
Page 2961.....3657
Page 2962.....3659
Page 2963.....3660
Page 2964.....3662
Page 2965.....3664
Page 2966.....3666
Page 2967.....3668
Page 2968.....3670
Page 2969.....3671
Page 2970.....3673

Page 2971.....3675
Page 2972.....3677
Page 2973.....3678
Page 2974.....3679
Page 2975.....3680
Page 2976.....3681
Page 2977.....3682
Page 2978.....3683
Page 2979.....3685

Page 2980.....3686
Page 2981.....3688
Page 2982.....3690
Page 2983.....3692
Page 2984.....3693
Page 2985.....3694
Page 2986.....3695
Page 2987.....3697
Page 2988.....3699
Page 2989.....3701
Page 2990.....3703
Page 2991.....3704
Page 2992.....3705
Page 2993.....3706
Page 2994.....3707
Page 2995.....3708
Page 2996.....3709
Page 2997.....3710
Page 2998.....3711
Page 2999.....3712
Page 3000.....3713
Page 3001.....3714
Page 3002.....3715
Page 3003.....3716
Page 3004.....3717
Page 3005.....3718

Page 3006.....3719
Page 3007.....3720
Page 3008.....3721
Page 3009.....3723
Page 3010.....3724
Page 3011.....3725
Page 3012.....3726
Page 3013.....3727
Page 3014.....3729
Page 3015.....3731
Page 3016.....3732
Page 3017.....3733
Page 3018.....3735
Page 3019.....3737
Page 3020.....3739
Page 3021.....3741
Page 3022.....3743
Page 3023.....3745
Page 3024.....3746
Page 3025.....3747
Page 3026.....3749
Page 3027.....3751
Page 3028.....3753
Page 3029.....3755
Page 3030.....3757
Page 3031.....3759

Page 3032.....3761
Page 3033.....3762
Page 3034.....3764
Page 3035.....3766
Page 3036.....3768
Page 3037.....3770
Page 3038.....3772
Page 3039.....3774
Page 3040.....3776
Page 3041.....3777
Page 3042.....3778
Page 3043.....3779
Page 3044.....3780
Page 3045.....3781
Page 3046.....3782
Page 3047.....3784
Page 3048.....3786
Page 3049.....3788
Page 3050.....3790
Page 3051.....3792
Page 3052.....3794
Page 3053.....3795
Page 3054.....3797
Page 3055.....3799
Page 3056.....3801
Page 3057.....3803

Page 3058.....3804
Page 3059.....3806
Page 3060.....3808
Page 3061.....3810
Page 3062.....3811
Page 3063.....3812
Page 3064.....3813
Page 3065.....3814
Page 3066.....3816
Page 3067.....3818
Page 3068.....3820

Page 3069.....3822
Page 3070.....3824

Page 3071.....3826
Page 3072.....3828
Page 3073.....3830
Page 3074.....3831
Page 3075.....3832
Page 3076.....3833
Page 3077.....3834
Page 3078.....3835
Page 3079.....3836
Page 3080.....3837
Page 3081.....3838
Page 3082.....3840

Page 3083.....3841
Page 3084.....3842
Page 3085.....3843
Page 3086.....3844
Page 3087.....3845
Page 3088.....3846
Page 3089.....3847
Page 3090.....3848
Page 3091.....3849
Page 3092.....3851
Page 3093.....3853
Page 3094.....3854
Page 3095.....3855
Page 3096.....3856
Page 3097.....3858
Page 3098.....3859
Page 3099.....3860
Page 3100.....3861
Page 3101.....3862
Page 3102.....3863
Page 3103.....3864
Page 3104.....3866
Page 3105.....3867
Page 3106.....3868
Page 3107.....3869
Page 3108.....3870

Page 3109.....3872
Page 3110.....3873
Page 3111.....3875
Page 3112.....3876
Page 3113.....3877
Page 3114.....3878
Page 3115.....3880
Page 3116.....3881
Page 3117.....3882
Page 3118.....3883
Page 3119.....3885
Page 3120.....3887
Page 3121.....3888
Page 3122.....3889
Page 3123.....3890
Page 3124.....3891
Page 3125.....3892
Page 3126.....3893
Page 3127.....3894
Page 3128.....3895
Page 3129.....3896
Page 3130.....3897
Page 3131.....3898
Page 3132.....3899
Page 3133.....3901
Page 3134.....3902

Page 3135.....3903
Page 3136.....3904
Page 3137.....3905
Page 3138.....3907
Page 3139.....3908
Page 3140.....3909
Page 3141.....3910
Page 3142.....3911
Page 3143.....3913
Page 3144.....3915
Page 3145.....3916
Page 3146.....3917
Page 3147.....3918
Page 3148.....3919
Page 3149.....3920
Page 3150.....3921
Page 3151.....3922
Page 3152.....3923
Page 3153.....3924
Page 3154.....3925
Page 3155.....3927
Page 3156.....3928
Page 3157.....3929
Page 3158.....3930
Page 3159.....3932
Page 3160.....3933

Page 3161.....3934
Page 3162.....3935
Page 3163.....3936
Page 3164.....3937
Page 3165.....3938
Page 3166.....3940
Page 3167.....3941
Page 3168.....3942
Page 3169.....3944
Page 3170.....3946
Page 3171.....3948
Page 3172.....3949
Page 3173.....3951
Page 3174.....3952
Page 3175.....3954
Page 3176.....3955
Page 3177.....3956
Page 3178.....3958
Page 3179.....3960

Page 3180.....3962
Page 3181.....3964

Page 3182.....3966

Page 3183.....3968
Page 3184.....3970

Page 3185.....3972

Page 3186.....3974

Page 3187.....3976

Page 3188.....3978

Page 3189.....3980

Page 3190.....3982

Page 3191.....3984

Page 3192.....3986

Page 3193.....3988

Page 3194.....3990

Page 3195.....3992

Page 3196.....3994

Page 3197.....3996

Page 3198.....3998

Page 3199.....4000

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC, 1555-1566	1
PREFACE	1
THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC	4
Part 1.	5
I.	5
II.	7
III.	12
IV.	14
V.	17
VI.	19
MOTLEY’S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 2.	24
VII.	24
VIII.	40
IX.	42
X.	45
XI.	47
XII.	52
XIII.	62
XIV.	70
MOTLEY’S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 3.	72
MOTLEY’S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 4.	94
MOTLEY’S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 5.	152
MOTLEY’S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 6.	179
MOTLEY’S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 7.	210
MOTLEY’S HISTORY OF THE	245

NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 8.
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 9. 286
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 10. 321
379
CHAPTER IX., Part 1., 1566 397
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 13. 409
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 14. 440
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 15. 472
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 16. 510
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 17. 550
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 18. 576
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 19. 605
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 20. 634
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 21. 663
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 22. 694
694
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS 739
THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC 770
CHAPTER IV. 770

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 26 818
PART V. 818
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 27 850
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 28 876
CHAPTER III. 876
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 29 902
CHAPTER IV. 902
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 30 935
CHAPTER V. 935
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 31 962
PART VI. 963
CHAPTER I. 963
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 32 995
CHAPTER II. 995
CHAPTER III. 1016
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 33 1033
CHAPTER IV. 1033
CHAPTER V. 1058
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 34 1079
CHAPTER VI. 1079
CHAPTER VII. 1104
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS, 1584-1609, Complete 1131
By John Lothrop Motley 1131
THE UNITED NETHERLANDS. 1134
CHAPTER I. 1134
CHAPTER II. 1150

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1176
CHAPTER III. 1176
CHAPTER IV. 1194
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1219
CHAPTER V., Part 1. 1219
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1253
CHAPTER V., Part 2. 1254
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1286
CHAPTER V., Part 3. 1286
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1320
CHAPTER VI., Part 1. 1320
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1352
CHAPTER VI., Part 2. 1352
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1374
CHAPTER VII., Part 1. 1374
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1421
CHAPTER VII., Part 2. 1421
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1449
CHAPTER VIII. 1449
1480
CHAPTER IX. 1480
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1515
CHAPTER X. 1515
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1536
CHAPTER. XI 1536
CHAPTER XII. 1542
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1557
CHAPTER XIII. 1557
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1588
CHAPTER XIV. 1588
CHAPTER XV. 1604
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1631

CHAPTER XVI. 1631
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1646
CHAPTER XVII. 1646
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1688
CHAPTER XVIII. Part 1. 1688
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1723
CHAPTER XVIII. Part 2. 1723
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1756
CHAPTER XIX. Part 1. 1756
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1771
CHAPTER XIX. Part 2. 1771
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1804
CHAPTER XX. 1804
1822
CHAPTER XXI. 1822
CHAPTER XXII. 1832
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1848
CHAPTER XXIII. 1848
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1880
CHAPTER XXIV. 1880
CHAPTER XXV. 1897
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1920
CHAPTER XXVI. 1920
CHAPTER XXVII. 1928
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1935
CHAPTER XXVIII. 1935
CHAPTER XXIX. 1961
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1979
CHAPTER XXX. 1979
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2016
CHAPTER XXXI. 2016
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2039
CHAPTER XXXII. 2039

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2086
CHAPTER XXXIII. 2086
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2119
CHAPTER XXXIV. 2119
CHAPTER XXXV. 2134
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2164
CHAPTER XXXVI. 2164
CHAPTER XXXVII. 2189
2203
CHAPTER, XXXVIII. 2204
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2236
CHAPTER XXXIX. 2236
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2261
CHAPTER XL. 2261
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2288
CHAPTER XLI. 2288
CHAPTER XLII. 2315
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2327
CHAPTER XLIII. 2327
CHAPTER XLIV. 2339
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2362
CHAPTER XLV. 2362
CHAPTER XLVI. 2377
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2404
CHAPTER XLVII. 2404
CHAPTER XLVIII. 2411
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2429
CHAPTER XLIX. 2430
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2471
CHAPTER L. 2471
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2496
CHAPTER LI. 2496
HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 2530

CHAPTER LII. 2530
CHAPTER LIII. 2546
ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1584-1609, COMPLETE 2569
WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR 2578
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Volume 99 2578
PREFACE: 2578
THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOHN OF BARNEVELD, v1, 1609 2582
CHAPTER I. 2582
THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND 2646
CHAPTER II. 2646
CHAPTER III. 2663
THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND 2671
CHAPTER IV. 2671
THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND 2725
CHAPTER V. 2725
THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND 2754
CHAPTER VI. 2755
CHAPTER VII. 2763
CHAPTER VIII. 2776
THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND 2791
CHAPTER IX. 2791
CHAPTER X 2801
2813
Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v7, 1614-17 2813
CHAPTER XI. 2813
CHAPTER XII. 2851
THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF 2860

HOLLAND
CHAPTER XIII. 2860
CHAPTER XIV. 2875
CHAPTER XV. 2900
THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND 2921
CHAPTER XVI. 2921
CHAPTER XVII. 2941
CHAPTER XVIII. 2948
THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND 2971
CHAPTER XIX. 2971
CHAPTER XX. 2981
THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND 3031
CHAPTER XXI. 3031
CHAPTER XXII. 3037
CHAPTER XXIII. 3053
END OF THE HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS BY MOTLEY 3072
NOTE. 3072
I. 3073
II. 3076
III. 3079
IV. 3081
V. 3087
VI. 3090
VII. 3092
VIII. 3095
IX. 3098
X. 3100
XI. 3103
XII. 3106
XIII. 3106
XIV. 3108
XV. 3110
JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY. 3114
XVI. 3114
XVII. 3116
XVIII. 3125
XIX. 3132
XX. 3135
XXI. 3137

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY. 3154
XXII. 3154
XXIII. 3163
XXIV. 3165
APPENDIX. 3168
B. 3169
C. 3170
E. 3174
G. 3178
PG EDITOR’S BOOKMARKS OF HOLME’S MOTLEY: 3178

Page 1

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC, 1555-1566

A History

John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D. Corresponding Member of the Institute of France, *Etc*. 1855

[Etext Editor's Note: *John Lothrop Motley*, born in Dorchester, Mass. 1814, died 1877. Other works: Morton's Hopes and Merry Mount, novels. Motley was the United States Minister to Austria, 1861-67, and the United States Minister to England, 1869-70. Mark Twain mentions his respect for John Motley. Oliver Wendell Holmes said in 'An Oration delivered before the City Authorities of Boston' on the 4th of July, 1863: "'It cannot be denied,'—says another observer, placed on one of our national watch-towers in a foreign capital,—'it cannot be denied that the tendency of European public opinion, as delivered from high places, is more and more unfriendly to our cause; but the people,' he adds, 'everywhere sympathize with us, for they know that our cause is that of free institutions,—that our struggle is that of the people against an oligarchy.' These are the words of the Minister to Austria, whose generous sympathies with popular liberty no homage paid to his genius by the class whose admiring welcome is most seductive to scholars has ever spoiled; our fellow-citizen, the historian of a great Republic which infused a portion of its life into our own,—John Lothrop Motley." (See the biography of Motley, by Holmes) Ed.]

PREFACE

The rise of the Dutch Republic must ever be regarded as one of the leading events of modern times. Without the birth of this great commonwealth, the various historical phenomena of: the sixteenth and following centuries must have either not existed; or have presented themselves under essential modifications.—Itself an organized protest against ecclesiastical tyranny and universal empire, the Republic guarded with sagacity, at many critical periods in the world's history; that balance of power which, among civilized states; ought always to be identical with the scales of divine justice. The splendid empire of Charles the Fifth was erected upon the grave of liberty. It is a consolation to those who have hope in humanity to watch, under the reign of his successor, the gradual but triumphant resurrection of the spirit over which the sepulchre had so long been sealed. From the handbreadth of territory called the province of Holland rises a power which wages eighty years' warfare with the most potent empire upon earth, and which, during the progress of the struggle, becoming itself a mighty state, and binding about its own slender form a zone of the richest possessions of earth, from pole to tropic, finally dictates its decrees to the empire of Charles.

Page 2

So much is each individual state but a member of one great international commonwealth, and so close is the relationship between the whole human family, that it is impossible for a nation, even while struggling for itself, not to acquire something for all mankind. The maintenance of the right by the little provinces of Holland and Zealand in the sixteenth, by Holland and England united in the seventeenth, and by the United States of America in the eighteenth centuries, forms but a single chapter in the great volume of human fate; for the so-called revolutions of Holland, England, and America, are all links of one chain.

To the Dutch Republic, even more than to Florence at an earlier day, is the world indebted for practical instruction in that great science of political equilibrium which must always become more and more important as the various states of the civilized world are pressed more closely together, and as the struggle for pre-eminence becomes more feverish and fatal. Courage and skill in political and military combinations enabled William the Silent to overcome the most powerful and unscrupulous monarch of his age. The same hereditary audacity and fertility of genius placed the destiny of Europe in the hands of William's great-grandson, and enabled him to mould into an impregnable barrier the various elements of opposition to the overshadowing monarchy of Louis *xiv*. As the schemes of the Inquisition and the unparalleled tyranny of Philip, in one century, led to the establishment of the Republic of the United Provinces, so, in the next, the revocation of the Nantes Edict and the invasion of Holland are avenged by the elevation of the Dutch stadholder upon the throne of the stipendiary Stuarts.

To all who speak the English language; the history of the great agony through which the Republic of Holland was ushered into life must have peculiar interest, for it is a portion of the records of the Anglo-Saxon race—essentially the same, whether in Friesland, England, or Massachusetts.

A great naval and commercial commonwealth, occupying a small portion of Europe but conquering a wide empire by the private enterprise of trading companies, girdling the world with its innumerable dependencies in Asia, America, Africa, Australia—exercising sovereignty in Brazil, Guiana, the West Indies, New York, at the Cape of Good Hope, in Hindostan, Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, New Holland—having first laid together, as it were, many of the Cyclopean blocks, out of which the British realm, at a late: period, has been constructed—must always be looked upon with interest by Englishmen, as in a great measure the precursor in their own scheme of empire.

For America the spectacle is one of still deeper import. The Dutch Republic originated in the opposition of the rational elements of human nature to sacerdotal dogmatism and persecution—in the courageous resistance of historical and chartered liberty to foreign despotism. Neither that liberty nor ours was born of the cloud-embraces of a false Divinity with, a Humanity of impossible beauty, nor was the infant career of either arrested in blood and tears by the madness of its worshippers. "To maintain," not to

overthrow, was the device of the Washington of the sixteenth century, as it was the aim of our own hero and his great contemporaries.

Page 3

The great Western Republic, therefore—in whose Anglo-Saxon veins flows much of that ancient and kindred blood received from the nation once ruling a noble portion of its territory, and tracking its own political existence to the same parent spring of temperate human liberty—must look with affectionate interest upon the trials of the elder commonwealth. These volumes recite the achievement of Dutch independence, for its recognition was delayed till the acknowledgment was superfluous and ridiculous. The existence of the Republic is properly to be dated from the Union of Utrecht in 1581, while the final separation of territory into independent and obedient provinces, into the Commonwealth of the United States and the Belgian provinces of Spain, was in reality effected by William the Silent, with whose death three years subsequently, the heroic period of the history may be said to terminate. At this point these volumes close. Another series, with less attention to minute details, and carrying the story through a longer range of years, will paint the progress of the Republic in its palmy days, and narrate the establishment of, its external system of dependencies and its interior combinations for self-government and European counterpoise. The lessons of history and the fate of free states can never be sufficiently pondered by those upon whom so large and heavy a responsibility for the maintenance of rational human freedom rests.

I have only to add that this work is the result of conscientious research, and of an earnest desire to arrive at the truth. I have faithfully studied all the important contemporary chroniclers and later historians—Dutch, Flemish, French, Italian, Spanish, or German. Catholic and Protestant, Monarchist and Republican, have been consulted with the same sincerity. The works of Bor (whose enormous but indispensable folios form a complete magazine of contemporary state-papers, letters, and pamphlets, blended together in mass, and connected by a chain of artless but earnest narrative), of Meteren, De Thou, Burgundius, Heuterus; Tassis, Viglius, Hoofd, Haraeus, Van der Haer, Grotius-of Van der Vynckt, Wagenaer, Van Wyn, De Jonghe, Kluit, Van Kampen, Dewez, Kappelle, Bakhuyzen, Groen van Prinsterer—of Ranke and Raumer, have been as familiar to me as those of Mendoza, Carnero, Cabrera, Herrera, Ulloa, Bentivoglio, Peres, Strada. The manuscript relations of those Argus-eyed Venetian envoys who surprised so many courts and cabinets in their most unguarded moments, and daguerreotyped their character and policy for the instruction of the crafty Republic, and whose reports remain such an inestimable source for the secret history of the sixteenth century, have been carefully examined—especially the narratives of the caustic and accomplished Badovaro, of Suriano, and Michele. It is unnecessary to add that all the publications of M. Gachard—particularly the invaluable correspondence of Philip *ii*. and of William the Silent, as well as the “Archives

Page 4

et Correspondence" of the Orange Nassau family, edited by the learned and distinguished Groen van Prinsterer, have been my constant guides through the tortuous labyrinth of Spanish and Netherland politics. The large and most interesting series of pamphlets known as "The Duncan Collection," in the Royal Library at the Hague, has also afforded a great variety of details by which I have endeavoured to give color and interest to the narrative. Besides these, and many other printed works, I have also had the advantage of perusing many manuscript histories, among which may be particularly mentioned the works of Pontua Payen, of Renom de France, and of Pasquier de la Barre; while the vast collection of unpublished documents in the Royal Archives of the Hague, of Brussels, and of Dresden, has furnished me with much new matter of great importance. I venture to hope that many years of labour, a portion of them in the archives of those countries whose history forms the object of my study, will not have been entirely in vain; and that the lovers of human progress, the believers in the capacity of nations for self-government and self-improvement, and the admirers of disinterested human genius and virtue, may find encouragement for their views in the detailed history of an heroic people in its most eventful period, and in the life and death of the great man whose name and fame are identical with those of his country.

No apology is offered for this somewhat personal statement. When an unknown writer asks the attention of the public upon an important theme, he is not only authorized, but required, to show, that by industry and earnestness he has entitled himself to a hearing. The author too keenly feels that he has no further claims than these, and he therefore most diffidently asks for his work the indulgence of his readers.

I would take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to Dr. Klemm, Hofrath and Chief Librarian at Dresden, and to Mr. Von Weber, Ministerial-rath and Head of the Royal Archives of Saxony, for the courtesy and kindness extended to me so uniformly during the course of my researches in that city. I would also speak a word of sincere thanks to Mr. Campbell, Assistant Librarian at the Hague, for his numerous acts of friendship during the absence of, his chief, M. Holtrop. To that most distinguished critic and historian, M. Bakhuyzen van den Brinck, Chief Archivist of the Netherlands, I am under deep obligations for advice, instruction, and constant kindness, during my residence at the Hague; and I would also signify my sense of the courtesy of Mr. Charter-Master de Schwane, and of the accuracy with which copies of MSS. in the archives were prepared for me by his care. Finally, I would allude in the strongest language of gratitude and respect to M. Gachard, Archivist-General of Belgium, for his unwearied courtesy and manifold acts of kindness to me during my studies in the Royal Archives of Brussels.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

Page 5

Historical introduction.

Part 1.

I.

The north-western corner of the vast plain which extends from the German ocean to the Ural mountains, is occupied by the countries called the Netherlands. This small triangle, enclosed between France, Germany, and the sea, is divided by the modern kingdoms of Belgium and Holland into two nearly equal portions. Our earliest information concerning this territory is derived from the Romans. The wars waged by that nation with the northern barbarians have rescued the damp island of Batavia, with its neighboring morasses, from the obscurity in which they might have remained for ages, before any thing concerning land or people would have been made known by the native inhabitants. Julius Caesar has saved from, oblivion the heroic savages who fought against his legions in defence of their dismal homes with ferocious but unfortunate patriotism; and the great poet of England, learning from the conqueror's Commentaries the name of the boldest tribe, has kept the Nervii, after almost twenty centuries, still fresh and familiar in our ears.

Tacitus, too, has described with singular minuteness the struggle between the people of these regions and the power of Rome, overwhelming, although tottering to its fall; and has moreover, devoted several chapters of his work upon Germany to a description of the most remarkable Teutonic tribes of the Netherlands.

Geographically and ethnographically, the Low Countries belong both to Gaul and to Germany. It is even doubtful to which of the two the Batavian island, which is the core of the whole country, was reckoned by the Romans. It is, however, most probable that all the land, with the exception of Friesland, was considered a part of Gaul.

Three great rivers—the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheld—had deposited their slime for ages among the dunes and sand banks heaved up by the ocean around their mouths. A delta was thus formed, habitable at last for man. It was by nature a wide morass, in which oozy islands and savage forests were interspersed among lagoons and shallows; a district lying partly below the level of the ocean at its higher tides, subject to constant overflow from the rivers, and to frequent and terrible inundations by the sea.

The Rhine, leaving at last the regions where its storied lapse, through so many ages, has been consecrated alike by nature and art-by poetry and eventful truth—flows reluctantly through the basalt portal of the Seven Mountains into the open fields which extend to the German sea. After entering this vast meadow, the stream divides itself

into two branches, becoming thus the two-horned Rhine of Virgil, and holds in these two arms the island of Batavia.

The Meuse, taking its rise in the Vosges, pours itself through the Ardennes wood, pierces the rocky ridges upon the southeastern frontier of the Low Countries, receives the Sambre in the midst of that picturesque anthracite basin where now stands the city of Namur, and then moves toward the north, through nearly the whole length of the country, till it mingles its waters with the Rhine.

Page 6

The Scheld, almost exclusively a Belgian river, after leaving its fountains in Picardy, flows through the present provinces of Flanders and Hainault. In Caesar's time it was suffocated before reaching the sea in quicksands and thickets, which long afforded protection to the savage inhabitants against the Roman arms; and which the slow process of nature and the untiring industry of man have since converted into the archipelago of Zealand and South Holland. These islands were unknown to the Romans.

Such were the rivers, which, with their numerous tributaries, coursed through the spongy land. Their frequent overflow, when forced back upon their currents by the stormy sea, rendered the country almost uninhabitable. Here, within a half-submerged territory, a race of wretched ichthyophagi dwelt upon terpen, or mounds, which they had raised, like beavers, above the almost fluid soil. Here, at a later day, the same race chained the tyrant Ocean and his mighty streams into subserviency, forcing them to fertilize, to render commodious, to cover with a beneficent network of veins and arteries, and to bind by watery highways with the furthest ends of the world, a country disinherited by nature of its rights. A region, outcast of ocean and earth, wrested at last from both domains their richest treasures. A race, engaged for generations in stubborn conflict with the angry elements, was unconsciously educating itself for its great struggle with the still more savage despotism of man.

The whole territory of the Netherlands was girt with forests. An extensive belt of woodland skirted the sea-coast; reaching beyond the mouths of the Rhine. Along the outer edge of this carrier, the dunes cast up by the sea were prevented by the close tangle of thickets from drifting further inward; and thus formed a breastwork which time and art were to strengthen. The, groves of Haarlem and the Hague are relics of this ancient forest. The Badahuenna wood, horrid with Druidic sacrifices, extended along the eastern line of the vanished lake of Flevo. The vast Hercynian forest, nine days' journey in breadth, closed in the country on the German side, stretching from the banks of the Rhine to the remote regions of the Dacians, in such vague immensity (says the conqueror of the whole country) that no German, after traveling sixty days, had ever reached, or even heard of; its commencement. On the south, the famous groves of Ardennes, haunted by faun and satyr, embowered the country, and separated it from Celtic Gaul.

Thus inundated by mighty rivers, quaking beneath the level of the ocean, belted about by hirsute forests, this low land, nether land, hollow land, or Holland, seemed hardly deserving the arms of the all-accomplished Roman. Yet foreign tyranny, from the earliest ages, has coveted this meagre territory as lustfully as it has sought to wrest from their native possessors those lands with the fatal gift of beauty for their dower; while the genius of liberty has inspired as noble a resistance to oppression here as it ever aroused in Grecian or Italian breasts.

Page 7

II.

It can never be satisfactorily ascertained who were the aboriginal inhabitants. The record does not reach beyond Caesar's epoch, and he found the territory on the left of the Rhine mainly tenanted by tribes of the Celtic family. That large division of the Indo-European group which had already overspread many portions of Asia Minor, Greece, Germany, the British Islands, France, and Spain, had been long settled in Belgic Gaul, and constituted the bulk of its population. Checked in its westward movement by the Atlantic, its current began to flow backwards towards its fountains, so that the Gallic portion of the Netherland population was derived from the original race in its earlier wanderings and from the later and refluent tide coming out of Celtic Gaul. The modern appellation of the Walloons points to the affinity of their ancestors with the Gallic, Welsh, and Gaelic family. The Belgae were in many respects a superior race to most of their blood-allies. They were, according to Caesar's testimony, the bravest of all the Celts. This may be in part attributed to the presence of several German tribes, who, at this period had already forced their way across the Rhine, mingled their qualities with the Belgic material, and lent an additional mettle to the Celtic blood. The heart of the country was thus inhabited by a Gallic race, but the frontiers had been taken possession of by Teutonic tribes.

When the Cimbri and their associates, about a century before our era, made their memorable onslaught upon Rome, the early inhabitants of the Rhine island of Batavia, who were probably Celts, joined in the expedition. A recent and tremendous inundation had swept away their miserable homes, and even the trees of the forests, and had thus rendered them still more dissatisfied with their gloomy abodes. The island was deserted of its population. At about the same period a civil dissension among the Chatti —a powerful German race within the Hercynian forest—resulted in the expatriation of a portion of the people. The exiles sought a new home in the empty Rhine island, called it "Bet-auw," or "good-meadow," and were themselves called, thenceforward, Batavi, or Batavians.

These Batavians, according to Tacitus, were the bravest of all the Germans. The Chatti, of whom they formed a portion, were a pre-eminently warlike race. "Others go to battle," says the historian, "these go to war." Their bodies were more hardy, their minds more vigorous, than those of other tribes. Their young men cut neither hair nor beard till they had slain an enemy. On the field of battle, in the midst of carnage and plunder, they, for the first time, bared their faces. The cowardly and sluggish, only, remained unshorn. They wore an iron ring, too, or shackle upon their necks until they had performed the same achievement, a symbol which they then threw away, as the emblem of sloth. The Batavians were ever spoken of by

Page 8

the Romans with entire respect. They conquered the Belgians, they forced the free Frisians to pay tribute, but they called the Batavians their friends. The tax-gatherer never invaded their island. Honorable alliance united them with the Romans. It was, however, the alliance of the giant and the dwarf. The Roman gained glory and empire, the Batavian gained nothing but the hardest blows. The Batavian cavalry became famous throughout the Republic and the Empire. They were the favorite troops of Caesar, and with reason, for it was their valor which turned the tide of battle at Pharsalia. From the death of Julius down to the times of Vespasian, the Batavian legion was the imperial body guard, the Batavian island the basis of operations in the Roman wars with Gaul, Germany, and Britain.

Beyond the Batavians, upon the north, dwelt the great Frisian family, occupying the regions between the Rhine and Ems, The Zuyder Zee and the Dollart, both caused by the terrific inundations of the thirteenth century and not existing at this period, did not then interpose boundaries between kindred tribes. All formed a homogeneous nation of pure German origin.

Thus, the population of the country was partly Celtic, partly German. Of these two elements, dissimilar in their tendencies and always difficult to blend, the Netherland people has ever been compounded. A certain fatality of history has perpetually helped to separate still more widely these constituents, instead of detecting and stimulating the elective affinities which existed. Religion, too, upon all great historical occasions, has acted as the most powerful of dissolvents. Otherwise, had so many valuable and contrasted characteristics been early fused into a whole, it would be difficult to show a race more richly endowed by Nature for dominion and progress than the Belgo-Germanic people.

Physically the two races resembled each other. Both were of vast stature. The gigantic Gaul derided the Roman soldiers as a band of pigmies. The German excited astonishment by his huge body and muscular limbs. Both were fair, with fierce blue eyes, but the Celt had yellow hair floating over his shoulders, and the German long locks of fiery red, which he even dyed with woad to heighten the favorite color, and wore twisted into a war-knot upon the top of his head. Here the German’s love of finery ceased. A simple tunic fastened at his throat with a thorn, while his other garments defined and gave full play to his limbs, completed his costume. The Gaul, on the contrary, was so fond of dress that the Romans divided his race respectively into long-haired, breeched, and gowned Gaul; (Gallia comata, braccata, togata). He was fond of brilliant and parti-colored clothes, a taste which survives in the Highlander’s costume. He covered his neck and arms with golden chains. The simple and ferocious German wore no decoration save his iron ring, from which his first homicide relieved him. The Gaul was irascible,

Page 9

furious in his wrath, but less formidable in a sustained conflict with a powerful foe. “All the Gauls are of very high stature,” says a soldier who fought under Julian. (Amm. Marcel. xv. 12. 1). “They are white, golden-haired, terrible in the fierceness of their eyes, greedy of quarrels, bragging and insolent. A band of strangers could not resist one of them in a brawl, assisted by his strong blue-eyed wife, especially when she begins, gnashing her teeth, her neck swollen, brandishing her vast and snowy arms, and kicking with her heels at the same time, to deliver her fisticuffs, like bolts from the twisted strings of a catapult. The voices of many are threatening and formidable. They are quick to anger, but quickly appeased. All are clean in their persons; nor among them is ever seen any man or woman, as elsewhere, squalid in ragged garments. At all ages they are apt for military service. The old man goes forth to the fight with equal strength of breast, with limbs as hardened by cold and assiduous labor, and as contemptuous of all dangers, as the young. Not one of them, as in Italy is often the case, was ever known to cut off his thumbs to avoid the service of Mars.”

The polity of each race differed widely from that of the other. The government of both may be said to have been republican, but the Gallic tribes were aristocracies, in which the influence of clanship was a predominant feature; while the German system, although nominally regal, was in reality democratic. In Gaul were two orders, the nobility and the priesthood, while the people, says Caesar, were all slaves. The knights or nobles were all trained to arms. Each went forth to battle, followed by his dependents, while a chief of all the clans was appointed to take command during the war. The prince or chief governor was elected annually, but only by the nobles. The people had no rights at all, and were glad to assign themselves as slaves to any noble who was strong enough to protect them. In peace the Druids exercised the main functions of government. They decided all controversies, civil and criminal. To rebel against their decrees was punished by exclusion from the sacrifices—a most terrible excommunication, through which the criminal was cut off from all intercourse with his fellow-creatures.

With the Germans, the sovereignty resided in the great assembly of the people. There were slaves, indeed, but in small number, consisting either of prisoners of war or of those unfortunates who had gambled away their liberty in games of chance. Their chieftains, although called by the Romans princes and kings, were, in reality, generals, chosen by universal suffrage. Elected in the great assembly to preside in war, they were raised on the shoulders of martial freemen, amid wild battle cries and the clash of spear and shield. The army consisted entirely of volunteers, and the soldier was for life infamous who deserted the field while his chief remained alive. The same great

Page 10

assembly elected the village magistrates and decided upon all important matters both of peace and war. At the full of the moon it was usually convoked. The nobles and the popular delegates arrived at irregular intervals, for it was an inconvenience arising from their liberty, that two or three days were often lost in waiting for the delinquents. All state affairs were in the hands of this fierce democracy. The elected chieftains had rather authority to persuade than power to command.

The Gauls were an agricultural people. They were not without many arts of life. They had extensive flocks and herds; and they even exported salted provisions as far as Rome. The truculent German, Ger-mane, Heer-mann, War-man, considered carnage the only useful occupation, and despised agriculture as enervating and ignoble. It was base, in his opinion, to gain by sweat what was more easily acquired by blood. The land was divided annually by the magistrates, certain farms being assigned to certain families, who were forced to leave them at the expiration of the year. They cultivated as a common property the lands allotted by the magistrates, but it was easier to summon them to the battle-field than to the plough. Thus they were more fitted for the roaming and conquering life which Providence was to assign to them for ages, than if they had become more prone to root themselves in the soil. The Gauls built towns and villages. The German built his solitary hut where inclination prompted. Close neighborhood was not to his taste.

In their system of religion the two races were most widely contrasted. The Gauls were a priest-ridden race. Their Druids were a dominant caste, presiding even over civil affairs, while in religious matters their authority was despotic. What were the principles of their wild Theology will never be thoroughly ascertained, but we know too much of its sanguinary rites. The imagination shudders to penetrate those shaggy forests, ringing with the death-shrieks of ten thousand human victims, and with the hideous hymns chanted by smoke-and-blood-stained priests to the savage gods whom they served.

The German, in his simplicity, had raised himself to a purer belief than that of the sensuous Roman or the superstitious Gaul. He believed in a single, supreme, almighty God, All-Vater or All-father. This Divinity was too sublime to be incarnated or imaged, too infinite to be enclosed in temples built with hands. Such is the Roman’s testimony to the lofty conception of the German. Certain forests were consecrated to the unseen God whom the eye of reverent faith could alone behold. Thither, at stated times, the people repaired to worship. They entered the sacred grove with feet bound together, in token of submission. Those who fell were forbidden to rise, but dragged themselves backwards on the ground. Their rules were few and simple. They had no caste of priests, nor were they, when first known to the Romans, accustomed to offer sacrifice.

Page 11

It must be confessed that in a later age, a single victim, a criminal or a prisoner, was occasionally immolated. The purity of their religion was soon stained by their Celtic neighborhood. In the course of the Roman dominion it became contaminated, and at last profoundly depraved. The fantastic intermixture of Roman mythology with the gloomy but modified superstition of Romanized Celts was not favorable to the simple character of German theology. The entire extirpation, thus brought about, of any conceivable system of religion, prepared the way for a true revelation. Within that little river territory, amid those obscure morasses of the Rhine and Scheld, three great forms of religion—the sanguinary superstition of the Druid, the sensuous polytheism of the Roman, the elevated but dimly groping creed of the German, stood for centuries, face to face, until, having mutually debased and destroyed each other, they all faded away in the pure light of Christianity.

Thus contrasted were Gaul and German in religious and political systems. The difference was no less remarkable in their social characteristics. The Gaul was singularly unchaste. The marriage state was almost unknown. Many tribes lived in most revolting and incestuous concubinage; brethren, parents, and children, having wives in common. The German was loyal as the Celt was dissolute. Alone among barbarians, he contented himself with a single wife, save that a few dignitaries, from motives of policy, were permitted a larger number. On the marriage day the German offered presents to his bride—not the bracelets and golden necklaces with which the Gaul adorned his fair-haired concubine, but oxen and a bridled horse, a sword, a shield, and a spear-symbols that thenceforward she was to share his labors and to become a portion of himself.

They differed, too, in the honors paid to the dead. The funerals of the Gauls were pompous. Both burned the corpse, but the Celt cast into the flames the favorite animals, and even the most cherished slaves and dependents of the master. Vast monuments of stone or piles of earth were raised above the ashes of the dead. Scattered relics of the Celtic age are yet visible throughout Europe, in these huge but unsightly memorials.

The German was not ambitious at the grave. He threw neither garments nor odors upon the funeral pyre, but the arms and the war-horse of the departed were burned and buried with him.

The turf was his only sepulchre, the memory of his valor his only monument. Even tears were forbidden to the men. “It was esteemed honorable,” says the historian, “for women to lament, for men to remember.”

Page 12

The parallel need be pursued no further. Thus much it was necessary to recall to the historical student concerning the prominent characteristics by which the two great races of the land were distinguished: characteristics which Time has rather hardened than effaced. In the contrast and the separation lies the key to much of their history. Had Providence permitted a fusion of the two races, it is, possible, from their position, and from the geographical and historical link which they would have afforded to the dominant tribes of Europe, that a world-empire might have been the result, different in many respects from any which has ever arisen. Speculations upon what might have been are idle. It is well, however; to ponder the many misfortunes resulting from a mutual repulsion, which, under other circumstances and in other spheres, has been exchanged for mutual attraction and support.

It is now necessary to sketch rapidly the political transformations undergone by the country, from the early period down to the middle of the sixteenth century; the epoch when the long agony commenced, out of which the Batavian republic was born.

III.

The earliest chapter in the history of the Netherlands was written by their conqueror. Celtic Gaul is already in the power of Rome; the Belgic tribes, alarmed at the approaching danger, arm against the universal, tyrant. Inflammable, quick to strike, but too fickle to prevail against so powerful a foe, they hastily form a league of almost every clan. At the first blow of Caesar's sword, the frail confederacy falls asunder like a rope of sand. The tribes scatter in all directions.

Nearly all are soon defeated, and sue for mercy. The Nervii, true to the German blood in their, veins, swear to die rather than surrender. They, at least, are worthy of their cause. Caesar advances against them at the head of eight legions. Drawn up on the banks of the Sambre, they await the Roman's approach. In three days' march Caesar comes up with them, pitches his camp upon a steep hill sloping down to the river, and sends some cavalry across. Hardly have the Roman horsemen crossed the stream, than the Nervii rush from the wooded hill-top, overthrow horse and rider, plunge in one great mass into the current, and, directly afterwards, are seen charging up the hill into the midst of the enemy's force. "At the same moment," says the conqueror, "they seemed in the wood, in the river, and within our lines." There is a panic among the Romans, but it is brief. Eight veteran Roman legions, with the world's victor at their head, are too much for the brave but undisciplined Nervii. Snatching a shield from a soldier, and otherwise unarmed, Caesar throws himself into the hottest of the fight. The battle rages foot to foot and hand to hand but the hero's skill, with the cool valor of his troops, proves invincible as ever. The Nervii, true to their vow, die, but not a man surrenders.

Page 13

They fought upon that day till the ground was heaped with their dead, while, as the foremost fell thick and fast, their comrades, says the Roman, sprang upon their piled-up bodies, and hurled their javelins at the enemy as from a hill. They fought like men to whom life without liberty was a curse. They were not defeated, but exterminated. Of many thousand fighting men went home but five hundred. Upon reaching the place of refuge where they had bestowed their women and children, Caesar found, after the battle, that there were but three of their senators left alive. So perished the Nervii. Caesar commanded his legions to treat with respect the little remnant of the tribe which had just fallen to swell the empty echo of his glory, and then, with hardly a breathing pause, he proceeded to annihilate the Aduatici, the Menapii, and the Morini.

Gaul being thus pacified, as, with sublime irony, he expresses himself concerning a country some of whose tribes had been annihilated, some sold as slaves, and others hunted to their lairs like beasts of prey, the conqueror departed for Italy. Legations for peace from many German races to Rome were the consequence of these great achievements. Among others the Batavians formed an alliance with the masters of the world. Their position was always an honorable one. They were justly proud of paying no tribute, but it was, perhaps, because they had nothing to pay. They had few cattle, they could give no hides and horns like the Frisians, and they were therefore allowed to furnish only their blood. From this time forth their cavalry, which was the best of Germany, became renowned in the Roman army upon every battle-field of Europe.

It is melancholy, at a later moment, to find the brave Batavians distinguished in the memorable expedition of Germanicus to crush the liberties of their German kindred. They are forever associated with the sublime but misty image of the great Hermann, the hero, educated in Rome, and aware of the colossal power of the empire, who yet, by his genius, valor, and political adroitness, preserved for Germany her nationality, her purer religion, and perhaps even that noble language which her late-flowering literature has rendered so illustrious—but they are associated as enemies, not as friends.

Galba, succeeding to the purple upon the suicide of Nero, dismissed the Batavian life-guards to whom he owed his elevation. He is murdered, Otho and Vitellius contend for the succession, while all eyes are turned upon the eight Batavian regiments. In their hands the scales of empire seem to rest. They declare for Vitellius, and the civil war begins. Otho is defeated; Vitellius acknowledged by Senate and people. Fearing, like his predecessors, the imperious turbulence of the Batavian legions, he, too, sends them into Germany. It was the signal for a long and extensive revolt, which had well nigh overturned the Roman power in Gaul and Lower Germany.

Page 14

IV.

Claudius Civilis was a Batavian of noble race, who had served twenty-five years in the Roman armies. His Teutonic name has perished, for, like most savages who become denizens of a civilized state, he had assumed an appellation in the tongue of his superiors. He was a soldier of fortune, and had fought wherever the Roman eagles flew. After a quarter of a century's service he was sent in chains to Rome, and his brother executed, both falsely charged with conspiracy. Such were the triumphs adjudged to Batavian auxiliaries. He escaped with life, and was disposed to consecrate what remained of it to a nobler cause. Civilis was no barbarian. Like the German hero Arminius, he had received a Roman education, and had learned the degraded condition of Rome. He knew the infamous vices of her rulers; he retained an unconquerable love for liberty and for his own race. Desire to avenge his own wrongs was mingled with loftier motives in his breast. He knew that the sceptre was in the gift of the Batavian soldiery. Galba had been murdered, Otho had destroyed himself, and Vitellius, whose weekly gluttony cost the empire more gold than would have fed the whole Batavian population and converted their whole island-morass into fertile pastures, was contending for the purple with Vespasian, once an obscure adventurer like Civilis himself, and even his friend and companion in arms. It seemed a time to strike a blow for freedom.

By his courage, eloquence, and talent for political combinations, Civilis effected a general confederation of all the Netherland tribes, both Celtic and German. For a brief moment there was a united people, a Batavian commonwealth. He found another source of strength in German superstition. On the banks of the Lippe, near its confluence with the Rhine, dwelt the Virgin Velleda, a Bructerian weird woman, who exercised vast influence over the warriors of her nation. Dwelling alone in a lofty tower, shrouded in a wild forest, she was revered as an oracle. Her answers to the demands of her worshippers concerning future events were delivered only to a chosen few. To Civilis, who had formed a close friendship with her, she promised success, and the downfall of the Roman world. Inspired by her prophecies, many tribes of Germany sent large subsidies to the Batavian chief.

The details of the revolt have been carefully preserved by Tacitus, and form one of his grandest and most elaborate pictures. The spectacle of a brave nation, inspired by the soul of one great man and rising against an overwhelming despotism, will always speak to the heart, from generation to generation. The battles, the sieges, the defeats, the indomitable spirit of Civilis, still flaming most brightly when the clouds were darkest around him, have been described by the great historian in his most powerful manner. The high-born Roman has thought the noble barbarian's portrait a subject worthy his genius.

Page 15

The struggle was an unsuccessful one. After many victories and many overthrows, Civilis was left alone. The Gallic tribes fell off, and sued for peace. Vespasian, victorious over Vitellius, proved too powerful for his old comrade. Even the Batavians became weary of the hopeless contest, while fortune, after much capricious hovering, settled at last upon the Roman side. The imperial commander Cerialis seized the moment when the cause of the Batavian hero was most desperate to send emissaries among his tribe, and even to tamper with the mysterious woman whose prophecies had so inflamed his imagination. These intrigues had their effect. The fidelity of the people was sapped; the prophetess fell away from her worshipper, and foretold ruin to his cause. The Batavians murmured that their destruction was inevitable, that one nation could not arrest the slavery which was destined for the whole world. How large a part of the human race were the Batavians? What were they in a contest with the whole Roman empire? Moreover, they were not oppressed with tribute. They were only expected to furnish men and valor to their proud allies. It was the next thing to liberty. If they were to have rulers, it was better to serve a Roman emperor than a German witch.

Thus murmured the people. Had Civilis been successful, he would have been deified; but his misfortunes, at last, made him odious in spite of his heroism. But the Batavian was not a man to be crushed, nor had he lived so long in the Roman service to be outmatched in politics by the barbarous Germans. He was not to be sacrificed as a peace-offering to revengeful Rome. Watching from beyond the Rhine the progress of defection and the decay of national enthusiasm, he determined to be beforehand with those who were now his enemies. He accepted the offer of negotiation from Cerialis. The Roman general was eager to grant a full pardon, and to re-enlist so brave a soldier in the service of the empire.

A colloquy was agreed upon. The bridge across the Nabalia was broken asunder in the middle, and Cerialis and Civilis met upon the severed sides. The placid stream by which Roman enterprise had connected the waters of the Rhine with the lake of Flevo, flowed between the imperial commander and the rebel chieftain.

****

Here the story abruptly terminates. The remainder of the Roman’s narrative is lost, and upon that broken bridge the form of the Batavian hero disappears forever. His name fades from history: not a syllable is known of his subsequent career; every thing is buried in the profound oblivion which now steals over the scene where he was the most imposing actor.

Page 16

The soul of Civilis had proved insufficient to animate a whole people; yet it was rather owing to position than to any personal inferiority, that his name did not become as illustrious as that of Hermann. The German patriot was neither braver nor wiser than the Batavian, but he had the infinite forests of his fatherland to protect him. Every legion which plunged into those unfathomable depths was forced to retreat disastrously, or to perish miserably. Civilis was hemmed in by the ocean; his country, long the basis of Roman military operations, was accessible by river and canal, The patriotic spirit which he had for a moment raised, had abandoned him; his allies had deserted him; he stood alone and at bay, encompassed by the hunters, with death or surrender as his only alternative. Under such circumstances, Hermann could not have shown more courage or conduct, nor have terminated the impossible struggle with greater dignity or adroitness.

The contest of Civilis with Rome contains a remarkable foreshadowing of the future conflict with Spain, through which the Batavian republic, fifteen centuries later, was to be founded. The characters, the events, the amphibious battles, desperate sieges, slippery alliances, the traits of generosity, audacity and cruelty, the generous confidence, the broken faith seem so closely to repeat themselves, that History appears to present the self-same drama played over and over again, with but a change of actors and of costume. There is more than a fanciful resemblance between Civilis and William the Silent, two heroes of ancient German stock, who had learned the arts of war and peace in the service of a foreign and haughty world-empire. Determination, concentration of purpose, constancy in calamity, elasticity almost preternatural, self-denial, consummate craft in political combinations, personal fortitude, and passionate patriotism, were the heroic elements in both. The ambition of each was subordinate to the cause which he served. Both refused the crown, although each, perhaps, contemplated, in the sequel, a Batavian realm of which he would have been the inevitable chief. Both offered the throne to a Gallic prince, for Classicus was but the prototype of Anjou, as Brinno of Brederode, and neither was destined, in this world, to see his sacrifices crowned with success.

The characteristics of the two great races of the land portrayed themselves in the Roman and the Spanish struggle with much the same colors. The Southrons, inflammable, petulant, audacious, were the first to assault and to defy the imperial power in both revolts, while the inhabitants of the northern provinces, slower to be aroused, but of more enduring wrath, were less ardent at the commencement, but; alone, steadfast at the close of the contest. In both wars the southern Celts fell away from the league, their courageous but corrupt chieftains having been purchased with imperial gold to bring about the abject submission of their followers; while the German Netherlands, although eventually subjugated by Rome, after a desperate struggle, were successful in the great conflict with Spain, and trampled out of existence every vestige of her authority. The Batavian republic took its rank among the leading powers of the earth; the Belgic provinces remained Roman, Spanish, Austrian property.

Page 17

V.

Obscure but important movements in the regions of eternal twilight, revolutions, of which history has been silent, in the mysterious depths of Asia, outpourings of human rivets along the sides of the Altai mountains, convulsions up-heaving r mote realms and unknown dynasties, shock after shock throb bing throughout the barbarian world and dying upon the edge of civilization, vast throes which shake the earth as precursory pangs to the birth of a new empire—as dying symptoms of the proud but effete realm which called itself the world; scattered hordes of sanguinary, grotesque savages pushed from their own homes, and hovering with vague purposes upon the Roman frontier, constantly repelled and perpetually reappearing in ever-increasing swarms, guided thither by a fierce instinct, or by mysterious laws—such are the well known phenomena which preceded the fall of western Rome. Stately, externally powerful, although undermined and putrescent at the core, the death-stricken empire still dashed back the assaults of its barbarous enemies.

During the long struggle intervening between the age of Vespasian and that of Odoacer, during all the preliminary ethnographical revolutions which preceded the great people's wandering, the Netherlands remained subject provinces. Their country was upon the high road which led the Goths to Rome. Those low and barren tracts were the outlying marches of the empire. Upon that desolate beach broke the first surf from the rising ocean of German freedom which was soon to overwhelm Rome. Yet, although the ancient landmarks were soon well nigh obliterated, the Netherlands still remained faithful to the Empire, Batavian blood was still poured out for its defence.

By the middle of the fourth century, the Franks and Allemanians, alle-mannez, all-men, a mass of united Germans are defeated by the Emperor Julian at Strasburg, the Batavian cavalry, as upon many other great occasions, saving the day for despotism. This achievement, one of the last in which the name appears upon historic record, was therefore as triumphant for the valor as it was humiliating to the true fame of the nation. Their individuality soon afterwards disappears, the race having been partly exhausted in the Roman service, partly merged in the Frank and Frisian tribes who occupy the domains of their forefathers.

For a century longer, Rome still retains its outward form, but the swarming nations are now in full career. The Netherlands are successively or simultaneously trampled by Franks, Vandals, Alani, Suevi, Saxons, Frisians, and even Sclavonians, as the great march of Germany to universal empire, which her prophets and bards had foretold, went majestically forward. The fountains of the frozen North were opened, the waters prevailed, but the ark of Christianity floated upon the flood. As the deluge assuaged, the earth had returned to chaos, the last pagan empire had been washed out of existence, but the dimly, groping, faltering, ignorant infancy of Christian Europe had begun.

Page 18

After the wanderings had subsided, the Netherlands are found with much the same ethnological character as before. The Frank dominion has succeeded the Roman, the German stock preponderates over the Celtic, but the national ingredients, although in somewhat altered proportions, remain essentially the same. The old Belgae, having become Romanized in tongue and customs, accept the new Empire of the Franks. That people, however, pushed from their hold of the Rhine by thickly thronging hordes of Gepidi, Quadi, Sarmati, Heruli, Saxons, Burgundians, move towards the South and West. As the Empire falls before Odoacer, they occupy Celtic Gaul with the Belgian portion of the Netherlands; while the Frisians, into which ancient German tribe the old Batavian element has melted, not to be extinguished, but to live a renovated existence, the “free Frisians;” whose name is synonymous with liberty, nearest blood relations of the Anglo-Saxon race, now occupy the northern portion, including the whole future European territory of the Dutch republic.

The history of the Franks becomes, therefore, the history of the Netherlands. The Frisians struggle, for several centuries, against their dominion, until eventually subjugated by Charlemagne. They even encroach upon the Franks in Belgic Gaul, who are determined not to yield their possessions. Moreover, the pious Merovingian faineans desire to plant Christianity among the still pagan Frisians. Dagobert, son of the second Clotaire, advances against them as far as the Weser, takes possession of Utrecht, founds there the first Christian church in Friesland, and establishes a nominal dominion over the whole country.

Yet the feeble Merovingians would have been powerless against rugged Friesland, had not their dynasty already merged in that puissant family of Brabant, which long wielded their power before it assumed their crown. It was Pepin of Heristal, grandson of the Netherlander, Pepin of Landen, who conquered the Frisian Radbod (A.D. 692), and forced him to exchange his royal for the ducal title.

It was Pepin’s bastard, Charles the Hammer, whose tremendous blows completed his father’s work. The new mayor of the palace soon drove the Frisian chief into submission, and even into Christianity. A bishop’s indiscretion, however, neutralized the apostolic blows of the mayor. The pagan Radbod had already immersed one of his royal legs in the baptismal font, when a thought struck him. “Where are my dead forefathers at present?” he said, turning suddenly upon Bishop Wolfran. “In Hell, with all other unbelievers,” was the imprudent answer. “Mighty well,” replied Radbod, removing his leg, “then will I rather feast with my ancestors in the halls of Woden, than dwell with your little starveling hand of Christians in Heaven.” Entreaties and threats were unavailing. The Frisian declined positively a rite which was to cause an eternal separation from his buried kindred, and he died as

Page 19

he had lived, a heathen. His son, Poppa, succeeding to the nominal sovereignty, did not actively oppose the introduction of Christianity among his people, but himself refused to be converted. Rebelling against the Frank dominion, he was totally routed by Charles Martell in a great battle (A.D.750) and perished with a vast number of Frisians. The Christian dispensation, thus enforced, was now accepted by these northern pagans. The commencement of their conversion had been mainly the work of their brethren from Britain. The monk Wilfred was followed in a few years by the Anglo-Saxon Willibrod. It was he who destroyed the images of Woden in Walcheren, abolished his worship, and founded churches in North Holland. Charles Martell rewarded him with extensive domains about Utrecht, together with many slaves and other chattels. Soon afterwards he was consecrated Bishop of all the Frisians. Thus rose the famous episcopate of Utrecht. Another Anglo-Saxon, Winfred, or Bonifacius, had been equally active among his Frisian cousins. His crozier had gone hand in hand with the battle-axe. Bonifacius followed close upon the track of his orthodox coadjutor Charles. By the middle of the eighth century, some hundred thousand Frisians had been slaughtered, and as many more converted. The hammer which smote the Saracens at Tours was at last successful in beating the Netherlanders into Christianity. The labors of Bonifacius through Upper and Lower Germany were immense; but he, too, received great material rewards. He was created Archbishop of Mayence, and, upon the death of Willibrod, Bishop of Utrecht. Faithful to his mission, however, he met, heroically, a martyr's death at the hands of the refractory pagans at Dokkum. Thus was Christianity established in the Netherlands.

Under Charlemagne, the Frisians often rebelled, making common cause with the Saxons. In 785, A.D., they were, however, completely subjugated, and never rose again until the epoch of their entire separation from the Frank empire. Charlemagne left them their name of free Frisians, and the property in their own land. The feudal system never took root in their soil. "The Frisians," says their statute book; "shall be free, as long as the wind blows out of the clouds and the world stands." They agreed, however, to obey the chiefs whom the Frank monarch should appoint to govern them, according to their own laws. Those laws were collected, and are still extant. The vernacular version of their Asega book contains their ancient customs, together with the Frank additions. The general statutes of Charlemagne were, of course, in vigor also; but that great legislator knew too well the importance attached by all mankind to local customs, to allow his imperial capitulara to interfere, unnecessarily, with the Frisian laws.

VI.

Page 20

Thus again the Netherlands, for the first time since the fall of Rome, were united under one crown imperial. They had already been once united, in their slavery to Rome. Eight centuries pass away, and they are again united, in subjection to Charlemagne. Their union was but in forming a single link in the chain of a new realm. The reign of Charlemagne had at last accomplished the promise of the sorceress Velleda and other soothsayers. A German race had re-established the empire of the world. The Netherlands, like-the other provinces of the great monarch's dominion, were governed by crown-appointed functionaries, military and judicial. In the northeastern, or Frisian portion, however; the grants of land were never in the form of revocable benefices or feuds. With this important exception, the whole country shared the fate, and enjoyed the general organization of the Empire.

But Charlemagne came an age too soon. The chaos which had brooded over Europe since the dissolution of the Roman world, was still too absolute. It was not to be fashioned into permanent forms, even by his bold and constructive genius. A soil, exhausted by the long culture of Pagan empires, was to lie fallow for a still longer period. The discordant elements out of which the Emperor had compounded his realm, did not coalesce during his life-time. They were only held together by the vigorous grasp of the hand which had combined them. When the great statesman died, his Empire necessarily fell to pieces. Society had need of farther disintegration before it could begin to reconstruct itself locally. A new civilization was not to be improvised by a single mind. When did one man ever civilize a people? In the eighth and ninth centuries there was not even a people to be civilized. The construction of Charles was, of necessity, temporary. His Empire was supported by artificial columns, resting upon the earth, which fell prostrate almost as soon as the hand of their architect was cold. His institutions had not struck down into the soil. There were no extensive and vigorous roots to nourish, from below, a flourishing Empire through time and tempest.

Moreover, the Carlovingian race had been exhausted by producing a race of heroes like the Pepins and the Charleses. The family became, soon, as contemptible as the ox-drawn, long-haired "do-nothings" whom it had expelled; but it is not our task to describe the fortunes of the Emperor's ignoble descendants. The realm was divided, sub-divided, at times partially reunited, like a family farm, among monarchs incompetent alike to hold, to delegate, or—to resign the inheritance of the great warrior and lawgiver. The meek, bald, fat, stammering, simple Charles, or Louis, who successively sat upon his throne—princes, whose only historic individuality consists in these insipid appellations—had not the sense to comprehend, far less to develop, the plans of their ancestor.

Page 21

Charles the Simple was the last Carlovingian who governed Lotharingia, in which were comprised most of the Netherlands and Friesland. The German monarch, Henry the Fowler, at that period called King of the East Franks, as Charles of the West Franks, acquired Lotharingia by the treaty of Bonn, Charles reserving the sovereignty over the kingdom during his lifetime. In 925, A.D., however, the Simpleton having been imprisoned and deposed by his own subjects, the Fowler was recognized King, of Lotharingia. Thus the Netherlands passed out of France into Germany, remaining, still, provinces of a loose, disjointed Empire.

This is the epoch in which the various dukedoms, earldoms, and other petty sovereignties of the Netherlands became hereditary. It was in the year 922 that Charles the Simple presented to Count Dirk the territory of Holland, by letters patent. This narrow hook of land, destined, in future ages, to be the cradle of a considerable empire, stretching through both hemispheres, was, thenceforth, the inheritance of Dirk's descendants. Historically, therefore, he is Dirk I., Count of Holland.

Of this small sovereign and his successors, the most powerful foe for centuries was ever the Bishop of Utrecht, the origin of whose greatness has been already indicated. Of the other Netherland provinces, now or before become hereditary, the first in rank was Lotharingia, once the kingdom of Lothaire, now the dukedom of Lorraine. In 965 it was divided into Upper and Lower Lorraine, of which the lower duchy alone belonged to the Netherlands. Two centuries later, the Counts of Louvain, then occupying most of Brabant, obtained a permanent hold of Lower Lorraine, and began to call themselves Dukes of Brabant. The same principle of local independence and isolation which created these dukes, established the hereditary power of the counts and barons who formerly exercised jurisdiction under them and others. Thus arose sovereign Counts of Namur, Hainault, Limburg, Zutphen, Dukes of Luxemburg and Gueldres, Barons of Mechlin, Marquesses of Antwerp, and others; all petty autocrats. The most important of all, after the house of Lorraine, were the Earls of Flanders; for the bold foresters of Charles the Great had soon wrested the sovereignty of their little territory from his feeble descendants as easily as Baldwin, with the iron arm, had deprived the bald Charles of his daughter. Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Overyssel, Groningen, Drenthe and Friesland (all seven being portions of Friesland in a general sense), were crowded together upon a little desolate corner of Europe; an obscure fragment of Charlemagne's broken empire. They were afterwards to constitute the United States of the Netherlands, one of the most powerful republics of history. Meantime, for century after century, the Counts of Holland and the Bishops of Utrecht were to exercise divided sway over the territory.

Thus the whole country was broken into many shreds and patches of sovereignty. The separate history of such half-organized morsels is tedious and petty. Trifling dynasties, where a family or two were every thing, the people nothing, leave little worth recording. Even the most devout of genealogists might shudder to chronicle the long succession of so many illustrious obscure.

Page 22

A glance, however, at the general features of the governmental system now established in the Netherlands, at this important epoch in the world's history, will show the transformations which the country, in common with other portions of the western world, had undergone.

In the tenth century the old Batavian and later Roman forms have faded away. An entirely new polity has succeeded. No great popular assembly asserts its sovereignty, as in the ancient German epoch; no generals and temporary kings are chosen by the nation. The elective power had been lost under the Romans, who, after conquest, had conferred the administrative authority over their subject provinces upon officials appointed by the metropolis. The Franks pursued the same course. In Charlemagne's time, the revolution is complete. Popular assemblies and popular election entirely vanish. Military, civil, and judicial officers-dukes, earls, margraves, and others—are all king's creatures, 'knegton des konings, pueri regis', and so remain, till they abjure the creative power, and set up their own. The principle of Charlemagne, that his officers should govern according to local custom, helps them to achieve their own independence, while it preserves all that is left of national liberty and law.

The counts, assisted by inferior judges, hold diets from time to time—thrice, perhaps, annually. They also summon assemblies in case of war. Thither are called the great vassals, who, in turn, call their lesser vassals; each armed with "a shield, a spear, a bow, twelve arrows, and a cuirass." Such assemblies, convoked in the name of a distant sovereign, whose face his subjects had never seen, whose language they could hardly understand, were very different from those tumultuous mass-meetings, where boisterous freemen, armed with the weapons they loved the best, and arriving sooner or later, according to their pleasure, had been accustomed to elect their generals and magistrates and to raise them upon their shields. The people are now governed, their rulers appointed by an invisible hand. Edicts, issued by a power, as it were, supernatural, demand implicit obedience. The people, acquiescing in their own annihilation, abdicate not only their political but their personal rights. On the other hand, the great source of power diffuses less and less of light and warmth. Losing its attractive and controlling influence, it becomes gradually eclipsed, while its satellites fly from their prescribed bounds and chaos and darkness return. The sceptre, stretched over realms so wide, requires stronger hands than those of degenerate Carlovingians. It breaks asunder. Functionaries become sovereigns, with hereditary, not delegated, right to own the people, to tax their roads and rivers, to take tithings of their blood and sweat, to harass them in all the relations of life. There is no longer a metropolis to protect them from official oppression. Power, the more sub-divided,

Page 23

becomes the more tyrannical. The sword is the only symbol of law, the cross is a weapon of offence, the bishop is a consecrated pirate, every petty baron a burglar, while the people, alternately the prey of duke, prelate, and seignor, shorn and butchered like sheep, esteem it happiness to sell themselves into slavery, or to huddle beneath the castle walls of some little potentate, for the sake of his wolfish protection. Here they build hovels, which they surround from time to time with palisades and muddy entrenchments; and here, in these squalid abodes of ignorance and misery, the genius of Liberty, conducted by the spirit of Commerce, descends at last to awaken mankind from its sloth and cowardly stupor. A longer night was to intervene; however, before the dawn of day.

The crown-appointed functionaries had been, of course, financial officers. They collected the revenue of the sovereign, one third of which slipped through their fingers into their own coffers. Becoming sovereigns themselves, they retain these funds for their private emolument. Four principal sources yielded this revenue: royal domains, tolls and imposts, direct levies and a pleasantry called voluntary contributions or benevolences. In addition to these supplies were also the proceeds of fines. Taxation upon sin was, in those rude ages, a considerable branch of the revenue. The old Frisian laws consisted almost entirely of a discriminating tariff upon crimes. Nearly all the misdeeds which man is prone to commit, were punished by a money-bote only. Murder, larceny, arson, rape—all offences against the person were commuted for a definite price. There were a few exceptions, such as parricide, which was followed by loss of inheritance; sacrilege and the murder of a master by a slave, which were punished with death. It is a natural inference that, as the royal treasury was enriched by these imposts, the sovereign would hardly attempt to check the annual harvest of iniquity by which his revenue was increased. Still, although the moral sense is shocked by a system which makes the ruler’s interest identical with the wickedness of his people, and holds out a comparative immunity in evil-doing for the rich, it was better that crime should be punished by money rather than not be punished at all. A severe tax, which the noble reluctantly paid and which the penniless culprit commuted by personal slavery, was sufficiently unjust as well as absurd, yet it served to mitigate the horrors with which tumult, rapine, and murder enveloped those early days. Gradually, as the light of reason broke upon the dark ages, the most noxious features of the system were removed, while the general sentiment of reverence for law remained.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

Page 24

A country disinherited by nature of its rights
A pleasantry called voluntary contributions or benevolences
Annual harvest of iniquity by which his revenue was increased
Batavian legion was the imperial body guard
Beating the Netherlanders into Christianity
Bishop is a consecrated pirate
Brethren, parents, and children, having wives in common
For women to lament, for men to remember
Gaul derided the Roman soldiers as a band of pigmies
Great science of political equilibrium
Holland, England, and America, are all links of one chain
Long succession of so many illustrious obscure
Others go to battle, says the historian, these go to war
Revocable benefices or feuds
Taxation upon sin
The Gaul was singularly unchaste

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 2.

The rise of the Dutch republic
John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.
1855

Historical introduction., Part 2.

VII.

Five centuries of isolation succeed. In the Netherlands, as throughout Europe, a thousand obscure and slender rills are slowly preparing the great stream of universal culture. Five dismal centuries of feudalism: during which period there is little talk of human right, little obedience to divine reason. Rights there are none, only forces; and, in brief, three great forces, gradually arising, developing themselves, acting upon each other, and upon the general movement of society.

The sword—the first, for a time the only force: the force of iron. The "land's master," having acquired the property in the territory and in the people who feed thereon, distributes to his subalterns, often but a shade beneath him in power, portions of his estate, getting the use of their faithful swords in return. Vavasours subdivide again to vassals, exchanging land and cattle, human or otherwise, against fealty, and so the iron chain of a military hierarchy, forged of mutually interdependent links, is stretched over each little province. Impregnable castles, here more numerous than in any other part of

Christendom, dot the level surface of the country. Mail-clad knights, with their followers, encamp permanently upon the soil. The fortunate fable of divine right is invented to sanction the system; superstition and ignorance give currency to the delusion. Thus the grace of God, having conferred the property in a vast portion of Europe upon a certain idiot in France, makes him competent to sell large fragments of his estate, and to give a divine, and, therefore, most satisfactory title along with them. A great convenience to a man, who had neither power, wit, nor will to keep the property in his own hands.

Page 25

So the Dirks of Holland get a deed from Charles the Simple, and, although the grace of God does not prevent the royal grantor himself from dying a miserable, discrowned captive, the conveyance to Dirk is none the less hallowed by almighty fiat. So the Roberts and Guys, the Johns and Baldwins, become sovereigns in Hainault, Brabant, Flanders and other little districts, affecting supernatural sanction for the authority which their good swords have won and are ever ready to maintain. Thus organized, the force of iron asserts and exerts itself. Duke, count, seignor and vassal, knight and squire, master and man swarm and struggle amain. A wild, chaotic, sanguinary scene. Here, bishop and baron contend, centuries long, murdering human creatures by ten thousands for an acre or two of swampy pasture; there, doughty families, hugging old musty quarrels to their heart, buffet each other from generation to generation; thus they go on, raging and wrestling among themselves, with all the world, shrieking insane war-cries which no human soul ever understood—red caps and black, white hoods and grey, Hooks and Kabbeljaws, dealing destruction, building castles and burning them, tilting at tourneys, stealing bullocks, roasting Jews, robbing the highways, crusading—now upon Syrian sands against Paynim dogs, now in Frisian quagmires against Albigenses, Stedingers, and other heretics—plunging about in blood and fire, repenting, at idle times, and paying their passage through, purgatory with large slices of ill-gotten gains placed in the ever-extended dead-hand of the Church; acting, on the whole, according to their kind, and so getting themselves civilized or exterminated, it matters little which. Thus they play their part, those energetic men-at-arms; and thus one great force, the force of iron, spins and expands itself, century after century, helping on, as it whirls, the great progress of society towards its goal, wherever that may be.

Another force—the force clerical—the power of clerks, arises; the might of educated mind measuring itself against brute violence; a force embodied, as often before, as priestcraft—the strength of priests: craft meaning, simply, strength, in our old mother-tongue. This great force, too, develops itself variously, being sometimes beneficent, sometimes malignant. Priesthood works out its task, age after age: now smoothing penitent death-beds, consecrating graves! feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, incarnating the Christian precepts, in an, age of rapine and homicide, doing a thousand deeds of love and charity among the obscure and forsaken—deeds of which there shall never be human chronicle, but a leaf or two, perhaps, in the recording angel’s book; hiving precious honey from the few flowers of gentle, art which bloom upon a howling wilderness; holding up the light of science over a stormy sea; treasuring in convents and crypts the few fossils of antique learning which become visible, as the extinct Megatherium of an elder world reappears after the

Page 26

gothic deluge; and now, careering in helm and hauberk with the other ruffians, bandying blows in the thickest of the fight, blasting with bell, book, and candle its trembling enemies, while sovereigns, at the head of armies, grovel in the dust and offer abject submission for the kiss of peace; exercising the same conjury over ignorant baron and cowardly hind, making the fiction of apostolic authority to bind and loose, as prolific in acres as the other divine right to have and hold; thus the force of cultivated intellect, wielded by a chosen few and sanctioned by supernatural authority, becomes as potent as the sword.

A third force, developing itself more slowly, becomes even more potent than the rest: the power of gold. Even iron yields to the more ductile metal. The importance of municipalities, enriched by trade, begins to be felt. Commerce, the mother of Netherland freedom, and, eventually, its destroyer—even as in all human history the vivifying becomes afterwards the dissolving principle—commerce changes insensibly and miraculously the aspect of society. Clusters of hovels become towered cities; the green and gilded Hanse of commercial republicanism coils itself around the decaying trunk of feudal despotism. Cities leagued with cities throughout and beyond Christendom-empire within empire-bind themselves closer and closer in the electric chain of human sympathy and grow stronger and stronger by mutual support. Fishermen and river raftsmen become ocean adventurers and merchant princes. Commerce plucks up half-drowned Holland by the locks and pours gold into her lap. Gold wrests power from iron. Needy Flemish weavers become mighty manufacturers. Armies of workmen, fifty thousand strong, tramp through the swarming streets. Silk-makers, clothiers, brewers become the gossips of kings, lend their royal gossips vast sums and burn the royal notes of hand in fires of cinnamon wood. Wealth brings strength, strength confidence. Learning to handle cross-bow and dagger, the burghers fear less the baronial sword, finding that their own will cut as well, seeing that great armies—flowers of chivalry—can ride away before them fast enough at battles of spurs and other encounters. Sudden riches beget insolence, tumults, civic broils. Internecine quarrels, horrible tumults stain the streets with blood, but education lifts the citizens more and more out of the original slough. They learn to tremble as little at priestcraft as at swordcraft, having acquired something of each. Gold in the end, unsanctioned by right divine, weighs up the other forces, supernatural as they are. And so, struggling along their appointed path, making cloth, making money, making treaties with great kingdoms, making war by land and sea, ringing great bells, waving great banners, they, too—these insolent, boisterous burghers—accomplish their work. Thus, the mighty power of the purse develops itself and municipal liberty becomes a substantial fact. A fact, not a principle; for the old theorem of sovereignty

Page 27

remains undisputed as ever. Neither the nation, in mass, nor the citizens, in class, lay claim to human rights. All upper attributes—legislative, judicial, administrative—remain in the land-master's breast alone. It is an absurdity, therefore, to argue with Grotius concerning the unknown antiquity of the Batavian republic. The republic never existed at all till the sixteenth century, and was only born after long years of agony. The democratic instincts of the ancient German savages were to survive in the breasts of their cultivated descendants, but an organized, civilized, republican polity had never existed. The cities, as they grew in strength, never claimed the right to make the laws or to share in the government. As a matter of fact, they did make the laws, and shared, beside, in most important functions of sovereignty, in the treaty-making power, especially. Sometimes by bargains; sometimes by blood, by gold, threats, promises, or good hard blows they extorted their charters. Their codes, statutes, joyful entrances, and other constitutions were dictated by the burghers and sworn to by the monarch. They were concessions from above; privileges private laws; fragments indeed of a larger liberty, but vastly, better than the slavery for which they had been substituted; solid facts instead of empty abstractions, which, in those practical and violent days, would have yielded little nutriment; but they still rather sought to reconcile themselves, by a rough, clumsy fiction, with the hierarchy which they had invaded, than to overturn the system. Thus the cities, not regarding themselves as representatives or aggregations of the people, became fabulous personages, bodies without souls, corporations which had acquired vitality and strength enough to assert their existence. As persons, therefore—gigantic individualities—they wheeled into the feudal ranks and assumed feudal powers and responsibilities. The city of Dort; of Middelburg, of Ghent, of Louvain, was a living being, doing fealty, claiming service, bowing to its lord, struggling with its equals, trampling upon its slaves.

Thus, in these obscure provinces, as throughout Europe, in a thousand remote and isolated corners, civilization builds itself up, synthetically and slowly; yet at last, a whole is likely to get itself constructed. Thus, impelled by great and conflicting forces, now obliquely, now backward, now upward, yet, upon the whole, onward, the new Society moves along its predestined orbit, gathering consistency and strength as it goes. Society, civilization, perhaps, but hardly humanity. The people has hardly begun to extricate itself from the clods in which it lies buried. There are only nobles, priests, and, latterly, cities. In the northern Netherlands, the degraded condition of the mass continued longest. Even in Friesland, liberty, the dearest blessing of the ancient Frisians, had been forfeited in a variety of ways. Slavery was both voluntary and compulsory. Paupers sold

Page 28

themselves that they might escape starvation. The timid sold themselves that they might escape violence. These voluntary sales, which were frequent, wore usually made to cloisters and ecclesiastical establishments, for the condition of Church-slaves was preferable to that of other serfs. Persons worsted in judicial duels, shipwrecked sailors, vagrants, strangers, criminals unable to pay the money-bote imposed upon them, were all deprived of freedom; but the prolific source of slavery was war. Prisoners were almost universally reduced to servitude. A free woman who intermarried with a slave condemned herself and offspring to perpetual bondage. Among the Ripuarian Franks, a free woman thus disgracing herself, was girt with a sword and a distaff. Choosing the one, she was to strike her husband dead; choosing the other, she adopted the symbol of slavery, and became a chattel for life.

The ferocious inroads of the Normans scared many weak and timid persons into servitude. They fled, by throngs, to church and monastery, and were happy, by enslaving themselves, to escape the more terrible bondage of the sea-kings. During the brief dominion of the Norman Godfrey, every free Frisian was forced to wear a halter around his neck. The lot of a Church-slave was freedom in comparison. To kill him was punishable by a heavy fine. He could give testimony in court, could inherit, could make a will, could even plead before the law, if law could be found. The number of slaves throughout the Netherlands was very large; the number belonging to the bishopric of Utrecht, enormous.

The condition of those belonging to laymen was much more painful. The Lyf-eigene, or absolute slaves, were the most wretched. They were mere brutes. They had none of the natural attributes of humanity, their life and death were in the master’s hands, they had no claim to a fraction of their own labor or its fruits, they had no marriage, except under condition of the infamous ‘jus primoe noctis’. The villagers, or villeins, were the second class and less forlorn. They could commute the labor due to their owner by a fixed sum of money, after annual payment of which, the villein worked for himself. His master, therefore, was not his absolute proprietor. The chattel had a beneficial interest in a portion of his own flesh and blood.

The crusades made great improvement in the condition of the serfs. He who became a soldier of the cross was free upon his return, and many were adventurous enough to purchase liberty at so honorable a price. Many others were sold or mortgaged by the crusading knights, desirous of converting their property into gold, before embarking upon their enterprise. The purchasers or mortgagees were in general churches and convents, so that the slaves, thus alienated, obtained at least a preferable servitude. The place of the absent serfs was supplied by free labor, so that agricultural and mechanical occupations, now devolving upon a more elevated class, became less

Page 29

degrading, and, in process of time, opened an ever-widening sphere for the industry and progress of freemen. Thus a people began to exist. It was, however; a miserable people, with personal, but no civil rights whatever. Their condition, although better than servitude, was almost desperate. They were taxed beyond their ability, while priest and noble were exempt. They had no voice in the apportionment of the money thus contributed. There was no redress against the lawless violence to which they were perpetually exposed. In the manorial courts, the criminal sat in judgment upon his victim. The functions of highwayman and magistrate were combined in one individual.

By degrees, the class of freemen, artisans, traders, and the like, becoming the more numerous, built stronger and better houses outside the castle gates of the “land’s master” or the burghs of the more powerful nobles. The superiors, anxious to increase their own importance, favored the progress of the little boroughs. The population, thus collected, began to divide themselves into guilds. These were soon afterwards erected by the community into bodies corporate; the establishment of the community, of course, preceding, the incorporation of the guilds. Those communities were created by charters or Keuren, granted by the sovereign. Unless the earliest concessions of this nature have perished, the town charters of Holland or Zeland are nearly a century later than those of Flanders, France, and England.

The oldest Keur, or act of municipal incorporation, in the provinces afterwards constituting the republic, was that granted by Count William the First of Holland and Countess Joanna of Flanders, as joint proprietors of Walcheren, to the town of Middelburg. It will be seen that its main purport is to promise, as a special privilege to this community, law, in place of the arbitrary violence by which mankind, in general, were governed by their betters.

“The inhabitants,” ran the Charter, “are taken into protection by both counts. Upon fighting, maiming, wounding, striking, scolding; upon peace-breaking, upon resistance to peace-makers and to the judgment of Schepens; upon contemning the Ban, upon selling spoiled wine, and upon other misdeeds fines are imposed for behoof of the Count, the city, and sometimes of the Schepens.....To all Middelburgers one kind of law is guaranteed. Every man must go to law before the Schepens. If any one being summoned and present in Walcheren does not appear, or refuses submission to sentence, he shall be banished with confiscation of property. Schout or Schepen denying justice to a complainant, shall, until reparation, hold no tribunal again.....A burgher having a dispute with an outsider (buiten mann) must summon him before the Schepens. An appeal lies from the Schepens to the Count. No one can testify but a householder. All alienation of real estate must take place before the Schepens. If an outsider has a complaint against a burgher, the Schepens and Schout must arrange it. If either party refuses submission to them, they must ring the town bell and summon an assembly of all the burghers to compel him. Any one ringing the town bell, except by

general consent, and any one not appearing when it tolls, are liable to a fine. No Middelburger can be arrested or held in durance within Flanders or Holland, except for crime."

Page 30

This document was signed, sealed, and sworn to by the two sovereigns in the year 1217. It was the model upon which many other communities, cradles of great cities, in Holland and Zeland, were afterwards created.

These charters are certainly not very extensive, even for the privileged municipalities which obtained them, when viewed from an abstract stand-point. They constituted, however, a very great advance from the stand-point at which humanity actually found itself. They created, not for all inhabitants, but for great numbers of them, the right, not to govern them selves but to be governed by law: They furnished a local administration of justice. They provided against arbitrary imprisonment. They set up tribunals, where men of burgher class were to sit in judgment. They held up a shield against arbitrary violence from above and sedition from within. They encouraged peace-makers, punished peace-breakers. They guarded the fundamental principle, 'ut sua tanerent', to the verge of absurdity; forbidding a freeman, without a freehold, from testifying—a capacity not denied even to a country slave. Certainly all this was better than fist-law and courts manorial. For the commencement of the thirteenth century, it was progress.

The Schout and Schepens, or chief magistrate and aldermen, were originally appointed by the sovereign. In process of time, the election of these municipal authorities was conceded to the communities. This inestimable privilege, however, after having been exercised during a certain period by the whole body of citizens, was eventually monopolized by the municipal government itself, acting in common with the deans of the various guilds.

Thus organized and inspired with the breath of civic life, the communities of Flanders and Holland began to move rapidly forward. More and more they assumed the appearance of prosperous little republics. For this prosperity they were indebted to commerce, particularly with England and the Baltic nations, and to manufactures, especially of wool.

The trade between England and the Netherlands had existed for ages, and was still extending itself, to the great advantage of both countries. A dispute, however, between the merchants of Holland and England, towards the year 1215, caused a privateering warfare, and a ten years' suspension of intercourse. A reconciliation afterwards led to the establishment of the English wool staple, at Dort. A subsequent quarrel deprived Holland of this great advantage. King Edward refused to assist Count Florence in a war with the Flemings, and transferred the staple from Dort to Bruges and Mechlin.

Page 31

The trade of the Netherlands with the Mediterranean and the East was mainly through this favored city of Bruges, which, already in the thirteenth century, had risen to the first rank in the commercial world. It was the resting-place for the Lombards and other Italians, the great entrepot for their merchandise. It now became, in addition, the great marketplace for English wool, and the woollen fabrics of all the Netherlands, as well as for the drugs and spices of the East. It had, however, by no means reached its apogee, but was to culminate with Venice, and to sink with her decline. When the overland Indian trade fell off with the discovery of the Cape passage, both cities withered. Grass grew in the fair and pleasant streets of Bruges, and sea-weed clustered about the marble halls of Venice. At this epoch, however, both were in a state of rapid and insolent prosperity.

The cities, thus advancing in wealth and importance, were no longer satisfied with being governed according to law, and began to participate, not only in their own, but in the general government. Under Guy of Flanders, the towns appeared regularly, as well as the nobles, in the assembly of the provincial estates. (1386-1389, A.D.) In the course of the following century, the six chief cities, or capitals, of Holland (Dort, Harlem, Delft, Leyden, Goads, and Amsterdam) acquired the right of sending their deputies regularly to the estates of the provinces. These towns, therefore, with the nobles, constituted the parliamentary power of the nation. They also acquired letters patent from the count, allowing them to choose their burgomasters and a limited number of councillors or senators (Vroedschappen).

Thus the liberties of Holland and Flanders waxed, daily, stronger. A great physical convulsion in the course of the thirteenth century came to add its influence to the slower process of political revolution. Hitherto there had been but one Friesland, including Holland, and nearly all the territory of the future republic. A slender stream alone separated the two great districts. The low lands along the Vlie, often threatened, at last sank in the waves. The German Ocean rolled in upon the inland Lake of Flevo. The stormy Zuyder Zee began its existence by engulfing thousands of Frisian villages, with all their population, and by spreading a chasm between kindred peoples. The political, as well as the geographical, continuity of the land was obliterated by this tremendous deluge. The Hollanders were cut off from their relatives in the east by as dangerous a sea as that which divided them from their Anglo-Saxon brethren in Britain. The deputies to the general assemblies at Aurich could no longer undertake a journey grown so perilous. West Friesland became absorbed in Holland. East Friesland remained a federation of rude but self-governed maritime provinces, until the brief and bloody dominion of the Saxon dukes led to the establishment of Charles the Fifth’s

Page 32

authority. Whatever the nominal sovereignty over them, this most republican tribe of Netherlanders, or of Europeans, had never accepted feudalism. There was an annual congress of the whole confederacy. Each of the seven little states, on the other hand, regulated its own internal affairs. Each state was subdivided into districts, each district governed by a Griet-mann (greatman, selectman) and assistants. Above all these district officers was a Podesta, a magistrate identical, in name and functions, with the chief officer of the Italian republics. There was sometimes but one Podesta; sometimes one for each province. He was chosen by the people, took oath of fidelity to the separate estates, or, if Podesta-general, to the federal diet, and was generally elected for a limited term, although sometimes for life. He was assisted by a board of eighteen or twenty councillors. The deputies to the general congress were chosen by popular suffrage in Easter-week. The clergy were not recognized as a political estate.

Thus, in those lands which a niggard nature had apparently condemned to perpetual poverty and obscurity, the principle of reasonable human freedom, without which there is no national prosperity or glory worth contending for, was taking deepest and strongest root. Already in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Friesland was a republic, except in name; Holland, Flanders, Brabant, had acquired a large share of self-government. The powerful commonwealth, at a later period to be evolved out of the great combat between centralized tyranny and the spirit of civil and religious liberty, was already foreshadowed. The elements, of which that important republic was to be compounded, were germinating for centuries. Love of freedom, readiness to strike and bleed at any moment in her cause, manly resistance to despotism, however overshadowing, were the leading characteristics of the race in all regions or periods, whether among Frisian swamps, Dutch dykes, the gentle hills and dales of England, or the pathless forests of America. Doubtless, the history of human liberty in Holland and Flanders, as every where else upon earth where there has been such a history, unrolls many scenes of turbulence and bloodshed; although these features have been exaggerated by prejudiced historians. Still, if there were luxury and insolence, sedition and uproar, at any rate there was life. Those violent little commonwealths had blood in their veins. They were compact of proud, self-helping, muscular vigor. The most sanguinary tumults which they ever enacted in the face of day, were better than the order and silence born of the midnight darkness of despotism. That very unruliness was educating the people for their future work. Those merchants, manufacturers, country squires, and hard-fighting barons, all pent up in a narrow corner of the earth, quarrelling with each other and with all the world for centuries, were keeping alive a national pugnacity of character, for which there was to be a heavy demand in the sixteenth century, and without which the fatherland had perhaps succumbed in the most unequal conflict ever waged by man against oppression.

Page 33

To sketch the special history of even the leading Netherland provinces, during the five centuries which we have thus rapidly sought to characterize, is foreign to our purpose. By holding the clue of Holland's history, the general maze of dynastic transformations throughout the country may, however, be swiftly threaded. From the time of the first Dirk to the close of the thirteenth century there were nearly four hundred years of unbroken male descent, a long line of Dirks and Florences. This iron-handed, hot-headed, adventurous race, placed as sovereign upon its little sandy hook, making ferocious exertions to swell into larger consequence, conquering a mile or two of morass or barren furze, after harder blows and bloodier encounters than might have established an empire under more favorable circumstances, at last dies out. The courtship falls to the house of Avennes, Counts of Hainault. Holland, together with Zeland, which it had annexed, is thus joined to the province of Hainault. At the end of another half century the Hainault line expires. William the Fourth died childless in 1355. His death is the signal for the outbreak of an almost interminable series of civil commotions. Those two great, parties, known by the uncouth names of Hook and Kabbeljaw, come into existence, dividing noble against noble, city against city, father against son, for some hundred and fifty years, without foundation upon any abstract or intelligible principle. It may be observed, however, that, in the sequel, and as a general rule, the Kabbeljaw, or cod-fish party, represented the city or municipal faction, while the Hooks (fish-hooks), that were to catch and control them, were the nobles; iron and audacity against brute number and weight.

Duke William of Bavaria, sister's son—of William the Fourth, gets himself established in 1354. He is succeeded by his brother Albert; Albert by his son William. William, who had married Margaret of Burgundy, daughter of Philip the Bold, dies in 1417. The goodly heritage of these three Netherland provinces descends to his daughter Jacqueline, a damsel of seventeen. Little need to trace the career of the fair and ill-starred Jacqueline. Few chapters of historical romance have drawn more frequent tears. The favorite heroine of ballad and drama, to Netherlanders she is endued with the palpable form and perpetual existence of the Iphigenias, Mary Stuarts, Joans of Arc, or other consecrated individualities. Exhausted and broken-hearted, after thirteen years of conflict with her own kinsmen, consoled for the cowardice and brutality of three husbands by the gentle and knightly spirit of the fourth, dispossessed of her father's broad domains, degraded from the rank of sovereign to be lady forester of her own provinces by her cousin, the bad Duke of Burgundy, Philip surnamed "the Good," she dies at last, and the good cousin takes undisputed dominion of the land. (1437.)

The five centuries of isolation are at end. The many obscure streams of Netherland history are merged in one broad current. Burgundy has absorbed all the provinces which, once more, are forced to recognize a single master. A century and a few years more succeed, during which this house and its heirs are undisputed sovereigns of the soil.

Page 34

Philip the Good had already acquired the principal Netherlands, before dispossessing Jacqueline. He had inherited, beside the two Burgundies, the counties of Flanders and Artois. He had purchased the county of Namur, and had usurped the duchy of Brabant, to which the duchy of Limburg, the marquisate of Antwerp, and the barony of Mechlin, had already been annexed. By his assumption of Jacqueline's dominions, he was now lord of Holland, Zeland, and Hainault, and titular master of Friesland. He acquired Luxemburg a few years later.

Lord of so many opulent cities and fruitful provinces, he felt himself equal to the kings of Europe. Upon his marriage with Isabella of Portugal, he founded, at Bruges, the celebrated order of the Golden Fleece. What could be more practical or more devout than the conception? Did not the Lamb of God, suspended at each knightly breast, symbolize at once the woollen fabrics to which so much of Flemish wealth and Burgundian power was owing, and the gentle humility of Christ, which was ever to characterize the order? Twenty-five was the limited number, including Philip himself, as grand master. The chevaliers were emperors, kings, princes, and the most illustrious nobles of Christendom; while a leading provision, at the outset, forbade the brethren, crowned heads excepted, to accept or retain the companionship of any other order.

The accession of so potent and ambitious a prince as the good Philip boded evil to the cause of freedom in the Netherlands. The spirit of liberty seemed to have been typified in the fair form of the benignant and unhappy Jacqueline, and to be buried in her grave. The usurper, who had crushed her out of existence, now strode forward to trample upon all the laws and privileges of the provinces which had formed her heritage.

At his advent, the municipal power had already reached an advanced stage of development. The burgher class controlled the government, not only of the cities, but often of the provinces, through its influence in the estates. Industry and wealth had produced their natural results. The supreme authority of the sovereign and the power of the nobles were balanced by the municipal principle which had even begun to preponderate over both. All three exercised a constant and salutary check upon each other. Commerce had converted slaves into freemen, freemen into burghers, and the burghers were acquiring daily, a larger practical hold upon the government. The town councils were becoming almost omnipotent. Although with an oligarchical tendency, which at a later period was to be more fully developed, they were now composed of large numbers of individuals, who had raised themselves, by industry and intelligence, out of the popular masses. There was an unquestionably republican tone to the institutions. Power, actually, if not nominally, was in the hands of many who had achieved the greatness to which they had not been born.

Page 35

The assemblies of the estates were rather diplomatic than representative. They consisted, generally, of the nobles and of the deputations from the cities. In Holland, the clergy had neither influence nor seats in the parliamentary body. Measures were proposed by the stadholder, who represented the sovereign. A request, for example, of pecuniary, accommodation, was made by that functionary or by the count himself in person. The nobles then voted upon the demand, generally as one body, but sometimes by heads. The measure was then laid before the burghers. If they had been specially commissioned to act upon the matter; they voted, each city as a city, not each deputy, individually. If they had received no instructions, they took back the proposition to lay before the councils of their respective cities, in order to return a decision at an adjourned session, or at a subsequent diet. It will be seen, therefore, that the principle of national, popular representation was but imperfectly developed. The municipal deputies acted only under instructions. Each city was a little independent state, suspicious not only of the sovereign and nobles, but of its sister cities. This mutual jealousy hastened the general humiliation now impending. The centre of the system waging daily more powerful, it more easily unsphered these feebler and mutually repulsive bodies.

Philip's first step, upon assuming the government, was to issue a declaration, through the council of Holland, that the privileges and constitutions, which he had sworn to as Ruward, or guardian, during the period in which Jacqueline had still retained a nominal sovereignty, were to be considered null and void, unless afterwards confirmed by him as count. At a single blow he thus severed the whole knot of pledges, oaths and other political complications, by which he had entangled himself during his cautious advance to power. He was now untrammelled again. As the conscience of the smooth usurper was, thenceforth, the measure of provincial liberty, his subjects soon found it meted to them more sparingly than they wished. From this point, then, through the Burgundian period, and until the rise of the republic, the liberty of the Netherlands, notwithstanding several brilliant but brief laminations, occurring at irregular intervals, seemed to remain in almost perpetual eclipse.

The material prosperity of the country had, however, vastly increased. The fisheries of Holland had become of enormous importance. The invention of the humble Beukelzoon of Biervliet, had expanded into a mine of wealth. The fisheries, too, were most useful as a nursery of seamen, and were already indicating Holland's future naval supremacy. The fishermen were the militia of the ocean, their prowess attested in the war with the Hanseatic cities, which the provinces of Holland and Zeland, in Philip's name, but by their own unassisted exertions, carried on triumphantly at this epoch. Then came into existence that race of cool and daring mariners, who, in after times, were to make the Dutch name illustrious throughout the world, the men, whose fierce descendants, the "beggars of the sea," were to make the Spanish empire tremble, the men, whose later successors swept the seas with brooms at the mast-head, and whose ocean-battles with their equally fearless English brethren often lasted four uninterrupted days and nights.

Page 36

The main strength of Holland was derived from the ocean, from whose destructive grasp she had wrested herself, but in whose friendly embrace she remained. She was already placing securely the foundations of commercial wealth and civil liberty upon those shifting quicksands which the Roman doubted whether to call land or water. Her submerged deformity, as she floated, mermaid-like, upon the waves was to be forgotten in her material splendor. Enriched with the spoils of every clime, crowned with the divine jewels of science and art, she was, one day, to sing a siren song of freedom, luxury, and power.

As with Holland, so with Flanders, Brabant, and the other leading provinces. Industry and wealth, agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, were constantly augmenting. The natural sources of power were full to overflowing, while the hand of despotism was deliberately sealing the fountain.

For the house of Burgundy was rapidly culminating and as rapidly curtailing the political privileges of the Netherlands. The contest was, at first, favorable to the cause of arbitrary power; but little seeds were silently germinating, which, in the progress of their gigantic development, were, one day, to undermine the foundations of Tyranny and to overshadow the world. The early progress of the religious reformation in the Netherlands will be outlined in a separate chapter. Another great principle was likewise at work at this period. At the very epoch when the greatness of Burgundy was most swiftly ripening, another weapon was secretly forging, more potent in the great struggle for freedom than any which the wit or hand of man has ever devised or wielded. When Philip the Good, in the full blaze of his power, and flushed with the triumphs of territorial aggrandizement, was instituting at Bruges the order of the Golden Fleece, “to the glory of God, of the blessed Virgin, and of the holy Andrew, patron saint of the Burgundian family,” and enrolling the names of the kings and princes who were to be honored with its symbols, at that very moment, an obscure citizen of Harlem, one Lorenz Coster, or Lawrence the Sexton, succeeded in printing a little grammar, by means of movable types. The invention of printing was accomplished, but it was not ushered in with such a blaze of glory as heralded the contemporaneous erection of the Golden Fleece. The humble setter of types did not deem emperors and princes alone worthy his companionship. His invention sent no thrill of admiration throughout Christendom; and yet, what was the good Philip of Burgundy, with his Knights of the Golden Fleece, and all their effulgent trumpery, in the eye of humanity and civilization, compared with the poor sexton and his wooden types?

Page 37

[The question of the time and place to which the invention of printing should be referred, has been often discussed. It is not probable that it will ever be settled to the entire satisfaction of Holland and Germany. The Dutch claim that movable types were first used at Harlem, fixing the time variously between the years 1423 and 1440. The first and very faulty editions of Lorenz are religiously preserved at Harlem.]

Philip died in February, 1467. The details of his life and career do not belong to our purpose. The practical tendency of his government was to repress the spirit of liberty, while especial privileges, extensive in nature, but limited in time, were frequently granted to corporations. Philip, in one day, conferred thirty charters upon as many different bodies of citizens. These were, however, grants of monopoly not concessions of rights. He also fixed the number of city councils or Vroedschappen in many Netherland cities, giving them permission to present a double list of candidates for burgomasters and judges, from which he himself made the appointments. He was certainly neither a good nor great prince, but he possessed much administrative ability. His military talents were considerable, and he was successful in his wars. He was an adroit dissembler, a practical politician. He had the sense to comprehend that the power of a prince, however absolute, must depend upon the prosperity of his subjects. He taxed severely the wealth, but he protected the commerce and the manufactures of Holland and Flanders. He encouraged art, science, and literature. The brothers, John and Hubert Van Eyck, were attracted by his generosity to Bruges, where they painted many pictures. John was even a member of the duke's council. The art of oil-painting was carried to great perfection by Hubert's scholar, John of Bruges. An incredible number of painters, of greater or less merit, flourished at this epoch in the Netherlands, heralds of that great school, which, at a subsequent period, was to astonish the world with brilliant colors; profound science, startling effects, and vigorous reproductions of Nature. Authors, too, like Olivier de la Marche and Philippe de Comines, who, in the words of the latter, "wrote, not for the amusement of brutes, and people of low degree, but for princes and other persons of quality," these and other writers, with aims as lofty, flourished at the court of Burgundy, and were rewarded by the Duke with princely generosity. Philip remodelled and befriended the university of Louvain. He founded at Brussels the Burgundian library, which became celebrated throughout Europe. He levied largely, spent profusely, but was yet so thrifty a housekeeper, as to leave four hundred thousand crowns of gold, a vast amount in those days, besides three million marks' worth of plate and furniture, to be wasted like water in the insane career of his son.

Page 38

The exploits of that son require but few words of illustration. Hardly a chapter of European history or romance is more familiar to the world than the one which records the meteoric course of Charles the Bold. The propriety of his title was never doubtful. No prince was ever bolder, but it is certain that no quality could be less desirable, at that particular moment in the history of his house. It was not the quality to confirm a usurping family in its ill-gotten possessions. Renewed aggressions upon the rights of others justified retaliation and invited attack. Justice, prudence, firmness, wisdom of internal administration were desirable in the son of Philip and the rival of Louis. These attributes the gladiator lacked entirely. His career might have been a brilliant one in the old days of chivalry. His image might have appeared as imposing as the romantic forms of Baldwin Bras de Fer or Godfrey of Bouillon, had he not been misplaced in history. Nevertheless, he imagined himself governed by a profound policy. He had one dominant idea, to make Burgundy a kingdom. From the moment when, with almost the first standing army known to history, and with coffers well filled by his cautious father's economy, he threw himself into the lists against the crafty Louis, down to the day when he was found dead, naked, deserted, and with his face frozen into a pool of blood and water, he faithfully pursued this thought. His ducal cap was to be exchanged for a kingly crown, while all the provinces which lay beneath the Mediterranean and the North Sea, and between France and Germany, were to be united under his sceptre. The Netherlands, with their wealth, had been already appropriated, and their freedom crushed. Another land of liberty remained; physically, the reverse of Holland, but stamped with the same courageous nationality, the same ardent love of human rights. Switzerland was to be conquered. Her eternal battlements of ice and granite were to constitute the great bulwark of his realm. The world knows well the result of the struggle between the lord of so many duchies and earldoms, and the Alpine mountaineers. With all his boldness, Charles was but an indifferent soldier. His only merit was physical courage. He imagined himself a consummate commander, and, in conversation with his jester, was fond of comparing himself to Hannibal. "We are getting well Hannibalized to-day, my lord," said the bitter fool, as they rode off together from the disastrous defeat of Gransen. Well "Hannibalized" he was, too, at Gransen, at Murten, and at Nancy. He followed in the track of his prototype only to the base of the mountains.

Page 39

As a conqueror, he was signally unsuccessful; as a politician, he could out-wit none but himself; it was only as a tyrant within his own ground, that he could sustain the character which he chose to enact. He lost the crown, which he might have secured, because he thought the emperor's son unworthy the heiress of Burgundy; and yet, after his father's death, her marriage with that very Maximilian alone secured the possession of her paternal inheritance. Unsuccessful in schemes of conquest, and in political intrigue, as an oppressor of the Netherlands, he nearly carried out his plans. Those provinces he regarded merely as a bank to draw upon. His immediate intercourse with the country was confined to the extortion of vast requests. These were granted with ever-increasing reluctance, by the estates. The new taxes and excises, which the sanguinary extravagance of the duke rendered necessary, could seldom be collected in the various cities without tumults, sedition, and bloodshed. Few princes were ever a greater curse to the people whom they were allowed to hold as property. He nearly succeeded in establishing a centralized despotism upon the ruins of the provincial institutions. His sudden death alone deferred the catastrophe. His removal of the supreme court of Holland from the Hague to Mechlin, and his maintenance of a standing army, were the two great measures by which he prostrated the Netherlands. The tribunal had been remodelled by his father; the expanded authority which Philip had given to a bench of judges dependent upon himself, was an infraction of the rights of Holland. The court, however, still held its sessions in the country; and the sacred privilege—de non evocando—the right of every Hollander to be tried in his own land, was, at least, retained. Charles threw off the mask; he proclaimed that this council—composed of his creatures, holding office at his pleasure—should have supreme jurisdiction over all the charters of the provinces; that it was to follow his person, and derive all authority from his will. The usual seat of the court he transferred to Mechlin. It will be seen, in the sequel, that the attempt, under Philip the Second, to enforce its supreme authority was a collateral cause of the great revolution of the Netherlands.

Charles, like his father, administered the country by stadholders. From the condition of flourishing self-ruled little republics, which they had, for a moment, almost attained, they became departments of an ill-assorted, ill-conditioned, ill-governed realm, which was neither commonwealth nor empire, neither kingdom nor duchy; and which had no homogeneousness of population, no affection between ruler and people, small sympathies of lineage or of language.

Page 40

His triumphs were but few, his fall ignominious. His father's treasure was squandered, the curse of a standing army fixed upon his people, the trade and manufactures of the country paralyzed by his extortions, and he accomplished nothing. He lost his life in the forty-fourth year of his age (1477), leaving all the provinces, duchies, and lordships, which formed the miscellaneous realm of Burgundy, to his only child, the Lady Mary. Thus already the countries which Philip had wrested from the feeble hand of Jacqueline, had fallen to another female. Philip's own granddaughter, as young, fair, and unprotected as Jacqueline, was now sole mistress of those broad domains.

VIII.

A crisis, both for Burgundy and the Netherlands, succeeds. Within the provinces there is an elastic rebound, as soon as the pressure is removed from them by the tyrant's death. A sudden spasm of liberty gives the whole people gigantic strength. In an instant they recover all, and more than all, the rights which they had lost. The cities of Holland, Flanders, and other provinces call a convention at Ghent. Laying aside their musty feuds, men of all parties-Hooks and Kabbeljaws, patricians and people, move forward in phalanx to recover their national constitutions. On the other hand, Louis the Eleventh seizes Burgundy, claiming the territory for his crown, the heiress for his son. The situation is critical for the Lady Mary. As usual in such cases, appeals are made to the faithful commons. A prodigality of oaths and pledges is showered upon the people, that their loyalty may be refreshed and grow green. The congress meets at Ghent. The Lady Mary professes much, but she will keep her vow. The deputies are called upon to rally the country around the duchess, and to resist the fraud and force of Louis. The congress is willing to maintain the cause of its young mistress. The members declare, at the same time, very roundly, "that the provinces have been much impoverished and oppressed by the enormous taxation imposed upon them by the ruinous wars waged by Duke Charles from the beginning to the end of his life." They rather require "to be relieved than additionally encumbered." They add that, "for many years past, there has been a constant violation of the provincial and municipal charters, and that they should be happy to see them restored."

The result of the deliberations is the formal grant by Duchess Mary of the "Groot Privilegie," or Great Privilege, the Magna Charta of Holland. Although this instrument was afterwards violated, and indeed abolished, it became the foundation of the republic. It was a recapitulation and recognition of ancient rights, not an acquisition of new privileges. It was a restoration, not a revolution. Its principal points deserve attention from those interested in the political progress of mankind.

Page 41

“The duchess shall not marry without consent of the estates of her provinces. All offices in her gift shall be conferred on natives only. No man shall fill two offices. No office shall be farmed. The ’Great Council and Supreme Court of Holland’ is re-established. Causes shall be brought before it on appeal from the ordinary courts. It shall have no original jurisdiction of matters within the cognizance of the provincial and municipal tribunals. The estates and cities are guaranteed in their right not to be summoned to justice beyond the limits of their territory. The cities, in common with all the provinces of the Netherlands, may hold diets as often ten and at such places as they choose. No new taxes shall be imposed but by consent of the provincial estates. Neither the duchess nor her descendants shall begin either an offensive or defensive war without consent of the estates. In case a war be illegally undertaken, the estates are not bound to contribute to its maintenance. In all public and legal documents, the Netherland language shall be employed. The commands of the duchess shall be invalid, if conflicting with the privileges of a city.

“The seat of the Supreme Council is transferred from Mechlin to the Hague. No money shall be coined, nor its value raised or lowered, but by consent of the estates. Cities are not to be compelled to contribute to requests which they have not voted. The sovereign shall come in person before the estates, to make his request for supplies.”

Here was good work. The land was rescued at a blow from the helpless condition to which it had been reduced. This summary annihilation of all the despotic arrangements of Charles was enough to raise him from his tomb. The law, the sword, the purse, were all taken from the hand of the sovereign and placed within the control of parliament. Such sweeping reforms, if maintained, would restore health to the body politic. They gave, moreover, an earnest of what was one day to arrive. Certainly, for the fifteenth century, the “Great Privilege” was a reasonably liberal constitution. Where else upon earth, at that day, was there half so much liberty as was thus guaranteed? The congress of the Netherlands, according to their Magna Charta, had power to levy all taxes, to regulate commerce and manufactures, to declare war, to coin money, to raise armies and navies. The executive was required to ask for money in person, could appoint only natives to office, recognized the right of disobedience in his subjects, if his commands should conflict with law, and acknowledged himself bound by decisions of courts of justice. The cities appointed their own magistrates, held diets at their own pleasure, made their local by-laws and saw to their execution. Original cognizance of legal matters belonged to the municipal courts, appellate jurisdiction to the supreme tribunal, in which the judges were appointed by the sovereign. The liberty of the citizen against arbitrary imprisonment was amply provided for. The ‘jus de non evocando’, the habeas corpus of Holland, was re-established.

Page 42

Truly, here was a fundamental law which largely, roundly, and reasonably recognized the existence of a people with hearts, heads, and hands of their own. It was a vast step in advance of natural servitude, the dogma of the dark ages. It was a noble and temperate vindication of natural liberty, the doctrine of more enlightened days. To no people in the world more than to the stout burghers of Flanders and Holland belongs the honor of having battled audaciously and perennially in behalf of human rights.

Similar privileges to the great charter of Holland are granted to many other provinces; especially to Flanders, ever ready to stand forward in fierce vindication of freedom. For a season all is peace and joy; but the duchess is young, weak, and a woman. There is no lack of intriguing politicians, reactionary councillors. There is a cunning old king in the distance, lying in wait; seeking what he can devour. A mission goes from the estates to France. The well-known tragedy of Imbrecourt and Hugonet occurs. Envoys from the states, they dare to accept secret instructions from the duchess to enter into private negotiations with the French monarch, against their colleagues—against the great charter—against their country. Sly Louis betrays them, thinking that policy the more expedient. They are seized in Ghent, rapidly tried, and as rapidly beheaded by the enraged burghers. All the entreaties of the Lady Mary, who, dressed in mourning garments, with dishevelled hair, unloosed girdle, and streaming eyes; appears at the town-house and afterwards in the market place, humbly to intercede for her servants, are fruitless There is no help for the juggling diplomatists. The punishment was sharp. Was it more severe and sudden than that which betrayed monarchs usually inflict? Would the Flemings, at that critical moment, have deserved their freedom had they not taken swift and signal vengeance for this first infraction of their newly recognized rights? Had it not been weakness to spare the traitors who had thus stained the childhood of the national joy at liberty regained?

IX.

Another step, and a wide one, into the great stream of European history. The Lady Mary espouses the Archduke Maximilian. The Netherlands are about to become Habsburg property. The Ghenters reject the pretensions of the dauphin, and select for husband of their duchess the very man whom her father had so stupidly rejected. It had been a wiser choice for Charles the Bold than for the Netherlanders. The marriage takes place on the 18th of August, 1477. Mary of Burgundy passes from the guardianship of Ghent burghers into that of the emperor’s son. The crafty husband allies himself with the city party, feeling where the strength lies. He knows that the voracious Kabbeljaws have at last swallowed the Hooks, and run away with them. Promising himself future rights of reconsideration, he is liberal in

Page 43

promises to the municipal party. In the mean time he is governor and guardian of his wife and her provinces. His children are to inherit the Netherlands and all that therein is. What can be more consistent than laws of descent, regulated by right divine? At the beginning of the century, good Philip dispossesses Jacqueline, because females can not inherit. At its close, his granddaughter succeeds to the property, and transmits it to her children. Pope and emperor maintain both positions with equal logic. The policy and promptness of Maximilian are as effective as the force and fraud of Philip. The Lady Mary falls from her horse and dies. Her son, Philip, four years of age, is recognized as successor. Thus the house of Burgundy is followed by that of Austria, the fifth and last family which governed Holland, previously to the erection of the republic. Maximilian is recognized by the provinces as governor and guardian, during the minority of his children. Flanders alone refuses. The burghers, ever prompt in action, take personal possession of the child Philip, and carry on the government in his name. A commission of citizens and nobles thus maintain their authority against Maximilian for several years. In 1488, the archduke, now King of the Romans, with a small force of cavalry, attempts to take the city of Bruges, but the result is a mortifying one to the Roman king. The citizens of Bruges take him. Maximilian, with several councillors, is kept a prisoner in a house on the market-place. The magistrates are all changed, the affairs of government conducted in the name of the young Philip alone. Meantime, the estates of the other Netherlands assemble at Ghent; anxious, unfortunately, not for the national liberty, but for that of the Roman king. Already Holland, torn again by civil feuds, and blinded by the artifices of Maximilian, has deserted, for a season, the great cause to which Flanders has remained so true. At last, a treaty is made between the archduke and the Flemings. Maximilian is to be regent of the other provinces; Philip, under guardianship of a council, is to govern Flanders. Moreover, a congress of all the provinces is to be summoned annually, to provide for the general welfare. Maximilian signs and swears to the treaty on the 16th May, 1488. He swears, also, to dismiss all foreign troops within four days. Giving hostages for his fidelity, he is set at liberty. What are oaths and hostages when prerogative, and the people are contending? Emperor Frederic sends to his son an army under the Duke of Saxony. The oaths are broken, the hostages left to their fate. The struggle lasts a year, but, at the end of it, the Flemings are subdued. What could a single province effect, when its sister states, even liberty-loving Holland, had basely abandoned the common cause? A new treaty is made, (Oct.1489). Maximilian obtains uncontrolled guardianship of his son, absolute dominion over Flanders and the other provinces. The insolent burghers are severely punished for remembering that they had been freemen. The magistrates of Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres, in black garments, ungirdled, bare-headed, and kneeling, are compelled to implore the despot’s forgiveness, and to pay three hundred thousand crowns of gold as its price. After this, for a brief season, order reigns in Flanders.

Page 44

The course of Maximilian had been stealthy, but decided. Allying himself with the city party, he had crushed the nobles. The power thus obtained, he then turned against the burghers. Step by step he had trampled out the liberties which his wife and himself had sworn to protect. He had spurned the authority of the “Great Privilege,” and all other charters. Burgomasters and other citizens had been beheaded in great numbers for appealing to their statutes against the edicts of the regent, for voting in favor of a general congress according to the unquestionable law. He had proclaimed that all landed estates should, in lack of heirs male, escheat to his own exchequer. He had debased the coin of the country, and thereby authorized unlimited swindling on the part of all his agents, from stadholders down to the meanest official. If such oppression and knavery did not justify the resistance of the Flemings to the guardianship of Maximilian, it would be difficult to find any reasonable course in political affairs save abject submission to authority.

In 1493, Maximilian succeeds to the imperial throne, at the death of his father. In the following year his son, Philip the Fair, now seventeen years of age, receives the homage of the different states of the Netherlands. He swears to maintain only the privileges granted by Philip and Charles of Burgundy, or their ancestors, proclaiming null and void all those which might have been acquired since the death of Charles. Holland, Zeland, and the other provinces accept him upon these conditions, thus ignominiously, and without a struggle, relinquishing the Great Privilege, and all similar charters.

Friesland is, for a brief season, politically separated from the rest of the country. Harassed and exhausted by centuries of warfare, foreign, and domestic, the free Frisians, at the suggestion or command of Emperor Maximilian, elect the Duke of Saxony as their Podesta. The sovereign prince, naturally proving a chief magistrate far from democratic, gets himself acknowledged, or submitted to, soon afterwards, as legitimate sovereign of Friesland. Seventeen years afterward Saxony sells the sovereignty to the Austrian house for 350,000 crowns. This little country, whose statutes proclaimed her to be “free as the wind, as long as it blew,” whose institutions Charlemagne had honored and left unmolested, who had freed herself with ready poniard from Norman tyranny, who never bowed her neck to feudal chieftain, nor to the papal yoke, now driven to madness and suicide by the dissensions of her wild children, forfeits at last her independent existence. All the provinces are thus united in a common servitude, and regret, too late, their supineness at a moment when their liberties might yet have been vindicated. Their ancient and cherished charters, which their bold ancestors had earned with the sweat of their brows and the blood of their hearts, are at the mercy of an autocrat, and liable to be superseded by his edicts.

Page 45

In 1496, the momentous marriage of Philip the Fair with Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Castile and Aragon, is solemnized. Of this union, in the first year of the century, is born the second Charlemagne, who is to unite Spain and the Netherlands, together with so many vast and distant realms, under a single sceptre. Six years afterwards (Sept. 25, 1506), Philip dies at Burgos. A handsome profligate, devoted to his pleasures, and leaving the cares of state to his ministers, Philip, “croit-conseil,” is the bridge over which the house of Habsburg passes to almost universal monarchy, but, in himself, is nothing.

X.

Two prudent marriages, made by Austrian archdukes within twenty years, have altered the face of the earth. The stream, which we have been tracing from its source, empties itself at last into the ocean of a world-empire. Count Dirk the First, lord of a half-submerged corner of Europe, is succeeded by Count Charles the Second of Holland, better known as Charles the Fifth, King of Spain, Sicily, and Jerusalem, Duke of Milan, Emperor of Germany, Dominator in Asia and Africa, autocrat of half the world. The leading events of his brilliant reign are familiar to every child. The Netherlands now share the fate of so large a group of nations, a fate, to these provinces, most miserable. The weddings of Austria Felix were not so prolific of happiness to her subjects as to herself. It can never seem just or reasonable that the destiny of many millions of human beings should depend upon the marriage-settlements of one man with one woman, and a permanent, prosperous empire can never be reared upon so frail a foundation. The leading thought of the first Charlemagne was a noble and a useful one, nor did his imperial scheme seem chimerical, even although time, wiser than monarchs or lawgivers, was to prove it impracticable. To weld into one great whole the various tribes of Franks, Frisians, Saxons, Lombards, Burgundians, and others, still in their turbulent youth, and still composing one great Teutonic family; to enforce the mutual adhesion of naturally coherent masses, all of one lineage, one language, one history, and which were only beginning to exhibit their tendencies to insulation, to acquiesce in a variety of local laws and customs, while an iron will was to concentrate a vast, but homogeneous, people into a single nation; to raise up from the grave of corrupt and buried Rome a fresh, vigorous, German, Christian empire; this was a reasonable and manly thought. Far different the conception of the second Charlemagne. To force into discordant union, tribes which, for seven centuries, had developed themselves into hostile nations, separated by geography and history, customs and laws, to combine many millions under one sceptre, not because of natural identity, but for the sake of composing one splendid family property, to establish unity by annihilating local institutions, to supersede popular

Page 46

and liberal charters by the edicts of a central despotism, to do battle with the whole spirit of an age, to regard the souls as well as the bodies of vast multitudes as the personal property of one individual, to strive for the perpetuation in a single house of many crowns, which accident had blended, and to imagine the consecration of the whole system by placing the pope's triple diadem forever upon the imperial head of the Habsburgs;—all this was not the effort of a great, constructive genius, but the selfish scheme of an autocrat.

The union of no two countries could be less likely to prove advantageous or agreeable than that of the Netherlands and Spain. They were widely separated geographically, while in history, manners, and politics, they were utterly opposed to each other. Spain, which had but just assumed the form of a single state by the combination of all its kingdoms, with its haughty nobles descended from petty kings, and arrogating almost sovereign power within their domains, with its fierce enthusiasm for the Catholic religion, which, in the course of long warfare with the Saracens, had become the absorbing characteristic of a whole nation, with its sparse population scattered over a wide and stern country, with a military spirit which led nearly all classes to prefer poverty to the wealth attendant upon degrading pursuits of trade;—Spain, with her gloomy, martial, and exaggerated character, was the absolute contrast of the Netherlands.

These provinces had been rarely combined into a whole, but there was natural affinity in their character, history, and position. There was life, movement, bustling activity every where. An energetic population swarmed in all the flourishing cities which dotted the surface of a contracted and highly cultivated country. Their ships were the carriers for the world;—their merchants, if invaded in their rights, engaged in vigorous warfare with their own funds and their own frigates; their fabrics were prized over the whole earth; their burghers possessed the wealth of princes, lived with royal luxury, and exercised vast political influence; their love of liberty was their predominant passion. Their religious ardor had not been fully awakened; but the events of the next generation were to prove that in no respect more than in the religious sentiment, were the two races opposed to each other. It was as certain that the Netherlanders would be fierce reformers as that the Spaniards would be uncompromising persecutors. Unhallowed was the union between nations thus utterly contrasted.

Philip the Fair and Ferdinand had detested and quarrelled with each other from the beginning. The Spaniards and Flemings participated in the mutual antipathy, and hated each other cordially at first sight. The unscrupulous avarice of the Netherland nobles in Spain, their grasping and venal ambition, enraged and disgusted the haughty Spaniards. This international malignity furnishes one of the keys to a proper understanding of the great revolt in the next reign.

Page 47

The provinces, now all united again under an emperor, were treated, opulent and powerful as they were, as obscure dependencies. The regency over them was entrusted by Charles to his near relatives, who governed in the interest of his house, not of the country. His course towards them upon the religious question will be hereafter indicated. The political character of his administration was typified, and, as it were, dramatized, on the occasion of the memorable insurrection at Ghent. For this reason, a few interior details concerning that remarkable event, seem requisite.

XI.

Ghent was, in all respects, one of the most important cities in Europe. Erasmus, who, as a Hollander and a courtier, was not likely to be partial to the turbulent Flemings, asserted that there was no town in all Christendom to be compared to it for size, power, political constitution, or the culture of its inhabitants. It was, said one of its inhabitants at the epoch of the insurrection, rather a country than a city. The activity and wealth of its burghers were proverbial. The bells were rung daily, and the drawbridges over the many arms of the river intersecting the streets were raised, in order that all business might be suspended, while the armies of workmen were going to or returning from their labors. As early as the fourteenth century, the age of the Arteveldes, Froissart estimated the number of fighting men whom Ghent could bring into the field at eighty thousand. The city, by its jurisdiction over many large but subordinate towns, disposed of more than its own immediate population, which has been reckoned as high as two hundred thousand.

Placed in the midst of well cultivated plains, Ghent was surrounded by strong walls, the external circuit of which measured nine miles. Its streets and squares were spacious and elegant, its churches and other public buildings numerous and splendid. The sumptuous church of Saint John or Saint Bavon, where Charles the Fifth had been baptized, the ancient castle whither Baldwin Bras de Fer had brought the daughter of Charles the Bald, the city hall with its graceful Moorish front, the well-known belfry, where for three centuries had perched the dragon sent by the Emperor Baldwin of Flanders from Constantinople, and where swung the famous Roland, whose iron tongue had called the citizens, generation after generation, to arms, whether to win battles over foreign kings at the head of their chivalry, or to plunge their swords in each others' breasts, were all conspicuous in the city and celebrated in the land. Especially the great bell was the object of the burghers' affection, and, generally, of the sovereign's hatred; while to all it seemed, as it were, a living historical personage, endowed with the human powers and passions which it had so long directed and inflamed.

Page 48

The constitution of the city was very free. It was a little republic in all but name. Its population was divided into fifty-two guilds of manufacturers and into thirty-two tribes of weavers; each fraternity electing annually or biennally its own deans and subordinate officers. The senate, which exercised functions legislative, judicial, and administrative, subject of course to the grand council of Mechlin and to the sovereign authority, consisted of twenty-six members. These were appointed partly from the upper class, or the men who lived upon their means, partly from the manufacturers in general, and partly from the weavers. They were chosen by a college of eight electors, who were appointed by the sovereign on nomination by the citizens. The whole city, in its collective capacity, constituted one of the four estates (Membra) of the province of Flanders. It is obvious that so much liberty of form and of fact, added to the stormy character by which its citizens were distinguished, would be most offensive in the eyes of Charles, and that the delinquencies of the little commonwealth would be represented in the most glaring colors by all those quiet souls, who preferred the tranquillity of despotism to the turbulence of freedom. The city claimed, moreover, the general provisions of the “Great Privilege” of the Lady Mary, the Magna Charta, which, according to the monarchical party, had been legally abrogated by Maximilian. The liberties of the town had also been nominally curtailed by the “calf-skin” (Kalf Vel). By this celebrated document, Charles the Fifth, then fifteen years of age, had been made to threaten with condign punishment all persons who should maintain that he had sworn at his inauguration to observe any privileges or charters claimed by the Ghenters before the peace of Cadsand.

The immediate cause of the discontent, the attempt to force from Flanders a subsidy of four hundred thousand caroli, as the third part of the twelve hundred thousand granted by the states of the Netherlands, and the resistance of Ghent in opposition to the other three members of the province, will, of course, be judged differently, according as the sympathies are stronger with popular rights or with prerogative. The citizens claimed that the subsidy could only be granted by the unanimous consent of the four estates of the province. Among other proofs of this their unquestionable right, they appealed to a muniment, which had never existed, save in the imagination of the credulous populace. At a certain remote epoch, one of the Counts of Flanders, it was contended, had gambled away his countship to the Earl of Holland, but had been extricated from his dilemma by the generosity of Ghent. The burghers of the town had paid the debts and redeemed the sovereignty of their lord, and had thereby gained, in return, a charter, called the Bargain of Flanders (Koop van Flandern). Among the privileges granted by this document, was an express stipulation that no subsidy

Page 49

should ever be granted by the province without the consent of Ghent. This charter would have been conclusive in the present emergency, had it not labored under the disadvantage of never having existed. It was supposed by many that the magistrates, some of whom were favorable to government, had hidden the document. Lieven Pyl, an ex-senator, was supposed to be privy to its concealment. He was also, with more justice, charged with an act of great baseness and effrontery. Reputed by the citizens to carry to the Queen Regent their positive refusal to grant the subsidy, he had, on the contrary, given an answer, in their name, in the affirmative. For these delinquencies, the imaginary and the real, he was inhumanly tortured and afterwards beheaded. “I know, my children,” said he upon the scaffold, “that you will be grieved when you have seen my blood flow, and that you will regret me when it is too late.” It does not appear, however, that there was any especial reason to regret him, however sanguinary the punishment which had requited his broken faith.

The mischief being thus afoot, the tongue of Roland, and the easily-excited spirits of the citizens, soon did the rest. Ghent broke forth into open insurrection. They had been willing to enlist and pay troops under their own banners, but they had felt outraged at the enormous contribution demanded of them for a foreign war, undertaken in the family interests of their distant master. They could not find the “Bargain of Flanders,” but they got possession of the odious “calf skin,” which was solemnly cut in two by the dean of the weavers. It was then torn in shreds by the angry citizens, many of whom paraded the streets with pieces of the hated document stuck in their caps, like plumes. From these demonstrations they proceeded to intrigues with Francis the First. He rejected them, and gave notice of their overtures to Charles, who now resolved to quell the insurrection, at once. Francis wrote, begging that the Emperor would honor him by coming through France; “wishing to assure you,” said he, “my lord and good brother, by this letter, written and signed by my hand, upon my honor, and on the faith of a prince, and of the best brother you have, that in passing through my kingdom every possible honor and hospitality will be offered you, even as they could be to myself.” Certainly, the French king, after such profuse and voluntary pledges, to confirm which he, moreover, offered his two sons and other great individuals as hostages, could not, without utterly disgracing himself, have taken any unhandsome advantage of the Emperor’s presence in his dominions. The reflections often made concerning the high-minded chivalry of Francis, and the subtle knowledge of human nature displayed by Charles upon the occasion, seem, therefore, entirely superfluous. The Emperor came to Paris. “Here,” says a citizen of Ghent, at the time, who has left a minute account of the transaction upon record, but whose sympathies were ludicrously

Page 50

with the despot and against his own townspeople, “here the Emperor was received as if the God of Paradise had descended.” On the 9th of February, 1540, he left Brussels; on the 14th he came to Ghent. His entrance into the city lasted more than six hours. Four thousand lancers, one thousand archers, five thousand halberdmen and musqueteers composed his bodyguard, all armed to the teeth and ready for combat. The Emperor rode in their midst, surrounded by “cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and other great ecclesiastical lords,” so that the terrors of the Church were combined with the panoply of war to affright the souls of the turbulent burghers. A brilliant train of “dukes, princes, earls, barons, grand masters, and seignors, together with most of the Knights of the Fleece,” were, according to the testimony of the same eyewitness, in attendance upon his Majesty. This unworthy son of Ghent was in ecstasies with the magnificence displayed upon the occasion. There was such a number of “grand lords, members of sovereign houses, bishops, and other ecclesiastical dignitaries going about the streets, that,” as the poor soul protested with delight, “there was nobody else to be met with.” Especially the fine clothes of these distinguished guests excited his warmest admiration. It was wonderful to behold, he said, “the nobility and great richness of the princes and seignors, displayed as well in their beautiful furs, martins and sables, as in the great chains of fine gold which they wore twisted round their necks, and the pearls and precious stones in their bonnets and otherwise, which they displayed in great abundance. It was a very triumphant thing to see them so richly dressed and accoutred.”

An idea may be formed of the size and wealth of the city at this period, from the fact that it received and accommodated sixty thousand strangers, with their fifteen thousand horses, upon the occasion of the Emperor’s visit. Charles allowed a month of awful suspense to intervene between his arrival and his vengeance. Despair and hope alternated during the interval. On the 17th of March, the spell was broken by the execution of nineteen persons, who were beheaded as ringleaders. On the 29th of April, he pronounced sentence upon the city. The hall where it was rendered was open to all comers, and graced by the presence of the Emperor, the Queen Regent, and the great functionaries of Court, Church, and State. The decree, now matured, was read at length. It annulled all the charters, privileges, and laws of Ghent. It confiscated all its public property, rents, revenues, houses, artillery, munitions of war, and in general every thing which the corporation, or the traders, each and all, possessed in common. In particular, the great bell—Roland was condemned and sentenced to immediate removal. It was decreed that the four hundred thousand florins, which had caused the revolt, should forthwith be paid, together with an additional fine by Ghent of one hundred and fifty

Page 51

thousand, besides six thousand a year, forever after. In place of their ancient and beloved constitution, thus annihilated at a blow, was promulgated a new form of municipal government of the simplest kind, according to which all officers were in future to be appointed by himself and the guilds, to be reduced to half their number; shorn of all political power, and deprived entirely of self-government. It was, moreover, decreed, that the senators, their pensionaries, clerks and secretaries, thirty notable burghers, to be named by the Emperor, with the great dean and second dean of the weavers, all dressed in black robes, without their chains, and bareheaded, should appear upon an appointed day, in company with fifty persons from the guilds, and fifty others, to be arbitrarily named, in their shirts, with halters upon their necks. This large number of deputies, as representatives of the city, were then to fall upon their knees before the Emperor, say in a loud and intelligible voice, by the mouth of one of their clerks, that they were extremely sorry for the disloyalty, disobedience, infraction of laws, commotions, rebellion, and high treason, of which they had been guilty, promise that they would never do the like again, and humbly implore him, for the sake of the Passion of Jesus Christ, to grant them mercy and forgiveness.

The third day of May was appointed for the execution of the sentence. Charles, who was fond of imposing exhibitions and prided himself upon arranging them with skill, was determined that this occasion should be long remembered by all burghers throughout his dominions who might be disposed to insist strongly upon their municipal rights. The streets were alive with troops: cavalry and infantry in great numbers keeping strict guard at every point throughout the whole extent of the city; for it was known that the hatred produced by the sentence was most deadly, and that nothing but an array of invincible force could keep those hostile sentiments in check. The senators in their black mourning robes, the other deputies in linen shirts, bareheaded, with halters on their necks, proceeded, at the appointed hour, from the senate house to the imperial residence. High on his throne, with the Queen Regent at his side, surrounded by princes, prelates and nobles, guarded by his archers and halberdiers, his crown on his head and his sceptre in his hand, the Emperor, exalted, sat. The senators and burghers, in their robes cf humiliation, knelt in the dust at his feet. The prescribed words of contrition and of supplication for mercy were then read by the pensionary, all the deputies remaining upon their knees, and many of them crying bitterly with rage and shame. “What principally distressed them,” said the honest citizen, whose admiration for the brilliant accoutrement of the princes and prelates has been recorded, “was to have the halter on their necks, which they found hard to bear, and, if they had not been compelled, they would rather have died than submit to it.”

Page 52

As soon as the words had been all spoken by the pensionary, the Emperor, whose cue was now to appear struggling with mingled emotions of reasonable wrath and of natural benignity, performed his part with much dramatic effect. "He held himself coyly for a little time," says the eye-witness, "without saying a word; deporting himself as though he were considering whether or not he would grant the pardon for which the culprits had prayed." Then the Queen Regent enacted her share in the show. Turning to his Majesty "with all reverence, honor and humility, she begged that he would concede forgiveness, in honor of his nativity, which had occurred in that city."

Upon this the Emperor "made a fine show of benignity," and replied "very sweetly" that in consequence of his "fraternal love for her, by reason of his being a gentle and virtuous prince, who preferred mercy to the rigor of justice, and in view of their repentance, he would accord his pardon to the citizens."

The Netherlands, after this issue to the struggle of Ghent, were reduced, practically, to a very degraded condition. The form of local self-government remained, but its spirit, when invoked, only arose to be derided. The supreme court of Mechlin, as in the days of Charles the Bold, was again placed in despotic authority above the ancient charters. Was it probable that the lethargy of provinces, which had reached so high a point of freedom only to be deprived of it at last, could endure forever? Was it to be hoped that the stern spirit of religious enthusiasm, allying itself with the—keen instinct of civil liberty, would endue the provinces with strength to throw off the Spanish yoke?

XII.

It is impossible to comprehend the character of the great Netherland revolt in the sixteenth century without taking a rapid retrospective survey of the religious phenomena exhibited in the provinces. The introduction of Christianity has been already indicated. From the earliest times, neither prince, people, nor even prelates were very dutiful to the pope. As the papal authority made progress, strong resistance was often made to its decrees. The bishops of Utrecht were dependent for their wealth and territory upon the good will of the Emperor. They were the determined opponents of Hildebrand, warm adherents of the Hohenstaufers-Ghibelline rather than Guelph. Heresy was a plant of early growth in the Netherlands. As early as the beginning of the 12th century, the notorious Tanchelyn preached at Antwerp, attacking the authority of the pope and of all other ecclesiastics; scoffing at the ceremonies and sacraments of the Church. Unless his character and career have been grossly misrepresented, he was the most infamous of the many impostors who have so often disgraced the cause of religious reformation. By more than four centuries, he anticipated the licentiousness and greediness manifested by a series of false prophets, and was the first to turn both the stupidity of a populace and the viciousness of a priesthood to his own advancement; an ambition which afterwards reached its most signal expression in the celebrated John of Leyden.

Page 53

The impudence of Tanchelyn and the superstition of his followers seem alike incredible. All Antwerp was his harem. He levied, likewise, vast sums upon his converts, and whenever he appeared in public, his apparel and pomp were befitting an emperor. Three thousand armed satellites escorted his steps and put to death all who resisted his commands. So groveling became the superstition of his followers that they drank of the water in which, he had washed, and treasured it as a divine elixir. Advancing still further in his experiments upon human credulity, he announced his approaching marriage with the Virgin Mary, bade all his disciples to the wedding, and exhibited himself before an immense crowd in company with an image of his holy bride. He then ordered the people to provide for the expenses of the nuptials and the dowry of his wife, placing a coffer upon each side of the image, to receive the contributions of either sex. Which is the most wonderful manifestation in the history of this personage—the audacity of the impostor, or the bestiality of his victims? His career was so successful in the Netherlands that he had the effrontery to proceed to Rome, promulgating what he called his doctrines as he went. He seems to have been assassinated by a priest in an obscure brawl, about the year 1115.

By the middle of the 12th century, other and purer heresiarchs had arisen. Many Netherlanders became converts to the doctrines of Waldo. From that period until the appearance of Luther, a succession of sects—Waldenses, Albigenses, Perfectists, Lollards, Poplicans, Arnaldists, Bohemian Brothers—waged perpetual but unequal warfare with the power and depravity of the Church, fertilizing with their blood the future field of the Reformation. Nowhere was the persecution of heretics more relentless than in the Netherlands. Suspected persons were subjected to various torturing but ridiculous ordeals. After such trial, death by fire was the usual but, perhaps, not the most severe form of execution. In Flanders, monastic ingenuity had invented another most painful punishment for Waldenses and similar malefactors. A criminal whose guilt had been established by the hot iron, hot ploughshare, boiling kettle, or other logical proof, was stripped and bound to the stake:—he was then flayed, from the neck to the navel, while swarms of bees were let loose to fasten upon his bleeding flesh and torture him to a death of exquisite agony.

Nevertheless heresy increased in the face of oppression The Scriptures, translated by Waldo into French, were rendered into Netherland rhyme, and the converts to the Vaudois doctrine increased in numbers and boldness. At the same time the power and luxury of the clergy was waxing daily. The bishops of Utrecht, no longer the defenders of the people against arbitrary power, conducted themselves like little popes. Yielding in dignity neither to king nor kaiser, they exacted homage from the most powerful princes of the

Page 54

Netherlands. The clerical order became the most privileged of all. The accused priest refused to acknowledge the temporal tribunals. The protection of ecclesiastical edifices was extended over all criminals and fugitives from justice—a beneficent result in those sanguinary ages, even if its roots were sacerdotal pride. To establish an accusation against a bishop, seventy-two witnesses were necessary; against a deacon, twenty-seven; against an inferior dignitary, seven; while two were sufficient to convict a layman. The power to read and write helped the clergy to much wealth. Privileges and charters from petty princes, gifts and devises from private persons, were documents which few, save ecclesiastics, could draw or dispute. Not content, moreover, with their territories and their tithings, the churchmen perpetually devised new burthens upon the peasantry. Ploughs, sickles, horses, oxen, all implements of husbandry, were taxed for the benefit of those who toiled not, but who gathered into barns. In the course of the twelfth century, many religious houses, richly endowed with lands and other property, were founded in the Netherlands. Was hand or voice raised against clerical encroachment—the priests held ever in readiness a deadly weapon of defence: a blasting anathema was thundered against their antagonist, and smote him into submission. The disciples of Him who ordered his followers to bless their persecutors, and to love their enemies, invented such Christian formulas as these:—"In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, the blessed Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, Peter and Paul, and all other Saints in Heaven, do we curse and cut off from our Communion him who has thus rebelled against us. May the curse strike him in his house, barn, bed, field, path, city, castle. May he be cursed in battle, accursed in praying, in speaking, in silence, in eating, in drinking, in sleeping. May he be accursed in his taste, hearing, smell, and all his senses. May the curse blast his eyes, head, and his body, from his crown to the soles of his feet. I conjure you, Devil, and all your imps, that you take no rest till you have brought him to eternal shame; till he is destroyed by drowning or hanging, till he is torn to pieces by wild beasts, or consumed by fire. Let his children become orphans, his wife a widow. I command you, Devil, and all your imps, that even as I now blow out these torches, you do immediately extinguish the light from his eyes. So be it—so be it. Amen. Amen." So speaking, the curser was wont to blow out two waxen torches which he held in his hands, and, with this practical illustration, the anathema was complete.

Such insane ravings, even in the mouth of some impotent beldame, were enough to excite a shudder, but in that dreary epoch, these curses from the lips of clergymen were deemed sufficient to draw down celestial lightning upon the head, not of the blasphemer, but of his victim. Men, who trembled neither at sword nor fire, cowered like slaves before such horrid imprecations, uttered by tongues gifted, as it seemed, with superhuman power. Their fellow-men shrank from the wretches thus blasted, and refused communication with them as unclean and abhorred.

Page 55

By the end of the thirteenth century, however, the clerical power was already beginning to decline. It was not the corruption of the Church, but its enormous wealth which engendered the hatred, with which it was by many regarded. Temporal princes and haughty barons began to dispute the right of ecclesiastics to enjoy vast estates, while refusing the burthen of taxation, and unable to draw a sword for the common defence. At this period, the Counts of Flanders, of Holland, and other Netherland sovereigns, issued decrees, forbidding clerical institutions from acquiring property, by devise, gift, purchase, or any other mode. The downfall of the rapacious and licentious knights-templar in the provinces and throughout Europe, was another severe blow administered at the same time. The attacks upon Church abuses redoubled in boldness, as its authority declined. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, the doctrines of Wicklif had made great progress in the land. Early in the fifteenth, the executions of Huss and Jerome of Prague, produce the Bohemian rebellion. The Pope proclaims a crusade against the Hussites. Knights and prelates, esquires and citizens, enlist in the sacred cause, throughout Holland and its sister provinces; but many Netherlanders, who had felt the might of Ziska's arm, come back, feeling more sympathy with the heresy which they had attacked, than with the Church for which they had battled.

Meantime, the restrictions imposed by Netherland sovereigns upon clerical rights to hold or acquire property, become more stern and more general. On the other hand, with the invention of printing, the cause of Reformation takes a colossal stride in advance. A Bible, which, before, had cost five hundred crowns, now costs but five. The people acquire the power of reading God's Word, or of hearing it read, for themselves. The light of truth dispels the clouds of superstition, as by a new revelation. The Pope and his monks are found to bear, very often, but faint resemblance to Jesus and his apostles. Moreover, the instinct of self-interest sharpens the eye of the public. Many greedy priests, of lower rank, had turned shop-keepers in the Netherlands, and were growing rich by selling their wares, exempt from taxation, at a lower rate than lay hucksters could afford. The benefit of clergy, thus taking the bread from the mouths of many, excites jealousy; the more so, as, besides their miscellaneous business, the reverend traders have a most lucrative branch of commerce from which other merchants are excluded. The sale of absolutions was the source of large fortunes to the priests. The enormous impudence of this traffic almost exceeds belief. Throughout the Netherlands, the price current of the wares thus offered for sale, was published in every town and village. God's pardon for crimes already committed, or about to be committed, was advertised according to a graduated tariff. Thus, poisoning, for example, was absolved for eleven ducats, six livres tournois.

Page 56

Absolution for incest was afforded at thirty-six livres, three ducats. Perjury came to seven livres and three carlines. Pardon for murder, if not by poison, was cheaper. Even a parricide could buy forgiveness at God's tribunal at one ducat; four livres, eight carlines. Henry de Montfort, in the year 1448, purchased absolution for that crime at that price. Was it strange that a century or so of this kind of work should produce a Luther? Was it unnatural that plain people, who loved the ancient Church, should rather desire to see her purged of such blasphemous abuses, than to hear of St. Peter's dome rising a little nearer to the clouds on these proceeds of commuted crime?

At the same time, while ecclesiastical abuses are thus augmenting, ecclesiastical power is diminishing in the Netherlands. The Church is no longer able to protect itself against the secular aim. The halcyon days of ban, book and candle, are gone. In 1459, Duke Philip of Burgundy prohibits the churches from affording protection to fugitives. Charles the Bold, in whose eyes nothing is sacred save war and the means of making it, lays a heavy impost upon all clerical property. Upon being resisted, he enforces collection with the armed hand. The sword and the pen, strength and intellect, no longer the exclusive servants or instruments of priestcraft, are both in open revolt. Charles the Bold storms one fortress, Doctor Grandfort, of Groningen, batters another. This learned Frisian, called "the light of the world," friend and compatriot of the great Rudolph Agricola, preaches throughout the provinces, uttering bold denunciations of ecclesiastical error. He even disputes the infallibility of the Pope, denies the utility of prayers for the dead, and inveighs against the whole doctrine of purgatory and absolution.

With the beginning of the 16th century, the great Reformation was actually alive. The name of Erasmus of Rotterdam was already celebrated; the man, who, according to Grotius, "so well showed the road to a reasonable reformation." But if Erasmus showed the road, he certainly did not travel far upon it himself. Perpetual type of the quietist, the moderate man, he censured the errors of the Church with discrimination and gentleness, as if Borgianism had not been too long rampant at Rome, as if men's minds throughout Christendom were not too deeply stirred to be satisfied with mild rebukes against sin, especially when the mild rebuker was in receipt of livings and salaries from the sinner. Instead of rebukes, the age wanted reforms. The Sage of Rotterdam was a keen observer, a shrewd satirist, but a moderate moralist. He loved ease, good company, the soft repose of princely palaces, better than a life of martyrdom and a death at the stake. He was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made, as he handsomely confessed on more than one occasion. "Let others affect martyrdom," he said, "for myself I am unworthy of the honor;" and, at another time, "I am not of a mind," he

Page 57

observed “to venture my life for the truth’s sake; all men have not strength to endure the martyr’s death. For myself, if it came to the point, I should do no better than Simon Peter.” Moderate in all things, he would have liked, he said, to live without eating and drinking, although he never found it convenient to do so, and he rejoiced when advancing age diminished his tendency to other carnal pleasures in which he had moderately indulged. Although awake to the abuses of the Church, he thought Luther going too fast and too far. He began by applauding ended by censuring the monk of Wittemberg. The Reformation might have been delayed for centuries had Erasmus and other moderate men been the only reformers. He will long be honored for his elegant, Latinity. In the republic of letters, his efforts to infuse a pure taste, a sound criticism, a love for the beautiful and the classic, in place of the owlish pedantry which had so long flapped and hooted through mediveval cloisters, will always be held in grateful reverence. In the history of the religious Reformation, his name seems hardly to deserve the commendations of Grotius.

As the schism yawns, more and more ominously, throughout Christendom, the Emperor naturally trembles. Anxious to save the state, but being no antique Roman, he wishes to close the gulf, but with more convenience to himself: He conceives the highly original plan of combining Church and Empire under one crown. This is Maximilian’s scheme for Church reformation. An hereditary papacy, a perpetual pope-emperor, the Charlemagne and Hildebrand systems united and simplified—thus the world may yet be saved. “Nothing more honorable, nobler, better, could happen to us,” writes Maximilian to Paul Lichtenstein (16th Sept. 1511), “than to re-annex the said popedom—which properly belongs to us—to our Empire. Cardinal Adrian approves our reasons and encourages us to proceed, being of opinion that we should not have much trouble with the cardinals. It is much to be feared that the Pope may die of his present sickness. He has lost his appetite, and fills himself with so much drink that his health is destroyed. As such matters can not be arranged without money, we have promised the cardinals, whom we expect to bring over, 300,000 ducats, [Recall that the fine for redemption and pardon for the sin of murder was at that time one ducat. D.W.] which we shall raise from the Fuggers, and make payable in Rome upon the appointed day.”

These business-like arrangements he communicates, two days afterwards, in a secret letter to his daughter Margaret, and already exults at his future eminence, both in this world and the next. “We are sending Monsieur de Gurce,” he says; “to make an agreement with the Pope, that we may be taken as coadjutor, in order that, upon his death, we may be sure of the papacy, and, afterwards, of becoming a saint. After my decease, therefore, you will be constrained to adore me, of which I shall be very proud. I am beginning to work upon the cardinals, in which affair two or three hundred thousand ducats will be of great service.” The letter was signed, “From the hand of your good father, Maximilian, future Pope.”

Page 58

These intrigues are not destined, however, to be successful. Pope Julius lives two years longer; Leo the Tenth succeeds; and, as Medici are not much prone to Church reformation some other scheme, and perhaps some other reformer, may be wanted. Meantime, the traffic in bulls of absolution becomes more horrible than ever. Money must be raised to supply the magnificent extravagance of Rome. Accordingly, Christians, throughout Europe, are offered by papal authority, guarantees of forgiveness for every imaginable sin, “even for the rape of God’s mother, if that were possible,” together with a promise of life eternal in Paradise, all upon payment of the price affixed to each crime. The Netherlands, like other countries, are districted and farmed for the collection of this papal revenue. Much of the money thus raised, remains in the hands of the vile collectors. Sincere Catholics, who love and honor the ancient religion, shrink with horror at the spectacle offered on every side. Criminals buying Paradise for money, monks spending the money thus paid in gaming houses, taverns, and brothels; this seems, to those who have studied their Testaments, a different scheme of salvation from the one promulgated by Christ. There has evidently been a departure from the system of earlier apostles. Innocent conservative souls are much perplexed; but, at last, all these infamies arouse a giant to do battle with the giant wrong. Martin Luther enters the lists, all alone, armed only with a quiver filled with ninety-five propositions, and a bow which can send them all over Christendom with incredible swiftness. Within a few weeks the ninety-five propositions have flown through Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and are found in Jerusalem.

At the beginning, Erasmus encourages the bold friar. So long as the axe is not laid at the foot of the tree, which bears the poisonous but golden fruit, the moderate man applauds the blows. “Luther’s cause is considered odious,” writes Erasmus to the Elector of Saxony, “because he has, at the same time, attacked the bellies of the monks and the bulls of the Pope.” He complains that the zealous man had been attacked with roiling, but not with arguments. He foresees that the work will have a bloody and turbulent result, but imputes the principal blame to the clergy. “The priests talk,” said he, “of absolution in such terms, that laymen can not stomach it. Luther has been for nothing more censured than for making little of Thomas Aquinas; for wishing to diminish the absolution traffic; for having a low opinion of mendicant orders, and for respecting scholastic opinions less than the gospels. All this is considered intolerable heresy.”

Page 59

Erasmus, however, was offending both parties. A swarm of monks were already buzzing about him for the bold language of his Commentaries and Dialogues. He was called Erasmus for his errors—Arasmus because he would plough up sacred things—-Erasinus because he had written himself an ass—Behemoth, Antichrist, and many other names of similar import. Luther was said to have bought the deadly seed in his barn. The egg had been laid by Erasmus, hatched by Luther. On the other hand, he was reviled for not taking side manfully with the reformer. The moderate man received much denunciation from zealots on either side. He soon clears himself, however, from all suspicions of Lutheranism. He is appalled at the fierce conflict which rages far and wide. He becomes querulous as the mighty besom sweeps away sacred dust and consecrated cobwebs. “Men should not attempt every thing at once,” he writes, “but rather step by step. That which men can not improve they must look at through the fingers. If the godlessness of mankind requires such fierce physicians as Luther, if man can not be healed with soothing ointments and cooling drinks, let us hope that God will comfort, as repentant, those whom he has punished as rebellious. If the dove of Christ —not the owl of Minerva—would only fly to us, some measure might be put to the madness of mankind.”

Meantime the man, whose talk is not of doves and owls, the fierce physician, who deals not with ointments and cooling draughts, strides past the crowd of gentle quacks to smite the foul disease. Devils, thicker than tiles on house-tops, scare him not from his work. Bans and bulls, excommunications and decrees, are rained upon his head. The paternal Emperor sends down dire edicts, thicker than hail upon the earth. The Holy Father blasts and raves from Rome. Louvain doctors denounce, Louvain hangmen burn, the bitter, blasphemous books. The immoderate man stands firm in the storm, demanding argument instead of illogical thunder; shows the hangmen and the people too, outside the Elster gate at Wittenberg, that papal bulls will blaze as merrily as heretic scrolls. What need of allusion to events which changed the world—which every child has learned—to the war of Titans, uprooting of hoary trees and rock-ribbed hills, to the Worms diet, Peasant wars, the Patmos of Eisenach, and huge wrestlings with the Devil?

Imperial edicts are soon employed to suppress the Reformation in the Netherlands by force. The provinces, unfortunately; are the private property of Charles, his paternal inheritance; and most paternally, according to his view of the matter, does he deal with them. Germany can not be treated thus summarily, not being his heritage. “As it appears,” says the edict of 1521, “that the aforesaid Martin is not a man, but a devil under the form of a man, and clothed in the dress of a priest, the better to bring the human race to hell and damnation, therefore all his disciples and converts are to be punished

Page 60

with death and forfeiture of all their goods." This was succinct and intelligible. The bloody edict, issued at Worms, without even a pretence of sanction by the estates, was carried into immediate effect. The papal inquisition was introduced into the provinces to assist its operations. The bloody work, for which the reign of Charles is mainly distinguished in the Netherlands, now began. In 1523, July 1st, two Augustine monks were burned at Brussels, the first victims to Lutheranism in the provinces. Erasmus observed, with a sigh, that "two had been burned at Brussels, and that the city now began strenuously to favor Lutheranism."

Pope Adrian the Sixth, the Netherland boat-maker's son and the Emperor's ancient tutor, was sufficiently alive to the sins of churchmen. The humble scholar of Utrecht was, at least, no Borgia. At the diet of Nuremberg, summoned to put down Luther, the honest Pope declared roundly, through the Bishop of Fabriane, that "these disorders had sprung from the Sins of men, more especially from the sins of priests and prelates. Even in the holy chair," said he, "many horrible crimes have been committed. Many abuses have grown up in the ecclesiastical state. The contagious disease, spreading from the head to the members—from the Pope to lesser prelates—has spread far and wide, so that scarcely any one is to be found who does right, and who is free from infection. Nevertheless, the evils have become so ancient and manifold, that it will be necessary to go step by step."

In those passionate days, the ardent reformers were as much outraged by this pregnant confession as the ecclesiastics. It would indeed be a slow process, they thought, to move step by step in the Reformation, if between each step, a whole century was to intervene. In vain did the gentle pontiff call upon Erasmus to assuage the stormy sea with his smooth rhetoric. The Sage of Rotterdam was old and sickly; his day was over. Adrian's head; too; languishes beneath the triple crown but twenty months. He dies 13th Sept., 1523, having arrived at the conviction, according to his epitaph, that the greatest misfortune of his life was to have reigned.

Another edict, published in the Netherlands, forbids all private assemblies for devotion; all reading of the scriptures; all discussions within one's own doors concerning faith, the sacraments, the papal authority, or other religious matter, under penalty of death. The edicts were no dead letter. The fires were kept constantly supplied with human fuel by monks, who knew the art of burning reformers better than that of arguing with them. The scaffold was the most conclusive of syllogisms, and used upon all occasions. Still the people remained unconvinced. Thousands of burned heretics had not made a single convert.

Page 61

A fresh edict renewed and sharpened the punishment for reading the scriptures in private or public. At the same time, the violent personal altercation between Luther and Erasmus, upon predestination, together with the bitter dispute between Luther and Zwingli concerning the real presence, did more to impede the progress of the Reformation than ban or edict, sword or fire. The spirit of humanity hung her head, finding that the bold reformer had only a new dogma in place of the old ones, seeing that dissenters, in their turn, were sometimes as ready as papists, with age, fagot, and excommunication. In 1526, Felix Mants, the anabaptist, is drowned at Zurich, in obedience to Zwingli's pithy formula—'Qui iterum mergit mergatur'. Thus the anabaptists, upon their first appearance, were exposed to the fires of the Church and the water of the Zwinglians.

There is no doubt that the anabaptist delusion was so ridiculous and so loathsome, as to palliate or at least render intelligible the wrath with which they were regarded by all parties. The turbulence of the sect was alarming to constituted authorities, its bestiality disgraceful to the cause of religious reformation. The leaders were among the most depraved of human creatures, as much distinguished for licentiousness, blasphemy and cruelty as their followers for grovelling superstition. The evil spirit, driven out of Luther, seemed, in orthodox eyes, to have taken possession of a herd of swine. The Germans, Muncer and Hoffmann, had been succeeded, as chief prophets, by a Dutch baker, named Matthiszoon, of Harlem; who announced himself as Enoch. Chief of this man's disciples was the notorious John Boccold, of Leyden. Under the government of this prophet, the anabaptists mastered the city of Munster. Here they confiscated property, plundered churches, violated females, murdered men who refused to join the gang, and, in briefs practised all the enormities which humanity alone can conceive or perpetrate. The prophet proclaimed himself King of Sion, and sent out apostles to preach his doctrines in Germany and the Netherlands. Polygamy being a leading article of the system, he exemplified the principle by marrying fourteen wives. Of these, the beautiful widow of Matthiszoon was chief, was called the Queen of Sion, and wore a golden crown. The prophet made many fruitless efforts to seize Amsterdam and Leyden. The armed invasion of the anabaptists was repelled, but their contagious madness spread. The plague broke forth in Amsterdam. On a cold winter's night, (February, 1535), seven men and five women, inspired by the Holy Ghost, threw off their clothes and rushed naked and raving through the streets, shrieking "Wo, wo, wo! the wrath of God, the wrath of God!" When arrested, they obstinately refused to put on clothing. "We are," they observed, "the naked truth." In a day or two, these furious lunatics, who certainly deserved a madhouse rather than the scaffold, were all executed. The numbers of the sect increased

Page 62

with the martyrdom to which they were exposed, and the disorder spread to every part of the Netherlands. Many were put to death in lingering torments, but no perceptible effect was produced by the chastisement. Meantime the great chief of the sect, the prophet John, was defeated by the forces of the Bishop of Munster, who recovered his city and caused the “King of Zion” to be pinched to death with red-hot tongs.

Unfortunately the severity of government was not wreaked alone upon the prophet and his mischievous crew. Thousands and ten-thousands of virtuous, well-disposed men and women, who had as little sympathy with anabaptistical as with Roman depravity; were butchered in cold blood, under the sanguinary rule of Charles, in the Netherlands. In 1533, Queen Dowager Mary of Hungary, sister of the Emperor, Regent of the provinces, the “Christian widow” admired by Erasmus, wrote to her brother that “in her opinion all heretics, whether repentant or not, should be prosecuted with such severity as that error might be, at once, extinguished, care being only taken that the provinces were not entirely depopulated.” With this humane limitation, the “Christian Widow” cheerfully set herself to superintend as foul and wholesale a system of murder as was ever organized. In 1535, an imperial edict was issued at Brussels, condemning all heretics to death; repentant males to be executed with the sword, repentant females to be buried alive, the obstinate, of both sexes, to be burned. This and similar edicts were the law of the land for twenty years, and rigidly enforced. Imperial and papal persecution continued its daily deadly work with such diligence as to make it doubtful whether the limits set by the Regent Mary might not be overstepped. In the midst of the carnage, the Emperor sent for his son Philip, that he might receive the fealty of the Netherlands as their future lord and master. Contemporaneously, a new edict was published at Brussels (29th April, 1549), confirming and reenacting all previous decrees in their most severe provisions. Thus stood religious matters in the Netherlands at the epoch of the imperial abdication.

XIII.

The civil institutions of the country had assumed their last provincial form, in the Burgundo-Austrian epoch. As already stated, their tendency, at a later period a vicious one, was to substitute fictitious personages for men. A chain of corporations was wound about the liberty of the Netherlands; yet that liberty had been originally sustained by the system in which it, one day, might be strangled. The spirit of local self-government, always the life-blood of liberty, was often excessive in its manifestations. The centrifugal force had been too much developed, and, combining with the mutual jealousy of corporations, had often made the nation weak against a common foe. Instead of popular rights there were state rights, for the large cities, with extensive districts and

Page 63

villages under their government, were rather petty states than municipalities. Although the supreme legislative and executive functions belonged to the sovereign, yet each city made its by-laws, and possessed, beside, a body of statutes and regulations, made from time to time by its own authority and confirmed by the prince. Thus a large portion, at least, of the nation shared practically in the legislative functions, which, technically, it did not claim; nor had the requirements of society made constant legislation so necessary, as that to exclude the people from the work was to enslave the country. There was popular power enough to effect much good, but it was widely scattered, and, at the same time, confined in artificial forms. The guilds were vassals of the towns, the towns, vassals of the feudal lord. The guild voted in the “broad council” of the city as one person; the city voted in the estates as one person. The people of the United Netherlands was the personage yet to be invented, It was a privilege, not a right, to exercise a handiwork, or to participate in the action of government. Yet the mass of privileges was so large, the shareholders so numerous, that practically the towns were republics. The government was in the hands of a large number of the people. Industry and intelligence led to wealth and power. This was great progress from the general servitude of the 11th and 12th centuries, an immense barrier against arbitrary rule. Loftier ideas of human rights, larger conceptions of commerce, have taught mankind, in later days, the difference between liberties and liberty, between guilds and free competition. At the same time it was the principle of mercantile association, in the middle ages, which protected the infant steps of human freedom and human industry against violence and wrong. Moreover, at this period, the tree of municipal life was still green and vigorous. The healthful flow of sap from the humblest roots to the most verdurous branches indicated the internal soundness of the core, and provided for the constant development of exterior strength. The road to political influence was open to all, not by right of birth, but through honorable exertion of heads and hands.

The chief city of the Netherlands, the commercial capital of the world, was Antwerp. In the North and East of Europe, the Hanseatic league had withered with the revolution in commerce. At the South, the splendid marble channels, through which the overland India trade had been conducted from the Mediterranean by a few stately cities, were now dry, the great aqueducts ruinous and deserted. Verona, Venice, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Bruges, were sinking, but Antwerp, with its deep and convenient river, stretched its arm to the ocean and caught the golden prize, as it fell from its sister cities’ grasp. The city was so ancient that its genealogists, with ridiculous gravity, ascended to a period two centuries before the Trojan war, and discovered a giant, rejoicing in the classic

Page 64

name of Antigonus, established on the Scheld. This patriarch exacted one half the merchandise of all navigators who passed his castle, and was accustomed to amputate and cast into the river the right hands of those who infringed this simple tariff. Thus Hand-werpen, hand-throwing, became Antwerp, and hence, two hands, in the escutcheon of the city, were ever held up in heraldic attestation of the truth. The giant was, in his turn, thrown into the Scheld by a hero, named Brabo, from whose exploits Brabant derived its name; “de quo Brabonica tellus.” But for these antiquarian researches, a simpler derivation of the name would seem an t’ werf, “on the wharf.” It had now become the principal entrepot and exchange of Europe. The Huggers, Velsens, Ostetts, of Germany, the Gualterotti and Bonvisi of Italy, and many other great mercantile houses were there established. No city, except Paris, surpassed it in population, none approached it in commercial splendor. Its government was very free. The sovereign, as Marquis of Antwerp, was solemnly sworn to govern according to the ancient charters and laws. The stadholder, as his representative, shared his authority with the four estates of the city. The Senate of eighteen members was appointed by the stadholder out of a quadruple number nominated by the Senate itself and by the fourth body, called the Borgery. Half the board was thus renewed annually. It exercised executive and appellate judicial functions, appointed two burgomasters, and two pensionaries or legal councillors, and also selected the lesser magistrates and officials of the city. The board of ancients or ex-senators, held their seats ex officio. The twenty-six ward-masters, appointed, two from each ward, by the Senate on nomination by the wards, formed the third estate. Their especial business was to enrol the militia and to attend to its mustering and training. The deans of the guilds, fifty-four in number, two from each guild, selected by the Senate, from a triple list of candidates presented by the guilds, composed the fourth estate. This influential body was always assembled in the broad-council of the city. Their duty was likewise to conduct the examination of candidates claiming admittance to any guild and offering specimens of art or handiwork, to superintend the general affairs of the guilds and to regulate disputes.

There were also two important functionaries, representing the king in criminal and civil matters. The Vicarius capitalis, Scultetus, Schout, Sheriff, or Margrave, took precedence of all magistrates. His business was to superintend criminal arrests, trials, and executions. The Vicarius civilis was called the Amman, and his office corresponded with that of the Podesta in the Frisian and Italian republics. His duties were nearly similar, in civil, to those of his colleague, in criminal matters.

These four branches, with their functionaries and dependents, composed the commonwealth of Antwerp. Assembled together in council, they constituted the great and general court. No tax could be imposed by the sovereign, except with consent of the four branches, all voting separately.

Page 65

The personal and domiciliary rights of the citizen were scrupulously guarded. The Schout could only make arrests with the Burgomaster's warrant, and was obliged to bring the accused, within three days, before the judges, whose courts were open to the public.

The condition of the population was prosperous. There were but few poor, and those did not seek but were sought by the almoners: The schools were excellent and cheap. It was difficult to find a child of sufficient age who could not read, write, and speak, at least, two languages. The sons of the wealthier citizens completed their education at Louvain, Douay, Paris, or Padua.

The city itself was one of the most beautiful in Europe. Placed upon a plain along the banks of the Scheld, shaped like a bent bow with the river for its string, it enclosed within it walls some of the most splendid edifices in Christendom. The world-renowned church of Notre Dame, the stately Exchange where five thousand merchants daily congregated, prototype of all similar establishments throughout the world, the capacious mole and port where twenty-five hundred vessels were often seen at once, and where five hundred made their daily entrance or departure, were all establishments which it would have been difficult to rival in any other part of the world.

From what has already been said of the municipal institutions of the country, it may be inferred that the powers of the Estates-general were limited. The members of that congress were not representatives chosen by the people, but merely a few ambassadors from individual provinces. This individuality was not always composed of the same ingredients. Thus, Holland consisted of two members, or branches—the nobles and the six chief cities; Flanders of four branches—the cities, namely, of Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, and the "freedom of Bruges;" Brabant of Louvain, Brussels, Bois le Due, and Antwerp, four great cities, without representation of nobility or clergy; Zeland, of one clerical person, the abbot of Middelburg, one noble, the Marquis of Veer and Vliessingen, and six chief cities; Utrecht, of three branches—the nobility, the clergy, and five cities. These, and other provinces, constituted in similar manner, were supposed to be actually present at the diet when assembled. The chief business of the states-general was financial; the sovereign, or his stadholder, only obtaining supplies by making a request in person, while any single city, as branch of a province, had a right to refuse the grant.

Education had felt the onward movement of the country and the times. The whole system was, however, pervaded by the monastic spirit, which had originally preserved all learning from annihilation, but which now kept it wrapped in the ancient cerecloths, and stiffening in the stony sarcophagus of a bygone age. The university of Louvain was the chief literary institution in the provinces. It had been established in 1423 by Duke John *iv*. of Brabant. Its government

Page 66

consisted of a President and Senate, forming a close corporation, which had received from the founder all his own authority, and the right to supply their own vacancies. The five faculties of law, canon law, medicine, theology, and the arts, were cultivated at the institution. There was, besides, a high school for under graduates, divided into four classes. The place reeked with pedantry, and the character of the university naturally diffused itself through other scholastic establishments. Nevertheless, it had done and was doing much to preserve the love for profound learning, while the rapidly advancing spirit of commerce was attended by an ever increasing train of humanizing arts.

The standard of culture in those flourishing cities was elevated, compared with that observed in many parts of Europe. The children of the wealthier classes enjoyed great facilities for education in all the great capitals. The classics, music, and the modern languages, particularly the French, were universally cultivated. Nor was intellectual cultivation confined to the higher orders. On the contrary, it was diffused to a remarkable degree among the hard-working artisans and handicraftsmen of the great cities.

For the principle of association had not confined itself exclusively to politics and trade. Besides the numerous guilds by which citizenship was acquired in the various cities, were many other societies for mutual improvement, support, or recreation. The great secret, architectural or masonic brotherhood of Germany, that league to which the artistic and patient completion of the magnificent works of Gothic architecture in the middle ages is mainly to be attributed, had its branches in nether Germany, and explains the presence of so many splendid and elaborately finished churches in the provinces. There were also military sodalities of musketeers, cross-bowmen, archers, swordsmen in every town. Once a year these clubs kept holiday, choosing a king, who was selected for his prowess and skill in the use of various weapons. These festivals, always held with great solemnity and rejoicing, were accompanied bye many exhibitions of archery and swordsmanship. The people were not likely, therefore, voluntarily to abandon that privilege and duty of freemen, the right to bear arms, and the power to handle them.

Another and most important collection of brotherhoods were the so-called guilds of Rhetoric, which existed, in greater or less number, in all the principal cities. These were associations of mechanics, for the purpose of amusing their leisure with poetical effusions, dramatic and musical exhibitions, theatrical processions, and other harmless and not inelegant recreations. Such chambers of rhetoric came originally in the fifteenth century from France. The fact that in their very title they confounded rhetoric with poetry and the drama indicates the meagre attainments of these early “Rederykers.” In the outset of their

Page 67

career they gave theatrical exhibitions. “King Herod and his Deeds” was enacted in the cathedral at Utrecht in 1418. The associations spread with great celerity throughout the Netherlands, and, as they were all connected with each other, and in habits of periodical intercourse, these humble links of literature were of great value in drawing the people of the provinces into closer union. They became, likewise, important political engines. As early as the time of Philip the Good, their songs and lampoons became so offensive to the arbitrary notions of the Burgundian government, as to cause the societies to be prohibited. It was, however, out of the sovereign’s power permanently to suppress institutions, which already partook of the character of the modern periodical press combined with functions resembling the show and licence of the Athenian drama. Viewed from the stand-point of literary criticism their productions were not very commendable in taste, conception, or execution. To torture the Muses to madness, to wire-draw poetry through inextricable coils of difficult rhymes and impossible measures; to hammer one golden grain of wit into a sheet of infinite platitude, with frightful ingenuity to construct ponderous anagrams and preternatural acrostics, to dazzle the vulgar eye with tawdry costumes, and to tickle the vulgar ear with virulent personalities, were tendencies which perhaps smacked of the hammer, the yard-stick and the pincers, and gave sufficient proof, had proof been necessary, that literature is not one of the mechanical arts, and that poetry can not be manufactured to a profit by joint stock companies. Yet, if the style of these lucubrations was often depraved, the artisans rarely received a better example from the literary institutions above them. It was not for guilds of mechanics to give the tone to literature, nor were their efforts in more execrable taste than the emanations from the pedants of Louvain. The “Rhetoricians” are not responsible for all the bad taste of their generation. The gravest historians of the Netherlands often relieved their elephantine labors by the most asinine gambols, and it was not to be expected that these bustling weavers and cutlers should excel their literary superiors in taste or elegance.

Philip the Fair enrolled himself as a member in one of these societies. It may easily be inferred, therefore, that they had already become bodies of recognized importance. The rhetorical chambers existed in the most obscure villages. The number of yards of Flemish poetry annually manufactured and consumed throughout the provinces almost exceed belief. The societies had regular constitutions. Their presiding officers were called kings, princes, captains, archdeacons, or rejoiced in similar high-sounding names. Each chamber had its treasurer, its buffoon, and its standard-bearer for public processions. Each had its peculiar title or blazon, as the Lily, the Marigold, or the Violet, with an appropriate motto. By the year 1493, the associations had become so important, that Philip the Fair summoned them all to a general assembly at Mechlin. Here they were organized, and formally incorporated under the general supervision of an upper or mother-society of Rhetoric, consisting of fifteen members, and called by the title of “Jesus with the balsam flower.”

Page 68

The sovereigns were always anxious to conciliate these influential guilds by becoming members of them in person. Like the players, the Rhetoricians were the brief abstract and chronicle of the time, and neither prince nor private person desired their ill report. It had, indeed, been Philip's intention to convert them into engines for the arbitrary purposes of his house, but fortunately the publicly organized societies were not the only chambers. On the contrary, the unchartered guilds were the moat numerous and influential. They exercised a vast influence upon the progress of the religious reformation, and the subsequent revolt of the Netherlands. They ridiculed, with their farces and their satires, the vices of the clergy. They dramatized tyranny for public execration. It was also not surprising, that among the leaders of the wild anabaptists who disgraced the great revolution in church and state by their hideous antics, should be found many who, like David of Delft, John of Leyden, and others, had been members of rhetorical chambers. The genius for mummery and theatrical exhibitions, transplanted from its sphere, and exerting itself for purposes of fraud and licentiousness, was as baleful in its effects as it was healthy in its original manifestations. Such exhibitions were but the excrescences of a system which had borne good fruit. These literary guilds befitted and denoted a people which was alive, a people which had neither sunk to sleep in the lap of material prosperity, nor abased itself in the sty of ignorance and political servitude. The spirit of liberty pervaded these rude but not illiterate assemblies, and her fair proportions were distinctly visible, even through the somewhat grotesque garb which she thus assumed.

The great leading recreations which these chambers afforded to themselves and the public, were the periodic jubilees which they celebrated in various capital cities. All the guilds of rhetoric throughout the Netherlands were then invited to partake and to compete in magnificent processions, brilliant costumes, living pictures, charades, and other animated, glittering groups, and in trials of dramatic and poetic skill, all arranged under the superintendence of the particular association which, in the preceding year, had borne away the prize. Such jubilees were called "Land jewels."

From the amusements of a people may be gathered much that is necessary for a proper estimation of its character. No unfavorable opinion can be formed as to the culture of a nation, whose weavers, smiths, gardeners, and traders, found the favorite amusement of their holidays in composing and enacting tragedies or farces, reciting their own verses, or in personifying moral and esthetic sentiments by ingeniously-arranged groups, or gorgeous habiliments. The cramoisy velvets and yellow satin doublets of the court, the gold-brocaded mantles of priests and princes are often but vulgar drapery of little historic worth. Such costumes thrown around

Page 69

the swart figures of hard-working artisans, for literary and artistic purposes, have a real significance, and are worthy of a closer examination. Were not these amusements of the Netherlanders as elevated and humanizing as the contemporary bull-fights and autos-da-fe of Spain? What place in history does the gloomy bigot merit who, for the love of Christ, converted all these gay cities into shambles, and changed the glittering processions of their Land jewels into fettered marches to the scaffold?

Thus fifteen ages have passed away, and in the place of a horde of savages, living among swamps and thickets, swarm three millions of people, the most industrious, the most prosperous, perhaps the most intelligent under the sun. Their cattle, grazing on the bottom of the sea, are the finest in Europe, their agricultural products of more exchangeable value than if nature had made their land to overflow with wine and oil. Their navigators are the boldest, their mercantile marine the most powerful, their merchants the most enterprising in the world. Holland and Flanders, peopled by one race, vie with each other in the pursuits of civilization. The Flemish skill in the mechanical and in the fine arts is unrivalled. Belgian musicians delight and instruct other nations, Belgian pencils have, for a century, caused the canvas to glow with colors and combinations never seen before. Flemish fabrics are exported to all parts of Europe, to the East and West Indies, to Africa. The splendid tapestries, silks, linens, as well as the more homely and useful manufactures of the Netherlands, are prized throughout the world. Most ingenious, as they had already been described by the keen-eyed Caesar, in imitating the arts of other nations, the skillful artificers of the country at Louvain, Ghent, and other places, reproduce the shawls and silks of India with admirable accuracy.

Their national industry was untiring; their prosperity unexampled; their love of liberty indomitable; their pugnacity proverbial. Peaceful in their pursuits, phlegmatic by temperament, the Netherlands were yet the most belligerent and excitable population of Europe. Two centuries of civil war had but thinned the ranks of each generation without quenching the hot spirit of the nation.

The women were distinguished by beauty of form and vigor of constitution. Accustomed from childhood to converse freely with all classes and sexes in the daily walks of life, and to travel on foot or horseback from one town to another, without escort and without fear, they had acquired manners more frank and independent than those of women in other lands, while their morals were pure and their decorum undoubted. The prominent part to be sustained by the women of Holland in many dramas of the revolution would thus fitly devolve upon a class, enabled by nature and education to conduct themselves with courage.

Within the little circle which encloses the seventeen provinces are 208 walled cities, many of them among the most stately in Christendom, 150 chartered towns, 6,300

villages, with their watch-towers and steeples, besides numerous other more insignificant hamlets; the whole guarded by a belt of sixty fortresses of surpassing strength.

Page 70

XIV.

Thus in this rapid sketch of the course and development of the Netherland nation during sixteen centuries, we have seen it ever marked by one prevailing characteristic, one master passion—the love of liberty, the instinct of self-government. Largely compounded of the bravest Teutonic elements, Batavian and Frisian, the race ever battles to the death with tyranny, organizes extensive revolts in the age of Vespasian, maintains a partial independence even against the sagacious dominion of Charlemagne, refuses in Friesland to accept the papal yoke or feudal chain, and, throughout the dark ages, struggles resolutely towards the light, wresting from a series of petty sovereigns a gradual and practical recognition of the claims of humanity. With the advent of the Burgundian family, the power of the commons has reached so high a point, that it is able to measure itself, undaunted, with the spirit of arbitrary rule, of which that engrossing and tyrannical house is the embodiment. For more than a century the struggle for freedom, for civic life, goes on; Philip the Good, Charles the Bold, Mary's husband Maximilian, Charles V., in turn, assailing or undermining the bulwarks raised, age after age, against the despotic principle. The combat is ever renewed. Liberty, often crushed, rises again and again from her native earth with redoubled energy. At last, in the 16th century, a new and more powerful spirit, the genius of religious freedom, comes to participate in the great conflict. Arbitrary power, incarnated in the second Charlemagne, assails the new combination with unscrupulous, unforgiving fierceness. Venerable civic magistrates; haltered, grovel in sackcloth and ashes; innocent, religious reformers burn in holocausts. By the middle of the century, the battle rages more fiercely than ever. In the little Netherland territory, Humanity, bleeding but not killed, still stands at bay and defies the hunters. The two great powers have been gathering strength for centuries. They are soon to be matched in a longer and more determined combat than the world had ever seen. The emperor is about to leave the stage. The provinces, so passionate for nationality, for municipal freedom, for religious reformation, are to become the property of an utter stranger; a prince foreign to their blood, their tongue, their religion, their whole habits of life and thought.

Such was the political, religious, and social condition of a nation who were now to witness a new and momentous spectacle.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Absolution for incest was afforded at thirty-six livres
Achieved the greatness to which they had not been born
Advancing age diminished his tendency to other carnal pleasures
All his disciples and converts are to be punished with death
All reading of the scriptures (forbidden)
Altercation between

Page 71

Luther and Erasmus, upon predestination
An hereditary papacy, a perpetual pope-emperor
Announced his approaching marriage with the Virgin Mary
As ready as papists, with age, fagot, and excommunication
Attacking the authority of the pope
Bold reformer had only a new dogma in place of the old ones
Charles the Fifth autocrat of half the world
Condemning all heretics to death
Craft meaning, simply, strength
Criminal whose guilt had been established by the hot iron
Criminals buying Paradise for money
Crusades made great improvement in the condition of the serfs
Democratic instincts of the ancient German savages
Denies the utility of prayers for the dead
Difference between liberties and liberty
Dispute between Luther and Zwingli concerning the real presence
Divine right
Drank of the water in which, he had washed
Enormous wealth (of the Church) which engendered the hatred
Erasmus encourages the bold friar
Erasmus of Rotterdam
Even for the rape of God’s mother, if that were possible
Executions of Huss and Jerome of Prague
Fable of divine right is invented to sanction the system
Felix Mants, the anabaptist, is drowned at Zurich
Few, even prelates were very dutiful to the pope
Fiction of apostolic authority to bind and loose
Fishermen and river raftsmen become ocean adventurers
For myself I am unworthy of the honor (of martyrdom)
Forbids all private assemblies for devotion
Force clerical—the power of clerks
Great Privilege, the Magna Charta of Holland
Guarantees of forgiveness for every imaginable sin
Halcyon days of ban, book and candle
Heresy was a plant of early growth in the Netherlands
In Holland, the clergy had neither influence nor seats
Invented such Christian formulas as these (a curse)
July 1st, two Augustine monks were burned at Brussels
King of Zion to be pinched to death with red-hot tongs
Labored under the disadvantage of never having existed
Learn to tremble as little at priestcraft as at swordcraft
Many greedy priests, of lower rank, had turned shop-keepers

No one can testify but a householder
Not of the stuff of which martyrs are made (Erasmus)
Nowhere was the persecution of heretics more relentless
Obstinate, of both sexes, to be burned
One golden grain of wit into a sheet of infinite platitude
Pardon for crimes already committed, or about to be committed
Pardon for murder, if not by poison, was cheaper
Paying their passage through, purgatory
Poisoning, for example, was absolved for eleven ducats
Pope and emperor maintain both positions with equal logic
Power to read and write helped the clergy to much wealth

Page 72

Readiness to strike and bleed at any moment in her cause
Repentant females to be buried alive
Repentant males to be executed with the sword
Sale of absolutions was the source of large fortunes to the priests
Same conjury over ignorant baron and cowardly hind
Scoffing at the ceremonies and sacraments of the Church
Sharpened the punishment for reading the scriptures in private
Slavery was both voluntary and compulsory
Soldier of the cross was free upon his return
St. Peter’s dome rising a little nearer to the clouds
Tanchelyn
The bad Duke of Burgundy, Philip surnamed “the Good,”
The egg had been laid by Erasmus, hatched by Luther
The vivifying becomes afterwards the dissolving principle
Thousands of burned heretics had not made a single convert
Thus Hand-werpen, hand-throwing, became Antwerp
To prefer poverty to the wealth attendant upon trade
Tranquillity of despotism to the turbulence of freedom
Villagers, or villeins

MOTLEY’S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 3.

The rise of the Dutch republic
John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.
1855
Philip the second in the Netherlands
1555 [*chapter* I.]

Abdication of Charles resolved upon—Brussels in the sixteenth century—Hall of the palace described—Portraits of prominent individuals present at the ceremony—-Formalities of the abdication— Universal emotion—Remarks upon the character and career of Charles —His retirement at Juste.

On the twenty-fifth day of October, 1555, the estates of the Netherlands were assembled in the great hall of the palace at Brussels. They had been summoned to be the witnesses and the guarantees of the abdication which Charles V. had long before resolved upon, and which he was that day to execute. The emperor, like many

potentates before and since, was fond of great political spectacles. He knew their influence upon the masses of mankind. Although plain, even to shabbiness, in his own costume, and usually attired in black, no one ever understood better than he how to arrange such exhibitions in a striking and artistic style. We have seen the theatrical and imposing manner in which he quelled the insurrection at Ghent, and nearly crushed the life forever out of that vigorous and turbulent little commonwealth. The closing scene of his long and energetic reign he had now arranged with profound study, and with an accurate knowledge of the manner in which the requisite effects were to be produced. The termination of his own career, the opening of his beloved Philip's, were to be dramatized in a manner worthy the august character of the actors, and the importance of the great stage where they played their parts. The eyes of the whole world were directed upon that day towards Brussels; for an imperial abdication was an event which had not, in the sixteenth century, been staled by custom.

Page 73

The gay capital of Brabant—of that province which rejoiced in the liberal constitution known by the cheerful title of the “joyful entrance,” was worthy to be the scene of the imposing show. Brussels had been a city for more than five centuries, and, at that day, numbered about one hundred thousand inhabitants. Its walls, six miles in circumference, were already two hundred years old. Unlike most Netherland cities, lying usually upon extensive plains, it was built along the sides of an abrupt promontory. A wide expanse of living verdure, cultivated gardens, shady groves, fertile cornfields, flowed round it like a sea. The foot of the town was washed by the little river Senne, while the irregular but picturesque streets rose up the steep sides of the hill like the semicircles and stairways of an amphitheatre. Nearly in the heart of the place rose the audacious and exquisitely embroidered tower of the townhouse, three hundred and sixty-six feet in height, a miracle of needlework in stone, rivalling in its intricate carving the cobweb tracery of that lace which has for centuries been synonymous with the city, and rearing itself above a facade of profusely decorated and brocaded architecture. The crest of the elevation was crowned by the towers of the old ducal palace of Brabant, with its extensive and thickly-wooded park on the left, and by the stately mansions of Orange, Egmont, Aremberg, Culemburg, and other Flemish grandees, on the right.. The great forest of Soignies, dotted with monasteries and convents, swarming with every variety of game, whither the citizens made their summer pilgrimages, and where the nobles chased the wild boar and the stag, extended to within a quarter of a mile of the city walls. The population, as thrifty, as intelligent, as prosperous as that of any city in Europe, was divided into fifty-two guilds of artisans, among which the most important were the armorers, whose suits of mail would turn a musket-ball; the gardeners, upon whose gentler creations incredible sums were annually lavished; and the tapestry-workers, whose gorgeous fabrics were the wonder of the world. Seven principal churches, of which the most striking was that of St. Gudule, with its twin towers, its charming facade, and its magnificently painted windows, adorned the upper part of the city. The number seven was a magic number in Brussels, and was supposed at that epoch, during which astronomy was in its infancy and astrology in its prime, to denote the seven planets which governed all things terrestrial by their aspects and influences. Seven noble families, springing from seven ancient castles, supplied the stock from which the seven senators were selected who composed the upper council of the city. There were seven great squares, seven city gates, and upon the occasion of the present ceremony, it was observed by the lovers of wonderful coincidences, that seven crowned heads would be congregated under a single roof in the liberty-loving city.

Page 74

The palace where the states-general were upon this occasion convened, had been the residence of the Dukes of Brabant since the days of John the Second, who had built it about the year 1300. It was a spacious and convenient building, but not distinguished for the beauty of its architecture. In front was a large open square, enclosed by an iron railing; in the rear an extensive and beautiful park, filled with forest trees, and containing gardens and labyrinths, fish-ponds and game preserves, fountains and promenades, race-courses and archery grounds. The main entrance to this edifice opened upon a spacious hall, connected with a beautiful and symmetrical chapel. The hall was celebrated for its size, harmonious proportions, and the richness of its decorations. It was the place where the chapters of the famous order of the Golden Fleece were held. Its walls were hung with a magnificent tapestry of Arran, representing the life and achievements of Gideon, the Midianite, and giving particular prominence to the miracle of the “fleece of wool,” vouchsafed to that renowned champion, the great patron of the Knights of the Fleece. On the present occasion there were various additional embellishments of flowers and votive garlands. At the western end a spacious platform or stage, with six or seven steps, had been constructed, below which was a range of benches for the deputies of the seventeen provinces. Upon the stage itself there were rows of seats, covered with tapestry, upon the right hand and upon the left. These were respectively to accommodate the knights of the order and the guests of high distinction. In the rear of these were other benches, for the members of the three great councils. In the centre of the stage was a splendid canopy, decorated with the arms of Burgundy, beneath which were placed three gilded arm-chairs.

All the seats upon the platform were vacant, but the benches below, assigned to the deputies of the provinces, were already filled. Numerous representatives from all the states but two—Gelderland and Overyssel—had already taken their places. Grave magistrates, in chain and gown, and executive officers in the splendid civic uniforms for which the Netherlands were celebrated, already filled every seat within the apace allotted. The remainder of the hall was crowded with the more favored portion of the multitude which had been fortunate enough to procure admission to the exhibition. The archers and hallebardiers of the body-guard kept watch at all the doors. The theatre was filled—the audience was eager with expectation—the actors were yet to arrive. As the clock struck three, the hero of the scene appeared. Caesar, as he was always designated in the classic language of the day, entered, leaning on the shoulder of William of Orange. They came from the chapel, and were immediately followed by Philip the Second and Queen Mary of Hungary. The Archduke Maximilian the Duke of Savoy, and other great personages came afterwards, accompanied by a glittering throng of warriors, councillors, governors, and Knights of the Fleece.

Page 75

Many individuals of existing or future historic celebrity in the Netherlands, whose names are so familiar to the student of the epoch, seemed to have been grouped, as if by premeditated design, upon this imposing platform, where the curtain was to fall forever upon the mightiest emperor since Charlemagne, and where the opening scene of the long and tremendous tragedy of Philip's reign was to be simultaneously enacted. There was the Bishop of Arras, soon to be known throughout Christendom by the more celebrated title of Cardinal Granvelle, the serene and smiling priest whose subtle influence over the destinies of so many individuals then present, and over the fortunes of the whole land, was to be so extensive and so deadly. There was that flower of Flemish chivalry, the, lineal descendant of ancient Frisian kings, already distinguished for his bravery in many fields, but not having yet won those two remarkable victories which were soon to make the name of Egmont like the sound of a trumpet throughout the whole country. Tall, magnificent in costume, with dark flowing hair, soft brown eye, smooth cheek, a slight moustache, and features of almost feminine delicacy; such was the gallant and ill-fated Lamoral Egmont. The Count of Horn; too, with bold, sullen face, and fan-shaped beard-a brave, honest, discontented, quarrelsome, unpopular man; those other twins in doom—the Marquis Berghen and the Lord of Montigny; the Baron Berlaymont, brave, intensely loyal, insatiably greedy for office and wages, but who, at least, never served but one party; the Duke of Arschot, who was to serve all, essay to rule all, and to betray all—a splendid seignor, magnificent in cramoisy velvet, but a poor creature, who traced his pedigree from Adam, according to the family monumental inscriptions at Louvain, but who was better known as grand-nephew of the emperor's famous tutor, Chiebres; the bold, debauched Brederode, with handsome, reckless face and turbulent demeanor; the infamous Noircarmes, whose name was to be covered with eternal execration, for aping towards his own compatriots and kindred as much of Alva's atrocities and avarice, as he was permitted to exercise; the distinguished soldiers Meghen and Aremberg—these, with many others whose deeds of arms were to become celebrated throughout Europe, were all conspicuous in the brilliant crowd. There, too, was that learned Frisian, President Viglius, crafty, plausible, adroit, eloquent—a small, brisk man, with long yellow hair, glittering green eyes, round, tumid, rosy cheeks, and flowing beard. Foremost among the Spanish grandees, and close to Philip, stood the famous favorite, Ruy Gomez, or as he was familiarly called "Re y Gomez" (King and Gomez), a man of meridional aspect, with coal-black hair and beard, gleaming eyes, a face pallid with intense application, and slender but handsome figure; while in immediate attendance upon the emperor, was the immortal Prince of Orange.

Such were a few only of the most prominent in that gay throng, whose fortunes, in part, it will be our humble duty to narrate; how many of them passing through all this glitter to a dark and mysterious doom!—some to perish on public scaffolds, some by midnight assassination; others, more fortunate, to fall on the battle-field —nearly all, sooner or later, to be laid in bloody graves!

Page 76

All the company present had risen to their feet as the emperor entered. By his command, all immediately afterwards resumed their places. The benches at either end of the platform were accordingly filled with the royal and princely personages invited, with the Fleece Knights, wearing the insignia of their order, with the members of the three great councils, and with the governors. The Emperor, the King, and the Queen of Hungary, were left conspicuous in the centre of the scene. As the whole object of the ceremony was to present an impressive exhibition, it is worth our while to examine minutely the appearance of the two principal characters.

Charles the Fifth was then fifty-five years and eight months old; but he was already decrepit with premature old age. He was of about the middle height, and had been athletic and well-proportioned. Broad in the shoulders, deep in the chest, thin in the flank, very muscular in the arms and legs, he had been able to match himself with all competitors in the tourney and the ring, and to vanquish the bull with his own hand in the favorite national amusement of Spain. He had been able in the field to do the duty of captain and soldier, to endure fatigue and exposure, and every privation except fasting. These personal advantages were now departed. Crippled in hands, knees and legs, he supported himself with difficulty upon a crutch, with the aid of, an attendant's shoulder. In face he had always been extremely ugly, and time had certainly not improved his physiognomy. His hair, once of a light color, was now white with age, close-clipped and bristling; his beard was grey, coarse, and shaggy. His forehead was spacious and commanding; the eye was dark blue, with an expression both majestic and benignant. His nose was aquiline but crooked. The lower part of his face was famous for its deformity. The under lip, a Burgundian inheritance, as faithfully transmitted as the duchy and county, was heavy and hanging; the lower jaw protruding so far beyond the upper, that it was impossible for him to bring together the few fragments of teeth which still remained, or to speak a whole sentence in an intelligible voice. Eating and talking, occupations to which he was always much addicted, were becoming daily more arduous, in consequence of this original defect, which now seemed hardly human, but rather an original deformity.

So much for the father. The son, Philip the Second, was a small, meagre man, much below the middle height, with thin legs, a narrow chest, and the shrinking, timid air of an habitual invalid. He seemed so little, upon his first visit to his aunts, the Queens Eleanor and Mary, accustomed to look upon proper men in Flanders and Germany, that he was fain to win their favor by making certain attempts in the tournament, in which his success was sufficiently problematical. "His body," says his professed panegyrist, "was but a human cage, in which, however brief and narrow, dwelt a soul to whose flight the immeasurable

Page 77

expanse of heaven was too contracted." [Cabrera] The same wholesale admirer adds, that "his aspect was so reverend, that rustics who met him alone in a wood, without knowing him, bowed down with instinctive veneration." In face, he was the living image of his father, having the same broad forehead, and blue eye, with the same aquiline, but better proportioned, nose. In the lower part of the countenance, the remarkable Burgundian deformity was likewise reproduced. He had the same heavy, hanging lip, with a vast mouth, and monstrously protruding lower jaw. His complexion was fair, his hair light and thin, his beard yellow, short, and pointed. He had the aspect of a Fleming, but the loftiness of a Spaniard. His demeanor in public was still, silent, almost sepulchral. He looked habitually on the ground when he conversed, was chary of speech, embarrassed, and even suffering in manner. This was ascribed partly to a natural haughtiness which he had occasionally endeavored to overcome, and partly to habitual pains in the stomach, occasioned by his inordinate fondness for pastry. [Bodavaro]

Such was the personal appearance of the man who was about to receive into his single hand the destinies of half the world; whose single will was, for the future, to shape the fortunes of every individual then present, of many millions more in Europe, America, and at the ends of the earth, and of countless millions yet unborn.

The three royal personages being seated upon chairs placed triangularly under the canopy, such of the audience as had seats provided for them, now took their places, and the proceedings commenced. Philibert de Bruxelles, a member of the privy council of the Netherlands, arose at the emperor's command, and made a long oration. He spoke of the emperor's warm affection for the provinces, as the land of his birth; of his deep regret that his broken health and failing powers, both of body and mind, compelled him to resign his sovereignty, and to seek relief for his shattered frame in a more genial climate. Caesar's gout was then depicted in energetic language, which must have cost him a twinge as he sat there and listened to the councillor's eloquence. "'Tis a most truculent executioner," said Philibert: "it invades the whole body, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, leaving nothing untouched. It contracts the nerves with intolerable anguish, it enters the bones, it freezes the marrow, it converts the lubricating fluids of the joints into chalk, it pauses not until, having exhausted and debilitated the whole body, it has rendered all its necessary instruments useless, and conquered the mind by immense torture." [Godelaevus]

Page 78

[The historian was present at the ceremony, and gives a very full report of the speeches, all of which he heard. His imagination may have assisted his memory in the task. The other reporters of the councillor's harangue have reduced this pathological flight of rhetoric to a very small compass.]

Engaged in mortal struggle with such an enemy, Caesar felt himself obliged, as the councillor proceeded to inform his audience, to change the scene of the contest from the humid air of Flanders to the warmer atmosphere of Spain. He rejoiced, however, that his son was both vigorous and experienced, and that his recent marriage with the Queen of England had furnished the provinces with a most valuable alliance. He then again referred to the emperor's boundless love for his subjects, and concluded with a tremendous, but superfluous, exhortation to Philip on the necessity of maintaining the Catholic religion in its purity. After this long harangue, which has been fully reported by several historians who were present at the ceremony, the councillor proceeded to read the deed of cession, by which Philip, already sovereign of Sicily, Naples, Milan, and titular King of England, France, and Jerusalem, now received all the duchies, marquisates, earldoms, baronies, cities, towns, and castles of the Burgundian property, including, of course, the seventeen Netherlands.

As De Bruxelles finished, there was a buzz of admiration throughout the assembly, mingled with murmurs of regret, that in the present great danger upon the frontiers from the belligerent King of France and his warlike and restless nation, the provinces should be left without their ancient and puissant defender. The emperor then rose to his feet. Leaning on his crutch, he beckoned from his seat the personage upon whose arm he had leaned as he entered the hall. A tall, handsome youth of twenty-two came forward —a man whose name from that time forward, and as long as history shall endure, has been, and will be, more familiar than any other in the mouths of Netherlanders. At that day he had rather a southern than a German or Flemish appearance. He had a Spanish cast of features, dark, well chiselled, and symmetrical. His head was small and well placed upon his shoulders. His hair was dark brown, as were also his moustache and peaked beard. His forehead was lofty, spacious, and already prematurely engraved with the anxious lines of thought. His eyes were full, brown, well opened, and expressive of profound reflection. He was dressed in the magnificent apparel for which the Netherlanders were celebrated above all other nations, and which the ceremony rendered necessary. His presence being considered indispensable at this great ceremony, he had been summoned but recently from the camp on the frontier, where, notwithstanding his youth, the emperor had appointed him to command his army in chief against such antagonists as Admiral Coligny and the Due de Nevers.

Page 79

Thus supported upon his crutch and upon the shoulder of William of Orange, the Emperor proceeded to address the states, by the aid of a closely-written brief which he held in his hand. He reviewed rapidly the progress of events from his seventeenth year up to that day. He spoke of his nine expeditions into Germany, six to Spain, seven to Italy, four to France, ten to the Netherlands, two to England, as many to Africa, and of his eleven voyages by sea. He sketched his various wars, victories, and treaties of peace, assuring his hearers that the welfare of his subjects and the security of the Roman Catholic religion had ever been the leading objects of his life. As long as God had granted him health, he continued, only enemies could have regretted that Charles was living and reigning, but now that his strength was but vanity, and life fast ebbing away, his love for dominion, his affection for his subjects, and his regard for their interests, required his departure. Instead of a decrepit man with one foot in the grave, he presented them with a sovereign in the prime of life and the vigor of health. Turning toward Philip, he observed, that for a dying father to bequeath so magnificent an empire to his son was a deed worthy of gratitude, but that when the father thus descended to the grave before his time, and by an anticipated and living burial sought to provide for the welfare of his realms and the grandeur of his son, the benefit thus conferred was surely far greater. He added, that the debt would be paid to him and with usury, should Philip conduct himself in his administration of the province with a wise and affectionate regard to their true interests. Posterity would applaud his abdication, should his son Prove worthy of his bounty; and that could only be by living in the fear of God, and by maintaining law, justice, and the Catholic religion in all their purity, as the true foundation of the realm. In conclusion, he entreated the estates, and through them the nation, to render obedience to their new prince, to maintain concord and to preserve inviolate the Catholic faith; begging them, at the same time, to pardon him all errors or offences which he might have committed towards them during his reign, and assuring them that he should unceasingly remember their obedience and affection in his every prayer to that Being to whom the remainder of his life was to be dedicated.

Such brave words as these, so many vigorous asseverations of attempted performance of duty, such fervent hopes expressed of a benign administration in behalf of the son, could not but affect the sensibilities of the audience, already excited and softened by the impressive character of the whole display. Sobs were heard throughout every portion of the hall, and tears poured profusely from every eye. The Fleece Knights on the platform and the burghers in the background were all melted with the same emotion. As for the Emperor himself, he sank almost fainting upon

Page 80

his chair as he concluded his address. An ashy paleness overspread his countenance, and he wept like a child. Even the icy Philip was almost softened, as he rose to perform his part in the ceremony. Dropping upon his knees before his father's feet, he reverently kissed his hand. Charles placed his hands solemnly upon his son's head, made the sign of the cross, and blessed him in the name of the Holy Trinity. Then raising him in his arms he tenderly embraced him. saying, as he did so, to the great potentates around him, that he felt a sincere compassion for the son on whose shoulders so heavy a weight had just devolved, and which only a life-long labor would enable him to support. Philip now uttered a few words expressive of his duty to his father and his affection for his people. Turning to the orders, he signified his regret that he was unable to address them either in the French or Flemish language, and was therefore obliged to ask their attention to the Bishop of Arras, who would act as his interpreter. Antony Perrenot accordingly arose, and in smooth, fluent, and well-turned commonplaces, expressed at great length the gratitude of Philip towards his father, with his firm determination to walk in the path of duty, and to obey his father's counsels and example in the future administration of the provinces. This long address of the prelate was responded to at equal length by Jacob Maas, member of the Council of Brabant, a man of great learning, eloquence and prolixity, who had been selected to reply on behalf of the states-general, and who now, in the name of these; bodies, accepted the abdication in an elegant and complimentary harangue. Queen Mary of Hungary, the "Christian widow" of Erasmus, and Regent of the Netherlands during the past twenty-five years, then rose to resign her office, making a brief address expressive of her affection for the people, her regrets at leaving them, and her hopes that all errors which she might have committed during her long administration would be forgiven her. Again the redundant Maas responded, asserting in terms of fresh compliment and elegance the uniform satisfaction of the provinces with her conduct during her whole career.

The orations and replies having now been brought to a close, the ceremony was terminated. The Emperor, leaning on the shoulders of the Prince of Orange and of the Count de Buren, slowly left the hall, followed by Philip, the Queen of Hungary, and the whole court; all in the same order in which they had entered, and by the same passage into the chapel.

It is obvious that the drama had been completely successful. It had been a scene where heroic self-sacrifice, touching confidence, ingenuous love of duty, patriotism, and paternal affection upon one side; filial reverence, with a solemn regard for public duty and the highest interests of the people on the other, were supposed to be the predominant sentiments. The happiness of the Netherlands was apparently the only object

Page 81

contemplated in the great transaction. All had played well their parts in the past, all hoped the best in the times which were to follow. The abdicating Emperor was looked upon as a hero and a prophet. The stage was drowned in tears. There is not the least doubt as to the genuine and universal emotion which was excited throughout the assembly. "Caesar's oration," says Secretary Godelaevus, who was present at the ceremony, "deeply moved the nobility and gentry, many of whom burst into tears; even the illustrious Knights of the Fleece were melted." The historian, Pontus Heuterus, who, then twenty years of age, was likewise among the audience, attests that "most of the assembly were dissolved in tears; uttering the while such sonorous sobs that they compelled his Caesarean Majesty and the Queen to cry with them. My own face," he adds, "was certainly quite wet." The English envoy, Sir John Mason, describing in a despatch to his government the scene which he had just witnessed, paints the same picture. "The Emperor," he said, "begged the forgiveness of his subjects if he had ever unwittingly omitted the performance of any of his duties towards them. And here," continues the envoy, "he broke into a weeping, whereunto, besides the dolefulness of the matter, I think, he was moche provoked by seeing the whole company to do the lyke before; there beyng in myne opinion not one man in the whole assemblie, stranger or another, that dewring the time of a good piece of his oration poured not out as abundantly teares, some more, some lesse. And yet he prayed them to beare with his imperfections, proceeding of his sickly age, and of the mentioning of so tender a matter as the departing from such a sort of dere and loving subjects."

And yet what was the Emperor Charles to the inhabitants of the Netherlands that they should weep for him? His conduct towards them during his whole career had been one of unmitigated oppression. What to them were all these forty voyages by sea and land, these journeyings back and forth from Friesland to Tunis, from Madrid to Vienna. What was it to them that the imperial shuttle was thus industriously flying to and fro? The fabric wrought was but the daily growing grandeur and splendor of his imperial house; the looms were kept moving at the expense of their hardly-earned treasure, and the woof was often dyed red in the blood of his bravest subjects. The interests of the Netherlands had never been even a secondary consideration with their master. He had fulfilled no duty towards them, he had committed the gravest crimes against them. He had regarded them merely as a treasury upon which to draw; while the sums which he extorted were spent upon ceaseless and senseless wars, which were of no more interest to them than if they had been waged in another planet. Of five millions of gold annually, which he derived from all his realms, two millions came from these industrious and opulent provinces, while but a half

Page 82

million came from Spain and another half from the Indies. The mines of wealth which had been opened by the hand of industry in that slender territory of ancient morass and thicket, contributed four times as much income to the imperial exchequer as all the boasted wealth of Mexico and Peru. Yet the artisans, the farmers and the merchants, by whom these riches were produced, were consulted about as much in the expenditure of the imposts upon their industry as were the savages of America as to the distribution of the mineral treasures of their soil. The rivalry of the houses of Habsburg and Valois, this was the absorbing theme, during the greater part of the reign which had just been so dramatically terminated. To gain the empire over Francis, to leave to Don Philip a richer heritage than the Dauphin could expect, were the great motives of the unparalleled energy displayed by Charles during the longer and the more successful portion of his career. To crush the Reformation throughout his dominions, was his occupation afterward, till he abandoned the field in despair. It was certainly not desirable for the Netherlanders that they should be thus controlled by a man who forced them to contribute so largely to the success of schemes, some of which were at best indifferent, and others entirely odious to them. They paid 1,200,000 crowns a year regularly; they paid in five years an extraordinary subsidy of eight millions of ducats, and the States were roundly rebuked by the courtly representatives of their despot, if they presumed to inquire into the objects of the appropriations, or to express an interest in their judicious administration. Yet it maybe supposed to have been a matter of indifference to them whether Francis or Charles had won the day at Pavia, and it certainly was not a cause of triumph to the daily increasing thousands of religious reformers in Holland and Flanders that their brethren had been crushed by the Emperor at Muhlberg. But it was not alone that he drained their treasure, and hampered their industry. He was in constant conflict with their ancient and dearly-bought political liberties. Like his ancestor Charles the Bold, he was desirous of constructing a kingdom out of the provinces. He was disposed to place all their separate and individual charters on a procrustean bed, and shape them all into uniformity simply by reducing the whole to a nullity. The difficulties in the way, the stout opposition offered by burghers, whose fathers had gained these charters with their blood, and his want of leisure during the vast labors which devolved upon him as the autocrat of so large a portion of the world, caused him to defer indefinitely the execution of his plan. He found time only to crush some of the foremost of the liberal institutions of the provinces, in detail. He found the city of Tournay a happy, thriving, self-governed little republic in all its local affairs; he destroyed its liberties, without a tolerable pretext, and reduced it to the condition of a Spanish or Italian provincial town.

Page 83

His memorable chastisement of Ghent for having dared to assert its ancient rights of self-taxation, is sufficiently known to the world, and has been already narrated at length. Many other instances might be adduced, if it were not a superfluous task, to prove that Charles was not only a political despot, but most arbitrary and cruel in the exercise of his despotism.

But if his sins against the Netherlands had been only those of financial and political oppression, it would be at least conceivable, although certainly not commendable, that the inhabitants should have regretted his departure. But there are far darker crimes for which he stands arraigned at the bar of history, and it is indeed strange that the man who had committed them should have been permitted to speak his farewell amid blended plaudits and tears. His hand planted the inquisition in the Netherlands. Before his day it is idle to say that the diabolical institution ever had a place there. The isolated cases in which inquisitors had exercised functions proved the absence and not the presence of the system, and will be discussed in a later chapter. Charles introduced and organized a papal inquisition, side by side with those terrible “placards” of his invention, which constituted a masked inquisition even more cruel than that of Spain. The execution of the system was never permitted to languish. The number of Netherlanders who were burned, strangled, beheaded, or buried alive, in obedience to his edicts, and for the offences of reading the Scriptures, of looking askance at a graven image, or of ridiculing the actual presence of the body and blood of Christ in a wafer, have been placed as high as one hundred thousand by distinguished authorities, and have never been put at a lower mark than fifty thousand. The Venetian envoy Navigero placed the number of victims in the provinces of Holland and Friesland alone at thirty thousand, and this in 1546, ten years before the abdication, and five before the promulgation of the hideous edict of 1550!

The edicts and the inquisition were the gift of Charles to the Netherlands, in return for their wasted treasure and their constant obedience. For this, his name deserves to be handed down to eternal infamy, not only throughout the Netherlands, but in every land where a single heart beats for political or religious freedom. To eradicate these institutions after they had been watered and watched by the care of his successor, was the work of an eighty years’ war, in the course of which millions of lives were sacrificed. Yet the abdicating Emperor had summoned his faithful estates around him, and stood up before them in his imperial robes for the last time, to tell them of the affectionate regard which he had always borne them, and to mingle his tears with theirs.

Page 84

Could a single phantom have risen from one of the many thousand graves where human beings had been thrust alive by his decree, perhaps there might have been an answer to the question propounded by the Emperor amid all that piteous weeping. Perhaps it might have told the man who asked his hearers to be forgiven if he had ever unwittingly offended them, that there was a world where it was deemed an offence to torture, strangle, burn, and drown one's innocent fellow-creatures. The usual but trifling excuse for such enormities can not be pleaded for the Emperor. Charles was no fanatic. The man whose armies sacked Rome, who laid his sacrilegious hands on Christ's vicegerent, and kept the infallible head of the Church a prisoner to serve his own political ends, was then no bigot. He believed in nothing; save that when the course of his imperial will was impeded, and the interests of his imperial house in jeopardy, pontiffs were to succumb as well as anabaptists. It was the political heresy which lurked in the restiveness of the religious reformers under dogma, tradition, and supernatural sanction to temporal power, which he was disposed to combat to the death. He was too shrewd a politician not to recognize the connection between aspirations for religious and for political freedom. His hand was ever ready to crush both heresies in one. Had he been a true son of the Church, a faithful champion of her infallibility, he would not have submitted to the peace of Passau, so long as he could bring a soldier to the field. Yet he acquiesced in the Reformation for Germany, while the fires for burning the reformers were ever blazing in the Netherlands, where it was death even to allude to the existence of the peace of Passau. Nor did he acquiesce only from compulsion, for long before his memorable defeat by Maurice, he had permitted the German troops, with whose services he could not dispense, regularly to attend Protestant worship performed by their own Protestant chaplains. Lutheran preachers marched from city to city of the Netherlands under the imperial banner, while the subjects of those patrimonial provinces were daily suffering on the scaffold for their nonconformity. The influence of this garrison-preaching upon the progress of the Reformation in the Netherlands is well known. Charles hated Lutherans, but he required soldiers, and he thus helped by his own policy to disseminate what had he been the fanatic which he perhaps became in retirement, he would have sacrificed his life to crush. It is quite true that the growing Calvinism of the provinces was more dangerous both religiously and politically, than the Protestantism of the German princes, which had not yet been formally pronounced heresy, but it is thus the more evident that it was political rather than religious heterodoxy which the despot wished to suppress.

Page 85

No man, however, could have been more observant of religious rites. He heard mass daily. He listened to a sermon every Sunday and holiday. He confessed and received the sacrament four times a year. He was sometimes to be seen in his tent at midnight, on his knees before a crucifix with eyes and hands uplifted. He ate no meat in Lent, and used extraordinary diligence to discover and to punish any man, whether courtier or plebeian, who failed to fast during the whole forty days. He was too good a politician not to know the value of broad phylacteries and long prayers. He was too nice an observer of human nature not to know how easily mint and cummin could still outweigh the “weightier matters of law, judgment, mercy and faith;” as if the founder of the religion which he professed, and to maintain which he had established the inquisition and the edicts, had never cried woe upon the Pharisees. Yet there is no doubt that the Emperor was at times almost popular in the Netherlands, and that he was never as odious as his successor. There were some deep reasons for this, and some superficial ones; among others, a singularly fortunate manner. He spoke German, Spanish, Italian, French, and Flemish, and could assume the characteristics of each country as easily as he could use its language. He could be stately with Spaniards, familiar with Flemings witty with Italians. He could strike down a bull in the ring like a matador at Madrid, or win the prize in the tourney like a knight of old; he could ride at the ring with the Flemish nobles, hit the popinjay with his crossbow among Antwerp artisans, or drink beer and exchange rude jests with the boors of Brabant. For virtues such as these, his grave crimes against God and man, against religion and chartered and solemnly-sworn rights have been palliated, as if oppression became more tolerable because the oppressor was an accomplished linguist and a good marksman.

But the great reason for his popularity no doubt lay in his military genius. Charles was inferior to no general of his age. “When he was born into the world,” said Alva, “he was born a soldier,” and the Emperor confirmed the statement and reciprocated the compliment, when he declared that “the three first captains of the age were himself first, and then the Duke of Alva and Constable Montmorency.” It is quite true that all his officers were not of the same opinion, and many were too apt to complain that his constant presence in the field did more harm than good, and “that his Majesty would do much better to stay at home.” There is, however, no doubt that he was both a good soldier and a good general. He was constitutionally fearless, and he possessed great energy and endurance. He was ever the first to arm when a battle was to be fought, and the last to take off his harness. He commanded in person and in chief, even when surrounded by veterans and crippled by the gout. He was calm in great reverses. It was said that he was

Page 86

never known to change color except upon two occasions: after the fatal destruction of his fleet at Algiers, and in the memorable flight from Innspruck. He was of a phlegmatic, stoical temperament, until shattered by age and disease; a man without a sentiment and without a tear. It was said by Spaniards that he was never seen to weep, even at the death of his nearest relatives and friends, except on the solitary occasion of the departure of Don Ferrante Gonzaga from court. Such a temperament was invaluable in the stormy career to which he had devoted his life. He was essentially a man of action, a military chieftain. “Pray only for my health and my life,” he was accustomed to say to the young officers who came to him from every part of his dominions to serve under his banners, “for so, long as I have these I will never leave you idle; at least in France. I love peace no better than the rest of you. I was born and bred to arms, and must of necessity keep on my harness till I can bear it no longer.” The restless energy and the magnificent tranquillity of his character made him a hero among princes, an idol with his officers, a popular favorite every where. The promptness with which, at much personal hazard, he descended like a thunderbolt in the midst of the Ghent insurrection; the juvenile ardor with which the almost bedridden man arose from his sick-bed to smite the Protestants at Muhlberg; the grim stoicism with which he saw sixty thousand of his own soldiers perish in the wintry siege of Metz; all ensured him a large measure of that applause which ever follows military distinction, especially when the man who achieves it happens to wear a crown. He combined the personal prowess of a knight of old with the more modern accomplishments of a scientific tactician. He could charge the enemy in person like the most brilliant cavalry officer, and he thoroughly understood the arrangements of a campaign, the marshalling and victualling of troops, and the whole art of setting and maintaining an army in the field.

Yet, though brave and warlike as the most chivalrous of his ancestors, Gothic, Burgundian, or Suabian, he was entirely without chivalry. Fanaticism for the faith, protection for the oppressed, fidelity to friend and foe, knightly loyalty to a cause deemed sacred, the sacrifice of personal interests to great ideas, generosity of hand and heart; all those qualities which unite with courage and constancy to make up the ideal chevalier, Charles not only lacked but despised. He trampled on the weak antagonist, whether burgher or petty potentate. He was false as water. He inveigled his foes who trusted to imperial promises, by arts unworthy an emperor or a gentleman. He led about the unfortunate John Frederic of Saxony, in his own language, “like a bear in a chain,” ready to be slipped upon Maurice should “the boy” prove ungrateful. He connived at the famous forgery of the prelate of Arras, to which the Landgrave Philip owed his long imprisonment; a villany worse than many for which humbler rogues have suffered by thousands upon the gallows. The contemporary world knew well the history of his frauds, on scale both colossal and minute, and called him familiarly “Charles qui triche.”

Page 87

The absolute master of realms on which the sun perpetually shone, he was not only greedy for additional dominion, but he was avaricious in small matters, and hated to part with a hundred dollars. To the soldier who brought him the sword and gauntlets of Francis the First, he gave a hundred crowns, when ten thousand would have been less than the customary present; so that the man left his presence full of desperation. The three soldiers who swam the Elbe, with their swords in their mouths; to bring him the boats with which he passed to the victory of Muhlberg, received from his imperial bounty a doublet, a pair of stockings, and four crowns apiece. His courtiers and ministers complained bitterly of his habitual niggardliness, and were fain to eke out their slender salaries by accepting bribes from every hand rich enough to bestow them. In truth Charles was more than any thing else a politician, notwithstanding his signal abilities as a soldier. If to have founded institutions which could last, be the test of statesmanship, he was even a statesman; for many of his institutions have resisted the pressure of three centuries. But those of Charlemagne fell as soon as his hand was cold, while the works of many ordinary legislators have attained to a perpetuity denied to the statutes of Solon or Lycurgus. Durability is not the test of merit in human institutions. Tried by the only touchstone applicable to governments, their capacity to insure the highest welfare of the governed, we shall not find his polity deserving of much admiration. It is not merely that he was a despot by birth and inclination, nor that he naturally substituted as far as was practicable, the despotic for the republican element, wherever his hand can be traced. There may be possible good in despotisms as there is often much tyranny in democracy. Tried however according to the standard by which all governments may be measured, those laws of truth and divine justice which all Christian nations recognize, and which are perpetual, whether recognized or not, we shall find little to venerate in the life work of the Emperor. The interests of his family, the security of his dynasty, these were his end and aim. The happiness or the progress of his people never furnished even the indirect motives of his conduct, and the result was a baffled policy and a crippled and bankrupt empire at last.

He knew men, especially he knew their weaknesses, and he knew how to turn them to account. He knew how much they would bear, and that little grievances would sometimes inflame more than vast and deliberate injustice. Therefore he employed natives mainly in the subordinate offices of his various states, and he repeatedly warned his successor that the haughtiness of Spaniards and the incompatibility of their character with the Flemish, would be productive of great difficulties and dangers. It was his opinion that men might be tyrannized more intelligently by their own kindred, and in this perhaps he was right. He was indefatigable

Page 88

in the discharge of business, and if it were possible that half a world could be administered as if it were the private property of an individual, the task would have been perhaps as well accomplished by Charles as by any man. He had not the absurdity of supposing it possible for him to attend to the details of every individual affair in every one of his realms; and he therefore intrusted the stewardship of all specialities to his various ministers and agents. It was his business to know men and to deal with affairs on a large scale, and in this he certainly was superior to his successor. His correspondence was mainly in the hands of Granvelle the elder, who analyzed letters received, and frequently wrote all but the signatures of the answers. The same minister usually possessed the imperial ear, and farmed it out for his own benefit. In all this there was of course room for vast deception, but the Emperor was quite aware of what was going on, and took a philosophic view of the matter as an inevitable part of his system. Granvelle grew enormously rich under his eye by trading on the imperial favor and sparing his majesty much trouble. Charles saw it all, ridiculed his peculations, but called him his “bed of down.” His knowledge of human nature was however derived from a contemplation mainly of its weaknesses, and was therefore one-sided. He was often deceived, and made many a fatal blunder, shrewd politician though he was. He involved himself often in enterprises which could not be honorable or profitable, and which inflicted damage on his greatest interests. He often offended men who might have been useful friends, and converted allies into enemies. “His Majesty,” said a keen observer who knew him well, “has not in his career shown the prudence which was necessary to him. He has often offended those whose love he might have conciliated, converted friends into enemies, and let those perish who were his most faithful partisans.” Thus it must be acknowledged that even his boasted knowledge of human nature and his power of dealing with men was rather superficial and empirical than the real gift of genius.

His personal habits during the greater part of his life were those of an indefatigable soldier. He could remain in the saddle day and night, and endure every hardship but hunger. He was addicted to vulgar and miscellaneous incontinence. He was an enormous eater. He breakfasted at five, on a fowl seethed in milk and dressed with sugar and spices. After this he went to sleep again. He dined at twelve, partaking always of twenty dishes. He supped twice; at first, soon after vespers, and the second time at midnight or one o’clock, which meal was, perhaps, the most solid of the four. After meat he ate a great quantity of pastry and sweetmeats, and he irrigated every repast by vast draughts of beer and wine. His stomach, originally a wonderful one, succumbed after forty years of such labors. His taste, but not his appetite began to fail, and

Page 89

he complained to his majordomo, that all his food was insipid. The reply is, perhaps, among the most celebrated of facetia. The cook could do nothing more unless he served his Majesty a pasty of watches. The allusion to the Emperor's passion for horology was received with great applause. Charles "laughed longer than he was ever known to laugh before, and all the courtiers (of course) laughed as long as his Majesty." [Badovaro] The success of so sorry a jest would lead one to suppose that the fooling was less admirable at the imperial court than some of the recorded quips of Tribaulet would lead us to suppose.

The transfer of the other crowns and dignitaries to Philip, was accomplished a month afterwards, in a quiet manner. Spain, Sicily, the Balearic Islands, America, and other portions of the globe, were made over without more display than an ordinary 'donatio inter vivos'. The Empire occasioned some difficulty. It had been already signified to Ferdinand, that his brother was to resign the imperial crown in his favor, and the symbols of sovereignty were accordingly transmitted to him by the hands of William of Orange. A deputation, moreover, of which that nobleman, Vice-Chancellor Seld, and Dr. Wolfgang Haller were the chiefs, was despatched to signify to the electors of the Empire the step which had been thus resolved upon. A delay of more than two years, however, intervened, occasioned partly by the deaths of three electors, partly by the war which so soon broke out in Europe, before the matter was formally acted upon. In February, 1553, however, the electors, having been assembled in Frankfort, received the abdication of Charles, and proceeded to the election of Ferdinand. That Emperor was crowned in March, and immediately despatched a legation to the Pope to apprize him of the fact. Nothing was less expected than any opposition on the part of the pontiff. The querulous dotard, however, who then sat in St. Peter's chair, hated Charles and all his race. He accordingly denied the validity of the whole transaction, without sanction previously obtained from the Pope, to whom all crowns belonged. Ferdinand, after listening, through his envoys, to much ridiculous dogmatism on the part of the Pope, at last withdrew from the discussion, with a formal protest, and was first recognized by Caraffa's successor, Pius *iv*.

Charles had not deferred his retirement till the end of these disputes. He occupied a private house in Brussels, near the gate of Louvain, until August of the year 1556. On the 27th of that month, he addressed a letter from Ghent to John of Osnabruck, president of the Chamber of Spiers, stating his abdication in favor of Ferdinand, and requesting that in the interim the same obedience might be rendered to Ferdinand, as could have been yielded to himself. Ten days later; he addressed a letter to the estates of the Empire, stating the same fact; and on the 17th September, 1556, he set sail from Zeland for Spain. These

Page 90

delays and difficulties occasioned some misconceptions. Many persons who did not admire an abdication, which others, on the contrary, esteemed as an act of unexampled magnanimity, stoutly denied that it was the intention of Charles to renounce the Empire. The Venetian envoy informed his government that Ferdinand was only to be lieutenant for Charles, under strict limitations, and that the Emperor was to resume the government so soon as his health would allow. The Bishop of Arras and Don Juan de Manrique had both assured him, he said, that Charles would not, on any account, definitely abdicate. Manrique even asserted that it was a mere farce to believe in any such intention. The Emperor ought to remain to protect his son, by the resources of the Empire, against France, the Turks, and the heretics. His very shadow was terrible to the Lutherans, and his form might be expected to rise again in stern reality from its temporary grave. Time has shown the falsity of all these imaginings, but views thus maintained by those in the best condition to know the truth, prove how difficult it was for men to believe in a transaction which was then so extraordinary, and how little consonant it was in their eyes with true propriety. It was necessary to ascend to the times of Diocletian, to find an example of a similar abdication of empire, on so deliberate and extensive a scale, and the great English historian of the Roman Empire has compared the two acts with each other. But there seems a vast difference between the cases. Both emperors were distinguished soldiers; both were merciless persecutors of defenceless Christians; both exchanged unbounded empire for absolute seclusion. But Diocletian was born in the lowest abyss of human degradation—the slave and the son of a slave. For such a man, after having reached the highest pinnacle of human greatness, voluntarily to descend from power, seems an act of far greater magnanimity than the retreat of Charles. Born in the purple, having exercised unlimited authority from his boyhood, and having worn from his cradle so many crowns and coronets, the German Emperor might well be supposed to have learned to estimate them at their proper value. Contemporary minds were busy, however, to discover the hidden motives which could have influenced him, and the world, even yet, has hardly ceased to wonder. Yet it would have been more wonderful, considering the Emperor’s character, had he remained. The end had not crowned the work; it not unreasonably discrowned the workman. The earlier, and indeed the greater part of his career had been one unbroken procession of triumphs. The cherished dream of his grandfather, and of his own youth, to add the Pope’s triple crown to the rest of the hereditary possessions of his family, he had indeed been obliged to resign. He had too much practical Flemish sense to indulge long in chimeras, but he had achieved the Empire over formidable rivals, and he had successively not only conquered, but captured

Page 91

almost every potentate who had arrayed himself in arms against him. Clement and Francis, the Dukes and Landgraves of, Clever, Hesse, Saxony, and Brunswick, he had bound to his chariot wheels; forcing many to eat the bread of humiliation and captivity, during long and weary years. But the concluding portion of his reign had reversed all its previous glories. His whole career had been a failure. He had been defeated, after all, in most of his projects. He had humbled Francis, but Henry had most signally avenged his father. He had trampled upon Philip of Hesse and Frederic of Saxony, but it had been reserved for one of that German race, which he characterized as “dreamy, drunken, and incapable of intrigue,” to outwit the man who had outwitted all the world, and to drive before him, in ignominious flight, the conqueror of the nations. The German lad who had learned both war and dissimulation in the court and camp of him who was so profound a master of both arts, was destined to eclipse his teacher on the most august theatre of Christendom. Absorbed at Innspruck with the deliberations of the Trent Council, Charles had not heeded the distant mutterings of the tempest which was gathering around him. While he was preparing to crush, forever, the Protestant Church, with the arms which a bench of bishops were forging, lo! the rapid and desperate Maurice, with long red beard streaming like a meteor in the wind, dashing through the mountain passes, at the head of his lancers—arguments more convincing than all the dogmas of Granvelle! Disguised as an old woman, the Emperor had attempted on the 6th April, to escape in a peasant’s wagon, from Innspruck into Flanders. Saved for the time by the mediation of Ferdinand, he had, a few weeks later, after his troops had been defeated by Maurice, at Fussen, again fled at midnight of the 22nd May, almost unattended, sick in body and soul, in the midst of thunder, lightning, and rain, along the difficult Alpine passes from Innspruck into Carinthia. His pupil had permitted his escape, only because in his own language, “for such a bird he had no convenient cage.” The imprisoned princes now owed their liberation, not to the Emperor’s clemency, but to his panic. The peace of Passau, in the following August, crushed the whole fabric of the Emperor’s toil, and laid-the foundation of the Protestant Church. He had smitten the Protestants at Muhlberg for the last time. On the other hand, the man who had dealt with Rome, as if the Pope, not he, had been the vassal, was compelled to witness, before he departed, the insolence of a pontiff who took a special pride in insulting and humbling his house, and trampling upon the pride of Charles, Philip and Ferdinand. In France too, the disastrous siege of Metz had taught him that in the imperial zodiac the fatal sign of Cancer had been reached. The figure of a crab, with the words “plus citra,” instead of his proud motto of “plus ultra,” scrawled on the walls where he had resided during

Page 92

that dismal epoch, avenged more deeply, perhaps, than the jester thought, the previous misfortunes of France. The Grand Turk, too, Solyman the Magnificent, possessed most of Hungary, and held at that moment a fleet ready to sail against Naples, in co-operation with the Pope and France. Thus the Infidel, the Protestant, and the Holy Church were all combined together to crush him. Towards all the great powers of the earth, he stood not in the attitude of a conqueror, but of a disappointed, baffled, defeated potentate. Moreover, he had been foiled long before in his earnest attempts to secure the imperial throne for Philip. Ferdinand and Maximilian had both stoutly resisted his arguments and his blandishments. The father had represented the slender patrimony of their branch of the family, compared with the enormous heritage of Philip; who, being after all, but a man, and endowed with finite powers, might sink under so great a pressure of empire as his father wished to provide for him. Maximilian, also, assured his uncle that he had as good an appetite for the crown as Philip, and could digest the dignity quite as easily. The son, too, for whom the Emperor was thus solicitous, had already, before the abdication, repaid his affection with ingratitude. He had turned out all his father's old officials in Milan, and had refused to visit him at Brussels, till assured as to the amount of ceremonial respect which the new-made king was to receive at the hands of his father.

Had the Emperor continued to live and reign, he would have found himself likewise engaged in mortal combat with that great religious movement in the Netherlands, which he would not have been able many years longer to suppress, and which he left as a legacy of blood and fire to his successor. Born in the same year with his century, Charles was a decrepit, exhausted man at fifty-five, while that glorious age, in which humanity was to burst forever the cerements in which it had so long been buried, was but awakening to a consciousness of its strength.

Disappointed in his schemes, broken in his fortunes, with income anticipated, estates mortgaged, all his affairs in confusion; failing in mental powers, and with a constitution hopelessly shattered; it was time for him to retire. He showed his keenness in recognizing the fact that neither his power nor his glory would be increased, should he lag superfluous on the stage where mortification instead of applause was likely to be his portion. His frame was indeed but a wreck. Forty years of unexampled gluttony had done their work. He was a victim to gout, asthma, dyspepsia, gravel. He was crippled in the neck, arms, knees, and hands. He was troubled with chronic cutaneous eruptions. His appetite remained, while his stomach, unable longer to perform the task still imposed upon it, occasioned him constant suffering. Physiologists, who know how important a part this organ plays in the affairs of life, will perhaps see

Page 93

in this physical condition of the Emperor A sufficient explanation, if explanation were required, of his descent from the throne. Moreover, it is well known that the resolution to abdicate before his death had been long a settled scheme with him. It had been formally agreed between himself and the Empress that they should separate at the approach of old age, and pass the remainder of their lives in a convent and a monastery. He had, when comparatively a young man, been struck by the reply made to him by an aged officer, whose reasons he had asked for, earnestly soliciting permission to retire from the imperial service. It was, said the veteran, that he might put a little space of religious contemplation between the active portion of his life and the grave.

A similar determination, deferred from time to time, Charles had now carried into execution. While he still lingered in Brussels, after his abdication, a comet appeared, to warn him to the fulfilment of his purpose. From first to last, comets and other heavenly bodies were much connected with his evolutions and arrangements. There was no mistaking the motives with which this luminary had presented itself. The Emperor knew very well, says a contemporary German chronicler, that it portended pestilence and war, together with the approaching death of mighty princes. “My fates call out,” he cried, and forthwith applied himself to hasten the preparations for his departure.

The romantic picture of his philosophical retirement at Juste, painted originally by Sandoval and Siguenza, reproduced by the fascinating pencil of Strada, and imitated in frequent succession by authors of every age and country, is unfortunately but a sketch of fancy. The investigations of modern writers have entirely thrown down the scaffolding on which the airy fabric, so delightful to poets and moralists, reposed. The departing Emperor stands no longer in a transparency robed in shining garments. His transfiguration is at an end. Every action, almost every moment of his retirement, accurately chronicled by those who shared his solitude, have been placed before our eyes, in the most felicitous manner, by able and brilliant writers. The Emperor, shorn of the philosophical robe in which he had been conventionally arrayed for three centuries, shivers now in the cold air of reality.

So far from his having immersed himself in profound and pious contemplation, below the current of the world’s events, his thoughts, on the contrary, never were for a moment diverted from the political surface of the times. He read nothing but despatches; he wrote or dictated interminable ones in reply, as dull and prolix as any which ever came from his pen. He manifested a succession of emotions at the course of contemporary affairs, as intense and as varied, as if the world still rested in his palm. He was, in truth, essentially a man of action. He had neither the taste nor talents which make a man great in retirement. Not a lofty thought, not

Page 94

a generous sentiment, not a profound or acute suggestion in his retreat has been recorded from his lips. The epigrams which had been invented for him by fabulists have been all taken away, and nothing has been substituted, save a few dull jests exchanged with stupid friars. So far from having entertained and even expressed that sentiment of religious toleration for which he was said to have been condemned as a heretic by the inquisition, and for which Philip was ridiculously reported to have ordered his father's body to be burned, and his ashes scattered to the winds, he became in retreat the bigot effectually, which during his reign he had only been conventionally. Bitter regrets that he should have kept his word to Luther, as if he had not broken faith enough to reflect upon in his retirement; stern self-reproach for omitting to put to death, while he had him in his power, the man who had caused all the mischief of the age; fierce instructions thundered from his retreat to the inquisitors to hasten the execution of all heretics, including particularly his ancient friends, preachers and almoners, Cazalla and Constantine de Fuente; furious exhortations to Philip—as if Philip needed a prompter in such a work—that he should set himself to "cutting out the root of heresy with rigor and rude chastisement;"—such explosions of savage bigotry as these, alternating with exhibitions of revolting gluttony, with surfeits of sardine omelettes, Estramadura sausages, eel pies, pickled partridges, fat capons, quince syrups, iced beer, and flagons of Rhenish, relieved by copious draughts of senna and rhubarb, to which his horror-stricken doctor doomed him as he ate—compose a spectacle less attractive to the imagination than the ancient portrait of the cloistered Charles. Unfortunately it is the one which was painted from life.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Burned, strangled, beheaded, or buried alive (100,000)
Despot by birth and inclination (Charles V.)
Endure every hardship but hunger
Gallant and ill-fated Lamoral Egmont
He knew men, especially he knew their weaknesses
His imagination may have assisted his memory in the task
Little grievances would sometimes inflame more than vast
Often much tyranny in democracy
Planted the inquisition in the Netherlands

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 4.

The rise of the Dutch republic
John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

1855
Philip the second in the Netherlands
1555-1558 [*chapter ii*.]

Page 95

Sketch of Philip the Second—Characteristics of Mary Tudor—Portrait of Philip—His council—Rivalry of Rup Gomez and Alva—Character of Rup Gomez—Queen Mary of Hungary—Sketch of Philibert of Savoy— Truce of Vaucelles—Secret treaty between the Pope and Henry *ii*.— Rejoicings in the Netherlands on account of the Peace—Purposes of Philip—Re-enactment of the edict of 1560—The King's dissimulation —"Request" to the provinces—Infraction of the truce in Italy— Character of Pope Paul *iv*.—Intrigues of Cardinal Caraffa—War against Spain resolved upon by France—Campaign in Italy—-Amicable siege of Rome—Pence with the pontiff—Hostilities on the Flemish border—-Coligny foiled at Douay—Sacks Lens—Philip in England— Queen Mary engages in the war—Philip's army assembled at Givet— Portrait of Count Egmont—The French army under Coligny and Montmorency—Siege of St. Quentin—Attempts of the constable to relieve the city—Battle of St. Quentin—Hesitation and timidity of Philip—City of St. Quentin taken and sacked—Continued indecision of Philip—His army disbanded—-Campaign of the Duke of Guise— Capture of Calais—Interview between Cardinal de Lorraine and the Bishop of Arran—Secret combinations for a league between France and Spain against heresy—Languid movements of Guise—Foray of De Thermes on the Flemish frontier—Battle of Gravelines—Popularity of Egmont—Enmity of Alva.

Philip the Second had received the investiture of Milan and the crown of Naples, previously to his marriage with Mary Tudor. The imperial crown he had been obliged, much against his will, to forego. The archduchy of Austria, with the hereditary German dependencies of his father's family, had been transferred by the Emperor to his brother Ferdinand, on the occasion of the marriage of that prince with Anna, only sister of King Louis of Hungary. Ten years afterwards, Ferdinand (King of Hungary and Bohemia since the death of Louis, slain in 1526 at the battle of Mohacz) was elected King of the Romans, and steadily refused all the entreaties afterwards made to him in behalf of Philip, to resign his crown and his succession to the Empire, in favor of his nephew. With these diminutions, Philip had now received all the dominions of his father. He was King of all the Spanish kingdoms and of both the Sicilies. He was titular King of England, France, and Jerusalem. He was "Absolute Dominator" in Asia, Africa, and America; he was Duke of Milan and of both Burgundies, and Hereditary Sovereign of the seventeen Netherlands.

Thus the provinces had received a new master. A man of foreign birth and breeding, not speaking a word of their language, nor of any language which the mass of the inhabitants understood, was now placed in supreme authority over them, because he represented, through the females, the "good" Philip of Burgundy, who a century before had possessed himself by inheritance, purchase, force, or fraud, of the sovereignty in most of those provinces. It is necessary to say an introductory word or two concerning the previous history of the man to whose hands the destiny of so many millions was now entrusted.

Page 96

He was born in May, 1527, and was now therefore twenty-eight years of age. At the age of sixteen he had been united to his cousin, Maria of Portugal, daughter of John *iii*. and of the Emperor's sister, Donna Catalina. In the following year (1544) he became father of the celebrated and ill-starred Don Carlos, and a widower. The princess owed her death, it was said, to her own imprudence and to the negligence or bigotry of her attendants. The Duchess of Alva, and other ladies who had charge of her during her confinement, deserted her chamber in order to obtain absolution by witnessing an auto-da-fe of heretics. During their absence, the princess partook voraciously of a melon, and forfeited her life in consequence.

In 1548, Don Philip had made his first appearance in the Netherlands. He came thither to receive homage in the various provinces as their future sovereign, and to exchange oaths of mutual fidelity with them all. Andrew Doria, with a fleet of fifty ships, had brought him to Genoa, whence he had passed to Milan, where he was received with great rejoicing. At Trent he was met by Duke Maurice of Saxony, who warmly begged his intercession with the Emperor in behalf of the imprisoned Landgrave of Hesse. This boon Philip was graciously pleased to promise,—and to keep the pledge as sacredly as most of the vows plighted by him during this memorable year. The Duke of Aerschot met him in Germany with a regiment of cavalry and escorted him to Brussels. A summer was spent in great festivities, the cities of the Nether lands vieing with each other in magnificent celebrations of the ceremonies, by which Philip successively swore allegiance to the various constitutions and charters of the provinces, and received their oaths of future fealty in return. His oath to support all the constitutions and privileges was without reservation, while his father and grandfather had only sworn to maintain the charters granted or confirmed by Philip and Charles of Burgundy. Suspicion was disarmed by these indiscriminate concessions, which had been resolved upon by the unscrupulous Charles to conciliate the good will of the people. In view of the pretensions which might be preferred by the Brederode family in Holland, and by other descendants of ancient sovereign races in other provinces, the Emperor, wishing to ensure the succession to his sisters in case of the deaths of himself, Philip, and Don Carlos without issue, was unsparing in those promises which he knew to be binding only upon the weak. Although the house of Burgundy had usurped many of the provinces on the express pretext that females could not inherit, the rule had been already violated, and he determined to spare no pains to conciliate the estates, in order that they might be content with a new violation, should the contingency occur. Philip's oaths were therefore without reserve, and the light-hearted Flemings, Brabantines, and Walloons received him with open arms. In Valenciennes the festivities which attended his

Page 97

entrance were on a most gorgeous scale, but the “joyous entrance” arranged for him at Antwerp was of unparalleled magnificence. A cavalcade of the magistrates and notable burghers, “all attired in cramoisy velvet,” attended by lackies in splendid liveries and followed by four thousand citizen soldiers in full uniform, went forth from the gates to receive him. Twenty-eight triumphal arches, which alone, according to the thrifty chronicler, had cost 26,800 Carolus guldens, were erected in the different streets and squares, and every possible demonstration of affectionate welcome was lavished upon the Prince and the Emperor. The rich and prosperous city, unconscious of the doom which awaited it in the future, seemed to have covered itself with garlands to honor the approach of its master. Yet icy was the deportment with which Philip received these demonstrations of affection, and haughty the glance with which he looked down upon these exhibitions of civic hilarity, as from the height of a grim and inaccessible tower. The impression made upon the Netherlanders was any thing but favorable, and when he had fully experienced the futility of the projects on the Empire which it was so difficult both for his father and himself to resign, he returned to the more congenial soil of Spain. In 1554 he had again issued from the peninsula to marry the Queen of England, a privilege which his father had graciously resigned to him. He was united to Mary Tudor at Winchester, on the 25th July of that year, and if congeniality of tastes could have made a marriage happy, that union should have been thrice blessed. To maintain the supremacy of the Church seemed to both the main object of existence, to execute unbelievers the most sacred duty imposed by the Deity upon anointed princes, to convert their kingdoms into a hell the surest means of winning Heaven for themselves. It was not strange that the conjunction of two such wonders of superstition in one sphere should have seemed portentous in the eyes of the English nation. Philip’s mock efforts in favor of certain condemned reformers, and his pretended intercessions in favor of the Princess Elizabeth, failed entirely of their object. The parliament refused to confer upon him more than a nominal authority in England. His children, should they be born, might be sovereigns; he was but husband of the Queen; of a woman who could not atone by her abject but peevish fondness for himself, and by her congenial blood-thirstiness towards her subjects, for her eleven years seniority, her deficiency in attractions, and her incapacity to make him the father of a line of English monarchs. It almost excites compassion even for Mary Tudor, when her passionate efforts to inspire him with affection are contrasted with his impassiveness. Tyrant, bigot, murderess though she was, she was still woman, and she lavished upon her husband all that was not ferocious in her nature. Forbidding prayers to be said for the soul of her father, hating her sister and her people,

Page 98

burning bishops, bathing herself in the blood of heretics, to Philip she was all submissiveness and feminine devotion. It was a most singular contrast, Mary, the Queen of England and Mary the wife of Philip. Small, lean and sickly, painfully near-sighted, yet with an eye of fierceness and fire; her face wrinkled by the hands of care and evil passions still more than by Time, with a big man's voice, whose harshness made those in the next room tremble; yet feminine in her tastes, skilful with her needle, fond of embroidery work, striking the lute with a touch remarkable for its science and feeling, speaking many languages, including Latin, with fluency and grace; most feminine, too, in her constitutional sufferings, hysterical of habit, shedding floods of tears daily at Philip's coldness, undisguised infidelity, and frequent absences from England—she almost awakens compassion and causes a momentary oblivion of her identity.

Her subjects, already half maddened by religious persecution, were exasperated still further by the pecuniary burthens which she imposed upon them to supply the King's exigencies, and she unhesitatingly confronted their frenzy, in the hope of winning a smile from him. When at last her chronic maladies had assumed the memorable form which caused Philip and Mary to unite in a letter to Cardinal Pole, announcing not the expected but the actual birth of a prince, but judiciously leaving the date in blank, the momentary satisfaction and delusion of the Queen was unbounded. The false intelligence was transmitted every where. Great were the joy and the festivities in the Netherlands, where people were so easily made to rejoice and keep holiday for any thing. "The Regent, being in Antwerp," wrote Sir Thomas Gresham to the lords of council, "did cause the great bell to rings to give all men to understand that the news was trewe. The Queene's highness here merchants caused all our Inglishe ships to shoote off with such joy and triumph, as by men's arts and pollicey coulde be devised—-and the Regent sent our Inglishe maroners one hundred crownes to drynke." If bell-ringing and cannon-firing could have given England a Spanish sovereign, the devoutly-wished consummation would have been reached. When the futility of the royal hopes could no longer be concealed, Philip left the country, never to return till his war with France made him require troops, subsidies, and a declaration of hostilities from England.

The personal appearance of the new sovereign has already been described. His manner was far from conciliatory, and in this respect he was the absolute reverse of his father. Upon his first journey out of Spain, in 1548, into his various dominions, he had made a most painful impression every where. "He was disagreeable," says Envoy Suriano, "to the Italians, detestable to the Flemings, odious to the Germans."

Page 99

The remonstrances of the Emperor, and of Queen Mary of Hungary, at the impropriety of his manners, had produced, however, some effect, so that on his wedding journey to England, he manifested much “gentleness and humanity, mingled with royal gravity.” Upon this occasion, says another Venetian, accredited to him, “he had divested himself of that Spanish haughtiness, which, when he first came from Spain, had rendered him so odious.” The famous ambassador, Badovaro confirms the impression. “Upon his first journey,” he says, “he was esteemed proud, and too greedy for the imperial succession; but now ’tis the common opinion that his humanity and modesty are all which could be desired.” These humane qualities, however, it must be observed, were exhibited only in the presence of ambassadors and grandees, the only representatives of “humanity” with whom he came publicly and avowedly in contact.

He was thought deficient in manly energy. He was an infirm valetudinarian, and was considered as sluggish in character, as deficient in martial enterprise, as timid of temperament as he was fragile and sickly of frame. It is true, that on account of the disappointment which he occasioned by his contrast to his warlike father, he mingled in some tournaments in Brussels, where he was matched against Count Mansfeld, one of the most distinguished chieftains of the age, and where, says his professed panegyrist, “he broke his lances very mach to the satisfaction of his father and aunts.”

That learned and eloquent author, Estelle Calvete, even filled the greater part of a volume, in which he described the journey of the Prince, with a minute description of these feasts and jousts, but we may reasonably conclude that to the loyal imagination of his eulogist Philip is indebted for most of these knightly trophies. It was the universal opinion of unprejudiced cotemporaries, that he was without a spark of enterprise. He was even censured for a culpable want of ambition, and for being inferior to his father in this respect, as if the love of encroaching on his neighbor’s dominions, and a disposition to foreign. commotions and war would have constituted additional virtues, had he happened to possess them. Those who were most disposed to think favorably of him, remembered that there was a time when even Charles the Fifth was thought weak and indolent, and were willing to ascribe Philip’s pacific disposition to his habitual cholic and side-ache, and to his father’s inordinate care for him in youth. They even looked forward to the time when he should blaze forth to the world as a conqueror and a hero. These, however, were views entertained by but few; the general and the correct opinion, as it proved, being, that Philip hated war, would never certainly acquire any personal distinction in the field, and when engaged in hostilities would be apt to gather his laurels at the hands of his generals, rather than with his own sword. He was believed to be the reverse of the Emperor.

Page 100

Charles sought great enterprises, Philip would avoid them. The Emperor never recoiled before threats; the son was reserved, cautious, suspicious of all men, and capable of sacrificing a realm from hesitation and timidity. The father had a genius for action, the son a predilection for repose. Charles took “all men’s opinions, but reserved his judgment,” and acted on it, when matured, with irresistible energy; Philip was led by others, was vacillating in forming decisions, and irresolute in executing them when formed.

Philip, then, was not considered, in that warlike age, as likely to shine as a warrior. His mental capacity, in general, was likewise not very highly esteemed. His talents were, in truth, very much below mediocrity. His mind was incredibly small. A petty passion for contemptible details characterized him from his youth, and, as long as he lived, he could neither learn to generalize, nor understand that one man, however diligent, could not be minutely acquainted with all the public and private affairs of fifty millions of other men. He was a glutton of work. He was born to write despatches, and to scrawl comments upon those which he received.

[The character of these apostilles, always confused, wordy and awkward, was sometimes very ludicrous; nor did it improve after his thirty or forty years’ daily practice in making them. Thus, when he received a letter from France in 1589, narrating the assassination of Henry *iii*., and stating that “the manner in which he had been killed was that a Jacobin monk had given him a pistol-shot in the head” (la facon qua l’on dit qu’il a ette tue, sa ette par un Jacobin qui luy a donna d’un cou de pistolle dans la tayte), he scrawled the following luminous comment upon the margin. Underlining the word “pistolle,” he observed, “this is perhaps some kind of knife; and as for ‘tayte,’ it can be nothing else but head, which is not tayte, but tete, or teyte, as you very well know” (quiza de alguna manera de cuchillo, *etc*., *etc*.)—Gachard. Rapport a M. le Minist. de l’Interieur, prefixed to corresp. Philippe *ii*. Vol. I. xlix. note 1. It is obvious that a person who made such wonderful commentaries as this, and was hard at work eight or nine hours a day for forty years, would leave a prodigious quantity of unpublished matter at his death.]

He often remained at the council-board four or five hours at a time, and he lived in his cabinet. He gave audiences to ambassadors and deputies very willingly, listening attentively to all that was said to him, and answering in monosyllables. He spoke no tongue but Spanish; and was sufficiently sparing of that, but he was indefatigable with his pen. He hated to converse, but he could write a letter eighteen pages long, when his correspondent was in the next room, and when the subject was, perhaps, one which a man of talent could have settled with six words of his tongue. The world, in his opinion,

Page 101

was to move upon protocols and apostilles. Events had no right to be born throughout his dominions, without a preparatory course of his obstetrical pedantry. He could never learn that the earth would not rest on its axis, while he wrote a programme of the way it was to turn. He was slow in deciding, slower in communicating his decisions. He was prolix with his pen, not from affluence, but from paucity of ideas. He took refuge in a cloud of words, sometimes to conceal his meaning, oftener to conceal the absence of any meaning, thus mystifying not only others but himself. To one great purpose, formed early, he adhered inflexibly. This, however, was rather an instinct than an opinion; born with him, not created by him. The idea seemed to express itself through him, and to master him, rather than to form one of a stock of sentiments which a free agent might be expected to possess. Although at certain times, even this master-feeling could yield to the pressure of a predominant self-interest-thus showing that even in Philip bigotry was not absolute—yet he appeared on the whole the embodiment of Spanish chivalry and Spanish religious enthusiasm, in its late and corrupted form. He was entirely a Spaniard. The Burgundian and Austrian elements of his blood seemed to have evaporated, and his veins were filled alone with the ancient ardor, which in heroic centuries had animated the Gothic champions of Spain. The fierce enthusiasm for the Cross, which in the long internal warfare against the Crescent, had been the romantic and distinguishing feature of the national character, had degenerated into bigotry. That which had been a nation's glory now made the monarch's shame. The Christian heretic was to be regarded with a more intense hatred than even Moor or Jew had excited in the most Christian ages, and Philip was to be the latest and most perfect incarnation of all this traditional enthusiasm, this perpetual hate. Thus he was likely to be single-hearted in his life. It was believed that his ambition would be less to extend his dominions than to vindicate his title of the most Catholic king. There could be little doubt entertained that he would be, at least, dutiful to his father in this respect, and that the edicts would be enforced to the letter.

He was by birth, education, and character, a Spaniard, and that so exclusively, that the circumstance would alone have made him unfit to govern a country so totally different in habits and national sentiments from his native land. He was more a foreigner in Brussels, even, than in England. The gay, babbling, energetic, noisy life of Flanders and Brabant was detestable to him. The loquacity of the Netherlanders was a continual reproach upon his taciturnity. His education had imbued him, too, with the antiquated international hatred of Spaniard and Fleming, which had been strengthening in the metropolis, while the more rapid current of life had rather tended to obliterate the sentiment in the provinces.

Page 102

The flippancy and profligacy of Philip the Handsome, the extortion and insolence of his Flemish courtiers, had not been forgotten in Spain, nor had Philip the Second forgiven his grandfather for having been a foreigner. And now his mad old grandmother, Joanna, who had for years been chasing cats in the lonely tower where she had been so long imprisoned, had just died; and her funeral, celebrated with great pomp by both her sons, by Charles at Brussels and Ferdinand at Augsburg, seemed to revive a history which had begun to fade, and to recall the image of Castilian sovereignty which had been so long obscured in the blaze of imperial grandeur.

His education had been but meagre. In an age when all kings and noblemen possessed many languages, he spoke not a word of any tongue but Spanish,—although he had a slender knowledge of French and Italian, which he afterwards learned to read with comparative facility. He had studied a little history and geography, and he had a taste for sculpture, painting, and architecture. Certainly if he had not possessed a feeling for art, he would have been a monster. To have been born in the earlier part of the sixteenth century, to have been a king, to have had Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands as a birthright, and not to have been inspired with a spark of that fire which glowed so intensely in those favored lands and in that golden age, had indeed been difficult.

The King's personal habits were regular. His delicate health made it necessary for him to attend to his diet, although he was apt to exceed in sweetmeats and pastry. He slept much, and took little exercise habitually, but he had recently been urged by the physicians to try the effect of the chase as a corrective to his sedentary habits. He was most strict in religious observances, as regular at mass, sermons, and vespers as a monk; much more, it was thought by many good Catholics, than was becoming to his rank and age. Besides several friars who preached regularly for his instruction, he had daily discussions with others on abstruse theological points. He consulted his confessor most minutely as to all the actions of life, inquiring anxiously whether this proceeding or that were likely to burthen his conscience. He was grossly licentious. It was his chief amusement to issue forth at night disguised, that he might indulge in vulgar and miscellaneous incontinence in the common haunts of vice. This was his solace at Brussels in the midst of the gravest affairs of state. He was not illiberal, but, on the contrary, it was thought that he would have been even generous, had he not been straitened for money at the outset of his career. During a cold winter, he distributed alms to the poor of Brussels with an open hand. He was fond of jests in private, and would laugh immoderately, when with a few intimate associates, at buffooneries, which he checked in public by the icy gravity of his deportment. He dressed usually in the Spanish fashion, with close doublet, trunk hose, and short cloak, although at times he indulged in the more airy fashions of France and Burgundy, wearing buttons on his coats and feathers in his hat. He was not thought at that time to be cruel by nature, but was usually spoken of, in the conventional language appropriated to monarchs, as a prince "clement, benign, and debonnaire." Time was to show the justice of his claims to such honorable epithets.

Page 103

The court was organized during his residence at Brussels on the Burgundian, not the Spanish model, but of the one hundred and fifty persons who composed it, nine tenths of the whole were Spaniards; the other fifteen or sixteen being of various nations, Flemings, Burgundians, Italians, English, and Germans. Thus it is obvious how soon he disregarded his father's precept and practice in this respect, and began to lay the foundation of that renewed hatred to Spaniards which was soon to become so intense, exuberant, and fatal throughout every class of Netherlanders. He esteemed no nation but the Spanish, with Spaniards he consorted, with Spaniards he counselled, through Spaniards he governed.

His council consisted of five or six Spanish grandees, the famous Ruy Gomez, then Count of Melito, afterwards Prince of Eboli; the Duke of Alva, the Count de Feria, the Duke of Franca Villa, Don Antonio Toledo, and Don Juan Manrique de Lara. The "two columns," said Suriano, "which sustain this great machine, are Ruy Gomez and Alva, and from their councils depends the government of half the world." The two were ever bitterly opposed to each other. Incessant were their bickerings, intense their mutual hate, desperate and difficult the situation of any man, whether foreigner or native, who had to transact business with the government. If he had secured the favor of Gomez, he had already earned the enmity of Alva. Was he protected by the Duke, he was sure to be cast into outer darkness by the favorite.—Alva represented the war party, Ruy Gomez the pacific polity more congenial to the heart of Philip. The Bishop of Arras, who in the opinion of the envoys was worth them all for his capacity and his experience, was then entirely in the background, rarely entering the council except when summoned to give advice in affairs of extraordinary delicacy or gravity. He was, however, to reappear most signally in course of the events already preparing. The Duke of Alva, also to play so tremendous a part in the yet unborn history of the Netherlands, was not beloved by Philip. He was eclipsed at this period by the superior influence of the favorite, and his sword, moreover, became necessary in the Italian campaign which was impending. It is remarkable that it was a common opinion even at that day that the duke was naturally hesitating and timid. One would have thought that his previous victories might have earned for him the reputation for courage and skill which he most unquestionably deserved. The future was to develop those other characteristics which were to make his name the terror and wonder of the world.

Page 104

The favorite, Ruy Gomez da Silva, Count de Melito, was the man upon whose shoulders the great burthen of the state reposed. He was of a family which was originally Portuguese. He had been brought up with the King, although some eight years his senior, and their friendship dated from earliest youth. It was said that Ruy Gomez, when a boy, had been condemned to death for having struck Philip, who had come between him and another page with whom he was quarrelling. The Prince threw himself passionately at his father's feet, and implored forgiveness in behalf of the culprit with such energy that the Emperor was graciously pleased to spare the life of the future prime minister. The incident was said to have laid the foundation of the remarkable affection which was supposed to exist between the two, to an extent never witnessed before between king and subject. Ruy Gomez was famous for his tact and complacency, and omitted no opportunity of cementing the friendship thus auspiciously commenced. He was said to have particularly charmed his master, upon one occasion, by hypocritically throwing up his cards at a game of hazard played for a large stake, and permitting him to win the game with a far inferior hand. The King learning afterwards the true state of the case, was charmed by the grace and self-denial manifested by the young nobleman. The complacency which the favorite subsequently exhibited in regard to the connexion which existed so long and so publicly between his wife, the celebrated Princess Eboli, and Philip, placed his power upon an impregnable basis, and secured it till his death.

At the present moment he occupied the three posts of valet, state councillor, and finance minister. He dressed and undressed his master, read or talked him to sleep, called him in the morning, admitted those who were to have private audiences, and superintended all the arrangements of the household. The rest of the day was devoted to the enormous correspondence and affairs of administration which devolved upon him as first minister of state and treasury. He was very ignorant. He had no experience or acquirement in the arts either of war or peace, and his early education had been limited. Like his master, he spoke no tongue but Spanish, and he had no literature. He had prepossessing manners, a fluent tongue, a winning and benevolent disposition. His natural capacity for affairs was considerable, and his tact was so perfect that he could converse face to face with statesmen; doctors, and generals upon campaigns, theology, or jurisprudence, without betraying any remarkable deficiency. He was very industrious, endeavoring to make up by hard study for his lack of general knowledge, and to sustain with credit the burthen of his daily functions. At the same time, by the King's desire, he appeared constantly at the frequent banquets, masquerades, tourneys and festivities, for which Brussels at that epoch was remarkable. It was no wonder that his cheek

Page 105

was pale, and that he seemed dying of overwork. He discharged his duties cheerfully, however, for in the service of Philip he knew no rest. "After God," said Badovaro, "he knows no object save the felicity of his master." He was already, as a matter of course, very rich, having been endowed by Philip with property to the amount of twenty-six thousand dollars yearly, [at values of 1855] and the tide of his fortunes was still at the flood.

Such were the two men, the master and the favorite, to whose hands the destinies of the Netherlands were now entrusted.

The Queen of Hungary had resigned the office of Regent of the Netherlands, as has been seen, on the occasion of the Emperor's abdication. She was a woman of masculine character, a great huntress before the Lord, a celebrated horsewoman, a worthy descendant of the Lady Mary of Burgundy. Notwithstanding all the fine phrases exchanged between herself and the eloquent Maas, at the great ceremony of the 25th of October, she was, in reality, much detested in the provinces, and she repaid their aversion with abhorrence. "I could not live among these people," she wrote to the Emperor, but a few weeks before the abdication, "even as a private person, for it would be impossible for me to do my duty towards God and my prince. As to governing them, I take God to witness that the task is so abhorrent to me, that I would rather earn my daily bread by labor than attempt it." She added, that a woman of fifty years of age, who had served during twenty-five of them, had a right to repose, and that she was moreover "too old to recommence and learn her A, B, C." The Emperor, who had always respected her for the fidelity with which she had carried out his designs, knew that it was hopeless to oppose her retreat. As for Philip, he hated his aunt, and she hated him—although, both at the epoch of the abdication and subsequently, he was desirous that she should administer the government.

The new Regent was to be the Duke of Savoy. This wandering and adventurous potentate had attached himself to Philip's fortunes, and had been received by the King with as much favor as he had ever enjoyed at the hands of the Emperor. Emanuel Philibert of Savoy, then about twenty-six or seven years of age, was the son of the late unfortunate duke, by Donna Beatrice of Portugal, sister of the Empress. He was the nephew of Charles, and first cousin to Philip. The partiality of the Emperor for his mother was well known, but the fidelity with which the family had followed the imperial cause had been productive of nothing but disaster to the duke. He had been ruined in fortune, stripped of all his dignities and possessions. His son's only inheritance was his sword. The young Prince of Piedmont, as he was commonly called in his youth; sought the camp of the Emperor, and was received with distinguished favor. He rose rapidly in the military service. Acting always upon his favorite motto, "Spoliatis

Page 106

arma supersunt," he had determined, if possible, to carve his way to glory, to wealth, and even to his hereditary estates, by his sword alone. War was not only his passion, but his trade. Every one of his campaigns was a speculation, and he had long derived a satisfactory income by purchasing distinguished prisoners of war at a low price from the soldiers who had captured them, and were ignorant of their rank, and by ransoming them afterwards at an immense advance. This sort of traffic in men was frequent in that age, and was considered perfectly honorable. Marshal Strozzi, Count Mansfeld, and other professional soldiers, derived their main income from the system. They were naturally inclined, therefore, to look impatiently upon a state of peace as an unnatural condition of affairs which cut off all the profits of their particular branch of industry, and condemned them both to idleness and poverty. The Duke of Savoy had become one of the most experienced and successful commanders of the age, and an especial favorite with the Emperor. He had served with Alva in the campaigns against the Protestants of Germany, and in other important fields. War being his element, he considered peace as undesirable, although he could recognize its existence. A truce he held, however, to be a senseless parodox, unworthy of the slightest regard. An armistice, such as was concluded on the February following the abdication, was, in his opinion, only to be turned to account by dealing insidious and unsuspected blows at the enemy, some portion of whose population might repose confidence in the plighted faith of monarchs and plenipotentiaries. He had a show of reason for his political and military morality, for he only chose to execute the evil which had been practised upon himself. His father had been beggared, his mother had died of spite and despair, he had himself been reduced from the rank of a sovereign to that of a mercenary soldier, by spoliations made in time of truce. He was reputed a man of very decided abilities, and was distinguished for headlong bravery. His rashness and personal daring were thought the only drawbacks to his high character as a commander. He had many accomplishments. He spoke Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian with equal fluency, was celebrated for his attachment to the fine arts, and wrote much and with great elegance. Such had been Philibert of Savoy, the pauper nephew of the powerful Emperor, the adventurous and vagrant cousin of the lofty Philip, a prince without a people, a duke without a dukedom; with no hope but in warfare, with no revenue but rapine; the image, in person, of a bold and manly soldier, small, but graceful and athletic, martial in bearing, "wearing his sword under his arm like a corporal," because an internal malady made a belt inconvenient, and ready to turn to swift account every chance which a new series of campaigns might open to him. With his new salary as governor, his pensions, and the remains of his possessions in Nice and Piedmont, he had now the splendid annual income of one hundred thousand crowns, and was sure to spend it all.

Page 107

It had been the desire of Charles to smooth the commencement of Philip's path. He had for this purpose made a vigorous effort to undo, as it were, the whole work of his reign, to suspend the operation of his whole political system. The Emperor and conqueror, who had been warring all his lifetime, had attempted, as the last act of his reign, to improvise a peace. But it was not so easy to arrange a pacification of Europe as dramatically as he desired, in order that he might gather his robes about him, and allow the curtain to fall upon his eventful history in a grand hush of decorum and quiet. During the autumn and winter of 1555, hostilities had been virtually suspended, and languid negotiations ensued. For several months armies confronted each other without engaging, and diplomatists fenced among themselves without any palpable result. At last the peace commissioners, who had been assembled at Vaucelles since the beginning of the year 1556, signed a treaty of truce rather than of peace, upon the 5th of February. It was to be an armistice of five years, both by land and sea, for France, Spain, Flanders, and Italy, throughout all the dominions of the French and Spanish monarchs. The Pope was expressly included in the truce, which was signed on the part of France by Admiral Coligny and Sebastian l'Aubespine; on that of Spain, by Count de Lalain, Philibert de Bruxelles, Simon Renard, and Jean Baptiste Sciceio, a jurisconsult of Cremona. During the precious month of December, however, the Pope had concluded with the French monarch a treaty, by which this solemn armistice was rendered an egregious farce. While Henry's plenipotentiaries had been plighting their faith to those of Philip, it had been arranged that France should sustain, by subsidies and armies, the scheme upon which Paul was bent, to drive the Spaniards entirely out of the Italian peninsula. The king was to aid the pontiff, and, in return, was to carve thrones for his own younger children out of the confiscated realms of Philip. When was France ever slow to sweep upon Italy with such a hope? How could the ever-glowing rivalry of Valois and Habsburg fail to burst into a general conflagration, while the venerable vicegerent of Christ stood thus beside them with his fan in his hand?

For a brief breathing space, however, the news of the pacification occasioned much joy in the provinces. They rejoiced even in a temporary cessation of that long series of campaigns from which they could certainly derive no advantage, and in which their part was to furnish money, soldiers, and battlefields, without prospect of benefit from any victory, however brilliant, or any treaty, however elaborate. Manufacturing, agricultural and commercial provinces, filled to the full with industrial life, could not but be injured by being converted into perpetual camps. All was joy in the Netherlands, while at Antwerp, the great commercial metropolis of the provinces and of Europe, the rapture was unbounded. Oxen were

Page 108

roasted whole in the public squares; the streets, soon to be empurpled with the best blood of her citizens, ran red with wine; a hundred triumphal arches adorned the pathway of Philip as he came thither; and a profusion of flowers, although it was February, were strewn before his feet. Such was his greeting in the light-hearted city, but the countenance was more than usually sullen with which the sovereign received these demonstrations of pleasure. It was thought by many that Philip had been really disappointed in the conclusion of the armistice, that he was inspired with a spark of that martial ambition for which his panegyrists gave him credit, and that knowing full well the improbability of a long suspension of hostilities, he was even eager for the chance of conquest which their resumption would afford him. The secret treaty of the Pope was of course not so secret but that the hollow intention of the contracting parties to the truce of Vaucelles were thoroughly suspected; intentions which certainly went far to justify the maxims and the practice of the new governor-general of the Netherlands upon the subject of armistices.

Philip, understanding his position, was revolving renewed military projects while his subjects were ringing merry bells and lighting bonfires in the Netherlands. These schemes, which were to be carried out in the immediate future, caused, however, a temporary delay in the great purpose to which he was to devote his life.

The Emperor had always desired to regard the Netherlands as a whole, and he hated the antiquated charters and obstinate privileges which interfered with his ideas of symmetry. Two great machines, the court of Mechlin and the inquisition, would effectually simplify and assimilate all these irregular and heterogeneous rights. The civil tribunal was to annihilate all diversities in their laws by a general cassation of their constitutions, and the ecclesiastical court was to burn out all differences in their religious faith. Between two such millstones it was thought that the Netherlands might be crushed into uniformity. Philip succeeded to these traditions. The father had never sufficient leisure to carry out all his schemes, but it seemed probable that the son would be a worthy successor, at least in all which concerned the religious part of his system. One of the earliest measures of his reign was to re-enact the dread edict of 1550. This he did by the express advice of the Bishop of Arras who represented to him the expediency of making use of the popularity of his father’s name, to sustain the horrible system resolved upon. As Charles was the author of the edict, it could be always argued that nothing new was introduced; that burning, hanging, and drowning for religious differences constituted a part of the national institutions; that they had received the sanction of the wise Emperor, and had been sustained by the sagacity of past generations. Nothing could have been more subtle, as the event proved, than this

Page 109

advice. Innumerable were the appeals made in subsequent years, upon this subject, to the patriotism and the conservative sentiments of the Netherlanders. Repeatedly they were summoned to maintain the inquisition, on the ground that it had been submitted to by their ancestors, and that no change had been made by Philip, who desired only to maintain church and crown in the authority which they had enjoyed in the days of his father of very laudable memory.

Nevertheless, the King's military plans seemed to interfere for the moment with this cherished object. He seemed to swerve, at starting, from pursuing the goal which he was only to abandon with life. The edict of 1550 was re-enacted and confirmed, and all office-holders were commanded faithfully to enforce it upon pain of immediate dismissal. Nevertheless, it was not vigorously carried into effect any where. It was openly resisted in Holland, its proclamation was flatly refused in Antwerp, and repudiated throughout Brabant. It was strange that such disobedience should be tolerated, but the King wanted money. He was willing to refrain for a season from exasperating the provinces by fresh religious persecution at the moment when he was endeavoring to extort every penny which it was possible to wring from their purses.

The joy, therefore, with which the pacification had been hailed by the people was far from an agreeable spectacle to the King. The provinces would expect that the forces which had been maintained at their expense during the war would be disbanded, whereas he had no intention of disbanding them. As the truce was sure to be temporary, he had no disposition to diminish his available resources for a war which might be renewed at any moment. To maintain the existing military establishment in the Netherlands, a large sum of money was required, for the pay was very much in arrear. The king had made a statement to the provincial estates upon this subject, but the matter was kept secret during the negotiations with France. The way had thus been paved for the "Request" or "Bede," which he now made to the estates assembled at Brussels, in the spring of 1556. It was to consist of a tax of one per cent. (the hundredth penny) upon all real estate, and of two per cent. upon all merchandise; to be collected in three payments. The request, in so far as the imposition of the proposed tax was concerned, was refused by Flanders, Brabant, Holland, and all the other important provinces, but as usual, a moderate, even a generous, commutation in money was offered by the estates. This was finally accepted by Philip, after he had become convinced that at this moment, when he was contemplating a war with France, it would be extremely impolitic to insist upon the tax. The publication of the truce in Italy had been long delayed, and the first infractions which it suffered were committed in that country. The arts of politicians; the schemes of individual ambition, united with the short-lived military ardor of Philip to place the monarch in an eminently false position, that of hostility to the Pope. As was unavoidable, the secret treaty of December acted as an immediate dissolvent to the truce of February.

Page 110

Great was the indignation of Paul Caraffa, when that truce was first communicated to him by the Cardinal de Tournon, on the part of the French Government. Notwithstanding the protestations of France that the secret league was still binding, the pontiff complained that he was likely to be abandoned to his own resources, and to be left single-handed to contend with the vast power of Spain.

Pope Paul *iv*., of the house of Caraffa, was, in position, the well-known counterpart of the Emperor Charles. At the very moment when the conqueror and autocrat was exchanging crown for cowl, and the proudest throne of the universe for a cell, this aged monk, as weary of scientific and religious seclusion as Charles of pomp and power, had abdicated his scholastic pre-eminence, and exchanged his rosary for the keys and sword. A pontifical Faustus, he had become disgusted with the results of a life of study and abnegation, and immediately upon his election appeared to be glowing with mundane passions, and inspired by the fiercest ambition of a warrior. He had rushed from the cloister as eagerly as Charles had sought it. He panted for the tempests of the great external world as earnestly as the conqueror who had so long ridden upon the whirlwind of human affairs sighed for a haven of repose. None of his predecessors had been more despotic, more belligerent, more disposed to elevate and strengthen the temporal power of Rome. In the inquisition he saw the grand machine by which this purpose could be accomplished, and yet found himself for a period the antagonist of Philip. The single circumstance would have been sufficient, had other proofs been wanting, to make manifest that the part which he had chosen to play was above his genius. Had his capacity been at all commensurate with his ambition, he might have deeply influenced the fate of the world; but fortunately no wizard's charm came to the aid of Paul Caraffa, and the triple-crowned monk sat upon the pontifical throne, a fierce, peevish, querulous, and quarrelsome dotard; the prey and the tool of his vigorous enemies and his intriguing relations. His hatred of Spain and Spaniards was unbounded. He raved at them as "heretics, schismatics, accursed of God, the spawn of Jews and Moors, the very dregs of the earth." To play upon such insane passions was not difficult, and a skilful artist stood ever ready to strike the chords thus vibrating with age and fury. The master spirit and principal mischief-maker of the papal court was the well-known Cardinal Caraffa, once a wild and dissolute soldier, nephew to the Pope. He inflamed the anger of the pontiff by his representations, that the rival house of Colonna, sustained by the Duke of Alva, now viceroy of Naples, and by the whole Spanish power, thus relieved from the fear of French hostilities, would be free to wreak its vengeance upon their family. It was determined that the court of France should be held by the secret league. Moreover, the Pope had been expressly included in

Page 111

the treaty of Vaucelles, although the troops of Spain had already assumed a hostile attitude in the south of Italy. The Cardinal was for immediately proceeding to Paris, there to excite the sympathy of the French monarch for the situation of himself and his uncle. An immediate rupture between France and Spain, a re-kindling of the war flames from one end of Europe to the other, were necessary to save the credit and the interests of the Caraffas. Cardinal de Tournon, not desirous of so sudden a termination to the pacific relations between his, country and Spain, succeeded in detaining him a little longer in Rome.—He remained, but not in idleness. The restless intriguer had already formed close relations with the most important personage in France, Diana of Poitiers. —This venerable courtesan, to the enjoyment of whose charms Henry had succeeded, with the other regal possessions, on the death of his father, was won by the flatteries of the wily Caraffa, and by the assiduities of the Guise family. The best and most sagacious statesmen, the Constable, and the Admiral, were in favor of peace, for they knew the condition of the kingdom. The Duke of Guise and the Cardinal Lorraine were for a rupture, for they hoped to increase their family influence by war. Coligny had signed the treaty of Vaucelles, and wished to maintain it, but the influence of the Catholic party was in the ascendant. The result was to embroil the Catholic King against the Pope and against themselves. The queen was as favorably inclined as the mistress to listen to Caraffa, for Catherine de Medici was desirous that her cousin, Marshal Strozzi, should have honorable and profitable employment in some fresh Italian campaigns.

In the mean time an accident favored the designs of the papal court. An open quarrel with Spain resulted from an insignificant circumstance. The Spanish ambassador at Rome was in the habit of leaving the city very often, at an early hour in the morning, upon shooting excursions, and had long enjoyed the privilege of ordering the gates to be opened for him at his pleasure. By accident or design, he was refused permission upon one occasion to pass through the gate as usual. Unwilling to lose his day's sport, and enraged at what he considered an indignity, his excellency, by the aid of his attendants, attacked and beat the guard, mastered them, made his way out of the city, and pursued his morning's amusement. The Pope was furious, Caraffa artfully inflamed his anger. The envoy was refused an audience, which he desired, for the sake of offering explanations, and the train being thus laid, it was thought that the right moment had arrived for applying the firebrand. The Cardinal went to Paris post haste. In his audience of the King, he represented that his Holiness had placed implicit reliance upon his secret treaty with his majesty, that the recently concluded truce with Spain left the pontiff at the mercy of the Spaniard, that the Duke of Alva had already drawn the sword,

Page 112

that the Pope had long since done himself the pleasure and the honor of appointing the French monarch protector of the papal chair in general, and of the Caraffa family in particular, and that the moment had arrived for claiming the benefit of that protection. He assured him, moreover, as by full papal authority, that in respecting the recent truce with Spain, his majesty would violate both human and divine law. Reason and justice required him to defend the pontiff, now that the Spaniards were about to profit by the interval of truce to take measures for his detriment. Moreover, as the Pope was included in the truce of Vaucelles, he could not be abandoned without a violation of that treaty itself.—The arts and arguments of the Cardinal proved successful; the war was resolved upon in favor of the Pope. The Cardinal, by virtue of powers received and brought with him from his holiness, absolved the King from all obligation to keep his faith with Spain. He also gave him a dispensation from the duty of prefacing hostilities by a declaration of war. Strozzi was sent at once into Italy, with some hastily collected troops, while the Duke of Guise waited to organize a regular army.

The mischief being thus fairly afoot, and war let loose again upon Europe, the Cardinal made a public entry into Paris, as legate of the Pope. The populace crowded about his mule, as he rode at the head of a stately procession through the streets. All were anxious to receive a benediction from the holy man who had come so far to represent the successor of St. Peter, and to enlist the efforts of all true believers in his cause. He appeared to answer the entreaties of the superstitious rabble with fervent blessings, while the friends who were nearest him were aware that nothing but gibes and sarcasms were falling from his lips. “Let us fool these poor creatures to their heart’s content, since they will be fools,” he muttered; smiling the while upon them benignantly, as became his holy office. Such were the materials of this new combination; such was the fuel with which this new blaze was lighted and maintained. Thus were the great powers of the earth—Spain, France, England, and the Papacy embroiled, and the nations embattled against each other for several years. The preceding pages show how much national interests, or principles; were concerned in the struggle thus commenced, in which thousands were to shed their life-blood, and millions to be reduced from peace and comfort to suffer all the misery which famine and rapine can inflict. It would no doubt have increased the hilarity of Caraffa, as he made his triumphant entry into Paris, could the idea have been suggested to his mind that the sentiments, or the welfare of the people throughout the great states now involved in his meshes, could have any possible bearing upon the question of peace or wax. The world was governed by other influences. The wiles of a cardinal—the arts of a concubine—the snipe-shooting of an ambassador—the speculations

Page 113

of a soldier of fortune—the ill temper of a monk—the mutual venom of Italian houses—-above all, the perpetual rivalry of the two great historical families who owned the greater part of Europe between them as their private property—such were the wheels on which rolled the destiny of Christendom. Compared to these, what were great moral and political ideas, the plans of statesmen, the hopes of nations? Time was soon to show. Meanwhile, government continued to be administered exclusively for the benefit of the governors. Meanwhile, a petty war for paltry motives was to precede the great spectacle which was to prove to Europe that principles and peoples still existed, and that a phlegmatic nation of merchants and manufacturers could defy the powers of the universe, and risk all their blood and treasure, generation after generation, in a sacred cause.

It does not belong to our purpose to narrate the details of the campaign in Italy; neither is this war of politics and chicane of any great interest at the present day. To the military minds of their age, the scientific duel which now took place upon a large scale, between two such celebrated captains as the Dukes of Guise and Alva, was no doubt esteemed the most important of spectacles; but the progress of mankind in the art of slaughter has stripped so antiquated an exhibition of most of its interest, even in a technical point of view. Not much satisfaction could be derived from watching an old-fashioned game of war, in which the parties sat down before each other so tranquilly, and picked up piece after piece, castle after castle, city after city, with such scientific deliberation as to make it evident that, in the opinion of the commanders, war was the only serious business to be done in the world; that it was not to be done in a hurry, nor contrary to rule, and that when a general had a good job upon his hands he ought to know his profession much too thoroughly, to hasten through it before he saw his way clear to another. From the point of time, at the close of the year 1556, when that well-trained but not very successful soldier, Strozzi, crossed the Alps, down to the autumn of the following year, when the Duke of Alva made his peace with the Pope, there was hardly a pitched battle, and scarcely an event of striking interest. Alva, as usual, brought his dilatory policy to bear upon his adversary with great effect. He had no intention, he observed to a friend, to stake the whole kingdom of Naples against a brocaded coat of the Duke of Guise. Moreover, he had been sent to the war, as Ruy Gomez informed the Venetian ambassador, “with a bridle in his mouth.” Philip, sorely troubled in his mind at finding himself in so strange a position as this hostile attitude to the Church, had earnestly interrogated all the doctors and theologians with whom he habitually took counsel, whether this war with the Pope would not work a forfeiture of his title of the Most Catholic King. The Bishop of Arras

Page 114

and the favorite both disapproved of the war, and encouraged, with all their influence, the pacific inclinations of the monarch. The doctors were, to be sure, of opinion that Philip, having acted in Italy only in self-defence, and for the protection of his states, ought not to be anxious as to his continued right to the title on which he valued himself so highly. Nevertheless, such ponderings and misgivings could not but have the effect of hampering the actions of Alva. That general chafed inwardly at what he considered his own contemptible position. At the same time, he enraged the Duke of Guise still more deeply by the forced calmness of his proceedings. Fortresses were reduced, towns taken, one after another, with the most provoking deliberation, while his distracted adversary in vain strove to defy, or to delude him, into trying the chances of a stricken field. The battle of Saint Quentin, the narrative of which belongs to our subject, and will soon occupy our attention, at last decided the Italian operations. Egmont's brilliant triumph in Picardy rendered a victory in Italy superfluous, and placed in Alva's hand the power of commanding the issue of his own campaign. The Duke of Guise was recalled to defend the French frontier, which the bravery of the Flemish hero had imperilled, and the Pope was left to make the best peace which he could. All was now prosperous and smiling, and the campaign closed with a highly original and entertaining exhibition. The pontiff's puerile ambition, sustained by the intrigues of his nephew, had involved the French monarch in a war which was contrary to his interests and inclination. Paul now found his ally too sorely beset to afford him that protection upon which he had relied, when he commenced, in his dotage, his career as a warrior. He was, therefore, only desirous of deserting his friend, and of relieving himself from his uncomfortable predicament, by making a treaty with his catholic majesty upon the best terms which he could obtain. The King of France, who had gone to war only for the sake of his holiness, was to be left to fight his own battles, while the Pope was to make his peace with all the world. The result was a desirable one for Philip. Alva was accordingly instructed to afford the holy father a decorous and appropriate opportunity for carrying out his wishes. The victorious general was apprized that his master desired no fruit from his commanding attitude in Italy and the victory of Saint Quentin, save a full pardon from the Pope for maintaining even a defensive war against him. An amicable siege of Rome was accordingly commenced, in the course of which an assault or "camiciata" on the holy city, was arranged for the night of the 26th August, 1557. The pontiff agreed to be taken by surprise—while Alva, through what was to appear only a superabundance of his habitual discretion, was to draw off his troops at the very moment when the victorious assault was to be made. The imminent

Page 115

danger to the holy city and to his own sacred person thus furnishing the pontiff with an excuse for abandoning his own cause, as well as that of his ally the Duke of Alva was allowed, in the name of his master and himself; to make submission to the Church and his peace with Rome. The Spanish general, with secret indignation and disgust, was compelled to humor the vanity of a peevish but imperious old man. Negotiations were commenced, and so skilfully had the Duke played his game during the spring and summer, that when he was admitted to kiss the Pope's toe, he was able to bring a hundred Italian towns in his hand, as a peace-offering to his holiness. These he now restored, with apparent humility and inward curses, upon the condition that the fortifications should be razed, and the French alliance absolutely renounced. Thus did the fanaticism of Philip reverse the relative position of himself and his antagonist. Thus was the vanquished pontiff allowed almost to dictate terms to the victorious general. The king who could thus humble himself to a dotard, while he made himself the scourge of his subjects, deserved that the bull of excommunication which had been prepared should have been fulminated. He, at least, was capable of feeling the scathing effects of such anathemas.

The Duke of Guise, having been dismissed with the pontiff's assurance that he had done little for the interests of his sovereign, less for the protection of the Church, and least of all for his own reputation, set forth with all speed for Civita Vecchia, to do what he could upon the Flemish frontier to atone for his inglorious campaign in Italy. The treaty between the Pope and the Duke of Alva was signed on the 14th September (1557), and the Spanish general retired for the winter to Milan. Cardinal Caraffa was removed from the French court to that of Madrid, there to spin new schemes for the embroilment of nations and the advancement of his own family. Very little glory was gained by any of the combatants in this campaign. Spain, France, nor Paul *iv*., not one of them came out of the Italian contest in better condition than that in which they entered upon it. In fact all were losers. France had made an inglorious retreat, the Pope a ludicrous capitulation, and the only victorious party, the King of Spain, had, during the summer, conceded to Cosmo de Medici the sovereignty of Sienna. Had Venice shown more cordiality towards Philip, and more disposition to sustain his policy, it is probable that the Republic would have secured the prize which thus fell to the share of Cosmo. That astute and unprincipled potentate, who could throw his net so well in troubled water, had successfully duped all parties, Spain, France, and Rome. The man who had not only not participated in the contest, but who had kept all parties and all warfare away from his borders, was the only individual in Italy who gained territorial advantage from the war.

To avoid interrupting the continuity of the narrative, the Spanish campaign has been briefly sketched until the autumn of 1557, at which period the treaty between the Pope and Philip was concluded. It is now necessary to go back to the close of the preceding year.

Page 116

Simultaneously with the descent of the French troops upon Italy, hostilities had broken out upon the Flemish border. The pains of the Emperor in covering the smouldering embers of national animosities so precipitately, and with a view rather to scenic effect than to a deliberate and well-considered result, were thus set at nought, and within a year from the day of his abdication, hostilities were reopened from the Tiber to the German Ocean. The blame of first violating the truce of Vaucelles was laid by each party upon the other with equal justice, for there can be but little doubt that the reproach justly belonged to both. Both had been equally faithless in their professions of amity. Both were equally responsible for the scenes of war, plunder, and misery, which again were desolating the fairest regions of Christendom.

At the time when the French court had resolved to concede to the wishes of the Caraffa family, Admiral Coligny, who had been appointed governor of Picardy, had received orders to make a foray upon the frontier of Flanders. Before the formal annunciation of hostilities, it was thought desirable to reap all the advantage possible from the perfidy which had been resolved upon.

It happened that a certain banker of Lucca, an ancient gambler and debauchee, whom evil courses had reduced from affluence to penury, had taken up his abode upon a hill overlooking the city of Douay. Here he had built himself a hermit's cell. Clad in sackcloth, with a rosary at his waist, he was accustomed to beg his bread from door to door. His garb was all, however, which he possessed of sanctity, and he had passed his time in contemplating the weak points in the defences of the city with much more minuteness than those in his own heart. Upon the breaking out of hostilities in Italy, the instincts of his old profession had suggested to him that a good speculation might be made in Flanders, by turning to account as a spy the observations which he had made in his character of a hermit. He sought an interview with Coligny, and laid his propositions before him. The noble Admiral hesitated, for his sentiments were more elevated than those of many of his contemporaries. He had, moreover, himself negotiated and signed the truce with Spain, and he shrank from violating it with his own hand, before a declaration of war. Still he was aware that a French army was on its way to attack the Spaniards in Italy; he was under instructions to take the earliest advantage which his position upon the frontier might offer him; he knew that both theory and practice authorized a general, in that age, to break his fast, even in time of truce, if a tempting morsel should present itself; and, above all, he thoroughly understood the character of his nearest antagonist, the new governor of the Netherlands, Philibert of Savoy, whom he knew to be the most unscrupulous chieftain in Europe. These considerations decided him to take advantage of the hermit-banker's communication.

Page 117

A day was accordingly fixed, at which, under the guidance of this newly-acquired ally, a surprise should be attempted by the French forces, and the unsuspecting city of Douay given over to the pillage of a brutal soldiery. The time appointed was the night of Epiphany, upon occasion of which festival, it was thought that the inhabitants, overcome with sleep and wassail, might be easily overpowered. (6th January, 1557.) The plot was a good plot, but the Admiral of France was destined to be foiled by an old woman. This person, apparently the only creature awake in the town, perceived the danger, ran shrieking through the streets, alarmed the citizens while it was yet time, and thus prevented the attack. Coligny, disappointed in his plan, recompensed his soldiers by a sudden onslaught upon Lens in Arthois, which he sacked and then levelled with the ground. Such was the wretched condition of frontier cities, standing, even in time of peace, with the ground undermined beneath them, and existing every moment, as it were, upon the brink of explosion.

Hostilities having been thus fairly commenced, the French government was in some embarrassment. The Duke of Guise, with the most available forces of the kingdom, having crossed the Alps, it became necessary forthwith to collect another army. The place of rendezvous appointed was Pierrepoint, where an army of eighteen thousand infantry and five thousand horse were assembled early in the spring. In the mean time, Philip finding the war fairly afoot, had crossed to England for the purpose (exactly in contravention of all his marriage stipulations) of cajoling his wife and browbeating her ministers into a participation in his war with France. This was easily accomplished. The English nation found themselves accordingly engaged in a contest with which they had no concern, which, as the event proved, was very much against their interests, and in which the moving cause for their entanglement was the devotion of a weak, bad, ferocious woman, for a husband who hated her. A herald sent from England arrived in France, disguised, and was presented to King Henry at Rheims. Here, dropping on one knee, he recited a list of complaints against his majesty, on behalf of the English Queen, all of them fabricated or exaggerated for the occasion, and none of them furnishing even a decorous pretext for the war which was now formally declared in consequence. The French monarch expressed his regret and surprise that the firm and amicable relations secured by treaty between the two countries should thus, without sufficient cause, be violated. In accepting the wager of warfare thus forced upon him, he bade the herald, Norris, inform his mistress that her messenger was treated with courtesy only because he represented a lady, and that, had he come from a king, the language with which he would have been greeted would have befitted the perfidy manifested on the occasion. God would punish this shameless violation of faith, and this wanton interruption to the friendship of two great nations. With this the herald was dismissed from the royal presence, but treated with great distinction, conducted to the hotel of the English ambassador, and presented, on the part of the French sovereign with a chain of gold.

Page 118

Philip had despatched Ruy Gomez to Spain for the purpose of providing ways and means, while he was himself occupied with the same task in England. He stayed there three months. During this time, he “did more,” says a Spanish contemporary, “than any one could have believed possible with that proud and indomitable nation. He caused them to declare war against France with fire and sword, by sea and land.” Hostilities having been thus chivalrously and formally established, the Queen sent an army of eight thousand men, cavalry, infantry, and pioneers, who, “all clad in blue uniform,” commanded by Lords Pembroke and Clinton, with the three sons of the Earl of Northumberland, and officered by many other scions of England’s aristocracy, disembarked at Calais, and shortly afterwards joined the camp before Saint Quentin.

Philip meantime had left England, and with more bustle and activity than was usual with him, had given directions for organizing at once a considerable army. It was composed mainly of troops belonging to the Netherlands, with the addition of some German auxiliaries. Thirty-five thousand foot and twelve thousand horse had, by the middle of July, advanced through the province of Namur, and were assembled at Givet under the Duke of Savoy, who, as Governor-General of the Netherlands, held the chief command. All the most eminent grandees of the provinces, Orange, Aerschot, Berlaymont, Meghen, Brederode, were present with the troops, but the life and soul of the army, upon this memorable occasion, was the Count of Egmont.

Lamoral, Count of Egmont, Prince of Gavere, was now in the thirty-sixth year of his age, in the very noon of that brilliant life which was destined to be so soon and so fatally overshadowed. Not one of the dark clouds, which were in the future to accumulate around him, had yet rolled above his horizon. Young, noble, wealthy, handsome, valiant, he saw no threatening phantom in the future, and caught eagerly at the golden opportunity, which the present placed within his grasp, of winning fresh laurels on a wider and more fruitful field than any in which he had hitherto been a reaper. The campaign about to take place was likely to be an imposing, if not an important one, and could not fail to be attractive to a noble of so ardent and showy a character as Egmont. If there were no lofty principles or extensive interests to be contended for, as there certainly were not, there was yet much that was stately and exciting to the imagination in the warfare which had been so deliberately and pompously arranged. The contending armies, although of moderate size, were composed of picked troops, and were commanded by the flower of Europe’s chivalry. Kings, princes, and the most illustrious paladins of Christendom, were arming for the great tournament, to which they had been summoned by herald and trumpet; and the Batavian hero, without a crown or even a country, but with as lofty a lineage as many anointed sovereigns could boast, was ambitious to distinguish himself in the proud array.

Page 119

Upon the north-western edge of the narrow peninsula of North Holland, washed by the stormy waters of the German Ocean, were the ancient castle, town, and lordship, whence Egmont derived his family name, and the title by which he was most familiarly known. He was supposed to trace his descent, through a line of chivalrous champions and crusaders, up to the pagan kings of the most ancient of existing Teutonic races. The eighth century names of the Frisian Radbold and Adgild among his ancestors were thought to denote the antiquity of a house whose lustre had been increased in later times by the splendor of its alliances. His father, united to Francoise de Luxemburg, Princess of Gavere, had acquired by this marriage, and transmitted to his posterity, many of the proudest titles and richest estates of Flanders. Of the three children who survived him, the only daughter was afterwards united to the Count of Vaudemont, and became mother of Louise de Vaudemont, queen of the French monarch, Henry the Third.

Of his two sons, Charles, the elder, had died young and unmarried, leaving all the estates and titles of the family to his brother. Lamoral, born in 1522, was in early youth a page of the Emperor. When old enough to bear arms he demanded and obtained permission to follow the career of his adventurous sovereign. He served his apprenticeship as a soldier in the stormy expedition to Barbary, where, in his nineteenth year, he commanded a troop of light horse, and distinguished himself under the Emperor’s eye for his courage and devotion, doing the duty not only of a gallant commander but of a hardy soldier. Returning, unscathed by the war, flood, or tempest of that memorable enterprise, he reached his country by the way of Corsica, Genoa, and Lorraine, and was three years afterwards united (in the year 1545) to Sabina of Bavaria, sister of Frederick, Elector Palatine. The nuptials had taken place at Spiers, and few royal weddings could have been more brilliant. The Emperor, his brother Ferdinand King of the Romans, with the Archduke Maximilian, all the imperial electors, and a concourse of the principal nobles of the empire, were present on the occasion been at the Emperor’s side during the unlucky siege of Metz; in 1554 he had been sent at the head of a splendid embassy to England, to solicit for Philip the hand of Mary Tudor, and had witnessed the marriage in Winchester Cathedral, the same year. Although one branch of his house had, in past times, arrived at the sovereignty of Gueldres, and another had acquired the great estates and titles of Buren, which had recently passed, by intermarriage with the heiress, into the possession of the Prince of Orange, yet the Prince of Gavere, Count of Egmont, was the chief of a race which yielded to none of the great Batavian or Flemish families in antiquity, wealth, or power. Personally, he was distinguished for his bravery, and although he was not yet the idol of the camp, which he was destined

Page 120

to become, nor had yet commanded in chief on any important occasion, he was accounted one of the five principal generals in the Spanish service. Eager for general admiration, he was at the same time haughty and presumptuous, attempting to combine the characters of an arrogant magnate and a popular chieftain. Terrible and sudden in his wrath, he was yet of inordinate vanity, and was easily led by those who understood his weakness. With a limited education, and a slender capacity for all affairs except those relating to the camp, he was destined to be as vacillating and incompetent as a statesman, as he was prompt and fortunately audacious in the field. A splendid soldier, his evil stars had destined him to tread, as a politician, a dark and dangerous path, in which not even genius, caution, and integrity could ensure success, but in which rashness alternating with hesitation, and credulity with violence, could not fail to bring ruin. Such was Count Egmont, as he took his place at the-head of the king's cavalry in the summer of 1557.

The early operations of the Duke of Savoy were at first intended to deceive the enemy. The army, after advancing as far into Picardy as the town of Vervins, which they burned and pillaged, made a demonstration with their whole force upon the city of Guise. This, however, was but a feint, by which attention was directed and forces drawn off from Saint Quentin, which was to be the real point of attack In the mean time, the Constable of France, Montmorency, arrived upon the 28th July (1557), to take command of the French troops. He was accompanied by the Marechal de Saint Andre and by Admiral Coligny. The most illustrious names of France, whether for station or valor, were in the officers' list of this select army. Nevers and Montpensier, Enghien and Conde, Vendome and Rochefoucauld, were already there, and now the Constable and the Admiral came to add the strength of their experience and lofty reputation to sustain the courage of the troops. The French were at Pierrepoint, a post between Champagne and Picardy, and in its neighborhood. The Spanish army was at Vervins, and threatening Guise. It had been the opinion in France that the enemy's intention was to invade Champagne, and the Duc de Nevers, governor of that province, had made a disposition of his forces suitable for such a contingency. It was the conviction of Montmorency, however, that Picardy was to be the quarter really attacked, and that Saint Quentin, which was the most important point at which the enemy's progress, by that route, towards Paris could be arrested, was in imminent danger. The Constable's opinion was soon confirmed by advices received by Coligny. The enemy's army, he was informed, after remaining three days before Guise, had withdrawn from that point, and had invested Saint Quentin with their whole force.

Page 121

This wealthy and prosperous city stood upon an elevation rising from the river Somme. It was surrounded by very extensive suburbs, ornamented with orchards and gardens, and including within their limits large tracts of a highly cultivated soil. Three sides of the place were covered by a lake, thirty yards in width, very deep at some points, in others, rather resembling a morass, and extending on the Flemish side a half mile beyond the city. The inhabitants were thriving and industrious; many of the manufacturers and merchants were very rich, for it was a place of much traffic and commercial importance.

Teligny, son-in-law of the Admiral, was in the city with a detachment of the Dauphin's regiment; Captain Brueuil was commandant of the town. Both informed Coligny of the imminent peril in which they stood. They represented the urgent necessity of immediate reinforcements both of men and supplies. The city, as the Admiral well knew, was in no condition to stand a siege by such an army, and dire were the consequences which would follow the downfall of so important a place. It was still practicable, they wrote, to introduce succor, but every day diminished the possibility of affording effectual relief. Coligny was not the man to let the grass grow under his feet, after such an appeal in behalf of the principal place in his government. The safety of France was dependent upon that of St. Quentin. The bulwark overthrown, Paris was within the next stride of an adventurous enemy. The Admiral instantly set out, upon the 2d of August, with strong reinforcements. It was too late. The English auxiliaries, under Lords Pembroke, Clinton, and Grey, had, in the mean time, effected their junction with the Duke of Savoy, and appeared in the camp before St. Quentin. The route, by which it had been hoped that the much needed succor could be introduced, was thus occupied and rendered impracticable. The Admiral, however, in consequence of the urgent nature of the letters received from Brueuil and Teligny, had outstripped, in his anxiety, the movements of his troops. He reached the city, almost alone and unattended. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of his officers, he had listened to no voice save the desperate entreaties of the besieged garrison, and had flown before his army. He now shut himself up in the city, determined to effect its deliverance by means of his skill and experience, or, at least, to share its fate. As the gates closed upon Coligny, the road was blocked up for his advancing troops.

A few days were passed in making ineffectual sorties, ordered by Coligny for the sake of reconnoitring the country, and of discovering the most practicable means of introducing supplies. The Constable, meantime, who had advanced with his army to La Fore, was not idle. He kept up daily communications with the beleagured Admiral, and was determined, if possible, to relieve the city. There was, however, a constant succession of disappointments. Moreover, the

Page 122

brave but indiscreet Teligny, who commanded during a temporary illness of the Admiral, saw fit, against express orders, to make an imprudent sortie. He paid the penalty of his rashness with his life. He was rescued by the Admiral in person, who, at imminent hazard, brought back the unfortunate officer covered with wounds, into the city, there to die at his father's feet, imploring forgiveness for his disobedience. Meantime the garrison was daily growing weaker. Coligny sent out of the city all useless consumers, quartered all the women in the cathedral and other churches, where they were locked in, lest their terror and their tears should weaken the courage of the garrison; and did all in his power to strengthen the defences of the city, and sustain the resolution of the inhabitants. Affairs were growing desperate. It seemed plain that the important city must soon fall, and with it most probably Paris. One of the suburbs was already in the hands of the enemy. At last Coligny discovered a route by which he believed it to be still possible to introduce reinforcements. He communicated the results of his observations to the Constable. Upon one side of the city the lake, or morass, was traversed by a few difficult and narrow pathways, mostly under water, and by a running stream which could only be passed in boats. The Constable, in consequence of this information received from Coligny, set out from La Fere upon the 8th of August, with four thousand infantry and two thousand horse. Halting his troops at the village of Essigny, he advanced in person to the edge of the morass, in order to reconnoitre the ground and prepare his plans. The result was a determination to attempt the introduction of men and supplies into the town by the mode suggested. Leaving his troops drawn up in battle array, he returned to La Fere for the remainder of his army, and to complete his preparations. Coligny in the mean time was to provide boats for crossing the stream. Upon the 10th August, which was the festival of St. Laurence, the Constable advanced with four pieces of heavy artillery, four culverines, and four lighter pieces, and arrived at nine o'clock in the morning near the Faubourg d'Isle, which was already in possession of the Spanish troops. The whole army of the Constable consisted of twelve thousand German, with fifteen companies of French infantry; making in all some sixteen thousand foot, with five thousand cavalry in addition. The Duke of Savoy's army lay upon the same side of the town, widely extended, and stretching beyond the river and the morass. Montmorency's project was to be executed in full view of the enemy. Fourteen companies of Spaniards were stationed in the faubourg. Two companies had been pushed forward as far as a water-mill, which lay in the pathway of the advancing Constable. These soldiers stood their ground for a moment, but soon retreated, while a cannonade was suddenly opened by the French upon the quarters of the Duke of Savoy. The Duke's

Page 123

tent was torn to pieces, and he had barely time to hurry on his cuirass, and to take refuge with Count Egmont. The Constable, hastening to turn this temporary advantage to account at once, commenced the transportation of his troops across the morass. The enterprise was, however, not destined to be fortunate. The number of boats which had been provided was very inadequate; moreover they were very small, and each as it left the shore was consequently so crowded with soldiers that it was in danger of being swamped. Several were overturned, and the men perished. It was found also that the opposite bank was steep and dangerous. Many who had crossed the river were unable to effect a landing, while those who escaped drowning in the water lost their way in the devious and impracticable paths, or perished miserably in the treacherous quagmires. Very few effected their entrance into the town, but among them was Andelot, brother of Coligny, with five hundred followers. Meantime, a council of officers was held in Egmont's tent. Opinions were undecided as to the course to be pursued under the circumstances. Should an engagement be risked, or should the Constable, who had but indifferently accomplished his project and had introduced but an insignificant number of troops into the city, be allowed to withdraw with the rest of his army? The fiery vehemence of Egmont carried all before it. Here was an opportunity to measure arms at advantage with the great captain of the age. To relinquish the prize, which the fortune of war had now placed within reach of their valor, was a thought not to be entertained. Here was the great Constable Montmorency, attended by princes of the royal blood, the proudest of the nobility, the very crown and flower of the chivalry of France, and followed by an army of her bravest troops. On a desperate venture he had placed himself within their grasp. Should he go thence alive and unmolested? The moral effect of destroying such an army would be greater than if it were twice its actual strength. It would be dealing a blow at the very heart of France, from which she could not recover. Was the opportunity to be resigned without a struggle of laying at the feet of Philip, in this his first campaign since his accession to his father's realms, a prize worthy of the proudest hour of the Emperor's reign? The eloquence of the impetuous Batavian was irresistible, and it was determined to cut off the Constable's retreat.

Three miles from the Faubourg d'Isle, to which that general had now advanced, was a narrow pass or defile, between steep and closely hanging hills. While advancing through this ravine in the morning, the Constable had observed that the enemy might have it in their power to intercept his return at that point. He had therefore left the Rhinegrave, with his company of mounted carabineers, to guard the passage. Being ready to commence his retreat, he now sent forward the Due de Nevers, with four companies of cavalry

Page 124

to strengthen that important position, which he feared might be inadequately guarded. The act of caution came too late. This was the fatal point which the quick glance of Egmont had at once detected. As Nevers reached the spot, two thousand of the enemy's cavalry rode through and occupied the narrow passage. Inflamed by mortification and despair, Nevers would have at once charged those troops, although outnumbering his own by nearly, four to one. His officers restrained him with difficulty, recalling to his memory the peremptory orders which he had received from the Constable to guard the passage, but on no account to hazard an engagement, until sustained by the body of the army. It was a case in which rashness would have been the best discretion. The headlong charge which the Duke had been about to make, might possibly have cleared the path and have extricated the army, provided the Constable had followed up the movement by a rapid advance upon his part. As it was, the passage was soon blocked up by freshly advancing bodies of Spanish and Flemish cavalry, while Nevers slowly and reluctantly fell back upon the Prince of Conde, who was stationed with the light horse at the mill where the first skirmish had taken place. They were soon joined by the Constable, with the main body of the army. The whole French force now commenced its retrograde movement. It was, however, but too evident that they were enveloped. As they approached the fatal pass through which lay their only road to La Fire, and which was now in complete possession of the enemy, the signal of assault was given by Count Egmont. That general himself, at the head of two thousand light horse, led the charge upon the left flank. The other side was assaulted by the Dukes Eric and Henry of Brunswick, each with a thousand heavy dragoons, sustained by Count Horn, at the head of a regiment of mounted gendarmerie. Mansfeld, Lalain, Hoogstraaten; and Vilain, at the same time made a furious attack upon the front. The French cavalry wavered with the shock so vigorously given. The camp followers, sutlers, and pedlers, panic-struck, at once fled helter-skelter, and in their precipitate retreat, carried confusion and dismay throughout all the ranks of the army. The rout was sudden and total. The onset and the victory were simultaneous, Nevers riding through a hollow with some companies of cavalry, in the hope of making a detour and presenting a new front to the enemy, was overwhelmed at once by the retreating French and their furious pursuers. The day was lost, retreat hardly possible, yet, by a daring and desperate effort, the Duke, accompanied by a handful of followers, cut his way through the enemy and effected his escape. The cavalry had been broken at the first onset and nearly destroyed. A portion of the infantry still held firm, and attempted to continue their retreat. Some pieces of artillery, however, now opened upon them, and before they reached Essigny, the whole army was completely annihilated. The defeat was absolute.

Page 125

Half the French troops actually engaged in the enterprise, lost their lives upon the field. The remainder of the army was captured or utterly disorganized. When Nevers reviewed, at Laon, the wreck of the Constable's whole force, he found some thirteen hundred French and three hundred German cavalry, with four companies of French infantry remaining out of fifteen, and four thousand German foot remaining of twelve thousand. Of twenty-one or two thousand remarkably fine and well-appointed troops, all but six thousand had been killed or made prisoners within an hour. The Constable himself, with a wound in the groin, was a captive. The Duke of Enghien, after behaving with brilliant valor, and many times rallying the troops, was shot through the body, and brought into the enemy's camp only to expire. The Due de Montpensier, the Marshal de Saint Andre, the Due de Loggieville, Prince Ludovic of Mantua, the Baron Corton, la Roche du Mayne, the Rhinegrave, the Counts de Rochefoucauld, d'Aubigni, de Rochefort, all were taken. The Due de Nevers, the Prince of Conde, with a few others, escaped; although so absolute was the conviction that such an escape was impossible, that it was not believed by the victorious army. When Nevers sent a trumpet, after the battle, to the Duke of Savoy, for the purpose of negotiating concerning the prisoners, the trumpeter was pronounced an impostor, and the Duke's letter a forgery; nor was it till after the whole field had been diligently searched for his dead body without success, that Nevers could persuade the conquerors that he was still in existence.

Of Philip's army but fifty lost their lives. Lewis of Brederode was smothered in his armor; and the two counts Spiegelberg and Count Waldeck were also killed; besides these, no officer of distinction fell. All the French standards and all their artillery but two pieces were taken, and placed before the King, who the next day came into the camp before Saint Quentin. The prisoners of distinction were likewise presented to him in long procession. Rarely had a monarch of Spain enjoyed a more signal triumph than this which Philip now owed to the gallantry and promptness of Count Egmont.

While the King stood reviewing the spoils of victory, a light horseman of Don Henrico Manrique's regiment approached, and presented him with a sword. "I am the man, may it please your Majesty," said the trooper, "who took the Constable; here is his sword; may your Majesty be pleased to give me something to eat in my house." "I promise it," replied Philip; upon which the soldier kissed his Majesty's hand and retired. It was the custom universally recognized in that day, that the king was the king's captive, and the general the general's, but that the man, whether soldier or officer, who took the commander-in-chief, was entitled to ten thousand ducats. Upon this occasion the Constable was the prisoner of Philip, supposed to command his own army in person. A certain Spanish Captain Valenzuela, however, disputed

Page 126

the soldier's claim to the Constable's sword. The trooper advanced at once to the Constable, who stood there with the rest of the illustrious prisoners. "Your excellency is a Christian," said he; "please to declare upon your conscience and the faith of a cavalier, whether 't was I that took you prisoner. It need not surprise your excellency that I am but a soldier, since with soldiers his Majesty must wage his wars." "Certainly," replied the Constable, "you took me and took my horse, and I gave you my sword. My word, however, I pledged to Captain Valenzuela." It appearing, however, that the custom of Spain did not recognize a pledge given to any one but the actual captor, it was arranged that the soldier should give two thousand of his ten thousand ducats to the captain. Thus the dispute ended.

Such was the brilliant victory of Saint Quentin, worthy to be placed in the same list with the world-renowned combats of Creqy and Agincourt. Like those battles, also, it derives its main interest from the personal character of the leader, while it seems to have been hallowed by the tender emotions which sprang from his subsequent fate. The victory was but a happy move in a winning game. The players were kings, and the people were stakes—not parties. It was a chivalrous display in a war which was waged without honorable purpose, and in which no single lofty sentiment was involved. The Flemish frontier was, however, saved for the time from the misery which was now to be inflicted upon the French border. This was sufficient to cause the victory to be hailed as rapturously by the people as by the troops. From that day forth the name of the brave Hollander was like the sound of a trumpet to the army. "Egmont and Saint Quentin" rang through every mouth to the furthest extremity of Philip's realms. A deadly blow was struck to the very heart of France. The fruits of all the victories of Francis and Henry withered. The battle, with others which were to follow it, won by the same hand, were soon to compel the signature of the most disastrous treaty which had ever disgraced the history of France.

The fame and power of the Constable faded—his misfortunes and captivity fell like a blight upon the ancient glory of the house of Montmorency—his enemies destroyed his influence and his popularity—while the degradation of the kingdom was simultaneous with the downfall of his illustrious name. On the other hand, the exultation of Philip was as keen as his cold and stony nature would permit. The magnificent palace-convent of the Escurial, dedicated to the saint on whose festival the battle had been fought, and built in the shape of the gridiron, on which that martyr had suffered, was soon afterwards erected in pious commemoration of the event. Such was the celebration of the victory. The reward reserved for the victor was to be recorded on a later page of history.

Page 127

The coldness and caution, not to say the pusillanimity of Philip, prevented him from seizing the golden fruits of his triumph. Ferdinand Gonzaga wished the blow to be followed up by an immediate march upon Paris.—Such was also the feeling of all the distinguished soldiers of the age. It was unquestionably the opinion, and would have been the deed, of Charles, had he been on the field of Saint Quentin, crippled as he was, in the place of his son. He could not conceal his rage and mortification when he found that Paris had not fallen, and is said to have refused to read the despatches which recorded that the event had not been consummated. There was certainly little of the conqueror in Philip's nature; nothing which would have led him to violate the safest principles of strategy. He was not the man to follow up enthusiastically the blow which had been struck; Saint Quentin, still untaken, although defended by but eight hundred soldiers, could not be left behind him; Nevers was still in his front, and although it was notorious that he commanded only the wreck of an army, yet a new one might be collected, perhaps, in time to embarrass the triumphant march to Paris. Out of his superabundant discretion, accordingly, Philip refused to advance till Saint Quentin should be reduced.

Although nearly driven to despair by the total overthrow of the French in the recent action, Coligny still held bravely out, being well aware that every day by which the siege could be protracted was of advantage to his country. Again he made fresh attempts to introduce men into the city. A fisherman showed him a submerged path, covered several feet deep with water, through which he succeeded in bringing one hundred and fifty unarmed and half-drowned soldiers into the place. His garrison consisted barely of eight hundred men, but the siege was still sustained, mainly by his courage and sagacity, and by the spirit of his brother Andelot. The company of cavalry, belonging to the Dauphin's regiment, had behaved badly, and even with cowardice, since the death of their commander Teligny. The citizens were naturally weary and impatient of the siege. Mining and countermining continued till the 21st August. A steady cannonade was then maintained until the 27th. Upon that day, eleven breaches having been made in the walls, a simultaneous assault was ordered at four of them. The citizens were stationed upon the walls, the soldiers in the breaches. There was a short but sanguinary contest, the garrison resisting with uncommon bravery. Suddenly an entrance was effected through a tower which had been thought sufficiently strong, and which had been left unguarded. Coligny, rushing to the spot, engaged the enemy almost single-handed. He was soon overpowered, being attended only by four men and a page, was made a prisoner by a soldier named Francisco Diaz, and conducted through one of the subterranean mines into the presence of the Duke of Savoy, from whom the captor received ten thousand ducats in exchange for the Admiral's sword. The fighting still continued with great determination in the streets, the brave Andelot resisting to the last. He was, however, at last overpowered, and taken prisoner. Philip, who had, as usual, arrived in the trenches by noon, armed in complete harness, with a page carrying his helmet, was met by the intelligence that the city of Saint Quentin was his own.

Page 128

To a horrible carnage succeeded a sack and a conflagration still more horrible. In every house entered during the first day, every human being was butchered. The sack lasted all that day and the whole of the following, till the night of the 28th. There was not a soldier who did not obtain an ample share of plunder, and some individuals succeeded in getting possession of two, three, and even twelve thousand ducats each. The women were not generally outraged, but they were stripped almost entirely naked, lest they should conceal treasure which belonged to their conquerors, and they were slashed in the face with knives, partly in sport, partly as a punishment for not giving up property which was not in their possession. The soldiers even cut off the arms of many among these wretched women, and then turned them loose, maimed and naked, into the blazing streets; for the town, on the 28th, was fired in a hundred places, and was now one general conflagration. The streets were already strewn with the corpses of the butchered garrison and citizens; while the survivors were now burned in their houses. Human heads, limbs, and trunks, were mingled among the bricks and rafters of the houses, which were falling on every side. The fire lasted day and night, without an attempt being made to extinguish it; while the soldiers dashed like devils through flame and smoke in search of booty. Bearing lighted torches, they descended into every subterrranean vault and receptacle, of which there were many in the town, and in every one of which they hoped to discover hidden treasure. The work of killing, plundering, and burning lasted nearly three days and nights. The streets, meanwhile, were encumbered with heaps of corpses, not a single one of which had been buried since the capture of the town. The remains of nearly all the able bodied male population, dismembered, gnawed by dogs or blackened by fire, polluted the midsummer air meantime, the women had been again driven into the cathedral, where they had housed during the siege, and where they now crouched together in trembling expectation of their fate.’ On the 29th August, at two o’clock in the afternoon, Philip issued an order that every woman, without an exception, should be driven out of the city into the French territory. Saint Quentin, which seventy years before had been a Flemish town, was to be re-annexed, and not a single man, woman, or child who could speak the French language was to remain another hour in the place. The tongues of the men had been effectually silenced. The women, to the number of three thousand five hundred, were now compelled to leave the cathedral and the city. Some were in a starving condition; others had been desperately wounded; all, as they passed through the ruinous streets of what had been their home, were compelled to tread upon the unburied remains of their fathers, husbands, or brethren. To none of these miserable creatures remained a living protector—hardly even a dead body which could be recognized; and thus

Page 129

the ghastly procession of more than three thousand women, many with gaping wounds in the face, many with their arms cut off and festering, of all ranks and ages, some numbering more than ninety years, bareheaded, with grey hair streaming upon their shoulders; others with nursing infants in their arms, all escorted by a company of heavy-armed troopers, left forever their native city. All made the dismal journey upon foot, save that carts were allowed to transport the children between the ages of two and six years. The desolation and depopulation were now complete. "I wandered through the place, gazing at all this," says a Spanish soldier who was present, and kept a diary of all which occurred, "and it seemed to me that it was another destruction of Jerusalem. What most struck me was to find not a single denizen of the town left, who was or who dared to call himself French. How vain and transitory, thought I, are the things of this world! Six days ago what riches were in the city, and now remains not one stone upon another."

The expulsion of the women had been accomplished by the express command of Philip, who moreover had made no effort to stay the work of carnage, pillage, and conflagration. The pious King had not forgotten, however, his duty to the saints. As soon as the fire had broken out, he had sent to the cathedral, whence he had caused the body of Saint Quentin to be removed and placed in the royal tent. Here an altar, was arranged, upon one side of which was placed the coffin of that holy personage, and upon the other the head of the "glorious Saint Gregory" (whoever that glorious individual may have been in life), together with many other relics brought from the church. Within the sacred enclosure many masses were said daily, while all this devil's work was going on without. The saint who had been buried for centuries was comfortably housed and guarded by the monarch, while dogs were gnawing the carcases of the freshly-slain men of Saint Quentin, and troopers were driving into perpetual exile its desolate and mutilated women.

The most distinguished captives upon this occasion were, of course, Coligny and his brother. Andelot was, however, fortunate enough to make his escape that night under the edge of the tent in which he was confined. The Admiral was taken to Antwerp. Here he lay for many weeks sick with a fever. Upon his recovery, having no better pastime, he fell to reading the Scriptures. The result was his conversion to Calvinism; and the world shudders yet at the fate in which that conversion involved him.

Saint Quentin being thus reduced, Philip was not more disposed to push his fortune. The time was now wasted in the siege of several comparatively unimportant places, so that the fruits of Egmont's valor were not yet allowed to ripen. Early in September Le Catelet was taken. On the 12th of the same month the citadel of Ham yielded, after receiving two thousand shots from Philip's artillery, while

Page 130

Nojon, Chanly, and some other places of less importance, were burned to the ground. After all this smoke and fire upon the frontier, productive of but slender consequences, Philip disbanded his army, and retired to Brussels. He reached that city on the 12th October. The English returned to their own country. The campaign of 1557 was closed without a material result, and the victory of Saint Quentin remained for a season barren.

In the mean time the French were not idle. The army of the Constable had been destroyed but the Duke de Guise, who had come post-haste from Italy after hearing the news of Saint Quentin, was very willing to organize another. He was burning with impatience both to retrieve his own reputation, which had suffered some little damage by his recent Italian campaign, and to profit by the captivity of his fallen rival the Constable. During the time occupied by the languid and dilatory proceedings of Philip in the autumn, the Duke had accordingly recruited in France and Germany a considerable army. In January (1558) he was ready to take the field. It had been determined in the French cabinet, however, not to attempt to win back the places which they had lost in Picardy, but to carry the war into the territory of the ally. It was fated that England should bear all the losses, and Philip appropriate all the gain and glory, which resulted from their united exertions. It was the war of the Queen's husband, with which the Queen's people had no concern, but in which the last trophies of the Black Prince were to be forfeited. On the first January, 1558, the Duc de Guise appeared before Calais. The Marshal Strozzi had previously made an expedition, in disguise, to examine the place. The result of his examination was that the garrison was weak, and that it relied too much upon the citadel. After a tremendous cannonade, which lasted a week, and was heard in Antwerp, the city was taken by assault. Thus the key to the great Norman portal of France, the time-honored key which England had worn at her girdle since the eventful day of Crecy, was at last taken from her. Calais had been originally won after a siege which had lasted a twelvemonth, had been held two hundred and ten years, and was now lost in seven days. Seven days more, and ten thousand discharges from thirty-five great guns sufficed for the reduction of Guines. Thus the last vestige of English dominion, the last substantial pretext of the English sovereign to wear the title and the lilies of France, was lost forever. King Henry visited Calais, which after two centuries of estrangement had now become a French town again, appointed Paul de Thermes governor of the place, and then returned to Paris to celebrate soon afterwards the marriage of the Dauphin with the niece of the Guises, Mary, Queen of Scots.

These events, together with the brief winter campaign of the Duke, which had raised for an instant the drooping head of France, were destined before long to give a new face to affairs, while it secured the ascendancy of the Catholic party in the kingdom. Disastrous eclipse had come over the house of Montmorency and Coligny, while the star of Guise, brilliant with the conquest of Calais, now culminated to the zenith.

Page 131

It was at this period that the memorable interview between the two ecclesiastics, the Bishop of Arras and the Cardinal de Lorraine, took place at Peronne. From this central point commenced the weaving of that wide-spread scheme, in which the fate of millions was to be involved. The Duchess Christina de Lorraine, cousin of Philip, had accompanied him to Saint Quentin. Permission had been obtained by the Duc de Guise and his brother, the Cardinal, to visit her at Peronne. The Duchess was accompanied by the Bishop of Arras, and the consequence was a full and secret negotiation between the two priests. It may be supposed that Philip's short-lived military ardor had already exhausted itself. He had mistaken his vocation, and already recognized the false position in which he was placed. He was contending against the monarch in whom he might find the surest ally against the arch enemy of both kingdoms, and of the world. The French monarch held heresy in horror, while, for himself, Philip had already decided upon his life's mission.

The crafty Bishop was more than a match for the vain and ambitious Cardinal. That prelate was assured that Philip considered the captivity of Coligny and Montmorency a special dispensation of Providence, while the tutelar genius of France, notwithstanding the reverses sustained by that kingdom, was still preserved. The Cardinal and his brother, it was suggested, now held in their hands the destiny of the kingdom, and of Europe. The interests of both nations, of religion, and of humanity, made it imperative upon them to put an end to this unnatural war, in order that the two monarchs might unite hand and heart for the extirpation of heresy. That hydra-headed monster had already extended its coils through France, while its pestilential breath was now wafted into Flanders from the German as well as the French border. Philip placed full reliance upon the wisdom and discretion of the Cardinal. It was necessary that these negotiations should for the present remain a profound secret; but in the mean time a peace ought to be concluded with as little delay as possible; a result which, it was affirmed, was as heartily desired by Philip as it could be by Henry. The Bishop was soon aware of the impression which his artful suggestions had produced. The Cardinal, inspired by the flattery thus freely administered, as well as by the promptings of his own ambition, lent a willing ear to the Bishop's plans. Thus was laid the foundation of a vast scheme, which time was to complete. A crusade with the whole strength of the French and Spanish crowns, was resolved upon against their own subjects. The Bishop's task was accomplished. The Cardinal returned to France, determined to effect a peace with Spain. He was convinced that the glory of his house was to be infinitely enhanced, and its power impregnably established, by a cordial co-operation with Philip in his dark schemes against religion and humanity. The negotiations were kept, however, profoundly secret. A new campaign and fresh humiliations were to precede the acceptance by France of the peace which was thus proffered.

Page 132

Hostile operations were renewed soon after the interview at Peronne. The Duke of Guise, who had procured five thousand cavalry and fourteen thousand infantry in Germany, now, at the desire of the King, undertook an enterprise against Thionville, a city of importance and great strength in Luxemburg, upon the river Moselle. It was defended by Peter de Quarebbe, a gentleman of Louvain, with a garrison of eighteen hundred men. On the 5th June, thirty-five pieces of artillery commenced the work; the mining and countermining-continuing seventeen days; on the 22nd the assault was made, and the garrison capitulated immediately afterwards. It was a siege conducted in a regular and business-like way, but the details possess no interest. It was, however, signalized by the death of one of the eminent adventurers of the age, Marshal Strozzi. This brave, but always unlucky soldier was slain by a musket ball while assisting the Duke of Guise—whose arm was, at that instant, resting upon his shoulder—to point a gun at the fortress.

After the fall of Thionville, the Due de Guise, for a short time, contemplated the siege of the city of Luxemburg, but contented himself with the reduction of the unimportant places of Vireton and Arlon. Here he loitered seventeen days, making no exertions to follow up the success which had attended him at the opening of the campaign. The good fortune of the French was now neutralized by the same languor which had marked the movements of Philip after the victory of Saint Quentin. The time, which might have been usefully employed in following up his success, was now wasted by the Duke in trivial business, or in absolute torpor. This may have been the result of a treacherous understanding with Spain, and the first fruits of the interview at Peronne. Whatever the cause, however, the immediate consequences were disaster to the French nation, and humiliation to the crown.

It had been the plan of the French cabinet that Marshal de Thermes, who, upon the capture of Calais, had been appointed governor of the city, should take advantage of his position as soon as possible. Having assembled an army of some eight thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, partly Gascons and partly Germans, he was accordingly directed to ravage the neighboring country, particularly the county of Saint Pol. In the mean time, the Due de Guise, having reduced the cities on the southern frontier, was to move in a northerly direction, make a junction with the Marshal, and thus extend a barrier along the whole frontier of the Netherlands.

De Therlries set forth from Calais, in the beginning of June, with his newly-organized army. Passing by Gravelines and Bourbourg, he arrived before Dunkerk on the 2d of July. The city, which was without a garrison, opened negotiations, during the pendency of which it was taken by assault and pillaged. The town of Saint Winochsberg shared the same fate. De Thermes, who was a martyr to the gout, was obliged

Page 133

at this point temporarily to resign the command to d'Estonteville, a ferocious soldier, who led the predatory army as far as Niewport, burning, killing, ravishing, plundering, as they went. Meantime Philip, who was at Brussels, had directed the Duke of Savoy to oppose the Due de Guise with an army which had been hastily collected and organized at Maubeuge, in the province of Namur. He now desired, if possible, to attack and cut off the forces of De Thermes before he should extend the hand to Guise, or make good his retreat to Calais.

Flushed with victory over defenceless peasants, laden with the spoils of sacked and burning towns, the army of De Thermes was already on its homeward march. It was the moment for a sudden and daring blow. Whose arm should deal it? What general in Philip's army possessed the requisite promptness, and felicitous audacity; who, but the most brilliant of cavalry officers, the bold and rapid hero of St. Quentin? Egmont, in obedience to the King's command, threw himself at once into the field. He hastily collected all the available forces in the neighborhood. These, with drafts from the Duke of Savoy's army, and with detachments under Marshal Bigonicourt from the garrisons of Saint Omer, Bethune, Aire, and Bourbourg, soon amounted to ten thousand foot and two thousand horse. His numbers were still further swollen by large bands of peasantry, both men and women, maddened by their recent injuries, and thirsting for vengeance. With these troops the energetic chieftain took up his position directly in the path of the French army. Determined to destroy De Thermes with all his force, or to sacrifice himself, he posted his army at Gravelines, a small town lying near the sea-shore, and about midway between Calais and Dunkerk. The French general was putting the finishing touch to his expedition by completing the conflagration at Dunkerk, and was moving homeward, when he became aware of the lion in his path. Although suffering from severe sickness, he mounted his horse and personally conducted his army to Gravelines. Here he found his progress completely arrested. On that night, which was the 12th July, he held a council of officers. It was determined to refuse the combat offered, and, if possible, to escape at low tide along the sands toward Calais. The next morning he crossed the river Aa, below Gravelines. Egmont, who was not the man, on that occasion at least, to build a golden bridge for a flying enemy, crossed the same stream just above the town, and drew up his whole force in battle array. De Thermes could no longer avoid the conflict thus resolutely forced upon him. Courage was now his only. counsellor. Being not materially outnumbered by his adversaries, he had, at least, an even chance of cutting his way through all obstacles, and of saving his army and his treasure. The sea was on his right hand, the Aa behind him, the enemy in front. He piled his baggage and wagons so as to form a barricade upon his left, and placed his artillery, consisting of four culverines and three falconeta, in front. Behind these he drew up his cavalry, supported at each side by the Gascons, and placed his French and German infantry in the rear.

Page 134

Egmont, on the other hand, divided his cavalry into five squadrons. Three of light horse were placed in advance for the first assault—the centre commanded by himself, the two wings by Count Pontenals and Henrico Henriquez. The black hussars of Lazarus Schwendi and the Flemish gendarmes came next. Behind these was the infantry, divided into three nations, Spanish, German, and Flemish, and respectively commanded by Carvajal, Monchausen, and Bignicourt. Egmont, having characteristically selected the post of danger in the very front of battle for himself, could no longer restrain his impatience. "The foe is ours already," he shouted; "follow me, all who love their fatherland:" With that he set spurs to his horse, and having his own regiment well in hand, dashed upon the enemy. The Gascons received the charge with coolness, and under cover of a murderous fire from the artillery in front, which mowed down the foremost ranks of their assailants-sustained the whole weight of the first onset without flinching. Egmont's horse was shot under him at the commencement of the action. Mounting another, he again cheered his cavalry to the attack. The Gascons still maintained an unwavering front, and fought with characteristic ferocity. The courage of despair inflamed the French, the hope of a brilliant and conclusive victory excited the Spaniards and Flemings. It was a wild, hand to hand conflict—general and soldier, cavalier and pikeman, lancer and musketeer, mingled together in one dark, confused, and struggling mass, foot to foot, breast to breast, horse to horse-a fierce, tumultuous battle on the sands, worthy the fitful pencil of the national painter, Wouvermans. For a long time it was doubtful on which side victory was to incline, but at last ten English vessels unexpectedly appeared in the offing, and ranging up soon afterwards as close to the share as was possible, opened their fire upon the still unbroken lines of the French. The ships were too distant, the danger of injuring friend as well as foe too imminent, to allow of their exerting any important influence upon the result. The spirit of the enemy was broken, however, by this attack upon their seaward side, which they had thought impregnable. At the same time, too, a detachment of German cavalry which had been directed by Egmont to make their way under the downs to the southward, now succeeded in turning their left flank. Egmont, profiting by their confusion, charged them again with redoubled vigor. The fate of the day was decided. The French cavalry wavered, broke their ranks, and in their flight carried dismay throughout the whole army. The rout was total; horse and foot; French, Gascon, and German fled from the field together. Fifteen hundred fell in the action, as many more were driven into the sea, while great numbers were torn to pieces by the exasperated peasants, who now eagerly washed out their recent injuries in the blood of the dispersed, wandering, and wounded soldiers. The army of

Page 135

De Thermes was totally destroyed, and with it, the last hope of France for an honorable and equal negotiation. She was now at Philip's feet, so that this brilliant cavalry action, although it has been surpassed in importance by many others, in respect to the numbers of the combatants and the principles involved in the contest, was still, in regard to the extent both of its immediate and its permanent results, one of the most decisive and striking which have ever been fought. The French army engaged was annihilated. Marshal de Thermes, with a wound in the head, Senarpont, Annibault, Villefon, Morvilliers, Chanlis, and many others of high rank were prisoners. The French monarch had not much heart to set about the organization of another army; a task which he was now compelled to undertake. He was soon obliged to make the best terms which he could, and to consent to a treaty which was one of the most ruinous in the archives of France.

The Marshal de Thermes was severely censured for having remained so long at Dunkerk and in its neighborhood. He was condemned still more loudly for not having at least effected his escape beyond Gravelines, during the night which preceded the contest. With regard to the last charge, however, it may well be doubted whether any nocturnal attempt would have been likely to escape the vigilance of Egmont. With regard to his delay at Dunkerk, it was asserted that he had been instructed to await in that place the junction with the Due de Guise, which had been previously arranged. But for the criminal and, then, inexplicable languor which characterized that commander's movements, after the capture of Thionville, the honor of France might still have been saved.

Whatever might have been the faults of De Thermes or of Guise, there could be little doubt as to the merit of Egmont. Thus within eleven months of the battle of Saint Quentin, had the Dutch hero gained another victory so decisive as to settle the fate of the war, and to elevate his sovereign to a position from which he might dictate the terms of a triumphant peace. The opening scenes of Philip's reign were rendered as brilliant as the proudest days of the Emperor's career, while the provinces were enraptured with the prospect of early peace. To whom, then, was the sacred debt of national and royal gratitude due but to Lamoral of Egmont? His countrymen gladly recognized the claim. He became the idol of the army; the familiar hero of ballad and story; the mirror of chivalry, and the god of popular worship. Throughout the Netherlands he was hailed as the right hand of the fatherland, the saviour of Flanders from devastation and outrage, the protector of the nation, the pillar of the throne.

Page 136

The victor gained many friends by his victory, and one enemy. The bitterness of that foe was likely, in the future, to outweigh all the plaudits of his friends. The Duke of Alva had strongly advised against giving battle to De Thermes. He depreciated the triumph after it had been gained, by reflections upon the consequences which would have flowed, had a defeat been suffered instead. He even held this language to Egmont himself after his return to Brussels. The conqueror, flushed with his glory, was not inclined to digest the criticism, nor what he considered the venomous detraction of the Duke. More vain and arrogant than ever, he treated his powerful Spanish rival with insolence, and answered his observations with angry sarcasms, even in the presence of the King. Alva was not likely to forget the altercation, nor to forgive the triumph.

There passed, naturally, much bitter censure and retort on both sides at court, between the friends and adherents of Egmont and those who sustained the party of his adversary. The battle of Gravelines was fought over daily, amid increasing violence and recrimination, between Spaniard and Fleming, and the old international hatred flamed more fiercely than ever. Alva continued to censure the foolhardiness which had risked so valuable an army on a single blow. Egmont's friends replied that it was easy for foreigners, who had nothing at risk in the country, to look on while the fields of the Netherlands were laid waste, and the homes and hearths of an industrious population made desolate, by a brutal and rapacious soldiery. They who dwelt in the Provinces would be ever grateful to their preserver for the result. They had no eyes for the picture which the Spanish party painted of an imaginary triumph of De Thermos and its effects. However the envious might cavil, now that the blow had been struck, the popular heart remained warm as ever, and refused to throw down the idol which had so recently been set up.

1558-1559 [*Chapter iii*.]

Secret negotiations for peace—Two fresh armies assembled, but inactive—Negotiations at Cercamp—Death of Mary Tudor—Treaty of Cateau Cambresis—Death of Henry *ii*.—-Policy of Catharine de Medici —Revelations by Henry *ii*. to the Prince of Orange—-Funeral of Charles V. in Brussels—Universal joy in the Netherlands at the restoration of peace—Organization of the government by Philip, and preparations for his departure—-Appointment of Margaret of Parma as Regent of the Netherlands—Three councils—The consulta—The stadholders of the different provinces—Dissatisfaction caused by the foreign troops—Assembly of the Estates at Ghent to receive the parting instructions and farewell of the King—Speech of the Bishop of Arras—Request for three millions—Fierce denunciation of heresy on the part of Philip—Strenuous enforcement of the edicts commanded—Reply by the States of Arthois—Unexpected conditions—

Page 137

Rage of the King—Similar conduct on the part of the other provinces—Remonstrance in the name of States—General against the foreign soldiery—Formal reply on the part of the crown—Departure of the King from the Netherlands—Autos—da—fe in Spain.

The battle of Gravelines had decided the question. The intrigues of the two Cardinals at Peronne having been sustained by Egmont's victory, all parties were ready for a peace. King Henry was weary of the losing game which he had so long been playing, Philip was anxious to relieve himself from his false position, and to concentrate his whole mind and the strength of his kingdom upon his great enemy the Netherland heresy, while the Duke of Savoy felt that the time had at last arrived when an adroit diplomacy might stand him in stead, and place him in the enjoyment of those rights which the sword had taken from him, and which his own sword had done so much towards winning back. The sovereigns were inclined to peace, and as there had never been a national principle or instinct or interest involved in the dispute, it was very certain that peace would be popular every where, upon whatever terms it might be concluded.

Montmorency and the Prince of Orange were respectively empowered to open secret negotiations. The Constable entered upon the task with alacrity, because he felt that every day of his captivity was alike prejudicial to his own welfare and the interests of his country.—The Guises, who had quarrelled with the Duchess de Valentinois (Diane de Poitiers), were not yet powerful enough to resist the influence of the mistress; while, rather to baffle them than from any loftier reasons, that interest was exerted in behalf of immediate peace. The Cardinal de Lorraine had by no means forgotten the eloquent arguments used by the Bishop of Arras; but his brother, the Due de Guise, may be supposed to have desired some little opportunity of redeeming the credit of the kingdom, and to have delayed the negotiations until his valor could secure a less inglorious termination to the war.

A fresh army had, in fact, been collected under his command, and was already organized at Pierrepoint. At the same time, Philip had assembled a large force, consisting of thirty thousand foot and fifteen thousand cavalry, with which he had himself taken the field, encamping towards the middle of August upon the banks of the river Anthies, near the border of Picardy. King Henry, on the other hand, had already arrived in the camp at Pierrepoint, and had reviewed as imposing an army as had ever been at the disposal of a French monarch. When drawn up in battle array it covered a league and a half of ground, while three hours were required to make its circuit on horseback. All this martial display was only for effect. The two kings, at the head of their great armies, stood looking at each other while the negotiations for, peace were proceeding. An unimportant skirmish or two at the out-posts, unattended with loss of life,

Page 138

were the only military results of these great preparations. Early in the autumn, all the troops were disbanded, while the commissioners of both crowns met in open congress at the abbey of Cercamp, near Cambray, by the middle of October. The envoys on the part of Philip were the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Alva, the Bishop of Arras, Ruy Gomez de Silva, the president Viglius; on that of the French monarch, the Constable, the Marshal de Saint Andre, the Cardinal de Lorraine, the Bishop of Orleans, and Claude l'Aubespine.

There were also envoys sent by the Queen of England, but as the dispute concerning Calais was found to hamper the negotiations at Cercamp, the English question was left to be settled by another congress, and was kept entirely separate from the arrangements concluded between France and Spain.

The death of Queen Mary, on the 17th November, caused a temporary suspension of the proceedings. After the widower, however, had made a fruitless effort to obtain the hand of her successor, and had been unequivocally repulsed, the commissioners again met in February, 1559, at Cateau Cambresis. The English difficulty was now arranged by separate commissioners, and on the third of April a treaty between France and Spain was concluded.

By this important convention, both kings bound themselves to maintain the Catholic worship inviolate by all means in their power, and agreed that an oecumenical council should at once assemble, to compose the religious differences, and to extinguish the increasing heresy in both kingdoms. Furthermore, it was arranged that the conquests made by each country during the preceding eight years should be restored. Thus all the gains of Francis and Henry were annulled by a single word, and the Duke of Savoy converted, by a dash of the pen, from a landless soldier of fortune into a sovereign again. He was to receive back all his estates, and was moreover to marry Henry's sister Margaret, with a dowry of three hundred thousand crowns. Philip, on the other hand, now a second time a widower, was to espouse Henry's daughter Isabella, already betrothed to the Infant Don Carlos, and to receive with her a dowry of four hundred thousand crowns. The restitutions were to be commenced by Henry, and to be completed within three months. Philip was to restore his conquests in the course of a month afterwards.

Most of the powers of Europe were included by both parties in this treaty: the Pope, the Emperor, all the Electors, the republics of Venice, Genoa and Switzerland, the kingdoms of England, Scotland, Poland, Denmark, Sweden; the duchies of Ferrara, Savoy and Parma, besides other inferior principalities. Nearly all Christendom, in short, was embraced in this most amicable compact, as if Philip were determined that, henceforth and forever, Calvinists and Mahometans, Turks and Flemings, should be his only enemies.

The King of France was to select four hostages from among Philip's subjects, to accompany him to Paris as pledges for the execution of all the terms of the treaty. The royal choice fell upon the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Alva, the Duke of Aerschot, and the Count of Egmont.

Page 139

Such was the treaty of Cateau Cambresis. Thus was a termination put to a war between France and Spain, which had been so wantonly undertaken.

Marshal Monluc wrote that a treaty so disgraceful and disastrous had never before been ratified by a French monarch. It would have been difficult to point to any one more unfortunate upon her previous annals; if any treaty can be called unfortunate, by which justice is done and wrongs repaired, even under coercion. The accumulated plunder of years, which was now disgorged by France, was equal in value to one third of that kingdom. One hundred and ninety-eight fortified towns were surrendered, making, with other places of greater or less importance, a total estimated by some writers as high as four hundred. The principal gainer was the Duke of Savoy, who, after so many years of knight-errantry, had regained his duchy, and found himself the brother-in-law of his ancient enemy.

The well-known tragedy by which the solemnities of this pacification were abruptly concluded in Paris, bore with it an impressive moral. The monarch who, in violation of his plighted word and against the interests of his nation and the world, had entered precipitately into a causeless war, now lost his life in fictitious combat at the celebration of peace. On the tenth of July, Henry the Second died of the wound inflicted by Montgomery in the tournament held eleven days before. Of this weak and worthless prince, all that even his flatterers could favorably urge was his great fondness for war, as if a sanguinary propensity, even when unaccompanied by a spark of military talent, were of itself a virtue. Yet, with his death the kingdom fell even into more pernicious hands, and the fate of Christendom grew darker than ever. The dynasty of Diane de Poitiers was succeeded by that of Catharine de Medici; the courtesan gave place to the dowager; and France during the long and miserable period in which she lay bleeding in the grasp of the Italian she-wolf and her litter of cowardly and sanguinary princes—-might even lament the days of Henry and his Diana. Charles the Ninth, Henry the Third, Francis of Alencon, last of the Valois race—how large a portion of the fearful debt which has not yet been discharged by half a century of revolution and massacre was of their accumulation.

The Duchess of Valentinois had quarrelled latterly with the house of Guise, and was disposed to favor Montmorency. The King, who was but a tool in her hands, might possibly have been induced, had he lived, to regard Coligny and his friends with less aversion. This is, however, extremely problematical, for it was Henry the Second who had concluded that memorable arrangement with his royal brother of Spain, to arrange for the Huguenot chiefs throughout both realms, a “Sicilian Vespers,” upon the first favorable occasion. His death and the subsequent policy of the Queen-Regent deferred the execution of the great scheme till fourteen years later.

Page 140

Henry had lived long enough, however, after the conclusion of the secret agreement to reveal it to one whose life was to be employed in thwarting this foul conspiracy of monarchs against their subjects. William of Orange, then a hostage for the execution of the treaty of Cateau Cambresis, was the man with whom the King had the unfortunate conception to confer on the subject of the plot. The Prince, who had already gained the esteem of Charles the Fifth by his habitual discretion, knew how to profit by the intelligence and to bide his time; but his hostility to the policy of the French and Spanish courts was perhaps dated from that hour.

Pending the peace negotiations, Philip had been called upon to mourn for his wife and father. He did not affect grief for the death of Mary Tudor, but he honored the Emperor's departure with stately obsequies at Brussels. The ceremonies lasted two days (the 29th and 30th December, 1558). In the grand and elaborate procession which swept through the streets upon the first day, the most conspicuous object was a ship floating apparently upon the waves, and drawn by a band of Tritons who disported at the bows. The masts, shrouds, and sails of the vessel were black, it was covered with heraldic achievements, banners and emblematic mementos of the Emperor's various expeditions, while the flags of Turks and Moors trailed from her sides in the waves below. Three allegorical personages composed the crew. Hope, "all clothyd in brown, with anker in hand," stood at the prow; Faith, with sacramental chalice and red cross, clad in white garment, with her face nailed "with white tiffany," sat on a "stool of estate" before the mizen-mast; while Charity "in red, holding in her hand a burning heart," was at the helm to navigate the vessel. Hope, Faith, and Love were thought the most appropriate symbols for the man who had invented the edicts, introduced the inquisition, and whose last words, inscribed by a hand already trembling with death, had adjured his son, by his love, allegiance, and hope of salvation, to deal to all heretics the extreme rigor of the law, "without respect of persons and without regard to any plea in their favor."

The rest of the procession, in which marched the Duke of Alva, the Prince of Orange, and other great personages, carrying the sword, the globe, the sceptre, and the "crown imperial," contained no emblems or imagery worthy of being recorded. The next day the King, dressed in mourning and attended by a solemn train of high officers and nobles, went again to the church. A contemporary letter mentions a somewhat singular incident as forming the concluding part of the ceremony. "And the service being done," wrote Sir Richard Clough to Sir Thomas Gresham, "there went a nobleman into the herse (so far as I codde understande, it was the Prince of Orange), who, standing before the herse, struck with his hand upon the chest and sayd, 'He is ded.' Then standing styli awhile, he sayd, 'He shall remayn ded.' And 'then resting awhile, he struck again and sayd, 'He is ded, and there is another rysen up in his place greater than ever he was.' Whereupon the Kynge's hoode was taken off and the Kynge went home without his hoode."

Page 141

If the mourning for the dead Emperor was but a mummery and a masquerade, there was, however, heartiness and sincerity in the rejoicing which now burst forth like a sudden illumination throughout the Netherlands, upon the advent of peace. All was joy in the provinces, but at Antwerp, the metropolis of the land, the enthusiasm was unbounded. Nine days were devoted to festivities. Bells rang their merriest peals, artillery thundered, beacons blazed, the splendid cathedral spire flamed nightly with three hundred burning cresaets, the city was strewn with flowers and decorated with triumphal arches, the Guilds of Rhetoric amazed the world with their gorgeous processions, glittering dresses and bombastic versification, the burghers all, from highest to humblest, were feasted and made merry, wine flowed in the streets and oxen were roasted whole, prizes on poles were climbed for, pigs were hunted blindfold, men and women raced in sacks, and in short, for nine days long there was one universal and spontaneous demonstration of hilarity in Antwerp and throughout the provinces.

But with this merry humor of his subjects, the sovereign had but little sympathy. There was nothing in his character or purposes which owed affinity with any mood of this jocund and energetic people. Philip had not made peace with all the world that the Netherlanders might climb on poles or ring bells, or strew flowers in his path for a little holiday time, and then return to their industrious avocations again. He had made peace with all the world that he might be free to combat heresy; and this arch enemy had taken up its strong hold in the provinces. The treaty of Cateau Cambresis left him at liberty to devote himself to that great enterprise. He had never loved the Netherlands, a residence in these constitutional provinces was extremely irksome to him, and he was therefore anxious to return to Spain. From the depths of his cabinet he felt that he should be able to direct the enterprise he was resolved upon, and that his presence in the Netherlands would be superfluous and disagreeable.

The early part of the year 1559 was spent by Philip in organizing the government of the provinces and in making the necessary preparations for his departure. The Duke of Savoy, being restored to his duchy, had, of course, no more leisure to act as Regent of the Netherlands, and it was necessary, therefore, to fix upon his successor in this important post, at once. There were several candidates. The Duchess Christina of Lorraine had received many half promises of the appointment, which she was most anxious to secure; the Emperor was even said to desire the nomination of the Archduke Maximilian, a step which would have certainly argued more magnanimity upon Philip’s part than the world could give him credit for; and besides these regal personages, the high nobles of the land, especially Orange and Egmont, had hopes of obtaining the dignity. The Prince of Orange,

Page 142

however, was too sagacious to deceive himself long, and became satisfied very soon that no Netherlander was likely to be selected for Regent. He therefore threw his influence in favor of the Duchess Christina, whose daughter, at the suggestion of the Bishop of Arras, he was desirous of obtaining in marriage. The King favored for a time, or pretended to favor, both the appointment of Madame de Lorraine and the marriage project of the Prince. Afterwards, however, and in a manner which was accounted both sudden and mysterious, it appeared that the Duchess and Orange had both been deceived, and that the King and Bishop had decided in favor of another candidate, whose claims had not been considered, before, very prominent. This was the Duchess Margaret of Parma, natural daughter of Charles the Fifth. A brief sketch of this important personage, so far as regards her previous career, is reserved for the following chapter. For the present it is sufficient to state the fact of the nomination. In order to afford a full view of Philip's political arrangements before his final departure from the Netherlands, we defer until the same chapter, an account of the persons who composed the boards of council organized to assist the new Regent in the government. These bodies themselves were three in number: a state and privy council and one of finance. They were not new institutions, having been originally established by the Emperor, and were now arranged by his successor upon the same nominal basis upon which they had before existed. The finance council, which had superintendence of all matters relating to the royal domains and to the annual budgets of the government, was presided over by Baron Berlaymont. The privy council, of which Viglius was president, was composed of ten or twelve learned doctors, and was especially entrusted with the control of matters relating to law, pardons, and the general administration of justice. The state council, which was far the most important of the three boards, was to superintend all high affairs of government, war, treaties, foreign intercourse, internal and interprovincial affairs. The members of this council were the Bishop of Arras, Viglius, Berlaymont, the Prince of Orange, Count Egmont, to which number were afterwards added the Seigneur de Glayon, the Duke of Aerschot, and Count Horn. The last-named nobleman, who was admiral of the provinces, had, for the, present, been appointed to accompany the King to Spain, there to be specially entrusted with the administration of affairs relating to the Netherlands. He was destined, however, to return at the expiration of two years.

Page 143

With the object, as it was thought, of curbing the power of the great nobles, it had been arranged that the three councils should be entirely distinct from each other, that the members of the state council should have no participation in the affairs of the two other bodies; but, on the other hand, that the finance and privy councillors, as well as the Knights of the Fleece, should have access to the deliberations of the state council. In the course of events, however, it soon became evident that the real power of the government was exclusively in the hands of the consulta, a committee of three members of the state council, by whose deliberations the Regent was secretly instructed to be guided on all important occasions. The three, Viglius, Berlaymont, and Arras, who composed the secret conclave or cabinet, were in reality but one. The Bishop of Arras was in all three, and the three together constituted only the Bishop of Arras.

There was no especial governor or stadholder appointed for the province of Brabant, where the Regent was to reside and to exercise executive functions in person. The stadholders for the other provinces were, for Flanders and Artois, the Count of Egmont; for Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, the Prince of Orange; for Gueldres and Zutfen, the Count of Meghen; for Friesland, Groningen and Overyssel, Count Aremberg; for Hainault, Valenciennes and Cambray, the Marquis of Berghen; for Tournay and Tournaisis, Baron Montigny; for Namur, Baron Berlaymont; for Luxemburg, Count Mansfeld; for Ryssel, Douay and Orchies, the Baron Coureires. All these stadholders were commanders-in-chief of the military forces in their respective provinces. With the single exception of Count Egmont, in whose province of Flanders the stadholders were excluded from the administration of justice,—all were likewise supreme judges in the civil and criminal tribunal. The military force of the Netherlands in time of peace was small, for the provinces were jealous of the presence of soldiery. The only standing army which then legally existed in the Netherlands were the Bandes d'Ordonnance, a body of mounted gendarmerie—amounting in all to three thousand men—which ranked among the most accomplished and best disciplined cavalry of Europe. They were divided into fourteen squadrons, each under the command of a stadholder, or of a distinguished noble. Besides these troops, however, there still remained in the provinces a foreign force amounting in the aggregate to four thousand men. These soldiers were the remainder of those large bodies which year after year had been quartered upon the Netherlands during the constant warfare to which they had been exposed. Living upon the substance of the country, paid out of its treasury, and as offensive by their licentious and ribald habits of life as were the enemies against whom they were enrolled, these troops had become an intolerable burthen to the people. They were now disposed in different garrisons, nominally

Page 144

to protect the frontier. As a firm peace, however, had now been concluded between Spain and France, and as there was no pretext for compelling the provinces to accept this protection, the presence of a foreign soldiery strengthened a suspicion that they were to be used in the onslaught which was preparing against the religious freedom and the political privileges of the country. They were to be the nucleus of a larger army, it was believed, by which the land was to be reduced to a state of servile subjection to Spain. A low, constant, but generally unheeded murmur of dissatisfaction and distrust upon this subject was already perceptible throughout the Netherlands; a warning presage of the coming storm.

All the provinces were now convoked for the 7th of August (1559), at Ghent, there to receive the parting communication and farewell of the King. Previously to this day, however, Philip appeared in person upon several solemn occasions, to impress upon the country the necessity of attending to the great subject with which his mind was exclusively occupied. He came before the great council of Mechlin, in order to address that body with his own lips upon the necessity of supporting the edicts to the letter, and of trampling out every vestige of heresy, wherever it should appear, by the immediate immolation of all heretics, whoever they might be. He likewise caused the estates of Flanders to be privately assembled, that he might harangue them upon the same great topic. In the latter part of July he proceeded to Ghent, where a great concourse of nobles, citizens, and strangers had already assembled. Here, in the last week of the month, the twenty-third chapter of the Golden Fleece was held with much pomp, and with festivities which lasted three days. The fourteen vacancies which existed were filled with the names of various distinguished personages. With this last celebration the public history of Philip the Good’s ostentatious and ambitious order of knighthood was closed. The subsequent nominations were made ’ex indultu apostolico’, and without the assembling of a chapter.

The estates having duly assembled upon the day prescribed, Philip, attended by Margaret of Parma, the Duke of Savoy, and a stately retinue of ambassadors and grandees, made his appearance before them. After the customary ceremonies had been performed, the Bishop of Arras arose and delivered, in the name of his sovereign, an elaborate address of instructions and farewells. In this important harangue, the states were informed that the King had convened them in order that they might be informed of his intention of leaving the Netherlands immediately. He would gladly have remained longer in his beloved provinces, had not circumstances compelled his departure. His father had come hither for the good of the country in the year 1543, and had never returned to Spain, except to die.

Page 145

Upon the King's accession to the sovereignty he had arranged a truce of five years, which had been broken through by the faithlessness of France. He had, therefore, been obliged, notwithstanding his anxiety to return to a country where his presence was so much needed, to remain in the provinces till he had conducted the new war to a triumphant close. In doing this he had been solely governed by his intense love for the Netherlands, and by his regard for their interests. All the money which he had raised from their coffers had been spent for their protection. Upon this account his Majesty expressed his confidence that the estates would pay an earnest attention to the "Request" which had been laid before them, the more so, as its amount, three millions of gold florins, would all be expended for the good of the provinces. After his return to Spain he hoped to be able to make a remittance. The Duke of Savoy, he continued, being obliged, in consequence of the fortunate change in his affairs, to resign the government of the Netherlands, and his own son, Don Carlos, not yet being sufficiently advanced in years to succeed to that important post, his Majesty had selected his sister, the Duchess Margaret of Parma, daughter of the Emperor, as the most proper person for Regent. As she had been born in the Netherlands, and had always entertained a profound affection for the provinces, he felt a firm confidence that she would prove faithful both to their interests and his own. As at this moment many countries, and particularly the lands in the immediate neighborhood, were greatly infested by various "new, reprobate, and damnable sects;" as these sects, proceeding from the foul fiend, father of discord, had not failed to keep those kingdoms in perpetual dissension and misery, to the manifest displeasure of God Almighty; as his Majesty was desirous to avert such terrible evils from his own realms, according to his duty to the Lord God, who would demand reckoning from him hereafter for the well-being of the provinces; as all experience proved that change of religion ever brought desolation and confusion to the commonweal; as low persons, beggars and vagabonds, under color of religion, were accustomed to traverse the land for the purpose of plunder and disturbance; as his Majesty was most desirous of following in the footsteps of his lord and father; as it would be well remembered what the Emperor had said to him upon the memorable occasion of his abdication; therefore his Majesty had commanded the Regent Margaret of Parma, for the sake of religion and the glory of God, accurately and exactly to cause to be enforced the edicts and decrees made by his imperial Majesty, and renewed by his present Majesty, for the extirpation of all sects and heresies. All governors, councillors, and others having authority, were also instructed to do their utmost to accomplish this great end.

The great object of the discourse was thus announced in the most impressive manner, and with all that conventional rhetoric of which the Bishop of Arras was considered a consummate master. Not a word was said on the subject which was nearest the hearts of the Netherlanders—the withdrawal of the Spanish troops.

Page 146

[Bentivoglio. Guerra di Fiandra, i. 9 (Opere, Parigi, 1648), gives a different report, which ends with a distinct promise on the part of the King to dismiss the troops as soon as possible: "—in segno di the spetialmente havrebbe quanto prima, a fatti uscire i presidij stranieri dalle fortezze a levata ogn' insolita contributione al paese." It is almost superfluous to state that the Cardinal is no authority for speeches, except, indeed, for those which were never made. Long orations by generals upon the battle-field, by royal personages in their cabinets, by conspirators in secret conclave, are reported by him with muck minuteness, and none can gainsay the accuracy with which these harangues, which never had any existence, except in the author's imagination, are placed before the reader. Bentivoglio's stately and graceful style, elegant descriptions, and general acquaintance with his subject will always make his works attractive, but the classic and conventional system of inventing long speeches for historical characters has fortunately gone out of fashion. It is very interesting to know what an important personage really did say or write upon remarkable occasions; but it is less instructive to be told what the historian thinks might have been a good speech or epistle for him to utter or indito.]

Not a hint was held out that a reduction of the taxation, under which the provinces had so long been groaning, was likely to take place; but, on the contrary, the King had demanded a new levy of considerable amount. A few well-turned paragraphs were added on the subject of the administration of justice—"without which the republic was a dead body without a soul"—in the Bishop's most approved style, and the discourse concluded with a fervent exhortation to the provinces to trample heresy and heretics out of existence, and with the hope that the Lord God, in such case, would bestow upon the Netherlands health and happiness.

After the address had been concluded, the deputies, according to ancient form, requested permission to adjourn, that the representatives of each province might deliberate among themselves on the point of granting or withholding the Request for the three millions. On the following day they again assembled in the presence of the King, for the purpose of returning their separate answers to the propositions.

The address first read was that of the Estates of Artois. The chairman of the deputies from that province read a series of resolutions, drawn up, says a contemporary, "with that elegance which characterized all the public acts of the Artesians; bearing witness to the vivacity of their wits." The deputies spoke of the extreme affection which their province had always borne to his Majesty and to the Emperor. They had proved it by the constancy with which they had endured the calamities of war so long, and they now cheerfully consented to the Request, so far as their contingent went. They were willing to place

Page 147

at his Majesty's disposal, not only the remains of their property, but even the last drop of their blood. As the eloquent chairman reached this point in his discourse, Philip, who was standing with his arm resting upon Egmont's shoulder, listening eagerly to the Artesian address, looked upon the deputies of the province with a smiling face, expressing by the unwonted benignity of his countenance the satisfaction which he received from these loyal expressions of affection, and this dutiful compliance with his Request.

The deputy, however, proceeded to an unexpected conclusion, by earnestly entreating his Majesty, as a compensation for the readiness thus evinced in the royal service, forthwith to order the departure of all foreign troops then in the Netherlands. Their presence, it was added, was now rendered completely superfluous by the ratification of the treaty of peace so fortunately arranged with all the world.

At this sudden change in the deputy's language, the King, no longer smiling, threw himself violently upon his chair of state, where he remained, brooding with a gloomy countenance upon the language which had been addressed to him. It was evident, said an eye-witness, that he was deeply offended. He changed color frequently, so that all present "could remark, from the working of his face, how much his mind was agitated."

The rest of the provinces were even more explicit than the deputies of Artois. All had voted their contingents to the Request, but all had made the withdrawal of the troops an express antecedent condition to the payment of their respective quotas.

The King did not affect to conceal his rage at these conditions, exclaiming bitterly to Count Egmont and other seignors near the throne that it was very easy to estimate, by these proceedings, the value of the protestations made by the provinces of their loyalty and affection.

Besides, however, the answers thus addressed by the separate states to the royal address, a formal remonstrance had also been drawn up in the name of the States General, and signed by the Prince of Orange, Count Egmont, and many of the leading patricians of the Netherlands. This document, which was formally presented to the King before the adjournment of the assembly, represented the infamous "pillaging, insults, and disorders" daily exercised by the foreign soldiery; stating that the burthen had become intolerable, and that the inhabitants of Marienburg, and of many other large towns and villages had absolutely abandoned their homes rather than remain any longer exposed to such insolence and oppression.

The king, already enraged, was furious at the presentation of this petition. He arose from his seat, and rushed impetuously from the assembly, demanding of the members as he went, whether he too, as a Spaniard, was expected immediately to leave the land,

and to resign all authority over it. The Duke of Savoy made use of this last occasion in which he appeared in public as Regent, violently to rebuke the estates for the indignity thus offered to their sovereign.

Page 148

It could not be forgotten, however, by nobles and burghers, who had not yet been crushed by the long course of oppression which was in store for them, that there had been a day when Philip's ancestors had been more humble in their deportment in the face of the provincial authorities. His great-grandfather, Maximilian, kept in durance by the citizens of Bruges; his great-grandmother, Mary of Burgundy, with streaming eyes and dishevelled hair, supplicating in the market-place for the lives of her treacherous ambassadors, were wont to hold a less imperious language to the delegates of the states.

This burst of ill temper on the part of the monarch was, however, succeeded by a different humor. It was still thought advisable to dissemble, and to return rather an expostulatory than a peremptory answer to the remonstrance of the States General. Accordingly a paper of a singular tone was, after the delay of a few days, sent into the assembly. In this message it was stated that the King was not desirous of placing strangers in the government—a fact which was proved by the appointment of the Duchess Margaret; that the Spanish infantry was necessary to protect the land from invasion; that the remnant of foreign troops only amounted to three or four thousand men, who claimed considerable arrears of pay, but that the amount due would be forwarded to them immediately after his Majesty's return to Spain. It was suggested that the troops would serve as an escort for Don Carlos when he should arrive in the Netherlands, although the King would have been glad to carry them to Spain in his fleet, had he known the wishes of the estates in time. He would, however, pay for their support himself, although they were to act solely for the good of the provinces. He observed, moreover, that he had selected two seignors of the provinces, the Prince of Orange and Count Egmont, to take command of these foreign troops, and he promised faithfully that, in the course of three or four months at furthest, they should all be withdrawn.

On the same day in which the estates had assembled at Ghent, Philip had addressed an elaborate letter to the grand council of Mechlin, the supreme court of the provinces, and to the various provincial councils and tribunals of the whole country. The object of the communication was to give his final orders on the subject of the edicts, and for the execution of all heretics in the most universal and summary manner. He gave stringent and unequivocal instructions that these decrees for burning, strangling, and burying alive, should be fulfilled to the letter. He ordered all judicial officers and magistrates "to be curious to enquire on all sides as to the execution of the placards," stating his intention that "the utmost rigor should be employed without any respect of persons," and that not only the transgressors should be proceeded against, but also the judges who should prove remiss in their prosecution of heretics. He alluded to a false opinion which had gained currency that the edicts were only intended against anabaptists. Correcting this error, he stated that they were to be "enforced against all sectaries, without any distinction or mercy, who might be spotted merely with the errors introduced by Luther."

Page 149

The King, notwithstanding the violent scenes in the assembly, took leave of the estates at another meeting with apparent cordiality. His dissatisfaction was sufficiently manifest, but it expressed itself principally against individuals. His displeasure at the course pursued by the leading nobles, particularly by the Prince of Orange, was already no secret.

Philip, soon after the adjournment of the assembly, had completed the preparations for his departure. At Middelburg he was met by the agreeable intelligence that the Pope had consented to issue a bull for the creation of the new bishoprics which he desired for the Netherlands.—This important subject will be resumed in another chapter; for the present we accompany the King to Flushing, whence the fleet was to set sail for Spain. He was escorted thither by the Duchess Regent, the Duke of Savoy, and by many of the most eminent personages of the provinces. Among others William of Orange was in attendance to witness the final departure of the King, and to pay him his farewell respects. As Philip was proceeding on board the ship which was to bear him forever from the Netherlands, his eyes lighted upon the Prince. His displeasure could no longer be restrained. With angry face he turned upon him, and bitterly reproached him for having thwarted all his plans by means of his secret intrigues. William replied with humility that every thing which had taken place had been done through the regular and natural movements of the states. Upon this the King, boiling with rage, seized the Prince by the wrist, and shaking it violently, exclaimed in Spanish, “No los estados, ma vos, vos, vos!—Not the estates, but you, you, you!” repeating thrice the word vos, which is as disrespectful and uncourteous in Spanish as “toi” in French.

After this severe and public insult, the Prince of Orange did not go on board his Majesty’s vessel, but contented himself with wishing Philip, from the shore, a fortunate journey. It may be doubted, moreover, whether he would not have made a sudden and compulsory voyage to Spain had he ventured his person in the ship, and whether, under the circumstances, he would have been likely to effect as speedy a return. His caution served him then as it was destined to do on many future occasions, and Philip left the Netherlands with this parting explosion of hatred against the man who, as he perhaps instinctively felt, was destined to circumvent his measures and resist his tyranny to the last.

The fleet, which consisted of ninety vessels, so well provisioned that, among other matters, fifteen thousand capons were put on board, according to the Antwerp chronicler, set sail upon the 26th August (1559), from Flushing. The voyage proved tempestuous, so that much of the rich tapestry and other merchandise which had been accumulated by Charles and Philip was lost. Some of the vessels foundered; to save others it was necessary to lighten the cargo, and “to enrobe

Page 150

the roaring waters with the silks," for which the Netherlands were so famous; so that it was said that Philip and his father had impoverished the earth only to enrich the ocean. The fleet had been laden with much valuable property, because the King had determined to fix for the future the wandering capital of his dominions in Spain. Philip landed in safety, however, at Laredo, on the 8th September. His escape from imminent peril confirmed him in the great purpose to which he had consecrated his existence. He believed himself to have been reserved from shipwreck only because a mighty mission had been confided to him, and lest his enthusiasm against heresy should languish, his eyes were soon feasted, upon his arrival in his native country, with the spectacle of an auto-da fe.

Early in January of this year the King being persuaded that it was necessary every where to use additional means to check the alarming spread of Lutheran opinions, had written to the Pope for authority to increase, if that were possible, the stringency of the Spanish inquisition. The pontiff, nothing loath, had accordingly issued a bull directed to the inquisitor general, Valdez, by which he was instructed to consign to the flames all prisoners whatever, even those who were not accused of having "relapsed." Great preparations had been made to strike terror into the hearts of heretics by a series of horrible exhibitions, in the course of which the numerous victims, many of them persons of high rank, distinguished learning, and exemplary lives, who had long been languishing in the dungeons of the holy office, were to be consigned to the flames. The first auto-da fe had been consummated at Valladolid on the 21st May (1559), in the absence of the King, of course, but in the presence of the royal family and the principal notabilities, civil, ecclesiastical, and military. The Princess Regent, seated on her throne, close to the scaffold, had held on high the holy sword. The Archbishop of Seville, followed by the ministers of the inquisition and by the victims, had arrived in solemn procession at the "cadahalso," where, after the usual sermon in praise of the holy office and in denunciation of heresy, he had administered the oath to the Intante, who had duly sworn upon the crucifix to maintain forever the sacred inquisition and the apostolic decrees. The Archbishop had then cried aloud, "So may God prosper your Highnesses and your estates;" after which the men and women who formed the object of the show had been cast into the flames.—[Cabrera]. It being afterwards ascertained that the King himself would soon be enabled to return to Spain, the next festival was reserved as a fitting celebration for his arrival. Upon the 8th October, accordingly, another auto-da fe took place at Valladolid. The King, with his sister and his son, the high officers of state, the foreign ministers, and all the nobility of the kingdom, were present, together with an immense concourse of soldiery, clergy, and populace.

Page 151

The sermon was preached by the Bishop of Cuenga. When it was finished, Inquisitor General Valdez cried with a loud voice, “Oh God, make speed to help us!” The King then drew his sword. Valdez, advancing to the platform upon which Philip was seated, proceeded to read the protestation: “Your Majesty swears by the cross of the sword, whereon your royal hand reposes, that you will give all necessary favor to the holy office of the inquisition against heretics, apostates, and those who favor them, and will denounce and inform against all those who, to your royal knowledge, shall act or speak against the faith.” The King answered aloud, “I swear it,” and signed the paper. The oath was read to the whole assembly by an officer of the inquisition. Thirteen distinguished victims were then burned before the monarch’s eyes, besides one body which a friendly death had snatched from the hands of the holy office, and the effigy of another person who had been condemned, although not yet tried or even apprehended. Among the sufferers was Carlos de Sessa, a young noble of distinguished character and abilities, who said to the King as he passed by the throne to the stake, “How can you thus look on and permit me to be burned?” Philip then made the memorable reply, carefully recorded by his historiographer and panegyrist; “I would carry the wood to burn my own son withal, were he as wicked as you.”

In Seville, immediately afterwards, another auto-da fe was held, in which fifty living heretics were burned, besides the bones of Doctor Constantine Ponce de la Fuente, once the friend, chaplain, and almoner of Philip’s father. This learned and distinguished ecclesiastic had been released from a dreadful dungeon by a fortunate fever. The holy office, however, not content with punishing his corpse, wreaked also an impotent and ludicrous malice upon his effigy. A stuffed figure, attired in his robes and with its arms extended in the attitude which was habitual with him in prayer, was placed upon the scaffold among the living victims, and then cast into the flames, that bigotry might enjoy a fantastic triumph over the grave.

Such were the religious ceremonies with which Philip celebrated his escape from shipwreck, and his marriage with Isabella of France, immediately afterwards solemnized. These human victims, chained and burning at the stake, were the blazing torches which lighted the monarch to his nuptial couch.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

Consign to the flames all prisoners whatever (Papal letter)
Courage of despair inflamed the French
Decrees for burning, strangling, and burying alive
I would carry the wood to burn my own son withal
Inventing long speeches for historical characters
Let us fool these poor creatures to their heart’s content
Petty passion for contemptible details

Promises which he knew to be binding only upon the weak
Rashness alternating with hesitation
These human victims, chained and burning at the stake

Page 152

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 5.

The rise of the Dutch republic
John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.
1855
Administration of the duchess Margaret.
1559-1560 [*Chapter* I.]

Biographical sketch and portrait of Margaret of Parma—The state council—Berlaymont—Viglius—Sketch of William the Silent—Portrait of Antony Perrenot, afterwards Cardinal Granvelle—General view of the political, social and religious condition of the Netherlands— Habits of the aristocracy—Emulation in extravagance—Pecuniary embarrassments—Sympathy for the Reformation, steadily increasing among the people, the true cause of the impending revolt—Measures of the government.—Edict of 1550 described—Papal Bulls granted to Philip for increasing the number of Bishops in the Netherlands— Necessity for retaining the Spanish troops to enforce the policy of persecution.

Margaret of Parma, newly appointed Regent of the Netherlands, was the natural daughter of Charles the Fifth, and his eldest born child. Her mother, of a respectable family called Van der Genst, in Oudenarde, had been adopted and brought up by the distinguished house of Hoogstraaten. Peculiar circumstances, not necessary to relate at length, had palliated the fault to which Margaret owed her imperial origin, and gave the child almost a legitimate claim upon its father's protection. The claim was honorably acknowledged. Margaret was in her infancy placed by the Emperor in the charge of his paternal aunt, Margaret of Savoy, then Regent of the provinces. Upon the death of that princess, the child was entrusted to the care of the Emperor's sister, Mary, Queen Dowager of Hungary, who had succeeded to the government, and who occupied it until the abdication. The huntress-queen communicated her tastes to her youthful niece, and Margaret soon outrivalled her instructress. The ardor with which she pursued the stag, and the courageous horsemanship which she always displayed, proved her, too, no degenerate descendant of Mary of Burgundy. Her education for the distinguished position in which she had somewhat surreptitiously been placed was at least not neglected in this particular. When, soon after the memorable sack of Rome, the Pope and the Emperor had been reconciled, and it had been decided that the Medici family should be elevated upon the ruins of Florentine liberty, Margaret's hand was conferred in marriage upon the pontiff's nephew Alexander. The wretched profligate who was thus selected to mate with the Emperor's eldest born child and to appropriate the fair demesnes of the Tuscan republic was nominally the offspring of Lorenzo de Medici by a Moorish slave, although generally reputed a bastard of the Pope himself. The nuptials were celebrated with great pomp at Naples,

Page 153

where the Emperor rode at the tournament in the guise of a Moorish warrior. At Florence splendid festivities had also been held, which were troubled with omens believed to be highly unfavorable. It hardly needed, however, preternatural appearances in heaven or on earth to proclaim the marriage ill-starred which united a child of twelve years with a worn-out debauchee of twenty-seven. Fortunately for Margaret, the funereal portents proved true. Her husband, within the first year of their wedded life, fell a victim to his own profligacy, and was assassinated by his kinsman, Lorenzino de Medici. Cosmo, his successor in the tyranny of Florence, was desirous of succeeding to the hand of Margaret, but the politic Emperor, thinking that he had already done enough to conciliate that house, was inclined to bind to his interests the family which now occupied the papal throne. Margaret was accordingly a few years afterwards united to Ottavio Farnese, nephew of Paul the Third. It was still her fate to be unequally matched. Having while still a child been wedded to a man of more than twice her years, she was now, at the age of twenty, united to an immature youth of thirteen. She conceived so strong an aversion to her new husband, that it became impossible for them to live together in peace. Ottavio accordingly went to the wars, and in 1541 accompanied the Emperor in his memorable expedition to Barbary.

Rumors of disaster by battle and tempest reaching Europe before the results of the expedition were accurately known, reports that the Emperor had been lost in a storm, and that the young Ottavio had perished with him, awakened remorse in the bosom of Margaret. It seemed to her that he had been driven forth by domestic inclemency to fall a victim to the elements. When, however, the truth became known, and it was ascertained that her husband, although still living, was lying dangerously ill in the charge of the Emperor, the repugnance which had been founded upon his extreme youth changed to passionate fondness. His absence, and his faithful military attendance upon her father, caused a revulsion in her feelings, and awakened her admiration. When Ottavio, now created Duke of Parma and Piacenza, returned to Rome, he was received by his wife with open arms. Their union was soon blessed with twins, and but for a certain imperiousness of disposition which Margaret had inherited from her father, and which she was too apt to exercise even upon her husband, the marriage would have been sufficiently fortunate.

Various considerations pointed her out to Philip as a suitable person for the office of Regent, although there seemed some mystery about the appointment which demanded explanation. It was thought that her birth would make her acceptable to the people; but perhaps, the secret reason with Philip was, that she alone of all other candidates would be amenable to the control of the churchman in whose hand he intended placing the real administration of the provinces.

Page 154

Moreover, her husband was very desirous that the citadel of Piacenza, still garrisoned by Spanish troops, should be surrendered to him. Philip was disposed to conciliate the Duke, but unwilling to give up the fortress. He felt that Ottavio would be flattered by the nomination of his wife to so important an office, and be not too much dissatisfied at finding himself relieved for a time from her imperious fondness. Her residence in the Netherlands would guarantee domestic tranquillity to her husband, and peace in Italy to the King. Margaret would be a hostage for the fidelity of the Duke, who had, moreover, given his eldest son to Philip to be educated in his service.

She was about thirty-seven years of age when she arrived in the Netherlands, with the reputation of possessing high talents, and a proud and energetic character. She was an enthusiastic Catholic, and had sat at the feet of Loyola, who had been her confessor and spiritual guide. She felt a greater horror for heretics than for any other species of malefactors, and looked up to her father's bloody edicts as if they had been special revelations from on high. She was most strenuous in her observance of Roman rites, and was accustomed to wash the feet of twelve virgins every holy week, and to endow them in marriage afterwards.—Her acquirements, save that of the art of horsemanship, were not remarkable.

Carefully educated in the Machiavellian and Medicean school of politics, she was versed in that "dissimulation," to which liberal Anglo-Saxons give a shorter name, but which formed the main substance of statesmanship at the court of Charles and Philip. In other respects her accomplishments were but meagre, and she had little acquaintance with any language but Italian. Her personal appearance, which was masculine, but not without a certain grand and imperial fascination, harmonized with the opinion generally entertained of her character. The famous moustache upon her upper lips was supposed to indicate authority and virility of purpose, an impression which was confirmed by the circumstance that she was liable to severe attacks of gout, a disorder usually considered more appropriate to the sterner sex.

Such were the previous career and public reputation of the Duchess Margaret. It remains to be unfolded whether her character and endowments, as exemplified in her new position, were to justify the choice of Philip.

The members of the state council, as already observed, were Berlaymont, Viglius, Arras, Orange, and Egmont.

The first was, likewise, chief of the finance department. Most of the Catholic writers described him as a noble of loyal and highly honorable character. Those of the Protestant party, on the contrary, uniformly denounced him as greedy, avaricious, and extremely sanguinary. That he was a brave and devoted soldier, a bitter papist, and an inflexible adherent to the royal cause, has never been disputed. The Baron

Page 155

himself, with his four courageous and accomplished sons, were ever in the front ranks to defend the crown against the nation. It must be confessed, however, that fanatical loyalty loses most of the romance with which genius and poetry have so often hallowed the sentiment, when the “legitimate” prince for whom the sword is drawn is not only an alien in tongue and blood, but filled with undisguised hatred for the land he claims to rule.

Viglius van Aytta van Zuichem was a learned Frisian, born, according to some writers, of “boors’ degree, but having no inclination for boorish work”. According to other authorities, which the President himself favored, he was of noble origin; but, whatever his race, it is certain that whether gentle or simple, it derived its first and only historical illustration from his remarkable talents and acquirements. These in early youth were so great as to acquire the commendation of Erasmus. He had studied in Louvain, Paris, and Padua, had refused the tutorship Philip when that prince was still a child, and had afterwards filled a professorship at Ingolstadt. After rejecting several offers of promotion from the Emperor, he had at last accepted in 1542 a seat in the council of Mechlin, of which body he had become president in 1545. He had been one of the peace commissioners to France in 1558, and was now president of the privy council, a member of the state council, and of the inner and secret committee of that board, called the Consults. Much odium was attached to his name for his share in the composition of the famous edict of 1550. The rough draught was usually attributed to his pen, but he complained bitterly, in letters written at this time, of injustice done him in this respect, and maintained that he had endeavored, without success, to induce the Emperor to mitigate the severity of the edict. One does not feel very strongly inclined to accept his excuses, however, when his general opinions on the subject of religion are remembered. He was most bigoted in precept and practice. Religious liberty he regarded as the most detestable and baleful of doctrines; heresy he denounced as the most unpardonable of crimes.

From no man’s mouth flowed more bitter or more elegant commonplaces than from that of the learned president against those blackest of malefactors, the men who claimed within their own walls the right to worship God according to their own consciences. For a common person, not learned in law or divinity, to enter into his closet, to shut the door, and to pray to Him who seeth in secret, was, in his opinion, to open wide the gate of destruction for all the land, and to bring in the Father of Evil at once to fly away with the whole population, body and soul. “If every man,” said he to Hopper, “is to believe what he likes in his own house, we shall have hearth gods and tutelar divinities, again, the country will swarm with a thousand errors and sects, and very few there will be, I fear, who will allow

Page 156

themselves to be enclosed in the sheepfold of Christ. I have ever considered this opinion," continued the president, "the most pernicious of all. They who hold it have a contempt for all religion, and are neither more nor less than atheists. This vague, fireside liberty should be by every possible means extirpated; therefore did Christ institute shepherds to drive his wandering sheep back into the fold of the true Church; thus only can we guard the lambs against the ravening wolves, and prevent their being carried away from the flock of Christ to the flock of Belial. Liberty of religion, or of conscience, as they call it, ought never to be tolerated."

This was the cant with which Viglius was ever ready to feed not only his faithful Hopper, but all the world beside. The president was naturally anxious that the fold of Christ should be entrusted to none but regular shepherds, for he looked forward to taking one of the most lucrative crooks into his own hand, when he should retire from his secular career.

It is now necessary to say a few introductory words concerning the man who, from this time forth, begins to rise upon the history of his country with daily increasing grandeur and influence. William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, although still young in years, is already the central personage about whom the events and the characters of the epoch most naturally group themselves; destined as he is to become more and more with each succeeding year the vivifying source of light, strength, and national life to a whole people.

The Nassau family first emerges into distinct existence in the middle of the eleventh century. It divides itself almost as soon as known into two great branches. The elder remained in Germany, ascended the imperial throne in the thirteenth century in the person of Adolph of Nassau and gave to the country many electors, bishops, and generals. The younger and more illustrious branch retained the modest property and petty sovereignty of Nassau Dillenbourg, but at the same time transplanted itself to the Netherlands, where it attained at an early period to great power and large possessions. The ancestors of William, as Dukes of Gueldres, had begun to exercise sovereignty in the provinces four centuries before the advent of the house of Burgundy. That overshadowing family afterwards numbered the Netherland Nassaus among its most stanch and powerful adherents. Engelbert the Second was distinguished in the turbulent councils and in the battle-fields of Charles the Bold, and was afterwards the unwavering supporter of Maximilian, in court and camp. Dying childless, he was succeeded by his brother John, whose two sons, Henry and William, of Nassau, divided the great inheritance after their father's death, William succeeded to the German estates, became a convert to Protestantism, and introduced the Reformation into his dominions. Henry, the eldest son, received the family possessions and titles in Luxembourg, Brabant,

Page 157

Flanders and Holland, and distinguished himself as much as his uncle Engelbert, in the service of the Burgundo-Austrian house. The confidential friend of Charles the Fifth, whose governor he had been in that Emperor's boyhood, he was ever his most efficient and reliable adherent. It was he whose influence placed the imperial crown upon the head of Charles. In 1515 he espoused Claudia de Chalons, sister of Prince Philibert of Orange, "in order," as he wrote to his father, "to be obedient to his imperial Majesty, to please the King of France, and more particularly for the sake of his own honor and profit."

His son Rene de Nassau-Chalons succeeded Philibert. The little principality of Orange, so pleasantly situated between Provence and Dauphiny, but in such dangerous proximity to the seat of the "Babylonian captivity" of the popes at Avignon, thus passed to the family of Nassau. The title was of high antiquity. Already in the reign of Charlemagne, Guillaume au Court-Nez, or "William with the Short Nose," had defended the little—town of Orange against the assaults of the Saracens. The interest and authority acquired in the demesnes thus preserved by his valor became extensive, and in process of time hereditary in his race. The principality became an absolute and free sovereignty, and had already descended, in defiance of the Salic law, through the three distinct families of Orange, Baux, and Chalons.

In 1544, Prince Rene died at the Emperor's feet in the trenches of Saint Dizier. Having no legitimate children, he left all his titles and estates to his cousin-german, William of Nassau, son of his father's brother William, who thus at the age of eleven years became William the Ninth of Orange. For this child, whom the future was to summon to such high destinies and such heroic sacrifices, the past and present seemed to have gathered riches and power together from many sources. He was the descendant of the Othos, the Engelberts, and the Henries, of the Netherlands, the representative of the Philiberts and the Renes of France; the chief of a house, humbler in resources and position in Germany, but still of high rank, and which had already done good service to humanity by being among the first to embrace the great principles of the Reformation.

His father, younger brother of the Emperor's friend Henry, was called William the Rich. He was, however, only rich in children. Of these he had five sons and seven daughters by his wife Juliana of Stolberg. She was a person of most exemplary character and unaffected piety. She instilled into the minds of all her children the elements of that devotional sentiment which was her own striking characteristic, and it was destined that the seed sown early should increase to an abundant harvest. Nothing can be more tender or more touching than the letters which still exist from her hand, written to her illustrious sons in hours of anxiety or anguish, and to the last, recommending to them with as much earnest simplicity as if they were still little children at her knee, to rely always in the midst of the trials and dangers which were to beset their paths through life, upon the great hand of God. Among the mothers of great men, Juliana of Stolberg

deserves a foremost place, and it is no slight eulogy that she was worthy to have been the mother of William of Orange and of Lewis, Adolphus, Henry, and John of Nassau.

Page 158

At the age of eleven years, William having thus unexpectedly succeeded to such great possessions, was sent from his father's roof to be educated in Brussels. No destiny seemed to lie before the young prince but an education at the Emperor's court, to be followed by military adventures, embassies, viceroyalties, and a life of luxury and magnificence. At a very early age he came, accordingly, as a page into the Emperor's family. Charles recognized, with his customary quickness, the remarkable character of the boy. At fifteen, William was the intimate, almost confidential friend of the Emperor, who prided himself, above all other gifts, on his power of reading and of using men. The youth was so constant an attendant upon his imperial chief that even when interviews with the highest personages, and upon the gravest affairs, were taking place, Charles would never suffer him to be considered superfluous or intrusive. There seemed to be no secrets which the Emperor held too high for the comprehension or discretion of his page. His perceptive and reflective faculties, naturally of remarkable keenness and depth, thus acquired a precocious and extraordinary development. He was brought up behind the curtain of that great stage where the world's dramas were daily enacted. The machinery and the masks which produced the grand delusions of history had no deceptions for him. Carefully to observe men's actions, and silently to ponder upon their motives, was the favorite occupation of the Prince during his apprenticeship at court. As he advanced to man's estate, he was selected by the Emperor for the highest duties. Charles, whose only merit, so far as the provinces were concerned, was in having been born in Ghent, and that by an ignoble accident, was glad to employ this representative of so many great Netherland houses, in the defence of the land. Before the Prince was twenty-one he was appointed general-in-chief of the army on the French frontier, in the absence of the Duke of Savoy. The post was coveted by many most distinguished soldiers: the Counts of Buren, Bossu, Lalaing, Aremberg, Meghem, and particularly by Count Egmont; yet Charles showed his extraordinary confidence in the Prince of Orange, by selecting him for the station, although he had hardly reached maturity, and was moreover absent in France. The young Prince acquitted himself of his high command in a manner which justified his appointment.

It was the Prince's shoulder upon which the Emperor leaned at the abdication; the Prince's hand which bore the imperial insignia of the discrowned monarch to Ferdinand, at Augsburg. With these duties his relations with Charles were ended, and those with Philip begun. He was with the army during the hostilities which were soon after resumed in Picardy; he was the secret negotiator of the preliminary arrangement with France, soon afterwards confirmed by the triumphant treaty of April, 1559. He had conducted these initiatory conferences with the Constable

Page 159

Montmorency and Marshal de Saint Andre with great sagacity, although hardly a man in years, and by so doing he had laid Philip under deep obligations. The King was so inexpressibly anxious for peace that he would have been capable of conducting a treaty upon almost any terms. He assured the Prince that “the greatest service he could render him in this world was to make peace, and that he desired to have it at any price what ever, so eager was he to return to Spain.” To the envoy Suriano, Philip had held the same language. “Oh, Ambassador,” said he, “I wish peace on any terms, and if the King of France had not sued for it, I would have begged for it myself.”

With such impatience on the part of the sovereign, it certainly manifested diplomatic abilities of a high character in the Prince, that the treaty negotiated by him amounted to a capitulation by France. He was one of the hostages selected by Henry for the due execution of the treaty, and while in France made that remarkable discovery which was to color his life. While hunting with the King in the forest of Vincennes, the Prince and Henry found themselves alone together, and separated from the rest of the company. The French monarch’s mind was full of the great scheme which had just secretly been formed by Philip and himself, to extirpate Protestantism by a general extirpation of Protestants. Philip had been most anxious to conclude the public treaty with France, that he might be the sooner able to negotiate that secret convention by which he and his Most Christian Majesty were solemnly to bind themselves to massacre all the converts to the new religion in France and the Netherlands. This conspiracy of the two Kings against their subjects was the matter nearest the hearts of both. The Duke of Alva, a fellow hostage with William of Orange, was the plenipotentiary to conduct this more important arrangement. The French monarch, somewhat imprudently imagining that the Prince was also a party to the plot, opened the whole subject to him without reserve. He complained of the constantly increasing numbers of sectaries in his kingdom, and protested that his conscience would never be easy, nor his state secure until his realm should be delivered of “that accursed vermin.” A civil revolution, under pretext of a religious reformation, was his constant apprehension, particularly since so many notable personages in the realm, and even princes of the blood, were already tainted with heresy. Nevertheless, with the favor of heaven, and the assistance of his son and brother Philip, he hoped soon to be master of the rebels. The King then proceeded, with cynical minuteness, to lay before his discreet companion the particulars of the royal plot, and the manner in which all heretics, whether high or humble, were to be discovered and massacred at the most convenient season. For the furtherance of the scheme in the Netherlands, it was understood that the Spanish regiments would be exceedingly efficient. The

Page 160

Prince, although horror-struck and indignant at the royal revelations, held his peace, and kept his countenance. The King was not aware that, in opening this delicate negotiation to Alva's colleague and Philip's plenipotentiary, he had given a warning of inestimable value to the man who had been born to resist the machinations of Philip and of Alva. William of Orange earned the surname of "the Silent," from the manner in which he received these communications of Henry without revealing to the monarch, by word or look, the enormous blunder which he had committed. His purpose was fixed from that hour. A few days afterwards he obtained permission to visit the Netherlands, where he took measures to excite, with all his influence, the strongest and most general opposition to the continued presence of the Spanish troops, of which forces, touch against his will, he had been, in conjunction with Egmont, appointed chief. He already felt, in his own language, that "an inquisition for the Netherlands had been, resolved upon more cruel than that of Spain; since it would need but to look askance at an image to be cast into the flames." Although having as yet no spark of religious sympathy for the reformers, he could not, he said, "but feel compassion for so many virtuous men and women thus devoted to massacre," and he determined to save them if he could!' At the departure of Philip he had received instructions, both patent and secret, for his guidance as stadholder of Holland, Friesland, and Utrecht. He was ordered "most expressly to correct and extirpate the sects reprobated by our Holy Mother Church; to execute the edicts of his Imperial Majesty, renewed by the King, with absolute rigor. He was to see that the judges carried out the edicts, without infraction, alteration, or moderation, since they were there to enforce, not to make or to discuss the law." In his secret instructions he was informed that the execution of the edicts was to be with all rigor, and without any respect of persons. He was also reminded that, whereas some persons had imagined the severity of the law "to be only intended against Anabaptists, on the contrary, the edicts were to be enforced on Lutherans and all other sectaries without distinction." Moreover, in one of his last interviews with Philip, the King had given him the names of several "excellent persons suspected of the new religion," and had commanded him to have them put to death. This, however, he not only omitted to do, but on the contrary gave them warning, so that they might effect their escape, "thinking it more necessary to obey God than man."

Page 161

William of Orange, at the departure of the King for Spain, was in his twenty-seventh year. He was a widower; his first wife, Anne of Egmont, having died in 1558, after seven years of wedlock. This lady, to whom he had been united when they were both eighteen years of age, was the daughter of the celebrated general, Count de Buren, and the greatest heiress in the Netherlands. William had thus been faithful to the family traditions, and had increased his possessions by a wealthy alliance. He had two children, Philip and Mary. The marriage had been more amicable than princely marriages arranged for convenience often prove. The letters of the Prince to his wife indicate tenderness and contentment. At the same time he was accused, at a later period, of “having murdered her with a dagger.” The ridiculous tale was not even credited by those who reported it, but it is worth mentioning, as a proof that no calumny was too senseless to be invented concerning the man whose character was from that hour forth to be the mark of slander, and whose whole life was to be its signal, although often unavailing, refutation.

Yet we are not to regard William of Orange, thus on the threshold of his great career, by the light diffused from a somewhat later period. In no historical character more remarkably than in his is the law of constant development and progress illustrated. At twenty-six he is not the “pater patriae,” the great man struggling upward and onward against a host of enemies and obstacles almost beyond human strength, and along the dark and dangerous path leading through conflict, privation, and ceaseless labor to no repose but death. On the contrary, his foot was hardly on the first step of that difficult ascent which was to rise before him all his lifetime. He was still among the primrose paths. He was rich, powerful, of sovereign rank. He had only the germs within him of what was thereafter to expand into moral and intellectual greatness. He had small sympathy for the religious reformation, of which he was to be one of the most distinguished champions. He was a Catholic, nominally, and in outward observance. With doctrines he troubled himself but little. He had given orders to enforce conformity to the ancient Church, not with bloodshed, yet with comparative strictness, in his principality of Orange. Beyond the compliance with rites and forms, thought indispensable in those days to a personage of such high degree, he did not occupy himself with theology. He was a Catholic, as Egmont and Horn, Berlaymont and Mansfeld, Montigny and even Brederode, were Catholic. It was only tanners, dyers and apostate priests who were Protestants at that day in the Netherlands. His determination to protect a multitude of his harmless inferiors from horrible deaths did not proceed from sympathy with their religious sentiments, but merely from a generous and manly detestation of murder. He carefully averted his mind from sacred matters. If indeed

Page 162

the seed implanted by his pious parents were really the germ of his future conversion to Protestantism, it must be confessed that it lay dormant a long time. But his mind was in other pursuits. He was disposed for an easy, joyous, luxurious, princely life. Banquets, masquerades, tournaments, the chase, interspersed with the routine of official duties, civil and military, seemed likely to fill out his life. His hospitality, like his fortune, was almost regal. While the King and the foreign envoys were still in the Netherlands, his house, the splendid Nassau palace of Brussels, was ever open. He entertained for the monarch, who was, or who imagined himself to be, too poor to discharge his own duties in this respect, but he entertained at his own expense. This splendid household was still continued. Twenty-four noblemen and eighteen pages of gentle birth officiated regularly in his family. His establishment was on so extensive a scale that upon one day twenty-eight master cooks were dismissed, for the purpose of diminishing the family expenses, and there was hardly a princely house in Germany which did not send cooks to learn their business in so magnificent a kitchen. The reputation of his table remained undiminished for years. We find at a later period, that Philip, in the course of one of the nominal reconciliations which took place several times between the monarch and William of Orange, wrote that, his head cook being dead, he begged the Prince to "make him a present of his chief cook, Master Herman, who was understood to be very skilful."

In this hospitable mansion, the feasting continued night and day. From early morning till noon, the breakfast-tables were spread with wines and luxurious viands in constant succession, to all comers and at every moment.—The dinner and supper were daily banquets for a multitude of guests. The highest nobles were not those alone who were entertained. Men of lower degree were welcomed with a charming hospitality which made them feel themselves at their ease. Contemporaries of all parties unite in eulogizing the winning address and gentle manners of the Prince. "Never," says a most bitter Catholic historian, "did an arrogant or indiscreet word fall from his lips. He, upon no occasion, manifested anger to his servants, however much they might be in fault, but contented himself with admonishing them graciously, without menace or insult. He had a gentle and agreeable tongue, with which he could turn all the gentlemen at court any way he liked. He was beloved and honored by the whole community." His manner was graceful, familiar, caressing, and yet dignified. He had the good breeding which comes from the heart, refined into an inexpressible charm from his constant intercourse, almost from his cradle, with mankind of all ranks.

Page 163

It may be supposed that this train of living was attended with expense. Moreover, he had various other establishments in town and country; besides his almost royal residence in Brussels. He was ardently fond of the chase, particularly of the knightly sport of falconry. In the country he “consoled himself by taking every day a heron in the clouds.” His falconers alone cost him annually fifteen hundred florins, after he had reduced their expenses to the lowest possible point. He was much in debt, even at this early period and with his princely fortune. “We come of a race,” he wrote carelessly to his brother Louis, “who are somewhat bad managers in our young days, but when we grow older, we do better, like our late father: ’sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper et in secula seculorum’. My greatest difficulty,” he adds, “as usual, is on account of the falconers.”

His debts already amounted, according to Granvelle’s statement, to 800,000 or 900,000 florins. He had embarrassed himself, not only through his splendid extravagance, by which all the world about him were made to partake of his wealth, but by accepting the high offices to which he had been appointed. When general-in-chief on the frontier, his salary was three hundred florins monthly; “not enough,” as he said, “to pay the servants in his tent,” his necessary expenses being twenty-five hundred florins, as appears by a letter to his wife. His embassy to carry the crown to Ferdinand, and his subsequent residence as a hostage for the treaty in Paris, were also very onerous, and he received no salary; according to the economical system in this respect pursued by Charles and Philip. In these two embassies or missions alone, together with the entertainments offered by him to the court and to foreigners, after the peace at Brussels, the Prince spent, according to his own estimate, 1,500,000 florins. He was, however, although deeply, not desperately involved, and had already taken active measures to regulate and reduce his establishment. His revenues were vast, both in his own right and in that of his deceased wife. He had large claims upon the royal treasury for service and expenditure. He had besides ample sums to receive from the ransoms of the prisoners of St. Quentin and Gravelines, having served in both campaigns. The amount to be received by individuals from this source may be estimated from the fact that Count Horn, by no means one of the most favored in the victorious armies, had received from Leonor d’Orleans, Due de Loggieville, a ransom of eighty thousand crowns. The sum due, if payment were enforced, from the prisoners assigned to Egmont, Orange, and others, must have been very large. Granvelle estimated the whole amount at two millions; adding, characteristically, “that this kind of speculation was a practice” which our good old fathers, lovers of virtue, would not have found laudable. In this the churchman was right, but he might have added that the “lovers of virtue” would have found it as little “laudable” for ecclesiastics to dispose of the sacred offices in their gift, for carpets, tapestry, and annual payments of certain percentages upon the cure of souls. If the profits respectively gained by military and clerical speculators in that day should be compared, the disadvantage would hardly be found to lie with those of the long robe.

Page 164

Such, then, at the beginning of 1560, was William of Orange; a generous, stately, magnificent, powerful grandee. As a military commander, he had acquitted himself very creditably of highly important functions at an early age. Nevertheless it was the opinion of many persons, that he was of a timid temperament. He was even accused of having manifested an unseemly panic at Philippeville, and of having only been restrained by the expostulations of his officers, from abandoning both that fortress and Charlemont to Admiral Coligny, who had made his appearance in the neighborhood, merely at the head of a reconnoitring party. If the story were true, it would be chiefly important as indicating that the Prince of Orange was one of the many historical characters, originally of an excitable and even timorous physical organization, whom moral courage and a strong will have afterwards converted into dauntless heroes. Certain it is that he was destined to confront open danger in every form, that his path was to lead through perpetual ambush, yet that his cheerful confidence and tranquil courage were to become not only unquestionable but proverbial. It may be safely asserted, however, that the story was an invention to be classed with those fictions which made him the murderer of his first wife, a common conspirator against Philip's crown and person, and a crafty malefactor in general, without a single virtue. It must be remembered that even the terrible Alva, who lived in harness almost from the cradle to the grave, was, so late as at this period, censured for timidity, and had been accused in youth of flat cowardice. He despised the insinuation, which for him had no meaning. There is no doubt too that caution was a predominant characteristic of the Prince. It was one of the chief sources of his greatness. At that period, perhaps at any period, he would have been incapable of such brilliant and dashing exploits as had made the name of Egmont so famous. It had even become a proverb, "the counsel of Orange, the execution of Egmont," yet we shall have occasion to see how far this physical promptness which had been so felicitous upon the battle-field was likely to avail the hero of St. Quentin in the great political combat which was approaching.

As to the talents of the Prince, there was no difference of opinion. His enemies never contested the subtlety and breadth of his intellect, his adroitness and capacity in conducting state affairs, his knowledge of human nature, and the profoundness of his views. In many respects it must be confessed that his surname of The Silent, like many similar appellations, was a misnomer. William of Orange was neither "silent" nor "taciturn," yet these are the epithets which will be forever associated with the name of a man who, in private, was the most affable, cheerful, and delightful of companions, and who on a thousand great public occasions was to prove himself, both by pen and by speech, the most eloquent man of his age. His mental accomplishments were considerable: He had studied history with attention, and he spoke and wrote with facility Latin, French, German, Flemish, and Spanish.

Page 165

The man, however, in whose hands the administration of the Netherlands was in reality placed, was Anthony Perrenot, then Bishop of Arras, soon to be known by the more celebrated title of Cardinal Granvelle. He was the chief of the Consults, or secret council of three, by whose deliberations the Duchess Regent was to be governed. His father, Nicholas Perrenot, of an obscure family in Burgundy, had been long the favorite minister and man of business to the Emperor Charles. Anthony, the eldest of thirteen children, was born in 1517. He was early distinguished for his talents. He studied at Dole, Padua, Paris, and Louvain. At, the age of twenty he spoke seven languages with perfect facility, while his acquaintance with civil and ecclesiastical laws was considered prodigious. At the age of twenty-three he became a canon of Liege Cathedral. The necessary eight quarters of gentility produced upon that occasion have accordingly been displayed by his panegyrists in triumphant refutation of that theory which gave him a blacksmith for his grandfather. At the same period, although he had not reached the requisite age, the rich bishopric of Arras had already been prepared for him by his father's care. Three years afterwards, in 1543, he distinguished himself by a most learned and brilliant harangue before the Council of Trent, by which display he so much charmed the Emperor, that he created him councillor of state. A few years afterwards he rendered the unscrupulous Charles still more valuable proofs of devotion and dexterity by the part he played in the memorable imprisonment of the Landgrave of Hesse and the Saxon Dukes. He was thereafter constantly employed in embassies and other offices of trust and profit.

There was no doubt as to his profound and varied learning, nor as to his natural quickness and dexterity. He was ready witted, smooth and fluent of tongue, fertile in expedients, courageous, resolute. He thoroughly understood the art of managing men, particularly his superiors. He knew how to govern under the appearance of obeying. He possessed exquisite tact in appreciating the characters of those far above him in rank and beneath him in intellect. He could accommodate himself with great readiness to the idiosyncrasies of sovereigns. He was a chameleon to the hand which fed him. In his intercourse with the King, he colored himself, as it were, with the King's character. He was not himself, but Philip; not the sullen, hesitating, confused Philip, however, but Philip endowed with eloquence, readiness, facility. The King ever found himself anticipated with the most delicate obsequiousness, beheld his struggling ideas change into winged words without ceasing to be his own. No flattery could be more adroit. The bishop accommodated himself to the King's epistolary habits. The silver-tongued and ready debater substituted protocols for conversation, in deference to a monarch who could not speak. He corresponded with Philip, with Margaret of Parma, with

Page 166

every one. He wrote folios to the Duchess when they were in the same palace. He would write letters forty pages long to the King, and send off another courier on the same day with two or three additional despatches of identical date. Such prolixity enchanted the King, whose greediness for business epistles was insatiable. The painstaking monarch toiled, pen in hand, after his wonderful minister in vain. Philip was only fit to be the bishop's clerk; yet he imagined himself to be the directing and governing power. He scrawled apostilles in the margins to prove that he had read with attention, and persuaded himself that he suggested when he scarcely even comprehended. The bishop gave advice and issued instructions when he seemed to be only receiving them. He was the substance while he affected to be the shadow. These tactics were comparatively easy and likely to be triumphant, so long as he had only to deal with inferior intellects like those of Philip and Margaret. When he should be matched against political genius and lofty character combined, it was possible that his resources might not prove so all-sufficient.

His political principles were sharply defined in reality, but smoothed over by a conventional and decorous benevolence of language, which deceived vulgar minds. He was a strict absolutist. His deference to arbitrary power was profound and slavish. God and "the master," as he always called Philip, he professed to serve with equal humility. "It seems to me," said he, in a letter of this epoch, "that I shall never be able to fulfil the obligation of slave which I owe to your majesty, to whom I am bound by so firm a chain; —at any rate, I shall never fail to struggle for that end with sincerity."

As a matter of course, he was a firm opponent of the national rights of the Netherlands, however artfully he disguised the sharp sword of violent absolutism under a garland of flourishing phraseology. He had strenuously warned Philip against assembling the States-general before his departure for the sake of asking them for supplies. He earnestly deprecated allowing the constitutional authorities any control over the expenditures of the government, and averred that this practice under the Regent Mary had been the cause of endless trouble. It may easily be supposed that other rights were as little to his taste as the claim to vote the subsidies, a privilege which was in reality indisputable. Men who stood forth in defence of the provincial constitutions were, in his opinion, mere demagogues and hypocrites; their only motive being to curry favor with the populace. Yet these charters were, after all, sufficiently limited. The natural rights of man were topics which had never been broached. Man had only natural wrongs. None ventured to doubt that sovereignty was heaven-born, anointed of God. The rights of the Netherlands were special, not general; plural, not singular; liberties, not liberty; "privileges," not maxims.

Page 167

They were practical, not theoretical; historical, not philosophical. Still, such as they were, they were facts, acquisitions. They had been purchased by the blood and toil of brave ancestors; they amounted—however open to criticism upon broad humanitarian grounds, of which few at that day had ever dreamed—to a solid, substantial dyke against the arbitrary power which was ever chafing and fretting to destroy its barriers. No men were more subtle or more diligent in corroding the foundation of these bulwarks than the disciples of Granvelle. Yet one would have thought it possible to tolerate an amount of practical freedom so different from the wild, social speculations which in later days, have made both tyrants and reasonable lovers of our race tremble with apprehension. The Netherlanders claimed, mainly, the right to vote the money which was demanded in such enormous profusion from their painfully-acquired wealth; they were also unwilling to be burned alive if they objected to transubstantiation. Granvelle was most distinctly of an opposite opinion upon both topics. He strenuously deprecated the interference of the states with the subsidies, and it was by his advice that the remorseless edict of 1550, the Emperor's ordinance of blood and fire, was re-enacted, as the very first measure of Philip's reign. Such were his sentiments as to national and popular rights by representation. For the people itself—"that vile and mischievous animal called the people"—as he expressed it, he entertained a cheerful contempt.

His aptitude for managing men was very great; his capacity for affairs incontestable; but it must be always understood as the capacity for the affairs of absolutism. He was a clever, scheming politician, an adroit manager; it remained to be seen whether he had a claim to the character of a statesman. His industry was enormous. He could write fifty letters a day with his own hand. He could dictate to half a dozen amanuenses at once, on as many different subjects, in as many different languages, and send them all away exhausted.

He was already rich. His income from his see and other livings was estimated, in 1557, at ten thousand dollars—[1885 approximation. The decimal point more places to the right would in 2000 not be out of line. D.W.]—; his property in ready money, "furniture, tapestry, and the like," at two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. When it is considered that, as compared with our times, these sums represent a revenue of a hundred thousand, and a capital of two millions and a half in addition, it may be safely asserted that the prelate had at least made a good beginning. Besides his regular income, moreover, he had handsome receipts from that simony which was reduced to a system, and which gave him a liberal profit, generally in the shape of an annuity, upon every benefice which he conferred. He was, however, by no means satisfied. His appetite was as boundless as the sea; he was still a shameless

Page 168

mendicant of pecuniary favors and lucrative offices. Already, in 1552, the Emperor had roundly rebuked his greediness. "As to what you say of getting no 'merced' nor 'ayuda de costa,'" said he, "'tis merced and ayuda de costa quite sufficient, when one has fat benefices, pensions, and salaries, with which a man might manage to support himself." The bishop, however, was not easily abashed, and he was at the epoch which now occupies us, earnestly and successfully soliciting from Philip the lucrative abbey of Saint Armand. Not that he would have accepted this preferment, "could the abbey have been annexed to any of the new bishoprics;" on the contrary, he assured the king that "to carry out so holy a work as the erection of those new sees, he would willingly have contributed even out of his own miserable pittance."

It not being considered expedient to confiscate the abbey to any particular bishop, Philip accordingly presented it to the prelate of Arras, together with a handsome sum of money in the shape of an "ayuda de costa" beside. The thrifty bishop, who foresaw the advent of troublous times in the Netherlands, however, took care in the letters by which he sent his thanks, to instruct the King to secure the money upon crown property in Arragon, Naples, and Sicily, as matters in the provinces were beginning to look very precarious.

Such, at the commencement of the Duchess Margaret's administration, were the characters and the previous histories of the persons into whose hands the Netherlands were entrusted. None of them have been prejudged. We have contented ourselves with stating the facts with regard to all, up to the period at which we have arrived. Their characters have been sketched, not according to subsequent developments, but as they appeared at the opening of this important epoch.

The aspect of the country and its inhabitants offered many sharp contrasts, and revealed many sources of future trouble.

The aristocracy of the Netherlands was excessively extravagant, dissipated, and already considerably embarrassed in circumstances. It had been the policy of the Emperor and of Philip to confer high offices, civil, military, and diplomatic, upon the leading nobles, by which enormous expenses were entailed upon them, without any corresponding salaries. The case of Orange has been already alluded to, and there were many other nobles less able to afford the expense, who had been indulged with these ruinous honors. During the war, there had been, however, many chances of bettering broken fortunes. Victory brought immense prizes to the leading officers. The ransoms of so many illustrious prisoners as had graced the triumphs of Saint Quentin and Gravelines had been extremely profitable. These sources of wealth had now been cut off; yet, on the departure of the King from the Netherlands, the luxury increased instead of diminishing, "Instead of one court," said a contemporary, "you would have said that

Page 169

there were fifty." Nothing could be more sumptuous than the modes of life in Brussels. The household of Orange has been already painted. That of Egmont was almost as magnificent. A rivalry in hospitality and in display began among the highest nobles, and extended to those less able to maintain themselves in the contest. During the war there had been the valiant emulation of the battlefield; gentlemen had vied with each other how best to illustrate an ancient name with deeds of desperate valor, to repair the fortunes of a ruined house with the spoils of war. They now sought to surpass each other in splendid extravagance. It was an eager competition who should build the stateliest palaces, have the greatest number of noble pages and gentlemen in waiting, the most gorgeous liveries, the most hospitable tables, the most scientific cooks. There was, also, much depravity as well as extravagance. The morals of high society were loose. Gaming was practised to a frightful extent. Drunkenness was a prevailing characteristic of the higher classes. Even the Prince of Orange himself, at this period, although never addicted to habitual excess, was extremely convivial in his tastes, tolerating scenes and companions, not likely at a later day to find much favor in his sight. "We kept Saint Martin's joyously," he wrote, at about this period, to his brother, "and in the most jovial company. Brederode was one day in such a state that I thought he would certainly die, but he has now got over it." Count Brederode, soon afterwards to become so conspicuous in the early scenes of the revolt, was, in truth, most notorious for his performances in these banqueting scenes. He appeared to have vowed as uncompromising hostility to cold water as to the inquisition, and always denounced both with the same fierce and ludicrous vehemence. Their constant connection with Germany at that period did not improve the sobriety of the Netherlands' nobles. The aristocracy of that country, as is well known, were most "potent at potting." "When the German finds himself sober," said the bitter Badovaro, "he believes himself to be ill." Gladly, since the peace, they had welcomed the opportunities afforded for many a deep carouse with their Netherlands cousins. The approaching marriage of the Prince of Orange with the Saxon princess—an episode which will soon engage our attention—gave rise to tremendous orgies. Count Schwartzburg, the Prince's brother-in-law, and one of the negotiators of the marriage, found many occasions to strengthen the bonds of harmony between the countries by indulgence of these common tastes. "I have had many princes and counts at my table," he wrote to Orange, "where a good deal more was drunk than eaten. The Rhinegrave's brother fell down dead after drinking too much malvoisie; but we have had him balsamed and sent home to his family."

These disorders among the higher ranks were in reality so extensive as to justify the biting remark of the Venetian: "The gentlemen intoxicate themselves every day," said he, "and the ladies also; but much less than the men." His remarks as to the morality, in other respects, of both sexes were equally sweeping, and not more complimentary.

Page 170

If these were the characteristics of the most distinguished society, it may be supposed that they were reproduced with more or less intensity throughout all the more remote but concentric circles of life, as far as the seductive splendor of the court could radiate. The lesser nobles emulated the grandees, and vied with each other in splendid establishments, banquets, masquerades, and equipages. The natural consequences of such extravagance followed. Their estates were mortgaged, deeply and more deeply; then, after a few years, sold to the merchants, or rich advocates and other gentlemen of the robe, to whom they had been pledged. The more closely ruin stared the victims in the face, the more heedlessly did they plunge into excesses. "Such were the circumstances," moralizes a Catholic writer, "to which, at an earlier period, the affairs of Catiline, Cethegus, Lentulus, and others of that faction had been reduced, when they undertook to overthrow the Roman republic." Many of the nobles being thus embarrassed, and some even desperate, in their condition, it was thought that they were desirous of creating disturbances in the commonwealth, that the payment of just debts might be avoided, that their mortgaged lands might be wrested by main force from the low-born individuals who had become possessed of them, that, in particular, the rich abbey lands held by idle priests might be appropriated to the use of impoverished gentlemen who could turn them to so much better account. It is quite probable that interested motives such as these were not entirely inactive among a comparatively small class of gentlemen. The religious reformation in every land of Europe derived a portion of its strength from the opportunity it afforded to potentates and great nobles for helping themselves to Church property. No doubt many Netherlanders thought that their fortunes might be improved at the expense of the monks, and for the benefit of religion. Even without apostasy from the mother Church, they looked with longing eyes on the wealth of her favored and indolent children. They thought that the King would do well to carve a round number of handsome military commanderies out of the abbey lands, whose possessors should be bound to military service after the ancient manner of fiefs, so that a splendid cavalry, headed by the gentlemen of the country, should be ever ready to mount and ride at the royal pleasure, in place of a horde of lazy epicureans, telling beads and indulging themselves in luxurious vice.

Such views were entertained; such language often held. These circumstances and sentiments had their influence among the causes which produced the great revolt now impending. Care should be taken, however, not to exaggerate that influence. It is a prodigious mistake to refer this great historical event to sources so insufficient as the ambition of a few great nobles, and the embarrassments of a larger number of needy gentlemen. The Netherlands revolt was not an aristocratic,

Page 171

but a popular, although certainly not a democratic movement. It was a great episode—-the longest, the darkest, the bloodiest, the most important episode in the history of the religious reformation in Europe. The nobles so conspicuous upon the surface at the outbreak, only drifted before a storm which they neither caused nor controlled. Even the most powerful and the most sagacious were tossed to and fro by the surge of great events, which, as they rolled more and more tumultuously around them, seemed to become both irresistible and unfathomable.

For the state of the people was very different from the condition of the aristocracy. The period of martyrdom had lasted long and was to last loner; but there were symptoms that it might one day be succeeded by a more active stage of popular disease. The tumults of the Netherlands were long in ripening; when the final outbreak came it would have been more philosophical to enquire, not why it had occurred, but how it could have been so long postponed. During the reign of Charles, the sixteenth century had been advancing steadily in strength as the once omnipotent Emperor lapsed into decrepitude. That extraordinary century had not dawned upon the earth only to increase the strength of absolutism and superstition. The new world had not been discovered, the ancient world reconquered, the printing-press perfected, only that the inquisition might reign undisturbed over the fairest portions of the earth, and chartered hypocrisy fatten upon its richest lands. It was impossible that the most energetic and quick-witted people of Europe should not feel sympathy with the great effort made by Christendom to shake off the incubus which had so long paralyzed her hands and brain. In the Netherlands, where the attachment to Rome had never been intense, where in the old times, the Bishops of Utrecht had been rather Ghibelline than Guelph, where all the earlier sects of dissenters—Waldenses, Lollards, Hussites—had found numerous converts and thousands of martyrs, it was inevitable that there should be a response from the popular heart to the deeper agitation which now reached to the very core of Christendom. In those provinces, so industrious and energetic, the disgust was likely to be most easily awakened for a system under which so many friars battened in luxury upon the toils of others, contributing nothing to the taxation, nor to the military defence of the country, exercising no productive avocation, except their trade in indulgences, and squandering in taverns and brothels the annual sums derived from their traffic in licences to commit murder, incest, and every other crime known to humanity.

Page 172

The people were numerous, industrious, accustomed for centuries to a state of comparative civil freedom, and to a lively foreign trade, by which their minds were saved from the stagnation of bigotry. It was natural that they should begin to generalize, and to pass from the concrete images presented them in the Flemish monasteries to the abstract character of Rome itself. The Flemish, above all their other qualities, were a commercial nation. Commerce was the mother of their freedom, so far as they had acquired it, in civil matters. It was struggling to give birth to a larger liberty, to freedom of conscience. The provinces were situated in the very heart of Europe. The blood of a world-wide traffic was daily coursing through the thousand arteries of that water-in-woven territory. There was a mutual exchange between the Netherlands and all the world; and ideas were as liberally interchanged as goods. Truth was imported as freely as less precious merchandise. The psalms of Marot were as current as the drugs of Molucca or the diamonds of Borneo. The prohibitory measures of a despotic government could not annihilate this intellectual trade, nor could bigotry devise an effective quarantine to exclude the religious pest which lurked in every bale of merchandise, and was wafted on every breeze from East and West.

The edicts of the Emperor had been endured, but not accepted. The horrible persecution under which so many thousands had sunk had produced its inevitable result. Fertilized by all this innocent blood, the soil of the Netherlands became as a watered garden, in which liberty, civil and religious, was to flourish perennially. The scaffold had its daily victims, but did not make a single convert. The statistics of these crimes will perhaps never be accurately adjusted, nor will it be ascertained whether the famous estimate of Grotius was an exaggerated or an inadequate calculation. Those who love horrible details may find ample material. The chronicles contain the lists of these obscure martyrs; but their names, hardly pronounced in their life-time, sound barbarously in our ears, and will never ring through the trumpet of fame. Yet they were men who dared and suffered as much as men can dare and suffer in this world, and for the noblest cause which can inspire humanity. Fanatics they certainly were not, if fanaticism consists in show, without corresponding substance. For them all was terrible reality. The Emperor and his edicts were realities, the axe, the stake were realities, and the heroism with which men took each other by the hand and walked into the flames, or with which women sang a song of triumph while the grave-digger was shovelling the earth upon their living faces, was a reality also.

Page 173

Thus, the people of the Netherlands were already pervaded, throughout the whole extent of the country, with the expanding spirit of religious reformation. It was inevitable that sooner or later an explosion was to arrive. They were placed between two great countries, where the new principles had already taken root. The Lutheranism of Germany and the Calvinism of France had each its share in producing the Netherland revolt, but a mistake is perhaps often made in estimating the relative proportion of these several influences. The Reformation first entered the provinces, not through the Augsburg, but the Huguenot gate. The fiery field-preachers from the south of France first inflamed the excitable hearts of the kindred population of the south-western Netherlands. The Walloons were the first to rebel against and the first to reconcile themselves with papal Rome, exactly as their Celtic ancestors, fifteen centuries earlier, had been foremost in the revolt against imperial Rome, and precipitate in their submission to her overshadowing power. The Batavians, slower to be moved but more steadfast, retained the impulse which they received from the same source which was already agitating their “Welsh” compatriots. There were already French preachers at Valenciennes and Tournay, to be followed, as we shall have occasion to see, by many others. Without undervaluing the influence of the German Churches, and particularly of the garrison-preaching of the German military chaplains in the Netherlands, it may be safely asserted that the early Reformers of the provinces were mainly Huguenots in their belief: The Dutch Church became, accordingly, not Lutheran, but Calvinistic, and the founder of the commonwealth hardly ceased to be a nominal Catholic before he became an adherent to the same creed.

In the mean time, it is more natural to regard the great movement, psychologically speaking, as a whole, whether it revealed itself in France, Germany, the Netherlands, England, or Scotland. The policy of governments, national character, individual interests, and other collateral circumstances, modified the result; but the great cause was the same; the source of all the movements was elemental, natural, and single. The Reformation in Germany had been adjourned for half a century by the Augsburg religious peace, just concluded. It was held in suspense in France through the Macchiavellian policy which Catharine de Medici had just adopted, and was for several years to prosecute, of balancing one party against the other, so as to neutralize all power but her own. The great contest was accordingly transferred to the Netherlands, to be fought out for the rest of the century, while the whole of Christendom were to look anxiously for the result. From the East and from the West the clouds rolled away, leaving a comparatively bright and peaceful atmosphere, only that they might concentrate themselves with portentous blackness over the devoted soil of the Netherlands.

Page 174

In Germany, the princes, not the people, had conquered Rome, and to the princes, not the people, were secured the benefits of the victory—the spoils of churches, and the right to worship according to conscience. The people had the right to conform to their ruler's creed, or to depart from his land. Still, as a matter of fact, many of the princes being Reformers, a large mass of the population had acquired the privilege for their own generation and that of their children to practise that religion which they actually approved. This was a fact, and a more comfortable one than the necessity of choosing between what they considered wicked idolatry and the stake—the only election left to their Netherland brethren. In France, the accidental splinter from Montgomery's lance had deferred the Huguenot massacre for a dozen years. During the period in which the Queen Regent was resolved to play her fast and loose policy, all the persuasions of Philip and the arts of Alva were powerless to induce her to carry out the scheme which Henry had revealed to Orange in the forest of Vincennes. When the crime came at last, it was as blundering as it was bloody; at once premeditated and accidental; the isolated execution of an interregal conspiracy, existing for half a generation, yet exploding without concert; a wholesale massacre, but a piecemeal plot.

The aristocracy and the masses being thus, from a variety of causes, in this agitated and dangerous condition, what were the measures of the government?

The edict of 1550 had been re-enacted immediately after Philip's accession to sovereignty. It is necessary that the reader should be made acquainted with some of the leading provisions of this famous document, thus laid down above all the constitutions as the organic law of the land. A few plain facts, entirely without rhetorical varnish, will prove more impressive in this case than superfluous declamation. The American will judge whether the wrongs inflicted by Laud and Charles upon his Puritan ancestors were the severest which a people has had to undergo, and whether the Dutch Republic does not track its source to the same high, religious origin as that of our own commonwealth.

"No one," said the edict, "shall print, write, copy, keep, conceal, sell, buy or give in churches, streets, or other places, any book or writing made by Martin Luther, John Ecolampadius, Ulrich Zwinglius, Martin Bucer, John Calvin, or other heretics reprobated by the Holy Church; nor break, or otherwise injure the images of the holy virgin or canonized saints.... nor in his house hold conventicles, or illegal gatherings, or be present at any such in which the adherents of the above-mentioned heretics teach, baptize, and form conspiracies against the Holy Church and the general welfare..... Moreover, we forbid," continues the edict, in name of the sovereign, "all lay persons to converse or dispute concerning the Holy Scriptures, openly or secretly,

Page 175

especially on any doubtful or difficult matters, or to read, teach, or expound the Scriptures, unless they have duly studied theology and been approved by some renowned university..... or to preach secretly, or openly, or to entertain any of the opinions of the above-mentioned heretics..... on pain, should anyone be found to have contravened any of the points above-mentioned, as perturbators of our state and of the general quiet, to be punished in the following manner." And how were they to be punished? What was the penalty inflicted upon the man or woman who owned a hymn-book, or who hazarded the opinion in private, that Luther was not quite wrong in doubting the power of a monk to sell for money the license to commit murder or incest; or upon the parent, not being a Roman Catholic doctor of divinity, who should read Christ's Sermon on the Mount to his children in his own parlor or shop? How were crimes like these to be visited upon the transgressor? Was it by reprimand, fine, imprisonment, banishment, or by branding on the forehead, by the cropping of the ears or the slitting of nostrils, as was practised upon the Puritan fathers of New England for their nonconformity? It was by a sharper chastisement than any of these methods. The Puritan fathers of the Dutch Republic had to struggle against a darker doom. The edict went on to provide—

"That such perturbators of the general quiet are to be executed, to wit: the men with the sword and the women to be buried alive, if they do not persist in their errors; if they do persist in them, then they are to be executed with fire; all their property in both cases being confiscated to the crown."

Thus, the clemency of the sovereign permitted the repentant heretic to be beheaded or buried, alive, instead of being burned.

The edict further provided against all misprision of heresy by making those who failed to betray the suspected liable to the same punishment as if suspected or convicted themselves: "we forbid," said the decree, "all persons to lodge, entertain, furnish with food, fire, or clothing, or otherwise to favor any one holden or notoriously suspected of being a heretic; . . . and any one failing to denounce any such we ordain shall be liable to the above-mentioned punishments."

The edict went on to provide, "that if any person, being not convicted of heresy or error, but greatly suspected thereof, and therefore condemned by the spiritual judge to abjure such heresy, or by the secular magistrate to make public fine and reparation, shall again become suspected or tainted with heresy—although it should not appear that he has contravened or violated any one of our abovementioned commands—nevertheless, we do will and ordain that such person shall be considered as relapsed, and, as such, be punished with loss of life and property, without any hope of moderation or mitigation of the above-mentioned penalties."

Page 176

Furthermore, it was decreed, that “the spiritual judges, desiring to proceed against any one for the crime of heresy, shall request any of our sovereign courts or provincial councils to appoint any one of their college, or such other adjunct as the council shall select, to preside over the proceedings to be instituted against the suspected. All who know of any person tainted with heresy are required to denounce and give them up to all judges, officers of the bishops, or others having authority on the premises, on pain of being punished according to the pleasure of the judge. Likewise, all shall be obliged, who know of any place where such heretics keep themselves, to declare them to the authorities, on pain of being held as accomplices, and punished as such heretics themselves would be if apprehended.”

In order to secure the greatest number of arrests by a direct appeal to the most ignoble, but not the least powerful principle of human nature, it was ordained “that the informer, in case of conviction, should be entitled to one half the property of the accused, if not more than one hundred pounds Flemish; if more, then ten per cent. of all such excess.”

Treachery to one’s friends was encouraged by the provision, “that if any man being present at any secret conventicle, shall afterwards come forward and betray his fellow-members of the congregation, he shall receive full pardon.”

In order that neither the good people of the Netherlands, nor the judges and inquisitors should delude themselves with the notion that these fanatic decrees were only intended to inspire terror, not for practical execution, the sovereign continued to ordain—“to the end that the judges and officers may have no reason, under pretext that the penalties are too great and heavy and only devised to terrify delinquents, to punish them less severely than they deserve—that the culprits be really punished by the penalties above declared; forbidding all judges to alter or moderate the penalties in any manner forbidding any one, of whatsoever condition, to ask of us, or of any one having authority, to grant pardon, or to present any petition in favor of such heretics, exiles, or fugitives, on penalty of being declared forever incapable of civil and military office, and of being, arbitrarily punished besides.”

Such were the leading provisions of this famous edict, originally promulgated in 1550 as a recapitulation and condensation of all the previous ordinances of the Emperor upon religious subjects. By its style and title it was a perpetual edict, and, according to one of its clauses, was to be published forever, once in every six months, in every city and village of the Netherlands. It had been promulgated at Augsburg, where the Emperor was holding a diet, upon the 25th of September. Its severity had so appalled the Dowager Queen of Hungary, that she had made a journey to Augsburg expressly to procure a mitigation of some of its provisions. The principal alteration which she was able to obtain of the Emperor was, however, in the phraseology only. As a concession to popular, prejudice, the words “spiritual judges” were substituted for “inquisitors” wherever that expression had occurred in the original draft.

Page 177

The edict had been re-enacted by the express advice of the Bishop of Arras, immediately on the accession of Philip: The prelate knew the value of the Emperor's name; he may have thought, also, that it would be difficult to increase the sharpness of the ordinances. "I advised the King," says Granvelle, in a letter written a few years later, "to make no change in the placards, but to proclaim the text drawn up by the Emperor, republishing the whole as the King's edict, with express insertion of the phrase, 'Carolus,' *etc*. I recommended this lest men should calumniate his Majesty as wishing to introduce novelties in the matter of religion."

This edict, containing the provisions which have been laid before the reader, was now to be enforced with the utmost rigor; every official personage, from the stadholders down, having received the most stringent instructions to that effect, under Philip's own hand. This was the first gift of Philip and of Granvelle to the Netherlands; of the monarch who said of himself that he had always, "from the beginning of his government, followed the path of clemency, according to his natural disposition, so well known to all the world;" of the prelate who said of himself, "that he had ever combated the opinion that any thing could be accomplished by terror, death, and violence."

During the period of the French and Papal war, it has been seen that the execution of these edicts had been permitted to slacken. It was now resumed with redoubled fury. Moreover, a new measure had increased the disaffection and dismay of the people, already sufficiently filled with apprehension. As an additional security for the supremacy of the ancient religion, it had been thought desirable that the number of bishops should be increased. There were but four sees in the Netherlands, those of Arras, Cambray, Tournay, and Utrecht. That of Utrecht was within the archiepiscopate of Cologne; the other three were within that of Rheims. It seemed proper that the prelates of the Netherlands should owe no extraprovincial allegiance. It was likewise thought that three millions of souls required more than four spiritual superintendents. At any rate, whatever might be the interest of the flocks, it was certain that those broad and fertile pastures would sustain more than the present number of shepherds. The wealth of the religious houses in the provinces was very great. The abbey of Afflighem alone had a revenue of fifty thousand florins, and there were many others scarcely inferior in wealth. But these institutions were comparatively independent both of King and Pope. Electing their own superiors from time to time, in nowise desirous of any change by which their ease might be disturbed and their riches endangered, the honest friars were not likely to engage in any very vigorous crusade against heresy, nor for the sake of introducing or strengthening Spanish institutions, which they knew to be abominated by the people, to

Page 178

take the risk, of driving all their disciples into revolt and apostacy. Comforting themselves with an Erasmian philosophy, which they thought best suited to the times, they were as little likely as the Sage of Rotterdam himself would have been, to make martyrs of themselves for the sake of extirpating Calvinism. The abbots and monks were, in political matters, very much under the influence of the great nobles, in whose company they occupied the benches of the upper house of the States-general.

Doctor Francis Sonnius had been sent on a mission to the Pope, for the purpose of representing the necessity of an increase in the episcopal force of the Netherlands. Just as the King was taking his departure, the commissioner arrived, bringing with him the Bull of Paul the Fourth, dated May 18, 1559. This was afterwards confirmed by that of Pius the Fourth, in January of the following year. The document stated that “Paul the Fourth, slave of slaves, wishing to provide for the welfare of the provinces and the eternal salvation of their inhabitants, had determined to plant in that fruitful field several new bishoprics. The enemy of mankind being abroad,” said the Bull, “in so many forms at that particular time, and the Netherlands, then under the sway of that beloved son of his holiness, Philip the Catholic, being compassed about with heretic and schismatic nations, it was believed that the eternal welfare of the land was in great danger. At the period of the original establishment of Cathedral churches, the provinces had been sparsely peopled; they had now become filled to overflowing, so that the original ecclesiastical arrangement did not suffice. The harvest was plentiful, but the laborers were few.”

In consideration of these and other reasons, three archbishoprics were accordingly appointed. That of Mechlin was to be principal, under which were constituted six bishoprics, those, namely, of Antwerp, Bois le Due, Rurmond, Ghent, Bruges and Ypres. That of Cambray was second, with the four subordinate dioceses of Tournay, Arras, Saint Omer and Namur. The third archbishopric was that of Utrecht, with the five sees of Haarlem, Middelburg, Leeuwarden, Groningen and Deventer.

The nomination to these important offices was granted to the King, subject to confirmation by the Pope. Moreover, it was ordained by the Bull that “each bishop should appoint nine additional prebendaries, who were to assist him in the matter of the inquisition throughout his bishopric, two of whom were themselves to be inquisitors.”

To sustain these two great measures, through which Philip hoped once and forever to extinguish the Netherland heresy, it was considered desirable that the Spanish troops still remaining in the provinces, should be kept there indefinitely.

The force was not large, amounting hardly to four thousand men, but they were unscrupulous, and admirably disciplined. As the entering wedge, by which a military and ecclesiastical despotism was eventually to be forced into the very heart of the land,

they were invaluable. The moral effect to be hoped from the regular presence of a Spanish standing army during a time of peace in the Netherlands could hardly be exaggerated. Philip was therefore determined to employ every argument and subterfuge to detain the troops.

Page 179

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Burned alive if they objected to transubstantiation
German finds himself sober—he believes himself ill
Govern under the appearance of obeying
Informer, in case of conviction, should be entitled to one half
Man had only natural wrongs (No natural rights)
No calumny was too senseless to be invented
Ruinous honors
Sovereignty was heaven-born, anointed of God
That vile and mischievous animal called the people
Understood the art of managing men, particularly his superiors
Upon one day twenty-eight master cooks were dismissed
William of Nassau, Prince of Orange

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 6.

The rise of the Dutch republic
John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.
1855
1560-1561 [*Chapter ii*.]

Agitation in the Netherlands—The ancient charters resorted to as barriers against the measures of government—"Joyous entrance" of Brabant—Constitution of Holland—-Growing unpopularity of Antony Perrenot, Archbishop of Mechlin—Opposition to the new bishoprics, by Orange, Egmont, and other influential nobles—Fury of the people at the continued presence of the foreign soldiery—Orange resigns the command of the legion—The troops recalled—Philip's personal attention to the details of persecution—-Perrenot becomes Cardinal de Granvelle—All the power of government in his hands—-His increasing unpopularity—Animosity and violence of Egmont towards the Cardinal—-Relations between Orange and Granvelle—Ancient friendship gradually changing to enmity—Renewal of the magistracy at Antwerp—Quarrel between the Prince and Cardinal—Joint letter of Orange and Egmont to the King—Answer of the King—-Indignation of Philip against Count Horn—Secret correspondence between the King and Cardinal—Remonstrances against the new bishoprics—Philip's private financial statements—Penury of the exchequer in Spain and in the provinces—Plan for debasing the coin—Marriage of William the Silent with the Princess of Lorraine circumvented—-Negotiations for his matrimonial alliance with Princess Anna of Saxony—Correspondence between Granvelle and Philip upon the subject— Opposition of Landgrave Philip and of Philip the Second—Character and conduct of Elector Augustus—Mission of Count Schwartzburg— Communications of Orange to the King and to

Duchess Margaret— Characteristic letter of Philip—Artful conduct of Granvelle and of the Regent—Visit of Orange to Dresden—Proposed “note” of Elector Augustus—-Refusal of the Prince—Protest of the Landgrave against the marriage—Preparations for the wedding at Leipzig—Notarial instrument drawn up on the marriage day—Wedding ceremonies and festivities—Entrance of Granvelle into Mechlin as Archbishop—Compromise in Brabant between the abbeys and bishops.

The years 1560 and 1561 were mainly occupied with the agitation and dismay produced by the causes set forth in the preceding chapter.

Page 180

Against the arbitrary policy embodied in the edicts, the new bishoprics and the foreign soldiery, the Netherlanders appealed to their ancient constitutions. These charters were called “handvests” in the vernacular Dutch and Flemish, because the sovereign made them fast with his hand. As already stated, Philip had made them faster than any of the princes of his house had ever done, so far as oath and signature could accomplish that purpose, both as hereditary prince in 1549, and as monarch in 1555. The reasons for the extensive and unconditional manner in which he swore to support the provincial charters, have been already indicated.

Of these constitutions, that of Brabant, known by the title of the ‘joyeuse entree, blyde inkomst’, or blithe entrance, furnished the most decisive barrier against the present wholesale tyranny. First and foremost, the “joyous entry” provided “that the prince of the land should not elevate the clerical state higher than of old has been customary and by former princes settled; unless by consent of the other two estates, the nobility and the cities.”

Again; “the prince can prosecute no one of his subjects nor any foreign resident, civilly or criminally, except in the ordinary and open courts of justice in the province, where the accused may answer and defend himself with the help of advocates.”

Further; “the prince shall appoint no foreigners to office in Brabant.”

Lastly; “should the prince, by force or otherwise, violate any of these privileges, the inhabitants of Brabant, after regular protest entered, are discharged of their oaths of allegiance, and as free, independent and unbound people, may conduct themselves exactly as seems to them best.”

Such were the leading features, so far as they regarded the points now at issue, of that famous constitution which was so highly esteemed in the Netherlands, that mothers came to the province in order to give birth to their children, who might thus enjoy, as a birthright, the privileges of Brabant. Yet the charters of the other provinces ought to have been as effective against the arbitrary course of the government. “No foreigner,” said the constitution of Holland, “is eligible as, councillor, financier, magistrate, or member of a court. Justice can be administered only by the ordinary tribunals and magistrates. The ancient laws and customs shall remain inviolable. Should the prince infringe any of these provisions, no one is bound to obey him.”

These provisions, from the Brabant and Holland charters, are only cited as illustrative of the general spirit of the provincial constitutions. Nearly all the provinces possessed privileges equally ample, duly signed and sealed. So far as ink and sealing wax could defend a land against sword and fire, the Netherlands were impregnable against the edicts and the renewed episcopal inquisition. Unfortunately, all history shows how feeble are barriers of paper

Page 181

or lambskin, even when hallowed with a monarch's oath, against the torrent of regal and ecclesiastical absolutism. It was on the reception in the provinces of the new and confirmatory Bull concerning the bishoprics, issued in January, 1560, that the measure became known, and the dissatisfaction manifest. The discontent was inevitable and universal. The ecclesiastical establishment which was not to be enlarged or elevated but by consent of the estates, was suddenly expanded into three archiepiscopates and fifteen bishoprics. The administration of justice, which was only allowed in free and local courts, distinct for each province, was to be placed, so far as regarded the most important of human interests, in the, hands of bishops and their creatures, many of them foreigners and most of them monks. The lives and property of the whole population were to be at the mercy of these utterly irresponsible conclaves. All classes were outraged. The nobles were offended because ecclesiastics, perhaps foreign ecclesiastics, were to be empowered to sit in the provincial estates and to control their proceedings in place of easy, indolent, ignorant abbots and friars, who had generally accepted the influence of the great seignors. The priests were enraged because the religious houses were thus taken out of their control and confiscated to a bench of bishops, usurping the places of those superiors who had formally been elected by and among themselves. The people were alarmed because the monasteries, although not respected nor popular, were at least charitable and without ambition to exercise ecclesiastical cruelty; while, on the other hand, by the new episcopal arrangements, a force of thirty new inquisitors was added to the apparatus for enforcing orthodoxy already established. The odium of the measure was placed upon the head of that churchman, already appointed Archbishop of Mechlin, and soon to be known as Cardinal Granvelle. From this time forth, this prelate began to be regarded with a daily increasing aversion. He was looked upon as the incarnation of all the odious measures which had been devised; as the source of that policy of absolutism which revealed itself more and more rapidly after the King's departure from the country. It was for this reason that so much stress was laid by popular clamor upon the clause prohibiting foreigners from office. Granvelle was a Burgundian; his father had passed most of his active life in Spain, while both he and his more distinguished son were identified in the general mind with Spanish politics. To this prelate, then, were ascribed the edicts, the new bishoprics, and the continued presence of the foreign troops. The people were right as regarded the first accusation. They were mistaken as to the other charges.

Page 182

The King had not consulted Anthony Perrenot with regard to the creation of the new bishoprics. The measure, which had been successively contemplated by Philip “the Good,” by Charles the Bold, and by the Emperor Charles, had now been carried out by Philip the Second, without the knowledge of the new Archbishop of Mechlin. The King had for once been able to deceive the astuteness of the prelate, and had concealed from him the intended arrangement, until the arrival of Sonnius with the Bulls. Granvelle gave the reasons for this mystery with much simplicity. “His Majesty knew,” he said, “that I should oppose it, as it was more honorable and lucrative to be one of four than one of eighteen.” In fact, according to his own statement, he lost money by becoming archbishop of Mechlin, and ceasing to be Bishop of Arras. For these reasons he declined, more than once, the proffered dignity, and at last only accepted it from fear of giving offence to the King, and after having secured compensation for his alleged losses. In the same letter (of 29th May, 1560) in which he thanked Philip for conferring upon him the rich abbey of Saint Armand, which he had solicited, in addition to the “merced” in ready money, concerning the safe investment of which he had already sent directions, he observed that he was now willing to accept the archbishopric of Mechlin; notwithstanding the odium attached to the measure, notwithstanding his feeble powers, and notwithstanding that, during the life of the Bishop of Tournay, who was then in rude health, he could only receive three thousand ducats of the revenue, giving up Arras and gaining nothing in Mechlin; notwithstanding all this, and a thousand other things besides, he assured his Majesty that, “since the royal desire was so strong that he should accept, he would consider nothing so difficult that he would not at least attempt it.” Having made up his mind to take the see and support the new arrangements, he was resolved that his profits should be as large as possible. We have seen how he had already been enabled to indemnify himself. We shall find him soon afterwards importuning the King for the Abbey of Afflighem, the enormous revenue of which the prelate thought would make another handsome addition to the rewards of his sacrifices. At the same time, he was most anxious that the people, and particularly the great nobles, should not ascribe the new establishment to him, as they persisted in doing. “They say that the episcopates were devised to gratify my ambition,” he wrote to Philip two years later; “whereas your Majesty knows how steadily I refused the see of Mechlin, and that I only accepted it in order not to live in idleness, doing nothing for God and your Majesty.” He therefore instructed Philip, on several occasions, to make it known to the government of the Regent, to the seignors, and to the country generally, that the measure had been arranged without his knowledge; that the Marquis Berghen had known of it first, and that the prelate had, in truth, been kept in the dark on the subject until the arrival of Sonnius with the Bulls. The King, always docile to his minister, accordingly wrote to the Duchess the statements required, in almost the exact phraseology suggested; taking pains to repeat the declarations on several occasions, both by letter and by word of mouth, to many influential persons.

Page 183

The people, however, persisted in identifying the Bishop with the scheme. They saw that he was the head of the new institutions; that he was to receive the lion's share of the confiscated abbeys, and that he was foremost in defending and carrying through the measure, in spite of all opposition. That opposition waxed daily more bitter, till the Cardinal, notwithstanding that he characterised the arrangement to the King as "a holy work," and warmly assured Secretary Perez that he would contribute his fortune, his blood, and his life, to its success, was yet obliged to exclaim in the bitterness of his spirit, "Would to God that the erection of these new sees had never been thought of. Amen! Amen!"

Foremost in resistance was the Prince of Orange. Although a Catholic, he had no relish for the horrible persecution which had been determined upon. The new bishoprics he characterized afterwards as parts "of one grand scheme for establishing the cruel inquisition of Spain; the said bishops to serve as inquisitors, burners of bodies; and tyrants of conscience: two prebendaries in each see being actually constituted inquisitors." For this reason he omitted no remonstrance on the subject to the Duchess, to Granvelle, and by direct letters to the King. His efforts were seconded by Egmont, Berghen, and other influential nobles. Even Berlaymont was at first disposed to side with the opposition, but upon the argument used by the Duchess, that the bishoprics and prebends would furnish excellent places for his sons and other members of the aristocracy, he began warmly to support the measure. Most of the labor, however, and all the odium, of the business fell upon the Bishop's shoulders. There was still a large fund of loyalty left in the popular mind, which not even forty years of the Emperor's dominion had consumed, and which Philip was destined to draw upon as prodigally as if the treasure had been inexhaustible. For these reasons it still seemed most decorous to load all the hatred upon the minister's back, and to retain the consolatory formula, that Philip was a prince, "clement, benign, and debonair."

The Bishop, true to his habitual conviction, that words, with the people, are much more important than things, was disposed to have the word "inquisitor" taken out of the text of the new decree. He was anxious at this juncture to make things pleasant, and he saw no reason why men should be unnecessarily startled. If the inquisition could be practised, and the heretics burned, he was in favor of its being done comfortably. The word "inquisitor" was unpopular, almost indecent. It was better to suppress the term and retain the thing. "People are afraid to speak of the new bishoprics," he wrote to Perez, "on account of the clause providing that of nine canons one shall be inquisitor. Hence people fear the Spanish inquisition."—He, therefore, had written to the King to suggest instead, that the canons or graduates should be obliged to assist the Bishop, according as he might command. Those terms would suffice, because, although not expressly stated, it was clear that the Bishop was an ordinary inquisitor; but it was necessary to expunge words that gave offence.

Page 184

It was difficult, however, with all the Bishop's eloquence and dexterity, to construct an agreeable inquisition. The people did not like it, in any shape, and there were indications, not to be mistaken, that one day there would be a storm which it would be beyond human power to assuage. At present the people directed their indignation only upon a part of the machinery devised for their oppression. The Spanish troops were considered as a portion of the apparatus by which the new bishoprics and the edicts were to be forced into execution. Moreover, men were, weary of the insolence and the pillage which these mercenaries had so long exercised in the land. When the King had been first requested to withdraw them, we have seen that he had burst into a violent passion. He had afterward dissembled. Promising, at last, that they should all be sent from the country within three or four months after his departure, he had determined to use every artifice to detain them in the provinces. He had succeeded, by various subterfuges, in keeping them there fourteen months; but it was at last evident that their presence would no longer be tolerated. Towards the close of 1560 they were quartered in Walcheren and Brill. The Zelanders, however, had become so exasperated by their presence that they resolutely refused to lay a single hand upon the dykes, which, as usual at that season, required great repairs. Rather than see their native soil profaned any longer by these hated foreign mercenaries, they would see it sunk forever in the ocean. They swore to perish-men, women, and children together-in the waves, rather than endure longer the outrages which the soldiery daily inflicted. Such was the temper of the Zelanders that it was not thought wise to trifle with their irritation. The Bishop felt that it was no longer practicable to detain the troops, and that all the pretext devised by Philip and his government had become ineffectual. In a session of the State Council, held on the 25th October, 1560, he represented in the strongest terms to the Regent the necessity for the final departure of the troops. Viglius, who knew the character of his countrymen, strenuously seconded the proposal. Orange briefly but firmly expressed the same opinion, declining any longer to serve as commander of the legion, an office which, in conjunction with Egmont, he had accepted provisionally, with the best of motives, and on the pledge of Philip that the soldiers should be withdrawn. The Duchess urged that the order should at least be deferred until the arrival of Count Egmont, then in Spain, but the proposition was unanimously negatived.

Page 185

Letters were accordingly written, in the name of the Regent, to the King. It was stated that the measure could no longer be delayed, that the provinces all agreed in this point, that so long as the foreigners remained not a stiver should be paid into the treasury; that if they had once set sail, the necessary amount for their arrears would be furnished to the government; but that if they should return it was probable that they would be resisted by the inhabitants with main force, and that they would only be allowed to enter the cities through a breach in their wall. It was urged, moreover, that three or four thousand Spaniards would not be sufficient to coerce all the provinces, and that there was not money enough in the royal exchequer to pay the wages of a single company of the troops. “It cuts me to the heart,” wrote the Bishop to Philip, “to see the Spanish infantry leave us; but go they must. Would to God that we could devise any pretext, as your Majesty desires, under which to keep them here! We have tried all means humanly possible for retaining them, but I see no way to do it without putting the provinces in manifest danger of sudden revolt.”

Fortunately for the dignity of the government, or for the repose of the country, a respectable motive was found for employing the legion elsewhere. The important loss which Spain had recently met with in the capture of Zerby made a reinforcement necessary in the army engaged in the Southern service. Thus, the disaster in Barbary at last relieved the Netherlands of the pest which had afflicted them so long. For a brief breathing space the country was cleared of foreign mercenaries.

The growing unpopularity of the royal government, still typified, however, in the increasing hatred entertained for the Bishop, was not materially diminished by the departure of the Spaniards. The edicts and the bishoprics were still there, even if the soldiers were gone. The churchman worked faithfully to accomplish his master’s business. Philip, on his side, was industrious to bring about the consummation of his measures. Ever occupied with details, the monarch, from his palace in Spain, sent frequent informations against the humblest individuals in the Netherlands. It is curious to observe the minute reticulations of tyranny which he had begun already to spin about a whole, people, while cold, venomous, and patient he watched his victims from the centre of his web. He forwarded particular details to the Duchess and Cardinal concerning a variety of men and women, sending their names, ages, personal appearance, occupations, and residence, together with directions for their immediate immolation. Even the inquisitors of Seville were set to work to increase, by means of their branches or agencies in the provinces, the royal information on this all-important subject. “There are but few of us left in the world,” he moralized in a letter to the Bishop, “who care for religion. ’Tis necessary, therefore, for us to take the greater heed for Christianity. We must lose our all, if need be, in order to do our duty; in fine,” added he, with his usual tautology, “it is right that a man should do his duty.”

Page 186

Granvelle—as he must now be called, for his elevation to the cardinalship will be immediately alluded to—wrote to assure the King that every pains would be taken to ferret out and execute the individuals complained of. He bewailed, however, the want of heartiness on the part of the Netherland inquisitors and judges. "I find," said he, "that all judicial officers go into the matter of executing the edicts with reluctance, which I believe is caused by their fear of displeasing the populace. When they do act they do it but languidly, and when these matters are not taken in hand with the necessary liveliness, the fruit desired is not gathered. We do not fail to exhort and to command them to do their work." He added that Viglius and Berlaymont displayed laudable zeal, but that he could not say as much for the Council of Brabant. Those councillors "were forever prating," said he, "of the constitutional rights of their province, and deserved much less commendation."

The popularity of the churchman, not increased by these desperate exertions to force an inhuman policy upon an unfortunate nation, received likewise no addition from his new elevation in rank. During the latter part of the year 1560, Margaret of Parma, who still entertained a profound admiration of the prelate, and had not yet begun to chafe under his smooth but imperious dominion, had been busy in preparing for him a delightful surprise. Without either his knowledge or that of the King, she had corresponded with the Pope, and succeeded in obtaining, as a personal favor to herself, the Cardinal's hat for Anthony Perrenot. In February, 1561, Cardinal Borromeo wrote to announce that the coveted dignity had been bestowed. The Duchess hastened, with joyous alacrity, to communicate the intelligence to the Bishop, but was extremely hurt to find that he steadily refused to assume his new dignity, until he had written to the King to announce the appointment, and to ask his permission to accept the honor. The Duchess, justly wounded at his refusal to accept from her hands the favor which she, and she only, had obtained for him, endeavored in vain to overcome his pertinacity. She represented that although Philip was not aware of the application or the appointment, he was certain to regard it as an agreeable surprise. She urged, moreover, that his temporary refusal would be misconstrued at Rome, where it would certainly excite ridicule, and very possibly give offence in the highest quarter. The Bishop was inexorable. He feared, says his panegyrist, that he might one day be on worse terms than at present with the Duchess, and that then she might reproach him with her former benefits. He feared also that the King might, in consequence of the step, not look with satisfaction upon him at some future period, when he might stand in need of his favors. He wrote, accordingly, a most characteristic letter to Philip, in which he informed him that he had been honored with the Cardinal's hat. He observed that many persons were already congratulating him, but that before he made any demonstration of accepting or refusing, he waited for his Majesty's orders: upon his will he wished ever to depend. He also had the coolness, under the circumstances, to express his conviction that "it was his Majesty who had secretly procured this favor from his Holiness."

Page 187

The King received the information very graciously, observing in reply, that although he had never made any suggestion of the kind, he had “often thought upon the subject.” The royal command was of course at once transmitted, that the dignity should be accepted. By special favor, moreover, the Pope dispensed the new Cardinal from the duty of going to Rome in person, and despatched his chamberlain, Theophilus Friso, to Brussels, with the red hat and tabbard.

The prelate, having thus reached the dignity to which he had long aspired, did not grow more humble in his deportment, or less zealous in the work through which he had already gained so much wealth and preferment. His conduct with regard to the edicts and bishoprics had already brought him into relations which were far from amicable with his colleagues in the council. More and more he began to take the control of affairs into his own hand. The consulta, or secret committee of the state council, constituted the real government of the country. Here the most important affairs were decided upon without the concurrence of the other seignors, Orange, Egmont, and Glayon, who, at the same time, were held responsible for the action of government. The Cardinal was smooth in manner, plausible of speech, generally even-tempered, but he was overbearing and blandly insolent. Accustomed to control royal personages, under the garb of extreme obsequiousness, he began, in his intercourse with those of less exalted rank, to omit a portion of the subserviency while claiming a still more undisguised authority. To nobles like Egmont and Orange, who looked down upon the son of Nicolas Perrenot and Nicola Bonvalot as a person immeasurably beneath themselves in the social hierarchy, this conduct was sufficiently irritating. The Cardinal, placed as far above Philip, and even Margaret, in mental power as he was beneath them in worldly station, found it comparatively easy to deal with them amicably. With such a man as Egmont, it was impossible for the churchman to maintain friendly relations. The Count, who notwithstanding his romantic appearance, his brilliant exploits, and his interesting destiny, was but a commonplace character, soon conceived a mortal aversion to Granvelle. A rude soldier, entertaining no respect for science or letters, ignorant and overbearing, he was not the man to submit to the airs of superiority which pierced daily more and more decidedly through the conventional exterior of the Cardinal. Granvelle, on the other hand, entertained a gentle contempt for Egmont, which manifested itself in all his private letters to the King, and was sufficiently obvious in his deportment. There had also been distinct causes of animosity between them. The governorship of Hesdin having become vacant, Egmont, backed by Orange and other nobles, had demanded it for the Count de Roeulx, a gentleman of the Croy family, who, as well as his father, had rendered many important services to the crown.

Page 188

The appointment was, however, bestowed, through Granvelle's influence, upon the Seigneur d'Helfault, a gentleman of mediocre station and character, who was thought to possess no claims whatever to the office. Egmont, moreover, desired the abbey of Trulle for a poor relation of his own; but the Cardinal, to whom nothing in this way ever came amiss, had already obtained the King's permission to, appropriate the abbey to himself Egmont was now furious against the prelate, and omitted no opportunity of expressing his aversion, both in his presence and behind his back. On one occasion, at least, his wrath exploded in something more than words. Exasperated by Granvelle's polished insolence in reply to his own violent language, he drew his dagger upon him in the presence of the Regent herself, "and," says a contemporary, "would certainly have sent the Cardinal into the next world had he not been forcibly restrained by the Prince of Orange and other persons present, who warmly represented to him that such griefs were to be settled by deliberate advice, not by choler." At the same time, while scenes like these were occurring in the very bosom of the state council, Granvelle, in his confidential letters to secretary Perez, asserted warmly that all reports of a want of harmony between himself and the other seignors and councillors were false, and that the best relations existed among them all. It was not his intention, before it should be necessary, to let the King doubt his ability to govern the counsel according to the secret commission with which he had been invested.

His relations with Orange were longer in changing from friendship to open hostility. In the Prince the Cardinal met his match. He found himself confronted by an intellect as subtle, an experience as fertile in expedients, a temper as even, and a disposition sometimes as haughty as his own. He never affected to undervalue the mind of Orange. "'Tis a man of profound genius, vast ambition—dangerous, acute, politic," he wrote to the King at a very early period. The original relations between himself and the Prince bad been very amicable. It hardly needed the prelate's great penetration to be aware that the friendship of so exalted a personage as the youthful heir to the principality of Orange, and to the vast possessions of the Chalons-Nassau house in Burgundy and the Netherlands, would be advantageous to the ambitious son of the Burgundian Councillor Granvelle. The young man was the favorite of the Emperor from boyhood; his high rank, and his remarkable talents marked him indisputably for one of the foremost men of the coming reign. Therefore it was politic in Perrenot to seize every opportunity of making himself useful to the Prince. He busied himself with securing, so far as it might be necessary to secure, the succession of William to his cousin's principality. It seems somewhat ludicrous for a merit to be made not only for Granvelle but for the Emperor, that the Prince should have been allowed to take an inheritance

Page 189

which the will of Rene de Nassau most unequivocally conferred, and which no living creature disputed. Yet, because some of the crown lawyers had propounded the dogma that “the son Of a heretic ought not to succeed,” it was gravely stated as an immense act of clemency upon the part of Charles the Fifth that he had not confiscated the whole of the young Prince’s heritage. In return Granvelle’s brother Jerome had obtained the governorship of the youth, upon whose majority he had received an honorable military appointment from his attached pupil. The prelate had afterwards recommended the marriage with the Count de Buren’s heiress, and had used his influence with the Emperor to overcome certain objections entertained by Charles, that the Prince, by this great accession of wealth, might be growing too powerful. On the other hand, there were always many poor relations and dependents of Granvelle, eager to be benefitted by Orange’s patronage, who lived in the Prince’s household, or received handsome appointments from his generosity. Thus, there had been great intimacy, founded upon various benefits mutually conferred; for it could hardly be asserted that the debt of friendship was wholly upon one side.

When Orange arrived in Brussels from a journey, he would go to the bishop’s before alighting at his own house. When the churchman visited the Prince, he entered his bed-chamber without ceremony before he had risen; for it was William’s custom, through life, to receive intimate acquaintances, and even to attend to important negotiations of state, while still in bed.

The show of this intimacy had lasted longer than its substance. Granvelle was the most politic of men, and the Prince had not served his apprenticeship at the court of Charles the Fifth to lay himself bare prematurely to the criticism or the animosity of the Cardinal with the recklessness of Horn and Egmont. An explosion came at last, however, and very soon after an exceedingly amicable correspondence between the two upon the subject of an edict of religious amnesty which Orange was preparing for his principality, and which Granvelle had recommended him not to make too lenient. A few weeks after this, the Antwerp magistracy was to be renewed. The Prince, as hereditary burgrave of that city, was entitled to a large share of the appointing power in these political arrangements, which at the moment were of great importance. The citizens of Antwerp were in a state of excitement on the subject of the new bishops. They openly, and in the event, successfully resisted the installation of the new prelate for whom their city had been constituted a diocese. The Prince was known to be opposed to the measure, and to the whole system of ecclesiastical persecution. When the nominations for the new magistracy came before the Regent, she disposed of the whole matter in the secret consulta, without the knowledge, and in a manner opposed to the views of Orange. He was then furnished with a list of the

Page 190

new magistrates, and was informed that he had been selected as commissioner along with Count Aremberg, to see that the appointments were carried into effect. The indignation of the Prince was extreme. He had already taken offence at some insolent expressions upon this topic, which the Cardinal had permitted himself. He now sent back the commission to the Duchess, adding, it was said, that he was not her lackey, and that she might send some one else with her errands. The words were repeated in the state council. There was a violent altercation—Orange vehemently resenting his appointment merely to carry out decisions in which he claimed an original voice. His ancestors, he said, had often changed the whole of the Antwerp magistracy by their own authority. It was a little too much that this matter, as well as every other state affair, should be controlled by the secret committee of which the Cardinal was the chief. Granvelle, on his side, was also in a rage. He flung from the council-chamber, summoned the Chancellor of Brabant, and demanded, amid bitter execrations against Orange, what common and obscure gentleman there might be, whom he could appoint to execute the commission thus refused by the Prince and by Aremberg. He vowed that in all important matters he would, on future occasions, make use of nobles less inflated by pride, and more tractable than such grand seignors. The chancellor tried in vain to appease the churchman's wrath, representing that the city of Antwerp would be highly offended at the turn things were taking, and offering his services to induce the withdrawal, on the part of the Prince, of the language which had given so much offence. The Cardinal was inexorable and peremptory. "I will have nothing to do with the Prince, Master Chancellor," said he, "and these are matters which concern you not." Thus the conversation ended, and thus began the open state of hostilities between the great nobles and the Cardinal, which had been brooding so long.

On the 23rd July, 1561, a few weeks after the scenes lately described, the Count of Egmont and the Prince of Orange addressed a joint letter to the King. They reminded him in this despatch that, they had originally been reluctant to take office in the state council, on account of their previous experience of the manner in which business had been conducted during the administration of the Duke of Savoy. They had feared that important matters of state might be transacted without their concurrence. The King had, however, assured them, when in Zeland, that all affairs would be uniformly treated in full council. If the contrary should ever prove the case, he had desired them to give him information to that effect, that he might instantly apply the remedy. They accordingly now gave him that information. They were consulted upon small matters: momentous affairs were decided upon in their absence. Still they would not even now have complained had not Cardinal Granvelle declared that all the members of the state council were to be held responsible for its measures, whether they were present at its decisions or not. Not liking such responsibility, they requested the King either to accept their resignation or to give orders that all affairs should be communicated to the whole board and deliberated upon by all the councillors.

Page 191

In a private letter, written some weeks later (August 15), Egmont begged secretary Erasso to assure the King that their joint letter had not been dictated by passion, but by zeal for his service. It was impossible, he said, to imagine the insolence of the Cardinal, nor to form an idea of the absolute authority which he arrogated.

In truth, Granvelle, with all his keenness, could not see that Orange, Egmont, Berghen, Montigny and the rest, were no longer pages and young captains of cavalry, while he was the politician and the statesman. By six or seven years the senior of Egmont, and by sixteen years of Orange, he did not divest himself of the superciliousness of superior wisdom, not unjust nor so irritating when they had all been boys. In his deportment towards them, and in the whole tone of his private correspondence with Philip, there was revealed, almost in spite of himself, an affectation of authority, against which Egmont rebelled and which the Prince was not the man to acknowledge. Philip answered the letter of the two nobles in his usual procrastinating manner. The Count of Horn, who was about leaving Spain (whither he had accompanied the King) for the Netherlands, would be entrusted with the resolution which he should think proper to take upon the subject suggested. In the mean time, he assured them that he did not doubt their zeal in his service.

As to Count Horn, Granvelle had already prejudiced the King against him. Horn and the Cardinal had never been friends. A brother of the prelate had been an aspirant for the hand of the Admiral's sister, and had been somewhat contemptuously rejected. Horn, a bold, vehement, and not very good-tempered personage, had long kept no terms with Granvelle, and did not pretend a friendship which he had never felt. Granvelle had just written to instruct the King that Horn was opposed bitterly to that measure which was nearest the King's heart—the new bishoprics. He had been using strong language, according to the Cardinal, in opposition to the scheme, while still in Spain. He therefore advised that his Majesty, concealing, of course, the source of the information, and speaking as it were out of the royal mind itself, should expostulate with the Admiral upon the subject. Thus prompted, Philip was in no gracious humor when he received Count Horn, then about to leave Madrid for the Netherlands, and to take with him the King's promised answer to the communication of Orange and Egmont. His Majesty had rarely been known to exhibit so much anger towards any person as he manifested upon that occasion. After a few words from the Admiral, in which he expressed his sympathy with the other Netherland nobles, and his aversion to Granvelle, in general terms, and in reply to Philip's interrogatories, the King fiercely interrupted him: "What! miserable man!" he vociferated, "you all complain of this Cardinal, and always in vague language. Not one of you, in spite of all my questions, can give me a single reason for your dissatisfaction." With this the royal wrath boiled over in such unequivocal terms that the Admiral changed color, and was so confused with indignation and astonishment, that he was scarcely able to find his way out of the room.

Page 192

This was the commencement of Granvelle's long mortal combat with Egmont, Horn, and Orange. This was the first answer which the seignors were to receive to their remonstrances against the churchman's arrogance. Philip was enraged that any opposition should be made to his coercive measures, particularly to the new bishoprics, the "holy work" which the Cardinal was ready, to "consecrate his fortune and his blood" to advance. Granvelle fed his master's anger by constant communications as to the efforts made by distinguished individuals to delay the execution of the scheme. Assonville had informed him, he wrote, that much complaint had been made on the subject by several gentlemen, at a supper of Count Egmont's. It was said that the King ought to have consulted them all, and the state councillors especially. The present nominees to the new episcopates were good enough, but it would be found, they said, that very improper personages would be afterwards appointed. The estates ought not to permit the execution of the scheme. In short, continued Granvelle, "there is the same kind of talk which brought about the recall of the Spanish troops." A few months later, he wrote to inform Philip that a petition against the new bishoprics was about to be drawn up by "the two lords.". They had two motives; according to the Cardinal, for this step—first, to let the King know that he could do nothing without their permission; secondly, because in the states' assembly they were then the cocks of the walk. They did not choose, therefore, that in the clerical branch of the estates any body should be above the abbots, whom they could frighten into doing whatever they chose. At the end, of the year, Granvelle again wrote to instruct his sovereign how to reply to the letter which was about to be addressed to him by the Prince of Orange and the Marquis Berghen on the subject of the bishoprics. They would tell him, he said, that the incorporation of the Brabant abbeys into the new bishoprics was contrary to the constitution of the "joyful entrance." Philip was, however, to make answer that he had consulted the universities, and those learned in the laws, and had satisfied himself that it was entirely constitutional. He was therefore advised to send his command that the Prince and Marquis should use all their influence to promote the success of the measure. Thus fortified, the King was enabled not only to deal with the petition of the nobles, but also with the deputies from the estates of Brabant, who arrived about this time at Madrid. To these envoys, who asked for the appointment of royal commissioners, with whom they might treat on the subject of the bishoprics, the abbeys, and the "joyful entrance," the King answered proudly, "that in matters which concerned the service of God, he was his own commissioner." He afterwards, accordingly, recited to them, with great accuracy, the lesson which he had privately received from the ubiquitous Cardinal. Philip was determined

Page 193

that no remonstrance from great nobles or from private citizens should interfere with the thorough execution of the grand scheme on which he was resolved, and of which the new bishoprics formed an important part. Opposition irritated him more and more, till his hatred of the opponents became deadly; but it, at the same time, confirmed him in his purpose. "'Tis no time to temporize," he wrote to Granvelle; "we must inflict chastisement with full rigor and severity. These rascals can only be made to do right through fear, and not always even by that means."

At the same time, the royal finances did not admit of any very active measures, at the moment, to enforce obedience to a policy which was already so bitterly opposed. A rough estimate, made in the King's own handwriting, of the resources and obligations of his exchequer, a kind of balance sheet for the, years 1560 and 1561, drawn up much in the same manner as that in which a simple individual would make a note of his income and expenditure, gave but a dismal picture of his pecuniary, condition. It served to show how intelligent a financier is despotism, and how little available are the resources of a mighty empire when regarded merely as private property, particularly when the owner chances to have the vanity of attending to all details himself: "Twenty millions of ducats," began the memorandum, "will be required to disengage my revenues. But of this," added the King, with whimsical pathos for an account-book, "we will not speak at present, as the matter is so entirely impossible." He then proceeded to enter the various items of expense which were to be met during the two years; such as so many millions due to the Fuggers (the Rothschilds of the sixteenth century), so many to merchants in Flanders, Seville, and other places, so much for Prince Doria's galleys, so much for three years' pay due to his guards, so much for his household expenditure, so much for the, tuition of Don Carlos, and Don Juan d'Austria, so much for salaries of ambassadors and councillors—mixing personal and state expenses, petty items and great loans, in one singular jumble, but arriving at a total demand upon his purse of ten million nine hundred and ninety thousand ducats.

To meet this expenditure he painfully enumerated the funds upon which he could reckon for the two years. His ordinary rents and taxes being all deeply pledged, he could only calculate from that source upon two hundred thousand ducats. The Indian revenue, so called, was nearly spent; still it might yield him four hundred and twenty thousand ducats. The quicksilver mines would produce something, but so little as hardly to require mentioning. As to the other mines, they were equally unworthy of notice, being so very uncertain, and not doing as well as they were wont. The licences accorded by the crown to carry slaves to America were put down at fifty thousand ducats for the two years. The product of the "crozada" and "cuarta," or money paid to him in small

Page 194

sums by individuals, with the permission of his Holiness, for the liberty of abstaining from the Church fasts, was estimated at five hundred thousand ducats. These and a few more meagre items only sufficed to stretch his income to a total of one million three hundred and thirty thousand far the two years, against an expenditure calculated at near eleven millions. "Thus, there are nine millions, less three thousand ducats, deficient," he concluded ruefully (and making a mistake in his figures in his own favor of six hundred and sixty-three thousand besides), "which I may look for in the sky, or try to raise by inventions already exhausted."

Thus, the man who owned all America and half of Europe could only raise a million ducats a year from his estates. The possessor of all Peru and Mexico could reckon on "nothing worth mentioning" from his mines, and derived a precarious income mainly from permissions granted his subjects to carry on the slave-trade and to eat meat on Fridays. This was certainly a gloomy condition of affairs for a monarch on the threshold of a war which was to outlast his own life and that of his children; a war in which the mere army expenses were to be half a million florins monthly, in which about seventy per cent. of the annual disbursements was to be regularly embezzled or appropriated by the hands through which it passed, and in which for every four men on paper, enrolled and paid for, only one, according to the average, was brought into the field.

Granvelle, on the other hand, gave his master but little consolation from the aspect of financial affairs in the provinces. He assured him that "the government was often in such embarrassment as not to know where to look for ten ducats." He complained bitterly that the states would meddle with the administration of money matters, and were slow in the granting of subsidies. The Cardinal felt especially outraged by the interference of these bodies with the disbursement of the sums which they voted. It has been seen that the states had already compelled the government to withdraw the troops, much to the regret of Granvelle. They continued, however, to be intractable on the subject of supplies. "These are very vile things," he wrote to Philip, "this authority which they assume, this audacity with which they say whatever they think proper; and these impudent conditions which they affix to every proposition for subsidies." The Cardinal protested that he had in vain attempted to convince them of their error, but that they remained perverse.

It was probably at this time that the plan for debasing the coin, suggested to Philip some time before by a skilful chemist named Malen, and always much approved of both by himself and Ruy Gomez, recurred to his mind. "Another and an extraordinary source of revenue, although perhaps not a very honorable one," wrote Suriano, "has hitherto been kept secret; and on account of differences of opinion between the King and his confessor, has been discontinued."

Page 195

This source of revenue, it seemed, was found in “a certain powder, of which one ounce mixed with six ounces of quicksilver would make six ounces of silver.” The composition was said to stand the test of the hammer, but not of the fire. Partly in consequence of theological scruples and partly on account of opposition from the states, a project formed by the King to pay his army with this kind of silver was reluctantly abandoned. The invention, however, was so very agreeable to the King, and the inventor had received such liberal rewards, that it was supposed, according to the envoy, that in time of scarcity his Majesty would make use of such coin without reluctance.

It is necessary, before concluding this chapter, which relates the events of the years 1560 and 1561, to allude to an important affair which occupied much attention during the whole of this period. This is the celebrated marriage of the Prince of Orange with the Princess Anna of Saxony. By many superficial writers; a moving cause of the great Netherland revolt was found in the connexion of the great chieftain with this distinguished Lutheran house. One must have studied the characters and the times to very little purpose, however, to believe it possible that much influence could be exerted on the mind of William of Orange by such natures as those of Anna of Saxony, or of her uncle the Elector Augustus, surnamed “the Pious.”

The Prince had become a widower in 1558, at the age of twenty-five. Granvelle, who was said to have been influential in arranging his first marriage, now proposed to him, after the year of mourning had expired, an alliance with Mademoiselle Renee, daughter of the Duchess de Lorraine, and granddaughter of Christiern the Third of Denmark, and his wife Isabella, sister of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Such a connexion, not only with the royal house of Spain but with that of France—for, the young Duke of Lorraine, brother of the lady, had espoused the daughter of Henry the considered highly desirable by the Prince. Philip and the Duchess Margaret of Parma both approved, or pretended to approve, the match. At the same time the Dowager Duchess of Lorraine, mother of the intended bride, was a candidate, and a very urgent one, for the Regency of the Netherlands. Being a woman of restless ambition, and intriguing character, she naturally saw in a man of William’s station and talents a most desirable ally in her present and future schemes. On the other hand, Philip—who had made open protestation of his desire to connect the Prince thus closely with his own blood, and had warmly recommended the match to the young lady’s mother—soon afterwards, while walking one day with the Prince in the park at Brussels, announced to him that the Duchess of Lorraine had declined his proposals. Such a result astonished the Prince, who was on the best of terms with the mother, and had been urging her appointment to the Regency with all his-influence, having entirely withdrawn his own claims

Page 196

to that office. No satisfactory explanation was ever given of this singular conclusion to a courtship, begun with the apparent consent of all parties. It was hinted that the young lady did not fancy the Prince; but, as it was not known that a word had ever been exchanged between them, as the Prince, in appearance and reputation, was one of the most brilliant cavaliers of the age, and as the approval of the bride was not usually a matter of primary consequence in such marriages of state, the mystery seemed to require a further solution. The Prince suspected Granvelle and the King, who were believed to have held mature and secret deliberation together, of insincerity. The Bishop was said to have expressed the opinion, that although the friendship he bore the Prince would induce him to urge the marriage, yet his duty to his master made him think it questionable whether it were right to advance a personage already placed so high by birth, wealth, and popularity, still higher by so near an alliance with his Majesty's family. The King, in consequence, secretly instructed the Duchess of Lorraine to decline the proposal, while at the same time he continued openly to advocate the connexion. The Prince is said to have discovered this double dealing, and to have found in it the only reasonable explanation of the whole transaction. Moreover, the Duchess of Lorraine, finding herself equally duped, and her own ambitious scheme equally foiled by her unscrupulous cousin—who now, to the surprise of every one, appointed Margaret of Parma to be Regent, with the Bishop for her prime minister—had as little reason to be satisfied with the combinations of royal and ecclesiastical intrigue as the Prince of Orange himself. Soon after this unsatisfactory mystification, William turned his attentions to Germany. Anna of Saxony, daughter of the celebrated Elector Maurice, lived at the court of her uncle, the Elector Augustus. A musket-ball, perhaps a traitorous one, in an obscure action with Albert of Brandenbourg, had closed the adventurous career of her father seven years before. The young lady, who was thought to have inherited much of his restless, stormy character, was sixteen years of age. She was far from handsome, was somewhat deformed, and limped. Her marriage-portion was deemed, for the times, an ample one; she had seventy thousand rix dollars in hand, and the reversion of thirty thousand on the death of John Frederic the Second, who had married her mother after the death of Maurice. Her rank was accounted far higher in Germany than that of William of Nassau, and in this respect, rather than for pecuniary considerations, the marriage seemed a desirable one for him. The man who held the great Nassau-Chalons property, together with the heritage of Count Maximilian de Buren, could hardly have been tempted by 100,000 thalers. His own provision for the children who might spring from the proposed marriage was to be a settlement of seventy thousand florins annually. The fortune

Page 197

which permitted of such liberality was not one to be very materially increased by a dowry which might seem enormous to many of the pauper princes of Germany. “The bride’s portion,” says a contemporary, “after all, scarcely paid for the banquets and magnificent festivals which celebrated the marriage. When the wedding was paid for, there was not a thaler remaining of the whole sum.” Nothing, then, could be more puerile than to accuse the Prince of mercenary motives in seeking this alliance; an accusation, however, which did not fail to be brought.

There were difficulties on both sides to be arranged before this marriage could take place. The bride was a Lutheran, the Prince was a Catholic. With regard to the religion of Orange not the slightest doubt existed, nor was any deception attempted. Granvelle himself gave the most entire attestation of the Prince’s orthodoxy. “This proposed marriage gives me great pain,” he wrote to Philip, “but I have never had reason to suspect his principles.” In another letter he observed that he wished the marriage could be broken off; but that he hoped so much from the virtue of the Prince that nothing could suffice to separate him from the true religion. On the other side there was as little doubt as to his creed. Old Landgrave Philip of Hesse, grandfather of the young lady, was bitterly opposed to the match. “’Tis a papist,” said he, “who goes to mass, and eats no meat on fast days.” He had no great objection to his character, but insurmountable ones to his religion. “Old Count William,” said he, “was an evangelical lord to his dying day. This man is a papist!” The marriage, then, was to be a mixed marriage. It is necessary, however, to beware of anachronisms upon the subject. Lutherans were not yet formally denounced as heretics. On the contrary, it was exactly at this epoch that the Pope was inviting the Protestant princes of Germany to the Trent Council, where the schism was to be closed, and all the erring lambs to be received again into the bosom of the fold. So far from manifesting an outward hostility, the papal demeanor was conciliating. The letters of invitation from the Pope to the princes were sent by a legate, each commencing with the exordium, “To my beloved son,” and were all sent back to his Holiness, contemptuously, with the coarse jest for answer, “We believe our mothers to have been honest women, and hope that we had better fathers.” The great council had not yet given its decisions. Marriages were of continual occurrence, especially among princes and potentates, between the adherents of Rome and of the new religion. Even Philip had been most anxious to marry the Protestant Elizabeth, whom, had she been a peasant, he would unquestionably have burned, if in his power. Throughout Germany, also, especially in high places, there was a disposition to cover up the religious controversy; to abstain from disturbing the ashes where devastation still glowed, and was one day to rekindle itself. It was exceedingly difficult for any man, from the Archduke Maximilian down, to define his creed. A marriage, therefore; between a man and woman of discordant views upon this topic was not startling, although in general not considered desirable.

Page 198

There were, however, especial reasons why this alliance should be distasteful, both to Philip of Spain upon one side, and to the Landgrave Philip of Hesse on the other. The bride was the daughter of the elector Maurice. In that one name were concentrated nearly all the disasters, disgrace, and disappointment of the Emperor's reign. It was Maurice who had hunted the Emperor through the Tyrolean mountains; it was Maurice who had compelled the peace of Passau; it was Maurice who had overthrown the Catholic Church in Germany, it was Maurice who had frustrated Philip's election as king of the Romans. If William of Orange must seek a wife among the pagans, could no other bride be found for him than the daughter of such a man?

Anna's grandfather, on the other hand, Landgrave Philip, was the celebrated victim to the force and fraud of Charles the Fifth. He saw in the proposed bridegroom, a youth who had been from childhood, the petted page and confidant of the hated Emperor, to whom he owed his long imprisonment. He saw in him too, the intimate friend and ally —for the brooding quarrels of the state council were not yet patent to the world—of the still more deeply detested Granvelle; the crafty priest whose substitution of "einig" for "ewig" had inveigled him into that terrible captivity. These considerations alone would have made him unfriendly to the Prince, even had he not been a Catholic.

The Elector Augustus, however, uncle and guardian to the bride, was not only well-disposed but eager for the marriage, and determined to overcome all obstacles, including the opposition of the Landgrave, without whose consent he was long pledged not to bestow the hand of Anna. For this there were more than one reason. Augustus, who, in the words of one of the most acute historical critics of our day, was "a Byzantine Emperor of the lowest class, re-appearing in electoral hat and mantle," was not firm in his rights to the dignity he held. He had inherited from his brother, but his brother had dispossessed John Frederic. Maurice, when turning against the Emperor, who had placed him in his cousin's seat, had not thought it expedient to restore to the rightful owner the rank which he himself owed to the violence of Charles. Those claims might be revindicated, and Augustus be degraded in his turn, by a possible marriage of the Princess Anna, with some turbulent or intriguing German potentate. Out of the land she was less likely to give trouble. The alliance, if not particularly desirable on the score of rank, was, in other worldly respects, a most brilliant one for his niece. As for the religious point, if he could overcome or circumvent the scruples of the Landgrave, he foresaw little difficulty in conquering his own conscience.

Page 199

The Prince of Orange, it is evident, was placed in such a position, that it would be difficult for him to satisfy all parties. He intended that the marriage, like all marriages among persons in high places at that day, should be upon the “uti possidetis” principle, which was the foundation of the religious peace of Germany. His wife, after marriage and removal to the Netherlands, would “live Catholically;” she would be considered as belonging to the same Church with her husband, was to give no offence to the government, and bring no suspicion upon himself, by violating any of the religious decencies. Further than this, William, who at that day was an easy, indifferent Catholic, averse to papal persecutions, but almost equally averse to long, puritanical prayers and faces, taking far more pleasure in worldly matters than in ecclesiastical controversies, was not disposed to advance in this thorny path. Having a stern bigot to deal with, in Madrid, and another in Cassel, he soon convinced himself that he was not likely entirely to satisfy either, and thought it wiser simply to satisfy himself.

Early in 1560, Count Gunther de Schwartzburg, betrothed to the Prince’s sister Catharine, together with Colonel George Von Holl, were despatched to Germany to open the marriage negotiations. They found the Elector Augustus already ripe and anxious for the connexion. It was easy for the envoys to satisfy all his requirements on the religious question. If, as the Elector afterwards stated to the Landgrave, they really promised that the young lady should be allowed to have an evangelical preacher in her own apartments, together with the befitting sacraments, it is very certain that they travelled a good way out of their instructions, for such concessions were steadily refused by William in person. It is, however, more probable that Augustus, whose slippery feet were disposed to slide smoothly and swiftly over this dangerous ground, had represented the Prince’s communications under a favorable gloss of his own. At any rate, nothing in the subsequent proceedings justified the conclusions thus hastily formed.

The Landgrave Philip, from the beginning, manifested his repugnance to the match. As soon as the proposition had been received by Augustus, that potentate despatched Hans von Carlowitz to the grandfather at Cassel. The Prince of Orange, it was represented, was young, handsome, wealthy, a favorite of the Spanish monarch; the Princess Anna, on the other hand, said her uncle was not likely to grow straighter or better proportioned in body, nor was her crooked and perverse character likely to improve with years. It was therefore desirable to find a settlement for her as soon as possible. The Elector, however, would decide upon nothing without the Landgrave’s consent.

Page 200

To this frank, and not very flattering statement, so far as the young lady was concerned, the Landgrave answered stoutly and characteristically. The Prince was a Spanish subject, he said, and would not be able to protect Anna in her belief, who would sooner or later become a fugitive: he was but a Count in Germany, and no fitting match for an Elector's daughter; moreover, the lady herself ought to be consulted, who had not even seen the Prince. If she were crooked in body, as the Elector stated, it was a shame to expose her; to conceal it, however, was questionable, as the Prince might complain afterwards that a straight princess had been promised, and a crooked one fraudulently substituted,—and so on, though a good deal more of such quaint casuistry, in which the Landgrave was accomplished. The amount of his answer, however, to the marriage proposal was an unequivocal negative, from which he never wavered.

In consequence of this opposition, the negotiations were for a time suspended. Augustus implored the Prince not to abandon the project, promising that every effort should be made to gain over the Landgrave, hinting that the old man might "go to his long rest soon," and even suggesting that if the worst came to the worst, he had bound himself to do nothing without the knowledge of the Landgrave, but was not obliged to wait for his consent.

On the other hand, the Prince had communicated to the King of Spain the fact of the proposed marriage. He had also held many long conversations with the Regent and with Granvelle. In all these interviews he had uniformly used one language: his future wife was to "live as a Catholic," and if that point were not conceded, he would break off the negotiations. He did not pretend that she was to abjure her Protestant faith. The Duchess, in describing to Philip the conditions, as sketched to her by the Prince, stated expressly that Augustus of Saxony was to consent that his niece "should live Catholically after the marriage," but that it was quite improbable that "before the nuptials she would be permitted to abjure her errors, and receive necessary absolution, according to the rules of the Church." The Duchess, while stating her full confidence in the orthodoxy of the Prince, expressed at the same time her fears that attempts might be made in the future by his new connexions "to pervert him to their depraved opinions."

A silence of many months ensued on the part of the sovereign, during which he was going through the laborious process of making up his mind, or rather of having it made up for him by people a thousand miles off. In the autumn Granvelle wrote to say that the Prince was very much surprised to have been kept so long waiting for a definite reply to his communications, made at the beginning of the year concerning his intended marriage, and to learn at last that his Majesty had sent no answer, upon the ground that the match had been broken off; the fact being, that the negotiations were proceeding more earnestly than ever.

Page 201

Nothing could be more helpless and more characteristic than the letter which Philip sent, thus pushed for a decision. “You wrote me,” said he, “that you had hopes that this matter of the Prince’s marriage would go no further, and seeing that you did not write oftener on the subject, I thought certainly that it had been terminated. This pleased me not a little, because it was the best thing that could be done. Likewise,” continued the most tautological of monarchs, “I was much pleased that it should be done. Nevertheless;” he added, “if the marriage is to be proceeded with, I really don’t know what to say about it, except to refer it to my sister, inasmuch as a person being upon the spot can see better what can be done with regard to it; whether it be possible to prevent it, or whether it be best, if there be no remedy, to give permission. But if there be a remedy, it would be better to take it, because,” concluded the King, pathetically, “I don’t see how the Prince could think of marrying with the daughter of the man who did to his majesty, now in glory, that which Duke Maurice did.”

Armed with this luminous epistle, which, if it meant any thing, meant a reluctant affirmation to the demand of the Prince for the royal consent, the Regent and Granvelle proceeded to summon William of Orange, and to catechise him in a manner most galling to the pride, and with a latitude not at all justified by any reasonable interpretation of the royal instructions. They even informed him that his Majesty had assembled “certain persons learned in cases of conscience, and versed in theology,” according to whose advice a final decision, not yet possible, would be given at some future period. This assembly of learned conscience-keepers and theologians had no existence save in the imaginations of Granvelle and Margaret. The King’s letter, blind and blundering as it was, gave the Duchess the right to decide in the affirmative on her own responsibility; yet fictions like these formed a part of the “dissimulation,” which was accounted profound statesmanship by the disciples of Machiavelli. The Prince, however irritated, maintained his steadiness; assured the Regent that the negotiation had advanced too far to be abandoned, and repeated his assurance that the future Princess of Orange was to “live as a Catholic.”

In December, 1560, William made a visit to Dresden, where he was received by the Elector with great cordiality. This visit was conclusive as to the marriage. The appearance and accomplishments of the distinguished suitor made a profound impression upon the lady. Her heart was carried by storm. Finding, or fancying herself very desperately enamored of the proposed bridegroom, she soon manifested as much eagerness for the marriage as did her uncle, and expressed herself frequently with the violence which belonged to her character. “What God had decreed,” she said, “the Devil should not hinder.”

The Prince was said to have exhibited much diligence in his attention to the services of the Protestant Church during his visit at Dreaden. As that visit lasted, however, but ten or eleven days, there was no great opportunity for shewing much zeal.

Page 202

At the same period one William Knuttel was despatched by Orange on the forlorn hope of gaining the old Landgrave's consent, without making any vital concessions. "Will the Prince," asked the Landgrave, "permit my granddaughter to have an evangelical preacher in the house?"—"No," answered Knuttel. "May she at least receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in her own chamber, according to the Lutheran form?"—"No," answered Knuttel, "neither in Breda, nor any where else in the Netherlands. If she imperatively requires such sacraments, she must go over the border for them, to the nearest Protestant sovereign."

Upon the 14th April, 1561, the Elector, returning to the charge, caused a little note to be drawn up on the religious point, which he forwarded, in the hope that the Prince would copy and sign it. He added a promise that the memorandum should never be made public to the signer's disadvantage.

At the same time he observed to Count Louis, verbally, "that he had been satisfied with the declarations made by the Prince when in Dresden, upon all points, except that concerning religion. He therefore felt obliged to beg for a little agreement in writing.—-"By no means! by no means!" interrupted Louis promptly, at the very first word, "the Prince can give your electoral highness no such assurance. 'T would be risking life, honor, and fortune to do so, as your grace is well aware." The Elector protested that the declaration, if signed, should never come into the Spanish monarch's hands, and insisted upon sending it to the Prince. Louis, in a letter to his brother, characterized the document as "singular, prolix and artful," and strongly advised the Prince to have nothing to do with it.

This note, which the Prince was thus requested to sign, and which his brother Louis thus strenuously advised him not to sign, the Prince never did sign. Its tenor was to the following effect:—The Princess, after marriage, was, neither by menace nor persuasion; to be turned from the true and pure Word of God, or the use of the sacrament according to the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession. The Prince was to allow her to read books written in accordance with the Augsburg Confession. The prince was to permit her, as often, annually, as she required it, to go out of the Netherlands to some place where she could receive the sacrament according to the Augsburg Confession. In case she were in sickness or perils of childbirth, the Prince, if necessary, would call to her an evangelical preacher, who might administer to her the holy sacrament in her chamber. The children who might spring from the marriage were to be instructed as to the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession.

Page 203

Even if executed, this celebrated memorandum would hardly have been at variance with the declarations made by the Prince to the Spanish government. He had never pretended that his bride was to become a Catholic, but only to live as a Catholic. All that he had promised, or was expected to promise, was that his wife should conform to the law in the Netherlands. The paper, in a general way, recognized that law. In case of absolute necessity, however, it was stipulated that the Princess should have the advantage of private sacraments. This certainly would have been a mortal offence in a Calvinist or Anabaptist, but for Lutherans the practise had never been so strict. Moreover, the Prince already repudiated the doctrines of the edicts, and rebelled against the command to administer them within his government. A general promise, therefore, made by him privately, in the sense of the memorandum drawn up by the Elector, would have been neither hypocritical nor deceitful, but worthy the man who looked over such grovelling heads as Granvelle and Philip on the one side, or Augustus of Saxony on the other, and estimated their religious pretences at exactly what they were worth. A formal document, however, technically according all these demands made by the Elector, would certainly be regarded by the Spanish government as a very culpable instrument. The Prince never signed the note, but, as we shall have occasion to state in its proper place, he gave a verbal declaration, favorable to its tenor, but in very vague and brief terms, before a notary, on the day of the marriage.

If the reader be of opinion that too much time has been expended upon the elucidation of this point, he should remember that the character of a great and good man is too precious a possession of history to be lightly abandoned. It is of no great consequence to ascertain the precise creed of Augustus of Saxony, or of his niece; it is of comparatively little moment to fix the point at which William of Orange ceased to be an honest, but liberal Catholic, and opened his heart to the light of the Reformation; but it is of very grave interest that his name should be cleared of the charge of deliberate fraud and hypocrisy. It has therefore been thought necessary to prove conclusively that the Prince never gave, in Dresden or Cassel, any assurance inconsistent with his assertions to King and Cardinal. The whole tone of his language and demeanor on the religious subject was exhibited in his reply to the Electress, who, immediately after the marriage, entreated that he would not pervert her niece from the paths of the true religion. “She shall not be troubled,” said the Prince, “with such melancholy things. Instead of holy writ she shall read ‘Amadis de Gaule,’ and such books of pastime which discourse de amore; and instead of knitting and sewing she shall learn to dance a galdiarde, and such courtoisies as are the mode of our country and suitable to her rank.”

Page 204

The reply was careless, flippant, almost contemptuous. It is very certain that William of Orange was not yet the “father William” he was destined to become—grave, self-sacrificing, deeply religious, heroic; but it was equally evident from this language that he had small sympathy, either in public or private, with Lutheranism or theological controversy. Landgrave William was not far from right when he added, in his quaint style, after recalling this well-known reply, “Your grace will observe, therefore, that when the abbot has dice in his pocket, the convent will play.”

So great was the excitement at the little court of Cassel, that many Protestant princes and nobles declared that “they would sooner give their daughters to a boor or a swineherd than to a Papist.” The Landgrave was equally vigorous in his protest, drawn up in due form on the 26th April, 1561. He was not used, he said, “to flatter or to tickle with a foxtail.” He was sorry if his language gave offense, nevertheless “the marriage was odious, and that was enough.” He had no especial objection to the Prince, “who before the world was a brave and honorable man.” He conceded that his estates were large, although he hinted that his debts also were ample; allowed that he lived in magnificent style, had even heard “of one of his banquets, where all the table-cloths, plates, and every thing else, were made of sugar,” but thought he might be even a little too extravagant; concluding, after a good deal of skimble-skamble of this nature, with “protesting before God, the world, and all pious Christians, that he was not responsible for the marriage, but only the Elector Augustus and others, who therefore would one day have to render account thereof to the Lord.”

Meantime the wedding had been fixed to take place on Sunday, the 24th August, 1561. This was St. Bartholomew’s, a nuptial day which was not destined to be a happy one in the sixteenth century. The Landgrave and his family declined to be present at the wedding, but a large and brilliant company were invited. The King of Spain sent a bill of exchange to the Regent, that she might purchase a ring worth three thousand crowns, as a present on his part to the bride. Beside this liberal evidence that his opposition to the marriage was withdrawn, he authorized his sister to appoint envoys from among the most distinguished nobles to represent him on the occasion. The Baron de Montigny, accordingly, with a brilliant company of gentlemen, was deputed by the Duchess, although she declined sending all the governors of the provinces, according to the request of the Prince. The marriage was to take place at Leipsic. A slight picture of the wedding festivities, derived entirely from unpublished sources, may give some insight into the manners and customs of high life in Germany and the Netherlands at this epoch.

Page 205

The Kings of Spain and Denmark were invited, and were represented by special ambassadors. The Dukes of Brunswick, Lauenburg, Mecklenburg, the Elector and Margraves of Brandenburg, the Archbishop of Cologne, the Duke of Cleves, the Bishops of Naumburg, Meneburg, Meissen, with many other potentates, accepted the invitations, and came generally in person, a few only being represented by envoys. The town councils of Erfurt, Leipsic, Magdeburg, and other cities, were also bidden. The bridegroom was personally accompanied by his brothers John, Adolphus, and Louis; by the Burens, the Leuchtenbergs, and various other distinguished personages.

As the electoral residence at Leipsic was not completely finished, separate dwellings were arranged for each of the sovereign families invited, in private houses, mostly on the market-place. Here they were to be furnished with provisions by the Elector's officials, but they were to cook for themselves. For this purpose all the princes had been requested to bring their own cooks and butlers, together with their plate and kitchen utensils. The sovereigns themselves were to dine daily with the Elector at the town-house, but the attendants and suite were to take their meals in their own lodgings. A brilliant collection of gentlemen and pages, appointed by the Elector to wait at his table, were ordered to assemble at Leipsic on the 22d, the guests having been all invited for the 23d. Many regulations were given to these noble youths, that they might discharge their duties with befitting decorum. Among other orders, they received particular injunctions that they were to abstain from all drinking among themselves, and from all riotous conduct whatever, while the sovereigns and potentates should be at dinner. "It would be a shameful indecency," it was urged, "if the great people sitting at table should be unable to hear themselves talk on account of the screaming of the attendants." This provision did not seem unreasonable. They were also instructed that if invited to drink by any personage at the great tables they were respectfully to decline the challenge, and to explain the cause after the repast.

Particular arrangements were also made for the safety of the city. Besides the regular guard of Leipsic, two hundred and twenty arquebuseers, spearsmen, and halberdmen, were ordered from the neighboring towns. These were to be all dressed in uniform; one arm, side and leg in black, and the other in yellow, according to a painting distributed beforehand to the various authorities. As a mounted patrole, Leipsic had a regular force of two men. These were now increased to ten, and received orders to ride with their lanterns up and down all the streets and lanes, to accost all persons whom they might find abroad without lights in their hands, to ask them their business in courteous language, and at the same time to see generally to the peace and safety of the town.

Fifty arquebuseers were appointed to protect the town-house, and a burgher watch of six hundred was distributed in different quarters, especially to guard against fire.

Page 206

On Saturday, the day before the wedding, the guests had all arrived at Leipsic, and the Prince of Orange, with his friends, at Meneburg. On Sunday, the 24th August, the Elector at the head of his guests and attendants, in splendid array, rode forth to receive the bridegroom. His cavalcade numbered four thousand. William of Orange had arrived, accompanied by one thousand mounted men. The whole troop now entered the city together, escorting the Prince to the town-house. Here he dismounted, and was received on the staircase by the Princess Anna, attended by her ladies. She immediately afterwards withdrew to her apartments.

It was at this point, between 4 and 5 P.M., that the Elector and Electress, with the bride and bridegroom, accompanied also by the Dame Sophia von Miltitz and the Councillors Hans von Ponika and Ubrich Woltersdorff upon one side, and by Count John of Nassau and Heinrich von Wiltberg upon the other, as witnesses, appeared before Wolf Seidel, notary, in a corner room of the upper story of the town-house. One of the councillors, on the part of the Elector, then addressed the bridegroom. He observed that his highness would remember, no doubt, the contents of a memorandum or billet, sent by the Elector on the 14th April of that year, by the terms of which the Prince was to agree that he would, neither by threat nor persuasion, prevent his future wife from continuing in the Augsburg Confession; that he would allow her to go to places where she might receive the Augsburg sacraments; that in case of extreme need she should receive them in her chamber; and that the children who might spring from the marriage should be instructed as to the Augsburg doctrines. As, however, continued the councillor, his highness the Prince of Orange has, for various reasons, declined giving any such agreement in writing, as therefore it had been arranged that before the marriage ceremony the Prince should, in the presence of the bride and of the other witnesses, make a verbal promise on the subject, and as the parties were now to be immediately united in marriage, therefore the Elector had no doubt that the Prince would make no objection in presence of those witnesses to give his consent to maintain the agreements comprised in the memorandum or note. The note was then read. Thereupon, the Prince answered verbally. “Gracious Elector; I remember the writing which you sent me on the 14th April. All the point: just narrated by the Doctor were contained in it. I now state to your highness that I will keep it all as becomes a prince, and conform to it.” Thereupon he gave the Elector his hand.—

Page 207

What now was the amount and meaning of this promise on the part of the Prince? Almost nothing. He would conform to the demands of the Elector, exactly as he had hitherto said he would conform to them. Taken in connexion with his steady objections to sign and seal any instrument on the subject—with his distinct refusal to the Landgrave (through Knuttel) to allow the Princess an evangelical preacher or to receive the sacraments in the Netherlands—with the vehement, formal, and public protest, on the part of the Landgrave, against the marriage—with the Prince's declarations to the Elector at Dresden, which were satisfactory on all points save the religious point,—what meaning could this verbal promise have, save that the Prince would do exactly as much with regard to the religious question as he had always promised, and no more? This was precisely what did happen. There was no pretence on the part of the Elector, afterwards, that any other arrangement had been contemplated. The Princess lived catholically from the moment of her marriage, exactly as Orange had stated to the Duchess Margaret, and as the Elector knew would be the case. The first and the following children born of the marriage were baptized by Catholic priests, with very elaborate Catholic ceremonies, and this with the full consent of the Elector, who sent deputies and officiated as sponsor on one remarkable occasion.

Who, of all those guileless lambs then, Philip of Spain, the Elector of Saxony, or Cardinal Granvelle, had been deceived by the language or actions of the Prince? Not one. It may be boldly asserted that the Prince, placed in a transition epoch, both of the age and of his own character, surrounded by the most artful and intriguing personages known to history, and involved in a network of most intricate and difficult circumstances, acquitted himself in a manner as honorable as it was prudent. It is difficult to regard the notarial instrument otherwise than as a memorandum, filed rather by Augustus than by wise William, in order to put upon record for his own justification, his repeated though unsuccessful efforts to procure from the Prince a regularly signed, sealed, and holographic act, upon the points stated in the famous note.

After the delay occasioned by these private formalities, the bridal procession, headed by the court musicians, followed by the court marshals, councillors, great officers of state, and the electoral family, entered the grand hall of the town-house. The nuptial ceremony was then performed by "the Superintendent Doctor Pfeffinger." Immediately afterwards, and in the same hall, the bride and bridegroom were placed publicly upon a splendid, gilded bed, with gold-embroidered curtains, the Princess being conducted thither by the Elector and Electress. Confects and spiced drinks were then served to them and to the assembled company. After this ceremony they were conducted to their separate chambers, to dress for dinner. Before they left the hall, however, Margrave Hans of Brandenburg, on part of the Elector of Saxony, solemnly recommended the bride to her husband, exhorting him to cherish her with faith and affection, and "to leave her undisturbed in the recognized truth of the holy gospel and the right use of the sacraments."

Page 208

Five round tables were laid in the same hall immediately afterwards—each accommodating ten guests. As soon as the first course of twenty-five dishes had been put upon the chief table, the bride and bridegroom, the Elector and Electress, the Spanish and Danish envoys and others, were escorted to it, and the banquet began. During the repast, the Elector's choir and all the other bands discoursed the "merriest and most ingenious music." The noble vassals handed the water, the napkins, and the wine, and every thing was conducted decorously and appropriately. As soon as the dinner was brought to a close, the tables were cleared away, and the ball began in the same apartment. Dances, previously arranged, were performed, after which "confects and drinks" were again distributed, and the bridal pair were then conducted to the nuptial chamber.

The wedding, according to the Lutheran custom of the epoch, had thus taken place not in a church, but in a private dwelling; the hall of the town-house, representing, on this occasion, the Elector's own saloons. On the following morning, however, a procession was formed at seven o'clock to conduct the newly-married couple to the church of St. Nicholas, there to receive an additional exhortation and benediction. Two separate companies of gentlemen, attended by a great number of "fifers, drummers, and trumpeters," escorted the bride and the bridegroom, "twelve counts wearing each a scarf of the Princess Anna's colors, with golden garlands on their heads and lighted torches in their hands," preceding her to the choir, where seats had been provided for the more illustrious portion of the company. The church had been magnificently decked in tapestry, and, as the company entered, a full orchestra performed several fine motettos. After listening to a long address from Dr. Pfeffinger, and receiving a blessing before the altar, the Prince and Princess of Orange returned, with their attendant processions, to the town-house.

After dinner, upon the same and the three following days, a tournament was held. The lists were on the market-place, on the side nearest the town-house; the Electress and the other ladies looking down from balcony and window to "rain influence and adjudge the prize." The chief hero of these jousts, according to the accounts in the Archives, was the Elector of Saxony. He "comported himself with such especial chivalry" that his far-famed namesake and remote successor, Augustus the Strong, could hardly have evinced more knightly prowess. On the first day he encountered George Von Wiedebach, and unhorsed him so handsomely that the discomfited cavalier's shoulder was dislocated. On the following day he tilted with Michael von Denstedt, and was again victorious, hitting his adversary full in the target, and "bearing him off over his horse's tail so neatly, that the knight came down, heels over head, upon the earth."

Page 209

On Wednesday, there was what was called the palliatourney. The Prince of Orange, at the head of six bands, amounting in all to twenty-nine men; the Margrave George of Brandenburg, with seven bands, comprising thirty-four men, and the Elector Augustus, with one band of four men, besides himself, all entered the lists. Lots were drawn for the “gate of honor,” and gained by the Margrave, who accordingly defended it with his band. Twenty courses were then run between these champions and the Prince of Orange, with his men. The Brandenburgs broke seven lances, the Prince’s party only six, so that Orange was obliged to leave the lists discomfited. The ever-victorious Augustus then took the field, and ran twenty courses against the defenders, breaking fourteen spears to the Brandenburg’s ten. The Margrave, thus defeated, surrendered the “gate of honor” to the Elector, who maintained, it the rest of the day against all comers. It is fair to suppose, although the fact is not recorded, that the Elector’s original band had received some reinforcement. Otherwise, it would be difficult to account for these constant victories, except by ascribing more than mortal strength, as well as valor, to Augustus and his four champions. His party broke one hundred and fifty-six lances, of which number the Elector himself broke thirty-eight and a half. He received the first prize, but declined other guerdons adjudged to him. The reward for the hardest hitting was conferred on Wolf Von Schonberg, “who thrust Kurt Von Arnim clean out of the saddle, so that he fell against the barriers.”

On Thursday was the riding at the ring. The knights who partook of this sport wore various strange garbs over their armor. Some were disguised as hussars, some as miners, come as lansquenettes; others as Tartans, pilgrims, fools, bird-catchers, hunters, monks; peasants, or Netherland cuirassiers. Each party was attended by a party of musicians, attired in similar costume. Moreover, Count Gunter Von Schwartzburg made, his appearance in the lists, accompanied “by five remarkable giants of wonderful proportions and appearance, very ludicrous to behold, who performed all kind of odd antics on horseback.”

The next day there was a foot tourney, followed in the evening by “mummeries,” or masquerades. These masques were repeated on the following evening, and afforded great entertainment. The costumes were magnificent, “with golden and pearl embroidery,” the dances were very merry and artistic, and the musicians, who formed a part of the company, exhibited remarkable talent. These “mummeries” had been brought by William of Orange from the Netherlands, at the express request of the Elector, on the ground that such matters were much better understood in the provinces than in Germany.

Page 210

Such is a slight sketch of the revels by which this ill-fated Bartholomew marriage was celebrated. While William of Orange was thus employed in Germany, Granvelle seized the opportunity to make his entry into the city of Mechlin, as archbishop; believing that such a step would be better accomplished in the absence of the Prince from the country. The Cardinal found no one in the city to welcome him. None of the great nobles were there. "The people looked upon the procession with silent hatred. No man cried, God bless him." He wrote to the King that he should push forward the whole matter of the bishoprics as fast as possible, adding the ridiculous assertion that the opposition came entirely from the nobility, and that "if the seigniors did not talk so much, not a man of the people would open his mouth on the subject."

The remonstrance offered by the three estates of Brabant against the scheme had not influenced Philip. He had replied in a peremptory tone. He had assured them that he had no intention of receding, and that the province of Brabant ought to feel itself indebted to him for having given them prelates instead of abbots to take care of their eternal interests, and for having erected their religious houses into episcopates. The abbeys made what resistance they could, but were soon fain to come to a compromise with the bishops, who, according to the arrangement thus made, were to receive a certain portion of the abbey revenues, while the remainder was to belong to the institutions, together with a continuance of their right to elect their own chiefs, subordinate, however, to the approbation of the respective prelates of the diocese. Thus was the episcopal matter settled in Brabant. In many of the other bishoprics the new dignitaries were treated with disrespect, as they made their entrance into their cities, while they experienced endless opposition and annoyance on attempting to take possession of the revenue assigned to them.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

History shows how feeble are barriers of paper
Licences accorded by the crown to carry slaves to America
We believe our mothers to have been honest women
When the abbot has dice in his pocket, the convent will play
Wiser simply to satisfy himself

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 7.

The rise of the Dutch republic
John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.
1855
1561-1562 [*Chapter iii*.]

Page 211

The inquisition the great cause of the revolt—The three varieties of the institution—The Spanish inquisition described—The Episcopal inquisition in the Netherlands—The Papal inquisition established in the provinces by Charles V.—His instructions to the inquisitors — They are renewed by Philip—Inquisitor Titelmann—Instances of his manner of proceeding—Spanish and Netherland inquisitions compared— Conduct of Granvelle—-Faveau and Mallart condemned at Valenciennes— “Journee des maubrulea”—Severe measures at Valenciennes—Attack of the Rhetoric Clubs Upon Granvelle—Granvelle’s insinuations against Egmont and Simon Renard—Timidity of Viglius—Universal hatred toward the Cardinal—Buffoonery of Brederode and Lumey—Courage of Granvelle—-Philip taxes the Netherlands for the suppression of the Huguenots in France—Meeting of the Knights of the Fleece—Assembly at the house of Orange—Demand upon the estates for supplies— Montigny appointed envoy to Spain—Open and determined opposition to Granvelle—Secret representations by the Cardinal to Philip, concerning Egmont and other Seigniors—Line of conduct traced out for the King—Montigny’s representations in Spain—Unsatisfactory result of his mission.

The great cause of the revolt which, within a few years, was to break forth throughout the Netherlands; was the inquisition. It is almost puerile to look further or deeper, when such a source of convulsion lies at the very outset of any investigation. During the war there had been, for reasons already indicated, an occasional pause in the religious persecution. Philip had now returned to Spain, having arranged, with great precision, a comprehensive scheme for exterminating that religious belief which was already accepted by a very large portion of his Netherland Subjects. From afar there rose upon the provinces the prophetic vision of a coming evil still more terrible than any which had yet oppressed them. As across the bright plains of Sicily, when the sun is rising, the vast pyramidal shadow of Mount Etna is definitely and visibly projected—the phantom of that ever-present enemy, which holds fire and devastation in its bosom—so, in the morning hour of Philip’s reign, the shadow of the inquisition was cast from afar across those warm and smiling provinces—a spectre menacing fiercer flames and wider desolation than those which mere physical agencies could ever compass.

There has been a good deal of somewhat superfluous discussion concerning the different kinds of inquisition. The distinction drawn between the papal, the episcopal, and the Spanish inquisitions, did not, in the sixteenth century, convince many unsophisticated minds of the merits of the establishment in any of its shapes. However classified or entitled, it was a machine for inquiring into a man’s thoughts, and for burning him if the result was not satisfactory.

Page 212

The Spanish inquisition, strictly so called, that is to say, the modern or later institution established by Pope Alexander the Sixth and Ferdinand the Catholic, was doubtless invested with a more complete apparatus for inflicting human misery, and for appalling human imagination, than any of the other less artfully arranged inquisitions, whether papal or episcopal. It had been originally devised for Jews or Moors, whom the Christianity of the age did not regard as human beings, but who could not be banished without depopulating certain districts. It was soon, however, extended from pagans to heretics. The Dominican Torquemada was the first Moloch to be placed upon this pedestal of blood and fire, and from that day forward the “holy office” was almost exclusively in the hands of that band of brothers. In the eighteen years of Torquemada’s administration; ten thousand two hundred and twenty individuals were burned alive, and ninety-seven thousand three hundred and twenty-one punished with infamy, confiscation of property, or perpetual imprisonment, so that the total number of families destroyed by this one friar alone amounted to one hundred and fourteen thousand four hundred and one. In course of time the jurisdiction of the office was extended. It taught the savages of India and America to shudder at the name of Christianity. The fear of its introduction froze the earlier heretics of Italy, France, and Ger many into orthodoxy. It was a court owning allegiance to no temporal authority, superior to all other tribunals. It was a bench of monks without appeal, having its familiars in every house, diving into the secrets of every fireside, judging, and executing its horrible decrees without responsibility. It condemned not deeds, but thoughts. It affected to descend into individual conscience, and to punish the crimes which it pretended to discover. Its process was reduced to a horrible simplicity. It arrested on suspicion, tortured till confession, and then punished by fire. Two witnesses, and those to separate facts, were sufficient to consign the victim to a loathsome dungeon. Here he was sparingly supplied with food, forbidden to speak, or even to sing to which pastime it could hardly be thought he would feel much inclination—and then left to himself, till famine and misery should break his spirit. When that time was supposed to have arrived he was examined. Did he confess, and forswear his heresy, whether actually innocent or not, he might then assume the sacred shirt, and escape with confiscation of all his property. Did he persist in the avowal of his innocence, two witnesses sent him to the stake, one witness to the rack. He was informed of the testimony against him, but never confronted with the witness. That accuser might be his son, father, or the wife of his bosom, for all were enjoined, under the death penalty, to inform the inquisitors of every suspicious word which might fall from their nearest relatives. The indictment

Page 213

being thus supported, the prisoner was tried by torture. The rack was the court of justice; the criminal's only advocate was his fortitude—for the nominal counsellor, who was permitted no communication with the prisoner, and was furnished neither with documents nor with power to procure evidence, was a puppet, aggravating the lawlessness of the proceedings by the mockery of legal forms: The torture took place at midnight, in a gloomy dungeon, dimly, lighted by torches. The victim—whether man, matron, or tender virgin—was stripped naked, and stretched upon the wooden bench. Water, weights, fires, pulleys, screws—all the apparatus by which the sinews could be strained without cracking, the bones crushed without breaking, and the body racked exquisitely without giving up its ghost, was now put into operation. The executioner, enveloped in a black robe from head to foot, with his eyes glaring at his victim through holes cut in the hood which muffled his face, practised successively all the forms of torture which the devilish ingenuity of the monks had invented. The imagination sickens when striving to keep pace with these dreadful realities. Those who wish to indulge their curiosity concerning the details of the system, may easily satisfy themselves at the present day. The flood of light which has been poured upon the subject more than justifies the horror and the rebellion of the Netherlanders.

The period during which torture might be inflicted from day to day was unlimited in duration. It could only be terminated by confession; so that the scaffold was the sole refuge from the rack. Individuals have borne the torture and the dungeon fifteen years, and have been burned at the stake at last.

Execution followed confession, but the number of condemned prisoners was allowed to accumulate, that a multitude of victims might grace each great gala-day. The auto-da fe was a solemn festival. The monarch, the high functionaries of the land, the reverend clergy, the populace regarded it as an inspiring and delightful recreation. When the appointed morning arrived, the victim was taken from his dungeon. He was then attired in a yellow robe without sleeves, like a herald's coat, embroidered all over with black figures of devils. A large conical paper mitre was placed upon his head, upon which was represented a human being in the midst of flames, surrounded by imps. His tongue was then painfully gagged, so that he could neither open nor shut his mouth. After he was thus accoutred, and just as he was leaving his cell, a breakfast, consisting of every delicacy, was placed before him, and he was urged, with ironical politeness, to satisfy his hunger. He was then led forth into the public square. The procession was formed with great pomp. It was headed by the little school children, who were immediately followed by the band of prisoners, each attired in the horrible yet ludicrous manner described. Then came the magistrates and nobility, the prelates and other dignitaries

Page 214

of the Church: the holy inquisitors, with their officials and familiars, followed, all on horseback, with the blood-red flag of the “sacred office” waving above them, blazoned upon either side with the portraits of Alexander and of Ferdinand, the pair of brothers who had established the institution. After the procession came the rabble. When all had reached the neighborhood of the scaffold, and had been arranged in order, a sermon was preached to the assembled multitude. It was filled with laudations of the inquisition, and with blasphemous revilings against the condemned prisoners. Then the sentences were read to the individual victims. Then the clergy chanted the fifty-first psalm, the whole vast throng uniting in one tremendous miserere. If a priest happened to be among the culprits, he was now stripped of the canonicals which he had hitherto worn; while his hands, lips, and shaven crown were scraped with a bit of glass, by which process the oil of his consecration was supposed to be removed. He was then thrown into the common herd. Those of the prisoners who were reconciled, and those whose execution was not yet appointed, were now separated from the others. The rest were compelled to mount a scaffold, where the executioner stood ready to conduct them to the fire. The inquisitors then delivered them into his hands, with an ironical request that he would deal with them tenderly, and without blood-letting or injury. Those who remained steadfast to the last were then burned at the stake; they who in the last extremity renounced their faith were strangled before being thrown into the flames. Such was the Spanish inquisition—technically—so called: It was, according’ to the biographer of Philip the Second, a “heavenly remedy, a guardian angel of Paradise, a lions’ den in which Daniel and other just men could sustain no injury, but in which perverse sinners were torn to pieces.” It was a tribunal superior to all human law, without appeal, and certainly owing no allegiance to the powers of earth or heaven. No rank, high or humble, was safe from its jurisdiction. The royal family were not sacred, nor, the pauper’s hovel. Even death afforded no protection. The holy office invaded the prince in his palace and the beggar in his shroud. The corpses of dead heretics were mutilated and burned. The inquisitors preyed upon carcases and rifled graves. A gorgeous festival of the holy office had, as we have seen, welcomed Philip to his native land. The news of these tremendous autos-da fe, in which so many illustrious victims had been sacrificed before their sovereign’s eyes, had reached the Netherlands almost simultaneously with the bulls creating the new bishoprics in the provinces. It was not likely that the measure would be rendered more palatable by this intelligence of the royal amusements.

Page 215

The Spanish inquisition had never flourished in any soil but that of the peninsula. It is possible that the King and Granvelle were sincere in their protestations of entertaining no intention of introducing it into the Netherlands, although the protestations of such men are entitled to but little weight. The truth was, that the inquisition existed already in the provinces. It was the main object of the government to confirm and extend the institution. The episcopal inquisition, as we have already seen, had been enlarged by the enormous increase in the number of bishops, each of whom was to be head inquisitor in his diocese, with two special inquisitors under him. With this apparatus and with the edicts, as already described, it might seem that enough had already been done for the suppression of heresy. But more had been done. A regular papal inquisition also existed in the Netherlands. This establishment, like the edicts, was the gift of Charles the Fifth. A word of introduction is here again necessary—nor let the reader deem that too much time is devoted to this painful subject. On the contrary, no definite idea can be formed as to the character of the Netherland revolt without a thorough understanding of this great cause—the religious persecution in which the country had lived, breathed, and had its being, for half a century, and in which, had the rebellion not broken out at last, the population must have been either exterminated or entirely embruted. The few years which are immediately to occupy us in the present and succeeding chapter, present the country in a daily increasing ferment from the action of causes which had existed long before, but which received an additional stimulus as the policy of the new reign developed itself.

Previously to the accession of Charles V., it can not be said that an inquisition had ever been established in the provinces. Isolated instances to the contrary, adduced by the canonists who gave their advice to Margaret of Parma, rather proved the absence than the existence of the system. In the reign of Philip the Good, the vicar of the inquisitor-general gave sentence against some heretics, who were burned in Lille (1448). In 1459, Pierre Troussart, a Jacobin monk, condemned many Waldenses, together with some leading citizens of Artois, accused of sorcery and heresy. He did this, however, as inquisitor for the Bishop of Arras, so that it was an act of episcopal, and not papal inquisition. In general, when inquisitors were wanted in the provinces, it was necessary to borrow them from France or Germany. The exigencies of persecution making a domestic staff desirable, Charles the Fifth, in the year 1522, applied to his ancient tutor, whom he had placed on the papal throne.

Page 216

Charles had, however, already, in the previous year appointed Francis Van der Hulst to be inquisitor-general for the Netherlands. This man, whom Erasmus called a “wonderful enemy to learning,” was also provided with a coadjutor, Nicholas of Egmond by name, a Carmelite monk, who was characterized by the same authority as “a madman armed with a sword.” The inquisitor-general received full powers to cite, arrest, imprison, torture heretics without observing the ordinary forms of law, and to cause his sentences to be executed without appeal. He was, however, in pronouncing definite judgments, to take the advice of Laurens, president of the grand council of Mechlin, a coarse, cruel and ignorant man, who “hated learning with a more than deadly hatred,” and who might certainly be relied upon to sustain the severest judgments which the inquisitor might fulminate. Adrian; accordingly, commissioned Van der Hulst to be universal and general inquisitor for all the Netherlands. At the same time it was expressly stated that his functions were not to supersede those exercised by the bishops as inquisitors in their own sees. Thus the papal inquisition was established in the provinces. Van der Hulst, a person of infamous character, was not the man to render the institution less odious than it was by its nature. Before he had fulfilled his duties two years, however, he was degraded from his office by the Emperor for having forged a document. In 1525, Buedens, Houseau and Coppin were confirmed by Clement the Seventh as inquisitors in the room of Van der Hulst. In 1531, Ruard Tapper and Michael Drutius were appointed by Paul the Third, on the decease of Coppin, the other two remaining in office. The powers of the papal inquisitors had been gradually extended, and they were, by 1545, not only entirely independent of the episcopal inquisition, but had acquired right of jurisdiction over bishops and archbishops, whom they were empowered to arrest and imprison. They had also received and exercised the privilege of appointing delegates, or sub-inquisitors, on their own authority. Much of the work was, indeed, performed by these officials, the most notorious of whom were Barbier, De Monte, Titelmann, Fabry, Campo de Zon, and Stryen. In 1545, and again in 1550, a stringent set of instructions were drawn up by the Emperor for the guidance of these papal inquisitors. A glance at their context shows that the establishment was not intended to be an empty form.

They were empowered to inquire, proceed against, and chastise all heretics, all persons suspected of heresy, and their protectors. Accompanied by a notary, they were to collect written information concerning every person in the provinces, “infected or vehemently suspected.” They were authorized to summon all subjects of his Majesty, whatever their rank, quality, or station, and to compel them to give evidence, or to communicate suspicions. They were to punish all who pertinaciously refused such depositions with

Page 217

death. The Emperor commanded his presidents, judges, sheriffs, and all other judicial and executive officers to render all “assistance to the inquisitors and their familiars in their holy and pious inquisition, whenever required so to do,” on pain of being punished as encouragers of heresy, that is to say, with death. Whenever the inquisitors should be satisfied as to the heresy of any individual, they were to order his arrest and detention by the judge of the place, or by others arbitrarily to be selected by them. The judges or persons thus chosen, were enjoined to fulfil the order, on pain of being punished as protectors of heresy, that is to say, with death, by sword or fire. If the prisoner were an ecclesiastic, the inquisitor was to deal summarily with the case “without noise or form in the process—selecting an imperial councillor to render the sentence of absolution or condemnation.” If the prisoner were a lay person, the inquisitor was to order his punishment, according to the edicts, by the council of the province. In case of lay persons suspected but not convicted of heresy, the inquisitor was to proceed to their chastisement, “with the advice of a counsellor or some other expert.” In conclusion, the Emperor ordered the “inquisitors to make it known that they were not doing their own work, but that of Christ, and to persuade all persons of this fact.” This clause of their instructions seemed difficult of accomplishment, for no reasonable person could doubt that Christ, had he re-appeared in human form, would have been instantly crucified again, or burned alive in any place within the dominions of Charles or Philip. The blasphemy with which the name of Jesus was used by such men to sanctify all these nameless horrors, is certainly not the least of their crimes.

In addition to these instructions, a special edict had been issued on the 26th April, 1550, according to which all judicial officers, at the requisition of the inquisitors, were to render them all assistance in the execution of their office, by arresting and detaining all persons suspected of heresy, according to the instructions issued to said inquisitors; and this, notwithstanding any privileges or charters to the contrary. In short, the inquisitors were not subject to the civil authority, but the civil authority to them. The imperial edict empowered them “to chastise, degrade, denounce, and deliver over heretics to the secular judges for punishment; to make use of gaols, and to make arrests, without ordinary warrant, but merely with notice given to a single counselor, who was obliged to give sentence according to their desire, without application to the ordinary judge.”

Page 218

These instructions to the inquisitors had been renewed and confirmed by Philip, in the very first month of his reign (28th Nov. 1555). As in the case of the edicts, it had been thought desirable by Granvelle to make use of the supposed magic of the Emperor's name to hallow the whole machinery of persecution. The action of the system during the greater part of the imperial period had been terrible. Suffered for a time to languish during the French war, it had lately been renewed with additional vigor. Among all the inquisitors, the name of Peter Titelmann was now pre-eminent. He executed his infamous functions throughout Flanders, Douay, and Tournay, the most thriving and populous portions of the Netherlands, with a swiftness, precision, and even with a jocularity which hardly seemed human. There was a kind of grim humor about the man. The woman who, according to Lear's fool, was wont to thrust her live eels into the hot paste, "rapping them o' the coxcombs with a stick and crying reproachfully, Wantons, lie down!" had the spirit of a true inquisitor. Even so dealt Titelmann with his heretics writhing on the rack or in the flames. Cotemporary chronicles give a picture of him as of some grotesque yet terrible goblin, careering through the country by night or day, alone, on horseback, smiting the trembling peasants on the head with a great club, spreading dismay far and wide, dragging suspected persons from their firesides or their beds, and thrusting them into dungeons, arresting, torturing, strangling, burning, with hardly the shadow of warrant, information, or process.

The secular sheriff, familiarly called Red-Rod, from the color of his wand of office, meeting this inquisitor Titelmann one day upon the high road, thus wonderingly addressed him—"How can you venture to go about alone, or at most with an attendant or two, arresting people on every side, while I dare not attempt to execute my office, except at the head of a strong force, armed in proof; and then only at the peril of my life?"

"Ah! Red-Rod," answered Peter, jocosely, "you deal with bad people. I have nothing to fear, for I seize only the innocent and virtuous, who make no resistance, and let themselves be taken like lambs."

"Mighty well," said the other; "but if you arrest all the good people and I all the bad, 'tis difficult to say who in the world is to escape chastisement." The reply of the inquisitor has not been recorded, but there is no doubt that he proceeded like a strong man to run his day's course.

He was the most active of all the agents in the religious persecution at the epoch of which we are now treating, but he had been inquisitor for many years. The martyrology of the provinces reeks with his murders. He burned men for idle words or suspected thoughts; he rarely waited, according to his frank confession, for deeds. Hearing once that a certain schoolmaster, named Geleyn de Muler, of Audenarde, "was addicted

Page 219

to reading the Bible," he summoned the culprit before him and accused him of heresy. The schoolmaster claimed, if he were guilty of any crime, to be tried before the judges of his town. "You are my prisoner," said Titelmann, "and are to answer me and none other." The inquisitor proceeded accordingly to catechize him, and soon satisfied himself of the schoolmaster's heresy. He commanded him to make immediate recantation. The schoolmaster refused. "Do you not love your wife and children?" asked the demoniac Titelmann. "God knows," answered the heretic, "that if the whole world were of gold, and my own, I would give it all only to have them with me, even had I to live on bread and water and in bondage." "You have then," answered the inquisitor, "only to renounce the error of your opinions."—"Neither for wife, children, nor all the world, can I renounce my God and religious truth," answered the prisoner. Thereupon Titelmann sentenced him to the stake. He was strangled and then thrown into the flames.

At about the same-time, Thomas Calberg, tapestry weaver, of Tournay, within the jurisdiction of this same inquisitor, was convicted of having copied some hymns from a book printed in Geneva. He was burned alive. Another man, whose name has perished, was hacked to death with seven blows of a rusty sword, in presence of his wife, who was so horror-stricken that she died on the spot before her husband. His crime, to be sure, was anabaptism, the most deadly offence in the calendar. In the same year, one Walter Kapell was burned at the stake for heretical opinions. He was a man of some property, and beloved by the poor people of Dixmuyde, in Flanders, where he resided, for his many charities. A poor idiot, who had been often fed by his bounty, called out to the inquisitor's subalterns, as they bound his patron to the stake, "ye are bloody murderers; that man has done no wrong; but has given me bread to eat." With these words, he cast himself headlong into the flames to perish with his protector, but was with difficulty rescued by the officers. A day or two afterwards, he made his way to the stake, where the half-burnt skeleton of Walter Kapell still remained, took the body upon his shoulders, and carried it through the streets to the house of the chief burgomaster, where several other magistrates happened then to be in session. Forcing his way into their presence, he laid his burthen at their feet, crying, "There, murderers! ye have eaten his flesh, now eat his bones!" It has not been recorded whether Titelmann sent him to keep company with his friend in the next world. The fate of so obscure a victim could hardly find room on the crowded pages of the Netherland martyrdom.

Page 220

This kind of work, which went on daily, did not increase the love of the people for the inquisition or the edicts. It terrified many, but it inspired more with that noble resistance to oppression, particularly to religious oppression, which is the sublimest instinct of human nature. Men confronted the terrible inquisitors with a courage equal to their cruelty: At Tournay, one of the chief cities of Titelmann's district, and almost before his eyes, one Bertrand le Blas, a velvet manufacturer, committed what was held an almost incredible crime. Having begged his wife and children to pray for a blessing upon what he was about to undertake, he went on Christmas-day to the Cathedral of Tournay and stationed himself near the altar. Having awaited the moment in which the priest held on high the consecrated host, Le Blas then forced his way through the crowd, snatched the wafer from the hands of the astonished ecclesiastic, and broke it into bits, crying aloud, as he did so, "Misguided men, do ye take this thing to be Jesus Christ, your Lord and Saviour?" With these words, he threw the fragments on the ground and trampled them with his feet.

[Histoire des Martyrs, f. 356, exev.; apud Brandt, i. 171,172. It may be well supposed that this would be regarded as a crime of almost inconceivable magnitude. It was death even to refuse to kneel in the streets when the wafer was carried by. Thus, for example, a poor huckster, named Simon, at Bergen-op-Zoom, who neglected to prostrate himself before his booth at the passage of the host, was immediately burned. Instances of the same punishment for that offence might be multiplied. In this particular case, it is recorded that the sheriff who was present at the execution was so much affected by the courage and fervor of the simple-minded victim, that he went home, took to his bed, became delirious, crying constantly, Ah, Simon! Simon! and died miserably, "notwithstanding all that the monks could do to console him."]

The amazement and horror were so universal at such an appalling offence, that not a finger was raised to arrest the criminal. Priests and congregation were alike paralyzed, so that he would have found no difficulty in making his escape. Ho did not stir, however; he had come to the church determined to execute what he considered a sacred duty, and to abide the consequences. After a time, he was apprehended. The inquisitor demanded if he repented of what he had done. He protested, on the contrary, that he gloried in the deed, and that he would die a hundred deaths to rescue from such daily profanation the name of his Redeemer, Christ. He was then put thrice to the torture, that he might be forced to reveal his accomplices. It did not seem in human power for one man to accomplish such a deed of darkness without confederates. Bertrand had none, however, and could denounce none. A frantic sentence was then devised as a feeble punishment for so much wickedness.

Page 221

He was dragged on a hurdle, with his mouth closed with an iron gag, to the market-place. Here his right hand and foot were burned and twisted off between two red-hot irons. His tongue was then torn out by the roots, and because he still endeavored to call upon the name of God, the iron gag was again applied. With his arms and legs fastened together behind his back, he was then hooked by the middle of his body to an iron chain, and made to swing to and fro over a slow fire till he was entirely roasted. His life lasted almost to the end of these ingenious tortures, but his fortitude lasted as long as his life.

In the next year, Titelmann caused one Robert Ogier, of Ryssel, in Flanders, to be arrested, together with his wife and two sons. Their crime consisted in not going to mass, and in practising private worship at home. They confessed the offence, for they protested that they could not endure to see the profanation of their Saviour's name in the idolatrous sacraments. They were asked what rites they practised in their own house. One of the sons, a mere boy, answered, "We fall on our knees, and pray to God that he may enlighten our hearts, and forgive our sins. We pray for our sovereign, that his reign may be prosperous, and his life peaceful. We also pray for the magistrates and others in authority, that God may protect and preserve them all." The boy's simple eloquence drew tears even from the eyes of some of his judges; for the inquisitor had placed the case before the civil tribunal. The father and eldest son were, however, condemned to the flames. "Oh God!" prayed the youth at the stake, "Eternal Father, accept the sacrifice of our lives, in the name of thy beloved Son."—"Thou liest, scoundrel!" fiercely interrupted a monk, who was lighting the fire; "God is not your father; ye are the devil's children." As the flames rose about them, the boy cried out once more, "Look, my father, all heaven is opening, and I see ten hundred thousand angels rejoicing over us. Let us be glad, for we are dying for the truth."—"Thou liest! thou liest!" again screamed the monk; "all hell is opening, and you see ten thousand devils thrusting you into eternal fire." Eight days afterwards, the wife of Ogier and his other son were burned; so that there was an end of that family.

Such are a few isolated specimens of the manner of proceeding in a single district of the Netherlands. The inquisitor Titelmann certainly deserved his terrible reputation. Men called him Saul the persecutor, and it was well known that he had been originally tainted with the heresy which he had, for so many years, been furiously chastising. At the epoch which now engages our attention, he felt stimulated by the avowed policy of the government to fresh exertions, by which all his previous achievements should be cast into the shade. In one day he broke into a house in Ryssel, seized John de Swarte, his wife and four children, together with two newly-married couples, and two other persons, convicted them of reading the Bible, and of praying in their own doors, and had them all immediately burned.

Page 222

Are these things related merely to excite superfluous horror? Are the sufferings of these obscure Christians beneath the dignity of history? Is it not better to deal with murder and oppression in the abstract, without entering into trivial details? The answer is, that these things are the history of the Netherlands at this epoch; that these hideous details furnish the causes of that immense movement, out of which a great republic was born and an ancient tyranny destroyed; and that Cardinal Granvelle was ridiculous when he asserted that the people would not open their mouths if the seigniors did not make such a noise. Because the great lords “owed their very souls”—because convulsions might help to pay their debts, and furnish forth their masquerades and banquets—because the Prince of Orange was ambitious, and Egmont jealous of the Cardinal—therefore superficial writers found it quite natural that the country should be disturbed, although that “vile and mischievous animal, the people,” might have no objection to a continuance of the system which had been at work so long. On the contrary, it was exactly because the movement was a popular and a religious movement that it will always retain its place among the most important events of history. Dignified documents, state papers, solemn treaties, are often of no more value than the lambskin on which they are engrossed. Ten thousand nameless victims, in the cause of religious and civil freedom, may build up great states and alter the aspect of whole continents.

The nobles, no doubt, were conspicuous, and it was well for the cause of the right that, as in the early hours of English liberty, the crown and mitre were opposed by the baron’s sword and shield. Had all the seigniors made common cause with Philip and Granvelle, instead of setting their breasts against the inquisition, the cause of truth and liberty would have been still more desperate. Nevertheless they were directed and controlled, under Providence, by humbler, but more powerful agencies than their own. The nobles were but the gilded hands on the outside of the dial—the hour to strike was determined by the obscure but weighty movements within.

Nor is it, perhaps, always better to rely upon abstract phraseology, to produce a necessary impression. Upon some minds, declamation concerning liberty of conscience and religious tyranny makes but a vague impression, while an effect may be produced upon them, for example by a dry, concrete, cynical entry in an account book, such as the following, taken at hazard from the register of municipal expenses at Tournay, during the years with which we are now occupied:

> “To Mr. Jacques Barra, executioner, for having tortured, twice, Jean de Lannoy, ten sous.
>
> “To the same, for having executed, by fire, said Lannoy, sixty sous. For having thrown his cinders into the river, eight sous.”

Page 223

This was the treatment to which thousands, and tens of thousands, had been subjected in the provinces. Men, women, and children were burned, and their “cinders” thrown away, for idle words against Rome, spoken years before, for praying alone in their closets, for not kneeling to a wafer when they met it in the streets, for thoughts to which they had never given utterance, but which, on inquiry, they were too honest to deny. Certainly with this work going on year after year in every city in the Netherlands, and now set into renewed and vigorous action by a man who wore a crown only that he might the better torture his fellow-creatures, it was time that the very stones in the streets should be moved to mutiny.

Thus it may be seen of how much value were the protestations of Philip and of Granvelle, on which much stress has latterly been laid, that it was not their intention to introduce the Spanish inquisition. With the edicts and the Netherland inquisition, such as we have described them, the step was hardly necessary.

In fact, the main difference between the two institutions consisted in the greater efficiency of the Spanish in discovering such of its victims as were disposed to deny their faith. Devised originally for more timorous and less conscientious infidels who were often disposed to skulk in obscure places and to renounce without really abandoning their errors, it was provided with a set of venomous familiars who glided through every chamber and coiled themselves at every fireside. The secret details of each household in the realm being therefore known to the holy office and to the monarch, no infidel or heretic could escape discovery. This invisible machinery was less requisite for the Netherlands. There was comparatively little difficulty in ferreting out the “vermin”—to use the expression of a Walloon historian of that age—so that it was only necessary to maintain in good working order the apparatus for destroying the noxious creatures when unearthed. The heretics of the provinces assembled at each other’s houses to practise those rites described in such simple language by Baldwin Ogier, and denounced under such horrible penalties by the edicts. The inquisitorial system of Spain was hardly necessary for men who had but little prudence in concealing, and no inclination to disavow their creed. “It is quite a laughable matter,” wrote Granvelle, who occasionally took a comic view of the inquisition, “that the King should send us depositions made in Spain by which we are to hunt for heretics here, as if we did not know of thousands already. Would that I had as many doubloons of annual income,” he added, “as there are public and professed heretics in the provinces.” No doubt the inquisition was in such eyes a most desirable establishment. “To speak without passion,” says the Walloon, “the inquisition well administered is a laudable institution, and not less necessary than all the other offices of spirituality and temporality

Page 224

belonging both to the bishops and to the commissioners of the Roman see." The papal and episcopal establishments, in co-operation with the edicts, were enough, if thoroughly exercised and completely extended. The edicts alone were sufficient. "The edicts and the inquisition are one and the same thing," said the Prince of Orange. The circumstance, that the civil authorities were not as entirely superseded by the Netherland, as by the Spanish system, was rather a difference of form than of fact. We have seen that the secular officers of justice were at the command of the inquisitors. Sheriff, gaoler, judge, and hangman, were all required, under the most terrible penalties, to do their bidding. The reader knows what the edicts were. He knows also the instructions to the corps of papal inquisitors, delivered by Charles and Philip: He knows that Philip, both in person and by letter, had done his utmost to sharpen those instructions, during the latter portion of his sojourn in the Netherlands. Fourteen new bishops, each with two special inquisitors under him, had also been appointed to carry out the great work to which the sovereign had consecrated his existence. The manner in which the hunters of heretics performed their office has been exemplified by slightly sketching the career of a single one of the sub-inquisitors, Peter Titelmann. The monarch and his minister scarcely needed, therefore, to transplant the peninsular exotic. Why should they do so? Philip, who did not often say a great deal in a few words, once expressed the whole truth of the matter in a single sentence: "Wherefore introduce the Spanish inquisition?" said he; "the inquisition of the Netherlands is much more pitiless than that of Spain."

Such was the system of religious persecution commenced by Charles, and perfected by Philip. The King could not claim the merit of the invention, which justly belonged to the Emperor. At the same time, his responsibility for the unutterable woe caused by the continuance of the scheme is not a jot diminished. There was a time when the whole system had fallen into comparative desuetude. It was utterly abhorrent to the institutions and the manners of the Netherlanders. Even a great number of the Catholics in the provinces were averse to it. Many of the leading grandees, every one of whom was Catholic were foremost in denouncing its continuance. In short, the inquisition had been partially endured, but never accepted. Moreover, it had never been introduced into Luxemburg or Groningen. In Gelderland it had been prohibited by the treaty through which that province had been annexed to the emperor's dominions, and it had been uniformly and successfully resisted in Brabant. Therefore, although Philip, taking the artful advice of Granvelle, had sheltered himself under the Emperor's name by re-enacting, word for word, his decrees, and re-issuing his instructions, he can not be allowed any such protection at the bar of history. Such a defence for crimes

Page 225

so enormous is worse than futile. In truth, both father and son recognized instinctively the intimate connexion between ideas of religious and of civil freedom. "The authority of God and the supremacy of his Majesty" was the formula used with perpetual iteration to sanction the constant recourse to scaffold and funeral pile. Philip, bigoted in religion, and fanatical in his creed of the absolute power of kings, identified himself willingly with the Deity, that he might more easily punish crimes against his own sacred person. Granvelle carefully sustained him in these convictions, and fed his suspicions as to the motives of those who opposed his measures. The minister constantly represented the great seigniors as influenced by ambition and pride. They had only disapproved of the new bishoprics, he insinuated, because they were angry that his Majesty should dare to do anything without their concurrence, and because their own influence in the states would be diminished. It was their object, he said, to keep the King "in tutelage"—to make him a "shadow and a cipher," while they should themselves exercise all authority in the provinces. It is impossible to exaggerate the effect of such suggestions upon the dull and gloomy mind to which they were addressed. It is easy, however, to see that a minister with such views was likely to be as congenial to his master as he was odious to the people. For already, in the beginning of 1562, Granvelle was extremely unpopular. "The Cardinal is hated of all men," wrote Sir Thomas Gresham. The great struggle between him and the leading nobles had already commenced. The people justly identified him with the whole infamous machinery of persecution, which had either originated or warmly made his own. Viglius and Berlaymont were his creatures. With the other members of the state council, according to their solemn statement, already recorded, he did not deign to consult, while he affected to hold them responsible for the measures of the administration. Even the Regent herself complained that the Cardinal took affairs quite out of her hands, and that he decided upon many important matters without her cognizance. She already began to feel herself the puppet which it had been intended she should become; she already felt a diminution of the respectful attachment for the ecclesiastic which had inspired her when she procured his red hat.

Granvelle was, however, most resolute in carrying out the intentions of his master. We have seen how vigorously he had already set himself to the inauguration of the new bishoprics, despite of opposition and obloquy. He was now encouraging or rebuking the inquisitors in their "pious office" throughout all the provinces. Notwithstanding his exertions, however, heresy continued to spread. In the Walloon provinces the infection was most prevalent, while judges and executioners were appalled by the mutinous demonstrations which each successive sacrifice provoked. The victims were cheered on their way to the scaffold.

Page 226

The hymns of Marot were sung in the very faces of the inquisitors. Two ministers, Faveau and Mallart, were particularly conspicuous at this moment at Valenciennes. The governor of the province, Marquis Berghen, was constantly absent, for he hated with his whole soul the system of persecution. For this negligence Granvelle denounced him secretly and perpetually to Philip, “The Marquis says openly,” said the Cardinal, “that ’tis not right to shed blood for matters of faith. With such men to aid us, your Majesty can judge how much progress we can make.” It was, however, important, in Granvelle’s opinion, that these two ministers at Valenciennes should be at once put to death. They were avowed heretics, and they preached to their disciples, although they certainly were not doctors of divinity. Moreover, they were accused, most absurdly, no doubt, of pretending to work miracles. It was said that, in presence of several witnesses, they had undertaken to cast out devils; and they had been apprehended on an accusation of this nature.
["Histoire des choses les plus memorables qui se sent passees en la ville et Compte de Valenciennes depuis le commencement des troubles des Pays-Bas sons le regne de Phil. II., jusqu’ a l’annee 1621.”— *Ms*. (Collect. Gerard).—This is a contemporary manuscript belonging to the Gerard collection in the Royal Library at the Hague. Its author was a citizen of Valenciennes, and a personal witness of most of the events which he describes. He appears to have attained to a great age, as he minutely narrates, from personal observation, many scenes which occurred before 1566, and his work is continued till the year 1621. It is a mere sketch, without much literary merit, but containing many local anecdotes of interest. Its anonymous author was a very sincere Catholic.]

Their offence really consisted in reading the Bible to a few of their friends. Granvelle sent Philibert de Bruxelles to Valenciennes to procure their immediate condemnation and execution. He rebuked the judges and inquisitors, he sent express orders to Marquis Berghen to repair at once to the scene of his duties. The prisoners were condemned in the autumn of 1561. The magistrates were, however, afraid to carry the sentence into effect. Granvelle did not cease to censure them for their pusillanimity, and wrote almost daily letters, accusing the magistrates of being themselves the cause of the tumults by which they were appalled. The popular commotion was, however, not lightly to be braved. Six or seven months long the culprits remained in confinement, while daily and nightly the people crowded the streets, hurling threats and defiance at the authorities, or pressed about the prison windows, encouraging their beloved ministers, and promising to rescue them in case the attempt should be made to fulfil the sentence. At last Granvelle sent down a peremptory order to execute the culprits by fire. On the 27th of April,

Page 227

1562, Faveau and Mallart were accordingly taken from their jail and carried to the market-place, where arrangements had been made for burning them. Simon Faveau, as the executioner was binding him to the stake, uttered the invocation, “O! Eternal Father!” A woman in the crowd, at the same instant, took off her shoe and threw it at the funeral pile. This was a preconcerted signal. A movement was at once visible in the crowd. Men in great numbers dashed upon the barriers which had been erected in the square around the place of execution. Some seized the fagots, which had been already lighted, and scattered them in every direction; some tore up the pavements; others broke in pieces the barriers. The executioners were prevented from carrying out the sentence, but the guard were enabled, with great celerity and determination, to bring off the culprits and to place them in their dungeon again. The authorities were in doubt and dismay. The inquisitors were for putting the ministers to death in prison, and hurling their heads upon the street. Evening approached while the officials were still pondering. The people who had been chanting the Psalms of David through the town, without having decided what should be their course of action, at last determined to rescue the victims. A vast throng, after much hesitation, accordingly directed their steps to the prison. “You should have seen this vile populace,” says an eye-witness, “moving, pausing, recoiling, sweeping forward, swaying to and fro like the waves of the sea when it is agitated by contending winds.” The attack was vigorous, the defence was weak—-for the authorities had expected no such fierce demonstration, notwithstanding the menacing language which had been so often uttered. The prisoners were rescued, and succeeded in making their escape from the city. The day in which the execution had been thus prevented was called, thenceforward, the “day of the ill-burned,” (Journee des mau-brulez). One of the ministers, however, Simon Faveau, not discouraged by this near approach to martyrdom, persisted in his heretical labors, and was a few years afterwards again apprehended. “He was then,” says the chronicler, cheerfully, “burned well and finally” in the same place whence he had formerly been rescued. [Valenciennes *Ms*.]

This desperate resistance to tyranny was for a moment successful, because, notwithstanding the murmurs and menaces by which the storm had been preceded, the authorities had not believed the people capable of proceeding to such lengths. Had not the heretics—in the words of Inquisitor Titelmann—allowed themselves, year after year, to be taken and slaughtered like lambs? The consternation of the magistrates was soon succeeded by anger. The government at Brussels was in a frenzy of rage when informed of the occurrence. A bloody vengeance was instantly prepared, to vindicate the insult to the inquisition. On the 29th of April, detachments of Bossu’s and of Berghen’s “band of ordonnance”

Page 228

were sent into Valenciennes, together with a company of the Duke of Aerschot's regiment. The prisons were instantly filled to overflowing with men and women arrested for actual or suspected participation in the tumult. Orders had been sent down from the capital to make a short process and a sharp execution for all the criminals. On the 16th of May, the slaughter commenced. Some were burned at the stake, some were beheaded: the number of victims was frightful. "Nothing was left undone by the magistrates," says an eyewitness, with great approbation, "which could serve for the correction and amendment of the poor people." It was long before the judges and hangmen rested from their labors. When at last the havoc was complete, it might be supposed that a sufficient vengeance had been taken for the "day of the ill-burned," and an adequate amount of "amendment" provided for the "poor people."

Such scenes as these did not tend to increase the loyalty of the nation, nor the popularity of the government. On Granvelle's head was poured a daily increasing torrent of hatred. He was looked upon in the provinces as the impersonation of that religious oppression which became every moment more intolerable. The King and the Regent escaped much of the odium which belonged to them, because the people chose to bestow all their maledictions upon the Cardinal. There was, however, no great injustice in this embodiment. Granvelle was the government. As the people of that day were extremely reverent to royalty, they vented all their rage upon the minister, while maintaining still a conventional respect for the sovereign. The prelate had already become the constant butt of the "Rhetoric Chambers." These popular clubs for the manufacture of homespun poetry and street farces out of the raw material of public sentiment, occupied the place which has been more effectively filled in succeeding ages, and in free countries by the daily press. Before the invention of that most tremendous weapon, which liberty has ever wielded against tyranny, these humble but influential associations shared with the pulpit the only power which existed of moving the passions or directing the opinions of the people. They were eminently liberal in their tendencies. The authors and the actors of their comedies, poems, and pasquils were mostly artisans or tradesmen, belonging to the class out of which proceeded the early victims, and the later soldiers of the Reformation. Their bold farces and truculent satire had already effected much in spreading among the people a detestation of Church abuses. They were particularly severe upon monastic licentiousness. "These corrupt comedians, called rhetoricians," says the Walloon contemporary already cited, "afforded much amusement to the people." Always some poor little nuns or honest monks were made a part of the farce. It seemed as if the people could take no pleasure except in ridiculing God and the Church. The people, however, persisted in the opinion that

Page 229

the ideas of a monk and of God were not inseparable. Certainly the piety of the early reformers was sufficiently fervent, and had been proved by the steadiness with which they confronted torture and death, but they knew no measure in the ridicule which they heaped upon the men by whom they were daily murdered in droves. The rhetoric comedies were not admirable in an aesthetic point of view, but they were wrathful and sincere. Therefore they cost many thousand lives, but they sowed the seed of resistance to religious tyranny, to spring up one day in a hundredfold harvest. It was natural that the authorities should have long sought to suppress these perambulating dramas. "There was at that tyme," wrote honest Richard Clough to Sir Thomas Gresham, "syche playes (of Reteryke) played thet hath cost many a 1000 man's lyves, for in these plays was the Word of God first opened in thys country. Weche playes were and are forbidden moche more strictly than any of the bookes of Martin Luther."

These rhetoricians were now particularly inflamed against Granvelle. They were personally excited against him, because he had procured the suppression of their religious dramas. "These rhetoricians who make farces and street plays," wrote the Cardinal to Philip, "are particularly angry with me, because two years ago I prevented them from ridiculing the holy Scriptures." Nevertheless, these institutions continued to pursue their opposition to the course of the government. Their uncouth gambols, their awkward but stunning blows rendered daily service to the cause of religious freedom. Upon the newly-appointed bishops they poured out an endless succession of rhymes and rebuses, epigrams, caricatures and extravaganzas. Poems were pasted upon the walls of every house, and passed from hand to hand. Farces were enacted in every street; the odious ecclesiastics figuring as the principal buffoons. These representations gave so much offence, that renewed edicts were issued to suppress them. The prohibition was resisted, and even ridiculed in many provinces, particularly in Holland. The tyranny which was able to drown a nation in blood and tears, was powerless to prevent them from laughing most bitterly at their oppressors. The tanner, Cleon, was never belabored more soundly by the wits of Athens, than the prelate by these Flemish "rhetoricians." With infinitely less Attic salt, but with as much heartiness as Aristophanes could have done, the popular rhymers gave the minister ample opportunity to understand the position which he occupied in the Netherlands. One day a petitioner placed a paper in his hand and vanished. It contained some scurrilous verses upon himself, together with a caricature of his person. In this he was represented as a hen seated upon a pile of eggs, out of which he was hatching a brood of bishops. Some of these were clipping the shell, some thrusting forth an arm, some a leg, while others were running about with mitres on their heads, all bearing whimsical resemblance to various prelates who had been newly-appointed. Above the Cardinal's head the Devil was represented hovering, with these words issuing from his mouth: "This is my beloved Son, listen to him, my people."

Page 230

There was another lampoon of a similar nature, which was so well executed, that it especially excited Granvelle's anger. It was a rhymed satire of a general nature, like the rest, but so delicate and so stinging, that the Cardinal ascribed it to his old friend and present enemy, Simon Renard. This man, a Burgundian by birth, and college associate of Granvelle, had been befriended both by himself and his father. Aided by their patronage and his own abilities, he had arrived at distinguished posts; having been Spanish envoy both in France and England, and one of the negotiators of the truce of Vaucelles. He had latterly been disappointed in his ambition to become a councillor of state, and had vowed vengeance upon the Cardinal, to whom he attributed his ill success. He was certainly guilty of much ingratitude, for he had been under early obligations to the man in whose side he now became a perpetual thorn. It must be confessed, on the other hand, that Granvelle repaid the enmity of his old associate with a malevolence equal to his own, and if Renard did not lose his head as well as his political station, it was not for want of sufficient insinuation on the part of the minister. Especially did Granvelle denounce him to "the master" as the perverter of Egmont, while he usually described that nobleman himself, as weak, vain, "a friend of smoke," easily misguided, but in the main well-intentioned and loyal. At the same time, with all these vague commendations, he never omitted to supply the suspicious King with an account of every fact or every rumor to the Count's discredit. In the case of this particular satire, he informed Philip that he could swear it came from the pen of Renard, although, for the sake of deception, the rhetoric comedians had been employed. He described the production as filled with "false, abominable, and infernal things," and as treating not only himself, but the Pope and the whole ecclesiastical order with as much contumely as could be showed in Germany. He then proceeded to insinuate, in the subtle manner which was peculiarly his own, that Egmont was a party to the publication of the pasquil. Renard visited at that house, he said, and was received there on a much more intimate footing than was becoming. Eight days before the satire was circulated, there had been a conversation in Egmont's house, of a nature exactly similar to the substance of the pamphlet. The man, in whose hands it was first seen, continued Granvelle, was a sword cutler, a godson of the Count. This person said that he had torn it from the gate of the city hall, but God grant, prayed the Cardinal, that it was not he who had first posted it up there. 'Tis said that Egmont and Mansfeld, he added, have sent many times to the cutler to procure copies of the satire, all which augments the suspicion against them.

Page 231

With the nobles he was on no better terms than with the people. The great seigniors, Orange, Egmont, Horn, and others, openly avowed their hostility to him, and had already given their reasons to the King. Mansfeld and his son at that time were both with the opposition. Aerschot and Aremberg kept aloof from the league which was forming against the prelate, but had small sympathy for his person. Even Berlaymont began to listen to overtures from the leading nobles, who, among other inducements, promised to supply his children with bishoprics. There were none truly faithful and submissive to the Cardinal but such men as the Prevot Morillon, who had received much advancement from him.

This distinguished pluralist was popularly called “double A, B, C,” to indicate that he had twice as many benefices as there were letters in the alphabet. He had, however, no objection to more, and was faithful to the dispensing power. The same course was pursued by Secretary Bave, Esquire Bordey, and other expectants and dependents. Viglius, always remarkable for his pusillanimity, was at this period already anxious to retire. The erudite and opulent Frisian preferred a less tempestuous career. He was in favor of the edicts, but he trembled at the uproar which their literal execution was daily exciting, for he knew the temper of his countrymen. On the other hand, he was too sagacious not to know the inevitable consequence of opposition to the will of Philip. He was therefore most eager to escape the dilemma. He was a scholar, and could find more agreeable employment among his books. He had accumulated vast wealth, and was desirous to retain it as long as possible. He had a learned head and was anxious to keep it upon his shoulders. These simple objects could be better attained in a life of privacy. The post of president of the privy council and member of the “Consulta” was a dangerous one. He knew that the King was sincere in his purposes. He foresaw that the people would one day be terribly in earnest. Of ancient Frisian blood himself, he knew that the, spirit of the ancient Batavians and Frisians had not wholly deserted their descendants. He knew that they were not easily roused, that they were patient, but that they would strike at last and would endure. He urgently solicited the King to release him, and pleaded his infirmities of body in excuse. Philip, however, would not listen to his retirement, and made use of the most convincing arguments to induce him to remain. Four hundred and fifty annual florins, secured by good reclaimed swamps in Friesland, two thousand more in hand, with a promise of still larger emoluments when the King should come to the Netherlands, were reasons which the learned doctor honestly confessed himself unable to resist. Fortified by these arguments, he remained at his post, continued the avowed friend and adherent of Granvelle, and sustained with magnanimity the invectives of nobles and people. To do him justice, he did what he could to conciliate antagonists and to compromise principles. If it had ever been possible to find the exact path between right and wrong, the President would have found it, and walked in it with respectability and complacency.

Page 232

In the council, however, the Cardinal continued to carry it with a high hand; turning his back on Orange and Egmont, and retiring with the Duchess and President to consult, after every session. Proud and important personages, like the Prince and Count, could ill brook such insolence; moreover, they suspected the Cardinal of prejudicing the mind of their sovereign against them. A report was very current, and obtained almost universal belief, that Granvelle had expressly advised his Majesty to take off the heads of at least half a dozen of the principal nobles in the land. This was an error; “These two seigniors,” wrote the Cardinal to Philip, “have been informed that I have written to your Majesty, that you will never be master of these provinces without taking off at least half a dozen heads, and that because it would be difficult, on account of the probable tumults which such a course would occasion, to do it here, your Majesty means to call them to Spain and do it there. Your Majesty can judge whether such a thing has ever entered my thoughts. I have laughed at it as a ridiculous invention. This gross forgery is one of Renard’s.” The Cardinal further stated to his Majesty that he had been informed by these same nobles that the Duke of Alva, when a hostage for the treaty of Cateau Cambresis, had negotiated an alliance between the crowns of France and Spain for the extirpation of heresy by the sword. He added, that he intended to deal with the nobles with all gentleness, and that he should do his best to please them. The only thing which he could not yield was the authority of his Majesty; to sustain that, he would sacrifice his life, if necessary. At the same time Granvelle carefully impressed upon the King the necessity of contradicting the report alluded to, a request which he took care should also be made through the Regent in person. He had already, both in his own person and in that of the Duchess, begged for a formal denial, on the King’s part, that there was any intention of introducing the Spanish inquisition into the Netherlands, and that the Cardinal had counselled, originally, the bishoprics. Thus instructed, the King accordingly wrote to Margaret of Parma to furnish the required contradictions. In so doing, he made a pithy remark. “The Cardinal had not counselled the cutting off the half a dozen heads,” said the monarch, “but perhaps it would not be so bad to do it!” Time was to show whether Philip was likely to profit by the hint conveyed in the Cardinal’s disclaimer, and whether the factor “half dozen” were to be used or not as a simple multiplier in the terrible account preparing.

Page 233

The contradictions, however sincere, were not believed by the persons most interested. Nearly all the nobles continued to regard the Cardinal with suspicion and aversion. Many of the ruder and more reckless class vied with the rhetoricians and popular caricaturists in the practical jests which they played off almost daily against the common foe. Especially Count Brederode, “a madman, if there ever were one,” as a contemporary expressed himself, was most untiring in his efforts to make Granvelle ridiculous. He went almost nightly to masquerades, dressed as a cardinal or a monk; and as he was rarely known to be sober on these or any other occasions, the wildness of his demonstrations may easily be imagined. He was seconded on all these occasions by his cousin Robert de la Marck, Seigneur de Lumey, a worthy descendant of the famous “Wild Boar of Ardennes;” a man brave to temerity, but utterly depraved, licentious, and sanguinary. These two men, both to be widely notorious, from their prominence in many of the most striking scenes by which the great revolt was ushered in, had vowed the most determined animosity to the Cardinal, which was manifested in the reckless, buffooning way which belonged to their characters. Besides the ecclesiastical costumes in which they always attired themselves at their frequent festivities, they also wore fog-tails in their hats instead of plumes. They decked their servants also with the same ornaments; openly stating, that by these symbols they meant to signify that the old fox Granvelle, and his cubs, Viglius, Berlaymont, and the rest, should soon be hunted down by them, and the brush placed in their hats as a trophy.

Moreover, there is no doubt that frequent threats of personal violence were made against the Cardinal. Granvelle informed the King that his life was continually menaced by, the nobles, but that he feared them little, “for he believed them too prudent to attempt any thing of the kind.” There is no doubt, when his position with regard to the upper and lower classes in the country is considered, that there was enough to alarm a timid man; but Granvelle was constitutionally brave. He was accused of wearing a secret shirt of mail, of living in perpetual trepidation, of having gone on his knees to Egmont and Orange, of having sent Richardot, Bishop of Arras, to intercede for him in the same humiliating manner with Egmont. All these stories were fables. Bold as he was arrogant, he affected at this time to look down with a forgiving contempt on the animosity of the nobles. He passed much of his time alone, writing his eternal dispatches to the King. He had a country-house, called La Fontaine, surrounded by beautiful gardens, a little way outside the gates of Brussels, where he generally resided, and whence, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends, he often returned to town, after sunset, alone, or with but a few attendants. He avowed that he feared no attempts at assassination, for,

Page 234

if the seigniors took his life, they would destroy the best friend they ever had. This villa, where most of his plans were matured and his state papers drawn up, was called by the people, in derision of his supposed ancestry, “The Smithy.” Here, as they believed, was the anvil upon which the chains of their slavery were forging; here, mostly deserted by those who had been his earlier, associates, he assumed a philosophical demeanor which exasperated, without deceiving his adversaries. Over the great gate of his house he had placed the marble statue of a female. It held an empty wine-cup in one hand, and an urn of flowing water in the other. The single word “Durate” was engraved upon the pedestal. By the motto, which was his habitual device, he was supposed, in this application, to signify that his power would outlast that of the nobles, and that perennial and pure as living water, it would flow tranquilly on, long after the wine of their life had been drunk to the lees. The fiery extravagance of his adversaries, and the calm and limpid moderation of his own character, thus symbolized, were supposed to convey a moral lesson to the world. The hieroglyphics, thus interpreted, were not relished by the nobles—all avoided his society, and declined his invitations. He consoled himself with the company of the lesser gentry,—a class which he now began to patronize, and which he urgently recommended to the favor of the King,—hinting that military and civil offices bestowed upon their inferiors would be a means of lowering the pride of the grandees. He also affected to surround himself with even humbler individuals. “It makes me laugh,” he wrote to Philip, “to see the great seigniors absenting themselves from my dinners; nevertheless, I can always get plenty of guests at my table, gentlemen and councillors. I sometimes invite even citizens, in order to gain their good will.”

The Regent was well aware of the anger excited in the breasts of the leading nobles by the cool manner in which they had been thrust out of their share in the administration of affairs. She defended herself with acrimony in her letters to the King, although a defence was hardly needed in that quarter for implicit obedience to the royal commands. She confessed her unwillingness to consult with her enemies.

She avowed her determination to conceal the secrets of the government from those who were capable of abusing her confidence. She represented that there were members of the council who would willingly take advantage of the trepidation which she really felt, and which she should exhibit if she expressed herself without reserve before them. For this reason she confined herself, as Philip had always intended, exclusively to the Consulta. It was not difficult to recognize the hand which wrote the letter thus signed by Margaret of Parma.

Page 235

Both nobles and people were at this moment irritated by another circumstance. The civil war having again broken out in France, Philip, according to the promise made by him to Catharine de Medici, when he took her daughter in marriage, was called upon to assist the Catholic party with auxiliaries. He sent three thousand infantry, accordingly, which he had levied in Italy, as many more collected in Spain, and gave immediate orders that the Duchess of Parma should despatch at least two thousand cavalry, from the Netherlands. Great was the indignation in the council when the commands were produced. Sore was the dismay of Margaret. It was impossible to obey the King. The idea of sending the famous mounted gendarmerie of the provinces to fight against the French Huguenots could not be tolerated for an instant. The “bands of ordonnance” were very few in number, and were to guard the frontier. They were purely for domestic purposes. It formed no part of their duty to go upon crusades in foreign lands; still less to take a share in a religious quarrel, and least of all to assist a monarch against a nation. These views were so cogently presented to the Duchess in council, that she saw the impossibility of complying with her brother’s commands. She wrote to Philip to that effect. Meantime, another letter arrived out of Spain, chiding her delay, and impatiently calling upon her to furnish the required cavalry at once. The Duchess was in a dilemma. She feared to provoke another storm in the council, for there was already sufficient wrangling there upon domestic subjects. She knew it was impossible to obtain the consent, even of Berlaymont and Viglius, to such an odious measure as the one proposed. She was, however, in great trepidation at the peremptory tone of the King’s despatch. Under the advice of Granvelle, she had recourse to a trick. A private and confidential letter of Philip was read to the council, but with alterations suggested and interpolated by the Cardinal. The King was represented as being furious at the delay, but as willing that a sum of money should be furnished instead of the cavalry, as originally required. This compromise, after considerable opposition, was accepted. The Duchess wrote to Philip, explaining and apologizing for the transaction. The King received the substitution with as good a grace as could have been expected, and sent fifteen hundred troopers from Spain to his Medicean mother-in-law, drawing upon the Duchess of Parma for the money to pay their expenses. Thus was the industry of the Netherlands taxed that the French might be persecuted by their own monarch.

Page 236

The Regent had been forbidden, by her brother, to convoke the states-general; a body which the Prince of Orange, sustained by Berghen, Montigny, and other nobles, was desirous of having assembled. It may be easily understood that Granvelle would take the best care that the royal prohibition should be enforced. The Duchess, however, who, as already hinted, was beginning to feel somewhat uncomfortable under the Cardinal's dominion, was desirous of consulting some larger council than that with which she held her daily deliberations. A meeting of the Knights of the Fleece was accordingly summoned. They assembled in Brussels, in the month of May, 1562. The learned Viglius addressed them in a long and eloquent speech, in which he discussed the troubled and dangerous condition of the provinces, alluded to some of its causes, and suggested various remedies. It may be easily conceived, however, that the inquisition was not stated among the causes, nor its suppression included among the remedies. A discourse, in which the fundamental topic was thus conscientiously omitted, was not likely, with all its concinnities, to make much impression upon the disaffected knights, or to exert a soothing influence upon the people. The orator was, however, delighted with his own performance. He informs us, moreover, that the Duchess was equally charmed, and that she protested she had never in her whole life heard any thing more "delicate, more suitable, or more eloquent." The Prince of Orange, however, did not sympathize with her admiration. The President's elegant periods produced but little effect upon his mind. The meeting adjourned, after a few additional words from the Duchess, in which she begged the knights to ponder well the causes of the increasing discontent, and to meet her again, prepared to announce what, in their opinion, would be the course best adapted to maintain the honor of the King, the safety of the provinces, and the glory of God.

Soon after the separation of the assembly, the Prince of Orange issued invitations to most of the knights, to meet at his house for the purpose of private deliberation. The President and Cardinal were not included in these invitations. The meeting was, in fact, what we should call a caucus, rather than a general gathering. Nevertheless, there were many of the government party present—men who differed from the Prince, and were inclined to support Granvelle. The meeting was a stormy one. Two subjects were discussed. The first was the proposition of the Duchess, to investigate the general causes of the popular dissatisfaction; the second was an inquiry how it could be rendered practicable to discuss political matters in future—a proceeding now impossible, in consequence of the perverseness and arrogance of certain functionaries, and one which, whenever attempted, always led to the same inevitable result. This direct assault upon the Cardinal produced a furious debate. His enemies were delighted

Page 237

with the opportunity of venting their long-suppressed spleen. They indulged in savage invectives against the man whom they so sincerely hated. His adherents, on the other hand—Bossu, Berlaymont, Courieres—were as warm in his defence. They replied by indignant denials of the charge against him, and by bitter insinuations against the Prince of Orange. They charged him with nourishing the desire of being appointed governor of Brabant, an office considered inseparable from the general stadholderate of all the provinces. They protested for themselves that they were actuated by no ambitious designs—that they were satisfied with their own position, and not inspired by jealousy of personages more powerful than themselves. It is obvious that such charges and recriminations could excite no healing result, and that the lines between Cardinalists and their opponents would be defined in consequence more sharply than ever. The adjourned meeting of the Chevaliers of the Fleece took place a few days afterwards. The Duchess exerted herself as much as possible to reconcile the contending factions, without being able, however, to apply the only remedy which could be effective. The man who was already fast becoming the great statesman of the country knew that the evil was beyond healing, unless by a change of purpose on the part of the government. The Regent, on the other hand, who it must be confessed never exhibited any remarkable proof of intellectual ability during the period of her residence in the Netherlands, was often inspired by a feeble and indefinite hope that the matter might be arranged by a compromise between the views of conflicting parties. Unfortunately the inquisition was not a fit subject for a compromise.

Nothing of radical importance was accomplished by the Assembly of the Fleece. It was decided that an application should be made to the different states for a giant of money, and that, furthermore, a special envoy should be despatched to Spain. It was supposed by the Duchess and her advisers that more satisfactory information concerning the provinces could be conveyed to Philip by word of mouth than by the most elaborate epistles. The meeting was dissolved after these two measures had been agreed upon. Doctor Viglius, upon whom devolved the duty of making the report and petition to the states, proceeded to draw up the necessary application. This he did with his customary elegance, and, as usual, very much to his own satisfaction. On returning to his house, however, after having discharged this duty, he was very much troubled at finding that a large mulberry-tree; which stood in his garden, had been torn up by the roots in a violent hurricane. The disaster was considered ominous by the President, and he was accordingly less surprised than mortified when he found, subsequently, that his demand upon the orders had remained as fruitless as his ruined tree. The tempest which had swept his garden he considered typical of the storm which was soon to rage through the land, and he felt increased anxiety to reach a haven while it was yet comparatively calm.

Page 238

The estates rejected the request for supplies, on various grounds; among others, that the civil war was drawing to a conclusion in France, and that less danger was to be apprehended from that source than had lately been the case. Thus, the “cup of bitterness,” of which Granvelle had already complained; was again commended to his lips, and there was more reason than ever for the government to regret that the national representatives had contracted the habit of meddling with financial matters.

Florence de Montmorency, Seigneur de Montigny, was selected by the Regent for the mission which had been decided upon for Spain. This gentleman was brother to Count Horn, but possessed of higher talents and a more amiable character than those of the Admiral. He was a warm friend of Orange, and a bitter enemy to Granvelle. He was a sincere Catholic, but a determined foe to the inquisition. His brother had declined to act as envoy. This refusal can excite but little surprise, when Philip’s wrath at their parting interview is recalled, and when it is also remembered that the new mission would necessarily lay bare fresh complaints against the Cardinal, still more extensive than those which had produced the former explosion of royal indignation. Montigny, likewise, would have preferred to remain at home, but he was overruled. It had been written in his destiny that he should go twice into the angry lion’s den, and that he should come forth once, alive.

Thus it has been shown that there was an open, avowed hostility on the part of the grand seignors and most of the lesser nobility to the Cardinal and his measures. The people fully and enthusiastically sustained the Prince of Orange in his course. There was nothing underhand in the opposition made to the government. The Netherlands did not constitute an absolute monarchy. They did not even constitute a monarchy. There was no king in the provinces. Philip was King of Spain, Naples, Jerusalem, but he was only Duke of Brabant, Count of Flanders, Lord of Friesland, hereditary chief, in short, under various titles, of seventeen states, each one of which, although not republican, possessed constitutions as sacred as, and much more ancient than, the Crown. The resistance to the absolutism of Granvelle and Philip was, therefore, logical, legal, constitutional. It was no cabal, no secret league, as the Cardinal had the effrontery to term it, but a legitimate exercise of powers which belonged of old to those who wielded them, and which only an unrighteous innovation could destroy.

Granvelle’s course was secret and subtle. During the whole course of the proceedings which have just been described, he was; in daily confidential correspondence with the King, besides being the actual author of the multitudinous despatches which were sent with the signature of the Duchess. He openly asserted his right to monopolize all the powers of the Government; he did his utmost to force upon the

Page 239

reluctant and almost rebellious people the odious measures which the King had resolved upon, while in his secret letters he uniformly represented the nobles who opposed him, as being influenced, not by an honest hatred of oppression and attachment to ancient rights, but by resentment, and jealousy of their own importance. He assumed, in his letters to his master, that the absolutism already existed of right and in fact, which it was the intention of Philip to establish. While he was depriving the nobles, the states and the nation of their privileges, and even of their natural rights (a slender heritage in those days), he assured the King that there was an evident determination to reduce his authority to a cipher.

The estates, he wrote, had usurped the whole administration of the finances, and had farmed it out to Antony Van Stralen and others, who were making enormous profits in the business. “The seignors,” he said, “declare at their dinner parties that I wish to make them subject to the absolute despotism of your Majesty. In point of fact, however, they really exercise a great deal more power than the governors of particular provinces ever did before; and it lacks but little that Madame and your Majesty should become mere ciphers, while the grandees monopolize the whole power. This,” he continued, “is the principal motive of their opposition to the new bishoprics. They were angry that your Majesty should have dared to solicit such an arrangement at Rome, without, first obtaining their consent. They wish to reduce your Majesty’s authority to so low a point that you can do nothing unless they desire it. Their object is the destruction of the royal authority and of the administration of justice, in order to avoid the payment of their debts; telling their creditors constantly that they, have spent their all in your Majesty’s service, and that they have never received recompence or salary. This they do to make your Majesty odious.”

As a matter of course, he attributed the resistance on the part of the great nobles, every man of whom was Catholic, to base motives. They were mere demagogues, who refused to burn their fellow-creatures, not from any natural repugnance to the task, but in order to gain favor with the populace. “This talk about the inquisition,” said he, “is all a pretext. ’Tis only to throw dust in the eyes of the vulgar, and to persuade them into tumultuous demonstrations, while the real reason is, that they choose that your Majesty should do nothing without their permission, and through their hands.”

He assumed sometimes, however, a tone of indulgence toward the seignors—who formed the main topics of his letters—an affectation which might, perhaps, have offended them almost as much as more open and sincere denunciation. He could forgive offences against himself. It was for Philip to decide as to their merits or crimes so far as the Crown was concerned. His language often was befitting a wise man who was speaking of very

Page 240

little children. “Assonleville has told me, as coming from Egmont,” he wrote, “that many of the nobles are dissatisfied with me; hearing from Spain that I am endeavoring to prejudice your Majesty against them.” Certainly the tone of the Cardinal’s daily letters would have justified such suspicion, could the nobles have seen them. Granvelle begged the King, however, to disabuse them upon this point. “Would to God,” said he, piously, “that they all would decide to sustain the authority of your Majesty, and to procure such measures as tend to the service of God and the security of the states. May I cease to exist if I do not desire to render good service to the very least of these gentlemen. Your Majesty knows that, when they do any thing for the benefit of your service, I am never silent. Nevertheless, thus they are constituted. I hope, however, that this flurry will blow over, and that when your Majesty comes they will all be found to deserve rewards of merit.”

Of Egmont, especially, he often spoke in terms of vague, but somewhat condescending commendation. He never manifested resentment in his letters, although, as already stated, the Count had occasionally indulged, not only in words, but in deeds of extreme violence against him. But the Cardinal was too forgiving a Christian, or too keen a politician not to pass by such offences, so long as there was a chance of so great a noble’s remaining or becoming his friend. He, accordingly, described him, in general, as a man whose principles, in the main, were good, but who was easily led by his own vanity and the perverse counsels of others. He represented him as having been originally a warm supporter of the new bishoprics, and as having expressed satisfaction that two of them, those of Bruges and Ypres, should have been within his own stadholderate. He regretted, however; to inform the King that the Count was latterly growing lukewarm, perhaps from fear of finding himself separated from the other nobles. On the whole, he was tractable enough, said the Cardinal, if he were not easily persuaded by the vile; but one day, perhaps, he might open his eyes again. Notwithstanding these vague expressions of approbation, which Granvelle permitted himself in his letters to Philip, he never failed to transmit to the monarch every fact, every rumor, every inuendo which might prejudice the royal mind against that nobleman or against any of the noblemen, whose characters he at the same time protested he was most unwilling to injure.

It is true that he dealt mainly by insinuation, while he was apt to conclude his statements with disclaimers upon his own part, and with hopes of improvement in the conduct of the seignors. At this particular point of time he furnished Philip with a long and most circumstantial account of a treasonable correspondence which was thought to be going on between the leading nobles and the future emperor, Maximilian. The narrative was a good specimen of the masterly style

Page 241

of inuendo in which the Cardinal excelled, and by which he was often enabled to convince his master of the truth of certain statements while affecting to discredit them. He had heard a story, he said, which he felt bound to communicate to his Majesty, although he did not himself implicitly believe it. He felt himself the more bound to speak upon the subject because it tallied exactly with intelligence which he had received from another source. The story was that one of these seigniors (the Cardinal did not know which, for he had not yet thought proper to investigate the matter) had said that rather than consent that the King should act in this matter of the bishoprics against the privileges of Brabant, the nobles would elect for their sovereign some other prince of the blood. This, said the Cardinal, was perhaps a fantasy rather than an actual determination. Count Egmont, to be sure, he said, was constantly exchanging letters with the King of Bohemia (Maximilian), and it was supposed, therefore, that he was the prince of the blood who was to be elected to govern the provinces. It was determined that he should be chosen King of the Romans, by fair means or by force, that he should assemble an army to attack the Netherlands, that a corresponding movement should be made within the states, and that the people should be made to rise, by giving them the reins in the matter of religion. The Cardinal, after recounting all the particulars of this fiction with great minuteness, added, with apparent frankness, that the correspondence between Egmont and Maximilian did not astonish him, because there had been much intimacy between them in the time of the late Emperor. He did not feel convinced, therefore, from the frequency of the letters exchanged, that there was a scheme to raise an army to attack the provinces and to have him elected by force. On the contrary, Maximilian could never accomplish such a scheme without the assistance of his imperial father the Emperor, whom Granvelle was convinced would rather die than be mixed up with such villany against Philip. Moreover, unless the people should become still more corrupted by the bad counsels constantly given them, the Cardinal did not believe that any of the great nobles had the power to dispose in this way of the provinces at their pleasure. Therefore, he concluded that the story was to be rejected as improbable, although it had come to him directly from the house of the said Count Egmont. It is remarkable that, at the commencement of his narrative, the Cardinal had expressed his ignorance of the name of the seignior who was hatching all this treason, while at the end of it he gave a local habitation to the plot in the palace of Egmont. It is also quite characteristic that he should add that, after all, he considered that nobleman one of the most honest of all, if appearances did not deceive.

It may be supposed, however, that all these details of a plot which was quite imaginary, were likely to produce more effect upon a mind so narrow and so suspicious as that of Philip, than could the vague assertions of the Cardinal, that in spite of all, he would dare be sworn that he thought the Count honest, and that men should be what they seemed.

Page 242

Notwithstanding the conspiracy, which, according to Granvelle's letters, had been formed against him, notwithstanding that his life was daily threatened, he did not advise the King at this period to avenge him by any public explosion of wrath. He remembered, he piously observed, that vengeance belonged to God, and that He would repay. Therefore he passed over insults meekly, because that comported best with his Majesty's service. Therefore, too, he instructed Philip to make no demonstration at that time, in order not to damage his own affairs. He advised him to dissemble, and to pretend not to know what was going on in the provinces. Knowing that his master looked to him daily for instructions, always obeyed them with entire docility, and, in fact, could not move a step in Netherland matters without them, he proceeded to dictate to him the terms in which he was to write to the nobles, and especially laid down rules for his guidance in his coming interviews with the Seigneur de Montigny. Philip, whose only talent consisted in the capacity to learn such lessons with laborious effort, was at this juncture particularly in need of tuition. The Cardinal instructed him, accordingly, that he was to disabuse all men of the impression that the Spanish inquisition was to be introduced into the provinces. He was to write to the seigniors, promising to pay them their arrears of salary; he was to exhort them to do all in their power for the advancement of religion and maintenance of the royal authority; and he was to suggest to them that, by his answer to the Antwerp deputation, it was proved that there was no intention of establishing the inquisition of Spain, under pretext of the new bishoprics.

The King was, furthermore, to signify his desire that all the nobles should exert themselves to efface this false impression from the popular mind. He was also to express himself to the same effect concerning the Spanish inquisition, the bishoprics, and the religious question, in the public letters to Madame de Parma, which were to be read in full council. The Cardinal also renewed his instructions to the King as to the manner in which the Antwerp deputies were to be answered, by giving them, namely, assurances that to transplant the Spanish inquisition into the provinces would be as hopeless as to attempt its establishment in Naples. He renewed his desire that Philip should contradict the story about the half dozen heads, and he especially directed him to inform Montigny that Berghen had known of the new bishoprics before the Cardinal. This, urged Granvelle, was particularly necessary, because the seigniors were irritated that so important a matter should have been decided upon without their advice, and because the Marquis Berghen was now the "cock of the opposition."

Page 243

At about the same time, it was decided by Granvelle and the Regent, in conjunction with the King, to sow distrust and jealousy among the nobles, by giving greater “mercedes” to some than to others, although large sums were really due to all. In particular, the attempt was made in this paltry manner, to humiliate William of Orange. A considerable sum was paid to Egmont, and a trifling one to the Prince, in consideration of their large claims upon the treasury. Moreover the Duke of Aerschot was selected as envoy to the Frankfort Diet, where the King of the Romans was to be elected, with the express intention, as Margaret wrote to Philip, of creating divisions among the nobles, as he had suggested. The Duchess at the same time informed her brother that, according to, Berlaymont, the Prince of Orange was revolving some great design, prejudicial to his Majesty’s service.

Philip, who already began to suspect that a man who thought so much must be dangerous, was eager to find out the scheme over which William the Silent was supposed to be brooding, and wrote for fresh intelligence to the Duchess.

Neither Margaret nor the Cardinal, however, could discover any thing against the Prince —who, meantime, although disappointed of the mission to Frankfort, had gone to that city in his private capacity—saving that he had been heard to say, “one day we shall be the stronger.” Granvelle and Madame de Parma both communicated this report upon the same day, but this was all that they were able to discover of the latent plot.

In the autumn of this year (1562) Montigny made his visit to Spain, as confidential envoy from the Regent. The King being fully prepared as to the manner in which he was to deal with him, received the ambassador with great cordiality. He informed him in the course of their interviews, that Granvelle had never attempted to create prejudice against the nobles, that he was incapable of the malice attributed to him, and that even were it otherwise, his evil representations against other public servants would produce no effect. The King furthermore protested that he had no intention of introducing the Spanish inquisition into the Netherlands, and that the new bishops were not intended as agents for such a design, but had been appointed solely with a view of smoothing religious difficulties in the provinces, and of leading his people back into the fold of the faithful. He added, that as long ago as his visit to England for the purpose of espousing Queen Mary, he had entertained the project of the new episcopates, as the Marquis Berghen, with whom he had conversed freely upon the subject, could bear witness. With regard to the connexion of Granvelle with the scheme, he assured Montigny that the Cardinal had not been previously consulted, but had first learned the plan after the mission of Sonnius.

Page 244

Such was the purport of the King's communications to the envoy, as appears from memoranda in the royal handwriting and from the correspondence of Margaret of Parma. Philip's exactness in conforming to his instructions is sufficiently apparent, on comparing his statements with the letters previously received from the omnipresent Cardinal. Beyond the limits of those directions the King hardly hazarded a syllable. He was merely the plenipotentiary of the Cardinal, as Montigny was of the Regent. So long as Granvelle's power lasted, he was absolute and infallible. Such, then, was the amount of satisfaction derived from the mission of Montigny. There was to be no diminution of the religious persecution, but the people were assured upon royal authority, that the inquisition, by which they were daily burned and beheaded, could not be logically denominated the Spanish inquisition. In addition to the comfort, whatever it might be, which the nation could derive from this statement, they were also consoled with the information that Granvelle was not the inventor of the bishoprics. Although he had violently supported the measure as soon as published, secretly denouncing as traitors and demagogues, all those who lifted their voices against it, although he was the originator of the renewed edicts, although he took, daily, personal pains that this Netherland inquisition, "more pitiless than the Spanish," should be enforced in its rigor, and although he, at the last, opposed the slightest mitigation of its horrors, he was to be represented to the nobles and the people as a man of mild and unprejudiced character, incapable of injuring even his enemies. "I will deal with the seigniors most blandly," the Cardinal had written to Philip, "and will do them pleasure, even if they do not wish it, for the sake of God and your Majesty." It was in this light, accordingly, that Philip drew the picture of his favorite minister to the envoy. Montigny, although somewhat influenced by the King's hypocritical assurances of the, benignity with which he regarded the Netherlands, was, nevertheless, not to be deceived by this flattering portraiture of a man whom he knew so well and detested so cordially as he did Granvelle. Solicited by the King, at their parting interview, to express his candid opinion as to the causes of the dissatisfaction in the provinces, Montigny very frankly and most imprudently gave vent to his private animosity towards the Cardinal. He spoke of his licentiousness, greediness, ostentation, despotism, and assured the monarch that nearly all the inhabitants of the Netherlands entertained the same opinion concerning him. He then dilated upon the general horror inspired by the inquisition and the great repugnance felt to the establishment of the new episcopates. These three evils, Granvelle, the inquisition, and the bishoprics, he maintained were the real and sufficient causes of the increasing popular discontent. Time was to reveal whether the open-hearted envoy was to escape punishment for his frankness, and whether vengeance for these crimes against Granvelle and Philip were to be left wholly, as the Cardinal had lately suggested, in the hands of the Lord.

Page 245

Montigny returned late in December. His report concerning the results of his mission was made in the state council, and was received with great indignation. The professions of benevolent intentions on the part of the sovereign made no impression on the mind of Orange, who was already in the habit of receiving secret information from Spain with regard to the intentions of the government. He knew very well that the plot revealed to him by Henry the Second in the wood of Vincennes was still the royal program, so far as the Spanish monarch was concerned. Moreover, his anger was heightened by information received from Montigny that the names of Orange, Egmont and their adherents, were cited to him as he passed through France as the avowed defenders of the Huguenots, in politics and religion. The Prince, who was still a sincere Catholic, while he hated the persecutions of the inquisition, was furious at the statement. A violent scene occurred in the council. Orange openly denounced the report as a new slander of Granvelle, while Margaret defended the Cardinal and denied the accusation, but at the same time endeavored with the utmost earnestness to reconcile the conflicting parties.

It had now become certain, however, that the government could no longer be continued on its present footing. Either Granvelle or the seigniors must succumb. The Prince of Orange was resolved that the Cardinal should fall or that he would himself withdraw from all participation in the affairs of government. In this decision he was sustained by Egmont, Horn, Montigny, Berghen, and the other leading nobles.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Affecting to discredit them
An inspiring and delightful recreation (auto-da-fe)
Arrested on suspicion, tortured till confession
Inquisition of the Netherlands is much more pitiless
Inquisition was not a fit subject for a compromise
Made to swing to and fro over a slow fire
Orator was, however, delighted with his own performance
Philip, who did not often say a great deal in a few words
Scaffold was the sole refuge from the rack
Ten thousand two hundred and twenty individuals were burned
Torquemada's administration (of the inquisition)
Two witnesses sent him to the stake, one witness to the rack

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 8.

The rise of the Dutch republic
John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

1855
1563-1564 [*Chapter iv*.]

Page 246

Joint letter to Philip, from Orange, Egmont, and Horn—Egmont's quarrel with Aerschot and with Aremberg—Philip's answer to the three nobles—His instructions to the Duchess—Egmont declines the King's invitation to visit Spain—Second letter of the three seigniors—Mission of Armenteros—Letter of Alva—Secret letters of Granvelle to Philip—The Cardinal's insinuations and instructions— His complaints as to the lukewarmness of Berghen and Montigny in the cause of the inquisition—Anecdotes to their discredit privately chronicled by Granvelle—Supposed necessity for the King's presence in the provinces—Correspondence of Lazarus Schwendi—Approaching crisis—Anxiety of Granvelle to retire—Banquet of Caspar Schetz— Invention of the foolscap livery—Correspondence of the Duchess and of the Cardinal with Philip upon the subject—Entire withdrawal of the three seigniors from the state council—the King advises with Alva concerning the recall of Granvelle—Elaborate duplicity of Philip's arrangements—-His secret note to the Cardinal—His dissembling letters to others—Departure of Granvelle from the Netherlands—Various opinions as to its cause—Ludicrous conduct of Brederode and Hoogstraaten—Fabulous statements in Granvelle's correspondence concerning his recall—Universal mystification—The Cardinal deceived by the King—-Granvelle in retirement—His epicureanism—Fears in the provinces as to his return—-Universal joy at his departure—Representations to his discredit made by the Duchess to Philip—Her hypocritical letters to the Cardinal— Masquerade at Count Mansfeld's—-Chantonnay's advice to his brother— Review of Granvelle's administration and estimate of his character.

On the 11th March, 1563, Orange, Horn, and Egmont united in a remarkable letter to the King. They said that as their longer "taciturnity" might cause the ruin of his Majesty's affairs, they were at last compelled to break silence. They hoped that the King would receive with benignity a communication which was pure, frank, and free from all passion. The leading personages of the province, they continued, having thoroughly examined the nature and extent of Cardinal Granvelle's authority, had arrived at the conclusion that every thing was in his hands. This persuasion, they said, was rooted in the hearts of all his Majesty's subjects, and particularly in their own, so deeply, that it could not be eradicated as long as the Cardinal remained. The King was therefore implored to consider the necessity of remedying the evil. The royal affairs, it was affirmed, would never be successfully conducted so long as they were entrusted to Granvelle, because he was so odious to so many people. If the danger were not imminent, they should not feel obliged to write to his Majesty with so much vehemence. It was, however, an affair which allowed neither delay nor dissimulation. They therefore prayed the King, if they had ever deserved credence in things of weight, to believe them now. By so doing,

Page 247

his Majesty would avoid great mischief. Many grand seigniors, governors, and others, had thought it necessary to give this notice, in order that the King might prevent the ruin of the country. If, however, his Majesty were willing, as they hoped, to avoid discontenting all for the sake of satisfying one, it was possible that affairs might yet prosper. That they might not be thought influenced by ambition or by hope of private profit, the writers asked leave to retire from the state council. Neither their reputation, they said, nor the interests of the royal service would permit them to act with the Cardinal. They professed themselves dutiful subjects and Catholic vassals. Had it not been for the zeal of the leading seigniors, the nobility, and other well-disposed persons, affairs would not at that moment be so tranquil; the common people having been so much injured, and the manner of life pursued by the Cardinal not being calculated to give more satisfaction than was afforded by his unlimited authority. In conclusion, the writers begged his Majesty not to throw the blame upon them, if mischance should follow the neglect of this warning. This memorable letter was signed by Guillaume, de Nassau, Lamoral d'Egmont, and Philippes de Montmorency (Count Horn). It was despatched undercover to Charles de Tisnacq, a Belgian, and procurator for the affairs of the Netherlands at Madrid, a man whose relations with Count Egmont were of a friendly character. It was impossible, however, to keep the matter a secret from the person most interested. The Cardinal wrote to the King the day before the letter was written, and many weeks before it was sent, to apprize him that it was coming, and to instruct him as to the answer he was to make. Nearly all the leading nobles and governors had adhered to the substance of the letter, save the Duke of Aerschot, Count Aremberg, and Baron Berlaymont. The Duke and Count had refused to join the league; violent scenes having occurred upon the subject between them and the leaders of the opposition party. Egmont, being with a large shooting party at Aerschot's country place, Beaumont, had taken occasion to urge the Duke to join in the general demonstration against the Cardinal, arguing the matter in the rough, off-hand, reckless manner which was habitual with him. His arguments offended the nobleman thus addressed, who was vain and irascible. He replied by affirming that he was a friend to Egmont, but would not have him for his master. He would have nothing to do, he said, with their league against the Cardinal, who had never given him cause of enmity. He had no disposition to dictate to the King as to his choice of ministers, and his Majesty was quite right to select his servants at his own pleasure. The Duke added that if the seigniors did not wish him for a friend, it was a matter of indifference to him. Not one of them was his superior; he had as large a band of noble followers and friends as the best of them, and

Page 248

he had no disposition to accept the supremacy of any nobleman in the land. The conversation carried on in this key soon became a quarrel, and from words the two gentlemen would soon have come to blows, but for the interposition of Aremberg and Robles, who were present at the scene. The Duchess of Parma, narrating the occurrence to the King, added that a duel had been the expected result of the affair, but that the two nobles had eventually been reconciled. It was characteristic of Aerschot that he continued afterward to associate with the nobles upon friendly terms, while maintaining an increased intimacy with the Cardinal.

The gentlemen who sent the letter were annoyed at the premature publicity which it seemed to have attained. Orange had in vain solicited Count Aremberg to join the league, and had quarrelled with him in consequence. Egmont, in the presence of Madame de Parma, openly charged Aremberg with having divulged the secret which had been confided to him. The Count fiercely denied that he had uttered a syllable on the subject to a human being; but added that any communication on his part would have been quite superfluous, while Egmont and his friends were daily boasting of what they were to accomplish. Egmont reiterated the charge of a breach of faith by Aremberg. That nobleman replied by laying his hand upon his sword, denouncing as liars all persons who should dare to charge him again with such an offence, and offering to fight out the quarrel upon the instant. Here, again, personal combat was, with much difficulty, averted.

Egmont, rude, reckless, and indiscreet, was already making manifest that he was more at home on a battle-field than in a political controversy where prudence and knowledge of human nature were as requisite as courage. He was at this period more liberal in his sentiments than at any moment of his life. Inflamed by his hatred of Granvelle, and determined to compass the overthrow of that minister, he conversed freely with all kinds of people, sought popularity among the burghers, and descanted to every one with much imprudence upon the necessity of union for the sake of liberty and the national good. The Regent, while faithfully recording in her despatches every thing of this nature which reached her ears, expressed her astonishment at Egmont's course, because, as she had often taken occasion to inform the King, she had always considered the Count most sincerely attached to his Majesty's service.

Berlaymont, the only other noble of prominence who did not approve the 11th of March letter, was at this period attempting to "swim in two waters," and, as usual in such cases, found it very difficult to keep himself afloat. He had refused to join the league, but he stood aloof from Granvelle. On a hope held out by the seigniors that his son should be made Bishop of Liege, he had ceased during a whole year from visiting the Cardinal, and had never spoken to him at the council-board. Granvelle, in narrating these circumstances to the King, expressed the opinion that Berlaymont, by thus attempting to please both parties, had thoroughly discredited himself with both.

Page 249

The famous epistle, although a most reasonable and manly statement of an incontrovertible fact, was nevertheless a document which it required much boldness to sign. The minister at that moment seemed omnipotent, and it was obvious that the King was determined upon a course of political and religious absolutism. It is, therefore, not surprising that, although many sustained its principles, few were willing to affix their names to a paper which might prove a death-warrant to the signers. Even Montigny and Berghen, although they had been active in conducting the whole cabal, if cabal it could be called, refused to subscribe the letter. Egmont and Horn were men of reckless daring, but they were not keen-sighted enough to perceive fully the consequences of their acts.

Orange was often accused by his enemies of timidity, but no man ever doubted his profound capacity to look quite through the deeds of men. His political foresight enabled him to measure the dangerous precipice which they were deliberately approaching, while the abyss might perhaps be shrouded to the vision of his companions. He was too tranquil of nature to be hurried, by passions into a grave political step, which in cooler moments he might regret. He resolutely, therefore, and with his eyes open, placed himself in open and recorded enmity with the most powerful and dangerous man in the whole Spanish realm, and incurred the resentment of a King who never forgave. It may be safely averred that as much courage was requisite thus to confront a cold and malignant despotism, and to maintain afterwards, without flinching, during a whole lifetime, the cause of national rights and liberty of conscience, as to head the most brilliant charge of cavalry that ever made hero famous.

Philip answered the letter of the three nobles on the 6th June following. In this reply, which was brief, he acknowledged the zeal and affection by which the writers had been actuated. He suggested, nevertheless, that, as they had mentioned no particular cause for adopting the advice contained in their letter, it would be better that one of them should come to Madrid to confer with him. Such matters, he said, could be better treated by word of mouth. He might thus receive sufficient information to enable him to form a decision, for, said he in conclusion, it was not his custom to aggrieve any of his ministers without cause.

This was a fine phrase, but under the circumstances of its application, quite ridiculous. There was no question of aggrieving the minister. The letter of the three nobles was very simple. It consisted of a fact and a deduction. The fact stated was, that the Cardinal was odious to all classes of the nation. The deduction drawn was, that the government could no longer be carried on by him without imminent danger of ruinous convulsions. The fact was indisputable. The person most interested confirmed it in his private letters. “’Tis said,” wrote Granvelle

Page 250

to Philip, “that grandees, nobles, and people, all abhor me, nor am I surprised to find that grandees, nobles, and people are all openly against me, since each and all have been invited to join in the league.” The Cardinal’s reasons for the existence of the unpopularity, which he admitted to the full, have no bearing upon the point in the letter. The fact was relied upon to sustain a simple, although a momentous inference. It was for Philip to decide upon the propriety of the deduction, and to abide by the consequences of his resolution when taken. As usual, however, the monarch was not capable of making up his mind. He knew very well that the Cardinal was odious and infamous, because he was the willing impersonation of the royal policy. Philip was, therefore, logically called upon to abandon the policy or to sustain the minister. He could make up his mind to do neither the one nor the other. In the mean time a well-turned period of mock magnanimity had been furnished him. This he accordingly transmitted as his first answer to a most important communication upon a subject which, in the words of the writers, “admitted neither of dissimulation nor delay.” To deprive Philip of dissimulation and delay, however, was to take away his all. They were the two weapons with which he fought his long life’s battle. They summed up the whole of his intellectual resources. It was inevitable, therefore, that he should at once have recourse to both on such an emergency as the present one.

At the same time that he sent his answer to the nobles, he wrote an explanatory letter to the Regent. He informed her that he had received the communication of the three seigniors, but instructed her that she was to appear to know nothing of the matter until Egmont should speak to her upon the subject. He added that, although he had signified his wish to the three nobles, that one of them, without specifying which, should come to Madrid, he in reality desired that Egmont, who seemed the most tractable of the three, should be the one deputed. The King added, that his object was to divide the nobles, and to gain time.

It was certainly superfluous upon Philip’s part to inform his sister that his object was to gain time. Procrastination was always his first refuge, as if the march of the world’s events would pause indefinitely while he sat in his cabinet and pondered. It was, however, sufficiently puerile to recommend to his sister an affectation of ignorance on a subject concerning which nobles had wrangled, and almost drawn their swords in her presence. This, however, was the King’s statesmanship when left to his unaided exertions. Granvelle, who was both Philip and Margaret when either had to address or to respond to the world at large, did not always find it necessary to regulate the correspondence of his puppets between themselves. In order more fully to divide the nobles, the King also transmitted to Egmont a private note, in his own handwriting, expressing his desire that he should visit Spain in person, that they might confer together upon the whole subject.

Page 251

These letters, as might be supposed, produced any thing but a satisfactory effect. The discontent and rage of the gentlemen who had written or sustained the 11th of March communication, was much increased. The answer was, in truth, no answer at all. "'Tis a cold and bad reply," wrote Louis of Nassau, "to send after so long a delay. 'Tis easy to see that the letter came from the Cardinal's smithy. In summa it is a vile business, if the gentlemen are all to be governed by one person. I hope to God his power will come soon to an end. Nevertheless," added Louis, "the gentlemen are all wide awake, for they trust the red fellow not a bit more than he deserves."

The reader has already seen that the letter was indeed "from the Cardinal's smithy," Granvelle having instructed his master how to reply to the seigniors before the communication had been despatched.

The Duchess wrote immediately to inform her brother that Egmont had expressed himself willing enough to go to Spain, but had added that he must first consult Orange and Horn. As soon as that step had been taken, she had been informed that it was necessary for them to advise with all the gentlemen who had sanctioned their letter. The Duchess had then tried in vain to prevent such an assembly, but finding that, even if forbidden, it would still take place, she had permitted the meeting in Brussels, as she could better penetrate into their proceedings there, than if it should be held at a distance. She added, that she should soon send her secretary Armenteros to Spain, that the King might be thoroughly acquainted with what was occurring.

Egmont soon afterwards wrote to Philip, declining to visit Spain expressly on account of the Cardinal. He added, that he was ready to undertake the journey, should the King command his presence for any other object. The same decision was formally communicated to the Regent by those Chevaliers of the Fleece who had approved the 11th of March letter—Montigny; Berghen, Meghem, Mansfeld, Ligne, Hoogstraaten, Orange, Egmont, and Horn. The Prince of Orange, speaking in the name of all, informed her that they did not consider it consistent with their reputation, nor with the interest of his Majesty, that any one of them should make so long and troublesome a journey, in order to accuse the Cardinal. For any other purpose, they all held themselves ready to go to Spain at once. The Duchess expressed her regret at this resolution. The Prince replied by affirming that, in all their proceedings, they had been governed, not by hatred of Granvelle but by a sense of duty to his Majesty. It was now, he added, for the King to pursue what course it pleased him.

Page 252

Four days after this interview with the Regent, Orange, Egmont, and Horn addressed a second letter to the King. In this communication they stated that they had consulted with all the gentlemen with whose approbation their first letter had been written. As to the journey of one of them to Spain,—as suggested, they pronounced it very dangerous for any seignior to absent himself, in the condition of affairs which then existed. It was not a sufficient cause to go thither on account of Granvelle. They disclaimed any intention of making themselves parties to a process against the Cardinal. They had thought that their simple, brief announcement would have sufficed to induce his Majesty to employ that personage in other places, where his talents would be more fruitful. As to "aggrieving the Cardinal without cause," there was no question of aggrieving him at all, but of relieving him of an office which could not remain in his hands without disaster. As to "no particular cause having been mentioned," they said the omission was from no lack of many such. They had charged none, however, because, from their past services and their fidelity to his Majesty, they expected to be believed on their honor, without further witnesses or evidence. They had no intention of making themselves accusers. They had purposely abstained from specifications. If his Majesty should proceed to ampler information, causes enough would be found. It was better, however, that they should be furnished by others than by themselves. His Majesty would then find that the public and general complaint was not without adequate motives. They renewed their prayer to be excused from serving in the council of state, in order that they might not be afterwards inculpated for the faults of others. Feeling that the controversy between themselves and the Cardinal de Granvelle in the state council produced no fruit for his Majesty's affairs, they preferred to yield to him. In conclusion, they begged the King to excuse the simplicity of their letters, the rather that they were not by nature great orators, but more accustomed to do well than to speak well, which was also more becoming to persons of their quality.

On the 4th of August, Count Horn also addressed a private letter to the King, written in the same spirit as that which characterized the joint letter just cited. He assured his Majesty that the Cardinal could render no valuable service to the crown on account of the hatred which the whole nation bore him, but that, as far as regarded the maintenance of the ancient religion, all the nobles were willing to do their duty.

The Regent now despatched, according to promise, her private secretary, Thomas de Armenteros, to Spain. His instructions, which were very elaborate, showed that Granvelle was not mistaken when he charged her with being entirely changed in regard to him, and when he addressed her a reproachful letter, protesting his astonishment that his conduct had become auspicious, and his inability to divine the cause of the weariness and dissatisfaction which she manifested in regard to him.

Page 253

Armenteros, a man of low, mercenary, and deceitful character, but a favorite of the Regent, and already beginning to acquire that influence over her mind which was soon to become so predominant, was no friend of the Cardinal. It was not probable that he would diminish the effect of that vague censure mingled with faint commendation, which characterized Margaret's instructions by any laudatory suggestions of his own. He was directed to speak in general terms of the advance of heresy, and the increasing penury of the exchequer. He was to request two hundred thousand crowns toward the lottery, which the Regent proposed to set up as a financial scheme. He was to represent that the Duchess had tried, unsuccessfully, every conceivable means of accommodating the quarrel between the Cardinal and the seigniors. She recognized Granvelle's great capacity, experience, zeal, and devotion—for all which qualities she made much of him—while on the other hand she felt that it would be a great inconvenience, and might cause a revolt of the country, were she to retain him in the Netherlands against the will of the seigniors. These motives had compelled her, the messenger was to add, to place both views of the subject before the eyes of the King. Armenteros was, furthermore, to narrate the circumstances of the interviews which had recently taken place between herself and the leaders of the opposition party.

From the tenor of these instructions, it was sufficiently obvious that Margaret of Parma was not anxious to retain the Cardinal, but that, on the contrary, she was beginning already to feel alarm at the dangerous position in which she found herself. A few days after the three nobles had despatched their last letter to the King, they had handed her a formal remonstrance. In this document they stated their conviction that the country was on the high road to ruin, both as regarded his Majesty's service and the common weal. The bare, the popular discontent daily increasing, the fortresses on the frontier in a dilapidated condition. It was to be apprehended daily that merchants and other inhabitants of the provinces would be arrested in foreign countries, to satisfy the debts owed by his Majesty. To provide against all these evils, but one course, it was suggested, remained to the government—to summon the states-general, and to rely upon their counsel and support. The nobles, however, forbore to press this point, by reason of the prohibition which the Regent had received from the King. They suggested, however, that such an interdiction could have been dictated only by a distrust created between his Majesty and the estates by persons having no love for either, and who were determined to leave no resource by which the distress of the country could be prevented. The nobles, therefore, begged her highness not to take it amiss if, so long as the King was indisposed to make other arrangements for the administration of the provinces, they should abstain from appearing at the state council. They preferred to cause the shadow at last to disappear, which they had so long personated. In conclusion, however, they expressed their determination to do their duty in their several governments, and to serve the Regent to the best of their abilities.

Page 254

After this remonstrance had been delivered, the Prince of Orange, Count Horn, and Count Egmont abstained entirely from the sessions of the state council. She was left alone with the Cardinal, whom she already hated, and with his two shadows, Viglius and Berlaymont.

Armenteros, after a month spent on his journey, arrived in Spain, and was soon admitted to an audience by Philip. In his first interview, which lasted four hours, he read to the King all the statements and documents with which he had come provided, and humbly requested a prompt decision. Such a result was of course out of the question. Moreover, the Cortes of Tarragon, which happened then to be in session, and which required the royal attention, supplied the monarch with a fresh excuse for indulging in his habitual vacillation. Meantime, by way of obtaining additional counsel in so grave an emergency, he transmitted the letters of the nobles, together with the other papers, to the Duke of Alva, and requested his opinion on the subject. Alva replied with the roar of a wild beast, “Every time,” he wrote, “that I see the despatches of those three Flemish seigniors my rage is so much excited that if I did not use all possible efforts to restrain it, my sentiments would seem those of a madman.” After this splenitive exordium he proceeded to express the opinion that all the hatred and complaints against the Cardinal had arisen from his opposition to the convocation of the states-general. With regard to persons who had so richly deserved such chastisement, he recommended “that their heads should be taken off; but, until this could be done, that the King should dissemble with them.” He advised Philip not to reply to their letters, but merely to intimate, through the Regent, that their reasons for the course proposed by them did not seem satisfactory. He did not prescribe this treatment of the case as “a true remedy, but only as a palliative; because for the moment only weak medicines could be employed, from which, however, but small effect could be anticipated.” As to recalling the Cardinal, “as they had the impudence to propose to his Majesty,” the Duke most decidedly advised against the step. In the mean time, and before it should be practicable to proceed “to that vigorous chastisement already indicated,” he advised separating the nobles as much as possible by administering flattery and deceitful caresses to Egmont, who might be entrapped more easily than the others.

Here, at least, was a man who knew his own mind. Here was a servant who could be relied upon to do his master’s bidding whenever this master should require his help. The vigorous explosion of wrath with which the Duke thus responded to the first symptoms of what he regarded as rebellion, gave a feeble intimation of the tone which he would assume when that movement should have reached a more advanced stage. It might be guessed what kind of remedies he would one day prescribe in place of the “mild medicines” in which he so reluctantly acquiesced for the present.

Page 255

While this had been the course pursued by the seigniors, the Regent and the King, in regard to that all-absorbing subject of Netherland politics—the straggle against Granvelle—the Cardinal, in his letters to Philip, had been painting the situation by minute daily touches, in a manner of which his pencil alone possessed the secret.

Still maintaining the attitude of an injured but forgiving Christian, he spoke of the nobles in a tone of gentle sorrow. He deprecated any rising of the royal wrath in his behalf; he would continue to serve the gentlemen, whether they would or no; he was most anxious lest any considerations on his account should interfere with the King's decision in regard to the course to be pursued in the Netherlands. At the same time, notwithstanding these general professions of benevolence towards the nobles, he represented them as broken spendthrifts, wishing to create general confusion in order to escape from personal liabilities; as conspirators who had placed themselves within the reach of the attorney-general; as ambitious malcontents who were disposed to overthrow the royal authority, and to substitute an aristocratic republic upon its ruins. He would say nothing to prejudice the King's mind against these gentlemen, but he took care to omit nothing which could possibly accomplish that result. He described them as systematically opposed to the policy which he knew lay nearest the King's heart, and as determined to assassinate the faithful minister who was so resolutely carrying it out, if his removal could be effected in no other way. He spoke of the state of religion as becoming more and more unsatisfactory, and bewailed the difficulty with which he could procure the burning of heretics; difficulties originating in the reluctance of men from whose elevated rank better things might have been expected.

As Granvelle is an important personage, as his character has been alternately the subject of much censure and of more applause, and as the epoch now described was the one in which the causes of the great convulsion were rapidly germinating, it is absolutely necessary that the reader should be placed in a position to study the main character, as painted by his own hand; the hand in which were placed, at that moment, the destinies of a mighty empire. It is the historian's duty, therefore, to hang the picture of his administration fully in the light. At the moment when the 11th of March letter was despatched, the Cardinal represented Orange and Egmont as endeavoring by every method of menace or blandishment to induce all the grand seigniors and petty nobles to join in the league against himself. They had quarrelled with Aerschot and Aremberg, they had more than half seduced Berlaymont, and they stigmatized all who refused to enter into their league as cardinalists and familiars of the inquisition. He protested that he should regard their ill-will with indifference, were he not convinced that he was himself only a pretext,

Page 256

and that their designs were really much deeper. Since the return of Montigny, the seigniors had established a league which that gentleman and his brother, Count Horn, had both joined. He would say nothing concerning the defamatory letters and pamphlets of which he was the constant object, for he wished no heed taken of matters which concerned exclusively himself, Notwithstanding this disclaimer, however, he rarely omitted to note the appearance of all such productions for his Majesty's especial information. "It was better to calm men's spirits," he said, "than to excite them." As to fostering quarrels among the seigniors, as the King had recommended, that was hardly necessary, for discord was fast sowing its own seeds. "It gave him much pain," he said, with a Christian sigh, "to observe that such dissensions had already arisen, and unfortunately on his account." He then proceeded circumstantially to describe the quarrel between Aerschot and Egmont, already narrated by the Regent, omitting in his statement no particular which could make Egmont reprehensible in the royal eyes. He likewise painted the quarrel between the same noble and Aremberg, to which he had already alluded in previous letters to the King, adding that many gentlemen, and even the more prudent part of the people, were dissatisfied with the course of the grandees, and that he was taking underhand but dexterous means to confirm them in such sentiments. He instructed Philip how to reply to the letter addressed to him, but begged his Majesty not to hesitate to sacrifice him if the interests of his crown should seem to require it.

With regard to religious matters, he repeatedly deplored that, notwithstanding his own exertions and those of Madame de Parma, things were not going on as he desired, but, on the contrary, very badly. "For the-love of God and the service of the holy religion," he cried out fervently, "put your royal hand valiantly to the work, otherwise we have only to exclaim, Help, Lord, for we perish!"

Having uttered this pious exhortation in the ear of a man who needed no stimulant in the path of persecution, he proceeded to express his regrets that the judges and other officers were not taking in hand the chastisement of heresy with becoming vigor.

Yet, at that very moment Peter Titelmann was raging through Flanders, tearing whole families out of bed and burning them to ashes, with such utter disregard to all laws or forms as to provoke in the very next year a solemn protest from the four estates of Flanders; and Titelmann was but one of a dozen inquisitors.

Granvelle, however, could find little satisfaction in the exertions of subordinates so long as men in high station were remiss in their duties. The Marquis Berghen, he informed Philip, showed but little disposition to put down heresy, in Valenciennes, while Montigny was equally remiss at Tournay. They were often heard to say, to any who chose to listen, that it was not right to inflict the punishment of

Page 257

death for matters of religion. This sentiment, uttered in that age of blood and fire, and crowning the memory of those unfortunate nobles with eternal honor, was denounced by the churchman as criminal, and deserving of castigation. He intimated, moreover, that these pretences of clemency were mere hypocrisy, and that self-interest was at the bottom of their compassion. "'Tis very black," said he, "when interest governs; but these men are a in debt, so deeply that they owe their very souls. They are seeking every means of escaping from their obligations, and are most desirous of creating general confusion." As to the Prince of Orange, the Cardinal asserted that he owed nine hundred thousand florins, and had hardly twenty-five thousand a-year clear income, while he spent ninety thousand, having counts; barons, and gentlemen in great numbers, in his household. At this point, he suggested that it might be well to find employment for some of these grandees in Spain and other dominions of his Majesty, adding that perhaps Orange might accept the vice-royalty of Sicily.

Resuming the religious matter, a few weeks later, he expressed himself a little more cheerfully, "We have made so much outcry," said he, "that at last Marquis Berghen has been forced to burn a couple of heretics at Valenciennes. Thus, it is obvious," moralized the Cardinal, "that if he were really willing to apply the remedy in that place, much progress might be made; but that we can do but little so long as he remains in the government of the provinces and refuses to assist us." In a subsequent letter, he again uttered com plaints against the Marquis and Montigny, who were evermore his scapegoats and bugbears. Berghen will give us no aid, he wrote, despite of all the letters we send him. He absents himself for private and political reasons. Montigny has eaten meat in Lent, as the Bishop of Tournay informs me. Both he and the Marquis say openly that it is not right to shed blood for matters of faith, so that the King can judge how much can be effected with such coadjutors. Berghen avoids the persecution of heretics, wrote the Cardinal again, a month later, to Secretary Perez. He has gone to Spa for his health, although those who saw him last say he is fat and hearty.

Granvelle added, however, that they had at last "burned one more preacher alive." The heretic, he stated, had feigned repentance to save his life, but finding that, at any rate, his head would be cut off as a dogmatizer, he retracted his recantation. "So," concluded the Cardinal, complacently, "they burned him."

He chronicled the sayings and doings of the principal personages in the Netherlands, for the instruction of the King, with great regularity, insinuating suspicions when unable to furnish evidence, and adding charitable apologies, which he knew would have but small effect upon the mind of his correspondent. Thus he sent an account of a "very secret meeting" held by Orange, Egmont, Horn, Montigny and Berghen,

Page 258

at the abbey of La Forest, near Brussels, adding, that he did not know what they had been doing there, and was at loss what to suspect. He would be most happy, he said, to put the best interpretation upon their actions, but he could not help remembering with great sorrow the observation so recently made by Orange to Montigny, that one day they should be stronger. Later in the year, the Cardinal informed the King that the same nobles were holding a conference at Weerdt, that he had not learned what had been transacted there, but thought the affair very suspicious. Philip immediately communicated the intelligence to Alva, together with an expression of Granvelle's fears and of his own, that a popular outbreak would be the consequence of the continued presence of the minister in the Netherlands.

The Cardinal omitted nothing in the way of anecdote or inuendo, which could injure the character of the leading nobles, with the exception, perhaps, of Count Egmont. With this important personage, whose character he well understood, he seemed determined, if possible, to maintain friendly relations. There was a deep policy in this desire, to which we shall advert hereafter. The other seigniors were described in general terms as disposed to overthrow the royal authority. They were bent upon Granvelle's downfall as the first step, because, that being accomplished, the rest would follow as a matter of course. "They intend," said he, "to reduce the state into the form of a republic, in which the King shall have no power except to do their bidding." He added, that he saw with regret so many German troops gathering on the borders; for he believed them to be in the control of the disaffected nobles of the Netherlands. Having made this grave insinuation, he proceeded in the same breath to express his anger at a statement said to have been made by Orange and Egmont, to the effect that he had charged them with intending to excite a civil commotion, an idea, he added, which had never entered his head. In the same paragraph, he poured into the most suspicious ear that ever listened to a tale of treason, his conviction that the nobles were planning a republic by the aid of foreign troops, and uttered a complaint that these nobles had accused him of suspecting them. As for the Prince of Orange, he was described as eternally boasting of his influence in Germany, and the great things which he could effect by means of his connexions there, "so that," added the Cardinal, "we hear no other song."

He had much to say concerning the projects of these grandees to abolish all the councils, but that of state, of which body they intended to obtain the entire control. Marquis Berghen was represented as being at the bottom of all these intrigues. The general and evident intention was to make a thorough change in the form of government. The Marquis meant to command in every thing, and the Duchess would soon have nothing to do in the provinces as regent for

Page 259

the King. In fact, Philip himself would be equally powerless, “for,” said the Cardinal, “they will have succeeded in putting your Majesty completely under guardianship.” He added, moreover, that the seigniors, in order to gain favor with the people and with the estates, had allowed them to acquire so much power, that they would respond to any request for subsidies by a general popular revolt. “This is the simple truth,” said Granvelle, “and moreover, by the same process, in a very few days there will likewise be no religion left in the land.” When the deputies of some of the states, a few weeks later, had been irregularly convened in Brussels, for financial purposes, the Cardinal informed the monarch that the nobles were endeavoring to conciliate their good-will, by offering them a splendid series of festivities and banquets.

He related various anecdotes which came to his ears from time to time, all tending to excite suspicions as to the loyalty and orthodoxy of the principal nobles. A gentleman coming from Burgundy had lately, as he informed the King, been dining with the Prince of Orange, with whom Horn and Montigny were then lodging. At table, Montigny called out in a very loud voice to the strange cavalier, who was seated at a great distance from him, to ask if there were many Huguenots in Burgundy. No, replied the gentleman nor would they be permitted to exist there. “Then there can be very few people of intelligence in that province,” returned Montigny, “for those who have any wit are mostly all Huguenots.” The Prince of Orange here endeavored to put a stop to the conversation, saying that the Burgundians were very right to remain as they were; upon which Montigny affirmed that he had heard masses enough lately to last him for three months. These things may be jests, commented Granvelle, but they are very bad ones; and ’tis evident that such a man is an improper instrument to remedy the state of religious affairs in Tournay.

At another large party, the King was faithfully informed by the same chronicler, that Marquis Berghen had been teasing the Duke of Aerschot very maliciously, because he would not join the league. The Duke had responded as he had formerly done to Egmont, that his Majesty was not to receive laws from his vassals; adding that, for himself, he meant to follow in the loyal track of his ancestors, fearing God and honoring the king. In short, said Granvelle, he answered them with so much wisdom, that although they had never a high opinion of his capacity, they were silenced. This conversation had been going on before all the servants, the Marquis being especially vociferous, although the room was quite full of them. As soon as the cloth was removed, and while some of the lackies still remained, Berghen had resumed the conversation. He said he was of the same mind as his ancestor, John of Berghen, had been, who had once told the King’s grandfather, Philip the Fair, that if his Majesty was bent on his

Page 260

own perdition, he had no disposition to ruin himself. If the present monarch means to lose these provinces by governing them as he did govern them, the Marquis affirmed that he had no wish to lose the little property that he himself possessed in the country. “But if,” argued the Duke of Aerschot, “the King absolutely refuse to do what you demand of him; what then?”—“Par la cordieu!” responded Berghen, in a rage, “we will let him see!” whereupon all became silent.

Granvelle implored the King to keep these things entirely to himself; adding that it was quite necessary for his Majesty to learn in this manner what were the real dispositions of the gentlemen of the provinces. It was also stated in the same letter, that a ruffian Genoese, who had been ordered out of the Netherlands by the Regent, because of a homicide he had committed, was kept at Weert, by Count Horn, for the purpose of murdering the Cardinal.

He affirmed that he was not allowed to request the expulsion of the assassin from the Count’s house; but that he would take care, nevertheless, that neither this ruffian nor any other, should accomplish his purpose. A few weeks afterwards, expressing his joy at the contradiction of a report that Philip had himself been assassinated, Granvelle added; “I too, who am but a worm in comparison, am threatened on so many sides, that many must consider me already dead. Nevertheless, I will endeavor, with God’s help, to live as long as I can, and if they kill me, I hope they will not gain every thing.” Yet, with characteristic Jesuitism, the Cardinal could not refrain, even in the very letter in which he detailed the rebellious demonstrations of Berghen, and the murderous schemes of Horn, to protest that he did not say these things “to prejudice his Majesty against any one, but only that it might be known to what a height the impudence was rising.” Certainly the King and the ecclesiastic, like the Roman soothsayers, would have laughed in each other’s face, could they have met, over the hollowness of such demonstrations. Granvelle’s letters were filled, for the greater part, with pictures of treason, stratagem, and bloody intentions, fabricated mostly out of reports, table-talk, disjointed chat in the careless freedom of domestic intercourse, while at the same time a margin was always left to express his own wounded sense of the injurious suspicions uttered against him by the various subjects of his letters. “God knows,” said he to Perez, “that I always speak of them with respect, which is more than they do of me. But God forgive them all. In times like these, one must hold one’s tongue. One must keep still, in order not to stir up a hornet’s nest.”

Page 261

In short, the Cardinal, little by little, during the last year of his residence in the Netherlands, was enabled to spread a canvas before his sovereign's eye, in which certain prominent figures, highly colored by patiently accumulated touches, were represented as driving a whole nation, against its own will, into manifest revolt. The estates and the people, he said, were already tired of the proceedings of the nobles, and those personages would find themselves very much mistaken in thinking that men who had any thing to lose would follow them, when they began a rebellion against his Majesty. On the whole, he was not desirous of prolonging his own residence, although, to do him justice, he was not influenced by fear. He thought or affected to think that the situation was one of a factitious popular discontent, procured by the intrigues of a few ambitious and impoverished Catilines and Cethegi, not a rising rebellion such as the world had never seen, born of the slowly-awakened wrath of, a whole people, after the martyrdom of many years. The remedy that he recommended was that his Majesty should come in person to the provinces. The monarch would cure the whole disorder as soon as he appeared, said the Cardinal, by merely making the sign of the cross. Whether, indeed, the rapidly-increasing cancer of national discontent would prove a mere king's evil, to be healed by the royal touch, as many persons besides Granvelle believed, was a point not doomed to be tested. From that day forward Philip began to hold out hopes that he would come to administer the desired remedy, but even then it was the opinion of good judges that he would give millions rather than make his appearance in the Netherlands. It was even the hope of William of Orange that the King would visit the provinces. He expressed his desire, in a letter to Lazarus Schwendi, that his sovereign should come in person, that he might see whether it had been right to sow so much distrust between himself and his loyal subjects. The Prince asserted that it was impossible for any person not on the spot to imagine the falsehoods and calumnies circulated by Granvelle and his friends, accusing Orange and his associates of rebellion and heresy, in the most infamous manner in the world. He added, in conclusion, that he could write no more, for the mere thought of the manner in which the government of the Netherlands was carried on filled him with disgust and rage. This letter, together with one in a similar strain from Egmont, was transmitted by the valiant and highly intellectual soldier to whom they were addressed, to the King of Spain, with an entreaty that he would take warning from the bitter truths which they contained. The Colonel, who was a most trusty friend of Orange, wrote afterwards to Margaret of Parma in the same spirit, warmly urging her to moderation in religious matters. This application highly enraged Morillon, the Cardinal's most confidential dependent, who accordingly conveyed

Page 262

the intelligence to his already departed chief, exclaiming in his letter, “what does the ungrateful baboon mean by meddling with our affairs? A pretty state of things, truly, if kings are to choose or retain their ministers at the will of the people; little does he know of the disasters which would be caused by a relaxation of the edicts.” In the same sense, the Cardinal, just before his departure, which was now imminent, wrote to warn his sovereign of the seditious character of the men who were then placing their breasts between the people and their butchers. He assured Philip that upon the movement of those nobles depended the whole existence of the country. It was time that they should be made to open their eyes. They should be solicited in every way to abandon their evil courses, since the liberty which they thought themselves defending was but abject slavery; but subjection to a thousand base and contemptible personages, and to that “vile animal called the people.”

It is sufficiently obvious, from the picture which we have now presented of the respective attitudes of Granvelle, of the seigniors and of the nation, during the whole of the year 1563, and the beginning of the following year, that a crisis was fast approaching. Granvelle was, for the moment, triumphant, Orange, Egmont, and Horn had abandoned the state council, Philip could not yet make up his mind to yield to the storm, and Alva howled defiance at the nobles and the whole people of the Netherlands. Nevertheless, Margaret of Parma was utterly weary of the minister, the Cardinal himself was most anxious to be gone, and the nation—for there was a nation, however vile the animal might be—was becoming daily more enraged at the presence of a man in whom, whether justly or falsely, it beheld the incarnation of the religious oppression under which they groaned. Meantime, at the close of the year, a new incident came to add to the gravity of the situation. Caspar Schetz, Baron of Grobbendonck, gave a Great dinner-party, in the month of December, 1563. This personage, whose name was prominent for many years in the public affairs of the nation, was one of the four brothers who formed a very opulent and influential mercantile establishment.

He was the King’s principal factor and financial agent. He was one of the great pillars of the Bourse at Antwerp. He was likewise a tolerable scholar, a detestable poet, an intriguing politician, and a corrupt financier. He was regularly in the pay of Sir Thomas Gresham, to whom he furnished secret information, for whom he procured differential favors, and by whose government he was rewarded by gold chains and presents of hard cash, bestowed as secretly as the equivalent was conveyed adroitly. Nevertheless, although his venality was already more than suspected, and although his peculation, during his long career became so extensive that he was eventually prosecuted by government, and died before the process was terminated, the lord of Grobbendonck was often employed in most delicate negotiations, and, at the present epoch, was a man of much importance in the Netherlands.

Page 263

The treasurer-general accordingly gave his memorable banquet to a distinguished party of noblemen. The conversation, during dinner, turned, as was inevitable, upon the Cardinal. His ostentation, greediness, insolence, were fully canvassed. The wine flowed freely as it always did in those Flemish festivities—the brains of the proud and reckless cavaliers became hot with excitement, while still the odious ecclesiastic was the topic of their conversation, the object alternately of fierce invective or of scornful mirth. The pompous display which he affected in his equipages, liveries, and all the appurtenances of his household, had frequently excited their derision, and now afforded fresh matter for their ridicule. The customs of Germany, the simple habiliments in which the retainers of the greatest houses were arrayed in that country, were contrasted with the tinsel and glitter in which the prelate pranked himself. It was proposed, by way of showing contempt for Granvelle, that a livery should be forthwith invented, as different as possible from his in general effect, and that all the gentlemen present should indiscriminately adopt it for their own menials. Thus would the people whom the Cardinal wished to dazzle with his finery learn to estimate such gauds at their true value. It was determined that something extremely plain, and in the German fashion, should be selected. At the same time, the company, now thoroughly inflamed with wine, and possessed by the spirit of mockery, determined that a symbol should be added to the livery, by which the universal contempt for Granvelle should be expressed. The proposition was hailed with acclamation, but who should invent the hieroglyphical costume? All were reckless and ready enough, but ingenuity of device was required. At last it was determined to decide the question by hazard. Amid shouts of hilarity, the dice were thrown. Those men were staking their lives, perhaps, upon the issue, but the reflection gave only a keener zest to the game. Egmont won. It was the most fatal victory which he had ever achieved, a more deadly prize even than the trophies of St. Quentin and Gravelingen.

In a few days afterwards, the retainers of the house of Egmont surprised Brussels by making their appearance in a new livery. Doublet and hose of the coarsest grey, and long hanging sleeves, without gold or silver lace, and having but a single ornament, comprised the whole costume. An emblem which seemed to resemble a monk’s cowl, or a fool’s cap and bells, was embroidered upon each sleeve. The device pointed at the Cardinal, as did, by contrast, the affected coarseness of the dress. There was no doubt as to the meaning of the hood, but they who saw in the symbol more resemblance to the jester’s cap, recalled certain biting expressions which Granvelle had been accustomed to use. He had been wont, in the days of his greatest insolence, to speak of the most eminent nobles as zanies, lunatics, and buffoons.

Page 264

The embroidered fool's cap was supposed to typify the gibe, and to remind the arrogant priest that a Brutus, as in the olden time, might be found lurking in the costume of the fool. However witty or appropriate the invention, the livery had an immense success. According to agreement, the nobles who had dined with the treasurer ordered it for all their servants. Never did a new dress become so soon the fashion. The unpopularity of the minister assisted the quaintness of the device. The fool's-cap livery became the rage. Never was such a run upon the haberdashers, mercers, and tailors, since Brussels had been a city. All the frieze-cloth in Brabant was exhausted. All the serge in Flanders was clipped into monastic cowls. The Duchess at first laughed with the rest, but the Cardinal took care that the king should be at once informed upon the subject. The Regent was, perhaps, not extremely sorry to see the man ridiculed whom she so cordially disliked, and, she accepted the careless excuses made on the subject by Egmont and by Orange without severe criticism. She wrote to her brother that, although the gentlemen had been influenced by no evil intention, she had thought it best to exhort them not to push the jest too far. Already, however, she found that two thousand pairs, of sleeves had been made, and the most she could obtain was that the fools' caps, or monks' hoods, should in future be omitted from the livery. A change was accordingly made in the costume, at about the time of the cardinal's departure.

A bundle of arrows, or in some instances a wheat-sheaf, was substituted for the cowls. Various interpretations were placed upon this new emblem. According to the nobles themselves, it denoted the union of all their hearts in the King's service, while their enemies insinuated that it was obviously a symbol of conspiracy. The costume thus amended was worn by the gentlemen themselves, as well as by their servants. Egmont dined at the Regent's table, after the Cardinal's departure, in a camlet doublet, with hanging sleeves, and buttons stamped with the bundle of arrows.

For the present, the Cardinal affected to disapprove of the fashion only from its rebellious tendency. The fools' caps and cowls, he meekly observed to Philip, were the least part of the offence, for an injury to himself could be easily forgiven. The wheat-sheaf and the arrow-bundles, however, were very vile things, for they betokened and confirmed the existence of a conspiracy, such as never could be tolerated by a prince who had any regard for his own authority.

This incident of the livery occupied the public attention, and inflamed the universal hatred during the later months of the minister's residence in the country. Meantime the three seigniors had become very impatient at receiving no answer to their letter. Margaret of Parma was urging her brother to give them satisfaction, repeating to him their bitter complaints that their characters and conduct were the subject of constant

Page 265

misrepresentation to their sovereign, and picturing her own isolated condition. She represented herself as entirely deprived of the support of those great personages, who, despite her positive assurances to the contrary, persisted in believing that they were held up to the King as conspirators, and were in danger of being punished as traitors. Philip, on his part, was conning Granvelle's despatches, filled with hints of conspiracy, and holding counsel with Alva, who had already recommended the taking off several heads for treason. The Prince of Orange, who already had secret agents in the King's household, and was supplied with copies of the most private papers in the palace, knew better than to be deceived by the smooth representations of the Regent. Philip had, however, at last begun secretly to yield. He asked Alva's advice whether on the whole it would not be better to let the Cardinal leave the Netherlands, at least for a time, on pretence of visiting his mother in Burgundy, and to invite Count Egmont to Madrid, by way of striking one link from the chain, as Granvelle had suggested. The Duke had replied that he had no doubt of the increasing insolence of the three seigniors, as depicted in the letters of the Duchess Margaret, nor of their intention to make the Cardinal their first victim; it being the regular principle in all revolts against the sovereign, to attack the chief minister in the first place. He could not, however, persuade himself that the King should yield and Granvelle be recalled. Nevertheless, if it were to be done at all, he preferred that the Cardinal should go to Burgundy without leave asked either of the Duchess or of Philip; and that he should then write; declining to return, on the ground that his life was not safe in the Netherlands.

After much hesitation, the monarch at last settled upon a plan, which recommended itself through the extreme duplicity by which it was marked, and the complicated system of small deceptions, which it consequently required. The King, who was never so thoroughly happy or at home as when elaborating the ingredients of a composite falsehood, now busily employed himself in his cabinet. He measured off in various letters to the Regent, to the three nobles, to Egmont alone, and to Granvelle, certain proportionate parts of his whole plan, which; taken separately, were intended to deceive, and did deceive nearly every person in the world, not only in his own generation, but for three centuries afterwards, but which arranged synthetically, as can now be done, in consequence of modern revelations, formed one complete and considerable lie, the observation of which furnishes the student with a lesson in the political chemistry of those days, which was called Macchiavellian statesmanship. The termination of the Granvelle regency is, moreover, most important, not only for the grave and almost interminable results to which it led, but for the illustration which it affords of the inmost characters of the Cardinal and "his master."

Page 266

The courier who was to take Philip's letters to the three nobles was detained three weeks, in order to allow Armenteros, who was charged with the more important and secret despatches for the Duchess and Granvelle to reach Brussels first. All the letters, however, were ready at the same time. The letter of instructions for Armenteros enjoined upon that envoy to tell the Regent that the heretics were to be chastised with renewed vigor, that she was to refuse to convoke the states-general under any pretext, and that if hard pressed, she was to refer directly to the King. With regard to Granvelle, the secretary was to state that his Majesty was still deliberating, and that the Duchess would be informed as to the decision when it should be made. He was to express the royal astonishment that the seigniors should absent themselves from the state council, with a peremptory intimation that they should immediately return to their posts. As they had specified no particularities against the Cardinal, the King would still reflect upon the subject.

He also wrote a private note to the Duchess, stating that he had not yet sent the letters for the three nobles, because he wished that Armenteros should arrive before their courier. He, however, enclosed two notes for Egmont, of which Margaret was to deliver that one, which, in her opinion, was, under the circumstances, the best. In one of these missives the King cordially accepted, and in the other he politely declined Egmont's recent offer to visit Spain. He also forwarded a private letter in his own hand-writing to the Cardinal. Armenteros, who travelled but slowly on account of the state of his health, arrived in Brussels towards the end of February. Five or six days afterwards, on the 1st March, namely, the courier arrived bringing the despatches for the seigniors. In his letter to Orange, Egmont, and Horn, the King expressed his astonishment at their resolution to abstain from the state council. Nevertheless, said he, imperatively, fail not to return thither and to show how much more highly you regard my service and the good of the country than any other particularity whatever. As to Granvelle, continued Philip, since you will not make any specifications, my intention is to think over the matter longer, in order to arrange it as may seem most fitting.

This letter was dated February 19 (1564), nearly a month later therefore than the secret letter to Granvelle, brought by Armenteros, although all the despatches had been drawn up at the same time and formed parts of the same plan. In this brief note to Granvelle, however, lay the heart of the whole mystery.

Page 267

“I have reflected much,” wrote the King, “on all that you have written me during these last few months, concerning the ill-will borne you by certain personages. I notice also your suspicions that if a revolt breaks out, they will commence with your person, thus taking occasion to proceed from that point to the accomplishment of their ulterior designs. I have particularly taken into consideration the notice received by you from the curate of Saint Gudule, as well as that which you have learned concerning the Genoese who is kept at Weert; all which has given me much anxiety as well from my desire for the preservation of your life in which my service is so deeply interested, as for the possible results if any thing should happen to you, which God forbid. I have thought, therefore, that it would be well, in order to give time and breathing space to the hatred and rancor which those persons entertain towards you, and in order to see what coarse they will take in preparing the necessary remedy, for the provinces, for you to leave the country for some days, in order to visit your mother, and this with the knowledge of the Duchess, my sister, and with her permission, which you will request, and which I have written to her that she must give, without allowing it to appear that you have received orders to that effect from me. You will also beg her to write to me requesting my approbation of what she is to do. By taking this course neither my authority nor yours will suffer prejudice; and according to the turn which things may take, measures may be taken for your return when expedient, and for whatever else there may be to arrange.”

Thus, in two words, Philip removed the unpopular minister forever. The limitation of his absence had no meaning, and was intended to have none. If there were not strength enough to keep the Cardinal in his place, it was not probable that the more difficult task of reinstating him after his fall would be very soon attempted. It, seemed, however, to be dealing more tenderly with Granvelle’s self-respect thus to leave a vague opening for a possible return, than to send him an unconditional dismissal.

Thus, while the King refused to give any weight to the representations of the nobles, and affected to be still deliberating whether or not he should recall the Cardinal, he had in reality already recalled him. All the minute directions according to which permission was to be asked of the Duchess to take a step which had already been prescribed by the monarch, and Philip’s indulgence craved for obeying his own explicit injunctions, were fulfilled to the letter.

Page 268

As soon as the Cardinal received the royal order, he privately made preparations for his departure. The Regent, on the other hand, delivered to Count Egmont the one of Philip's two letters in which that gentleman's visit was declined, the Duchess believing that, in the present position of affairs, she should derive more assistance from him than from the rest of the seigniors. As Granvelle, however, still delayed his departure, even after the arrival of the second courier, she was again placed in a situation of much perplexity. The three nobles considered Philip's letter to them extremely "dry and laconic," and Orange absolutely refused to comply with the order to re-enter the state council. At a session of that body, on the 3d of March, where only Granvelle, Viglius, and Berlaymont were present, Margaret narrated her fruitless attempts to persuade the seigniors into obedience to the royal orders lately transmitted, and asked their opinions. The extraordinary advice was then given, that "she should let them champ the bit a little while longer, and afterwards see what was to be done." Even at the last moment, the Cardinal, reluctant to acknowledge himself beaten, although secretly desirous to retire, was inclined for a parting struggle. The Duchess, however, being now armed with the King's express commands, and having had enough of holding the reins while such powerful and restive personages were "champing the bit," insisted privately that the Cardinal should make his immediate departure known. Pasquinades and pamphlets were already appearing daily, each more bitter than the other; the livery was spreading rapidly through all classes of people, and the seigniors most distinctly refused to recede from their determination of absenting themselves from the council so long as Granvelle remained. There was no help for it; and on the 13th of March the Cardinal took his departure. Notwithstanding the mystery of the whole proceeding, however, William of Orange was not deceived. He felt certain that the minister had been recalled, and thought it highly improbable that he would ever be permitted to return. "Although the Cardinal talks of coming back again soon," wrote the Prince to Schwartzburg, "we nevertheless hope that, as he lied about his departure, so he will also spare the truth in his present assertions." This was the general conviction, so far as the question of the minister's compulsory retreat was concerned, of all those who were in the habit of receiving their information and their opinions from the Prince of Orange. Many even thought that Granvelle had been recalled with indignity and much against his will. "When the Cardinal," wrote Secretary Lorich to Count Louis, "received the King's order to go, he growled like a bear, and kept himself alone in his chamber for a time, making his preparations for departure. He says he shall come back in two months, but some of us think they will be two long months which will eat themselves up like money borrowed of the Jews." A wag, moreover, posted a large placard upon the door of Granvelle's palace in Brussels as soon as the minister's departure was known, with the inscription, in large letters, "For sale, immediately." In spite of the royal ingenuity, therefore, many shrewdly suspected the real state of the case, although but very few actually knew the truth.

Page 269

The Cardinal left Brussels with a numerous suite, stately equipages, and much parade. The Duchess provided him with her own mules and with a sufficient escort, for the King had expressly enjoined that every care should be taken against any murderous attack. There was no fear of such assault, however, for all were sufficiently satisfied to see the minister depart. Brederode and Count Hoogstraaten were standing together, looking from the window of a house near the gate of Caudenberg, to feast their eyes with the spectacle of their enemy's retreat. As soon as the Cardinal had passed through that gate, on his way to Namur, the first stage of his journey, they rushed into the street, got both upon one horse, Hoogstraaten, who alone had boots on his legs, taking the saddle and Brederode the croup, and galloped after the Cardinal, with the exultation of school-boys. Thus mounted, they continued to escort the Cardinal on his journey. At one time, they were so near his carriage, while it was passing through a ravine, that they might have spoken to him from the heights above, where they had paused to observe him; but they pulled the capes of their cloaks over their faces and suffered him to pass unchallenged. "But they are young folk," said the Cardinal, benignantly, after relating all these particulars to the Duchess, "and one should pay little regard to their actions." He added, that one of Egmont's gentlemen dogged their party on the journey, lodging in the same inns with them, apparently in the hope of learning something from their conversation or proceedings. If that were the man's object, however, Granvelle expressed the conviction that he was disappointed, as nothing could have been more merry than the whole company, or more discreet than their conversation.

The Cardinal began at once to put into operation the system of deception, as to his departure, which had been planned by Philip. The man who had been ordered to leave the Netherlands by the King, and pushed into immediate compliance with the royal command by the Duchess, proceeded to address letters both to Philip and Margaret. He wrote from Namur to beg the Regent that she would not fail to implore his Majesty graciously to excuse his having absented himself for private reasons at that particular moment. He wrote to Philip from Besancon, stating that his desire to visit his mother, whom he had not seen for nineteen years, and his natal soil, to which he had been a stranger during the same period, had induced him to take advantage of his brother's journey to accompany him for a few days into Burgundy. He had, therefore, he said, obtained the necessary permission from the Duchess, who had kindly promised to write very particularly by the first courier, to beg his Majesty's approval of the liberty which they had both taken. He wrote from the same place to the Regent again, saying that some of the nobles pretended to have learned from Armenteros that the King had ordered the Cardinal to leave the country and not to return; all which, he added, was a very false Renardesque invention, at which he did nothing but laugh.

Page 270

As a matter of course, his brother, in whose company he was about to visit the mother whom he had not seen for the past nineteen years, was as much mystified as the rest of the world. Chantonnay was not aware that any thing but the alleged motives had occasioned the journey, nor did he know that his brother would perhaps have omitted to visit their common parent for nineteen years longer had he not received the royal order to leave the Netherlands.

Philip, on the other side, had sustained his part, in the farce with much ability. Viglius, Berlaymont, Morillon, and all the lesser cardinalists were entirely taken in by the letters which were formally despatched to the Duchess in reply to her own and the Cardinal's notification. "I can not take it amiss," wrote the King, "that you have given leave of absence to Cardinal de Granvelle, for two or three months, according to the advices just received from you, that he may attend to some private affairs of his own." As soon as these letters had been read in the council, Viglius faithfully transmitted them to Granvelle for that personage's enlightenment; adding his own innocent reflection, that "this was very different language from that held by some people, that your most illustrious lordship had retired by order of his Majesty." Morillon also sent the Cardinal a copy of the same passage in the royal despatch, saying, very wisely, "I wonder what they will all say now, since these letters have been read in council." The Duchess, as in duty bound, denied flatly, on all occasions, that Armenteros had brought any letters recommending or ordering the minister's retreat. She conscientiously displayed the letters of his Majesty, proving the contrary, and yet, said Viglius, it was very hard to prevent people talking as they liked. Granvelle omitted no occasion to mystify every one of his correspondents on the subject, referring, of course, to the same royal letters which had been written for public reading, expressly to corroborate these statements. "You see by his Majesty's letters to Madame de Parma," said he to Morillon, "how false is the report that the King had ordered me to leave Flanders, and in what confusion those persons find themselves who fabricated the story." It followed of necessity that he should carry out his part in the royal program, but he accomplished his task so adroitly, and with such redundancy of zeal, as to show his thorough sympathy with the King's policy. He dissembled with better grace, even if the King did it more naturally. Nobody was too insignificant to be deceived, nobody too august. Emperor Ferdinand fared no better than "Esquire" Bordey. "Some of those who hate me," he wrote to the potentate, "have circulated the report that I had been turned out of the country, and was never to return. This story has ended in smoke, since the letters written by his Majesty to the Duchess of Parma on the subject of the leave of absence which she had given me." Philip himself addressed a private letter to Granvelle,

Page 271

of course that others might see it, in which he affected to have just learned that the Cardinal had obtained permission from the Regent “to make a visit to his mother, in order to arrange certain family matters,” and gravely gave his approbation to the step. At the same time it was not possible for the King to resist the temptation of adding one other stroke of dissimulation to his own share in the comedy. Granvelle and Philip had deceived all the world, but Philip also deceived Granvelle. The Cardinal made a mystery of his departure to Pollwiller, Viglius, Morillon, to the Emperor, to his own brother, and also to the King’s secretary, Gonzalo Perez; but he was not aware that Perez, whom he thought himself deceiving as ingeniously as he had done all the others, had himself drawn up the letter of recall, which the King had afterwards copied out in his own hand and marked “secret and confidential.” Yet Granvelle might have guessed that in such an emergency Philip would hardly depend upon his own literary abilities.

Granvelle remained month after month in seclusion, doing his best to philosophize. Already, during the latter period of his residence in the Netherlands, he had lived in a comparative and forced solitude. His house had been avoided by those power-worshippers whose faces are rarely turned to the setting sun. He had, in consequence, already, before his departure, begun to discourse on the beauties of retirement, the fatigues of greatness, and the necessity of repose for men broken with the storms of state. A great man was like a lake, he said, to which a thirsty multitude habitually resorted till the waters were troubled, sullied, and finally exhausted. Power looked more attractive in front than in the retrospect. That which men possessed was ever of less value than that which they hoped. In this fine strain of eloquent commonplace the falling minister had already begun to moralize upon the vanity of human wishes. When he was established at his charming retreat in Burgundy, he had full leisure to pursue the theme. He remained in retirement till his beard grew to his waist, having vowed, according to report, that he would not shave till recalled to the Netherlands. If the report were true, said some of the gentlemen in the provinces, it would be likely to grow to his feet. He professed to wish himself blind and deaf that he might have no knowledge of the world’s events, described himself as buried in literature, and fit for no business save to remain in his chamber, fastened to his books, or occupied with private affairs and religious exercises. He possessed a most charming residence at Orchamps, where he spent a great portion of his time. In one of his letters to Vice-Chancellor Seld, he described the beauties of this retreat with much delicacy and vigor—“I am really not as badly off here,” said he, “as I should be in the Indies. I am in sweet places where I have wished for you a thousand times, for I am certain that you would think them appropriate

Page 272

for philosophy and worthy the habitation of the Muses. Here are beautiful mountains, high as heaven, fertile on all their sides, wreathed with vineyards, and rich with every fruit; here are rivers flowing through charming valleys, the waters clear as crystal, filled with trout, breaking into numberless cascades. Here are umbrageous groves, fertile fields, lovely meadows; on the one aide great warmth, on the other aide delectable coolness, despite the summer's heat. Nor is there any lack of good company, friends, and relations, with, as you well know, the very best wines in the world."

Thus it is obvious that the Cardinal was no ascetic. His hermitage contained other appliances save those for study and devotion. His retired life was, in fact, that of a voluptuary. His brother, Chantonnay, reproached him with the sumptuousness and disorder of his establishment. He lived in "good and joyous cheer." He professed to be thoroughly satisfied with the course things had taken, knowing that God was above all, and would take care of all. He avowed his determination to extract pleasure and profit even from the ill will of his adversaries. "Behold my philosophy," he cried, "to live joyously as possible, laughing at the world, at passionate people, and at all their calumnies." It is evident that his philosophy, if it had any real existence, was sufficiently Epicurean. It was, however, mainly compounded of pretence, like his whole nature and his whole life. Notwithstanding the mountains high as heaven, the cool grottos, the trout, and the best Burgundy wines in the world, concerning which he descanted so eloquently, he soon became in reality most impatient of his compulsory seclusion. His pretence of "composing himself as much as possible to tranquillity and repose" could deceive none of the intimate associates to whom he addressed himself in that edifying vein. While he affected to be blind and deaf to politics, he had eyes and ears for nothing else. Worldly affairs were his element, and he was shipwrecked upon the charming solitude which he affected to admire. He was most anxious to return to the world again, but he had difficult cards to play. His master was even more dubious than usual about everything. Granvelle was ready to remain in Burgundy as long as Philip chose that he should remain there. He was also ready to go to "India, Peru, or into the fire," whenever his King should require any such excursion, or to return to the Netherlands, confronting any danger which might lie in his path. It is probable that he nourished for a long time a hope that the storm would blow over in the provinces, and his resumption of power become possible. William of Orange, although more than half convinced that no attempt would be made to replace the minister, felt it necessary to keep strict watch on his movements. "We must be on our guard," said he, "and not be deceived. Perhaps they mean to put us asleep, in order the better to execute their designs.

Page 273

For the present things are peaceable, and all the world is rejoiced at the departure of that good Cardinal." The Prince never committed the error of undervaluing the talents of his great adversary, and he felt the necessity of being on the alert in the present emergency. "'Tis a sly and cunning bird that we are dealing with," said he, "one that sleeps neither day nor night if a blow is to be dealt to us." Honest Brederode, after solacing himself with the spectacle of his enemy's departure, soon began to suspect his return, and to express himself on the subject, as usual, with ludicrous vehemence. "They say the red fellow is back again," he wrote to Count Louis, "and that Berlaymont has gone to meet him at Namur. The Devil after the two would be a good chase." Nevertheless, the chances of that return became daily fainter. Margaret of Parma hated the Cardinal with great cordiality. She fell out of her servitude to him into far more contemptible hands, but for a brief interval she seemed to take a delight in the recovery of her freedom. According to Viglius, the court, after Granvelle's departure, was like a school of boys and girls when the pedagogue's back is turned. He was very bitter against the Duchess for her manifest joy at emancipation. The poor President was treated with the most marked disdain by Margaret, who also took pains to show her dislike to all the cardinalists. Secretary Armenteros forbade Bordey, who was Granvelle's cousin and dependent, from even speaking to him in public. The Regent soon became more intimate with Orange and Egmont than she had ever been with the Cardinal. She was made to see—and, seeing, she became indignant—the cipher which she had really been during his administration. "One can tell what's o'clock," wrote Morillon to the fallen minister, "since she never writes to you nor mentions your name." As to Armenteros, with whom Granvelle was still on friendly relations, he was restless in his endeavors to keep the once-powerful priest from rising again. Having already wormed himself into the confidence of the Regent, he made a point of showing to the principal seigniors various letters, in which she had been warned by the Cardinal to put no trust in them. "That devil," said Armenteros, "thought he had got into Paradise here; but he is gone, and we shall take care that he never returns." It was soon thought highly probable that the King was but temporizing, and that the voluntary departure of the minister had been a deception. Of course nothing was accurately known upon the subject. Philip had taken good care of that, but meantime the bets were very high that there would be no restoration, with but few takers. Men thought if there had been any royal favor remaining for the great man, that the Duchess would not be so decided in her demeanor on the subject. They saw that she was scarlet with indignation whenever the Cardinal's name was mentioned. They heard her thank Heaven that she had but one son, because if she had had a second

Page 274

he must have been an ecclesiastic, and as vile as priests always were. They witnessed the daily contumely which she heaped upon poor Viglius, both because he was a friend of Granvelle and was preparing in his old age to take orders. The days were gone, indeed, when Margaret was so filled with respectful affection for the prelate, that she could secretly correspond with the Holy Father at Rome, and solicit the red hat for the object of her veneration. She now wrote to Philip, stating that she was better informed as to affairs in the Netherlands than she had ever formerly been. She told her brother that all the views of Granvelle and of his followers, Viglius with the rest, had tended to produce a revolution which they hoped that Philip would find in full operation when he should come to the Netherlands. It was their object, she said, to fish in troubled waters, and, to attain that aim, they had ever pursued the plan of gaining the exclusive control of all affairs. That was the reason why they had ever opposed the convocation of the states-general. They feared that their books would be read, and their frauds, injustice, simony, and rapine discovered. This would be the result, if tranquillity were restored to the country, and therefore they had done their best to foment and maintain discord. The Duchess soon afterwards entertained her royal brother with very detailed accounts of various acts of simony, peculation, and embezzlement committed by Viglius, which the Cardinal had aided and abetted, and by which he had profited.—[Correspondence de Phil. II, i. 318-320.]—These revelations are inestimable in a historical point of view. They do not raise our estimate of Margaret's character, but they certainly give us a clear insight into the nature of the Granvelle administration. At the same time it was characteristic of the Duchess, that while she was thus painting the portrait of the Cardinal for the private eye of his sovereign, she should address the banished minister himself in a secret strain of condolence, and even of penitence. She wrote to assure Granvelle that she repented extremely having adopted the views of Orange. She promised that she would state publicly every where that the Cardinal was an upright man, intact in his morals and his administration, a most zealous and faithful servant of the King. She added that she recognized the obligations she was under to him, and that she loved him like a brother. She affirmed that if the Flemish seigniors had induced her to cause the Cardinal to be deprived of the government, she was already penitent, and that her fault deserved that the King, her brother, should cut off her head, for having occasioned so great a calamity.—["Memoires de Granvelle," tom. 33, p. 67.]

There was certainly discrepancy between the language thus used simultaneously by the Duchess to Granvelle and to Philip, but Margaret had been trained in the school of Macchiavelli, and had sat at the feet of Loyola.

Page 275

The Cardinal replied with equal suavity, protesting that such a letter from the Duchess left him nothing more to desire, as it furnished him with an “entire and perfect justification” of his conduct. He was aware of her real sentiments, no doubt, but he was too politic to quarrel with so important a personage as Philip’s sister.

An incident which occurred a few months after the minister’s departure served, to show the general estimation in which he was held by all ranks of Netherlanders. Count Mansfeld celebrated the baptism of his son, Philip Octavian, by a splendid series of festivities at Luxemburg, the capital of his government. Besides the tournaments and similar sports, with which the upper classes of European society were accustomed at that day to divert themselves, there was a grand masquerade, to which the public were admitted as spectators. In this “mummery” the most successful spectacle was that presented by a group arranged in obvious ridicule of Granvelle. A figure dressed in Cardinal’s costume, with the red hat upon his head, came pacing through the arena upon horseback. Before him marched a man attired like a hermit, with long white beard, telling his beads upon a rosary, which he held ostentatiously in his hands. Behind the mounted Cardinal came the Devil, attired in the usual guise considered appropriate to the Prince of Darkness, who scourged both horse and rider with a whip of fog-tails, causing them to scamper about the lists in great trepidation, to the immense delight of the spectators. The practical pun upon Simon Renard’s name embodied in the fox-tail, with the allusion to the effect of the manifold squibs perpetrated by that most bitter and lively enemy upon Granvelle, were understood and relished by the multitude. Nothing could be more hearty than the blows bestowed upon the minister’s representative, except the applause with which this satire, composed of actual fustigation, was received. The humorous spectacle absorbed all the interest of the masquerade, and was frequently repeated. It seemed difficult to satisfy the general desire to witness a thorough chastisement of the culprit.

The incident made a great noise in the country. The cardinalists felt naturally very much enraged, but they were in a minority. No censure came from the government at Brussels, and Mansfeld was then and for a long time afterwards the main pillar of royal authority in the Netherlands. It was sufficiently obvious that Granvelle, for the time at least, was supported by no party of any influence.

Meantime he remained in his seclusion. His unpopularity did not, however, decrease in his absence. More than a year after his departure, Berlaymont said the nobles detested the Cardinal more than ever, and would eat him alive if they caught him. The chance of his returning was dying gradually out. At about the same period Chantonnay advised his brother to show his teeth. He assured Granvelle that

Page 276

he was too quiet in his disgrace, reminded him that princes had warm affections when they wished to make use of people, but that when they could have them too cheaply, they esteemed them but little; making no account of men whom they were accustomed to see under their feet. He urged the Cardinal, in repeated letters, to take heart again, to make himself formidable, and to rise from his crouching attitude. All the world say, he remarked, that the game is up between the King and yourself, and before long every one will be laughing at you, and holding you for a dupe.

Stung or emboldened by these remonstrances, and weary of his retirement, Granvelle at last abandoned all intention of returning to the Netherlands, and towards the end of 1565, departed to Rome, where he participated in the election of Pope Pius V. Five years afterwards he was employed by Philip to negotiate the treaty between Spain, Rome, and Venice against the Turk. He was afterwards Viceroy of Naples, and in 1575, he removed to Madrid, to take an active part in the management of the public business, “the disorder of which,” says the Abbe Boisot, “could be no longer arrested by men of mediocre capacity.” He died in that city on the 21st September, 1586, at the age of seventy, and was buried at Besancon.

We have dwelt at length on the administration of this remarkable personage, because the period was one of vital importance in the history of the Netherland commonwealth. The minister who deals with the country at an epoch when civil war is imminent, has at least as heavy a responsibility upon his head as the man who goes forth to confront the armed and full-grown rebellion. All the causes out of which the great revolt was born, were in violent operation during the epoch of Granvelle’s power. By the manner in which he comported himself in presence of those dangerous and active elements of the coming convulsions, must his character as a historical personage be measured. His individuality had so much to do with the course of the government, the powers placed in his hands were so vast, and his energy so untiring, that it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of his influence upon the destiny of the country which he was permitted to rule. It is for this reason that we have been at great pains to present his picture, sketched as it were by his own hand. A few general remarks are, however, necessary. It is the historian’s duty to fix upon one plain and definite canvas the chameleon colors in which the subtle Cardinal produced his own image. Almost any theory concerning his character might be laid down and sustained by copious citations from his works; nay, the most opposite conclusions as to his interior nature, may be often drawn from a single one of his private and interminable letters. Embarked under his guidance, it is often difficult to comprehend the point to which we are tending. The oarsman’s face beams upon us with serenity, but he looks in one direction, and rows in the opposite course. Even thus it was three centuries ago. Was it to be wondered at that many did not see the precipice towards which the bark which held their all was gliding under the same impulse?

Page 277

No man has ever disputed Granvelle's talents. From friend and foe his intellect has received the full measure of applause which it could ever claim. No doubt his genius was of a rare and subtle kind. His great power was essentially dramatic in its nature. He mastered the characters of the men with whom he had to deal, and then assumed them. He practised this art mainly upon personages of exalted station, for his scheme was to govern the world by acquiring dominion over its anointed rulers. A smooth and supple slave in appearance, but, in reality, while his power lasted, the despot of his masters, he exercised boundless control by enacting their parts with such fidelity that they were themselves deceived. It is impossible not to admire the facility with which this accomplished Proteus successively assumed the characters of Philip and of Margaret, through all the complicated affairs and voluminous correspondence of his government.

When envoys of high rank were to be despatched on confidential missions to Spain, the Cardinal drew their instructions as the Duchess—threw light upon their supposed motives in secret letters as the King's sister—and answered their representations with ponderous wisdom as Philip; transmitting despatches, letters and briefs for royal conversations, in time to be thoroughly studied before the advent of the ambassador. Whoever travelled from Brussels to Madrid in order to escape the influence of the ubiquitous Cardinal, was sure to be confronted with him in the inmost recesses of the King's cabinet as soon as he was admitted to an audience. To converse with Philip or Margaret was but to commune with Antony. The skill with which he played his game, seated quietly in his luxurious villa, now stretching forth one long arm to move the King at Madrid, now placing Margaret upon what square he liked, and dealing with Bishops, Knight of the Fleece, and lesser dignitaries, the Richardota, the Morillons, the Viglii and the Berlaymonts, with sole reference to his own scheme of action, was truly of a nature to excite our special wonder. His aptitude for affairs and his power to read character were extraordinary; but it was necessary that the affairs should be those of a despotism, and the characters of an inferior nature. He could read Philip and Margaret, Egmont or Berlaymont, Alva or Viglius, but he had no plummet to sound the depths of a mind like that of William the Silent. His genius was adroit and subtle, but not profound. He aimed at power by making the powerful subservient, but he had not the intellect which deals in the daylight face to face with great events and great minds. In the violent political struggle of which his administration consisted, he was foiled and thrown by the superior strength of a man whose warfare was open and manly, and who had no defence against the poisoned weapons of his foe.

Page 278

His literary accomplishments were very great. His fecundity was prodigious, and he wrote at will in seven languages. 'This polyglot facility was not in itself a very remarkable circumstance, for it grew out of his necessary education and geographical position. Few men in that age and region were limited to their mother tongue. The Prince of Orange, who made no special pretence to learning, possessed at least five languages. Egmont, who was accounted an ignorant man, was certainly familiar with three. The Cardinal, however, wrote not only with ease, but with remarkable elegance, vigor and vivacity, in whatever language he chose to adopt. The style of his letters and other documents, regarded simply as compositions, was inferior to that of no writer of the age. His occasional orations, too, were esteemed models of smooth and flowing rhetoric, at an epoch when the art of eloquence was not much cultivated. Yet it must be allowed that beneath all the shallow but harmonious flow of his periods, it would be idle to search for a grain of golden sand. Not a single sterling, manly thought is to be found in all his productions. If at times our admiration is excited with the appearance of a gem of true philosophy, we are soon obliged to acknowledge, on closer inspection, that we have been deceived by a false glitter. In retirement, his solitude was not relieved by serious application to any branch of knowledge. Devotion to science and to the advancement of learning, a virtue which has changed the infamy of even baser natures than his into glory, never dignified his seclusion. He had elegant tastes, he built fine palaces, he collected paintings, and he discoursed of the fine arts with the skill and eloquence of a practised connoisseur; but the nectared fruits of divine philosophy were but harsh and crabbed to him.

His moral characteristics are even more difficult to seize than his intellectual traits. It is a perplexing task to arrive at the intimate interior structure of a nature which hardly had an interior. He did not change, but he presented himself daily in different aspects. Certain peculiarities he possessed, however, which were unquestionable. He was always courageous, generally calm. Placed in the midst of a nation which hated him, exposed to the furious opposition of the most powerful adversaries, having hardly a friend, except the cowardly Viglius and the pluralist Morillon, secretly betrayed by Margaret of Parma, insulted by rude grandees, and threatened by midnight assassins, he never lost his self-possession, his smooth arrogance, his fortitude. He was constitutionally brave. He was not passionate in his resentments. To say that he was forgiving by nature would be an immense error; but that he could put aside vengeance at the dictate of policy is very certain. He could temporize, even after the reception of what he esteemed grave injuries, if the offenders were powerful. He never manifested rancor against the Duchess.

Page 279

Even after his fall from power in the Netherlands, he interceded with the Pope in favor of the principality of Orange, which the pontiff was disposed to confiscate. The Prince was at that time as good a Catholic as the Cardinal. He was apparently on good terms with his sovereign, and seemed to have a prosperous career before him. He was not a personage to be quarrelled with. At a later day, when the position of that great man was most clearly defined to the world, the Cardinal's ancient affection for his former friend and pupil did not prevent him from suggesting the famous ban by which a price was set upon his head, and his life placed in the hands of every assassin in Europe. It did not prevent him from indulging in the jocularity of a fiend, when the news of the first-fruits of that bounty upon murder reached his ears. It did not prevent him from laughing merrily at the pain which his old friend must have suffered, shot through the head and face with a musket-ball, and at the mutilated aspect which his "handsome face must have presented to the eyes of his apostate wife." It did not prevent him from stoutly disbelieving and then refusing to be comforted, when the recovery of the illustrious victim was announced. He could always dissemble without entirely forgetting his grievances. Certainly, if he were the forgiving Christian he pictured himself, it is passing strange to reflect upon the ultimate fate of Egmont, Horn, Montigny, Berghen, Orange, and a host of others, whose relations with him were inimical.

His extravagance was enormous, and his life luxurious. At the same time he could leave his brother Champagny—a man, with all his faults, of a noble nature, and with scarcely inferior talents to his own—to languish for a long time in abject poverty; supported by the charity of an ancient domestic. His greediness for wealth was proverbial. No benefice was too large or too paltry to escape absorption, if placed within his possible reach. Loaded with places and preferments, rolling in wealth, he approached his sovereign with the whine of a mendicant. He talked of his property as a "misery," when he asked for boons, and expressed his thanks in the language of a slave when he received them. Having obtained the abbey of St. Armand, he could hardly wait for the burial of the Bishop of Tournay before claiming the vast revenues of Afflighem, assuring the King as he did so that his annual income was but eighteen thousand crowns. At the same time, while thus receiving or pursuing the vast rents of St. Armand and Afflighem, he could seize the abbey of Trulle from the expectant hands of poor dependents, and accept tapestries and hogsheads of wine from Jacques Lequien and others, as a tax on the benefices which he procured for them. Yet the man who, like his father before him, had so long fattened on the public money, who at an early day had incurred the Emperor's sharp reproof for his covetousness, whose family, beside all these salaries and personal property, possessed already fragments of the royal domain, in the shape of nineteen baronies and seigniories in Burgundy, besides the county of Cantecroix and other estates in the Netherlands, had the effrontery to affirm, "We have always rather regarded the service of the master than our own particular profit."

Page 280

In estimating the conduct of the minister, in relation to the provinces, we are met upon the threshold by a swarm of vague assertions which are of a nature to blind or distract the judgment. His character must be judged as a whole, and by its general results, with a careful allowance for contradictions and equivocations. Truth is clear and single, but the lights are parti-colored and refracted in the prism of hypocrisy. The great feature of his administration was a prolonged conflict between himself and the leading seigniors of the Netherlands. The ground of the combat was the religious question. Let the quarrel be turned or tortured in any manner that human ingenuity can devise, it still remains unquestionable that Granvelle's main object was to strengthen and to extend the inquisition, that of his adversaries to overthrow the institution. It followed, necessarily, that the ancient charters were to be trampled in the dust before that tribunal could be triumphant. The nobles, although all Catholics, defended the cause of the poor religious martyrs, the privileges of the nation and the rights of their order. They were conservatives, battling for the existence of certain great facts, entirely consonant to any theory of justice and divine reason—for ancient constitutions which had been purchased with blood and treasure. "I will maintain," was the motto of William of Orange. Philip, bigoted and absolute almost beyond comprehension, might perhaps have proved impervious to any representations, even of Granvelle. Nevertheless, the minister might have attempted the task, and the responsibility is heavy upon the man who shared the power and directed the career, but who never ceased to represent the generous resistance of individuals to frantic cruelty, as offences against God and the King.

Yet extracts are drawn from his letters to prove that he considered the Spaniards as "proud and usurping," that he indignantly denied ever having been in favor of subjecting the Netherlands to the soldiers of that nation; that he recommended the withdrawal of the foreign regiments, and that he advised the King, when he came to the country, to bring with him but few Spanish troops. It should, however, be remembered that he employed, according to his own statements, every expedient which human ingenuity could suggest to keep the foreign soldiers in the provinces, that he "lamented to his inmost soul" their forced departure, and that he did not consent to that measure until the people were in a tumult, and the Zealanders threatening to lay the country under the ocean. "You may judge of the means employed to excite the people," he wrote to Perez in 1563, "by the fact that a report is circulated that the Duke of Alva is coming hither to tyrannize the provinces." Yet it appears by the admissions of Del Ryo, one of Alva's blood council, that, "Cardinal Granvelle expressly advised that an army of Spaniards should be sent to the Netherlands, to maintain the obedience to his Majesty

Page 281

and the Catholic religion," and that the Duke of Alva was appointed chief by the advice of Cardinal Spinosa, and by that of Cardinal Granvelle, as, appeared by many letters written at the time to his friends. By the same confessions; it appeared that the course of policy thus distinctly recommended by Granvelle, "was to place the country under a system of government like that of Spain and Italy, and to reduce it entirely under the council of Spain." When the terrible Duke started on his errand of blood and fire, the Cardinal addressed him, a letter of fulsome flattery; protesting "that all the world know that no person could be found so appropriate as he, to be employed in an affair of such importance;" urging him to advance with his army as rapidly as possible upon the Netherlands, hoping that "the Duchess of Parma would not be allowed to consent that any pardon or concession should be made to the cities, by which the construction of fortresses would be interfered with, or the revocation of the charters which had been forfeited, be prevented," and giving him much advice as to the general measures to be adopted, and the persons to be employed upon his arrival, in which number the infamous Noircarmes was especially recommended. In a document found among his papers, these same points, with others, were handled at considerable length. The incorporation of the provinces into one kingdom, of which the King was to be crowned absolute sovereign; the establishment of, a universal law for the Catholic religion, care being taken not to call that law inquisition, "because there was nothing so odious to the northern nations as the word Spanish Inquisition, although the thing in itself be most holy and just;" the abolition and annihilation of the broad or general council in the cities, the only popular representation in the country; the construction of many citadels and fortresses to be garrisoned with Spaniards, Italians, and Germans. Such were the leading features in that remarkable paper.

The manly and open opposition of the nobles was stigmatized as a cabal by the offended priest. He repeatedly whispered in the royal ear that their league was a treasonable conspiracy, which the Attorney-General ought to prosecute; that the seigniors meant to subvert entirely the authority of the Sovereign; that they meant to put their King under tutelage, to compel him to obey all their commands, to choose another prince of the blood for their chief, to establish a republic by the aid of foreign troops. If such insinuations, distilled thus secretly into the ear of Philip, who, like his predecessor, Dionysius, took pleasure in listening daily to charges against his subjects and to the groans of his prisoners, were not likely to engender a dangerous gangrene in the royal mind, it would be difficult to indicate any course which would produce such a result. Yet the Cardinal maintained that he had never done the gentlemen ill service, but that "they were angry with him for wishing to sustain the authority

Page 282

of the master." In almost every letter he expressed vague generalities of excuse, or even approbation, while he chronicled each daily fact which occurred to their discredit. The facts he particularly implored the King to keep to himself, the vague laudation he as urgently requested him to repeat to those interested. Perpetually dropping small innuendos like pebbles into the depths of his master's suspicious soul, he knew that at last the waters of bitterness would overflow, but he turned an ever-smiling face upon those who were to be his victims. There was ever something in his irony like the bland request of the inquisitor to the executioner that he would deal with his prisoners gently. There was about the same result in regard to such a prayer to be expected from Philip as from the hangman. Even if his criticisms had been uniformly indulgent, the position of the nobles and leading citizens thus subjected to a constant but secret superintendence, would have been too galling to be tolerated. They did not know, so precisely as we have learned after three centuries, that all their idle words and careless gestures as well as their graver proceedings, were kept in a noting book to be pored over and conned by rote in the recesses of the royal cabinet and the royal mind; but they suspected the espionage of the Cardinal, and they openly charged him with his secret malignity.

The men who refused to burn their fellow-creatures for a difference in religious opinion were stigmatized as demagogues; as ruined spendthrifts who wished to escape from their liabilities in the midst of revolutionary confusion; as disguised heretics who were waiting for a good opportunity to reveal their true characters. Montigny, who, as a Montmorency, was nearly allied to the Constable and Admiral of France, and was in epistolary correspondence with those relatives, was held up as a Huguenot; of course, therefore, in Philip's eye, the most monstrous of malefactors.

Although no man could strew pious reflections and holy texts more liberally, yet there was always an afterthought even in his most edifying letters. A corner of the mask is occasionally lifted and the deadly face of slow but abiding vengeance is revealed. "I know very well," he wrote, soon after his fall, to Viglius, "that vengeance is the Lord's-God is my witness that I pardon all the past." In the same letter, nevertheless, he added, "My theology, however, does not teach me, that by enduring, one is to enable one's enemies to commit even greater wrongs. If the royal justice is not soon put into play, I shall be obliged to right myself. This thing is going on too long-patience exhausted changes to fury. 'Tis necessary that every man should assist himself as he can, and when I choose to throw the game into confusion I shall do it perhaps more notably than the others." A few weeks afterwards, writing to the same correspondent, he observed, "We shall have to turn again, and rejoice together.

Page 283

Whatever the King commands I shall do, even were I to march into the fire, whatever happens, and without fear or respect for any person I mean to remain the same man to the end—Durate;—and I have a head that is hard enough when I do undertake any thing—'nec animism despondeo'." Here, certainly, was significant foreshadowing of the general wrath to come, and it was therefore of less consequence that the portraits painted by him of Berghen, Horn, Montigny, and others, were so rarely relieved by the more flattering tints which he occasionally mingled with the sombre coloring of his other pictures. Especially with regard to Count Egmont, his conduct was somewhat perplexing and, at first sight, almost inscrutable. That nobleman had been most violent in opposition to his course, had drawn a dagger upon him, had frequently covered him with personal abuse, and had crowned his offensive conduct by the invention of the memorable fool's-cap: livery. Yet the Cardinal usually spoke of him with pity and gentle consideration, described him as really well disposed in the main, as misled by others, as a "friend of smoke," who might easily be gained by flattery and bribery. When there was question of the Count's going to Madrid, the Cardinal renewed his compliments with additional expression of eagerness that they should be communicated to their object. Whence all this Christian meekness in the author of the Ban against Orange and the eulogist of Alva? The true explanation of this endurance on the part of the Cardinal lies in the estimate which he had formed of Egmont's character. Granvelle had taken the man's measure, and even he could not foresee the unparalleled cruelty and dulness which were eventually to characterize Philip's conduct towards him. On the contrary, there was every reason why the Cardinal should see in the Count a personage whom brilliant services, illustrious rank, and powerful connexions, had marked for a prosperous future. It was even currently asserted that Philip was about to create him Governor-General of the Netherlands, in order to detach him entirely from Orange, and to bind him more closely to the Crown. He was, therefore, a man to be forgiven. Nothing apparently but a suspicion of heresy could damage the prospects of the great noble, and Egmont was orthodox beyond all peradventure. He was even a bigot in the Catholic faith. He had privately told the Duchess of Parma that he had always been desirous of seeing the edicts thoroughly enforced; and he denounced as enemies all those persons who charged him with ever having been in favor of mitigating the System. He was reported, to be sure, at about the time of Granvelle's departure from the Netherlands, to have said "post pocula, that the quarrel was not with the Cardinal, but with the King, who was administering the public affairs very badly, even in the matter of religion." Such a bravado, however, uttered by a gentleman in his cups, when flushed with a recent political triumph,

Page 284

could hardly outweigh in the cautious calculations of Granvelle; distinct admissions in favor of persecution. Egmont in truth stood in fear of the inquisition. The hero of Gravelingen and St. Quentin actually trembled before Peter Titelmann. Moreover, notwithstanding all that had past, he had experienced a change in his sentiments in regard to the Cardinal. He frequently expressed the opinion that, although his presence in the Netherlands was inadmissible, he should be glad to see him Pope. He had expressed strong disapprobation of the buffooning masquerade by which he had been ridiculed at the Mansfeld christening party. When at Madrid he not only spoke well of Granvelle himself; but would allow nothing disparaging concerning him to be uttered in his presence. When, however, Egmont had fallen from favor, and was already a prisoner, the Cardinal diligently exerted himself to place under the King's eye what he considered the most damning evidence of the Count's imaginary treason; a document with which the public prosecutor had not been made acquainted.

Thus, it will be seen by this retrospect how difficult it is to seize all the shifting subtleties of this remarkable character. His sophisms even, when self-contradictory, are so adroit that they are often hard to parry. He made a great merit to himself for not having originated the new episcopates; but it should be remembered that he did his utmost to enforce the measure, which was "so holy a scheme that he would sacrifice for its success his fortune and his life." He refused the archbishopric of Mechlin, but his motives for so doing were entirely sordid. His revenues were for the moment diminished, while his personal distinction was not, in his opinion, increased by the promotion. He refused to accept it because "it was no addition to his dignity, as he was already Cardinal and Bishop of Arras," but in this statement he committed an important anachronism. He was not Cardinal when he refused the see of Mechlin; having received the red hat upon February 26, 1561, and having already accepted the archbishopric in May of the preceding year. He affirmed that "no man would more resolutely defend the liberty and privileges of the provinces than he would do," but he preferred being tyrannized by his prince, to maintaining the joyful entrance. He complained of the insolence of the states in meddling with the supplies; he denounced the convocation of the representative bodies, by whose action alone, what there was of "liberty and privilege" in the land could be guarded; he recommended the entire abolition of the common councils in the cities. He described himself as having always combated the opinion that "any thing could be accomplished by terror, death and violence," yet he recommended the mission of Alva, in whom "terror, death, and violence" were incarnate. He was indignant that he should be accused of having advised the introduction of the Spanish inquisition; but his reason was that the term sounded disagreeably in northern

Page 285

ears, while the thing was most commendable. He manifested much anxiety that the public should be disabused of their fear of the Spanish inquisition, but he was the indefatigable supporter of the Netherland inquisition, which Philip declared with reason to be “the more pitiless institution” of the two. He was the author, not of the edicts, but of their re-enactment, verbally and literally, in all the horrid extent to which they had been carried by Charles the Fifth; and had recommended the use of the Emperor’s name to sanctify the infernal scheme. He busied himself personally in the execution of these horrible laws, even when judge and hangman slackened. To the last he denounced all those “who should counsel his Majesty to permit a moderation of the edicts,” and warned the King that if he should consent to the least mitigation of their provisions, things would go worse in the provinces than in France. He was diligent in establishing the reinforced episcopal inquisition side by side with these edicts, and with the papal inquisition already in full operation. He omitted no occasion of encouraging the industry of all these various branches in the business of persecution. When at last the loud cry from the oppressed inhabitants of Flanders was uttered in unanimous denunciation by the four estates of that province of the infamous Titelmann, the Cardinal’s voice, from the depths of his luxurious solitude, was heard, not in sympathy with the poor innocent wretches, who were daily dragged from their humble homes to perish by sword and fire, but in pity for the inquisitor who was doing the work of hell. “I deeply regret,” he wrote to Viglius, “that the states of Flanders should be pouting at inquisitor Titelmann. Truly he has good zeal, although sometimes indiscreet and noisy; still he must be supported, lest they put a bridle upon him, by which his authority will be quite enervated.” The reader who is acquainted with the personality of Peter Titelmann can decide as to the real benignity of the joyous epicurean who could thus commend and encourage such a monster of cruelty.

If popularity be a test of merit in a public man, it certainly could not be claimed by the Cardinal. From the moment when Gresham declared him to be “hated of all men,” down to the period of his departure, the odium resting upon him had been rapidly extending: He came to the country with two grave accusations resting upon his name. The Emperor Maximilian asserted that the Cardinal had attempted to take his life by poison, and he persisted in the truth of the charge thus made by him, till the day of his death. Another accusation was more generally credited. He was the author of the memorable forgery by which the Landgrave Philip of Hesse had been entrapped into his long imprisonment. His course in and towards the Netherlands has been sufficiently examined. Not a single charge has been made lightly, but only after careful sifting of evidence. Moreover they are all sustained mainly from the criminal’s

Page 286

own lips. Yet when the secrecy of the Spanish cabinet and the Macchiavellian scheme of policy by which the age was characterized are considered, it is not strange that there should have been misunderstandings and contradictions with regard to the man's character till a full light had been thrown upon it by the disinterment of ancient documents. The word "Durate," which was the Cardinals device, may well be inscribed upon his mask, which has at last been torn aside, but which was formed of such durable materials, that it has deceived the world for three centuries.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Attempting to swim in two waters
Dissimulation and delay
Excited with the appearance of a gem of true philosophy
Insinuating suspicions when unable to furnish evidence
Maintaining the attitude of an injured but forgiving Christian
More accustomed to do well than to speak well
Perpetually dropping small innuendos like pebbles
Procrastination was always his first refuge
They had at last burned one more preacher alive

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 9.

The rise of the Dutch republic
John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.
1855
1564-1565 [*Chapter* V.]

Return of the three seigniors to the state council—Policy of Orange—Corrupt character of the government—Efforts of the Prince in favor of reform—Influence of Armenteros—-Painful situation of Viglius—His anxiety to retire—Secret charges against him transmitted by the Duchess to Philip—Ominous signs of the times— Attention of Philip to the details of persecution—Execution of Fabricius, and tumult at Antwerp—Horrible cruelty towards the Protestants—Remonstrance of the Magistracy of Bruges and of the four Flemish estates against Titelmann—Obduracy of Philip—Council of Trent—Quarrel for precedence between the French and Spanish envoys—Order for the publication of the Trent decrees in the Netherlands—Opposition to the measure—Reluctance of the Duchess— Egmont accepts a mission to Spain—Violent debate in the council concerning his instructions—Remarkable speech of Orange—Apoplexy of Viglius—-Temporary appointment of Hopper—Departure of Egmont— Disgraceful scene at Cambray—Character of the Archbishop—Egmont in Spain—Flattery and bribery—-

Council of Doctors—Vehement declarations of Philip—His instructions to Egmont at his departure —Proceedings of Orange in regard to his principality—Egmont's report to the state council concerning his mission—His vainglory— Renewed orders from Philip to continue the persecution—Indignation of Egmont—Habitual dissimulation of the King—-Reproof of Egmont by Orange—Assembly of doctors in Brussels—Result of their deliberations transmitted to Philip—Universal

Page 287

excitement in the Netherlands—New punishment for heretics—Interview at Bayonne between Catharine de Medici and her daughter, the Queen of Spain— Mistaken views upon this subject—Diplomacy of Alva—Artful conduct of Catharine—Stringent letters from Philip to the Duchess with regard to the inquisition—Consternation of Margaret and of Viglius —New proclamation of the Edicts, the Inquisition, and the Council of Trent—-Fury of the people—Resistance of the leading seigniors and of the Brabant Council—-Brabant declared free of the inquisition—Prince Alexander of Parma betrothed to Donna Maria of Portugal—Her portrait—Expensive preparations for the nuptials— Assembly of the Golden Fleece—Oration of Viglius—Wedding of Prince Alexander.

The remainder of the year, in the spring of which the Cardinal had left the Netherlands, was one of anarchy, confusion, and corruption. At first there had been a sensation of relief.

Philip had exchanged letters of exceeding amity with Orange, Egmont, and Horn. These three seigniors had written, immediately upon Granvelle's retreat, to assure the King of their willingness to obey the royal commands, and to resume their duties at the state council. They had, however, assured the Duchess that the reappearance of the Cardinal in the country would be the signal for their instantaneous withdrawal. They appeared at the council daily, working with the utmost assiduity often till late into the night. Orange had three great objects in view, by attaining which the country, in his opinion, might yet be saved, and the threatened convulsions averted. These were to convoke the states-general, to moderate or abolish the edicts, and to suppress the council of finance and the privy council, leaving only the council of state. The two first of these points, if gained, would, of course, subvert the whole absolute policy which Philip and Granvelle had enforced; it was, therefore, hardly probable that any impression would be made upon the secret determination of the government in these respects. As to the council of state, the limited powers of that body, under the administration of the Cardinal, had formed one of the principal complaints against that minister. The justice and finance councils were sinks of iniquity. The most barefaced depravity reigned supreme. A gangrene had spread through the whole government. The public functionaries were notoriously and outrageously venal. The administration of justice had been poisoned at the fountain, and the people were unable to slake their daily thirst at the polluted stream. There was no law but the law of the longest purse. The highest dignitaries of Philip's appointment had become the most mercenary hucksters who ever converted the divine temple of justice into a den of thieves. Law was an article of merchandise, sold by judges to the highest bidder. A poor customer could obtain nothing but stripes and imprisonment, or, if tainted with suspicion of heresy, the fagot or the sword,

Page 288

but for the rich every thing was attainable. Pardons for the most atrocious crimes, passports, safe conducts, offices of trust and honor, were disposed of at auction to the highest bidder. Against all this sea of corruption did the brave William of Orange set his breast, undaunted and unflinching. Of all the conspicuous men in the land, he was the only one whose worst enemy had never hinted through the whole course of his public career, that his hands had known contamination. His honor was ever untarnished by even a breath of suspicion. The Cardinal could accuse him of pecuniary embarrassment, by which a large proportion of his revenues were necessarily diverted to the liquidation of his debts, but he could not suggest that the Prince had ever freed himself from difficulties by plunging his hands into the public treasury, when it might easily have been opened to him.

It was soon, however, sufficiently obvious that as desperate a struggle was to be made with the many-headed monster of general corruption as with the Cardinal by whom it had been so long fed and governed. The Prince was accused of ambition and intrigue. It was said that he was determined to concentrate all the powers of government in the state council, which was thus to become an omnipotent and irresponsible senate, while the King would be reduced to the condition of a Venetian Doge. It was, of course, suggested that it was the aim of Orange to govern the new Tribunal of Ten. No doubt the Prince was ambitious. Birth, wealth, genius, and virtue could not have been bestowed in such eminent degree on any man without carrying with them the determination to assert their value. It was not his wish so much as it was the necessary law of his being to impress himself upon his age and to rule his fellow-men. But he practised no arts to arrive at the supremacy which he felt must always belong to him, what ever might be his nominal position in the political hierarchy. He was already, although but just turned of thirty years, vastly changed from the brilliant and careless grandee, as he stood at the hour of the imperial abdication. He was becoming careworn in face, thin of figure, sleepless of habit. The wrongs of which he was the daily witness, the absolutism, the cruelty, the rottenness of the government, had marked his face with premature furrows. “They say that the Prince is very sad,” wrote Morillon to Granvelle; “and ’tis easy to read as much in his face. They say he can not sleep.” Truly might the monarch have taken warning that here was a man who was dangerous, and who thought too much. “Sleekheaded men, and such as slept o’ nights,” would have been more eligible functionaries, no doubt, in the royal estimation, but, for a brief period, the King was content to use, to watch, and to suspect the man who was one day to be his great and invincible antagonist. He continued assiduous at the council, and he did his best, by entertaining nobles and citizens at his hospitable mansion, to cultivate good relations with large numbers of his countrymen. He soon, however, had become disgusted with the court. Egmont was more lenient to the foul practices which prevailed there, and took almost a childish pleasure in dining at the table of the Duchess, dressed, as were many of the younger nobles, in short camlet doublet with the wheat-sheaf buttons.

Page 289

The Prince felt more unwilling to compromise his personal dignity by countenancing the flagitious proceedings and the contemptible supremacy of Armenteros, and it was soon very obvious, therefore, that Egmont was a greater favorite at court than Orange. At the same time the Count was also diligently cultivating the good graces of the middle and lower classes in Brussels, shooting with the burghers at the popinjay, calling every man by his name, and assisting at jovial banquets in town-house or guild-hall. The Prince, although at times a necessary partaker also in these popular amusements, could find small cause for rejoicing in the aspect of affairs. When his business led him to the palace, he was sometimes forced to wait in the ante-chamber for an hour, while Secretary Armenteros was engaged in private consultation with Margaret upon the most important matters of administration. It could not be otherwise than galling to the pride and offensive to the patriotism of the Prince, to find great public transactions entrusted to such hands. Thomas de Armenteros was a mere private secretary—a simple clerk. He had no right to have cognizance of important affairs, which could only come before his Majesty's sworn advisers. He was moreover an infamous peculator. He was rolling up a fortune with great rapidity by his shameless traffic in benefices, charges, offices, whether of church or state. His name of Armenteros was popularly converted into Argenteros, in order to symbolize the man who was made of public money. His confidential intimacy with the Duchess procured for him also the name of "Madam's barber," in allusion to the famous ornaments of Margaret's upper lip, and to the celebrated influence enjoyed by the barbers of the Duke of Savoy, and of Louis the Eleventh. This man sold dignities and places of high responsibility at public auction. The Regent not only connived at these proceedings, which would have been base enough, but she was full partner in the disgraceful commerce. Through the agency of the Secretary, she, too, was amassing a large private fortune. "The Duchess has gone into the business of vending places to the highest bidders," said Morillon, "with the bit between her teeth." The spectacle presented at the council-board was often sufficiently repulsive not only to the cardinalists, who were treated with elaborate insolence, but to all men who loved honor and justice, or who felt an interest in the prosperity of government. There was nothing majestic in the appearance of the Duchess, as she sat conversing apart with Armenteros, whispering, pinching, giggling, or disputing, while important affairs of state were debated, concerning which the Secretary had no right to be informed. It was inevitable that Orange should be offended to the utmost by such proceedings, although he was himself treated with comparative respect. As for the ancient adherents of Granvelle, the Bordeys, Baves, and Morillons, they were forbidden by the favorite

Page 290

even to salute him in the streets. Berlaymont was treated by the Duchess with studied insult. “What is the man talking about?” she would ask with languid superciliousness, if he attempted to express his opinion in the state-council. Viglius, whom Berlaymont accused of doing his best, without success, to make his peace with the seigniors, was in even still greater disgrace than his fellow-cardinalists. He longed, he said, to be in Burgundy, drinking Granvelle’s good wine. His patience under the daily insults which he received from the government made him despicable in the eyes of his own party. He was described by his friends as pusillanimous to an incredible extent, timid from excess of riches, afraid of his own shadow. He was becoming exceedingly pathetic, expressing frequently a desire to depart and end his days in peace. His faithful Hopper sustained and consoled him, but even Joachim could not soothe his sorrows when he reflected that after all the work performed by himself and colleagues, “they had only been beating the bush for others,” while their own share in the spoils had been withheld. Nothing could well be more contumelious than Margaret’s treatment of the learned Frisian. When other councillors were summoned to a session at three o’clock, the President was invited at four. It was quite impossible for him to have an audience of the Duchess except in the presence of the inevitable Armenteras. He was not allowed to open his mouth, even when he occasionally plucked up heart enough to attempt the utterance of his opinions. His authority was completely dead. Even if he essayed to combat the convocation of the states-general by the arguments which the Duchess, at his suggestion, had often used for the purpose, he was treated with the same indifference. “The poor President,” wrote Granvelle to the King’s chief secretary, Gonzalo Perez, “is afraid, as I hear, to speak a word, and is made to write exactly what they tell him.” At the same time the poor President, thus maltreated and mortified, had the vanity occasionally to imagine himself a bold and formidable personage. The man whom his most intimate friends described as afraid of his own shadow, described himself to Granvelle as one who went his own gait, speaking his mind frankly upon every opportunity, and compelling people to fear him a little, even if they did not love him. But the Cardinal knew better than to believe in this magnanimous picture of the doctor’s fancy.

Viglius was anxious to retire, but unwilling to have the appearance of being disgraced. He felt instinctively, although deceived as to the actual facts, that his great patron had been defeated and banished. He did not wish to be placed in the same position. He was desirous, as he piously expressed himself, of withdrawing from the world, “that he might balance his accounts with the Lord, before leaving the lodgings of life.” He was, however, disposed to please “the master” as well as the Lord. He wished to have the royal permission

Page 291

to depart in peace. In his own lofty language, he wished to be sprinkled on taking his leave “with the holy water of the court.” Moreover, he was fond of his salary, although he disliked the sarcasms of the Duchess. Egmont and others had advised him to abandon the office of President to Hopper, in order, as he was getting feeble, to reserve his whole strength for the state-council. Viglius did not at all relish the proposition. He said that by giving up the seals, and with them the rank and salary which they conferred, he should become a deposed saint. He had no inclination, as long as he remained on the ground at all, to part with those emoluments and honors, and to be converted merely into the “ass of the state-council.” He had, however, with the sagacity of an old navigator, already thrown out his anchor into the best holding-ground during the storms which he foresaw were soon to sweep the state. Before the close of the year which now occupies, the learned doctor of laws had become a doctor of divinity also; and had already secured, by so doing, the wealthy prebend of Saint Bavon of Ghent. This would be a consolation in the loss of secular dignities, and a recompence for the cold looks of the Duchess. He did not scruple to ascribe the pointed dislike which Margaret manifested towards him to the awe in which she stood of his stern integrity of character. The true reason why Armenteros and the Duchess disliked him was because, in his own words, “he was not of their mind with regard to lotteries, the sale of offices, advancement to abbeys, and many other things of the kind, by which they were in such a hurry to make their fortune.” Upon another occasion he observed, in a letter to Granvelle, that “all offices were sold to the highest bidder, and that the cause of Margaret’s resentment against both the Cardinal and himself was, that they had so long prevented her from making the profit which she was now doing from the sale of benefices, offices, and other favors.”

The Duchess, on her part, characterized the proceedings and policy, both past and present, of the cardinalists as factious, corrupt, and selfish in the last degree. She assured her brother that the simony, rapine, and dishonesty of Granvelle, Viglius, and all their followers, had brought affairs into the ruinous condition which was then but too apparent. They were doing their best, she said, since the Cardinal’s departure, to show, by their sloth and opposition, that they were determined to allow nothing to prosper in his absence. To quote her own vigorous expression to Philip—“Viglius made her suffer the pains of hell.” She described him as perpetually resisting the course of the administration, and she threw out dark suspicions, not only as to his honesty but his orthodoxy. Philip lent a greedy ear to these scandalous hints concerning the late omnipotent minister and his friends. It is an instructive lesson in human history to look through the cloud of dissimulation in which the actors

Page 292

of this remarkable epoch were ever enveloped, and to watch them all stabbing fiercely at each other in the dark, with no regard to previous friendship, or even present professions. It is edifying to see the Cardinal, with all his genius and all his grimace, corresponding on familiar terms with Armenteros, who was holding him up to obloquy upon all occasions; to see Philip inclining his ear in pleased astonishment to Margaret's disclosures concerning the Cardinal, whom he was at the very instant assuring of his undiminished confidence; and to see Viglius, the author of the edict of 1550, and the uniform opponent of any mitigation in its horrors, silently becoming involved without the least suspicion of the fact in the meshes of inquisitor Titelmann.

Upon Philip's eager solicitations for further disclosures, Margaret accordingly informed her brother of additional facts communicated to her, after oaths of secrecy had been exchanged, by Titelmann and his colleague del Canto. They had assured her, she said, that there were grave doubts touching the orthodoxy of Viglius. He had consorted with heretics during a large portion of his life, and had put many suspicious persons into office. As to his nepotism, simony, and fraud, there was no doubt at all. He had richly provided all his friends and relations in Friesland with benefices. He had become in his old age a priest and churchman, in order to snatch the provostship of Saint Bavon, although his infirmities did not allow him to say mass, or even to stand erect at the altar. The inquisitors had further accused him of having stolen rings, jewels, plate, linen, beds, tapestry, and other furniture, from the establishment, all which property he had sent to Friesland, and of having seized one hundred thousand florins in ready money which had belonged to the last abbe—an act consequently of pure embezzlement. The Duchess afterwards transmitted to Philip an inventory of the plundered property, including the furniture of nine houses, and begged him to command Viglius to make instant restitution. If there be truth in the homely proverb, that in case of certain quarrels honest men recover their rights, it is perhaps equally certain that when distinguished public personages attack each other, historians may arrive at the truth. Here certainly are edifying pictures of the corruption of the Spanish regency in the Netherlands, painted by the President of the state-council, and of the dishonesty of the President painted by the Regent.

A remarkable tumult occurred in October of this year, at Antwerp. A Carmelite monk, Christopher Smith, commonly called Fabricius, had left a monastery in Bruges, adopted the principles of the Reformation, and taken to himself a wife. He had resided for a time in England; but, invited by his friends, he had afterwards undertaken the dangerous charge of gospel-teacher in the commercial metropolis of the Netherlands. He was, however, soon betrayed to the authorities by a certain bonnet dealer, popularly

Page 293

called Long Margaret, who had pretended, for the sake of securing the informer's fee, to be a convert to his doctrines. He was seized, and immediately put to the torture. He manfully refused to betray any members of his congregation, as manfully avowed and maintained his religious creed. He was condemned to the flames, and during the interval which preceded his execution, he comforted his friends by letters of advice, religious consolation and encouragement, which he wrote from his dungeon. He sent a message to the woman who had betrayed him, assuring her of his forgiveness, and exhorting her to repentance. His calmness, wisdom, and gentleness excited the admiration of all. When; therefore, this humble imitator of Christ was led through the streets of Antwerp to the stake, the popular emotion was at once visible. To the multitude who thronged about the executioners with threatening aspect, he addressed an urgent remonstrance that they would not compromise their own safety by a tumult in his cause. He invited all, however, to remain steadfast to the great truth for which he was about to lay down his life. The crowd, as they followed the procession of hangmen, halberdsmen, and magistrates, sang the hundred and thirtieth psalm in full chorus. As the victim arrived upon the market-place, he knelt upon the ground to pray, for the last time. He was, however, rudely forced to rise by the executioner, who immediately chained him to the stake, and fastened a leathern strap around his throat. At this moment the popular indignation became uncontrollable; stones were showered upon the magistrates and soldiers, who, after a slight resistance, fled for their lives. The foremost of the insurgents dashed into the enclosed arena, to rescue the prisoner. It was too late. The executioner, even as he fled, had crushed the victim's head with a sledge hammer, and pierced him through and through with a poniard. Some of the bystanders maintained afterwards that his fingers and lips were seen to move, as if in feeble prayer, for a little time longer, until, as the fire mounted, he fell into the flames. For the remainder of the day, after the fire had entirely smouldered to ashes, the charred and half-consumed body of the victim remained on the market-place, a ghastly spectacle to friend and foe. It was afterwards bound to a stone and cast into the Scheld. Such was the doom of Christopher Fabricius, for having preached Christianity in Antwerp. During the night an anonymous placard, written with blood, was posted upon the wall of the town-house, stating that there were men in the city who would signally avenge his murder. Nothing was done, however, towards the accomplishment of the threat. The King, when he received the intelligence of the transaction, was furious with indignation, and wrote savage letters to his sister, commanding instant vengeance to be taken upon all concerned in so foul a riot. As one of the persons engaged had, however, been arrested and immediately hanged, and as the rest had effected their escape, the affair was suffered to drop.

Page 294

The scenes of outrage, the frantic persecutions, were fast becoming too horrible to be looked upon by Catholic or Calvinist. The prisons swarmed with victims, the streets were thronged with processions to the stake. The population of thriving cities, particularly in Flanders, were maddened by the spectacle of so much barbarity inflicted, not upon criminals, but usually upon men remarkable for propriety of conduct and blameless lives. It was precisely at this epoch that the burgomasters, senators, and council of the city of Bruges (all Catholics) humbly represented to the Duchess Regent, that Peter Titelmann, inquisitor of the Faith, against all forms of law, was daily exercising inquisition among the inhabitants, not only against those suspected or accused of heresy, but against all, however untainted their characters; that he was daily citing before him whatever persons he liked, men or women, compelling them by force to say whatever it pleased him; that he was dragging people from their houses, and even from the sacred precincts of the church; often in revenge for verbal injuries to himself, always under pretext of heresy, and without form or legal warrant of any kind. They therefore begged that he might be compelled to make use of preparatory examinations with the co-operation of the senators of the city, to suffer that witnesses should make their depositions without being intimidated by menace, and to conduct all his subsequent proceedings according to legal forms, which he had uniformly violated; publicly declaring that he would conduct himself according to his own pleasure.

The four estates of Flanders having, in a solemn address to the King, represented the same facts, concluded their brief but vigorous description of Titelmann's enormities by calling upon Philip to suppress these horrible practices, so manifestly in violation of the ancient charters which he had sworn to support. It may be supposed that the appeal to Philip would be more likely to call down a royal benediction than the reproof solicited upon the inquisitor's head. In the privy council, the petitions and remonstrances were read, and, in the words of the President, "found to be in extremely bad taste." In the debate which followed, Viglius and his friends recalled to the Duchess, in earnest language, the decided will of the King, which had been so often expressed. A faint representation was made, on the other hand, of the dangerous consequences, in case the people were driven to a still deeper despair. The result of the movement was but meagre. The Duchess announced that she could do nothing in the matter of the request until further information, but that meantime she had charged Titelmann to conduct himself in his office "with discretion and modesty." The discretion and modesty, however, never appeared in any modification of the inquisitor's proceedings, and he continued unchecked in his infamous career until death, which did not occur till several years afterwards.

Page 295

In truth, Margaret was herself in mortal fear of this horrible personage. He besieged her chamber door almost daily, before she had risen, insisting upon audiences which, notwithstanding her repugnance to the man, she did not dare to refuse. “May I perish,” said Morillon, “if she does not stand in exceeding awe of Titelmann.” Under such circumstances, sustained by the King in Spain, the Duchess in Brussels, the privy council, and by a leading member of what had been thought the liberal party, it was not difficult for the inquisition to maintain its ground, notwithstanding the solemn protestations of the estates and the suppressed curses of the people.

Philip, so far from having the least disposition to yield in the matter of the great religious persecution, was more determined as to his course than ever. He had already, as easy as August of this year, despatched orders to the Duchess that the decrees of the Council of Trent should be published and enforced throughout the Netherlands. The memorable quarrel as to precedency between the French and Spanish delegates had given some hopes of a different determination. Nevertheless, those persons who imagined that, in consequence of this quarrel of etiquette, Philip would slacken in his allegiance to the Church, were destined to be bitterly mistaken. He informed his sister that, in the common cause of Christianity, he should not be swayed by personal resentments.

How, indeed, could a different decision be expected? His envoy at Rome, as well as his representatives at the council, had universally repudiated all doubts as to the sanctity of its decrees. “To doubt the infallibility of the council, as some have dared to do,” said Francis de Vargas, “and to think it capable of error, is the most devilish heresy of all.” Nothing could so much disturb and scandalize the world as such a sentiment. Therefore the Archbishop of Granada told, very properly, the Bishop of Tortosa, that if he should express such an opinion in Spain, they would burn him. These strenuous notions were shared by the King. Therefore, although all Europe was on tip-toe with expectation to see how Philip would avenge himself for the slight put upon his ambassador, Philip disappointed all Europe.

In August, 1564, he wrote to the Duchess Regent, that the decrees were to be proclaimed and enforced without delay. They related to three subjects, the doctrines to be inculcated by the Church, the reformation of ecclesiastical moral, and the education of the people. General police regulations were issued at the same time, by which heretics were to be excluded from all share in the usual conveniences of society, and were in fact to be strictly excommunicated. Inns were to receive no guests, schools no children, alms-houses no paupers, grave-yards no dead bodies, unless guests, children, paupers, and dead bodies were furnished with the most satisfactory proofs of orthodoxy. Midwives of unsuspected Romanism were alone to exercise their

Page 296

functions, and were bound to give notice within twenty-four hours of every birth which occurred; the parish clerks were as regularly to record every such addition to the population, and the authorities to see that Catholic baptism was administered in each case with the least possible delay. Births, deaths, and marriages could only occur with validity under the shadow of the Church. No human being could consider himself born or defunct unless provided with a priest's certificate. The heretic was excluded, so far as ecclesiastical dogma could exclude him, from the pale of humanity, from consecrated earth, and from eternal salvation.

The decrees contained many provisions which not only conflicted with the privileges of the provinces, but with the prerogatives of the sovereign. For this reason many of the lords in council thought that at least the proper exceptions should be made upon their promulgation. This was also the opinion of the Duchess, but the King, by his letters of October, and November (1564), expressly prohibited any alteration in the ordinances, and transmitted a copy of the form according to which the canons had been published in Spain, together with the expression of his desire that a similar course should be followed in the Netherlands. Margaret of Parma was in great embarrassment. It was evident that the publication could no longer be deferred. Philip had issued his commands, but grave senators and learned doctors of the university had advised strongly in favor of the necessary exceptions. The extreme party, headed by Viglius, were in favor of carrying out the royal decisions. They were overruled, and the Duchess was induced to attempt a modification, if her brother's permission could be obtained. The President expressed the opinion that the decrees, even with the restrictions proposed, would "give no contentment to the people, who, moreover, had no right to meddle with theology." The excellent Viglius forgot, however, that theology had been meddling altogether too much with the people to make it possible that the public attention should be entirely averted from the subject. Men and women who might be daily summoned to rack, stake, and scaffold, in the course of these ecclesiastical arrangements, and whose births, deaths, marriages, and position in the next world, were now to be formally decided upon, could hardly be taxed with extreme indiscretion, if they did meddle with the subject.

In the dilemma to which the Duchess was reduced, she again bethought herself of a special mission to Spain. At the end of the year (1564), it was determined that Egmont should be the envoy. Montigny excused himself on account of private affairs; Marquis Berghen "because of his indisposition and corpulence." There was a stormy debate in council after Egmont had accepted the mission and immediately before his departure. Viglius had been ordered to prepare the Count's instructions. Having finished the rough draught,

Page 297

he laid it before the board. The paper was conceived in general terms and might mean any thing or nothing. No criticism upon its language was, however, offered until it came to the turn of Orange to vote upon the document. Then, however, William the Silent opened his lips, and poured forth a long and vehement discourse, such as he rarely pronounced, but such as few except himself could utter. There was no shuffling, no disguise, no timidity in his language. He took the ground boldly that the time had arrived for speaking out. The object of sending an envoy of high rank and European reputation like the Count of Egmont, was to tell the King the truth. Let Philip know it now. Let him be unequivocally informed that this whole machinery of placards and scaffolds, of new bishops and old hangmen, of decrees, inquisitors, and informers, must once and forever be abolished. Their day was over. The Netherlands were free provinces, they were surrounded by free countries, they were determined to vindicate their ancient privileges. Moreover, his Majesty was to be plainly informed of the frightful corruption which made the whole judicial and administrative system loathsome. The venality which notoriously existed every where, on the bench, in the council chamber, in all public offices, where purity was most essential, was denounced by the Prince in scathing terms. He tore the mask from individual faces, and openly charged the Chancellor of Brabant, Engelbert Maas, with knavery and corruption. He insisted that the King should be informed of the necessity of abolishing the two inferior councils, and of enlarging the council of state by the admission of ten or twelve new members selected for their patriotism, purity, and capacity. Above all, it was necessary plainly to inform his Majesty that the canons of Trent, spurned by the whole world, even by the Catholic princes of Germany, could never be enforced in the Netherlands, and that it would be ruinous to make the attempt. He proposed and insisted that the Count of Egmont should be instructed accordingly. He avowed in conclusion that he was a Catholic himself and intended to remain in the Faith, but that he could not look on with pleasure when princes strove to govern the souls of men, and to take away their liberty in matters of conscience and religion.

Here certainly was no daintiness of phraseology, and upon these leading points, thus slightly indicated, William of Orange poured out his eloquence, bearing conviction upon the tide of his rapid invective. His speech lasted till seven in the evening, when the Duchess adjourned the meeting. The council broke up, the Regent went to supper, but the effect of the discourse upon nearly all the members was not to be mistaken. Viglius was in a state of consternation, perplexity, and despair. He felt satisfied that, with perhaps the exception of Berlaymont, all who had listened or should afterwards listen to the powerful arguments of Orange, would be inevitably seduced or bewildered. The President lay awake, tossing and tumbling in his bed, recalling the Prince’s oration, point by point, and endeavoring, to answer it in order. It was important, he felt, to obliterate the impression produced. Moreover, as we have often seen, the learned Doctor valued himself upon his logic.

Page 298

It was absolutely necessary, therefore, that in his reply, next day, his eloquence should outshine that of his antagonist. The President thus passed a feverish and uncomfortable night, pronouncing and listening to imaginary harangues. With the dawn of day he arose and proceeded to dress himself. The excitement of the previous evening and the subsequent sleeplessness of his night had, however, been too much for his feeble and slightly superannuated frame. Before he had finished his toilet, a stroke of apoplexy stretched him senseless upon the floor. His servants, when they soon afterwards entered the apartment, found him rigid, and to all appearance dead. After a few days, however, he recovered his physical senses in part, but his reason remained for a longer time shattered, and was never perhaps fully restored to its original vigor.

This event made it necessary that his place in the council should be supplied. Viglius had frequently expressed intentions of retiring, a measure to which he could yet never fully make up his mind. His place was now temporarily supplied by his friend and countryman, Joachim Hopper, like himself a, Frisian doctor of ancient blood and extensive acquirements, well versed in philosophy and jurisprudence; a professor of Louvain and a member of the Mechlin council. He was likewise the original founder and projector of Douay University, an institution which at Philip's desire he had successfully organized in 1556, in order that a French university might be furnished for Walloon youths, as a substitute for the seductive and poisonous Paris. For the rest, Hopper was a mere man of routine. He was often employed in private affairs by Philip, without being entrusted with the secret at the bottom of them. His mind was a confused one, and his style inexpressibly involved and tedious. "Poor master Hopper," said Granvelle, "did not write the best French in the world; may the Lord forgive him. He was learned in letters, but knew very little of great affairs." His manners were as cringing as his intellect was narrow. He never opposed the Duchess, so that his colleagues always called him Councillor "Yes, Madam," and he did his best to be friends with all the world.

In deference to the arguments of Orange, the instructions for Egmont were accordingly considerably modified from the original draughts of Viglius. As drawn up by the new President, they contained at least a few hints to his Majesty as to the propriety of mitigating the edicts and extending some mercy to his suffering people. The document was, however, not very satisfactory to the Prince, nor did he perhaps rely very implicitly upon the character of the envoy.

Page 299

Egmont set forth upon his journey early in January (1565). He travelled in great state. He was escorted as far as Cambray by several nobles of his acquaintance, who improved the occasion by a series of tremendous banquets during the Count's sojourn, which was protracted till the end of January. The most noted of these gentlemen were Hoogstraaten, Brederode, the younger Mansfeld, Culemburg, and Noircarmes. Before they parted with the envoy, they drew up a paper which they signed with their blood, and afterwards placed in the hands of his Countess. In this document they promised, on account of their "inexpressible and very singular affection" for Egmont, that if, during his mission to Spain, any evil should befal him, they would, on their faith as gentlemen and cavaliers of honor, take vengeance, therefore, upon the Cardinal Granvelle, or upon all who should be the instigators thereof.

[Green v. P., Archives, *etc*., i. 345, from Arnoldi, Hist. Denkwurd, p. 282., It is remarkable that after the return of the Count from. Spain, Hoogstraaten received this singular bond from the Countess, and gave it to Mansfeld, to be burned in his presence. Mansfeld, however, advised keeping it, on account of Noircarmes, whose signature was attached to the document, and whom he knew to be so false and deceitful a man that it might be well to have it within their power at some future day to reproach him therewith.—Ibid. It will be seen in the sequel that Noircarmes more than justified the opinion of Mansfeld, but that the subsequent career of Mansfeld himself did not entitle him to reproach any of Philip's noble hangmen.]

Wherever Brederode was, there, it was probable, would be much severe carousing. Before the conclusion, accordingly, of the visit to Cambray, that ancient city rang with the scandal created by a most uproarious scene. A banquet was given to Egmont and his friends in the citadel. Brederode, his cousin Lumey, and the other nobles from Brussels, were all present. The Archbishop of Cambray, a man very odious to the liberal party in the provinces, was also bidden to the feast. During the dinner, this prelate, although treated with marked respect by Egmont, was the object of much banter and coarse pleasantry by the ruder portion of the guests. Especially these convivial gentlemen took infinite pains to overload him with challenges to huge bumpers of wine; it being thought very desirable, if possible; to place the Archbishop under the table. This pleasantry was alternated with much rude sarcasm concerning the new bishoprics. The conversation then fell upon other topics, among others, naturally upon the mission of Count Egmont. Brederede observed that it was a very hazardous matter to allow so eminent a personage to leave the land at such a critical period. Should any thing happen to the Count, the Netherlands would sustain an immense loss. The Archbishop, irritated by the previous conversation, ironically

Page 300

requested the speaker to be comforted, “because,” said he, “it will always be easy to find a new Egmont.” Upon this, Brederode, beside himself with rage, cried out vehemently, “Are we to tolerate such language from this priest?” Gulemburg, too, turning upon the offender, observed, “Your observation would be much more applicable to your own case. If you were to die, ’t would be easy to find five hundred of your merit, to replace you in the see of Cambray.” The conversation was, to say the least, becoming personal. The Bishop, desirous of terminating this keen encounter of wits, lifted a goblet full of wine and challenged Brederode to drink. That gentleman declined the invitation. After the cloth had been removed, the cup circulated more freely than ever. The revelry became fast and furious. One of the younger gentlemen who was seated near the Bishop snatched the bonnet of that dignitary from his head and placed it upon his own. He then drained a bumper to his health, and passed the goblet and the cap to his next neighbor. Both circulated till they reached the Viscount of Ghent, who arose from his seat and respectfully restored the cap to its owner. Brederode then took a large “cup of silver and gold,” filled it to the brim, and drained it to the confusion of Cardinal Granvelle; stigmatizing that departed minister, as he finished, by an epithet of more vigor than decency. He then called upon all the company to pledge him to the same toast, and denounced as cardinalists all those who should refuse. The Archbishop, not having digested the affronts which had been put upon him already, imprudently ventured himself once more into the confusion, and tried to appeal to the reason of the company. He might as well have addressed the crew of Comus. He gained nothing but additional insult. Brederode advanced upon him with threatening gestures. Egmont implored the prelate to retire, or at least not to take notice of a nobleman so obviously beyond the control of his reason. The Bishop, however, insisted —mingling reproof, menace; and somewhat imperious demands—that the indecent Saturnalia should cease. It would have been wiser for him to retire. Count Hoogstraaten, a young man and small of stature, seized the gilt laver, in which the company had dipped their fingers before seating themselves at table: “Be quiet, be quiet, little man,” said Egmont, soothingly, doing his best to restrain the tumult. “Little man, indeed,” responded the Count, wrathfully; “I would have you to know that never did little man spring from my race.” With those words he hurled the basin, water, and all, at the head of the Archbishop. Hoogstraaten had no doubt manifested his bravery before that day; he was to display, on future occasions, a very remarkable degree of heroism; but it must be confessed that the chivalry of the noble house of Lalaing was not illustrated by this attack upon a priest. The Bishop was sprinkled by the water, but not struck by the vessel. Young

Page 301

Mansfeld, ashamed of the outrage, stepped forward to apologize for the conduct of his companions and to soothe the insulted prelate. That personage, however, exasperated, very naturally, to the highest point, pushed him rudely away, crying, “Begone, begone! who is this boy that is preaching to me?” Whereupon, Mansfeld, much irritated, lifted his hand towards the ecclesiastic, and snapped his fingers contemptuously in his face. Some even said that he pulled the archiepiscopal nose, others that he threatened his life with a drawn dagger. Nothing could well have been more indecent or more cowardly than the conduct of these nobles upon this occasion. Their intoxication, together with the character of the victim, explained, but certainly could not palliate the vulgarity of the exhibition. It was natural enough that men like Brederode should find sport in this remarkable badgering of a bishop, but we see with regret the part played by Hoogstraaten in the disgraceful scene.

The prelate, at last, exclaiming that it appeared that he had been invited only to be insulted, left the apartment, accompanied by Noircarmes and the Viscount of Ghent, and threatening that all his friends and relations should be charged with his vengeance. The next day a reconciliation was effected, as well as such an arrangement was possible, by the efforts of Egmont, who dined alone with the prelate. In the evening, Hoogstraaten, Culemburg, and Brederode called upon the Bishop, with whom they were closeted for, an hour, and the party separated on nominal terms of friendship.

This scandalous scene; which had been enacted not only before many guests, but in presence of a host of servants, made necessarily a great sensation throughout the country. There could hardly be much difference of opinion among respectable people as to the conduct of the noblemen who had thus disgraced themselves. Even Brederode himself, who appeared to have retained, as was natural, but a confused impression of the transaction, seemed in the days which succeeded the celebrated banquet, to be in doubt whether he and his friends had merited any great amount of applause. He was, however, somewhat self-contradictory, although always vehement in his assertions on the subject. At one time he maintained—after dinner, of course—that he would have killed the Archbishop if they had not been forcibly separated; at other moments he denounced as liars all persons who should insinuate that he had committed or contemplated any injury to that prelate; offering freely to fight any man who disputed either of his two positions.

The whole scene was dramatized and represented in masquerade at a wedding festival given by Councillor d’Assonleville, on the marriage of Councillor Hopper’s daughter, one of the principal parts being enacted by a son of the President-judge of Artois. It may be supposed that if such eminent personages, in close connexion with the government, took part in such proceedings, the riot must have been considered

Page 302

of a very pardonable nature. The truth was, that the Bishop was a cardinalist, and therefore entirely out of favor with the administration. He was also a man of treacherous, sanguinary character, and consequently detested by the people. He had done his best to destroy heresy in Valenciennes by fire and sword. “I will say one thing,” said he in a letter to Granvelle, which had been intercepted, “since the pot is uncovered, and the whole cookery known, we had best push forward and make an end of all the principal heretics, whether rich or poor, without regarding whether the city will be entirely ruined by such a course. Such an opinion I should declare openly were it not that we of the ecclesiastical profession are accused of always crying out for blood.” Such was the prelate’s theory. His practice may be inferred from a specimen of his proceedings which occurred at a little later day. A citizen of Cambray, having been converted to the Lutheran Confession, went to the Archbishop, and requested permission to move out of the country, taking his property with him. The petitioner having made his appearance in the forenoon, was requested to call again after dinner, to receive his answer. The burgher did so, and was received, not by the prelate, but by the executioner, who immediately carried the Lutheran to the market-place, and cut off his head. It is sufficiently evident that a minister of Christ, with such propensities, could not excite any great sympathy, however deeply affronted he might have been at a drinking party, so long as any Christians remained in the land.

Egmont departed from Cambray upon the 30th January, his friends taking a most affectionate farewell of him; and Brederode assuring him, with a thousand oaths, that he would forsake God for his service. His reception at Madrid was most brilliant. When he made his first appearance at the palace, Philip rushed from his cabinet into the grand hall of reception, and fell upon his neck, embracing him heartily before the Count had time to drop upon his knee and kiss the royal hand. During the whole period of his visit he dined frequently at the King’s private table, an honor rarely accorded by Philip, and was feasted and flattered by all the great dignitaries of the court as never a subject of the Spanish crown had been before. All vied with each other in heaping honors upon the man whom the King was determined to honor.

Philip took him out to drive daily in his own coach, sent him to see the wonders of the new Escorial, which he was building to commemorate the battle of St. Quentin, and, although it was still winter, insisted upon showing him the beauties of his retreat in the Segovian forest. Granvelle’s counsels as to the method by which the “friend of smoke” was so easily to be gained, had not fallen unheeded in his royal pupil’s ears. The Count was lodged in the house of Ruy Gomez, who soon felt himself able, according to previous assurances to that effect, contained in a private

Page 303

letter of Armenteros, to persuade the envoy to any course which Philip might command. Flattery without stint was administered. More solid arguments to convince the Count that Philip was the most generous and clement of princes were also employed with great effect. The royal dues upon the estate of Gaasbecque, lately purchased by Egmont, were remitted. A mortgage upon his Seigneurie of Ninove was discharged, and a considerable sum of money presented to him in addition. Altogether, the gifts which the ambassador received from the royal bounty amounted to one hundred thousand crowns. Thus feasted, flattered, and laden with presents, it must be admitted that the Count more than justified the opinions expressed in the letter of Armenteros, that he was a man easily governed by those who had credit with him. Egmont hardly broached the public matters which had brought him to Madrid. Upon the subject of the edicts, Philip certainly did not dissemble, however loudly the envoy may have afterwards complained at Brussels. In truth, Egmont, intoxicated by the incense offered to him at the Spanish court, was a different man from Egmont in the Netherlands, subject to the calm but piercing glance and the irresistible control of Orange. Philip gave him no reason to suppose that he intended any change in the religious system of the provinces, at least in any sense contemplated by the liberal party. On the contrary, a council of doctors and ecclesiastics was summoned, at whose deliberations the Count was invited to assist; on which occasion the King excited general admiration by the fervor of his piety and the vehemence of his ejaculations. Falling upon his knees before a crucifix, in the midst of the assembly, he prayed that God would keep him perpetually in the same mind, and protested that he would never call himself master of those who denied the Lord God. Such an exhibition could leave but little doubt in the minds of those who witnessed it as to the royal sentiments, nor did Egmont make any effort to obtain any relaxation of those religious edicts, which he had himself declared worthy of approbation, and fit to be maintained. As to the question of enlarging the state-council, Philip dismissed the subject with a few vague observations, which Egmont, not very zealous on the subject at the moment, perhaps misunderstood. The punishment of heretics by some new method, so as to secure the pains but to take away the glories of martyrdom, was also slightly discussed, and here again Egmont was so unfortunate as to misconceive the royal meaning, and to interpret an additional refinement of cruelty into an expression of clemency. On the whole, however, there was not much negotiation between the monarch and the ambassador. When the Count spoke of business, the King would speak to him of his daughters, and of his desire to see them provided with brilliant marriages. As Egmont had eight girls, besides two sons, it was natural that he should be pleased to find Philip taking so

Page 304

much interest in looking out husbands for them. The King spoke to him, as hardly could be avoided, of the famous fool's-cap livery. The Count laughed the matter off as a jest, protesting that it was a mere foolish freak, originating at the wine-table, and asseverating, with warmth, that nothing disrespectful or disloyal to his Majesty had been contemplated upon that or upon any other occasion. Had a single gentleman uttered an undutiful word against the King, Egmont vowed he would have stabbed him through and through upon the spot, had he been his own brother. These warm protestations were answered by a gentle reprimand as to the past by Philip, and with a firm caution as to the future. "Let it be discontinued entirely, Count," said the King, as the two were driving together in the royal carriage. Egmont expressed himself in handsome terms concerning the Cardinal, in return for the wholesale approbation quoted to him in regard to his own character, from the private letters of that sagacious personage to his Majesty. Certainly, after all this, the Count might suppose the affair of the livery forgiven. Thus amicably passed the hours of that mission, the preliminaries for which had called forth so much eloquence from the Prince of Orange and so nearly carried off with apoplexy the President Viglius. On his departure Egmont received a letter of instructions from Philip as to the report which he was to make upon his arrival in Brussels, to the Duchess. After many things personally flattering to himself, the envoy was directed to represent the King as overwhelmed with incredible grief at hearing the progress made by the heretics, but as immutably determined to permit no change of religion within his dominions, even were he to die a thousand deaths in consequence. The King, he was to state, requested the Duchess forthwith to assemble an extraordinary session of the council, at which certain bishops, theological doctors, and very orthodox lawyers, were to assist, in which, under pretence of discussing the Council of Trent matter, it was to be considered whether there could not be some new way devised for executing heretics; not indeed one by which any deduction should be made from their sufferings (which certainly was not the royal wish, nor likely to be grateful to God or salutary to religion), but by which all hopes of glory—that powerful incentive to their impiety—might be precluded. With regard to any suggested alterations in the council of state, or in the other two councils, the King was to be represented as unwilling to form any decision until he should hear, at length, from the Duchess Regent upon the subject.

Page 305

Certainly here was a sufficient amount of plain speaking upon one great subject, and very little encouragement with regard to the other. Yet Egmont, who immediately after receiving these instructions set forth upon his return to the Netherlands, manifested nothing but satisfaction. Philip presented to him, as his travelling companion, the young Prince Alexander of Parma, then about to make a visit to his mother in Brussels, and recommended the youth, afterwards destined to play so prominent a part in Flemish history, to his peculiar caret Egmont addressed a letter to the King from Valladolid, in which he indulged in ecstasies concerning the Escorial and the wood of Segovia, and declared that he was returning to the Netherlands “the most contented man in the world.”

He reached Brussels at the end of April. Upon the fifth of May he appeared before the council, and proceeded to give an account of his interview with the King, together with a statement of the royal intentions and opinions. These were already sufficiently well known. Letters, written after the envoy’s departure, had arrived before him, in which, while in the main presenting the same views as those contained in the instructions to Egmont, Philip had expressed his decided prohibition of the project to enlarge the state council and to suppress the authority of the other two. Nevertheless, the Count made his report according to the brief received at Madrid, and assured his hearers that the King was all benignity, having nothing so much at heart as the temporal and eternal welfare of the provinces. The siege of Malta, he stated, would prevent the royal visit to the Netherlands for the moment, but it was deferred only for a brief period. To remedy the deficiency in the provincial exchequer, large remittances would be made immediately from Spain. To provide for the increasing difficulties of the religious question, a convocation of nine learned and saintly personages was recommended, who should devise some new scheme by which the objections to the present system of chastising heretics might be obviated.

It is hardly necessary to state that so meagre a result to the mission of Egmont was not likely to inspire the hearts of Orange and his adherents with much confidence. No immediate explosion of resentment, however, occurred. The general aspect for a few days was peaceful. Egmont manifested much contentment with the reception which he met with in Spain, and described the King’s friendly dispositions towards the leading nobles in lively colors. He went to his government immediately after his return, assembled the states of Artois, in the city of Arras, and delivered the letters sent to that body by the King. He made a speech on this occasion, informing the estates that his Majesty had given orders that the edicts of the Emperor were to be enforced to the letter; adding that he had told the King, freely, his own opinion upon the subject; in order to dissuade him from that which others were

Page 306

warmly urging. He described Philip as the most liberal and debonair of princes; his council in Spain as cruel and sanguinary. Time was to show whether the epithets thus applied to the advisers were not more applicable to the monarch than the eulogies thus lavished by the blind and predestined victim. It will also be perceived that this language, used before the estates of Artois, varied materially from his observation to the Dowager Duchess of Aerschot, denouncing as enemies the men who accused him of having requested a moderation of the edicts. In truth, this most vacillating, confused, and unfortunate of men perhaps scarcely comprehended the purport of his recent negotiations in Spain, nor perceived the drift of his daily remarks at home. He was, however, somewhat vainglorious immediately after his return, and excessively attentive to business. “He talks like a King,” said Morillon, spitefully, “negotiates night and day, and makes all bow before him.” His house was more thronged with petitioners, courtiers, and men of affairs, than even the palace of the Duchess. He avowed frequently that he would devote his life and his fortune to the accomplishment of the King’s commands, and declared his uncompromising hostility to all who should venture to oppose that loyal determination.

It was but a very short time, however, before a total change was distinctly perceptible in his demeanor. These halcyon days were soon fled. The arrival of fresh letters from Spain gave a most unequivocal evidence of the royal determination, if, indeed, any doubt could be rationally entertained before. The most stringent instructions to keep the whole machinery of persecution constantly at work were transmitted to the Duchess, and aroused the indignation of Orange and his followers. They avowed that they could no longer trust the royal word, since, so soon after Egmont’s departure, the King had written despatches so much at variance with his language, as reported by the envoy. There was nothing, they said, clement and debonair in these injunctions upon gentlemen of their position and sentiments to devote their time to the encouragement of hangmen and inquisitors. The Duchess was unable to pacify the nobles. Egmont was beside himself with rage. With his usual recklessness and wrath, he expressed himself at more than one session of the state council in most unmeasured terms. His anger had been more inflamed by information which he had received from the second son of Berlaymont, a young and indiscreet lad, who had most unfortunately communicated many secrets which he had learned from his father, but which were never intended for Egmont’s ear.

Page 307

Philip's habitual dissimulation had thus produced much unnecessary perplexity. It was his custom to carry on correspondence through the aid of various secretaries, and it was his invariable practice to deceive them all. Those who were upon the most confidential terms with the monarch, were most sure to be duped upon all important occasions. It has been seen that even the astute Granvelle could not escape this common lot of all who believed their breasts the depositories of the royal secrets. Upon this occasion, Gonzalo Perez and Ruy Gomez complained bitterly that they had known nothing of the letters which had recently been despatched from Valladolid, while Tisnacq and Courterville had been ignorant of the communications forwarded by the hands of Egmont. They avowed that the King created infinite trouble by thus treating his affairs in one way with one set of councillors and in an opposite sense with the others, thus dissembling with all, and added that Philip was now much astonished at the dissatisfaction created in the provinces by the discrepancy between the French letters brought by Egmont, and the Spanish letters since despatched to the Duchess. As this was his regular manner of transacting business, not only for the Netherlands, but for all his dominions, they were of opinion that such confusion and dissatisfaction might well be expected.

After all, however, notwithstanding the indignation of Egmont, it must be confessed that he had been an easy dupe. He had been dazzled by royal smiles, intoxicated by court incense, contaminated by yet baser bribes. He had been turned from the path of honor and the companionship of the wise and noble to do the work of those who were to compass his destruction. The Prince of Orange reproached him to his face with having forgotten, when in Spain, to represent the views of his associates and the best interests of the country, while he had well remembered his own private objects, and accepted the lavish bounty of the King. Egmont, stung to the heart by the reproof, from one whom he honored and who wished him well, became sad and sombre for a long time, abstained from the court and from society, and expressed frequently the intention of retiring to his estates. He was, however, much governed by his secretary, the Seigneur de Bakerzeel, a man of restless, intriguing, and deceitful character, who at this period exercised as great influence over the Count as Armenteros continued to maintain over the Duchess, whose unpopularity from that and other circumstances was daily increasing.

In obedience to the commands of the King, the canons of Trent had been published. They were nominally enforced at Cambray, but a fierce opposition was made by the clergy themselves to the innovation in Mechlin, Utrecht, and many other places.

Page 308

This matter, together with other more vitally important questions, came before the assembly of bishops and doctors, which, according to Philip's instructions, had been convoked by the Duchess. The opinion of the learned theologians was, on the whole, that the views of the Trent Council, with regard to reformation of ecclesiastical morals and popular education, was sound. There was some discordancy between the clerical and lay doctors upon other points. The seigniors, lawyers, and deputies from the estates were all in favor of repealing the penalty of death for heretical offences of any kind. President Viglius, with all the bishops and doctors of divinity, including the prelates of St. Omer, Namur and Ypres, and four theological professors from Louvain, stoutly maintained the contrary opinion. The President especially, declared himself vehemently in favor of the death punishment, and expressed much anger against those who were in favor of its abolition. The Duchess, upon the second day of the assembly, propounded formally the question, whether any change was to be made in the chastisement of heretics. The Prince of Orange, with Counts Horn and Egmont, had, however, declined to take part in the discussions, on the ground that it was not his Majesty's intention that state councillors should deliver their opinions before strangers, but that persons from outside had been summoned to communicate their advice to the Council. The seigniors having thus washed their hands of the matter, the doctors came to a conclusion with great alacrity. It was their unanimous opinion that it comported neither with the service of God nor the common weal, to make any change in the punishment, except, perhaps, in the case of extreme youth; but that, on the contrary, heretics were only to be dealt with by retaining the edicts in their rigor, and by courageously chastising the criminals. After sitting for the greater part of six days, the bishops and doctors of divinity reduced their sentiments to writing, and affixed their signatures to the document. Upon the great point of the change suggested in the penalties of heresy, it was declared that no alteration was advisable in the edicts, which had been working so well for thirty-five years. At the same time it was suggested that "some persons, in respect to their age and quality, might be executed or punished more or less rigorously than others; some by death, some by galley slavery, some by perpetual banishment and entire confiscation of property." The possibility was also admitted, of mitigating the punishment of those who, without being heretics or sectaries, might bring themselves within the provisions of the edicts, "through curiosity, nonchalance, or otherwise." Such offenders, it was hinted, might be "whipped with rods, fined, banished, or subjected to similar penalties of a lighter nature." It will be perceived by this slight sketch of the advice thus offered to the Duchess that these theologians were disposed very carefully to strain the mercy, which they imagined possible in some cases, but which was to drop only upon the heads of the just. Heretics were still to be dealt with, so far as the bishops and presidents could affect their doom, with unmitigated rigor.

Page 309

When the assembly was over, the Duchess, thus put in possession of the recorded wisdom of these special councillors, asked her constitutional advisers what she was to do with it. Orange, Egmont, Horn, Mansfeld replied, however, that it was not their affair, and that their opinion had not been demanded by his Majesty in the premises. The Duchess accordingly transmitted to Philip the conclusions of the assembly, together with the reasons of the seigniors for refusing to take part in its deliberations. The sentiments of Orange could hardly be doubtful, however, nor his silence fail to give offense to the higher powers. He contented himself for the time with keeping his eyes and ears open to the course of events, but he watched well. He had "little leisure for amusing himself," as Brederode suggested. That free-spoken individual looked upon the proceedings of the theological assembly with profound disgust. "Your letter," he wrote to Count Louis, "is full of those blackguards of bishops and presidents. I would the race were extinct, like that of green dogs. They will always combat with the arms which they have ever used, remaining to the end avaricious, brutal, obstinate, ambitious, *et cetera*. I leave you to supply the rest."

Thus, then, it was settled beyond peradventure that there was to be no compromise with heresy. The King had willed it. The theologians had advised it. The Duchess had proclaimed it. It was supposed that without the axe, the fire, and the rack, the Catholic religion would be extinguished, and that the whole population of the Netherlands would embrace the Reformed Faith. This was the distinct declaration of Viglius, in a private letter to Granvelle. "Many seek to abolish the chastisement of heresy," said he; "if they gain this point, actum est de religione Catholica; for as most of the people are ignorant fools, the heretics will soon be the great majority, if by fear of punishment they are not kept in the true path."

The uneasiness, the terror, the wrath of the people seemed rapidly culminating to a crisis. Nothing was talked of but the edicts and the inquisition. Nothing else entered into the minds of men. In the streets, in the shops, in the taverns, in the fields; at market, at church, at funerals, at weddings; in the noble's castle, at the farmer's fireside, in the mechanic's garret, upon the merchants' exchange, there was but one perpetual subject of shuddering conversation. It was better, men began to whisper to each other, to die at once than to live in perpetual slavery. It was better to fall with arms in hand than to be tortured and butchered by the inquisition. Who could expect to contend with such a foe in the dark?

Page 310

They reproached the municipal authorities with lending themselves as instruments to the institution. They asked magistrates and sheriffs how far they would go in their defence before God's tribunal for the slaughter of his creatures, if they could only answer the divine arraignment by appealing to the edict of 1550. On the other hand, the inquisitors were clamorous in abuse of the languor and the cowardice of the secular authorities. They wearied the ear of the Duchess with complaints of the difficulties which they encountered in the execution of their functions—of the slight alacrity on the part of the various officials to assist them in the discharge of their duties. Notwithstanding the express command of his Majesty to that effect, they experienced, they said, a constant deficiency of that cheerful co-operation which they had the right to claim, and there was perpetual discord in consequence. They had been empowered by papal and by royal decree to make use of the gaols, the constables, the whole penal machinery of each province; yet the officers often refused to act, and had even dared to close the prisons. Nevertheless, it had been intended, as fully appeared by the imperial and royal instructions to the inquisitors, that their action through the medium of the provincial authorities should be unrestrained. Not satisfied with these representations to the Regent, the inquisitors had also made a direct appeal to the King. Judocus Tiletanus and Michael de Bay addressed to Philip a letter from Louvain. They represented to him that they were the only two left of the five inquisitors-general appointed by the Pope for all the Netherlands, the other three having been recently converted into bishops. Daily complaints, they said, were reaching them of the prodigious advance of heresy, but their own office was becoming so odious, so calumniated, and exposed to so much resistance, that they could not perform its duties without personal danger. They urgently demanded from his Majesty, therefore, additional support and assistance. Thus the Duchess, exposed at once to the rising wrath of a whole people and to the shrill blasts of inquisitorial anger, was tossed to and fro, as upon a stormy sea. The commands of the King, too explicit to be tampered with, were obeyed. The theological assembly had met and given advice. The Council of Trent was here and there enforced. The edicts were republished and the inquisitors encouraged. Moreover, in accordance with Philip's suggestion, orders were now given that the heretics should be executed at midnight in their dungeons, by binding their heads between their knees, and then slowly suffocating them in tubs of water. Secret drowning was substituted for public burning, in order that the heretic's crown of vainglory, which was thought to console him in his agony, might never be placed upon his head.

Page 311

In the course of the summer, Magaret wrote to her brother that the popular frenzy was becoming more and more intense. The people were crying aloud, she said, that the Spanish inquisition, or a worse than Spanish inquisition, had been established among them by means of bishops and ecclesiastics. She urged Philip to cause the instructions for the inquisitors to be revised. Egmont, she said, was vehement in expressing his dissatisfaction at the discrepancy between Philip's language to him by word of mouth and that of the royal despatches on the religious question. The other seigniors were even more indignant.

While the popular commotion in the Netherlands was thus fearfully increasing, another circumstance came to add to the prevailing discontent. The celebrated interview between Catharine de Medici and her daughter, the Queen of Spain, occurred in the middle of the month of June, at Bayonne. The darkest suspicions as to the results to humanity of the plots to be engendered in this famous conference between the representatives of France and Spain were universally entertained. These suspicions were most reasonable, but they were nevertheless mistaken. The plan for a concerted action to exterminate the heretics in both kingdoms had, as it was perfectly well known, been formed long before this epoch. It was also no secret that the Queen Regent of France had been desirous of meeting her son-in-law in order to confer with him upon important matters, face to face. Philip, however, had latterly been disinclined for the personal interview with Catharine. As his wife was most anxious to meet her mother, it was nevertheless finally arranged that Queen Isabella should make the journey; but he excused himself, on account of the multiplicity of his affairs, from accompanying her in the expedition. The Duke of Alva was, accordingly, appointed to attend the Queen to Bayonne. Both were secretly instructed by Philip to leave nothing undone in the approaching interview toward obtaining the hearty co-operation of Catharine de Medici in a general and formally-arranged scheme for the simultaneous extermination of all heretics in the French and Spanish dominions. Alva's conduct in this diplomatic commission was stealthy in the extreme. His letters reveal a subtlety of contrivance and delicacy of handling such as the world has not generally reckoned among his characteristics. All his adroitness, as well as the tact of Queen Isabella, by whose ability Alva declared himself to have been astounded, proved quite powerless before the steady fencing of the wily Catharine. The Queen Regent, whose skill the Duke, even while defeated, acknowledged to his master, continued firm in her design to maintain her own power by holding the balance between Guise and Montmorency, between Leaguer and Huguenot. So long as her enemies could be employed in exterminating each other, she was willing to defer the extermination of the Huguenots. The great massacre of St. Bartholomew was to sleep

Page 312

for seven years longer. Alva was, to be sure, much encouraged at first by the language of the French princes and nobles who were present at Bayonne. Monluc protested that "they might saw the Queen Dowager in two before she would become Huguenot." Montpensier exclaimed that "he would be cut in pieces for Philip's service—that the Spanish monarch was the only hope for France," and, embracing Alva with fervor, he affirmed that "if his body were to be opened at that moment, the name of Philip would be found imprinted upon his heart." The Duke, having no power to proceed to an autopsy, physical or moral, of Montpensier's interior, was left somewhat in the dark, notwithstanding these ejaculations. His first conversation with the youthful King, however, soon dispelled his hopes. He found immediately, in his own words, that Charles the Ninth "had been doctored." To take up arms, for religious reasons, against his own subjects, the monarch declared to be ruinous and improper. It was obvious to Alva that the royal pupil had learned his lesson for that occasion. It was a pity for humanity that the wisdom thus hypocritically taught him could not have sunk into his heart. The Duke did his best to bring forward the plans and wishes of his royal master, but without success. The Queen Regent proposed a league of the two Kings and the Emperor against the Turk, and wished to arrange various matrimonial alliances between the sons and daughters of the three houses. Alva expressed the opinion that the alliances were already close enough, while, on the contrary, a secret league against the Protestants would make all three families the safer. Catherine, however, was not to be turned from her position. She refused even to admit that the Chancellor de l'Hospital was a Huguenot, to which the Duke replied that she was the only person in her kingdom who held that opinion. She expressed an intention of convoking an assembly of doctors, and Alva ridiculed in his letters to Philip the affectation of such a proceeding. In short, she made it sufficiently evident that the hour for the united action of the French and Spanish sovereigns against their subjects had not struck, so that the famous Bayonne conference was terminated without a result. It seemed not the less certain, however, in the general opinion of mankind, that all the particulars of a regular plot had been definitely arranged upon this occasion, for the extermination of the Protestants, and the error has been propagated by historians of great celebrity of all parties, down to our own days. The secret letters of Alva, however, leave no doubt as to the facts.

Page 313

In the course of November, fresh letters from Philip arrived in the Netherlands, confirming every thing which he had previously written. He wrote personally to the inquisitors-general, Tiletanus and De Bay, encouraging them, commending them, promising them his support, and urging them not to be deterred by any consideration from thoroughly fulfilling their duties. He wrote Peter Titelmann a letter, in which he applauded the pains taken by that functionary to remedy the ills which religion was suffering, assured him of his gratitude, exhorted him to continue in his virtuous course, and avowed his determination to spare neither pains, expense, nor even his own life, to sustain the Catholic Faith. To the Duchess he wrote at great length, and in most unequivocal language. He denied that what he had written from Valladolid was of different meaning from the sense of the despatches by Egmont. With regard to certain Anabaptist prisoners, concerning whose fate Margaret had requested his opinion, he commanded their execution, adding that such was his will in the case of all, whatever their quality, who could be caught. That which the people said in the Netherlands touching the inquisition, he pronounced extremely distasteful to him. That institution, which had existed under his predecessors, he declared more necessary than ever; nor would he suffer it to be discredited. He desired his sister to put no faith in idle talk, as to the inconveniences likely to flow from the rigor of the inquisition. Much greater inconveniences would be the result if the inquisitors did not proceed with their labors, and the Duchess was commanded to write to the secular judges, enjoining upon them to place no obstacles in the path, but to afford all the assistance which might be required.

To Egmont, the King wrote with his own hand, applauding much that was contained in the recent decisions of the assembly of bishops and doctors of divinity, and commanding the Count to assist in the execution of the royal determination. In affairs of religion, Philip expressed the opinion that dissimulation and weakness were entirely out of place.

When these decisive letters came before the state council, the consternation was extreme. The Duchess had counted, in spite of her inmost convictions, upon less peremptory instructions. The Prince of Orange, the Count of Egmont, and the Admiral, were loud in their denunciations of the royal policy. There was a violent and protracted debate. The excitement spread at once to the, people. Inflammatory hand-bills were circulated. Placards were posted every night upon the doors of Orange, Egmont, and Horn, calling upon them to come forth boldly as champions of the people and of liberty in religious matters. Banquets were held daily at the houses of the nobility, in which the more ardent and youthful of their order, with brains excited by wine and anger, indulged in flaming invectives against the government, and interchanged

Page 314

vows to protect each other and the cause of the oppressed provinces. Meanwhile the privy council, to which body the Duchess had referred the recent despatches from Madrid, made a report upon the whole subject to the state council, during the month of November, sustaining the royal views, and insisting upon the necessity of carrying them into effect. The edicts and inquisition having been so vigorously insisted upon by the King, nothing was to be done but to issue new proclamations throughout the country, together with orders to bishops, councils, governors and judges, that every care should be taken to enforce them to the full.

This report came before the state council, and was sustained by some of its members. The Prince of Orange expressed the same uncompromising hostility to the inquisition which he had always manifested, but observed that the commands of the King were so precise and absolute, as to leave no possibility of discussing that point. There was nothing to be done, he said, but to obey, but he washed his hands of the fatal consequences which he foresaw. There was no longer any middle course between obedience and rebellion. This opinion, the soundness of which could scarcely be disputed, was also sustained by Egmont and Horn.

Viglius, on the contrary, nervous, agitated, appalled, was now disposed to temporize. He observed that if the seigniors feared such evil results, it would be better to prevent, rather than to accelerate the danger which would follow the proposed notification to the governors and municipal authorities throughout the country, on the subject of the inquisition. To make haste, was neither to fulfil the intentions nor to serve the interests of the King, and it was desirable “to avoid emotion and scandal.” Upon these heads the President made a very long speech, avowing, in conclusion, that if his Majesty should not find the course proposed agreeable, he was ready to receive all the indignation upon his own head.

Certainly, this position of the President was somewhat inconsistent with his previous course. He had been most violent in his denunciations of all who should interfere with the execution of the great edict of which he had been the original draughtsman. He had recently been ferocious in combating the opinion of those civilians in the assembly of doctors who had advocated the abolition of the death penalty against heresy. He had expressed with great energy his private opinion that the ancient religion would perish if the machinery of persecution were taken away; yet he now for the first time seemed to hear or to heed the outcry of a whole nation, and to tremble at the sound. Now that the die had been cast, in accordance with the counsels of his whole life, now that the royal commands, often enigmatical and hesitating; were at last too distinct to be misconstrued, and too peremptory to be tampered with—the president imagined the possibility of delay. The health of the ancient

Page 315

Frisian had but recently permitted him to resume his seat at the council board. His presence there was but temporary, for he had received from Madrid the acceptance of his resignation, accompanied with orders to discharge the duties of President until the arrival of his successor, Charles de Tisnacq. Thus, in his own language, the Duchess was still obliged to rely for a season “upon her ancient Palinurus,” a necessity far from agreeable to her, for she had lost confidence in the pilot. It may be supposed that he was anxious to smooth the troubled waters during the brief period in which he was still to be exposed to their fury; but he poured out the oil of his eloquence in vain. Nobody sustained his propositions. The Duchess, although terrified at the probable consequences, felt the impossibility of disobeying the deliberate decree of her brother. A proclamation was accordingly prepared, by which it was ordered that the Council of Trent, the edicts and the inquisition, should be published in every town and village in the provinces, immediately, and once in six months forever afterwards. The deed was done, and the Prince of Orange, stooping to the ear of his next neighbor, as they sat at the council-board, whispered that they were now about to witness the commencement of the most extraordinary tragedy which had ever been enacted.

The prophecy was indeed a proof that the Prince could read the future, but the sarcasm of the President, that the remark had been made in a tone of exultation, was belied by every action of the prophet’s life.

The fiat went forth. In the market-place of every town and village of the Netherlands, the inquisition was again formally proclaimed. Every doubt which had hitherto existed as to the intention of the government was swept away. No argument was thenceforward to be permissible as to the constitutionality of the edicts as to the compatibility of their provisions with the privileges of the land. The cry of a people in its agony ascended to Heaven. The decree was answered with a howl of execration. The flames of popular frenzy arose lurid and threatening above the house-tops of every town and village. The impending conflict could no longer be mistaken. The awful tragedy which the great watchman in the land had so long unceasingly predicted, was seen sweeping solemnly and steadily onward. The superstitious eyes of the age saw supernatural and ominous indications in the sky. Contending armies trampled the clouds; blood dropped from heaven; the exterminating angel rode upon the wind.

There was almost a cessation of the ordinary business of mankind. Commerce was paralyzed. Antwerp shook as with an earthquake. A chasm seemed to open, in which her prosperity and her very existence were to be forever engulfed. The foreign merchants, manufacturers, and artisans fled from her gates as if the plague were raging within them. Thriving cities were likely soon to be depopulated. The metropolitan heart of the whole country was almost motionless.

Page 316

Men high in authority sympathized with the general indignation. The Marquis Berghen, the younger Mansfeld, the Baron Montigny, openly refused to enforce the edicts within their governments. Men of eminence inveighed boldly and bitterly against the tyranny of the government, and counselled disobedience. The Netherlanders, it was stoutly maintained, were not such senseless brutes as to be ignorant of the mutual relation of prince and people. They knew that the obligation of a king to his vassals was as sacred as the duties of the subjects to the sovereign.

The four principal cities of Brabant first came forward in formal denunciation of the outrage. An elaborate and conclusive document was drawn up in their name, and presented to the Regent. It set forth that the recent proclamation violated many articles in the “joyous entry.” That ancient constitution had circumscribed the power of the clergy, and the jealousy had been felt in old times as much by the sovereign as the people. No ecclesiastical tribunal had therefore been allowed, excepting that of the Bishop of Cambray, whose jurisdiction was expressly confined to three classes of cases —those growing out of marriages, testaments, and mortmains.

It would be superfluous to discuss the point at the present day, whether the directions to the inquisitors and the publication of the edicts conflicted with the “joyous entrance.” To take a man from his house and burn him, after a brief preliminary examination, was clearly not to follow the, letter and spirit of the Brabantine habeas corpus, by which inviolability of domicile and regular trials were secured and sworn to by the monarch; yet such had been the uniform practice of inquisitors throughout the country. The petition of the four cities was referred by the Regent to the council of Brabant. The chancellor, or president judge of that tribunal was notoriously corrupt—a creature of the Spanish. His efforts to sustain the policy of the administration however vain. The Duchess ordered the archives of the province to be searched for precedents, and the council to report upon the petition. The case was too plain for argument or dogmatism, but the attempt was made to take refuge in obscurity. The answer of the council was hesitating and equivocal. The Duchess insisted upon a distinct and categorical answer to the four cities. Thus pressed, the council of Brabant declared roundly that no inquisition of any kind had ever existed, in the provinces. It was impossible that any other answer could be given, but Viglius, with his associates in the privy council, were extremely angry at the conclusion. The concession was, however, made, notwithstanding the bad example which, according to some persons, the victory thus obtained by so important a province would afford to the people in the other parts of the country. Brabant was declared free of the inquisition. Meanwhile the pamphlets, handbills, pasquils, and other popular productions were multiplied. To

Page 317

use a Flemish expression, they “snowed in the streets.” They were nailed nightly on all the great houses in Brussels. Patriots were called upon to strike, speak, redress. Pungent lampoons, impassioned invectives, and earnest remonstrances, were thrust into the hands of the Duchess. The publications, as they appeared; were greedily devoured by the people. “We are willing,” it was said, in a remarkable letter to the King, “to die for the Gospel, but we read therein ’Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s, and unto God that which is God’s.’ We thank God that our enemies themselves are compelled to bear witness to our piety and patience; so that it is a common saying—’He swears not; he is a Protestant; he is neither a fornicator nor a drunkard; he is of the new sect.’ Yet, notwithstanding these testimonials to our character, no manner of punishment has been forgotten by which we can possibly be Chastised.” This statement of the morality of the Puritans of the Netherlands was the justification of martyrs—not the self-glorification of Pharisees. The fact was incontrovertible. Their tenets were rigid, but their lives were pure. They belonged generally to the middling and lower classes. They were industrious artisans, who desired to live in the fear of God and in honor of their King. They were protected by nobles and gentlemen of high position, very many of whom came afterwards warmly to espouse the creed which at first they had only generously defended. Their whole character and position resembled, in many features, those of the English Puritans, who, three quarters of a century afterwards, fled for refuge to the Dutch Republic, and thence departed to establish the American Republic. The difference was that the Netherlanders were exposed to a longer persecution and a far more intense martyrdom.

Towards the end of the year (1565) which was closing in such universal gloom; the contemporary chronicles are enlivened with a fitful gleam of sunshine. The light enlivens only the more elevated regions of the Flemish world, but it is pathetic to catch a glimpse of those nobles, many of whose lives were to be so heroic, and whose destinies so tragic, as amid the shadows projected by coming evil, they still found time for the chivalrous festivals of their land and epoch. A splendid tournament was held at the Chateau d’Antoing to celebrate the nuptials of Baron Montigny with the daughter of Prince d’Espinoy. Orange, Horn, and Hoogstraaten were the challengers, and maintained themselves victoriously against all comers, Egmont and other distinguished knights being, among the number.

Thus brilliantly and gaily moved the first hours of that marriage which before six months had fled was to be so darkly terminated. The doom which awaited the chivalrous bridegroom in the dungeon of Simancas was ere long to be recorded in one of the foulest chapters of Philip’s tyranny.

Page 318

A still more elaborate marriage-festival, of which the hero was, at a later day, to exercise a most decisive influence over the fortunes of the land, was celebrated at Brussels before the close of the year. It will be remembered that Alexander, Prince of Parma, had accompanied Egmont on his return from Spain in the month of April. The Duchess had been delighted with the appearance of her son, then twenty years of age, but already an accomplished cavalier. She had expressed her especial pleasure in finding him so thoroughly a Spaniard “in manner, costume, and conversation,” that it could not be supposed he had ever visited any other land, or spoken any other tongue than that of Spain.

The nobles of the Flemish court did not participate in the mother’s enthusiasm. It could not be denied that he was a handsome and gallant young prince; but his arrogance was so intolerable as to disgust even those most disposed to pay homage to Margaret’s son. He kept himself mainly in haughty retirement, dined habitually alone in his own apartments, and scarcely honored any of the gentlemen of the Netherlands with his notice. Even Egmont, to whose care he had been especially recommended by Philip, was slighted. If, occasionally, he honored one or two of the seigniors with an invitation to his table, he sat alone in solemn state at the head of the board, while the guests, to whom he scarcely vouchsafed a syllable, were placed on stools without backs, below the salt. Such insolence, it may be supposed, was sufficiently galling to men of the proud character, but somewhat reckless demeanor, which distinguished the Netherland aristocracy. After a short time they held themselves aloof, thinking it sufficient to endure such airs from Philip. The Duchess at first encouraged the young Prince in his haughtiness, but soon became sad, as she witnessed its effects. It was the universal opinion that the young Prince was a mere compound of pride and emptiness. “There is nothing at all in the man,” said Chantonnay. Certainly the expression was not a fortunate one. Time was to show that there was more in the man than in all the governors despatched successively by Philip to the Netherlands; but the proof was to be deferred to a later epoch. Meantime, his mother was occupied and exceedingly perplexed with his approaching nuptials. He had been affianced early in the year to the Princess Donna Maria of Portugal. It was found necessary, therefore, to send a fleet of several vessels to Lisbon, to fetch the bride to the Netherlands, the wedding being appointed to take place in Brussels. This expense alone was considerable, and the preparations for banquets, jousts, and other festivities, were likewise undertaken on so magnificent a scale that the Duke, her husband, was offended at Margaret’s extravagance. The people, by whom she was not beloved, commented bitterly on the prodigalities which they were witnessing in a period of dearth and trouble. Many of the nobles mocked at her perplexity. To crown the whole, the young Prince was so obliging as to express the hope, in his mother’s hearing, that the bridal fleet, then on its way from Portugal, might sink with all it contained, to the bottom of the sea.

Page 319

The poor Duchess was infinitely chagrined by all these circumstances. The “insane and outrageous expenses” in which the nuptials had involved her, the rebukes of her husband, the sneers of the seigniors, the undutiful epigrams of her son, the ridicule of the people, affected her spirits to such a degree, harassed as she was with grave matters of state, that she kept her rooms for days together, weeping, hour after hour, in the most piteous manner. Her distress was the town talk; nevertheless, the fleet arrived in the autumn, and brought the youthful Maria to the provinces. This young lady, if the faithful historiographer of the Farnese house is to be credited, was the paragon of princesses.

> [This princess, in her teens, might already exclaim, with the venerable Faustus:
>
> > “Habe nun Philosophie
> > Juristerei and Medicin
> > Und leider ach: Theologie
> > Durch studirt mit heissem Bemuhen,” *etc*.
>
> The panegyrists of royal houses in the sixteenth century were not accustomed to do their work by halves.—Strada.]

She was the daughter of Prince Edward, and granddaughter of John the Third. She was young and beautiful; she could talk both Latin and Greek, besides being well versed in philosophy, mathematics and theology. She had the scriptures at her tongue’s end, both the old dispensation and the new, and could quote from the fathers with the promptness of a bishop. She was so strictly orthodox that, on being compelled by stress of weather to land in England, she declined all communication with Queen Elizabeth, on account of her heresy. She was so eminently chaste that she could neither read the sonnets of Petrarch, nor lean on the arm of a gentleman. Her delicacy upon such points was, indeed, carried to such excess, that upon one occasion when the ship which was bringing her to the Netherlands was discovered to be burning, she rebuked a rude fellow who came forward to save her life, assuring him that there was less contamination in the touch of fire than in that of man. Fortunately, the flames were extinguished, and the Phoenix of Portugal was permitted to descend, unburned, upon the bleak shores of Flanders.

The occasion, notwithstanding the recent tears of the Duchess, and the arrogance of the Prince, was the signal for much festivity among the courtiers of Brussels. It was also the epoch from which movements of a secret and important character were to be dated. The chevaliers of the Fleece were assembled, and Viglius pronounced before them one of his most classical orations. He had a good deal to say concerning the private adventures of Saint Andrew, patron of the Order, and went into some details of a conversation which that venerated personage had once held with the proconsul Aegeas. The moral which he deduced from his narrative was the necessity of union

among the magnates for the maintenance of the Catholic faith; the nobility and the Church being

Page 320

the two columns upon which the whole social fabric reposed. It is to be feared that the President became rather prosy upon the occasion. Perhaps his homily, like those of the fictitious Archbishop of Granada, began to smack of the apoplexy from which he had so recently escaped. Perhaps, the meeting being one of hilarity, the younger nobles became restive under the infliction of a very long and very solemn harangue. At any rate, as the meeting broke up, there was a good dial of jesting on the subject. De Hammes, commonly called “Toison d’Or,” councillor and king-at-arms of the Order, said that the President had been seeing visions and talking with Saint Andrew in a dream. Marquis Berghen asked for the source whence he had derived such intimate acquaintance with the ideas of the Saint. The President took these remarks rather testily, and, from trifling, the company became soon earnestly engaged in a warm discussion of the agitating topics of the day. It soon became evident to Viglius that De Hammer and others of his comrades had been dealing with dangerous things. He began shrewdly to suspect that the popular heresy was rapidly extending into higher regions; but it was not the President alone who discovered how widely the contamination was spreading. The meeting, the accidental small talk, which had passed so swiftly from gaiety to gravity, the rapid exchange of ideas, and the free-masonry by which intelligence upon forbidden topics had been mutually conveyed, became events of historical importance. Interviews between nobles, who, in the course of the festivities produced by the Montigny and Parma marriages, had discovered that they entertained a secret similarity of sentiment upon vital questions, became of frequent occurrence. The result to which such conferences led will be narrated in the following chapter.

Meantime, upon the 11th November, 1565, the marriage of Prince Alexander and Donna Maria was celebrated; with great solemnity, by the Archbishop of Cambray, in the chapel of the court at Brussels. On the following Sunday the wedding banquet was held in the great hall, where, ten years previously, the memorable abdication of the bridegroom’s imperial grandfather had taken place.

The walls were again hung with the magnificent tapestry of Gideon, while the Knights of the Fleece, with all the other grandees of the land, were assembled to grace the spectacle. The King was represented by his envoy in England, Don Guzman de Silva, who came to Brussels for the occasion, and who had been selected for this duty because, according to Armenteros, “he was endowed, beside his prudence, with so much witty gracefulness with ladies in matters of pastime and entertainment.” Early in the month of December, a famous tournament was held in the great market-place of Brussels, the Duke of Parma, the Duke of Aerschot, and Count Egmont being judges of the jousts. Count Mansfeld was the challenger, assisted by his son Charles, celebrated among the

Page 321

gentry of the land for his dexterity in such sports. To Count Charles was awarded upon this occasion the silver cup from the lady of the lists. Count Bossu received the prize for breaking best his lances; the Seigneur de Beauvoir for the most splendid entrance; Count Louis, of Nassau, for having borne himself most gallantly in the melee. On the same evening the nobles, together with the bridal pair, were entertained at a splendid supper, given by the city of Brussels in the magnificent Hotel de Ville. On this occasion the prizes gained at the tournament were distributed, amid the applause and hilarity of all the revellers.

Thus, with banquet, tourney, and merry marriage bells, with gaiety gilding the surface of society, while a deadly hatred to the inquisition was eating into the heart of the nation, and while the fires of civil war were already kindling, of which no living man was destined to witness the extinction, ended the year 1565.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

All offices were sold to the highest bidder
English Puritans
Habeas corpus
He did his best to be friends with all the world
Look through the cloud of dissimulation
No law but the law of the longest purse
Panegyrists of royal houses in the sixteenth century
Secret drowning was substituted for public burning
Sonnets of Petrarch
St. Bartholomew was to sleep for seven years longer
To think it capable of error, is the most devilish heresy of all

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 10.

The rise of the Dutch republic
John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.
1855
1566 [*Chapter vi*.]

Francis Junius—His sermon at Culemburg House—The Compromise— Portraits of Sainte Aldegonde, of Louis 'Nassau, of "Toison d'Or," of Charles Mansfeld—Sketch of the Compromise—Attitude of Orange— His letter to the Duchess—Signers of the Compromise—Indiscretion of the confederates—Espionage over Philip by Orange—Dissatisfaction of the seigniors—Conduct of Egmont—Despair of the people—-

Emigration to England—Its effects—The request—Meeting at Breda and Hoogstraaten —Exaggerated statements concerning the Request in the state council—Hesitation of the Duchess—Assembly of notables—Debate concerning the Request and the inquisition— Character of Brederode—Arrival of the petitioners in Brussels— Presentation of the Request—Emotion of Margaret—Speech of Brederode—Sketch of the Request—Memorable sarcasm of Berlaymont— Deliberation in the state council—- Apostille to the Request—Answer to the Apostille—Reply of the Duchess—Speech of D'Esquerdes— Response of Margaret—Memorable banquet at Culemburg House—- Name of "the beggars" adopted—Orange, Egmont, and

Page 322

Horn break up the riotous meeting—Costume of “the beggars”—Brederode at Antwerp —Horrible execution at Oudenardo—Similar cruelties throughout the provinces— Project of “Moderation”—Religious views of Orange—His resignation of all his offices not accepted—The “Moderation” characterized— Egmont at Arras Debate on the “Moderation”—Vacillation of Egmont— Mission of Montigny and Berghen to Spain—-Instructions to the envoys—Secret correspondence of Philip with the Pope concerning the Netherland inquisition and the edicts—Field-preaching in the provinces—Modet at Ghent—Other preachers characterized—Excitement at Tournay—Peter Gabriel at Harlem—Field—preaching near Antwerp— Embarrassment of the Regent—Excitement at Antwerp—Pensionary Wesenbeck sent to Brussels—Orange at Antwerp—His patriotic course —Misrepresentation of the Duchess—Intemperate zeal of Dr. Rythovius —Meeting at St. Trond—Conference at Duffel—Louis of Nassau deputed to the Regent —Unsatisfactory negotiations.

The most remarkable occurrence in the earlier part of the year 1556 was the famous Compromise. This document, by which the signers pledged themselves to oppose the inquisition, and to defend each other against all consequences of such a resistance, was probably the work of Philip de Marnix, Lord of Sainte Aldegonde. Much obscurity, however, rests upon the origin of this league. Its foundations had already been laid in the latter part of the preceding year. The nuptials of Parma with the Portuguese princess had been the cause of much festivity, not only in Brussels, but at Antwerp. The great commercial metropolis had celebrated the occasion by a magnificent banquet. There had been triumphal arches, wreaths of flowers, loyal speeches, generous sentiments, in the usual profusion. The chief ornament of the dinner-table had been a magnificent piece of confectionary, netting elaborately forth the mission of Count Mansfeld with the fleet to Portugal to fetch the bride from her home, with exquisitely finished figures in sugar—portraits, it is to be presumed—of the principal personages as they appeared during the most striking scenes of the history. At the very moment, however, of these delectations, a meeting was held at Brussels of men whose minds were occupied with sterner stuff than sugar-work. On the wedding-day of Parma, Francis Junius, a dissenting minister then residing at Antwerp, was invited to Brussels to preach a sermon in the house of Count Culemburg, on the horse-market (now called Little Sablon), before a small assembly of some twenty gentlemen.

This Francis Junius, born of a noble family in Bourges, was the pastor of the secret French congregation of Huguenots at Antwerp. He was very young, having arrived from Geneva, where he had been educated, to take charge of the secret church, when but just turned of twenty years. He was, however, already celebrated for his learning, his eloquence, and his courage. Towards the end of 1565, it had already become known that Junius was in secret understanding with Louis of Nassau, to prepare an address to government on the subject of the inquisition and edicts. Orders were given for his arrest.

Page 323

A certain painter of Brussels affected conversion to the new religion, that he might gain admission to the congregation, and afterwards earn the reward of the informer. He played his part so well that he was permitted to attend many meetings, in the course of which he sketched the portrait of the preacher, and delivered it to the Duchess Regent, together with minute statements as to his residence and daily habits. Nevertheless, with all this assistance, the government could not succeed in laying hands on him. He escaped to Breda, and continued his labors in spite of persecution. The man's courage may be estimated from the fact that he preached on one occasion a sermon, advocating the doctrines of the reformed Church with his usual eloquence, in a room overlooking the market-place, where, at the very, instant, the execution by fire of several heretics was taking place, while the light from the flames in which the brethren of their Faith were burning, was flickering through the glass windows of the conventicle. Such was the man who preached a sermon in Culemburg Palace on Parma's wedding-day. The nobles who listened to him were occupied with grave discourse after conclusion of the religious exercises. Junius took no part in their conversation, but in his presence it was resolved that a league against the "barbarous and violent inquisition" should be formed, and, that the confederates should mutually bind themselves both within and without the Netherlands to this great purpose. Junius, in giving this explicit statement; has not mentioned the names of the nobles before whom he preached. It may be inferred that some of them were the more ardent and the more respectable among the somewhat miscellaneous band by whom the Compromise was afterwards signed.

At about the same epoch, Louis of Nassau, Nicolas de Hammes, and certain other gentlemen met at the baths of Spa. At this secret assembly, the foundations of the Compromise were definitely laid. A document was afterwards drawn up, which was circulated for signatures in the early part of 1566. It is, therefore, a mistake to suppose that this memorable paper was simultaneously signed and sworn to at any solemn scene like that of the declaration of American Independence, or like some of the subsequent transactions in the Netherland revolt, arranged purposely for dramatic effect. Several copies of the Compromise were passed secretly from hand to hand, and in the course of two months some two thousand signatures had been obtained. The original copy bore but three names, those of Brederode, Charles de Mansfeld, and Louis of Nassau. The composition of the paper is usually ascribed to Sainte Aldegonde, although the fact is not indisputable. At any rate, it is very certain that he was one of the originators and main supporters of the famous league. Sainte Aldegonde was one of the most accomplished men of his age. He was of ancient nobility, as he proved by an abundance of historical and heraldic evidence, in answer to a scurrilous

Page 324

pamphlet in which he had been accused, among other delinquencies, of having sprung from plebeian blood. Having established his “extraction from true and ancient gentlemen of Savoy, paternally and maternally,” he rebuked his assailants in manly strain. “Even had it been that I was without nobility of birth,” said he, “I should be none the less or more a virtuous or honest man; nor can any one reproach me with having failed in the point of honor or duty. What greater folly than to boast of the virtue or gallantry of others, as do many nobles who, having neither a grain of virtue in their souls nor a drop of wisdom in their brains, are entirely useless to their country! Yet there are such men, who, because their ancestors have done some valorous deed, think themselves fit to direct the machinery of a whole country, having from their youth learned nothing but to dance and to spin like weathercocks with their heads as well as their heels.” Certainly Sainte Aldegonde had learned other lessons than these. He was one of the many-sided men who recalled the symmetry of antique patriots. He was a poet of much vigor and imagination; a prose writer whose style was surpassed by that of none of his contemporaries, a diplomatist in whose tact and delicacy William of Orange afterwards reposed in the most difficult and important negotiations, an orator whose discourses on many great public occasions attracted the attention of Europe, a soldier whose bravery was to be attested afterwards on many a well-fought field, a theologian so skilful in the polemics of divinity, that, as it will hereafter appear, he was more than a match for a bench of bishops upon their own ground, and a scholar so accomplished, that, besides speaking and writing the classical and several modern languages with facility, he had also translated for popular use the Psalms of David into vernacular verse, and at a very late period of his life was requested by the states-general of the republic to translate all the Scriptures, a work, the fulfilment of which was prevented by his death. A passionate foe to the inquisition and to all the abuses of the ancient Church, an ardent defender of civil liberty, it must be admitted that he partook also of the tyrannical spirit of Calvinism. He never rose to the lofty heights to which the spirit of the great founder of the commonwealth was destined to soar, but denounced the great principle of religious liberty for all consciences as godless. He was now twenty-eight years of age, having been born in the same year with his friend Louis of Nassau. His device, “Repos ailleurs,” finely typified the restless, agitated and laborious life to which he was destined.

Page 325

That other distinguished leader of the newly-formed league, Count Louis, was a true knight of the olden time, the very mirror of chivalry. Gentle, generous, pious; making use, in his tent before the battle, of the prayers which his mother sent him from the home of his childhood,—yet fiery in the field as an ancient crusader—doing the work of general and soldier with desperate valor and against any numbers—cheerful and steadfast under all reverses, witty and jocund in social intercourse, animating with his unceasing spirits the graver and more foreboding soul of his brother; he was the man to whom the eyes of the most ardent among the Netherland Reformers were turned at this early epoch, the trusty staff upon which the great Prince of Orange was to lean till it was broken. As gay as Brederode, he was unstained by his vices, and exercised a boundless influence over that reckless personage, who often protested that he would "die a poor soldier at his feet." The career of Louis was destined to be short, if reckoned by years, but if by events, it was to attain almost a patriarchal length. At the age of nineteen he had taken part in the battle of St. Quentin, and when once the war of freedom opened, his sword was never to be sheathed. His days were filled with life, and when he fell into his bloody but unknown grave, he was to leave a name as distinguished for heroic valor and untiring energy as for spotless integrity. He was small of stature, but well formed; athletic in all knightly exercises, with agreeable features, a dark laughing eye, close-clipped brown hair, and a peaked beard.

"Golden Fleece," as Nicholas de Hammes was universally denominated, was the illegitimate scion of a noble house. He was one of the most active of the early adherents to the league, kept the lists of signers in his possession, and scoured the country daily to procure new confederates. At the public preachings of the reformed religion, which soon after this epoch broke forth throughout the Netherlands as by a common impulse, he made himself conspicuous. He was accused of wearing, on such occasions, the ensigns of the Fleece about his neck, in order to induce ignorant people to believe that they might themselves legally follow, when they perceived a member of that illustrious fraternity to be leading the way. As De Hammer was only an official or servant of that Order, but not a companion, the seduction of the lieges by such false pretenses was reckoned among the most heinous of his offences. He was fierce in his hostility to the government, and one of those fiery spirits whose premature zeal was prejudicial to the cause of liberty, and disheartening to the cautious patriotism of Orange. He was for smiting at once the gigantic atrocity of the Spanish dominion, without waiting for the forging of the weapons by which the blows were to be dealt. He forgot that men and money were as necessary as wrath, in a contest with the most tremendous despotism of the world.

Page 326

“They wish,” he wrote to Count Louis, “that we should meet these hungry wolves with remonstrances, using gentle words, while they are burning and cutting off heads.—Be it so then. Let us take the pen let them take the sword. For them deeds, for us words. We shall weep, they will laugh. The Lord be praised for all; but I can not write this without tears.” This nervous language painted the situation and the character of the writer.

As for Charles Mansfeld, he soon fell away from the league which he had embraced originally with excessive ardor.

By the influence of the leaders many signatures were obtained during the first two months of the year. The language of the document was such that patriotic Catholics could sign it as honestly as Protestants. It inveighed bitterly against the tyranny of “a heap of strangers,” who, influenced only by private avarice and ambition, were making use of an affected zeal for the Catholic religion, to persuade the King into a violation of his oaths. It denounced the refusal to mitigate the severity of the edicts. It declared the inquisition, which it seemed the intention of government to fix permanently upon them, as “iniquitous, contrary to all laws, human and divine, surpassing the greatest barbarism which was ever practised by tyrants, and as redounding to the dishonor of God and to the total desolation of the country.” The signers protested, therefore, that “having a due regard to their duties as faithful vassals of his Majesty, and especially, as noblemen—-and in order not to be deprived of their estates and their lives by those who, under pretext of religion, wished to enrich themselves by plunder and murder,” they had bound themselves to each other by holy covenant and solemn oath to resist the inquisition. They mutually promised to oppose it in every shape, open or covert, under whatever mask, it might assume, whether bearing the name of inquisition, placard, or edict, “and to extirpate and eradicate the thing in any form, as the mother of all iniquity and disorder.” They protested before God and man, that they would attempt nothing to the dishonor of the Lord or to the diminution of the King’s grandeur, majesty, or dominion. They declared, on the contrary, an honest purpose to “maintain the monarch in his estate, and to suppress all seditious, tumults, monopolies, and factions.” They engaged to preserve their confederation, thus formed, forever inviolable, and to permit none of its members to be persecuted in any manner, in body or goods, by any proceeding founded on the inquisition, the edicts, or the present league.

It will be seen therefore, that the Compromise was in its origin, a covenant of nobles. It was directed against the foreign influence by which the Netherlands were exclusively governed, and against the inquisition, whether papal, episcopal, or by edict. There is no doubt that the country was controlled entirely by Spanish masters, and that the intention was to reduce the ancient liberty of the Netherlands into subjection to a junta of foreigners sitting at Madrid. Nothing more legitimate could be imagined than a constitutional resistance to such a policy.

Page 327

The Prince of Orange had not been consulted as to the formation of the league. It was sufficiently obvious to its founders that his cautious mind would find much to censure in the movement. His sentiments with regard to the inquisition and the edicts were certainly known to all men. In the beginning of this year, too, he had addressed a remarkable letter to the Duchess, in answer to her written commands to cause the Council of Trent, the inquisition, and the edicts, in accordance with the recent commands of the King, to be published and enforced throughout his government. Although his advice on the subject had not been asked, he expressed his sense of obligation to speak his mind on the subject, preferring the hazard of being censured for his remonstrance, to that of incurring the suspicion of connivance at the desolation of the land by his silence. He left the question of reformation in ecclesiastical morals untouched, as not belonging to his vocation: As to the inquisition, he most distinctly informed her highness that the hope which still lingered in the popular mind of escaping the permanent establishment of that institution, had alone prevented the utter depopulation of the country, with entire subversion of its commercial and manufacturing industry. With regard to the edicts, he temperately but forcibly expressed the opinion that it was very hard to enforce those placards now in their rigor, when the people were exasperated, and the misery universal, inasmuch as they had frequently been modified on former occasions. The King, he said, could gain nothing but difficulty for himself, and would be sure to lose the affection of his subjects by renewing the edicts, strengthening the inquisition, and proceeding to fresh executions, at a time when the people, moved by the example of their neighbors, were naturally inclined to novelty. Moreover, when by reason of the daily increasing prices of grain a famine was impending over the land, no worse moment could be chosen to enforce such a policy. In conclusion, he observed that he was at all times desirous to obey the commands of his Majesty and her Highness, and to discharge the duties of “a good Christian.” The use of the latter term is remarkable, as marking an epoch in the history of the Prince’s mind. A year before he would have said a good Catholic, but it was during this year that his mind began to be thoroughly pervaded by religious doubt, and that the great question of the Reformation forced itself, not only as a political, but as a moral problem upon him, which he felt that he could not much longer neglect instead of solving.

Page 328

Such were the opinions of Orange. He could not, however, safely entrust the sacred interests of a commonwealth to such hands as those of Brederode—however deeply that enthusiastic personage might drink the health of “Younker William,” as he affectionately denominated the Prince—or to “Golden Fleece,” or to Charles Mansfeld, or to that younger wild boar of Ardennes, Robert de la Marck. In his brother and in Sainte Aldegonde he had confidence, but he did not exercise over them that control which he afterwards acquired. His conduct towards the confederacy was imitated in the main by the other great nobles. The covenanters never expected to obtain the signatures of such men as Orange, Egmont, Horn, Meghen, Berghen, or Montigny, nor were those eminent personages ever accused of having signed the Compromise, although some of them were afterwards charged with having protected those who did affix their names to the document. The confederates were originally found among the lesser nobles. Of these some were sincere Catholics, who loved the ancient Church but hated the inquisition; some were fierce Calvinists or determined Lutherans; some were troublous and adventurous spirits, men of broken fortunes, extravagant habits, and boundless desires, who no doubt thought that the broad lands of the Church, with their stately abbeys; would furnish much more fitting homes and revenues for gallant gentlemen than for lazy monks. All were young, few had any prudence or conduct, and the history of the league more than justified the disapprobation of Orange. The nobles thus banded together, achieved little by their confederacy. They disgraced a great cause by their orgies, almost ruined it by their inefficiency, and when the rope of sand which they had twisted fell asunder, the people had gained nothing and the gentry had almost lost the confidence of the nation. These remarks apply to the mass of the confederates and to some of the leaders. Louis of Nassau and Sainte Aldegonde were ever honored and trusted as they deserved.

Although the language of the Compromise spoke of the leaguers as nobles, yet the document was circulated among burghers and merchants also, many of whom, according to the satirical remark of a Netherland Catholic, may, have been influenced by the desire of writing their names in such aristocratic company, and some of whom were destined to expiate such vainglory upon the scaffold.

With such associates, therefore, the profound and anxious mind of Orange could have little in common. Confidence expanding as the numbers increased, their audacity and turbulence grew with the growth of the league. The language at their wild banquets was as hot as the wine which confused their heads; yet the Prince knew that there was rarely a festival in which there did not sit some calm, temperate Spaniard, watching with quiet eye and cool brain the extravagant demeanor, and listening with composure to the dangerous avowals or bravados of these revellers, with the purpose

Page 329

of transmitting a record of their language or demonstrations, to the inmost sanctuary of Philip's cabinet at Madrid. The Prince knew, too, that the King was very sincere in his determination to maintain the inquisition, however dilatory his proceedings might appear. He was well aware that an armed force might be expected ere long to support the royal edicts. Already the Prince had organized that system of espionage upon Philip, by which the champion of his country was so long able to circumvent its despot. The King left letters carefully locked in his desk at night, and unseen hands had forwarded copies of them to William of Orange before the morning. He left memoranda in his pockets on retiring to bed, and exact transcripts of those papers found their way, likewise, ere he rose, to the same watchman in the Netherlands. No doubt that an inclination for political intrigue was a prominent characteristic of the Prince, and a blemish upon the purity of his moral nature. Yet the dissimulating policy of his age he had mastered only that he might accomplish the noblest purposes to which a great and good man can devote his life-the protection of the liberty and the religion of a whole people against foreign tyranny. His intrigue served his country, not a narrow personal ambition, and it was only by such arts that he became Philip's master, instead of falling at once, like so many great personages, a blind and infatuated victim. No doubt his purveyors of secret information were often destined fearfully to atone for their contraband commerce, but they who trade in treason must expect to pay the penalty of their traffic.

Although, therefore, the great nobles held themselves aloof from the confederacy, yet many of them gave unequivocal signs of their dissent from the policy adopted by government. Marquis Berghen wrote to the Duchess; resigning his posts, on the ground of his inability to execute the intention of the King in the matter of religion. Meghen replied to the same summons by a similar letter. Egmont assured her that he would have placed his offices in the King's hands in Spain, could he have foreseen that his Majesty would form such resolutions as had now been proclaimed. The sentiments of Orange were avowed in the letter to which we have already alluded. His opinions were shared by Montigny, Culemburg, and many others. The Duchess was almost reduced to desperation. The condition of the country was frightful. The most determined loyalists, such as Berlaymont, Viglius and Hopper, advised her not to mention the name of inquisition in a conference which she was obliged to hold with a deputation from Antwerp. She feared, all feared, to pronounce the hated word. She wrote despairing letters to Philip, describing the condition of the land and her own agony in the gloomiest colors. Since the arrival of the royal orders, she said, things had gone from bad to worse. The King had been ill advised. It was useless to tell the people that the inquisition had always existed

Page 330

in the provinces. They maintained that it was a novelty; that the institution was a more rigorous one than the Spanish Inquisition, which, said Margaret, “was most odious, as the King knew.” It was utterly impossible to carry the edicts into execution. Nearly all the governors of provinces had told her plainly that they would not help to burn fifty or sixty thousand Netherlanders. Thus bitterly did Margaret of Parma bewail the royal decree; not that she had any sympathy for the victims, but because she felt the increasing danger to the executioner. One of two things it was now necessary to decide upon, concession or armed compulsion. Meantime, while Philip was slowly and secretly making his levies, his sister, as well as his people, was on the rack. Of all the seigniors, not one was placed in so painful a position as Egmont. His military reputation and his popularity made him too important a personage to be slighted, yet he was deeply mortified at the lamentable mistake which he had committed. He now averred that he would never take arms against the King, but that he would go where man should never see him more.

Such was the condition of the nobles, greater and less. That of the people could not well be worse. Famine reigned in the land. Emigration, caused not by over population, but by persecution, was fast weakening the country. It was no wonder that not only, foreign merchants should be scared from the great commercial cities by the approaching disorders; but that every industrious artisan who could find the means of escape should seek refuge among strangers, wherever an asylum could be found. That asylum was afforded by Protestant England, who received these intelligent and unfortunate wanderers with cordiality, and learned with eagerness the lessons in mechanical skill which they had to teach. Already thirty thousand emigrant Netherlanders were established in Sandwich, Norwich, and other places, assigned to them by Elizabeth. It had always, however, been made a condition of the liberty granted to these foreigners for practising their handiwork, that each house should employ at least one English apprentice. “Thus,” said a Walloon historian, splenetically, “by this regulation, and by means of heavy duties on foreign manufactures, have the English built up their own fabrics and prohibited those of the Netherlands. Thus have they drawn over to their own country our skilful artisans to practise their industry, not at home but abroad, and our poor people are thus losing the means of earning their livelihood. Thus has clothmaking, silk-making and the art of dyeing declined in this country, and would have been quite extinguished but by our wise countervailing edicts.” The writer, who derived most of his materials and his wisdom from the papers of Councillor d’Assonleville, could hardly doubt that the persecution to which these industrious artisans, whose sufferings he affected to deplore, had been subjected, must have had something

Page 331

to do with their expatriation; but he preferred to ascribe it wholly to the protective system adopted by England. In this he followed the opinion of his preceptor. “For a long time,” said Assonleville, “the Netherlands have been the Indies to England; and as long as she has them, she needs no other. The French try to surprise our fortresses and cities: the English make war upon our wealth and upon the purses of the people.” Whatever the cause, however, the current of trade was already turned. The cloth-making of England was already gaining preponderance over that of the provinces. Vessels now went every week from Sandwich to Antwerp, laden with silk, satin, and cloth, manufactured in England, while as many but a few years before, had borne the Flemish fabrics of the same nature from Antwerp to England.

It might be supposed by disinterested judges that persecution was at the bottom of this change in commerce. The Prince of Orange estimated that up to this period fifty thousand persons in the provinces had been put to death in obedience to the edicts. He was a moderate man, and accustomed to weigh his words. As a new impulse had been given to the system of butchery—as it was now sufficiently plain that “if the father had chastised his people with a scourge the son held a whip of scorpions” as the edicts were to be enforced with renewed vigor—it was natural that commerce and manufactures should make their escape out of a doomed land as soon as possible, whatever system of tariffs might be adopted by neighboring nations.

A new step had been resolved upon early in the month of March by the confederates. A petition, or “Request,” was drawn up, which was to be presented to the Duchess Regent in a formal manner by a large number of gentlemen belonging to the league. This movement was so grave, and likely to be followed by such formidable results, that it seemed absolutely necessary for Orange and his friends to take some previous cognizance of it before it was finally arranged. The Prince had no power, nor was there any reason why he should have the inclination, to prevent the measure, but he felt it his duty to do what he could to control the vehemence of the men who were moving so rashly forward, and to take from their manifesto, as much as possible, the character of a menace.

For this end, a meeting ostensibly for social purposes and “good cheer” was held, in the middle of March, at Breda, and afterwards adjourned to Hoogstraaten. To these conferences Orange invited Egmont, Horn, Hoogstraaten, Berghen, Meghen, Montigny, and other great nobles. Brederode, Tholouse, Boxtel, and other members of the league, were also present. The object of the Prince in thus assembling his own immediate associates, governors of provinces and knights of the Fleece, as well as some of the leading members of the league, was twofold. It had long been his opinion that a temperate and loyal movement was still possible, by which the impending convulsions

Page 332

might be averted. The line of policy which he had marked out required the assent of the magnates of the land, and looked towards the convocation of the states-general. It was natural that he should indulge in the hope of being seconded by the men who were in the same political and social station with himself. All, although Catholics, hated the inquisition. As Viglius pathetically exclaimed, “Saint Paul himself would have been unable to persuade these men that good fruit was to be gathered from the inquisition in the cause of religion.” Saint Paul could hardly be expected to reappear on earth for such a purpose. Meantime the arguments of the learned President had proved powerless, either to convince the nobles that the institution was laudable or to obtain from the Duchess a postponement in the publication of the late decrees. The Prince of Orange, however, was not able to bring his usual associates to his way of thinking. The violent purposes of the leaguers excited the wrath of the more loyal nobles. Their intentions were so dangerous, even in the estimation of the Prince himself, that he felt it his duty to lay the whole subject before the Duchess, although he was not opposed to the presentation of a modest and moderate Request. Meghen was excessively indignant at the plan of the confederates, which he pronounced an insult to the government, a treasonable attempt to overawe the Duchess, by a “few wretched vagabonds.” He swore that “he would break every one of their heads, if the King would furnish him with a couple of hundred thousand florins.” Orange quietly rebuked this truculent language, by assuring him both that such a process would be more difficult than he thought, and that he would also find many men of great respectability among the vagabonds.

The meeting separated at Hoogstraaten without any useful result, but it was now incumbent upon the Prince, in his own judgment, to watch, and in a measure to superintend, the proceedings of the confederates. By his care the contemplated Request was much altered, and especially made more gentle in its tone. Meghen separated himself thenceforth entirely from Orange, and ranged himself exclusively upon the side of Government. Egmont vacillated, as usual, satisfying neither the Prince nor the Duchess.

Margaret of Parma was seated in her council chamber very soon after these occurrences, attended both by Orange and Egmont, when the Count of Meghen entered the apartment. With much precipitation, he begged that all matters then before the board might be postponed, in order that he might make an important announcement. He then stated that he had received information from a gentleman on whose word he could rely, a very affectionate servant of the King, but whose name he had promised not to reveal, that a very extensive conspiracy of heretics and sectaries had been formed, both within and without the Netherlands, that they had already a force of thirty-five thousand men, foot and horse,

Page 333

ready for action, that they were about to make a sudden invasion, and to plunder the whole country, unless they immediately received a formal concession of entire liberty of conscience, and that, within six or seven days, fifteen hundred men-at-arms would make their appearance before her Highness. These ridiculous exaggerations of the truth were confirmed by Egmont, who said that he had received similar information from persons whose names he was not at liberty to mention, but from whose statements he could announce that some great tumult might be expected every day. He added that there were among the confederates many who wished to change their sovereign, and that the chieftains and captains of the conspiracy were all appointed. The same nobleman also laid before the council a copy of the Compromise, the terms of which famous document scarcely justified the extravagant language with which it had been heralded. The Duchess was astounded at these communications. She had already received, but probably not yet read, a letter from the Prince of Orange upon the subject, in which a moderate and plain statement of the actual facts was laid down, which was now reiterated by the same personage by word of mouth. An agitated and inconclusive debate followed, in which, however, it sufficiently appeared, as the Duchess informed her brother, that one of two things must be done without further delay. The time had arrived for the government to take up arms, or to make concessions.

In one of the informal meetings of councillors, now held almost daily, on the subject of the impending Request, Aremberg, Meghen, and Berlaymont maintained that the door should be shut in the face of the petitioners without taking any further notice of the petition. Berlaymont suggested also, that if this course were not found advisable, the next best thing would be to allow the confederates to enter the palace with their Request, and then to cut them to pieces to the very last man, by means of troops to be immediately ordered from the frontiers. Such sanguinary projects were indignantly rebuked by Orange. He maintained that the confederates were entitled to be treated with respect. Many of them, he said, were his friends—some of them his relations—and there was no reason for refusing to gentlemen of their rank, a right which belonged to the poorest plebeian in the land. Egmont sustained these views of the Prince as earnestly as he had on a previous occasion appeared to countenance the more violent counsels of Meghen.

Meantime, as it was obvious that the demonstration on the part of the confederacy was soon about to be made, the Duchess convened a grand assembly of notables, in which not only all the state and privy councillors, but all the governors and knights of the Fleece were to take part. On the 28th of March, this assembly was held, at which the whole subject of the Request, together with the proposed modifications of the edicts and abolition of the inquisition, was discussed.

Page 334

The Duchess also requested the advice of the meeting—whether it would not be best for her to retire to some other city, like Mons, which she had selected as her stronghold in case of extremity. The decision was that it would be a high-handed proceeding to refuse the right of petition to a body of gentlemen, many of them related to the greatest nobles in the land; but it was resolved that they should be required to make their appearance without arms. As to the contemplated flight of the Duchess, it was urged, with much reason, that such a step would cast disgrace upon the government, and that it would be a sufficiently precautionary measure to strengthen the guards at the city gates—not to prevent the entrance of the petitioners, but to see that they were unaccompanied by an armed force. It had been decided that Count Brederode should present the petition to the Duchess at the head of a deputation of about three hundred gentlemen. The character of the nobleman thus placed foremost on such an important occasion has been sufficiently made manifest. He had no qualities whatever but birth and audacity to recommend him as a leader for a political party. It was to be seen that other attributes were necessary to make a man useful in such a position, and the Count's deficiencies soon became lamentably conspicuous. He was the lineal descendant and representative of the old Sovereign Counts of Holland. Five hundred years before his birth; his ancestor Sikko, younger brother of Dirk the Third, had died, leaving two sons, one of whom was the first Baron of Brederode. A descent of five centuries in unbroken male succession from the original sovereigns of Holland, gave him a better genealogical claim to the provinces than any which Philip of Spain could assert through the usurping house of Burgundy. In the approaching tumults he hoped for an opportunity of again asserting the ancient honors of his name. He was a sworn foe to Spaniards and to "water of the fountain." But a short time previously to this epoch he had written to Louis of Nassau, then lying ill of a fever, in order gravely to remonstrate with him on the necessity of substituting wine for water on all occasions, and it will be seen in the sequel that the wine-cup was the great instrument on which he relied for effecting the deliverance of the country. Although "neither bachelor nor chancellor," as he expressed it, he was supposed to be endowed with ready eloquence and mother wit. Even these gifts, however, if he possessed them, were often found wanting on important emergencies. Of his courage there was no question, but he was not destined to the death either of a warrior or a martyr. Headlong, noisy, debauched, but brave, kind-hearted and generous, he was a fitting representative of his ancestors, the hard-fighting, hard-drinking, crusading, free-booting sovereigns of Holland and Friesland, and would himself have been more at home and more useful in the eleventh century than in the sixteenth.

Page 335

It was about six o'clock in the evening, on the third day of April (1566), that the long-expected cavalcade at last entered Brussels. An immense concourse of citizens of all ranks thronged around the noble confederates as soon as they made their appearance. They were about two hundred in number, all on horseback, with pistols in their holsters, and Brederode, tall, athletic, and martial in his bearing, with handsome features and fair curling locks upon his shoulders, seemed an appropriate chieftain for that band of Batavian chivalry.

The procession was greeted with frequent demonstrations of applause as it wheeled slowly through the city till it reached the mansion of Orange Nassau. Here Brederode and Count Louis alighted, while the rest of the company dispersed to different quarters of the town.

"They thought that I should not come to Brussels," said Brederode, as he dismounted. "Very well, here I am; and perhaps I shall depart in a different manner." In the Course of the next day, Counts Culemburg and Van den Berg entered the city with one hundred other cavaliers.

On the morning of the fifth of April, the confederates were assembled at the Culemburg mansion, which stood on the square called the Sabon, within a few minutes' walk of the palace. A straight handsome street led from the house along the summit of the hill, to the splendid residence of the ancient Dukes of Brabant, then the abode of Duchess Margaret. At a little before noon, the gentlemen came forth, marching on foot, two by two, to the number of three hundred. Nearly all were young, many of them bore the most ancient historical names of their country, every one was arrayed in magnificent costume. It was regarded as ominous, that the man who led the procession, Philip de Bailleul, was lame. The line was closed by Brederode and Count Louis, who came last, walking arm in arm. An immense crowd was collected in the square in front of the palace, to welcome the men who were looked upon as the deliverers of the land from Spanish tyranny, from the Cardinalists, and from the inquisition. They were received with deafening huzzas and clappings of hands by the assembled populace. As they entered the council chamber, passing through the great hall, where ten years before the Emperor had given away his crowns, they found the Emperor's daughter seated in the chair of state, and surrounded by the highest personages of the country. The emotion of the Duchess was evident, as the procession somewhat abruptly made its appearance; nor was her agitation diminished as she observed among the petitioners many relatives and, retainers of the Orange and Egmont houses, and saw friendly glances of recognition exchanged between them and their chiefs.

Page 336

As soon as all had entered the senate room, Brederode advanced, made a low obeisance, and spoke a brief speech. He said that he had come thither with his colleagues to present a humble petition to her Highness. He alluded to the reports which had been rife, that they had contemplated tumult, sedition, foreign conspiracies, and, what was more abominable than all, a change of sovereign. He denounced such statements as calumnies, begged the Duchess to name the men who had thus aspersed an honorable and loyal company, and called upon her to inflict exemplary punishment upon the slanderers. With these prefatory remarks he presented the petition. The famous document was then read aloud.—Its tone was sufficiently loyal, particularly in the preamble, which was filled with protestations of devotion to both King and Duchess. After this conventional introduction, however, the petitioners proceeded to state, very plainly, that the recent resolutions of his Majesty, with regard to the edict and the inquisition, were likely to produce a general rebellion. They had hoped, they said, that a movement would be made by the seigniors or by the estates, to remedy the evil by striking at its cause, but they had waited in vain. The danger, on the other hand, was augmenting every day, universal sedition was at the gate, and they had therefore felt obliged to delay no longer, but come forward the first and do their duty. They professed to do this with more freedom, because the danger touched them very nearly. They were the most exposed to the calamities which usually spring from civil commotions, for their, houses and lands situate in the open fields, were exposed to the pillage of all the world. Moreover there was not one of them, whatever his condition, who was not liable at any moment to be executed under the edicts, at the false complaint of the first man who wished to obtain his estate, and who chose to denounce him to the inquisitor, at whose mercy were the lives and property of all. They therefore begged the Duchess Regent to despatch an envoy on their behalf, who should humbly implore his Majesty to abolish the edicts. In the mean time they requested her Highness to order a general surcease of the inquisition, and of all executions, until the King's further pleasure was made known, and until new ordinances, made by his Majesty with advice and consent of the states-general duly assembled, should be established. The petition terminated as it had commenced, with expressions of extreme respect and devoted loyalty.

The agitation of Duchess Margaret increased very perceptibly during the reading of the paper. When it was finished, she remained for a few minutes quite silent, with tears rolling down her cheeks. As soon as she could overcome her excitement, she uttered a few words to the effect that she would advise with her councillors and give the petitioners such answer as should be found suitable. The confederates then passed out from the council chamber into the grand hall; each individual, as he took his departure, advancing towards the Duchess and making what was called the "caracole," in token of reverence. There was thus ample time to contemplate the whole company; and to count the numbers of the deputation.

Page 337

After this ceremony had been concluded, there was much earnest debate in. the council. The Prince of Orange addressed a few words to the Duchess, with the view of calming her irritation. He observed that the confederates were no seditious rebels, but loyal gentlemen, well born, well connected, and of honorable character. They had been influenced, he said, by an honest desire to save their country from impending danger—-not by avarice or ambition. Egmont shrugged his shoulders, and observed that it was necessary for him to leave the court for a season, in order to make a visit to the baths of Aix, for an inflammation which he had in the leg. It was then that Berlaymont, according to the account which has been sanctioned by nearly every contemporary writer, whether Catholic or Protestant, uttered the gibe which was destined to become immortal, and to give a popular name to the confederacy. "What, Madam," he is reported to have cried in a passion, "is it possible that your Highness can entertain fears of these beggars? (gueux). Is it not obvious what manner of men they are? They have not had wisdom enough to manage their own estates, and are they now to teach the King and your Highness how to govern the country? By the living God, if my advice were taken, their petition should have a cudgel for a commentary, and we would make them go down the steps of the palace a great deal faster than they mounted them."

The Count of Meghen was equally violent in his language. Aremberg was for ordering "their reverences; the confederates," to, quit Brussels without delay. The conversation, carried on in so violent a key, might not unnaturally have been heard by such of the gentlemen as had not yet left the grand hall adjoining the council chamber. The meeting of the council was then adjourned for an hour or two, to meet again in the afternoon, for the purpose of deciding deliberately upon the answer to be given to the Request. Meanwhile, many of the confederates were swaggering about the streets, talking very bravely of the scene which had just occurred, and it is probable, boasting not a little of the effect which their demonstration would produce. As they passed by the house of Berlaymont, that nobleman, standing at his window in company with Count Aremberg, is said to have repeated his jest. "There go our fine beggars again," said he. "Look, I pray you, with what bravado they are passing before us!"

On the 6th of April, Brederode, attended by a large number of his companions, again made his appearance at the palace. He then received the petition, which was returned to him with an apostille or commentary to this effect:—Her Highness would despatch an envoy for the purpose of inducing his Majesty to grant the Request. Every thing worthy of the King's unaffected (naive) and customary benignity might be expected as to the result. The Duchess had already, with the assistance of the state and privy councillors, Fleece knights and governors, commenced

Page 338

a project for moderating the edicts, to be laid before the King. As her authority did not allow her to suspend the inquisition and placards, she was confident that the petitioners would be satisfied with the special application about to be made to the King. Meantime, she would give orders to all inquisitors, that they should proceed “modestly and discreetly” in their office, so that no one would have cause to complain. Her Highness hoped likewise that the gentlemen on their part would conduct themselves in a loyal and satisfactory manner; thus proving that they had no intention to make innovations in the ancient religion of the country.

Upon the next day but one, Monday, 8th of April, Brederode, attended by a number of the confederates, again made his appearance at the palace, for the purpose of delivering an answer to the Apostille. In this second paper the confederates rendered thanks for the prompt reply which the Duchess had given to their Request, expressed regrets that she did not feel at liberty to suspend the inquisition, and declared their confidence that she would at once give such orders to the inquisitors and magistrates that prosecutions for religious matters should cease, until the King’s further pleasure should be declared. They professed themselves desirous of maintaining whatever regulations should be thereafter established by his Majesty, with the advice and consent of the states-general, for the security of the ancient religion, and promised to conduct themselves generally in such wise that her Highness would have every reason to be satisfied with them. They, moreover, requested that the Duchess would cause the Petition to be printed in authentic form by the government printer.

The admission that the confederates would maintain the ancient religion had been obtained, as Margaret informed her brother, through the dexterous management of Hoogstraaten, without suspicion on the part of the petitioners that the proposition for such a declaration came from her.

The Duchess replied by word of mouth to the second address thus made to her by the confederates, that she could not go beyond the Apostille which she had put on record. She had already caused letters for the inquisitors and magistrates to be drawn up. The minutes for those instructions should be laid before the confederates by Count Hoogstraaten and Secretary Berty. As for the printing of their petition, she was willing to grant their demand, and would give orders to that effect.

The gentlemen having received this answer, retired into the great hall. After a few minutes’ consultation, however, they returned to the council chamber, where the Seigneur d’Esquerdes, one of their number, addressed a few parting words, in the name of his associates, to the Regent; concluding with a request that she would declare, the confederates to have done no act, and made no demonstration, inconsistent with their duty and with a perfect respect for his Majesty.

Page 339

To this demand the Duchess answered somewhat drily that she could not be judge in such a cause. Time and their future deeds, she observed, could only bear witness as to their purposes. As for declarations from her, they must be satisfied with the Apostille which they had already received.

With this response, somewhat more tart than agreeable, the nobles were obliged to content themselves, and they accordingly took their leave.

It must be confessed that they had been disposed to slide rather cavalierly over a good deal of ground towards the great object which they had in view. Certainly the petitio principii was a main feature of their logic. They had, in their second address, expressed perfect confidence as to two very considerable concessions. The Duchess was practically to suspend the inquisition, although she had declared herself without authority for that purpose, The King, who claimed, de jure and de facto, the whole legislative power, was thenceforth to make laws on religious matters by and with the consent of the states-general. Certainly, these ends were very laudable, and if a civil and religious revolution could have been effected by a few gentlemen going to court in fine clothes to present a petition, and by sitting down to a tremendous banquet afterwards, Brederode and his associates were the men to accomplish the task. Unfortunately, a sea of blood and long years of conflict lay between the nation and the promised land, which for a moment seemed so nearly within reach.

Meantime the next important step in Brederode's eyes was a dinner. He accordingly invited the confederates to a magnificent repast which he had ordered to be prepared in the Culemburg mansion. Three hundred guests sat down, upon the 8th of April, to this luxurious banquet, which was destined to become historical.

The board glittered with silver and gold. The wine circulated with more than its usual rapidity among the band of noble Bacchanals, who were never weary of drinking the healths of Brederode, of Orange, and of Egmont. It was thought that the occasion imperiously demanded an extraordinary carouse, and the political events of the past three days lent an additional excitement to the wine. There was an earnest discussion as to an appropriate name to be given to their confederacy. Should they call themselves the "Society of Concord," the restorers of lost liberty, or by what other attractive title should the league be baptized? Brederode was, however, already prepared to settle the question. He knew the value of a popular and original name; he possessed the instinct by which adroit partisans in every age have been accustomed to convert the reproachful epithets of their opponents into watchwords of honor, and he had already made his preparations for a startling theatrical effect. Suddenly, amid the din of voices, he arose, with all his rhetorical powers at command: He recounted to the company the observations which

Page 340

the Seigneur de Berlaymont was reported to have made to the Duchess, upon the presentation of the Request, and the name which he had thought fit to apply to them collectively. Most of the gentlemen then heard the memorable sarcasm for the first time. Great was the indignation of all that the state councillor should have dared to stigmatize as beggars a band of gentlemen with the best blood of the land in their veins. Brederode, on the contrary, smoothing their anger, assured them with good humor that nothing could be more fortunate. “They call us beggars!” said he; “let us accept the name. We will contend with the inquisition, but remain loyal to the King, even till compelled to wear the beggar’s sack.”

He then beckoned to one of his pages, who brought him a leathern wallet, such as was worn at that day by professional mendicants, together with a large wooden bowl, which also formed part of their regular appurtenances. Brederode immediately hung the wallet around his neck, filled the bowl with wine, lifted it with both hands, and drained it at a draught. “Long live the beggars!” he cried, as he wiped his beard and set the bowl down. “Vivent les gueulx.” Then for the first time, from the lips of those reckless nobles rose the famous, cry, which was so often to ring over land and sea, amid blazing cities, on blood-stained decks, through the smoke and carnage of many a stricken field. The humor of Brederode was hailed with deafening shouts of applause. The Count then threw the wallet around the neck of his nearest neighbor, and handed him the wooden bawl. Each guest, in turn, donned the mendicant’s knapsack. Pushing aside his golden goblet, each filled the beggars’ bowl to the brim, and drained it to the beggars’ health. Roars of laughter, and shouts of “Vivent les gueulx” shook the walls of the stately mansion, as they were doomed never to shake again. The shibboleth was invented. The conjuration which they had been anxiously seeking was found. Their enemies had provided them with a spell, which was to prove, in after days, potent enough to start a spirit from palace or hovel, forest or wave, as the deeds of the “wild beggars,” the “wood beggars,” and the “beggars of the sea” taught Philip at last to understand the nation which he had driven to madness.

When the wallet and bowl had made the circuit of the table, they were suspended to a pillar in the hall. Each of the company in succession then threw some salt into his goblet, and, placing himself under these symbols of the brotherhood, repeated a jingling distich, produced impromptu for the occasion.

By this salt, by this bread, by this wallet we swear,
These beggars ne’er will change, though all the world should stare.

Page 341

This ridiculous ceremony completed the rites by which the confederacy received its name; but the banquet was by no means terminated. The uproar became furious. The younger and more reckless nobles abandoned themselves to revelry, which would have shamed heathen Saturnalia. They renewed to each other, every moment, their vociferous oaths of fidelity to the common cause, drained huge beakers to the beggars' health, turned their caps and doublets inside out, danced upon chairs and tables. Several addressed each other as Lord Abbot, or Reverend Prior, of this or that religious institution, thus indicating the means by which some of them hoped to mend their broken fortunes.

While the tumult was at its height, the Prince of Orange with Counts Horn and Egmont entered the apartment. They had been dining quietly with Mansfeld, who was confined to his house with an inflamed eye, and they were on their way to the council chamber, where the sessions were now prolonged nightly to a late hour. Knowing that Hoogstraaten, somewhat against his will, had been induced to be present at the banquet, they had come round by the way of Culemburg House, to induce him to retire. They were also disposed, if possible, to abridge the festivities which their influence would have been powerless to prevent.

These great nobles, as soon as they made their appearance, were surrounded by a crew of "beggars," maddened and dripping with their, recent baptism of wine, who compelled them to drink a cup amid shouts of "Vivent le roi et les gueulx!" The meaning of this cry they of course could not understand, for even those who had heard Berlaymont's contemptuous remarks, might not remember the exact term which he had used, and certainly could not be aware of the importance to which it had just been elevated. As for Horn, he disliked and had long before quarrelled with Brederode, had prevented many persons from signing the Compromise, and, although a guest at that time of Orange, was in the habit of retiring to bed before supper, to avoid the company of many who frequented the house. Yet his presence for a few moments, with the best intentions, at the conclusion of this famous banquet, was made one of the most deadly charges which were afterwards drawn up against him by the Crown. The three seigniors refused to be seated, and remained but for a moment, "the length of a Miserere," taking with them Hoogstraaten as they retired. They also prevailed upon the whole party to break up at the same time, so that their presence had served at least to put a conclusion to the disgraceful riot. When they arrived at the council chamber they received the thanks of the Duchess for what they had done.

Such was the first movement made by the members of the Compromise. Was it strange that Orange should feel little affinity with such companions? Had he not reason to hesitate, if the sacred cause of civil and religious liberty could only be maintained by these defenders and with such assistance?

Page 342

The “beggars” did not content themselves with the name alone of the time-honored fraternity of Mendicants in which they had enrolled themselves. Immediately after the Culemburg banquet, a costume for the confederacy was decided upon.

These young gentlemen discarding gold lace and velvet, thought it expedient to array themselves in doublets and hose of ashen grey, with short cloaks of the same color, all of the coarsest materials. They appeared in this guise in the streets, with common felt hats on their heads, and beggars’ pouches and bowls at their sides. They caused also medals of lead and copper to be struck, bearing upon one side the head of Philip; upon the reverse, two hands clasped within a wallet, with the motto, “Faithful to the King, even to wearing the beggar’s sack.” These badges they wore around their necks, or as buttons to their hats. As a further distinction they shaved their beards close, excepting the moustachios, which were left long and pendent in the Turkish fashion,—that custom, as it seemed, being an additional characteristic of Mendicants.

Very soon after these events the nobles of the league dispersed from the capital to their various homes. Brederode rode out of Brussels at the head of a band of cavaliers, who saluted the concourse of applauding spectators with a discharge of their pistols. Forty-three gentlemen accompanied him to Antwerp, where he halted for a night. The Duchess had already sent notice to the magistrates of that city of his intended visit, and warned them to have an eye upon his proceedings. “The great beggar,” as Hoogstraaten called him, conducted himself, however, with as much propriety as could be expected. Four or five thousand of the inhabitants thronged about the hotel where he had taken up his quarters. He appeared at a window with his wooden bowl, filled with wine, in his hands, and his wallet at his side. He assured the multitude that he was ready to die to defend the good people of Antwerp and of all the Netherlands against the edicts and the inquisition. Meantime he drank their healths, and begged all who accepted the pledge to hold up their hands. The populace, highly amused, held up and clapped their hands as honest Brederode drained his bowl, and were soon afterwards persuaded to retire in great good humor.

These proceedings were all chronicled and transmitted to Madrid. It was also both publicly reported and secretly registered, that Brederode had eaten capons and other meat at Antwerp, upon Good Friday, which happened to be the, day of his visit to that city. He denied the charge, however; with ludicrous vehemence. “They who have told Madame that we ate meat in Antwerp,” he wrote to Count Louis, “have lied wickedly and miserably, twenty-four feet down in their throats.” He added that his nephew, Charles Mansfeld, who, notwithstanding the indignant prohibition of his father, had assisted of the presentation of the Request, and was then in his uncle’s company at Antwerp, had ordered a capon, which Brederode had countermanded. “They told me afterwards,” said he, “that my nephew had broiled a sausage in his chamber. I suppose that he thought himself in Spain, where they allow themselves such dainties.”

Page 343

Let it not be thought that these trifles are beneath the dignity of history. Matters like these filled the whole soul of Philip, swelled the bills of indictment for thousands of higher and better men than Brederode, and furnished occupation as well for secret correspondents and spies as for the most dignified functionaries of Government. Capons or sausages on Good Friday, the Psalms of Clement Marot, the Sermon on the Mount in the vernacular, led to the rack, the gibbet, and the stake, but ushered in a war against the inquisition which was to last for eighty years. Brederode was not to be the hero of that party which he disgraced by his buffoonery. Had he lived, he might, perhaps, like many of his confederates, have redeemed, by his bravery in the field, a character which his orgies had rendered despicable. He now left Antwerp for the north of Holland, where, as he soon afterwards reported to Count Louis, “the beggars were as numerous as the sands on the seashore.”

His “nephew Charles,” two months afterwards, obeyed his father’s injunction, and withdrew formally from the confederacy.

Meantime the rumor had gone abroad that the Request of the nobles had already produced good fruit, that the edicts were to be mitigated, the inquisition abolished, liberty of conscience eventually to prevail. “Upon these reports,” says a contemporary, “all the vermin of exiles and fugitives for religion, as well as those who had kept in concealment, began to lift up their heads and thrust forth their horns.” It was known that Margaret of Parma had ordered the inquisitors and magistrates to conduct themselves “modestly and discreetly.” It was known that the privy council was hard at work upon the project for “moderating” the edicts. Modestly and discreetly, Margaret of Parma, almost immediately after giving these orders, and while the “moderation” was still in the hands of the lawyers, informed her brother that she had given personal attention to the case of a person who had snatched the holy wafer from the priest’s hand at Oudenarde. This “quidam,” as she called him—for his name was beneath the cognizance of an Emperor’s bastard daughter—had by her orders received rigorous and exemplary justice. And what was the “rigorous and exemplary justice” thus inflicted upon the “quidam?” The procurator of the neighboring city of Tournay has enabled us to answer. The young man, who was a tapestry weaver, Hans Tiskaen by name, had, upon the 30th May, thrown the holy wafer upon the ground. For this crime, which was the same as that committed on Christmas-day of the previous year by Bertrand le Blas, at Tournay, he now met with a similar although not quite so severe a punishment. Having gone quietly home after doing the deed, he was pursued, arrested, and upon the Saturday ensuing taken to the market-place of Oudenarde. Here the right hand with which he had committed the offence was cut off, and he was then fastened to the stake and burned to death over a slow fire. He was fortunately not more than a quarter of an hour in torment, but he persisted in his opinions, and called on God for support to his last breath.

Page 344

This homely tragedy was enacted at Oudenarde, the birth place of Duchess Margaret. She was the daughter of the puissant Charles the Fifth, but her mother was only the daughter of a citizen of Oudenarde; of a “quidam” like the nameless weaver who had thus been burned by her express order. It was not to be supposed, however, that the circumstance could operate in so great a malefactor’s favor. Moreover, at the same moment, she sent orders that a like punishment should be inflicted upon another person then in a Flemish prison, for the crime of anabaptism.

The privy council, assisted by thirteen knights of the Fleece, had been hard at work, and the result of their wisdom was at last revealed in a “moderation” consisting of fifty-three articles.

What now was the substance of those fifty-three articles, so painfully elaborated by Viglius, so handsomely drawn up into shape by Councillor d’Assonleville? Simply to substitute the halter for the fagot. After elimination of all verbiage, this fact was the only residuum. It was most distinctly laid down that all forms of religion except the Roman Catholic were forbidden; that no public or secret conventicles were to be allowed; that all heretical writings were to be suppressed; that all curious inquiries into the Scriptures were to be prohibited. Persons who infringed these regulations were divided into two classes—the misleaders and the misled. There was an affectation of granting mercy to persons in the second category, while death was denounced upon those composing the first. It was merely an affectation; for the rambling statute was so open in all its clauses, that the Juggernaut car of persecution could be driven through the whole of them, whenever such a course should seem expedient. Every man or woman in the Netherlands might be placed in the list of the misleaders, at the discretion of the officials. The pretended mercy to the misguided was a mere delusion.

The superintendents, preachers, teachers, ministers, sermon-makers, deacons, and other officers, were to be executed with the halter, with confiscation of their whole property. So much was very plain. Other heretics, however, who would abjure their heresy before the bishop, might be pardoned for the first offence, but if obstinate, were to be banished. This seemed an indication of mercy, at least to the repentant criminals. But who were these “other” heretics? All persons who discussed religious matters were to be put to death. All persons, not having studied theology at a “renowned university,” who searched and expounded the Scriptures, were to be put to death. All persons in whose houses any act of the perverse religion should be committed, were to be put to death. All persons who harbored or protected ministers and teachers of any sect, were to be put to death. All the criminals thus carefully enumerated were to be executed, whether repentant or not. If, however, they abjured their errors, they were to be beheaded instead of being strangled. Thus it was obvious that almost any heretic might be brought to the halter at a moment’s notice.

Page 345

Strictly speaking, the idea of death by the halter or the axe was less shocking to the imagination than that of being burned or buried alive. In this respect, therefore, the edicts were softened by the proposed “Moderation.” It would, however, always be difficult to persuade any considerable slumber of intelligent persons, that the infliction of a violent death, by whatever process, on account of religious opinions, was an act of clemency. The Netherlanders were, however, to be persuaded into this belief. The draft of the new edict was ostentatiously called the “Moderatie,” or the “Moderation.” It was very natural, therefore, that the common people, by a quibble, which is the same in Flemish as in English, should call the proposed “Moderation” the “Murderation.” The rough mother-wit of the people had already characterized and annihilated the project, while dull formalists were carrying it through the preliminary stages.

A vote in favor of the project having been obtained from the estates of Artois, Hainault, and Flanders, the instructions for the envoys; Baron Montigny and Marquis Berghen, were made out in conformity to the scheme. Egmont had declined the mission, not having reason to congratulate himself upon the diplomatic success of his visit to Spain in the preceding year. The two nobles who consented to undertake the office were persuaded into acceptance sorely against their will. They were aware that their political conduct since the King’s departure from the country had not always been deemed satisfactory at Madrid, but they were, of course, far from suspecting the true state of the royal mind. They were both as sincere Catholics and as loyal gentlemen as Granvelle, but they were not aware how continuously, during a long course of years, that personage had represented them to Philip as renegades and rebels. They had maintained the constitutional rights of the state, and they had declined to act as executioners for the inquisition, but they were yet to learn that such demonstrations amounted to high treason.

Montigny departed, on the 29th May, from Brussels. He left the bride to whom he had been wedded amid scenes of festivity, the preceding autumn—the unborn child who was never to behold its father’s face. He received warnings in Paris, by which he scorned to profit. The Spanish ambassador in that city informed him that Philip’s wrath at the recent transactions in the Netherlands was high. He was most significantly requested, by a leading personage in France, to feign illness, or to take refuge in any expedient by which he might avoid the fulfilment of his mission. Such hints had no effect in turning him from his course, and he proceeded to Madrid, where he arrived on the 17th of June.

Page 346

His colleague in the mission, Marquis Berghen, had been prevented from setting forth at the same time, by an accident which, under the circumstances, might almost seem ominous. Walking through the palace park, in a place where some gentlemen were playing at pall-mall, he was accidentally struck in the leg by a wooden ball. The injury, although trifling, produced go much irritation and fever that he was confined to his bed for several weeks. It was not until the 1st of July that he was able to take his departure from Brussels. Both these unfortunate nobles thus went forth to fulfil that dark and mysterious destiny from which the veil of three centuries has but recently been removed.

Besides a long historical discourse, in eighteen chapters, delivered by way of instruction to the envoys, Margaret sent a courier beforehand with a variety of intelligence concerning the late events. Alonzo del Canto, one of Philip's spies in the Netherlands, also wrote to inform the King that the two ambassadors were the real authors of all the troubles then existing in the country. Cardinal Granvelle, too, renewed his previous statements in a confidential communication to his Majesty, adding that no persons more appropriate could have been selected than Berghen and Montigny, for they knew better than any one else the state of affairs in which they had borne the principal part. Nevertheless, Montigny, upon his arrival in Madrid on the 17th of June, was received by Philip with much apparent cordiality, admitted immediately to an audience, and assured in the strongest terms that there was no dissatisfaction in the royal mind against the seigniors, whatever false reports might be circulated to that effect. In other respects, the result of this and of his succeeding interviews with the monarch was sufficiently meagre.

It could not well be otherwise. The mission of the envoys was an elaborate farce to introduce a terrible tragedy. They were sent to procure from Philip the abolition of the inquisition and the moderation of the edicts. At the very moment, however, of all these legislative and diplomatic arrangements, Margaret of Parma was in possession of secret letters from Philip, which she was charged to deliver to the Archbishop of Sorrento, papal nuncio at the imperial court, then on a special visit to Brussels. This ecclesiastic had come to the Netherlands ostensibly to confer with the Prince of Orange upon the affairs of his principality, to remonstrate with Count Culemburg, and to take measures for the reformation of the clergy. The real object of his mission, however, was to devise means for strengthening the inquisition and suppressing heresy in the provinces. Philip, at whose request he had come, had charged him by no means to divulge the secret, as the King was anxious to have it believed that the ostensible was the only business which the prelate had to perform in the country. Margaret accordingly delivered to him the private letters, in which Philip avowed his determination to maintain the inquisition and the edicts in all their rigor, but enjoined profound secrecy upon the subject. The Duchess, therefore, who knew the face of the cards, must have thought it a superfluous task to continue the game, which to Philip's cruel but procrastinating temperament was perhaps a pleasurable excitement.

Page 347

The scheme for mitigating the edicts by the substitution of strangling for burning, was not destined therefore far much success either in Spain or in the provinces; but the people by whom the next great movement was made in the drama of the revolt, conducted themselves in a manner to shame the sovereign who oppressed, and the riotous nobles who had undertaken to protect their liberties.

At this very moment, in the early summer of 1566, many thousands of burghers, merchants, peasants, and gentlemen, were seen mustering and marching through the fields of every province, armed with arquebus, javelin, pike and broadsword. For what purpose were these gatherings? Only to hear sermons and to sing hymns in the open air, as it was unlawful to profane the churches with such rites. This was the first great popular phase of the Netherland rebellion. Notwithstanding the edicts and the inquisition with their daily hecatombs, notwithstanding the special publication at this time throughout the country by the Duchess Regent that all the sanguinary statutes concerning religion were in as great vigor as ever, notwithstanding that Margaret offered a reward of seven hundred crowns to the man who would bring her a preacher—dead or alive,—the popular thirst for the exercises of the reformed religion could no longer be slaked at the obscure and hidden fountains where their priests had so long privately ministered.

Partly emboldened by a temporary lull in the persecution, partly encouraged by the presentation of the Request and by the events to which it had given rise, the Reformers now came boldly forth from their lurking places and held their religious meetings in the light of day. The consciousness of numbers and of right had brought the conviction of strength. The audacity of the Reformers was wonderful to the mind of President Viglius, who could find no language strong enough with which to characterize and to deplore such blasphemous conduct. The field-preaching seemed in the eyes of government to spread with the rapidity of a malignant pestilence. The miasma flew upon the wings of the wind. As early as 1562, there had been public preaching in the neighborhood of Ypres. The executions which followed, however, had for the time suppressed the practice both in that place as well as throughout Flanders and the rest of the provinces. It now broke forth as by one impulse from one end of the country to the other. In the latter part of June, Hermann Stryoker or Modet, a monk who had renounced his vows to become one of the most popular preachers in the Reformed Church, addressed a congregation of seven or eight thousand persons in the neighborhood of Ghent. Peter Dathenus, another unfrocked monk, preached at various places in West Flanders, with great effect. A man endowed with a violent, stormy eloquence, intemperate as most zealots, he was then rendering better services to the cause of the Reformation than he was destined to do at later periods.

Page 348

But apostate priests were not the only preachers. To the ineffable disgust of the conservatives in Church and State, there were men with little education, utterly devoid of Hebrew, of lowly station—hatters, curriers, tanners, dyers, and the like, who began to preach also; remembering, unseasonably perhaps, that the early disciples, selected by the founder of Christianity, had not all been doctors of theology, with diplomas from a "renowned university." But if the nature of such men were subdued to what it worked in, that charge could not be brought against ministers with the learning and accomplishments of Ambrose Wille, Marnier, Guy de Bray, or Francis Junius, the man whom Scaliger called the "greatest of all theologians since the days of the apostles." An aristocratic sarcasm could not be levelled against Peregrine de la Grange, of a noble family in Provence, with the fiery blood of southern France in his veins, brave as his nation, learned, eloquent, enthusiastic, who galloped to his field-preaching on horseback, and fired a pistol-shot as a signal for his congregation to give attention.

On the 28th of June, 1566, at eleven o'clock at night, there was an assemblage of six thousand people near Tournay, at the bridge of Ernonville, to hear a sermon from Ambrose Wille, a man who had studied theology in Geneva, at the feet of Calvin, and who now, with a special price upon his head,—was preaching the doctrines he had learned. Two days afterwards, ten thousand people assembled at the same spot, to hear Peregrine de la Grange. Governor Moulbais thundered forth a proclamation from the citadel, warning all men that the edicts were as rigorous as ever, and that every man, woman, or child who went to these preachings, was incurring the penalty of death. The people became only the more ardent and excited. Upon Sunday, the seventh of July; twenty thousand persons assembled at the same bridge to hear Ambrose Wille. One man in three was armed. Some had arquebuses, others pistols, pikes, swords, pitchforks, poniards, clubs. The preacher, for whose apprehension a fresh reward had been offered, was escorted to his pulpit by a hundred mounted troopers. He begged his audience not to be scared from the word of God by menace; assured them that although but a poor preacher himself, he held a divine commission; that he had no fear of death; that, should he fall, there were many better than he to supply his place, and fifty thousand men to avenge his murder.

The Duchess sent forth proclamations by hundreds. She ordered the instant suppression of these armed assemblies and the arrest of the preachers. But of what avail were proclamations against such numbers with weapons in their hands. Why irritate to madness these hordes of enthusiasts, who were now entirely pacific, and who marched back to the city, after conclusion of divine service, with perfect decorum? All classes of the population went eagerly to the sermons. The gentry of the place, the rich merchants,

Page 349

the notables, as well as the humbler artisans and laborers, all had received the infection. The professors of the Reformed religion outnumbered the Catholics by five or six to one. On Sundays and other holidays, during the hours of service, Tournay was literally emptied of its inhabitants. The streets were as silent as if war or pestilence had swept the place. The Duchess sent orders, but she sent no troops. The trained-bands of the city, the cross-bow-men of St. Maurice, the archers of St. Sebastian, the sword-players of St. Christopher, could not be ordered from Tournay to suppress the preaching, for they had all gone to the preaching themselves. How idle, therefore; to send peremptory orders without a matchlock to enforce the command.

Throughout Flanders similar scenes were enacted. The meetings were encampments, for the Reformers now came to their religious services armed to the teeth, determined, if banished from the churches, to defend their right to the fields. Barricades of upturned wagons, branches, and planks, were thrown up around the camps. Strong guards of mounted men were stationed at every avenue. Outlying scouts gave notice of approaching danger, and guided the faithful into the enclosure. Pedlers and hawkers plied the trade upon which the penalty of death was fixed, and sold the forbidden hymn-books to all who chose to purchase. A strange and contradictory spectacle! An army of criminals doing deeds which could only be expiated at the stake; an entrenched rebellion, bearding the government with pike, matchlock, javelin and barricade, and all for no more deadly purpose than to listen to the precepts of the pacific Jesus.

Thus the preaching spread through the Walloon provinces to the northern Netherlands. Towards the end of July, an apostate monk, of singular eloquence, Peter Gabriel by name, was announced to preach at Overeen near Harlem. This was the first field-meeting which had taken place in Holland. The people were wild with enthusiasm; the authorities beside themselves with apprehension. People from the country flocked into the town by thousands. The other cities were deserted, Harlem was filled to overflowing. Multitudes encamped upon the ground the night before. The magistrates ordered the gates to be kept closed in the morning till long after the usual hour. It was of no avail. Bolts and bars were but small impediments to enthusiasts who had travelled so many miles on foot or horseback to listen to a sermon. They climbed the walls, swam the moat and thronged to the place of meeting long before the doors had been opened. When these could no longer be kept closed without a conflict, for which the magistrates were not prepared, the whole population poured out of the city with a single impulse. Tens of thousands were assembled upon the field. The bulwarks were erected as usual, the guards were posted, the necessary precautions taken. But upon this occasion, and in that region there was but little danger to be apprehended.

Page 350

The multitude of Reformers made the edicts impossible, so long as no foreign troops were there to enforce them. The congregation was encamped and arranged in an orderly manner. The women, of whom there were many, were placed next the pulpit, which, upon this occasion, was formed of a couple of spears thrust into the earth, sustaining a cross-piece, against which the preacher might lean his back. The services commenced with the singing of a psalm by the whole vast assemblage. Clement Marot's verses, recently translated by Dathenus, were then new and popular. The strains of the monarch minstrel, chanted thus in their homely but nervous mother tongue by a multitude who had but recently learned that all the poetry and rapture of devotion were not irrevocably coffined with a buried language, or immured in the precincts of a church, had never produced a more elevating effect. No anthem from the world-renowned organ in that ancient city ever awakened more lofty emotions than did those ten thousand human voices ringing from the grassy meadows in that fervid midsummer noon. When all was silent again, the preacher rose; a little, meagre man, who looked as if he might rather melt away beneath the blazing sunshine of July, than hold the multitude enchained four uninterrupted hours long, by the magic of his tongue. His text was the 8th, 9th, and 10th verses of the second chapter of Ephesians; and as the slender monk spoke to his simple audience of God's grace, and of faith in Jesus, who had descended from above to save the lowliest and the most abandoned, if they would put their trust in Him, his hearers were alternately exalted with fervor or melted into tears. He prayed for all conditions of men—for themselves, their friends, their enemies, for the government which had persecuted them, for the King whose face was turned upon them in anger. At times, according to one who was present, not a dry eye was to be seen in the crowd. When the minister had finished, he left his congregation abruptly, for he had to travel all night in order to reach Alkmaar, where he was to preach upon the following day.

By the middle of July the custom was established outside all the principal cities. Camp-meetings were held in some places; as, for instance, in the neighborhood of Antwerp, where the congregations numbered often fifteen thousand and on some occasions were estimated at between twenty and thirty thousand persons at a time; "very many of them," said an eye-witness, "the best and wealthiest in the town."

The sect to which most of these worshippers belonged was that of Calvin. In Antwerp there were Lutherans, Calvinists, and Anabaptists. The Lutherans were the richest sect, but the Calvinists the most numerous and enthusiastic. The Prince of Orange at this moment was strenuously opposed both to Calvinism and Anabaptism, but inclining to Lutheranism. Political reasons at this epoch doubtless influenced his mind in religious matters. The aid of the Lutheran

Page 351

princes of Germany, who detested the doctrines of Geneva, could hardly be relied upon for the Netherlanders, unless they would adapt the Confession of Augsburg. The Prince knew that the Emperor, although inclined to the Reformation, was bitterly averse to Calvinism, and he was, therefore, desirous of healing the schism which existed in the general Reformed Church. To accomplish this, however, would be to gain a greater victory over the bigotry which was the prevailing characteristic of the age than perhaps could be expected. The Prince, from the first moment of his abandoning the ancient doctrines, was disposed to make the attempt.

The Duchess ordered the magistrates of Antwerp to put down these mass-meetings by means of the guild-militia. They replied that at an earlier day such a course might have been practicable, but that the sects had become quite too numerous for coercion. If the authorities were able to prevent the exercises of the Reformed religion within the city, it would be as successful a result as could be expected. To prevent the preaching outside the walls, by means of the bourgher force, was an utter impossibility. The dilatoriness of the Sovereign placed the Regent in a frightful dilemma, but it was sufficiently obvious that the struggle could not long be deferred. “There will soon be a hard nut to crack,” wrote Count Louis. “The King will never grant the preaching; the people will never give it up, if it cost them their necks. There’s a hard puff coming upon the country before long.” The Duchess was not yet authorized to levy troops, and she feared that if she commenced such operations, she should perhaps offend the King, while she at the same time might provoke the people into more effective military preparations than her own. She felt that for one company levied by her, the sectaries could raise ten. Moreover, she was entirely without money, even if she should otherwise think it expedient to enrol an army. Meantime she did what she could with “public prayers, processions, fasts, sermons, exhortations,” and other ecclesiastical machinery which she ordered the bishops to put in motion. Her situation was indeed sufficiently alarming.

Egmont, whom many of the sectaries hoped to secure as their leader in case of a civil war, showed no disposition to encourage such hopes, but as little to take up arms against the people. He went to Flanders, where the armed assemblages for field-preaching had become so numerous that a force of thirty or forty thousand men might be set on foot almost at a moment’s warning, and where the conservatives, in a state of alarm, desired the presence of their renowned governor. The people of Antwerp, on their part, demanded William of Orange. The Prince, who was hereditary burgrave of the city, had at first declined the invitation of the magistracy. The Duchess united her request with the universal prayer of the inhabitants. Events meantime had been thickening, and suspicion

Page 352

increasing. Meghen had been in the city for several days, much to the disgust of the Reformers, by whom he was hated. Aremberg was expected to join him, and it was rumored that measures were secretly in progress under the auspices of these two leading cardinalists, for introducing a garrison, together with great store of ammunition, into the city. On the other hand, the “great beggar,” Brederode, had taken up his quarters also in Antwerp; had been daily entertaining a crowd of roystering nobles at his hotel, previously to a second political demonstration, which will soon be described, and was constantly parading the street, followed by a swarm of adherents in the beggar livery. The sincere Reformers were made nearly as uncomfortable by the presence of their avowed friends, as by that of Meghen and Aremberg, and earnestly desired to be rid of them all. Long and anxious were the ponderings of the magistrates upon all these subjects. It was determined, at last, to send a fresh deputation to Brussels, requesting the Regent to order the departure of Meghen, Aremberg, and Brederode from Antwerp; remonstrating with her against any plan she might be supposed to entertain of sending mercenary troops into the city; pledging the word of the senate to keep the peace, meanwhile, by their regular force; and above all, imploring her once more, in the most urgent terms, to send thither the burgrave, as the only man who was capable of saving the city from the calamities into which it was so likely to fall.

The Prince of Orange being thus urgently besought, both by the government of Antwerp, the inhabitants of that city, and by the Regent herself, at last consented to make the visit so earnestly demanded. On the 13th July, he arrived in Antwerp. The whole city was alive with enthusiasm. Half its population seemed to have come forth from the gates to bid him welcome, lining the road for miles. The gate through which he was to pass, the ramparts, the roofs of the houses were packed close, with expectant and eager faces. At least thirty thousand persons had assembled to welcome their guest. A long cavalcade of eminent citizens had come as far as Berghen to meet him and to escort him into the city. Brederode, attended by some of the noble confederates, rode at the head of the procession. As they encountered the Prince, a discharge of pistol-shots was fired by way of salute, which was the signal for a deafening shout from the assembled multitude. The crowd thronged about the Prince as he advanced, calling him their preserver, their father, their only hope. Wild shouts of welcome rose upon every side, as he rode through the town, mingled with occasional vociferations of “long life to the beggars.” These party cries were instantly and sharply rebuked by Orange, who expressed, in Brederode’s presence, the determination that he would make men unlearn that mischievous watchword. He had, moreover, little relish at that time for the tumultuous demonstrations of attachment to his person, which were too fervid to be censured, but too unseasonable to be approved. When the crowd had at last been made to understand that their huzzas were distasteful to the Prince, most of the multitude consented to disperse, feeling, however, a relief from impending danger in the presence of the man to whom they instinctively looked as their natural protector.

Page 353

The senators had come forth in a body to receive the burgrave and escort him to the hotel prepared for him. Arrived there, he lost no time in opening the business which had brought him to Antwerp. He held at once a long consultation with the upper branch of the government. Afterwards, day after day, he honestly, arduously, sagaciously labored to restore the public tranquillity. He held repeated deliberations with every separate portion of the little commonwealth, the senate, the council of ancients, the corporation of ward-masters, the deans of trades. Nor did he confine his communication to these organized political bodies alone. He had frequent interviews with the officers of the military associations, with the foreign merchant companies, with the guilds of "Rhetoric." The chambers of the "Violet" and the "Marigold" were not too frivolous or fantastic to be consulted by one who knew human nature and the constitution of Netherland society so well as did the Prince. Night and day he labored with all classes of citizens to bring about a better understanding, and to establish mutual confidence. At last by his efforts tranquillity was restored. The broad-council having been assembled, it was decided that the exercise of the Reformed religion should be excluded from the city, but silently tolerated in the suburbs, while an armed force was to be kept constantly in readiness to suppress all attempts at insurrection. The Prince had desired, that twelve hundred men should be enlisted and paid by the city, so that at least a small number of disciplined troops might be ready at a moment's warning; but he found it impossible to carry the point with the council. The magistrates were willing to hold themselves responsible for the peace of the city, but they would have no mercenaries.

Thus, during the remainder of July and the early part of August, was William of Orange strenuously occupied in doing what should have been the Regent's work. He was still regarded both by the Duchess and by the Calvinist party—although having the sympathies of neither,—as the only man in the Netherlands who could control the rising tide of a national revolt. He took care, said his enemies, that his conduct at Antwerp should have every appearance of loyalty; but they insinuated that he was a traitor from the beginning, who was insidiously fomenting the troubles which he appeared to rebuke. No one doubted his genius, and all felt or affected admiration at its display upon this critical occasion. "The Prince of Orange is doing very great and notable services at Antwerp to the King and to the country," said Assonleville. "That seignior is very skilful in managing great affairs." Margaret of Parma wrote letters to him fixed with the warmest gratitude, expressions of approbation, and of wishes that he could both remain in Antwerp and return to assist her in Brussels. Philip, too, with his own pen, addressed him a letter, in which implicit confidence in the Prince's character

Page 354

was avowed, all suspicion on the part of the Sovereign indignantly repudiated, earnest thanks for his acceptance of the Antwerp mission uttered, and a distinct refusal given to the earnest request made by Orange to resign his offices. The Prince read or listened to all this commendation, and valued it exactly at its proper worth. He knew it to be pure grimace. He was no more deceived by it than if he had read the letter sent by Margaret to Philip, a few weeks later, in which she expressed herself as “thoroughly aware that it was the intention of Orange to take advantage of the impending tumults, for the purpose of conquering the provinces and of dividing the whole territory among himself and friends.” Nothing could be more utterly false than so vile and ridiculous a statement.

The course of the Prince had hitherto been, and was still, both consistent and loyal. He was proceeding step by step to place the monarch in the wrong, but the only art which he was using, was to plant himself more firmly upon the right. It was in the monarch’s power to convoke the assembly of the states-general, so loudly demanded by the whole nation, to abolish the inquisition, to renounce persecution, to accept the great fact of the Reformation. To do so he must have ceased to be Philip. To have faltered in attempting to bring him into that path, the Prince must have ceased to be William of Orange. Had he succeeded, there would have been no treason and no Republic of Holland. His conduct at the outbreak of the Antwerp troubles was firm and sagacious. Even had his duty required him to put down the public preaching with peremptory violence, he had been furnished with no means to accomplish the purpose. The rebellion, if it were one, was already full-grown. It could not be taken by the throat and strangled with one hand, however firm.

A report that the High Sheriff of Brabant was collecting troops by command of government, in order to attack the Reformers at their field-preachings, went far to undo the work already accomplished by the Prince. The assemblages swelled again from ten or twelve thousand to twenty-five thousand, the men all providing themselves more thoroughly with weapons than before. Soon afterwards, the intemperate zeal of another individual, armed to the teeth—not, however, like the martial sheriff and his forces, with arquebus and javelin, but with the still more deadly weapons of polemical theology,—-was very near causing a general outbreak. A peaceful and not very numerous congregation were listening to one of their preachers in a field outside the town. Suddenly an unknown individual in plain clothes and with a pragmatical demeanor, interrupted the discourse by giving a flat contradiction to some of the doctrines advanced. The minister replied by a rebuke, and a reiteration of the disputed sentiment. —The stranger, evidently versed in ecclesiastical matters, volubly and warmly responded. The preacher, a man of humble condition and moderate abilities, made as good

Page 355

show of argument as he could, but was evidently no match for his antagonist. He was soon vanquished in the wordy warfare. Well he might be, for it appeared that the stranger was no less a personage than Peter Rythovius, a doctor of divinity, a distinguished pedant of Louvain, a relation of a bishop and himself a Church dignitary. This learned professor, quite at home in his subject, was easily triumphant, while the poor dissenter, more accustomed to elevate the hearts of his hearers than to perplex their heads, sank prostrate and breathless under the storm of texts, glosses, and hard Hebrew roots with which he was soon overwhelmed. The professor's triumph was, however, but short-lived, for the simple-minded congregation, who loved their teacher, were enraged that he should be thus confounded. Without more ado, therefore, they laid violent hands upon the Quixotic knight-errant of the Church, and so cudgelled and belabored him bodily that he might perhaps have lost his life in the encounter had he not been protected by the more respectable portion of the assembly. These persons, highly disapproving the whole proceeding, forcibly rescued him from the assailants, and carried him off to town, where the news of the incident at once created an uproar. Here he was thrown into prison as a disturber of the peace, but in reality that he might be personally secure. The next day the Prince of Orange, after administering to him a severe rebuke for his ill-timed exhibition of pedantry, released him from confinement, and had him conveyed out of the city. "This theologian;" wrote the Prince to Duchess Margaret, "would have done better, methinks, to stay at home; for I suppose he had no especial orders to perform this piece of work."

Thus, so long as this great statesman could remain in the metropolis, his temperate firmness prevented the explosion which had so long been expected. His own government of Holland and Zeland, too, especially demanded his care. The field-preaching had spread in that region with prodigious rapidity. Armed assemblages, utterly beyond the power of the civil authorities, were taking place daily in the neighborhood of Amsterdam. Yet the Duchess could not allow him to visit his government in the north. If he could be spared from Antwerp for a day, it was necessary that he should aid her in a fresh complication with the confederated nobles in the very midst, therefore, of his Antwerp labors, he had been obliged, by Margaret's orders, to meet a committee at Duffel. For in this same eventful month of July a great meeting was held by the members of the Compromise at St. Trond, in the bishopric of Liege. They came together on the thirteenth of the month, and remained assembled till the beginning of August. It was a wild, tumultuous convention, numbering some fifteen hundred cavaliers, each with his esquires and armed attendants; a larger and more important gathering than had yet been held. Brederode and Count Louis were the

Page 356

chieftains of the assembly, which, as may be supposed from its composition and numbers, was likely to be neither very orderly in its demonstrations nor wholesome in its results. It was an ill-timed movement. The convention was too large for deliberation, too riotous to inspire confidence. The nobles quartered themselves every where in the taverns and the farm-houses of the neighborhood, while large numbers encamped upon the open fields. There was a constant din of revelry and uproar, mingled with wordy warfare, and an occasional crossing of swords. It seemed rather like a congress of ancient, savage Batavians, assembled in Teutonic fashion to choose a king amid hoarse shouting, deep drinking, and the clash of spear and shield, than a meeting for a lofty and earnest purpose, by their civilized descendants. A crowd of spectators, landlopers, mendicants, daily aggregated themselves to the aristocratic assembly, joining, with natural unction, in the incessant shout of “Vivent les gueux!” It was impossible that so soon after their baptism the self-styled beggars should repudiate all connection with the time-honored fraternity in which they had enrolled themselves.

The confederates discussed—if an exchange of vociferations could be called discussion—principally two points: whether, in case they obtained the original objects of their petition, they should pause or move still further onward; and whether they should insist upon receiving some pledge from the government, that no vengeance should be taken upon them for their previous proceedings. Upon both questions, there was much vehemence of argument and great difference of opinion. They, moreover, took two very rash and very grave resolutions—to guarantee the people against all violence on account of their creeds, and to engage a force of German soldiery, four thousand horse and forty companies of infantry by, “wart geld” or retaining wages. It was evident that these gentlemen were disposed to go fast and far. If they had been ready in the spring to receive their baptism of wine, the “beggars” were now eager for the baptism of blood. At the same time it must be observed that the levies which they proposed, not to make, but to have at command, were purely for defence. In case the King, as it was thought probable, should visit the Netherlands with fire and sword, then there would be a nucleus of resistance already formed.

Upon the 18th July, the Prince of Orange, at the earnest request of the Regent, met a committee of the confederated nobles at Duffel. Count Egmont was associated with him in this duty. The conference was not very satisfactory. The deputies from St. Trend, consisting of Brederode, Culemburg, and others, exchanged with the two seigniors the old arguments. It was urged upon the confederates, that they had made themselves responsible for the public tranquillity so long as the Regent should hold to her promise; that, as the Duchess had sent two distinguished envoys to Madrid, in order to accomplish, if possible, the wishes of the nobles, it was their duty to redeem their own pledges; that armed assemblages ought to be suppressed by their efforts rather than encouraged by their, example; and that, if they now exerted themselves zealously

to check, the tumults, the Duchess was ready to declare, in her own-name and that of his Majesty, that the presentation of the Request had been beneficial.

Page 357

The nobles replied that the pledges had become a farce, that the Regent was playing them false, that persecution was as fierce as ever, that the “Moderation” was a mockery, that the letters recommending “modesty and discretion” to the inquisitors had been mere waste paper, that a price had been set upon the heads of the preachers as if they had been wild beasts, that there were constant threats of invasions from Spain, that the convocation of the states-general had been illegally deferred, that the people had been driven to despair, and that it was the conduct of government, not of the confederates, which had caused the Reformers to throw off previous restraint and to come boldly forth by tens of thousands into the fields, not to defy their King, but to worship their God.

Such, in brief, was the conference of Duffel. In conclusion, a paper was drawn up which Brederode carried back to the convention, and which it was proposed to submit to the Duchess for her approval. At the end of the month, Louis of Nassau was accordingly sent to Brussels, accompanied by twelve associates, who were familiarly called his twelve apostles. Here he laid before her Highness in council a statement, embodying the views of the confederates. In this paper they asserted that they were ever ready to mount and ride against a foreign foe, but that they would never draw a sword against their innocent countrymen. They maintained that their past conduct deserved commendation, and that in requiring letters of safe conduct in the names both of the Duchess and of the Fleece-knights, they were governed not by a disposition to ask for pardon, but by a reluctance without such guarantees to enter into stipulations touching the public tranquillity. If, however, they should be assured that the intentions of the Regent were amicable and that there was no design to take vengeance for the past—if, moreover, she were willing to confide in the counsels of Horn, Egmont, and Orange, and to take no important measure without their concurrence—if, above all, she would convoke the states-general, then, and then only, were the confederates willing to exert their energies to preserve peace, to restrain popular impetuosity and banish universal despair.

So far Louis of Nassau and his twelve apostles. It must be confessed that, whatever might be thought of the justice, there could be but one opinion as to the boldness of these views. The Duchess was furious. If the language held in April had been considered audacious, certainly this new request was, in her own words, “still more bitter to the taste and more difficult of digestion.” She therefore answered in a very unsatisfactory, haughty and ambiguous manner, reserving decision upon their propositions till they had been discussed by the state council, and intimating that they would also be laid before the Knights of the Fleece, who were to hold a meeting upon the 26th of August.

Page 358

There was some further conversation without any result. Esquerdes complained that the confederates were the mark of constant calumny, and demanded that the slanderers should be confronted with them and punished. "I understand perfectly well," interrupted Margaret, "you wish to take justice into your own hands and to be King yourself." It was further intimated by these reckless gentlemen, that if they should be driven by violence into measures of self-protection, they had already secured friends in a certain country. The Duchess, probably astonished at the frankness of this statement, is said to have demanded further explanations. The confederates replied by observing that they had resources both in the provinces and in Germany. The state council decided that to accept the propositions of the confederates would be to establish a triumvirate at once, and the Duchess wrote to her brother distinctly advising against the acceptance of the proposal. The assembly at St. Trond was then dissolved, having made violent demonstrations which were not followed by beneficial results, and having laid itself open to various suspicions, most of which were ill-founded, while some of them were just.

Before giving the reader a brief account of the open and the secret policy pursued by the government at Brussels and Madrid, in consequence of these transactions, it is now necessary to allude to a startling series of events, which at this point added to the complications of the times, and exercised a fatal influence upon the situation of the commonwealth.

1566 [*Chapter vii*.]

Ecclesiastical architecture in the Netherlands—The image-breaking— Description of Antwerp Cathedral—Ceremony of the Ommegang— Precursory disturbances—-Iconoclasts at Antwerp—Incidents of the image—breaking in various cities—Events at Tournay—Preaching of Wille—Disturbance by a little boy—Churches sacked at Tournay — Disinterment of Duke Adolphus of Gueldres—Iconoclasts defeated and massacred at Anchin—Bartholomew's Day at Valenciennes—General characteristics of the image-breaking—Testimony of contemporaries as to the honesty of the rioters—Consternation of the Duchess— Projected flight to Mons—Advice of Horn and other seigniors—Accord of 25th August.

The Netherlands possessed an extraordinary number of churches and monasteries. Their exquisite architecture and elaborate decoration had been the earliest indication of intellectual culture displayed in the country. In the vast number of cities, towns, and villages which were crowded upon that narrow territory, there had been, from circumstances operating throughout Christendom, a great accumulation of ecclesiastical wealth. The same causes can never exist again which at an early day covered the soil of Europe with those magnificent creations of Christian art. It was in these anonymous but entirely original achievements that Gothic genius; awaking from its long sleep of

Page 359

the dark ages, first expressed itself. The early poetry of the German races was hewn and chiselled in atone. Around the steadfast principle of devotion then so firmly rooted in the soil, clustered the graceful and vigorous emanations of the newly-awakened mind. All that science could invent, all that art could embody, all that mechanical ingenuity could dare, all that wealth could lavish, whatever there was of human energy which was panting for pacific utterance, wherever there stirred the vital principle which instinctively strove to create and to adorn at an epoch when vulgar violence and destructiveness were the general tendencies of humanity, all gathered around these magnificent temples, as their aspiring pinnacles at last pierced the mist which had so long brooded over the world.

There were many hundreds of churches, more or less remarkable, in the Netherlands. Although a severe criticism might regret to find in these particular productions of the great Germanic school a development of that practical tendency which distinguished the Batavian and Flemish branches,—although it might recognize a departure from that mystic principle which, in its efforts to symbolize the strivings of humanity towards the infinite object of worship above, had somewhat disregarded the wants of the worshippers below,—although the spaces might be too wide and the intercolumniations too empty, except for the convenience of congregations; yet there were, nevertheless, many ecclesiastical masterpieces, which could be regarded as very brilliant manifestations of the Batavian and Belgic mind during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Many were filled with paintings from a school which had precedence in time and merit over its sister nurseries of art in Germany. All were peopled with statues. All were filled with profusely-adorned chapels, for the churches had been enriched generation after generation by wealthy penitence, which had thus purchased absolution for crime and smoothed a pathway to heaven.

And now, for the space of only six or seven summer days and nights, there raged a storm by which all these treasures were destroyed. Nearly every one of these temples was entirely rifled of its contents; not for the purpose of plunder, but of destruction. Hardly a province or a town escaped. Art must forever weep over this bereavement; Humanity must regret that the reforming is thus always ready to degenerate into the destructive principle; but it is impossible to censure very severely the spirit which prompted the brutal, but not ferocious deed. Those statues, associated as they were with the remorseless persecution which had so long desolated the provinces, had ceased to be images. They had grown human and hateful, so that the people arose and devoted them to indiscriminate massacre.

Page 360

No doubt the iconoclastic fury is to be regretted; for such treasures can scarcely be renewed. The age for building and decorating great cathedrals is past. Certainly, our own age, practical and benevolent, if less poetical, should occupy itself with the present, and project itself into the future. It should render glory to God rather by causing wealth to fertilize the lowest valleys of humanity, than by rearing gorgeous temples where paupers are to kneel. To clothe the naked, redeem the criminal, feed the hungry, less by alms and homilies than by preventive institutions and beneficent legislation; above all, by the diffusion of national education, to lift a race upon a level of culture hardly attained by a class in earlier times, is as lofty a task as to accumulate piles of ecclesiastical splendor.

It would be tedious to recount in detail the events which characterized the remarkable image-breaking in the Netherlands. As Antwerp was the central point in these transactions, and as there was more wealth and magnificence in the great cathedral of that city than in any church of northern Europe, it is necessary to give a rapid outline of the events which occurred there. From its exhibition in that place the spirit every where will best be shown.

The Church of Our Lady, which Philip had so recently converted into a cathedral, dated from the year 1124, although it may be more fairly considered a work of the fourteenth century. Its college of canons had been founded in another locality by Godfrey of Bouillon. The Brabantine hero, who so romantically incarnates the religious poetry of his age, who first mounted the walls of redeemed Jerusalem, and was its first Christian monarch, but who refused to accept a golden diadem on the spot where the Saviour had been crowned with thorns; the Fleming who lived and was the epic which the great Italian, centuries afterwards; translated into immortal verse, is thus fitly associated with the beautiful architectural poem which was to grace his ancestral realms. The body of the church, the interior and graceful perspectives of which were not liable to the reproach brought against many Netherland churches, of assimilating themselves already to the municipal palaces which they were to suggest—was completed in the fourteenth century. The beautiful facade, with its tower, was not completed till the year 1518. The exquisite and daring spire, the gigantic stem upon which the consummate flower of this architectural creation was to be at last unfolded, was a plant of a whole century’s growth. Rising to a height of nearly five hundred feet, over a church of as many feet in length, it worthily represented the upward tendency of Gothic architecture. Externally and internally the cathedral was a true expression of the Christian principle of devotion. Amid its vast accumulation of imagery, its endless ornaments, its multiplicity of episodes, its infinite variety of details, the central, maternal principle was ever visible. Every thing pointed upwards, from the spire in the clouds to the arch which enshrined the smallest sculptured saint in the chapels below. It was a sanctuary, not like pagan temples, to enclose a visible deity, but an edifice where mortals might worship an unseen Being in the realms above.

Page 361

The church, placed in the centre of the city, with the noisy streets of the busiest metropolis in Europe eddying around its walls, was a sacred island in the tumultuous main. Through the perpetual twilight, tall columnar trunks in thick profusion grew from a floor chequered with prismatic lights and sepulchral shadows. Each shaft of the petrified forest rose to a preternatural height, their many branches intermingling in the space above, to form an impenetrable canopy. Foliage, flowers and fruit of colossal luxuriance, strange birds, beasts, griffins and chimeras in endless multitudes, the rank vegetation and the fantastic zoology of a fresher or fabulous world, seemed to decorate and to animate the serried trunks and pendant branches, while the shattering symphonies or dying murmurs of the organ suggested the rushing of the wind through the forest, now the full diapason of the storm and now the gentle cadence of the evening breeze.

Internally, the whole church was rich beyond expression. All that opulent devotion and inventive ingenuity could devise, in wood, bronze, marble, silver, gold, precious jewelry, or blazing sacramental furniture, had been profusely lavished. The penitential tears of centuries had incrusted the whole interior with their glittering stalactites. Divided into five naves, with external rows of chapels, but separated by no screens or partitions, the great temple forming an imposing whole, the effect was the more impressive, the vistas almost infinite in appearance. The wealthy citizens, the twenty-seven guilds, the six military associations, the rhythmical colleges, besides many other secular or religious sodalities, had each their own chapels and altars. Tombs adorned with the effigies of mailed crusaders and pious dames covered the floor, tattered banners hung in the air, the escutcheons of the Golden Fleece, an order typical of Flemish industry, but of which Emperors and Kings were proud to be the chevaliers, decorated the columns. The vast and beautifully-painted windows glowed with scriptural scenes, antique portraits, homely allegories, painted in those brilliant and forgotten colors which Art has not ceased to deplore. The daylight melting into gloom or colored with fantastic brilliancy, priests in effulgent robes chanting in unknown language, the sublime breathing of choral music, the suffocating odors of myrrh and spikenard, suggestive of the oriental scenery and imagery of Holy Writ, all combined to bewilder and exalt the senses. The highest and humblest seemed to find themselves upon the same level within those sacred precincts, where even the bloodstained criminal was secure, and the arm of secular justice was paralyzed.

But the work of degeneration had commenced. The atmosphere of the cathedral was no longer holy in the eyes of increasing multitudes. Better the sanguinary rites of Belgic Druids, better the yell of slaughtered victims from the “wild wood without mercy” of the pagan forefathers of the nation, than this fantastic intermingling of divine music, glowing colors, gorgeous ceremonies, with all the burning, beheading and strangling work which had characterized the system of human sacrifice for the past half-century.

Page 362

Such was the church of Notre Dame at Antwerp. Thus indifferent or hostile towards the architectural treasure were the inhabitants of a city, where in a previous age the whole population would have risked their lives to defend what they esteemed the pride and garland of their metropolis.

The Prince of Orange had been anxiously solicited by the Regent to attend the conference at Duffel. After returning to Antwerp, he consented, in consequence of the urgent entreaties of the senate, to delay his departure until the 18th of August should be past. On the 13th of that month he had agreed with the magistrates upon an ordinance, which was accordingly published, and by which the preachings were restricted to the fields. A deputation of merchants and others waited upon him with a request to be permitted the exercises of the Reformed religion in the city. This petition the Prince peremptorily refused, and the deputies, as well as their constituents, acquiesced in the decision, “out of especial regard and respect for his person.” He, however, distinctly informed the Duchess that it would be difficult or impossible to maintain such a position long, and that his departure from the city would probably be followed by an outbreak. He warned her that it was very imprudent for him to leave Antwerp at that particular juncture. Nevertheless, the meeting of the Fleece-knights seemed, in Margaret’s opinion, imperatively to require his presence in Brussels. She insisted by repeated letters that he should leave Antwerp immediately.

Upon the 18th August, the great and time-honored ceremony of the Ommegang occurred. Accordingly, the great procession, the principal object of which was to conduct around the city a colossal image of the Virgin, issued as usual from the door of the cathedral. The image, bedizened and effulgent, was borne aloft upon the shoulders of her adorers, followed by the guilds, the military associations, the rhetoricians, the religious sodalities, all in glittering costume, bearing blazoned banners, and marching triumphantly through the streets with sound of trumpet and beat of drum. The pageant, solemn but noisy, was exactly such a show as was most fitted at that moment to irritate Protestant minds and to lead to mischief. No violent explosion of ill-feeling, however, took place. The procession was followed by a rabble rout of scoffers, but they confined themselves to words and insulting gestures. The image was incessantly saluted, as she was borne along—the streets, with sneers, imprecations, and the rudest, ribaldry. “Mayken! Mayken!” (little Mary) “your hour is come. ’Tis your last promenade. The city is tired of you.” Such were the greetings which the representative of the Holy Virgin received from men grown weary of antiquated mummery. A few missiles were thrown occasionally at the procession as it passed through the city, but no damage was inflicted. When the image was at last restored to its place, and the pageant brought to a somewhat hurried conclusion, there seemed cause for congratulation that no tumult had occurred.

Page 363

On the following morning there was a large crowd collected in front of the cathedral. The image, instead of standing in the centre of the church, where, upon all former occasions, it had been accustomed during the week succeeding the ceremony to receive congratulatory, visits, was now ignominiously placed behind an iron railing within the choir. It had been deemed imprudent to leave it exposed to sacrilegious hands. The precaution excited derision. Many vagabonds of dangerous appearance, many idle apprentices and ragged urchins were hanging for a long time about the imprisoned image, peeping through the railings, and indulging in many a brutal jest. "Mayken! Mayken!" they cried; "art thou terrified so soon? Hast flown to thy nest so early? Dost think thyself beyond the reach of mischief? Beware, Mayken! thine hour is fast approaching!" Others thronged around the balustrade, shouting "Vivent les gueux!" and hoarsely commanding the image to join in the beggars' cry. Then, leaving the spot, the mob roamed idly about the magnificent church, sneering at the idols, execrating the gorgeous ornaments, scoffing at crucifix and altar.

Presently one of the rabble, a ragged fellow of mechanical aspect, in a tattered black doublet and an old straw hat, ascended the pulpit. Opening a sacred volume which he found there, he began to deliver an extemporaneous and coarse caricature of a monkish sermon. Some of the bystanders applauded, some cried shame, some shouted "long live the beggars!" some threw sticks and rubbish at the mountebank, some caught him by the legs and strove to pull him from the place. He, on the other hand, manfully maintained his ground, hurling back every missile, struggling with his assailants, and continuing the while to pour forth a malignant and obscene discourse. At last a young sailor, warm in the Catholic Faith, and impulsive as mariners are prone to be, ascended the pulpit from behind, sprang upon the mechanic, and flung him headlong down the steps. The preacher grappled with his enemy as he fell, and both came rolling to the ground. Neither was much injured, but a tumult ensued. A pistol-shot was fired, and the sailor wounded in the arm. Daggers were drawn, cudgels brandished, the bystanders taking part generally against the sailor, while those who protected him were somewhat bruised and belabored before they could convey him out of the church. Nothing more, however, transpired that day, and the keepers of the cathedral were enabled to expel the crowd and to close the doors for the night.

Information of this tumult was brought to the senate, then assembled in the Hotel de Ville. That body was thrown into a state of great perturbation. In losing the Prince of Orange, they seemed to have lost their own brains, and the first measure which they took was to despatch a messenger to implore his return. In the mean time, it was necessary that they should do something for themselves. It was evident that a storm was brewing. The pest which

Page 364

was sweeping so rapidly through the provinces would soon be among them. Symptoms of the dreaded visitation were already but too manifest. What precaution should: they take? Should they issue a proclamation? Such documents had been too common of late, and had lost their virtue. It was the time not to assert but to exercise authority. Should they summon the ward-masters, and order the instant arming and mustering of their respective companies? Should they assemble the captains of the Military associations? Nothing better could have been desired than such measures in cases of invasion or of ordinary tumult, but who should say how deeply the poison had sunk into the body politic; who should say with how much or how little alacrity the burgher militia would obey the mandates of the magistracy? It would be better to issue no proclamation unless they could enforce its provisions; it would be better not to call out the citizen soldiery unless they were likely to prove obedient. Should mercenary troops at this late hour be sent for? Would not their appearance at this crisis rather inflame the rage than intimidate the insolence of the sectaries? Never were magistrates in greater perplexity. They knew not what course was likely to prove the safest, and in their anxiety to do nothing wrong, the senators did nothing at all. After a long and anxious consultation, the honest burgomaster and his associates all went home to their beds, hoping that the threatening flame of civil tumult would die out of itself, or perhaps that their dreams would supply them with that wisdom which seemed denied to their waking hours.

In the morning, as it was known that no precaution had been taken, the audacity of the Reformers was naturally increased. Within the cathedral a great crowd was at an early hour collected, whose savage looks and ragged appearance denoted that the day and night were not likely to pass away so peacefully as the last. The same taunts and imprecations were hurled at the image of the Virgin; the same howling of the beggars' cry resounded through the lofty arches. For a few hours, no act of violence was committed, but the crowd increased. A few trifles, drifting, as usual, before the event, seemed to indicate the approaching convulsion. A very paltry old woman excited the image-breaking of Antwerp. She had for years been accustomed to sit before the door of the cathedral with wax-tapers and wafers, earning scanty subsistence from the profits of her meagre trade, and by the small coins which she sometimes received in charity. Some of the rabble began to chaffer with this ancient hucksteress. They scoffed at her consecrated wares; they bandied with her ribald jests, of which her public position had furnished her with a supply; they assured her that the hour had come when her idolatrous traffic was to be forever terminated, when she and her patroness, Mary, were to be given over to destruction together. The old woman, enraged, answered threat with threat, and

Page 365

gibe with gibe. Passing from words to deeds, she began to catch from the ground every offensive missile or weapon which she could find, and to lay about her in all directions. Her tormentors defended themselves as they could. Having destroyed her whole stock-in-trade, they provoked others to appear in her defence. The passers-by thronged to the scene; the cathedral was soon filled to overflowing; a furious tumult was already in progress.

Many persons fled in alarm to the town-house, carrying information of this outbreak to the magistrates. John Van Immerzeel, Margrava of Antwerp, was then holding communication with the senate, and awaiting the arrival of the ward-masters, whom it had at last been thought expedient to summon. Upon intelligence of this riot, which the militia, if previously mustered, might have prevented, the senate determined to proceed to the cathedral in a body, with the hope of quelling the mob by the dignity of their presence. The margrave, who was the high executive officer of the little commonwealth, marched down to the cathedral accordingly, attended by the two burgomasters and all the senators. At first their authority, solicitations, and personal influence, produced a good effect. Some of those outside consented to retire, and the tumult partially subsided within. As night, however, was fast approaching, many of the mob insisted upon remaining for evening mass. They were informed that there would be none that night, and that for once the people could certainly dispense with their vespers.

Several persons now manifesting an intention of leaving the cathedral, it was suggested to the senators that if, they should lead the way, the populace would follow in their train, and so disperse to their homes. The excellent magistrates took the advice, not caring, perhaps, to fulfil any longer the dangerous but not dignified functions of police officers. Before departing, they adopted the precaution of closing all the doors of the church, leaving a single one open, that the rabble still remaining might have an opportunity to depart. It seemed not to occur to the senators that the same gate would as conveniently afford an entrance for those without as an egress for those within. That unlooked-for event happened, however. No sooner had the magistrates retired than the rabble burst through the single door which had been left open, overpowered the margrave, who, with a few attendants, had remained behind, vainly endeavoring by threats and exhortations to appease the tumult, drove him ignominiously from the church, and threw all the other portals wide open. Then the populace flowed in like an angry sea. The whole of the cathedral was at the mercy of the rioters, who were evidently bent on mischief. The wardens and treasurers of the church, after a vain attempt to secure a few of its most precious possessions, retired. They carried the news to the senators, who, accompanied by a few halberdmen, again ventured to approach the spot. It was but for a moment, however, for, appalled by the furious sounds which came from within the church, as if subterranean and invisible forces were preparing a catastrophe which no human power could withstand, the magistrates fled

precipitately from the scene. Fearing that the next attack would be upon the town-house, they hastened to concentrate at that point their available forces, and left the stately cathedral to its fate.

Page 366

And now, as the shadows of night were deepening the perpetual twilight of the church, the work of destruction commenced. Instead of evening mass rose the fierce music of a psalm, yelled by a thousand angry voices. It seemed the preconcerted signal for a general attack. A band of marauders flew upon the image of the Virgin, dragged it forth from its receptacle, plunged daggers into its inanimate body, tore off its jewelled and embroidered garments, broke the whole figure into a thousand pieces, and scattered the fragments along the floor. A wild shout succeeded, and then the work which seemed delegated to a comparatively small number of the assembled crowd, went on with incredible celerity. Some were armed with axes, some with bludgeons, some with sledge-hammers; others brought ladders, pulleys, ropes, and levers. Every statue was hurled from its niche, every picture torn from the wall, every wonderfully-painted window shivered to atoms, every ancient monument shattered, every sculptured decoration, however inaccessible in appearance, hurled to the ground. Indefatigably, audaciously, —endowed, as it seemed, with preternatural strength and nimbleness, these furious iconoclasts clambered up the dizzy heights, shrieking and chattering like malignant apes, as they tore off in triumph the slowly-matured fruit of centuries. In a space of time wonderfully brief, they had accomplished their task.

A colossal and magnificent group of the Saviour crucified between two thieves adorned the principal altar. The statue of Christ was wrenched from its place with ropes and pulleys, while the malefactors, with bitter and blasphemous irony, were left on high, the only representatives of the marble crowd which had been destroyed. A very beautiful piece of architecture decorated the choir,—the “repository,” as it was called, in which the body of Christ was figuratively enshrined. This much-admired work rested upon a single column, but rose, arch upon arch, pillar upon pillar, to the height of three hundred feet, till quite lost in the vault above. “It was now shattered into a million pieces.” The statues, images, pictures, ornaments, as they lay upon the ground, were broken with sledge-hammers, hewn with axes, trampled, torn; and beaten into shreds. A troop of harlots, snatching waxen tapers from the altars, stood around the destroyers and lighted them at their work. Nothing escaped their omnivorous rage. They desecrated seventy chapels, forced open all the chests of treasure, covered their own squalid attire with the gorgeous robes of the ecclesiastics, broke the sacred bread, poured out the sacramental wine into golden chalices, quaffing huge draughts to the beggars’ health; burned all the splendid missals and manuscripts, and smeared their shoes with the sacred oil, with which kings and prelates had been anointed. It seemed that each of these malicious creatures must have been endowed with the strength of a hundred giants. How else, in the few brief hours of a midsummer night, could such a monstrous desecration have been accomplished by a troop which, according to all accounts, was not more than one hundred in number. There was a multitude of spectators, as upon all such occasions, but the actual spoilers were very few.

Page 367

The noblest and richest temple of the Netherlands was a wreck, but the fury of the spoilers was excited, not appeased. Each seizing a burning torch, the whole herd rushed from the cathedral, and swept howling through the streets. “Long live the beggars!” resounded through the sultry midnight air, as the ravenous pack flew to and fro, smiting every image of the Virgin, every crucifix, every sculptured saint, every Catholic symbol which they met with upon their path. All night long, they roamed from one sacred edifice to another, thoroughly destroying as they went. Before morning they had sacked thirty churches within the city walls. They entered the monasteries, burned their invaluable libraries, destroyed their altars, statues, pictures, and descending into the cellars, broached every cask which they found there, pouring out in one great flood all the ancient wine and ale with which those holy men had been wont to solace their retirement from generation to generation. They invaded the nunneries, whence the occupants, panic-stricken, fled for refuge to the houses of their friends and kindred. The streets were filled with monks and nuns, running this way and that, shrieking and fluttering, to escape the claws of these fiendish Calvinists. The terror was imaginary, for not the least remarkable feature in these transactions was, that neither insult nor injury was offered to man or woman, and that not a farthing’s value of the immense amount of property destroyed, was appropriated. It was a war not against the living, but against graven images, nor was the sentiment which prompted the onslaught in the least commingled with a desire of plunder. The principal citizens of Antwerp, expecting every instant that the storm would be diverted from the ecclesiastical edifices to private dwellings, and that robbery, rape, and murder would follow sacrilege, remained all night expecting the attack, and prepared to defend their hearths, even if the altars were profaned. The precaution was needless. It was asserted by the Catholics that the confederates and other opulent Protestants had organized this company of profligates for the meagre pittance of ten stivers day. On the other hand, it was believed by many that the Catholics had themselves plotted the whole outrage in order to bring odium upon the Reformers. Both statements were equally unfounded. The task was most thoroughly performed, but it was prompted: by a furious fanaticism, not by baser motives.

Two days and nights longer the havoc raged unchecked through all the churches of Antwerp and the neighboring villages. Hardly a statue or picture escaped destruction. Fortunately, the illustrious artist, whose labors were destined in the next generation to enrich and ennoble the city, Rubens, most profound of colorists, most dramatic—of artists; whose profuse tropical genius seemed to flower the more luxuriantly, as if the destruction wrought by brutal hands were to be compensated by the creative

Page 368

energy of one, divine spirit, had not yet been born. Of the treasures which existed the destruction was complete. Yet the rage was directed exclusively against stocks and stones. Not a man was wounded nor a woman outraged. Prisoners, indeed, who had been languishing hopelessly in dungeons were liberated. A monk, who had been in the prison of the Barefoot Monastery, for twelve years, recovered his freedom. Art was trampled in the dust, but humanity deplored no victims.

These leading features characterized the movement every where. The process was simultaneous and almost universal. It was difficult to say where it began and where it ended. A few days in the midst of August sufficed for the whole work. The number of churches desecrated has never been counted. In the single province of Flanders, four hundred were sacked. In Limburg, Luxemburg, and Namur, there was no image-breaking. In Mechlin, seventy or eighty persons accomplished the work thoroughly, in the very teeth of the grand council, and of an astonished magistracy.

In Tournay, a city distinguished for its ecclesiastical splendor, the reform had been making great progress during the summer. At the same time the hatred between the two religions had been growing more and more intense. Trifles and serious matters alike fed the mutual animosity.

A tremendous outbreak had been nearly occasioned by an insignificant incident. A Jesuit of some notoriety had been preaching a glowing discourse in the pulpit of Notre Dane. He earnestly avowed his wish that he were good enough to die for all his hearers. He proved to demonstration that no man should shrink from torture or martyrdom in order to sustain the ancient faith. As he was thus expatiating, his fervid discourse was suddenly interrupted by three sharp, sudden blows, of a very peculiar character, struck upon the great portal of the Church. The priest, forgetting his love for martyrdom, turned pale and dropped under the pulpit. Hurrying down the steps, he took refuge in the vestry, locking and barring the door. The congregation shared in his panic: “The beggars are coming,” was the general cry. There was a horrible tumult, which extended through the city as the congregation poured precipitately out of the Cathedral, to escape a band of destroying and furious Calvinists. Yet when the shock had a little subsided, it was discovered that a small urchin was the cause of the whole tumult. Having been bathing in the Scheldt, he had returned by way of the church with a couple of bladders under his arm. He had struck these against the door of the Cathedral, partly to dry them, partly from a love of mischief. Thus a great uproar, in the course of which it had been feared that Toumay was to be sacked and drenched in blood, had been caused by a little wanton boy who had been swimming on bladders.

Page 369

This comedy preceded by a few days only the actual disaster. On the 22d of August the news reached Tournay that the churches in Antwerp, Ghent, and many other places, had been sacked. There was an instantaneous movement towards imitating the example on the same evening. Pasquier de la Barre, procureur-general of the city, succeeded by much entreaty in tranquillizing the people for the night. The “guard of terror” was set, and hopes were entertained that the storm might blow over. The expectation, was vain. At daybreak next day, the mob swept upon the churches and stripped them to the very walls. Pictures, statues; organs, ornaments, chalices of silver and gold, reliquaries, albs, chasubles, copes, ciboriea, crosses, chandeliers, lamps; censers, all of richest material, glittering with pearls, rubies, and other precious stones, were scattered in heaps of ruin upon the ground.

As the Spoilers burrowed among the ancient tombs, they performed, in one or two instances, acts of startling posthumous justice. The embalmed body of Duke Adolphus of Gueldres, last of the Egmonts, who had reigned in that province, was dragged from its sepulchre and recognized. Although it had been there for ninety years, it was as uncorrupted, “Owing to the excellent spices which had preserved it from decay,” as upon the day of burial. Thrown upon the marble floor of the church, it lay several days exposed to the execrations of the multitude. The Duke had committed a crime against his father, in consequence of which the province which had been ruled by native races, had passed under the dominion of Charles the Bold. Weary of waiting for the old Duke’s inheritance, he had risen against him in open rebellion. Dragging him from his bed at midnight in the depth of winter, he had compelled the old man, with no covering but his night gear, to walk with naked feet twenty-five miles over ice and snow from Grave to Buren, while he himself performed the same journey in his company on horseback. He had then thrown him into a dungeon beneath the tower of Buren castle, and kept him a close prisoner for six months.

[Memoires de Philippe de Comines (Loud. et Paris, 1747), liv. iv. 194-196. In the Royal Gallery at Berlin is a startling picture by Rembrandt, in which the old Duke is represented looking out of the bars of his dungeon at his son, who is threatening him with uplifted hand and savage face. No subject could be imagined better adapted to the gloomy and sarcastic genius of that painter.]

At last, the Duke of Burgundy summoned the two before his council, and proposed that Adolphus should allow his father 6000 florins annually, with the title of Duke till his death. “He told us,” said Comines, “that he would sooner throw the old man head-foremost down a well and jump in himself afterwards. His father had been Duke forty-four years, and it was time for him to retire.” Adolphus being thus intractable, had been kept in

Page 370

prison till after the death of Charles the Bold. To the memorable insurrection of Ghent, in the time of the Lady Mary, he owed his liberty. The insurgent citizens took him from prison, and caused him to lead them in their foray against Tournay. Beneath the walls of that city he was slain, and buried under its cathedral. And now as if his offence had not been sufficiently atoned for by the loss of his ancestral honors, his captivity, and his death, the earth, after the lapse of nearly a century, had cast him forth from her bosom. There, once more beneath the sunlight, amid a ribald crew of a later generation which had still preserved the memory of his sin, lay the body of the more than parricide, whom "excellent spices" had thus preserved from corruption, only to be the mark of scorn and demoniac laughter.

A large assemblage of rioters, growing in numbers as they advanced, swept over the province of Tournay, after accomplishing the sack of the city churches. Armed with halberds, hammers, and pitchforks, they carried on the war, day after day, against the images. At the convent of Marchiennes, considered by contemporaries the most beautiful abbey in all the Netherlands, they halted to sing the ten commandments in Marot's verse. Hardly had the vast chorus finished the precept against graven images;

> Taiiler ne to feras imaige
> De quelque chose que ce soit,
> Sy bonneur luy fail on hommaige,
> Bon Dieu jalousie en recoit,

when the whole mob seemed seized with sudden madness. Without waiting to complete the Psalm, they fastened upon the company of marble martyrs, as if they had possessed sensibility to feel the blows inflicted. In an hour they had laid the whole in ruins.

Having accomplished this deed, they swept on towards Anchin. Here, however, they were confronted by the Seigneur de la Tour, who, at the head of a small company of peasants, attacked the marauders and gained a complete victory. Five or six hundred of them were slain, others were drowned in the river and adjacent swamps, the rest were dispersed. It was thus proved that a little more spirit upon the part of the orderly portion of the inhabitants, might have brought about a different result than the universal image-breaking.

In Valenciennes, "the tragedy," as an eye-witness calls it, was performed upon Saint Bartholomew's day. It was, however, only a tragedy of statues. Hardly as many senseless stones were victims as there were to be living Huguenots sacrificed in a single city upon a Bartholomew which was fast approaching. In the Valenciennes massacre, not a human being was injured.

Page 371

Such in general outline and in certain individual details, was the celebrated iconomachy of the Netherlands. The movement was a sudden explosion of popular revenge against the symbols of that Church from which the Reformers had been enduring such terrible persecution. It was also an expression of the general sympathy for the doctrines which had taken possession of the national heart. It was the depravation of that instinct which had in the beginning of the summer drawn Calvinists and Lutherans forth in armed bodies, twenty thousand strong, to worship God in the open fields. The difference between the two phenomena was, that the field-preaching was a crime committed by the whole mass of the Reformers; men, women, and children confronting the penalties of death, by a general determination, while the imagebreaking was the act of a small portion of the populace. A hundred persons belonging to the lowest order of society sufficed for the desecration of the Antwerp churches. It was, said Orange, “a mere handful of rabble” who did the deed. Sir Richard Clough saw ten or twelve persons entirely sack church after church, while ten thousand spectators looked on, indifferent or horror-struck. The bands of iconoclasts were of the lowest character, and few in number. Perhaps the largest assemblage was that which ravaged the province of Tournay, but this was so weak as to be entirely routed by a small and determined force. The duty of repression devolved upon both Catholics and Protestants. Neither party stirred. All seemed overcome with special wonder as the tempest swept over the land.

The ministers of the Reformed religion, and the chiefs of the liberal party, all denounced the image-breaking. Francis Junius bitterly regretted such excesses. Ambrose Wille, pure of all participation in the crime, stood up before ten thousand Reformers at Tournay —even while the storm was raging in the neighboring cities, and, when many voices around him were hoarsely commanding similar depravities to rebuke the outrages by which a sacred cause was disgraced. The Prince of Orange, in his private letters, deplored the riots, and stigmatized the perpetrators. Even Brederode, while, as Suzerain of his city of Viane, he ordered the images there to be quietly taken from the churches, characterized this popular insurrection as insensate and flagitious. Many of the leading confederates not only were offended with the proceedings, but, in their eagerness to chastise the iconoclasts and to escape from a league of which they were weary, began to take severe measures against the Ministers and Reformers, of whom they had constituted themselves in April the especial protectors.

Page 372

The next remarkable characteristic of these tumults was the almost entire abstinence of the rioters from personal outrage and from pillage. The testimony of a very bitter, but honest Catholic at Valenciennes, is remarkable upon this point. "Certain chroniclers," said he, "have greatly mistaken the character of this image-breaking. It has been said that the Calvinists killed a hundred priests in this city, cutting some of them into pieces, and burning others over a slow fire. I remember very well every thing which happened upon that abominable day, and I can affirm that not a single priest was injured. The Huguenots took good care not to injure in any way the living images." This was the case every where. Catholic and Protestant writers agree that no deeds of violence were committed against man or woman.

It would be also very easy to accumulate a vast weight of testimony as to their forbearance from robbery. They destroyed for destruction's sake, not for purposes of plunder.

Although belonging to the lowest classes of society, they left heaps of jewellery, of gold and silver plate, of costly embroidery, lying unheeded upon the ground. They felt instinctively that a great passion would be contaminated by admixture with paltry motives. In Flanders a company of rioters hanged one of their own number for stealing articles to the value of five Shillings. In Valenciennes the iconoclasts were offered large sums if they would refrain from desecrating the churches of that city, but they rejected the proposal with disdain. The honest Catholic burgher who recorded the fact, observed that he did so because of the many misrepresentations on the subject, not because he wished to flatter heresy and rebellion.

At Tournay, the greatest scrupulousness was observed upon this point. The floor of the cathedral was strewn with "pearls and precious stones, with chalices and reliquaries of silver and gold;" but the ministers of the reformed religion, in company with the magistrates, came to the spot, and found no difficulty, although utterly without power to prevent the storm, in taking quiet possession of the wreck. "We had every thing of value," says Procureur-General De la Barre, "carefully inventoried, weighed, locked in chests, and placed under a strict guard in the prison of the Halle, to which one set of keys were given to the ministers, and another to the magistrates." Who will dare to censure in very severe language this havoc among stocks and stones in a land where so many living men and women, of more value than many statues, had been slaughtered by the inquisition, and where Alva's "Blood Tribunal" was so soon to eclipse even that terrible institution in the number of its victims and the amount of its confiscations?

Page 373

Yet the effect of the riots was destined to be most disastrous for a time to the reforming party. It furnished plausible excuses for many lukewarm friends of their cause to withdraw from all connection with it. Egmont denounced the proceedings as highly flagitious, and busied himself with punishing the criminals in Flanders. The Regent was beside herself with indignation and terror. Philip, when he heard the news, fell into a paroxysm of frenzy. "It shall cost them dear!" he cried, as he tore his beard for rage; "it shall cost them dear! I swear it by the soul of my father!" The Reformation in the Netherlands, by the fury of these fanatics, was thus made apparently to abandon the high ground upon which it had stood in the early summer. The sublime spectacle of the multitudinous field-preaching was sullied by the excesses of the image-breaking. The religious war, before imminent, became inevitable.

Nevertheless, the first effect of the tumults was a temporary advantage to the Reformers. A great concession was extorted from the fears of the Duchess Regent, who was certainly placed in a terrible position. Her conduct was not heroic, although she might be forgiven for trepidation. Her treachery, however, under these trying circumstances was less venial. At three o'clock in the morning of the 22nd of August, Orange, Egmont, Horn, Hoogatraaten, Mansfeld, and others were summoned to the palace. They found her already equipped for flight, surrounded by her waiting-women, chamberlains and lackeys, while the mules and hackneys stood harnessed in the court-yard, and her body-guard were prepared to mount at a moment's notice. She announced her intention of retreating at once to Mons, in which city, owing to Aerschot's care, she hoped to find refuge against the fury of the rebellion then sweeping the country. Her alarm was almost beyond control. She was certain that the storm was ready to burst upon Brussels, and that every Catholic was about to be massacred before her eyes. Aremberg, Berlaymont, and Noircarmes were with the Duchess when the other seigniors arrived.

A part of the Duke of Aerschot's company had been ordered out to escort the projected flight to *Mons*. Orange, Horn, Egmont, and Hoogstraaten implored her to desist from her fatal resolution. They represented that such a retreat before a mob would be the very means of ruining the country. They denounced all persons who had counselled the scheme, as enemies of his Majesty and herself. They protested their readiness to die at her feet in her defence, but besought her not to abandon the post of duty in the hour of peril. While they were thus anxiously debating, Viglius entered the chamber. With tears streaming down her cheeks, Margaret turned to the aged President, uttering fierce reproaches and desponding lamentations. Viglius brought the news that the citizens had taken possession of the gates, and were resolved not to permit her departure from the city.

Page 374

He reminded her, according to the indispensable practice of all wise counsellors, that he had been constantly predicting this result. He, however, failed in administering much consolation, or in suggesting any remedy. He was, in truth, in as great a panic as herself, and it was, according to the statement of the Duchess, mainly in order to save the President from threatened danger, that she eventually resolved to make concessions. “Viglius,” wrote Margaret to Philip, “is so much afraid of being cut to pieces, that his timidity has become incredible.” Upon the warm assurance of Count Horn, that he would enable her to escape from the city, should it become necessary, or would perish in the attempt, a promise in which he was seconded by the rest of the seigniors, she consented to remain for the day in her palace.—Mansfeld was appointed captain-general of the city; Egmont, Horn, Orange, and the others agreed to serve under his orders, and all went down together to the townhouse. The magistrates were summoned, a general meeting of the citizens was convened, and the announcement made of Mansfeld’s appointment, together with an earnest appeal to all honest men to support the Government. The appeal was answered by a shout of unanimous approbation, an enthusiastic promise to live or die with the Regent, and the expression of a resolution to permit neither reformed preaching nor image-breaking within the city.

Nevertheless, at seven o’clock in the evening, the Duchess again sent for the seigniors. She informed them that she had received fresh and certain information, that the churches were to be sacked that very night; that Viglius, Berlaymont, and Aremberg were to be killed, and that herself and Egmont were to be taken prisoners. She repeated many times that she had been ill-advised, expressed bitter regret at having deferred her flight from the city, and called upon those who had obstructed her plan, now to fulfil their promises. Turning fiercely upon Count Horn, she uttered a volley of reproaches upon his share in the transaction. “You are the cause,” said she, “that I am now in this position. Why do you not redeem your pledge and enable me to leave the place at once.” Horn replied that he was ready to do so if she were resolved to stay no longer. He would at the instant cut his way through the guard at the Caudenberg gate, and bring her out in safety, or die in the effort. At the same time he assured her that he gave no faith to the idle reports flying about the city, reminded her that nobles, magistrates, and citizens were united in her defence, and in brief used the, same arguments which had before been used to pacify her alarm. The nobles were again successful in enforcing their counsels, the Duchess was spared the ignominy and the disaster of a retreat before an insurrection which was only directed against statues, and the ecclesiastical treasures of Brussels were saved from sacrilege.

Page 375

On the 25th August came the crowning act of what the Reformers considered their most complete triumph, and the Regent her deepest degradation. It was found necessary under the alarming aspect of affairs, that liberty of worship, in places where it had been already established, should be accorded to the new religion. Articles of agreement to this effect were accordingly drawn up and exchanged between the Government and Lewis of Nassau, attended by fifteen others of the confederacy. A corresponding pledge was signed by them, that so long as the Regent was true to her engagement, they would consider their previously existing league annulled, and would assist cordially in every endeavor to maintain tranquillity and support the authority of his Majesty. The important Accord was then duly signed by the Duchess. It declared that the inquisition was abolished, that his Majesty would soon issue a new general edict, expressly and unequivocally protecting the nobles against all evil consequences from past transactions, that they were to be employed in the royal service, and that public preaching according to the forms of the new religion was to be practised in places where it had already taken place. Letters general were immediately despatched to the senates of all the cities, proclaiming these articles of agreement and ordering their execution. Thus for a fleeting moment there was a thrill of joy throughout the Netherlands. The inquisition was thought forever abolished, the era of religious reformation arrived.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

All denounced the image-breaking
Anxiety to do nothing wrong, the senators did nothing at all
Before morning they had sacked thirty churches
Bigotry which was the prevailing characteristic of the age
Enriched generation after generation by wealthy penitence
Fifty thousand persons in the provinces (put to death)
Furious fanaticism
Lutheran princes of Germany, detested the doctrines of Geneva
Monasteries, burned their invaluable libraries
No qualities whatever but birth and audacity to recommend him
Notre Dame at Antwerp
Persons who discussed religious matters were to be put to death
Premature zeal was prejudicial to the cause
Purchased absolution for crime and smoothed a pathway to heaven
Rearing gorgeous temples where paupers are to kneel
Schism which existed in the general Reformed Church
Storm by which all these treasures were destroyed (in 7 days)
The noblest and richest temple of the Netherlands was a wreck
Tyrannical spirit of Calvinism
Would not help to burn fifty or sixty thousand Netherlanders

Etext editor's bookmarks the Dutch republic, 1555-1566, Complete:

Page 376

A pleasantry called voluntary contributions or benevolences
A country disinherited by nature of its rights
Absolution for incest was afforded at thirty-six livres
Achieved the greatness to which they had not been born
Advancing age diminished his tendency to other carnal pleasures
Affecting to discredit them
All offices were sold to the highest bidder
All denounced the image-breaking
All his disciples and converts are to be punished with death
All reading of the scriptures (forbidden)
Altercation between Luther and Erasmus, upon predestination
An hereditary papacy, a perpetual pope-emperor
An inspiring and delightful recreation (auto-da-fe)
Announced his approaching marriage with the Virgin Mary
Annual harvest of iniquity by which his revenue was increased
Anxiety to do nothing wrong, the senators did nothing at all
Arrested on suspicion, tortured till confession
As ready as papists, with age, fagot, and excommunication
Attacking the authority of the pope
Attempting to swim in two waters
Batavian legion was the imperial body guard
Beating the Netherlanders into Christianity
Before morning they had sacked thirty churches
Bigotry which was the prevailing characteristic of the age
Bishop is a consecrated pirate
Bold reformer had only a new dogma in place of the old ones
Brethren, parents, and children, having wives in common
Burned alive if they objected to transubstantiation
Burned, strangled, beheaded, or buried alive (100,000)
Charles the Fifth autocrat of half the world
Condemning all heretics to death
Consign to the flames all prisoners whatever (Papal letter)
Courage of despair inflamed the French
Craft meaning, simply, strength
Criminal whose guilt had been established by the hot iron
Criminals buying Paradise for money
Crusades made great improvement in the condition of the serfs
Decrees for burning, strangling, and burying alive
Democratic instincts of the ancient German savages
Denies the utility of prayers for the dead
Despot by birth and inclination (Charles V.)
Difference between liberties and liberty
Dispute between Luther and Zwingli concerning the real presence

Dissimulation and delay
Divine right
Drank of the water in which, he had washed
Endure every hardship but hunger
English Puritans
Enormous wealth (of the Church) which engendered the hatred
Enriched generation after generation by wealthy penitence
Erasmus encourages the bold friar
Erasmus of Rotterdam
Even for the rape of God’s mother, if that were possible
Excited with the appearance of a gem of true philosophy

Page 377

Executions of Huss and Jerome of Prague
Fable of divine right is invented to sanction the system
Felix Mants, the anabaptist, is drowned at Zurich
Few, even prelates were very dutiful to the pope
Fiction of apostolic authority to bind and loose
Fifty thousand persons in the provinces (put to death)
Fishermen and river raftsmen become ocean adventurers
For myself I am unworthy of the honor (of martyrdom)
For women to lament, for men to remember
Forbids all private assemblies for devotion
Force clerical—the power of clerks
Furious fanaticism
Gallant and ill-fated Lamoral Egmont
Gaul derided the Roman soldiers as a band of pigmies
German finds himself sober—he believes himself ill
Govern under the appearance of obeying
Great science of political equilibrium
Great Privilege, the Magna Charta of Holland
Guarantees of forgiveness for every imaginable sin
Habeas corpus
Halcyon days of ban, book and candle
He knew men, especially he knew their weaknesses
He did his best to be friends with all the world
Heresy was a plant of early growth in the Netherlands
His imagination may have assisted his memory in the task
History shows how feeble are barriers of paper
Holland, England, and America, are all links of one chain
I would carry the wood to burn my own son withal
In Holland, the clergy had neither influence nor seats
Informer, in case of conviction, should be entitled to one half
Inquisition of the Netherlands is much more pitiless
Inquisition was not a fit subject for a compromise
Insinuating suspicions when unable to furnish evidence
Invented such Christian formulas as these (a curse)
Inventing long speeches for historical characters
July 1st, two Augustine monks were burned at Brussels
King of Zion to be pinched to death with red-hot tongs
Labored under the disadvantage of never having existed
Learn to tremble as little at priestcraft as at swordcraft
Let us fool these poor creatures to their heart’s content

Licences accorded by the crown to carry slaves to America
Little grievances would sometimes inflame more than vast
Long succession of so many illustrious obscure
Look through the cloud of dissimulation
Lutheran princes of Germany, detested the doctrines of Geneva
Made to swing to and fro over a slow fire
Maintaining the attitude of an injured but forgiving Christian
Man had only natural wrongs (No natural rights)
Many greedy priests, of lower rank, had turned shop-keepers
Monasteries, burned their invaluable libraries
More accustomed to do well than to speak well
No one can testify but a householder

Page 378

No calumny was too senseless to be invented
No law but the law of the longest purse
No qualities whatever but birth and audacity to recommend him
Not of the stuff of which martyrs are made (Erasmus)
Notre Dame at Antwerp
Nowhere was the persecution of heretics more relentless
Obstinate, of both sexes, to be burned
Often much tyranny in democracy
One golden grain of wit into a sheet of infinite platitude
Orator was, however, delighted with his own performance
Others go to battle, says the historian, these go to war
Panegyrists of royal houses in the sixteenth century
Pardon for murder, if not by poison, was cheaper
Pardon for crimes already committed, or about to be committed
Paying their passage through, purgatory
Perpetually dropping small innuendos like pebbles
Persons who discussed religious matters were to be put to death
Petty passion for contemptible details
Philip, who did not often say a great deal in a few words
Planted the inquisition in the Netherlands
Poisoning, for example, was absolved for eleven ducats
Pope and emperor maintain both positions with equal logic
Power to read and write helped the clergy to much wealth
Premature zeal was prejudicial to the cause
Procrastination was always his first refuge
Promises which he knew to be binding only upon the weak
Purchased absolution for crime and smoothed a pathway to heaven
Rashness alternating with hesitation
Readiness to strike and bleed at any moment in her cause
Rearing gorgeous temples where paupers are to kneel
Repentant females to be buried alive
Repentant males to be executed with the sword
Revocable benefices or feuds
Ruinous honors
Sale of absolutions was the source of large fortunes to the priests
Same conjury over ignorant baron and cowardly hind
Scaffold was the sole refuge from the rack
Schism which existed in the general Reformed Church
Scoffing at the ceremonies and sacraments of the Church
Secret drowning was substituted for public burning

Sharpened the punishment for reading the scriptures in private
Slavery was both voluntary and compulsory
Soldier of the cross was free upon his return
Sonnets of Petrarch
Sovereignty was heaven-born, anointed of God
St. Peter’s dome rising a little nearer to the clouds
St. Bartholomew was to sleep for seven years longer
Storm by which all these treasures were destroyed (in 7 days)
Tanchelyn
Taxation upon sin
Ten thousand two hundred and twenty individuals were burned
That vile and mischievous animal called the people
The noblest and richest temple of the Netherlands was a wreck

Page 379

The Gaul was singularly unchaste
The vivifying becomes afterwards the dissolving principle
The bad Duke of Burgundy, Philip surnamed “the Good,”
The egg had been laid by Erasmus, hatched by Luther
These human victims, chained and burning at the stake
They had at last burned one more preacher alive
Thousands of burned heretics had not made a single convert
Thus Hand-werpen, hand-throwing, became Antwerp
To think it capable of error, is the most devilish heresy of all
To prefer poverty to the wealth attendant upon trade
Torquemada’s administration (of the inquisition)
Tranquillity of despotism to the turbulence of freedom
Two witnesses sent him to the stake, one witness to the rack
Tyrannical spirit of Calvinism
Understood the art of managing men, particularly his superiors
Upon one day twenty-eight master cooks were dismissed
Villagers, or villeins
We believe our mothers to have been honest women
When the abbot has dice in his pocket, the convent will play
William of Nassau, Prince of Orange
Wiser simply to satisfy himself
Would not help to burn fifty or sixty thousand Netherlanders

MOTLEY’S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, 1566-1574, Complete
THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By *John Lothrop Motley*
1855

Volume 2, Book 1., 1566
1566 [*Chapter viii*.]

Secret policy of the government—Berghen and Montigny in Spain— Debates at Segovia—Correspondence of the Duchess with Philip— Procrastination and dissimulation of the King—Secret communication to the Pope—Effect in the provinces of the King’s letters to the government—Secret instructions to the Duchess—-Desponding statements of Margaret—Her misrepresentations concerning Orange, Egmont, and others—Wrath and duplicity of Philip—Egmont’s exertions in Flanders—-Orange returns to Antwerp—His tolerant spirit—Agreement of 2d September—Horn at Tournay—Excavations in the Cathedral—Almost universal attendance at the preaching

— Building of temples commenced—Difficult position of Horn—Preaching in the Clothiers' Hall—Horn recalled—Noircarmes at Tournay— Friendly correspondence of Margaret with Orange, Egmont, Horn, and Hoogstraaten—Her secret defamation of these persons.

Egmont in Flanders, Orange at Antwerp, Horn at Tournay; Hoogstraaten at Mechlin, were exerting themselves to suppress insurrection and to avert ruin. What, meanwhile, was the policy of the government? The secret course pursued both at Brussels and at Madrid may be condensed into the usual formula—dissimulation, procrastination, and again dissimulation.

Page 380

It is at this point necessary to take a rapid survey of the open and the secret proceedings of the King and his representatives from the moment at which Berghen and Montigny arrived in Madrid. Those ill-fated gentlemen had been received with apparent cordiality, and admitted to frequent, but unmeaning, interviews with his Majesty. The current upon which they were embarked was deep and treacherous, but it was smooth and very slow. They assured the King that his letters, ordering the rigorous execution of the inquisition and edicts, had engendered all the evils under which the provinces were laboring. They told him that Spaniards and tools of Spaniards had attempted to govern the country, to the exclusion of native citizens and nobles, but that it would soon be found that Netherlanders were not to be trodden upon like the abject inhabitants of Milan, Naples, and Sicily. Such words as these struck with an unaccustomed sound upon the royal ear, but the envoys, who were both Catholic and loyal, had no idea, in thus expressing their opinions, according to their sense of duty, and in obedience to the King's desire, upon the causes of the discontent, that they were committing an act of high treason.

When the news of the public preaching reached Spain, there were almost daily consultations at the grove of Segovia. The eminent personages who composed the royal council were the Duke of Alva, the Count de Feria, Don Antonio de Toledo, Don Juan Manrique de Lara, Ruy Gomez, Quixada, Councillor Tisnacq, recently appointed President of the State Council, and Councillor Hopper. Six Spaniards and two Netherlanders, one of whom, too, a man of dull intellect and thoroughly subservient character, to deal with the local affairs of the Netherlands in a time of intense excitement! The instructions of the envoys had been to represent the necessity of according three great points—abolition of the inquisition, moderation of the edicts, according to the draft prepared in Brussels, and an ample pardon for past transactions. There was much debate upon all these propositions. Philip said little, but he listened attentively to the long discourses in council, and he took an incredible quantity of notes. It was the general opinion that this last demand on the part of the Netherlanders was the fourth link in the chain of treason. The first had been the cabal by which Granvelle had been expelled; the second, the mission of Egmont, the main object of which had been to procure a modification of the state council, in order to bring that body under the control of a few haughty and rebellious nobles; the third had been the presentation of the insolent and seditious Request; and now, to crown the whole, came a proposition embodying the three points—abolition of the inquisition, revocation of the edicts, and a pardon to criminals, for whom death was the only sufficient punishment.

Page 381

With regard to these three points, it was, after much wrangling, decided to grant them under certain restrictions. To abolish the inquisition would be to remove the only instrument by which the Church had been accustomed to regulate the consciences and the doctrines of its subjects. It would be equivalent to a concession of religious freedom, at least to individuals within their own domiciles, than which no concession could be more pernicious. Nevertheless, it might be advisable to permit the temporary cessation of the papal inquisition, now that the episcopal inquisition had been so much enlarged and strengthened in the Netherlands, on the condition that this branch of the institution should be maintained in energetic condition. With regard to the Moderation, it was thought better to defer that matter till, the proposed visit of his Majesty to the provinces. If, however, the Regent should think it absolutely necessary to make a change, she must cause a new draft to be made, as that which had been sent was not found admissible. Touching the pardon general, it would be necessary to make many conditions and restrictions before it could be granted. Provided these were sufficiently minute to exclude all persons whom it might be found desirable to chastise, the amnesty was possible. Otherwise it was quite out of the question.

Meantime, Margaret of Parma had been urging her brother to come to a decision, painting the distracted condition of the country in the liveliest colors, and insisting, although perfectly aware of Philip's private sentiments, upon a favorable decision as to the three points demanded by the envoys. Especially she urged her incapacity to resist any rebellion, and demanded succor of men and money in case the "Moderation" were not accepted by his Majesty.

It was the last day of July before the King wrote at all, to communicate his decisions upon the crisis which had occurred in the first week of April. The disorder for which he had finally prepared a prescription had, before his letter arrived, already passed through its subsequent stages of the field-preaching and the image-breaking. Of course these fresh symptoms would require much consultation, pondering, and note-taking before they could be dealt with. In the mean time they would be considered as not yet having happened. This was the masterly procrastination of the sovereign, when his provinces were in a blaze.

His masterly dissimulation was employed in the direction suggested by his councillors. Philip never originated a thought, nor laid down a plan, but he was ever true to the falsehood of his nature, and was indefatigable in following out the suggestions of others. No greater mistake can be made than to ascribe talent to this plodding and pedantic monarch. The man's intellect was contemptible, but malignity and duplicity, almost superhuman; have effectually lifted his character out of the regions of the common-place. He wrote

Page 382

accordingly to say that the pardon, under certain conditions, might be granted, and that the papal inquisition might cease—the bishops now being present in such numbers, “to take care of their flocks,” and the episcopal inquisition being, therefore established upon so secure a basis. He added, that if a moderation of the edicts were still desired, a new project might be sent to Madrid, as the one brought by Berghen and Montigny was not satisfactory. In arranging this wonderful scheme for composing the tumults of the country, which had grown out of a determined rebellion to the inquisition in any form, he followed not only the advice, but adopted the exact language of his councillors.

Certainly, here was not much encouragement for patriotic hearts in the Netherlands. A pardon, so restricted that none were likely to be forgiven save those who had done no wrong; an episcopal inquisition stimulated to renewed exertions, on the ground that the papal functionaries were to be discharged; and a promise that, although the proposed Moderation of the edicts seemed too mild for the monarch’s acceptance, yet at some future period another project would be matured for settling the matter to universal satisfaction—such were the propositions of the Crown. Nevertheless, Philip thought he had gone too far, even in administering this meagre amount of mercy, and that he had been too frank in employing so slender a deception, as in the scheme thus sketched. He therefore summoned a notary, before whom, in presence of the Duke of Alva, the Licentiate Menchaca and Dr. Velasco, he declared that, although he had just authorized Margaret of Parma, by force of circumstances, to grant pardon to all those who had been compromised in the late disturbances of the Netherlands, yet as he had not done this spontaneously nor freely, he did not consider himself bound by the authorization, but that, on the contrary, he reserved his right to punish all the guilty, and particularly those who had been the authors and encouragers of the sedition.

So much for the pardon promised in his official correspondence.

With regard to the concessions, which he supposed himself to have made in the matter of the inquisition and the edicts, he saved his conscience by another process. Revoking with his right hand all which his left had been doing, he had no sooner despatched his letters to the Duchess Regent than he sent off another to his envoy at Rome. In this despatch he instructed Requesens to inform the Pope as to the recent royal decisions upon the three points, and to state that there had not been time to consult his Holiness beforehand. Nevertheless, continued Philip “the prudent,” it was perhaps better thus, since the abolition could have no force, unless the Pope, by whom the institution had been established, consented to its suspension. This matter, however, was to be kept a profound secret. So much for the inquisition matter. The papal institution, notwithstanding the official letters, was to exist, unless the Pope chose to destroy it; and his Holiness, as we have seen, had sent the Archbishop of Sorrento, a few weeks before, to Brussels, for the purpose of concerting secret measures for strengthening the “Holy Office” in the provinces.

Page 383

With regard to the proposed moderation of the edicts, Philip informed Pius the Fifth, through Requesens, that the project sent by the Duchess not having been approved, orders had been transmitted for a new draft, in which all the articles providing for the severe punishment of heretics were to be retained, while alterations, to be agreed upon by the state and privy councils, and the knights of the Fleece, were to be adopted—-certainly in no sense of clemency. On the contrary, the King assured his Holiness, that if the severity of chastisement should be mitigated the least in the world by the new articles, they would in no case receive the royal approbation. Philip further implored the Pope “not to be scandalized” with regard to the proposed pardon, as it would be by no means extended to offenders against religion. All this was to be kept entirely secret. The King added, that rather than permit the least prejudice to the ancient religion, he would sacrifice all his states, and lose a hundred lives if he had so many; for he would never consent to be the sovereign of heretics. He said he would arrange the troubles of the Netherlands, without violence, if possible, because forcible measures would cause the entire destruction of the country. Nevertheless they should be employed, if his purpose could be accomplished in no other way. In that case the King would himself be the executor of his own design, without allowing the peril which he should incur, nor the ruin of the provinces, nor that of his other realms, to prevent him from doing all which a Christian prince was bound to do, to maintain the Catholic religion and the authority of the Holy See, as well as to testify his personal regard for the reigning pontiff, whom he so much loved and esteemed.

Here was plain speaking. Here were all the coming horrors distinctly foreshadowed. Here was the truth told to the only being with whom Philip ever was sincere. Yet even on this occasion, he permitted himself a falsehood by which his Holiness was not deceived. Philip had no intention of going to the Netherlands in person, and the Pope knew that he had none. “I feel it in my bones,” said Granvelle, mournfully, “that nobody in Rome believes in his Majesty’s journey to the provinces.” From that time forward, however, the King began to promise this visit, which was held out as a panacea for every ill, and made to serve as an excuse for constant delay.

It may well be supposed that if Philip’s secret policy had been thoroughly understood in the Netherlands, the outbreak would have come sooner. On the receipt, however, of the public despatches from Madrid, the administration in Brussels made great efforts to represent their tenor as highly satisfactory. The papal inquisition was to be abolished, a pardon was to be granted, a new moderation was to be arranged at some indefinite period; what more would men have? Yet without seeing the face of the cards, the people suspected the real truth, and Orange was convinced of it. Viglius wrote that if the King did not make his intended visit soon, he would come too late, and that every week more harm was done by procrastination than could be repaired by months of labor and perhaps by torrents of blood. What the precise process was, through which Philip was to cure all disorders by his simple presence, the President did not explain.

Page 384

As for the measures propounded by the King after so long a delay, they were of course worse than useless; for events had been marching while he had been musing. The course suggested was, according to Viglius, but “a plaster for a wound, but a drag-chain for the wheel.” He urged that the convocation of the states-general was the only remedy for the perils in which the country was involved; unless the King should come in person. He however expressed the hope that by general consultation some means would be devised by which, if not a good, at least a less desperate aspect would be given to public affairs, “so that the commonwealth, if fall it must, might at least fall upon its feet like a cat, and break its legs rather than its neck.”

Notwithstanding this highly figurative view of the subject; and notwithstanding the urgent representations of Duchess Margaret to her brother, that nobles and people were all clamoring about the necessity of convening the states general, Philip was true to his instincts on this as on the other questions. He knew very well that the states-general of the Netherlands and Spanish despotism were incompatible ideas, and he recoiled from the idea of the assembly with infinite aversion. At the same time a little wholesome deception could do no harm. He wrote to the Duchess, therefore, that he was determined never to allow the states-general to be convened. He forbade her to consent to the step under any circumstances, but ordered her to keep his prohibition a profound secret. He wished, he said, the people to think that it was only for the moment that the convocation was forbidden, and that the Duchess was expecting to receive the necessary permission at another time. It was his desire, he distinctly stated, that the people should not despair of obtaining the assembly, but he was resolved never to consent to the step, for he knew very well what was meant by a meeting of the States-general. Certainly after so ingenuous but secret a declaration from the disciple of Macchiavelli, Margaret might well consider the arguments to be used afterward by herself and others, in favor of the ardently desired measure, as quite superfluous.

Such then was the policy secretly resolved upon by Philip; even before he heard of the startling events which were afterwards to break upon him. He would maintain the inquisition and the edicts; he would exterminate the heretics, even if he lost all his realms and his own life in the cause; he would never hear of the national representatives coming together. What then were likely to be his emotions when he should be told of twenty thousand armed heretics assembling at one spot, and fifteen thousand at another, in almost every town in every province, to practice their blasphemous rites; when he should be told of the whirlwind which had swept all the ecclesiastical accumulations of ages out of existence; when he should read Margaret’s despairing letters, in which she acknowledged that she had at last committed an act unworthy of God, of her King, and of herself, in permitting liberty of worship to the renegades from the ancient church!

Page 385

The account given by the Duchess was in truth very dismal. She said that grief consumed her soul and crimson suffused her cheeks while she related the recent transactions. She took God to witness that she had resisted long, that she had past many sleepless nights, that she had been wasted with fever and grief. After this penitential preface she confessed that, being a prisoner and almost besieged in her palace, sick in body and soul, she had promised pardon and security to the confederates, with liberty of holding assemblies to heretics in places where the practice had already obtained. These concessions had been made valid until the King by and with the consent of the states-general, should definitely arrange the matter. She stated, however, that she had given her consent to these two demands, not in the royal name, but in her own. The King was not bound by her promise, and she expreesed the hope that he would have no regard to any such obligation. She further implored her brother to come forth as soon as possibe to avenge the injuries inflicted upon the ancient church, adding, that if deprived of that consolation, she should incontinently depart this life. That hope alone would prevent her death.

This was certainly strong language. She was also very explicit in her representations of the influence which had been used by certain personages to prevent the exercise of any authority upon her own part. “Wherefore,” said Margaret, “I eat my heart; and shall never have peace till the arrival of your Majesty.”

There was no doubt who those personages were who, as it was pretended, had thus held the Duchess in bondage, and compelled her to grant these infamous concessions. In her secret Italian letters, she furnished the King with a tissue of most extravagant and improbable falsehoods, supplied to her mainly by Noircarmes and Mansfeld, as to the course pursued at this momentous crisis by Orange, Egmont, Horn, and Hoogstraaten. They had all, she said, declared against God and against religion.—Horn, at least, was for killing all the priests and monks in the country, if full satisfaction were not given to the demands of the heretics. Egmont had declared openly for the beggars, and was levying troops in Germany. Orange had the firm intention of making himself master of the whole country, and of dividing it among the other seigniors and himself. The Prince had said that if she took refuge in Mons, as she had proposed, they would instantly convoke the states-general, and take all necessary measures. Egmont had held the same language, saying that he would march at the head of forty thousand men to besiege her in that city. All these seigniors, however, had avowed their determination to prevent her flight, to assemble the estates, and to drag her by force before the assembly, in order to compel her consent to every measure which might be deemed expedient. Under all these circumstances, she had been obliged to defer her retreat, and to make the concessions which had overwhelmed her with disgrace.

Page 386

With such infamous calumnies, utterly disproved by every fact in the case, and unsupported by a tittle of evidence, save the hearsay reports of a man like Noircarmes, did this “woman, nourished at Rome, in whom no one could put confidence,” dig the graves of men who were doing their best to serve her.

Philip’s rage at first hearing of the image-breaking has been indicated. He was ill of an intermittent fever at the wood of Segovia when the news arrived, and it may well be supposed that his wrath at these proceedings was not likely to assuage his malady. Nevertheless, after the first burst of indignation, he found relief in his usual deception. While slowly maturing the most tremendous vengeance which anointed monarch ever deliberately wreaked upon his people, he wrote to say, that it was “his intention to treat his vassals and subjects in the provinces like a good and clement prince, not to ruin them nor to put them into servitude, but to exercise all humanity, sweetness, and grace, avoiding all harshness.” Such were the avowed intentions of the sovereign towards his people at the moment when the terrible Alva, who was to be the exponent of all this “humanity, sweetness, and grace,” was already beginning the preparations for his famous invasion of the Netherlands.

The essence of the compact agreed to upon the 23d August between the confederates and the Regent, was that the preaching of the reformed religion should be tolerated in places where it had previously to that date been established. Upon this basis Egmont, Horn, Orange, Hoogstraaten, and others, were directed once more to attempt the pacification of the different provinces.

Egmont departed for his government of Flanders, and from that moment vanished all his pretensions, which at best had been, slender enough, to the character of a national chieftain. During the whole of the year his course had been changeful. He had felt the influence of Orange; he had generous instincts; he had much vanity; he had the pride of high rank; which did not easily brook the domination of strangers, in a land which he considered himself and his compeers entitled by their birth to rule. At this juncture, however, particularly when in the company of Noircarmes, Berlaymont, and Viglius, he expressed, notwithstanding their calumnious misstatements, the deepest detestation of the heretics. He was a fervent Catholic, and he regarded the image-breaking as an unpardon able crime. “We must take up arms,” said he, “sooner or later, to bring these Reformers to reason, or they will end by laying down the law for us.” On the other hand, his anger would be often appeased by the grave but gracious remonstrances of Orange. During a part of the summer, the Reformers had been so strong in Flanders that upon a single day sixty thousand armed men had been assembled at the different field-preachings within that province. “All they needed was a Jacquemart, or a Philip van Artevelde,” says a Catholic, contemporary,

Page 387

“but they would have scorned to march under the banner of a brewer; having dared to raise their eyes for a chief, to the most illustrious warrior of his ages.” No doubt, had Egmont ever listened to these aspirations, he might have taken the field against the government with an invincible force, seized the capital, imprisoned the Regent, and mastered the whole country, which was entirely defenceless, before Philip would have had time to write more than ten despatches upon the subject.

These hopes of the Reformers, if hopes they could be called, were now destined to be most bitterly disappointed. Egmont entered Flanders, not as a chief of rebels—not as a wise pacificator, but as an unscrupulous partisan of government, disposed to take summary vengeance on all suspected persons who should fall in his way. He ordered numerous executions of image-breakers and of other heretics. The whole province was in a state of alarm; for, although he had not been furnished by the Regent with a strong body of troops, yet the name of the conqueror at Saint Quentin and Gravelines was worth many regiments. His severity was excessive. His sanguinary exertions were ably seconded also by his secretary Bakkerzeel, a man who exercised the greatest influence over his chief, and who was now fiercely atoning for having signed the Compromise by persecuting those whom that league had been formed to protect. “Amid all the perplexities of the Duchess Regent,” Says a Walloon historian, “this virtuous princess was consoled by the exploits of Bakkerzeel, gentleman in Count Egmont’s service. On one occasion he hanged twenty heretics, including a minister, at a single heat.”

Such achievements as these by the hands or the orders of the distinguished general who had been most absurdly held up as a possible protector of the civil and religious liberties of the country, created profound sensation. Flanders and Artois were filled with the wives and children of suspected I thousands who had fled the country to escape the wrath of Egmont. The cries and piteous lamentations of these unfortunate creatures were heard on every side. Count Louis was earnestly implored to intercede for the persecuted Reformers. “You who have been so nobly gifted by Heaven, you who have good will and singular bounty written upon your face,” said Utenhove to Louis, “have the power to save these poor victims from the throats of the ravenous wolves.” The Count responded to the appeal, and strove to soften the severity of Egmont, without, however, producing any very signal effect. Flanders was soon pacified, nor was that important province permitted to enjoy the benefits of the agreement which had been extorted, from the Duchess. The preachings were forbidden, and the ministers and congregations arrested and chastised, even in places where the custom had been established previously to the 23d August. Certainly such vigorous exertions upon the part both of master and man did not savor of treason to Philip, and hardly seemed to indicate the final doom of Egmont and Bakkerzeel.

Page 388

The course of Orange at Antwerp was consistent with his whole career. He honestly came to arrange a pacification, but he knew that this end could be gained only by loyally maintaining the Accord which had been signed between the confederates and the Regent. He came back to the city on the 26th August, and found order partially re-established. The burghers having at last become thoroughly alarmed, and the fury of the image-breakers entirely appeased, it had been comparatively easy to restore tranquillity. The tranquillity, however, rather restored itself, and when the calm had succeeded to the tempest, the placid heads of the burgomasters once, more emerged from the waves.

Three image-breakers, who had been taken in the act, were hanged by order of the magistrates upon the 28th of August. The presence of Orange gave them courage to achieve these executions which he could not prevent, as the fifth article of the Accord enjoined the chastisement of the rioters. The magistrates chose that the “chastisement” on this occasion should be exemplary, and it was not in the power of Orange to interfere with the regular government of the city when acting according to its laws. The deed was not his, however, and he hastened, in order to obviate the necessity of further violence, to prepare articles of agreement, upon the basis of Margaret’s concessions. Public preaching, according to the Reformed religion, had already taken place within the city. Upon the 22d, possession had been taken of at least three churches. The senate had deputed pensionary Wesenbeck to expostulate with the ministers, for the magistrates were at that moment not able to command. Taffin, the Walloon preacher, had been tractable, and had agreed to postpone his exercises. He furthermore had accompanied the pensionary to the cathedral, in order to persuade Herman Modet that it would be better for him likewise to defer his intended ministrations. They had found that eloquent enthusiast already in the great church, burning with impatience to ascend upon the ruins, and quite unable to resist the temptation of setting a Flemish psalm and preaching a Flemish sermon within the walls which had for so many centuries been vocal only to the Roman tongue and the Roman ritual. All that he would concede to the entreaties of his colleague and of the magistrate, was that his sermon should be short. In this, however, he had overrated his powers of retention, for the sermon not only became a long one, but he had preached another upon the afternoon of the same day. The city of Antwerp, therefore, was clearly within the seventh clause of the treaty of the 24th August, for preaching had taken place in the cathedral, previously to the signing of that Accord.

Page 389

Upon the 2d September, therefore, after many protracted interview with the heads of the Reformed religion, the Prince drew up sixteen articles of agreement between them, the magistrates and the government, which were duly signed and exchanged. They were conceived in the true spirit of statesmanship, and could the rulers of the land have elevated themselves to the mental height of William de Nassau, had Philip been able of comprehending such a mind, the Prince, who alone possessed the power in those distracted times of governing the wills of all men, would have enabled the monarch to transmit that beautiful cluster of provinces, without the lose of a single jewel, to the inheritors of his crown.

If the Prince were playing a game, he played it honorably. To have conceived the thought of religious toleration in an age of universal dogmatism; to have labored to produce mutual respect among conflicting opinions, at a period when many Dissenters were as bigoted as the orthodox, and when most Reformers fiercely proclaimed not liberty for every Christian doctrine, but only a new creed in place of all the rest,—to have admitted the possibility of several roads, to heaven, when zealots of all creeds would shut up all pathways but their own; if such sentiments and purposes were sins, they would have been ill-exchanged for the best virtues of the age. Yet, no doubt, this was his crying offence in the opinion of many contemporaries. He was now becoming apostate from the ancient Church, but he had long thought that Emperors, Kings, and Popes had taken altogether too much care of men's souls in times past, and had sent too many of them prematurely to their great account. He was equally indisposed to grant full-powers for the same purpose to Calvinists, Lutherans, or Anabaptists. "He censured the severity of our theologians," said a Catholic contemporary, accumulating all the religious offences of the Prince in a single paragraph, "because they keep strictly the constitutions of the Church without conceding a single point to their adversaries; he blamed the Calvinists as seditious and unruly people, yet nevertheless had a horror for the imperial edicts which condemned them to death; he said it was a cruel thing to take a man's life for sustaining an erroneous opinion; in short, he fantasied in his imagination a kind of religion, half Catholic, half Reformed, in order to content all persons; a system which would have been adopted could he have had his way." This picture, drawn by one of his most brilliant and bitter enemies, excites our admiration while intended to inspire aversion.

The articles of agreement at Antwerp thus promulgated assigned three churches to the different sects of reformers, stipulated that no attempt should be made by Catholics or Protestants to disturb the religious worship of each other, and provided that neither by mutual taunts in their sermons, nor by singing street ballads, together with improper allusions and overt acts of hostility, should the good-fellowship which ought to reign between brethren and fellow-citizens, even although entertaining different opinions as to religious rites and doctrines, be for the future interrupted.

Page 390

This was the basis upon which the very brief religious peace, broken almost as soon as established, was concluded by William of Orange, not only at Antwerp, but at Utrecht, Amsterdam, and other principal cities within his government. The Prince, however, notwithstanding his unwearied exertions, had slender hopes of a peaceful result. He felt that the last step taken by the Reformation had been off a precipice. He liked not such rapid progress. He knew that the King would never forgive the image-breaking. He felt that he would never recognize the Accord of the 24th August. Sir Thomas Gresham, who, as the representative of the Protestant Queen of England in the great commercial metropolis of Europe, was fully conversant with the turn things were taking, was already advising some other place for the sale of English commodities. He gave notice to his government that commerce would have no security at Antwerp "in those brabbling times." He was on confidential terms with the Prince, who invited him to dine upon the 4th September, and caused pensionary Wesenbeck, who was also present, to read aloud the agreement which was that day to be proclaimed at the town-house. Orange expressed himself, however, very doubtfully as to the future prospects of the provinces, and as to the probable temper of the King. "In all his talke," says Gresham, "the Prince aside unto me, 'I know this will nothing contente the King!'"

While Egmont had been, thus busied in Flanders, and Orange at Antwerp, Count Horn had been doing his best in the important city of Tournay. The Admiral was not especially gifted with intellect, nor with the power of managing men, but he went there with an honest purpose of seeing the Accord executed, intending, if it should prove practicable, rather to favor the Government than the Reformers. At the same time, for the purpose of giving satisfaction to the members of "the religion," and of manifesting his sincere desire for a pacification, he accepted lodgings which had been prepared for him at the house of a Calvinist merchant in the city, rather, than, take up his quarters with fierce old governor Moulbais, in the citadel. This gave much offence to the Catholics; and inspired the Reformers, with the hope of having their preaching inside the town. To this privilege they were entitled, for the practice had already been established there, previously to the 24th October. Nevertheless, at first he was disposed to limit them, in accordance with the wishes of the Duchess, to extra-mural exercises.

Upon his arrival, by a somewhat ominous conjuncture, he had supped with some of the leading citizens in the hall of the "gehenna" or torture room, certainly not a locality calculated to inspire a healthy appetite. On the following Sunday he had been entertained with a great banquet, at which all the principal burghers were present, held in a house on the market-place. The festivities had been interrupted by a quarrel, which had been taking place in the cathedral.

Page 391

Beneath the vaults of that edifice, tradition said that a vast treasure was hidden, and the canons had been known to boast that this buried wealth would be sufficient to rebuild their temple more magnificently than ever, in case of its total destruction. The Admiral had accordingly placed a strong guard in the church as soon as he arrived, and commenced very extensive excavations in search of this imaginary mine. The Regent informed her brother that the Count was prosecuting this work with the view of appropriating whatever might be found to his own benefit. As she knew that he was a ruined man, there seemed no more satisfactory mode of accounting for these proceedings. Horn had, however, expressly stated to her that every penny which should come into his possession from that or any other source would carefully be restored to the rightful owners. Nothing of consequence was ever found to justify the golden legends of the monks, but in the mean time the money-diggers gave great offence. The canons, naturally alarmed for the safety of their fabulous treasure, had forced the guard, by surreptitiously obtaining the countersign from a certain official of the town. A quarrel ensued which ended in the appearance of this personage, together with the commander of the military force on guard in the cathedral, before the banqueting company. The Count, in the rough way habitual with him, gave the culprit a sound rebuke for his intermeddling, and threatened, in case the offence were repeated, to have him instantly bound, gagged, and forwarded to Brussels for further punishment. The matter thus satisfactorily adjusted, the banquet proceeded, the merchants present being all delighted at seeing the said official, who was exceedingly, unpopular, “so well huffed by the Count.” The excavations were continued for along time, until there seemed danger of destroying the foundation of the church, but only a few bits of money were discovered, with some other articles of small value.

Horn had taken his apartments in the city in order to be at hand to suppress any tumults, and to inspire confidence in the people. He had come to a city where five sixths of the inhabitants—were of the reformed religion, and he did not, therefore, think it judicious to attempt violently the suppression of their worship. Upon his arrival he had issued a proclamation, ordering that all property which might have been pillaged from the religious houses should be instantly restored to the magistracy, under penalty that all who disobeyed the command should “be forthwith strangled at the gibbet.” Nothing was brought back, however, for the simple reason that nothing had been stolen. There was, therefore, no one to be strangled.

Page 392

The next step was to publish the Accord of 24th August, and to signify the intention of the Admiral to enforce its observance. The preachings were as enthusiastically attended as ever, while the storm which had been raging among the images had in the mean time been entirely allayed. Congregations of fifteen thousand were still going to hear Ambrose Wille in the suburbs, but they were very tranquil in their demeanor. It was arranged between the Admiral and the leaders of the reformed consistories, that three places, to be selected by Horn, should be assigned for their places of worship. At these spots, which were outside the walls, permission was given the Reformers to build meeting-houses. To this arrangement the Duchess formally gave her consent.

Nicholas Taffin; councillor, in the name of the Reformers, made “a brave and elegant harangue” before the magistrates, representing that, as on the most moderate computation, three quarters of the population were dissenters, as the Regent had ordered the construction of the new temples, and as the Catholics retained possession of all the churches in the city, it was no more than fair that the community should bear the expense of the new buildings. It was indignantly replied, however, that Catholics could not be expected to pay for the maintenance of heresy, particularly when they had just been so much exasperated by the image-breaking Councillor Taffin took nothing, therefore by his “brave and elegant harangue,” saving a small vote of forty livres.

The building was, however, immediately commenced. Many nobles and rich citizens contributed to the work; some making donations in money; others giving quantities of oaks, poplars, elms, and other timber trees, to be used in the construction. The foundation of the first temple outside the Ports de Cocquerel was immediately laid. Vast heaps of broken images and other ornaments of the desecrated churches were most unwisely used for this purpose, and the Catholics were exceedingly enraged at beholding those male and female saints, who had for centuries been placed in such “reverend and elevated positions,” fallen so low as to be the foundation-stones of temples whose builders denounced all those holy things as idols.

As the autumn began to wane, the people were clamorous for permission to have their preaching inside the city. The new buildings could not be finished before the winter; but in the mean time the camp-meetings were becoming, in the stormy seasons fast approaching, a very inconvenient mode of worship. On the other hand, the Duchess was furious at the proposition, and commanded Horn on no account to consent that the interior of Tournay should be profaned by these heretical rites. It was in vain that the Admiral represented the justice of the claim, as these exercises had taken place in several of the city churches previously to the Accord of the 24th of August.

Page 393

That agreement had been made by the Duchess only to be broken. She had already received money and the permission to make levies, and was fast assuming a tone very different from the abject demeanor which had characterized her in August. Count Horn had been used even as Egmont, Orange and Hoogstraaten had been employed, in order that their personal influence with the Reformers might be turned to account. The tools and the work accomplished by them were to be thrown away at the most convenient opportunity.

The Admiral was placed in a most intolerable position. An honest, common-place, sullen kind of man, he had come to a city full of heretics, to enforce concessions just made by the government to heresy. He soon found himself watched, paltered with, suspected by the administration at Brussels. Governor Moulbais in the citadel, who was nominally under his authority, refused obedience to his orders, was evidently receiving secret instructions from the Regent, and was determined to cannonade the city into submission at a very early day. Horn required him to pledge himself that no fresh troops should enter the castle. Moulbais swore he would make no such promise to a living soul. The Admiral stormed with his usual violence, expressed his regret that his brother Montigny had so bad a lieutenant in the citadel, but could make no impression upon the determined veteran, who knew, better than Horn, the game which was preparing. Small reinforcements were daily arriving at the castle; the soldiers of the garrison had been heard to boast “that they would soon carve and eat the townsmen’s flesh on their dressers,” and all the good effect from the Admiral’s proclamation on arriving, had completely vanished.

Horn complained bitterly of the situation in which he was placed. He knew himself the mark of incessant and calumnious misrepresentation both at Brussels and Madrid. He had been doing his best, at a momentous crisis, to serve the government without violating its engagements, but he declared himself to be neither theologian nor jurist, and incapable, while suspected and unassisted, of performing a task which the most learned doctors of the council would find impracticable. He would rather, he bitterly exclaimed, endure a siege in any fortress by the Turks, than be placed in such a position. He was doing all that he was capable of doing, yet whatever he did was wrong. There was a great difference, he said, between being in a place and talking about it at a distance.

In the middle of October he was recalled by the Duchess, whose letters had been uniformly so ambiguous that he confessed he was quite unable to divine their meaning. Before he left the city, he committed his most unpardonable crime. Urged by the leaders of the reformed congregations to permit their exercises in the Clothiers’ Hall until their temples should be finished, the Count accorded his consent provisionally, and subject to revocation by the Regent, to whom the arrangement was immediately to be communicated.

Page 394

Horn departed, and the Reformers took instant possession of the hall. It was found in a very dirty and disorderly condition, encumbered with benches, scaffoldings, stakes, gibbets, and all the machinery used for public executions upon the market-place. A vast body of men went to work with a will; scrubbing, cleaning, whitewashing, and removing all the foul lumber of the hall; singing in chorus, as they did so, the hymns of Clement Marot. By dinner-time the place was ready. The pulpit and benches for the congregation had taken the place of the gibbet timber. It is difficult to comprehend that such work as this was a deadly crime. Nevertheless, Horn, who was himself a sincere Catholic, had committed the most mortal of all his offences against Philip and against God, by having countenanced so flagitious a transaction.

The Admiral went to Brussels. Secretary de la Torre, a very second-rate personage, was despatched to Tournay to convey the orders of the Regent. Governor Moulbais, now in charge of affairs both civil and military, was to prepare all things for the garrison, which was soon to be despatched under Noircarmes. The Duchess had now arms in her hands, and her language was bold. La Torre advised the Reformers to be wise "while the rod was yet green and growing, lest it should be gathered for their backs; for it was unbecoming is subjects to make bargains with their King." There was hardly any decent pretext used in violating the Accord of the 24th August, so soon as the government was strong enough to break it. It was always said that the preachings suppressed, had not been established previously to that arrangement; but the preachings had in reality obtained almost every where, and were now universally abolished. The ridiculous quibble was also used that, in the preachings other religious exercises were not included, whereas it was notorious that they had never been separated. It is, however, a gratuitous task, to unravel the deceptions of tyranny when it hardly deigns to disguise itself. The dissimulations which have resisted the influence of centuries are more worthy of serious investigation, and of these the epoch offers us a sufficient supply.

At the close of the year, the city of Tournay was completely subjugated and the reformed religion suppressed. Upon the 2nd day of January, 1567, the Seignior de Noircarmes arrived before the gates at the head of eleven companies, with orders from Duchess Margaret to strengthen the garrison and disarm the citizens. He gave the magistrates exactly one hour and a half to decide whether they would submit without a murmur. He expressed an intention of maintaining the Accord of 24th August; a ridiculous affectation under the circumstances, as the event proved. The notables were summoned, submission agreed upon, and within the prescribed time the magistrates came before Noircarmes, with an unconditional acceptance of his terms. That truculent personage told them, in reply, that they had done wisely, for if they had delayed receiving the garrison a minute longer, he would have instantly burned the city to ashes and put every one of the inhabitants to the sword. He had been fully authorized to do so, and subsequent events were to show, upon more than one dreadful occasion, how capable Noircarmes would have been of fulfilling this menace.

Page 395

The soldiers, who had made a forced march all night, and who had been firmly persuaded that the city would refuse the terms demanded, were excessively disappointed at being obliged to forego the sack and pillage upon which they had reckoned. Eight or nine hundred rascally peasants, too, who had followed in the skirts of the regiments, each provided with a great empty bag, which they expected to fill with booty which they might purchase of the soldiers, or steal in the midst of the expected carnage and rapine, shared the discontent of the soldiery, by whom they were now driven ignominiously out of the town.

The citizens were immediately disarmed. All the fine weapons which they had been obliged to purchase at their own expense, when they had been arranged by the magistrates under eight banners, for defence of the city against tumult and invasion, were taken from them; the most beautiful cutlasses, carbines, poniards, and pistols, being divided by Noircarmes among his officers. Thus Tournay was tranquillized.

During the whole of these proceedings in Flanders, and at Antwerp, Tournay, and Mechlin, the conduct of the Duchess had been marked with more than her usual treachery. She had been disavowing acts which the men upon whom she relied in her utmost need had been doing by her authority; she had been affecting to praise their conduct, while she was secretly misrepresenting their actions and maligning their motives, and she had been straining every nerve to make foreign levies, while attempting to amuse the confederates and sectaries with an affectation of clemency.

When Orange complained that she had been censuring his proceedings at Antwerp, and holding language unfavorable to his character, she protested that she thoroughly approved his arrangements—excepting only the two points of the intramural preachings and the permission to heretics of other exercises than sermons—and that if she were displeased with him he might be sure that she would rather tell him so than speak ill of him behind his back. The Prince, who had been compelled by necessity, and fully authorized by the terms of the “Accord”, to grant those two points which were the vital matter in his arrangements, answered very calmly, that he was not so frivolous as to believe in her having used language to his discredit had he not been quite certain of the fact, as he would soon prove by evidence. Orange was not the man to be deceived as to the position in which he stood, nor as to the character of those with whom he dealt. Margaret wrote, however, in the same vein concerning him to Hoogstmaten, affirming that nothing could be further from her intention than to characterize the proceedings of “her cousin, the Prince of Orange, as contrary to the service of his Majesty; knowing, as she did, how constant had been his affection, and how diligent his actions, in the cause of God and the King.”

She also sent councillor d’Assonleville on a special mission to the Prince, instructing that smooth personage to inform her said cousin of Orange that he was and always had been “loved and cherished by his Majesty, and that for herself she had ever loved him like a brother or a child.”

Page 396

She wrote to Horn, approving of his conduct in the main, although in obscure terms, and expressing great confidence in his zeal, loyalty, and good intentions. She accorded the same praise to Hoogstraaten, while as to Egmont she was perpetually reproaching him for the suspicions which he seemed obstinately to entertain as to her disposition and that of Philip, in regard to his conduct and character.

It has already been partly seen what were her private sentiments and secret representations as to the career of the distinguished personages thus encouraged and commended. Her pictures were painted in daily darkening colors. She told her brother that Orange, Egmont, and Horn were about to place themselves at the head of the confederates, who were to take up arms and had been levying troops; that the Lutheran religion was to be forcibly established, that the whole power of the government was to be placed in the triumvirate thus created by those seigniors, and that Philip was in reality to be excluded entirely from those provinces which were his ancient patrimony. All this information she had obtained from Mansfeld, at whom the nobles were constantly sneering as at a faithful valet who would never receive his wages.

She also informed the King that the scheme for dividing the country was already arranged: that Augustus of Saxony was to have Friesland and Overyssel; Count Brederode, Holland; the Dukes of Cleves and Lorraine, Gueldres; the King of France, Flanders, Artois, and Hainault, of which territories Egmont was to be perpetual stadholder; the Prince of Orange, Brabant; and so on indefinitely. A general massacre of all the Catholics had been arranged by Orange, Horn, and Egmont, to commence as soon as the King should put his foot on shipboard to come to the country. This last remarkable fact Margaret reported to Philip, upon the respectable authority of Noircarmes.

She apologized for having employed the service of these nobles, on the ground of necessity. Their proceedings in Flanders, at Antwerp, Tournay, Mechlin, had been highly reprehensible, and she had been obliged to disavow them in the most important particulars. As for Egmont, she had most unwillingly entrusted forces to his hands for the purpose of putting down the Flemish sectaries. She had been afraid to show a want of confidence in his character, but at the same time she believed that all soldiers under Egmont's orders would be so many enemies to the king. Notwithstanding his protestations of fidelity to the ancient religion and to his Majesty, she feared that he was busied with some great plot against God and the King. When we remember the ruthless manner in which the unfortunate Count had actually been raging against the sectaries, and the sanguinary proofs which he had been giving of his fidelity to "God and the King," it seems almost incredible that Margaret could have written down all these monstrous assertions.

Page 397

The Duchess gave, moreover, repeated warnings to her brother, that the nobles were in the habit of obtaining possession of all the correspondence between Madrid and Brussels; and that they spent a vast deal of money in order to read her own and Philip's most private letters. She warned him therefore, to be upon his guard, for she believed that almost all their despatches were read. Such being the cases and the tenor of those documents being what we have seen it to be, her complaints as to the incredulity of those seigniors to her affectionate protestations, seem quite wonderful.

CHAPTER IX., Part 1., 1566

Position of Orange—The interview at Dendermonde—The supposititious letters of Alava—Views of Egmont—Isolation of Orange—Conduct of Egmont and of Horn—-Confederacy, of the nobles dissolved—Weak behavior of prominent personages——-Watchfulness of Orange— Convocation of States General demanded—Pamphlet of Orange—City of Valenciennes refuses a garrison—Influence of La Grange and De Bray—City, declared in a state of siege—Invested by Noircarmes— Movements to relieve the place—Calvinists defeated at Lannoy and at Waterlots—Elation of the government—The siege pressed more closely—Cruelties practised upon the country people—-Courage of the inhabitants—Remonstrance to the Knights of the Fleece—Conduct of Brederode—Orange at Amsterdam—New Oath demanded by Government— Orange refuses—He offers his resignation of all offices—Meeting at Breda—New "Request" of Brederode—He creates disturbances and levies troops in Antwerp—Conduct of Hoogstraaten—Plans of Brederode—Supposed connivance of Orange—Alarm at Brussels— Tholouse at Ostrawell—Brederode in Holland—De Beauvoir defeats Tholouse—Excitement at Antwerp—Determined conduct of Orange—Three days' tumult at Antwerp suppressed by the wisdom and courage of Orange.

It is necessary to allude to certain important events contemporaneous with those recorded in the last chapter, that the reader may thoroughly understand the position of the leading personages in this great drama at the close of the year 1566.

The Prince of Orange had, as we have seen, bean exerting all his energies faithfully to accomplish the pacification of the commercial metropolis, upon the basis assented to beforehand by the Duchess. He had established a temporary religious peace, by which alone at that crisis the gathering tempest could be averted; but he had permitted the law to take its course upon certain rioters, who had been regularly condemned by courts of justice. He had worked day and night—notwithstanding immense obstacles, calumnious misstatements, and conflicting opinions—to restore order out of chaos; he had freely imperilled his own life—dashing into a tumultuous mob on one occasion, wounding several with the halberd which he snatched from one of his guard, and dispersing almost with his single arm a

Page 398

dangerous and threatening insurrection—and he had remained in Antwerp, at the pressing solicitations of the magistracy, who represented that the lives of not a single ecclesiastic would be safe as soon as his back was turned, and that all the merchants would forthwith depart from the city. It was nevertheless necessary that he should make a personal visit to his government of Holland, where similar disorders had been prevailing, and where men of all ranks and parties were clamoring for their stadholder.

Notwithstanding all his exertions however, he was thoroughly aware of the position in which he stood towards the government. The sugared phrases of Margaret, the deliberate commendation of the “benign and debonair” Philip, produced no effect upon this statesman, who was accustomed to look through and through men’s actions to the core of their hearts. In the hearts of Philip and Margaret he already saw treachery and revenge indelibly imprinted. He had been especially indignant at the insult which the Duchess Regent had put upon him, by sending Duke Eric of Brunswick with an armed force into Holland in order to protect Gouda, Woerden, and other places within the Prince’s own government. He was thoroughly conversant with the general tone in which the other seigniors and himself were described to their sovereign. He, was already convinced that the country was to be conquered by foreign mercenaries, and that his own life, with these of many other nobles, was to be sacrificed. The moment had arrived in which he was justified in looking about him for means of defence, both for himself and his country, if the King should be so insane as to carry out the purposes which the Prince suspected. The time was fast approaching in which a statesman placed upon such an elevation before the world as that which he occupied, would be obliged to choose his part for life. To be the unscrupulous tool of tyranny, a rebel, or an exile, was his necessary fate. To a man so prone to read the future, the moment for his choice seemed already arrived. Moreover, he thought it doubtful, and events were most signally to justify his doubts, whether he could be accepted as the instrument of despotism, even were he inclined to prostitute himself to such service. At this point, therefore, undoubtedly began the treasonable thoughts of William the Silent, if it be treason to attempt the protection of ancient and chartered liberties against a foreign oppressor. He despatched a private envoy to Egmont, representing the grave suspicions manifested by the Duchess in sending Duke Eric into Holland, and proposing that means should be taken into consideration for obviating the dangers with which the country was menaced. Catholics as well as Protestants, he intimated, were to be crushed in one universal conquest as soon as Philip had completed the formidable preparations which he was making for invading the provinces. For himself, he said, he would not remain in the land to witness the utter

Page 399

desolation of the people, nor to fall an unresisting victim to the vengeance which he foresaw. If, however, he might rely upon the co-operation of Egmont and Horn, he was willing, with the advice of the states-general, to risk preparations against the armed invasion of Spaniards by which the country was to be reduced to slavery. It was incumbent, however, upon men placed as they were, “not to let the grass grow under their feet;” and the moment for action was fast approaching.

This was the scheme which Orange was willing to attempt. To make use of his own influence and that of his friends, to interpose between a sovereign insane with bigotry, and a people in a state of religious frenzy, to resist brutal violence if need should be by force, and to compel the sovereign to respect the charters which he had sworn to maintain, and which were far more ancient than his sovereignty; so much of treason did William of Orange already contemplate, for in no other way could he be loyal to his country and his own honor.

Nothing came of this secret embassy, for Egmont’s heart and fate were already fixed. Before Orange departed, however; for the north, where his presence in the Dutch provinces was now imperatively required, a memorable interview took place at Dendermonde between Orange, Horn, Egmont, Hoogstraaten, and Count Louis. The nature of this conference was probably similar to that of the secret mission from Orange to Egmont just recorded. It was not a long consultation. The gentlemen met at eleven o’clock, and conversed until dinner was ready, which was between twelve and one in the afternoon. They discussed the contents of a letter recently received by Horn from his brother Montigny at Segovia, giving a lively picture of Philip’s fury at the recent events in the Netherlands, and expressing the Baron’s own astonishment and indignation that it had been impossible for the seigniors to prevent such outrages as the public preaching, the image-breaking and the Accord. They had also some conversation concerning the dissatisfaction manifested by the Duchess at the proceedings of Count Horn at Tournay, and they read a very remarkable letter which had been furnished them, as having been written by the Spanish envoy in Paris, Don Francis of Alava, to Margaret of Parma. This letter was forged. At least the Regent, in her Italian correspondence, asserted it to be fictitious, and in those secret letters to Philip she usually told the truth. The astuteness of William of Orange had in this instance been deceived. The striking fidelity, however, with which the present and future policy of the government was sketched, the accuracy with which many unborn events were foreshadowed, together with the minute touches which gave an air of genuineness to the fictitious despatch, might well deceive even so sagacious an observer as the Prince.

Page 400

The letters alluded to the deep and long-settled hostility of Philip to Orange, Horn, and Egmont, as to a fact entirely within the writer's knowledge, and that of his correspondent, but urged upon the Duchess the assumption of an extraordinary degree of apparent cordiality in her intercourse with them. It was the King's intention to use them and to destroy them, said the writer, and it was the Regent's duty to second the design. "The tumults and troubles have not been without their secret concurrence," said the supposititious Alava, "and your Highness may rest assured that they will be the first upon whom his Majesty will seize, not to confer benefits, but to chastise them as they deserve. Your Highness, however, should show no symptom of displeasure, but should constantly maintain in their minds the idea that his Majesty considers them as the most faithful of his servants. While they are persuaded of this, they can be more easily used, but when the time comes, they will be treated in another manner. Your Highness may rest assured that his Majesty is not less inclined than your Highness that they should receive the punishment which they merit." The Duchess was furthermore recommended "to deal with the three seigniors according to the example of the Spanish Governments in its intercourse with the envoys, Bergen and Montigny, who are met with a smiling face, but who are closely watched, and who will never be permitted to leave Spain alive." The remainder of the letter alludes to supposed engagements between France and Spain for the extirpation of heresy, from which allusion to the generally accepted but mistaken notion as to the Bayonne conference, a decided proof seems to be furnished that the letter was not genuine. Great complaints, however, are made, as to the conduct of the Queen Regent, who is described as "a certain lady well known to her Highness, and as a person without faith, friendship, or truth; the most consummate hypocrite in the world." After giving instances of the duplicity manifested by Catherine de Medici, the writer continues: "She sends her little black dwarf to me upon frequent errands, in order that by means of this spy she may worm out my secrets. I am, however, upon my guard, and flatter myself that I learn more from him than she from me. She shall never be able to boast of having deceived a Spaniard."

An extract or two from this very celebrated document seemed indispensable, because of the great importance attached to it, both at the Dendermonde Conference, and at the trials of Egmont and Horn. The contemporary writers of Holland had no doubt of its genuineness, and what is more remarkable, Strada, the historiographer of the Farnese family, after quoting Margaret's denial of the authenticity of the letter, coolly observes: "Whether this were only an invention of the conspirators, or actually a despatch from Alava, I shall not decide. It is certain, however, that the Duchess declared it to be false."

Page 401

Certainly, as we read the epistles, and observe how profoundly the writer seems to have sounded the deep guile of the Spanish Cabinet, and how distinctly events, then far in the future, are indicated, we are tempted to exclaim: "aut Alava, aut Diabolus;" either the envoy wrote the despatch, or Orange. Who else could look into the future, and into Philip's heart so unerringly?

As the charge has never been made, so far as we are aware, against the Prince, it is superfluous to discuss the amount of immorality which should belong to such a deception. A tendency to employ stratagem in his warfare against Spain was, no doubt, a blemish upon his—high character. Before he is condemned, however, in the Court of Conscience, the ineffable wiles of the policy with which he had to combat must be thoroughly scanned, as well as the pure and lofty purpose for which his life's long battle was fought.

There was, doubtless, some conversation at Dendermonde on the propriety or possibility of forcible resistance to a Spanish army, with which it seemed probable that Philip was about to invade the provinces, and take the lives of the leading nobles. Count Louis was in favor of making provision in Germany for the accomplishment of this purpose. It is also highly probable that the Prince may have encouraged the proposition. In the sense of his former communication to Egmont, he may have reasoned on the necessity of making levies to sustain the decisions of the states-general against violence. There is, however, no proof of any such fact. Egmont, at any rate, opposed the scheme, on the ground that "it was wrong to entertain any such ill opinion of so good a king as Philip, that he had never done any thing unjust towards his subjects, and that if any one was in fear, he had better leave the country."

Egmont, moreover; doubted the authenticity of the letters from Alava, but agreed to carry them to Brussels, and to lay them before the Regent. That lady, when she saw them, warmly assured the Count that they were inventions.

The Conference broke up after it had lasted an hour and a half. The nobles then went to dinner, at which other persons appear to have been present, and the celebrated Dendermonde meeting was brought to a close. After the repast was finished, each of the five nobles mounted his horse, and departed on his separate way.

From this time forth the position of, these leading seigniors became more sharply defined. Orange was left in almost complete isolation. Without the assistance of Egmont, any effective resistance to the impending invasion from Spain seemed out of the question. The Count, however, had taken his irrevocable and fatal resolution. After various oscillations during the stormy period which had elapsed, his mind, notwithstanding all the disturbing causes by which it had hitherto been partially influenced, now pointed steadily to the point of loyalty. The guidance of that pole star was to lead him to

Page 402

utter shipwreck. The unfortunate noble, entrenched against all fear of Philip by the brazen wall of an easy conscience; saw no fault in his past at which he should grow pale with apprehension. Moreover, he was sanguine by nature, a Catholic in religion, a royalist from habit and conviction. Henceforth he was determined that his services to the crown should more than counterbalance any idle speeches or insolent demonstrations of which he might have been previously guilty.

Horn pursued a different course, but one which separated him also from the Prince, while it led to the same fate which Egmont was blindly pursuing.—The Admiral had committed no act of treason. On the contrary, he had been doing his best, under most difficult circumstances, to avert rebellion and save the interests of a most ungrateful sovereign. He was now disposed to wrap himself in his virtue, to retreat from a court life, for which he had never felt a vocation, and to resign all connection with a government by which he felt himself very badly, treated. Moody, wrathful, disappointed, ruined, and calumniated, he would no longer keep terms with King or Duchess. He had griefs of long standing against the whole of the royal family. He had never forgiven the Emperor for refusing him, when young, the appointment of chamberlain. He had served Philip long and faithfully, but he had never received a stiver of salary or “merced,” notwithstanding all his work as state councillor, as admiral, as superintendent in Spain; while his younger brother had long been in receipt of nine or ten thousand florins yearly. He had spent four hundred thousand florins in the King’s service; his estates were mortgaged to their full value; he had been obliged to sell, his family plate. He had done his best in Tourney to serve the Duchess, and he had averted the “Sicilian vespers,” which had been imminent at his arrival. He had saved the Catholics from a general massacre, yet he heard nevertheless from Montigny, that all his actions were distorted in Spain, and his motives blackened. His heart no longer inclined him to continue in Philip’s service, even were he furnished with the means of doing so. He had instructed his secretary, Alonzo de la Loo, whom he had despatched many months previously to Madrid, that he was no longer to press his master’s claims for a “merced,” but to signify that he abandoned all demands and resigned all posts. He could turn hermit for the rest of his days, as well as the Emperor Charles. If he had little, he could live upon little. It was in this sense that he spoke to Margaret of Parma, to Assonleville, to all around him. It was precisely in this strain and temper that he wrote to Philip, indignantly defending his course at Tourney, protesting against the tortuous conduct of the Duchess, and bluntly declaring that he would treat no longer with ladies upon matters which concerned a man’s honor.

Page 403

Thus, smarting under a sense of gross injustice, the Admiral expressed himself in terms which Philip was not likely to forgive. He had undertaken the pacification of Tournay, because it was Montigny's government, and he had promised his services whenever they should be requisite. Horn was a loyal and affectionate brother, and it is pathetic to find him congratulating Montigny on being, after all, better off in Spain than in the Netherlands. Neither loyalty nor the sincere Catholicism for which Montigny at this period commended Horn in his private letters, could save the two brothers from the doom which was now fast approaching.

Thus Horn, blind as Egmont—not being aware that a single step beyond implicit obedience had created an impassable gulf between Philip and himself—resolved to meet his destiny in sullen retirement. Not an entirely disinterested man, perhaps, but an honest one, as the world went, mediocre in mind, but brave, generous, and direct of purpose, goaded by the shafts of calumny, hunted down by the whole pack which fawned upon power as it grew more powerful, he now retreated to his "desert," as he called his ruined home at Weert, where he stood at bay, growling defiance at the Regent, at Philip, at all the world.

Thus were the two prominent personages upon whose co-operation Orange had hitherto endeavored to rely, entirely separated from him. The confederacy of nobles, too, was dissolved, having accomplished little, notwithstanding all its noisy demonstrations, and having lost all credit with the people by the formal cessation of the Compromise in consequence of the Accord of August. As a body, they had justified the sarcasm of Hubert Languet, that "the confederated nobles had ruined their country by their folly and incapacity." They had profaned a holy cause by indecent orgies, compromised it by seditious demonstrations, abandoned it when most in need of assistance. Bakkerzeel had distinguished himself by hanging sectaries in Flanders. "Golden Fleece" de Hammes, after creating great scandal in and about Antwerp, since the Accord, had ended by accepting an artillery commission in the Emperor's army, together with three hundred crowns for convoy from Duchess Margaret. Culemburg was serving the cause of religious freedom by defacing the churches within his ancestral domains, pulling down statues, dining in chapels and giving the holy wafer to his parrot. Nothing could be more stupid than these acts of irreverence, by which Catholics were offended and honest patriots disgusted. Nothing could be more opposed to the sentiments of Orange, whose first principle was abstinence by all denominations of Christians from mutual insults. At the same time, it is somewhat revolting to observe the indignation with which such offences were regarded by men of the most abandoned character. Thus, Armenteros, whose name was synonymous with government swindling, who had been rolling up money year after year, by peculations, auctioneering of high posts in church and state, bribes, and all kinds of picking and stealing, could not contain his horror as he referred to wafers eaten by parrots, or "toasted on forks" by renegade priests; and poured out his emotions on the subject into the faithful bosom of Antonio Perez, the man with whose debaucheries, political villanies, and deliberate murders all Europe was to ring.

Page 404

No doubt there were many individuals in the confederacy for whom it was reserved to render honorable service in the national cause. The names of Louis Nassau, Mamix of St. Aldegonde, Bernard de Merode, were to be written in golden letters in their country's rolls; but at this moment they were impatient, inconsiderate, out of the control of Orange. Louis was anxious for the King to come from Spain with his army, and for "the bear dance to begin." Brederode, noisy, bawling, and absurd as ever, was bringing ridicule upon the national cause by his buffoonery, and endangering the whole people by his inadequate yet rebellious exertions.

What course was the Prince of Orange to adopt? He could find no one to comprehend his views. He felt certain at the close of the year that the purpose of the government was fixed. He made no secret of his determination never to lend himself as an instrument for the contemplated subjugation of the people. He had repeatedly resigned all his offices. He was now determined that the resignation once for all should be accepted. If he used dissimulation, it was because Philip's deception permitted no man to be frank. If the sovereign constantly disavowed all hostile purposes against his people, and manifested extreme affection for the men whom he had already doomed to the scaffold, how could the Prince openly denounce him? It was his duty to save his country and his friends from impending ruin. He preserved, therefore, an attitude of watchfulness. Philip, in the depth of his cabinet, was under a constant inspection by the sleepless Prince. The sovereign assured his sister that her apprehensions about their correspondence was groundless. He always locked up his papers, and took the key with him. Nevertheless, the key was taken out of his pocket and the papers read. Orange was accustomed to observe, that men of leisure might occupy themselves with philosophical pursuits and with the secrets of nature, but that it was his business to study the hearts of kings. He knew the man and the woman with whom he had to deal. We have seen enough of the policy secretly pursued by Philip and Margaret to appreciate the accuracy with which the Prince, groping as it were in the dark, had judged the whole situation. Had his friends taken his warnings, they might have lived to render services against tyranny. Had he imitated their example of false loyalty, there would have been one additional victim, more illustrious than all the rest, and a whole country hopelessly enslaved.

It is by keeping these considerations in view, that we can explain his connection with such a man as Brederode. The enterprises of that noble, of Tholouse, and others, and the resistance of Valenciennes, could hardly have been prevented even by the opposition of the Prince. But why should he take the field against men who, however rashly or ineffectually, were endeavoring to oppose tyranny, when he knew himself already proscribed and doomed by the tyrant? Such loyalty he left to Egmont. Till late in the autumn, he had still believed in the possibility of convoking the states-general, and of making preparations in Germany to enforce their decrees.

Page 405

The confederates and sectaries had boasted that they could easily raise an army of sixty thousand men within the provinces,—that twelve hundred thousand florins monthly would be furnished by the rich merchants of Antwerp, and that it was ridiculous to suppose that the German mercenaries enrolled by the Duchess in Saxony, Hesse, and other Protestant countries, would ever render serious assistance against the adherents of the reformed religion. Without placing much confidence in such exaggerated statements, the Prince might well be justified in believing himself strong enough, if backed by the confederacy, by Egmont, and by his own boundless influence, both at Antwerp and in his own government, to sustain the constituted authorities of the nation even against a Spanish army, and to interpose with legitimate and irresistible strength between the insane tyrant and the country which he was preparing to crush. It was the opinion of the best informed Catholics that, if Egmont should declare for the confederacy, he could take the field with sixty thousand men, and make himself master of the whole country at a blow. In conjunction with Orange, the moral and physical force would have been invincible.

It was therefore not Orange alone, but the Catholics and Protestants alike, the whole population of the country, and the Duchess Regent herself, who desired the convocation of the estates. Notwithstanding Philip's deliberate but secret determination never to assemble that body, although the hope was ever to be held out that they should be convened, Margaret had been most importunate that her brother should permit the measure. "There was less danger," she felt herself compelled to say, "in assembling than in not assembling the States; it was better to preserve the Catholic religion for a part of the country, than to lose it altogether." "The more it was delayed," she said, "the more ruinous and desperate became the public affairs. If the measure were postponed much longer, all Flanders, half Brabant, the whole of Holland, Zeland, Gueldrea, Tournay, Lille, Mechlin, would be lost forever, without a chance of ever restoring the ancient religion." The country, in short, was "without faith, King, or law," and nothing worse could be apprehended from any deliberation of the states-general. These being the opinions of the Duchess, and according to her statement those of nearly all the good Catholics in the country, it could hardly seem astonishing or treasonable that the Prince should also be in favor of the measure.

As the Duchess grew stronger, however, and as the people, aghast at the fate of Tournay and Valenciennes, began to lose courage, she saw less reason for assembling the states. Orange, on the other hand, completely deserted by Egmont and Horn, and having little confidence in the characters of the ex-confederates, remained comparatively quiescent but watchful.

Page 406

At the close of the year, an important pamphlet from his hand was circulated, in which his views as to the necessity of allowing some degree of religious freedom were urged upon the royal government with his usual sagacity of thought, moderation of language, and modesty in tone. The man who had held the most important civil and military offices in the country almost from boyhood, and who was looked up to by friend and foe as the most important personage in the three millions of its inhabitants, apologized for his “presumption” in coming forward publicly with his advice. “I would not,” he said, “in matters of such importance, affect to be wiser or to make greater pretensions than my age or experience warrants, yet seeing affairs in such perplexity, I will rather incur the risk of being charged with forwardness than neglect that which I consider my duty.”

This, then, was the attitude of the principal personages in the Netherlands, and the situation of affairs at the end of the eventful year 1566, the last year of peace which the men then living or their children were to know. The government, weak at the commencement, was strong at the close. The confederacy was broken and scattered. The Request, the beggar banquets, the public preaching, the image-breaking, the Accord of August, had been followed by reaction. Tournay had accepted its garrison. Egmont, completely obedient to the crown, was compelling all the cities of Flanders and Artois to receive soldiers sufficient to maintain implicit obedience, and to extinguish all heretical demonstrations, so that the Regent was at comparative leisure to effect the reduction of Valenciennes.

This ancient city, in the province of Hainault, and on the frontier of France, had been founded by the Emperor Valentinian, from whom it had derived its name. Originally established by him as a city of refuge, it had received the privilege of affording an asylum to debtors, to outlaws, and even to murderers. This ancient right had been continued, under certain modifications, even till the period with which we are now occupied. Never, however, according to the government, had the right of asylum, even in the wildest times, been so abused by the city before. What were debtors, robbers, murderers, compared to heretics? yet these worst enemies of their race swarmed in the rebellious city, practising even now the foulest rites of Calvin, and obeying those most pestilential of all preachers, Guido de Bray, and Peregrine de la Grange. The place was the hot-bed of heresy and sedition, and it seemed to be agreed, as by common accord, that the last struggle for what was called the new religion, should take place beneath its walls.

Page 407

Pleasantly situated in a fertile valley, provided with very strong fortifications and very deep moats, Valenciennes, with the Scheld flowing through its centre, and furnishing the means of laying the circumjacent meadows under water, was considered in those days almost impregnable. The city was summoned, almost at the same time as Tournay, to accept a garrison. This demand of government was met by a peremptory refusal. Noircarmes, towards the middle of December, ordered the magistrates to send a deputation to confer with him at Conde. Pensionary Outreman accordingly repaired to that neighboring city, accompanied by some of his colleagues. This committee was not unfavorable to the demands of government. The magistracies of the cities, generally, were far from rebellious; but in the case of Valenciennes the real power at that moment was with the Calvinist consistory, and the ministers. The deputies, after their return from Conde, summoned the leading members of the reformed religion, together with the preachers. It was urged that it was their duty forthwith to use their influence in favor of the demand made by the government upon the city.

“May I grow mute as a fish!” answered de la Grange, stoutly, “may the tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, before I persuade my people to accept a garrison of cruel mercenaries, by whom their rights of conscience are to be trampled upon!”

Councillor Outreman reasoned with the fiery minister, that if he and his colleague were afraid of their own lives, ample provision should be made with government for their departure under safe conduct. La Grange replied that he had no fears for himself, that the Lord would protect those who preached and those who believed in his holy word, but that He would not forgive them should they now bend their necks to His enemies.

It was soon very obvious that no arrangement could be made. The magistrates could exert no authority, the preachers were all-powerful; and the citizens, said a Catholic inhabitant of Valenciennes, “allowed themselves to be led by their ministers like oxen.” Upon the 17th December, 1566, a proclamation was accordingly issued by the Duchess Regent, declaring the city in a state of siege, and all its inhabitants rebels. The crimes for which this penalty was denounced, were elaborately set forth in the edict. Preaching according to the reformed religion had been permitted in two or three churches, the sacrament according to the Calvinistic manner had been publicly administered, together with a renunciation by the communicants of their adhesion to the Catholic Church, and now a rebellious refusal to receive the garrison sent to them by the Duchess had been added to the list of their iniquities. For offences like these the Regent deemed it her duty to forbid all inhabitants of any city, village, or province of the Netherlands holding communication with Valenciennes, buying or selling with its inhabitants, or furnishing them with provisions; on pain of being considered accomplices in their rebellion, and as such of being executed with the halter.

Page 408

The city was now invested by Noircarmes with all the troops which could be spared. The confederates gave promises of assistance to the beleaguered citizens, Orange privately encouraged them to holdout in their legitimate refusal. Brederode and others busied themselves with hostile demonstrations which were destined to remain barren; but in the mean time the inhabitants had nothing to rely upon save their own stout hearts and arms.

At first, the siege was sustained with a light heart. Frequent sallies were made, smart skirmishes were ventured, in which the Huguenots, on the testimony of a most bitter Catholic contemporary, conducted themselves with the bravery of veteran troops, and as if they had done nothing all their lives but fight; forays were made upon the monasteries of the neighborhood for the purpose of procuring supplies, and the broken statues of the dismantled churches were used to build a bridge across an arm of the river, which was called in derision the Bridge of Idols. Noircarmes and the six officers under him, who were thought to be conducting their operations with languor, were christened the Seven Sleepers. Gigantic spectacles, three feet in circumference, were planted derisively upon the ramparts, in order that the artillery, which it was said that the papists of Arras were sending, might be seen, as soon as it should arrive. Councillor Outreman, who had left the city before the siege, came into it again, on commission from Noircarmes. He was received with contempt, his proposals on behalf of the government were answered with outcries of fury; he was pelted with stones, and was very glad to make his escape alive. The pulpits thundered with the valiant deeds of Joshua, Judas Maccabeus, and other bible heroes. The miracles wrought in their behalf served to encourage the enthusiasm of the people, while the movements making at various points in the neighborhood encouraged a hope of a general rising throughout the country.

Those hopes were destined to disappointment. There were large assemblages made, to be sure, at two points. Nearly three thousand sectaries had been collected at Lannoy under Pierre Comaille, who, having been a locksmith and afterwards a Calvinist preacher, was now disposed to try his fortune as a general. His band was, however, disorderly. Rustics armed with pitchforks, young students and old soldiers out of employment, furnished with rusty matchlocks, pikes and halberds, composed his force. A company similar in character, and already amounting to some twelve hundred in number, was collecting at Waterlots. It was hoped that an imposing array would soon be assembled, and that the two bands, making a junction, would then march to the relief of Valenciennes. It was boasted that in a very short time, thirty thousand men would be in the field. There was even a fear of some such result felt by the Catholics.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Page 409

1566, the last year of peace Dissenters were as bigoted as the orthodox If he had little, he could live upon little Incur the risk of being charged with forwardness than neglect Not to let the grass grow under their feet

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 13.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By *John Lothrop Motley*
1855

1567 [*Chapter ix*., Part 2.]

Calvinists defeated at Lannoy and at Waterlots—Elation of the government—The siege pressed more closely—Cruelties practised upon the country people—Courage of the inhabitants—Remonstrance to the Knights of the Fleece—Conduct of Brederode—-Orange at Amsterdam— New Oath demanded by Government—Orange refuses—He offers his resignation of all offices—Meeting at Breda—New "Request" of Brederode—-He creates disturbances and levies troops in Antwerp— Conduct of Hoogstraaten—-Plans of Brederode—Supposed connivance of Orange—Alarm at Brussels—Tholouse at Ostrawell—Brederode in Holland—De Beauvoir defeats Tholouse—Excitement at Antwerp— Determined conduct of Orange—Three days' tumult at Antwerp suppressed by the wisdom and courage of Orange.

It was then that Noircarmes and his "seven sleepers" showed that they were awake. Early in January, 1567, that fierce soldier, among whose vices slothfulness was certainly never reckoned before or afterwards, fell upon the locksmith's army at Zannoy, while the Seigneur de Rassinghem attacked the force at Waterlots on the same day. Noircarmes destroyed half his enemies at the very first charge. The ill-assorted rabble fell asunder at once. The preacher fought well, but his undisciplined force fled at the first sight of the enemy. Those who carried arquebusses threw them down without a single discharge, that they might run the faster. At least a thousand were soon stretched dead upon the field; others were hunted into the river. Twenty-six hundred, according to the Catholic accounts, were exterminated in an hour.

Rassinghem, on his part, with five or six hundred regulars, attacked Teriel's force, numbering at least twice as many. Half of these were soon cut to pieces and put to flight. Six hundred, however, who had seen some service, took refuge in the cemetery of Waterlots. Here, from behind the stone wall of the inclosure, they sustained the attack of the Catholics with some spirit. The repose of the dead in the quiet country church-yard was disturbed by the uproar of a most sanguinary conflict. The temporary fort was soon carried, and the Huguenots retreated into the church. A rattling

arquebusade was poured in upon them as they struggled in the narrow doorway. At least four hundred corpses were soon strewn among the ancient graves. The rest were hunted, into the church, and from the church into the belfry. A fire was then made in the steeple and kept up till all were roasted or suffocated. Not a man escaped.

Page 410

This was the issue in the first stricken field in the Netherlands, for the cause of religious liberty. It must be confessed that it was not very encouraging to the lovers of freedom. The partisans of government were elated, in proportion to the apprehension which had been felt for the result of this rising in the Walloon country. “These good hypocrites,” wrote a correspondent of Orange, “are lifting up their heads like so many dromedaries. They are becoming unmanageable with pride.” The Duke of Aerschot and Count Meghem gave great banquets in Brussels, where all the good chevaliers drank deep in honor of the victory, and to the health of his Majesty and Madame. “I saw Berlaymont just go by the window,” wrote Schwartz to the Prince. “He was coming from Aerschot’s dinner with a face as red as the Cardinal’s new hat.”

On the other hand, the citizens of Valenciennes were depressed in equal measure with the exultation of their antagonists. There was no more talk of seven sleepers now, no more lunettes stuck upon lances, to spy the coming forces of the enemy. It was felt that the government was wide awake, and that the city would soon see the impending horrors without telescopes. The siege was pressed more closely. Noircarmes took up a commanding position at Saint Armand, by which he was enabled to cut off all communication between the city and the surrounding country. All the villages in the neighborhood were pillaged; all the fields laid waste. All the infamies which an insolent soldiery can inflict upon helpless peasantry were daily enacted. Men and women who attempted any communication—with the city, were murdered in cold blood by hundreds. The villagers were plundered of their miserable possessions, children were stripped naked in the midst of winter for the sake of the rags which covered them; matrons and virgins were sold at public auction by the tap of drum; sick and wounded wretches were burned over slow fires, to afford amusement to the soldiers. In brief, the whole unmitigated curse which military power inflamed by religious bigotry can embody, had descended upon the heads of these unfortunate provincials who had dared to worship God in Christian churches without a Roman ritual.

Meantime the city maintained, a stout heart still. The whole population were arranged under different banners. The rich and poor alike took arms to defend the walls which sheltered them. The town paupers were enrolled in three companies, which bore the significant title of the “Tons-nulls” or the “Stark-nakeds,” and many was the fierce conflict delivered outside the gates by men, who, in the words of a Catholic then in the city, might rather be taken for “experienced veterans than for burghers and artisans.” At the same time, to the honor of Valenciennes, it must be stated, upon the same incontestable authority, that not a Catholic in the city was injured or insulted. The priests who had remained there were not allowed to say mass, but they never met with an opprobrious word or look from the people.

Page 411

The inhabitants of the city called upon the confederates for assistance. They also issued an address to the Knights of the Fleece; a paper which narrated the story of their wrongs in pathetic and startling language. They appealed to those puissant and illustrious chevaliers to prevent the perpetration of the great wrong which was now impending over so many innocent heads. “Wait not,” they said, “till the thunderbolt has fallen, till the deluge has overwhelmed us, till the fires already blazing have laid the land in coals and ashes, till no other course be possible, but to abandon the country in its desolation to foreign barbarity. Let the cause of the oppressed come to your ears. So shall your conscience become a shield of iron; so shall the happiness of a whole country witness before the angels, of your truth to his Majesty, in the cause of his true grandeur and glory.”

These stirring appeals to an order of which Philip was chief, Viglius chancellor, Egmont, Mansfeld, Aerschot, Berlaymont, and others, chevaliers, were not likely to produce much effect. The city could rely upon no assistance in those high quarters.

Meantime, however, the bold Brederode was attempting a very extensive diversion, which, if successful, would have saved Valenciennes and the whole country beside. That eccentric personage, during the autumn and winter had been creating disturbances in various parts of the country. Wherever he happened to be established, there came from the windows of his apartments a sound of revelry and uproar. Suspicious characters in various costumes thronged his door and dogged his footsteps. At the same time the authorities felt themselves obliged to treat him with respect. At Horn he had entertained many of the leading citizens at a great banquet.—The-health-of-the-beggars had been drunk in mighty potations, and their shibboleth had resounded through the house. In the midst of the festivities, Brederode had suspended a beggar’s-medal around the neck of the burgomaster, who had consented to be his guest upon that occasion, but who had no intention of enrolling himself in the fraternities of actual or political mendicants. The excellent magistrate, however, was near becoming a member of both. The emblem by which he had been conspicuously adorned proved very embarrassing to him upon his recovery from the effects of his orgies with the “great beggar,” and he was subsequently punished for his imprudence by the confiscation of half his property.

Early in January, Brederode had stationed himself in his city of Viane. There, in virtue of his seignorial rights, he had removed all statues and other popish emblems from the churches, performing the operation, however, with much quietness and decorum. He had also collected many disorderly men at arms in this city, and had strengthened its fortifications, to resist, as he said, the threatened attacks of Duke Eric of Brunswick and his German mercenaries.

Page 412

A printing-press was established in the place, whence satirical pamphlets, hymn-books, and other pestiferous productions, were constantly issuing to the annoyance of government. Many lawless and uproarious individuals enjoyed the Count's hospitality. All the dregs and filth of the provinces, according to Doctor Viglius, were accumulated at Viane as in a cesspool. Along the placid banks of the Lech, on which river the city stands, the "hydra of rebellion" lay ever coiled and threatening.

Brederode was supposed to be revolving vast schemes, both political and military, and Margaret of Parma was kept in continual apprehension by the bravado of this very noisy conspirator. She called upon William of Orange, as usual, for assistance. The Prince, however, was very ill-disposed to come to her relief. An extreme disgust for the policy of the government already began to, characterize his public language. In the autumn and winter he had done all that man could do for the safety of the monarch's crown, and for the people's happiness. His services in Antwerp have been recorded. As soon as he could tear himself from that city, where the magistrates and all classes of citizens clung to him as to their only saviour, he had hastened to tranquillize the provinces of Holland, Zeland, and Utrecht. He had made arrangements in the principal cities there upon the same basis which he had adopted in Antwerp, and to which Margaret had consented in August. It was quite out of the question to establish order without permitting the reformers, who constituted much the larger portion of the population, to have liberty of religious exercises at some places, not consecrated, within the cities.

At Amsterdam, for instance, as he informed the Duchess, there were swarms of unlearned, barbarous people, mariners and the like, who could by no means perceive the propriety of doing their preaching in the open country, seeing that the open country, at that season, was quite under water.—Margaret's gracious suggestion that, perhaps, something might be done with boats, was also considered inadmissible. "I know not," said Orange, "who could have advised your highness to make such a proposition." He informed her, likewise; that the barbarous mariners had a clear right to their preaching; for the custom had already been established previously to the August treaty, at a place called the "Lastadge," among the wharves. "In the name of God, then," wrote Margaret; "let them continue to preach in the Lastadge." This being all the barbarians wanted, an Accord, with the full consent of the Regent, was drawn up at Amsterdam and the other northern cities. The Catholics kept churches and cathedrals, but in the winter season, the greater part of the population obtained permission to worship God upon dry land, in warehouses and dock-yards.

Within a very few weeks, however, the whole arrangement was coolly cancelled by the Duchess, her permission revoked, and peremptory prohibition of all preaching within or without the walls proclaimed. The government was growing stronger. Had not Noircarmes and Rassinghem cut to pieces three or four thousand of these sectaries

marching to battle under parsons, locksmiths, and similar chieftains? Were not all lovers of good government “erecting their heads like dromedaries?”

Page 413

It may easily be comprehended that the Prince could not with complacency permit himself to be thus perpetually stultified by a weak, false, and imperious woman. She had repeatedly called upon him when she was appalled at the tempest and sinking in the ocean; and she had as constantly disavowed his deeds and reviled his character when she felt herself in safety again. He had tranquillized the old Batavian provinces, where the old Batavian spirit still lingered, by his personal influence and his unwearied exertions. Men of all ranks and religions were grateful for his labors. The Reformers had not gained much, but they were satisfied. The Catholics retained their churches, their property, their consideration. The states of Holland had voted him fifty thousand florins, as an acknowledgment of his efforts in restoring peace. He had refused the present. He was in debt, pressed for money, but he did not choose, as he informed Philip, “that men should think his actions governed by motives of avarice or particular interest, instead of the true affection which he bore to his Majesty’s service and the good of the country.” Nevertheless, his back was hardly turned before all his work was undone by the Regent.

A new and important step on the part of the government had now placed him in an attitude of almost avowed rebellion. All functionaries, from governors of provinces down to subalterns in the army, were required to take a new oath of allegiance, “novum et hactenua inusitatum religionia juramentum,” as the Prince characterized it, which was, he said, quite equal to the inquisition. Every man who bore his Majesty’s commission was ordered solemnly to pledge himself to obey the orders of government, every where, and against every person, without limitation or restriction.—Count Mansfeld, now “factotum at Brussels,” had taken the oath with great fervor. So had Aerachot, Berlaymont, Meghem, and, after a little wavering, Egmont. Orange spurned the proposition. He had taken oaths enough which he had never broken, nor intended now to break: He was ready still to do every thing conducive to the real interest of the monarch. Who dared do more was no true servant to the government, no true lover of the country. He would never disgrace himself by a blind pledge, through which he might be constrained to do acts detrimental, in his opinion, to the safety of the crown, the happiness of the commonwealth, and his own honor. The alternative presented he willingly embraced. He renounced all his offices, and desired no longer to serve a government whose policy he did not approve, a King by whom he was suspected.

Page 414

His resignation was not accepted by the Duchess, who still made efforts to retain the services of a man who was necessary to her administration. She begged him, notwithstanding the purely defensive and watchful attitude which he had now assumed, to take measures that Brederode should abandon his mischievous courses. She also reproached the Prince with having furnished that personage with artillery for his fortifications. Orange answered, somewhat contemptuously, that he was not Brederode's keeper, and had no occasion to meddle with his affairs. He had given him three small field-pieces, promised long ago; not that he mentioned that circumstance as an excuse for the donation. "Thank God," said he, "we have always had the liberty in this country of making to friends or relatives what presents we liked, and methinks that things have come to a pretty pass when such trifles are scrutinized." Certainly, as Suzerain of Viane, and threatened with invasion in his seignorial rights, the Count might think himself justified in strengthening the bulwarks of his little stronghold, and the Prince could hardly be deemed very seriously to endanger the safety of the crown by the insignificant present which had annoyed the Regent.

It is not so agreeable to contemplate the apparent intimacy which the Prince accorded to so disreputable a character, but Orange was now in hostility to the government, was convinced by evidence, whose accuracy time was most signally to establish, that his own head, as well as many others, were already doomed to the block, while the whole country was devoted to abject servitude, and he was therefore disposed to look with more indulgence upon the follies of those who were endeavoring, however weakly and insanely, to avert the horrors which he foresaw. The time for reasoning had passed. All that true wisdom and practical statesmanship could suggest, he had already placed at the disposal of a woman who stabbed him in the back even while she leaned upon his arm—of a king who had already drawn his death warrant, while reproaching his "cousin of Orange" for want of confidence in the royal friendship. Was he now to attempt the subjugation of his country by interfering with the proceedings of men whom he had no power to command, and who, at least, were attempting to oppose tyranny? Even if he should do so, he was perfectly aware of the reward, reserved for his loyalty. He liked not such honors as he foresaw for all those who had ever interposed between the monarch and his vengeance. For himself he had the liberation of a country, the foundation of a free commonwealth to achieve. There was much work for those hands before he should fall a victim to the crowned assassin.

Page 415

Early in February, Brederode, Hoogstraaten, Horn, and some other gentlemen, visited the Prince at Breda. Here it is supposed the advice of Orange was asked concerning the new movement contemplated by Brederode. He was bent upon presenting a new petition to the Duchess with great solemnity. There is no evidence to show that the Prince approved the step, which must have seemed to him superfluous, if not puerile. He probably regarded the matter with indifference. Brederode, however, who was fond of making demonstrations, and thought himself endowed with a genius for such work, wrote to the Regent for letters of safe conduct that he might come to Brussels with his petition. The passports were contemptuously refused. He then came to Antwerp, from which city he forwarded the document to Brussels in a letter.

By this new Request, the exercise of the reformed religion was claimed as a right, while the Duchess was summoned to disband the forces which she had been collecting, and to maintain in good faith the “August” treaty. These claims were somewhat bolder than those of the previous April, although the liberal party was much weaker and the confederacy entirely disbanded. Brederode, no doubt, thought it good generalship to throw the last loaf of bread into the enemy’s camp before the city should surrender. His haughty tone was at once taken down by Margaret of Parma. “She wondered,” she said, “what manner of nobles these were, who, after requesting, a year before, to be saved only from the inquisition, now presumed to talk about preaching in the cities.” The concessions of August had always been odious, and were now canceled. “As for you and your accomplices,” she continued to the Count, “you will do well to go to your homes at once without meddling with public affairs, for, in case of disobedience, I shall deal with you as I shall deem expedient.”

Brederode not easily abashed, disregarded the advice, and continued in Antwerp. Here, accepting the answer of the Regent as a formal declaration of hostilities, he busied himself in levying troops in and about the city.

Orange had returned to Antwerp early in February. During his absence, Hoogstraaten had acted as governor at the instance of the Prince and of the Regent. During the winter that nobleman, who was very young and very fiery, had carried matters with a high hand, whenever there had been the least attempt at sedition. Liberal in principles, and the devoted friend of Orange, he was disposed however to prove that the champions of religious liberty were not the patrons of sedition. A riot occurring in the cathedral, where a violent mob were engaged in defacing whatever was left to deface in that church, and in heaping insults on the papists at their worship, the little Count, who, says a Catholic contemporary, “had the courage of a lion,” dashed in among them, sword in hand, killed three upon the spot, and, aided by his followers, succeeded in slaying, wounding, or capturing all the

Page 416

rest. He had also tracked the ringleader of the tumult to his lodging, where he had caused him to be arrested at midnight, and hanged at once in his shirt without any form of trial. Such rapid proceedings little resembled the calm and judicious moderation of Orange upon all occasions, but they certainly might have sufficed to convince Philip that all antagonists of the inquisition were not heretics and outlaws. Upon the arrival of the Prince in Antwerp, it was considered advisable that Hoogstraaten should remain associated with him in the temporary government of the city.

During the month of February, Brederode remained in Antwerp, secretly enrolling troops. It was probably his intention—if so desultory and irresponsible an individual could be said to have an intention—to make an attempt upon the Island of Walcheren. If such important cities as Flushing and Middelburg could be gained, he thought it possible to prevent the armed invasion now soon expected from Spain. Orange had sent an officer to those cities, who was to reconnoitre their condition, and to advise them against receiving a garrison from government without his authority. So far he connived at Brederode's proceedings, as he had a perfect right to do, for Walcheren was within what had been the Prince's government, and he had no disposition that these cities should share the fate of Tourney, Valenciennes, Bois le Duc, and other towns which had already passed or were passing under the spears of foreign mercenaries.

It is also probable that he did not take any special pains to check the enrolments of Brederode. The peace of Antwerp was not endangered, and to the preservation of that city the Prince seemed now to limit himself. He was hereditary burgrave of Antwerp, but officer of Philip's never more. Despite the shrill demands of Duchess Margaret, therefore; the Prince did not take very active measures by which the crown of Philip might be secured. He, perhaps, looked upon the struggle almost with indifference. Nevertheless, he issued a formal proclamation by which the Count's enlistments were forbidden. Van der Aa, a gentleman who had been active in making these levies, was compelled to leave the city. Brederode was already gone to the north to busy himself with further enrolments.

In the mean time there had been much alarm in Brussels. Egmont, who omitted no opportunity of manifesting his loyalty, offered to throw himself at once into the Isle of Walcheren, for the purpose of dislodging any rebels who might have effected an entrance. He collected accordingly seven or eight hundred Walloon veterans, at his disposal in Flanders, in the little port of Sas de Ghent, prepared at once to execute his intention, "worthy," says a Catholic writer, "of his well-known courage and magnanimity." The Duchess expressed gratitude for the Count's devotion and loyalty, but his services in the sequel proved unnecessary. The rebels, several boat-loads of whom had been cruising about in the neighborhood of Flushing during the early part of March, had been refused admittance into any of the ports on the island. They therefore sailed up the

Scheld, and landed at a little village called Ostrawell, at the distance of somewhat more than a mile from Antwerp.

Page 417

The commander of the expedition was Marnix of Tholouse, brother to Marnix of Saint Aldegonde. This young nobleman, who had left college to fight for the cause of religious liberty, was possessed of fine talents and accomplishments. Like his illustrious brother, he was already a sincere convert to the doctrines of the reformed Church. He had nothing, however, but courage to recommend him as a leader in a military expedition. He was a mere boy, utterly without experience in the field. His troops were raw levies, vagabonds and outlaws.

Such as it was, however, his army was soon posted at Ostrawell in a convenient position, and with considerable judgment. He had the Scheld and its dykes in his rear, on his right and left the dykes and the village. In front he threw up a breastwork and sunk a trench. Here then was set up the standard of rebellion, and hither flocked daily many malcontents from the country round. Within a few days three thousand men were in his camp. On the other handy Brederode was busy in Holland, and boasted of taking the field ere long with six thousand soldiers at the very least. Together they would march to the relief of Valenciennes, and dictate peace in Brussels.

It was obvious that this matter could not be allowed to go on. The Duchess, with some trepidation, accepted the offer made by Philip de Lannoy, Seigneur de Beauvoir, commander of her body-guard in Brussels, to destroy this nest of rebels without delay. Half the whole number of these soldiers was placed at his disposition, and Egmont supplied De Beauvoir with four hundred of his veteran Walloons.

With a force numbering only eight hundred, but all picked men, the intrepid officer undertook his enterprise, with great despatch and secrecy. Upon the 12th March, the whole troop was sent off in small parties, to avoid suspicion, and armed only with sword and dagger. Their helmets, bucklers, arquebusses, corselets, spears, standards and drums, were delivered to their officers, by whom they were conveyed noiselessly to the place of rendezvous. Before daybreak, upon the following morning, De Beauvoir met his soldiers at the abbey of Saint Bernard, within a league of Antwerp. Here he gave them their arms, supplied them with refreshments, and made them a brief speech. He instructed them that they were to advance, with furled banners and without beat of drum, till within sight of the enemy, that the foremost section was to deliver its fire, retreat to the rear and load, to be followed by the next, which was to do the same, and above all, that not an arquebus should be discharged till the faces of the enemy could be distinguished.

Page 418

The troop started. After a few minutes' march they were in full sight of Ostrawell. They then displayed their flags and advanced upon the fort with loud huzzas. Tholouse was as much taken by surprise as if they had suddenly emerged from the bowels of the earth. He had been informed that the government at Brussels was in extreme trepidation. When he first heard the advancing trumpets and sudden shouts, he thought it a detachment of Brederode's promised force. The cross on the banners soon undeceived him. Nevertheless "like a brave and generous young gentleman as he was," he lost no time in drawing up his men for action, implored them to defend their breastworks, which were impregnable against so small a force, and instructed them to wait patiently with their fire, till the enemy were near enough to be marked.

These orders were disobeyed. The "young scholar," as De Beauvoir had designated him, had no power to infuse his own spirit into his rabble rout of followers. They were already panic-struck by the unexpected appearance of the enemy. The Catholics came on with the coolness of veterans, taking as deliberate aim as if it had been they, not their enemies, who were behind breastworks. The troops of Tholouse fired wildly, precipitately, quite over the heads of the assailants. Many of the defenders were slain as fast as they showed themselves above their bulwarks. The ditch was crossed, the breastwork carried at, a single determined charge. The rebels made little resistance, but fled as soon as the enemy entered their fort. It was a hunt, not a battle. Hundreds were stretched dead in the camp; hundreds were driven into the Scheld; six or eight hundred took refuge in a farm-house; but De Beauvoir's men set fire to the building, and every rebel who had entered it was burned alive or shot. No quarter was given. Hardly a man of the three thousand who had held the fort escaped. The body of Tholouse was cut into a hundred pieces. The Seigneur de Beauvoir had reason, in the brief letter which gave an account of this exploit, to assure her Highness that there were "some very valiant fellows in his little troop." Certainly they had accomplished the enterprise entrusted to them with promptness, neatness, and entire success. Of the great rebellious gathering, which every day had seemed to grow more formidable, not a vestige was left.

This bloody drama had been enacted in full sight of Antwerp. The fight had lasted from daybreak till ten o'clock in the forenoon, during the whole of which period, the city ramparts looking towards Ostrawell, the roofs of houses, the towers of churches had been swarming with eager spectators. The sound of drum and trumpet, the rattle of musketry, the shouts of victory, the despairing cries of the vanquished were heard by thousands who deeply sympathized with the rebels thus enduring so sanguinary a chastisement. In Antwerp there were forty thousand people opposed to the Church of Rome. Of this number the greater proportion were Calvinists, and of these Calvinists there were thousands looking down from the battlements upon the disastrous fight.

Page 419

The excitement soon became uncontrollable. Before ten o'clock vast numbers of sectaries came pouring towards the Red Gate, which afforded the readiest egress to the scene of action; the drawbridge of the Ostrawell Gate having been destroyed the night before by command of Orange. They came from every street and alley of the city. Some were armed with lance, pike, or arquebus; some bore sledge-hammers; others had the partisans, battle-axes, and huge two-handed swords of the previous century; all were determined upon issuing forth to the rescue of their friends in the fields outside the town. The wife of Tholouse, not yet aware of her husband's death, although his defeat was obvious, flew from street to street, calling upon the Calvinists to save or to avenge their perishing brethren.

A terrible tumult prevailed. Ten thousand men were already up and in arms.—It was then that the Prince of Orange, who was sometimes described by his enemies as timid and pusillanimous by nature, showed the mettle he was made of. His sense of duty no longer bade him defend the crown of Philip—which thenceforth was to be entrusted to the hirelings of the Inquisition—but the vast population of Antwerp, the women, the children, and the enormous wealth of the richest Deity in the world had been confided to his care, and he had accepted the responsibility. Mounting his horse, he made his appearance instantly at the Red Gate, before as formidable a mob as man has ever faced. He came there almost alone, without guards. Hoogstraaten arrived soon afterwards with the same intention. The Prince was received with howls of execration. A thousand hoarse voices called him the Pope's servant, minister of Antichrist, and lavished upon him many more epithets of the same nature. His life was in imminent danger. A furious clothier levelled an arquebus full at his breast. "Die, treacherous villain?" he cried; "thou who art the cause that our brethren have perished thus miserably in yonder field." The loaded weapon was struck away by another hand in the crowd, while the Prince, neither daunted by the ferocious demonstrations against his life, nor enraged by the virulent abuse to which he was subjected, continued tranquilly, earnestly, imperatively to address the crowd. William of Orange had that in his face and tongue "which men willingly call master-authority." With what other talisman could he, without violence and without soldiers, have quelled even for a moment ten thousand furious Calvinists, armed, enraged against his person, and thirsting for vengeance on Catholics. The postern of the Red Gate had already been broken through before Orange and his colleague, Hoogstraaten, had arrived. The most excited of the Calvinists were preparing to rush forth upon the enemy at Ostrawell. The Prince, after he had gained the ear of the multitude, urged that the battle was now over, that the reformers were entirely cut to pieces, the enemy, retiring, and that a disorderly and ill-armed mob would be unable

Page 420

to retrieve the fortunes of the day. Many were persuaded to abandon the design. Five hundred of the most violent, however, insisted upon leaving the gates, and the governors, distinctly warning these zealots that their blood must be upon their own heads, reluctantly permitted that number to issue from the city. The rest of the mob, not appeased, but uncertain, and disposed to take vengeance upon the Catholics within the walls, for the disaster which had been occurring without, thronged tumultuously to the long, wide street, called the Mere, situate in the very heart of the city.

Meantime the ardor of those who had sallied from the gate grew sensibly cooler, when they found themselves in the open fields. De Beauvoir, whose men, after the victory, had scattered in pursuit of the fugitives, now heard the tumult in the city. Suspecting an attack, he rallied his compact little army again for a fresh encounter. The last of the vanquished Tholousians who had been captured; more fortunate than their predecessors, had been spared for ransom. There were three hundred of them; rather a dangerous number of prisoners for a force of eight hundred, who were just going into another battle. De Beauvoir commanded his soldiers, therefore, to shoot them all. This order having been accomplished, the Catholics marched towards Antwerp, drums beating, colors flying. The five hundred Calvinists, not liking their appearance, and being in reality outnumbered, retreated within; the gates as hastily as they had just issued from them. De Beauvoir advanced close to the city moat, on the margin of which he planted the banners of the unfortunate Tholouse, and sounded a trumpet of defiance. Finding that the citizens had apparently no stomach for the fight, he removed his trophies, and took his departure.

On the other hand, the tumult within the walls had again increased. The Calvinists had been collecting in great numbers upon the Mere. This was a large and splendid thoroughfare, rather an oblong market-place than a street, filled with stately buildings, and communicating by various cross streets with the Exchange and with many other public edifices. By an early hour in the afternoon twelve or fifteen thousand Calvinists, all armed and fighting men, had assembled upon the place. They had barricaded the whole precinct with pavements and upturned wagons. They had already broken into the arsenal and obtained many field-pieces, which were planted at the entrance of every street and by-way. They had stormed the city jail and liberated the prisoners, all of whom, grateful and ferocious, came to swell the numbers who defended the stronghold on the Mere. A tremendous mischief was afoot. Threats of pillaging the churches and the houses of the Catholics, of sacking the whole opulent city, were distinctly heard among this powerful mob, excited by religious enthusiasm, but containing within one great heterogeneous mass the elements of every crime which humanity can commit. The alarm throughout the city was indescribable. The cries of women and children, as they remained in trembling expectation of what the next hour might bring forth, were, said one who heard them, “enough to soften the hardest hearts.”

Page 421

Nevertheless the diligence and courage of the Prince kept pace with the insurrection. He had caused the eight companies of guards enrolled in September, to be mustered upon the square in front of the city hall, for the protection of that building and of the magistracy. He had summoned the senate of the city, the board of ancients, the deans of guilds, the ward masters, to consult with him at the council-room. At the peril of his life he had again gone before the angry mob in the Mere, advancing against their cannon and their outcries, and compelling them to appoint eight deputies to treat with him and the magistrates at the town-hall. This done, quickly but deliberately he had drawn up six articles, to which those deputies gave their assent, and in which the city government cordially united. These articles provided that the keys of the city should remain in the possession of the Prince and of Hoogstraaten, that the watch should be held by burghers and soldiers together, that the magistrates should permit the entrance of no garrison, and that the citizens should be entrusted with the care of, the charters, especially with that of the joyful entrance.

These arrangements, when laid before the assembly at the Mere by their deputies, were not received with favor. The Calvinists demanded the keys of the city. They did not choose to be locked up at the mercy of any man. They had already threatened to blow the city hall into the air if the keys were not delivered to them. They claimed that burghers, without distinction of religion, instead of mercenary troops, should be allowed to guard the market-place in front of the town-hall.

It was now nightfall, and no definite arrangement had been concluded. Nevertheless, a temporary truce was made, by means of a concession as to the guard. It was agreed that the burghers, Calvinists and Lutherans, as well as Catholics, should be employed to protect the city. By subtlety, however, the Calvinists detailed for that service, were posted not in the town-house square, but on the ramparts and at the gates.

A night of dreadful expectation was passed. The army of fifteen thousand mutineers remained encamped and barricaded on the Mere, with guns loaded and artillery pointed. Fierce cries of “Long live the beggars,”—“Down with the papists,” and other significant watchwords, were heard all night long, but no more serious outbreak occurred.

During the whole of the following day, the Calvinists remained in their encampment, the Catholics and the city guardsmen at their posts near the city hall. The Prince was occupied in the council-chamber from morning till night with the municipal authorities, the deputies of “the religion,” and the guild officers, in framing a new treaty of peace. Towards evening fifteen articles were agreed upon, which were to be proposed forthwith to the insurgents, and in case of nonacceptance to be enforced. The arrangement provided that there should be no garrison;

Page 422

that the September contracts permitting the reformed worship at certain places within the city should be maintained; that men of different parties should refrain from mutual insults; that the two governors, the Prince and Hoogstraaten, should keep the keys; that the city should be guarded by both soldiers and citizens, without distinction of religious creed; that a band of four hundred cavalry and a small flotilla of vessels of war should be maintained for the defence of the place, and that the expenses to be incurred should be levied upon all classes, clerical and lay, Catholic and Reformed, without any exception.

It had been intended that the governors, accompanied by the magistrates, should forthwith proceed to the Mere, for the purpose of laying these terms before the insurgents. Night had, however, already arrived, and it was understood that the ill-temper of the Calvinists had rather increased than diminished, so that it was doubtful whether the arrangement would be accepted. It was, therefore, necessary to await the issue of another day, rather than to provoke a night battle in the streets.

During the night the Prince labored incessantly to provide against the dangers of the morrow. The Calvinists had fiercely expressed their disinclination to any reasonable arrangement. They had threatened, without farther pause, to plunder the religious houses and the mansions of all the wealthy Catholics, and to drive every papist out of town. They had summoned the Lutherans to join with them in their revolt, and menaced them, in case of refusal, with the same fate which awaited the Catholics. The Prince, who was himself a Lutheran, not entirely free from the universal prejudice against the Calvinists, whose sect he afterwards embraced, was fully aware of the deplorable fact, that the enmity at that day between Calvinists and Lutherans was as fierce as that between Reformers and Catholics. He now made use of this feeling, and of his influence with those of the Augsburg Confession, to save the city. During the night he had interviews with the ministers and notable members of the Lutheran churches, and induced them to form an alliance upon this occasion with the Catholics and with all friends of order, against an army of outlaws who were threatening to burn and sack the city. The Lutherans, in the silence of night, took arms and encamped, to the number of three or four thousand, upon the river side, in the neighborhood of Saint Michael's cloister. The Prince also sent for the deans of all the foreign mercantile associations—-Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, English, Hanseatic, engaged their assistance also for the protection of the city, and commanded them to remain in their armor at their respective factories, ready to act at a moment's warning. It was agreed that they should be informed at frequent intervals as to the progress of events.

Page 423

On the morning of the 15th, the city of Antwerp presented a fearful sight. Three distinct armies were arrayed at different points within its walls. The Calvinists, fifteen thousand strong, lay in their encampment on the Mere; the Lutherans, armed, and eager for action, were at St. Michael's; the Catholics and the regulars of the city guard were posted on the square. Between thirty-five and forty thousand men were up, according to the most moderate computation. All parties were excited, and eager for the fray. The fires of religious hatred burned fiercely in every breast. Many malefactors and outlaws, who had found refuge in the course of recent events at Antwerp, were in the ranks of the Calvinists, profaning a sacred cause, and inspiring a fanatical party with bloody resolutions. Papists, once and forever, were to be hunted down, even as they had been for years pursuing Reformers. Let the men who had fed fat on the spoils of plundered Christians be dealt with in like fashion. Let their homes be sacked, their bodies given to the dogs—such were the cries uttered by thousands of armed men.

On the other hand, the Lutherans, as angry and as rich as the Catholics, saw in every Calvinist a murderer and a robber. They thirsted after their blood; for the spirit of religious frenzy; the characteristic of the century, can with difficulty be comprehended in our colder and more sceptical age. There was every probability that a bloody battle was to be fought that day in the streets of Antwerp—a general engagement, in the course of which, whoever might be the victors, the city was sure to be delivered over to fire, sack, and outrage. Such would have been the result, according to the concurrent testimony of eye-witnesses, and contemporary historians of every country and creed, but for the courage and wisdom of one man. William of Orange knew what would be the consequence of a battle, pent up within the walls of Antwerp. He foresaw the horrible havoc which was to be expected, the desolation which would be brought to every hearth in the city. "Never were men so desperate and so willing to fight," said Sir Thomas Gresham, who had been expecting every hour his summons to share in the conflict. If the Prince were unable that morning to avert the impending calamity, no other power, under heaven, could save Antwerp from destruction.

The articles prepared on the 14th had been already approved by those who represented the Catholic and Lutheran interests. They were read early in the morning to the troops assembled on the square and at St. Michael's, and received with hearty cheers. It was now necessary that the Calvinists should accept them, or that the quarrel should be fought out at once. At ten o'clock, William of Orange, attended by his colleague, Hoogstraaten, together with a committee of the municipal authorities, and followed by a hundred troopers, rode to the Mere. They wore red scarfs over their armor, as symbols by which all those who

Page 424

had united to put down the insurrection were distinguished. The fifteen thousand Calvinists, fierce and disorderly as ever, maintained a threatening aspect. Nevertheless, the Prince was allowed to ride into the midst of the square. The articles were then read aloud by his command, after which, with great composure, he made a few observations. He pointed out that the arrangement offered them was founded upon the September concessions, that the right of worship was conceded, that the foreign garrison was forbidden, and that nothing further could be justly demanded or honorably admitted. He told them that a struggle upon their part would be hopeless, for the Catholics and Lutherans, who were all agreed as to the justice of the treaty, outnumbered them by nearly two to one. He, therefore, most earnestly and affectionately adjured them to testify their acceptance to the peace offered by repeating the words with which he should conclude. Then, with a firm voice; the Prince exclaimed, “God Save the King!” It was the last time that those words were ever heard from the lips of the man already proscribed by Philip. The crowd of Calvinists hesitated an instant, and then, unable to resist the tranquil influence, convinced by his reasonable language, they raised one tremendous shout of “Vive le Roi!”

The deed was done, the peace accepted, the dreadful battle averted, Antwerp saved. The deputies of the Calvinists now formally accepted and signed the articles. Kind words were exchanged among the various classes of fellow-citizens, who but an hour before had been thirsting for each other’s blood, the artillery and other weapons of war were restored to the arsenals, Calvinists, Lutherans, and Catholics, all laid down their arms, and the city, by three o’clock, was entirely quiet. Fifty thousand armed men had been up, according to some estimates, yet, after three days of dreadful expectation, not a single person had been injured, and the tumult was now appeased.

The Prince had, in truth, used the mutual animosity of Protestant sects to a good purpose; averting bloodshed by the very weapons with which the battle was to have been waged. Had it been possible for a man like William the Silent to occupy the throne where Philip the Prudent sat, how different might have been the history of Spain and the fate of the Netherlands. Gresham was right, however, in his conjecture that the Regent and court would not “take the business well.” Margaret of Parma was incapable of comprehending such a mind as that of Orange, or of appreciating its efforts. She was surrounded by unscrupulous and mercenary soldiers, who hailed the coming civil war as the most profitable of speculations. “Factotum” Mansfeld; the Counts Aremberg and Meghem, the Duke of Aerschot, the Sanguinary Noircarmes, were already counting their share in the coming confiscations. In the internecine conflict approaching, there would be gold for the gathering, even if no honorable laurels would wreath their swords. “Meghen with his regiment is desolating the country,” wrote William of Orange to the Landgrave of Hesse, “and reducing many people to poverty. Aremberg is doing the same in Friesland. They are only thinking how, under the pretext of religion, they may

grind the poor Christians, and grow rich and powerful upon their estates and their blood.”

Page 425

The Seignior de Beauvoir wrote to the Duchess, claiming all the estates of Tholouse, and of his brother St. Aldegonde, as his reward for the Ostrawell victory, while Noircarmes was at this very moment to commence at Valenciennes that career of murder and spoliation which, continued at Mons a few years afterwards, was to load his name with infamy.

From such a Regent, surrounded by such councillors, was the work of William de Nassau's hands to gain applause? What was it to them that carnage and plunder had been spared in one of the richest and most populous cities in Christendom? Were not carnage and plunder the very elements in which they disported themselves? And what more dreadful offence against God and Philip could be committed than to permit, as the Prince had just permitted, the right of worship in a Christian land to Calvinists and Lutherans? As a matter of course, therefore, Margaret of Parma denounced the terms by which Antwerp had been saved as a "novel and exorbitant capitulation," and had no intention of signifying her approbation either to prince or magistrate.

1567 [*Chapter* X.]

Egmont and Aerschot before Valenciennes—Severity of Egmont— Capitulation of the city—Escape and capture of the ministers— Execution of La Grange and De Bray—-Horrible cruelty at Valenciennes—Effects of the reduction of Valenciennes—The Duchess at Antwerp—Armed invasion of the provinces decided upon in Spain—Appointment of Alva—Indignation of Margaret—Mission of De Billy— Pretended visit of Philip—Attempts of the Duchess to gain over Orange—Mission of Berty—Interview between Orange and Egmont at Willebroek—Orange's letters to Philip, to Egmont, and to Horn— Orange departs from the Netherlands—Philip's letter to Egmont— Secret intelligence received by Orange—La Torre's mission to Brederode—Brederode's departure and death—Death of Bergen—Despair in the provinces—Great emigration—-Cruelties practised upon those of the new religion—Edict of 24th May—Wrath of the King.

Valenciennes, whose fate depended so closely upon the issue of these various events, was now trembling to her fall. Noircarmes had been drawing the lines more and more closely about the city, and by a refinement of cruelty had compelled many Calvinists from Tournay to act as pioneers in the trenches against their own brethren in Valenciennes. After the defeat of Tholouse, and the consequent frustration of all Brederode's arrangements to relieve the siege, the Duchess had sent a fresh summons to Valenciennes, together with letters acquainting the citizens with the results of the Ostrawell battle. The intelligence was not believed. Egmont and Aerschot, however, to whom Margaret had entrusted this last mission to the beleaguered town, roundly rebuked the deputies who came to treat with them, for their insolence in daring to doubt the word of the Regent. The two seigniors had established themselves in the Chateau

Page 426

of Beusnage, at a league's distance from Valenciennes. Here they received commissioners from the city, half of whom were Catholics appointed by the magistrates, half Calvinists deputed by the consistories. These envoys were informed that the Duchess would pardon the city for its past offences, provided the gates should now be opened, the garrison received, and a complete suppression of all religion except that of Rome acquiesced in without a murmur. As nearly the whole population was of the Calvinist faith, these terms could hardly be thought favorable. It was, however, added, that fourteen days should be allowed to the Reformers for the purpose of converting their property, and retiring from the country.

The deputies, after conferring with their constituents in the, city, returned on the following day with counter-propositions, which were not more likely to find favor with the government. They offered to accept the garrison, provided the soldiers should live at their own expense, without any tax to the citizens for their board, lodging, or pay. They claimed that all property which had been seized should be restored, all persons accused of treason liberated. They demanded the unconditional revocation of the edict by which the city had been declared rebellious, together with a guarantee from the Knights of the Fleece and the state council that the terms of the propose& treaty should be strictly observed.

As soon as these terms had been read to the two seigniors, the Duke of Aerschot burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. He protested that nothing could be more ludicrous than such propositions, worthy of a conqueror dictating a peace, thus offered by a city closely beleaguered, and entirely at the mercy of the enemy. The Duke's hilarity was not shared by Egmont, who, on the contrary, fell into a furious passion. He swore that the city should be burned about their ears, and that every one of the inhabitants should be put to the sword for the insolent language which they had thus dared to address to a most clement sovereign. He ordered the trembling deputies instantly to return with this peremptory rejection of their terms, and with his command that the proposals of government should be accepted within three days' delay.

The commissioners fell upon their knees at Egmont's feet, and begged for mercy. They implored him at least to send this imperious message by some other hand than theirs, and to permit them to absent themselves from the city. They should be torn limb from limb, they said, by the enraged inhabitants, if they dared to present themselves with such instructions before them. Egmont, however, assured them that they should be sent into the city, bound hand and foot, if they did not instantly obey his orders. The deputies, therefore, with heavy hearts, were fain to return home with this bitter result to their negotiations. The, terms were rejected, as a matter of course, but the gloomy forebodings of the commissioners, as to their own fate at the hands of their fellow-citizens, were not fulfilled.

Page 427

Instant measures were now taken to cannonade the city. Egmont, at the hazard of his life, descended into the foss, to reconnoitre the works, and to form an opinion as to the most eligible quarter at which to direct the batteries. Having communicated the result of his investigations to Noircarmes, he returned to report all these proceedings to the Regent at Brussels. Certainly the Count had now separated himself far enough from William of Orange, and was manifesting an energy in the cause of tyranny which was sufficiently unscrupulous. Many people who had been deceived by his more generous demonstrations in former times, tried to persuade themselves that he was acting a part. Noircarmes, however—and no man was more competent to decide the question distinctly—expressed his entire confidence in Egmont's loyalty. Margaret had responded warmly to his eulogies, had read with approbation secret letters from Egmont to Noircarmes, and had expressed the utmost respect and affection for "the Count." Egmont had also lost no time in writing to Philip, informing him that he had selected the most eligible spot for battering down the obstinate city of Valenciennes, regretting that he could not have had the eight or ten military companies, now at his disposal, at an earlier day, in which case he should have been able to suppress many tumults, but congratulating his sovereign that the preachers were all fugitive, the reformed religion suppressed, and the people disarmed. He assured the King that he would neglect no effort to prevent any renewal of the tumults, and expressed the hope that his Majesty would be satisfied with his conduct, notwithstanding the calumnies of which the times were full.

Noircarmes meanwhile, had unmasked his batteries, and opened his fire exactly according to Egmont's suggestions.

The artillery played first upon what was called the "White Tower," which happened to bear this ancient, rhyming inscription:

> "When every man receives his own,
> And justice reigns for strong and weak,
> Perfect shall be this tower of stone,
> And all the dumb will learn to speak."
>
> "Quand chacun sera satisfaict,
> Et la justice regnera,
> Ce boulevard sera parfaict,
> Et—la muette parlera."—Valenciennes *Ms*.

For some unknown reason, the rather insipid quatrain was tortured into a baleful prophecy. It was considered very ominous that the battery should be first opened against this Sibylline tower. The chimes, too, which had been playing, all through the siege, the music of Marot's sacred songs, happened that morning to be sounding forth from every belfry the twenty-second psalm: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Page 428

It was Palm Sunday, 23d of March. The women and children were going mournfully about the streets, bearing green branches in their hands, and praying upon their knees, in every part of the city. Despair and superstition had taken possession of citizens, who up to that period had justified La Noue's assertion, that none could endure a siege like Huguenots. As soon as the cannonading began, the spirit of the inhabitants seemed to depart. The ministers exhorted their flocks in vain as the tiles and chimneys began to topple into the streets, and the concussions of the artillery were responded to by the universal wailing of affrighted women.

Upon the very first day after the unmasking of the batteries, the city sent to Noircarmes, offering almost an unconditional surrender. Not the slightest breach had been effected—not the least danger of an assault existed—yet the citizens, who had earned the respect of their antagonists by the courageous manner in which they had sallied and skirmished during the siege, now in despair at any hope of eventual succor, and completely demoralized by the course of recent events outside their walls, surrendered ignominiously, and at discretion. The only stipulation agreed to by Noircarmes was, that the city should not be sacked, and that the lives of the inhabitants should be spared.

This pledge was, however, only made to be broken. Noircarmes entered the city and closed the gates. All the richest citizens, who of course were deemed the most criminal, were instantly arrested. The soldiers, although not permitted formally to sack the city, were quartered upon the inhabitants, whom they robbed and murdered, according to the testimony of a Catholic citizen, almost at their pleasure.

Michael Herlin, a very wealthy and distinguished burgher, was arrested upon the first day. The two ministers, Guido de Bray and Peregrine de la Grange, together with the son of Herlin, effected their escape by the water-gate. Having taken refuge in a tavern at Saint Arnaud, they were observed, as they sat at supper, by a peasant, who forthwith ran off to the mayor of the borough with the intelligence that some individuals, who looked like fugitives, had arrived at Saint Arnaud. One of them, said the informer, was richly dressed; and wore a gold-hilted sword with velvet scabbard. By the description, the mayor recognized Herlin the younger,—and suspected his companions. They were all arrested, and sent to Noircarmes. The two Herlins, father and son, were immediately beheaded. Guido de Bray and Peregrine de la Grange were loaded with chains, and thrown into a filthy dungeon, previously to their being hanged. Here they were visited by the Countess de Roeulx, who was curious to see how the Calvinists sustained themselves in their martyrdom. She asked them how they could sleep, eat, or drink, when covered with such heavy fetters. "The cause, and my good conscience," answered De Bray, "make me eat, drink, and sleep better than those who are doing me wrong. These shackles are more honorable to me than golden rings and chains. They are more useful to me, and as I hear their clank, methinks I hear the music of sweet voices and the tinkling of lutes."

Page 429

This exultation never deserted these courageous enthusiasts. They received their condemnation to death “as if it had been an invitation to a marriage feast.” They encouraged the friends who crowded their path to the scaffold with exhortations to remain true in the Reformed faith. La Grange, standing upon the ladder, proclaimed with a loud voice, that he was slain for having preached the pure word of God to a Christian people in a Christian land. De Bray, under the same gibbet; testified stoutly that he, too, had committed that offence alone. He warned his friends to obey the magistrates, and all others in authority, except in matters of conscience; to abstain from sedition; but to obey the will of God. The executioner threw him from the ladder while he was yet speaking. So ended the lives of two eloquent, learned, and highly-gifted divines.

Many hundreds of victims were sacrificed in the unfortunate city. “There were a great many other citizens strangled or beheaded,” says an aristocratic Catholic historian of the time, “but they were mostly personages of little quality, whose names are quite unknown to me.”—[Pontus Payen]—The franchises of the city were all revoked. There was a prodigious amount of property confiscated to the benefit of Noircarmes and the rest of the “Seven Sleepers.” Many Calvinists were burned, others were hanged. “For —two whole years,” says another Catholic, who was a citizen of Valenciennes at the time, “there was, scarcely a week in which several citizens were not executed and often a great number were despatched at a time. All this gave so much alarm to the good and innocent, that many quitted the city as fast as they could.” If the good and innocent happened to be rich, they might be sure that Noircarmes would deem that a crime for which no goodness and innocence could atone.

Upon the fate of Valenciennes had depended, as if by common agreement, the whole destiny of the anti-Catholic party. “People had learned at last,” says another Walloon, “that the King had long arms, and that he had not been enlisting soldiers to string beads. So they drew in their horns and their evil tempers, meaning to put them forth again, should the government not succeed at the siege of Valenciennes.” The government had succeeded, however, and the consternation was extreme, the general submission immediate and even abject. “The capture of Valenciennes,” wrote Noircarmes to Granvelle, “has worked a miracle. The other cities all come forth to meet me, putting the rope around their own necks.” No opposition was offered any where. Tournay had been crushed; Valenciennes, Bois le Duc, and all other important places, accepted their garrisons without a murmur. Even Antwerp had made its last struggle, and as soon as the back of Orange was turned, knelt down in the dust to receive its bridle. The Prince had been able, by his courage and wisdom, to avert a sanguinary conflict within its walls, but his personal presence alone could guarantee any thing like religious liberty for the inhabitants, now that the rest of the country was subdued. On the 26th April, sixteen companies of infantry, under Count Mansfeld, entered the gates. On the 28th the Duchess made a visit to the city, where she was received with respect, but where her eyes were shocked by that which she termed the “abominable, sad, and hideous spectacle of the desolated churches.”

Page 430

To the eyes of all who loved their fatherland and their race, the sight of a desolate country, with its ancient charters superseded by brute force, its industrious population swarming from the land in droves, as if the pestilence were raging, with gibbets and scaffolds erected in every village, and with a Sickening and universal apprehension of still darker disasters to follow, was a spectacle still more sad, hideous, and abominable.

For it was now decided that the Duke of Alva, at the head of a Spanish army, should forthwith take his departure for the Netherlands. A land already subjugated was to be crushed, and every vestige of its ancient liberties destroyed. The conquered provinces, once the abode of municipal liberty, of science, art, and literature, and blessed with an unexampled mercantile and manufacturing prosperity, were to be placed in absolute subjection to the cabinet council at Madrid. A dull and malignant bigot, assisted by a few Spanish grandees, and residing at the other extremity of Europe, was thenceforth to exercise despotic authority over countries which for centuries had enjoyed a local administration, and a system nearly approaching to complete self-government. Such was the policy devised by Granvelle and Spinosa, which the Duke of Alva, upon the 15th April, had left Madrid to enforce.

It was very natural that Margaret of Parma should be indignant at being thus superseded. She considered herself as having acquired much credit by the manner in which the latter insurrectionary movements had been suppressed, so soon as Philip, after his endless tergiversations, had supplied her with arms and money. Therefore she wrote in a tone of great asperity to her brother, expressing her discontent. She had always been trammelled in her action, she said, by his restrictions upon her authority. She complained that he had no regard for her reputation or her peace of mind. Notwithstanding, all impediments and dangers, she had at last settled the country, and now another person was to reap the honor. She also despatched the Seigneur de Billy to Spain, for the purpose of making verbal representations to his Majesty upon the inexpediency of sending the Duke of Alva to the Netherlands at that juncture with a Spanish army.

Margaret gained nothing, however, by her letters and her envoy, save a round rebuke from Philip, who was not accustomed to brook the language of remonstrance; even from his sister. His purpose was fixed. Absolute submission was now to be rendered by all. “He was highly astonished and dissatisfied,” he said, “that she should dare to write to him with so much passion, and in so resolute a manner. If she received no other recompense, save the glory of having restored the service of God, she ought to express her gratitude to the King for having given her the opportunity of so doing.”

Page 431

The affectation of clement intentions was still maintained, together with the empty pretence of the royal visit. Alva and his army were coming merely to prepare the way for the King, who still represented himself as “debonair and gentle, slow to anger, and averse from bloodshed.” Superficial people believed that the King was really coming, and hoped wonders from his advent. The Duchess knew better. The Pope never believed in it, Granvelle never believed in it, the Prince of Orange never believed in it, Councillor d’Assonleville never believed in it. “His Majesty,” says the Walloon historian, who wrote from Assonleville’s papers, “had many imperative reasons for not coming. He was fond of quiet, he was a great negotiator, distinguished for phlegm and modesty, disinclined to long journeys, particularly to sea voyages, which were very painful to him. Moreover, he was then building his Escorial with so much taste and affection that it was impossible for him to leave home.” These excellent reasons sufficed to detain the monarch, in whose place a general was appointed, who, it must be confessed, was neither phlegmatic nor modest, and whose energies were quite equal to the work required. There had in truth never been any thing in the King’s project of visiting the Netherlands but pretence.

On the other hand, the work of Orange for the time was finished. He had saved Antwerp, he had done his best to maintain the liberties of the country, the rights of conscience, and the royal authority, so far as they were compatible with each other. The alternative had now been distinctly forced upon every man, either to promise blind obedience or to accept the position of a rebel. William of Orange had thus become a rebel. He had been requested to sign the new oath, greedily taken by the Mansfelds, the Berlaymont, the Aerachot, and the Egmonts, to obey every order which he might receive, against every person and in every place, without restriction or limitation,—and he had distinctly and repeatedly declined the demand. He had again and again insisted upon resigning all his offices. The Duchess, more and more anxious to gain over such an influential personage to the cause of tyranny, had been most importunate in her requisitions. “A man with so noble a heart,” she wrote to the Prince, “and with a descent from, such illustrious and loyal ancestors, can surely not forget his duties to his Majesty and the country.”

William of Orange knew his duty to both better than the Duchess could understand. He answered this fresh summons by reminding her that he had uniformly refused the new and extraordinary pledge required of him. He had been true to his old oaths, and therefore no fresh pledge was necessary. Moreover, a pledge without limitation he would never take. The case might happen, he said, that he should be ordered to do things contrary to his conscience, prejudicial to his Majesty’s service, and in violation of his oaths to maintain the laws of the country. He therefore once more resigned all his offices, and signified his intention of leaving the provinces.

Page 432

Margaret had previously invited him to an interview at Brussels, which he had declined, because he had discovered a conspiracy in that place to “play him a trick.” Assonleville had already been sent to him without effect. He had refused to meet a deputation of Fleece Knights at Mechlin, from the same suspicion of foul play. After the termination of the Antwerp tumult, Orange again wrote to the Duchess, upon the 19th March, repeating his refusal to take the oath, and stating that he considered himself as at least suspended from all his functions, since she had refused, upon the ground of incapacity, to accept his formal resignation. Margaret now determined, by the advice of the state council, to send Secretary Berty, provided with an ample letter of instructions, upon a special mission to the Prince at Antwerp. That respectable functionary performed his task with credit, going through the usual formalities, and adducing the threadbare arguments in favor of the unlimited oath, with much adroitness and decorum. He mildly pointed out the impropriety of laying down such responsible posts as those which the Prince now occupied at such a juncture. He alluded to the distress which the step must occasion to the debonair sovereign.

William of Orange became somewhat impatient under the official lecture of this secretary to the privy council, a mere man of sealing-wax and protocols. The slender stock of platitudes with which he had come provided was soon exhausted. His arguments shrivelled at once in the scorn with which the Prince received them. The great statesman, who, it was hoped, would be entrapped to ruin, dishonor, and death by such very feeble artifices, asked indignantly whether it were really expected that he should acknowledge himself perjured to his old obligations by now signing new ones; that he should disgrace himself by an unlimited pledge which might require him to break his oaths to the provincial statutes and to the Emperor; that he should consent to administer the religious edicts which he abhorred; that he should act as executioner of Christians on account of their religious opinions, an office against which his soul revolted; that he should bind himself by an unlimited promise which might require, him to put his own wife to death, because she was a Lutheran? Moreover, was it to be supposed that he would obey without restriction any orders issued to him in his Majesty’s name, when the King’s representative might be a person whose supremacy it ill became one of his’ race to acknowledge? Was William of Orange to receive absolute commands from the Duke of Alva? Having mentioned that name with indignation, the Prince became silent.

It was very obvious that no impression was to be made upon the man by formalists. Poor Berty having conjugated his paradigm conscientiously through all its moods and tenses, returned to his green board in the council-room with his proces verbal of the conference. Before he took his leave, however, he prevailed upon Orange to hold an interview with the Duke of Aerschot, Count Mansfeld, and Count Egmont.

Page 433

This memorable meeting took place at Willebroek, a village midway between Antwerp and Brussels, in the first week of April. The Duke of Aerschot was prevented from attending, but Mansfeld and Egmont—accompanied by the faithful Berty, to make another proces verbal—duly made their appearance. The Prince had never felt much sympathy with Mansfeld, but a tender and honest friendship had always existed between himself and Egmont, notwithstanding the difference of their characters, the incessant artifices employed by the Spanish court to separate them, and the impassable chasm which now, existed between their respective positions towards the government.

The same common-places of argument and rhetoric were now discussed between Orange and the other three personages, the, Prince distinctly stating, in conclusion, that he considered himself as discharged from all his offices, and that he was about to leave the Netherlands for Germany. The interview, had it been confined to such formal conversation, would have but little historic interest. Egmont's choice had been made. Several months before he had signified his determination to hold those for enemies who should cease to conduct themselves as faithful vassals, declared himself to be without fear that the country was to be placed in the hands of Spaniards, and disavowed all intention, in any case whatever, of taking arms against the King. His subsequent course, as we have seen, had been entirely in conformity with these solemn declarations. Nevertheless, the Prince, to whom they had been made, thought it still possible to withdraw his friend from the precipice upon which he stood, and to save him from his impending fate. His love for Egmont had, in his own noble; and pathetic language, "struck its roots too deeply into his heart" to permit him, in this their parting interview, to neglect a last effort, even if this solemn warning were destined to be disregarded.

By any reasonable construction of history, Philip was an unscrupulous usurper, who was attempting to convert himself from a Duke of Brabant and a Count of Holland into an absolute king. It was William who was maintaining, Philip who was destroying; and the monarch who was thus blasting the happiness of the provinces, and about to decimate their population, was by the same process to undermine his own power forever, and to divest himself of his richest inheritance. The man on whom he might have leaned for support, had he been capable of comprehending his character, and of understanding the age in which he had himself been called upon to reign, was, through Philip's own insanity, converted into the instrument by which his most valuable provinces were, to be taken from him, and eventually re-organized into: an independent commonwealth. Could a vision, like that imagined by the immortal dramatist for another tyrant and murderer, have revealed the future to Philip, he, too, might have beheld his victim, not crowned himself, but pointing

Page 434

to a line of kings, even to some who ‘two-fold balls and treble sceptres carried’, and smiling on them for his. But such considerations as these had no effect upon the Prince of Orange. He knew himself already proscribed, and he knew that the secret condemnation had extended to Egmont also. He was anxious that his friend should prefer the privations of exile, with the chance of becoming the champion of a struggling country, to the wretched fate towards which his blind confidence was leading him. Even then it seemed possible that the brave soldier, who had been recently defiling his sword in the cause of tyranny, might be come mindful of his brighter and earlier fame. Had Egmont been as true to his native land as, until “the long divorce of steel fell on him,” he was faithful to Philip, he might yet have earned brighter laurels than those gained at St. Quentin and Gravelines. Was he doomed to fall, he might find a glorious death upon freedom’s battle-field, in place of that darker departure then so near him, which the prophetic language of Orange depicted, but which he was too sanguine to fear. He spoke with confidence of the royal clemency. “Alas, Egmont,” answered the Prince, “the King’s clemency, of which you boast, will destroy you. Would that I might be deceived, but I foresee too clearly that you are to be the bridge which the Spaniards will destroy so soon as they have passed over it to invade our country.” With these last, solemn words he concluded his appeal to awaken the Count from his fatal security. Then, as if persuaded that he was looking upon his friend for the last time, William of Orange threw his arms around Egmont, and held him for a moment in a close embrace. Tears fell from the eyes of both at this parting moment—and then the brief scene of simple and lofty pathos terminated—Egmont and Orange separated from each other, never to meet again on earth.

A few days afterwards, Orange addressed a letter to Philip once more resigning all his offices, and announcing his intention of departing from the Netherlands for Germany. He added, that he should be always ready to place himself and his property at the King’s orders in every thing which he believed conducive to the true service of his Majesty. The Prince had already received a remarkable warning from old Landgrave Philip of Hesse, who had not forgotten the insidious manner in which his own memorable captivity had been brought about by the arts of Granvelle and of Alva. “Let them not smear your mouths with honey,” said the Landgrave. “If the three seigniors, of whom the Duchess Margaret has had so much to say, are invited to court by Alva, under pretext of friendly consultation, let them be wary, and think twice ere they accept. I know the Duke of Alva and the Spaniards, and how they dealt with me.”

The Prince, before he departed, took a final leave of Horn and Egmont, by letters, which, as if aware of the monumental character they were to assume for posterity, he drew up in Latin. He desired, now that he was turning his back upon the country, that those two nobles who had refused to imitate, and had advised against his course, should remember that, he was acting deliberately, conscientiously, and in pursuance of a long-settled plan.

Page 435

To Count Horn he declared himself unable to connive longer at the sins daily committed against the country and his own conscience. He assured him that the government had been accustoming the country to panniers, in order that it might now accept patiently the saddle and bridle. For himself, he said, his back was not strong enough for the weight already imposed upon it, and he preferred to endure any calamity which might happen to him in exile, rather than be compelled by those whom they had all condemned to acquiesce in the object so long and steadily pursued.

He reminded Egmont, who had been urging him by letter to remain, that his resolution had been deliberately taken, and long since communicated to his friends. He could not, in conscience, take the oath required; nor would he, now that all eyes were turned upon him, remain in the land, the only recusant. He preferred to encounter all that could happen, rather than attempt to please others by the sacrifice of liberty, of his fatherland, of his own conscience. "I hope, therefore," said he to Egmont in conclusion, "that you, after weighing my reasons, will not disapprove my departure. The rest I leave to God, who will dispose of all as may most conduce to the glory of his name. For yourself, I pray you to believe that you have no more sincere friend than I am. My love for you has struck such deep root into my heart, that it can be lessened by no distance of time or place, and I pray you in return to maintain the same feelings towards me which you have always cherished."

The Prince had left Antwerp upon the 11th April, and had written these letters from Breda, upon the 13th of the same month. Upon the 22d, he took his departure for Dillenburg, the ancestral seat of his family in Germany, by the way of Grave and Cleves.

It was not to be supposed that this parting message would influence Egmont's decision with regard to his own movements, when his determination had not been shaken at his memorable interview with the Prince. The Count's fate was sealed. Had he not been praised by Noircarmes; had he not earned the hypocritical commendations of Duchess Margaret; nay more, had he not just received a most affectionate letter of, thanks and approbation from the King of Spain himself? This letter, one of the most striking monuments of Philip's cold-blooded perfidy, was dated the 26th of March. "I am pleased, my cousin," wrote the monarch to Egmont, "that you have taken the new oath, not that I considered it at all necessary so far as regards yourself, but for the example which you have thus given to others, and which I hope they will all follow. I have received not less pleasure in hearing of the excellent manner in which you are doing your duty, the assistance you are rendering, and the offers which you are making to my sister, for which I thank you, and request you to continue in the same course."

Page 436

The words were written by the royal hand which had already signed the death-warrant of the man to whom they were addressed. Alva, who came provided with full powers to carry out the great scheme resolved upon, unrestrained by provincial laws or by the statutes of the Golden Fleece, had left Madrid to embark for Carthagena, at the very moment when Egmont was reading the royal letter. "The Spanish honey," to use once more old Landgrave Philip's homely metaphor, had done its work, and the unfortunate victim was already entrapped.

Count Horn remained in gloomy silence in his lair at Weert, awaiting the hunters of men, already on their way. It seemed inconceivable that he, too, who knew himself suspected and disliked, should have thus blinded himself to his position. It will be seen, however, that the same perfidy was to be employed to ensnare him which proved so successful with Egmont.

As for the Prince himself, he did not move too soon. Not long after his arrival in Germany, Vandenesse, the King's private secretary, but Orange's secret agent, wrote him word that he had read letters from the King to Alva in which the Duke was instructed to "arrest the Prince as soon as he could lay hands upon him, and not to let his trial last more than twenty-four hours."

Brederode had remained at Viane, and afterwards at Amsterdam, since the ill-starred expedition of Tholouse, which he had organized, but at which he had not assisted. He had given much annoyance to the magistracy of Amsterdam, and to all respectable persons, Calvinist or Catholic. He made much mischief, but excited no hopes in the minds of reformers. He was ever surrounded by a host of pot companions, swaggering nobles disguised as sailors, bankrupt tradesmen, fugitives and outlaws of every description, excellent people to drink the beggars' health and to bawl the beggars' songs, but quite unfit for any serious enterprise. People of substance were wary of him, for they had no confidence in his capacity, and were afraid of his frequent demands for contributions to the patriotic cause. He spent his time in the pleasure gardens, shooting at the mark with arquebuss or crossbow, drinking with his comrades, and shrieking "Vivent les gueux."

The Regent, determined to dislodge him, had sent Secretary La Torre to him in March, with instructions that if Brederode refused to leave Amsterdam, the magistracy were to call for assistance upon Count Meghem, who had a regiment at Utrecht. This clause made it impossible for La Torre to exhibit his instructions to Brederode. Upon his refusal, that personage, although he knew the secretary as well as he knew his own father, coolly informed him that he knew nothing about him; that he did not consider him as respectable a person as he pretended to be; that he did not believe a word of his having any commission from the Duchess, and that he should therefore take no notice whatever of his demands. La Torre answered meekly, that

Page 437

he was not so presumptuous, nor so destitute of sense as to put himself into comparison with a, gentleman of Count Brederode's quality, but that as he had served as secretary to the privy council for twenty-three years, he had thought that he might be believed upon his word. Hereupon La Tome drew up a formal protest, and Brederode drew up another. La Torre made a proces verbal of their interview, while Brederode stormed like a madman, and abused the Duchess for a capricious and unreasonable tyrant. He ended by imprisoning La Torre for a day or two, and seizing his papers. By a singular coincidence, these events took place on the 13th, 24th, and 15th of March, the very days of the great Antwerp tumult. The manner in which the Prince of Orange had been dealing with forty or fifty thousand armed men, anxious to cut each other's throats, while Brederode was thus occupied in browbeating a pragmatical but decent old secretary, illustrated the difference in calibre of the two men.

This was the Count's last exploit. He remained at Amsterdam some weeks longer, but the events which succeeded changed the Hector into a faithful vassal. Before the 12th of April, he wrote to Egmont, begging his intercession with Margaret of Parma, and offering "carte blanche" as to terms, if he might only be allowed to make his peace with government. It was, however, somewhat late in the day for the "great beggar" to make his submission. No terms were accorded him, but he was allowed by the Duchess to enjoy his revenues provisionally, subject to the King's pleasure. Upon the 25th April, he entertained a select circle of friends at his hotel in Amsterdam, and then embarked at midnight for Embden. A numerous procession of his adherents escorted him to the ship, bearing lighted torches, and singing bacchanalian songs. He died within a year afterwards, of disappointment and hard drinking, at Castle Hardenberg, in Germany, after all his fretting and fury, and notwithstanding his vehement protestations to die a poor soldier at the feet of Louis Nassau.

That "good chevalier and good Christian," as his brother affectionately called him, was in Germany, girding himself for the manly work which Providence had destined him to perform. The life of Brederode, who had engaged in the early struggle, perhaps from the frivolous expectation of hearing himself called Count of Holland, as his ancestors had been, had contributed nothing to the cause of freedom, nor did his death occasion regret. His disorderly band of followers dispersed in every direction upon the departure of their chief. A vessel in which Batenburg, Galaina, and other nobles, with their men-at-arms, were escaping towards a German port, was carried into Harlingen, while those gentlemen, overpowered by sleep and wassail, were unaware of their danger, and delivered over to Count Meghem, by the treachery of their pilot. The soldiers, were immediately hanged. The noblemen were reserved to grace the first great scaffold which Alva was to erect upon the horse-market in Brussels.

Page 438

The confederacy was entirely broken to pieces. Of the chieftains to whom the people had been accustomed to look for support and encouragement, some had rallied to the government, some were in exile, some were in prison. Montigny, closely watched in Spain, was virtually a captive, pining for the young bride to whom he had been wedded amid such brilliant festivities but a few months before his departure, and for the child which was never to look upon its father's face.

His colleague, Marquis Berghen, more fortunate, was already dead. The excellent Viglius seized the opportunity to put in a good word for Noircarmes, who had been grinding Tournay in the dust, and butchering the inhabitants of Valenciennes. "We have heard of Berghen's death," wrote the President to his faithful Joachim. "The Lord of Noircarmes, who has been his substitute in the governorship of Hainault, has given a specimen of what he can do. Although I have no private intimacy with that nobleman, I can not help embracing him with all my benevolence. Therefore, oh my Hopper, pray do your best to have him appointed governor."

With the departure of Orange, a total eclipse seemed to come over the Netherlands. The country was absolutely helpless, the popular heart cold with apprehension. All persons at all implicated in the late troubles, or suspected of heresy, fled from their homes. Fugitive soldiers were hunted into rivers, cut to pieces in the fields, hanged, burned, or drowned, like dogs, without quarter, and without remorse. The most industrious and valuable part of the population left the land in droves. The tide swept outwards with such rapidity that the Netherlands seemed fast becoming the desolate waste which they had been before the Christian era. Throughout the country, those Reformers who were unable to effect their escape betook themselves to their old lurking-places. The new religion was banished from all the cities, every conventicle was broken up by armed men, the preachers and leading members were hanged, their disciples beaten with rods, reduced to beggary, or imprisoned, even if they sometimes escaped the scaffold. An incredible number, however, were executed for religious causes. Hardly a village so small, says the Antwerp chronicler,—[Meteren]—but that it could furnish one, two, or three hundred victims to the executioner. The new churches were levelled to the ground, and out of their timbers gallows were constructed. It was thought an ingenious pleasantry to hang the Reformers upon the beams under which they had hoped to worship God. The property of the fugitives was confiscated. The beggars in name became beggars in reality. Many who felt obliged to remain, and who loved their possessions better than their creed, were suddenly converted into the most zealous of Catholics. Persons who had for years not gone to mass, never omitted now their daily and nightly visits to the churches. Persons who had never spoken to an ecclesiastic but with contumely, now could not eat their dinners without one at their table. Many who were suspected of having participated in Calvinistic rites, were foremost and loudest in putting down and denouncing all forms and shows of the reformation. The country was as completely "pacified," to use the conqueror's expression, as Gaul had been by Caesar.

Page 439

The, Regent issued a fresh edict upon the 24th May, to refresh the memories of those who might have forgotten previous statutes, which were, however, not calculated to make men oblivious. By this new proclamation, all ministers and teachers were sentenced to the gallows. All persons who had suffered their houses to be used for religious purposes were sentenced to the gallows. All parents or masters whose children or servants had attended such meetings were sentenced to the gallows, while the children and servants were only to be beaten with rods. All people who sang hymns at the burial of their relations were sentenced to the gallows. Parents who allowed their newly-born children to be baptized by other hands than those of the Catholic priest were sentenced to the gallows. The same punishment was denounced against the persons who should christen the child or act as its sponsors. Schoolmasters who should teach any error or false doctrine were likewise to be punished with death. Those who infringed the statutes against the buying and selling of religious books and songs were to receive the same doom; after the first offence. All sneers or insults against priests and ecclesiastics were also made capital crimes. Vagabonds, fugitives; apostates, runaway monks, were ordered forthwith to depart from every city on pain of death. In all cases confiscation of the whole property of the criminal was added to the hanging.

This edict, says a contemporary historian, increased the fear of those professing the new religion to such an extent that they left the country “in great heaps.” It became necessary, therefore, to issue a subsequent proclamation forbidding all persons, whether foreigners or natives, to leave the land or to send away their property, and prohibiting all shipmasters, wagoners, and other agents of travel, from assisting in the flight of such fugitives, all upon pain of death.

Yet will it be credited that the edict of 24th May, the provisions of which have just been sketched, actually excited the wrath of Philip on account of their clemency? He wrote to the Duchess, expressing the pain and dissatisfaction which he felt, that an edict so indecent, so illegal, so contrary to the Christian religion, should have been published. Nothing, he said, could offend or distress him more deeply, than any outrage whatever, even the slightest one, offered to God and to His Roman Catholic Church. He therefore commanded his sister instantly to revoke the edict. One might almost imagine from reading the King’s letter that Philip was at last appalled at the horrors committed in his name. Alas, he was only indignant that heretics had been suffered to hang who ought to have been burned, and that a few narrow and almost impossible loopholes had been left through which those who had offended alight effect their escape.

Page 440

And thus, while the country is paralyzed with present and expected woe, the swiftly advancing trumpets of the Spanish army resound from beyond the Alps. The curtain is falling upon the prelude to the great tragedy which the prophetic lips of Orange had foretold. When it is again lifted, scenes of disaster and of bloodshed, battles, sieges, executions, deeds of unfaltering but valiant tyranny, of superhuman and successful resistance, of heroic self-sacrifice, fanatical courage and insane cruelty, both in the cause of the Wrong and the Right, will be revealed in awful succession—a spectacle of human energy, human suffering, and human strength to suffer, such as has not often been displayed upon the stage of the world's events.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

God Save the King! It was the last time
Having conjugated his paradigm conscientiously
Indignant that heretics had been suffered to hang
Insane cruelty, both in the cause of the Wrong and the Right
Sick and wounded wretches were burned over slow fires
Slender stock of platitudes
The time for reasoning had passed
Who loved their possessions better than their creed

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 14.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By *John Lothrop Motley*
1855

1567 [Part *iii*., *Alva*, *chapter* 1.]

Continued dissensions in the Spanish cabinet—Ruy Gomez and Alva— Conquest of the Netherlands entrusted to the Duke—Birth, previous career and character of Alva—-Organization of the invading army— Its march to the provinces—Complaints of Duchess Margaret—Alva receives deputations on the frontier—Interview between the Duke and Egmont—Reception of Alva by the Duchess of Parma—Circular letters to the cities requiring their acceptance of garrisons—Margaret's secret correspondence—Universal apprehension—Keys of the great cities demanded by Alva—Secret plans of the government, arranged before the Duke's departure—Arrest of Orange, Egmont, Horn, and others, determined upon—Stealthy course of the government towards them—-Infatuation of Egmont—Warnings addressed to him by De Billy and others—Measures to entrap Count Horn—Banquet of the Grand Prior—The Grand Prior's warning to Egmont—Evil counsels of Noircarmes—Arrests of Egmont, Horn, Bakkerzeel and

Straalen— Popular consternation—Petulant conduct of Duchess Margaret—Characteristic comments of Granvelle—His secret machinations and disclaimers—-Berghen and Montigny—Last moments of Marquis Berghen— Perfidy of Ruy Gomez—-Establishment of the “Blood-Council”—Its leading features—Insidious behavior of Viglius—Secret correspondence, concerning the President, between Philip and Alva—Members of the “Blood-Council”—Portraits of Vargas and Hessels— Mode of proceeding

Page 441

adopted by the council—Wholesale executions— Despair in the provinces—The resignation of Duchess Margaret accepted—Her departure from the Netherlands—-Renewed civil war in France—Death of Montmorency—Auxiliary troops sent by Alva to France—Erection of Antwerp citadel—Description of the citadel.

The armed invasion of the Netherlands was the necessary consequence of all which had gone before. That the inevitable result had been so long deferred lay rather in the incomprehensible tardiness of Philip's character than in the circumstances of the case. Never did a monarch hold so steadfastly to a deadly purpose, or proceed so languidly and with so much circumvolution to his goal. The mask of benignity, of possible clemency, was now thrown off, but the delusion of his intended visit to the provinces was still maintained. He assured the Regent that he should be governed by her advice, and as she had made all needful preparations to receive him in Zeland, that it would be in Zeland he should arrive.

The same two men among Philip's advisers were prominent as at an earlier day—the Prince of Eboli and the Duke of Alva. They still represented entirely opposite ideas, and in character, temper, and history, each was the reverse of the other. The policy of the Prince was pacific and temporizing; that of the Duke uncompromising and ferocious. Ruy Gomez was disposed to prevent, if possible, the armed mission of Alva, and he now openly counselled the King to fulfil his long-deferred promise, and to make his appearance in person before his rebellious subjects. The jealousy and hatred which existed between the Prince and the Duke—between the man of peace and the man of wrath—were constantly exploding, even in the presence of the King. The wrangling in the council was incessant. Determined, if possible; to prevent the elevation of his rival, the favorite was even for a moment disposed to ask for the command of the army himself. There was something ludicrous in the notion, that a man whose life had been pacific, and who trembled at the noise of arms, should seek to supersede the terrible Alva, of whom his eulogists asserted, with, Castilian exaggeration, that the very name of fear inspired him with horror. But there was a limit beyond which the influence of Anna de Mendoza and her husband did not extend. Philip was not to be driven to the Netherlands against his will, nor to be prevented from assigning the command of the army to the most appropriate man in Europe for his purpose.

It was determined at last that the Netherland heresy should be conquered by force of arms. The invasion resembled both a crusade against the infidel, and a treasure-hunting foray into the auriferous Indies, achievements by which Spanish chivalry had so often illustrated itself. The banner of the cross was to be replanted upon the conquered battlements of three hundred infidel cities, and a torrent of wealth, richer than ever flowed from Mexican or Peruvian mines,

Page 442

was to flow into the royal treasury from the perennial fountains of confiscation. Who so fit to be the Tancred and the Pizarro of this bicolored expedition as the Duke of Alva, the man who had been devoted from his earliest childhood, and from his father's grave, to hostility against unbelievers, and who had prophesied that treasure would flow in a stream, a yard deep, from the Netherlands as soon as the heretics began to meet with their deserts. An army of chosen troops was forthwith collected, by taking the four legions, or terzios, of Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, and Lombardy, and filling their places in Italy by fresh levies. About ten thousand picked and veteran soldiers were thus obtained, of which the Duke of Alva was appointed general-in-chief.

Ferdinando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva, was now in his sixtieth year. He was the most successful and experienced general of Spain, or of Europe. No man had studied more deeply, or practised more constantly, the military science. In the most important of all arts at that epoch he was the most consummate artist. In the only honorable profession of the age, he was the most thorough and the most pedantic professor. Since the days of Demetrius Poliorcetes, no man had besieged so many cities. Since the days of Fabius Cunctator; no general had avoided so many battles, and no soldier, courageous as he was, ever attained to a more sublime indifference to calumny or depreciation. Having proved in his boyhood, at Fontarabia, and in his maturity: at Muhlberg, that he could exhibit heroism and headlong courage; when necessary, he could afford to look with contempt upon the witless gibes which his enemies had occasionally perpetrated at his expense. Conscious of holding his armies in his hand, by the power of an unrivalled discipline, and the magic of a name illustrated by a hundred triumphs, he, could bear with patience and benevolence the murmurs of his soldiers when their battles were denied them.

He was born in 1508, of a family which boasted, imperial descent. A Palaeologus, brother of a Byzantine emperor, had conquered the city of Toledo, and transmitted its appellation as a family name. The father of Ferdinando, Don Garcia, had been slain on the isle of Gerbes, in battle with the Moors, when his son was but four years of age. The child was brought up by his grandfather, Don Frederic, and trained from his tenderest infancy to arms. Hatred to the infidel, and a determination to avenge his father's blood; crying to him from a foreign grave, were the earliest of his instincts. As a youth he was distinguished for his prowess. His maiden sword was fleshed at Fontarabia, where, although but sixteen years of age, he was considered, by his constancy in hardship, by his brilliant and desperate courage, and by the example of military discipline which he afforded to the troops, to have contributed in no small degree to the success of the Spanish arms.

Page 443

In 1530, he accompanied the Emperor in his campaign against the Turk. Charles, instinctively recognizing the merit of the youth who was destined to be the life-long companion of his toils and glories, distinguished him with his favor at the opening of his career. Young, brave, and enthusiastic, Ferdinand de Toledo at this period was as interesting a hero as ever illustrated the pages of Castilian romance. His mad ride from Hungary to Spain and back again, accomplished in seventeen days, for the sake of a brief visit to his newly-married wife, is not the least attractive episode in the history of an existence which was destined to be so dark and sanguinary. In 1535, he accompanied the Emperor on his memorable expedition to Tunis. In 1546 and 1547 he was generalissimo in the war against the Smalcaldian league. His most brilliant feat of arms-perhaps the most brilliant exploit of the Emperor's reign—was the passage of the Elbe and the battle of Muhlberg, accomplished in spite of Maximilian's bitter and violent reproaches, and the tremendous possibilities of a defeat. That battle had finished the war. The gigantic and magnanimous John Frederic, surprised at his devotions in the church, fled in dismay, leaving his boots behind him, which for their superhuman size, were ridiculously said afterwards to be treasured among the trophies of the Toledo house.

[Hist. du Due d'Albe, i. 274. Brantome, Hom. Illust., *etc*. (ch. v.), says that one of the boots was "large enough to hold a camp bedstead," p. 11. I insert the anecdote only as a specimen of the manner in which similar absurdities, both of great and, of little consequence, are perpetuated by writers in every land and age. The armor of the noble-hearted and unfortunate John Frederic may still be seen in Dresden. Its size indicates a man very much above the average height, while the external length of the iron shoe, on-the contrary, is less than eleven inches.]

The rout was total. "I came, I saw, and God conquered," said the Emperor, in pious parody of his immortal predecessor's epigram. Maximilian, with a thousand apologies for his previous insults, embraced the heroic Don Ferdinand over and over again, as, arrayed in a plain suit of blue armor, unadorned save with streaks of his enemies' blood, he returned from pursuit of the fugitives. So complete and so sudden was the victory, that it was found impossible to account for it, save on the ground of miraculous interposition. Like Joshua, in the vale of Ajalon, Don Ferdinand was supposed to have commanded the sun to stand still for a season, and to have been obeyed. Otherwise, how could the passage of the river, which was only concluded at six in the evening, and the complete overthrow of the Protestant forces, have all been accomplished within the narrow space of an April twilight? The reply of the Duke to Henry the Second of France, who questioned him subsequently upon the subject, is well known. "Your Majesty, I was too much

Page 444

occupied that evening with what was taking place on the earth beneath, to pay much heed to the evolutions of the heavenly bodies." Spared as he had been by his good fortune from taking any part in the Algerine expedition, or in witnessing the ignominious retreat from Innspruck, he was obliged to submit to the intercalation of the disastrous siege of Metz in the long history of his successes. Doing the duty of a field-marshal and a sentinel, supporting his army by his firmness and his discipline when nothing else could have supported them, he was at last enabled, after half the hundred thousand men with whom Charles had begun the siege had been sacrificed, to induce his imperial master to raise the siege before the remaining fifty thousand had been frozen or starved to death.

The culminating career of Alva seemed to have closed in the mist which gathered around the setting star of the empire. Having accompanied Philip to England in 1554, on his matrimonial-expedition, he was destined in the following years, as viceroy and generalissimo of Italy, to be placed in a series of false positions. A great captain engaged in a little war, the champion of the cross in arms against the successor of St. Peter, he had extricated himself, at last, with his usual adroitness, but with very little glory. To him had been allotted the mortification, to another the triumph. The lustre of his own name seemed to sink in the ocean while that of a hated rival, with new spangled ore, suddenly "flamed in the forehead of the morning sky." While he had been paltering with a dotard, whom he was forbidden to crush, Egmont had struck down the chosen troops of France, and conquered her most illustrious commanders. Here was the unpardonable crime which could only be expiated by the blood of the victor. Unfortunately for his rival, the time was now approaching when the long-deferred revenge was to be satisfied.

On the whole, the Duke of Alva was inferior to no general of his age. As a disciplinarian he was foremost in Spain, perhaps in Europe. A spendthrift of time, he was an economist of blood, and this was, perhaps, in the eye of humanity, his principal virtue. Time and myself are two, was a frequent observation of Philip, and his favorite general considered the maxim as applicable to war as to politics. Such were his qualities as a military commander. As a statesman, he had neither experience nor talent. As a man his character was simple. He did not combine a great variety of vices, but those which he had were colossal, and he possessed no virtues. He was neither lustful nor intemperate, but his professed eulogists admitted his enormous avarice, while the world has agreed that such an amount of stealth and ferocity, of patient vindictiveness and universal bloodthirstiness, were never found in a savage beast of the forest, and but rarely in a human bosom. His history was now to show that his previous thrift of human life was not derived from any love of his

Page 445

kind. Personally he was stern and overbearing. As difficult of access as Philip himself, he was even more haughty to those who were admitted to his presence. He addressed every one with the depreciating second person plural. Possessing the right of being covered in the presence of the Spanish monarch, he had been with difficulty brought to renounce it before the German Emperor. He was of an illustrious family; but his territorial possessions were not extensive. His duchy was a small one, furnishing him with not more than fourteen thousand crowns of annual income, and with four hundred soldiers. He had, however, been a thrifty financier all his life, never having been without a handsome sum of ready money at interest. Ten years before his arrival in the Netherlands, he was supposed to have already increased his income to forty thousand a year by the proceeds of his investments at Antwerp. As already intimated, his military character was sometimes profoundly misunderstood. He was often considered rather a pedantic than a practical commander, more capable to discourse of battles than to gain them. Notwithstanding that his long life had been an, almost unbroken campaign, the ridiculous accusation of timidity was frequently made against him. A gentleman at the court of the Emperor Charles once addressed a letter to the Duke with the title of "General of his Majesty's armies in the Duchy of Milan in time of peace, and major-domo of the household in the time of war." It was said that the lesson did the Duke good, but that he rewarded very badly the nobleman who gave it, having subsequently caused his head to be taken off. In general, however, Alva manifested a philosophical contempt for the opinions expressed concerning his military fame, and was especially disdainful of criticism expressed by his own soldiers. "Recollect," said he, at a little later period, to Don John of Austria, "that the first foes with whom one has to contend are one's own troops; with their clamors for an engagement at this moment, and—their murmurs, about results at another; with their 'I thought that the battle should be fought;' or, 'it was my, opinion that the occasion ought not to be lost.' Your highness will have opportunity enough to display valor, and will never be weak enough to be conquered by the babble of soldiers."

In person he was tall, thin, erect, with a small head, a long visage, lean yellow cheek, dark twinkling eyes, a dust complexion, black bristling hair, and a long sable-silvered beard, descending in two waving streams upon his breast.

Such being the design, the machinery was well selected. The best man in Europe to lead the invading force was placed at the head of ten thousand picked veterans. The privates in this exquisite little army, said the enthusiastic connoisseur Brantome, who travelled post into Lorraine expressly to see them on their march, all wore engraved or gilded armor, and were in every respect equipped like captains. They were the

Page 446

first who carried muskets, a weapon which very much astonished the Flemings when it first rattled in their ears. The musketeers, he observed, might have been mistaken, for princes, with such agreeable and graceful arrogance did they present themselves. Each was attended by his servant or esquire, who carried his piece for him, except in battle, and all were treated with extreme deference by the rest of the army, as if they had been officers. The four regiments of Lombardy, Sardinia, Sicily, and Naples, composed a total of not quite nine thousand of the best foot soldiers in Europe. They were commanded respectively by Don Sancho de Lodiono, Don Gonzalo de Bracamonte, Julien Romero, and Alfonso de Ulloa, all distinguished and experienced generals. The cavalry, amounting to about twelve hundred; was under the command of the natural son of the Duke, Don Ferdinando de Toledo, Prior of the Knights of St. John. Chiapin Vitelli, Marquis of Cetona, who had served the King in many a campaign, was appointed Marechal de camp, and Gabriel Cerbelloni was placed in command of the artillery. On the way the Duke received, as a present from the Duke of Savoy, the services of the distinguished engineer, Pacheco, or Paciotti, whose name was to be associated with the most celebrated citadel of the Netherlands; and whose dreadful fate was to be contemporaneous with the earliest successes of the liberal party.

With an army thus perfect, on a small scale, in all its departments, and furnished, in addition, with a force of two thousand prostitutes, as regularly enrolled, disciplined, and distributed as the cavalry or the artillery, the Duke embarked upon his momentous enterprise, on the 10th of May, at Carthagena. Thirty-seven galleys, under command of Prince Andrea Doria, brought the principal part of the force to Genoa, the Duke being delayed a few days at Nice by an attack of fever. On the 2d of June, the army was mustered at Alexandria de Palla, and ordered to rendezvous again at San Ambrosio at the foot of the Alps. It was then directed to make its way over Mount Cenis and through Savoy; Burgundy, and Lorraine, by a regularly arranged triple movement. The second division was each night to encamp on the spot which had been occupied upon the previous night by the vanguard, and the rear was to place itself on the following night in the camp of the corps de bataille. Thus coiling itself along almost in a single line by slow and serpentine windings, with a deliberate, deadly, venomous purpose, this army, which was to be the instrument of Philip’s long deferred vengeance, stole through narrow mountain pass and tangled forest. So close and intricate were many of the defiles through which the journey led them that, had one tithe of the treason which they came to punish, ever existed, save in the diseased imagination of their monarch, not one man would have been left to tell the tale. Egmont, had he really been the traitor and the conspirator he was assumed to be, might have easily organized the means of cutting off the troops before they could have effected their entrance into the country which they had doomed to destruction. His military experience, his qualifications for a daring stroke, his great popularity, and the intense hatred entertained for Alva, would have furnished him with a sufficient machinery for the purpose.

Page 447

Twelve days' march carried the army through Burgundy, twelve more through Lorraine. During the whole of the journey they were closely accompanied by a force of cavalry and infantry, ordered upon this service by the King of France, who, for fear of exciting a fresh Huguenot demonstration, had refused the Spaniards a passage through his dominions. This reconnoitring army kept pace with them like their shadow, and watched all their movements. A force of six thousand Swiss, equally alarmed and uneasy at the progress of the troops, hovered likewise about their flanks, without, however, offering any impediment to their advance. Before the middle of August they had reached Thionville, on the Luxemburg frontier, having on the last day marched a distance of two leagues through a forest, which seemed expressly arranged to allow a small defensive force to embarrass and destroy an invading army. No opposition, however, was attempted, and the Spanish soldiers encamped at last within the territory of the Netherlands, having accomplished their adventurous journey in entire safety, and under perfect discipline.

The Duchess had in her secret letters to Philip continued to express her disapprobation of the enterprise thus committed to Alva, She had bitterly complained that now when the country had been pacified by her efforts, another should be sent to reap all the glory, or perhaps to undo all that she had so painfully and so successfully done. She stated to her brother, in most unequivocal language, that the name of Alva was odious enough to make the whole Spanish nation detested in the Netherlands. She could find no language sufficiently strong to express her surprise that the King should have decided upon a measure likely to be attended with such fatal consequences without consulting her on the subject, and in opposition to what had been her uniform advice. She also wrote personally to Alva, imploring, commanding, and threatening, but with equally ill success. The Duke knew too well who was sovereign of the Netherlands now; his master's sister or himself. As to the effects of his armed invasion upon the temper of the provinces, he was supremely indifferent. He came as a conqueror not as a mediator. "I have tamed people of iron in my day," said he, contemptuously, "shall I not easily crush these men of butter?"

At Thionville he was, however, officially waited upon by Berlaymont and Noircarmes, on the part of the Regent. He at this point, moreover, began to receive deputations from various cities, bidding him a hollow and trembling welcome, and deprecating his displeasure for any thing in the past which might seem offensive. To all such embassies he replied in vague and conventional language; saying, however, to his confidential attendants: I am here, so much is certain, whether I am welcome or not is to me a matter of little consequence. At Tirlemont, on the 22d August, he was met by Count Egmont, who had ridden forth from Brussels to show

Page 448

him a becoming respect, as the representative of his sovereign, The Count was accompanied by several other noblemen, and brought to the Duke a present of several beautiful horses. Alva received him, however, but coldly, for he was unable at first to adjust the mask to his countenance as adroitly as was necessary. Behold the greatest of all the heretics, he observed to his attendants, as soon as the nobleman's presence was announced, and in a voice loud enough for him to hear.

Even after they had exchanged salutations, he addressed several remarks to him in a half jesting, half biting tone, saying among other things, that his countship might have spared him the trouble of making this long journey in his old age. There were other observations in a similar strain which might have well aroused the suspicion of any man not determined, like Egmont, to continue blind and deaf. After a brief interval, however, Alva seems to have commanded himself. He passed his arm lovingly over that stately neck, which he had already devoted to the block, and the Count having resolved beforehand to place himself, if possible, upon amicable terms with the new Viceroy—the two rode along side by side in friendly conversation, followed by the regiment of infantry and three companies of light horse, which belonged to the Duke's immediate command. Alva, still attended by Egmont, rode soon afterwards through the Louvain gate into Brussels, where they separated for a season. Lodgings had been taken for the Duke at the house of a certain Madame de Jasse, in the neighborhood of Egmont's palace. Leaving here the principal portion of his attendants, the Captain-General, without alighting, forthwith proceeded to the palace to pay his respects to the Duchess of Parma.

For three days the Regent had been deliberating with her council as to the propriety of declining any visit from the man whose presence she justly considered a disgrace and an insult to herself. This being the reward of her eight years' devotion to her brother's commands; to be superseded by a subject, and one too who came to carry out a policy which she had urgently deprecated, it could hardly be expected of the Emperor's daughter that she should graciously submit to the indignity, and receive her successor with a smiling countenance. In consequence, however, of the submissive language with which the Duke had addressed her in his recent communications, offering with true Castilian but empty courtesy, to place his guards, his army, and himself at her feet, she had consented to receive his visit with or without his attendants.

Page 449

On his appearance in the court-yard, a scene of violent altercation and almost of bloodshed took place between his body-guard and the archers of the Regent's household, who were at last, with difficulty, persuaded to allow the mercenaries of the hated Captain-General to pass. Presenting himself at three o'clock in the afternoon, after these not very satisfactory preliminaries, in the bedchamber of the Duchess, where it was her habit to grant confidential audiences, he met, as might easily be supposed, with a chilling reception: The Duchess, standing motionless in the centre of the apartment, attended by Berlaymont, the Duke of Aerachot, and Count Egmont, acknowledged his salutations with calm severity. Neither she nor any one of her attendants advanced a step to meet him. The Duke took off his hat, but she, calmly recognizing his right as a Spanish grandee, insisted upon his remaining covered. A stiff and formal conversation of half an hour's duration then ensued, all parties remaining upon their feet. The Duke, although respectful; found it difficult to conceal his indignation and his haughty sense of approaching triumph. Margaret was cold, stately, and forbidding, disguising her rage and her mortification under a veil of imperial pride. Alva, in a letter to Philip, describing the interview, assured his Majesty that he had treated the Duchess with as much deference as he could have shown to the Queen, but it is probable, from other contemporaneous accounts, that an ill-disguised and even angry arrogance was at times very visible in his demeanor. The state council had advised the Duchess against receiving him until he had duly exhibited his powers. This ceremony had been waived, but upon being questioned by the Duchess at this interview as to their nature and extent, he is reported to have coolly answered that he really did not exactly remember, but that he would look them over, and send her information at his earliest convenience.

The next day, however, his commission was duly exhibited.

In this document, which bore date 31st January, 1567, Philip appointed him to be Captain-General "in correspondence with his Majesty's dear sister of Parma, who was occupied with other matters belonging to the government," begged the Duchess to co-operate with him and to command obedience for him, and ordered all the cities of the Netherlands to receive such garrisons as he should direct.

At the official interview between Alva and Madame de Parma, at which these powers were produced, the necessary preliminary arrangements were made regarding the Spanish troops, which were now to be immediately quartered in the principal cities. The Duke, however, informed the Regent that as these matters were not within her province, he should take the liberty of arranging them with the authorities, without troubling her in the matter, and would inform her of the result of his measures at their next interview, which was to take place on the 26th August.

Page 450

Circular letters signed by Philip, which Alva had brought with him, were now despatched to the different municipal bodies of the country. In these the cities were severally commanded to accept the garrisons, and to provide for the armies whose active services the King hoped would not be required, but which he had sent beforehand to prepare a peaceful entrance for himself. He enjoined the most absolute obedience to the Duke of Alva until his own arrival, which was to be almost immediate. These letters were dated at Madrid on the 28th February, and were now accompanied by a brief official circular, signed by Margaret of Parma, in which she announced the arrival of her dear cousin of Alva, and demanded unconditional submission to his authority.

Having thus complied with these demands of external and conventional propriety, the indignant Duchess unbosomed herself, in her private Italian letters to her brother, of the rage which had been hitherto partially suppressed. She reiterated her profound regret that Philip had not yet accepted the resignation which she had so recently and so earnestly offered. She disclaimed all jealousy of the supreme powers now conferred upon Alva, but thought that his Majesty might have allowed her to leave the country before the Duke arrived with an authority which was so extraordinary, as well as so humiliating to herself. Her honor might thus have been saved. She was pained to perceive that she was like to furnish a perpetual example to all others, who considering the manner in which she had been treated by the King, would henceforth have but little inducement to do their duty. At no time, on no occasion, could any person ever render him such services as hers had been. For nine years she had enjoyed not a moment of repose. If the King had shown her but little gratitude, she was consoled by the thought that she had satisfied her God, herself, and the world. She had compromised her health, perhaps her life, and now that she had pacified the country, now that the King was more absolute, more powerful than ever before, another was sent to enjoy the fruit of her labors and her sufferings.

The Duchess made no secret of her indignation at being thus superseded and as she considered the matter, outraged. She openly avowed her displeasure. She was at times almost beside herself with rage. There was universal sympathy with her emotions, for all hated the Duke, and shuddered at the arrival of the Spaniards. The day of doom for all the crimes which had ever been committed in the course of ages, seemed now to have dawned upon the Netherlands. The sword which had so long been hanging over them, seemed now about to descend. Throughout the provinces, there was but one feeling of cold and hopeless dismay. Those who still saw a possibility of effecting their escape from the fated land, swarmed across the frontier. All foreign merchants deserted the great marts. The cities became as still as if the plague-banner had been unfurled on every house-top.

Page 451

Meantime the Captain-General proceeded methodically with his work. He distributed his troops through Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp, and other principal cities. As a measure of necessity and mark of the last humiliation, he required the municipalities to transfer their keys to his keeping. The magistrates of Ghent humbly remonstrated against the indignity, and Egmont was imprudent enough to make himself the mouth-piece of their remonstrance, which, it is needless to add, was unsuccessful. Meantime his own day of reckoning had arrived.

As already observed, the advent of Alva at the head of a foreign army was the natural consequence of all which had gone before. The delusion of the royal visit was still maintained, and the affectation of a possible clemency still displayed, while the monarch sat quietly in his cabinet without a remote intention of leaving Spain, and while the messengers of his accumulated and long-concealed wrath were already descending upon their prey. It was the deliberate intention of Philip, when the Duke was despatched to the Netherlands, that all the leaders of the anti-inquisition party, and all who had, at any time or in any way, implicated themselves in opposition to the government, or in censure of its proceedings, should be put to death. It was determined that the provinces should be subjugated to the absolute domination of the council of Spain, a small body of foreigners sitting at the other end of Europe, a junta in which Netherlanders were to have no voice and exercise no influence. The despotic government of the Spanish and Italian possessions was to be extended to these Flemish territories, which were thus to be converted into the helpless dependencies of a foreign and an absolute crown. There was to be a re-organization of the inquisition, upon the same footing claimed for it before the outbreak of the troubles, together with a re-enactment and vigorous enforcement of the famous edicts against heresy.

Such was the scheme recommended by Granvelle and Espinosa, and to be executed by Alva. As part and parcel of this plan, it was also arranged at secret meetings at the house of Espinosa, before the departure of the Duke, that all the seigniors against whom the Duchess Margaret had made so many complaints, especially the Prince of Orange, with the Counts Egmont, Horn, and Hoogstraaten, should be immediately arrested and brought to chastisement. The Marquis Berghen and the Baron Montigny, being already in Spain, could be dealt with at pleasure. It was also decided that the gentlemen implicated in the confederacy or compromise, should at once be proceeded against for high treason, without any regard to the promise of pardon granted by the Duchess.

Page 452

The general features of the great project having been thus mapped out, a few indispensable preliminaries were at once executed. In order that Egmont, Horn, and other distinguished victims might not take alarm, and thus escape the doom deliberately arranged for them, royal assurances were despatched to the Netherlands, cheering their despondency and dispelling their doubts. With his own hand Philip wrote the letter, full of affection and confidence, to Egmont, to which allusion has already been made. He wrote it after Alva had left Madrid upon his mission of vengeance. The same stealthy measures were pursued with regard to others. The Prince of Orange was not capable of falling into the royal trap, however cautiously baited. Unfortunately he could not communicate his wisdom to his friends.

It is difficult to comprehend so very sanguine a temperament as that to which Egmont owed his destruction. It was not the Prince of Orange alone who had prophesied his doom. Warnings had come to the Count from every quarter, and they were now frequently repeated. Certainly he was not without anxiety, but he had made his decision; determined to believe in the royal word, and in the royal gratitude for his services rendered, not only against Montmorency and De Thermes, but against the heretics of Flanders. He was, however, much changed. He had grown prematurely old. At forty-six years his hair was white, and he never slept without pistols under his pillow. Nevertheless he affected, and sometimes felt, a light-heartedness which surprised all around him. The Portuguese gentleman Robles, Seigneur de Billy, who had returned early in the summer from Spain; whither he had been sent upon a confidential mission by Madame de Parma, is said to have made repeated communications to Egmont as to the dangerous position in which he stood. Immediately after his arrival in Brussels he had visited the Count, then confined to his house by an injury caused by the fall of his horse. “Take care to get well very fast,” said De Billy, “for there are very bad stories told about you in Spain.” Egmont laughed heartily at the observation, as if, nothing could well be more absurd than such a warning. His friend—for De Billy is said to have felt a real attachment to the Count—-persisted in his prophecies, telling him that “birds in the field sang much more sweetly than those in cages,” and that he would do well to abandon the country before the arrival of Alva.

These warnings were repeated almost daily by the same gentleman, and by others, who were more and more astonished at Egmont’s infatuation. Nevertheless, he had disregarded their admonitions, and had gone forth to meet the Duke at Tirlemont. Even then he might have seen, in the coldness of his first reception, and in the disrespectful manner of the Spanish soldiers, who not only did not at first salute him, but who murmured audibly that he was a Lutheran and traitor, that he was not so great a favorite with the government at Madrid as he desired to be.

Page 453

After the first few moments, however, Alva's manner had changed, while Chiappin Vitelli, Gabriel de Serbelloni, and other principal officers, received the Count with great courtesy, even upon his first appearance. The grand prior, Ferdinando de Toledo, natural son of the Duke, and already a distinguished soldier, seems to have felt a warm and unaffected friendship for Egmont, whose brilliant exploits in the field had excited his youthful admiration, and of whose destruction he was, nevertheless, compelled to be the unwilling instrument. For a few days, accordingly, after the arrival of the new Governor-General all seemed to be going smoothly. The grand prior and Egmont became exceedingly intimate, passing their time together in banquets, masquerades, and play, as joyously as if the merry days which had succeeded the treaty of Cateau Cambreais were returned. The Duke, too, manifested the most friendly dispositions, taking care to send him large presents of Spanish and Italian fruits, received frequently by the government couriers.

Lapped in this fatal security, Egmont not only forgot his fears, but unfortunately succeeded in inspiring Count Horn with a portion of his confidence. That gentleman had still remained in his solitary mansion at Weert, notwithstanding the artful means which had been used to lure him from that "desert." It is singular that the very same person who, according to a well-informed Catholic contemporary, had been most eager to warn Egmont of his danger, had also been the foremost instrument for effecting the capture of the Admiral. The Seigneur de Billy, on the day after his arrival from Madrid, had written to Horn, telling him that the King was highly pleased with his services and character. De Billy also stated that he had been commissioned by Philip to express distinctly the royal gratitude for the Count's conduct, adding that his Majesty was about to visit the Netherlands in August, and would probably be preceded or accompanied by Baron Montigny.

Alva and his son Don Ferdinando had soon afterwards addressed letters from Gerverbiller (dated 26th and 27th July) to Count Horn, filled with expressions of friendship and confidence. The Admiral, who had sent one of his gentlemen to greet the Duke, now responded from Weert that he was very sensible of the kindness manifested towards him, but that for reasons which his secretary Alonzo de la Loo would more fully communicate, he must for the present beg to be excused from a personal visit to Brussels. The secretary was received by Alva with extreme courtesy. The Duke expressed infinite pain that the King had not yet rewarded Count Horn's services according to their merit, said that a year before he had told his brother Montigny how very much he was the Admiral's friend, and begged La Loo to tell his master that he should not doubt the royal generosity and gratitude. The governor added, that if he could see the Count in person he could tell him things which would please

Page 454

him, and which would prove that he had not been forgotten by his friends. La Loo had afterward a long conversation with the Duke's secretary Albornoz, who assured him that his master had the greatest affection for Count Horn, and that since his affairs were so much embarrassed, he might easily be provided with the post of governor at Milan, or viceroy of Naples, about to become vacant. The secretary added, that the Duke was much hurt at receiving no visits from many distinguished nobles whose faithful friend and servant he was, and that Count Horn ought to visit Brussels, if not to treat of great affairs, at least to visit the Captain-General as a friend. "After all this," said honest Alonzo, "I am going immediately to Weert, to urge his lordship to yield to the Duke's desires."

This scientific manoeuvring, joined to the urgent representations of Egmont, at last produced its effect. The Admiral left his retirement at Weert to fall into the pit which his enemies had been so skilfully preparing at Brussels. On the night of the 8th September, Egmont received another most significative and mysterious warning. A Spaniard, apparently an officer of rank, came secretly into his house, and urged him solemnly to effect his escape before the morrow. The Countess, who related the story afterwards, always believed, without being certain, that the mysterious visitor was Julian Romero, marechal de camp. Egmont, however, continued as blindly confident as before.

On the following day, September 9th, the grand prior, Don Ferdinando, gave a magnificent dinner, to which Egmont and Horn, together with Noircarmes, the Viscount of Ghent, and many other noblemen were invited. The banquet was enlivened by the music of Alva's own military band, which the Duke sent to entertain the company. At three o'clock he sent a message begging the gentlemen, after their dinner should be concluded, to favor him with their company at his house (the maison de Jassey), as he wished to consult them concerning the plan of the citadel, which he proposed erecting at Antwerp.

At this moment, the grand prior who was seated next to Egmont, whispered in his ear; "Leave this place, Signor Count, instantly; take the fleetest horse in your stable and make your escape without a moment's delay." Egmont, much troubled, and remembering the manifold prophecies and admonitions which he had passed by unheeded, rose from the table and went into the next room. He was followed by Noircarmes and two other gentlemen, who had observed his agitation, and were curious as to its cause. The Count repeated to them the mysterious words just whispered to him by the grand prior, adding that he was determined to take the advice without a moment's delay. "Ha! Count," exclaimed Noircarmes, "do not put lightly such implicit confidence in this stranger who is counselling you to your destruction. What will the Duke of Alva and all the Spaniards say of such a precipitate flight? Will they not say that your Excellency has fled from the consciousness of guilt? Will not your escape be construed into a confession of high treason."

Page 455

If these words were really spoken by Noircarmes; and that they were so, we have the testimony of a Walloon gentleman in constant communication with Egmont's friends and with the whole Catholic party, they furnish another proof of the malignant and cruel character of the man. The advice fixed forever the fate of the vacillating Egmont. He had risen from table determined to take the advice of a noble-minded Spaniard, who had adventured his life to save his friend. He now returned in obedience to the counsel of a fellow-countryman, a Flemish noble, to treat the well-meant warning with indifference, and to seat himself again at the last banquet which he was ever to grace with his presence.

At four o'clock, the dinner being finished, Horn and Egmont, accompanied by the other gentlemen, proceeded to the "Jassy" house, then occupied by Alva, to take part in the deliberations proposed. They were received by the Duke with great courtesy. The engineer, Pietro Urbino, soon appeared and laid upon the table a large parchment containing the plan and elevation of the citadel to be erected at Antwerp. A warm discussion upon the subject soon arose, Egmont, Horn, Noircarmes and others, together with the engineers Urbino and Pacheco, all taking part in the debate. After a short time, the Duke of Alva left the apartment, on pretext of a sudden indisposition, leaving the company still warmly engaged in their argument. The council lasted till near seven in the evening. As it broke up, Don Sancho d'Avila, captain of the Duke's guard, requested Egmont to remain for a moment after the rest, as he had a communication to make to him. After an insignificant remark or two, the Spanish officer, as soon as the two were alone, requested Egmont to surrender his sword. The Count, agitated, and notwithstanding every thing which had gone before, still taken by surprise, scarcely knew what reply to make. Don Sancho repeated that he had been commissioned to arrest him, and again demanded his sword. At the same moment the doors of the adjacent apartment were opened, and Egmont saw himself surrounded by a company of Spanish musqueteers and halberdmen. Finding himself thus entrapped, he gave up his sword, saying bitterly, as he did so, that it had at least rendered some service to the King in times which were past. He was then conducted to a chamber, in the upper story of the house, where his temporary prison had been arranged. The windows were barricaded, the daylight excluded, the whole apartment hung with black. Here he remained fourteen days (from the 9th to 23d September). During this period, he was allowed no communication with his friends. His room was lighted day and night with candles, and he was served in strict silence by Spanish attendants, and guarded by Spanish soldiers. The captain of the watch drew his curtain every midnight, and aroused him from sleep that he might be identified by the relieving officer.

Count Horn was arrested upon the same occasion by Captain Salinas, as he was proceeding through the court-yard of the house, after the breaking up of the council. He was confined in another chamber of the mansion, and met with a precisely similar treatment to that experienced by Egmont. Upon the 23d September, both were removed under a strong guard to the castle of Ghent.

Page 456

On this same day, two other important arrests, included and arranged in the same program, had been successfully accomplished. Bakkerzeel, private and confidential secretary of Egmont, and Antony Van Straalen, the rich and influential burgomaster of Antwerp, were taken almost simultaneously. At the request of Alva, the burgomaster had been invited by the Duchess of Parma to repair on business to Brussels. He seemed to have feared an ambuscade, for as he got into his coach to set forth upon the journey, he was so muffed in a multiplicity of clothing, that he was scarcely to be recognized. He was no sooner, however, in the open country and upon a spot remote from human habitations, than he was suddenly beset by a band of forty soldiers under command of Don Alberic Lodron and Don Sancho de Lodrono. These officers had been watching his movements for many days. The capture of Bakkerzeel was accomplished with equal adroitness at about the same hour.

Alva, while he sat at the council board with Egmont and Horn, was secretly informed that those important personages, Bakkerzeel and Straalen, with the private secretary of the Admiral, Alonzo de la Loo, in addition, had been thus successfully arrested. He could with difficulty conceal his satisfaction, and left the apartment immediately that the trap might be sprung upon the two principal victims of his treachery. He had himself arranged all the details of these two important arrests, while his natural son, the Prior Don Ferdinando, had been compelled to superintend the proceedings. The plot had been an excellent plot, and was accomplished as successfully as it bad been sagaciously conceived. None but Spaniards had been employed in any part of the affair. Officers of high rank in his Majesty's army had performed the part of spies and policemen with much adroitness, nor was it to be expected that the duty would seem a disgrace, when the Prior of the Knights of Saint John was superintendent of the operations, when the Captain-General of the Netherlands had arranged the whole plan, and when all, from subaltern to viceroy, had received minute instructions as to the contemplated treachery from the great chief of the Spanish police, who sat on the throne of Castile and Aragon.

No sooner were these gentlemen in custody than the secretary Albornoz was dispatched to the house of Count Horn, and to that of Bakkerzeel, where all papers were immediately seized, inventoried, and placed in the hands of the Duke. Thus, if amid the most secret communications of Egmont and Horn or their correspondents, a single treasonable thought should be lurking, it was to go hard but it might be twisted into a cord strong enough to strangle them all.

Page 457

The Duke wrote a triumphant letter to his Majesty that very night. He apologized that these important captures had been deferred so long but, stated that he had thought it desirable to secure all these leading personages at a single stroke. He then narrated the masterly manner in which the operations had been conducted. Certainly, when it is remembered that the Duke had only reached Brussels upon the 23d August, and that the two Counts were securely lodged in prison on the 9th of September, it seemed a superfluous modesty upon his part thus to excuse himself for an apparent delay. At any rate, in the eyes of the world and of posterity, his zeal to carry out the bloody commands of his master was sufficiently swift.

The consternation was universal throughout the provinces when the arrests became known. Egmont's great popularity and distinguished services placed him so high above the mass of citizens, and his attachment to the Catholic religion was moreover so well known, as to make it obvious that no man could now be safe, when men like him were in the power of Alva and his myrmidons. The animosity to the Spaniards increased hourly. The Duchess affected indignation at the arrest of the two nobles, although it nowhere appears that she attempted a word in their defence, or lifted, at any subsequent moment, a finger to save them. She was not anxious to wash her hands of the blood of two innocent men; she was only offended that they had been arrested without her permission. The Duke had, it is true, sent Berlaymont and Mansfeld to give her information of the fact, as soon as the capture had been made, with the plausible excuse that he preferred to save her from all the responsibility and all the unpopularity of the measure, Nothing, however, could appease her wrath at this and every other indication of the contempt in which he appeared to hold the sister of his sovereign. She complained of his conduct daily to every one who was admitted to her presence. Herself oppressed by a sense of personal indignity, she seemed for a moment to identify herself with the cause of the oppressed provinces. She seemed to imagine herself the champion of their liberties, and the Netherlanders, for a moments seemed to participate in the delusion. Because she was indignant at the insolence of the Duke of Alva to her self, the honest citizens began to give her credit for a sympathy with their own wrongs. She expressed herself determined to move about from one city to another, until the answer to her demand for dismissal should arrive. She allowed her immediate attendants to abuse the Spaniards in good set terms upon every occasion. Even her private chaplain permitted himself, in preaching before her in the palace chapel, to denounce the whole nation as a race of traitors and ravishers, and for this offence was only reprimanded, much against her will, by the Duchess, and ordered to retire for a season to his convent. She did not attempt to disguise her dissatisfaction at every

Page 458

step which had been taken by the Duke. In all this there was much petulance, but very little dignity, while there was neither a spark of real sympathy for the oppressed millions, nor a throb of genuine womanly emotion for the impending fate of the two nobles. Her principal grief was that she had pacified the provinces, and that another had now arrived to reap the glory; but it was difficult, while the unburied bones of many heretics were still hanging, by her decree, on the rafters of their own dismantled churches, for her successfully to enact the part of a benignant and merciful Regent. But it is very true that the horrors of the Duke's administration have been propitious to the fame of Margaret, and perhaps more so to that of Cardinal Granvelle. The faint and struggling rays of humanity which occasionally illumined the course of their government, were destined to be extinguished in a chaos so profound and dark, that these last beams of light seemed clearer and more bountiful by the contrast.

The Count of Hoogstraaten, who was on his way to Brussels, had, by good fortune, injured his hand through the accidental discharge of a pistol. Detained by this casualty at Cologne, he was informed, before his arrival at the capital, of the arrest of his two distinguished friends, and accepted the hint to betake himself at once to a place of Safety.

The loyalty of the elder Mansfeld was beyond dispute even by Alva. His son Charles had, however, been imprudent, and, as we have seen, had even affixed his name to the earliest copies of the Compromise. He had retired, it is true, from all connexion with the confederates, but his father knew well that the young Count's signature upon that famous document would prove his death-warrant, were he found in the country. He therefore had sent him into Germany before the arrival of the Duke.

The King's satisfaction was unbounded when he learned this important achievement of Alva, and he wrote immediately to express his approbation in the most extravagant terms. Cardinal Granvelle, on the contrary, affected astonishment at a course which he had secretly counselled. He assured his Majesty that he had never believed Egmont to entertain sentiments opposed to the Catholic religion, nor to the interests of the Crown, up to the period of his own departure from the Netherlands. He was persuaded, he said, that the Count had been abused by others, although, to be sure, the Cardinal had learned with regret what Egmont had written on the occasion of the baptism of Count Hoogstraaten's child. As to the other persons arrested, he said that no one regretted their fate. The Cardinal added, that he was supposed to be himself the instigator of these captures, but that he was not disturbed by that, or by other imputations of a similar nature.

Page 459

In conversation with those about him, he frequently expressed regret that the Prince of Orange had been too crafty to be caught in the same net in which his more simple companions were so inextricably entangled. Indeed, on the first arrival of the news, that men of high rank had been arrested in Brussels, the Cardinal eagerly inquired if the Taciturn had been taken, for by that term he always characterized the Prince. Receiving a negative reply, he expressed extreme disappointment, adding, that if Orange had escaped, they had taken nobody; and that his capture would have been more valuable than that of every man in the Netherlands.

Peter Titelmann, too, the famous inquisitor, who, retired from active life, was then living upon Philip's bounty, and encouraged by friendly letters from that monarch, expressed the same opinion. Having been informed that Egmont and Horn had been captured, he eagerly inquired if "wise William" had also been taken. He was, of course, answered in the negative. "Then will our joy be but brief," he observed. "Woe unto us for the wrath to come from Germany."

On the 12th of July, of this year, Philip wrote to Granvelle to inquire the particulars of a letter which the Prince of Orange, according to a previous communication of the Cardinal, had written to Egmont on the occasion of the baptism of Count Hoogstraaten's child. On the 17th of August, the Cardinal replied, by setting the King right as to the error which he had committed. The letter, as he had already stated, was not written by Orange, but by Egmont, and he expressed his astonishment that Madame de Parma had not yet sent it to his Majesty. The Duchess must have seen it, because her confessor had shown it to the person who was Granvelle's informant. In this letter, the Cardinal continued, the statement had been made by Egmont to the Prince of Orange that their plots were discovered, that the King was making armaments, that they were unable to resist him, and that therefore it had become necessary to dissemble and to accommodate themselves as well as possible to the present situation, while waiting for other circumstances under which to accomplish their designs. Granvelle advised, moreover, that Straalen, who had been privy to the letter, and perhaps the amanuensis, should be forthwith arrested.

The Cardinal was determined not to let the matter sleep, notwithstanding his protestation of a kindly feeling towards the imprisoned Count. Against the statement that he knew of a letter which amounted to a full confession of treason, out of Egmont's own mouth—a fact which, if proved, and perhaps, if even insinuated, would be sufficient with Philip to deprive Egmont of twenty thousand lives—against these constant recommendations to his suspicious and sanguinary master, to ferret out this document, if it were possible, it must be confessed that the churchman's vague and hypocritical expressions on the side of mercy were very little worth.

Page 460

Certainly these seeds of suspicion did not fall upon a barren soil. Philip immediately communicated the information thus received to the Duke of Alva, charging him on repeated occasions to find out what was written, either by Egmont or by Straalen, at Egmont's instigation, stating that such a letter was written at the time of the Hoogstraaten baptism, that it would probably illustrate the opinions of Egmont at that period, and that the letter itself, which the confessor of Madame de Parma had once had in his hands, ought, if possible, to be procured. Thus the very language used by Granvelle to Philip was immediately repeated by the monarch to his representative in the Netherlands, at the moment when all Egmont's papers were in his possession, and when Egmont's private secretary was undergoing the torture, in order that; secrets might be wrenched from him which had never entered his brain. The fact that no such letter was found, that the Duchess had never alluded to any such document, and that neither a careful scrutiny of papers, nor the application of the rack, could elicit any satisfactory information on the subject, leads to the conclusion that no such treasonable paper had ever existed, save in the imagination of the Cardinal. At any rate, it is no more than just to hesitate before affixing a damning character to a document, in the absence of any direct proof that there ever was such a document at all. The confessor of Madame de Parma told another person, who told the Cardinal, that either Count Egmont, or Burgomaster Straalen, by command of Count Egmont, wrote to the Prince of Orange thus and so. What evidence was this upon which to found a charge of high treason against a man whom Granvelle affected to characterize as otherwise neither opposed to the Catholic religion, nor to the true service of the King? What vulpine kind of mercy was it on the part of the Cardinal, while making such deadly insinuations, to recommend the imprisoned victim to clemency?

The unfortunate envoys, Marquis Bergen and Baron Montigny, had remained in Spain under close observation. Of those doomed victims who, in spite of friendly remonstrances and of ominous warnings, had thus ventured into the lion's den, no retreating footmarks were ever to be seen. Their fate, now that Alva had at last been despatched to the Netherlands, seemed to be sealed, and the Marquis Bergen, accepting the augury in its most evil sense, immediately afterwards had sickened unto death. Whether it were the sickness of hope deferred, suddenly changing to despair, or whether it were a still more potent and unequivocal poison which came to the relief of the unfortunate nobleman, will perhaps never be ascertained with certainty. The secrets of those terrible prison-houses of Spain, where even the eldest begotten son, and the wedded wife of the monarch, were soon afterwards believed to have been the victims of his dark revenge, can never perhaps be accurately known, until the grave gives up its dead, and the buried crimes of centuries are revealed.

Page 461

It was very soon after the departure of Alva's fleet from Carthagena, that the Marquis Bergen felt his end approaching. He sent for the Prince of Eboli, with whom he had always maintained intimate relations, and whom he believed to be his disinterested friend. Relying upon his faithful breast, and trusting to receive from his eyes alone the pious drops of sympathy which he required, the dying noble poured out his long and last complaint. He charged him to tell the man whom he would no longer call his king, that he had ever been true and loyal, that the bitterness of having been constantly suspected, when he was conscious of entire fidelity, was a sharper sorrow than could be lightly believed, and that he hoped the time would come when his own truth and the artifices of his enemies would be brought to light. He closed his parting message by predicting that after he had been long laid in the grave, the impeachments against his character would be, at last, although too late, retracted.

So spake the unhappy envoy, and his friend replied with words of consolation. It is probable that he even ventured, in the King's name, to grant him the liberty of returning to his home; the only remedy, as his physicians had repeatedly stated, which could possibly be applied to his disease. But the devilish hypocrisy of Philip, and the abject perfidy of Eboli, at this juncture, almost surpass belief. The Prince came to press the hand and to close the eyes of the dying man whom he called his friend, having first carefully studied a billet of most minute and secret instructions from his master as to the deportment he was to observe upon this solemn occasion and afterwards. This paper, written in Philip's own hand, had been delivered to Eboli on the very day of his visit to Bergen, and bore the superscription that it was not to be read nor opened till the messenger who brought it had left his presence. It directed the Prince, if it should be evident Marquis was past recovery, to promise him, in the King's name, the permission of returning to the Netherlands. Should, however, a possibility of his surviving appear, Eboli was only to hold out a hope that such permission might eventually be obtained. In case of the death of Bergen, the Prince was immediately to confer with the Grand Inquisitor and with the Count of Feria, upon the measures to be taken for his obsequies. It might seem advisable, in that event to exhibit the regret which the King and his ministers felt for his death, and the great esteem in which they held the nobles of the Netherlands. At the same time, Eboli was further instructed to confer with the same personages as to the most efficient means for preventing the escape of Baron Montigny; to keep a vigilant eye upon his movements, and to give general directions to governors and to postmasters to intercept his flight, should it be attempted. Finally, in case of Bergen's death, the Prince was directed to despatch a special messenger, apparently on his own responsibility, and as if in the absence and without the knowledge of the King, to inform the Duchess of Parma of the event, and to urge her immediately to take possession of the city of Bergen-op-Zoom, and of all other property belonging to the Marquis, until it should be ascertained whether it were not possible to convict him, after death, of treason, and to confiscate his estates accordingly.

Page 462

Such were the instructions of Philip to Eboli, and precisely in accordance with the program, was the horrible comedy enacted at the death-bed of the envoy. Three days after his parting interview with his disinterested friend, the Marquis was a corpse.—-Before his limbs were cold, a messenger was on his way to Brussels, instructing the Regent to sequestrate his property, and to arrest, upon suspicion of heresy, the youthful kinsman and niece, who, by the will of the Marquis, were to be united in marriage and to share his estate. The whole drama, beginning with the death scene, was enacted according to order: Before the arrival of Alva in the Netherlands, the property of the Marquis was in the hands of the Government, awaiting the confiscation,—which was but for a brief season delayed, while on the other hand, Baron Montigny, Bergen's companion in doom, who was not, however, so easily to be carried off by homesickness, was closely confined in the alcazar of Segovia, never to leave a Spanish prison alive. There is something pathetic in the delusion in which Montigny and his brother, the Count Horn, both indulged, each believing that the other was out of harm's way, the one by his absence from the Netherlands, the other by his absence from Spain, while both, involved in the same meshes, were rapidly and surely approaching their fate.

In the same despatch of the 9th September, in which the Duke communicated to Philip the capture of Egmont and Horn, he announced to him his determination to establish a new court for the trial of crimes committed during the recent period of troubles. This wonderful tribunal was accordingly created with the least possible delay. It was called the Council of Troubles, but it soon acquired the terrible name, by which it will be forever known in history, of the 'Blood-Council'. It superseded all other institutions. Every court, from those of the municipal magistracies up to the supreme councils of the provinces, were forbidden to take cognizance in future of any cause growing out of the late troubles. The council of state, although it was not formally disbanded, fell into complete desuetude, its members being occasionally summoned into Alva's private chambers in an irregular manner, while its principal functions were usurped by the Blood-Council. Not only citizens of every province, but the municipal bodies and even the sovereign provincial estates themselves, were compelled to plead, like humble individuals, before this new and extraordinary tribunal. It is unnecessary to allude to the absolute violation which was thus committed of all charters, laws and privileges, because the very creation of the council was a bold and brutal proclamation that those laws and privileges were at an end. The constitution or maternal principle of this suddenly erected court was of a twofold nature. It defined and it punished the crime of treason. The definitions, couched in eighteen articles, declared it to be treason

Page 463

to have delivered or signed any petition against the new bishops, the Inquisition, or the Edicts; to have tolerated public preaching under any circumstances; to have omitted resistance to the image-breaking, to the field-preaching, or to the presentation of the Request by the nobles, and “either through sympathy or surprise” to have asserted that the King did not possess the right to deprive all the provinces of their liberties, or to have maintained that this present tribunal was bound to respect in any manner any laws or any charters. In these brief and simple, but comprehensive terms, was the crime of high treason defined. The punishment was still more briefly, simply, and comprehensively stated, for it was instant death in all cases. So well too did this new and terrible engine perform its work, that in less than three months from the time of its erection, eighteen hundred human beings had suffered death by its summary proceedings; some of the highest, the noblest, and the most virtuous in the land among the number; nor had it then manifested the slightest indication of faltering in its dread career.

Yet, strange to say, this tremendous court, thus established upon the ruins of all the ancient institutions of the country, had not been provided with even a nominal authority from any source whatever. The King had granted it no letters patent or charter, nor had even the Duke of Alva thought it worth while to grant any commissions either in his own name or as Captain-General, to any of the members composing the board. The Blood-Council was merely an informal club, of which the Duke was perpetual president, while the other members were all appointed by himself.

Of these subordinate councillors, two had the right of voting, subject, however, in all cases to his final decision, while the rest of the number did not vote at all. It had not, therefore, in any sense, the character of a judicial, legislative, or executive tribunal, but was purely a board of advice by which the bloody labors of the duke were occasionally lightened as to detail, while not a feather’s weight of power or of responsibility was removed from his shoulders. He reserved for himself the final decision upon all causes which should come before the council, and stated his motives for so doing with grim simplicity. “Two reasons,” he wrote to the King, “have determined me thus to limit the power of the tribunal; the first that, not knowing its members, I might be easily deceived by them; the second, that the men of law only condemn for crimes which are proved; whereas your Majesty knows that affairs of state are governed by very different rules from the laws which they have here.”

Page 464

It being, therefore, the object of the Duke to compose a body of men who would be of assistance to him in condemning for crimes which could not be proved, and in slipping over statutes which were not to be recognized, it must be confessed that he was not unfortunate in the appointments which he made to the office of councillors. In this task of appointment he had the assistance of the experienced Viglius. That learned jurisconsult, with characteristic lubricity, had evaded the dangerous honor for himself, but he nominated a number of persons from whom the Duke selected his list. The sacerdotal robes which he had so recently and so “craftily” assumed, furnished his own excuse, and in his letters to his faithful Hopper he repeatedly congratulated himself upon his success in keeping himself at a distance from so bloody and perilous a post.

It is impossible to look at the conduct of the distinguished Frisian at this important juncture without contempt. Bent only upon saving himself, his property, and his reputation, he did not hesitate to bend before the “most illustrious Duke,” as he always denominated him, with fulsome and fawning homage. While he declined to dip his own fingers in the innocent blood which was about to flow in torrents, he did not object to officiate at the initiatory preliminaries of the great Netherland holocaust. His decent and dainty demeanor seems even more offensive than the jocularity of the real murderers. Conscious that no man knew the laws and customs of the Netherlands better than himself, he had the humble effrontery to observe that it was necessary for him at that moment silently to submit his own unskilfulness to the superior judgment and knowledge of others. Having at last been relieved from the stone of Sisyphus, which, as he plaintively expressed himself, he had been rolling for twenty years; having, by the arrival of Tisnacq, obtained his discharge as President of the state council, he was yet not unwilling to retain the emoluments and the rank of President of the privy council, although both offices had become sinecures since the erection of the Council of Blood. Although his life had been spent in administrative and judicial employments, he did not blush upon a matter of constitutional law to defer to the authority of such jurisconsults as the Duke of Alva and his two Spanish bloodhounds, Vargas and Del Rio. He did not like, he observed, in his confidential correspondence, to gainsay the Duke, when maintaining, that in cases of treason, the privileges of Brabant were powerless, although he mildly doubted whether the Brabantines would agree with the doctrine. He often thought, he said, of remedies for restoring the prosperity of the provinces, but in action he only assisted the Duke, to the best of his abilities, in arranging the Blood-Council. He wished well to his country, but he was more anxious for the favor of Alva. “I rejoice,” said he, in one of his letters, “that the most illustrious Duke has written to the King in praise

Page 465

of my obsequiousness; when I am censured here for so reverently cherishing him, it is a consolation that my services to the King and to the governor are not unappreciated there." Indeed the Duke of Alva, who had originally suspected the President's character, seemed at last overcome by his indefatigable and cringing homage. He wrote to the King, in whose good graces the learned Doctor was most anxious at that portentous period to maintain himself, that the President was very serviceable and diligent, and that he deserved to receive a crumb of comfort from the royal hand. Philip, in consequence, wrote in one of his letters a few lines of vague compliment, which could be shown to Viglius, according to Alva's suggestion. It is, however, not a little characteristic of the Spanish court and of the Spanish monarch, that, on the very day before, he had sent to the Captain-General a few documents of very different import. In order, as he said, that the Duke might be ignorant of nothing which related to the Netherlands, he forwarded to him copies of the letters written by Margaret of Parma from Brussels, three years before. These letters, as it will be recollected, contained an account of the secret investigations which the Duchess had made as to the private character and opinions of Viglius—at the very moment when he apparently stood highest in her confidence—and charged him with heresy, swindling, and theft. Thus the painstaking and time-serving President, with all his learning and experience, was successively the dupe of Margaret and of Alva, whom he so obsequiously courted, and always of Philip, whom he so feared and worshipped.

With his assistance, the list of blood-councillors was quickly completed. No one who was offered the office refused it. Noircarmes and Berlaymont accepted with very great eagerness. Several presidents and councillors of the different provincial tribunals were appointed, but all the Netherlanders were men of straw. Two Spaniards, Del Rio and Vargas, were the only members who could vote; while their decisions, as already stated, were subject to reversal by Alva. Del Rio was a man without character or talent, a mere tool in the hands of his superiors, but Juan de Vargas was a terrible reality.

No better man could have been found in Europe for the post to which he was thus elevated. To shed human blood was, in his opinion, the only important business and the only exhilarating pastime of life. His youth had been stained with other crimes. He had been obliged to retire from Spain, because of his violation of an orphan child to whom he was guardian, but, in his manhood, he found no pleasure but in murder. He executed Alva's bloody work with an industry which was almost superhuman, and with a merriment which would have shamed a demon. His execrable jests ring through the blood and smoke and death-cries of those days of perpetual sacrifice. He was proud to be the double of the iron-hearted Duke, and acted so uniformly in accordance with his

Page 466

views, that the right of revision remained but nominal. There could be no possibility of collision where the subaltern was only anxious to surpass an incomparable superior. The figure of Vargas rises upon us through the mist of three centuries with terrible distinctness. Even his barbarous grammar has not been forgotten, and his crimes against syntax and against humanity have acquired the same immortality. “Heretici fraxerunt templa, boni nihili faxerunt contra, ergo debent omnes patibulare,” was the comprehensive but barbarous formula of a man who murdered the Latin language as ruthlessly as he slaughtered his contemporaries.

Among the ciphers who composed the rest of the board, the Flemish Councillor Hessels was the one whom the Duke most respected. He was not without talent or learning, but the Duke only valued him for his cruelty. Being allowed to take but little share in the deliberations, Hessels was accustomed to doze away his afternoon hours at the council table, and when awakened from his nap in order that he might express an opinion on the case then before the court, was wont to rub his eyes and to call out “Ad patibulum, ad patibulum,” ("to the gallows with him, to the gallows with him,”) with great fervor, but in entire ignorance of the culprit’s name or the merits of the case. His wife, naturally disturbed that her husband’s waking and sleeping hours were alike absorbed with this hangman’s work, more than once ominously expressed her hope to him, that he, whose head and heart were thus engrossed with the gibbet, might not one day come to hang upon it himself; a gloomy prophecy which the Future most terribly fulfilled.

The Council of Blood, thus constituted, held its first session on the 20th September, at the lodgings of Alva. Springing completely grown and armed to the teeth from the head of its inventor, the new tribunal—at the very outset in possession of all its vigor—-forthwith began to manifest a terrible activity in accomplishing the objects of its existence. The councillors having been sworn to “eternal secrecy as to any thing which should be transacted at the board, and having likewise made oath to denounce any one of their number who should violate the pledge,” the court was considered as organized. Alva worked therein seven hours daily. It may be believed that the subordinates were not spared, and that their office proved no sinecure. Their labors, however, were not encumbered by antiquated forms. As this supreme and only tribunal for all the Netherlands had no commission or authority save the will of the Captain-General, so it was also thought a matter of supererogation to establish a set of rules and orders such as might be useful in less independent courts. The forms of proceeding were brief and artless. There was a rude organization by which a crowd of commissioners, acting as inferior officers of the council, were spread over the provinces, whose business was to collect information concerning all persons who might be incriminated for participation in the recent troubles. The greatest crime, however, was to be rich, and one which could be expiated by no virtues, however signal. Alva was bent upon proving himself as accomplished a financier as he was indisputably a consummate commander, and he

had promised his master an annual income of 500,000 ducats from the confiscations which were to accompany the executions.

Page 467

It was necessary that the blood torrent should flow at once through the Netherlands, in order that the promised golden river, a yard deep, according to his vaunt, should begin to irrigate the thirsty soil of Spain. It is obvious, from the fundamental laws which were made to define treason at the same moment in which they established the council, that any man might be at any instant summoned to the court. Every man, whether innocent or guilty, whether Papist or Protestant, felt his head shaking on his shoulders. If he were wealthy, there seemed no remedy but flight, which was now almost impossible, from the heavy penalties affixed by the new edict upon all carriers, shipmasters, and wagoners, who should aid in the escape of heretics.

A certain number of these commissioners were particularly instructed to collect information as to the treason of Orange, Louis Nassau, Brederode, Egmont, Horn, Culemberg, Vanden Berg, Bergen, and Montigny. Upon such information the proceedings against those distinguished seigniors were to be summarily instituted. Particular councillors of the Court of Blood were charged with the arrangement of these important suits, but the commissioners were to report in the first instance to the Duke himself, who afterwards returned the paper into the hands of his subordinates.

With regard to the inferior and miscellaneous cases which were daily brought in incredible profusion before the tribunal, the same preliminaries were observed, by way of aping the proceedings in courts of justice. Alva sent the cart-loads of information which were daily brought to him, but which neither he nor any other man had time to read, to be disposed of by the board of councillors. It was the duty of the different subalterns, who, as already stated, had no right of voting, to prepare reports upon the cases. Nothing could be more summary. Information was lodged against a man, or against a hundred men, in one document. The Duke sent the papers to the council, and the inferior councillors reported at once to Vargas. If the report concluded with a recommendation of death to the man, or the hundred men in question, Vargas instantly approved it, and execution was done upon the man, or the hundred men, within forty-eight hours. If the report had any other conclusion, it was immediately sent back for revision, and the reporters were overwhelmed with reproaches by the President.

Such being the method of operation, it may be supposed that the councillors were not allowed to slacken in their terrible industry. The register of every city, village, and hamlet throughout the Netherlands showed the daily lists of men, women, and children thus sacrificed at the shrine of the demon who had obtained the mastery over this unhappy land. It was not often that an individual was of sufficient importance to be tried —if trial it could be called—by himself. It was found more expeditious to send them in batches to the furnace. Thus, for example, on the 4th of January, eighty-four inhabitants of Valenciennes were condemned; on another day, ninety-five miscellaneous individuals, from different places in Flanders; on another, forty-six inhabitants of Malines; on another, thirty-five persons from different localities, and so on.

Page 468

The evening of Shrovetide, a favorite holiday in the Netherlands, afforded an occasion for arresting and carrying off a vast number of doomed individuals at a single swoop. It was correctly supposed that the burghers, filled with wine and wassail, to which perhaps the persecution under which they lived lent an additional and horrible stimulus, might be easily taken from their beds in great numbers, and be delivered over at once to the council. The plot was ingenious, the net was spread accordingly. Many of the doomed were, however, luckily warned of the terrible termination which was impending over their festival, and bestowed themselves in safety for a season. A prize of about five hundred prisoners was all which rewarded the sagacity of the enterprise. It is needless to add that they were all immediately executed. It is a wearisome and odious task to ransack the mouldy records of three centuries ago, in order to reproduce the obscure names of the thousands who were thus sacrificed.. The dead have buried their dead, and are forgotten. It is likewise hardly necessary to state that the proceedings before the council were all ‘ex parte’, and that an information was almost inevitably followed by a death-warrant. It sometimes happened even that the zeal of the councillors outstripped the industry of the commissioners. The sentences were occasionally in advance of the docket. Thus upon one occasion a man’s case was called for trial, but before the investigation was commenced it was discovered that he had been already executed. A cursory examination of the papers proved, moreover, as usual, that the culprit had committed no crime. “No matter for that,” said Vargas, jocosely, “if he has died innocent, it will be all the better for him when he takes his trial in the other world.”

But, however the councillors might indulge in these gentle jests among themselves, it was obvious that innocence was in reality impossible, according to the rules which had been laid down regarding treason. The practice was in accordance with the precept, and persons were daily executed with senseless pretexts, which was worse than executions with no pretexts at all. Thus Peter de Witt of Amsterdam was beheaded, because at one of the tumults in that city he had persuaded a rioter not to fire upon a magistrate. This was taken as sufficient proof that he was a man in authority among the rebels, and he was accordingly put to death. Madame Juriaen, who, in 1566, had struck with her slipper a little wooden image of the Virgin, together with her maid-servant, who had witnessed without denouncing the crime, were both drowned by the hangman in a hogshead placed on the scaffold.

Death, even, did not in all cases place a criminal beyond the reach of the executioner. Egbert Meynartzoon, a man of high official rank, had been condemned, together with two colleagues, on an accusation of collecting money in a Lutheran church. He died in prison of dropsy. The sheriff was indignant with the physician, because, in spite of cordials and strengthening prescriptions, the culprit had slipped through his fingers before he had felt those of the hangman. He consoled himself by placing the body on a chair, and having the dead man beheaded in company with his colleagues.

Page 469

Thus the whole country became a charnel-house; the deathbell tolled hourly in every village; not a family but was called to mourn for its dearest relatives, while the survivors stalked listlessly about, the ghosts of their former selves, among the wrecks of their former homes. The spirit of the nation, within a few months after the arrival of Alva, seemed hopelessly broken. The blood of its best and bravest had already stained the scaffold; the men to whom it bad been accustomed to look for guidance and protection, were dead, in prison, or in exile. Submission had ceased to be of any avail, flight was impossible, and the spirit of vengeance had alighted at every fireside. The mourners went daily about the streets, for there was hardly a house which had not been made desolate. The scaffolds, the gallows, the funeral piles, which had been sufficient in ordinary times, furnished now an entirely inadequate machinery for the incessant executions. Columns and stakes in every street, the door-posts of private houses, the fences in the fields were laden with human carcasses, strangled, burned, beheaded. The orchards in the country bore on many a tree the hideous fruit of human bodies.

Thus the Netherlands were crushed, and but for the stringency of the tyranny which had now closed their gates, would have been depopulated. The grass began to grow in the streets of those cities which had recently nourished so many artisans. In all those great manufacturing and industrial marts, where the tide of human life had throbbed so vigorously, there now reigned the silence and the darkness of midnight. It was at this time that the learned Viglius wrote to his friend Hopper, that all venerated the prudence and gentleness of the Duke of Alva. Such were among the first-fruits of that prudence and that gentleness.

The Duchess of Parma had been kept in a continued state of irritation. She had not ceased for many months to demand her release from the odious position of a cipher in a land where she had so lately been sovereign, and she had at last obtained it. Philip transmitted his acceptance of her resignation by the same courier who brought Alva's commission to be governor-general in her place. The letters to the Duchess were full of conventional compliments for her past services, accompanied, however, with a less barren and more acceptable acknowledgment, in the shape of a life income of 14,000 ducats instead of the 8000 hitherto enjoyed by her Highness.

In addition to this liberal allowance, of which she was never to be deprived, except upon receiving full payment of 140,000 ducats, she was presented with 25,000 florins by the estates of Brabant, and with 30,000 by those of Flanders.

With these substantial tokens of the success of her nine years' fatigue and intolerable anxiety, she at last took her departure from the Netherlands, having communicated the dissolution of her connexion with the provinces by a farewell letter to the Estates dated 9th December, 1567. Within a few weeks afterwards, escorted by the Duke of Alva across the frontier of Brabant; attended by a considerable deputation of Flemish nobility into Germany, and accompanied to her journey's end at Parma by the Count and Countess of Mansfeld, she finally closed her eventful career in the Netherlands.

Page 470

The horrors of the succeeding administration proved beneficial to her reputation. Upon the dark ground of succeeding years the lines which recorded her history seemed written with letters of light. Yet her conduct in the Netherlands offers but few points for approbation, and many for indignant censure. That she was not entirely destitute of feminine softness and sentiments of bounty, her parting despatch to her brother proved. In that letter she recommended to him a course of clemency and forgiveness, and reminded him that the nearer kings approach to God in station, the more they should endeavor to imitate him in his attributes of benignity. But the language of this farewell was more tender than had been the spirit of her government. One looks in vain, too, through the general atmosphere of kindness which pervades the epistle; for a special recommendation of those distinguished and doomed seigniors, whose attachment to her person and whose chivalrous and conscientious endeavors to fulfil her own orders, had placed them upon the edge of that precipice from which they were shortly to be hurled. The men who had restrained her from covering herself with disgrace by a precipitate retreat from the post of danger, and who had imperilled their lives by obedience to her express instructions, had been long languishing in solitary confinement, never to be terminated except by a traitor's death—yet we search in vain for a kind word in their behalf.

Meantime the second civil war in France had broken out. The hollow truce by which the Guise party and the Huguenots had partly pretended to deceive each other was hastened to its end; among other causes, by the march of Alva, to the Netherlands. The Huguenots had taken alarm, for they recognized the fellowship which united their foes in all countries against the Reformation, and Conde and Coligny knew too well that the same influence which had brought Alva to Brussels would soon create an exterminating army against their followers. Hostilities were resumed with more bitterness than ever. The battle of St. Denis—fierce, fatal, but indecisive—was fought. The octogenarian hero, Montmorency, fighting like a foot soldier, refusing to yield his sword, and replying to the respectful solicitations of his nearest enemy by dashing his teeth down his throat with the butt-end of his pistol, the hero of so many battles, whose defeat at St. Quintin had been the fatal point in his career, had died at last in his armor, bravely but not gloriously, in conflict with his own countrymen, led by his own heroic nephew. The military control of the Catholic party was completely in the hand of the Guises; the Chancellor de l'Hopital had abandoned the court after a last and futile effort to reconcile contending factions, which no human power could unite; the Huguenots had possessed themselves of Rochelle and of other strong places, and, under the guidance of adroit statesmen and accomplished generals, were pressing the Most Christian monarch hard in the very heart of his kingdom.

Page 471

As early as the middle of October, while still in Antwerp, Alva had received several secret agents of the French monarch, then closely beleaguered in his capital. Cardinal Lorraine offered to place several strong places of France in the hands of the Spaniard, and Alva had written to Philip that he was disposed to accept the offer, and to render the service. The places thus held would be a guarantee for his expenses, he said, while in case King Charles and his brother should die, “their possession would enable Philip to assert his own claim to the French crown in right of his wife, the Salic law being merely a pleasantry.”

The Queen Dowager, adopting now a very different tone from that which characterized her conversation at the Bayonne interview, wrote to Alva, that, if for want of 2000 Spanish musketeers, which she requested him to furnish, she should be obliged to succumb, she chose to disculpate herself in advance before God and Christian princes for the peace which she should be obliged to make. The Duke wrote to her in reply, that it was much better to have a kingdom ruined in preserving it for God and the king by war, than to have it kept entire without war, to the profit of the devil and of his followers. He was also reported on another occasion to have reminded her of the Spanish proverb —that the head of one salmon is worth those of a hundred frogs. The hint, if it were really given, was certainly destined to be acted upon.

The Duke not only furnished Catherine with advice, but with the musketeers which she had solicited. Two thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, under the Count of Aremberg, attended by a choice band of the Catholic nobility of the Netherlands, had joined the royal camp at Paris before the end of the year, to take their part in the brief hostilities by which the second treacherous peace was to be preceded.

Meantime, Alva was not unmindful of the business which had served as a pretext in the arrest of the two Counts. The fortifications of the principal cities were pushed on with great rapidity. The memorable citadel of Antwerp in particular had already been commenced in October under the superintendence of the celebrated engineers, Pacheco and Gabriel de Cerbelloni. In a few months it was completed, at a cost of one million four hundred thousand florins, of which sum the citizens, in spite of their remonstrances, were compelled to contribute more than one quarter. The sum of four hundred thousand florins was forced from the burghers by a tax upon all hereditary property within the municipality.

Page 472

Two thousand workmen were employed daily in the construction of this important fortress, which was erected, as its position most plainly manifested, not to protect, but to control the commercial capital of the provinces. It stood at the edge of the city, only separated from its walls by an open esplanade. It was the most perfect pentagon in Europe, having one of its sides resting on the Scheld, two turned towards the city, and two towards the open country. Five bastions, with walls of hammered stone, connected by curtains of turf and masonry, surrounded by walls measuring a league in circumference, and by an outer moat fed by the Scheld, enclosed a spacious enceinte, where a little church with many small lodging-houses, shaded by trees and shrubbery, nestled among the bristling artillery, as if to mimic the appearance of a peaceful and pastoral village. To four of the five bastions, the Captain-General, with characteristic ostentation, gave his own names and titles. One was called the Duke, the second Ferdinando, a third Toledo, a fourth Alva, while the fifth was baptized with the name of the ill-fated engineer, Pacheco. The Watergate was decorated with the escutcheon of Alva, surrounded by his Golden Fleece collar, with its pendant lamb of God; a symbol of blasphemous irony, which still remains upon the fortress, to recal the image of the tyrant and murderer. Each bastion was honeycombed with casemates and subterranean storehouses, and capable of containing within its bowels a vast supply of provisions, munitions, and soldiers. Such was the celebrated citadel built to tame the turbulent spirit of Antwerp, at the cost of those whom it was to terrify and to insult.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Conde and Coligny
Furnished, in addition, with a force of two thousand prostitutes
He came as a conqueror not as a mediator
Hope deferred, suddenly changing to despair
Meantime the second civil war in France had broken out
Spendthrift of time, he was an economist of blood
The greatest crime, however, was to be rich
Time and myself are two

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 15.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By *John Lothrop Motley* 1855 1568 [*chapter ii*.]

Orange, Count Louis, Hoogstraaten, and others, cited before the Blood-Council—-Charges against them—Letter of Orange in reply— Position and sentiments of the Prince—Seizure of Count de Buren— Details of that transaction—Petitions to the Council from Louvain and other places—Sentence of death against the whole

population of the Netherlands pronounced by the Spanish Inquisition and proclaimed by Philip—Cruel inventions against heretics—The Wild Beggars— Preliminary proceedings of the Council against Egmont and Horn—

Page 473

Interrogatories addressed to them in prison—Articles of accusation against them—-Foreclosure of the cases—Pleas to the jurisdiction— Efforts by the Countesses Egmont and Horn, by many Knights of the Fleece, and by the Emperor, in favor of the prisoners—Answers of Alva and of Philip—Obsequious behavior of Viglius—Difficulties arising from the Golden Fleece statutes set aside—Particulars of the charges against Count Horn and of his defence—Articles of accusation against Egmont—Sketch of his reply—-Reflections upon the two trials—Attitude of Orange—His published 'Justification'—His secret combinations—His commission to Count Louis—Large sums of money subscribed by the Nassau family, by Netherland refugees, and others—Great personal sacrifices made by the Prince—Quadruple scheme for invading the Netherlands—-Defeat of the patriots under Cocqueville—Defeat of Millers—Invasion of Friesland by Count Louis—Measures of Alva to oppose him—Command of the royalists entreated to Aremberg and Meghem—The Duke's plan for the campaign— Skirmish at Dam—-Detention of Meghem—Count Louis at Heiliger—Lee— Nature of the ground—Advance of Aremberg—Disposition of the patriot forces—Impatience of the Spanish troops to engage—Battle of Heiliger-Lee—Defeat and death of Aremberg—Death of Adolphus Nassau—Effects of the battle—Anger and severe measures of Alva— Eighteen nobles executed at Brussels—Sentence of death pronounced upon Egmont and Horn—The Bishop of Ypres sent to Egmont—Fruitless intercession by the prelate and the Countess—Egmont's last night in prison—The "grande place" at Brussels—Details concerning the execution of Egmont and Horn—Observation upon the characters of the two nobles—Destitute condition of Egmont's family.

Late in October, the Duke of Alva made his triumphant entry into the new fortress. During his absence, which was to continue during the remainder of the year, he had ordered the Secretary Courteville and the Councillor del Rio to superintend the commission, which was then actually engaged in collecting materials for the prosecutions to be instituted against the Prince of Orange and the other nobles who had abandoned the country. Accordingly, soon after his return, on the 19th of January, 1568, the Prince, his brother Louis of Nassau, his brother-in-law, Count Van den Berg, the Count Hoogstraaten, the Count Culemburg, and the Baron Montigny, were summoned in the name of Alva to appear before the Blood-Council, within thrice fourteen days from the date of the proclamation, under pain of perpetual banishment with confiscation of their estates. It is needless to say that these seigniors did not obey the summons. They knew full well that their obedience would be rewarded only by death.

Page 474

The charges against the Prince of Orange, which were drawn up in ten articles, stated, chiefly and briefly, that he had been, and was, the head and front of the rebellion; that as soon as his Majesty had left the Netherlands, he had begun his machinations to make himself master of the country and to expel his sovereign by force, if he should attempt to return to the provinces; that he had seduced his Majesty's subjects by false pretences that the Spanish inquisition was about to be introduced; that he had been the secret encourager and director of Brederode and the confederated nobles; and that when sent to Antwerp, in the name of the Regent, to put down the rebellion, he had encouraged heresy and accorded freedom of religion to the Reformers.

The articles against Hoogstraaten and the other gentlemen mere of similar tenor. It certainly was not a slender proof of the calm effrontery of the government thus to see Alva's proclamation charging it as a crime upon Orange that he had inveigled the lieges into revolt by a false assertion that the inquisition was about to be established, when letters from the Duke to Philip, and from Granvelle to Philip, dated upon nearly the same day, advised the immediate restoration of the inquisition as soon as an adequate number of executions had paved the way for the measure. It was also a sufficient indication of a reckless despotism, that while the Duchess, who had made the memorable Accord with the Religionists, received a flattering letter of thanks and a farewell pension of fourteen thousand ducats yearly, those who, by her orders, had acted upon that treaty as the basis of their negotiations, were summoned to lay down their heads upon the block.

The Prince replied to this summons by a brief and somewhat contemptuous plea to the jurisdiction. As a Knight of the Fleece, as a member of the Germanic Empire, as a sovereign prince in France, as a citizen of the Netherlands, he rejected the authority of Alva and of his self-constituted tribunal. His innocence he was willing to establish before competent courts and righteous judges. As a Knight of the Fleece, he said he could be tried only by his peers, the brethren of the Order, and, for that purpose, he could be summoned only by the King as Head of the Chapter, with the sanction of at least six of his fellow-knights. In conclusion, he offered to appear before his Imperial Majesty, the Electors, and other members of the Empire, or before the Knights of the Golden Fleece. In the latter case, he claimed the right, under the statutes of that order, to be placed while the trial was pending, not in a solitary prison, as had been the fate of Egmont and of Horn, but under the friendly charge and protection of the brethren themselves. The letter was addressed to the procurator-general, and a duplicate was forwarded to the Duke.

Page 475

From the general tenor of the document, it is obvious both that the Prince was not yet ready to throw down the gauntlet to his sovereign, nor to proclaim his adhesion to the new religion: Of departing from the Netherlands in the spring, he had said openly that he was still in possession of sixty thousand florins yearly, and that he should commence no hostilities against Philip, so long as he did not disturb him in his honor or his estates. Far-seeing politician, if man ever were, he knew the course whither matters were inevitably tending, but he knew how much strength was derived from putting an adversary irretrievably in the wrong. He still maintained an attitude of dignified respect towards the monarch, while he hurled back with defiance the insolent summons of the viceroy. Moreover, the period had not yet arrived for him to break publicly with the ancient faith. Statesman, rather than religionist, at this epoch, he was not disposed to affect a more complete conversion than the one which he had experienced. He was, in truth, not for a new doctrine, but for liberty of conscience. His mind was already expanding beyond any dogmas of the age. The man whom his enemies stigmatized as atheist and renegade, was really in favor of toleration, and therefore, the more deeply criminal in the eyes of all religious parties.

Events, personal to himself, were rapidly to place him in a position from which he might enter the combat with honor.

His character had already been attacked, his property threatened with confiscation. His closest ties of family were now to be severed by the hand of the tyrant. His eldest child, the Count de Buren, torn from his protection, was to be carried into indefinite captivity in a foreign land. It was a remarkable oversight, for a person of his sagacity, that, upon his own departure from the provinces, he should leave his son, then a boy of thirteen years, to pursue his studies at the college of Louvain. Thus exposed to the power of the government, he was soon seized as a hostage for the good behavior of the father. Granvelle appears to have been the first to recommend the step in a secret letter to Philip, but Alva scarcely needed prompting. Accordingly, upon the 13th of February, 1568, the Duke sent the Seignior de Chassy to Louvain, attended by four officers and by twelve archers. He was furnished with a letter to the Count de Buren, in which that young nobleman was requested to place implicit confidence in the bearer of the despatch, and was informed that the desire which his Majesty had to see him educated for his service, was the cause of the communication which the Seignior de Chassy was about to make.

Page 476

That gentleman was, moreover, minutely instructed as to his method of proceeding in this memorable case of kidnapping. He was to present the letter to the young Count in presence of his tutor. He was to invite him to Spain in the name of his Majesty. He was to assure him that his Majesty's commands were solely with a view, to his own good, and that he was not commissioned to arrest, but only to escort him. He was to allow the Count to be accompanied only by two valets, two pages, a cook, and a keeper of accounts. He was, however, to induce his tutor to accompany him, at least to the Spanish frontier. He was to arrange that the second day after his arrival at Louvain, the Count should set out for Antwerp, where he was to lodge with Count Lodron, after which they were to proceed to Flushing, whence they were to embark for Spain. At that city he was to deliver the young Prince to the person whom he would find there, commissioned for that purpose by the Duke. As soon as he had made the first proposition at Louvain to the Count, he was, with the assistance of his retinue, to keep the most strict watch over him day and night, but without allowing the supervision to be perceived.

The plan was carried out admirably, and in strict accordance with the program. It was fortunate, however, for the kidnappers, that the young Prince proved favorably disposed to the plan. He accepted the invitation of his captors with alacrity. He even wrote to thank the governor for his friendly offices in his behalf. He received with boyish gratification the festivities with which Lodron enlivened his brief sojourn at Antwerp, and he set forth without reluctance for that gloomy and terrible land of Spain, whence so rarely a Flemish traveller had returned. A changeling, as it were, from his cradle, he seemed completely transformed by his Spanish tuition, for he was educated and not sacrificed by Philip. When he returned to the Netherlands, after a twenty years' residence in Spain, it was difficult to detect in his gloomy brow, saturnine character, and Jesuistical habits, a trace of the generous spirit which characterized that race of heroes, the house of Orange-Nassau.

Philip had expressed some anxiety as to the consequences of this capture upon the governments of Germany. Alva, however, re-assured his sovereign upon that point, by reason of the extreme docility of the captive, and the quiet manner in which the arrest had been conducted. At that particular juncture, moreover, it would, have been difficult for the government of the Netherlands to excite surprise any where, except by an act of clemency. The president and the deputation of professors from the university of Louvain waited upon Vargas, by whom, as acting president of the Blood-Council, the arrest had nominally been made, with a remonstrance that the measure was in gross violation of their statutes and privileges. That personage, however, with his usual contempt both for law and Latin, answered brutally, "Non curamus vestros privilegios," and with this memorable answer, abruptly closed his interview with the trembling pedants.

Page 477

Petitions now poured into the council from all quarters, abject recantations from terror-stricken municipalities, humble intercessions in behalf of doomed and imprisoned victims. To a deputation of the magistracy of Antwerp, who came with a prayer for mercy in behalf of some of their most distinguished fellow-citizens, then in prison, the Duke gave a most passionate and ferocious reply. He expressed his wonder that the citizens of Antwerp, that hotbed of treason, should dare to approach him in behalf of traitors and heretics. Let them look to it in future, he continued, or he would hang every man in the whole city, to set an example to the rest of the country; for his Majesty would rather the whole land should become an uninhabited wilderness, than that a single Dissenter should exist within its territory.

Events now marched with rapidity. The monarch seemed disposed literally to execute the threat of his viceroy. Early in the year, the most sublime sentence of death was promulgated which has ever been pronounced since the creation of the world. The Roman tyrant wished that his enemies' heads were all upon a single neck, that he might strike them off at a blow; the inquisition assisted Philip to place the heads of all his Netherland subjects upon a single neck for the same fell purpose. Upon the 16th February, 1568, a sentence of the Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics. From this universal doom only a few persons, especially named; were excepted. A proclamation of the King, dated ten days later, confirmed this decree of the inquisition, and ordered it to be carried into instant execution, without regard to age, sex, or condition. This is probably the most concise death-warrant that was ever framed. Three millions of people, men, women, and children, were sentenced to the scaffold in: three lines; and, as it was well known that these were not harmless thunders, like some bulls of the Vatican, but serious and practical measures, which it was intended should be enforced, the horror which they produced may be easily imagined. It was hardly the purpose of Government to compel the absolute completion of the wholesale plan in all its length and breadth, yet in the horrible times upon which they had fallen, the Netherlanders might be excused for believing that no measure was too monstrous to be fulfilled. At any rate, it was certain that when all were condemned, any might at a moment's warning be carried to the scaffold, and this was precisely the course adopted by the authorities.

Under this universal decree the industry of the Blood-Council might, now seem superfluous. Why should not these mock prosecutions be dispensed with against individuals, now that a common sentence had swallowed the whole population in one vast grave? Yet it may be supposed that if the exertions of the commissioners and councillors served no other purpose, they at least furnished the Government with valuable evidence as to the relative wealth and other circumstances of the individual victims. The leading thought of the Government being that persecution, judiciously managed, might fructify into a golden harvest,—it was still desirable to persevere in the cause in which already such bloody progress had been made.

Page 478

And under this new decree, the executions certainly did not slacken. Men in the highest and the humblest positions were daily and hourly dragged to the stake. Alva, in a single letter to Philip, coolly estimated the number of executions which were to take place immediately after the expiration of holy week, “at eight hundred heads.” Many a citizen, convicted of a hundred thousand florins and of no other crime, saw himself suddenly tied to a horse’s tail, with his hands fastened behind him, and so dragged to the gallows. But although wealth was an unpardonable sin, poverty proved rarely a protection. Reasons sufficient could always be found for dooming the starveling laborer as well as the opulent burgher. To avoid the disturbances created in the streets by the frequent harangues or exhortations addressed to the bystanders by the victims on their way to the scaffold, a new gag was invented. The tongue of each prisoner was screwed into an iron ring, and then seared with a hot iron. The swelling and inflammation which were the immediate result, prevented the tongue from slipping through the ring, and of course effectually precluded all possibility of speech.

Although the minds of men were not yet prepared for concentrated revolt against the tyranny under which they were languishing, it was not possible to suppress all sentiments of humanity, and to tread out every spark of natural indignation.

Unfortunately, in the bewilderment and misery of this people, the first development of a forcible and organized resistance was of a depraved and malignant character. Extensive bands of marauders and highway robbers sprang into existence, who called themselves the Wild Beggars, and who, wearing the mask and the symbols of a revolutionary faction, committed great excesses in many parts of the country, robbing, plundering, and murdering. Their principal wrath was exercised against religious houses and persons. Many monasteries were robbed, many clerical persons maimed and maltreated. It became a habit to deprive priests of their noses or ears, and to tie them to the tails of horses. This was the work of ruffian gangs, whose very existence was engendered out of the social and moral putrescence to which the country was reduced, and who were willing to profit by the deep and universal hatred which was felt against Catholics and monks. An edict thundered forth by Alva, authorizing and commanding all persons to slay the wild beggars at sight, without trial or hangman, was of comparatively slight avail. An armed force of veterans actively scouring the country was more successful, and the freebooters were, for a time, suppressed.

Page 479

Meantime the Counts Egmont and Horn had been kept in rigorous confinement at Ghent. Not a warrant had been read or drawn up for their arrest. Not a single preliminary investigation, not the shadow of an information had preceded the long imprisonment of two men so elevated in rank, so distinguished in the public service. After the expiration of two months, however, the Duke condescended to commence a mock process against them. The councillors appointed to this work were Vargas and Del Rio, assisted by Secretary Praets. These persons visited the Admiral on the 10th, 11th, 12th and 17th of November, and Count Egmont on the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 16th, of the same month; requiring them to respond to a long, confused, and rambling collection of interrogatories. They were obliged to render these replies in prison, unassisted by any advocates, on penalty of being condemned 'in contumaciam'. The questions, awkwardly drawn up as they seemed, were yet tortuously and cunningly arranged with a view of entrapping the prisoners into self-contradiction. After this work had been completed, all the papers by which they intended to justify their answers were taken away from them. Previously, too, their houses and those of their secretaries, Bakkerzeel and Alonzo de la Loo, had been thoroughly ransacked, and every letter and document which could be found placed in the hands of government. Bakkerzeel, moreover, as already stated, had been repeatedly placed upon the rack, for the purpose of extorting confessions which might implicate his master. These preliminaries and precautionary steps having been taken, the Counts had again been left to their solitude for two months longer. On the 10th January, each was furnished with a copy of the declarations or accusations filed against him by the procurator-general. To these documents, drawn up respectively in sixty-three, and in ninety articles, they were required, within five days' time, without the assistance of an advocate, and without consultation with any human being, to deliver a written answer, on pain, as before, of being proceeded against and condemned by default.

This order was obeyed within nearly the prescribed period and here, it may be said, their own participation in their trial ceased; while the rest of the proceedings were buried in the deep bosom of the Blood-Council. After their answers had been delivered, and not till then, the prisoners were, by an additional mockery, permitted to employ advocates. These advocates, however, were allowed only occasional interviews with their clients, and always in the presence of certain persons, especially deputed for that purpose by the Duke. They were also allowed commissioners to collect evidence and take depositions, but before the witnesses were ready, a purposely premature day, 8th of May, was fixed upon for declaring the case closed, and not a single tittle of their evidence, personal or documentary, was admitted.—Their advocates petitioned for an exhibition of the evidence

Page 480

prepared by government, and were refused. Thus, they were forbidden to use the testimony in their favor, while that which was to be employed against them was kept secret. Finally, the proceedings were formally concluded on the 1st of June, and the papers laid before the Duke. The mass of matter relating to these two monster processes was declared, three days afterwards to have been examined—a physical impossibility in itself—and judgment was pronounced upon the 4th of June. This issue was precipitated by the campaign of Louis Nassau in Friesland, forming a aeries of important events which it will be soon our duty to describe. It is previously necessary, however, to add a few words in elucidation of the two mock trials which have been thus briefly sketched.

The proceeding had been carried on, from first to last, under protest by the prisoners, under a threat of contumacy on the part of the government. Apart from the totally irresponsible and illegal character of the tribunal before which they were summoned—-the Blood-Council being a private institution of Alva's without pretext or commission—-these nobles acknowledged the jurisdiction of but three courts. As Knights of the Golden Fleece, both claimed the privilege of that Order to be tried by its statutes. As a citizen and noble of Brabant, Egmont claimed the protection of the "Joyeuse Entree," a constitution which had been sworn to by Philip and his ancestors, and by Philip more amply, than by all his ancestors. As a member and Count of the Holy Roman Empire, the Admiral claimed to be tried by his peers, the electors and princes of the realm.

The Countess Egmont, since her husband's arrest, and the confiscation of his estates before judgment, had been reduced to a life of poverty as well as agony. With her eleven children, all of tender age, she had taken refuge in a convent. Frantic with despair, more utterly desolate, and more deeply wronged than high-born lady had often been before, she left no stone unturned to save her husband from his fate, or at least to obtain for him an impartial and competent tribunal. She addressed the Duke of Alva, the King, the Emperor, her brother the Elector Palatine, and many leading Knights of the Fleece. The Countess Dowager of Horn, both whose sons now lay in the jaws of death, occupied herself also with the most moving appeals to the same high personages. No pains were spared to make the triple plea to the jurisdiction valid. The leading Knights of the Fleece, Mansfeld, whose loyalty was unquestioned, and Hoogstraaten, although himself an outlaw; called upon the King of Spain to protect the statutes of the illustrious order of which he was the chief. The estates of Brabant, upon the petition of Sabina, Countess Egmont, that they would take to heart the privileges of the province, so that her husband might enjoy that protection of which the meanest citizen in the land could not be justly deprived, addressed a feeble and trembling protest to Alva, and enclosed to him the lady's petition. The Emperor, on behalf of Count Horn, wrote personally to Philip, to claim for him a trial before the members of the realm.

Page 481

It was all in vain. The conduct of Philip and his Viceroy coincided in spirit with the honest brutality of Vargas. “Non curamus vestros privilegios,” summed up the whole of the proceedings. Non curamus vestros privilegios had been the unanswerable reply to every constitutional argument which had been made against tyranny since Philip mounted his father’s throne. It was now the only response deemed necessary to the crowd of petitions in favor of the Counts, whether they proceeded from sources humble or august. Personally, the King remained silent as the grave. In writing to the Duke of Alva, he observed that “the Emperor, the Dukes of Bavaria and Lorraine, the Duchess and the Duchess-dowager, had written to him many times, and in the most pressing manner, in favor of the Counts Horn and Egmont.” He added, that he had made no reply to them, nor to other Knights of the Fleece who had implored him to respect the statutes of the order, and he begged Alva “to hasten the process as fast as possible.” To an earnest autograph letter, in which the Emperor, on the 2nd of March, 1568, made a last effort to save the illustrious prisoners, he replied, that “the whole world would at last approve his conduct, but that, at any rate, he would not act differently, even if he should risk the loss of the provinces, and if the sky should fall on his head.”

But little heed was paid to the remonstrances in behalf of the imperial Courts, or the privileges of Brabant. These were but cobweb impediments which, indeed, had long been brushed away. President Viglius was even pathetic on the subject of Madame Egmont’s petition to the council of Brabant. It was so bitter, he said, that the Duke was slightly annoyed, and took it ill that the royal servants in that council should have his Majesty’s interests so little at heart. It seemed indecent in the eyes of the excellent Frisian, that a wife pleading for her husband, a mother for her, eleven children, so soon to be fatherless, should indulge in strong language!

The statutes of the Fleece were obstacles somewhat more serious. As, however, Alva had come to the Netherlands pledged to accomplish the destruction of these two nobles, as soon as he should lay his hands upon them, it was only a question of form, and even that question was, after a little reflection, unceremoniously put aside.

To the petitions in behalf of the two Counts, therefore, that they should be placed in the friendly keeping of the Order, and be tried by its statutes, the Duke replied, peremptorily, that he had undertaken the cognizance of this affair by commission of his Majesty, as sovereign of the land, not as head of the Golden Fleece, that he should carry it through as it had been commenced, and that the Counts should discontinue presentations of petitions upon this point.

Page 482

In the embarrassment created by the stringent language of these statutes, Doctor Viglius found an opportunity to make himself very useful. Alva had been turning over the laws and regulations of the Order, but could find no loophole. The President, however, came to his rescue, and announced it as his legal opinion that the Governor need concern himself no further on the subject, and that the code of the Fleece offered no legal impediment to the process. Alva immediately wrote to communicate this opinion to Philip, adding, with great satisfaction, that he should immediately make it known to the brethren of the Order, a step which was the more necessary because Egmont's advocate had been making great trouble with these privileges, and had been protesting at every step of the proceedings. In what manner the learned President argued these troublesome statutes out of the way, has nowhere appeared; but he completely reinstated himself in favor, and the King wrote to thank him for his legal exertions.

It was now boldly declared that the statutes of the Fleece did not extend to such crimes as those with which the prisoner were charged. Alva, moreover, received an especial patent, ante-dated eight or nine months, by which Philip empowered him to proceed against all persons implicated in the troubles, and particularly against Knights of the Golden Fleece.

It is superfluous to observe that these were merely the arbitrary acts of a despot. It is hardly necessary to criticise such proceedings. The execution of the nobles had been settled before Alva left Spain. As they were inhabitants of a constitutional country, it was necessary to stride over the constitution. As they were Knights of the Fleece, it was necessary to set aside the statutes of the Order. The Netherland constitutions seemed so entirely annihilated already, that they could hardly be considered obstacles; but the Order of the Fleece was an august little republic of which Philip was the hereditary chief, of which emperors, kings, and great seigniors were the citizens. Tyranny might be embarrassed by such subtle and golden filaments as these, even while it crashed through municipal charters as if they had been reeds and bulrushes. Nevertheless, the King's course was taken. Although the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth chapters of the Order expressly provided for the trial and punishment of brethren who had been guilty of rebellion, heresy, or treason; and although the eleventh chapter; perpetual and immutable, of additions to that constitution by the Emperor Charles, conferred on the Order exclusive jurisdiction over all crimes whatever committed by the knights, yet it was coolly proclaimed by Alva, that the crimes for which the Admiral and Egmont had been arrested, were beyond the powers of the tribunal.

So much for the plea to the jurisdiction. It is hardly worth while to look any further into proceedings which were initiated and brought to a conclusion in the manner already narrated. Nevertheless, as they were called a process, a single glance at the interior of that mass of documents can hardly be superfluous.

Page 483

The declaration against Count Horn; upon which, supported by invisible witnesses, he was condemned, was in the nature of a narrative. It consisted in a rehearsal of circumstances, some true and some fictitious, with five inferences. These five inferences amounted to five crimes—high treason, rebellion, conspiracy, misprision of treason, and breach of trust. The proof of these crimes was evolved, in a dim and misty manner, out of a purposely confused recital. No events, however, were recapitulated which have not been described in the course of this history. Setting out with a general statement, that the Admiral, the Prince of Orange, Count Egmont, and other lords had organized a plot to expel his Majesty from the Netherlands, and to divide the provinces among themselves; the declaration afterwards proceeded to particulars. Ten of its sixty-three articles were occupied with the Cardinal Granvelle, who, by an absurd affectation, was never directly named, but called “a certain personage—a principal personage—a grand personage, of his Majesty’s state council.” None of the offences committed against him were forgotten: the 11th of March letter, the fool’s-cap, the livery, were reproduced in the most violent colors, and the cabal against the minister was quietly assumed to constitute treason against the monarch.

The Admiral, it was further charged, had advised and consented to the fusion of the finance and privy councils with that of state, a measure which was clearly treasonable. He had, moreover, held interviews with the Prince of Orange, with Egmont, and other nobles, at Breda and at Hoogstraaten, at which meetings the confederacy and the petition had been engendered. That petition had been the cause of all the evils which had swept the land. “It had scandalously injured the King, by affirming that the inquisition was a tyranny to humanity, which was an infamous and unworthy proposition.” The confederacy, with his knowledge and countenance, had enrolled 30,000 men. He had done nothing, any more than Orange or Egmont, to prevent the presentation of the petition. In the consultation at the state-council which ensued, both he and the Prince were for leaving Brussels at once, while Count Egmont expressed an intention of going to Aix to drink the waters. Yet Count Egmont’s appearance (proceeded this indictment against another individual) exhibited not a single sign of sickness. The Admiral had, moreover, drank the toast of “Vivent leg gueux” on various occasions, at the Culemberg House banquet, at the private table of the Prince of Orange, at a supper at the monastery of Saint Bernard’s, at a dinner given by Burgomaster Straalen. He had sanctioned the treaties with the rebels at Duffel, by which he had clearly rendered himself guilty of high treason. He had held an interview with Orange, Egmont, and Hoogstraaten, at Denremonde, for the treasonable purpose of arranging a levy of troops to prevent his Majesty’s entrance into the Netherlands.

Page 484

He had refused to come to Brussels at the request of the Duchess of Parma, when the rebels were about to present the petition. He had written to his secretary that he was thenceforth resolved to serve neither King nor Kaiser. He had received from one Taffin, with marks of approbation, a paper, stating that the assembling of the states-general was the only remedy for the troubles in the land. He had, repeatedly affirmed that the inquisition and edicts ought to be repealed.

On his arrival at Tournay in August, 1566, the people had cried “Vivent les gueux;” a proof that he liked the cry. All his transactions at Tournay, from first to last, had been criminal. He had tolerated Reformed preaching, he had forbidden Catholics and Protestants to molest each other, he had omitted to execute heretics, he had allowed the religionists to erect an edifice for public worship outside the walls. He had said, at the house of Prince Espinoy, that if the King should come into the provinces with force, he would oppose him with 15,000 troops. He had said, if his brother Montigny should be detained in Spain, he would march to his rescue at the head of 50,000 men whom he had at his command. He had on various occasions declared that “men should live according to their consciences”—as if divine and human laws were dead, and men, like wild beasts, were to follow all their lusts and desires. Lastly, he had encouraged the rebellion in Valenciennes.

Of all these crimes and misdeeds the procurator declared himself sufficiently informed, and the aforesaid defendant entirely, commonly, and publicly defamed.

Wherefore, that officer terminated his declaration by claiming “that the cause should be concluded summarily, and without figure or form of process; and that therefore, by his Excellency or his sub-delegated judges, the aforesaid defendant should be declared to have in diverse ways committed high treason, should be degraded from his dignities, and should be condemned to death, with confiscation of all his estates.”

The Admiral, thus peremptorily summoned, within five days, without assistance, without documents, and from the walls of a prison, to answer to these charges, ‘solos ex vinculis causam dicere’, undertook his task with the boldness of innocence. He protested, of course, to the jurisdiction, and complained of the want of an advocate, not in order to excuse any weakness in his defence, but only any inelegance in his statement. He then proceeded flatly to deny some of the facts, to admit others, and to repel the whole treasonable inference. His answer in all essential respects was triumphant. Supported by the evidence which, alas was not collected and published till after his death, it was impregnable.

Page 485

He denied that he had ever plotted against his King, to whom he had ever been attached, but admitted that he had desired the removal of Granvelle, to whom he had always been hostile. He had, however, been an open and avowed enemy to the Cardinal, and had been engaged in no secret conspiracy against his character or against his life. He denied that the livery (for which, however, he was not responsible) had been intended to ridicule the Cardinal, but asserted that it was intended to afford an example of economy to an extravagant nobility. He had met Orange and Egmont at Breda and Hoogstraaten, and had been glad to do so, for he had been long separated from them. These interviews, however, had been social, not political, for good cheer and merry-making, not for conspiracy and treason. He had never had any connection with the confederacy; he had neither advised nor protected the petition, but, on the contrary, after hearing of the contemplated movement, had written to give notice thereof to the Duchess. He was in no manner allied, with Brederode, but, on the contrary, for various reasons, was not upon friendly terms with him. He had not entered his house since his return from Spain. He had not been a party to the dinner at Culemburg House. Upon that day he had dined with the Prince of Orange, with whom he was lodging and, after dinner, they had both gone together to visit Mansfeld, who was confined with an inflamed eye. There they had met Egmont, and the three had proceeded together to Culemburg House in order to bring away Hoogstraaten, whom the confederates had compelled to dine with them; and also to warn the nobles not to commit themselves by extravagant and suspicious excesses. They had remained in the house but a few minutes, during which time the company had insisted upon their drinking a single cup to the toast of “Vivent le roy et les gueux.” They had then retired, taking with them Hoogstraaten, and all thinking that they had rendered a service to the government by their visit, instead of having made themselves liable to a charge of treason. As to the cries of “Vivent les gueux” at the tables of Orange, of the Abbot of Saint Bernard, and at other places, those words had been uttered by simple, harmless fellows; and as he considered, the table a place of freedom, he had not felt himself justified in rebuking the manners of his associates, particularly, in houses where he was himself but a guest. As for committing treason at the Duffel meeting, he had not been there at all.

He thanked God that, at that epoch, he had been absent from Brussels, for had he, as well as Orange and Egmont, been commissioned by the Duchess to arrange those difficult matters, he should have considered it his duty to do as they did. He had never thought of levying troops against his Majesty. The Denremonde meeting had been held, to consult upon four subjects: the affairs of Tournay; the intercepted letters of the French ambassador, Alava; the letter of Montigny,

Page 486

in which he warned his brother of the evil impression which the Netherland matters were making in Spain; and the affairs of Antwerp, from which city the Prince of Orange found it necessary at that moment to withdraw.—With regard to his absence from Brussels, he stated that he had kept away from the Court because he was ruined. He was deeply in debt, and so complete was his embarrassment, that he had been unable in Antwerp to raise 1000 crowns upon his property, even at an interest of one hundred per cent. So far from being able to levy troops, he was hardly able to pay for his daily bread. With regard to his transactions at Tournay, he had, throughout them all, conformed himself to the instructions of Madame de Parma. As to the cry of “Vivent les gueux,” he should not have cared at that moment if the populace had cried ‘Vive Comte Horn’, for his thoughts were then occupied with more substantial matters. He had gone thither under a special commission from the Duchess, and had acted under instructions daily received by her own hand. He had, by her orders, effected a temporary compromise between the two religious parties, on the basis of the Duffel treaty. He had permitted the public preaching to continue, but had not introduced it for the first time. He had allowed temples to be built outside the gates, but it was by express command of Madame, as he could prove by her letters. She had even reproved him before the council, because the work had not been accomplished with sufficient despatch. With regard to his alleged threat, that he would oppose the King’s entrance with 15,000 men, he answered, with astonishing simplicity, that he did not remember making any such observation, but it was impossible for a man to retain in his mind all the nonsense which he might occasionally utter. The honest Admiral thought that his poverty, already pleaded, was so notorious that the charge was not worthy of a serious answer. He also treated the observation which he was charged with having made, relative to his marching to Spain with 50,000 men to rescue Montigny as “frivolous and ridiculous.” He had no power to raise a hundred men. Moreover he had rejoiced at Montigny’s detention, for he had thought that to be out of the Netherlands was to be out of harm’s way. On the whole, he claimed that in all those transactions of his which might be considered anti-Catholic, he had been governed entirely by the instructions of the Regent, and by her Accord with the nobles. That Accord, as she had repeatedly stated to him, was to be kept sacred until his Majesty, by advice of the states-general, should otherwise ordain.

Finally, he observed, that law was not his vocation. He was no pettifogger, but he had endeavored loyally to conform himself to the broad and general principles of honor, justice, and truth. In a very few and simple words, he begged his judges to have regard to his deeds, and to a life of loyal service. If he had erred occasionally in those times of tumult, his intentions had ever been faithful and honorable.

Page 487

The charges against Count Egmont were very similar to those against Count Horn. The answers of both defendants were nearly identical. Interrogations thus addressed to two different persons, as to circumstances which had occurred long before, could not have been thus separately, secretly, but simultaneously answered in language substantially the same, had not that language been the words of truth. Egmont was accused generally of plotting with others to expel the King from the provinces, and to divide the territory among themselves. Through a long series of ninety articles, he was accused of conspiring against the character and life of Cardinal Granvelle. He was the inventor, it was charged, of the fool's-cap livery. He had joined in the letters to the King, demanding the prelate's removal. He had favored the fusion of the three councils. He had maintained that the estates-general ought to be forthwith assembled, that otherwise the debts of his Majesty and of the country could never be paid, and that the provinces would go to the French, to the Germans, or to the devil. He had asserted that he would not be instrumental in burning forty or fifty thousand men, in order that the inquisition and the edicts might be sustained. He had declared that the edicts were rigorous. He had advised the Duchess, to moderate them, and remove the inquisition, saying that these measures, with a pardon general in addition, were the only means of quieting the country. He had advised the formation of the confederacy, and promised to it his protection and favor. He had counselled the presentation of the petition. He had arranged all these matters, in consultation with the other nobles, at the interviews at Breda and Hoogstraaten. He had refused the demand of Madame de Parma, to take arms in her defence. He had expressed his intention, at a most critical moment, of going to the baths of Aix for his health, although his personal appearance gave no indication of any malady whatever. He had countenanced and counselled the proceedings of the rebel nobles at Saint Trond. He had made an accord with those of "the religion" at Ghent, Bruges, and other places. He had advised the Duchess to grant a pardon to those who had taken up arms. He had maintained, in common with the Prince of Orange, at a session of the state council, that if Madame should leave Brussels, they would assemble the states-general of their own authority, and raise a force of forty thousand men. He had plotted treason, and made arrangements for the levy of troops at the interview at Denremonde, with Horn, Hoogstraaten, and the Prince of Orange. He had taken under his protection on the 20th April, 1566, the confederacy of the rebels; had promised that they should never be molested, for the future, on account of the inquisition or the edicts, and that so long as they kept within the terms of the Petition and the Compromise, he would defend them with his own person. He had granted liberty of

Page 488

preaching outside the walls in many cities within his government. He had said repeatedly, that if the King desired to introduce the inquisition into the Netherlands, he would sell all his property and remove to another land; thus declaring with how much contempt and detestation he regarded the said inquisition. He had winked at all the proceedings of the sectaries. He had permitted the cry of “Vivent les gueux” at his table. He had assisted at the banquet at Culemburg House.

These were the principal points in the interminable act of accusation. Like the Admiral, Egmont admitted many of the facts, and flatly denied the rest. He indignantly repelled the possibility of a treasonable inference from any of, or all, his deeds. He had certainly desired the removal of Granvelle, for he believed that the King’s service would profit by his recal. He replied, almost in the same terms as the Admiral had done, to the charge concerning the livery, and asserted that its principal object had been to set an example of economy. The fool’s-cap and bells had been changed to a bundle of arrows, in consequence of a certain rumor which became rife in Brussels, and in obedience to an ordinance of Madame de Parma. As to the assembling of the states-general, the fusion of the councils, the moderation of the edicts, he had certainly been in favor of these measures, which he considered to be wholesome and lawful, not mischievous or treasonable. He had certainly maintained that the edicts were rigorous, and had advised the Duchess, under the perilous circumstances of the country, to grant a temporary modification until the pleasure of his Majesty could be known. With regard to the Compromise, he had advised all his friends to keep out of it, and many in consequence had kept out of it. As to the presentation of the petition, he had given Madame de Parma notice thereof, so soon as he had heard that such a step was contemplated. He used the same language as had been employed by Horn, with regard to the interview at Breda and Hoogstraaten—that they had been meetings of “good cheer” and good fellowship. He had always been at every moment at the command of the Duchess, save when he had gone to Flanders and Artois to suppress the tumults, according to her express orders. He had no connexion with the meeting of the nobles at Saint Trond. He had gone to Duffel as special envoy from the Duchess, to treat with certain plenipotentiaries appointed at the Saint Trond meeting. He had strictly conformed to the letter of instructions, drawn up by the Duchess, which would be found among his papers, but he had never promised the nobles his personal aid or protection. With regard to the Denremonde meeting, he gave almost exactly the same account as Horn had given. The Prince, the Admiral, and himself, had conversed between a quarter past eleven and dinner time, which was twelve o’clock, on various matters, particularly upon the King’s dissatisfaction with recent events

Page 489

in the Netherlands, and upon a certain letter from the ambassador Alava in Paris to the Duchess of Parma. He had, however, expressed his opinion to Madame that the letter was a forgery. He had permitted public preaching in certain cities, outside the walls, where it had already been established, because this was in accordance with the treaty which Madame had made at Duffel, which she had ordered him honorably to maintain. He had certainly winked at the religious exercises of the Reformers, because he had been expressly commanded to do so, and because the government at that time was not provided with troops to suppress the new religion by force. He related the visit of Horn, Orange, and himself to Culemburg House, at the memorable banquet, in almost the same words which the Admiral had used. He had done all in his power to prevent Madame from leaving Brussels, in which effort he had been successful, and from which much good had resulted to the country. He had never recommended that a pardon should be granted to those who had taken up arms, but on the contrary, had advised their chastisement, as had appeared in his demeanor towards the rebels at Osterwel, Tournay, and Valenciennes. He had never permitted the cry of “Vivent les gueux” at his own table, nor encouraged it in his presence any where else.

Such were the leading features in these memorable cases of what was called high treason. Trial there was none. The tribunal was incompetent; the prisoners were without advocates; the government evidence was concealed; the testimony for the defence was excluded; and the cause was finally decided before a thousandth part of its merits could have been placed under the eyes of the judge who gave the sentence.

But it is almost puerile to speak of the matter in the terms usually applicable to state trials. The case had been settled in Madrid long before the arrest of the prisoners in Brussels. The sentence, signed by Philip in blank, had been brought in Alva’s portfolio from Spain. The proceedings were a mockery, and, so far as any effect upon public opinion was concerned, might as well have been omitted. If the gentlemen had been shot in the court-yard of Jasse-house, by decree of a drum-head court-martial, an hour after their arrest, the rights of the provinces and the sentiments of humanity would not have been outraged more utterly. Every constitutional and natural right was violated from first to last. This certainly was not a novelty. Thousands of obscure individuals, whose relations and friends were not upon thrones and in high places, but in booths and cellars, and whose fate therefore did not send a shudder of sympathy throughout Europe, had already been sacrificed by the Blood tribunal. Still this great case presented a colossal emblem of the condition in which the Netherlands were now gasping. It was a monumental exhibition of the truth which thousands had already learned to their cost, that law and justice were abrogated throughout the land.

Page 490

The country was simply under martial law—the entire population under sentence of death. The whole civil power was in Alva's hand; the whole responsibility in Alva's breast. Neither the most ignoble nor the most powerful could lift their heads in the sublime desolation which was sweeping the country. This was now proved beyond peradventure. A miserable cobbler or weaver might be hurried from his shop to the scaffold, invoking the 'jus de non evocando' till he was gagged, but the Emperor would not stoop from his throne, nor electors palatine and powerful nobles rush to his rescue; but in behalf of these prisoners the most august hands and voices of Christendom had been lifted up at the foot of Philip's throne; and their supplications had proved as idle as the millions of tears and death-cries which had beep shed or uttered in the lowly places of the land. It was obvious; then, that all intercession must thereafter be useless. Philip was fanatically impressed with his mission. His viceroy was possessed by his loyalty as by a demon. In this way alone, that conduct which can never be palliated may at least be comprehended. It was Philip's enthusiasm to embody the wrath of God against heretics. It was Alva's enthusiasm to embody the wrath of Philip. Narrow-minded, isolated, seeing only that section of the world which was visible through the loop-hole of the fortress in which Nature had imprisoned him for life, placing his glory in unconditional obedience to his superior, questioning nothing, doubting nothing, fearing nothing, the viceroy accomplished his work of hell with all the tranquillity of an angel. An iron will, which clove through every obstacle; adamantine fortitude, which sustained without flinching a mountain of responsibility sufficient to crush a common nature, were qualities which, united to, his fanatical obedience, made him a man for Philip's work such as could not have been found again in the world.

The case, then, was tried before a tribunal which was not only incompetent, under the laws of the land, but not even a court of justice in any philosophical or legal sense. Constitutional and municipal law were not more outraged in its creation, than all national and natural maxims.

The reader who has followed step by step the career of the two distinguished victims through the perilous days of Margaret's administration, is sufficiently aware of the amount of treason with which they are chargeable. It would be an insult to common sense for us to set forth, in full, the injustice of their sentence. Both were guiltless towards the crown; while the hands of one, on the contrary, were deeply dyed in the blood of the people. This truth was so self-evident, that even a member of the Blood-Council, Pierre Arsens, president of Artois, addressed an elaborate memoir to the Duke of Alva, criticising the case according to the rules of law, and maintaining that Egmont, instead of deserving punishment, was entitled to a signal reward.

Page 491

So much for the famous treason of Counts Egmont and Horn, so far as regards the history of the proceedings and the merits of the case. The last act of the tragedy was precipitated by occurrences which must be now narrated.

The Prince of Orange had at last thrown down the gauntlet. Proscribed, outlawed, with his Netherland property confiscated, and his eldest child kidnapped, he saw sufficient personal justification for at last stepping into the lists, the avowed champion of a nation's wrongs. Whether the revolution was to be successful, or to be disastrously crushed; whether its result would be to place him upon a throne or a scaffold, not even he, the deep-revolving and taciturn politician, could possibly foresee. The Reformation, in which he took both a political and a religious interest, might prove a sufficient lever in his hands for the overthrow of Spanish power in the Netherlands. The inquisition might roll back upon his country and himself, crushing them forever. The chances seemed with the inquisition. The Spaniards, under the first chieftain in Europe, were encamped and entrenched in the provinces. The Huguenots had just made their fatal peace in France, to the prophetic dissatisfaction of Coligny. The leading men of liberal sentiments in the Netherlands were captive or in exile. All were embarrassed by the confiscations which, in anticipation of sentence, had severed the nerves of war. The country was terror-stricken; paralyzed, motionless, abject, forswearing its convictions, and imploring only life. At this moment William of Orange reappeared upon the scene.

He replied to the act of condemnation, which had been pronounced against him in default, by a published paper, of moderate length and great eloquence. He had repeatedly offered to place himself, he said, upon trial before a competent court. As a Knight of the Fleece, as a member of the Holy Roman Empire, as a sovereign prince, he could acknowledge no tribunal save the chapters of the knights or of the realm. The Emperor's personal intercession with Philip had been employed in vain, to obtain the adjudication of his case by either. It would be both death and degradation on his part to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the infamous Council of Blood. He scorned, he said, to plead his cause "before he knew not what base knaves, not fit to be the valets of his companions and himself."

He appealed therefore to the judgment of the world. He published not an elaborate argument, but a condensed and scathing statement of the outrages which had been practised upon him. He denied that he had been a party to the Compromise. He denied that he had been concerned in the Request, although he denounced with scorn the tyranny which could treat a petition to government as an act of open war against the sovereign. He spoke of Granvelle with unmeasured wrath. He maintained that his own continuance in office had been desired by the cardinal, in order that his personal

Page 492

popularity might protect the odious designs of the government. The edicts, the inquisition, the persecution, the new bishoprics, had been the causes of the tumults. He concluded with a burst of indignation against Philip's conduct toward himself. The monarch had forgotten his services and those of his valiant ancestors. He had robbed him of honor, he had robbed him of his son—both dearer to him than life. By thus doing he had degraded himself more than he had injured him, for he had broken all his royal oaths and obligations.

The paper was published early in the summer of 1568. At about the same time, the Count of Hoogstraaten published a similar reply to the act of condemnation with which he had been visited. He defended himself mainly upon the ground, that all the crimes of which he stood arraigned had been committed in obedience to the literal instructions of the Duchess of Parma, after her accord with the confederates.

The Prince now made the greatest possible exertions to raise funds and troops. He had many meetings with influential individuals in Germany. The Protestant princes, particularly the Landgrave of Hesse and the Elector of Saxony, promised him assistance. He brought all his powers of eloquence and of diplomacy to make friends for the cause which he had now boldly espoused. The high-born Demosthenes electrified large assemblies by his indignant invectives against the Spanish Philip. He excelled even his royal antagonist in the industrious subtlety with which he began to form a thousand combinations. Swift, secret, incapable of fatigue, this powerful and patient intellect sped to and fro, disentangling the perplexed skein where all had seemed so hopelessly confused, and gradually unfolding broad schemes of a symmetrical and regenerated polity. He had high correspondents and higher hopes in England. He was already secretly or openly in league with half the sovereigns of Germany. The Huguenots of France looked upon him as their friend, and on Louis of Nassau as their inevitable chieftain, were Coligny destined to fall. He was in league with all the exiled and outlawed nobles of the Netherlands. By his orders recruits were daily enlisted, without sound of drum. He granted a commission to his brother Louis, one of the most skilful and audacious soldiers of the age, than whom the revolt could not have found a more determined partisan, nor the Prince a more faithful lieutenant.

This commission, which was dated Dillenburg, 6th April, 1568, was a somewhat startling document. It authorized the Count to levy troops and wage war against Philip, strictly for Philip's good. The fiction of loyalty certainly never went further. The Prince of Orange made known to all "to whom those presents should come," that through the affection which he bore the gracious King, he purposed to expel his Majesty's forces from the Netherlands. "To show our love for the monarch and his hereditary provinces," so ran the commission, "to prevent the desolation hanging over the country by the ferocity of the Spaniards, to maintain the privileges sworn to by his Majesty and his predecessors, to prevent the extirpation of all religion by the edicts, and to save the

sons and daughters of the land from abject slavery, we have requested our dearly beloved brother Louis Nassau to enrol as many troops as he shall think necessary."

Page 493

Van der Bergh, Hoogstraaten, and others, provided with similar powers, were also actively engaged in levying troops; but the right hand of the revolt was Count Louis, as his illustrious brother was its head and heart. Two hundred thousand crowns was the sum which the Prince considered absolutely necessary for organizing the army with which he contemplated making an entrance into the Netherlands. Half this amount had been produced by the cities of Antwerp, Amsterdam, Leyden, Harlem, Middelburg, Flushing, and other towns, as well as by refugee merchants in England. The other half was subscribed by individuals. The Prince himself contributed 50,000 florins, Hoogstraaten 30,000, Louis of Nassau 10,000, Culemberg 30,000, Van der Bergh 30,000, the Dowager-countess Horn 10,000, and other persons in less proportion. Count John of Nassau also pledged his estates to raise a large sum for the cause. The Prince himself sold all his jewels, plate, tapestry, and other furniture, which were of almost regal magnificence. Not an enthusiast, but a deliberate, cautious man, he now staked his all upon the hazard, seemingly so desperate. The splendor of his station has been sufficiently depicted. His luxury, his fortune, his family, his life, his children, his honor, all were now ventured, not with the recklessness of a gambler, but with the calm conviction of a statesman.

A private and most audacious attempt to secure the person: of Alva and the possession of Brussels had failed. He was soon, however, called upon to employ all his energies against the open warfare which was now commenced.

According to the plan of the Prince, the provinces were to be attacked simultaneously, in three places, by his lieutenants, while he himself was waiting in the neighborhood of Cleves, ready for a fourth assault. An army of Huguenots and refugees was to enter Artois upon the frontier of France; a second, under Hoogstraaten, was to operate between the Rhine and the Meuse; while Louis of Nassau was to raise the standard of revolt in Friesland.

The two first adventures were destined to be signally unsuccessful. A force under Seigneur de Cocqueville, latest of all, took the field towards the end of June. It entered the bailiwick of Hesdin in Artois, was immediately driven across the frontier by the Count de Roeulx, and cut to pieces at St. Valery by Marechal de Cossis, governor of Picardy. This action was upon the 18th July. Of the 2500 men who composed the expedition, scarce 300 escaped. The few Netherlanders who were taken prisoners were given to the Spanish government, and, of course, hanged.

The force under the Seigneur de Villars was earlier under arms, and the sooner defeated. This luckless gentleman, who had replaced the Count of Hoogstraaten, crossed the frontier of Juliers; in the neighborhood of Maestricht, by the 20th April. His force, infantry and cavalry, amounted to nearly three thousand men. The object of the enterprise was to, raise the country; and, if possible, to obtain a foothold by securing an important city. Roermonde was the first point of attack, but the attempts, both by stratagem and by force, to secure the town, were fruitless. The citizens were not ripe

for revolt, and refused the army admittance. While the invaders were, therefore, endeavoring to fire the gates, they were driven off by the approach of a Spanish force.

Page 494

The Duke, so soon as the invasion was known to him, had acted with great promptness. Don Sancho de Lodrono and Don Sancho de Avila, with five vanderas of Spanish infantry, three companies of cavalry, and about three hundred pikemen under Count Eberstein, a force amounting in all to about 1600 picked troops, had been at once despatched against Villars. The rebel chieftain, abandoning his attempt upon Roermonde, advanced towards Erkelens. Upon the 25th April, between Erkelens and Dalem, the Spaniards came up with him, and gave him battle. Villars lost all his cavalry and two vanderas of his infantry in the encounter. With the remainder of his force, amounting to 1300 men, he effected his retreat in good order to Dalem. Here he rapidly entrenched himself. At four in the afternoon, Sancho de Lodrono, at the head of 600 infantry, reached the spot. He was unable to restrain the impetuosity of his men, although the cavalry under Avila, prevented by the difficult nature of the narrow path through which the rebels had retreated, had not yet arrived. The enemy were two to one, and were fortified; nevertheless, in half an hour the entrenchments were carried, and almost every man in the patriot army put to the sword. Villars himself, with a handful of soldiers, escaped into the town, but was soon afterwards taken prisoner, with all his followers. He sullied the cause in which he was engaged by a base confession of the designs formed by the Prince of Orange—a treachery, however, which did not save him from the scaffold. In the course of this day's work, the Spanish lost twenty men, and the rebels nearly 200. This portion of the liberating forces had been thus disastrously defeated on the eve of the entrance of Count Louis into Friesland.

As early as the 22d April, Alva had been informed, by the lieutenant-governor of that province, that the beggars were mustering in great force in the neighborhood of Embden. It was evident that an important enterprise was about to be attempted. Two days afterwards, Louis of Nassau entered the provinces, attended by a small body of troops. His banners blazed with patriotic inscriptions. 'Nunc aut nunquam, Recuperare aut mori', were the watchwords of his desperate adventure: "Freedom for fatherland and conscience" was the device which was to draw thousands to his standard. On the western wolds of Frisia, he surprised the castle of Wedde, a residence of the absent Aremberg, stadholder of the province. Thence he advanced to Appingadam, or Dam, on the tide waters of the Dollart. Here he was met by, his younger brother, the gallant Adolphus, whose days were so nearly numbered, who brought with him a small troop of horse. At Wedde, at Dam, and at Slochteren, the standard was set up. At these three points there daily gathered armed bodies of troops, voluntary adventurers, peasants with any rustic weapon which they could find to their hand. Lieutenant-governor Groesbeck wrote urgently to the Duke, that the beggars were hourly increasing in force; that the leaders perfectly understood their game; that they kept their plans a secret, but were fast seducing the heart of the country.

Page 495

On the 4th May, Louis issued a summons to the magistracy of Groningen, ordering them to send a deputation to confer with him at Dam. He was prepared, he said, to show the commission with which he was provided. He had not entered the country on a mere personal adventure, but had received orders to raise a sufficient army. By the help of the eternal God, he was determined, he said, to extirpate the detestable tyranny of those savage persecutors who had shed so much Christian blood. He was resolved to lift up the down-trod privileges, and, to protect the fugitive, terror-stricken Christians and patriarchs of the country. If the magistrates were disposed to receive him with friendship, it was well. Otherwise, he should, with regret, feel himself obliged to proceed against them, as enemies of his Majesty and of the common weal.

As the result of this summons, Louis received a moderate sum of money, on condition of renouncing for the moment an attack upon the city. With this temporary supply he was able to retain a larger number of the adventurers; who were daily swarming around him.

In the mean time Alva was not idle. On the 30th April, he wrote to Groesbeck, that he must take care not to be taken napping; that he must keep his eyes well open until the arrival of succor, which was already on the way. He then immediately ordered Count Aremberg, who had just returned from France on conclusion of hostilities, to hasten to the seat of war. Five vanderas of his own regiment; a small body of cavalry, and Braccamonte's Sardinian legion, making in all a force of nearly 2500 men, were ordered to follow him with the utmost expedition. Count Meghem, stadholder of Gueldres, with five vanderas of infantry, three of light horse, and some artillery, composing a total of about 1500 men, was directed to co-operate with Aremberg. Upon this point the orders of the Governor-general were explicit. It seemed impossible that the rabble rout under Louis Nassau could stand a moment before nearly 4000 picked and veteran troops, but the Duke was earnest in warning his generals not to undervalue the enemy.

On the 7th May, Counts Meghem and Aremberg met and conferred at Arnheim, on their way to Friesland. It was fully agreed between them, after having heard full reports of the rising in that province, and of the temper throughout the eastern Netherlands, that it would be rash to attempt any separate enterprise. On the 11th, Aremberg reached Vollenhoven, where he was laid up in his bed with the gout. Bodies of men, while he lay sick, paraded hourly with fife and drum before his windows, and discharged pistols and arquebuses across the ditch of the blockhouse where he was quartered. On the 18th, Braccamonte, with his legion, arrived by water at Harlingen. Not a moment more was lost. Aremberg, notwithstanding his gout, which still confined him to a litter, started at once in pursuit of the enemy. Passing through Groningen, he collected all the troops which could

Page 496

be spared.. He also received six pieces of artillery. Six cannon, which the lovers of harmony had baptized with the notes of the gamut, ‘ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la’, were placed at his disposal by the authorities, and have acquired historical celebrity. It was, however, ordained that when those musical pieces piped, the Spaniards were not to dance. On the 22d, followed by his whole force, consisting of Braccamonte’s legion, his own four vanderas, and a troop of Germans, he came in sight of the enemy at Dam. Louis of Nassau sent out a body of arquebusiers, about one thousand strong, from the city. A sharp skirmish ensued, but the beggars were driven into their entrenchments, with a loss of twenty or thirty men, and nightfall terminated the contest.

It was beautiful to see, wrote Aremberg to Alva, how brisk and eager were the Spaniards, notwithstanding the long march which they had that day accomplished. Time was soon to show how easily immoderate, valor might swell into a fault. Meantime, Aremberg quartered his troops in and about Wittewerum Abbey, close to the little unwalled city of Dam.

On the other hand, Meghem, whose co-operation had been commanded by Alva, and arranged personally with Aremberg a fortnight before, at Arnheim, had been delayed in his movements. His troops, who had received no wages for a long time had mutinied. A small sum of money, however, sent from Brussels, quelled this untimely insubordination. Meghem then set forth to effect his junction with his colleague, having assured the Governor-general that the war would be ended in six days. The beggars had not a stiver, he said, and must disband or be beaten to pieces as soon as Aremberg and he had joined forces. Nevertheless he admitted that these same “master-beggars,” as he called them, might prove too many for either general alone.

Alva, in reply, expressed his confidence that four or five thousand choice troops of Spain would be enough to make a short war of it, but nevertheless warned his officers of the dangers of overweening confidence. He had been informed that the rebels had assumed the red scarf of the Spanish uniform. He hoped the stratagem would not save them from broken heads, but was unwilling that his Majesty’s badge should be altered.

He reiterated his commands that no enterprise should be undertaken, except by the whole army in concert; and enjoined the generals incontinently to hang and strangle all prisoners the moment they should be taken.

Marching directly northward, Meghem reached Coeverden, some fifty miles from Dam, on the night of the 22d. He had informed Aremberg that he might expect him with his infantry and his light horse in the course of the next day. On the following morning, the 23d, Aremberg wrote his last letter to the Duke, promising to send a good account of the beggars within a very few hours.

Page 497

Louis of Nassau had broken up his camp at Dam about midnight. Falling back, in a southerly direction, along the Wold-weg, or forest road, a narrow causeway through a swampy district, he had taken up a position some three leagues from his previous encampment. Near the monastery of Heiliger Lee, or the “Holy Lion,” he had chosen his ground. A little money in hand, ample promises, and the hopes of booty, had effectually terminated the mutiny, which had also broken out in his camp. Assured that Meghem had not yet effected his junction with Aremberg, prepared to strike, at last, a telling blow for freedom and fatherland, Louis awaited the arrival of his eager foe.

His position was one of commanding strength and fortunate augury. Heiliger Lee was a wooded eminence, artificially reared by Premonstrant monks. It was the only rising ground in that vast extent of watery pastures, enclosed by the Ems and Lippe—the “fallacious fields” described by Tacitus. Here Hermann, first of Teutonic heroes, had dashed out of existence three veteran legions of tyrant Rome. Here the spectre of Varus, begrimed and gory, had risen from the morass to warn Germanicus, who came to avenge him, that Gothic freedom was a dangerous antagonist. And now, in the perpetual reproductions of history, another German warrior occupied a spot of vantage in that same perilous region. The tyranny with which he contended strove to be as universal as that of Rome, and had stretched its wings of conquest into worlds of which the Caesars had never dreamed. It was in arms, too, to crush not only the rights of man, but the rights of God. The battle of freedom was to be fought not only for fatherland, but for conscience. The cause was even holier than that which had inspired the arm of Hermann.

Although the swamps of that distant age had been transformed into fruitful pastures, yet the whole district was moist, deceitful, and dangerous. The country was divided into squares, not by hedges but by impassable ditches. Agricultural entrenchments had long made the country almost impregnable, while its defences against the ocean rendered almost as good service against a more implacable human foe.

Aremberg, leading his soldiers along the narrow causeway, in hot pursuit of what they considered a rabble rout of fugitive beggars, soon reached Winschoten. Here he became aware of the presence of his despicable foe. Louis and Adolphus of Nassau, while sitting at dinner in the convent of the “Holy Lion,” had been warned by a friendly peasant of the approach of the Spaniards. The opportune intelligence had given the patriot general time to make his preparations. His earnest entreaties had made his troops ashamed of their mutinous conduct on the preceding day, and they were now both ready and willing to engage. The village was not far distant from the abbey, and in the neighborhood of the abbey Louis of Nassau was now posted. Behind him was a wood, on his left

Page 498

a hill of moderate elevation, before him an extensive and swampy field. In the front of the field was a causeway leading to the abbey. This was the road which Aremberg was to traverse. On the plain which lay between the wood and the hill, the main body of the beggars were drawn up. They were disposed in two squares or squadrons, rather deep than wide, giving the idea of a less number than they actually contained. The lesser square, in which were two thousand eight hundred men, was partially sheltered by the hill. Both were flanked by musketeers. On the brow of the hill was a large body of light armed troops, the 'enfans perdus' of the army. The cavalry, amounting to not more than three hundred men, was placed in front, facing the road along which Aremberg was to arrive.

That road was bordered by a wood extending nearly to the front of the hill. As Aremberg reached its verge, he brought out his artillery, and opened a fire upon the body of light troops. The hill protected a large part of the enemy's body from this attack. Finding the rebels so strong in numbers and position, Aremberg was disposed only to skirmish. He knew better than did his soldiers the treacherous nature of the ground in front of the enemy. He saw that it was one of those districts where peat had been taken out in large squares for fuel, and where a fallacious and verdant scum upon the surface of deep pools simulated the turf that had been removed. He saw that the battle-ground presented to him by his sagacious enemy was one great sweep of traps and pitfalls. Before he could carry the position, many men must necessarily be engulfed.

He paused for an instant. He was deficient in cavalry, having only Martinengo's troop, hardly amounting to four hundred men. He was sure of Meghem's arrival within twenty-four hours. If, then, he could keep the rebels in check, without allowing them any opportunity to disperse, he should be able, on the morrow, to cut them to pieces, according to the plan agreed upon a fortnight before. But the Count had to contend with a double obstacle. His soldiers were very hot, his enemy very cool. The Spaniards, who had so easily driven a thousand musketeers from behind their windmill, the evening before, who had seen the whole rebel force decamp in hot haste on the very night of their arrival before Dam, supposed themselves in full career of victory. Believing that the name alone of the old legions had stricken terror to the hearts of the beggars, and that no resistance was possible to Spanish arms, they reviled their general for his caution. His reason for delay was theirs for hurry. Why should Meghem's loitering and mutinous troops, arriving at the eleventh hour, share in the triumph and the spoil? No man knew the country better than Aremberg, a native of the Netherlands, the stadholder of the province. Cowardly or heretical motives alone could sway him, if he now held them back in the very hour of victory. Inflamed beyond endurance by these taunts, feeling his pride of country touched to the quick, and willing to show that a Netherlander would lead wherever Spaniards dared to follow, Aremberg allowed himself to commit the grave error for which he was so deeply to atone. Disregarding the dictates of his own

experience and the arrangements of his superior, he yielded to the braggart humor of his soldiers, which he had not, like Alva, learned to moderate or to despise.

Page 499

In the mean, time, the body of light troops which had received the fire from the musical pieces of Groningen was seen to waver. The artillery was then brought beyond the cover of the wood, and pointed more fully upon the two main squares of the enemy. A few shots told. Soon afterward the 'enfans perdus' retreated helter-skelter, entirely deserting their position.

This apparent advantage, which was only a preconcerted stratagem, was too much for the fiery Spaniards. They rushed merrily forward to attack the stationary squares, their general being no longer able, to restrain their impetuosity. In a moment the whole van-guard had plunged into the morass. In a few minutes more they were all helplessly and hopelessly struggling in the pools, while the musketeers of the enemy poured in a deadly fire upon them, without wetting the soles of their own feet. The pikemen, too, who composed the main body of the larger square, now charged upon all who were extricating themselves from their entanglement, and drove them back again to a muddy death. Simultaneously, the lesser patriot squadron, which had so long been sheltered, emerged from the cover of the hill, made a detour around its base, enveloped the rear-guard of the Spaniards before they could advance to the succor of their perishing comrades, and broke them to pieces almost instantly. Gonzalo de Braccamonte, the very Spanish colonel who had been foremost in denunciation of Aremberg, for his disposition to delay the contest, was now the first to fly. To his bad conduct was ascribed the loss of the day. The anger of Alva was so high, when he was informed of the incident, that he would have condemned the officer to death but for the intercession of his friends and countrymen. The rout was sudden and absolute. The foolhardiness of the Spaniards had precipitated them into the pit which their enemies had dug. The day, was lost. Nothing was left for Aremberg but to perish with honor. Placing himself at the head of his handful of cavalry, he dashed into the melee. The shock was sustained by young Adolphus of Nassau, at the head of an equal number of riders. Each leader singled out the other. They met as "captains of might" should do, in the very midst of the affray. Aremberg, receiving and disregarding a pistol shot from his adversary, laid Adolphus dead at his feet, with a bullet through his body and a sabre cut on his head. Two troopers in immediate attendance upon the young Count shared the same fate from the same hand. Shortly afterward, the horse of Aremberg, wounded by a musket ball, fell to the ground. A few devoted followers lifted the charger to his legs and the bleeding rider to his saddle. They endeavored to bear their wounded general from the scene of action. The horse staggered a few paces and fell dead. Aremberg disengaged himself from his body, and walked a few paces to the edge of a meadow near the road. Here, wounded in the action, crippled by the disease which had so

Page 500

long tormented him, and scarcely able to sustain longer the burthen of his armor, he calmly awaited his fate. A troop of the enemy advanced soon afterwards, and Aremberg fell, covered with wounds, fighting like a hero of Homer, single-handed, against a battalion, with a courage worthy a better cause and a better fate. The sword by which he received his final death-blow was that of the Seigneur do Haultain. That officer having just seen his brother slain before his eyes, forgot the respect due to unsuccessful chivalry.

The battle was scarcely finished when an advancing trumpet was heard. The sound caused the victors to pause in their pursuit, and enabled a remnant of the conquered Spaniards to escape. Meghem's force was thought to be advancing. That general had indeed arrived, but he was alone. He had reached Zuidlaren, a village some four leagues from the scene of action, on the noon of that day. Here he had found a letter from Aremberg, requesting him to hasten. He had done so. His troops, however, having come from Coevorden that morning, were unable to accomplish so long a march in addition. The Count, accompanied by a few attendants, reached the neighborhood of Heiliger Lee only in time to meet with some of the camp sutlers and other fugitives, from whom he learned the disastrous news of the defeat. Finding that all was lost, he very properly returned to Zuidlaren, from which place he made the best of his way to Groningen. That important city, the key of Friesland, he was thus enabled to secure. The troops which he brought, in addition to the four German vanderas of Schaumburg, already quartered there, were sufficient to protect it against the ill-equipped army of Louis Nassau.

The patriot leader had accomplished, after all, but a barren victory. He had, to be sure, destroyed a number of Spaniards, amounting, according to the different estimates, from five hundred to sixteen hundred men. He had also broken up a small but veteran army. More than all, he had taught the Netherlanders, by this triumphant termination to a stricken field, that the choice troops of Spain were not invincible. But the moral effect of the victory was the only permanent one. The Count's badly paid troops could with difficulty be kept together. He had no sufficient artillery to reduce the city whose possession would have proved so important to the cause. Moreover, in common with the Prince of Orange and all his brethren, he had been called to mourn for the young and chivalrous Adolphus, whose life-blood had stained the laurels of this first patriot victory. Having remained, and thus wasted the normal three days upon the battle-field, Louis now sat down before Groningen, fortifying and entrenching himself in a camp within cannonshot of the city.

On the 23rd we have seen that Aremberg had written, full of confidence, to the Governor-general, promising soon to send him good news of the beggars. On the 26th, Count Meghem wrote that, having spoken with a man who had helped to place Aremberg in his coffin, he could hardly entertain any farther doubt as to his fate.

Page 501

The wrath of the Duke was even greater than his surprise. Like Augustus, he called in vain on the dead commander for his legions, but prepared himself to inflict a more rapid and more terrible vengeance than the Roman's. Recognizing the gravity of his situation, he determined to take the field in person, and to annihilate this insolent chieftain who had dared not only to cope with, but to conquer his veteran regiments. But before he could turn his back upon Brussels, many deeds were to be done. His measures now followed each other in breathless succession, fulminating and blasting at every stroke. On the 28th May, he issued an edict, banishing, on pain of death, the Prince of Orange, Louis Nassau, Hoogstraaten, Van den Berg, and others, with confiscation of all their property. At the same time he razed the Culemburg Palace to the ground, and erected a pillar upon its ruins, commemorating the accursed conspiracy which had been engendered within its walls. On the 1st June, eighteen prisoners of distinction, including the two barons Batenburg, Maximilian Kock, Blois de Treslong and others, were executed upon the Horse Market, in Brussels. In the vigorous language of Hoogstraaten, this horrible tragedy was enacted directly before the windows of that "cruel animal, Noircarmes," who, in company of his friend, Berlaymont, and the rest of the Blood-Council, looked out upon the shocking spectacle. The heads of the victims were exposed upon stakes, to which also their bodies were fastened. Eleven of these victims were afterward deposited, uncoffined, in unconsecrated ground; the other seven were left unburied to moulder on the gibbet. On the 2d June, Villars, the leader in the Daalem rising, suffered on the scaffold, with three others. On the 3d, Counts Egmont and Horn were brought in a carriage from Ghent to Brussels, guarded by ten companies of infantry and one of cavalry. They were then lodged in the "Brood-huis" opposite the Town Hall, on the great square of Brussels. On the 4th, Alva having, as he solemnly declared before God and the world, examined thoroughly the mass of documents appertaining to those two great prosecutions which had only been closed three days before, pronounced sentence against the illustrious prisoners. These documents of iniquity signed and sealed by the Duke, were sent to the Blood-Council, where they were read by Secretary Praets. The signature of Philip was not wanting, for the sentences had been drawn upon blanks signed by the monarch, of which the Viceroy had brought a whole trunk full from Spain. The sentence against Egmont declared very briefly that the Duke of Alva, having read all the papers and evidence in the case, had found the Count guilty of high treason. It was proved that Egmont had united with the confederates; that he had been a party to the accursed conspiracy of the Prince of Orange; that he had taken the rebel nobles under his protection, and that he had betrayed the Government and the Holy Catholic Church by his conduct in Flanders. Therefore the Duke condemned him to be executed by the sword on the following day, and decreed that his head should be placed on high in a public place, there to remain until the Duke should otherwise direct. The sentence against Count Horn was similar in language and purport.

Page 502

That afternoon the Duke sent for the Bishop of Ypres, The prelate arrived at dusk. As soon as he presented himself, Alva informed him of the sentence which had just been pronounced, and ordered him to convey the intelligence to the prisoners. He further charged him with the duty of shriving the victims, and preparing their souls for death. The bishop fell on his knees, aghast at the terrible decree. He implored the Governor-General to have mercy upon the two unfortunate nobles. If their lives could not be spared, he prayed him at any rate to grant delay. With tears and earnest supplications the prelate endeavored to avert or to postpone the doom which had been pronounced. It was in vain. The sentence, inflexible as destiny, had been long before ordained. Its execution had been but hastened by the temporary triumph of rebellion in Friesland. Alva told the Bishop roughly that he had not been summoned to give advice. Delay or pardon was alike impossible. He was to act as confessor to the criminals, not as councillor to the Viceroy. The Bishop, thus rebuked, withdrew to accomplish his melancholy mission. Meanwhile, on the same evening, the miserable Countess of Egmont had been appalled by rumors, too vague for belief, too terrible to be slighted. She was in the chamber of Countess Aremberg, with whom she had come to condole for the death of the Count, when the order for the immediate execution of her own husband was announced to her. She hastened to the presence of the Governor-General. The Princess Palatine, whose ancestors had been emperors, remembered only that she was a wife and a mother. She fell at the feet of the man who controlled the fate of her husband, and implored his mercy in humble and submissive terms. The Duke, with calm and almost incredible irony, reassured the Countess by the information that, on the morrow, her husband was certainly to be released. With this ambiguous phrase, worthy the paltering oracles of antiquity, the wretched woman was obliged to withdraw. Too soon afterward the horrible truth of the words was revealed to her—-words of doom, which she had mistaken for consolation.

An hour before midnight the Bishop of Ypres reached Egmont's prison. The Count was confined in a chamber on the second story of the Brood-huis, the mansion of the crossbowmen's guild, in that corner of the building which rests on a narrow street running back from the great square. He was aroused from his sleep by the approach of his visitor. Unable to speak, but indicating by the expression of his features the occurrence of a great misfortune, the Bishop, soon after his entrance, placed the paper given to him by Alva in Egmont's hands. The unfortunate noble thus suddenly received the information that his death-sentence had been pronounced, and that its execution was fixed for the next morning. He read the paper through without flinching, and expressed astonishment rather than dismay at its tidings. Exceedingly sanguine by nature, he had never believed,

Page 503

even after his nine months' imprisonment, in a fatal termination to the difficulties in which he was involved. He was now startled both at the sudden condemnation which had followed his lingering trial, and at the speed with which his death was to fulfil the sentence. He asked the Bishop, with many expressions of amazement, whether pardon was impossible; whether delay at least might not be obtained? The prelate answered by a faithful narrative of the conversation which had just occurred between Alva and himself. Egmont, thus convinced of his inevitable doom, then observed to his companion, with exquisite courtesy, that, since he was to die, he rendered thanks both to God and to the Duke that his last moments were to be consoled by so excellent a father confessor.

Afterwards, with a natural burst of indignation, he exclaimed that it was indeed a cruel and unjust sentence. He protested that he had never in his whole life wronged his Majesty; certainly never so deeply as to deserve such a punishment. All that he had done had been with loyal intentions. The King's true interest had been his constant aim. Nevertheless, if he had fallen into error, he prayed to God that his death might wipe away his misdeeds, and that his name might not be dishonored, nor his children brought to shame. His beloved wife and innocent children were to endure misery enough by his death and the confiscation of his estates. It was at least due to his long services that they should be spared further suffering. He then asked his father confessor what advice he had to give touching his present conduct. The Bishop replied by an exhortation, that he should turn himself to God; that he should withdraw his thoughts entirely from all earthly interests, and prepare himself for the world beyond the grave. He accepted the advice, and kneeling before the Bishop, confessed himself. He then asked to receive the sacrament, which the Bishop administered, after the customary mass. Egmont asked what prayer would be most appropriate at the hour of execution. His confessor replied that there was none more befitting than the one which Jesus had taught his disciples—Our Father, which art in heaven.

Some conversation ensued, in which the Count again expressed his gratitude that his parting soul had been soothed by these pious and friendly offices. By a revulsion of feeling, he then bewailed again the sad fate of his wife and of his young children. The Bishop entreated him anew to withdraw his mind from such harrowing reflections, and to give himself entirely to God. Overwhelmed with grief, Egmont exclaimed with natural and simple pathos—"Alas! how miserable and frail is our nature, that, when we should think of God only, we are unable to shut out the images of wife and children."

Recovering from his emotion, and having yet much time, he sat down and wrote with perfect self-possession two letters, one to Philip and one to Alva. The celebrated letter to the King was as follows:

Page 504

"*Sire*,—I have learned, this evening, the sentence which your Majesty has been pleased to pronounce upon me. Although I have never had a thought, and believe myself never to have done a deed, which could tend to the prejudice of your Majesty's person or service, or to the detriment of our true ancient and Catholic religion, nevertheless I take patience to bear that which it has pleased the good God to send. If, during these troubles in the Netherlands, I have done or permitted aught which had a different appearance, it has been with the true and good intent to serve God and your Majesty, and the necessity of the times. Therefore, I pray your Majesty to forgive me, and to have compassion on my poor wife, my children, and my servants; having regard to my past services. In which hope I now commend myself to the mercy of God.

"From Brussels,
"Ready to die, this 5th June, 1568,
"Your Majesty's very humble and loyal vassal and servant,
"*Lamoral* D'EGMONT."

Having thus kissed the murderous hand which smote him, he handed the letter, stamped rather with superfluous loyalty than with Christian forgiveness, to the Bishop, with a request that he would forward it to its destination, accompanied by a letter from his own hand. This duty the Bishop solemnly promised to fulfil.

Facing all the details of his execution with the fortitude which belonged to his character, he now took counsel with his confessor as to the language proper for him to hold from the scaffold to the assembled people. The Bishop, however, strongly dissuaded him from addressing the multitude at all.

The persons farthest removed, urged the priest, would not hear the words, while the Spanish troops in the immediate vicinity would not understand them. It seemed, therefore, the part of wisdom and of dignity for him to be silent, communing only with his God. The Count assented to this reasoning, and abandoned his intention of saying a few farewell words to the people, by many of whom he believed himself tenderly beloved. He now made many preparations for the morrow, in order that his thoughts, in the last moments, might not be distracted by mechanical details, cutting the collar from his doublet and from his shirt with his own hands, in order that those of the hangman might have no excuse for contaminating his person. The rest of the night was passed in prayer and meditation.

Fewer circumstances concerning the last night of Count Horn's life have been preserved. It is, however, well ascertained that the Admiral received the sudden news of his condemnation with absolute composure. He was assisted at his devotional exercises in prison by the curate of La Chapelle.

During the night, the necessary preparations for the morning tragedy had been made in the great square of Brussels. It was the intention of government to strike terror to the

heart of the people by the exhibition of an impressive and appalling spectacle. The absolute and irresponsible destiny which ruled them was to be made manifest by the immolation of these two men, so elevated by rank, powerful connexion, and distinguished service.

Page 505

The effect would be heightened by the character of the, locality where the gloomy show was to be presented. The great square of Brussels had always a striking and theatrical aspect. Its architectural effects, suggesting in some degree the meretricious union between Oriental and a corrupt Grecian art, accomplished in the medieval midnight, have amazed the eyes of many generations. The splendid Hotel de Ville, with its daring spire and elaborate front, ornamented one side of the place; directly opposite was the graceful but incoherent facade of the Brood-huis, now the last earthly resting-place of the two distinguished victims, while grouped around these principal buildings rose the fantastic palaces of the Archers, Mariners, and of other guilds, with their festooned walls and toppling gables bedizened profusely with emblems, statues, and quaint decorations. The place had been alike the scene of many a brilliant tournament and of many a bloody execution. Gallant knights had contended within its precincts, while bright eyes rained influence from all those picturesque balconies and decorated windows. Martyrs to religious and to political liberty had, upon the same spot, endured agonies which might have roused every stone of its pavement to mutiny or softened them to pity. Here Egmont himself, in happier days, had often borne away the prize of skill or of valor, the cynosure of every eye; and hence, almost in the noon of a life illustrated by many brilliant actions, he was to be sent, by the hand of tyranny, to his great account.

On the morning of the 5th of June, three thousand Spanish troops were drawn up in battle array around a scaffold which had been erected in the centre of the square. Upon this scaffold, which was covered with black cloth, were placed two velvet cushions, two iron spikes, and a small table. Upon the table was a silver crucifix. The provost-marshal, Spelle, sat on horseback below, with his red wand in his hand, little dreaming that for him a darker doom was reserved than that of which he was now the minister. The executioner was concealed beneath the draperies of the scaffold.

At eleven o’clock, a company of Spanish soldiers, led by Julian Romero and Captain Salinas, arrived at Egmont’s chamber. The Count was ready for them. They were about to bind his hands, but he warmly protested against the indignity, and, opening the folds of his robe, showed them that he had himself shorn off his collars, and made preparations for his death. His request was granted. Egmont, with the Bishop at his side, then walked with a steady step the short distance which separated him from the place of execution. Julian Romero and the guard followed him. On his way, he read aloud the fifty-first Psalm: “Hear my cry, O God, and give ear unto my prayer!” He seemed to have selected these scriptural passages as a proof that, notwithstanding the machinations of his enemies, and the cruel punishment to which they had led him, loyalty to his sovereign was as deeply rooted and as religious a sentiment in his bosom as devotion to his God. “Thou wilt prolong the King’s life; and his years as many generations. He shall abide before God for ever! O prepare mercy and truth which may preserve him.” Such was the remarkable prayer of the condemned traitor on his way to the block.

Page 506

Having ascended the scaffold, he walked across it twice or thrice. He was dressed in a tabard or robe of red damask, over which was thrown a short black mantle, embroidered in gold. He had a black silk hat, with black and white plumes, on his head, and held a handkerchief in his hand. As he strode to and fro, he expressed a bitter regret that he had not been permitted to die, sword in hand, fighting for his country and his king. Sanguine to the last, he passionately asked Romero, whether the sentence was really irrevocable, whether a pardon was not even then to be granted. The marshal shrugged his shoulders, murmuring a negative reply. Upon this, Egmont gnashed his teeth together, rather in rage than despair. Shortly afterward commanding himself again, he threw aside his robe and mantle, and took the badge of the Golden Fleece from his neck. Kneeling, then, upon one of the cushions, he said the Lord's Prayer aloud, and requested the Bishop, who knelt at his side, to repeat it thrice. After this, the prelate gave him the silver crucifix to kiss, and then pronounced his blessing upon him. This done, the Count rose again to his feet, laid aside his hat and handkerchief, knelt again upon the cushion, drew a little cap over his eyes, and, folding his hands together, cried with a loud voice, "Lord, into Thy hands I commit my spirit." The executioner then suddenly appeared, and severed his head from his shoulders at a single blow.

A moment of shuddering silence succeeded the stroke. The whole vast assembly seemed to have felt it in their own hearts. Tears fell from the eyes even of the Spanish soldiery, for they knew and honored Egmont as a valiant general. The French embassador, Mondoucet, looking upon the scene from a secret place, whispered that he had now seen the head fall before which France had twice trembled. Tears were even seen upon the iron cheek of Alva, as, from a window in a house directly opposite the scaffold, he looked out upon the scene.

A dark cloth was now quickly thrown over the body and the blood, and, within a few minutes, the Admiral was seen advancing through the crowd. His bald head was uncovered, his hands were unbound. He calmly saluted such of his acquaintances as he chanced to recognize upon his path. Under a black cloak, which he threw off when he had ascended the scaffold, he wore a plain, dark doublet, and he did not, like Egmont, wear the insignia of the Fleece. Casting his eyes upon the corpse, which lay covered with the dark cloth, he asked if it were the body of Egmont. Being answered in the affirmative, he muttered a few words in Spanish, which were not distinctly audible. His attention was next caught by the sight of his own coat of arms reversed, and he expressed anger at this indignity to his escutcheon, protesting that he had not deserved the insult. He then spoke a few words to the crowd below, wishing them happiness, and begging them to pray for his soul. He did not kiss the crucifix, but he knelt upon the scaffold to pray, and was assisted in his devotions by the Bishop of Ypres. When they were concluded, he rose again to his feet. Then drawing a Milan cap completely over his face, and uttering, in Latin, the same invocation which Egmont had used, he submitted his neck to the stroke.

Page 507

Egmont had obtained, as a last favor, that his execution should precede that of his friend. Deeming himself in part to blame for Horn's reappearance in Brussels after the arrival of Alva, and for his, death, which was the result, he wished to be spared the pang of seeing him dead. Gemma Frisius, the astrologer who had cast the horoscope of Count Horn at his birth, had come to him in the most solemn manner to warn him against visiting Brussels. The Count had answered stoutly that he placed his trust in God, and that, moreover, his friend Egmont was going thither also, who had engaged that no worse fate should befal the one of them than the other.

The heads of both sufferers were now exposed for two hours upon the iron stakes. Their bodies, placed in coffins, remained during the same interval upon the scaffold. Meantime, notwithstanding the presence of the troops, the populace could not be restrained from tears and from execrations. Many crowded about the scaffold, and dipped their handkerchiefs in the blood, to be preserved afterwards as memorials of the crime and as ensigns of revenge.

The bodies were afterwards delivered to their friends. A stately procession of the guilds, accompanied by many of the clergy, conveyed their coffins to the church of Saint Gudule. Thence the body of Egmont was carried to the convent of Saint Clara, near the old Brussels gate, where it was embalmed. His escutcheon and banners were hung upon the outward wall of his residence, by order of the Countess. By command of Alva they were immediately torn down. His remains were afterwards conveyed to his city of Sottegem, in Flanders, where they were interred. Count Horn was entombed at Kempen. The bodies had been removed from the scaffold at two o'clock. The heads remained exposed between burning torches for two hours longer. They were then taken down, enclosed in boxes, and, as it was generally supposed, despatched to Madrid. The King was thus enabled to look upon the dead faces of his victims without the trouble of a journey to the provinces.

Thus died Philip Montmorency, Count of Horn, and Lamoral of Egmont, Prince of Gaveren. The more intense sympathy which seemed to attach itself to the fate of Egmont, rendered the misfortune of his companion in arms and in death comparatively less interesting.

Egmont is a great historical figure, but he was certainly not a great man. His execution remains an enduring monument not only of Philip's cruelty and perfidy but of his dullness. The King had everything to hope from Egmont and nothing to fear. Granvelle knew the man well, and, almost to the last, could not believe in the possibility of so unparalleled a blunder as that which was to make a victim, a martyr, and a popular idol of a personage brave indeed, but incredibly vacillating and inordinately vain, who, by a little management, might have been converted into a most useful instrument for the royal purposes.

Page 508

It is not necessary to recapitulate the events of Egmont's career. Step by step we have studied his course, and at no single period have we discovered even a germ of those elements which make the national champion. His pride of order rendered him furious at the insolence of Granvelle, and caused him to chafe under his dominion. His vanity of high rank and of distinguished military service made him covet the highest place under the Crown, while his hatred of those by whom he considered himself defrauded of his claims, converted him into a malcontent. He had no sympathy with the people, but he loved, as a grand Seignior, to be looked up to and admired by a gaping crowd. He was an unwavering Catholic, held sectaries in utter loathing, and, after the image-breaking, took a positive pleasure in hanging ministers, together with their congregations, and in pressing the besieged Christians of Valenciennes to extremities. Upon more than one occasion he pronounced his unequivocal approval of the infamous edicts, and he exerted himself at times to enforce them within his province. The transitory impression made upon his mind by the lofty nature of Orange was easily effaced in Spain by court flattery and by royal bribes. Notwithstanding the coldness, the rebuffs, and the repeated warnings which might have saved him from destruction, nothing could turn him at last from the fanatic loyalty towards which, after much wavering, his mind irrevocably pointed. His voluntary humiliation as a general, a grandee, a Fleming, and a Christian before the insolent Alva upon his first arrival, would move our contempt were it not for the gentler emotions suggested by the infatuated nobleman's doom. Upon the departure of Orange, Egmont was only too eager to be employed by Philip in any work which the monarch could find for him to do. Yet this was the man whom Philip chose, through the executioner's sword, to convert into a popular idol, and whom Poetry has loved to contemplate as a romantic champion of freedom.

As for Horn, details enough have likewise been given of his career to enable the reader thoroughly to understand the man. He was a person of mediocre abilities and thoroughly commonplace character. His high rank and his tragic fate are all which make him interesting. He had little love for court or people. Broken in fortunes, he passed his time mainly in brooding over the ingratitude of Charles and Philip, and in complaining bitterly of the disappointments to which their policy had doomed him. He cared nothing for Cardinalists or confederates. He disliked Brederode, he detested Granvelle. Gloomy and morose, he went to bed, while the men who were called his fellow-conspirators were dining and making merry in the same house with himself: He had as little sympathy with the cry of "Vivent les gueux" as for that of "Vive le Roy." The most interesting features in his character are his generosity toward his absent brother and the manliness with which, as Montigny's representative at

Page 509

Tournay, he chose rather to confront the anger of the government, and to incur the deadly revenge of Philip, than make himself the executioner of the harmless Christians in Tournay. In this regard, his conduct is vastly more entitled to our respect than that of Egmont, and he was certainly more deserving of reverence from the people, even though deserted by all men while living, and left headless and solitary in his coffin at Saint Gudule.

The hatred for Alva, which sprang from the graves of these illustrious victims, waxed daily more intense. “Like things of another world,” wrote Hoogstraaten, “seem the cries, lamentations, and just compassion which all the inhabitants of Brussels, noble or ignoble, feel for such barbarous tyranny, while this Nero of an Alva is boasting that he will do the same to all whom he lays his hands upon.” No man believed that the two nobles had committed a crime, and many were even disposed to acquit Philip of his share in the judicial murder. The people ascribed the execution solely to the personal jealousy of the Duke. They discoursed to each other not only of the envy with which the Governor-general had always regarded the military triumphs of his rival, but related that Egmont had at different times won large sums of Alva at games of hazard, and that he had moreover, on several occasions, carried off the prize from the Duke in shooting at the popinjay. Nevertheless, in spite of all these absurd rumors, there is no doubt that Philip and Alva must share equally in the guilt of the transaction, and that the “chastisement” had been arranged before Alva had departed from Spain.

The Countess Egmont remained at the convent of Cambre with her eleven children, plunged in misery and in poverty. The Duke wrote to Philip, that he doubted if there were so wretched a family in the world. He, at the same time, congratulated his sovereign on the certainty that the more intense the effects, the more fruitful would be the example of this great execution. He stated that the Countess was considered a most saintly woman, and that there had been scarcely a night in which, attended by her daughters, she had not gone forth bare-footed to offer up prayers for her husband in every church within the city. He added, that it was doubtful whether they had money enough to buy themselves a supper that very night, and he begged the King to allow them the means of supporting life. He advised that the Countess should be placed, without delay in a Spanish convent, where her daughters might at once take the veil, assuring his Majesty that her dower was entirely inadequate to her support. Thus humanely recommending his sovereign to bestow an alms on the family which his own hand had reduced from a princely station to beggary, the Viceroy proceeded to detail the recent events in Friesland, together with the measures which he was about taking to avenge the defeat and death of Count Aremberg.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

Page 510

Deeply criminal in the eyes of all religious parties
He had omitted to execute heretics
Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands
Not for a new doctrine, but for liberty of conscience
Questioning nothing, doubting nothing, fearing nothing
The perpetual reproductions of history
Wealth was an unpardonable sin

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 16.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By *John Lothrop Motley*
1855

1568 [*Chapter iii*.]

Preparations of the Duke against Count Louis—Precarious situation of Louis in Friesland—Timidity of the inhabitants—Alva in Friesland—Skirmishing near Groningen—Retreat of the patriots— Error committed by Louis—His position at Jemmingen—-Mutinous demonstrations of his troops—Louis partially restores order— Attempt to destroy the dykes interrupted by the arrival of Alva's forces—Artful strategy of the Duke—Defeat of Count Louis and utter destruction of his army—Outrages committed by the Spaniards—Alva at Utrecht—Execution of Vrow van Diemen—Episode of Don Carlos— Fables concerning him and Queen Isabella—Mystery, concerning his death—Secret letters of Philip to the Pope—The one containing the truth of the transaction still concealed in the Vatican—Case against Philip as related by Mathieu, De Thou, and others—Testimony in the King's favor by the nuncio, the Venetian envoy, and others—Doubtful state of the question—Anecdotes concerning Don Carlos—His character.

Those measures were taken with the precision and promptness which marked the Duke's character, when precision and promptness were desirable. There had been a terrible energy in his every step, since the successful foray of Louis Nassau. Having determined to take the field in person with nearly all the Spanish veterans, he had at once acted upon the necessity of making the capital secure, after his back should be turned. It was impossible to leave three thousand choice troops to guard Count Egmont. A less number seemed insufficient to prevent a rescue. He had, therefore, no longer delayed the chastisement which had already been determined, but which the events in the north had precipitated. Thus the only positive result of Louis Nassau's victory was the execution of his imprisoned friends.

The expedition under Aremberg had failed from two causes. The Spanish force had been inadequate, and they had attacked the enemy at a disadvantage. The imprudent attack was the result of the contempt with which they had regarded their antagonist. These errors were not to be repeated. Alva ordered Count Meghem, now commanding in the province of Groningen, on no account to hazard hostilities until the game was sure. He also immediately ordered large reinforcements to move forward to the seat of war. The commanders

Page 511

intrusted with this duty were Duke Eric of Brunswick, Chiappin Vitelli, Noircarmes, and Count de Roeulx. The rendezvous for the whole force was Deventer, and here they all arrived on the 10th July. On the same day the Duke of Alva himself entered Deventer, to take command in person. On the evening of the 14th July he reached Rolden, a village three leagues distant from Groningen, at the head of three terzios of Spanish infantry, three companies of light horse, and a troop of dragoons. His whole force in and about Groningen amounted to fifteen thousand choice troops besides a large but uncertain number of less disciplined soldiery.

Meantime, Louis of Nassau, since his victory, had accomplished nothing. For this inactivity there was one sufficient excuse, the total want of funds. His only revenue was the amount of black mail which he was able to levy upon the inhabitants of the province. He repeated his determination to treat them all as enemies, unless they furnished him with the means of expelling their tyrants from the country. He obtained small sums in this manner from time to time. The inhabitants were favorably disposed, but they were timid and despairing. They saw no clear way towards the accomplishment of the result concerning which Louis was so confident. They knew that the terrible Alva was already on his way. They felt sure of being pillaged by both parties, and of being hanged as rebels, besides, as soon as the Governor-general should make his appearance.

Louis had, however, issued two formal proclamations for two especial contributions. In these documents he had succinctly explained that the houses of all recusants should be forthwith burned about their ears, and in consequence of these peremptory measures, he had obtained some ten thousand florins. Alva ordered counter-proclamations to be affixed to church doors and other places, forbidding all persons to contribute to these forced loans of the rebels, on penalty of paying twice as much to the Spaniards, with arbitrary punishment in addition, after his arrival. The miserable inhabitants, thus placed between two fires, had nothing for it but to pay one-half of their property to support the rebellion in the first place, with the prospect of giving the other half as a subsidy to tyranny afterwards; while the gibbet stood at the end of the vista to reward their liberality. Such was the horrible position of the peasantry in this civil conflict. The weight of guilt thus accumulated upon the crowned head which conceived, and upon the red right hand which wrought all this misery, what human scales can measure?

Page 512

With these precarious means of support, the army of Louis of Nassau, as may easily be supposed, was anything but docile. After the victory of Heiliger Lee there had seemed to his German mercenaries a probability of extensive booty, which grew fainter as the slender fruit of that battle became daily more apparent. The two abbots of Wittewerum and of Heiliger Lee, who had followed Aremberg's train in order to be witnesses of his victory, had been obliged to pay to the actual conqueror a heavy price for the entertainment to which they had invited themselves, and these sums, together with the amounts pressed from the reluctant estates, and the forced contributions paid by luckless peasants, enabled him to keep his straggling troops together a few weeks longer. Mutiny, however, was constantly breaking out, and by the eloquent expostulations and vague promises of the Count, was with difficulty suppressed.

He had, for a few weeks immediately succeeding the battle, distributed his troops in three different stations. On the approach of the Duke, however, he hastily concentrated his whole force at his own strongly fortified camp, within half cannon shot of Groningen. His army, such as it was, numbered from 10,000 to 12,000 men. Alva reached Groningen early in the morning, and without pausing a moment, marched his troops directly through the city. He then immediately occupied an entrenched and fortified house, from which it was easy to inflict damage upon the camp. This done, the Duke, with a few attendants, rode forward to reconnoitre the enemy in person. He found him in a well fortified position, having the river on his front, which served as a moat to his camp, and with a deep trench three hundred yards beyond, in addition. Two wooden bridges led across the river; each was commanded by a fortified house, in which was a provision of pine torches, ready at a moment's warning, to set fire to the bridges. Having thus satisfied himself, the Duke rode back to his army, which had received strict orders not to lift a finger till his return. He then despatched a small force of five hundred musketeers, under Robles, to skirmish with the enemy, and, if possible, to draw them from their trenches.

The troops of Louis, however, showed no greediness to engage. On the contrary, it soon became evident that their dispositions were of an opposite tendency. The Count himself, not at that moment trusting his soldiery, who were in an extremely mutinous condition, was desirous of falling back before his formidable antagonist. The Duke, faithful, however, to his life-long principles, had no intentions of precipitating the action in those difficult and swampy regions. The skirmishing, therefore, continued for many hours, an additional force of 1000 men being detailed from the Spanish army. The day was very sultry, however, the enemy reluctant, and the whole action languid. At last, towards evening, a large body, tempted beyond their trenches, engaged warmly with the Spaniards.

Page 513

The combat lasted but a few minutes, the patriots were soon routed, and fled precipitately back to their camp. The panic spread with them, and the whole army was soon in retreat. On retiring, they had, however, set fire to the bridges, and thus secured an advantage at the outset of the chase. The Spaniards were no longer to be held. Vitelli obtained permission to follow with 2000 additional troops. The fifteen hundred who had already been engaged, charged furiously upon their retreating foes. Some dashed across the blazing bridges, with their garments and their very beards on fire. Others sprang into the river. Neither fire nor water could check the fierce pursuit. The cavalry dismounting, drove their horses into the stream, and clinging to their tails, pricked the horses forward with their lances. Having thus been dragged across, they joined their comrades in the mad chase along the narrow dykes, and through the swampy and almost impassable country where the rebels were seeking shelter. The approach of night, too soon advancing, at last put an end to the hunt. The Duke with difficulty recalled his men, and compelled them to restrain their eagerness until the morrow. Three hundred of the patriots were left dead upon the field, besides at least an equal number who perished in the river and canals. The army of Louis was entirely routed, and the Duke considered it virtually destroyed. He wrote to the state council that he should pursue them the next day, but doubted whether he should find anybody to talk with him. In this the Governor-general soon found himself delightfully disappointed.

Five days later, the Duke arrived at Reyden, on the Ems. Owing to the unfavorable disposition of the country people, who were willing to protect the fugitives by false information to their pursuers, he was still in doubt as to the position then occupied by the enemy. He had been fearful that they would be found at this very village of Reyden. It was a fatal error on the part of Count Louis that they were not. Had he made a stand at this point, he might have held out a long time. The bridge which here crossed the river would have afforded him a retreat into Germany at any moment, and the place was easily to be defended in front. Thus he might have maintained himself against his fierce but wary foe, while his brother Orange, who was at Strasburg watching the progress of events, was executing his own long-planned expedition into the heart of the Netherlands. With Alva thus occupied in Friesland, the results of such an invasion might have been prodigious. It was, however, not on the cards for that campaign. The mutinous disposition of the mercenaries under his command had filled Louis with doubt and disgust. Bold and sanguine, but always too fiery and impatient, he saw not much possibility of paying his troops any longer with promises. Perhaps he was not unwilling to place them in a position where they would be obliged to fight or to perish. At any rate, such was

Page 514

their present situation. Instead of halting at Reyden, he had made his stand at Jemmingen, about four leagues distant from that place, and a little further down the river. Alva discovered this important fact soon after his arrival at Reyden, and could not conceal his delight. Already exulting at the error made by his adversary, in neglecting the important position which he now occupied himself, he was doubly delighted at learning the nature of the place which he had in preference selected. He saw that Louis had completely entrapped himself.

Jemmingen was a small town on the left bank of the Ems. The stream here very broad and deep, is rather a tide inlet than a river, being but a very few miles from the Dollart. This circular bay, or ocean chasm, the result of the violent inundation of the 13th century, surrounds, with the river, a narrow peninsula. In the corner of this peninsula, as in the bottom of a sack, Louis had posted his army. His infantry, as usual, was drawn up in two large squares, and still contained ten thousand men. The rear rested upon the village, the river was upon his left; his meagre force of cavalry upon the right. In front were two very deep trenches. The narrow road, which formed the only entrance to his camp, was guarded by a ravelin on each side, and by five pieces of artillery.

The Duke having reconnoitred the enemy in person, rode back, satisfied that no escape was possible. The river was too deep and too wide for swimming or wading, and there were but very few boats. Louis was shut up between twelve thousand Spanish veterans and the river Ems. The rebel army, although not insufficient in point of numbers, was in a state of disorganization. They were furious for money and reluctant to fight. They broke out into open mutiny upon the very verge of battle, and swore that they would instantly disband, if the gold, which, as they believed, had been recently brought into the camp, were not immediately distributed among them. Such was the state of things on the eventful morning of the 21st July. All the expostulations of Count Louis seemed powerless. His eloquence and his patience, both inferior to his valor, were soon exhausted. He peremptorily, refused the money for which they clamored, giving the most cogent of all reasons, an empty coffer. He demonstrated plainly that they were in that moment to make their election, whether to win a victory or to submit to a massacre. Neither flight nor surrender was possible. They knew how much quarter they could expect from the lances of the Spaniards or the waters of the Dollart. Their only chance of salvation lay in their own swords. The instinct of self-preservation, thus invoked, exerted a little of its natural effect.

Page 515

Meantime, a work which had been too long neglected, was then, if possible, to be performed. In that watery territory, the sea was only held in check by artificial means. In a very short time, by the demolition of a few dykes and the opening of a few sluices, the whole country through which the Spaniards had to pass could be laid under water. Believing it yet possible to enlist the ocean in his defence, Louis, having partially reduced his soldiers to obedience, ordered a strong detachment upon this important service. Seizing a spade, he commenced the work himself, and then returned to set his army in battle array. Two or three tide gates had been opened, two or three bridges had been demolished, when Alva, riding in advance of his army, appeared within a mile or two of Jemmingen. It was then eight o'clock in the morning. The patriots redoubled their efforts. By ten o'clock the waters were already knee high, and in some places as deep as to the waist. At that hour, the advanced guard of the Spaniards arrived. Fifteen hundred musketeers were immediately ordered forward by the Duke. They were preceded by a company of mounted carabineers, attended by a small band of volunteers of distinction. This little band threw themselves at once upon the troops engaged in destroying the dykes. The rebels fled at the first onset, and the Spaniards closed the gates. Feeling the full importance of the moment, Count Louis ordered a large force of musketeers to recover the position, and to complete the work of inundation. It was too late. The little band of Spaniards held the post with consummate tenacity. Charge after charge, volley after volley, from the overwhelming force brought against them, failed to loosen the fierce grip with which they held this key to the whole situation. Before they could be driven from the dykes, their comrades arrived, when all their antagonists at once made a hurried retreat to their camp.

Very much the same tactics were now employed by the Duke, as in the engagement near Selwaert Abbey. He was resolved that this affair, also, should be a hunt, not a battle; but foresaw that it was to be a more successful one. There was no loophole of escape, so that after a little successful baiting, the imprisoned victims would be forced to spring from their lurking-place, to perish upon his spears. On his march from Reyden that morning, he had taken care to occupy every farm-house, every building of whatever description along the road, with his troops. He had left a strong guard on the bridge at Reyden, and had thus closed carefully every avenue. The same fifteen hundred musketeers were now advanced further towards the camp. This small force, powerfully but secretly sustained, was to feel the enemy; to skirmish with him, and to draw him as soon as possible out of his trenches. The plan succeeded. Gradually the engagements between them and the troops sent out by Count Louis grew more earnest. Finding so insignificant a force opposed to them, the mutinous rebels took courage. The work waged hot. Lodrono and Romero, commanders of the musketeers, becoming alarmed, sent to the Duke for reinforcements. He sent back word in reply, that if they were not enough to damage the enemy, they could, at least, hold their own for the present. So much he had a right to expect of Spanish soldiers. At any rate, he should send no reinforcements.

Page 516

Again they were more warmly pressed; again their messenger returned with the same reply. A third time they send the most urgent entreaties for succour. The Duke was still inexorable.

Meantime the result of this scientific angling approached. By noon the rebels, not being able to see how large a portion of the Spanish army had arrived, began to think the affair not so serious. Count Louis sent out a reconnoitring party upon the river in a few boats. They returned without having been able to discover any large force. It seemed probable, therefore, that the inundation had been more successful in stopping their advance than had been supposed. Louis, always too rash, inflamed his men with temporary enthusiasm. Determined to cut their way out by one vigorous movement, the whole army at last marched forth from their entrenchments, with drums beating, colors flying; but already the concealed reinforcements of their enemies were on the spot. The patriots met with a warmer reception than they had expected. Their courage evaporated. Hardly had they advanced three hundred yards, when the whole body wavered and then retreated precipitately towards the encampment, having scarcely exchanged a shot with the enemy. Count Louis, in a frenzy of rage and despair, flew from rank to rank, in vain endeavouring to rally his terror-stricken troops. It was hopeless. The battery which guarded the road was entirely deserted. He rushed to the cannon himself, and fired them all with his own hand. It was their first and last discharge. His single arm, however bold, could not turn the tide of battle, and he was swept backwards with his coward troops. In a moment afterwards, Don Lope de Figueroa, who led the van of the Spaniards, dashed upon the battery, and secured it, together with the ravelins. Their own artillery was turned against the rebels, and the road was soon swept. The Spaniards in large numbers now rushed through the trenches in pursuit of the retreating foe. No resistance was offered, nor quarter given. An impossible escape was all which was attempted. It was not a battle, but a massacre. Many of the beggars in their flight threw down their arms; all had forgotten their use. Their antagonists butchered them in droves, while those who escaped the sword were hurled into the river. Seven Spaniards were killed, and seven thousand rebels.

[Letter of Alva to the Council of State. Correspondanee du Duc d'Albe, 158. The same letter is published in Igor, iv. 245, 246. All writers allow seven thousand to have been killed on the patriot side, and—the number of Spaniards slain is not estimated at more than eighty, even by the patriotic Meteren, 55. Compare Bor, iv. 245-246; Herrera, av. 696; Hoofd, v, 176, and Mendoza, 72.]

The swift ebb-tide swept the hats of the perishing wretches in such numbers down the stream, that the people at Embden knew the result of the battle in an incredibly short period of time. The skirmishing

Page 517

had lasted from ten o'clock till one, but the butchery continued much longer. It took time to slaughter even unresisting victims. Large numbers obtained refuge for the night upon an island in the river. At low water next day the Spaniards waded to them, and slew every man. Many found concealment in hovels, swamps, and thickets, so that the whole of the following day was occupied in ferreting out and despatching them. There was so much to be done, that there was work enough for all. "Not a soldier," says, with great simplicity, a Spanish historian who fought in the battle, "not a soldier, nor even a lad, who wished to share in the victory, but could find somebody to wound, to kill, to burn, or to drown." The wounding, killing, burning, drowning lasted two days, and very few escaped. The landward pursuit extended for three or four leagues around, so that the roads and pastures were covered with bodies, with corslets, and other weapons. Count Louis himself stripped off his clothes, and made his escape, when all was over, by swimming across the Ems. With the paltry remnant of his troops he again took refuge in Germany.

The Spanish army, two days afterwards, marched back to Groningen. The page which records their victorious campaign is foul with outrage and red with blood. None of the horrors which accompany the passage of hostile troops through a defenceless country were omitted. Maids and matrons were ravished in multitudes; old men butchered in cold blood. As Alva returned, with the rear-guard of his army, the whole sky was red with a constant conflagration; the very earth seemed changed to ashes. Every peasant's hovel, every farm-house, every village upon the road had been burned to the ground. So gross and so extensive had been the outrage, that the commander-in-chief felt it due to his dignity to hang some of his own soldiers who had most distinguished themselves in this work. Thus ended the campaign of Count Louis in Friesland. Thus signally and terribly had the Duke of Alva vindicated the supremacy of Spanish discipline and of his own military skill.

On his return to Groningen, the estates were summoned, and received a severe lecture for their suspicious demeanour in regard to the rebellion. In order more effectually to control both province and city, the Governor-general ordered the construction of a strong fortress, which was soon begun but never completed. Having thus furnished himself with a key to this important and doubtful region, he returned by way of Amsterdam to Utrecht. There he was met by his son Frederic with strong reinforcements. The Duke reviewed his whole army, and found himself at the head of 30,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry. Having fully subdued the province, he had no occupation for such a force, but he improved the opportunity by cutting off the head of an old woman in Utrecht. The Vrow van Diemen, eighteen months previously, had given the preacher Arendsoon a night's lodging in her

Page 518

house. The crime had, in fact, been committed by her son-in-law, who dwelt under her roof, and who had himself, without her participation, extended this dangerous hospitality to a heretic; but the old lady, although a devout Catholic, was rich. Her execution would strike a wholesome terror into the hearts of her neighbours. The confiscation of her estates would bring a handsome sum into the government coffers. It would be made manifest that the same hand which could destroy an army of twelve thousand rebels at a blow could inflict as signal punishment on the small delinquencies of obscure individuals. The old lady, who was past eighty-four years of age, was placed in a chair upon the scaffold. She met her death with heroism, and treated her murderers with contempt. "I understand very well," she observed, "why my death is considered necessary. The calf is fat and must be killed." To the executioner she expressed a hope that his sword was sufficiently sharp, "as he was likely to find her old neck very tough." With this grisly parody upon the pathetic dying words of Anne Boleyn, the courageous old gentlewoman submitted to her fate.

The tragedy of Don Carlos does not strictly belong to our subject, which is the rise of the Netherland commonwealth—not the decline of the Spanish monarchy, nor the life of Philip the Second. The thread is but slender which connects the unhappy young prince with the fortunes of the northern republic. He was said, no doubt with truth, to desire the government of Flanders. He was also supposed to be in secret correspondence with the leaders of the revolt in the provinces. He appeared, however, to possess very little of their confidence. His name is only once mentioned by William of Orange, who said in a letter that "the Prince of Spain had lately eaten sixteen pounds of fruit, including four pounds of grapes at a single sitting, and had become ill in consequence." The result was sufficiently natural, but it nowhere appears that the royal youth, born to consume the fruits of the earth so largely, had ever given the Netherlanders any other proof of his capacity to govern them. There is no doubt that he was a most uncomfortable personage at home, both to himself and to others, and that he hated his father' very cordially. He was extremely incensed at the nomination of Alva to the Netherlands, because he had hoped that either the King would go thither or entrust the mission to him, in either of which events he should be rid for a time of the paternal authority, or at least of the paternal presence. It seems to be well ascertained that Carlos nourished towards his father a hatred which might lead to criminal attempts, but there is no proof that such attempts were ever made. As to the fabulous amours of the Prince and the Queen, they had never any existence save in the imagination of poets, who have chosen to find a source of sentimental sorrow for the Infante in the arbitrary substitution of his father for himself

Page 519

in the marriage contract with the daughter of Henry the Second. As Carlos was but twelve or thirteen years of age when thus deprived of a bride whom he had never seen, the foundation for a passionate regret was but slight. It would hardly be a more absurd fantasy, had the poets chosen to represent Philip's father, the Emperor Charles, repining in his dotage for the loss of "bloody Mary," whom he had so handsomely ceded to his son. Philip took a bad old woman to relieve his father; he took a fair young princess at his son's expense; but similar changes in state marriages were such matters of course, that no emotions were likely to be created in consequence. There is no proof whatever, nor any reason to surmise; that any love passages ever existed between Don Carlos and his step-mother.

As to the process and the death of the Prince, the mystery has not yet been removed, and the field is still open to conjecture. It seems a thankless task to grope in the dark after the truth at a variety of sources; when the truth really exists in tangible shape if profane hands could be laid upon it. The secret is buried in the bosom of the Vatican. Philip wrote two letters on the subject to Pius V. The contents of the first (21st January, 1568) are known. He informed the pontiff that he had been obliged to imprison his son, and promised that he would, in the conduct of the affair, omit nothing which could be expected of a father and of a just and prudent king. The second letter, in which he narrated, or is supposed to have narrated, the whole course of the tragic proceedings, down to the death and burial of the Prince, has never yet been made public. There are hopes that this secret missive, after three centuries of darkness, may soon see the light. —[I am assured by Mr. Gachard that a copy of this important letter is confidently expected by the Commission Royale d'Histoire.]

As Philip generally told the truth to the Pope, it is probable that the secret, when once revealed, will contain the veritable solution of the mystery. Till that moment arrives, it seems idle to attempt fathoming the matter. Nevertheless, it may be well briefly to state the case as it stands. As against the King, it rests upon no impregnable, but certainly upon respectable authority. The Prince of Orange, in his famous Apology, calls Philip the murderer of his wife and of his son, and says that there was proof of the facts in France. He alludes to the violent death of Carlos almost as if it were an indisputable truth. "As for Don Charles," he says, "was he not our future sovereign? And if the father could allege against his son fit cause for death, was it not rather for us to judge him than for three or four monks or inquisitors of Spain?"

The historian, P. Matthieu, relates that Philip assembled his council of conscience; that they recommended mercy; that hereupon Philip gave the matter to the inquisition, by which tribunal Carlos was declared a heretic on account of his connexion with Protestants, and for his attempt against his father's life was condemned to death, and that the sentence was executed by four slaves, two holding the arms, one the feet, while the fourth strangled him.

Page 520

De Thou gives the following account of the transaction, having derived many of his details from the oral communications of Louis de Foix:

Philip imagined that his son was about to escape from Spain, and to make his way to the Netherlands. The King also believed himself in danger of assassination from Carlos, his chief evidence being that the Prince always carried pistols in the pockets of his loose breeches. As Carlos wished always to be alone at night without any domestic in his chamber, de Foix had arranged for him a set of pulleys, by means of which he could open or shut his door without rising from his bed. He always slept with two pistols and two drawn swords under his pillow, and had two loaded arquebusses in a wardrobe close at hand. These remarkable precautions would seem rather to indicate a profound fear of being himself assassinated; but they were nevertheless supposed to justify Philip's suspicions, that the Infante was meditating parricide. On Christmas eve, however (1567), Don Carlos told his confessor that he had determined to kill a man. The priest, in consequence, refused to admit him to the communion. The Prince demanded, at least, a wafer which was not consecrated, in order that he might seem to the people to be participating in the sacrament. The confessor declined the proposal, and immediately repairing to the King, narrated the whole story. Philip exclaimed that he was himself the man whom the Prince intended to kill, but that measures should be forthwith taken to prevent such a design. The monarch then consulted the Holy Office of the inquisition, and the resolution was taken to arrest his son. De Foix was compelled to alter the pulleys of the door to the Prince's chamber in such a manner that it could be opened without the usual noise, which was almost sure to awaken him. At midnight, accordingly, Count Lerma entered the room so stealthily that the arms were all, removed from the Prince's pillow and the wardrobe, without awakening the sleeper. Philip, Ruy Gomez, the Duke de Feria, and two other nobles, then noiselessly, crept into the apartment. Carlos still slept so profoundly that it was necessary for Derma to shake him violently by the arm before he could be aroused. Starting from his sleep in the dead of night, and seeing his father thus accompanied, before his bed, the Prince cried out that he was a dead man, and earnestly besought the bystanders to make an end of him at once. Philip assured him, however, that he was not come to kill him, but to chastise him paternally, and to recal him to his duty. He then read him a serious lecture, caused him to rise from his bed, took away his servants, and placed him under guard. He was made to array himself in mourning habiliments, and to sleep on a truckle bed. The Prince was in despair. He soon made various attempts upon his own life. He threw himself into the fire, but was rescued by his guards, with his clothes all in flames. He passed several days without taking

Page 521

any food, and then ate so many patties of minced meat that he nearly died of indigestion. He was also said to have attempted to choke himself with a diamond, and to have been prevented by his guard; to have filled his bed with ice; to have sat in cold draughts; to have gone eleven days without food, the last method being, as one would think, sufficiently thorough. Philip, therefore, seeing his son thus desperate, consulted once more with the Holy Office, and came to the decision that it was better to condemn him legitimately to death than to permit him to die by his own hand. In order, however, to save appearances, the order was secretly carried into execution. Don Carlos was made to swallow poison in a bowl of broth, of which he died in a few hours. This was at the commencement of his twenty-third year. The death was concealed for several months, and was not made public till after Alva's victory at Jemmingen.

Such was the account drawn up by de Thou from the oral communications of de Foix, and from other sources not indicated. Certainly, such a narrative is far from being entitled to implicit credence. The historian was a contemporary, but he was not in Spain, and the engineer's testimony is, of course, not entitled to much consideration on the subject of the process and the execution (if there were an execution); although conclusive as to matters which had been within his personal knowledge. For the rest, all that it can be said to establish is the existence of the general rumor, that Carlos came to his death by foul means and in consequence of advice given by the inquisition.

On the other hand, in all the letters written at the period by persons in Madrid most likely, from their position, to know the truth, not a syllable has been found in confirmation of the violent death said to have been suffered by Carlos. Secretary Erasso, the papal nuncio Castagna, the Venetian envoy Cavalli, all express a conviction that the death of the prince had been brought about by his own extravagant conduct and mental excitement; by alternations of starving and voracious eating, by throwing himself into the fire; by icing his bed, and by similar acts of desperation. Nearly every writer alludes to the incident of the refusal of the priest to admit Carlos to communion, upon the ground of his confessed deadly hatred to an individual whom all supposed to be the King. It was also universally believed that Carlos meant to kill his father. The nuncio asked Spinosa (then president of Castile) if this report were true. "If nothing more were to be feared," answered the priest, "the King would protect himself by other measures," but the matter was worse, if worse could be. The King, however, summoned all the foreign diplomatic body and assured them that the story was false. After his arrest, the Prince, according to Castagna, attempted various means of suicide, abstaining, at last, many days from food, and dying in consequence, "discoursing, upon his deathbed, gravely and like a man of sense."

Page 522

The historian Cabrera, official panegyrist of Philip the Second, speaks of the death of Carlos as a natural one, but leaves a dark kind of mystery about the symptoms of his disease. He states, that the Prince was tried and condemned by a commission or junta, consisting of Spinosa, Ruy Gomez, and the Licentiate Virviesca, but that he was carried off by an illness, the nature of which he does not describe.

Llorente found nothing in the records of the Inquisition to prove that the Holy Office had ever condemned the Prince or instituted any process against him. He states that he was condemned by a commission, but that he died of a sickness which supervened. It must be confessed that the illness was a convenient one, and that such diseases are very apt to attack individuals whom tyrants are disposed to remove from their path, while desirous, at the same time, to save appearances. It would certainly be presumptuous to accept implicitly the narrative of de Thou, which is literally followed by Hoofd and by many modern writers. On the other hand, it would be an exaggeration of historical scepticism to absolve Philip from the murder of his son, solely upon negative testimony. The people about court did not believe in the crime. They saw no proofs of it. Of course they saw none. Philip would take good care that there should be none if he had made up his mind that the death of the Prince should be considered a natural one. And priori argument, which omits the character of the suspected culprit, and the extraordinary circumstances of time and place, is not satisfactory. Philip thoroughly understood the business of secret midnight murder. We shall soon have occasion to relate the elaborate and ingenious method by which the assassination of Montigny was accomplished and kept a profound secret from the whole world, until the letters of the royal assassin, after three centuries' repose, were exhumed, and the foul mystery revealed. Philip was capable of any crime. Moreover, in his letter to his aunt, Queen Catharine of Portugal, he distinctly declares himself, like Abraham, prepared to go all lengths in obedience to the Lord. "I have chosen in this matter," he said, "to make the sacrifice to God of my own flesh and blood, and to prefer His service and the universal welfare to all other human considerations." Whenever the letter to Pius V. sees the light, it will appear whether the sacrifice which the monarch thus made to his God proceeded beyond the imprisonment and condemnation of his son, or was completed by the actual immolation of the victim.

With regard to the Prince himself, it is very certain that, if he had lived, the realms of the Spanish Crown would have numbered one tyrant more. Carlos from his earliest youth, was remarkable for the ferocity of his character. The Emperor Charles was highly pleased with him, then about fourteen years of age, upon their first interview after the abdication. He flattered himself that the lad had inherited his

Page 523

own martial genius together with his name. Carlos took much interest in his grandfather's account of his various battles, but when the flight from Innspruck was narrated, he repeated many times, with much vehemence, that he never would have fled; to which position he adhered, notwithstanding all the arguments of the Emperor, and very much to his amusement. The young Prince was always fond of soldiers, and listened eagerly to discourses of war. He was in the habit also of recording the names of any military persons who, according to custom, frequently made offers of their services to the heir apparent, and of causing them to take a solemn oath to keep their engagements. No other indications of warlike talent, however, have been preserved concerning him. "He was crafty, ambitious, cruel, violent," says the envoy Suriano, "a hater of buffoons, a lover of soldiers." His natural cruelty seems to have been remarkable from his boyhood. After his return from the chase, he was in the habit of cutting the throats of hares and other animals, and of amusing himself with their dying convulsions. He also frequently took pleasure in roasting them alive. He once received a present of a very large snake from some person who seemed to understand how to please this remarkable young prince. After a time, however, the favorite reptile allowed itself to bite its master's finger, whereupon Don Carlos immediately retaliated by biting off its head.

He was excessively angry at the suggestion that the prince who was expected to spring from his father's marriage with the English queen, would one day reign over the Netherlands, and swore he would challenge him to mortal combat in order to prevent such an infringement of his rights. His father and grandfather were both highly diverted with this manifestation of spirit, but it was not decreed that the world should witness the execution of these fraternal intentions against the babe which was never to be born.

Ferocity, in short, seems to have been the leading characteristic of the unhappy Carlos. His preceptor, a man of learning and merit, who was called "the honorable John", tried to mitigate this excessive ardor of temperament by a course of Cicero de Officiis, which he read to him daily. Neither the eloquence of Tully, however, nor the precepts of the honorable John made the least impression upon this very savage nature. As he grew older he did not grow wiser nor more gentle. He was prematurely and grossly licentious. All the money which as a boy, he was allowed, he spent upon women of low character, and when he was penniless, he gave them his chains, his medals, even the clothes from his back. He took pleasure in affronting respectable females when he met them in the streets, insulting them by the coarsest language and gestures. Being cruel, cunning, fierce and licentious, he seemed to combine many of the worst qualities of a lunatic. That he probably was one is the best defence which can be offered for his conduct. In attempting to offer violence to a female, while he was at the university of Alcala, he fell down a stone staircase, from which cause he was laid up for a long time with a severely wounded head, and was supposed to have injured his brain.

Page 524

The traits of ferocity recorded of him during his short life are so numerous that humanity can hardly desire that it should have been prolonged. A few drops of water having once fallen upon his head from a window, as he passed through the street, he gave peremptory orders to his guard to burn the house to the ground, and to put every one of its inhabitants to the sword. The soldiers went forthwith to execute the order, but more humane than their master, returned with the excuse that the Holy Sacrament of the Viaticum had that moment been carried into the house. This appeal to the superstition of the Prince successfully suspended the execution of the crimes which his inconceivable malignity had contemplated. On another occasion, a nobleman, who slept near his chamber, failed to answer his bell on the instant. Springing upon his dilatory attendant, as soon as he made his appearance, the Prince seized him in his arms and was about to throw him from the window, when the cries of the unfortunate chamberlain attracted attention, and procured a rescue.

The Cardinal Espinoza had once accidentally detained at his palace an actor who was to perform a favorite part by express command of Don Carlos. Furious at this detention, the Prince took the priest by the throat as soon as he presented himself at the palace, and plucking his dagger from its sheath, swore, by the soul of his father, that he would take his life on the spot. The grand inquisitor fell on his knees and begged for mercy, but it is probable that the entrance of the King alone saved his life.

There was often something ludicrous mingled with the atrocious in these ungovernable explosions of wrath. Don Pedro Manuel, his chamberlain, had once, by his command, ordered a pair of boots to be made for the Prince. When brought home, they were, unfortunately, too tight. The Prince after vainly endeavouring to pull them on, fell into a blazing passion. He swore that it was the fault of Don Pedro, who always wore tight boots himself, but he at the same time protested that his father was really at the bottom of the affair. He gave the young nobleman a box on the ear for thus conspiring with the King against his comfort, and then ordered the boots to be chopped into little pieces, stewed and seasoned. Then sending for the culprit shoemaker, he ordered him to eat his own boots, thus converted into a pottage; and with this punishment the unfortunate mechanic, who had thought his life forfeited, was sufficiently glad to comply.

Even the puissant Alva could not escape his violence. Like all the men in whom his father reposed confidence, the Duke was odious to the heir apparent. Don Carlos detested him with the whole force of his little soul. He hated him as only a virtuous person deserved to be hated by such a ruffian. The heir apparent had taken the Netherlands under his patronage. He had even formed the design of repairing secretly to the provinces, and could not, therefore, disguise

Page 525

his wrath at the appointment of the Duke. It is doubtful whether the country would have benefited by the gratification of his wishes. It is possible that the pranks of so malignant an ape might have been even more mischievous than the concentrated and vigorous tyranny of an Alva. When the new Captain-general called, before his departure, to pay his respects to the Infante, the Duke seemed, to his surprise, to have suddenly entered the den of a wild beast. Don Carlos sprang upon him with a howl of fury, brandishing a dagger in his hand. He uttered reproaches at having been defrauded of the Netherland government. He swore that Alva should never accomplish his mission, nor leave his presence alive. He was proceeding to make good the threat with his poniard, when the Duke closed with him. A violent struggle succeeded. Both rolled together on the ground, the Prince biting and striking like a demoniac, the Duke defending himself as well as he was able, without attempting his adversary's life. Before the combat was decided, the approach of many persons put an end to the disgraceful scene. As decent a veil as possible was thrown over the transaction, and the Duke departed on his mission. Before the end of the year, the Prince was in the prison whence he never came forth alive.

The figure of Don Carlos was as misshapen as his mind. His head was disproportionately large, his limbs were rickety, one shoulder was higher, one leg longer than the other. With features resembling those of his father, but with a swarthy instead of a fair complexion, with an expression of countenance both fierce and foolish, and with a character such as we have sketched it, upon the evidence of those who knew him well, it is indeed strange that he should ever have been transformed by the magic of poetry into a romantic hero. As cruel and cunning as his father, as mad as his great-grandmother, he has left a name, which not even his dark and mysterious fate can render interesting.

1568 [*Chapter iv*.]

Continued and excessive barbarity of the government—Execution of Antony van Straalen, of "Red—Rod" Spelle—The Prince of Orange advised by his German friends to remain quiet—Heroic sentiments of Orange—His religious opinions—His efforts in favor of toleration— His fervent piety—His public correspondence with the Emperor—-His "Justification," his "Warning," and other papers characterized—The Prince, with a considerable army, crosses the Rhine—Passage of the Meuse at Stochem—He offers battle to Alva—Determination of the Duke to avoid an engagement—Comparison of his present situation with his previous position in Friesland—Masterly tactics of the Duke—-Skirmish on the Geta—Defeat of the Orangists—Death of Hoogstraaten—Junction with Genlis—Adherence of Alva to his original plan—The Prince crosses the frontier of France— Correspondence between Charles *ix*. and Orange—The patriot army disbanded at Strasburg—Comments

Page 526

by Granvelle upon the position of the Prince—Triumphant attitude of Alva—Festivities at Brussels— Colossal statue of Alva erected by himself in Antwerp citadel— Intercession of the Emperor with Philip—Memorial of six Electors to the Emperor—Mission of the Archduke Charles to Spain—His negotiations with Philip—Public and private correspondence between the King and Emperor—Duplicity of Maximilian—Abrupt conclusion to the intervention—Granvelle's suggestions to Philip concerning the treaty of Passau.

The Duke having thus crushed the project of Count Bouts, and quelled the insurrection in Friesland, returned in triumph to Brussels. Far from softened by the success of his arms, he renewed with fresh energy the butchery which, for a brief season, had been suspended during his brilliant campaign in the north. The altars again smoked with victims; the hanging, burning, drowning, beheading, seemed destined to be the perpetual course of his administration, so long as human bodies remained on which his fanatical vengeance could be wreaked. Four men of eminence were executed soon after his return to the capital. They had previously suffered such intense punishment on the rack, that it was necessary to carry them to the scaffold and bind them upon chairs, that they might be beheaded. These four sufferers were a Frisian nobleman, named Galena, the secretaries of Egmont and Horn, Bakkerzeel and La Loo, and the distinguished burgomaster of Antwerp, Antony Van Straalen. The arrest of the three last-mentioned individuals, simultaneously with that of the two Counts, has been related in a previous chapter. In the case of Van Straalen, the services rendered by him to the provinces during his long and honorable career, had been so remarkable, that even the Blood-Council, in sending his case to Alva for his sentence, were inspired by a humane feeling. They felt so much compunction at the impending fate of a man who, among other meritorious acts, had furnished nearly all the funds for the brilliant campaign in Picardy, by which the opening years of Philip's reign had been illustrated, as to hint at the propriety of a pardon. But the recommendation to mercy, though it came from the lips of tigers, dripping with human blood, fell unheeded on the tyrant's ear. It seemed meet that the man who had supplied the nerves of war in that unforgiven series of triumphs, should share the fate of the hero who had won the laurels.

[Bor, Cappella, Hoofd, ubi sup. The last words of the Burgomaster as he bowed his neck to the executioner's stroke were, "Voor wel gedaan, kwaclyk beloud,"—"For faithful service, evil recompense." —Cappella, 232.]

Hundreds of obscure martyrs now followed in the same path to another world, where surely they deserved to find their recompense, if steadfast adherence to their faith, and a tranquil trust in God amid tortures and death too horrible to be related, had ever found favor above. The "Red-Rod," as the

Page 527

provost of Brabant was popularly designated, was never idle. He flew from village to village throughout the province, executing the bloody behests of his masters with congenial alacrity. Nevertheless his career was soon destined to close upon the same scaffold where he had so long officiated. Partly from caprice, partly from an uncompromising and fantastic sense of justice, his master now hanged the executioner whose industry had been so untiring. The sentence which was affixed to his breast, as he suffered, stated that he had been guilty of much malpractice; that he had executed many persons without a warrant, and had suffered many guilty persons for a bribe, to escape their doom. The reader can judge which of the two clauses constituted the most sufficient reason.

During all these triumphs of Alva, the Prince of Orange had not lost his self-possession. One after another, each of his bold, skilfully-conceived and carefully-prepared plans had failed. Villers had been entirely discomfited at Dalhena, Cocqueville had been cut to pieces in Picardy, and now the valiant and experienced Louis had met with an entire overthrow in Friesland. The brief success of the patriots at Heiliger Zee had been washed out in the blood-torrents of Jemmingen. Tyranny was more triumphant, the provinces more timidly crouching, than ever. The friends on whom William of Orange relied in Germany, never enthusiastic in his cause, although many of them true-hearted and liberal, now grew cold and anxious. For months long, his most faithful and affectionate allies, such men as the Elector of Hesse and the Duke of Wirtemberg, as well as the less trustworthy Augustus of Saxony, had earnestly expressed their opinion that, under the circumstances, his best course was to sit still and watch the course of events.

It was known that the Emperor had written an urgent letter to Philip on the subject of his policy in the Netherlands in general, and concerning the position of Orange in particular. All persons, from the Emperor down to the pettiest potentate, seemed now of opinion that the Prince had better pause; that he was, indeed, bound to wait the issue of that remonstrance. “Your highness must sit still,” said Landgrave William. “Your highness must sit still,” said Augustus of Saxony. “You must move neither hand nor foot in the cause of the perishing provinces,” said the Emperor. “Not a soldier-horse, foot, or dragoon-shall be levied within the Empire. If you violate the peace of the realm, and embroil us with our excellent brother and cousin Philip, it is at your own peril. You have nothing to do but to keep quiet and await his answer to our letter.” But the Prince knew how much effect his sitting still would produce upon the cause of liberty and religion. He knew how much effect the Emperor’s letter was like to have upon the heart of Philip. He knew that the more impenetrable the darkness now gathering over that land of doom which he had devoted his life to defend, the more urgently

Page 528

was he forbidden to turn his face away from it in its affliction. He knew that thousands of human souls, nigh to perishing, were daily turning towards him as their only hope on earth, and he was resolved, so long as he could dispense a single ray of light, that his countenance should never be averted. It is difficult to contemplate his character, at this period, without being infected with a perhaps dangerous enthusiasm. It is not an easy task coldly to analyse a nature which contained so much of the self-sacrificing and the heroic, as well as of the adroit and the subtle; and it is almost impossible to give utterance to the emotions which naturally swell the heart at the contemplation of so much active virtue, without rendering oneself liable to the charge of excessive admiration. Through the mists of adversity, a human form may dilate into proportions which are colossal and deceptive. Our judgment may thus, perhaps, be led captive, but at any rate the sentiment excited is more healthful than that inspired by the mere shedder of blood, by the merely selfish conqueror. When the cause of the champion is that of human right against tyranny, of political ind religious freedom against an all-engrossing and absolute bigotry, it is still more difficult to restrain veneration within legitimate bounds. To liberate the souls and bodies of millions, to maintain for a generous people, who had well-nigh lost their all, those free institutions which their ancestors had bequeathed, was a noble task for any man. But here stood a Prince of ancient race, vast possessions, imperial blood, one of the great ones of the earth, whose pathway along the beaten track would have been smooth and successful, but who was ready to pour out his wealth like water, and to coin his heart's blood, drop by drop, in this virtuous but almost desperate cause. He felt that of a man to whom so much had been entrusted, much was to be asked. God had endowed him with an incisive and comprehensive genius, unfaltering fortitude, and with the rank and fortune which enable a man to employ his faculties, to the injury or the happiness of his fellows, on the widest scale. The Prince felt the responsibility, and the world was to learn the result.

It was about this time that a deep change came over his mind. Hitherto, although nominally attached to the communion of the ancient Church, his course of life and habits of mind had not led him to deal very earnestly with things beyond the world. The severe duties, the grave character of the cause to which his days were henceforth to be devoted, had already led him to a closer inspection of the essential attributes of Christianity. He was now enrolled for life as a soldier of the Reformation. The Reformation was henceforth his fatherland, the sphere, of his duty and his affection. The religious Reformers became his brethren, whether in France, Germany, the Netherlands, or England. Yet his mind had taken a higher flight than that of the most eminent Reformers.

Page 529

His goal was not a new doctrine, but religious liberty. In an age when to think was a crime, and when bigotry and a persecuting spirit characterized Romanists and Lutherans, Calvinists and Zwinglians, he had dared to announce freedom of conscience as the great object for which noble natures should strive. In an age when toleration was a vice, he had the manhood to cultivate it as a virtue. His parting advice to the Reformers of the Netherlands, when he left them for a season in the spring of 1567, was to sink all lesser differences in religious union. Those of the Augsburg Confession and those of the Calvinistic Church, in their own opinion as incapable of commingling as oil and water, were, in his judgment, capable of friendly amalgamation. He appealed eloquently to the good and influential of all parties to unite in one common cause against oppression. Even while favoring daily more and more the cause of the purified Church, and becoming daily more alive to the corruption of Rome, he was yet willing to tolerate all forms of worship, and to leave reason to combat error.

Without a particle of cant or fanaticism, he had become a deeply religious man. Hitherto he had been only a man of the world and a statesman, but from this time forth he began calmly to rely upon God's providence in all the emergencies of his eventful life. His letters written to his most confidential friends, to be read only by themselves, and which have been gazed upon by no other eyes until after the lapse of nearly three centuries, abundantly prove his sincere and simple trust. This sentiment was not assumed for effect to delude others, but cherished as a secret support for himself. His religion was not a cloak to his designs, but a consolation in his disasters. In his letter of instruction to his most confidential agent, John Bazius, while he declared himself frankly in favor of the Protestant principles, he expressed his extreme repugnance to the persecution of Catholics. "Should we obtain power over any city or cities," he wrote, "let the communities of papists be as much respected and protected as possible. Let them be overcome, not by violence, but with gentle-mindedness and virtuous treatment." After the terrible disaster at Jemmingen, he had written to Louis, consoling him, in the most affectionate language, for the unfortunate result of his campaign. Not a word of reproach escaped from him, although his brother had conducted the operations in Friesland, after the battle of Heiliger Lee, in a manner quite contrary to his own advice. He had counselled against a battle, and had foretold a defeat; but after the battle had been fought and a crushing defeat sustained, his language breathed only unwavering submission to the will of God, and continued confidence in his own courage. "You may be well assured, my brother," he wrote, "that I have never felt anything more keenly than the pitiable misfortune which has happened to you, for many reasons which you can easily imagine. Moreover, it hinders

Page 530

us much in the levy which we are making, and has greatly chilled the hearts of those who otherwise would have been ready to give us assistance. Nevertheless, since it has thus pleased God, it is necessary to have patience and to lose not courage; conforming ourselves to His divine will, as for my part I have determined to do in everything which may happen, still proceeding onward in our work with his Almighty aid. 'Soevis tranquillus in undis', he was never more placid than when the storm was wildest and the night darkest. He drew his consolations and refreshed his courage at the never-failing fountains of Divine mercy.

"I go to-morrow," he wrote to the unworthy Anne of Saxony; "but when I shall return, or when I shall see you, I cannot, on my honor, tell you with certainty. I have resolved to place myself in the hands of the Almighty, that he may guide me whither it is His good pleasure that I should go. I see well enough that I am destined to pass this life in misery and labor, with which I am well content, since it thus pleases the Omnipotent, for I know that I have merited still greater chastisement. I only implore Him graciously to send me strength to endure with patience."

Such language, in letters the most private, never meant to be seen by other eyes than those to which they were addressed, gives touching testimony to the sincere piety of his character. No man was ever more devoted to a high purpose, no man had ever more right to imagine himself, or less inclination to pronounce himself, entrusted with a divine mission. There was nothing of the charlatan in his character. His nature was true and steadfast. No narrow-minded usurper was ever more loyal to his own aggrandisement than this large-hearted man to the cause of oppressed humanity. Yet it was inevitable that baser minds should fail to recognise his purity. While he exhausted his life for the emancipation of a people, it was easy to ascribe all his struggles to the hope of founding a dynasty. It was natural for grovelling natures to search in the gross soil of self-interest for the sustaining roots of the tree beneath whose branches a nation found its shelter. What could they comprehend of living fountains and of heavenly dews?

In May, 1568, the Emperor Maximilian had formally issued a requisition to the Prince of Orange to lay down his arms, and to desist from all levies and machinations against the King of Spain and the peace of the realm. This summons he was commanded to obey on pain of forfeiting all rights, fiefs, privileges and endowments bestowed by imperial hands on himself or his predecessors, and of incurring the heaviest disgrace, punishment, and penalties of the Empire.

Page 531

To this document the Prince replied in August, having paid in the meantime but little heed to its precepts. Now that the Emperor, who at first was benignant, had begun to frown on his undertaking, he did not slacken in his own endeavours to set his army on foot. One by one, those among the princes of the empire who had been most stanch in his cause, and were still most friendly to his person, grew colder as tyranny became stronger; but the ardor of the Prince was not more chilled by their despair than by the overthrow at Jemmingen, which had been its cause. In August, he answered the letter of the Emperor, respectfully but warmly. He still denounced the tyranny of Alva and the arts of Granvelle with that vigorous eloquence which was always at his command, while, as usual, he maintained a show of almost exaggerated respect for their monarch. It was not to be presumed, he said, that his Majesty, “a king debonair and bountiful,” had ever intended such cruelties as those which had been rapidly retraced in the letter, but it was certain that the Duke of Alva had committed them all of his own authority. He trusted, moreover, that the Emperor, after he had read the “Justification” which the Prince had recently published, would appreciate the reason for his taking up arms. He hoped that his Majesty would now consider the resistance just, Christian, and conformable to the public peace. He expressed the belief that rather than interpose any hindrance, his Majesty would thenceforth rather render assistance “to the poor and desolate Christians,” even as it was his Majesty’s office and authority to be the last refuge of the injured.

The “Justification against the false blame of his calumniators by the Prince of Orange,” to which the Prince thus referred, has been mentioned in a previous chapter. This remarkable paper had been drawn up at the advice of his friends, Landgrave William and Elector Augustus, but it was not the only document which the Prince caused to be published at this important epoch. He issued a formal declaration of war against the Duke of Alva; he addressed a solemn and eloquent warning or proclamation to all the inhabitants of the Netherlands. These documents are all extremely important and interesting. Their phraseology shows the intentions and the spirit by which the Prince was actuated on first engaging in the struggle. Without the Prince and his efforts—at this juncture, there would probably have never been a free Netherland commonwealth. It is certain, likewise, that without an enthusiastic passion for civil and religious liberty throughout the masses of the Netherland people, there would have been no successful effort on the part of the Prince. He knew his countrymen; while they, from highest to humblest, recognised in him their saviour. There was, however, no pretence of a revolutionary movement. The Prince came to maintain, not to overthrow. The freedom which had been enjoyed in the provinces until the accession

Page 532

of the Burgundian dynasty, it was his purpose to restore. The attitude which he now assumed was a peculiar one in history. This defender of a people's cause set up no revolutionary standard. In all his documents he paid apparent reverence to the authority of the King. By a fiction, which was not unphilosophical, he assumed that the monarch was incapable of the crimes which he charged upon the Viceroy. Thus he did not assume the character of a rebel in arms against his prince, but in his own capacity of sovereign he levied troops and waged war against a satrap whom he chose to consider false to his master's orders. In the interest of Philip, assumed to be identical with the welfare of his people, he took up arms against the tyrant who was sacrificing both. This mask of loyalty would never save his head from the block, as he well knew, but some spirits lofty as his own, might perhaps be influenced by a noble sophistry, which sought to strengthen the cause of the people by attributing virtue to the King.

And thus did the sovereign of an insignificant little principality stand boldly forth to do battle with the most powerful monarch in the world. At his own expense, and by almost superhuman exertions, he had assembled nearly thirty thousand men. He now boldly proclaimed to the world, and especially to the inhabitants of the provinces, his motives, his purposes, and his hopes.

"We, by God's grace Prince of Orange," said his declaration of 31st August, 1568, "salute all faithful subjects of his Majesty. To few people is it unknown that the Spaniards have for a long time sought to govern the land according to their pleasure. Abusing his Majesty's goodness, they have persuaded him to decree the introduction of the inquisition into the Netherlands. They well understood, that in case the Netherlanders could be made to tolerate its exercise, they would lose all protection to their liberty; that if they opposed its introduction, they would open those rich provinces as a vast field of plunder. We had hoped that his Majesty, taking the matter to heart, would have spared his hereditary provinces from such utter ruin. We have found our hopes futile. We are unable, by reason of our loyal service due to his Majesty, and of our true compassion for the faithful lieges, to look with tranquillity any longer at such murders, robberies, outrages, and agony. We are, moreover, certain that his Majesty has been badly informed upon Netherland matters. We take up arms, therefore, to oppose the violent tyranny of the Spaniards, by the help of the merciful God, who is the enemy of all bloodthirstiness. Cheerfully inclined to wager our life and all our worldly wealth on the cause, we have now, God be thanked, an excellent army of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, raised all at our own expense. We summon all loyal subjects of the Netherlands to come and help us. Let them take to heart the uttermost need of the country, the danger of perpetual slavery

Page 533

for themselves and their children, and of the entire overthrow of the Evangelical religion. Only when Alva's blood- thirstiness shall have been at last overpowered, can the provinces hope to recover their pure administration of justice, and a prosperous condition for their commonwealth."

In the "warning" or proclamation to all the inhabitants of the Netherlands, the Prince expressed similar sentiments. He announced his intention of expelling the Spaniards forever from the country. To accomplish the mighty undertaking, money was necessary. He accordingly called on his countrymen to contribute, the rich out of their abundance, the poor even out of their poverty, to the furtherance of the cause. To do this, while it was yet time, he solemnly warned them "before God, the fatherland, and the world." After the title of this paper were cited the 28th, 29th, and 30th verses of the tenth chapter of Proverbs. The favorite motto of the Prince, "pro lege, rege, grege," was also affixed to the document.

These appeals had, however, but little effect. Of three hundred thousand crowns, promised on behalf of leading nobles and merchants of the Netherlands by Marcus Perez, but ten or twelve thousand came to hand. The appeals to the gentlemen who had signed the Compromise, and to many others who had, in times past, been favorable to the liberal party were powerless. A poor Anabaptist preacher collected a small sum from a refugee congregation on the outskirts of Holland, and brought it, at the peril of his life, into the Prince's camp. It came from people, he said, whose will was better than the gift. They never wished to be repaid, he said, except by kindness, when the cause of reform should be triumphant in the Netherlands. The Prince signed a receipt for the money, expressing himself touched by this sympathy from these poor outcasts. In the course of time, other contributions from similar sources, principally collected by dissenting preachers, starving and persecuted church communities, were received. The poverty-stricken exiles contributed far more, in proportion, for the establishment of civil and religious liberty, than the wealthy merchants or the haughty nobles.

Late in September, the Prince mustered his army in the province of Treves, near the monastery of Romersdorf. His force amounted to nearly thirty thousand men, of whom nine thousand were cavalry. Lumey, Count de la Marek, now joined him at the head of a picked band of troopers; a bold, ferocious partisan, descended from the celebrated Wild Boar of Ardennes. Like Civilis, the ancient Batavian hero, he had sworn to leave hair and beard unshorn till the liberation of the country was achieved, or at least till the death of Egmont, whose blood relation he was, had been avenged. It is probable that the fierce conduct of this chieftain, and particularly the cruelties exercised upon monks and papists by his troops, dishonored the cause more than their valor could advance it. But in those stormy times such rude but incisive instruments were scarcely to be neglected, and the name of Lumey was to be forever associated with important triumphs of the liberal cause.

Page 534

It was fated, however, that but few laurels should be won by the patriots in this campaign. The Prince crossed the Rhine at Saint Feit, a village belonging to himself. He descended along the banks as far as the neighbourhood of Cologne. Then, after hovering in apparent uncertainty about the territories of Juliers and Limburg, he suddenly, on a bright moonlight night, crossed the Meuse with his whole army, in the neighbourhood of Stochem. The operation was brilliantly effected. A compact body of cavalry, according to the plan which had been more than once adopted by Julius Caesar, was placed in the midst of the current, under which shelter the whole army successfully forded the river. The Meuse was more shallow than usual, but the water was as high as the soldiers' necks. This feat was accomplished on the night and morning of the 4th and 5th of October. It was considered so bold an achievement that its fame spread far and wide. The Spaniards began to tremble at the prowess of a Prince whom they had affected to despise. The very fact of the passage was flatly contradicted. An unfortunate burgher at Amsterdam was scourged at the whipping-post, because he mentioned it as matter of common report. The Duke of Alva refused to credit the tale when it was announced to him. "Is the army of the Prince of Orange a flock of wild geese," he asked, "that it can fly over rivers like the Meuse?" Nevertheless it was true. The outlawed, exiled Prince stood once more on the borders of Brabant, with an army of disciplined troops at his back. His banners bore patriotic inscriptions. "Pro Lege, Rege, Grege," was emblazoned upon some. A pelican tearing her breast to nourish her young with her life-blood was the pathetic emblem of others. It was his determination to force or entice the Duke of Alva into a general engagement. He was desirous to wipe out the disgrace of Jemmingen. Could he plant his victorious standard thus in the very heart of the country, he felt that thousands would rally around it. The country would rise almost to a man, could he achieve a victory over the tyrant, flushed as he was with victory, and sated with blood.

With banners flying, drums beating, trumpets sounding, with all the pomp and defiance which an already victorious general could assume, Orange marched into Brabant, and took up a position within six thousand paces of Alva's encampment. His plan was at every hazard to dare or to decoy his adversary into the chances of a stricken field. The Governor was entrenched at a place called Keiserslager, which Julius Caesar had once occupied. The city of Maestricht was in his immediate neighbourhood, which was thus completely under his protection, while it furnished him with supplies. The Prince sent to the Duke a herald, who was to propose that all prisoners who might be taken in the coming campaign should be exchanged instead of being executed. The herald, booted and spurred, even as he had dismounted from his horse, was instantly hanged. This was the significant answer to the mission of mercy. Alva held no parley with rebels before a battle, nor gave quarter afterwards.

Page 535

In the meantime, the Duke had carefully studied the whole position of affairs, and had arrived at his conclusion. He was determined not to fight. It was obvious that the Prince would offer battle eagerly, ostentatiously, frequently, but the Governor was resolved never to accept the combat. Once taken, his resolution was unalterable. He recognized the important difference between his own attitude at present, and that in which he had found himself during the past summer in Friesland. There a battle had been necessary, now it was more expedient to overcome his enemy by delay. In Friesland, the rebels had just achieved a victory over the choice troops of Spain. Here they were suffering from the stigma of a crushing defeat. Then, the army of Louis Nassau was swelling daily by recruits, who poured in from all the country round. Now, neither peasant nor noble dared lift a finger for the Prince. The army of Louis had been sustained by the one which his brother was known to be preparing. If their movements had not been checked, a junction would have been effected. The armed revolt would then have assumed so formidable an aspect, that rebellion would seem, even for the timid, a safer choice than loyalty. The army of the Prince, on the contrary, was now the last hope of the patriots: The three by which it had been preceded had been successively and signally vanquished.

Friesland, again, was on the outskirts of the country. A defeat sustained by the government there did not necessarily imperil the possession of the provinces. Brabant, on the contrary, was the heart of the Netherlands. Should the Prince achieve a decisive triumph then and there, he would be master of the nation’s fate. The Viceroy knew himself to be odious, and he reigned by terror. The Prince was the object of the people’s idolatry, and they would rally round him if they dared. A victory gained by the liberator over the tyrant, would destroy the terrible talisman of invincibility by which Alva governed. The Duke had sufficiently demonstrated his audacity in the tremendous chastisement which he had inflicted upon the rebels under Louis. He could now afford to play that scientific game of which he was so profound a master, without risking any loss of respect or authority. He was no enthusiast. Although he doubtless felt sufficiently confident of overcoming the Prince in a pitched battle, he had not sufficient relish for the joys of contest to be willing to risk even a remote possibility of defeat. His force, although composed of veterans and of the best musketeers and pikemen in Europe, was still somewhat inferior in numbers to that of his adversary. Against the twenty thousand foot and eight thousand, horse of Orange, he could oppose only fifteen or sixteen thousand foot and fifty-five hundred riders. Moreover, the advantage which he had possessed in Friesland, a country only favorable to infantry, in which he had been stronger than his opponent, was now transferred

Page 536

to his new enemy. On the plains of Brabant, the Prince's superiority in cavalry was sure to tell. The season of the year, too, was an important element in the calculation. The winter alone would soon disperse the bands of German mercenaries, whose expenses Orange was not able to support, even while in active service. With unpaid wages and disappointed hopes of plunder, the rebel army would disappear in a few weeks as totally as if defeated in the open field. In brief, Orange by a victory would gain new life and strength, while his defeat could no more than anticipate, by a few weeks, the destruction of his army, already inevitable. Alva, on the contrary, might lose the mastery of the Netherlands if unfortunate, and would gain no solid advantage if triumphant. The Prince had everything to hope, the Duke everything to fear, from the result of a general action.

The plan, thus deliberately resolved upon, was accomplished with faultless accuracy. As a work of art, the present campaign of Alva against Orange was a more consummate masterpiece than the, more brilliant and dashing expedition into Friesland. The Duke had resolved to hang upon his adversary's skirts, to follow him move by move, to check him at every turn, to harass him in a hundred ways, to foil all his enterprises, to parry all his strokes, and finally to drive him out of the country, after a totally barren campaign, when, as he felt certain, his ill-paid hirelings would vanish in all directions, and leave their patriot Prince a helpless and penniless adventurer. The scheme thus sagaciously conceived, his adversary, with all his efforts, was unable to circumvent.

The campaign lasted little more than a month. Twenty-nine times the Prince changed his encampment, and at every remove the Duke was still behind him, as close and seemingly as impalpable as his shadow. Thrice they were within cannon-shot of each other; twice without a single trench or rampart between them. The country people refused the Prince supplies, for they trembled at the vengeance of the Governor. Alva had caused the irons to be removed from all the mills, so that not a bushel of corn could be ground in the whole province. The country thus afforded but little forage for the thirty thousand soldiers of the Prince. The troops, already discontented, were clamorous for pay and plunder. During one mutinous demonstration, the Prince's sword was shot from his side, and it was with difficulty that a general outbreak was suppressed. The soldiery were maddened and tantalized by the tactics of Alva. They found themselves constantly in the presence of an enemy, who seemed to court a battle at one moment and to vanish like a phantom at the next They felt the winter approaching, and became daily more dissatisfied with the irritating hardships to which they were exposed. Upon the night of the 5th and 6th of October the Prince had crossed the Meuse at Stochem. Thence he had proceeded to Tongres, followed closely by the enemy's force, who encamped in the immediate neighbourhood. From Tongres he had moved to Saint Trond, still pursued and still baffled in the same cautious manner. The skirmishing at the outposts was incessant, but the main body was withdrawn as soon as there seemed a chance of its becoming involved.

Page 537

From Saint Trond, in the neighbourhood of which he had remained several days, he advanced in a southerly direction towards Jodoigne. Count de Genlis, with a reinforcement of French Huguenots, for which the Prince had been waiting, had penetrated through the Ardennes, crossed the Meuse at Charlemont, and was now intending a junction with him at Waveron. The river Geta flowed between them. The Prince stationed a considerable force upon a hill near the stream to protect the passage, and then proceeded leisurely to send his army across the river. Count Hoogstraaten, with the rear-guard, consisting of about three thousand men, were alone left upon the hither bank, in order to provoke or to tempt the enemy, who, as usual, was encamped very near. Alva refused to attack the main army, but Frederic with a force of four thousand men, were alone left on the hither bank, in order to provoke or to tempt the enemy, who as usual, was encamped very near. Alva refused to attack the main army but rapidly detached his son, Don Fredrick, with a force of four thousand foot and three thousand horse, to cut off the rear-guard. The movement was effected in a masterly manner, the hill was taken, the three thousand troops which had not passed the river were cut to pieces, and Vitelli hastily despatched a gentleman named Barberini to implore the Duke to advance with the main body, cross the river, and, once for all, exterminate the rebels in a general combat. Alva, inflamed, not with ardor for an impending triumph, but with rage, that his sagely-conceived plans could not be comprehended even by his son and by his favorite officers, answered the eager messenger with peremptory violence. “Go back to Vitelli,” he cried. “Is he, or am I, to command in this campaign? Tell him not to suffer a single man to cross the river. Warn him against sending any more envoys to advise a battle; for should you or any other man dare to bring me another such message, I swear to you, by the head of the King, that you go not hence alive.”

With this decisive answer the messenger had nothing for it but to gallop back with all haste, in order to participate in what might be left of the butchery of Count Hoogstraaten’s force, and to prevent Vitelli and Don Frederic in their ill-timed ardor, from crossing the river. This was properly effected, while in the meantime the whole rear-guard of the patriots had been slaughtered. A hundred or two, the last who remained, had made their escape from the field, and had taken refuge in a house in the neighbourhood. The Spaniards set the buildings on fire, and standing around with lifted lances, offered the fugitives the choice of being consumed in the flames or of springing out upon their spears. Thus entrapped some chose the one course, some the other. A few, to escape the fury of the fire and the brutality of the Spaniards, stabbed themselves with their own swords. Others embraced, and then killed each other, the enemies from below looking

Page 538

on, as at a theatrical exhibition; now hissing and now applauding, as the death struggles were more or less to their taste. In a few minutes all the fugitives were dead. Nearly three thousand of the patriots were slain in this combat, including those burned or butchered after the battle was over. The Sieur de Louverwal was taken prisoner, and soon afterwards beheaded in Brussels; but the greatest misfortune sustained by the liberal party upon this occasion was the death of Antony de Lalaing, Count of Hoogstraaten. This brave and generous nobleman, the tried friend of the Prince of Orange, and his colleague during the memorable scenes at Antwerp, was wounded in the foot during the action, by an accidental discharge of his own pistol. The injury, although apparently slight, caused his death in a few days. There seemed a strange coincidence in his good and evil fortunes. A casual wound in the hand from his own pistol while he was on his way to Brussels, to greet Alva upon his first arrival, had saved him from the scaffold. And now in his first pitched battle with the Duke, this seemingly trifling injury in the foot was destined to terminate his existence. Another peculiar circumstance had marked the event. At a gay supper in the course of this campaign, Hoogstraaten had teased Count Louis, in a rough, soldierly way, with his disaster at Jemmingen. He had affected to believe that the retreat upon that occasion had been unnecessary. “We have been now many days in the Netherlands;” said he, “and we have seen nothing of the Spaniards but their backs.”—“And when the Duke does break loose,” replied Louis, somewhat nettled, “I warrant you will see their faces soon enough, and remember them for the rest of your life.” The half-jesting remark was thus destined to become a gloomy prophecy.

This was the only important action daring the campaign. Its perfect success did not warp Alva’s purpose, and, notwithstanding the murmurs of many of his officers, he remained firm in his resolution. After the termination of the battle on the Geta, and the Duke’s obstinate refusal to pursue his advantage, the Baron de Chevreau dashed his pistol to the ground, in his presence, exclaiming that the Duke would never fight. The Governor smiled at the young man’s chagrin, seemed even to approve his enthusiasm, but reminded him that it was the business of an officer to fight, of a general to conquer. If the victory were bloodless, so much the better for all.

This action was fought on the 20th of October. A few days afterwards, the Prince made his junction with Genlis at Waveren, a place about three leagues from Louvain and from Brussels. This auxiliary force was, however, insignificant. There were only five hundred cavalry and three thousand foot, but so many women and children, that it seemed rather an emigrating colony than an invading army. They arrived late. If they had come earlier, it would have been of little consequence, for it had been written

Page 539

that no laurels were to be gathered in that campaign. The fraternal spirit which existed between the Reformers in all countries was all which could be manifested upon the occasion. The Prince was frustrated in his hopes of a general battle, still more bitterly disappointed by the supineness of the country. Not a voice was raised to welcome the deliverer. Not a single city opened its gates. All was crouching, silent, abject. The rising, which perhaps would have been universal had a brilliant victory been obtained, was, by the masterly tactics of Alva, rendered an almost inconceivable idea. The mutinous demonstrations in the Prince's camp became incessant; the soldiers were discontented and weary. What the Duke had foretold was coming to pass, for the Prince's army was already dissolving.

Genlis and the other French officers were desirous that the Prince should abandon the Netherlands for the present, and come to the rescue of the Huguenots, who had again renewed the religious war under Conde and Coligny. The German soldiers, however would listen to no such proposal. They had enlisted to fight the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands, and would not hear of making war against Charles *ix*. in France. The Prince was obliged to countermarch toward the Rhine. He recrossed the Geta, somewhat to Alva's astonishment, and proceeded in the direction of the Meuse. The autumn rains, however, had much swollen that river since his passage at the beginning of the month, so that it could no longer be forded. He approached the city of Liege, and summoned their Bishop, as he had done on his entrance into the country, to grant a free passage to his troops. The Bishop who stood in awe of Alva, and who had accepted his protection again refused. The Prince had no time to parley. He was again obliged to countermarch, and took his way along the high-road to France, still watched and closely pursued by Alva, between whose troops and his own daily skirmishes took place. At Le Quesnoy, the Prince gained a trifling advantage over the Spaniards; at Cateau Cambresis he also obtained a slight and easy-victory; but by the 17th of November the Duke of Alva had entered Cateau Cambresis, and the Prince had crossed the frontier of France.

The Marechal de Cosse, who was stationed on the boundary of France and Flanders, now harassed the Prince by very similar tactics to those of Alva. He was, however, too weak to inflict any serious damage, although strong enough to create perpetual annoyance. He also sent a secretary to the Prince, with a formal prohibition, in the name of Charles *ix*., against his entering the French territory with his troops.

Page 540

Besides these negotiations, conducted by Secretary Favelles on the part of Marechal de Cosse, the King, who was excessively alarmed, also despatched the Marechal Gaspar de Schomberg on the same service. That envoy accordingly addressed to the Prince a formal remonstrance in the name of his sovereign. Charles *ix*., it was represented, found it very strange that the Prince should thus enter the French territory. The King was not aware that he had ever given him the least cause for hostile proceedings, could not therefore take it in good part that the Prince should thus enter France with a "large and puissant army;" because no potentate, however humble, could tolerate such a proceeding, much less a great and powerful monarch. Orange was therefore summoned to declare his intentions, but was at the same, time informed, that if he merely desired "to pass amiably through the country," and would give assurance, and request permission to that, effect, under his hand and seal, his Majesty would take all necessary measures to secure that amiable passage.

The Prince replied by a reference to the statements which he had already made to Marechal de Cosse. He averred that he had not entered France with evil intent, but rather with a desire to render very humble service to his Majesty, so far as he could do so with a clear conscience.

Touching the King's inability to remember having given any occasion to hostile proceedings on the part of the Prince, he replied that he would pass that matter by. Although he could adduce many, various, and strong reasons for violent measures, he was not so devoid of understanding as not to recognize the futility of attempting anything, by his own personal means, against so great and powerful a King, in comparison with whom he was "but a petty companion."

"Since the true religion," continued Orange, "is a public and general affair, which ought to be preferred to all private matters; since the Prince, as a true Christian, is held by his honor and conscience to procure, with all his strength, its advancement and establishment in every place whatever; since, on the other hand, according to the edict published in September last by his Majesty, attempts have been made to force in their consciences all those who are of the Christian religion; and since it has been determined to exterminate the pure word of God, and the entire exercise thereof, and to permit no other religion than the Roman Catholic, a thing very, prejudicial to the neighbouring nations where there is a free exercise of the Christian religion, therefore the Prince would put no faith in the assertions of his Majesty, that it was not his Majesty's intentions to force the consciences of any one."

Page 541

Having given this very deliberate and succinct contradiction to the statements of the French King, the Prince proceeded to express his sympathy for the oppressed Christians everywhere. He protested that he would give them all the aid, comfort, counsel, and assistance that he was able to give them. He asserted his conviction that the men who professed the religion demanded nothing else than the glory of God and the advancement of His word, while in all matters of civil polity they were ready to render obedience to his Majesty. He added that all his doings were governed by a Christian and affectionate regard for the King and his subjects, whom his Majesty must be desirous of preserving from extreme ruin. He averred, moreover, that if he should perceive any indication that those of the religion were pursuing any other object than liberty of conscience and security for life and property, he would not only withdraw his assistance from them, but would use the whole strength of his army to exterminate them. In conclusion, he begged the King to believe that the work which the Prince had undertaken was a Christian work, and that his intentions were good and friendly towards his Majesty.

> [This very eloquently written letter was dated Ciasonne, December 3rd, 1568. It has never been published. It is in the Collection of MSS, Pivoen concernant, *etc*., Hague archives.]

It was, however, in vain that the Prince endeavoured to induce his army to try the fortunes of the civil war in France. They had enlisted for the Netherlands, the campaign was over, and they insisted upon being led back to Germany. Schomberg, secretly instructed by the King of France, was active in fomenting the discontent, and the Prince was forced to yield. He led his army through Champagne and Lorraine to Strasburg, where they were disbanded. All the money which the Prince had been able to collect was paid them. He pawned all his camp equipage, his plate, his furniture.

What he could not pay in money he made up in promises, sacredly to be fulfilled, when he should be restored to his possessions. He even solemnly engaged, should he return from France alive, and be still unable to pay their arrears of wages, to surrender his person to them as a hostage for his debt.

Thus triumphantly for Alva, thus miserably for Orange, ended the campaign. Thus hopelessly vanished the army to which so many proud hopes had attached themselves. Eight thousand teen had been slain in paltry encounters, thirty thousand were dispersed, not easily to be again collected. All the funds which the Prince could command had been wasted without producing a result. For the present, nothing seemed to afford a ground of hope for the Netherlands, but the war of freedom had been renewed in France. A band of twelve hundred mounted men-at-arms were willing to follow the fortunes of the Prince. The three brothers accordingly; William, Louis, and Henry—a lad of eighteen, who had abandoned his studies at the university to obey the chivalrous instincts of his race—set forth early in the following spring to join the banner of Conde.

Page 542

Cardinal Granvelle, who had never taken his eyes or thoughts from the provinces during his residence at Rome, now expressed himself with exultation. He had predicted, with cold malice, the immediate results of the campaign, and was sanguine enough to believe the contest over, and the Prince for ever crushed. In his letters to Philip he had taken due notice of the compliments paid to him by Orange in his Justification, in his Declaration, and in his letter to the Emperor. He had declined to make any answer to the charges, in order to enrage the Prince the more. He had expressed the opinion, however, that this publication of writings was not the business of brave soldiers, but of cowards. He made the same reflection upon the alleged intrigues by Orange to procure an embassy on his own behalf from the Emperor to Philip—a mission which was sure to end in smoke, while it would cost the Prince all credit, not only in Germany but the Netherlands. He felt sure, he said, of the results of the impending campaign. The Duke of Alva was a man upon whose administrative prudence and military skill his sovereign could implicitly rely, nor was there a person in the ranks of the rebels capable of, conducting an enterprise of such moment. Least of all had the Prince of Orange sufficient brains for carrying on such weighty affairs, according to the opinion which he had formed of him during their long intercourse in former days.

When the campaign had been decided, and the Prince had again become an exile, Granvelle observed that it was now proved how incompetent he and all his companions were to contend in military skill with the Duke of Alva. With a cold sneer at motives which he assumed, as a matter of course, to be purely selfish, he said that the Prince had not taken the proper road to recover his property, and that he would now be much embarrassed to satisfy his creditors. Thus must those ever fall, he moralized, who would fly higher than they ought; adding, that henceforth the Prince would have enough to do in taking care of madam his wife, if she did not change soon in humor and character.

Meantime the Duke of Alva, having despatched from Cateau Cambresis a brief account of the victorious termination of the campaign, returned in triumph to Brussels. He had certainly amply vindicated his claim to be considered the first warrior of the age. By his lieutenants he had summarily and rapidly destroyed two of the armies sent against him; he had annihilated in person the third, by a brilliantly successful battle, in which he had lost seven men, and his enemies seven thousand; and he had now, by consummate strategy, foiled the fourth and last under the idolized champion of the Netherlands, and this so decisively that, without losing a man, he had destroyed eight thousand rebels, and scattered to the four winds the remaining twenty thousand. Such signal results might well make even a meeker nature proud. Such vast and fortunate

Page 543

efforts to fix for ever an impregnable military tyranny upon a constitutional country, might cause a more modest despot to exult. It was not wonderful that the haughty, and now apparently omnipotent Alva, should almost assume the god. On his return to Brussels he instituted a succession of triumphant festivals. The people were called upon to rejoice and to be exceeding glad, to strew flowers in his path, to sing Hosannas in his praise who came to them covered with the blood of those who had striven in their defence. The holiday was duly called forth; houses, where funeral hatchments for murdered inmates had been perpetually suspended, were decked with garlands; the bells, which had hardly once omitted their daily knell for the victims of an incredible cruelty, now rang their merriest peals; and in the very square where so lately Egmont and Horn, besides many other less distinguished martyrs, had suffered an ignominious death, a gay tournament was held, day after day, with all the insolent pomp which could make the exhibition most galling.

But even these demonstrations of hilarity were not sufficient. The conqueror and tamer of the Netherlands felt that a more personal and palpable deification was necessary for his pride. When Germanicus had achieved his last triumph over the ancient freedom of those generous races whose descendants, but lately in possession of a better organized liberty, Alva had been sent by the second and the worse Tiberius to insult and to crush, the valiant but modest Roman erected his trophy upon the plains of Idistavisus. “The army of Tiberius Caesar having subdued the nations between the Rhine and the Elbe, dedicate this monument to Mars, to Jupiter, and to Augustus.” So ran the inscription of Germanicus, without a word of allusion to his own name. The Duke of Alva, on his return from the battle-fields of Brabant and Friesland, reared a colossal statue of himself, and upon its pedestal caused these lines to be engraved: “To Ferdinand Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva, Governor of the Netherlands under Philip the Second, for having extinguished sedition, chastised rebellion, restored religion, secured justice, established peace; to the King’s most faithful minister this monument is erected.”

[Bor, iv. 257, 258. Meteren, 61. De Thou, v. 471-473, who saw it after it was overthrown, and who was “as much struck by the beauty of the work as by the insane pride of him who ordered it to be made.”]

So pompous a eulogy, even if truthful and merited, would be sufficiently inflated upon a tombstone raised to a dead chieftain by his bereaved admirers. What shall we say of such false and fulsome tribute, not to a god, not to the memory of departed greatness, but to a living, mortal man, and offered not by his adorers but by himself? Certainly, self-worship never went farther than in this remarkable monument, erected in Alva’s honor, by Alva’s hands. The statue was colossal, and was placed in the citadel

Page 544

of Antwerp. Its bronze was furnished by the cannon captured at Jemmingen. It represented the Duke trampling upon a prostrate figure with two heads, four arms, and one body. The two heads were interpreted by some to represent Egmont and Horn, by others, the two Nassaus, William and Louis. Others saw in them an allegorical presentment of the nobles and commons of the Netherlands, or perhaps an impersonation of the Compromise and the Request. Besides the chief inscription on the pedestal, were sculptured various bas-reliefs; and the spectator, whose admiration for the Governor-general was not satiated with the colossal statue itself, was at liberty to find a fresh, personification of the hero, either in a torch-bearing angel or a gentle shepherd. The work, which had considerable esthetic merit, was executed by an artist named Jacob Jongeling. It remained to astonish and disgust the Netherlanders until it was thrown down and demolished by Alva's successor, Requesens.

It has already been observed that many princes of the Empire had, at first warmly and afterwards, as the storm darkened around him, with less earnestness, encouraged the efforts of Orange. They had, both privately and officially, urged the subject upon the attention of the Emperor, and had solicited his intercession with Philip. It was not an interposition to save the Prince from chastisement, however the artful pen of Granvelle might distort the facts. It was an address in behalf of religious liberty for the Netherlands, made by those who had achieved it in their own persons, and who were at last enjoying immunity from persecution. It was an appeal which they who made it were bound to make, for the Netherland commissioners had assisted at the consultations by which the Peace of Passau had been wrung from the reluctant hand of Charles.

These applications, however, to the Emperor, and through him to the King of Spain, had been, as we have seen, accompanied by perpetual advice to the Prince of Orange, that he should "sit still." The Emperor had espoused his cause with apparent frankness, so far as friendly mediation went, but in the meantime had peremptorily commanded him to refrain from levying war upon Alva, an injunction which the Prince had as peremptorily declined to obey. The Emperor had even sent especial envoys to the Duke and to the Prince, to induce them to lay down their arms, but without effect. Orange knew which course was the more generous to his oppressed country; to take up arms, now that hope had been converted into despair by the furious tyranny of Alva, or to "sit still" and await the result of the protocols about to be exchanged between king and kaiser. His arms had been unsuccessful indeed, but had he attended the issue of this sluggish diplomacy, it would have been even worse for the cause of freedom. The sympathy of his best friends, at first fervent then lukewarm, had, as disasters thickened around him, grown at last stone-cold. From the grave, too, of Queen Isabella arose the most importunate phantom in his path. The King of Spain was a widower again, and the Emperor among his sixteen children had more than one marriageable daughter. To the titles of "beloved cousin and brother-in-law," with which Philip had always been greeted

in the Imperial proclamations, the nearer and dearer one of son-in-law was prospectively added.

Page 545

The ties of wedlock were sacred in the traditions of the Habsburg house, but still the intervention was nominally made. As early as August, 1568, the Emperor's minister at Madrid had addressed a memorial to the King. He had spoken in warm and strong language of the fate of Egmont and Horn, and had reminded Philip that the executions which were constantly taking place in the provinces were steadily advancing the Prince of Orange's cause. On the 22nd September, 1568, the six electors had addressed a formal memorial to the Emperor. They thanked him for his previous interposition in favor of the Netherlands, painted in lively colors the cruelty of Alva, and denounced the unheard-of rigor with which he had massacred, not only many illustrious seigniors, but people of every degree. Notwithstanding the repeated assurances given by the King to the contrary, they reminded the Emperor, that the inquisition, as well as the Council of Trent, had now been established in the Netherlands in full vigor. They maintained that the provinces had been excluded from the Augsburg religious peace, to which their claim was perfect. Nether Germany was entitled to the same privileges as Upper Germany. They begged the Emperor to make manifest his sentiments and their own. It was fitting that his Catholic Majesty should be aware that the princes of the Empire were united for the conservation of fatherland and of tranquillity. To this end they placed in the Emperor's hands their estates, their fortunes, and their lives.

Such was the language of that important appeal to the Emperor in behalf of oppressed millions in the Netherlands, an appeal which Granvelle had coldly characterized as an intrigue contrived by Orange to bring about his own restoration to favor!

The Emperor, in answer, assured the electoral envoys that he had taken the affair to heart, and had resolved to despatch his own brother, the Archduke Charles, on a special mission to Spain.

Accordingly, on the 21st October, 1568, the Emperor presented his brother with an ample letter of instructions. He was to recal to Philip's memory the frequent exhortations made by the Emperor concerning the policy pursued in the Netherlands. He was to mention the urgent interpellations made to him by the electors and princes of the Empire in their recent embassy. He was to state that the Emperor had recently deputed commissioners to the Prince of Orange and the Duke of Alva, in order to bring about, if possible, a suspension of arms. He was to represent that the great number of men raised by the Prince of Orange in Germany, showed the powerful support which he had found in the country. Under such circumstances he was to show that it had been impossible for the Emperor to decree the ban against him, as the Duke of Alva had demanded. The Archduke was to request the King's consent to the reconciliation of Orange, on honorable conditions. He was to demand the substitution of clemency in for severity, and to insist on the recall of the foreign soldiery from the Netherlands.

Page 546

Furnished with this very warm and stringent letter, the Archduke arrived in Madrid on the 10th December, 1568. A few days later he presented the King with a copy of the instructions; those brave words upon which the Prince of Orange was expected to rely instead of his own brave heart and the stout arms of his followers. Philip having examined the letter, expressed his astonishment that such propositions should be made to him, and by the agency, too, of such a personage as the Archduke. He had already addressed a letter to the Emperor, expressing his dissatisfaction at the step now taken. He had been disturbed at the honor thus done to the Prince of Orange, and at this interference with his own rights. It was, in his opinion, an unheard-of proceeding thus to address a monarch of his quality upon matters in which he could accept the law from no man. He promised, however, that a written answer should be given to the letter of instructions.

On the 20th of January, 1569, that answer was placed in the hands of the Archduke. It was intimated that the paper was a public one, fit to be laid by the Emperor, before the electors; but that the King had also caused a confidential one to be prepared, in which his motives and private griefs were indicated to Maximilian.

In the more public document, Philip observed that he had never considered himself obliged to justify his conduct, in his own affairs, to others. He thought, however, that his example of severity would have been received with approbation by princes whose subjects he had thus taught obedience. He could not admit that, on account of the treaties which constituted the Netherlands a circle of the Empire, he was obliged to observe within their limits the ordinances of the imperial diet. As to the matter of religion, his principal solicitude, since his accession to the crown, had been to maintain the Catholic faith throughout all his states. In things sacred he could admit no compromise. The Church alone had the right to prescribe rules to the faithful. As to the chastisement inflicted by him upon the Netherland rebels, it would be found that he had not used rigor, as had been charged against him, but, on the, contrary, great clemency and gentleness. He had made no change in the government of the provinces, certainly none in the edicts, the only statutes binding upon princes. He had appointed the Duke of Alva to the regency, because it was his royal will and pleasure so to appoint him. The Spanish soldiery were necessary for the thorough chastisement of the rebels, and could not be at present removed. As to the Prince of Orange, whose case seemed the principal motive for this embassy, and in whose interest so much had been urged, his crimes were so notorious that it was impossible even to attempt to justify them. He had been, in effect, the author of all the conspiracies, tumults, and seditious which had taken place in the Netherlands. All the thefts, sacrileges, violations of temples,

Page 547

and other misdeeds of which these provinces had been the theatre, were, with justice, to be imputed to him. He had moreover, levied an army and invaded his Majesty's territories. Crimes so enormous had closed the gate to all clemency. Notwithstanding his respect for the intercession made by the Emperor and the princes of the Empire, the King could not condescend to grant what was now asked of him in regard to the Prince of Orange. As to a truce between him and the Duke of Alva, his Imperial Majesty ought to reflect upon the difference between a sovereign and his rebellious vassal, and consider how indecent and how prejudicial to the King's honor such a treaty must be esteemed.

So far the public letter, of which the Archduke was furnished with a copy, both in Spanish and in Latin. The private memorandum was intended for the Emperor's eyes alone and those of his envoy. In this paper the King expressed himself with more warmth and in more decided language. He was astonished, he said, that the Prince of Orange, in levying an army for the purpose of invading the states of his natural sovereign, should have received so much aid and comfort in Germany. It seemed incredible that this could not have been prevented by imperial authority. He had been pained that commissioners had been sent to the Prince. He regretted such a demonstration in his favor as had now been made by the mission of the Archduke to Madrid. That which, however, had caused the King the deepest sorrow was, that his Imperial Majesty should wish to persuade him in religious matters to proceed with mildness. The Emperor ought to be aware that no human consideration, no regard for his realms, nothing in the world which could be represented or risked, would cause him to swerve by a single hair's breadth from his path in the matter of religion. This path was the same throughout all his kingdoms. He had ever trod in it faithfully, and he meant to keep in it perpetually. He would admit neither counsel nor persuasion to the contrary, and should take it ill if counsel or persuasion should be offered. He could not but consider the terms of the instructions given to the Archduke as exceeding the limits of amicable suggestion. They in effect amounted to a menace, and he was astonished that a menace should be employed, because, with princes constituted like himself, such means could have but little success.

On the 23rd of January, 1569, the Archduke presented the King with a spirited reply to the public letter. It was couched in the spirit of the instructions, and therefore need not be analysed at length. He did not believe that his Imperial Majesty would admit any justification of the course pursued in the Netherlands. The estates of the Empire would never allow Philip's reasoning concerning the connexion of those countries with the Empire, nor that they were independent, except in the particular articles expressed in the treaty of Augsburg. In 1555, when Charles the Fifth and King Ferdinand had settled

Page 548

the religious peace, they had been assisted by envoys from the Netherlands. The princes of the Empire held the ground, therefore, that the religious peace, which alone had saved a vestige of Romanism in Germany, should of right extend to the provinces. As to the Prince of Orange, the Archduke would have preferred to say nothing more, but the orders of the Emperor did not allow him to be silent. It was now necessary to put an end to this state of things in Lower Germany. The princes of the Empire were becoming exasperated. He recalled the dangers of the Smalcaldian war—the imminent peril in which the Emperor had been placed by the act of a single elector. They who believed that Flanders could be governed in the same manner as Italy and Spain were greatly mistaken, and Charles the Fifth had always recognised that error.

This was the sum and substance of the Archduke's mission to Madrid, so far as its immediate objects were concerned. In the course, however, of the interview between this personage and Philip, the King took occasion to administer a rebuke to his Imperial Majesty for his general negligence in religious matters. It was a matter which lay at his heart, he said, that the Emperor, although, as he doubted not, a Christian and Catholic prince, was from policy unaccustomed to make those exterior demonstrations which matters of faith required. He therefore begged the Archduke to urge this matter upon the attention of his Imperial Majesty.

The Emperor, despite this solemn mission, had become more than indifferent before his envoy had reached Madrid. For this indifference there were more reasons than one. When the instructions had been drawn up, the death of the Queen of Spain had not been known in Vienna. The Archduke had even been charged to inform Philip of the approaching marriages of the two Archduchesses, that of Anne with the King of France, and that of Isabella with the King of Portugal. A few days later, however, the envoy received letters from the Emperor, authorizing him to offer to the bereaved Philip the hand of the Archduchess Anne.

[Herrera (lib. xv. 707) erroneously states that the Archduke was, at the outset, charged with these two commissions by the Emperor; namely, to negotiate the marriage of the Archduchess Anne with Philip, and to arrange the affairs of the Netherlands. On the contrary, he was empowered to offer Anne to the King of France, and had already imparted his instructions to that effect to Philip, before he received letters from Vienna, written after the death of Isabella had become known. At another interview, he presented this new matrimonial proposition to Philip. These facts are important, for they indicate how completely the objects of the embassy, the commencement of which was so pretentious, were cast aside, that a more advantageous marriage for one of the seven Austrian Archduchesses might be secured.—Compare Correspondance de Philippe]

The King replied to the Archduke, when this proposition was made, that if he had regard only to his personal satisfaction, he should remain as he was. As however he had now no son, he was glad that the proposition had been made, and would see how the affair could be arranged with France.

Page 549

Thus the ill success of Orange in Brabant, so disheartening to the German princes most inclined to his cause, and still more the widowhood of Philip, had brought a change over the views of Maximilian. On the 17th of January, 1569, three days before his ambassador had entered upon his negotiations, he had accordingly addressed an autograph letter to his Catholic Majesty. In this epistle, by a few, cold lines, he entirely annihilated any possible effect which might have been produced by the apparent earnestness of his interposition in favor of the Netherlands. He informed the King that the Archduke had been sent, not to vex him, but to convince him of his friendship. He assured Philip that he should be satisfied with his response, whatever it might be. He entreated only that it might be drawn up in such terms that the princes and electors to whom it must be shown, might not be inspired with suspicion.

The Archduke left Madrid on the 4th of March, 1569. He retired, well pleased with the results of his mission, not because its ostensible objects had been accomplished, for those had signally failed, but because the King had made him a present of one hundred thousand ducats, and had promised to espouse the Archduchess Anne. On the 26th of May, 1569, the Emperor addressed a final reply to Philip, in which he expressly approved the King's justification of his conduct. It was founded, he thought, in reason and equity. Nevertheless, it could hardly be shown, as it was, to the princes and electors, and he had therefore modified many points which he thought might prove offensive.

Thus ended "in smoke," as Granvelle had foretold, the famous mission of Archduke Charles. The Holy Roman Emperor withdrew from his pompous intervention, abashed by a rebuke, but consoled by a promise. If it were good to be guardian of religious freedom in Upper and Nether Germany, it was better to be father-in-law to the King of Spain and both the Indies. Hence the lame and abrupt conclusion.

Cardinal Granvelle had been very serviceable in this juncture. He had written to Philip to assure him that, in his, opinion, the Netherlands had no claim, under the transaction of Augsburg, to require the observance within their territory of the decrees of the Empire. He added, that Charles the Fifth had only agreed to the treaty of Passau to save his brother Ferdinand from ruin; that he had only consented to it as Emperor, and had neither directly nor indirectly included the Netherlands within its provisions. He stated, moreover, that the Emperor had revoked the treaty by an act which was never published, in consequence of the earnest solicitations of Ferdinand.

Page 550

It has been seen that the King had used this opinion of Granvelle in the response presented to the Archduke. Although he did not condescend to an argument, he had laid down the fact as if it were indisputable. He was still more delighted to find that Charles had revoked the treaty of Passau, and eagerly wrote to Granvelle to inquire where the secret instrument was to be found. The Cardinal replied that it was probably among his papers at Brussels, but that he doubted whether it would be possible to find it in his absence. Whether such a document ever existed, it is difficult to say. To perpetrate such a fraud would have been worthy of Charles; to fable its perpetration not unworthy of the Cardinal. In either case, the transaction was sufficiently high-handed and exceedingly disgraceful.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Age when toleration was a vice
An age when to think was a crime
Business of an officer to fight, of a general to conquer
Cruelties exercised upon monks and papists
For faithful service, evil recompense
Pathetic dying words of Anne Boleyn
Seven Spaniards were killed, and seven thousand rebels
The calf is fat and must be killed
The illness was a convenient one
The tragedy of Don Carlos

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 17.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By *John Lothrop Motley* 1855 1569-70 [*chapter* V.]

Quarrel between Alva and Queen Elizabeth of England—Spanish funds seized by the English government—Non-intercourse between England and the Netherlands—-Stringent measures against heresy—Continued persecution—Individual cases—-Present of hat and sword to Alva from the Pope—Determination of the Governor—-general to establish a system of arbitrary taxation in the provinces—Assembly of estates at Brussels—Alva's decrees laid before them—The hundredth, tenth, and fifth pence—Opposition of Viglius to the project—Estates of various provinces give a reluctant consent—Determined resistance of Utrecht—The city and province cited before the Blood Council— Sentence of confiscation and disfranchisement against both —Appeal to the King—Difficulty of collecting the new tax—Commutation for two years —Projects for a pardon-general—Growing disfavour of the Duke—His desire to resign his post—Secret hostility between the Governor and Viglius—Altered sentiments of the

President—Opinions expressed by Granvelle—The pardon pompously proclaimed by the Duke at Antwerp—Character of the amnesty—Dissatisfaction of the people with the act—Complaints of Alva to the King—Fortunes and fate of Baron Montigny in Spain—-His confinement at Segovia—His attempt to escape—Its failure—His mock trial—His wife's appeal to Philip— His condemnation—His secret assassination

Page 551

determined upon—Its details, as carefully prescribed and superintended by the King—Terrible inundation throughout the Netherlands—Immense destruction of life and property in Friesland—Lowestein Castle taken by De Ruyter, by stratagem—Recapture of the place by the Spaniards— Desperate resistance and death of De Ruyter.

It was very soon after the Duke's return to Brussels that a quarrel between himself and the Queen of England took place. It happened thus. Certain vessels, bearing roving commissions from the Prince of Conde, had chased into the ports of England some merchantmen coming from Spain with supplies in specie for the Spanish army in the Netherlands. The trading ships remained in harbor, not daring to leave for their destination, while the privateers remained in a neighbouring port ready to pounce upon them should they put to sea. The commanders of the merchant fleet complained to the Spanish ambassador in London. The envoy laid the case before the Queen. The Queen promised redress, and, almost as soon as the promise had been made, seized upon all the specie in the vessels, amounting to about eight hundred thousand dollars —[1885 exchange rate]—and appropriated the whole to her own benefit. The pretext for this proceeding was twofold. In the first place, she assured the ambassador that she had taken the money into her possession in order that it might be kept safe for her royal brother of Spain. In the second place, she affirmed that the money did not belong to the Spanish government at all, but that it was the property of certain Genoese merchants, from whom, as she had a right to do, she had borrowed it for a short period. Both these positions could hardly be correct, but either furnished an excellent reason for appropriating the funds to her own use.

The Duke of Alva being very much in want of money, was furious when informed of the circumstance. He immediately despatched Councillor d'Assonleville with other commissioners on a special embassy to the Queen of England. His envoys were refused an audience, and the Duke was taxed with presumption in venturing, as if he had been a sovereign, to send a legation to a crowned head. No satisfaction was given to Alva, but a secret commissioner was despatched to Spain to discuss the subject there. The wrath of Alva was not appeased by this contemptuous treatment. Chagrined at the loss of his funds, and stung to the quick by a rebuke which his arrogance had merited, he resorted to a high-handed measure. He issued a proclamation commanding the personal arrest of every Englishman within the territory of the Netherlands, and the seizure of every article of property which could be found belonging to individuals of that nation. The Queen retaliated by measures of the same severity against Netherlanders in England. The Duke followed up his blow by a proclamation (of March 31st, 1569), in which the grievance was detailed, and strict non-intercourse with England enjoined. While the Queen and the

Page 552

Viceroy were thus exchanging blows, the real sufferers were, of course, the unfortunate Netherlanders. Between the upper and nether millstones of Elizabeth's rapacity and Alva's arrogance, the poor remains of Flemish prosperity were well nigh crushed out of existence. Proclamations and commissions followed hard upon each other, but it was not till April 1573, that the matter was definitely arranged. Before that day arrived, the commerce of the Netherlands had suffered, at the lowest computation, a dead loss of two million florins, not a stiver of which was ever reimbursed to the sufferers by the Spanish government.

Meantime, neither in the complacency of his triumph over William of Orange, nor in the torrent of his wrath against the English Queen, did the Duke for a moment lose sight of the chief end of his existence in the Netherlands. The gibbet and the stake were loaded with their daily victims. The records of the period are foul with the perpetually renewed barbarities exercised against the new religion. To the magistrates of the different cities were issued fresh instructions, by which all municipal officers were to be guided in the discharge of their great duty. They were especially enjoined by the Duke to take heed that Catholic midwives, and none other, should be provided for every parish, duly sworn to give notice within twenty-four hours of every birth which occurred, in order that the curate might instantly proceed to baptism. They were also ordered to appoint certain spies who should keep watch at every administration of the sacraments, whether public or private, whether at the altar or at death-beds, and who should report for exemplary punishment (that is to say, death by fire) all persons who made derisive or irreverential gestures, or who did not pay suitable honor to the said Sacraments. Furthermore, in order that not even death itself should cheat the tyrant of his prey, the same spies were to keep watch at the couch of the dying, and to give immediate notice to government of all persons who should dare to depart this life without previously receiving extreme unction and the holy wafer. The estates of such culprits, it was ordained, should be confiscated, and their bodies dragged to the public place of execution.

An affecting case occurred in the north of Holland, early in this year, which, for its peculiarity, deserves brief mention. A poor Anabaptist, guilty of no crime but his fellowship with a persecuted sect, had been condemned to death. He had made his escape, closely pursued by an officer of justice, across a frozen lake. It was late in the winter, and the ice had become unsound. It trembled and cracked beneath his footsteps, but he reached the shore in safety. The officer was not so fortunate. The ice gave way beneath him, and he sank into the lake, uttering a cry for succor. There were none to hear him, except the fugitive whom he had been hunting. Dirk Willemzoon, for so was the Anabaptist

Page 553

called, instinctively obeying the dictates of a generous nature, returned, crossed the quaking and dangerous ice, at the peril of his life, extended his hand to his enemy, and saved him from certain death. Unfortunately for human nature, it cannot be added that the generosity, of, the action was met by a corresponding heroism. The officer was desirous, it is true, of avoiding the responsibility of sacrificing the preserver of his life, but the burgomaster of Asperen sternly reminded him to remember his oath. He accordingly arrested the fugitive, who, on the 16th of May following, was burned to death under the most lingering tortures.

Almost at the same time four clergymen, the eldest seventy years of age, were executed at the Hague, after an imprisonment of three years. All were of blameless lives, having committed no crime save that of having favored the Reformation. As they were men of some local eminence, it was determined that they should be executed with solemnity. They were condemned to the flames, and as they were of the ecclesiastical profession, it was necessary before execution that their personal sanctity should be removed. Accordingly, on the 27th May, attired in the gorgeous robes of high mass, they were brought before the Bishop of Bois le Duc. The prelate; with a pair of scissors, cut a lock of hair from each of their heads. He then scraped their crowns and the tips of their fingers with a little silver knife very gently, and without inflicting the least injury. The mystic oil of consecration was thus supposed to be sufficiently removed. The prelate then proceeded to disrobe the victims, saying to each one as he did so, “Eximo tibi vestem justitiae, quem volens abjecisti;” to which the oldest pastor, Arent Dirkzoon, stoutly replied, “imo vestem injustitiae.” The bishop having thus completed the solemn farce of desecration, delivered the prisoners to the Blood Council, begging that they might be handled very gently. Three days afterwards they were all executed at the stake, having, however, received the indulgence of being strangled before being thrown into the flames.

It was precisely at this moment, while the agents of the Duke’s government were thus zealously enforcing his decrees, that a special messenger arrived from the Pope, bringing as a present to Alva a jewelled hat and sword. It was a gift rarely conferred by the Church, and never save upon the highest dignitaries, or upon those who had merited her most signal rewards by the most shining exploits in her defence. The Duke was requested, in the autograph letter from his Holiness which accompanied the presents, “to remember, when he put the hat upon his head, that he was guarded with it as with a helmet of righteousness, and with the shield of God’s help, indicating the heavenly crown which was ready for all princes who support the Holy Church and the Roman Catholic faith.” The motto on the sword ran as follows, “Accipe sanctum gladium, menus a Deo in quo dejicies adversarios populi mei Israel.”

Page 554

The Viceroy of Philip, thus stimulated to persevere in his master's precepts by the Vicegerent of Christ, was not likely to swerve from his path, nor to flinch from his work. It was beyond the power of man's ingenuity to add any fresh features of horror to the religious persecution under which the provinces were groaning, but a new attack could be made upon the poor remains of their wealth.

The Duke had been dissatisfied with the results of his financial arrangements. The confiscation of banished and murdered heretics had not proved the inexhaustible mine he had boasted. The stream of gold which was to flow perennially into the Spanish coffers, soon ceased to flow at all. This was inevitable. Confiscations must, of necessity, offer but a precarious supply to any treasury. It was only the frenzy of an Alva which could imagine it possible to derive a permanent revenue from such a source. It was, however, not to be expected that this man, whose tyranny amounted to insanity, could comprehend the intimate connection between the interests of a people and those of its rulers, and he was determined to exhibit; by still more fierce and ludicrous experiments, how easily a great soldier may become a very paltry financier.

He had already informed his royal master that, after a very short time, remittances would no longer be necessary from Spain to support the expenses of the array and government in the Netherlands. He promised, on the contrary, that at least two millions yearly should be furnished by the provinces, over and above the cost of their administration, to enrich the treasury at home. Another Peru had already been discovered by his ingenuity, and one which was not dependent for its golden fertility on the continuance of that heresy which it was his mission to extirpate. His boast had been much ridiculed in Madrid, where he had more enemies than friends, and he was consequently the more eager to convert it into reality. Nettled by the laughter with which all his schemes of political economy had been received at home, he was determined to show that his creative statesmanship was no less worthy of homage than his indisputable genius for destruction.

His scheme was nothing more than the substitution of an arbitrary system of taxation by the Crown, for the legal and constitutional right of the provinces to tax themselves. It was not a very original thought, but it was certainly a bold one. For although a country so prostrate might suffer the imposition of any fresh amount of tyranny, yet it was doubtful whether she had sufficient strength remaining to bear the weight after it had been imposed. It was certain, moreover, that the new system would create a more general outcry than any which had been elicited even by the religious persecution. There were many inhabitants who were earnest and sincere Catholics, and who therefore considered themselves safe from the hangman's hands, while there were none who could

Page 555

hope to escape the gripe of the new tax-gatherers. Yet the Governor was not the man to be daunted by the probable unpopularity of the measure. Courage he possessed in more than mortal proportion. He seemed to have set himself to the task of ascertaining the exact capacity of the country for wretchedness. He was resolved accurately to gauge its width and its depth; to know how much of physical and moral misery might be accumulated within its limits, before it should be full to overflowing. Every man, woman, and child in the country had been solemnly condemned to death; and arbitrary executions, in pursuance of that sentence, had been daily taking place. Millions of property had been confiscated; while the most fortunate and industrious, as well as the bravest of the Netherlanders, were wandering penniless in distant lands. Still the blows, however recklessly distributed, had not struck every head. The inhabitants had been decimated, not annihilated, and the productive energy of the country, which for centuries had possessed so much vitality, was even yet not totally extinct. In the wreck of their social happiness, in the utter overthrow of their political freedom, they had still preserved the shadow, at least, of one great bulwark against despotism. The king could impose no tax.

The “Joyeuse Entree” of Brabant, as well as the constitutions of Flanders, Holland, Utrecht, and all the other provinces, expressly prescribed the manner in which the requisite funds for government should be raised. The sovereign or his stadholder was to appear before the estates in person, and make his request for money. It was for the estates, after consultation with their constituents, to decide whether or not this petition (Bede) should be granted, and should a single branch decline compliance, the monarch was to wait with patience for a more favorable moment. Such had been the regular practice in the Netherlands, nor had the reigning houses often had occasion to accuse the estates of parsimony. It was, however, not wonderful that the Duke of Alva should be impatient at the continued existence of this provincial privilege. A country of condemned criminals, a nation whose universal neck might at any moment be laid upon the block without ceremony, seemed hardly fit to hold the purse-strings, and to dispense alms to its monarch. The Viceroy was impatient at this arrogant vestige of constitutional liberty. Moreover, although he had taken from the Netherlanders nearly all the attributes of freemen, he was unwilling that they should enjoy the principal privilege of slaves, that of being fed and guarded at their master’s expense. He had therefore summoned a general assembly of the provincial estates in Brussels, and on the 20th of March, 1569, had caused the following decrees to be laid before them.

A tax of the hundredth penny, or one per cent., was laid upon all property, real and personal, to be collected instantly. This impost, however, was not perpetual, but only to be paid once, unless, of course, it should suit the same arbitrary power by which it was assessed to require it a second time.

Page 556

A tax of the twentieth penny; or five per cent., was laid upon every transfer of real estate. This imposition was perpetual.

Thirdly, a tag of the tenth penny, or ten per cent., was assessed upon every article of merchandise or personal-property, to be paid as often as it should be sold. This tax was likewise to be perpetual.

The consternation in the assembly when these enormous propositions were heard, can be easily imagined. People may differ about religious dogmas. In the most bigoted persecutions there will always be many who, from conscientious although misguided motives, heartily espouse the cause of the bigot. Moreover, although resistance to tyranny in matters of faith, is always the most ardent of struggles, and is supported by the most sublime principle in our nature, yet all men are not of the sterner stuff of which martyrs are fashioned. In questions relating to the world above; many may be seduced from their convictions by interest, or forced into apostasy by violence. Human nature is often malleable or fusible, where religious interests are concerned, but in affairs material and financial opposition to tyranny is apt to be unanimous.

The interests of commerce and manufacture, when brought into conflict with those of religion, had often proved victorious in the Netherlands. This new measure, however—-this arbitrary and most prodigious system of taxation, struck home to every fireside. No individual, however adroit or time-serving, could parry the blow by which all were crushed.

It was most unanswerably maintained in the assembly, that this tenth and twentieth penny would utterly destroy the trade and the manufactures of the country. The hundredth penny, or the one per cent. assessment on all property throughout the land, although a severe subsidy, might be borne with for once. To pay, however, a twentieth part of the full value of a house to the government as often as the house was sold, was a most intolerable imposition. A house might be sold twenty times in a year, and in the course, therefore, of the year be confiscated in its whole value. It amounted either to a prohibition of all transfers of real estate, or to an eventual surrender of its price.

As to the tenth penny upon articles of merchandise, to be paid by the vendor at every sale, the scheme was monstrous. All trade and manufactures must, of necessity, expire, at the very first attempt to put it in execution. The same article might be sold ten times in a week, and might therefore pay one hundred per cent. weekly. An article, moreover, was frequently compounded of ten, different articles, each of which might pay one hundred per cent., and therefore the manufactured article, if ten times transferred, one thousand per cent. weekly. Quick transfers and unfettered movements being the nerves and muscles of commerce, it was impossible for it long to survive the paralysis of such a tax. The impost could never be collected, and would only produce an entire prostration of industry. It could by no possibility enrich the government.

Page 557

The King could not derive wealth from the ruin of his subjects; yet to establish such a system was the stern and absurd determination of the Governor-general. The infantine simplicity of the effort seemed incredible. The ignorance was as sublime as the tyranny. The most lucid arguments and the most earnest remonstrances were all in vain. Too opaque to be illumined by a flood of light, too hard to be melted by a nation's tears, the Viceroy held calmly to his purpose. To the keen and vivid representations of Viglius, who repeatedly exhibited all that was oppressive and all that was impossible in the tax, he answered simply that it was nothing more nor less than the Spanish "alcabala," and that he derived 50,000 ducats yearly from its imposition in his own city of Alva.

Viglius was upon this occasion in opposition to the Duke. It is but justice to state that the learned jurisconsult manfully and repeatedly confronted the wrath of his superior in many a furious discussion in council upon the subject. He had never essayed to snatch one brand from the burning out of the vast holocaust of religious persecution, but he was roused at last by the threatened destruction of all the material interests of the land. He confronted the tyrant with courage, sustained perhaps by the knowledge that the proposed plan was not the King's, but the Governor's. He knew that it was openly ridiculed in Madrid, and that Philip, although he would probably never denounce it in terms, was certainly not eager for its execution. The President enlarged upon the difference which existed between the condition of a sparsely-peopled country of herdsmen and laborers in Spain, and the densely-thronged and bustling cities of the Netherlands. If the Duke collected 50,000 ducats yearly from the alcabala in Alva, he could only offer him his congratulations, but could not help assuring him that the tax would prove an impossibility in the provinces. To his argument, that the impost would fall with severity not upon the highest nor the lowest classes of society, neither upon the great nobility and clergy nor on the rustic population, but on the merchants and manufacturers, it was answered by the President that it was not desirable to rob Saint Peter's altar in order to build one to Saint Paul. It might have been simpler to suggest that the consumer would pay the tax, supposing it were ever paid at all, but the axiom was not so familiar three centuries ago as now.

Meantime, the report of the deputies to the assembly on their return to their constituents had created the most intense excitement and alarm. Petition after petition, report after report, poured in upon the government. There was a cry of despair, and almost of defiance, which had not been elicited by former agonies. To induce, however, a more favorable disposition on the part of the Duke, the hundredth penny, once for all, was conceded by the estates. The tenth and twentieth occasioned—severe

Page 558

and protracted struggles, until the various assemblies of the patrimonial provinces, one after another, exhausted, frightened, and hoping that no serious effort would be made to collect the tax, consented, under certain restrictions, to its imposition.—The principal conditions were a protest against the legality of the proceeding, and the provision that the consent of no province should be valid until that of all had been obtained. Holland, too, was induced to give in its adhesion, although the city of Amsterdam long withheld its consent; but the city and province of Utrecht were inexorable. They offered a handsome sum in commutation, increasing the sum first proposed from 70,000 to 200,000 florins, but they resolutely refused to be saddled with this permanent tax. Their stout resistance was destined to cost them dear. In the course of a few months Alva, finding them still resolute in their refusal, quartered the regiment of Lombardy upon them, and employed other coercive measures to bring them to reason. The rude, insolent, unpaid and therefore insubordinate soldiery were billeted in every house in the city, so that the insults which the population were made to suffer by the intrusion of these ruffians at their firesides would soon, it was thought, compel the assent of the province to the tax. It was not so, however. The city and the province remained stanch in their opposition. Accordingly, at the close of the year (15th. December, 1569) the estates were summoned to appear within fourteen days before the Blood Council. At the appointed time the procureur-general was ready with an act of accusation, accompanied, as was usually the case, with a simultaneous sentence of condemnation. The indictment revived and recapitulated all previous offences committed in the city and the province, particularly during the troubles of 1566, and at the epoch of the treaty with Duchess Margaret. The inhabitants and the magistrates, both in their individual and public capacities, were condemned for heresy, rebellion, and misprision. The city and province were accordingly pronounced guilty of high treason, were deprived of all their charters, laws, privileges, freedoms, and customs, and were declared to have forfeited all their property, real and personal, together with all tolls, rents, excises, and imposts, the whole being confiscated to the benefit of his Majesty.

The immediate execution of the sentence was, however, suspended, to allow the estates opportunity to reply. An enormous mass of pleadings, replies, replications, rejoinders, and apostilles was the result, which few eyes were destined to read, and least of all those to whom they were nominally addressed. They were of benefit to none save in the shape of fees which they engendered to the gentlemen of the robe. It was six months, however, before the case was closed. As there was no blood to be shed, a summary process was not considered necessary. At last, on the 14th July, the voluminous pile of documents was placed

Page 559

before Vargas. It was the first time he had laid eyes upon them, and they were, moreover, written in a language of which he did not understand a word. Such, however, was his capacity for affairs, that a glance only at the outside of the case enabled him to form his decision. Within half an hour afterwards, booted and spurred, he was saying mass in the church of Saint Gudule, on his way to pronounce sentence at Antwerp. That judgment was rendered the same day, and confirmed the preceding act of condemnation. Vargas went to his task as cheerfully as if it had been murder. The act of outlawry and beggary was fulminated against the city and province, and a handsome amount of misery for others, and of plunder for himself, was the result of his promptness. Many thousand citizens were ruined, many millions of property confiscated.

Thus was Utrecht deprived of all its ancient liberties, as a punishment for having dared to maintain them. The clergy, too, of the province, having invoked the bull “in Coena Domini,” by which clerical property was declared exempt from taxation, had excited the wrath of the Duke. To wield so slight a bulrush against the man who had just been girded with the consecrated and jewelled sword of the Pope, was indeed but a feeble attempt at defence. Alva treated the Coena Domini with contempt, but he imprisoned the printer who had dared to-republish it at this juncture. Finding, moreover, that it had been put in press by the orders of no less a person than Secretary La Torre, he threw that officer also into prison, besides suspending him from his functions for a year.

The estates of the province and the magistracy of the city appealed to his Majesty from the decision of the Duke. The case did not directly concern the interests of religion, for although the heretical troubles of 1566 furnished the nominal motives of the condemnation, the resistance to the tenth and twentieth penny was the real crime for which they were suffering. The King, therefore, although far from clement, was not extremely rigorous. He refused the object of the appeal, but he did not put the envoys to death by whom it was brought to Madrid. This would have certainly been the case in matters strictly religious, or even had the commissioners arrived two years before, but even Philip believed, perhaps, that for the moment almost enough innocent blood had been shed. At any rate he suffered the legates from Utrecht to return, not with their petition, granted, but at least with their heads upon their shoulders. Early in the following year, the provinces still remaining under martial law, all the Utrecht charters were taken into the possession of government, and deposited in the castle of Vredenberg. It was not till after the departure of Alva, that they were restored; according to royal command, by the new governor, Requesens.

By the middle of the year 1569, Alva wrote to the King, with great cheerfulness of tone, announcing that the estates of the provinces had all consented to the tax. He congratulated his Majesty upon the fact that this income might thenceforth be enjoyed in perpetuity, and that it would bring at least two millions yearly into his coffers, over and

above the expenses of government. The hundredth penny, as he calculated, would amount to at least five millions.

Page 560

He was, however, very premature in his triumph, for the estates were not long in withdrawing a concession which had either been wrung from them by violence or filched from them by misrepresentation. Taking the ground that the assent of all had been stipulated before that of any one should be esteemed valid, every province now refused to enforce or to permit the collection of the tenth or the twentieth penny within their limits. Dire were the threatenings and the wrath of the Viceroy, painfully protracted the renewed negotiations with the estates. At last, a compromise was effected, and the final struggle postponed. Late in the summer it was agreed that the provinces should pay two millions yearly for the two following years, the term to expire in the month of August, 1571. Till that period, therefore, there was comparative repose upon the subject.

The question of a general pardon had been agitated for more than a year, both in Brussels and Madrid. Viglius, who knew his countrymen better than the Viceroy knew them, had written frequently to his friend Hopper, on the propriety of at once proclaiming an amnesty. There had also been many conferences between himself and the Duke of Alva, and he had furnished more than one draught for the proposed measure. The President knew full well that the point had been reached beyond which the force of tyranny could go no further. All additional pressure, he felt sure, could only produce reaction, the effect of which might be to drive the Spaniards from the Netherlands. There might then be another game to play. The heads of those who had so assiduously served the government throughout its terrible career might, in their turn, be brought to the block, and their estates be made to enrich the Treasury. Moreover, there were symptoms that Alva's favor was on the wane. The King had not been remarkably struck with the merits of the new financial measures, and had expressed much, anxiety lest the trade of the country should suffer. The Duke was known to be desirous of his recal. His health was broken, he felt that he was bitterly detested throughout the country, and he was certain that his enemies at Madrid were fast undermining his credit. He seemed also to have a dim suspicion that his mission was accomplished in the Netherlands; that as much blood had been shed at present as the land could easily absorb. He wrote urgently and even piteously to Philip, on the subject of his return. "Were your Majesty only pleased to take me from this country," he said, "I should esteem it as great a favor as if your Majesty had given me life." He swore "by the soul of the Duchess," that he "would rather be cut into little pieces" than retire from his post were his presence necessary, but he expressed the opinion that through his exertions affairs had been placed in such train that they were sure to roll on smoothly to the end of time. "At present, and for the future," he wrote, "your Majesty is and will be more strictly obeyed than any

Page 561

of your predecessors;" adding, with insane self-complacency, "and all this has been accomplished without violence." He also assured his Majesty as to the prosperous condition of financial affairs. His tax was to work wonders. He had conversed with capitalists who had offered him four millions yearly for the tenth penny, but he had refused, because he estimated the product at a much higher figure. The hundredth penny could not be rated lower than five millions. It was obvious, therefore, that instead of remitting funds to the provinces, his Majesty would, for the future, derive from them a steady and enormous income. Moreover, he assured the King that there was at present no one to inspire anxiety from within or without. The only great noble of note in the country was the Duke of Aerschot, who was devoted to his Majesty, and who, moreover, "amounted to very little," as the King well knew. As for the Prince of Orange, he would have business enough in keeping out of the clutches of his creditors. They had nothing to fear from Germany. England would do nothing as long as Germany was quiet; and France was sunk too low to be feared at all.

Such being the sentiments of the Duke, the King was already considering the propriety of appointing his successor. All this was known to the President. He felt instinctively that more clemency was to be expected from that successor, whoever he might be; and he was satisfied, therefore, that he would at least not be injuring his own position by inclining at this late hour to the side of mercy. His opposition to the tenth and twentieth penny had already established a breach between himself and the Viceroy, but he felt secretly comforted by the reflection that the King was probably on the same side with himself. Alva still spoke of him, to be sure, both in public and private, with approbation; taking occasion to commend him frequently, in his private letters, as a servant upright and zealous, as a living register, without whose universal knowledge of things and persons he should hardly know which way to turn. The President, however, was growing weary of his own sycophancy. He begged his friend Joachim to take his part, if his Excellency should write unfavorably about his conduct to the King. He seemed to have changed his views of the man concerning whose "prudence and gentleness" he could once turn so many fine periods. He even expressed some anxiety lest doubts should begin to be entertained as to the perfect clemency of the King's character. "Here is so much confiscation and bloodshed going on," said he, "that some taint of cruelty or avarice may chance to bespatter the robe of his Majesty." He also confessed that he had occasionally read in history of greater benignity than was now exercised against the poor Netherlanders. Had the learned Frisian arrived at these humane conclusions at a somewhat earlier day, it might perhaps have been better for himself and for his fatherland. Had he served his country as faithfully as he had served Time, and Philip, and Alva, his lands would not have been so broad, nor his dignities so numerous, but he would not have been obliged, in his old age; to exclaim, with whimsical petulance, that "the faithful servant is always a perpetual ass."

Page 562

It was now certain that an act of amnesty was in contemplation by the King. Viglius had furnished several plans, which, however, had been so much disfigured by the numerous exceptions suggested by Alva, that the President could scarce recognize his work. Granvelle, too, had frequently urged the pardon on the attention of Philip. The Cardinal was too astute not to perceive that the time had arrived when a continued severity could only defeat its own work. He felt that the country could not be rendered more abject, the spirit of patriotism more apparently extinct. A show of clemency, which would now cost nothing, and would mean nothing, might be more effective than this profuse and wanton bloodshed.

He saw plainly that the brutality of Alva had already overshot the mark. Too politic, however, openly to reprove so powerful a functionary, he continued to speak of him and of his administration to Philip in terms of exalted eulogy. He was a “sage seignior,” a prudent governor, one on whom his Majesty could entirely repose. He was a man of long experience, trained all his life to affairs, and perfectly capable of giving a good account of everything to which he turned his hands. He admitted, however, to other correspondents, that the administration of the sage seignior, on whom his Majesty could so implicitly rely, had at last “brought that provinces into a deplorable condition.”

Four different forms of pardon had been sent from Madrid, toward the close of 1569. From these four the Duke was to select one, and carefully to destroy the other three. It was not, however, till July of the following year that the choice was made, and the Viceroy in readiness to announce the pardon. On the 14th of that month a great festival was held at Antwerp, for the purpose of solemnly proclaiming the long expected amnesty. In the morning, the Duke, accompanied by a brilliant staff, and by a long procession of clergy in their gorgeous robes, paraded through the streets of the commercial capital, to offer up prayers and hear mass in the cathedral. The Bishop of Arras then began a sermon upon the blessings of mercy, with a running commentary upon the royal clemency about to be exhibited. In the very outset, however, of his discourse, he was seized with convulsions, which required his removal from the pulpit; an incident which was not considered of felicitous augury. In the afternoon, the Duke with his suite appeared upon the square in front of the Town House. Here a large scaffolding or theatre had been erected. The platform and the steps which led to it were covered with scarlet cloth. A throne, covered with cloth of gold, was arranged in the most elevated position for the Duke. On the steps immediately below him were placed two of the most beautiful women in Antwerp, clad in allegorical garments to represent righteousness and peace. The staircase and platform were lined with officers, the square was beset with troops, and filled to its utmost verge with an expectant crowd

Page 563

of citizens. Toward the close of a summer's afternoon, the Duke wearing the famous hat and sword of the Pope, took his seat on the throne with all the airs of royalty. After a few preliminary ceremonies, a civil functionary, standing between two heralds; then recited the long-expected act of grace. His reading, however, was so indistinct, that few save the soldiers in the immediate vicinity of the platform could hear a word of the document.

This effect was, perhaps, intentional. Certainly but little enthusiasm could be expected from the crowd, had the text of the amnesty been heard. It consisted of three parts—a recitation of the wrongs committed, a statement of the terms of pardon, and a long list of exceptions. All the sins of omission and commission, the heresy, the public preaching, the image-breaking, the Compromise, the confederacy, the rebellion, were painted in lively colors. Pardon, however, was offered to all those who had not rendered themselves liable to positive impeachment, in case they should make their peace with the Church before the expiration of two months, and by confession and repentance obtain their absolution. The exceptions, however, occupied the greater part of the document. When the general act of condemnation had been fulminated by which all Netherlanders were sentenced to death, the exceptions had been very few, and all the individuals mentioned by name. In the act of pardon, the exceptions comprehended so many classes of inhabitants, that it was impossible for any individual to escape a place in, some one of the categories, whenever it should please the government to take his life. Expressly excluded from the benefit of the act were all ministers, teachers, dogmatizers, and all who had favored and harbored such dogmatizers and preachers; all those in the least degree implicated in the image-breaking; all who had ever been individually suspected of heresy or schism; all who had ever signed or favored the Compromise or the Petition to the Regent; all those who had taken up arms, contributed money, distributed tracts; all those in any manner chargeable with misprision, or who had failed to denounce those guilty of heresy. All persons, however, who were included in any of these classes of exceptions might report themselves within six months, when, upon confession of their crime, they might hope for a favorable consideration of their case.

Such, in brief, and stripped of its verbiage, was this amnesty for which the Netherlands had so long been hoping. By its provisions, not a man or woman was pardoned who had ever committed a fault. The innocent alone were forgiven. Even they were not sure of mercy, unless they should obtain full absolution from the Pope. More certainly than ever would the accustomed rigor be dealt to all who had committed any of those positive acts for which so many had already lost their heads. The clause by which a possibility of pardon was hinted to such criminals, provided they would confess and surrender,

Page 564

was justly regarded as a trap. No one was deceived by it. No man, after the experience of the last three years; would voluntarily thrust his head into the lion's mouth, in order to fix it more firmly upon his shoulders. No man who had effected his escape was likely to play informer against himself, in hope of obtaining a pardon from which all but the most sincere and zealous Catholics were in reality excepted.

The murmur and discontent were universal, therefore, as soon as the terms of the act became known. Alva wrote to the King, to be sure, "that the people were entirely satisfied, save only the demagogues, who could tolerate no single exception from the amnesty; but he could neither deceive his sovereign nor himself by such statements." Certainly, Philip was totally disappointed in the effect which he had anticipated from the measure. He had thought "it would stop the mouths of many people." On the contrary, every mouth in the Netherlands became vociferous to denounce the hypocrisy by which a new act of condemnation had been promulgated under the name of a pardon. Viglius, who had drawn up an instrument of much ampler clemency, was far from satisfied with the measure which had been adopted. "Certainly," he wrote to his confidant, "a more benignant measure was to be expected from so merciful a Prince. After four years have past, to reserve for punishment and for execution all those who during the tumult did not, through weakness of mind, render as much service to government as brave men might have offered, is altogether unexampled."

Alva could not long affect to believe in the people's satisfaction. He soon wrote to the King, acknowledging that the impression produced by the pardon was far from favorable. He attributed much evil effect to the severe censure which was openly pronounced upon the act by members of the government, both in Spain and the Netherlands. He complained that Hopper had written to Viglius, that "the most severe of the four forms of pardon transmitted had been selected;" the fact being, that the most lenient one had been adopted. If this were so, whose imagination is powerful enough to portray the three which had been burned, and which, although more severe than the fierce document promulgated, were still entitled acts of pardon? The Duke spoke bitterly of the manner in which influential persons in Madrid had openly abominated the cruel form of amnesty which had been decreed. His authority in the Netherlands was already sufficiently weakened, he said, and such censure upon his actions from head-quarters did not tend to improve it. "In truth," he added, almost pathetically, "it is not wonderful that the whole nation should be ill-disposed towards me, for I certainly have done nothing to make them love me. At the same time, such language transmitted from Madrid does not increase their tenderness."

Page 565

In short, viewed as a measure by which government, without disarming itself of its terrible powers, was to pacify the popular mind, the amnesty was a failure. Viewed as a net, by which fresh victims should be enticed to entangle themselves, who had already made their way into the distant atmosphere of liberty, it was equally unsuccessful. A few very obscure individuals made their appearance to claim the benefit of the act, before the six months had expired. With these it was thought expedient to deal gently; but no one was deceived by such clemency. As the common people expressed themselves, the net was not spread on that occasion for finches.

The wits of the Netherlands, seeking relief from their wretched condition in a still more wretched quibble, transposed two letters of the word Pardona, and re-baptized the new measure Pandora. The conceit was not without meaning. The amnesty, descending from supernal regions, had been ushered into the presence of mortals as a messenger laden with heavenly gifts. The casket, when opened, had diffused curses instead of blessings. There, however, the classical analogy ended, for it would have puzzled all the pedants of Louvain to discover Hope lurking, under any disguise, within the clauses of the pardon.

Very soon after the promulgation of this celebrated act, the new bride of Philip, Anne of Austria, passed through the Netherlands, on her way to Madrid. During her brief stay in Brussels, she granted an interview to the Dowager Countess of Horn. That unhappy lady, having seen her eldest son, the head of her illustrious house, so recently perish on the scaffold, wished to make a last effort in behalf of the remaining one, then closely confined in the prison of Segovia. The Archduchess solemnly promised that his release should be the first boon which she would request of her royal bridegroom, and the bereaved countess retired almost with a hope.

A short digression must here be allowed, to narrate the remaining fortunes of that son, the ill-starred Seigneur de Montigny. His mission to Madrid in company of the Marquis Berghen has been related in a previous volume. The last and most melancholy scene in the life of his fellow envoy has been described in a recent chapter. After that ominous event, Montigny became most anxious to effect his retreat from Spain. He had been separated more than a year from his few months' bride. He was not imprisoned, but he felt himself under the most rigid although secret inspection. It was utterly impossible for him to obtain leave to return, or to take his departure without permission. On one occasion, having left the city accidentally for a ride on horseback to an adjoining village, he found himself surrounded by an unexpected escort of forty troopers. Still, however, the King retained a smiling mien. To Montigny's repeated and urgent requests for dismissal, Philip graciously urged his desire for a continuance of his visit. He

Page 566

was requested to remain in order to accompany his sovereign upon that journey to the Netherlands which would not be much longer delayed. In his impatience anything seemed preferable to the state of suspense in which he was made to linger. He eagerly offered, if he were accused or suspected of crime, to surrender himself to imprisonment if he only could be brought to trial. Soon after Alva's arrival in the Netherlands, the first part of this offer was accepted. No sooner were the arrests of Egmont and Horn known in Madrid, than Montigny was deprived of his liberty, and closely confined in the alcazar of Segovia. Here he remained imprisoned for eight or nine months in a high tower, with no attendant save a young page, Arthur de Munter, who had accompanied him from the Netherlands. Eight men-at-arms were expressly employed to watch over him and to prevent his escape.

One day towards the middle of July, 1568, a band of pilgrims, some of them in Flemish attire, went through the streets of Segovia. They were chanting, as was customary on such occasions, a low, monotonous song, in which Montigny, who happened to be listening, suddenly recognized the language of his fatherland. His surprise was still greater when, upon paying closer attention, he distinguished the terrible meaning of the song. The pretended pilgrims, having no other means of communication with the prisoner, were singing for his information the tragic fates of his brother, Count Horn, and of his friend, Count Egmont. Mingled with the strain were warnings of his own approaching doom; if he were not able to effect his escape before it should be too late. Thus by this friendly masquerade did Montigny learn the fate of his brother, which otherwise, in that land of terrible secrecy, might have been concealed from him for ever.

The hint as to his own preservation was not lost upon him; and he at once set about a plan of escape. He succeeded in gaining over to his interests one of the eight soldiers by whom he was guarded, and he was thus enabled to communicate with many of his own adherents without the prison walls. His major-domo had previously been permitted to furnish his master's table with provisions dressed by his own cook. A correspondence was now carried on by means of letters concealed within the loaves of bread sent daily to the prisoner. In the same way files were provided for sawing through his window-bars. A very delicate ladder of ropes, by which he was to effect his escape into the court below, was also transmitted. The plan had been completely arranged. A certain Pole employed in the enterprise was to be at Hernani, with horses in readiness to convey them to San Sebastian. There a sloop had been engaged, and was waiting their arrival. Montigny, accordingly, in a letter enclosed within a loaf of bread—the last, as he hoped, which he should break in prison—was instructed, after cutting off his beard and otherwise disguising his person, to execute his plan and join

Page 567

his confederates at Hernani. Unfortunately, the major-domo of Montigny was in love. Upon the eve of departure from Spain, his farewell interview with his mistress was so much protracted that the care of sending the bread was left to another. The substitute managed so unskilfully that the loaf was brought to the commandant of the castle, and not to the prisoner. The commandant broke the bread, discovered the letter, and became master of the whole plot. All persons engaged in the enterprise were immediately condemned to death, and the Spanish soldier executed without delay. The others being considered, on account of their loyalty to their master as deserving a commutation of punishment, were sent to the galleys. The major-domo, whose ill-timed gallantry had thus cost Montigny his liberty, received two hundred lashes in addition. All, however, were eventually released from imprisonment.

The unfortunate gentleman was now kept in still closer confinement in his lonely tower. As all his adherents had been disposed of, he could no longer entertain a hope of escape. In the autumn of this year (1568) it was thought expedient by Alva to bring his case formally before the Blood Council. Montigny had committed no crime, but he was one of that band of popular, nobles whose deaths had been long decreed. Letters were accordingly sent to Spain, empowering certain functionaries there to institute that preliminary examination, which, as usual, was to be the only trial vouchsafed. A long list of interrogatories was addressed to him on February 7th, 1569, in his prison at Segovia. A week afterwards, he was again visited by the alcalde, who read over to him the answers which he had made on the first occasion, and required him to confirm them. He was then directed to send his procuration to certain persons in the Netherlands, whom he might wish to appear in his behalf. Montigny complied by sending several names, with a clause of substitution. All the persons thus appointed, however, declined to act, unless they could be furnished with a copy of the procuration, and with a statement of the articles of accusation. This was positively refused by the Blood Council. Seeing no possibility of rendering service to their friend by performing any part in this mockery of justice, they refused to accept the procuration. They could not defend a case when not only the testimony, but even the charges against the accused were kept secret. An individual was accordingly appointed by government to appear in the prisoner’s behalf.

Thus the forms of justice were observed, and Montigny, a close prisoner in the tower of Segovia, was put upon trial for his life in Brussels. Certainly nothing could exceed the irony of such a process. The advocate had never seen his client, thousands of miles away, and was allowed to hold no communication with him by letter. The proceedings were instituted by a summons, addressed by the Duke of Alva to Madame de Montigny in Brussels. That unhappy lady could

Page 568

only appeal to the King. “Convinced,” she said, “that her husband was innocent of the charges brought against him, she threw herself, overwhelmed and consumed by tears and misery, at his Majesty’s feet. She begged the King to remember the past services of Montigny, her own youth, and that she had enjoyed his company but four months. By all these considerations, and by the passion of Jesus Christ, she adjured the monarch to pardon any faults which her husband might have committed.” The reader can easily judge how much effect such a tender appeal was like to have upon the heart of Philip. From that rock; thus feebly smitten, there flowed no fountain of mercy. It was not more certain that Montigny’s answers to the interrogatories addressed to him had created a triumphant vindication of his course, than that such vindication would be utterly powerless to save his life. The charges preferred against him were similar to those which had brought Egmont and Horn to the block, and it certainly created no ground of hope for him, that he could prove himself even more innocent of suspicious conduct than they had done. On the 4th March, 1570, accordingly, the Duke of Alva pronounced sentence against him. The sentence declared that his head should be cut off, and afterwards exposed to public view upon the head of a pike. Upon the 18th March, 1570, the Duke addressed a requisitory letter to the alcaldes, corregidors, and other judges of Castile, empowering them to carry the sentence into execution.

On the arrival of this requisition there was a serious debate before the King in council. It seemed to be the general opinion that there had been almost severity enough in the Netherlands for the present. The spectacle of the public execution of another distinguished personage, it was thought, might now prove more irritating than salutary. The King was of this opinion himself. It certainly did not occur to him or to his advisers that this consideration should lead them to spare the life of an innocent man. The doubts entertained as to the expediency of a fresh murder were not allowed to benefit the prisoner, who, besides being a loyal subject and a communicant of the ancient Church, was also clothed in the white robes of an envoy, claiming not only justice but hospitality, as the deputy of Philip’s sister, Margaret of Parma. These considerations probably never occurred to the mind of His Majesty. In view, however, of the peculiar circumstances of the case, it was unanimously agreed that there should be no more blood publicly shed. Most of the councillors were in favor of slow poison. Montigny’s meat and drink, they said, should be daily drugged, so that he might die by little and little. Philip, however, terminated these disquisitions by deciding that the ends of justice would not thus be sufficiently answered. The prisoner, he had resolved, should be regularly executed, but the deed should be secret, and it should be publicly announced that he had died of a fever.

Page 569

This point having been settled; the King now set about the arrangement of his plan with all that close attention to detail which marked his character. The patient industry which, had God given him a human heart and a love of right, might have made him a useful monarch, he now devoted to a scheme of midnight murder with a tranquil sense of enjoyment which seems almost incredible. There is no exaggeration in calling the deed a murder, for it certainly was not sanctioned by any law, divine or human, nor justified or excused by any of the circumstances which are supposed to palliate homicide. Nor, when the elaborate and superfluous luxury of arrangements made by Philip for the accomplishment of his design is considered, can it be doubted that he found a positive pleasure in his task. It would almost seem that he had become jealous of Alva's achievements in the work of slaughter. He appeared willing to prove to those immediately about him, that however capable might be the Viceroy of conducting public executions on a grand and terrifying scale, there was yet a certain delicacy of finish never attained by Alva in such business, and which was all his Majesty's own. The King was resolved to make the assassination of Montigny a masterpiece.

On the 17th August, 1570, he accordingly directed Don Eugenio de Peralta, concierge of the fortress of Simancas, to repair to Segovia, and thence to remove the Seigneur Montigny to Simancas. Here he was to be strictly immured; yet was to be allowed at times to walk in the corridor adjoining his chamber. On the 7th October following, the licentiate Don Alonzo de Avellano, alcalde of Valladolid, was furnished with an order addressed by the King to Don Eugenio de Peralta, requiring him to place the prisoner in the hands of the said licentiate, who was charged with the execution of Alva's sentence. This functionary had, moreover, been provided with a minute letter of instructions, which had been drawn up according to the King's directions, on the 1st October. In these royal instructions, it was stated that, although the sentence was for a public execution, yet the King had decided in favor of a private one within the walls of the fortress. It was to be managed so that no one should suspect that Montigny had been executed, but so that, on the contrary, it should be universally said and believed that he had died a natural death. Very few persons, all sworn and threatened into secrecy, were therefore to be employed. Don Alonzo was to start immediately for Valladolid; which was within two short leagues of Simancas. At that place he would communicate with Don Eugenio, and arrange the mode, day, and hour of execution. He would leave Valladolid on the evening before a holiday, late in the afternoon, so as to arrive a little after dark at Simancas. He would take with him a confidential notary, an executioner, and as few servants as possible. Immediately upon his entrance to the fortress, he was to communicate the sentence of death to Montigny,

Page 570

in presence of Don Eugenio and of one or two other persons. He would then console him, in which task he would be assisted by Don Eugenio. He would afterwards leave him with the religious person who would be appointed for that purpose. That night and the whole of the following day, which would be a festival, till after midnight, would be allotted to Montigny, that he might have time to confess, to receive the sacraments, to convert himself to God, and to repent. Between one and two o'clock in the morning the execution was to take place, in presence of the ecclesiastic, of Don Eugenio de Peralta, of the notary, and of one or two other persons, who would be needed by the executioner. The ecclesiastic was to be a wise and prudent person, and to be informed how little confidence Montigny inspired in the article of faith. If the prisoner should wish to make a will, it could not be permitted. As all his property had been confiscated, he could dispose of nothing. Should he, however, desire to make a memorial of the debts which he would wish paid; he was to be allowed that liberty. It was, however, to be stipulated that he was to make no allusion, in any memorial or letter which he might write, to the execution which was about to take place. He was to use the language of a man seriously ill, and who feels himself at the point of death. By this infernal ingenuity it was proposed to make the victim an accomplice in the plot, and to place a false exculpation of his assassins in his dying lips. The execution having been fulfilled, and the death having been announced with the dissimulation prescribed, the burial was to take place in the church of Saint Saviour, in Simancas. A moderate degree of pomp, such as befitted a person of Montigny's quality, was to be allowed, and a decent tomb erected. A grand mass was also to be celebrated, with a respectable number, "say seven hundred," of lesser masses. As the servants of the defunct were few in number, continued the frugal King, they might be provided each with a suit of mourning. Having thus personally arranged all the details of this secret work, from the reading of the sentence to the burial of the prisoner; having settled not only the mode of his departure from life, but of his passage through purgatory, the King despatched the agent on his mission.

The royal program was faithfully enacted. Don Alonzo arrived at Valladolid; and made his arrangements with Don Eugenio. It was agreed that a paper, prepared by royal authority, and brought by Don Alonzo from Madrid, should be thrown into the corridor of Montigny's prison. This paper, written in Latin, ran as follows:

Page 571

“In the night, as I understand, there will be no chance for your escape. In the daytime there will be many; for you are then in charge of a single gouty guardian, no match in strength or speed for so vigorous a man as you. Make your escape from the 8th to the 12th of October, at any hour you can, and take the road contiguous to the castle gate through which you entered. You will find Robert and John, who will be ready with horses, and with everything necessary. May God favor your undertaking.—R. D. M.”

The letter, thus designedly thrown into the corridor by one confederate, was soon afterwards picked up by the other, who immediately taxed Montigny with an attempt to escape. Notwithstanding the vehement protestations of innocence naturally made by the prisoner, his pretended project was made the pretext for a still closer imprisonment in the “Bishop’s Tower.” A letter, written at Madrid, by Philip’s orders, had been brought by Don Alonzo to Simancas, narrating by anticipation these circumstances, precisely as they had now occurred. It moreover stated that Montigny, in consequence of his close confinement, had fallen grievously ill, and that he would receive all the attention compatible with his safe keeping. This letter, according to previous orders, was now signed by Don Eugenio de Peralta, dated 10th October, 1570; and publicly despatched to Philip. It was thus formally established that Montigny was seriously ill. A physician, thoroughly instructed and sworn to secrecy, was now ostentatiously admitted to the tower, bringing with him a vast quantity of drugs. He duly circulated among the townspeople, on his return, his opinion that the illustrious prisoner was afflicted with a disorder from which it was almost impossible that he should recover. Thus, thanks to Philip’s masterly precautions, not a person in Madrid or Simancas was ignorant that Montigny was dying of a fever, with the single exception of the patient himself.

On Saturday, the 14th of October, at nightfall, Don Alonzo de Avellano, accompanied by the prescribed individuals, including Fray Hernando del, Castillo, an ecclesiastic of high reputation, made their appearance at the prison of Simancas. At ten in the evening the announcement of the sentence was made to Montigny. He was visibly agitated at the sudden intelligence, for it was entirely unexpected by him. He had, on the contrary, hoped much from the intercession of, the Queen, whose arrival he had already learned. He soon recovered himself, however, and requested to be left alone with the ecclesiastic. All the night and the following day were passed in holy offices. He conducted himself with great moderation, courage, and tranquillity. He protested his entire innocence of any complicity with the Prince of Orange, or of any disloyal designs or sentiments at any period of his life. He drew up a memorial, expressing his strong attachment to every point of the Catholic faith,

Page 572

from which he had never for an instant swerved. His whole demeanor was noble, submissive, and Christian. “In every essential,” said Fray Hernando, “he conducted himself so well that we who remain may bear him envy.” He wrote a paper of instructions concerning his faithful and bereaved dependents. He placed his signet ring, attached to a small gold chain, in the hands of the ecclesiastic, to be by him transmitted to his wife. Another ring, set with turquois, he sent to his mother-in-law, the Princess Espinoy, from whom he had received it. About an hour after midnight, on the morning, therefore, of the 16th of October, Fray Hernando gave notice that the prisoner was ready to die. The alcalde Don Alonzo then entered, accompanied by the executioner and the notary. The sentence of Alva was now again recited, the alcalde adding that the King, “out of his clemency and benignity,” had substituted a secret for a public execution. Montigny admitted that the judgment would be just and the punishment lenient, if it were conceded that the charges against him were true. His enemies, however, while he had been thus immured, had possessed the power to accuse him as they listed. He ceased to speak, and the executioner then came forward and strangled him. The alcalde, the notary, and the executioner then immediately started for Valladolid, so that no person next morning knew that they had been that night at Simancas, nor could guess the dark deed which they had then and there accomplished. The terrible, secret they were forbidden, on pain of death, to reveal.

Montigny, immediately after his death, was clothed in the habit of Saint Francis, in order to conceal the marks of strangulation. In the course of the day the body was deposited, according to the King’s previous orders, in the church of Saint Saviour. Don Eugenio de Peralta, who superintended the interment, uncovered the face of the defunct to prove his identity, which was instantly recognised by many sorrowing servants. The next morning the second letter, prepared by Philip long before, and brought by Don Alonzo de Avellano to Simancas, received the date of 17th October, 1570, together with the signature of Don Eugenio de Peralta, keeper of Simancas fortress, and was then publicly despatched to the King. It stated that, notwithstanding the care given to the Seigneur de Montigny in his severe illness by the physicians who had attended him, he had continued to grow worse and worse until the previous morning between three and four o’clock, when he had expired. The Fray Hernando del Castillo, who had accidentally happened to be at Simancas, had performed the holy offices, at the request of the deceased, who had died in so catholic a frame of mind, that great hopes might be entertained of his salvation. Although he possessed no property, yet his burial had been conducted very respectably.

Page 573

On the 3rd of November, 1570, these two letters, ostensibly written by Don Eugenio de Peralta, were transmitted by Philip to the Duke of Alva. They were to serve as evidence of the statement which the Governor-General was now instructed to make, that the Seigneur de Montigny had died a natural death in the fortress of Simancas. By the same courier, the King likewise forwarded a secret memoir, containing the exact history of the dark transaction, from which memoir the foregoing account has been prepared. At the same time the Duke was instructed publicly to exhibit the lying letters of Don Eugenio de Peralta, as containing an authentic statement of the affair. The King observed, moreover, in his letter, that there was not a person in Spain who doubted that Montigny had died of a fever. He added that if the sentiments of the deceased nobleman had been at all in conformity with his external manifestations, according to the accounts received of his last moments, it was to be hoped that God would have mercy upon his soul. The secretary who copied the letter, took the liberty of adding, however, to this paragraph the suggestion, that “if Montigny were really a heretic, the devil, who always assists his children in such moments, would hardly have failed him in his dying hour.” Philip, displeased with this flippancy, caused the passage to be erased. He even gave vent to his royal indignation in a marginal note, to the effect that we should always express favorable judgments concerning the dead—a pious sentiment always dearer to writing masters than to historians. It seemed never to have occurred however to this remarkable moralist, that it was quite as reprehensible to strangle an innocent man as to speak ill of him after his decease.

Thus perished Baron Montigny, four years after his arrival in Madrid as Duchess Margaret’s ambassador, and three years after the death of his fellow-envoy Marquis Berghen. No apology is necessary for so detailed an account of this dark and secret tragedy. The great transactions of a reign are sometimes paltry things; great battles and great treaties, after vast consumption of life and of breath, often leave the world where they found it. The events which occupy many of the statelier pages of history, and which have most lived in the mouths of men, frequently contain but commonplace lessons of philosophy. It is perhaps otherwise when, by the resuscitation of secret documents, over which the dust of three centuries has gathered, we are enabled to study the internal working of a system of perfect tyranny. Liberal institutions, republican or constitutional governments, move in the daylight; we see their mode of operation, feel the jar of their wheels, and are often needlessly alarmed at their apparent tendencies. The reverse of the picture is not always so easily attainable. When, therefore, we find a careful portrait of a consummate tyrant, painted by his own hand, it is worth our while to pause for a moment, that we may carefully peruse the lineaments. Certainly, we shall afterwards not love liberty the less.

Page 574

Towards the end of the year 1570, still another and a terrible misfortune descended upon the Netherlands. It was now the hand of God which smote the unhappy country, already so tortured by the cruelty of war. An inundation, more tremendous than any which had yet been recorded in those annals so prolific in such catastrophes, now swept the whole coast from Flanders to Friesland. Not the memorable deluge of the thirteenth century, out of which the Zuyder Zee was born; not that in which the waters of the Dollart had closed for ever over the villages and churches of Groningen; not one of those perpetually recurring floods by which the inhabitants of the Netherlands, year after year, were recalled to an anxious remembrance of the watery chaos out of which their fatherland had been created, and into which it was in daily danger of resolving itself again, had excited so much terror and caused so much destruction. A continued and violent gale from the north-west had long been sweeping the Atlantic waters into the North Sea, and had now piled them upon the fragile coasts of the provinces. The dykes, tasked beyond their strength, burst in every direction. The cities of Flanders, to a considerable distance inland, were suddenly invaded by the waters of the ocean. The whole narrow peninsula of North Holland was in imminent danger of being swept away for ever. Between Amsterdam and Meyden, the great Diemer dyke was broken through in twelve places. The Hand-bos, a bulwark formed of oaken piles, fastened with metal clamps, moored with iron anchors, and secured by gravel and granite, was snapped to pieces like packthread. The “Sleeper,” a dyke thus called, because it was usually left in repose by the elements, except in great emergencies, alone held firm, and prevented the consummation of the catastrophe. Still the ocean poured in upon the land with terrible fury. Dort, Rotterdam, and many other cities were, for a time, almost submerged. Along the coast, fishing vessels, and even ships of larger size, were floated up into the country, where they entangled themselves in groves and orchards, or beat to pieces the roofs and walls of houses. The destruction of life and of property was enormous throughout the maritime provinces, but in Friesland the desolation was complete. There nearly all the dykes and sluices were dashed to fragments; the country, far and-wide, converted into an angry sea. The steeples and towers of inland cities became islands of the ocean. Thousands of human beings were swept out of existence in a few hours. Whole districts of territory, with all their villages, farms, and churches, were rent from their places, borne along by the force of the waves, sometimes to be lodged in another part of the country, sometimes to be entirely engulfed. Multitudes of men, women, children, of horses, oxen, sheep, and every domestic animal, were struggling in the waves in every direction. Every boat, and every article which could serve as a boat, were eagerly seized upon. Every house

Page 575

was inundated; even the grave-yards gave up their dead. The living infant in his cradle, and the long-buried corpse in his coffin, floated side by side. The ancient flood seemed about to be renewed. Everywhere, upon the top of trees, upon the steeples of churches, human beings were clustered, praying to God for mercy, and to their fellow-men for assistance. As the storm at last was subsiding, boats began to ply in every direction, saving those who were still struggling in the water, picking fugitives from roofs and tree-tops, and collecting the bodies of those already drowned. Colonel Robles, Seigneur de Billy, formerly much hated for his Spanish or Portuguese blood, made himself very active in this humane work. By his exertions, and those of the troops belonging to Groningen, many lives were rescued, and gratitude replaced the ancient animosity. It was estimated that at least twenty thousand persons were destroyed in the province of Friesland alone. Throughout the Netherlands, one hundred thousand persons perished. The damage alone to property, the number of animals engulfed in the sea, were almost incalculable.

These events took place on the 1st and 2nd November, 1570. The former happened to be the day of All Saints, and the Spaniards maintained loudly that the vengeance of Heaven had descended upon the abode of heretics. The Netherlanders looked upon the catastrophe as ominous of still more terrible misfortunes in store for them. They seemed doomed to destruction by God and man. An overwhelming tyranny had long been chafing against their constitutional bulwarks, only to sweep over them at last; and now the resistless ocean, impatient of man's feeble barriers, had at last risen to reclaim his prey. Nature, as if disposed to put to the blush the feeble cruelty of man, had thus wrought more havoc in a few hours, than bigotry, however active, could effect in many years.

Nearly at the close of this year (1570) an incident occurred, illustrating the ferocious courage so often engendered in civil contests. On the western verge of the Isle of Bommel, stood the castle of Lowestein. The island is not in the sea. It is the narrow but important territory which is enclosed between the Meuse and the Waal. The castle, placed in a slender hook, at the junction of the two rivers, commanded the two cities of Gorcum and Dorcum, and the whole navigation of the waters. One evening, towards the end of December, four monks, wearing the cowls and robes of Mendicant Grey Friars, demanded hospitality at the castle gate. They were at once ushered into the presence of the commandant, a brother of President Tisnacq. He was standing by the fire, conversing with his wife. The foremost monk approaching him, asked whether the castle held for the Duke of Alva or the Prince of Orange. The castellian replied that he recognized no prince save Philip, King of Spain. Thereupon the monk, who was no other than Herman de Ruyter, a drover by

Page 576

trade, and a warm partisan of Orange, plucked a pistol from beneath his robe, and shot the commandant through the head. The others, taking advantage of the sudden panic, overcame all the resistance offered by the feeble garrison, and made themselves masters of the place. In the course of the next day they introduced into the castle four or five and twenty men, with which force they diligently set themselves to fortify the place, and secure themselves in its possession. A larger reinforcement which they had reckoned upon, was detained by the floods and frosts, which, for the moment, had made the roads and fivers alike impracticable.

Don Roderigo de Toledo, governor of Bois le Duc, immediately despatched a certain Captain Perea, at the head of two hundred soldiers, who were joined on the way by a miscellaneous force of volunteers, to recover the fortress as soon as possible. The castle, bathed on its outward walls by the Waal and Meuse, and having two redoubts, defended by a double interior foss, would have been difficult to take by assaults had the number of the besieged been at all adequate to its defence. As matters stood, however, the Spaniards, by battering a breach in the wall with their cannon on the first day, and then escalading the inner works with remarkable gallantry upon the second, found themselves masters of the place within eight and forty hours of their first appearance before its gates. Most of the defenders were either slain or captured alive. De Ruyter alone had betaken himself to an inner hall of the castle, where he stood at bay upon the threshold. Many Spaniards, one after another, as they attempted to kill or to secure him, fell before his sword, which he wielded with the strength of a giant. At last, overpowered by numbers, and weakened by the loss of blood, he retreated slowly into the hall, followed by many of his antagonists. Here, by an unexpected movement, he applied a match to a train of powder, which he had previously laid along the floor of the apartment. The explosion was instantaneous. The tower, where the contest was taking place, sprang into the air, and De Ruyter with his enemies shared a common doom. A part of the mangled remains of this heroic but ferocious patriot were afterwards dug from the ruins of the tower, and with impotent malice nailed upon the gallows at Bois le Duc. Of his surviving companions, some were beheaded, some were broken on the wheel, some were hung and quartered—all were executed.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Constitutional governments, move in the daylight
Consumer would pay the tax, supposing it were ever paid at all
Financial opposition to tyranny is apt to be unanimous
Great battles often leave the world where they found it
Great transactions of a reign are sometimes paltry things
The faithful servant is always a perpetual ass

BOOKRAGS

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 18.

Page 577

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By *John Lothrop Motley* 1855 1570 [*chapter vi*.]

Orange and Count Louis in France—Peace with the Huguenots— Coligny's memoir, presented by request to Charles *ix*., on the subject of invading the Netherlands—Secret correspondence of Orange organized by Paul Buys—Privateering commissions issued by the Prince—Regulations prescribed by him for the fleets thus created—Impoverished condition of the Prince—His fortitude—His personal sacrifices and privations—His generosity—Renewed contest between the Duke and the Estates on the subject of the tenth and twentieth pence—Violent disputes in the council—Firm opposition of Viglius— Edict commanding the immediate collection of the tax—Popular tumults—Viglius denounced by Alva—The Duke's fierce complaints to the King—Secret schemes of Philip against Queen Elizabeth of England—The Ridolphi plot to murder Elizabeth countenanced by Philip and Pius V.—The King's orders to Alva to further the plan— The Duke's remonstrances—Explosion of the plot—Obstinacy of Philip—-Renewed complaints of Alva as to the imprudent service required of him—Other attempts of Philip to murder Elizabeth—Don John of Austria in the Levant——Battle of Lepanto—Slothfulness of Selim—Appointment of Medina Celi—Incessant wrangling in Brussels upon the tax—Persevering efforts of Orange—Contempt of Alva for the Prince—Proposed sentence of ignominy against his name—Sonoy's mission to Germany—-Remarkable papers issued by the Prince—The "harangue"—Intense hatred for Alva entertained by the highest as well as lower orders—Visit of Francis de Alva to Brussels—His unfavourable report to the King—Querulous language of the Duke— Deputation to Spain—Universal revolt against the tax—Ferocity of Alva—Execution of eighteen tradesmen secretly ordered—Interrupted by the capture of Brill—Beggars of the sea—-The younger Wild Boar of Ardennes—Reconciliation between the English government and that of Alva—The Netherland privateersmen ordered out of English ports— De la Marck's fleet before Brill—The town summoned to surrender— Commissioners sent out to the fleet—Flight of the magistrates and townspeople—Capture of the place—-Indignation of Alva—Popular exultation in Brussels—Puns and Caricatures—Bossu ordered to recover the town of Brill—His defeat—His perfidious entrance into Rotterdam—Massacre in that city—Flushing revolutionized— Unsuccessful attempt of Governor de Bourgogne to recal the citizens to their obedience—Expedition under Treslong from Brill to assist the town of Flushing—Murder of Paccheco by the Patriots—Zeraerts appointed Governor of Walcheren by Orange.

While such had been the domestic events of the Netherlands during the years 1569 and 1570, the Prince of Orange, although again a wanderer, had never allowed himself to despair. During this whole period, the darkest

Page 578

hour for himself and for his country, he was ever watchful. After disbanding his troops at Strasburg, and after making the best arrangements possible under the circumstances for the eventual payment of their wages, he had joined the army which the Duke of Deux Ponts had been raising in Germany to assist the cause of the Huguenots in France. The Prince having been forced to acknowledge that, for the moment, all open efforts in the Netherlands were likely to be fruitless, instinctively turned his eyes towards the more favorable aspect of the Reformation in France. It was inevitable that, while he was thus thrown for the time out of his legitimate employment, he should be led to the battles of freedom in a neighbouring land. The Duke of Deux Ponts, who felt his own military skill hardly adequate to the task which he had assumed, was glad, as it were, to put himself and his army under the orders of Orange.

Meantime the battle of Jamac had been fought; the Prince of Condo, covered with wounds, and exclaiming that it was sweet to die for Christ and country, had fallen from his saddle; the whole Huguenot army had been routed by the royal forces under the nominal command of Anjou, and the body of Conde, tied to the back of a she ass, had been paraded through the streets of Jarnap in derision.

Affairs had already grown almost as black for the cause of freedom in France as in the provinces. Shortly afterwards William of Orange, with a band of twelve hundred horsemen, joined the banners of Coligny. His two brothers accompanied him. Henry, the stripling, had left the university to follow the fortunes of the Prince. The indomitable Louis, after seven thousand of his army had been slain, had swum naked across the Ems, exclaiming “that his courage, thank God, was as fresh and lively as ever,” and had lost not a moment in renewing his hostile schemes against the Spanish government. In the meantime he had joined the Huguenots in France. The battle of Moncontour had succeeded, Count Peter Mansfeld, with five thousand troops sent by Alva, fighting on the side of the royalists, and Louis Nassau on that of the Huguenots, atoning by the steadiness and skill with which he covered the retreat, for his intemperate courage, which had precipitated the action, and perhaps been the main cause of Coligny’s overthrow. The Prince of Orange, who had been peremptorily called to the Netherlands in the beginning of the autumn, was not present at the battle. Disguised as a peasant, with but five attendants, and at great peril, he had crossed the enemy’s lines, traversed France, and arrived in Germany before the winter. Count Louis remained with the Huguenots. So necessary did he seem to their cause, and so dear had he become to their armies, that during the severe illness of Coligny in the course of the following summer all eyes were turned upon him as the inevitable successor of that great man, the only remaining pillar of freedom in France.

Page 579

Coligny recovered. The deadly peace between the Huguenots and the Court succeeded. The Admiral, despite his sagacity and his suspicions, embarked with his whole party upon that smooth and treacherous current which led to the horrible catastrophe of Saint Bartholomew. To occupy his attention, a formal engagement was made by the government to send succor to the Netherlands. The Admiral was to lead the auxiliaries which were to be despatched across the frontier to overthrow the tyrannical government of Alva. Long and anxious were the colloquies held between Coligny and the Royalists. The monarch requested a detailed opinion, in writing, from the Admiral, on the most advisable plan for invading the Netherlands. The result was the preparation of the celebrated memoir, under Coligny's directions, by young De Mornay, Seigneur de Plessis. The document was certainly not a paper of the highest order. It did not appeal to the loftier instincts which kings or common mortals might be supposed to possess. It summoned the monarch to the contest in the Netherlands that the ancient injuries committed by Spain might be avenged. It invoked the ghost of Isabella of France, foully murdered, as it was thought, by Philip. It held out the prospect of re-annexing the fair provinces, wrested from the King's ancestors by former Spanish sovereigns. It painted the hazardous position of Philip; with the Moorish revolt gnawing at the entrails of his kingdom, with the Turkish war consuming its extremities, with the canker of rebellion corroding the very heart of the Netherlands. It recalled, with exultation, the melancholy fact that the only natural and healthy existence of the French was in a state of war—that France, if not occupied with foreign campaigns, could not be prevented from plunging its sword into its own vitals.

It indulged in refreshing reminiscences of those halcyon days, not long gone by, when France, enjoying perfect tranquillity within its own borders, was calmly and regularly carrying on its long wars beyond the frontier.

In spite of this savage spirit, which modern documents, if they did not scorn, would, at least have shrouded, the paper was nevertheless a sagacious one; but the request for the memoir, and the many interviews on the subject of the invasion, were only intended to deceive. They were but the curtain which concealed the preparations for the dark tragedy which was about to be enacted. Equally deceived, and more sanguine than ever, Louis Nassau during this period was indefatigable in his attempts to gain friends for his cause. He had repeated audiences of the King, to whose court he had come in disguise. He made a strong and warm impression upon Elizabeth's envoy at the French Court, Walsingham. It is probable that in the Count's impetuosity to carry his point, he allowed more plausibility to be given to certain projects for subdividing the Netherlands than his brother would ever have sanctioned. The Prince was a total stranger to these inchoate schemes. His work was to set his country free, and to destroy the tyranny which had grown colossal. That employment was sufficient for a lifetime, and there is no proof to be found that a paltry and personal self-interest had even the lowest place among his motives.

Page 580

Meantime, in the autumn of 1569, Orange had again reached Germany. Paul Buys, Pensionary of Leyden, had kept him constantly informed of the state of affairs in the provinces. Through his means an extensive correspondence was organized and maintained with leading persons in every part of the Netherlands. The conventional terms by which different matters and persons of importance were designated in these letters were familiarly known to all friends of the cause, not only in the provinces, but in France, England, Germany, and particularly in the great commercial cities. The Prince, for example, was always designated as Martin Willemzoon, the Duke of Alva as Master Powels van Alblas, the Queen of England as Henry Philipzoon, the King of Denmark as Peter Peterson. The twelve signs of the zodiac were used instead of the twelve months, and a great variety of similar substitutions were adopted. Before his visit to France, Orange had, moreover, issued commissions, in his capacity of sovereign, to various seafaring persons, who were empowered to cruise against Spanish commerce.

The “beggars of the sea,” as these privateersmen designated themselves, soon acquired as terrible a name as the wild beggars, or the forest beggars; but the Prince, having had many conversations with Admiral Coligny on the important benefits to be derived from the system, had faithfully set himself to effect a reformation of its abuses after his return from France. The Seigneur de Dolhain, who, like many other refugee nobles, had acquired much distinction in this roving corsair life, had for a season acted as Admiral for the Prince. He had, however, resolutely declined to render any accounts of his various expeditions, and was now deprived of his command in consequence. Gillain de Fiennes, Seigneur de Lumbres, was appointed to succeed him. At the same time strict orders were issued by Orange, forbidding all hostile measures against the Emperor or any of the princes of the empire, against Sweden, Denmark, England, or against any potentates who were protectors of the true Christian religion. The Duke of Alva and his adherents were designated as the only lawful antagonists. The Prince, moreover, gave minute instructions as to the discipline to be observed in his fleet. The articles of war were to be strictly enforced. Each commander was to maintain a minister on board his ship, who was to preach God’s word, and to preserve Christian piety among the crew. No one was to exercise any command in the fleet save native Netherlanders, unless thereto expressly commissioned by the Prince of Orange. All prizes were to be divided and distributed by a prescribed rule. No persons were to be received on board, either as sailors or soldiers, save “folk of goad name and fame.” No man who had ever been punished of justice was to be admitted. Such were the principal features in the organization of that infant navy which, in course of this and the following centuries, was to achieve so many triumphs,

Page 581

and to which a powerful and adventurous mercantile marine had already led the way. “Of their ships,” said Cardinal Bentivoglio, “the Hollanders make houses, of their houses schools. Here they are born, here educated, here they learn their profession. Their sailors, flying from one pale to the other, practising their art wherever the sun displays itself to mortals, become so skilful that they can scarcely be equalled, certainly not surpassed; by any nation in the civilized world.”

The Prince, however, on his return from France, had never been in so forlorn a condition. “Orange is plainly perishing,” said one of the friends of the cause. Not only had he no funds to organize new levies, but he was daily exposed to the most clamorously-urged claims, growing out of the army which he had been recently obliged to disband. It had been originally reported in the Netherlands that he had fallen in the battle of Moncontour. “If he have really been taken off,” wrote Viglius, hardly daring to credit the great news, “we shall all of us have less cause to tremble.” After his actual return, however, lean and beggared, with neither money nor credit, a mere threatening shadow without substance or power, he seemed to justify the sarcasm of Granvelle. “Vana sine viribus ira,” quoted the Cardinal, and of a verity it seemed that not a man was likely to stir in Germany in his behalf, now that so deep a gloom had descended upon his cause. The obscure and the oppressed throughout the provinces and Germany still freely contributed out of their weakness and their poverty, and taxed themselves beyond their means to assist enterprizes for the relief of the Netherlands. The great ones of the earth, however, those on whom the Prince had relied; those to whom he had given his heart; dukes, princes, and electors, in this fatal change of his fortunes fell away like water.

Still his spirit was unbroken. His letters showed a perfect appreciation of his situation, and of that to which his country was reduced; but they never exhibited a trace of weakness or despair. A modest, but lofty courage; a pious, but unaffected resignation, breathed through—every document, public or private, which fell from his pen during this epoch. He wrote to his brother John that he was quite willing to go, to Frankfort, in order to give himself up as a hostage to his troops for the payment of their arrears. At the same time he begged his brother to move heaven and earth to raise at least one hundred thousand thalers. If he could only furnish them with a month’s pay, the soldiers would perhaps be for a time contented. He gave directions also concerning the disposition of what remained of his plate and furniture, the greater part of it having been already sold and expended in the cause. He thought it would, on the whole, be better to have the remainder sold, piece by piece, at the fair. More money would be raised by that course than by a more wholesale arrangement.

Page 582

He was now obliged to attend personally to the most minute matters of domestic economy. The man who been the mate of emperors, who was himself a sovereign, had lived his life long in pomp and luxury, surrounded by countless nobles, pages, men-at-arms, and menials, now calmly accepted the position of an outlaw and an exile. He cheerfully fulfilled tasks which had formerly devolved upon his grooms and valets. There was an almost pathetic simplicity in the homely details of an existence which, for the moment, had become so obscure and so desperate. "Send by the bearer," he wrote, "the little hackney given me by the Admiral; send also my two pair of trunk hose; one pair is at the tailor's to be mended, the other, pair you will please order to be taken from the things which I wore lately at Dillenburg. They lie on the table with my accoutrements. If the little hackney be not in condition, please send the grey horse with the cropped ears and tail."

He was always mindful, however, not only of the great cause to which he had devoted himself, but of the wants experienced by individuals who had done him service. He never forgot his friends. In the depth of his own misery he remembered favors received from humble persons. "Send a little cup, worth at least a hundred florins, to Hartmann Wolf," he wrote to his brother; "you can take as much silver out of the coffer, in which there is still some of my chapel service remaining."—"You will observe that Affenstein is wanting a horse," he wrote on another occasion; "please look him out one, and send it to me with the price. I will send you the money. Since he has shown himself so willing in the cause, one ought to do something for him."

The contest between the Duke and the estates, on the subject of the tenth and twentieth penny had been for a season adjusted. The two years' term, however, during which it had been arranged that the tax should be commuted, was to expire in the autumn of 1571. Early therefore in this year the disputes were renewed with greater acrimony than ever. The estates felt satisfied that the King was less eager than the Viceroy. Viglius was satisfied that the power of Alva was upon the wane. While the King was not likely openly to rebuke his recent measures, it seemed not improbable that the Governor's reiterated requests to be recalled might be granted. Fortified by these considerations, the President, who had so long been the supple tool of the tyrant, suddenly assumed the character of a popular tribune. The wranglings, the contradictions, the vituperations, the threatenings, now became incessant in the council. The Duke found that he had exulted prematurely, when he announced to the King the triumphant establishment, in perpetuity, of the lucrative tax. So far from all the estates having given their consent, as he had maintained, and as he had written to Philip, it now appeared that not one of those bodies considered itself bound beyond its quota for the two years. This

Page 583

was formally stated in the council by Berlaymont and other members. The wrath of the Duke blazed forth at this announcement. He berated Berlaymont for maintaining, or for allowing it to be maintained, that the consent of the orders had ever been doubtful. He protested that they had as unequivocally agreed to the perpetual imposition of the tag as he to its commutation during two years. He declared, however, that he was sick of quotas. The tax should now be collected forthwith, and Treasurer Schetz was ordered to take his measures accordingly.

At a conference on the 29th May, the Duke asked Viglius for his opinion. The President made a long reply, taking the ground that the consent of the orders had been only conditional, and appealing to such members of the finance council as were present to confirm his assertion. It was confirmed by all. The Duke, in a passion, swore that those who dared maintain such a statement should be chastised. Viglius replied that it had always been the custom for councillors to declare their opinion, and that they had never before been threatened with such consequences. If such, however, were his Excellency's sentiments, councillors had better stay at home, hold their tongues, and so avoid chastisement. The Duke, controlling himself a little, apologized for this allusion to chastisement, a menace which he disclaimed having intended with reference to councillors whom he had always commended to the King, and of whom his Majesty had so high an opinion. At a subsequent meeting the Duke took Viglius aside, and assured him that he was quite of his own way of thinking. For certain reasons, however, he expressed himself as unwilling that the rest of the council should be aware of the change in his views. He wished, he said, to dissemble. The astute President, for a moment, could not imagine the Governor's drift. He afterwards perceived that the object of this little piece of deception had been to close his mouth. The Duke obviously conjectured that the President, lulled into security, by this secret assurance, would be silent; that the other councillors, believing the President to have adopted the Governor's views, would alter their opinions; and that the opposition of the estates, thus losing its support in the council, would likewise very soon be abandoned. The President, however, was not to be entrapped by this falsehood. He resolutely maintained his hostility to the tax, depending for his security on the royal opinion, the popular feeling, and the judgment of his colleagues.

The daily meetings of the board were almost entirely occupied by this single subject. Although since the arrival of Alva the Council of Blood had usurped nearly all the functions of the state and finance-councils, yet there now seemed a disposition on the part of Alva to seek the countenance, even while he spurned the authority, of other functionaries. He found, however, neither sympathy nor obedience. The President

Page 584

stoutly told him that he was endeavouring to swim against the stream, that the tax was offensive to the people, and that the voice of the people was the voice of God. On the last day of July, however, the Duke issued an edict, by which summary collection of the tenth and twentieth pence was ordered. The whole country was immediately in uproar. The estates of every province, the assemblies of every city, met and remonstrated. The merchants suspended all business, the petty dealers shut up their shops. The people congregated together in masses, vowing resistance to the illegal and cruel impost. Not a farthing was collected. The “seven stiver people”, spies of government, who for that paltry daily stipend were employed to listen for treason in every tavern, in every huckster’s booth, in every alley of every city, were now quite unable to report all the curses which were hourly heard uttered against the tyranny of the Viceroy. Evidently, his power was declining. The councillors resisted him, the common people almost defied him. A mercer to whom he was indebted for thirty thousand florins’ worth of goods, refused to open his shop, lest the tax should be collected on his merchandize. The Duke confiscated his debt, as the mercer had foreseen, but this being a pecuniary sacrifice, seemed preferable to acquiescence in a measure so vague and so boundless that it might easily absorb the whole property of the country.

No man saluted the governor as he passed through the streets. Hardly an attempt was made by the people to disguise their abhorrence of his person: Alva, on his side, gave daily exhibitions of ungovernable fury. At a council held on 25th September, 1571, he stated that the King had ordered the immediate enforcement of the edict. Viglius observed that there were many objections to its form. He also stoutly denied that the estates had ever given their consent. Alva fiercely asked the President if he had not himself once maintained that the consent had been granted! Viglius replied that he had never made such an assertion. He had mentioned the conditions and the implied promises on the part of government, by which a partial consent had been extorted. He never could have said that the consent had been accorded, for he had never believed that it could be obtained. He had not proceeded far in his argument when he was interrupted by the Duke—“But you said so, you said so, you said so,” cried the exasperated Governor, in a towering passion, repeating many times this flat contradiction to the President’s statements. Viglius firmly stood his ground. Alva loudly denounced him for the little respect he had manifested for his authority. He had hitherto done the President good offices, he said, with his Majesty, but certainly should not feel justified in concealing his recent and very unhandsome conduct.

Page 585

Viglius replied that he had always reverently cherished the Governor, and had endeavoured to merit his favor by diligent obsequiousness. He was bound by his oath, however; to utter in council that which comported with his own sentiments and his Majesty's interests. He had done this heretofore in presence of Emperors, Kings, Queens, and Regents, and they had not taken offence. He did not, at this hour, tremble for his grey head, and hoped his Majesty would grant him a hearing before condemnation. The firm attitude of the President increased the irritation of the Viceroy. Observing that he knew the proper means of enforcing his authority he dismissed the meeting.

Immediately afterwards, he received the visits of his son, Don Frederic of Vargas, and other familiars. To these he recounted the scene which had taken place, raving the while so ferociously against Viglius as to induce the supposition that something serious was intended against him. The report flew from mouth to mouth. The affair became the town talk, so that, in the words of the President, it was soon discussed by every barber and old woman in Brussels. His friends became alarmed for his safety, while, at the same time, the citizens rejoiced that their cause had found so powerful an advocate. Nothing, however, came of these threats and these explosions. On the contrary, shortly afterwards the Duke gave orders that the tenth penny should be remitted upon four great articles-corn, meat, wine, and beer. It was also not to be levied upon raw materials used in manufactures. Certainly, these were very important concessions. Still the constitutional objections remained. Alva could not be made to understand why the alcabala, which was raised without difficulty in the little town of Alva, should encounter such fierce opposition in the Netherlands. The estates, he informed the King, made a great deal of trouble. They withheld their consent at command of their satrap. The motive which influenced the leading men was not the interest of factories or fisheries, but the fear that for the future they might not be able to dictate the law to their sovereign. The people of that country, he observed, had still the same character which had been described by Julius Caesar.

The Duke, however, did not find much sympathy at Madrid. Courtiers and councillors had long derided his schemes. As for the King, his mind was occupied with more interesting matters. Philip lived but to enforce what he chose to consider the will of God. While the duke was fighting this battle with the Netherland constitutionalists, his master had engaged at home in a secret but most comprehensive scheme. This was a plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth of England, and to liberate Mary Queen of Scots, who was to be placed on the throne in her stead. This project, in which was of course involved the reduction of England under the dominion of the ancient Church, could not but prove attractive to Philip.

Page 586

It included a conspiracy against a friendly sovereign, immense service to the Church, and a murder. His passion for intrigue, his love of God, and his hatred of man, would all be gratified at once. Thus, although the Moorish revolt within the heart of his kingdom had hardly been terminated—although his legions and his navies were at that instant engaged in a contest of no ordinary importance with the Turkish empire—although the Netherlands, still maintaining their hostility and their hatred, required the flower of the Spanish army to compel their submission, he did not hesitate to accept the dark adventure which was offered to him by ignoble hands.

One Ridolfi, a Florentine, long resident in England, had been sent to the Netherlands as secret agent of the Duke of Norfolk. Alva read his character immediately, and denounced him to Philip as a loose, prating creature, utterly unfit to be entrusted with affairs of importance. Philip, however, thinking more of the plot than of his fellow-actors, welcomed the agent of the conspiracy to Madrid, listened to his disclosures attentively, and, without absolutely committing himself by direct promises, dismissed him with many expressions of encouragement.

On the 12th of July, 1571, Philip wrote to the Duke of Alva, giving an account of his interview with Roberto Ridolfi. The envoy, after relating the sufferings of the Queen of Scotland, had laid before him a plan for her liberation. If the Spanish monarch were willing to assist the Duke of Norfolk and his friends, it would be easy to put upon Mary's head the crown of England. She was then to intermarry with Norfolk. The kingdom of England was again to acknowledge the authority of Rome, and the Catholic religion to be everywhere restored. The most favorable moment for the execution of the plan would be in August or September. As Queen Elizabeth would at that season quit London for the country, an opportunity would be easily found for seizing and murdering her. Pius V., to whom Ridolfi had opened the whole matter, highly approved the scheme, and warmly urged Philip's cooperation. Poor and ruined as he was himself; the Pope protested that he was ready to sell his chalices, and even his own vestments, to provide funds for the cause. Philip had replied that few words were necessary to persuade him. His desire to see the enterprize succeed was extreme, notwithstanding the difficulties by which it was surrounded. He would reflect earnestly upon the subject, in the hope that God, whose cause it was, would enlighten and assist him. Thus much he had stated to Ridolfi, but he had informed his council afterwards that he was determined to carry out the scheme by certain means of which the Duke would soon be informed. The end proposed was to kill or to capture Elizabeth, to set at liberty the Queen of Scotland, and to put upon her head the crown of England. In this enterprize he instructed the Duke of Alva secretly to assist, without however resorting to open hostilities in his

Page 587

own name or in that of his sovereign. He desired to be informed how many Spaniards the Duke could put at the disposition of the conspirators. They had asked for six thousand arquebusiers for England, two thousand for Scotland, two thousand for Ireland. Besides these troops, the Viceroy was directed to provide immediately four thousand arquebuses and two thousand corslets. For the expenses of the enterprize Philip would immediately remit two hundred thousand crowns. Alva was instructed to keep the affair a profound secret from his councillors. Even Hopper at Madrid knew nothing of the matter, while the King had only expressed himself in general terms to the nuncio and to Ridolfi, then already on his way to the Netherlands. The King concluded his letter by saying, that from what he had now written with his own hand, the Duke could infer how much he had this affair at heart. It was unnecessary for him to say more, persuaded as he was that the Duke would take as profound an interest in it as himself.

Alva perceived all the rashness of the scheme, and felt how impossible it would be for him to comply with Philip's orders. To send an army from the Netherlands into England for the purpose of dethroning and killing a most popular sovereign, and at the same time to preserve the most amicable relations with the country, was rather a desperate undertaking. A force of ten thousand Spaniards, under Chiappin Vitelli, and other favorite officers of the Duke, would hardly prove a trifle to be overlooked, nor would their operations be susceptible of very friendly explanations. The Governor therefore, assured Philip that he "highly applauded his master for his plot. He could not help rendering infinite thanks to God for having made him vassal to such a Prince." He praised exceedingly the resolution which his Majesty had taken. After this preamble, however, he proceeded to pour cold water upon his sovereign's ardor. He decidedly expressed the opinion that Philip should not proceed in such an undertaking until at any rate the party of the Duke of Norfolk had obtained possession of Elizabeth's person. Should the King declare himself prematurely, he might be sure that the Venetians, breaking off their alliance with him, would make their peace with the Turk; and that Elizabeth would, perhaps, conclude that marriage with the Duke of Alencon which now seemed but a pleasantry. Moreover, he expressed his want of confidence in the Duke of Norfolk, whom he considered as a poor creature with but little courage. He also expressed his doubts concerning the prudence and capacity of Don Gueran de Espes, his Majesty's ambassador at London.

It was not long before these machinations became known in England. The Queen of Scots was guarded more closely than ever, the Duke of Norfolk was arrested; yet Philip, whose share in the conspiracy had remained a secret, was not discouraged by the absolute explosion of the whole affair. He still held to an impossible purpose with a tenacity which resembled fatuity. He avowed that his obligations in the sight of God were so strict that he was still determined to proceed in the sacred cause. He remitted,

therefore, the promised funds to the Duke of Alva, and urged him to act with proper secrecy and promptness.

Page 588

The Viceroy was not a little perplexed by these remarkable instructions. None but lunatics could continue to conspire, after the conspiracy had been exposed and the conspirators arrested. Yet this was what his Catholic Majesty expected of his Governor-General. Alva complained, not unreasonably, of the contradictory demands to which he was subjected.

He was to cause no rupture with England, yet he was to send succor to an imprisoned traitor; he was to keep all his operations secret from his council, yet he was to send all his army out of the country, and to organize an expensive campaign. He sneered: at the flippancy of Ridolfi, who imagined that it was the work of a moment to seize the Queen of England, to liberate the Queen of Scotland, to take possession of the Tower of London, and to burn the fleet in the Thames. “Were your Majesty and the Queen of England acting together,” he observed, “it would be impossible to execute the plan proposed by Ridolfi.” The chief danger to be apprehended was from France and Germany. Were those countries not to interfere, he would undertake to make Philip sovereign of England before the winter. Their opposition, however, was sufficient to make the enterprise not only difficult, but impossible. He begged his, master not to be precipitate in the; most important affair which had been negotiated by man since Christ came upon earth. Nothing less, he said, than the existence of the Christian faith was at stake, for, should his Majesty fail in this undertaking, not one stone of the ancient religion would be left upon another. He again warned the King of the contemptible character, of Ridolfi, who had spoken of the affair so freely that it was a common subject of discussion on the Bourse, at Antwerp, and he reiterated, in all his letters his distrust of the parties prominently engaged in the transaction.

Such was the general, tenor of the long despatches exchanged between the King and the Duke of Alva upon this iniquitous scheme. The Duke showed himself reluctant throughout the whole affair, although he certainly never opposed his master’s project by any arguments founded upon good faith, Christian charity, or the sense of honor. To kill the Queen of England, subvert the laws of her realm, burn her fleets, and butcher her subjects, while the mask of amity and entire consideration was sedulously preserved—-all these projects were admitted to be strictly meritorious in themselves, although objections were taken as to the time and mode of execution.

Alva never positively refused to accept his share in the enterprise, but he took care not to lift his finger till the catastrophe in England had made all attempts futile. Philip, on the other hand, never positively withdrew from the conspiracy, but, after an infinite deal of writing and intriguing, concluded by leaving the whole affair in the hands of Alva. The only sufferer for Philip’s participation in the plot was the Spanish envoy at London, Don Gueran de Espes. This gentleman was formally dismissed by Queen Elizabeth, for having given treacherous and hostile advice to the Duke of Alva and to Philip; but her Majesty at the same time expressed the most profound consideration for her brother of Spain.

Page 589

Towards the close of the same year, however (December, 1571); Alva sent two other Italian assassins to England, bribed by the promise of vast rewards, to attempt the life of Elizabeth, quietly, by poison or otherwise. The envoy, Mondoucet, in apprizing the French monarch of this scheme, added that the Duke was so ulcerated and annoyed by the discovery of the previous enterprise, that nothing could exceed his rage. These ruffians were not destined to success, but the attempts of the Duke upon the Queen's life were renewed from time to time. Eighteen months later (August, 1573), two Scotchmen, pensioners of Philip, came from Spain, with secret orders to consult with Alva. They had accordingly much negotiation with the Duke and his secretary, Albornoz. They boasted that they could easily capture Elizabeth, but said that the King's purpose was to kill her. The plan, wrote Mondoucet, was the same as it had been before, namely, to murder the Queen of England, and to give her crown to Mary of Scotland, who would thus be in their power, and whose son was to be seized, and bestowed in marriage in such a way as to make them perpetual masters of both kingdoms.

It does not belong to this history to discuss the merits, nor to narrate the fortunes, of that bickering and fruitless alliance which had been entered into at this period by Philip with Venice and the Holy See against the Turk. The revolt of Granada had at last, after a two years' struggle, been subdued, and the remnants of the romantic race which had once swayed the Peninsula been swept into slavery. The Moors had sustained the unequal conflict with a constancy not to have been expected of so gentle a people. "If a nation meek as lambs could resist so bravely," said the Prince of Orange, "what ought not to be expected of a hardy people like the Netherlanders?" Don John of Austria having concluded a series of somewhat inglorious forays against women, children, and bed-ridden old men in Andalusia and Granada; had arrived, in August of this year, at Naples, to take command of the combined fleet in the Levant. The battle of Lepanto had been fought, but the quarrelsome and contradictory conduct of the allies had rendered the splendid victory as barren as the waves: upon which it had been won. It was no less true, however, that the blunders of the infidels had previously enabled Philip to extricate himself with better success from the dangers of the Moorish revolt than might have been his fortune. Had the rebels succeeded in holding Granada and the mountains of Andalusia, and had they been supported, as they had a right to expect, by the forces of the Sultan, a different aspect might have been given to the conflict, and one far less triumphant for Spain. Had a prince of vigorous ambition and comprehensive policy governed at that moment the Turkish empire; it would have cost Philip a serious struggle to maintain himself in his hereditary dominions. While he was plotting against the life and throne of Elizabeth,

Page 590

he might have had cause to tremble for his own. Fortunately, however, for his Catholic Majesty, Selim was satisfied to secure himself in the possession of the Isle of Venus, with its fruitful vineyards. “To shed the blood” of Cyprian vines, in which he was so enthusiastic a connoisseur, was to him a more exhilarating occupation than to pursue, amid carnage and hardships, the splendid dream of a re-established Eastern caliphate.

On the 25th Sept. 1571, a commission of Governor-General of the Netherlands was at last issued to John de la Cerda, Duke of Medina Coeli. Philip, in compliance with the Duke’s repeated requests, and perhaps not entirely satisfied with the recent course of events in the provinces, had at last, after great hesitation, consented to Alva’s resignation. His successor; however, was not immediately to take his departure, and in the meantime the Duke was instructed to persevere in his faithful services. These services had, for the present, reduced themselves to a perpetual and not very triumphant altercation with his council, with the estates, and with the people, on the subject of his abominable tax. He was entirely alone. They who had stood unflinchingly at his side when the only business of the administration was to burn heretics, turned their backs upon him now that he had engaged in this desperate conflict with. the whole money power of the country. The King was far from cordial in his support, the councillors much too crafty to retain their hold upon the wheel, to which they had only attached themselves in its ascent. Viglius and Berlaymont; Noircarmes and Aerschot, opposed and almost defied the man they now thought sinking, and kept the King constantly informed of the vast distress which the financial measures of the Duke were causing.

Quite, at the close of the year, an elaborate petition from the estates of Brabant was read before the State Council. It contained a strong remonstrance against the tenth penny. Its repeal was strongly urged, upon the ground that its collection would involve the country in universal ruin. Upon this, Alva burst forth in one of the violent explosions of rage to which he was subject. The prosperity of the, Netherlands, he protested, was not dearer to the inhabitants than to himself. He swore by the cross, and by the most holy of holies, preserved in the church of Saint Gudule, that had he been but a private individual, living in Spain, he would, out of the love he bore the provinces, have rushed to their defence had their safety been endangered. He felt therefore deeply wounded that malevolent persons should thus insinuate that he had even wished to injure the country, or to exercise tyranny over its citizens. The tenth penny, he continued, was necessary to the defence of the land, and was much preferable to quotas. It was highly improper that every man in the rabble should know how much was contributed, because each individual, learning the gross amount, would imagine that he, had paid it all himself. In conclusion, he observed that, broken in health and stricken in years as he felt himself, he was now most anxious to return, and was daily looking with eagerness for the arrival of the Duke of Medina Coeli.

Page 591

During the course of this same year, the Prince of Orange had been continuing his preparations. He had sent his agents to every place where a hope was held out to him of obtaining support. Money was what he was naturally most anxious to obtain from individuals; open and warlike assistance what he demanded from governments. His funds, little by little, were increasing, owing to the generosity of many obscure persons, and to the daring exploits of the beggars of the sea. His mission, however, to the northern courts had failed. His envoys had been received in Sweden and Denmark with barren courtesy. The Duke of Alva, on the other hand, never alluded to the Prince but with contempt; knowing not that the ruined outlaw was slowly undermining the very ground beneath the monarch's feet; dreaming not that the feeble strokes which he despised were the opening blows of a century's conflict; foreseeing not that long before its close the chastised province was to expand into a great republic, and that the name of the outlaw was to become almost divine.

Granvelle had already recommended that the young Count de Buren should be endowed with certain lands in Spain, in exchange for his hereditary estates, in order that the name and fame of the rebel William should be forever extinguished in the Netherlands. With the same view, a new sentence against the Prince of Orange was now proposed by the Viceroy. This was, to execute him solemnly in effigy, to drag his escutcheon through the streets at the tails of horses, and after having broken it in pieces, and thus cancelled his armorial bearings, to declare him and his descendants, ignoble, infamous, and incapable of holding property or estates. Could a leaf or two of future history have been unrolled to King, Cardinal, and Governor, they might have found the destined fortune of the illustrious rebel's house not exactly in accordance with the plan of summary extinction thus laid down.

Not discouraged, the Prince continued to send his emissaries in every direction. Diedrich Sonoy, his most trustworthy agent, who had been chief of the legation to the Northern Courts, was now actively canvassing the governments and peoples of, Germany with the same object. Several remarkable papers from the hand of Orange were used upon this service. A letter, drawn up and signed by his own hand, recited; in brief and striking language, the history of his campaign in 1568, and of his subsequent efforts in the sacred cause. It was now necessary, he said, that others besides himself should partake of his sacrifices. This he stated plainly and eloquently. The document was in truth a letter asking arms for liberty. "For although all things," said the Prince, "are in the hand of God, and although he has created all things out of nought, yet hath he granted to different men different means, whereby, as with various instruments, he accomplishes his, almighty purposes. Thereto hath he endowed some with strength

Page 592

of body, others with worldly wealth, others with still different gifts, all of which are to be used by their possessors to His honor and glory, if they wish not to incur the curse of the unworthy steward, who buried his talent in the earth. . . . . Now ye may easily see," he continued, "that the Prince cannot carry out this great work alone, having lost land, people, and goods, and having already employed in the cause all which had remained to him, besides incurring heavy obligations in addition."

Similar instructions were given to other agents, and a paper called the Harangue, drawn up according to his suggestions, was also extensively circulated. This document is important to all who are interested in his history and character. He had not before issued a missive so stamped with the warm, religious impress of the reforming party. Sadly, but without despondency, the Harangue recalled the misfortunes of the past; and depicted the gloom of the present. Earnestly, but not fanatically, it stimulated hope and solicited aid for the future. "Although the appeals made to the Prince," so ran a part of the document, "be of diverse natures, and various in their recommendations, yet do they all tend to the advancement of God's glory, and to the liberation of the fatherland. This it is which enables him and those who think with him to endure hunger; thirst, cold, heat, and all the misfortunes which Heaven may send. . . . . Our enemies spare neither their money nor their labor; will ye be colder and duller than your foes? Let, then, each church congregation set an example to the others. We read that King Saul, when he would liberate the men of Jabez from the hands of Nahad, the Ammonite, hewed a yoke of oxen in pieces, and sent them as tokens over all Israel, saying, 'Ye who will not follow Saul and Samuel, with them shall be dealt even as with these oxen. And the fear of the Lord came upon the people, they came forth, and the men of Jabez were delivered.' Ye have here the same warning, look to it, watch well ye that despise it, lest the wrath of God, which the men of Israel by their speedy obedience escaped, descend upon your heads. Ye may say that ye are banished men. 'Tis true: but thereby are ye not stripped of all faculty of rendering service; moreover, your assistance is asked for one who will restore ye to your homes. Ye may say that ye have been robbed of all your goods; yet many of you have still something remaining, and of that little ye should contribute, each his mite. Ye say that you have given much already. 'Tis true, but the enemy is again in the field; fierce for your subjugation, sustained by the largess of his supporters. Will ye be less courageous, less generous, than your foes."

Page 593

These urgent appeals did not remain fruitless. The strength of the Prince was slowly but steadily increasing. Meantime the abhorrence with which Alva was universally regarded had nearly reached to frenzy. In the beginning of the year 1572, Don Francis de Alava, Philip's ambassador in France, visited Brussels. He had already been enlightened as to the consequences of the Duke's course by the immense immigration of Netherland refugees to France, which he had witnessed with his own eyes. On his journey towards Brussels he had been met near Cambray by Noircarmes. Even that "cruel animal," as Hoogstraaten had called him, the butcher of Tournay and Valenciennes, had at last been roused to alarm, if not to pity, by the sufferings of the country. "The Duke will never disabuse his mind of this filthy tenth penny," said he to Alava. He sprang from his chair with great emotion as the ambassador alluded to the flight of merchants and artisans from the provinces. "Senor Don Francis," cried he, "there are ten thousand more who are on the point of leaving the country, if the Governor does not pause in his career. God grant that no disaster arise beyond human power to remedy."

The ambassador arrived in Brussels, and took up his lodgings in the palace. Here he found the Duke just recovering from a fit of the gout, in a state of mind sufficiently savage. He became much excited as Don Francis began to speak of the emigration, and he assured him that there was gross deception on the subject. The envoy replied that he could not be mistaken, for it was a matter which, so to speak, he had touched with his own fingers, and seen with his own eyes. The Duke, persisting that Don Francis had been abused and misinformed, turned the conversation to other topics. Next day the ambassador received visits from Berlaymont and his son, the Seigneur de Hierges. He was taken aside by each of them, separately. "Thank God, you have come hither," said they, in nearly the same words, "that you may fully comprehend the condition of the provinces, and without delay admonish his Majesty of the impending danger." All his visitors expressed the same sentiments. Don Frederic of Toledo furnished the only exception, assuring the envoy that his father's financial measures were opposed by Noircarmes and others, only because it deprived them of their occupation and their influence. This dutiful language, however, was to be expected in one of whom Secretary Albornoz had written, that he was the greatest comfort to his father, and the most divine genius ever known. It was unfortunately corroborated by no other inhabitant of the country.

Page 594

On the third day, Don Francis went to take his leave. The Duke begged him to inform his Majesty of the impatience with which he was expecting the arrival of his successor. He then informed his guest that they had already begun to collect the tenth penny in Brabant, the most obstinate of all the provinces. “What do you say to that, Don Francis?” he cried, with exultation. Alava replied that he thought, none the less, that the tax would encounter many obstacles, and begged him earnestly to reflect. He assured him, moreover, that he should, without reserve, express his opinions fully to the King. The Duke used the same language which Don Frederic had held, concerning the motives of those who opposed the tax. “It may be so,” said Don Francis, “but at any rate, all have agreed to sing to the same tune.” A little startled, the Duke rejoined, “Do you doubt that the cities will keep their promises? Depend upon it, I shall find the means to compel them.” “God grant it may be so,” said Alava, “but in my poor judgment you will have need of all your prudence and of all your authority.”

The ambassador did not wait till he could communicate with his sovereign by word of mouth. He forwarded to Spain an ample account of his observations and deductions. He painted to Philip in lively colors the hatred entertained by all men for the Duke. The whole nation, he assured his Majesty, united in one cry, “Let him begone, let him begone, let him begone!” As for the imposition of the tenth penny, that, in the opinion of Don Francis, was utterly impossible. He moreover warned his Majesty that Alva was busy in forming secret alliances with the Catholic princes of Europe, which would necessarily lead to defensive leagues among the Protestants.

While thus, during the earlier part of the year 1572, the Prince of Orange, discouraged by no defeats, was indefatigable in his exertions to maintain the cause of liberty, and while at the same time the most stanch supporters of arbitrary power were unanimous in denouncing to Philip the insane conduct of his Viceroy, the letters of Alva himself were naturally full of complaints and expostulations. It was in vain, he said, for him to look for a confidential councillor, now that matters which he had wished to be kept so profoundly secret that the very earth should not hear of them, had been proclaimed aloud above the tiles of every housetop. Nevertheless, he would be cut into little pieces but his Majesty should be obeyed, while he remained alive to enforce the royal commands. There were none who had been ever faithful but Berlaymont, he said, and even he had been neutral in the affair of the tax. He had rendered therein neither good nor bad offices, but, as his Majesty was aware, Berlaymont was entirely ignorant of business, and “knew nothing more than to be a good fellow.” That being the case, he recommended Hierges, son of the “good fellow,” as a proper person to be governor of Friesland.

Page 595

The deputations appointed by the different provinces to confer personally with the King received a reprimand upon their arrival, for having dared to come to Spain without permission. Farther punishment, however, than this rebuke was not inflicted. They were assured that the King was highly displeased with their venturing to bring remonstrances against the tax, but they were comforted with the assurance that his Majesty would take the subject of their petition into consideration. Thus, the expectations of Alva were disappointed, for the tenth penny was not formally confirmed; and the hopes of the provinces frustrated, because it was not distinctly disavowed.

Matters had reached another crisis in the provinces. “Had we money now,” wrote the Prince of Orange, “we should, with the help of God, hope to effect something. This is a time when, with even small sums, more can be effected than at other seasons with ampler funds.” The citizens were in open revolt against the tax. In order that the tenth penny should not be levied upon every sale of goods, the natural but desperate remedy was adopted—no goods were sold at all.

Not only the wholesale commerce oh the provinces was suspended, but the minute and indispensable traffic of daily life was entirely at a stand. The shops were all shut. “The brewers,” says a contemporary, “refused to brew, the bakers to bake, the tapsters to tap.” Multitudes, thrown entirely out of employment, and wholly dependent upon charity, swarmed in every city. The soldiery, furious for their pay, which Alva had for many months neglected to furnish, grew daily more insolent; the citizens, maddened by outrage and hardened by despair, became more and more obstinate in their resistance; while the Duke, rendered inflexible by opposition and insane by wrath, regarded the ruin which he had caused with a malignant spirit which had long ceased to be human. “The disease is gnawing at our vitals,” wrote Viglius; “everybody is suffering for the want of the necessaries of life. Multitudes are in extreme and hopeless poverty. My interest in the welfare of the commonwealth,” he continued, “induces me to send these accounts to Spain. For myself, I fear nothing. Broken by sickness and acute physical suffering, I should leave life without regret.”

The aspect of the capital was that of a city stricken with the plague. Articles of the most absolute necessity could not be obtained. It was impossible to buy bread, or meat, or beer. The tyrant, beside himself with rage at being thus braved in his very lair, privately sent for Master Carl, the executioner. In order to exhibit an unexpected and salutary example, he had determined to hang eighteen of the leading tradesmen of the city in the doors of their own shops, with the least possible delay and without the slightest form of trial.

Page 596

Master Carl was ordered, on the very night of his interview with the Duke, to prepare eighteen strong cords, and eighteen ladders twelve feet in length. By this simple arrangement, Alva was disposed to make manifest on the morrow, to the burghers of Brussels, that justice was thenceforth to be carried to every man's door. He supposed that the spectacle of a dozen and a half of butchers and bakers suspended in front of the shops which they had refused to open, would give a more effective stimulus to trade than any to be expected from argument or proclamation. The hangman was making ready his cords and ladders; Don Frederic of Toledo was closeted with President Viglius, who, somewhat against his will, was aroused at midnight to draw the warrants for these impromptu executions; Alva was waiting with grim impatience for the dawn upon which the show was to be exhibited, when an unforeseen event suddenly arrested the homely tragedy. In the night arrived the intelligence that the town of Brill had been captured. The Duke, feeling the full gravity of the situation, postponed the chastisement which he had thus secretly planned to a more convenient season, in order without an instant's hesitation to avert the consequences of this new movement on the part of the rebels. The seizure of Brill was the Deus ex machina which unexpectedly solved both the inextricable knot of the situation and the hangman's noose.

Allusion has more than once been made to those formidable partisans of the patriot cause, the marine outlaws. Cheated of half their birthright by nature, and now driven forth from their narrow isthmus by tyranny, the exiled Hollanders took to the ocean. Its boundless fields, long arable to their industry, became fatally fruitful now that oppression was transforming a peaceful seafaring people into a nation of corsairs. Driven to outlawry and poverty, no doubt many Netherlanders plunged into crime. The patriot party had long sine laid aside the respectful deportment which had provoked the sarcasms of the loyalists. The beggars of the sea asked their alms through the mouths of their cannon. Unfortunately, they but too often made their demands upon both friend and foe. Every ruined merchant, every banished lord, every reckless mariner, who was willing to lay the commercial world under contribution to repair his damaged fortunes, could, without much difficulty, be supplied with a vessel and crew at some northern port, under color of cruising against the Viceroy's government. Nor was the ostensible motive simply a pretext. To make war upon Alva was the leading object of all these freebooters, and they were usually furnished by the Prince of Orange, in his capacity of sovereign, with letters of marque for that purpose. The Prince, indeed, did his utmost to control and direct an evil which had inevitably grown out of the horrors of the time. His Admiral, William de la Marck, was however, incapable of comprehending the lofty purposes of his

Page 597

superior. A wild, sanguinary, licentious noble, wearing his hair and beard unshorn, according to ancient Batavian custom, until the death of his relative, Egmont, should have been expiated, a worthy descendant of the Wild Boar of Ardennes, this hirsute and savage corsair seemed an embodiment of vengeance. He had sworn to wreak upon Alva and upon popery the deep revenge owed to them by the Netherland nobility, and in the cruelties afterwards practised by him upon monks and priests, the Blood Council learned that their example had made at least one ripe scholar among the rebels. He was lying, at this epoch, with his fleet on the southern coast of England, from which advantageous position he was now to be ejected in a summary manner.

The negotiations between the Duke of Alva and Queen Elizabeth had already assumed an amicable tone, and were fast ripening to an adjustment. It lay by no means in that sovereign's disposition to involve herself at this juncture in a war with Philip, and it was urged upon her government by Alva's commissioners, that the continued countenance afforded by the English people to the Netherland cruisers must inevitably lead to that result. In the latter days of March, therefore, a sentence of virtual excommunication was pronounced against De la Marck and his rovers. A peremptory order of Elizabeth forbade any of her subjects to supply them with meat, bread, or beer. The command being strictly complied with, their farther stay was rendered impossible. Twenty-four vessels accordingly, of various sizes, commanded by De la Marck, Treslong, Adam van Harem, Brand, and Other distinguished seamen, set sail from Dover in the very last days of March. Being almost in a state of starvation, these adventurers were naturally anxious to supply themselves with food. They determined to make a sudden foray upon the coasts of North Holland, and accordingly steered for Enkbuizen, both because it was a rich sea-port and because it contained many secret partisans of the Prince. On Palm Sunday they captured two Spanish merchantmen. Soon afterwards, however, the wind becoming contrary, they were unable to double the Helder or the Texel, and on Tuesday, the 1st of April, having abandoned their original intention, they dropped down towards Zealand, and entered the broad mouth of the river Meuse. Between the town of Brill, upon the southern lip of this estuary, and Naaslandsluis, about half a league distant, upon the opposite aide, the squadron suddenly appeared at about two o'clock of an April afternoon, to the great astonishment of the inhabitants of both places. It seemed too large a fleet to be a mere collection of trading vessels, nor did they appear to be Spanish ships. Peter Koppelstok, a sagacious ferryman, informed the passengers whom he happened to be conveying across the river, that the strangers were evidently the water beggars. The dreaded name filled his hearers with consternation, and they became eager to escape from so perilous a vicinity. Having duly landed his customers, however, who hastened to spread the news of the impending invasion, and to prepare for defence or flight, the stout ferryman, who was secretly favorable to the cause of liberty, rowed boldly out to inquire the destination and purposes of the fleet.

Page 598

The vessel which he first hailed was that commanded by William de Blois, Seigneur of Treslong. This adventurous noble, whose brother had been executed by the Duke of Alva in 1568, had himself fought by the side of Count Louis at Jemmingen, and although covered with wounds, had been one of the few who escaped alive from that horrible carnage. During the intervening period he had become one of the most famous rebels on the ocean, and he had always been well known in Brill, where his father had been governor for the King. He at once recognized Koppelstok, and hastened with him on board the Admiral's ship, assuring De la Marck that the ferryman was exactly the man for their purpose. It was absolutely necessary that a landing should be effected, for the people were without the necessaries of life. Captain Martin Brand had visited the ship of Adam Van Haren, as soon as they had dropped anchor in the Meuse, begging for food. "I gave him a cheese," said Adam, afterwards relating the occurrence, "and assured him that it was the last article of food to be found in the ship." The other vessels were equally destitute. Under the circumstances, it was necessary to attempt a landing. Treslong, therefore, who was really the hero of this memorable adventure, persuaded De la Marck to send a message to the city of Brill, demanding its surrender. This was a bold summons to be made by a handful of men, three or four hundred at most, who were both metaphorically and literally beggars. The city of Brill was not populous, but it was well walled and fortified. It was moreover a most commodious port. Treslong gave his signet ring to the fisherman, Koppelstok, and ordered him, thus accredited as an envoy, to carry their summons to the magistracy. Koppelstok, nothing loath, instantly rowed ashore, pushed through the crowd of inhabitants, who overwhelmed him with questions, and made his appearance in the town-house before the assembled magistrates. He informed them that he had been sent by the Admiral of the fleet and by Treslong, who was well known to them, to demand that two commissioners should be sent out on the part of the city to confer with the patriots. He was bidden, he said, to give assurance that the deputies would be courteously treated. The only object of those who had sent him was to free the land from the tenth penny, and to overthrow the tyranny of Alva and his Spaniards. Hereupon he was asked by the magistrates, how large a force De la Marck had under his command, To this question the ferryman carelessly replied, that there might be some five thousand in all. This enormous falsehood produced its effect upon the magistrates. There was now no longer any inclination to resist the invader; the only question discussed being whether to treat with them or to fly. On the whole, it was decided to do both. With some difficulty, two deputies were found sufficiently valiant to go forth to negotiate with the beggars, while in their absence most of the leading burghers

Page 599

and functionaries made their preparations for flight. The envoys were assured by De la Marck and Treslong that no injury was intended to the citizens or to private property, but that the overthrow of Alva's government was to be instantly accomplished. Two hours were given to the magistrates in which to decide whether or not they would surrender the town and accept the authority of De la Marck as Admiral of the Prince of Orange. They employed the two hours thus granted in making an ignominious escape. Their example was followed by most of the townspeople. When the invaders, at the expiration of the specified term, appeared under the walls of the city, they found a few inhabitants of the lower class gazing at them from above, but received no official communication from any source.

The whole rebel force was now divided into two parties, one of which under Treslong made an attack upon the southern gate, while the other commanded by the Admiral advanced upon the northern. Treslong after a short struggle succeeded in forcing his entrance, and arrested, in doing so, the governor of the city, just taking his departure. De la Marck and his men made a bonfire at the northern gate, and then battered down the half-burned portal with the end of an old mast. Thus rudely and rapidly did the Netherland patriots conduct their first successful siege. The two parties, not more perhaps than two hundred and fifty men in all, met before sunset in the centre of the city, and the foundation of the Dutch Republic was laid. The weary spirit of freedom, so long a fugitive over earth and sea, had at last found a resting-place, which rude and even ribald hands had prepared.

The panic created by the first appearance of the fleet had been so extensive that hardly fifty citizens had remained in the town. The rest had all escaped, with as much property as they could carry away. The Admiral, in the name, of the Prince of Orange, as lawful stadholder of Philip, took formal possession of an almost deserted city. No indignity was offered to the inhabitants of either sex, but as soon, as the conquerors were fairly established in the best houses of the place, the inclination to plunder the churches could no longer be restrained. The altars and images were all destroyed, the rich furniture and gorgeous vestments appropriated to private use. Adam van Hare appeared on his vessel's deck attired in a magnificent high mass chasuble. Treslong thenceforth used no drinking cups in his cabin save the golden chalices of the sacrament. Unfortunately, their hatred to popery was not confined to such demonstrations. Thirteen unfortunate monks and priests, who had been unable to effect their escape, were arrested and thrown into prison, from whence they were taken a few days later, by order of the ferocious Admiral, and executed under circumstances of great barbarity.

Page 600

The news of this important exploit spread with great rapidity. Alva, surprised at the very moment of venting his rage on the butchers and grocers of Brussels, deferred this savage design in order to deal with the new difficulty. He had certainly not expected such a result from the ready compliance of queen Elizabeth with his request. His rage was excessive; the triumph of the people, by whom he was cordially detested, proportionably great. The punsters of Brussels were sure not to let such an opportunity escape them, for the name of the captured town was susceptible of a quibble, and the event had taken place upon All Fools' Day.

> "On April's Fool's Day,
> Duke Alva's spectacles were stolen away,"

became a popular couplet. The word spectacles, in Flemish, as well as the name of the suddenly surprised city, being Brill, this allusion to the Duke's loss and implied purblindness was not destitute of ingenuity. A caricature, too, was extensively circulated, representing De la Marck stealing the Duke's spectacles from his nose, while the Governor was supposed to be uttering his habitual expression whenever any intelligence of importance was brought to him: 'No es nada, no es nada—'Tis nothing, 'tis nothing.

The Duke, however, lost not an instant in attempting to repair the disaster. Count Bossu, who had acted as stadholder of Holland and Zealand, under Alva's authority, since the Prince of Orange had resigned that office, was ordered at once to recover the conquered sea-port, if possible.

Hastily gathering a force of some ten companies from the garrison of Utrecht, some of which very troops had recently and unluckily for government, been removed from Brill to that city, the Count crossed the Sluis to the island of Voorn upon Easter day, and sent a summons to the rebel force to surrender Brill. The patriots being very few in number, were at first afraid to venture outside the gates to attack the much superior force of their invaders. A carpenter, however, who belonged to the city, but had long been a partisan of Orange, dashed into the water with his axe in his hand, and swimming to the Niewland sluice, hacked it open with a few vigorous strokes. The sea poured in at once, making the approach to the city upon the north side impossible: Bossu then led his Spaniards along the Niewland dyke to the southern gate, where they were received with a warm discharge of artillery, which completely staggered them. Meantime Treslong and Robol had, in the most daring manner, rowed out to the ships which had brought the enemy to the island, cut some adrift, and set others on fire.

Page 601

The Spaniards at the southern gate caught sight of their blazing vessels, saw the sea rapidly rising over the dyke, became panic-struck at being thus enclosed between fire and water, and dashed off in precipitate retreat along the slippery causeway and through the slimy and turbid waters, which were fast threatening to overwhelm them. Many were drowned or smothered in their flight, but the greater portion of the force effected their escape in the vessels which still remained within reach. This danger averted, Admiral de la Marck summoned all the inhabitants, a large number of whom had returned to the town after the capture had been fairly established, and required them, as well as all the population of the island, to take an oath of allegiance to the Prince of Orange as stadholder for his Majesty.

The Prince had not been extremely satisfied with the enterprise of De la Marck. He thought-it premature, and doubted whether it would be practicable to hold the place, as he had not yet completed his arrangements in Germany, nor assembled the force with which he intended again to take the field. More than all, perhaps, he had little confidence in the character of his Admiral. Orange was right in his estimate of De la Marck. It had not been that rover's design either to take or to hold the place; and after the descent had been made, the ships victualled, the churches plundered, the booty secured, and a few monks murdered, he had given orders for the burning of the town, and for the departure of the fleet. The urgent solicitations of Treslong, however, prevailed, with some difficulty, over De la Marck' original intentions. It is to that bold and intelligent noble, therefore, more than to any other individual, that the merit of laying this corner-stone of the Batavian commonwealth belongs. The enterprise itself was an accident, but the quick eye of Treslong saw the possibility of a permanent conquest, where his superior dreamed of nothing beyond a piratical foray.

Meantime Bossu, baffled in his attempt upon Brill, took his way towards Rotterdam. It was important that he should at least secure such other cities as the recent success of the rebels might cause to waver in their allegiance. He found the gates of Rotterdam closed. The authorities refused to comply with his demand to admit a garrison for the King. Professing perfect loyalty, the inhabitants very naturally refused to admit a band of sanguinary Spaniards to enforce their obedience. Compelled to parley, Bossu resorted to a perfidious stratagem. He requested permission for his troops to pass through the city without halting. This was granted by the magistrates, on condition that only a corporal's command should be admitted at a time. To these terms the Count affixed his hand and seal. With the admission, however, of the first detachment, a violent onset was made upon the gate by the whole Spanish force. The townspeople, not suspecting treachery, were not prepared to make effective resistance.

Page 602

A stout smith, confronting the invaders at the gate, almost singly, with his sledge-hammer, was stabbed to the heart by Bossu with his own hand. The soldiers having thus gained admittance, rushed through the streets, putting every man to death who offered the slightest resistance. Within a few minutes four hundred citizens were murdered. The fate of the women, abandoned now to the outrage of a brutal soldiery, was worse than death. The capture of Rotterdam is infamous for the same crimes which blacken the record of every Spanish triumph in the Netherlands.

The important town of Flushing, on the Isle of Walcheren, was first to vibrate with the patriotic impulse given by the success at Brill. The Seigneur de Herpt, a warm partisan of Orange, excited the burghers assembled in the market-place to drive the small remnant of the Spanish garrison from the city. A little later upon the same day a considerable reinforcement arrived before the walls. The Duke had determined, although too late, to complete the fortress which had been commenced long before to control the possession of this important position at the mouth of the western Scheld. The troops who were to resume this too long intermitted work arrived just in time to witness the expulsion of their comrades. De Herpt easily persuaded the burghers that the die was cast, and that their only hope lay in a resolute resistance. The people warmly acquiesced, while a half-drunken, half-wined fellow in the crowd valiantly proposed, in consideration of a pot of beer, to ascend the ramparts and to discharge a couple of pieces of artillery at the Spanish ships. The offer was accepted, and the vagabond merrily mounting the height, discharged the guns. Strange to relate, the shot thus fired by a lunatic's hand put the invading ships to flight. A sudden panic seized the Spaniards, the whole fleet stood away at once in the direction of Middelburg, and were soon out of sight.

The next day, however, Antony of Bourgoyne, governor under Alva for the Island of Walcheren, made his appearance in Flushing. Having a high opinion of his own oratorical powers, he came with the intention of winning back with his rhetoric a city which the Spaniards had thus far been unable to recover with their cannon. The great bell was rung, the whole population assembled in the marketplace, and Antony, from the steps of the town-house, delivered a long oration, assuring the burghers, among other asseverations, that the King, who was the best natured prince in all Christendom, would forget and forgive their offences if they returned honestly to their duties.

Page 603

The effect of the Governor's eloquence was much diminished, however, by the interlocutory remarks, of De Herpt and a group of his adherents. They reminded the people of the King's good nature, of his readiness to forget and to forgive, as exemplified by the fate of Horn and Egmont, of Berghen and Montigny, and by the daily and almost hourly decrees of the Blood Council. Each well-rounded period of the Governor was greeted with ironical cheers. The oration was unsuccessful. "Oh, citizens, citizens!" cried at last the discomfited Antony, "ye know not what ye do. Your blood be upon your own heads; the responsibility be upon your own hearts for the fires which are to consume your cities and the desolation which is to sweep your land!" The orator at this impressive point was interrupted, and most unceremoniously hustled out of the city. The government remained in the hands of the patriots.

The party, however, was not so strong in soldiers as in spirit. No sooner, therefore, had they established their rebellion to Alva as an incontrovertible fact, than they sent off emissaries to the Prince of Orange, and to Admiral De la Marek at Brill. Finding that the inhabitants of Flushing were willing to provide arms and ammunition, De la Marck readily consented to send a small number of men, bold and experienced in partisan warfare, of whom he had now collected a larger number than he could well arm or maintain in his present position.

The detachment, two hundred in number, in three small vessels, set sail accordingly from Brill for Flushing; and a wild crew they were, of reckless adventurers under command of the bold Treslong. The expedition seemed a fierce but whimsical masquerade. Every man in the little fleet was attired in the gorgeous vestments of the plundered churches, in gold-embroidered cassocks, glittering mass-garments, or the more sombre cowls, and robes of Capuchin friars. So sped the early standard bearers of that ferocious liberty which had sprung from the fires in which all else for which men cherish their fatherland had been consumed. So swept that resolute but fantastic band along the placid estuaries of Zealand, waking the stagnant waters with their wild beggar songs and cries of vengeance.

That vengeance found soon a distinguished object. Pacheco, the chief engineer of Alva, who had accompanied the Duke in his march from Italy, who had since earned a world-wide reputation as the architect of the Antwerp citadel, had been just despatched in haste to Flushing to complete the fortress whose construction had been so long delayed. Too late for his work, too soon for his safety, the ill-fated engineer had arrived almost at the same moment with Treslong and his crew. He had stepped on shore, entirely ignorant of all which had transpired, expecting to be treated with the respect due to the chief commandant of the place, and to an officer high in the confidence of the Governor-General. He found himself surrounded by an indignant and threatening

Page 604

mob. The unfortunate Italian understood not a word of the opprobrious language addressed to him, but he easily comprehended that the authority of the Duke was overthrown. Observing De Ryk, a distinguished partisan officer and privateersman of Amsterdam, whose reputation for bravery and generosity was known, to him, he approached him, and drawing a seal ring from his finger, kissed it, and handed it to the rebel chieftain. By this dumbshow he gave him to understand that he relied upon his honor for the treatment due to a gentleman. De Ryk understood the appeal, and would willingly have assured him, at least, a soldier's death, but he was powerless to do so. He arrested him, that he might be protected from the fury of the rabble, but Treslong, who now commanded in Flushing, was especially incensed against the founder of the Antwerp citadel, and felt a ferocious desire to avenge his brother's murder upon the body of his destroyer's favourite. Pacheco was condemned to be hanged upon the very day of his arrival. Having been brought forth from his prison, he begged hard but not abjectly for his life. He offered a heavy ransom, but his enemies were greedy for blood, not for money. It was, however, difficult to find an executioner. The city hangman was absent, and the prejudice of the country and the age against the vile profession had assuredly not been diminished during the five horrible years of Alva's administration. Even a condemned murderer, who lay in the town-gaol, refused to accept his life in recompence for performing the office. It should never be said, he observed, that his mother had given birth to a hangman. When told, however, that the intended victim was a Spanish officer, the malefactor consented to the task with alacrity, on condition that he might afterwards kill any man who taunted him with the deed.

Arrived at the foot of the gallows, Pacheco complained bitterly of the disgraceful death designed for him. He protested loudly that he came of a house as noble as that of Egmont or Horn, and was entitled to as honorable an execution as theirs had been. "The sword! the sword!" he frantically exclaimed, as he struggled with those who guarded him. His language was not understood, but the names of Egmont and Horn inflamed still more highly the rage of the rabble, while his cry for the sword was falsely interpreted by a rude fellow who had happened to possess himself of Pacheco's rapier, at his capture, and who now paraded himself with it at the gallows' foot. "Never fear for your sword, Seilor," cried this ruffian; "your sword is safe enough, and in good hands. Up the ladder with you, Senor; you have no further use for your sword."

Page 605

Pacheco, thus outraged, submitted to his fate. He mounted the ladder with a steady step, and was hanged between two other Spanish officers. So perished miserably a brave soldier, and one of the most distinguished engineers of his time; a man whose character and accomplishments had certainly merited for him a better fate. But while we stigmatize as it deserves the atrocious conduct of a few Netherland partisans, we should remember who first unchained the demon of international hatred in this unhappy land, nor should it ever be forgotten that the great leader of the revolt, by word, proclamation, example, by entreaties, threats, and condign punishment, constantly rebuked, and to a certain extent, restrained the sanguinary spirit by which some of his followers disgraced the noble cause which they had espoused.

Treslong did not long remain in command at Flushing. An officer, high in the confidence of the Prince, Jerome van 't Zeraerts, now arrived at Flushing, with a commission to be Lieutenant-Governor over the whole isle of Walcheren. He was attended by a small band of French infantry, while at nearly the same time the garrison was further strengthened by the arrival of a large number of volunteers from England.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Beggars of the sea, as these privateersmen designated themselves
Hair and beard unshorn, according to ancient Batavian custom
Only healthy existence of the French was in a state of war

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 19.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By *John Lothrop Motley* 1855 1572 [*chapter vii*.]

Municipal revolution throughout Holland and Zealand—Characteristics of the movement in various places—Sonoy commissioned by Orange as governor of North Holland—-Theory of the provisional government— Instructions of the Prince to his officers—Oath prescribed—Clause of toleration—Surprise of Mons by Count Louis—Exertions of Antony Oliver—Details of the capture—Assembly of the citizens—Speeches of Genlis and of Count Louis—Effect of the various movements upon Alva—Don Frederic ordered to invest Mons—The Duke's impatience to retire—Arrival of Medina Coeli—His narrow escape—Capture of the Lisbon fleet—Affectation of cordiality between Alva and Medina — Concessions by King and Viceroy on the subject of the tenth penny— Estates of Holland assembled, by summons of Orange, at Dort—Appeals from the Prince to this congress for funds to pay his newly levied army—Theory of the provisional States' assembly—Source and nature of its authority—Speech of St. Aldegonde—Liberality of the estates and the provinces—Pledges exchanged between the Prince's

representative and the Congress—Commission to De la Marck ratified —Virtual dictatorship of Orange—Limitation of his power by his

Page 606

own act—Count Louis at Mons—Reinforcements led from France by Genlis—Rashness of that officer—His total defeat—Orange again in the field—Rocrmond taken—Excesses of the patriot army—Proclamation of Orange, commanding respect to all personal and religious rights—His reply to the Emperor's summons—His progress in the Netherlands— Hopes entertained from France—Reinforcements under Coligny promised to Orange by Charles *ix*.—The Massacre of St. Bartholomew—The event characterized—Effect in England, in Rome, and in other parts of Europe—Excessive hilarity of Philip—Extravagant encomium bestowed by him upon Charles *ix*.—Order sent by Philip to put all French prisoners in the Netherlands to Death—Secret correspondence of Charles *ix*. with his envoy in the Netherlands—Exultation of the Spaniards before Mons—Alva urged by the French envoy, according to his master's commands, to put all the Frenchmen in Mons, and those already captured, to death—-Effect of the massacre upon the Prince of Orange—Alva and Medina in the camp before Mons—Hopelessness of the Prince's scheme to obtain battle from Alva—Romero's encamisada —Narrow escape of the prince—Mutiny and dissolution of his army— His return to Holland—His steadfastness—Desperate position of Count Louis in Mons—-Sentiments of Alva—Capitulation of Mons— Courteous reception of Count Louis by the Spanish generals— Hypocrisy of these demonstrations—Nature of the Mons capitulation— Horrible violation of its terms—Noircarmes at Mons—Establishment of a Blood Council in the city—Wholesale executions—Cruelty and cupidity of Noircarmes—Late discovery of the archives of these crimes—Return of the revolted cities of Brabant and Flanders to obedience—Sack of Mechlin by the Spaniards—Details of that event.

The example thus set by Brill and Flushing was rapidly followed. The first half of the year 1572 was distinguished by a series of triumphs rendered still more remarkable by the reverses which followed at its close. Of a sudden, almost as it were by accident, a small but important sea-port, the object for which the Prince had so long been hoping, was secured. Instantly afterward, half the island of Walcheren renounced the yoke of Alva, Next, Enkbuizen, the key to the Zuyder Zee, the principal arsenal, and one of the first commercial cities in the Netherlands, rose against the Spanish Admiral, and hung out the banner of Orange on its ramparts. The revolution effected here was purely the work of the people—of the mariners and burghers of the city. Moreover, the magistracy was set aside and the government of Alva repudiated without shedding one drop of blood, without a single wrong to person or property. By the same spontaneous movement, nearly all the important cities of Holland and Zealand raised the standard of him in whom they recognized their deliverer. The revolution was accomplished under nearly similar circumstances everywhere. With one fierce bound of enthusiasm the nation shook off its chain. Oudewater, Dort, Harlem, Leyden, Gorcum, Loewenstein, Gouda, Medenblik, Horn, Alkmaar, Edam, Monnikendam, Purmerende, as well as Flushing, Veer, and Enkbuizen, all ranged themselves under the government of Orange, as lawful stadholder for the King.

Page 607

Nor was it in Holland and Zealand alone that the beacon fires of freedom were lighted. City after city in Gelderland, Overyssel, and the See of Utrecht; all the important towns of Friesland, some sooner, some later, some without a struggle, some after a short siege, some with resistance by the functionaries of government, some by amicable compromise, accepted the garrisons of the Prince, and formally recognized his authority. Out of the chaos which a long and preternatural tyranny had produced, the first struggling elements of a new and a better world began to appear. It were superfluous to narrate the details which marked the sudden restoration of liberty in these various groups of cities. Traits of generosity marked the change of government in some, circumstances of ferocity, disfigured the revolution in others. The island of Walcheren, equally divided as it was between the two parties, was the scene of much truculent and diabolical warfare. It is difficult to say whether the mutual hatred of race or the animosity of religious difference proved the deadlier venom. The combats were perpetual and sanguinary, the prisoners on both sides instantly executed. On more than one occasion; men were seen assisting to hang with their own hands and in cold blood their own brothers, who had been taken prisoners in the enemy's ranks. When the captives were too many to be hanged, they were tied back to back, two and two, and thus hurled into the sea. The islanders found a fierce pleasure in these acts of cruelty. A Spaniard had ceased to be human in their eyes. On one occasion, a surgeon at Veer cut the heart from a Spanish prisoner, nailed it on a vessel's prow; and invited the townsmen to come and fasten their teeth in it, which many did with savage satisfaction.

In other parts of the country the revolution was, on the whole, accomplished with comparative calmness. Even traits of generosity were not uncommon. The burgomaster of Gonda, long the supple slave of Alva and the Blood Council, fled for his life as the revolt broke forth in that city. He took refuge in the house of a certain widow, and begged for a place of concealment. The widow led him to a secret closet which served as a pantry. "Shall I be secure there?" asked the fugitive functionary. "O yes, sir Burgomaster," replied the widow, "'t was in that very place that my husband lay concealed when you, accompanied by the officers of justice, were searching the house, that you might bring him to the scaffold for his religion. Enter the pantry, your worship; I will be responsible for your safety." Thus faithfully did the humble widow of a hunted and murdered Calvinist protect the life of the magistrate who had brought desolation to her hearth.

Not all the conquests thus rapidly achieved in the cause of liberty were destined to endure, nor were any to be, retained without a struggle. The little northern cluster of republics which had now restored its honor to the ancient Batavian name was destined, however, for a long and vigorous life. From that bleak isthmus the light of freedom was to stream through many years upon struggling humanity in Europe; a guiding pharos across a stormy sea; and Harlem, Leyden, Alkmaar—names hallowed by deeds of heroism such as have not often illustrated human annals, still breathe as trumpet-tongued and perpetual a defiance to despotism as Marathon, Thermopylae, or Salamis.

Page 608

A new board of magistrates had been chosen in all the redeemed cities, by popular election. They were required to take an oath of fidelity to the King of Spain, and to the Prince of Orange as his stadholder; to promise resistance to the Duke of Alva, the tenth penny, and the inquisition; to support every man's freedom and the welfare of the country; to protect widows, orphans, and miserable persons, and to maintain justice and truth.

Diedrich Sonoy arrived on the 2nd June at Enkbuizen. He was provided by the Prince with a commission, appointing him Lieutenant-Governor of North Holland or Waterland. Thus, to combat the authority of Alva was set up the authority of the King. The stadholderate over Holland and Zealand, to which the Prince had been appointed in 1559, he now reassumed. Upon this fiction reposed the whole provisional polity of the revolted Netherlands. The government, as it gradually unfolded itself, from this epoch forward until the declaration of independence and the absolute renunciation of the Spanish sovereign power, will be sketched in a future chapter. The people at first claimed not an iota more of freedom than was secured by Philip's coronation oath. There was no pretence that Philip was not sovereign, but there was a pretence and a determination to worship God according to conscience, and to reclaim the ancient political "liberties" of the land. So long as Alva reigned, the Blood Council, the inquisition, and martial law, were the only codes or courts, and every charter slept. To recover this practical liberty and these historical rights, and to shake from their shoulders a most sanguinary government, was the purpose of William and of the people. No revolutionary standard was displayed.

The written instructions given by the Prince to his Lieutenant Sonoy were to "see that the Word of God was preached, without, however, suffering any hindrance to the Roman Church in the exercise of its religion; to restore fugitives and the banished for conscience sake, and to require of all magistrates and officers of guilds and brotherhoods an oath of fidelity." The Prince likewise prescribed the form of that oath, repeating therein, to his eternal honor, the same strict prohibition of intolerance. "Likewise," said the formula, "shall those of 'the religion' offer no let or hindrance to the Roman churches."

The Prince was still in Germany, engaged in raising troops and providing funds. He directed; however, the affairs of the insurgent provinces in their minutest details, by virtue of the dictatorship inevitably forced upon him both by circumstances and by the people. In the meantime; Louis of Nassau, the Bayard of the Netherlands, performed a most unexpected and brilliant exploit. He had been long in France, negotiating with the leaders of the Huguenots, and, more secretly, with the court. He was supposed by all the world to be still in that kingdom, when the startling intelligence arrived that he had surprised and captured the important

Page 609

city of *Mons*. This town, the capital of Hainault, situate in a fertile, undulating, and beautiful country, protected by lofty walls, a triple moat, and a strong citadel, was one of the most flourishing and elegant places in the Netherlands. It was, moreover, from its vicinity to the frontiers of France; a most important acquisition to the insurgent party. The capture was thus accomplished. A native of Mons, one Antony Oliver, a geographical painter, had insinuated himself into the confidence of Alva, for whom he had prepared at different times some remarkably well-executed maps of the country. Having occasion to visit France, he was employed by the Duke to keep a watch upon the movements of Louis of Nassau, and to make a report as to the progress of his intrigues with the court of France. The painter, however, was only a spy in disguise, being in reality devoted to the cause of freedom, and a correspondent of Orange and his family. His communications with Louis, in Paris, had therefore a far different result from the one anticipated by Alva. A large number of adherents within the city of Mons had already been secured, and a plan was now arranged between Count Louis, Genlis, De la Noue, and other distinguished Huguenot chiefs, to be carried out with the assistance of the brave and energetic artist.

On the 23rd of May, Oliver appeared at the gates of Mons, accompanied by three wagons, ostensibly containing merchandise, but in reality laden with arquebusses. These were secretly distributed among his confederates in the city. In the course of the day Count Louis arrived in the neighbourhood, accompanied by five hundred horsemen and a thousand foot soldiers. This force he stationed in close concealment within the thick forests between Maubeuge and *Mons*. Towards evening he sent twelve of the most trusty and daring of his followers, disguised as wine merchants, into the city. These individuals proceeded boldly to a public house, ordered their supper, and while conversing with the landlord, carelessly inquired at what hour next morning the city gates would be opened. They were informed that the usual hour was four in the morning, but that a trifling present to the porter would ensure admission, if they desired it, at an earlier hour. They explained their inquiries by a statement that they had some casks of wine which they wished to introduce into the city before sunrise. Having obtained all the information which they needed, they soon afterwards left the tavern. The next day they presented themselves very early at the gate, which the porter, on promise of a handsome “drink-penny,” agreed to unlock. No sooner were the bolts withdrawn, however, than he was struck dead, while about fifty dragoons rode through the gate. The Count and his followers now galloped over the city in the morning twilight, shouting “France! liberty! the town is ours!” “The Prince is coming!” “Down with the tenth penny; down with the murderous Alva!” So soon as a burgher showed his wondering face at the window, they shot at him with their carbines. They made as much noise, and conducted themselves as boldly as if they had been at least a thousand strong.

Page 610

Meantime, however, the streets remained empty; not one of their secret confederates showing himself. Fifty men could surprise, but were too few to keep possession of the city. The Count began to suspect a trap. As daylight approached the alarm spread; the position of the little band was critical. In his impetuosity, Louis had far outstripped his army, but they had been directed to follow hard upon his footsteps, and he was astonished that their arrival was so long delayed. The suspense becoming intolerable, he rode out of the city in quest of his adherents, and found them wandering in the woods, where they had completely lost their way. Ordering each horseman to take a foot soldier on the crupper behind him, he led them rapidly back to *Mons*. On the way they were encountered by La Noue, “with the iron arm,” and Genlis, who, meantime, had made an unsuccessful attack to recover Valenciennes, which within a few hours had been won and lost again. As they reached the gates of Mons, they found themselves within a hair’s breadth of being too late; their adherents had not come forth; the citizens had been aroused; the gates were all fast but one—and there the porter was quarrelling with a French soldier about an arquebuss. The drawbridge across the moat was at the moment rising; the last entrance was closing, when Guitoy de Chaumont, a French officer, mounted on a light Spanish barb, sprang upon the bridge as it rose. His weight caused it to sink again, the gate was forced, and Louis with all his men rode triumphantly into the town.

The citizens were forthwith assembled by sound of bell in the market-place. The clergy, the magistracy, and the general council were all present. Genlis made the first speech, in which he disclaimed all intention of making conquests in the interest of France. This pledge having been given, Louis of Nassau next addressed the assembly: “The magistrates,” said he, “have not understoood my intentions. I protest that I am no rebel to the King; I prove it by asking no new oaths from any man. Remain bound by your old oaths of allegiance; let the magistrates continue to exercise their functions—to administer justice. I imagine that no person will suspect a brother of the Prince of Orange capable of any design against the liberties of the country. As to the Catholic religion, I take it under my very particular protection. You will ask why I am in Mons at the head of an armed force: are any of you ignorant of Alva’s cruelties? The overthrow of this tyrant is as much the interest of the King as of the people, therefore there is nothing in my present conduct inconsistent with fidelity to his Majesty. Against Alva alone I have taken up arms; ’tis to protect you against his fury that I am here. It is to prevent the continuance of a general rebellion that I make war upon him. The only proposition which I have to make to you is this—I demand that you declare Alva de Toledo a traitor to the King, the executioner of the people, an enemy to the country, unworthy of the government, and hereby deprived of his authority.”

Page 611

The magistracy did not dare to accept so bold a proposition; the general council, composing the more popular branch of the municipal government, were comparatively inclined to favor Nassau, and many of its members voted for the downfall of the tyrant. Nevertheless the demands of Count Louis were rejected. His position thus became critical. The civic authorities refused to, pay for his troops, who were, moreover, too few, in number to resist the inevitable siege. The patriotism of the citizens was not to be repressed, however, by the authority, of the magistrates; many rich proprietors of the great cloth and silk manufactories, for which Mons was famous, raised, and armed companies at their own expense; many volunteer troops were also speedily organized and drilled, and the fortifications were put in order. No attempt was made to force the reformed religion upon the inhabitants, and even Catholics who were discovered in secret correspondence with the enemy were treated with such extreme gentleness by Nassau as to bring upon him severe reproaches from many of his own party.

A large collection of ecclesiastical plate, jewellery, money, and other valuables, which had been sent to the city for safe keeping from the churches and convents of the provinces, was seized, and thus, with little bloodshed and no violence; was the important city secured for the insurgents. Three days afterwards, two thousand infantry, chiefly French, arrived in the place. In the early part of the following month Louis was still further strengthened by the arrival of thirteen hundred foot and twelve hundred horsemen, under command of Count Montgomery, the celebrated officer, whose spear at the tournament had proved fatal to Henry the Second. Thus the Duke of Alva suddenly found himself exposed to a tempest of revolution. One thunderbolt after another seemed descending around him in breathless succession. Brill and Flushing had been already lost; Middelburg was so closely invested that its fall seemed imminent, and with it would go the whole island of Walcheren, the key to all the Netherlands. In one morning he had heard of the revolt of Enkbuizen and of the whole Waterland; two hours later came the news of the Valenciennes rebellion, and next day the astonishing capture of *Mons*. One disaster followed hard upon another. He could have sworn that the detested Louis of Nassau, who had dealt this last and most fatal stroke, was at that moment in Paris, safely watched by government emissaries; and now he had, as it were, suddenly started out of the earth, to deprive him of this important city, and to lay bare the whole frontier to the treacherous attacks of faithless France. He refused to believe the intelligence when it was first announced to him, and swore that he had certain information that Count Louis had been seen playing in the tennis-court at Paris, within so short a period as to make his presence in Hainault at that moment impossible. Forced, at last, to admit the truth of the disastrous news, he dashed his hat upon the ground in a fury, uttering imprecations upon the Queen Dowager of France, to whose perfidious intrigues he ascribed the success of the enterprise, and pledging himself to send her Spanish thistles, enough in return for the Florentine lilies which she had thus bestowed upon him.

Page 612

In the midst of the perplexities thus thickening around him, the Duke preserved his courage, if not his temper. Blinded, for a brief season, by the rapid attacks made upon him, he had been uncertain whither to direct his vengeance. This last blow in so vital a quarter determined him at once. He forthwith despatched Don Frederic to undertake the siege of Mons, and earnestly set about raising large reinforcements to his army. Don Frederic took possession, without much opposition, of the Bethlehem cloister in the immediate vicinity of the city, and with four thousand troops began the investment in due form.

Alva had, for a long time, been most impatient to retire from the provinces. Even he was capable of human emotions. Through the sevenfold panoply of his pride he had been pierced by the sharpness of a nation's curse. He was wearied with the unceasing execrations which assailed his ears. "The hatred which the people bear me," said he, in a letter to Philip, "because of the chastisement which it has been necessary for me to inflict, although with all the moderation in the world, make all my efforts vain. A successor will meet more sympathy and prove more useful." On the 10th June, the Duke of Medina Coeli; with a fleet of more than forty sail, arrived off Blankenburg, intending to enter the Scheld. Julian Romero, with two thousand Spaniards, was also on board the fleet. Nothing, of course, was known to the new comers of the altered condition of affairs in the Netherlands, nor of the unwelcome reception which they were like to meet in Flushing. A few of the lighter craft having been taken by the patriot cruisers, the alarm was spread through all the fleet. Medina Coeli, with a few transports, was enabled to effect his escape to Sluys, whence he hastened to Brussels in a much less ceremonious manner than he had originally contemplated. Twelve Biscayan ships stood out to sea, descried a large Lisbon fleet, by a singular coincidence, suddenly heaving in sight, changed their course again, and with a favoring breeze bore boldly up the Hond; passed Flushing in spite of a severe cannonade from the forts, and eventually made good their entrance into Rammekens, whence the soldiery, about one-half of whom had thus been saved, were transferred at a very critical moment to Middelburg.

The great Lisbon fleet followed in the wake of the Biscayans, with much inferior success. Totally ignorant of the revolution which had occurred in the Ise of Walclieren, it obeyed the summons of the rebel fort to come to anchor, and, with the exception of three or four, the vessels were all taken. It was the richest booty which the insurgents had yet acquired by sea or land. The fleet was laden with spices, money, jewellery, and the richest merchandize. Five hundred thousand crowns of gold were taken, and it was calculated that the plunder altogether would suffice to maintain the war for two years at least. One thousand Spanish soldiers, and a good amount of

Page 613

ammunition, were also captured. The unexpected condition of affairs made a pause natural and almost necessary, before the government could be decorously transferred. Medina Coeli with Spanish grandiloquence, avowed his willingness to serve as a soldier, under a general whom he so much venerated, while Alva ordered that, in all respects, the same outward marks of respect should be paid to his appointed successor as to himself. Beneath all this external ceremony, however, much mutual malice was concealed.

Meantime, the Duke, who was literally “without a single real,” was forced at last to smother his pride in the matter of the tenth penny. On the 24th June, he summoned the estates of Holland to assemble on the 15th of the ensuing month. In the missive issued for this purpose, he formally agreed to abolish the whole tax, on condition that the estates-general of the Netherlands would furnish him with a yearly supply of two millions of florins. Almost at the same moment the King had dismissed the deputies of the estates from Madrid, with the public assurance that the tax was to be suspended, and a private intimation that it was not abolished in terms, only in order to save the dignity of the Duke.

These healing measures came entirely too late. The estates of Holland met, indeed, on the appointed day of July; but they assembled not in obedience to Alva, but in consequence of a summons from William of Orange. They met, too, not at the Hague, but at Dort, to take formal measures for renouncing the authority of the Duke. The first congress of the Netherland commonwealth still professed loyalty to the Crown, but was determined to accept the policy of Orange without a question.

The Prince had again assembled an army in Germany, consisting of fifteen thousand foot and seven thousand horse, besides a number of Netherlanders, mostly Walloons, amounting to nearly three thousand more. Before taking the field, however, it was necessary that he should guarantee at least three months’ pay to his troops. This he could no longer do, except by giving bonds endorsed by certain cities of Holland as his securities. He had accordingly addressed letters in his own name to all the principal cities, fervently adjuring them to remember, at last, what was due to him, to the fatherland, and to their own character. “Let not a sum of gold,” said he in one of these letters, “be so dear to you, that for its sake you will sacrifice your lives, your wives, your children, and all your descendants, to the latest generations; that you will bring sin and shame upon yourselves, and destruction upon us who have so heartily striven to assist you. Think what scorn you will incur from foreign nations, what a crime you will commit against the. Lord God, what a bloody yoke ye will impose forever upon yourselves and your children, if you now seek for subterfuges; if you now prevent us from taking the field with the troops which we have enlisted. On the other hand, what inexpressible benefits you will confer on your country, if you now help us to rescue that fatherland from the power of Spanish vultures and wolves.”

Page 614

This and similar missives, circulated throughout the province of Holland, produced a deep impression. In accordance with his suggestions, the deputies from the nobility and from twelve cities of that province assembled on the 15th July, at Dort. Strictly speaking, the estates or government of Holland, the body which represented the whole people, consisted of the nobler and six great cities. On this occasion, however, Amsterdam being still in the power of the King, could send no deputies, while, on the other hand, all the small towns were invited to send up their representatives to the Congress. Eight accepted the proposal; the rest declined to appoint delegates, partly from motives of economy, partly from timidity.'

These estates were the legitimate representatives of the people, but they had no legislative powers. The people had never pretended to sovereignty, nor did they claim it now. The source from which the government of the Netherlands was supposed to proceed was still the divine mandate. Even now the estates silently conceded, as they had ever done, the supreme legislative and executive functions to the land's master. Upon Philip of Spain, as representative of Count Dirk the First of Holland, had descended, through many tortuous channels, the divine effluence originally supplied by Charles the Simple of France. That supernatural power was not contested, but it was now ingeniously turned against the sovereign. The King's authority was invoked against himself in the person of the Prince of Orange, to whom, thirteen years before, a portion of that divine right had been delegated. The estates of Holland met at Dort on the 15th July, as representatives of the people; but they were summoned by Orange, royally commissioned in 1559 as stadholder, and therefore the supreme legislative and executive officer of certain provinces. This was the theory of the provisional government. The Prince represented the royal authority, the nobles represented both themselves and the people of the open country, while the twelve cities represented the whole body of burghers. Together, they were supposed to embody all authority, both divine and human, which a congress could exercise. Thus the whole movement was directed against Alva and against Count Bossu, appointed stadholder by Alva in the place of Orange. Philip's name was destined to figure for a long time, at the head of documents by which monies were raised, troops levied, and taxes collected, all to be used in deadly war against himself.

The estates were convened on the 15th July, when Paul Buys, pensionary of Leyden, the tried and confidential friend of Orange, was elected Advocate of Holland. The convention was then adjourned till the 18th, when Saint Aldegonde made his appearance, with full powers to act provisionally in behalf of his Highness.

Page 615

The distinguished plenipotentiary delivered before the congress a long and very effective harangue. He recalled the sacrifices and efforts of the Prince during previous years. He adverted to the disastrous campaign of 1568, in which the Prince had appeared full of high hope, at the head of a gallant army, but had been obliged, after a short period, to retire, because not a city had opened its gates nor a Netherlander lifted his finger in the cause. Nevertheless, he had not lost courage nor closed his heart; and now that, through the blessing of God, the eyes of men had been opened, and so many cities had declared against the tyrant, the Prince had found himself exposed to a bitter struggle. Although his own fortunes had been ruined in the cause, he had been unable to resist the daily flood of petitions which called upon him to come forward once more. He had again importuned his relations and powerful friends; he had at last set on foot a new and well-appointed army. The day of payment had arrived. Over his own head impended perpetual shame, over the fatherland perpetual woe, if the congress should now refuse the necessary supplies. "Arouse ye, then," cried the orator, with fervor, "awaken your own zeal and that of your sister cities. Seize Opportunity by the locks, who never appeared fairer than she does to-day."

The impassioned eloquence of St. Aldegonde produced a profound impression. The men who had obstinately refused the demands of Alva, now unanimously resolved to pour forth their gold and their blood at the call of Orange. "Truly," wrote the Duke, a little later, "it almost drives me mad to see the difficulty with which your Majesty's supplies are furnished, and the liberality with which the people place their lives and fortunes at the disposal of this rebel." It seemed strange to the loyal governor that men should support their liberator with greater alacrity than that with which they served their destroyer! It was resolved that the requisite amount should be at once raised, partly from the regular imposts and current "requests," partly by loans from the rich, from the clergy, from the guilds and brotherhoods, partly from superfluous church ornaments and other costly luxuries. It was directed that subscriptions should be immediately opened throughout the land, that gold and silver plate, furniture, jewellery, and other expensive articles should be received by voluntary contributions, for which inventories and receipts should be given by the magistrates of each city, and that upon these money should be raised, either by loan or sale. An enthusiastic and liberal spirit prevailed. All seemed determined rather than pay the tenth to Alva to pay the whole to the Prince.

The estates, furthermore, by unanimous resolution, declared that they recognized the Prince as the King's lawful stadholder over Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Utrecht, and that they would use their influence with the other provinces to procure his appointment as Protector of all the Netherlands during the King's absence. His Highness was requested to appoint an Admiral, on whom, with certain deputies from the Water-cities, the conduct of the maritime war should devolve.

Page 616

The conduct of the military operations by land was to be directed by Dort, Leyden, and Enkbuizen, in conjunction with the Count de la Marck. A pledge was likewise exchanged between the estates and the pleni-potentiary, that neither party should enter into any treaty with the King, except by full consent and co-operation of the other. With regard to religion, it was firmly established, that the public exercises of divine worship should be permitted not only to the Reformed Church, but to the Roman Catholic—the clergy of both being protected from all molestation.

After these proceedings, Count de la Marck made his appearance before the assembly. His commission from Orange was read to the deputies, and by them ratified. The Prince, in that document, authorized “his dear cousin” to enlist troops, to accept the fealty of cities, to furnish them with garrisons, to re-establish all the local laws, municipal rights, and ancient privileges which had been suppressed. He was to maintain freedom of religion, under penalty of death to those who infringed it; he was to restore all confiscated property; he was, with advice of his council, to continue in office such city magistrates as were favorable, and to remove those adverse to the cause.

The Prince was, in reality, clothed with dictatorial and even regal powers. This authority had been forced upon him by the prayers of the people, but he manifested no eagerness as he partly accepted the onerous station. He was provisionally the depositary of the whole sovereignty of the northern provinces, but he cared much less for theories of government than for ways and means. It was his object to release the country from the tyrant who, five years long, had been burning and butchering the people. It was his determination to drive out the foreign soldiery. To do this, he must meet his enemy in the field. So little was he disposed to strengthen his own individual power, that he voluntarily imposed limits on himself, by an act, supplemental to the proceedings of the Congress of Dort. In this important ordinance made by the Prince of Orange, as a provisional form of government, he publicly announced “that he would do and ordain nothing except by the advice of the estates, by reason that they were best acquainted with the circumstances and the humours of the inhabitants.” He directed the estates to appoint receivers for all public taxes, and ordained that all military officers should make oath of fidelity to him, as stadholder, and to the estates of Holland, to be true and obedient, in order to liberate the land from the Albanian and Spanish tyranny, for the service of his royal Majesty as Count of Holland. The provisional constitution, thus made by a sovereign prince and actual dictator, was certainly as disinterested as it was sagacious.

Page 617

Meanwhile the war had opened vigorously in Hainault. Louis of Nassau had no sooner found himself in possession of Mons than he had despatched Genlis to France, for those reinforcements which had been promised by royal lips. On the other hand, Don Frederic held the city closely beleaguered; sharp combats before the walls were of almost daily occurrence, but it was obvious that Louis would be unable to maintain the position into which he had so chivalrously thrown himself unless he should soon receive important succor. The necessary reinforcements were soon upon the way. Genlis had made good speed with his levy, and it was soon announced that he was advancing into Hainault, with a force of Huguenots, whose numbers report magnified to ten thousand veterans. Louis despatched an earnest message to his confederate, to use extreme caution in his approach. Above all things, he urged him, before attempting to throw reinforcements into the city, to effect a junction with the Prince of Orange, who had already crossed the Rhine with his new army.

Genlis, full of overweening confidence, and desirous of acquiring singly the whole glory of relieving the city, disregarded this advice. His rashness proved his ruin, and the temporary prostration of the cause of freedom. Pushing rapidly forward across the French frontier, he arrived, towards the middle of July, within two leagues of *Mons*. The Spaniards were aware of his approach, and well prepared to frustrate his project. On the 19th, he found himself upon a circular plain of about a league's extent, surrounded with coppices and forests, and dotted with farm-houses and kitchen gardens. Here he paused to send out a reconnoitring party. The little detachment was, however, soon driven in, with the information that Don Frederic of Toledo, with ten thousand men, was coming instantly upon them. The Spanish force, in reality, numbered four thousand infantry, and fifteen hundred cavalry; but three thousand half-armed boors had been engaged by Don Frederic, to swell his apparent force. The demonstration produced its effect, and no sooner had the first panic of the intelligence been spread, than Noircarmes came charging upon them at the head of his cavalry. The infantry arrived directly afterwards, and the Huguenots were routed almost as soon as seen. It was a meeting rather than a battle. The slaughter of the French was very great, while but an insignificant number of the Spaniards fell. Chiappin Vitelli was the hero of the day. It was to his masterly arrangements before the combat, and to his animated exertions upon the field, that the victory was owing. Having been severely wounded in the thigh but a few days previously, he caused himself to be carried upon a litter in a recumbent position in front of his troops, and was everywhere seen, encouraging their exertions, and exposing himself, crippled as he was, to the whole brunt of the battle. To him the victory nearly proved fatal; to Don Frederic it brought increased renown. Vitelli's exertions, in his precarious condition, brought on severe inflammation, under which he nearly succumbed, while the son of Alva reaped extensive fame from the total overthrow of the veteran Huguenots, due rather to his lieutenant and to Julian Romero.

Page 618

The number of dead left by the French upon the plain amounted to at least twelve hundred, but a much larger number was butchered in detail by the peasantry, among whom they attempted to take refuge, and who had not yet forgotten the barbarities inflicted by their countrymen in the previous war. Many officers were taken prisoners, among whom was the Commander-in-chief, Genlis.

That unfortunate gentleman was destined to atone for his rashness and obstinacy with his life. He was carried to the castle of Antwerp, where, sixteen months afterwards, he was secretly strangled by command of Alva, who caused the report to be circulated that he had died a natural death. About one hundred foot soldiers succeeded in making their entrance into Mona, and this was all the succor which Count Louis was destined to receive from France, upon which country he had built such lofty and such reasonable hopes.

While this unfortunate event was occurring, the Prince had already put his army in motion. On the 7th of July he had crossed the Rhine at Duisburg, with fourteen thousand foot, seven thousand horse, enlisted in Germany, besides a force of three thousand Walloons. On the 23rd of July, he took the city of Roermond, after a sharp cannonade, at which place his troops already began to disgrace the honorable cause in which they were engaged, by imitating the cruelties and barbarities of their antagonists. The persons and property of the burghers were, with a very few exceptions, respected; but many priests and monks were put to death by the soldiery under circumstances of great barbarity. The Prince, incensed at such conduct, but being unable to exercise very stringent authority over troops whose wages he was not yet able to pay in full, issued a proclamation, denouncing such excesses, and commanding his followers, upon pain of death, to respect the rights of all individuals, whether Papist or Protestant, and to protect religious exercises both in Catholic and Reformed churches.

It was hardly to be expected that the troops enlisted by the Prince in the same great magazine of hireling soldiers, Germany, from whence the Duke also derived his annual supplies, would be likely to differ very much in their propensities from those enrolled under Spanish banners; yet there was a vast contrast between the characters of the two commanders. One leader inculcated the practice of robbery, rape, and murder, as a duty, and issued distinct orders to butcher every mother’s son in the cities which he captured; the other restrained every excess to, the utmost of his ability, protecting not only life and property, but even the ancient religion.

Page 619

The Emperor Maximilian had again issued his injunctions against the military operations of Orange. Bound to the monarch of Spain by so many family ties, being at once cousin, brother-in-law, and father-in-law of Philip, it was difficult for him to maintain the attitude which became him, as chief of that Empire to which the peace of Passau had assured religious freedom. It had, however, been sufficiently proved that remonstrances and intercessions addressed to Philip were but idle breath. It had therefore become an insult to require pacific conduct from the Prince on the ground of any past or future mediation. It was a still grosser mockery to call upon him to discontinue hostilities because the Netherlands were included in the Empire, and therefore protected by the treaties of Passau and Augsburg. Well did the Prince reply to his Imperial Majesty's summons in a temperate but cogent letter, in which he addressed to him from his camp, that all intercessions had proved fruitless, and that the only help for the Netherlands was the sword.

The Prince had been delayed for a month at Roermonde, because, as he expressed it; "he had not a single sou," and because, in consequence, the troops refused to advance into the Netherlands. Having at last been furnished with the requisite guarantees from the Holland cities for three months' pay, on the 27th of August, the day of the publication of his letter to the Emperor, he crossed the Meuse and took his circuitous way through Diest, Tirlemont, Sichem, Louvain, Mechlin, Termonde, Oudenarde, Nivelles. Many cities and villages accepted his authority and admitted his garrisons. Of these Mechlin was the most considerable, in which he stationed a detachment of his troops. Its doom was sealed in that moment. Alva could not forgive this act of patriotism on the part of a town which had so recently excluded his own troops. "This is a direct permission of God," he wrote, in the spirit of dire and revengeful prophecy, "for us to punish her as she deserves, for the image-breaking and other misdeeds done there in the time of Madame de Parma, which our Lord was not willing to pass over without chastisement."

Meantime the Prince continued his advance. Louvain purchased its neutrality for the time with sixteen thousand ducats; Brussels obstinately refused to listen to him, and was too powerful to be forcibly attacked at that juncture; other important cities, convinced by the arguments and won by the eloquence of the various proclamations which he scattered as he advanced, ranged themselves spontaneously and even enthusiastically upon his side. How different world have been the result of his campaign but for the unexpected earthquake which at that instant was to appal Christendom, and to scatter all his well-matured plans and legitimate hopes. His chief reliance, under Providence and his own strong heart, had been upon French assistance. Although Genlis, by his misconduct, had sacrificed

Page 620

his army and himself, yet the Prince as still justly sanguine as to the policy of the French court. The papers which had been found in the possession of Genlis by his conquerors all spoke one language. "You would be struck with stupor," wrote Alva's secretary, "could you see a letter which is now in my power, addressed by the King of France to Louis of Nassau." In that letter the King had declared his determination to employ all the forces which God had placed in his hands to rescue the Netherlands from the oppression under which they were groaning. In accordance with the whole spirit and language of the French government, was the tone of Coligny in his correspondence with Orange. The Admiral assured the Prince that there was no doubt as to the earnestness of the royal intentions in behalf of the Netherlands, and recommending extreme caution, announced his hope within a few days to effect a junction with him at the head of twelve thousand French arquebusiers, and at least three thousand cavalry. Well might the Prince of Orange, strong, and soon to be strengthened, boast that the Netherlands were free, and that Alva was in his power. He had a right to be sanguine, for nothing less than a miracle could now destroy his generous hopes—and, alas! the miracle took place; a miracle of perfidy and bloodshed such as the world, familiar as it had ever been and was still to be with massacre, had not yet witnessed. On the 11th of August, Coligny had written thus hopefully of his movements towards the Netherlands, sanctioned and aided by his King. A fortnight from that day occurred the "Paris-wedding;" and the Admiral, with thousands of his religious confederates, invited to confidence by superhuman treachery, and lulled into security by the music of august marriage bells, was suddenly butchered in the streets of Paris by royal and noble hands.

The Prince proceeded on his march, during which the heavy news had been brought to him, but he felt convinced that, with the very arrival of the awful tidings, the fate of that campaign was sealed, and the fall of Mons inevitable. In his own language, he had been struck to the earth "with the blow of a sledge-hammer,"—nor did the enemy draw a different augury from the great event.

The crime was not committed with the connivance of the Spanish government. On the contrary, the two courts were at the moment bitterly hostile to each other. In the beginning of the summer, Charles *ix*. and his advisers were as false to Philip, as at the end of it they were treacherous to Coligny and Orange. The massacre of the Huguenots had not even the merit of being a well-contrived and intelligently executed scheme. We have seen how steadily, seven years before, Catharine de Medici had rejected the advances of Alva towards the arrangement of a general plan for the extermination of all heretics within France and the Netherlands at the same moment. We have seen the disgust with which Alva turned from the wretched

Page 621

young King at Bayonne, when he expressed the opinion that to take arms against his own subjects was wholly out of the question, and could only be followed by general ruin. "'Tis easy to see that he has been tutored," wrote Alva to his master. Unfortunately, the same mother; who had then instilled those lessons of hypocritical benevolence, had now wrought upon her son's cowardly but ferocious nature with a far different intent. The incomplete assassination of Coligny, the dread of signal vengeance at the hands of the Huguenots, the necessity of taking the lead in the internecine snuggle; were employed with Medicean art, and with entire success. The King was lashed into a frenzy. Starting to his feet, with a howl of rage and terror, "I agree to the scheme," he cried, "provided not one Huguenot be left alive in France to reproach me with the deed."

That night the slaughter commenced. The long premeditated crime was executed in a panic, but the work was thoroughly done. The King, who a few days before had written with his own hand to Louis of Nassau, expressing his firm determination to sustain the Protestant cause both in France and the Netherlands, who had employed the counsels of Coligny in the arrangement, of his plans, and who had sent French troops, under Genlis and La None, to assist their Calvinist brethren in Flanders, now gave the signal for the general massacre of the Protestants, and with his own hands, from his own palace windows, shot his subjects with his arquebuss as if they had been wild beasts.

Between Sunday and Tuesday, according to one of the most moderate calculations, five thousand Parisians of all ranks were murdered. Within the whole kingdom, the number of victims was variously estimated at from twenty-five thousand to one hundred thousand. The heart of Protestant Europe, for an instant, stood still with horror. The Queen of England put on mourning weeds, and spurned the apologies of the French envoy with contempt. At Rome, on the contrary, the news of the massacre created a joy beyond description. The Pope, accompanied by his cardinals, went solemnly to the church of Saint Mark to render thanks to God for the grace thus singularly vouchsafed to the Holy See and to all Christendom; and a Te Deum was performed in presence of the same august assemblage.

But nothing could exceed the satisfaction which the event occasioned in the mind of Philip the Second. There was an end now of all assistance from the French government to the Netherland Protestants. "The news of the events upon Saint Bartholomew's day," wrote the French envoy at Madrid, Saint Goard, to Charles *ix*., "arrived on the 7th September. The King, on receiving the intelligence, showed, contrary to his natural custom, so much gaiety, that he seemed more delighted than with all the good fortune or happy incidents which had ever before occurred to him. He called all his familiars about him in order to assure them that your Majesty was his

Page 622

good brother, and that no one else deserved the title of Most Christian. He sent his secretary Cayas to me with his felicitations upon the event, and with the information that he was just going to Saint Jerome to render thanks to God, and to offer his prayers that your Majesty might receive Divine support in this great affair. I went to see him next morning, and as soon as I came into his presence he began to laugh, and with demonstrations of extreme contentment, to praise your Majesty as deserving your title of Most Christian, telling me there was no King worthy to be your Majesty's companion, either for valor or prudence. He praised the steadfast resolution and the long dissimulation of so great an enterprise, which all the world would not be able to comprehend."

"I thanked him," continued the embassador, "and I said that I thanked God for enabling your Majesty to prove to his Master that his apprentice had learned his trade, and deserved his title of most Christian King. I added, that he ought to confess that he owed the preservation of the Netherlands to your Majesty."

Nothing certainly could, in Philip's apprehension, be more delightful than this most unexpected and most opportune intelligence. Charles *ix*., whose intrigues in the Netherlands he had long known, had now been suddenly converted by this stupendous crime into his most powerful ally, while at the same time the Protestants of Europe would learn that there was still another crowned head in Christendom more deserving of abhorrence than himself. He wrote immediately to Alva, expressing his satisfaction that the King of France had disembarrassed himself of such pernicious men, because he would now be obliged to cultivate the friendship of Spain, neither the English Queen nor the German Protestants being thenceforth capable of trusting him. He informed the Duke, moreover, that the French envoy, Saint Goard, had been urging him to command the immediate execution of Genlis and his companions, who had been made prisoners, as well as all the Frenchmen who would be captured in Mons; and that he fully concurred in the propriety of the measure. "The sooner," said Philip, "these noxious plants are extirpated from the earth, the less fear there is that a fresh crop will spring up." The monarch therefore added, with his own hand, to the letter, "I desire that if you have not already disembarrassed the world of them, you will do it immediately, and inform me thereof, for I see no reason why it should be deferred."

This is the demoniacal picture painted by the French ambassador, and by Philip's own hand, of the Spanish monarch's joy that his "Most Christian" brother had just murdered twenty-five thousand of his own subjects. In this cold-blooded way, too, did his Catholic Majesty order the execution of some thousand Huguenots additionally, in order more fully to carry out his royal brother's plans; yet Philip could write of himself, "that all the world recognized the gentleness of his nature and the mildness of his intentions."

Page 623

In truth, the advice thus given by Saint Goard on the subject of the French prisoners in Alva's possessions, was a natural result of the Saint Bartholomew. Here were officers and soldiers whom Charles *ix*. had himself sent into the Netherlands to fight for the Protestant cause against Philip and Alva. Already, the papers found upon them had placed him in some embarrassment, and exposed his duplicity to the Spanish government, before the great massacre had made such signal reparation for his delinquency. He had ordered Mondoucet, his envoy in the Netherlands, to use dissimulation to an unstinted amount, to continue his intrigues with the Protestants, and to deny stoutly all proofs of such connivance. "I see that the papers found upon Genlis;" he wrote twelve days before the massacre, "have been put into the hands of Assonleville, and that they know everything done by Genlis to have been committed with my consent."

[These remarkable letters exchanged between Charles *ix*. and Mondoucet have recently been published by M. Emile Gachet (chef du bureau paleographique aux Archives de Belgique) from a manuscript discovered by him in the library at Rheims.—Compte Rendu de la Com. Roy. d'Hist., iv. 340, sqq.]

"Nevertheless, you will tell the Duke of Alva that these are lies invented to excite suspicion against me. You will also give him occasional information of the enemy's affairs, in order to make him believe in your integrity. Even if he does not believe you, my purpose will be answered, provided you do it dexterously. At the same time you must keep up a constant communication with the Prince of Orange, taking great care to prevent discovery of your intelligence with King."

Were not these masterstrokes of diplomacy worthy of a King whom his mother, from boyhood upwards, had caused to study Macchiavelli's "Prince," and who had thoroughly taken to heart the maxim, often repeated in those days, that the "Science of reigning was the science of lying"?

The joy in the Spanish camp before Mons was unbounded. It was as if the only bulwark between the Netherland rebels and total destruction had been suddenly withdrawn. With anthems in Saint Gudule, with bonfires, festive illuminations, roaring artillery, with trumpets also, and with shawms, was the glorious holiday celebrated in court and camp, in honor of the vast murder committed by the Most Christian King upon his Christian subjects; nor was a moment lost in apprising the Huguenot soldiers shut up with Louis of Nassau in the beleaguered city of the great catastrophe which was to render all their valor fruitless. "'T was a punishment," said a Spanish soldier, who fought most courageously before Mons, and who elaborately described the siege afterwards, "well worthy of a king whose title is 'The Most Christian,' and it was still more honorable to inflict it with his own hands as he did." Nor was the observation a pithy sarcasm, but a frank expression of opinion, from a man celebrated alike for the skill with which he handled both his sword and his pen.

Page 624

The, French envoy in the Netherlands was, of course, immediately informed by his sovereign of the great event: Charles *ix*. gave a very pithy account of the transaction. “To prevent the success of the enterprise planned by the Admiral,” wrote the King on the 26th of August, with hands yet reeking, and while the havoc throughout France was at its height, “I have been obliged to permit the said Guises to rush upon the said Admiral, —which they have done, the said Admiral having been killed and all his adherents. A very great number of those belonging to the new religion have also been massacred and cut to pieces. It is probable that the fire thus kindled will spread through all the cities of my kingdom, and that all those of the said religion will be made sure of.” Not often, certainly, in history, has a Christian king spoken thus calmly of butchering his subjects while the work was proceeding all around him. It is to be observed, moreover, that the usual excuse for such enormities, religious fanaticism, can not be even suggested on this occasion. Catharine, in times past had favored Huguenots as much as Catholics, while Charles had been, up to the very moment of the crime, in strict alliance with the heretics of both France and Flanders, and furthering the schemes of Orange and Nassau. Nay, even at this very moment, and in this very letter in which he gave the news of the massacre, he charged his envoy still to maintain the closest but most secret intelligence with the Prince of Orange; taking great care that the Duke of Alva should not discover these relations. His motives were, of course, to prevent the Prince from abandoning his designs, and from coming to make a disturbance in France. The King, now that the deed was done, was most anxious to reap all the fruits of his crime. “Now, M. de Mondoucet, it is necessary in such affairs,” he continued, “to have an eye to every possible contingency. I know that this news will be most agreeable to the Duke of Alva, for it is most favorable to his designs. At the same time, I don’t desire that he alone should gather the fruit. I don’t choose that he should, according to his excellent custom, conduct his affairs in such wise as to throw the Prince of Orange upon my hands, besides sending back to France Genlis and the other prisoners, as well as the French now shut up in *Mons*.”

This was a sufficiently plain hint, which Mondoucet could not well misunderstand. “Observe the Duke’s countenance carefully when you give him this message,” added the King, “and let me know his reply.” In order, however, that there might be no mistake about the matter, Charles wrote again to his ambassador, five days afterwards, distinctly stating the regret which he should feel if Alva should not take the city of Mons, or if he should take it by composition. “Tell the Duke,” said he, “that it is most important for the service of his master and of God that those Frenchmen and others in Mons should be cut in pieces.”

Page 625

He wrote another letter upon the name day, such was his anxiety upon the subject, instructing the envoy to urge upon Alva the necessity of chastising those rebels to the French crown. "If he tells you," continued Charles, "that this is tacitly requiring him to put to death all the French prisoners now in hand as well to cut in pieces every man in Mons, you will say to him that this is exactly what he ought to do, and that he will be guilty of a great wrong to Christianity if he does otherwise." Certainly, the Duke, having been thus distinctly ordered, both by his own master and by his Christian Majesty, to put every one of these Frenchmen to death, had a sufficiency of royal warrant. Nevertheless, he was not able to execute entirely these ferocious instructions. The prisoners already in his power were not destined to escape, but the city of Mons, in his own language, "proved to have sharper teeth than he supposed."

Mondoucet lost no time in placing before Alva the urgent necessity of accomplishing the extensive and cold-blooded massacre thus proposed. "The Duke has replied," wrote the envoy to his sovereign, "that he is executing his prisoners every day, and that he has but a few left. Nevertheless, for some reason which he does not mention, he is reserving the principal noblemen and chiefs." He afterwards informed his master that Genlis, Jumelles, and the other leaders, had engaged, if Alva would grant them a reasonable ransom, to induce the French in Mons to leave the city, but that the Duke, although his language was growing less confident, still hoped to take the town by assault. "I have urged him," he added, "to put them all to death, assuring him that he would be responsible for the consequences of a contrary course."—"Why does not your Most Christian master," asked Alva, "order these Frenchmen in Mons to come to him under oath to make no disturbance? Then my prisoners will be at my discretion and I shall get my city."—"Because," answered the envoy, "they will not trust his Most Christian Majesty, and will prefer to die in *Mons*."—[Mondoucet to Charles *ix*., 15th September, 1572.]

This certainly was a most sensible reply, but it is instructive to witness the cynicism with which the envoy accepts this position for his master, while coldly recording the results of all these sanguinary conversations.

Such was the condition of affairs when the Prince of Orange arrived at Peronne, between Binche and the Duke of Alva's entrenchments. The besieging army was rich in notabilities of elevated rank. Don Frederic of Toledo had hitherto commanded, but on the 27th of August, the Dukes of Medina Coeli and of Alva had arrived in the camp. Directly afterwards came the warlike Archbishop of Cologne, at the head of two thousand cavalry. There was but one chance for the Prince of Orange, and experience had taught him, four years before, its slenderness. He might still provoke his adversary into a pitched battle,

Page 626

and he relied upon God for the result. In his own words, “he trusted ever that the great God of armies was with him, and would fight in the midst of his forces.” If so long as Alva remained in his impregnable camp, it was impossible to attack him, or to throw reinforcements into *Mons*. The Prince soon found, too, that Alva was far too wise to hazard his position by a superfluous combat. The Duke knew that the cavalry of the Prince was superior to his own. He expressed himself entirely unwilling to play into the Prince’s hands, instead of winning the game which was no longer doubtful. The Huguenot soldiers within Mons were in despair and mutiny; Louis of Nassau lay in his bed consuming with a dangerous fever; Genlis was a prisoner, and his army cut to pieces; Coligny was murdered, and Protestant France paralyzed; the troops of Orange, enlisted but for three months, were already rebellious, and sure to break into open insubordination when the consequences of the Paris massacre should become entirely clear to them; and there were, therefore, even more cogent reasons than in 1568, why Alva should remain perfectly still, and see his enemy’s cause founder before his eyes. The valiant Archbishop of Cologne was most eager for the fray. He rode daily at the Duke’s side, with harness on his back and pistols in his holsters, armed and attired like one of his own troopers, and urging the Duke, with vehemence, to a pitched battle with the Prince. The Duke commended, but did not yield to, the prelate’s enthusiasm. “’Tis a fine figure of a man, with his corslet and pistols,” he wrote to Philip, “and he shows great affection for your Majesty’s service.”

The issue of the campaign was inevitable. On the 11th September, Don Frederic, with a force of four thousand picked men, established himself at Saint Florian, a village near the Havre gate of the city, while the Prince had encamped at Hermigny, within half a league of the same place, whence he attempted to introduce reinforcements into the town. On the night of the 11th and 12th, Don Frederic hazarded an encamisada upon the enemy’s camp, which proved eminently successful, and had nearly resulted in the capture of the Prince himself. A chosen band of six hundred arquebussers, attired, as was customary in these nocturnal expeditions, with their shirts outside their armor, that they might recognize each other in the darkness, were led by Julian Romero, within the lines of the enemy. The sentinels were cut down, the whole army surprised, and for a moment powerless, while, for two hours long, from one o’clock in the morning until three, the Spaniards butchered their foes, hardly aroused from their sleep, ignorant by how small a force they had been thus suddenly surprised, and unable in the confusion to distinguish between friend and foe. The boldest, led by Julian in person, made at once for the Prince’s tent. His guards and himself were in profound sleep, but a small spaniel, who always passed the night upon

Page 627

his bed, was a more faithful sentinel. The creature sprang forward, barking furiously at the sound of hostile footsteps, and scratching his master's face with his paws.—There was but just time for the Prince to mount a horse which was ready saddled, and to effect his escape through the darkness, before his enemies sprang into the tent. His servants were cut down, his master of the horse and two of his secretaries, who gained their saddles a moment later, all lost their lives, and but for the little dog's watchfulness, William of Orange, upon whose shoulders the whole weight of his country's fortunes depended, would have been led within a week to an ignominious death. To his dying day, the Prince ever afterwards kept a spaniel of the same race in his bed-chamber. The midnight slaughter still continued, but the Spaniards in their fury, set fire to the tents. The glare of the conflagration showed the Orangists by how paltry a force they had been surprised. Before they could rally, however, Romero led off his arquebusiers, every one of whom had at least killed his man. Six hundred of the Prince's troops had been put to the sword, while many others were burned in their beds, or drowned in the little rivulet which flowed outside their camp. Only sixty Spaniards lost their lives.

This disaster did not alter the plans of the Prince, for those plans had already been frustrated. The whole marrow of his enterprise had been destroyed in an instant by the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. He retreated to Wronne and Nivelles, an assassin, named Heist, a German, by birth, but a French chevalier, following him secretly in his camp, pledged to take his life for a large reward promised by Alva—an enterprise not destined, however, to be successful. The soldiers flatly refused to remain an hour longer in the field, or even to furnish an escort for Count Louis, if, by chance, he could be brought out of the town. The Prince was obliged to inform his brother of the desperate state of his affairs, and to advise him to capitulate on the best terms which he could make. With a heavy heart, he left the chivalrous Louis besieged in the city which he had so gallantly captured, and took his way across the Meuse towards the Rhine. A furious mutiny broke out among his troops. His life was, with difficulty, saved from the brutal soldiery—infuriated at his inability to pay them, except in the over-due securities of the Holland cities—by the exertions of the officers who still regarded him with veneration and affection. Crossing the Rhine at Orsoy, he disbanded his army and betook himself, almost alone, to Holland.

Yet even in this hour of distress and defeat, the Prince seemed more heroic than many a conqueror in his day of triumph. With all his hopes blasted, with the whole fabric of his country's fortunes shattered by the colossal crime of his royal ally, he never lost his confidence in himself nor his unfaltering trust in God. All the cities which, but a few weeks before, had so eagerly raised his standard, now fell off at once. He went to Holland, the only province which remained true, and which still looked up to him as its saviour, but he went thither expecting and prepared to perish. "There I will make my sepulchre," was his simple and sublime expression in a private letter to his brother.

Page 628

He had advanced to the rescue of Louis, with city after city opening its arms to receive him. He had expected to be joined on the march by Coligny, at the head of a chosen army, and he was now obliged to leave his brother to his fate, having the massacre of the Admiral and his confederates substituted for their expected army of assistance, and with every city and every province forsaking his cause as eagerly as they had so lately embraced it. "It has pleased God," he said, "to take away every hope which we could have founded upon man; the King has published that the massacre was by his orders, and has forbidden all his subjects, upon pain of death, to assist me; he has, moreover, sent succor to Alva. Had it not been for this, we had been masters of the Duke, and should have made him capitulate at our pleasure." Yet even then he was not cast down.

Nor was his political sagacity liable to impeachment by the extent to which he had been thus deceived by the French court. "So far from being reprehensible that I did not suspect such a crime," he said, "I should rather be chargeable with malignity had I been capable of so sinister a suspicion. 'Tis not an ordinary thing to conceal such enormous deliberations under the plausible cover of a marriage festival."

Meanwhile, Count Louis lay confined to his couch with a burning fever. His soldiers refused any longer to hold the city, now that the altered intentions of Charles *ix*. were known and the forces of Orange withdrawn. Alva offered the most honorable conditions, and it was therefore impossible for the Count to make longer resistance. The city was so important, and time was at that moment so valuable that the Duke was willing to forego his vengeance upon the rebel whom he so cordially detested, and to be satisfied with depriving, him of the prize which he had seized with such audacity. "It would have afforded me sincere pleasure," wrote the Duke, "over and above the benefit to God and your Majesty, to have had the Count of Nassau in my power. I would overleap every obstacle to seize him, such is the particular hatred which I bear the man." Under, the circumstances, however, he acknowledged that the result of the council of war could only be to grant liberal terms.

On the 19th September, accordingly, articles of capitulation were signed between the distinguished De la None with three others on the one part, and the Seigneur de Noircarmes and three others on the side of Spain. The town was given over to Alva, but all the soldiers were to go out with their weapons and property. Those of the townspeople who had borne arms against his Majesty, and all who still held to the Reformed religion, were to retire with the soldiery. The troops were to pledge themselves not to serve in future against the Kings of France or Spain, but from this provision Louis, with his English and German soldiers, was expressly excepted, the Count indignantly repudiating the idea of such a pledge, or of discontinuing his hostilities for an instant. It was also agreed that convoys should be furnished, and hostages exchanged, for the due observance of the terms of the treaty. The preliminaries having been thus settled, the patriot forces abandoned the town.

Page 629

Count Louis, rising from his sick bed, paid his respects in person to the victorious generals, at their request. He was received in Alva's camp with an extraordinary show of admiration and esteem. The Duke of Medina Coeli overwhelmed him with courtesies and "basolomanos," while Don Frederic assured him, in the high-flown language of Spanish compliment, that there was nothing which he would not do to serve him, and that he would take a greater pleasure in executing his slightest wish than if he had been his next of kin.

As the Count next day, still suffering with fever, and attired in his long dressing-gown, was taking his departure from the city, he ordered his carriage to stop at the entrance to Don Frederic's quarters. That general, who had been standing incognito near the door, gazing with honest admiration at the hero of so many a hard-fought field, withdrew as he approached, that he might not give the invalid the trouble of alighting. Louis, however, recognising him, addressed him with the Spanish salutation, "Perdone vuestra Senoria la pesedumbre," and paused at the gate. Don Frederic, from politeness to his condition, did not present himself, but sent an aid-de-camp to express his compliments and good wishes. Having exchanged these courtesies, Louis left the city, conveyed, as had been agreed upon, by a guard of Spanish troops. There was a deep meaning in the respect with which the Spanish generals had treated the rebel chieftain. Although the massacre of Saint Bartholomew met with Alva's entire approbation, yet it was his cue to affect a holy horror at the event, and he avowed that he would "rather cut off both his hands than be guilty of such a deed"—as if those hangman's hands had the right to protest against any murder, however wholesale. Count Louis suspected at once, and soon afterwards thoroughly understood; the real motives of the chivalrous treatment which he had received. He well knew that these very men would have sent him to the scaffold; had he fallen into their power, and he therefore estimated their courtesy at its proper value.

It was distinctly stated, in the capitulation of the city, that all the soldiers, as well as such of the inhabitants as had borne arms, should be allowed to leave the city, with all their property. The rest of the people, it was agreed, might remain without molestation to their persons or estates. It has been the general opinion of historians that the articles of this convention were maintained by the conquerors in good faith. Never was a more signal error. The capitulation was made late at night, on the 20th September, without the provision which Charles *ix*. had hoped for: the massacre, namely, of De la None and his companions. As for Genlis and those who had been taken prisoners at his defeat, their doom had already been sealed. The city was evacuated on the 21st September: Alva entered it upon the 24th. Most of the volunteers departed with the

Page 630

garrison, but many who had, most unfortunately, prolonged their farewells to their families, trusting to the word of the Spanish Captain Molinos, were thrown into prison. Noircarmes the butcher of Valenciennes, now made his appearance in *Mons*. As grand bailiff of Hainault, he came to the place as one in authority, and his deeds were now to complete the infamy which must for ever surround his name. In brutal violation of the terms upon which the town had surrendered, he now set about the work of massacre and pillage. A Commission of Troubles, in close imitation of the famous Blood Council at Brussels, was established, the members of the tribunal being appointed by Noircarmes, and all being inhabitants of the town. The council commenced proceedings by condemning all the volunteers, although expressly included .in the capitulation. Their wives and children were all banished; their property all confiscated. On the 15th December, the executions commenced. The intrepid De Leste, silk manufacturer, who had commanded a band of volunteers, and sustained during the siege the assaults of Alva's troops with remarkable courage at a very critical moment, was one of the earliest victims. In consideration "that he was a gentleman, and not among the most malicious," he was executed by sword. "In respect that he heard the mass, and made a sweet and Catholic end," it was allowed that he should be "buried in consecrated earth." Many others followed in quick succession. Some were beheaded, some were hanged, some were burned alive. All who had borne arms or worked at the fortifications were, of course, put to death. Such as refused to confess and receive the Catholic sacraments perished by fire. A poor wretch, accused of having ridiculed these mysteries, had his tongue torn out before being beheaded. A cobbler, named Blaise Bouzet, was hanged for having eaten meat-soup upon Friday. He was also accused of going to the Protestant preachings for the sake of participating in the alms distributed an these occasions, a crime for which many other paupers were executed. An old man of sixty-two was sent to the scaffold for having permitted his son to bear arms among the volunteers. At last, when all pretexts were wanting to justify executions; the council assigned as motives for its decrees an adhesion of heart on the part of the victims to the cause of the insurgents, or to the doctrines of the Reformed Church. Ten, twelve, twenty persons, were often hanged, burned, or beheaded in a single day. Gibbets laden with mutilated bodies lined the public highways,—while Noircarmes, by frightful expressions of approbation, excited without ceasing the fury of his satellites. This monster would perhaps, be less worthy of execration had he been governed in these foul proceedings by fanatical bigotry or by political hatred; but his motives were of the most sordid description. It was mainly to acquire gold for himself that he ordained all this carnage. With the same pen which signed the death-sentences

Page 631

of the richest victims, he drew orders to his own benefit on their confiscated property. The lion's share of the plunder was appropriated by himself. He desired the estate; of Francois de Glarges, Seigneur d'Eslesmes. The gentleman had committed no offence of any kind, and, moreover, lived beyond the French frontier. Nevertheless, in contempt of international law, the neighbouring territory was invaded, and d'Eslesmes dragged before the blood tribunal of *Mons*. Noircarmes had drawn up beforehand, in his own handwriting, both the terms of the accusation and of the sentence. The victim was innocent and a Catholic, but he was rich. He confessed to have been twice at the preaching, from curiosity, and to have omitted taking the sacrament at the previous Easter. For these offences he was beheaded, and his confiscated estate adjudged at an almost nominal price to the secretary of Noircarmes, bidding for his master. "You can do me no greater pleasure," wrote Noircarmes to the council, "than to make quick work with all these rebels, and to proceed with the confiscation of their estates, real and personal. Don't fail to put all those to the torture out of whom anything can be got."

Notwithstanding the unexampled docility of the commissioners, they found it difficult to extract from their redoubted chief a reasonable share in the wages of blood. They did not scruple, therefore, to display their, own infamy, and to enumerate their own crimes, in order to justify their demand for higher salaries. "Consider," they said, in a petition to this end, "consider closely, all that is odious in our office, and the great number of banishments and of executions which we have pronounced among all our own relations and friends."

It may be added, moreover, as a slight palliation for the enormous crimes committed by these men, that, becoming at last weary of their business, they urged Noircarmes to desist from the work of proscription. Longehaye, one of the commissioners, even waited upon him personally, with a plea for mercy in favor of "the poor people, even beggars, who, although having borne arms during the siege, might then be pardoned." Noircarmes, in a rage at the proposition, said that "if he did not know the commissioners to be honest men, he should believe that their palms had been oiled," and forbade any farther words on the subject. When Longehaye still ventured to speak in favor of certain persons "who were very poor and simple, not charged with duplicity, and good Catholics besides," he fared no better. "Away with you!" cried Noircarmes in a great fury, adding that he had already written to have execution done upon the whole of them. "Whereupon," said poor blood-councillor Longehaye, in his letter to his colleagues, "I retired, I leave you to guess how."

Thus the work went on day after day, month after month. Till the 27th August of the following year (1573) the executioner never rested, and when Requesens, successor to Alva, caused the prisons of Mons to be opened, there were found still seventy-five individuals condemned to the block, and awaiting their fate.

Page 632

It is the most dreadful commentary upon the times in which these transactions occurred, that they could sink so soon into oblivion. The culprits took care to hide the records of their guilt, while succeeding horrors, on a more extensive scale, at other places, effaced the memory of all these comparatively obscure murders and spoliations. The prosperity of Mons, one of the most flourishing and wealthy manufacturing towns in the Netherlands, was annihilated, but there were so many cities in the same condition that its misery was hardly remarkable. Nevertheless, in our own days, the fall of a mouldering tower in the ruined Chateau de Naast at last revealed the archives of all these crimes. How the documents came to be placed there remains a mystery, but they have at last been brought to light.

The Spaniards had thus recovered Mons, by which event the temporary revolution throughout the whole Southern Netherlands was at an end. The keys of that city unlocked the gates of every other in Brabant and Flanders. The towns which had so lately embraced the authority of Orange now hastened to disavow the Prince, and to return to their ancient, hypocritical, and cowardly allegiance. The new oaths of fidelity were in general accepted by Alva, but the beautiful archiepiscopal city of Mechlin was selected for an example and a sacrifice.

There were heavy arrears due to the Spanish troops. To indemnify them, and to make good his blasphemous prophecy of Divine chastisement for its past misdeeds, Alva now abandoned this town to the licence of his soldiery. By his command Don Frederic advanced to the gates and demanded its surrender. He was answered by a few shots from the garrison. Those cowardly troops, however, having thus plunged the city still more deeply into the disgrace which, in Alva's eyes, they had incurred by receiving rebels within their walls after having but just before refused admittance to the Spanish forces, decamped during the night, and left the place defenceless.

Early next morning there issued from the gates a solemn procession of priests, with banner and crozier, followed by a long and suppliant throng of citizens, who attempted by this demonstration to avert the wrath of the victor. While the penitent psalms were resounding, the soldiers were busily engaged in heaping dried branches and rubbish into the moat. Before the religious exercises were concluded, thousands had forced the gates or climbed the walls; and entered the city with a celerity which only the hope of rapine could inspire. The sack instantly commenced. The property of friend and foe, of Papist and Calvinist, was indiscriminately rifled. Everything was dismantled and destroyed. "Hardly a nail," said a Spaniard, writing soon afterwards from Brussels, "was left standing in the walls." The troops seemed to imagine themselves in a Turkish town, and wreaked the Divine vengeance which Alva had denounced upon the city with an energy which met with his fervent applause.

Page 633

Three days long the horrible scene continued, one day for the benefit of the Spaniards, two more for that of the Walloons and Germans. All the churches, monasteries, religious houses of every kind, were completely sacked. Every valuable article which they contained, the ornaments of altars, the reliquaries, chalices, embroidered curtains, and carpets of velvet or damask, the golden robes of the priests, the repositories of the host, the precious vessels of chrism and extreme unction, the rich clothing and jewellery adorning the effigies of the Holy Virgin, all were indiscriminately rifled by the Spanish soldiers. The holy wafers were trampled underfoot, the sacramental wine was poured upon the ground, and, in brief, all the horrors which had been committed by the iconoclasts in their wildest moments, and for a thousandth part of which enormities heretics had been burned in droves, were now repeated in Mechlin by the especial soldiers of Christ, by Roman Catholics who had been sent to the Netherlands to avenge the insults offered to the Roman Catholic faith. The motive, too, which inspired the sacrilegious crew was not fanaticism, but the, desire of plunder. The property of Romanists was taken as freely as that of Calvinists, of which sect there were; indeed, but few in the archiepiscopal city. Cardinal Granvelle's house was rifled. The pauper funds deposited in the convents were not respected. The beds were taken from beneath sick and dying women, whether lady abbess or hospital patient, that the sacking might be torn to pieces in search of hidden treasure.

The iconoclasts of 1566 had destroyed millions of property for the sake of an idea, but they had appropriated nothing. Moreover, they had scarcely injured a human being; confining their wrath to graven images. The Spaniards at Mechlin spared neither man nor woman. The murders and outrages would be incredible, were they not attested by most respectable Catholic witnesses. Men were butchered in their houses, in the streets, at the altars. Women were violated by hundreds in churches and in grave-yards. Moreover, the deed had been as deliberately arranged as it was thoroughly performed. It was sanctioned by the highest authority. Don Frederic, Son of Alva, and General Noircarmes were both present at the scene, and applications were in vain made to them that the havoc might be stayed. "They were seen whispering to each other in the ear on their arrival," says an eye-witness and a Catholic, "and it is well known that the affair had been resolved upon the preceding day. The two continued together as long as they remained in the city." The work was, in truth, fully accomplished. The ultra-Catholic, Jean Richardot, member of the Grand Council, and nephew of the Bishop of Arras, informed the State Council that the sack of Mechlin had been so horrible that the poor and unfortunate mothers had not a single morsel of bread to put in the mouths of their children, who were dying before their eyes—so insane and cruel had been the avarice of the plunderers. "He could say more," he added, "if his hair did not stand on end, not only at recounting, but even at remembering the scene."

Page 634

Three days long the city was abandoned to that trinity of furies which ever wait upon War's footsteps—Murder, Lust, and Rapine—under whose promptings human beings become so much more terrible than the most ferocious beasts. In his letter to his master, the Duke congratulated him upon these foul proceedings as upon a pious deed well accomplished. He thought it necessary, however; to excuse himself before the public in a document, which justified the sack of Mechlin by its refusal to accept his garrison a few months before, and by the shots which had been discharged at his troops as they approached the city. For these offences, and by his express order, the deed was done. Upon his head must the guilt for ever rest.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Hanged for having eaten meat-soup upon Friday
Provided not one Huguenot be left alive in France
Put all those to the torture out of whom anything can be got
Saint Bartholomew's day
Science of reigning was the science of lying

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 20.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By *John Lothrop Motley*
1855

1572-73 [*Chapter viii*.]

Affairs in Holland and Zealand—Siege of Tergoes by the patriots— Importance of the place—Difficulty of relieving it—Its position— Audacious plan for sending succor across the "Drowned Land"— Brilliant and successful expedition of Mondragon—The siege raised— Horrible sack of Zutphen—Base conduct of Count Van den Berg— Refusal of Naarden to surrender—Subsequent unsuccessful deputation to make terms with Don Frederic—Don Frederic before Naarden— Treachery of Romero—The Spaniards admitted—General massacre of the garrison and burghers—The city burned to the ground—Warm reception of Orange in Holland—Secret negotiations with the Estates—Desperate character of the struggle between Spain and the provinces —Don Frederic in Amsterdam—Plans for reducing Holland—Skirmish on the ice at Amsterdam—-Preparation in Harlem for the expected siege— Description of the city—Early operations —Complete investment— Numbers of besiegers and besieged—Mutual barbarities—-Determined repulse of the first assault—Failure of Batenburg's expedition— Cruelties in city and camp—Mining and countermining—Second assault victoriously repelled—-Suffering and disease in Harlem—Disposition of Don Frederic to retire—Memorable

rebuke by Alva—Efforts of Orange to relieve the place—Sonoy's expedition—Exploit of John Haring—Cruel execution of prisoners on both sides—Quiryn Dirkzoon and his family put to death in the city—Fleets upon the lake— Defeat of the patriot armada—-Dreadful suffering and starvation in the city—Parley with the besiegers—Despair of the city—Appeal to Orange—Expedition under Batenburg

Page 635

to relieve the city—His defeat and death—Desperate condition of Harlem—Its surrender at discretion—Sanguinary executions—General massacre—Expense of the victory in blood and money—Joy of Philip at the news.

While thus Brabant and Flanders were scourged back to the chains which they had so recently broken, the affairs of the Prince of Orange were not improving in Zealand. Never was a twelvemonth so marked by contradictory fortune, never were the promises of a spring followed by such blight and disappointment in autumn than in the memorable year 1572. On the island of Walcheren, Middelburg and Arnemuyde still held for the King—Campveer and Flushing for the Prince of Orange. On the island of South Bevelaad, the city of Goes or Tergoes was still stoutly defended by a small garrison of Spanish troops. As long as the place held out, the city of Middelburg could be maintained. Should that important city fall, the Spaniards would lose all hold upon Walcheren and the province of Zealand.

Jerome de ’t Zeraerts, a brave, faithful, but singularly unlucky officer, commanded for the Prince in Walcheren. He had attempted by various hastily planned expeditions to give employment to his turbulent soldiery, but fortune had refused to smile upon his efforts. He had laid siege to Middelburg and failed. He had attempted Tergoes and had been compelled ingloriously to retreat. The citizens of Flushing, on his return, had shut the gates of the town in his face, and far several days refused to admit him or his troops. To retrieve this disgrace, which had sprung rather from the insubordination of his followers and the dislike which they bore his person than from any want of courage or conduct on his part, he now assembled a force of seven thousand men, marched again to Tergoes, and upon the 26th of August laid siege to the place in forma. The garrison was very insufficient, and although they conducted themselves with great bravery, it was soon evident that unless reinforced they must yield. With their overthrow it was obvious that the Spaniards would lose the important maritime province of Zealand, and the Duke accordingly ordered D’Avila, who commanded in Antwerp, to throw succor into Tergoes without delay. Attempts were made, by sea and by land, to this effect, but were all unsuccessful. The Zealanders commanded the waters with their fleet,—and were too much at home among those gulfs and shallows not to be more than a match for their enemies. Baffled in their attempt to relieve the town by water or by land, the Spaniards conceived an amphibious scheme. Their plan led to one of the most brilliant feats of arms which distinguishes the history of this war.

Page 636

The Scheld, flowing past the city of Antwerp and separating the provinces of Flanders and Brabant, opens wide its two arms in nearly opposite directions, before it joins the sea. Between these two arms lie the isles of Zealand, half floating upon, half submerged by the waves. The town of Tergoes was the chief city of South Beveland, the most important part of this archipelago, but South Beveland had not always been an island. Fifty years before, a tempest, one of the most violent recorded in the stormy annals of that exposed country, had overthrown all barriers, the waters of the German Ocean, lashed by a succession of north winds, having been driven upon the low coast of Zealand more rapidly than they could be carried off through the narrow straits of Dover. The dykes of the island had burst, the ocean had swept over the land, hundreds of villages had been overwhelmed, and a tract of country torn from the province and buried for ever beneath the sea. This “Drowned Land,” as it is called, now separated the island from the main. At low tide it was, however, possible for experienced pilots to ford the estuary, which had usurped the place of the land. The average depth was between four and five feet at low water, while the tide rose and fell at least ten feet; the bottom was muddy and treacherous, and it was moreover traversed by three living streams or channels; always much too deep to be fordable.

Captain Plomaert, a Fleming of great experience and bravery, warmly attached to the King’s cause, conceived the plan of sending reinforcements across this drowned district to the city of Tergoes. Accompanied by two peasants of the country, well acquainted with the track, he twice accomplished the dangerous and difficult passage; which, from dry land to dry land, was nearly ten English miles in length. Having thus satisfied himself as to the possibility of the enterprise, he laid his plan before the Spanish colonel, Mondragon. That courageous veteran eagerly embraced the proposal, examined the ground, and after consultation with Sancho Avila, resolved in person to lead an expedition along the path suggested by Plomaert. Three thousand picked men, a thousand from each nation,—Spaniards, Walloons, and Germans, were speedily and secretly assembled at Bergen op Zoom, from the neighbourhood of which city, at a place called Aggier, it was necessary that the expedition should set forth. A quantity of sacks were provided, in which a supply of, biscuit and of powder was placed, one to be carried by each soldier upon his head. Although it was already late in the autumn, the weather was propitious; the troops, not yet informed: as to the secret enterprise for which they had been selected, were all ready assembled at the edge of the water, and Mondragon, who, notwithstanding his age, had resolved upon heading the hazardous expedition, now briefly, on the evening of the 20th October, explained to them the nature of the service. His statement

Page 637

of the dangers which they were about to encounter, rather inflamed than diminished their ardor. Their enthusiasm became unbounded, as he described the importance of the city which they were about to save, and alluded to the glory which would be won by those who thus courageously came forward to its rescue. The time of about half ebb-tide having arrived, the veteran,—preceded only by the guides and Plomaert, plunged gaily into the waves, followed by his army, almost in single file. The water was never lowed khan the breast, often higher than the shoulder. The distance to the island, three and a half leagues at least, was to be accomplished within at most, six hours, or the rising tide would overwhelm them for ever. And thus, across the quaking and uncertain slime, which often refused them a footing, that adventurous band, five hours long, pursued their midnight march, sometimes swimming for their lives, and always struggling with the waves which every instant threatened to engulph them.

Before the tide had risen to more than half-flood, before the day had dawned, the army set foot on dry land again, at the village of Irseken. Of the whole three thousand, only nine unlucky individuals had been drowned; so much had courage and discipline availed in that dark and perilous passage through the very bottom of the sea. The Duke of Alva might well pronounce it one of the most brilliant and original achievements in the annals of war. The beacon fires were immediately lighted upon the shore; as agreed upon, to inform Sancho d'Avila, who was anxiously awaiting the result at Bergen op Zoom, of the safe arrival of the troops. A brief repose was then allowed. At the approach of daylight, they set forth from Irseken, which lay about four leagues from Tergoes. The news that a Spanish army had thus arisen from the depths of the sea, flew before them as they marched. The besieging force commanded the water with their fleet, the land with their army; yet had these indomitable Spaniards found a path which was neither land nor water, and had thus stolen upon them in the silence of night. A panic preceded them as they fell upon a foe much superior in number to their own force. It was impossible for 't Zeraerts to induce his soldiers to offer resistance. The patriot army fled precipitately and ignominiously to their ships, hotly pursued by the Spaniards, who overtook and destroyed the whole of their rearguard before they could embark. This done, the gallant little garrison which had so successfully held the city, was reinforced with the courageous veterans who had come to their relief his audacious project thus brilliantly accomplished, the "good old Mondragon," as his soldiers called him, returned to the province of Brabant.

Page 638

After the capture of Mons and the sack of Mechlin, the Duke of Alva had taken his way to Nimwegen, having despatched his son, Don Frederic, to reduce the northern and eastern country, which was only too ready to submit to the conqueror. Very little resistance was made by any of the cities which had so recently, and—with such enthusiasm, embraced the cause of Orange. Zutphen attempted a feeble opposition to the entrance of the King's troops, and received a dreadful chastisement in consequence. Alva sent orders to his son to leave not a single man alive in the city, and to burn every house to the ground. The Duke's command was almost literally obeyed. Don Frederic entered Zutphen, and without a moment's warning put the whole garrison to the sword. The citizens next fell a defenceless, prey; some being, stabbed in the streets, some hanged on the trees which decorated the city, some stripped stark naked; and turned out into the fields to freeze to death in the wintry night. As the work of death became too fatiguing for the butchers, five hundred innocent burghers were tied two and two, back to back, and drowned like dogs in the river Yssel. A few stragglers who had contrived to elude pursuit at first, were afterwards taken from their hiding places and hung upon the gallows by the feet, some of which victims suffered four days and nights of agony before death came to their relief. It is superfluous to add that the outrages upon women were no less universal in Zutphen than they had been in every city captured or occupied by the Spanish troops. These horrors continued till scarcely chastity or life remained, throughout the miserable city.

This attack and massacre had been so suddenly executed, that assistance would hardly have been possible, even had there been disposition to render it. There was; however, no such disposition. The whole country was already cowering again, except the provinces of Holland and Zealand. No one dared approach, even to learn what had occurred within the walls of the town, for days after its doom had been accomplished. "A wail of agony was heard above Zutphen last Sunday," wrote Count Nieuwenar, "a sound as of a mighty massacre, but we know not what has taken place."

Count Van, den Bergh, another brother-in-law of Orange, proved himself signally unworthy of the illustrious race to which he was allied. He had, in the earlier part of the year, received the homage of the cities of Gelderland and Overyssel, on behalf of the patriot Prince. He now basely abandoned the field where he had endeavoured to gather laurels while the sun of success had been shining. Having written from Kampen, whither he had retired, that he meant to hold the city to the last gasp, he immediately afterwards fled secretly and precipitately from the country. In his flight he was plundered by his own people, while his wife, Mary of Nassau, then far advanced in pregnancy, was left behind, disguised as a peasant girl, in an obscure village.

Page 639

With the flight of Van den Bergh, all the cities which, under his guidance, had raised the standard of Orange, deserted the cause at once. Friesland too, where Robles obtained a victory over six thousand patriots, again submitted to the yoke. But if the ancient heart of the free Frisians was beating thus feebly, there was still spirit left among their brethren on the other side of the Zuyder Zee. It was not while William of Orange was within her borders, nor while her sister provinces had proved recreant to him, that Holland would follow their base example. No rebellion being left, except in the north-western extremities of the Netherlands, Don Frederic was ordered to proceed from Zutphen to Amsterdam, thence to undertake the conquest of Holland. The little city of Naarden, on the coast of the Zuyder Zee, lay in his path, and had not yet formally submitted. On the 22nd of November a company of one hundred troopers was sent to the city gates to demand its surrender. The small garrison which had been left by the Prince was not disposed to resist, but the spirit of the burghers was stouter than, their walls. They answered the summons by a declaration that they had thus far held the city for the King and the Prince of Orange, and, with God's help, would continue so to do. As the horsemen departed with this reply, a lunatic, called Adrian Krankhoeft, mounted the ramparts and, discharged a culverine among them. No man was injured, but the words of defiance, and the shot fired by a madman's hand, were destined to be fearfully answered.

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the place, which was at best far from strong, and ill provided with arms, ammunition, or soldiers, despatched importunate messages to Sonoy, and to ether patriot generals nearest to them, soliciting reinforcements. Their messengers came back almost empty handed. They brought a little powder and a great many promises, but not a single man-at-arms, not a ducat, not a piece of artillery. The most influential commanders, moreover, advised an honorable capitulation, if it were still possible.

Thus baffled, the burghers of the little city found their proud position quite untenable. They accordingly, on the 1st of December, despatched the burgomaster and a senator to Amersfoort, to make terms, if possible, with Don Frederic. When these envoys reached the place, they were refused admission to the general's presence. The army had already been ordered to move forward to Naarden, and they were directed to accompany the advance guard, and to expect their reply at the gates of their own city. This command was sufficiently ominous. The impression which it made upon them was confirmed by the warning voices of their friends in Amersfoort, who entreated them not to return to Naarden. The advice was not lost upon one of the two envoys. After they had advanced a little distance on their journey, the burgomaster Laurentszoon slid privately out of the sledge in which they were travelling, leaving his cloak behind him. "Adieu; I think I will not venture back to Naarden at present," said he, calmly, as he abandoned his companion to his fate. The other, who could not so easily desert his children, his wife, and his fellow-citizens, in the hour of danger, went forward as calmly to share in their impending doom.

Page 640

The army reached Bussem, half a league distant from Naarden, in the evening. Here Don Frederic established his head quarters, and proceeded to invest the city. Senator Gerrit was then directed to return to Naarden and to bring out a more numerous deputation on the following morning, duly empowered to surrender the place. The envoy accordingly returned next day, accompanied by Lambert Hortensius, rector of a Latin academy, together with four other citizens. Before this deputation had reached Bussem, they were met by Julian Romero, who informed them that he was commissioned to treat with them on the part of Don Frederic. He demanded the keys of the city, and gave the deputation a solemn pledge that the lives and property of all the inhabitants should be sacredly respected. To attest this assurance Don Julian gave his hand three several times to Lambert Hortensius. A soldier's word thus plighted, the commissioners, without exchanging any written documents, surrendered the keys, and immediately afterwards accompanied Romero into the city, who was soon followed by five or six hundred musketeers.

To give these guests a hospitable reception, all the housewives of the city at once set about preparations for a sumptuous feast, to which the Spaniards did ample justice, while the colonel and his officers were entertained by Senator Gerrit at his own house. As soon as this conviviality had come to an end, Romero, accompanied by his host, walked into the square. The great bell had been meantime ringing, and the citizens had been summoned to assemble in the Gast Huis Church, then used as a town hall. In the course of a few minutes five hundred had entered the building, and stood quietly awaiting whatever measures might be offered for their deliberation. Suddenly a priest, who had been pacing to and fro before the church door, entered the building, and bade them all prepare for death; but the announcement, the preparation, and the death, were simultaneous. The door was flung open, and a band of armed Spaniards rushed across the sacred threshold. They fired a single volley upon the defenceless herd, and then sprang in upon them with sword and dagger. A yell of despair arose as the miserable victims saw how hopelessly they were engaged, and beheld the ferocious faces of their butchers. The carnage within that narrow apace was compact and rapid. Within a few minutes all were despatched, and among them Senator Gerrit, from whose table the Spanish commander had but just risen. The church was then set on fire, and the dead and dying were consumed to ashes together.

Inflamed but not satiated, the Spaniards then rushed into the streets, thirsty for fresh horrors. The houses were all rifled of their contents, and men were forced to carry the booty to the camp, who were then struck dead as their reward. The town was then fired in every direction, that the skulking citizens might be forced from their hiding-places. As fast as they came forth they were put to death

Page 641

by their impatient foes. Some were pierced with rapiers, some were chopped to pieces with axes, some were surrounded in the blazing streets by troops of laughing soldiers, intoxicated, not with wine but with blood, who tossed them to and fro with their lances, and derived a wild amusement from their dying agonies. Those who attempted resistance were crimped alive like fishes, and left to gasp themselves to death in lingering torture. The soldiers becoming more and more insane, as the foul work went on, opened the veins of some of their victims, and drank their blood as if it were wine. Some of the burghers were for a time spared, that they might witness the violation of their wives and daughters, and were then butchered in company with these still more unfortunate victims. Miracles of brutality were accomplished. Neither church nor hearth was sacred: Men were slain, women outraged at the altars, in the streets, in their blazing homes. The life of Lambert Hortensius was spared, out of regard to his learning and genius, but he hardly could thank his foes for the boon, for they struck his only son dead, and tore his heart out before his father's eyes. Hardly any man or woman survived, except by accident. A body of some hundred burghers made their escape across the snow into the open country. They were, however, overtaken, stripped stark naked, and hung upon the trees by the feet, to freeze, or to perish by a more lingering death. Most of them soon died, but twenty, who happened to be wealthy, succeeded, after enduring much torture, in purchasing their lives of their inhuman persecutors. The principal burgomaster, Heinrich Lambertszoon, was less fortunate. Known to be affluent, he was tortured by exposing the soles of his feet to a fire until they were almost consumed. On promise that his life should be spared, he then agreed to pay a heavy ransom; but hardly had he furnished the stipulated sum when, by express order of Don Frederic himself, he was hanged in his own doorway, and his dissevered limbs afterwards nailed to the gates of the city.

Nearly all the inhabitants of Naarden, soldiers and citizens, were thus destroyed; and now Don Frederic issued peremptory orders that no one, on pain of death, should give lodging or food to any fugitive. He likewise forbade to the dead all that could now be forbidden them—a grave. Three weeks long did these unburied bodies pollute the streets, nor could the few wretched women who still cowered within such houses as had escaped the flames ever wave from their lurking-places without treading upon the festering remains of what had been their husbands, their fathers, or their brethren. Such was the express command of him whom the flatterers called the "most divine genius ever known." Shortly afterwards came an order to dismantle the fortifications, which had certainly proved sufficiently feeble in the hour of need, and to raze what was left of the city from the surface of the earth. The work was faithfully accomplished, and for a longtime Naarden ceased to exist.

Page 642

Alva wrote, with his usual complacency in such cases, to his sovereign, that “they had cut the throats of the burghers and all the garrison, and that they had not left a mother’s son alive.” The statement was almost literally correct, nor was the cant with which these bloodhounds commented upon their crimes less odious than their guilt. “It was a permission of God,” said the Duke, “that these people should have undertaken to defend a city, which was so weak that no other persons would have attempted such a thing.” Nor was the reflection of Mendoza less pious. “The sack of Naarden,” said that really brave and accomplished cavalier, “was a chastisement which must be believed to have taken place by express permission of a Divine Providence; a punishment for having been the first of the Holland towns in which heresy built its nest, whence it has taken flight to all the neighboring cities.”

It is not without reluctance, but still with a stern determination, that the historian—should faithfully record these transactions. To extenuate would be base; to exaggerate impossible. It is good that the world should not forget how much wrong has been endured by a single harmless nation at the hands of despotism, and in the sacred name of God. There have been tongues and pens enough to narrate the excesses of the people, bursting from time to time out of slavery into madness. It is good, too, that those crimes should be remembered, and freshly pondered; but it is equally wholesome to study the opposite picture. Tyranny, ever young and ever old, constantly reproducing herself with the same stony features, with the same imposing mask which she has worn through all the ages, can never be too minutely examined, especially when she paints her own portrait, and when the secret history of her guilt is furnished by the confessions of her lovers. The perusal of her traits will not make us love popular liberty the less.

The history of Alva’s administration in the Netherlands is one of those pictures which strike us almost dumb with wonder. Why has the Almighty suffered such crimes to be perpetrated in His sacred name? Was it necessary that many generations should wade through this blood in order to acquire for their descendants the blessings of civil and religious freedom? Was it necessary that an Alva should ravage a peaceful nation with sword and flame—that desolation should be spread over a happy land, in order that the pure and heroic character of a William of Orange should stand forth more conspicuously, like an antique statue of spotless marble against a stormy sky?

Page 643

After the army which the Prince had so unsuccessfully led to the relief of Mons had been disbanded, he had himself repaired to Holland. He had come to Kampen shortly before its defection from his cause. Thence he had been escorted across the Zuyder Zee to Eukhuyzen. He came to that province, the only one which through good and ill report remained entirely faithful to him, not as a conqueror but as an unsuccessful, proscribed man. But there were warm hearts beating within those cold lagunes, and no conqueror returning from a brilliant series of victories could have been received with more affectionate respect than William in that darkest hour of the country's history. He had but seventy horsemen at his back, all which remained of the twenty thousand troops which he had a second time levied in Germany, and he felt that it would be at that period hopeless for him to attempt the formation of a third army. He had now come thither to share the fate of Holland, at least, if he could not accomplish her liberation. He went from city to city, advising with the magistracies and with the inhabitants, and arranging many matters pertaining both to peace and war. At Harlem the States of the Provinces, according to his request, had been assembled. The assembly begged him to lay before them, if it were possible, any schemes and means which he might have devised for further resistance to the Duke of Alva. Thus solicited, the Prince, in a very secret session, unfolded his plans, and satisfied them as to the future prospects of the cause. His speech has nowhere been preserved. His strict injunctions as to secrecy, doubtless, prevented or effaced any record of the session. It is probable, however, that he entered more fully into the state of his negotiations with England, and into the possibility of a resumption by Count Louis of his private intercourse with the French court, than it was safe, publicly, to divulge.

While the Prince had been thus occupied in preparing the stout-hearted province for the last death-struggle with its foe, that mortal combat was already fast approaching; for the aspect of the contest in the Netherlands was not that of ordinary warfare. It was an encounter between two principles, in their nature so hostile to each other that the absolute destruction of one was the only, possible issue. As the fight went on, each individual combatant seemed inspired by direct personal malignity, and men found a pleasure in deeds of cruelty, from which generations not educated to slaughter recoil with horror. To murder defenceless prisoners; to drink, not metaphorically but literally, the heart's blood of an enemy; to exercise a devilish ingenuity in inventions of mutual torture, became not only a duty but a rapture. The Liberty of the Netherlands had now been hunted to its lair. It had taken its last refuge among the sands and thickets where its savage infancy had been nurtured, and had now prepared itself to crush its tormentor in a last embrace, or to die in the struggle.

Page 644

After the conclusion of the sack and massacre of Naarden, Don Frederic had hastened to Amsterdam, where the Duke was then quartered, that he might receive the paternal benediction for his well-accomplished work. The royal approbation was soon afterwards added to the applause of his parent, and the Duke was warmly congratulated in a letter written by Philip as soon as the murderous deed was known, that Don Frederic had so plainly shown himself to be his father's son. There was now more work for father and son. Amsterdam was the only point in Holland which held for Alva, and from that point it was determined to recover the whole province. The Prince of Orange was established in the southern district; Diedrich Sonoy, his lieutenant, was stationed in North Holland. The important city of Harlem lay between the two, at a spot where the whole breadth of the territory, from sea to sea, was less than an hour's walk. With the fall of that city the province would be cut in twain, the rebellious forces utterly dissevered, and all further resistance, it was thought, rendered impossible.

The inhabitants of Harlem felt their danger. Bossu, Alva's stadholder for Holland, had formally announced the system hitherto pursued at Mechlin, Zutphen, and Naarden, as the deliberate policy of the government. The King's representative had formally proclaimed the extermination of man, woman; and child in every city which opposed his authority, but the promulgation and practice of such a system had an opposite effect to the one intended. "The hearts of the Hollanders were rather steeled to resistance than awed into submission by the fate of Naarden." A fortunate event, too, was accepted as a lucky omen for the coming contest. A little fleet of armed vessels, belonging to Holland, had been frozen up in the neighbourhood of Amsterdam. Don Frederic on his arrival from Naarden, despatched a body of picked men over the ice to attack the imprisoned vessels. The crews had, however, fortified themselves by digging a wide trench around the whole fleet, which thus became from the moment an almost impregnable fortress. Out of this frozen citadel a strong band of well-armed and skilful musketeers sallied forth upon skates as the besieging force advanced. A rapid, brilliant, and slippery skirmish succeeded, in which the Hollanders, so accustomed to such sports, easily vanquished their antagonists, and drove them off the field, with the loss of several hundred left dead upon the ice.

"'T was a thing never heard of before to-day," said Alva, "to see a body of arquebusiers thus skirmishing upon a frozen sea." In the course of the next four-and-twenty hours a flood and a rapid thaw released the vessels, which all escaped to Enkhuyzen, while a frost, immediately and strangely succeeding, made pursuit impossible.

Page 645

The Spaniards were astonished at these novel manoeuvres upon the ice. It is amusing to read their elaborate descriptions of the wonderful appendages which had enabled the Hollanders to glide so glibly into battle with a superior force, and so rapidly to glance away, after achieving a signal triumph. Nevertheless, the Spaniards could never be dismayed, and were always apt scholars, even if an enemy were the teacher. Alva immediately ordered seven thousand pairs of skates, and his soldiers soon learned to perform military evolutions with these new accoutrements as audaciously, if not as adroitly, as the Hollanders.

A portion of the Harlem magistracy, notwithstanding the spirit which pervaded the province, began to tremble as danger approached. They were base enough to enter into secret negotiations with Alva, and to send three of their own number to treat with the Duke at Amsterdam. One was wise enough to remain with the enemy. The other two were arrested on their return, and condemned, after an impartial trial, to death. For, while these emissaries of a cowardly magistracy were absent, the stout commandant of the little garrison, Ripperda, had assembled the citizens and soldiers in the market-place. He warned them of the absolute necessity to make a last effort for freedom. In startling colors he held up to them the fate of Mechlin, of Zutphen, of Naarden, as a prophetic mirror, in which they might read their own fate should they be base enough to surrender the city. There was no composition possible, he urged, with foes who were as false as they were sanguinary, and whose foul passions were stimulated, not slaked, by the horrors with which they had already feasted themselves.

Ripperda addressed men who could sympathize with his bold and lofty sentiments. Soldiers and citizens cried out for defence instead of surrender, as with one voice, for there were no abject spirits at Harlem, save among the magistracy; and Saint Aldegonde, the faithful minister of Orange, was soon sent to Harlem by the Prince to make a thorough change in that body.

Harlem, over whose ruins the Spanish tyranny intended to make its entrance into Holland, lay in the narrowest part of that narrow isthmus which separates the Zuyder Zee from the German Ocean. The distance from sea to sea is hardly five English miles across. Westerly from the city extended a slender strip of land, once a morass, then a fruitful meadow; maintained by unflagging fortitude in the very jaws of a stormy ocean. Between the North Sea and the outer edge of this pasture surged those wild and fantastic downs, heaped up by wind and wave in mimicry of mountains; the long coils of that rope of sand, by which, plaited into additional strength by the slenderest of bulrushes, the waves of the North Sea were made to obey the command of man. On the opposite, or eastern aide, Harlem looked towards Amsterdam. That already flourishing city was distant but ten miles. The two cities

Page 646

were separated by an expanse of inland water, and united by a slender causeway. The Harlem Lake, formed less than a century before by the bursting of four lesser, meres during a storm which had threatened to swallow the whole Peninsula, extended itself on the south and east; a sea of limited dimensions, being only fifteen feet in depth with seventy square miles of surface, but, exposed as it lay to all the winds of heaven, often lashed into storms as dangerous as those of the Atlantic. Beyond the lake, towards the north, the waters of the Y nearly swept across the Peninsula. This inlet of the Zuyder Zee was only separated from the Harlem mere by a slender thread of land. Over this ran the causeway between the two sister cities, now so unfortunately in arms against each other. Midway between the two, the dyke was pierced and closed again with a system of sluice-works, which when opened admitted the waters of the lake into those of the estuary, and caused an inundation of the surrounding country.

The city was one of the largest and most beautiful in the Netherlands. It was also one of the weakest.—The walls were of antique construction, turreted, but not strong. The extent and feebleness of the defences made a large garrison necessary, but unfortunately, the garrison was even weaker than the walls. The city's main reliance was on the stout hearts of the inhabitants. The streets were, for that day, spacious and regular; the canals planted with limes and poplars. The ancient church of Saint Bavon, a large imposing structure of brick, stood almost in the centre of the place, the most prominent object, not only of the town but of the province, visible over leagues of sea and of land more level than the sea, and seeming to gather the whole quiet little city under its sacred and protective wings. Its tall open-work leaden spire was surmounted by a colossal crown, which an exalted imagination might have regarded as the emblematic guerdon of martyrdom held aloft over the city, to reward its heroism and its agony.

It was at once obvious that the watery expanse between Harlem and Amsterdam would be the principal theatre of the operations about to commence. The siege was soon begun. The fugitive burgomaster, De Fries, had the effrontery, with the advice of Alva, to address a letter to the citizens, urging them to surrender at discretion. The messenger was hanged—a cruel but practical answer, which put an end to all further traitorous communications. This was in the first week of December. On the 10th, Don Frederic, sent a strong detachment to capture the fort and village of Sparendam, as an indispensable preliminary to the commencement of the siege. A peasant having shown Zapata, the commander of the expedition, a secret passage across the flooded and frozen meadows, the Spaniards stormed the place gallantly, routed the whole garrison, killed three hundred, and took possession of the works and village. Next day, Don Frederic

Page 647

appeared before the walls of Harlem, and proceeded regularly to invest the place. The misty weather favored his operations, nor did he cease reinforcing himself; until at least thirty thousand men, including fifteen hundred cavalry, had been encamped around the city. The Germans, under Count Overstein, were stationed in a beautiful and extensive grove of limes and beeches, which spread between the southern walls and the shore of Harlem Lake. Don Frederic, with his Spaniards, took up a position on the opposite side, at a place called the House of Kleef, the ruins of which still remain. The Walloons, and other regiments were distributed in different places, so as completely to encircle the town.
[Pierre Sterlinckx: Eene come Waerachtige Beschryvinghe van alle Geschiedinissen, Anschlagen, Stormen, Schermutsingen oude Schieten voor de vroome Stadt Haerlem in Holland gheschicht, *etc*., *etc*.— Delft, 1574.—This is by far the best contemporary account of the famous siege. The author was a citizen of Antwerp, who kept a daily journal of the events as they occurred at Harlem. It is a dry, curt register of horrors, jotted down without passion or comment.— Compare Bor, vi. 422, 423; Meteren, iv. 79; Mendoza, viii. 174, 175; Wagenaer, vad. Hist., vi. 413, 414.]

On the edge of the mere the Prince of Orange had already ordered a cluster of forts to be erected, by which the command of its frozen surface was at first secured for Harlem. In the course of the siege, however, other forts were erected by Don Frederic, so that the aspect of things suffered a change.

Against this immense force, nearly equal in number to that of the whole population of the city, the garrison within the walls never amounted to more than four thousand men. In the beginning it was much less numerous. The same circumstances, however, which assisted the initiatory operations of Don Frederic, were of advantage to the Harlemers. A dense frozen fog hung continually over the surface of the lake. Covered by this curtain, large supplies of men, provisions, and ammunition were daily introduced into the city, notwithstanding all the efforts of the besieging force. Sledges skimming over the ice, men, women, and even children, moving on their skates as swiftly as the wind, all brought their contributions in the course of the short dark days and long nights of December, in which the wintry siege was opened.

The garrison at last numbered about one thousand pioneers or delvers, three thousand fighting men, and about three hundred fighting women. The last was a most efficient corps, all females of respectable character, armed with sword, musket, and dagger. Their chief, Kenau Hasselaer, was a widow of distinguished family and unblemished reputation, about forty-seven years of age, who, at the head of her amazons, participated in many of the most fiercely contested actions of the siege, both within and without the walls. When

Page 648

such a spirit animated the maids and matrons of the city, it might be expected that the men would hardly surrender the place without a struggle. The Prince had assembled a force of three or four thousand men at Leyden, which he sent before the middle of December towards the city under the command of De la Marck. These troops were, however, attacked on the way by a strong detachment under Bossu, Noircarmes, and Romero. After a sharp, action in a heavy snow-storm, De la Marek was completely routed. One thousand of his soldiers were cut to pieces, and a large number carried off as prisoners to the gibbets, which were already conspicuously erected in the Spanish camp, and which from the commencement to the close of the siege were never bare of victims. Among the captives was a gallant officer, Baptist van Trier, for whom De la Marck in vain offered two thousand crowns and nineteen Spanish prisoners. The proposition was refused with contempt. Van Trier was hanged upon the gallows by one leg until he was dead, in return for which barbarity the nineteen Spaniards were immediately gibbeted by De la Marck. With this interchange of cruelties the siege may be said to have opened.

Don Frederic had stationed himself in a position opposite to the gate of the Cross, which was not very strong, but fortified by a ravelin. Intending to make a very short siege of it, he established his batteries immediately, and on the 18th, 19th, and 20th December directed a furious cannonade against the Cross-gate, the St. John's-gate, and the curtain between the two. Six hundred and eighty shots were discharged on the first, and nearly as many on each of the two succeeding days. The walls were much shattered, but men, women, and children worked night and day within the city, repairing the breaches as fast as made. They brought bags of sand; blocks of stone, cart-loads of earth from every quarter, and they stripped the churches of all their statues, which they threw by heaps into the gaps. If They sought thus a more practical advantage from those sculptured saints than they could have gained by only imploring their interposition. The fact, however, excited horror among the besiegers. Men who were daily butchering their fellow-beings, and hanging their prisoners in cold blood, affected to shudder at the enormity of the offence thus exercised against graven images.

After three days' cannonade, the assault was ordered, Don Frederic only intending a rapid massacre, to crown his achievements at—Zutphen and Naarden. The place, he thought, would fall in a week, and after another week of sacking, killing, and ravishing, he might sweep on to "pastures new" until Holland was overwhelmed. Romero advanced to the breach, followed by a numerous storming party, but met with a resistance which astonished the Spaniards. The church bells rang the alarm throughout the city, and the whole population swarmed to the walls. The besiegers were encountered not only with sword and musket, but with every implement

Page 649

which the burghers' hands could find. Heavy stones, boiling oil, live coals, were hurled upon the heads of the soldiers; hoops, smeared with pitch and set on fire, were dexterously thrown upon their necks. Even Spanish courage and Spanish ferocity were obliged to shrink before the steady determination of a whole population animated by a single spirit. Romero lost an eye in the conflict, many officers were killed and wounded, and three or four hundred soldiers left dead in the breach, while only three or four of the townsmen lost their lives. The signal of recal was reluctantly given, and the Spaniards abandoned the assault. Don Frederic was now aware that Harlem would not fall at his feet at the first sound of his trumpet. It was obvious that a siege must precede the massacre. He gave orders therefore that the ravelin should be undermined, and doubted not that, with a few days' delay, the place would be in his hands.

Meantime, the Prince of Orange, from his head-quarters at Sassenheim, on the southern extremity of the mere, made a fresh effort to throw succor into the place. Two thousand men, with seven field-pieces, and many wagon-loads of munitions, were sent forward under Batenburg. This officer had replaced De la Marck, whom the Prince had at last deprived of his commission. The reckless and unprincipled freebooter was no longer to serve a cause which was more sullied by his barbarity than it could be advanced by his desperate valor. Batenburg's expedition was, however, not more successful than the one made by his predecessor. The troops, after reaching the vicinity of the city, lost their way in the thick mists, which almost perpetually enveloped the scene. Cannons were fired, fog-bells were rung, and beacon fires were lighted on the ramparts, but the party was irretrievably lost. The Spaniards fell upon them before they could find their way to the city. Many were put to the sword, others made their escape in different directions; a very few succeeded in entering Harlem. Batenburg brought off a remnant of the forces, but all the provisions so much needed were lost, and the little army entirely destroyed.

De Koning, the second in command, was among the prisoners. The Spaniards cut off his head and threw it over the walls into the city, with this inscription: "This is the head of Captain de Koning, who is on his way with reinforcements for the good city of Harlem." The citizens retorted with a practical jest, which was still more barbarous. They cut off the heads of eleven prisoners and put them into a barrel, which they threw into the Spanish camp. A Label upon the barrel contained these words: "Deliver these ten heads to Duke Alva in payment of his tenpenny tax, with one additional head for interest." With such ghastly merriment did besieged and besiegers vary the monotonous horror of that winter's siege. As the sallies and skirmishes were of daily occurrence, there was a constant supply of prisoners, upon whom both parties might exercise their ingenuity, so that the gallows in camp or city was perpetually garnished.

Page 650

Since the assault of the 21st December, Don Frederic had been making his subterranean attack by regular approaches. As fast, however, as the Spaniards mined, the citizens countermined. Spaniard and Netherlander met daily in deadly combat within the bowels of the earth. Desperate and frequent were the struggles within gangways so narrow that nothing but daggers could be used, so obscure that the dim lanterns hardly lighted the death-stroke. They seemed the conflicts, not of men but of evil spirits. Nor were these hand-to-hand battles all. A shower of heads, limbs, mutilated trunks, the mangled remains of hundreds of human beings, often spouted from the earth as if from an invisible volcano. The mines were sprung with unexampled frequency and determination. Still the Spaniards toiled on with undiminished zeal, and still the besieged, undismayed, delved below their works, and checked their advance by sword, and spear, and horrible explosions.

The Prince of Orange, meanwhile, encouraged the citizens to persevere, by frequent promises of assistance. His letters, written on extremely small bits of paper; were sent into the town by carrier pigeons. On the 28th of January he despatched a considerable supply of the two necessaries, powder and bread, on one hundred and seventy sledges across the Harlem Lake, together with four hundred veteran soldiers. The citizens continued to contest the approaches to the ravelin before the Cross-gate, but it had become obvious that they could not hold it long. Secretly, steadfastly, and swiftly they had, therefore, during the long wintry nights, been constructing a half moon of solid masonry on the inside of the same portal. Old men, feeble women, tender children, united with the able-bodied to accomplish this work, by which they hoped still to maintain themselves after the ravelin had fallen:

On the 31st of January, after two or three days' cannonade against the gates of the Cross and of Saint John, and the intervening curtains, Don Frederic ordered a midnight assault. The walls had been much shattered, part of the John's-gate was in ruins; the Spaniards mounted the breach in great numbers; the city was almost taken by surprise; while the Commander-in-chief, sure of victory, ordered the whole of his forces under arms to cut off the population who were to stream panic-struck from every issue. The attack was unexpected, but the forty or fifty sentinels defended the walls while they sounded the alarm. The tocsin bells tolled, and the citizens, whose sleep was not-apt to be heavy during that perilous winter, soon manned the ramparts again. The daylight came upon them while the fierce struggle was still at its height. The besieged, as before, defended themselves with musket and rapier, with melted pitch, with firebrands, with clubs and stones. Meantime, after morning prayers in the Spanish camp, the trumpet for a general assault was sounded. A tremendous onset was made upon the gate of the Cross, and the ravelin was carried

Page 651

at last. The Spaniards poured into this fort, so long the object of their attack, expecting instantly to sweep into the city with sword and fire. As they mounted its wall they became for the first time aware of the new and stronger fortification which had been secretly constructed on the inner side. The reason why the ravelin had been at last conceded was revealed. The half moon, whose existence they had not suspected, rose before them bristling with cannon. A sharp fire was instantly opened upon the besiegers, while at the same instant the ravelin, which the citizens had undermined, blew up with a severe explosion, carrying into the air all the soldiers who had just entered it so triumphantly. This was the turning point. The retreat was sounded, and the Spaniards fled to their camp, leaving at least three hundred dead beneath the walls. Thus was a second assault, made by an overwhelming force and led by the most accomplished generals of Spain, signally and gloriously repelled by the plain burghers of Harlem.

It became now almost evident that the city could be taken neither by regular approaches nor by sudden attack. It was therefore resolved that it should be reduced by famine. Still, as the winter wore on, the immense army without the walls were as great sufferers by that scourge as the population within. The soldiers fell in heaps before the diseases engendered by intense cold and insufficient food, for, as usual in such sieges, these deaths far outnumbered those inflicted by the enemy's hand. The sufferings inside the city necessarily increased day by day, the whole population being put on a strict allowance of food. Their supplies were daily diminishing, and with the approach of the spring and the thawing of the ice on the lake, there was danger that they would be entirely cut off. If the possession of the water were lost, they must yield or starve; and they doubted whether the Prince would be able to organize a fleet. The gaunt spectre of Famine already rose before them with a menace which could not be misunderstood. In their misery they longed for the assaults of the Spaniards, that they might look in the face of a less formidable foe. They paraded the ramparts daily, with drums beating, colors flying, taunting the besiegers to renewed attempts. To inflame the religious animosity of their antagonists, they attired themselves in the splendid, gold-embroidered vestments of the priests, which they took from the churches, and moved about in mock procession, bearing aloft images bedizened in ecclesiastical finery, relics, and other symbols, sacred in Catholic eyes, which they afterwards hurled from the ramparts, or broke, with derisive shouts, into a thousand fragments.

Page 652

It was, however, at that season earnestly debated by the enemy whether or not to raise the siege. Don Frederic was clearly of opinion that enough had been done for the honor of the Spanish arms. He was wearied with seeing his men perish helplessly around him, and considered the prize too paltry for the lives it must cost. His father thought differently. Perhaps he recalled the siege of Metz, and the unceasing regret with which, as he believed, his imperial master had remembered the advice received from him. At any rate the Duke now sent back Don Bernardino de Mendoza, whom Don Frederic had despatched to Nimwegen, soliciting his father's permission to raise the siege, with this reply: "Tell Don Frederic," said Alva, "that if he be not decided to continue the siege till the town be taken, I shall no longer consider him my son, whatever my opinion may formerly have been. Should he fall in the siege, I will myself take the field to maintain it, and when we have both perished, the Duchess, my wife, shall come from Spain to do the same."

Such language was unequivocal, and hostilities were resumed as fiercely as before. The besieged welcomed them with rapture, and, as usual, made daily the most desperate sallies. In one outbreak the Harlemers, under cover of a thick fog, marched up to the enemy's chief battery, and attempted to spike the guns before his face. They were all slain at the cannon's mouth, whither patriotism, not vainglory, had led them, and lay dead around the battery, with their hammers and spikes in their hands. The same spirit was daily manifested. As the spring advanced; the kine went daily out of the gates to their peaceful pasture, notwithstanding, all the turmoil within and around; nor was it possible for the Spaniards to capture a single one of these creatures, without paying at least a dozen soldiers as its price. "These citizens," wrote Don Frederic, "do as much as the best soldiers in the world could do."

The frost broke up by the end of February. Count Bossu, who had been building a fleet of small vessels in Amsterdam, soon afterwards succeeded in entering the lake with a few gun-boats, through a breach which he had made in the Overtoom, about half a league from that city. The possession of the lake was already imperilled. The Prince, however, had not been idle, and he, too, was soon ready to send his flotilla to the mere. At the same time, the city of Amsterdam was in almost as hazardous a position as Harlem. As the one on the lake, so did the other depend upon its dyke for its supplies. Should that great artificial road which led to Muyden and Utrecht be cut asunder, Amsterdam might be starved as soon as Harlem. "Since I came into the world," wrote Alva, "I have never, been in such anxiety. If they should succeed in cutting off the communication along the dykes, we should have to raise the siege of Harlem, to surrender, hands crossed, or to starve." Orange was fully aware of the position of both places, but he was, as usual, sadly deficient in men and means. He wrote imploringly to his friends in England, in France, in Germany. He urged his brother Louis to bring a few soldiers, if it were humanly possible. "The whole country longs for you," he wrote to Louis, "as if you were the archangel Gabriel."

Page 653

The Prince, however, did all that it was possible for man, so hampered, to do. He was himself, while anxiously writing, hoping, and waiting for supplies of troops from Germany or France, doing his best with such volunteers as he could raise. He was still established at Sassenheim, on the south of the city, while Sonoy with his slender forces was encamped on the north. He now sent that general with as large a party as he could muster to attack the Diemerdyk. His men entrenched themselves as strongly as they could between the Diemer and the Y, at the same time opening the sluices and breaking through the dyke. During the absence of their commander, who had gone to Edam for reinforcements, they were attacked by a large force from Amsterdam. A fierce amphibious contest took place, partly in boats, partly on the slippery causeway, partly in the water, resembling in character the frequent combats between the ancient Batavians and Romans during the wars of Civilis. The patriots were eventually overpowered.

Sonoy, who was on his way to their rescue, was frustrated in his design by the unexpected faint-heartedness of the volunteers whom he had enlisted at Edam. Braving a thousand perils, he advanced, almost unattended, in his little vessel, but only to witness the overthrow and expulsion of his band. It was too late for him singly to attempt to rally the retreating troops. They had fought well, but had been forced to yield before superior numbers, one individual of the little army having performed prodigies of valor. John Haring, of Horn, had planted himself entirely alone upon the dyke, where it was so narrow between the Y on the one side and the Diemer Lake on the other, that two men could hardly stand abreast. Here, armed with sword and shield, he had actually opposed and held in check one thousand of the enemy, during a period long enough to enable his own men, if they, had been willing, to rally, and effectively to repel the attack. It was too late, the battle was too far lost to be restored; but still the brave soldier held the post, till, by his devotion, he had enabled all those of his compatriots who still remained in the entrenchments to make good their retreat. He then plunged into the sea, and, untouched by spear or bullet, effected his escape. Had he been a Greek or a Roman, an Horatius or a Chabrias, his name would have been famous in history—his statue erected in the market-place; for the bold Dutchman on his dyke had manifested as much valor in a sacred cause as the most classic heroes of antiquity.

This unsuccessful attempt to cut off the communication between Amsterdam and the country strengthened the hopes of Alva. Several hundreds of the patriots were killed or captured, and among the slain was Antony Oliver, the painter, through whose agency Louis of Nassau had been introduced into *Mons*. His head was cut off by two ensigns in Alva's service, who received the price which had been set upon it

Page 654

of two thousand caroli. It was then labelled with its owner's name, and thrown into the city of Harlem. At the same time a new gibbet was erected in the Spanish camp before the city, in a conspicuous situation, upon which all the prisoners were hanged, some by the neck, some by the heels, in full view of their countrymen. As usual, this especial act of cruelty excited the emulation of the citizens. Two of the old board of magistrates, belonging to the Spanish party, were still imprisoned at Harlem; together with seven other persons, among whom was a priest and a boy of twelve years. They were now condemned to the gallows. The wife of one of the ex-burgomasters and his daughter, who was a beguin, went by his side as he was led to execution, piously exhorting him to sustain with courage the execrations of the populace and his ignominious doom. The rabble, irritated by such boldness, were not satisfied with wreaking their vengeance on the principal victims, but after the execution had taken place they hunted the wife and daughter into the water, where they both perished. It is right to record these instances of cruelty, sometimes perpetrated by the patriots as well as by their oppressors—a cruelty rendered almost inevitable by the incredible barbarity of the foreign invader. It was a war of wolfish malignity. In the words of Mendoza, every man within and without Harlem "seemed inspired by a spirit of special and personal vengeance." The innocent blood poured out in Mechlin, Zutphen, Naarden, and upon a thousand scaffolds, had been crying too long from the ground. The Hollanders must have been more or less than men not to be sometimes betrayed into acts which justice and reason must denounce. [No! It was as evil for one side as the other. D.W.]

The singular mood which has been recorded of a high-spirited officer of the garrison, Captain Corey, illustrated the horror with which such scenes of carnage were regarded by noble natures. Of a gentle disposition originally, but inflamed almost to insanity by a contemplation of Spanish cruelty, he had taken up the profession of arms, to which he had a natural repugnance. Brave to recklessness, he led his men on every daring outbreak, on every perilous midnight adventure. Armed only with his rapier, without defensive armor, he was ever found where the battle raged most fiercely, and numerous were the victims who fell before his sword. On returning, however, from such excursions, he invariably shut himself in his quarters, took to his bed, and lay for days, sick with remorse, and bitterly lamenting all that bloodshed in which he had so deeply participated, and which a cruel fate seemed to render necessary. As the gentle mood subsided, his frenzy would return, and again he would rush to the field, to seek new havoc and fresh victims for his rage.

Page 655

The combats before the walls were of almost daily occurrence. On the 25th March, one thousand of the besieged made a brilliant sally, drove in all the outposts of the enemy, burned three hundred tents, and captured seven cannon, nine standards, and many wagon-loads of provisions, all which they succeeded in bringing with them into the city. —Having thus reinforced themselves, in a manner not often practised by the citizens of a beleaguered town, in the very face of thirty thousand veterans—having killed eight hundred of the enemy, which was nearly one for every man engaged, while they lost but four of their own party—the Harlemers, on their return, erected a trophy of funereal but exulting aspect. A mound of earth was constructed upon the ramparts, in the form of a colossal grave, in full view of the enemy's camp, and upon it were planted the cannon and standards so gallantly won in the skirmish, with the taunting inscription floating from the centre of the mound "Harlem is the graveyard of the Spaniards."

Such were the characteristics of this famous siege during the winter and early spring. Alva might well write to his sovereign, that "it was a war such as never before was seen or heard of in any land on earth." Yet the Duke had known near sixty years of warfare. He informed Philip that "never was a place defended with such skill and bravery as Harlem, either by rebels or by men fighting for their lawful Prince." Certainly his son had discovered his mistake in asserting that the city would yield in a week; while the father, after nearly six years' experience, had found this "people of butter" less malleable than even those "iron people" whom he boasted of having tamed. It was seen that neither the skies of Greece or Italy, nor the sublime scenery of Switzerland, were necessary to arouse the spirit of defiance to foreign oppression—a spirit which beat as proudly among the wintry mists and the level meadows of Holland as it had ever done under sunnier atmospheres and in more romantic lands.

Mendoza had accomplished his mission to Spain, and had returned with supplies of money within six weeks from the date of his departure. Owing to his representations and Alva's entreaties, Philip had, moreover, ordered Requesens, governor of Milan, to send forward to the Netherlands three veteran Spanish regiments, which were now more required at Harlem than in Italy. While the land force had thus been strengthened, the fleet upon the lake had also been largely increased. The Prince of Orange had, on the other hand, provided more than a hundred sail of various descriptions, so that the whole surface of the mere was now alive with ships. Seafights and skirmishes took place almost daily, and it was obvious that the life and death struggle was now to be fought upon the water. So long as the Hollanders could hold or dispute the possession of the lake, it was still possible to succor Harlem from time to time. Should the Spaniards overcome the Prince's fleet, the city must inevitably starve.

Page 656

At last, on the 28th of May, a decisive engagement of the fleets took place. The vessels grappled with each other, and there was a long, fierce, hand-to-hand combat. Under Bossu were one hundred vessels; under Martin Brand, admiral of the patriot fleet, nearly one hundred and fifty, but of lesser dimensions. Batenhurg commanded the troops on board the Dutch vessels. After a protracted conflict, in which several thousands were killed, the victory was decided in favor of the Spaniards. Twenty-two of the Prince's vessels being captured, and the rest totally routed, Bossu swept across the lake in triumph. The forts belonging to the patriots were immediately taken, and the Harlemers, with their friends, entirely excluded from the lake.

This was the beginning of the end. Despair took possession of the city. The whole population had been long subsisting upon an allowance of a pound of bread to each man, and half-a-pound for each woman; but the bread was now exhausted, the famine had already begun, and with the loss of the lake starvation was close at their doors. They sent urgent entreaties to, the Prince to attempt something in their behalf. Three weeks more they assigned as the longest term during which they could possibly hold out. He sent them word by carrier pigeons to endure yet a little time, for he was assembling a force, and would still succeed in furnishing them with supplies. Meantime, through the month of June the sufferings of the inhabitants increased hourly. Ordinary food had long since vanished. The population now subsisted on linseed and rape-seed; as these supplies were exhausted they devoured cats, dogs, rats, and mice, and when at last these unclean animals had been all consumed, they boiled the hides of horses and oxen; they ate shoe-leather; they plucked the nettles and grass from the graveyards, and the weeds which grew between the stones of the pavement, that with such food they might still support life a little longer, till the promised succor should arrive. Men, women, and children fell dead by scores in the streets, perishing of pure starvation, and the survivors had hardly the heart or the strength to bury them out of their sight. They who yet lived seemed to flit like shadows to and fro, envying those whose sufferings had already been terminated by death.

Thus wore away the month of June. On the 1st of July the burghers consented to a parley. Deputies were sent to confer with the besiegers, but the negotiations were abruptly terminated, for no terms of compromise were admitted by Don Frederic. On the 3rd a tremendous cannonade was re-opened upon the city. One thousand and eight balls were discharged—the most which had ever been thrown in one day, since the commencement of the siege. The walls were severely shattered, but the assault was not ordered, because the besiegers were assured that it was physically impossible for the inhabitants to hold out many days longer. A last letter, written in blood, was now despatched

Page 657

to the Prince of Orange, stating the forlorn condition to which they were reduced. At the same time, with the derision of despair, they flung into the hostile camp the few loaves of bread which yet remained within the city walls. A day or two later, a second and third parley were held, with no more satisfactory result than had attended the first. A black flag was now hoisted on the cathedral tower, the signal of despair to friend and foe, but a pigeon soon afterwards flew into the town with a letter from the Prince, begging them to maintain themselves two days longer, because succor was approaching.

The Prince had indeed been doing all which, under the circumstances, was possible. He assembled the citizens of Delft in the market-place, and announced his intention of marching in person to the relief of the city, in the face of the besieging army, if any troops could be obtained. Soldiers there were none; but there was the deepest sympathy for Harlem throughout its sister cities, Delft, Rotterdam, Gouda. A numerous mass of burghers, many of them persons of station, all people of respectability, volunteered to march to the rescue. The Prince highly disapproved of this miscellaneous army, whose steadfastness he could not trust. As a soldier, he knew that for such a momentous enterprise, enthusiasm could not supply the place of experience. Nevertheless, as no regular troops could be had, and as the emergency allowed no delay, he drew up a commission, appointing Paulus Buys to be governor during his absence, and provisional stadholder, should he fall in the expedition. Four thousand armed volunteers, with six hundred mounted troopers, under Carlo de Noot, had been assembled, and the Prince now placed himself at their head. There was, however, a universal cry of remonstrance from the magistracies and burghers of all the towns, and from the troops themselves, at this project. They would not consent that a life so precious, so indispensable to the existence of Holland, should be needlessly hazarded. It was important to succor Harlem, but the Prince was of more value than many cities. He at last reluctantly consented, therefore, to abandon the command of the expedition to Baron Batenburg, the less willingly from the want of confidence which he could not help feeling in the character of the forces. On the 8th of July, at dusk, the expedition set forth from Sassenheim. It numbered nearly five thousand men, who had with them four hundred wagon-loads of provisions and seven field-pieces. Among the volunteers, Oldenbarneveld; afterwards so illustrious in the history of the Republic; marched in the ranks, with his musket on his shoulder. Such was a sample of the spirit which pervaded the population of the province.

Batenburg came to a halt in the woods of Nordwyk, on the south aide of the city, where he remained till midnight. All seemed still in the enemy’s camp. After prayers, he gave orders to push forward, hoping to steal through the lines of his sleeping adversaries and accomplish the relief by surprise. He was destined to be bitterly disappointed. His plans and his numbers were thoroughly known to the Spaniards, two doves, bearing letters which contained the details of the intended expedition, having been shot and brought into Don Frederic’s camp.

Page 658

The citizens, it appeared, had broken through the curtain work on the side where Batenburg was expected, in order that a sally might be made in co-operation with the relieving force, as soon as it should appear. Signal fires had been agreed upon, by which the besieged were to be made aware of the approach of their friends. The Spanish Commander accordingly ordered a mass of green branches, pitch, and straw, to be lighted opposite to the gap in the city wall. Behind it he stationed five thousand picked troops. Five thousand more, with a force of cavalry, were placed in the neighbourhood of the downs, with orders to attack the patriot army on the left. Six regiments, under Romero, were ordered to move eastward, and assail their right. The dense mass of smoke concealed the beacon lights displayed by Batenburg from the observation of the townspeople, and hid the five thousand Spaniards from the advancing Hollanders. As Batenburg emerged from the wood, he found himself attacked by a force superior to his own, while a few minutes later he was entirely enveloped by overwhelming numbers. The whole Spanish army was, indeed; under arms, and had been expecting him for two days. The unfortunate citizens alone were ignorant of his arrival. The noise of the conflict they supposed to be a false alarm created by the Spaniards, to draw them into their camp; and they declined a challenge which they were in no condition to accept.

Batenburg was soon slain, and his troops utterly routed. The number killed was variously estimated at from six hundred to two and even three thousand. It is, at any rate, certain that the whole force was entirely destroyed or dispersed, and the attempt to relieve the city completely frustrated. The death of Batenburg was the less regretted, because he was accused, probably with great injustice, of having been intoxicated at the time of action, and therefore incapable of properly, conducting the enterprise entrusted to him.

The Spaniards now cut off the nose and ears of a prisoner and sent him into the city, to announce the news, while a few heads were also thrown over the walls to confirm the intelligence. When this decisive overthrow became known in Delft, there was even an outbreak of indignation against Orange. According to a statement of Alva, which, however, is to be received with great distrust, some of the populace wished to sack the Prince’s house, and offered him personal indignities. Certainly, if these demonstrations were made, popular anger was never more senseless; but the tale rests entirely, upon a vague assertion of the Duke, and is entirely, at variance with every other contemporaneous account of these transactions. It had now become absolutely, necessary, however, for the heroic but wretched town to abandon itself to its fate. It was impossible to attempt anything more in its behalf. The lake and its forts were in the hands of the enemy, the best force which could be mustered to make head against the besieging army had been cut to pieces, and the Prince of Orange, with a heavy heart, now sent word that the burghers were to make the best terms they could with the enemy.

Page 659

The tidings of despair created a terrible commotion in the starving city. There was no hope either in submission or resistance. Massacre or starvation was the only alternative. But if there was no hope within the walls, without there was still a soldier's death. For a moment the garrison and the able-bodied citizens resolved to advance from the gates in a solid column, to cut their way through the enemy's camp, or to perish on the field. It was thought that the helpless and the infirm, who would alone be left in the city, might be treated with indulgence after the fighting men had all been slain. At any rate, by remaining the strong could neither protect nor comfort them. As soon, however, as this resolve was known, there was such wailing and outcry of women and children as pierced the hearts of the soldiers and burghers, and caused them to forego the project. They felt that it was cowardly not to die in their presence. It was then determined to form all the females, the sick, the aged, and the children, into a square, to surround them with all the able-bodied men who still remained, and thus arrayed to fight their way forth from the gates, and to conquer by the strength of despair, or at least to perish all together.

These desperate projects, which the besieged were thought quite capable of executing, were soon known in the Spanish camp. Don Frederic felt, after what he had witnessed in the past seven months, that there was nothing which the Harlemers could not do or dare. He feared lest they should set fire to their city, and consume their houses, themselves, and their children, to ashes together; and he was unwilling that the fruits of his victory, purchased at such a vast expense, should be snatched from his hand as he was about to gather them. A letter was accordingly, by his order, sent to the magistracy and leading citizens, in the name of Count Overstein, commander of the German forces in the besieging army. This despatch invited a surrender at discretion, but contained the solemn assurance that no punishment should be inflicted except upon those who, in the judgment of the citizens themselves, had deserved it, and promised ample forgiveness if the town should submit without further delay. At the moment of sending this letter, Don Frederic was in possession of strict orders from his father not to leave a man alive of the garrison, excepting only the Germans, and to execute besides a large number of the burghers. These commands he dared not disobey,—even if he had felt any inclination to do so. In consequence of the semi-official letter of Overstein, however, the city formally surrendered at discretion on the 12th July.

Page 660

The great bell was tolled, and orders were issued that all arms in the possession of the garrison or the inhabitants should be brought to the town-house. The men were then ordered to assemble in the cloister of Zyl, the women in the cathedral. On the same day, Don Frederic, accompanied by Count Bossu and a numerous staff, rode into the city. The scene which met his view might have moved a heart of stone. Everywhere was evidence of the misery which had been so bravely endured during that seven months' siege. The smouldering ruins of houses, which had been set on fire by balls, the shattered fortifications, the felled trunks of trees, upturned pavements, broken images and other materials for repairing gaps made by the daily cannonade, strewn around in all directions, the skeletons of unclean animals from which the flesh had been gnawed, the unburied bodies of men and women who had fallen dead in the public thoroughfares—more than all, the gaunt and emaciated forms of those who still survived, the ghosts of their former, selves, all might have induced at least a doubt whether the suffering inflicted already were not a sufficient punishment, even for crimes so deep as heresy and schism. But this was far from being the sentiment of Don Frederic. He seemed to read defiance as well as despair in the sunken eyes which glared upon him as he entered the place, and he took no thought of the pledge which he had informally but sacredly given.

All the officers of the garrison were at once arrested. Some of them had anticipated the sentence of their conqueror by a voluntary death. Captain Bordet, a French officer of distinction, like Brutus, compelled his servant to hold the sword upon which he fell, rather than yield himself alive to the vengeance of the Spaniards. Traits of generosity were not wanting. Instead of Peter Hasselaer, a young officer who had displayed remarkable bravery throughout the siege, the Spaniards by. mistake arrested his cousin Nicholas. The prisoner was suffering himself to be led away to the inevitable scaffold without remonstrance, when Peter Hasselaer pushed his way violently through the ranks of the captors. "If you want Ensign Hasselaer, I am the man. Let this innocent person depart," he cried. Before the sun set his head had fallen. All the officers were taken to the House of Kleef, where they were immediately executed.—Captain Ripperda, who had so heroically rebuked the craven conduct of the magistracy, whose eloquence had inflamed the soldiers and citizens to resistance, and whose skill and courage had sustained the siege so long, was among the first to suffer. A natural son of Cardinal Granvelle, who could have easily saved his life by proclaiming a parentage which he loathed, and Lancelot Brederode, an illegitimate scion of that ancient house, were also among these earliest victims.

Page 661

The next day Alva came over to the camp. He rode about the place, examining the condition of the fortifications from the outside, but returned to Amsterdam without having entered the city. On the following morning the massacre commenced. The plunder had been commuted for two hundred and forty thousand guilders, which the citizens bound themselves to pay in four instalments; but murder was an indispensable accompaniment of victory, and admitted of no compromise. Moreover, Alva had already expressed the determination to effect a general massacre upon this occasion. The garrison, during the siege, had been reduced from four thousand to eighteen hundred. Of these the Germans, six hundred in number, were, by Alva's order, dismissed, on a pledge to serve no more against the King. All the rest of the garrison were immediately butchered, with at least as many citizens. Drummers went about the city daily, proclaiming that all who harbored persons having, at any former period, been fugitives, were immediately to give them up, on pain of being instantly hanged themselves in their own doors. Upon these refugees and upon the soldiery fell the brunt of the slaughter; although, from day to day, reasons were perpetually discovered for putting to death every individual at all distinguished by service, station, wealth, or liberal principles; for the carnage could not be accomplished at once, but, with all the industry and heartiness employed, was necessarily protracted through several days. Five executioners, with their attendants, were kept constantly at work; and when at last they were exhausted with fatigue, or perhaps sickened with horror, three hundred wretches were tied two and two, back to back, and drowned in the Harlem Lake.

At last, after twenty-three hundred human creatures had been murdered in cold blood, within a city where so many thousands had previously perished by violent or by lingering deaths; the blasphemous farce of a pardon was enacted. Fifty-seven of the most prominent burghers of the place were, however, excepted from the act of amnesty, and taken into custody as security for the future good conduct of the other citizens. Of these hostages some were soon executed, some died in prison, and all would have been eventually sacrificed, had not the naval defeat of Bossu soon afterwards enabled the Prince of Orange to rescue the remaining prisoners. Ten thousand two hundred and fifty-six shots had been discharged against the walls during the siege. Twelve thousand of the besieging army had died of wounds or disease, during the seven months and two days, between the, investment and the surrender. In the earlier part of August, after the executions had been satisfactorily accomplished, Don Frederic made his triumphal entry, and the first chapter in the invasion of Holland was closed. Such was the memorable siege of Harlem, an event in which we are called upon to wonder equally at human capacity to inflict and to endure misery.

Page 662

The Spaniards celebrated a victory, while in Utrecht they made an effigy of the Prince of Orange, which they carried about in procession, broke upon the wheel, and burned. It was, however, obvious, that if the reduction of Harlem were a triumph, it was one which the conquerors might well exchange for a defeat. At any rate, it was certain that the Spanish empire was not strong enough to sustain many more such victories. If it had required thirty thousand choice troops, among which were three regiments called by Alva respectively, the “Invincibles,” the “Immortals,” and the “None-such,” to conquer the weakest city of Holland in seven months, and with the loss of twelve thousand men; how many men, how long a time, and how many deaths would it require to reduce the rest of that little province? For, as the sack of Naarden had produced the contrary effect from the one intended, inflaming rather than subduing the spirit of Dutch resistance, so the long and glorious defence of Harlem, notwithstanding its tragical termination, had only served to strain to the highest pitch the hatred and patriotism of the other cities in the province. Even the treasures of the New World were inadequate to pay for the conquest of that little sand-bank. Within five years, twenty-five millions of florins had been sent from Spain for war expenses in the Netherlands.—Yet, this amount, with the addition of large sums annually derived from confiscations, of five millions, at which the proceeds of the hundredth penny was estimated, and the two millions yearly, for which the tenth and twentieth pence had been compounded, was insufficient to save the treasury from beggary and the unpaid troops from mutiny.

Nevertheless, for the moment the joy created was intense. Philip was lying dangerously ill at the wood of Segovia, when the happy tidings of the reduction of Harlem, with its accompanying butchery, arrived. The account of all this misery, minutely detailed to him by Alva, acted like magic. The blood of twenty-three hundred of his fellow-creatures—coldly murdered, by his orders, in a single city—proved for the sanguinary monarch the elixir of life: he drank and was refreshed. “The principal medicine which has cured his Majesty,” wrote Secretary Cayas from Madrid to Alva, “is the joy caused to him by the good news which you have communicated of the surrender of Harlem.” In the height of his exultation, the King forgot how much dissatisfaction he had recently felt with the progress of events in the Netherlands; how much treasure had been annually expended with an insufficient result. “Knowing your necessity,” continued Cayas, “his Majesty instantly sent for Doctor Velasco, and ordered him to provide you with funds, if he had to descend into the earth to dig for it.” While such was the exultation of the Spaniards, the Prince of Orange was neither dismayed nor despondent. As usual, he trusted to a higher power than man. “I had hoped to send you better news,”

Page 663

he wrote, to Count Louis, “nevertheless, since it has otherwise pleased the good God, we must conform ourselves to His divine will. I take the same God to witness that I have done everything according to my means, which was possible, to succor the city.” A few days later, writing in the same spirit, he informed his brother that the Zealanders had succeeded in capturing the castle of Rammekens, on the isle of Walcheren. “I hope,” he said, “that this will reduce the pride of our enemies, who, after the surrender of Harlem, have thought that they were about to swallow us alive. I assure myself, however, that they will find a very different piece of work from the one which they expect.”

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

Enthusiasm could not supply the place of experience
Envying those whose sufferings had already been terminated
Leave not a single man alive in the city, and to burn every house
Not strong enough to sustain many more such victories
Oldenbarneveld; afterwards so illustrious
Sent them word by carrier pigeons
Three hundred fighting women
Tyranny, ever young and ever old, constantly reproducing herself
Wonder equally at human capacity to inflict and to endure misery

MOTLEY’S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 21.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By *John Lothrop Motley* 1855 1573 [*chapter ix*.]

Position of Alva—Hatred entertained for him by elevated personages —Quarrels between him and Medina Coeli—Departure of the latter— Complaints to the King by each of the other—Attempts at conciliation addressed by government to the people of the Netherlands—Grotesque character of the address—Mutinous demonstration of the Spanish troops—Secret overtures to Orange— Obedience, with difficulty, restored by Alva—Commencement of the siege of Alkmaar—Sanguinary menaces of the Duke—-Encouraging and enthusiastic language of the Prince—Preparations in Alkmaar for defence—The first assault steadily repulsed—Refusal of the soldiers to storm a second time—Expedition of the Carpenter-envoy— Orders of the Prince to flood the country—-The Carpenter’s despatches in the enemy’s hands—Effect produced upon the Spaniards —The siege raised—Negotiations of Count Louis with France— Uneasiness and secret correspondence of the Duke—Convention with the English government—-

Objects pursued by Orange—Cruelty of De la Marck—His dismissal from office and subsequent death—Negotiations with France—Altered tone of the French court with regard to the St. Bartholomew—Ill effects of the crime upon the royal projects—Hypocrisy of the Spanish government—Letter of Louis to Charles *ix*. —Complaints of Charles *ix*.—Secret aspirations of that monarch and of Philip—Intrigues concerning the Polish election—Renewed

Page 664

negotiations between Schomberg and Count Louis, with consent of Orange—Conditions prescribed by the Prince—Articles of secret alliance—Remarkable letter of Count Louis to Charles *ix*.— Responsible and isolated situation of Orange—The “Address” and the “Epistle”—Religious sentiments of the Prince—Naval action on the Zuyder Zee—-Captivity of Bossu and of Saint Aldegonde—Odious position of Alva—His unceasing cruelty—Execution of Uitenhoove— Fraud practised by Alva upon his creditors—Arrival of Requesens, the new Governor-General—Departure of Alva—Concluding remarks upon his administration.

For the sake of continuity in the narrative, the siege of Harlem has been related until its conclusion. This great event constituted, moreover, the principal stuff in Netherland, history, up to the middle of the year 1573. A few loose threads must be now taken up before we can proceed farther.

Alva had for some time felt himself in a false and uncomfortable position. While he continued to be the object of a popular hatred as intense as ever glowed, he had gradually lost his hold upon those who, at the outset of his career, had been loudest and lowest in their demonstrations of respect. “Believe me,” wrote Secretary Albornoz to Secretary Cayas, “this people abhor our nation worse than they abhor the Devil. As for the Duke of Alva, they foam at the mouth when they hear his name.” Viglius, although still maintaining smooth relations with the Governor, had been, in reality, long since estranged from him. Even Aerschot, far whom the Duke had long maintained an intimacy half affectionate, half contemptuous, now began to treat him with a contumely which it was difficult for so proud a stomach to digest.

But the main source of discomfort was doubtless the presence of Medina Coeli. This was the perpetual thorn in his side, which no cunning could extract. A successor who would not and could not succeed him, yet who attended him as his shadow and his evil genius—a confidential colleague who betrayed his confidence, mocked his projects, derided his authority, and yet complained of ill treatment—a rival who was neither compeer nor subaltern, and who affected to be his censor—a functionary of a purely anomalous character, sheltering himself under his abnegation of an authority which he had not dared to assume, and criticising measures which he was not competent to grasp;—such was the Duke of Medina Coeli in Alva’s estimation.

The bickering between the two Dukes became unceasing and disgraceful. Of course, each complained to the King, and each, according to his own account, was a martyr to the other’s tyranny, but the meekness manifested by Alva; in all his relations with the new comer, was wonderful, if we are to believe the accounts furnished by himself and by his confidential secretary. On the other hand, Medina Coeli wrote to the King, complaining of Alva in most unmitigated strains, and asserting that he was himself never allowed to see any despatches, nor to have the slightest information as to the policy of the government. He reproached, the Duke with shrinking from personal participation in

military operations, and begged the royal forgiveness if he withdrew from a scene where he felt himself to be superfluous.

Page 665

Accordingly, towards the end of November, he took his departure, without paying his respects. The Governor complained to the King of this unceremonious proceeding, and assured His Majesty that never were courtesy and gentleness so ill requited as his had been by this ingrate and cankered Duke. “He told me,” said Alva, “that if I did not stay in the field, he would not remain with me in peaceful cities, and he asked me if I intended to march into Holland with the troops which were to winter there. I answered, that I should go wherever it was necessary, even should I be obliged to swim through all the canals of Holland.” After giving these details, the Duke added, with great appearance of candor and meekness, that he was certain Medina Coeli had only been influenced by extreme zeal for His Majesty’s service, and that, finding, so little for him to do in the Netherlands, he had become dissatisfied with his position.

Immediately after the fall of Harlem, another attempt was made by Alva to win back the allegiance of the other cities by proclamations. It had become obvious to the Governor that so determined a resistance on the part of the first place besieged augured many long campaigns before the whole province could be subdued. A circular was accordingly issued upon the 26th July from Utrecht, and published immediately afterwards in all the cities of the Netherlands. It was a paper of singular character, commingling an affectation of almost ludicrous clemency, with honest and hearty brutality. There was consequently something very grotesque about the document. Philip, in the outset, was made to sustain towards his undutiful subjects the characters of the brooding hen and the prodigal’s father; a range of impersonation hardly to be allowed him, even by the most abject flattery. “Ye are well aware,” thus ran the address, “that the King has, over and over again, manifested his willingness to receive his children, in however forlorn a condition the prodigals might return. His Majesty assures you once more that your sins, however black they may have been, shall be forgiven and forgotten in the plenitude of royal kindness, if you repent and return in season to his Majesty’s embrace. Notwithstanding your manifold crimes, his Majesty still seeks, like a hen calling her chickens, to gather you all under the parental wing. The King hereby warns you once more, therefore, to place yourselves in his royal hands, and not to wait for his rage, cruelty, and fury, and the approach of his army.”

The affectionate character of the address, already fading towards the end of the preamble, soon changes to bitterness. The domestic maternal fowl dilates into the sanguinary dragon as the address proceeds. “But if,” continues the monarch, “ye disregard these offers of mercy, receiving them with closed ears, as heretofore, then we warn you that there is no rigor, nor cruelty, however great, which you are not to expect by laying waste, starvation, and the sword, in such manner that nowhere shall remain a relic of that which at present exists, but his Majesty will strip bare and utterly depopulate the land, and cause it to be inhabited again by strangers; since otherwise his Majesty could not believe that the will of God and of his Majesty had been accomplished.”

Page 666

It is almost superfluous to add that this circular remained fruitless. The royal wrath, thus blasphemously identifying itself with divine vengeance, inspired no terror, the royal blandishments no affection.

The next point of attack was the city of Alkmaar, situate quite at the termination of the Peninsula, among the lagunes and redeemed prairies of North Holland. The Prince of Orange had already provided it with a small garrison. The city had been summoned to surrender by the middle of July, and had returned a bold refusal.—Meantime, the Spaniards had retired from before the walls, while the surrender and chastisement of Harlem occupied them during the next succeeding weeks. The month of August, moreover, was mainly consumed by Alva in quelling a dangerous and protracted mutiny, which broke out among the Spanish soldiers at Harlem—between three and four thousand of them having been quartered upon the ill-fated population of that city.

Unceasing misery was endured by the inhabitants at the hands of the ferocious Spaniards, flushed with victory, mutinous for long arrears of pay, and greedy for the booty which had been denied. At times, however, the fury of the soldiery was more violently directed against their own commanders than against the enemy. A project was even formed by the malcontent troops to deliver Harlem into the hands of Orange. A party of them, disguised as Baltic merchants, waited upon the Prince at Delft, and were secretly admitted to his bedside before he had risen. They declared to him that they were Spanish soldiers, who had compassion on his cause, were dissatisfied with their own government, and were ready, upon receipt of forty thousand guilders, to deliver the city into his hands. The Prince took the matter into consideration, and promised to accept the offer if he could raise the required sum. This, however, he found himself unable to do within the stipulated time, and thus, for want of so paltry a sum, the offer was of necessity declined.

Various were the excesses committed by the insubordinate troops in every province in the Netherlands upon the long-suffering inhabitants. “Nothing,” wrote Alva, “had given him so much pain during his forty years of service.” He avowed his determination to go to Amsterdam in order to offer himself as a hostage to the soldiery, if by so doing he could quell the mutiny. He went to Amsterdam accordingly, where by his exertions, ably seconded by those of the Marquis Vitelli, and by the payment of thirty crowns to each soldier—fourteen on account of arrearages and sixteen as his share in the Harlem compensation money—the rebellion was appeased, and obedience restored.

Page 667

There was now leisure for the General to devote his whole energies against the little city of Alkmaar. On that bank and shoal, the extreme verge of habitable earth, the spirit of Holland's Freedom stood at bay. The grey towers of Egmont Castle and of Egmont Abbey rose between the city and the sea, and there the troops sent by the Prince of Orange were quartered during the very brief period in which the citizens wavered as to receiving them. The die was soon cast, however, and the Prince's garrison admitted. The Spaniards advanced, burned the village of Egmont to the ground as soon as the patriots had left it, and on the 21st of August Don Frederic, appearing before the walls, proceeded formally to invest Allanaar. In a few days this had been so thoroughly accomplished that, in Alva's language, "it was impossible for a sparrow to enter or go out of the city." The odds were somewhat unequal. Sixteen thousand veteran troops constituted the besieging force. Within the city were a garrison of eight hundred soldiers, together with thirteen hundred burghers, capable of bearing arms. The rest of the population consisted of a very few refugees, besides the women and children. Two thousand one hundred able-bodied men, of whom only about one-third were soldiers, to resist sixteen thousand regulars.

Nor was there any doubt as to the fate which was reserved for them, should they succumb. The Duke was vociferous at the ingratitude with which his clemency had hitherto been requited. He complained bitterly of the ill success which had attended his monitory circulars; reproached himself with incredible vehemence, for his previous mildness, and protested that, after having executed only twenty-three hundred persons at the surrender of Harlem, besides a few additional burghers since, he had met with no correspondent demonstrations of affection. He promised himself, however, an ample compensation for all this ingratitude, in the wholesale vengeance which he purposed to wreak upon Alkmaar. Already he gloated in anticipation over the havoc which would soon be let loose within those walls. Such ravings, if invented by the pen of fiction, would seem a puerile caricature; proceeding, authentically, from his own,—they still appear almost too exaggerated for belief. "If I take Alkmaar," he wrote to Philip, "I am resolved not to leave a single creature alive; the knife shall be put to every throat. Since the example of Harlem has proved of no use, perhaps an example of cruelty will bring the other cities to their senses."

He took occasion also to read a lecture to the party of conciliation in Madrid, whose counsels, as he believed, his sovereign was beginning to heed. Nothing, he maintained, could be more senseless than the idea of pardon and clemency. This had been sufficiently proved by recent events. It was easy for people at a distance to talk about gentleness, but those upon the spot knew better. Gentleness had produced

Page 668

nothing, so far; violence alone could succeed in future. “Let your Majesty,” he said, “be disabused of the impression, that with kindness anything can be done with these people. Already have matters reached such a point that many of those born in the country, who have hitherto advocated clemency, are now undeceived, and acknowledge —their mistake. They are of opinion that not a living soul should be left in Alkmaar, but that every individual should be put to the sword.” At the same time he took occasion, even in these ferocious letters, which seem dripping with blood, to commend his own natural benignity of disposition. “Your Majesty may be certain,” he said, “that no man on earth desires the path of clemency more than I do, notwithstanding my particular hatred for heretics and traitors.” It was therefore with regret that he saw himself obliged to take the opposite course, and to stifle all his gentler sentiments.

Upon Diedrich Sonoy, Lieutenant-Governor for Orange in the province of North Holland, devolved the immediate responsibility of defending this part of the country. As the storm rolled slowly up from the south, even that experienced officer became uneasy at the unequal conflict impending. He despatched a letter to his chief, giving a gloomy picture of his position. All looked instinctively towards the Prince, as to a God in their time of danger; all felt as if upon his genius and fortitude depended the whole welfare of the fatherland. It was hoped, too, that some resource had been provided in a secret foreign alliance. “If your princely grace,” wrote Sonoy, “have made a contract for assistance with any powerful potentate, it is of the highest importance that it should be known to all the cities, in order to put an end to the emigration, and to console the people in their affliction.”

The answer, of the Prince was full of lofty enthusiasm. He reprimanded with gentle but earnest eloquence the despondency and little faith of his lieutenant and other adherents. He had not expected, he said, that they would have so soon forgotten their manly courage. They seemed to consider the whole fate of the country attached to the city of Harlem. He took God to witness that—he had spared no pains, and would willingly have spared no drop of his blood to save that devoted city. “But as, notwithstanding our efforts,” he continued, “it has pleased God Almighty to dispose of Harlem according to His divine will, shall we, therefore, deny and deride His holy word? Has the strong arm of the Lord thereby grown weaker? Has his Church therefore come to caught? You ask if I have entered into a firm treaty with any great king or potentate, to which I answer, that before I ever took up the cause of the oppressed Christians in these provinces, I had entered into a close alliance with the King of kings; and I am firmly convinced that all who put their trust in Him shall be saved by His almighty hand. The God of armies will raise up armies for us to do battle with our enemies sad His own.” In conclusion, he stated his preparations for attacking the enemy by sea as well as by land, and encouraged his lieutenant and the citizens of the northern quarter to maintain a bold front before the advancing foe.

Page 669

And now, with the dismantled and desolate Harlem before their eyes, a prophetic phantom, perhaps, of their own imminent fate, did the handful of people shut up within Alkmaar prepare for the worst. Their main hope lay in the friendly sea. The vast sluices called the Zyp, through which an inundation of the whole northern province could be very soon effected, were but a few miles distant. By opening these gates, and by piercing a few dykes, the ocean might be made to fight for them. To obtain this result, however, the consent of the inhabitants was requisite, as the destruction of all the standing crops would be inevitable. The city was so closely invested, that it was a matter of life and death to venture forth, and it was difficult, therefore, to find an envoy for this hazardous mission. At last, a carpenter in the city, Peter Van der Mey by name, undertook the adventure, and was entrusted with letters to Sonoy, to the Prince of Orange, and to the leading personages, in several cities of the province: These papers were enclosed in a hollow walking-staff, carefully made fast at the top.

Affairs soon approached a crisis within the beleaguered city. Daily skirmishes, without decisive result; had taken place outside the walls. At last, on the 18th of September, after a steady cannonade of nearly twelve hours, Don Frederic, at three in the afternoon, ordered an assault. Notwithstanding his seven months' experience at Harlem, he still believed it certain that he should carry Alkmaar by storm. The attack took place at once upon the Frisian gate and upon the red tower on the opposite side. Two choice regiments, recently arrived from Lombardy; led the onset, rending the air with their shouts, and confident of an easy victory. They were sustained by what seemed an overwhelming force of disciplined troops. Yet never, even in the recent history of Harlem, had an attack been received by more dauntless breasts. Every living man was on the walls. The storming parties were assailed with cannon, with musketry, with pistols. Boiling water, pitch and oil, molten lead, and unslaked lime, were poured upon them every moment. Hundreds of tarred and burning hoops were skilfully quoited around the necks of the soldiers, who struggled in vain to extricate themselves from these fiery ruffs, while as fast as any of the invaders planted foot upon the breach, they were confronted face to face with sword and dagger by the burghers, who hurled them headlong into the moat below.

Thrice was the attack renewed with ever-increasing rage—thrice repulsed with unflinching fortitude. The storm continued four hours long. During all that period, not one of the defenders left his post, till he dropped from it dead or wounded. The women and children, unscared by the balls flying in every direction, or by the hand-to-hand conflicts on the ramparts; passed steadily to and fro from the arsenals to the fortifications, constantly supplying their fathers, husbands, and brothers with powder

Page 670

and ball. Thus, every human being in the city that could walk had become a soldier. At last darkness fell upon the scene. The trumpet of recal was sounded, and the Spaniards, utterly discomfited, retired from the walls, leaving at least one thousand dead in the trenches, while only thirteen burghers and twenty-four of the garrison lost their lives. Thus was Alkmaar preserved for a little longer—thus a large and well-appointed army signally defeated by a handful of men fighting for their firesides and altars. Ensign Solis, who had mounted the breach for an instant, and miraculously escaped with life, after having been hurled from the battlements, reported that he had seen “neither helmet nor harness,” as he looked down into the city: only some plain-looking people, generally dressed like fishermen. Yet these plain-looking fishermen had defeated the veterans of Alva.

The citizens felt encouraged by the results of that day’s work. Moreover, they already possessed such information concerning the condition of affairs in the camp of the enemy as gave them additional confidence. A Spaniard, named Jeronimo, had been taken prisoner and brought into the city. On receiving a promise of pardon, he had revealed many secrets concerning the position and intentions of the besieging army. It is painful to add that the prisoner, notwithstanding his disclosures and the promise under which they had been made, was treacherously executed. He begged hard for his life as he was led to the gallows, offering fresh revelations, which, however, after the ample communications already made, were esteemed superfluous. Finding this of no avail, he promised his captors, with perfect simplicity, to go down on his knees and worship the Devil precisely as they did, if by so doing he might obtain mercy. It may be supposed that such a proposition was not likely to gain additional favor for him in the eyes of these rigid Calvinists, and the poor wretch was accordingly hanged.

The day following the assault, a fresh cannonade was opened upon the city. Seven hundred shots having been discharged, the attack was ordered. It was in vain: neither threats nor entreaties could induce the Spaniards, hitherto so indomitable, to mount the breach. The place seemed to their imagination protected by more than mortal powers; otherwise how was it possible that a few half-starved fishermen could already have so triumphantly overthrown the time-honored legions of Spain. It was thought, no doubt, that the Devil, whom they worshipped, would continue to protect his children. Neither the entreaties nor the menaces of Don Frederic were of any avail. Several soldiers allowed themselves to be run through the body by their own officers, rather than advance to the walls; and the assault was accordingly postponed to an indefinite period.

Page 671

Meantime, as Governor Sonoy had opened many of the dykes, the land in the neighbourhood of the camp was becoming plashy, although as yet the threatened inundation had not taken place. The soldiers were already very uncomfortable and very refractory. The carpenter-envoy had not been idle, having, upon the 26th September, arrived at Sonoy's quarters, bearing letters from the Prince of Orange. These despatches gave distinct directions to Sonoy to flood the countlv at all risks; rather than allow Alkmaar to, fall into the enemy's hands. The dykes and sluices were to be protected by a strong guard, lest the peasants, in order to save their crops, should repair or close them in the night-time. The letters of Orange were copied, and, together with fresh communications from Sonoy, delivered to the carpenter. A note on the margin of the Prince's letter, directed the citizens to kindle four beacon fires in specified places, as soon as it should prove necessary to resort to extreme measures. When that moment should arrive, it was solemnly promised that an inundation should be created which should sweep the whole Spanish army into the sea. The work had, in fact, been commenced. The Zyp and other sluices had already been opened, and a vast body of water, driven by a strong north-west wind, had rushed in from the ocean. It needed only that two great dykes should be pierced to render the deluge and the desolation complete. The harvests were doomed to destruction, and a frightful loss of property rendered inevitable, but, at any rate, the Spaniards, if this last measure were taken, must fly or perish to a man.

This decisive blow having been thus ordered and promised; the carpenter set forth towards the city. He was, however, not so successful in accomplishing his entrance unmolested, as he had been in effecting his departure. He narrowly escaped with his life in passing through the enemy's lines, and while occupied in saving himself was so unlucky, or, as it proved, so fortunate, as to lose the stick in which his despatches were enclosed. He made good his entrance into the city, where, byword of mouth, he encouraged his fellow-burghers as to the intentions of the Prince and Sonoy. In the meantime his letters were laid before the general of the besieging army. The resolution taken by Orange, of which Don Frederic was thus unintentionally made aware, to flood the country far and near, rather than fail to protect Alkmaar, made a profound impression upon his mind. It was obvious that he was dealing with a determined leader and with desperate men. His attempt to carry the place by storm had signally failed, and he could not deceive himself as to the temper and disposition of his troops ever since that repulse. When it should become known that they were threatened with submersion in the ocean, in addition to all the other horrors of war, he had reason to believe that they would retire ignominiously from that remote and desolate sand hook, where, by remaining, they could only find a watery grave. These views having been discussed in a council of officers, the result was reached that sufficient had been already accomplished for the glory of Spanish arms. Neither honor nor loyalty, it was thought, required that sixteen thousand soldiers should be sacrificed in a contest, not with man but with the ocean.

Page 672

On the 8th of October, accordingly, the siege, which had lasted seven weeks, was raised, and Don Frederic rejoined his father in Amsterdam. Ready to die in the last ditch, and to overwhelm both themselves and their foes in a common catastrophe the Hollanders had at last compelled their haughty enemy to fly from a position which he had so insolently assumed.

These public transactions and military operations were not the only important events which affected the fate of Holland and its sister provinces at this juncture. The secret relations which had already been renewed between Louis of Nassau, as plenipotentiary of his brother and the French court, had for some time excited great uneasiness in the mind of Alva. Count Louis was known to be as skilful a negotiator as he was valiant and accomplished as a soldier. His frankness and boldness created confidence. The “brave spirit in the loyal breast” inspired all his dealing; his experience and quick perception of character prevented his becoming a dupe of even the most adroit politicians, while his truth of purpose made him incapable either of overreaching an ally or of betraying a trust. His career indicated that diplomacy might be sometimes successful, even although founded upon sincerity.

Alva secretly expressed to his sovereign much suspicion of France. He reminded him that Charles *ix*.; during the early part of the preceding year, had given the assurance that he was secretly dealing with Louis of Nassau, only that he might induce the Count to pass over to Philip’s service. At the same time Charles had been doing all he could to succor Moos, and had written the memorable letter which had fallen into Alva’s hands on the capture of Genlis, and which expressed such a fixed determination to inflict a deadly blow upon the King, whom the writer was thus endeavouring to cajole. All this the Governor recalled to the recollection of his sovereign. In view of this increasing repugnance of the English court, Alva recommended that fair words should be employed; hinting, however, that it would be by no means necessary for his master to consider himself very strictly bound by any such pledges to Elizabeth, if they should happen to become inconveniently pressing. “A monarch’s promises,” he delicately suggested, “were not to be considered so sacred as those of humbler mortals. Not that the King should directly violate his word, but at the same time,” continued the Duke, “I have thought all my life, and I have learned it from the Emperor, your Majesty’s father, that the negotiations of kings depend upon different principles from those of us private gentlemen who walk the world; and in this manner I always observed that your Majesty’s father, who was, so great a gentleman and so powerful a prince, conducted his affairs.” The Governor took occasion, likewise, to express his regrets at the awkward manner in which the Ridolfi scheme had been managed. Had he been consulted at an earlier day, the affair could have

Page 673

been treated much more delicately; as it was, there could be little doubt but that the discovery of the plot had prejudiced the mind of Elizabeth against Spain. "From that dust," concluded the Duke, "has resulted all this dirt." It could hardly be matter of surprise, either to Philip or his Viceroy, that the discovery by Elizabeth of a plot upon their parts to take her life and place the crown upon the head of her hated rival, should have engendered unamiable feelings in her bosom towards them. For the moment, however, Alva's negotiations were apparently successful.

On the first of May, 1573, the articles of convention between England and Spain, with regard to the Netherland difficulty, had been formally published in Brussels. The Duke, in communicating the termination of these arrangements, quietly recommended his master thenceforth to take the English ministry into his pay. In particular he advised his Majesty to bestow an annual bribe upon Lord Burleigh, "who held the kingdom in his hand; for it has always been my opinion," he continued, "that it was an excellent practice for princes to give pensions to the ministers of other potentates, and to keep those at home who took bribes from nobody."

On the other hand, the negotiations of Orange with the English court were not yet successful, and he still found it almost impossible to raise the requisite funds for carrying on the war. Certainly, his private letters showed that neither he nor his brothers were self-seekers in their negotiations. "You know;" said he in a letter to his brothers, "that my intention has never been to seek my private advantage. I have only aspired for the liberty of the country, in conscience and in polity, which foreigners have sought to oppress. I have no other articles to propose, save that religion, reformed according to the Word of God, should be permitted, that then the commonwealth should be restored to its ancient liberty, and, to that end, that the Spaniards and other soldiery should be compelled to retire."

The restoration of civil and religious liberty, the, establishment of the great principle of toleration in matters of conscience, constituted the purpose to which his days and nights were devoted, his princely fortune sacrificed, his life-blood risked. At the same time, his enforcement of toleration to both religions excited calumny against him among the bigoted adherents of both. By the Catholics he was accused of having instigated the excesses which he had done everything in his power to repress. The enormities of De la Marck, which had inspired the Prince's indignation, were even laid at the door of him who had risked his life to prevent and to chastise them. De la Marck had, indeed, more than counterbalanced his great service in the taking of Brill, by his subsequent cruelties. At last, Father Cornelius Musius, pastor of Saint Agatha, at the age of seventy-two, a man highly esteemed by the Prince of Orange, had been

Page 674

put to torture and death by this barbarian, under circumstances of great atrocity. The horrid deed cost the Prince many tears, aroused the indignation of the estates of Holland, and produced the dismission of the perpetrator from their service. It was considered expedient, however, in view of his past services, his powerful connexions, and his troublesome character, that he should be induced peaceably to leave the country.

It was long before the Prince and the estates could succeed in ridding themselves of this encumbrance. He created several riots in different parts of the province, and boasted, that he had many fine ships of war and three thousand men devoted to him, by whose assistance he could make the estates “dance after his pipe.” At the beginning of the following year (1574), he was at last compelled to leave the provinces, which he never again troubled with his presence. Some years afterwards, he died of the bite of a mad dog; an end not inappropriate to a man of so rabid a disposition.

While the Prince was thus steadily striving for a lofty and generous purpose, he was, of course, represented by his implacable enemies as a man playing a game which, unfortunately for himself, was a losing one. “That poor prince,” said Granvelle, “has been ill advised. I doubt now whether he will ever be able to make his peace, and I think we shall rather try to get rid of him and his brother as if they were Turks. The marriage with the daughter of Maurice, ‘unde mala et quia ipse talis’, and his brothers have done him much harm. So have Schwendi and German intimacies. I saw it all very plainly, but he did not choose to believe me.”

Ill-starred, worse counselled William of Orange! Had he but taken the friendly Cardinal’s advice, kept his hand from German marriages and his feet from conventicles —had he assisted his sovereign in burning heretics and hunting rebels, it would not then have become necessary “to treat him like a Turk.” This is unquestionable. It is equally so that there would have been one great lamp the less in that strait and difficult pathway which leads to the temple of true glory.

The main reliance of Orange was upon the secret negotiations which his brother Louis was then renewing with the French government. The Prince had felt an almost insurmountable repugnance towards entertaining any relation with that blood-stained court, since the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. But a new face had recently been put upon that transaction. Instead of glorying, in their crime, the King and his mother now assumed a tone of compunction, and averred that the deed had been unpremeditated; that it had been the result of a panic or an ecstasy of fear inspired by the suddenly discovered designs of the Huguenots; and that, in the instinct of self-preservation, the King, with his family and immediate friends, had plunged into a crime which they now bitterly lamented. The French envoys at the different courts of Europe were directed to

Page 675

impress this view upon the minds of the monarchs to whom they were accredited. It was certainly a very different instruction from that which they had at first received. Their cue had originally been to claim a full meed of praise and thanksgiving in behalf of their sovereign for his meritorious exploit. The salvos of artillery, the illuminations and rejoicings, the solemn processions and masses by which the auspicious event had been celebrated, mere yet fresh in the memory of men. The ambassadors were sufficiently embarrassed by the distinct and determined approbation which they had recently expressed. Although the King, by formal proclamation, had assumed the whole responsibility, as he had notoriously been one of the chief perpetrators of the deed, his agents were now to stultify themselves and their monarch by representing, as a deplorable act of frenzy, the massacre which they had already extolled to the echo as a skilfully executed and entirely commendable achievement.

To humble the power of Spain, to obtain the hand of Queen Elizabeth for the Duke d'Alencon, to establish an insidious kind of protectorate over the Protestant princes of Germany, to obtain the throne of Poland for the Duke of Anjou, and even to obtain the imperial crown for the house of Valois—all these cherished projects seemed dashed to the ground by the Paris massacre and the abhorrence which it had created. Charles and Catharine were not slow to discover the false position in which they had placed themselves, while the Spanish jocularity at the immense error committed by France was visible enough through the assumed mask of holy horror.

Philip and Alva listened with mischievous joy to the howl of execration which swept through Christendom upon every wind. They rejoiced as heartily in the humiliation of the malefactors as they did in the perpetration of the crime. "Your Majesty," wrote Louis of Nassau, very bluntly, to King Charles, "sees how the Spaniard, your mortal enemy, feasts himself full with the desolation of your affairs; how he laughs, to-split his sides, at your misfortunes. This massacre has enabled him to weaken your Majesty more than he could have done by a war of thirty years."

Before the year had revolved, Charles had become thoroughly convinced of the fatal impression produced by the event. Bitter and almost abject were his whinings at the Catholic King's desertion of his cause. "He knows well," wrote Charles to Saint Goard, "that if he can terminate these troubles and leave me alone in the dance, he will have leisure and means to establish his authority, not only in the Netherlands but elsewhere; and that he will render himself more grand and formidable than he has ever been. This is the return they render for the good received from me, which is such as every one knows."

Page 676

Gaspar de Schomberg, the adroit and honorable agent of Charles in Germany, had at a very early day warned his royal master of the ill effect of the massacre upon all the schemes which he had been pursuing, and especially upon those which referred to the crowns of the Empire and of Poland. The first project was destined to be soon abandoned. It was reserved neither for Charles nor Philip to divert the succession in Germany from the numerous offspring of Maximilian; yet it is instructive to observe the unprincipled avidity with which the prize was sought by both. Each was willing to effect its purchase by abjuring what were supposed his most cherished principles. Philip of Spain, whose mission was to extirpate heresy throughout his realms, and who, in pursuance of that mission, had already perpetrated more crimes, and waded more deeply in the blood of his subjects, than monarch had often done before; Philip, for whom his apologists have never found any defence, save that he believed it his duty to God rather to depopulate his territories than to permit a single heretic within their limits —now entered into secret negotiations with the princes of the Empire. He pledged himself, if they would confer the crown upon him, that he would withdraw the Spaniards from the Netherlands; that he would tolerate in those provinces the exercise of the Reformed religion; that he would recognize their union with the rest of the German Empire, and their consequent claim to the benefits of the Passau treaty; that he would restore the Prince of Orange “and all his accomplices” to their former possessions, dignities, and condition; and that he would cause to be observed, throughout every realm incorporated with the Empire, all the edicts and ordinances which had been constructed to secure religious freedom in Germany. In brief, Philip was willing, in case the crown of Charlemagne should be promised him, to undo the work of his life, to reinstate the arch-rebel whom he had hunted and proscribed, and to bow before that Reformation whose disciples he had so long burned, and butchered. So much extent and no more had that religious, conviction by which he had for years had the effrontery to excuse the enormities practised in the Netherlands. God would never forgive him so long as one heretic remained unburned in the provinces; yet give him the Imperial sceptre, and every heretic, without forswearing his heresy, should be purged with hyssop and become whiter than snow.

Charles *ix*., too, although it was not possible for him to recal to life the countless victims of the Parisian wedding, was yet ready to explain those murders to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced mind. This had become strictly necessary. Although the accession of either his Most Christian or Most Catholic Majesty to the throne of the Caesars was a most improbable event, yet the humbler elective, throne actually vacant was indirectly in the gift of the same powers. It was possible that the crown of

Page 677

Poland might be secured for the Duke of Anjou. That key unlocks the complicated policy of this and the succeeding year. The Polish election is the clue to the labyrinthian intrigues and royal tergiversations during the period of the interregnum. Sigismund Augustus, last of the Jagellons, had died on the 7th July; 1572. The prominent candidates to succeed him were the Archduke Ernest, son of the Emperor, and Henry of Anjou. The Prince of Orange was not forgotten. A strong party were in favor of compassing his election, as the most signal triumph which Protestantism could gain, but his ambition had not been excited by the prospect of such a prize. His own work required all the energies of all his life. His influence, however, was powerful, and eagerly sought by the partisans of Anjou. The Lutherans and Moravians in Poland were numerous, the Protestant party there and in Germany holding the whole balance of the election in their hands.

It was difficult for the Prince to overcome his repugnance to the very name of the man whose crime had at once made France desolate, and blighted the fair prospects under which he and his brother had, the year before, entered the Netherlands. Nevertheless; he was willing to listen to the statements by which the King and his ministers endeavoured, not entirely without success, to remove from their reputations, if not from their souls; the guilt of deep design. It was something, that the murderers now affected to expiate their offence in sackcloth and ashes—it was something that, by favoring the pretensions of Anjou, and by listening with indulgence to the repentance of Charles, the siege of Rochelle could be terminated, the Huguenots restored to freedom of conscience, and an alliance with a powerful nation established, by aid of which the Netherlands might once more lift their heads. The French government, deeply hostile to Spain, both from passion and policy, was capable of rendering much assistance to the revolted provinces. “I entreat you most humbly, my good master,” wrote Schomberg to Charles *ix*., “to beware of allowing the electors to take into their heads that you are favoring the affairs of the King of Spain in any manner whatsoever. Commit against him no act of open hostility, if you think that imprudent; but look sharp! if you do not wish to be thrown clean out of your saddle. I should split with rage if I should see you, in consequence of the wicked calumnies of your enemies, fail to secure the prize.”

Orange was induced, therefore, to accept, however distrustfully, the expression of a repentance which was to be accompanied with healing measures. He allowed his brother Louis to resume negotiations with Schomberg, in Germany. He drew up and transmitted to him the outlines of a treaty which he was willing to make with Charles. The main conditions of this arrangement illustrated the disinterested character of the man. He stipulated that the King of France should immediately make peace with his subjects, declaring

Page 678

expressly that he had been abused by those, who, under pretext of his service, had sought their own profit at the price of ruin to the crown and people. The King should make religion free. The edict to that effect should be confirmed by all the parliaments and estates of the kingdom, and such confirmations should be distributed without reserve or deceit among all the princes of Germany. If his Majesty were not inclined to make war for the liberation of the Netherlands, he was to furnish the Prince of Orange with one hundred thousand crowns at once, and every three months with another hundred thousand. The Prince was to have liberty to raise one thousand cavalry and seven thousand infantry in France. Every city or town in the provinces which should be conquered by his arms, except in Holland or Zealand, should be placed under the sceptre, and in the hands of the King of France. The provinces of Holland and Zealand should also be placed under his protection, but should be governed by their own gentlemen and citizens. Perfect religious liberty and maintenance of the ancient constitutions, privileges, and charters were to be guaranteed “without any cavilling whatsoever.” The Prince of Orange, or the estates of Holland or Zealand, were to reimburse his Christian Majesty for the sums which he was to advance. In this last clause was the only mention which the Prince made of himself, excepting in the stipulation that he was to be allowed a levy of troops in France. His only personal claims were to enlist soldiers to fight the battles of freedom, and to pay their expense, if it should not be provided for by the estates. At nearly the same period, he furnished his secret envoys, Luinbres and Doctor Taijaert, who were to proceed to Paris, with similar instructions.

The indefatigable exertions of Schomberg, and the almost passionate explanations on the part of the court of France, at length produced their effect. “You will constantly assure the princes,” wrote the Duke of Anjou to Schomberg, “that the things written, to you concerning that which had happened in this kingdom are true; that the events occurred suddenly, without having been in any manner premeditated; that neither the King nor myself have ever had any intelligence with, the King of Spain, against those of the religion, and that all is utter imposture which is daily said on this subject to the princes.”

Count Louis required peremptorily, however, that the royal repentance should bring forth the fruit of salvation for the remaining victims. Out of the nettles of these dangerous intrigues his fearless hand plucked the “flower of safety” for his down-trodden cause. He demanded not words, but deeds, or at least pledges. He maintained with the agents of Charles and with the monarch himself the same hardy scepticism which was manifested by the Huguenot deputies in their conferences with Catharine de Medicis. “Is the word of a king,” said the dowager to the commissioners, who were insisting upon guarantees,

Page 679

“is the word of a king not sufficient?”—“No, madam,” replied one of them, “by Saint Bartholomew, no!” Count Louis told Schomberg roundly, and repeated it many times, that he must have in a very few days a categorical response, “not to consist in words alone, but in deeds, and that he could not, and would not, risk for ever the honor of his brother, nor the property; blood, and life of those poor people who favored the cause.”

On the 23rd March, 1573, Schomberg had an interview with Count Louis, which lasted seven or eight hours. In that interview the enterprises of the Count, “which,” said Schomberg, “are assuredly grand and beautiful,” were thoroughly discussed, and a series of conditions, drawn up partly in the hand of one, partly in that of the other negotiator; definitely agreed upon. These conditions were on the basis of a protectorate over Holland and Zealand for the King of France, with sovereignty over the other places to be acquired in the Netherlands. They were in strict accordance with the articles furnished by the Prince of Orange. Liberty of worship for those of both religions, sacred preservation of municipal charters, and stipulation of certain annual subsidies on the part of France, in case his Majesty should not take the field, were the principal features.

Ten days later, Schomberg wrote to his master that the Count was willing to use all the influence of his family to procure for Anjou the crown of Poland, while Louis, having thus completed his negotiations with the agent, addressed a long and earnest letter to the royal principal. This remarkable despatch was stamped throughout with the impress of the writer’s frank and fearless character. “Thus diddest thou” has rarely been addressed to anointed monarch in such unequivocal tones: The letter painted the favorable position in which the king had been placed previously to the fatal summer of 1572. The Queen of England was then most amicably disposed towards him, and inclined to a yet closer connexion with his family. The German princes were desirous to elect him King of the Romans, a dignity for which his grandfather had so fruitlessly contended. The Netherlanders, driven to despair by the tyranny of their own sovereign, were eager to throw themselves into his arms. All this had been owing to his edict of religious pacification. How changed the picture now! Who now did reverence to a King so criminal and so fallen? “Your Majesty to-day,” said Louis, earnestly and plainly, “is near to ruin. The State, crumbling on every side and almost abandoned, is a prey to any one who wishes to seize upon it; the more so, because your Majesty, having, by the late excess and by the wars previously made, endeavoured to force men’s consciences, is now so destitute, not only of nobility and soldiery but of that which constitutes the strongest column of the throne, the love and good wishes of the lieges, that your Majesty resembles an ancient building propped up, day after, day, with piles, but which it will be impossible long to prevent from falling to the earth.” Certainly, here were wholesome truths told in straightforward style.

Page 680

The Count proceeded to remind the King of the joy which the “Spaniard, his mortal enemy,” had conceived from the desolation of his affairs, being assured that he should, by the troubles in France, be enabled to accomplish his own purposes without striking a blow. This, he observed, had been the secret of the courtesy with which the writer himself had been treated by the Duke of Alva at the surrender of *Mons*. Louis assured the King, in continuation, that if he persevered in these oppressive courses towards his subjects of the new religion, there was no hope for him, and that his two brothers would, to no purpose, take their departure for England, and, for Poland, leaving him with a difficult and dangerous war upon his hands. So long as he maintained a hostile attitude towards the Protestants in his own kingdom, his fair words would produce no effect elsewhere. “We are beginning to be vexed,” said the Count, “with the manner of negotiation practised by France. Men do not proceed roundly to business there, but angle with their dissimulation as with a hook.”

He bluntly reminded the King of the deceit which he had practised towards the Admiral —a sufficient reason why no reliance could in future be placed upon his word. Signal vengeance on those concerned in the attempted assassination of that great man had been promised, in the royal letters to the Prince of Orange, just before St. Bartholomew. “Two days afterwards,” said Louis, “your Majesty took that vengeance, but in rather ill fashion.” It was certain that the King was surrounded by men who desired to work his ruin, and who, for their own purposes, would cause him to bathe still deeper than he had done before in the blood of his subjects. This ruin his Majesty could still avert; by making peace in his kingdom, and by ceasing to torment his poor subjects of the religion.

In conclusion, the Count, with a few simple but eloquent phrases, alluded to the impossibility of chaining men’s thoughts. The soul, being immortal, was beyond the reach of kings. Conscience was not to be conquered, nor the religious spirit imprisoned. This had been discovered by the Emperor Charles, who had taken all the cities and great personages of Germany captive, but who had nevertheless been unable to take religion captive. “That is a sentiment,” said Louis, “deeply rooted in the hearts of men, which is not to be plucked out by force of arms. Let your majesty, therefore not be deceived by the flattery of those who, like bad physicians, keep their patients in ignorance of their disease, whence comes their ruin.”

Page 681

It would be impossible, without insight into these private and most important transactions, to penetrate the heart of the mystery which enwrapped at this period the relations of the great powers with each other. Enough has been seen to silence for ever the plea, often entered in behalf of religious tyranny, that the tyrant acts in obedience to a sincere conviction of duty; that, in performing his deeds of darkness, he believes himself to be accomplishing the will of Heaven. Here we have seen Philip, offering to restore the Prince of Orange, and to establish freedom of religion in the Netherlands, if by such promises he can lay hold of the Imperial diadem. Here also we have Charles *ix*. and his mother—their hands reeking with the heretic-blood of St. Bartholomew—-making formal engagements with heretics to protect heresy everywhere, if by such pledges the crown of the Jagellons and the hand of Elizabeth can be secured.

While Louis was thus busily engaged in Germany, Orange was usually established at Delft. He felt the want of his brother daily, for the solitude of the Prince, in the midst of such fiery trials, amounted almost to desolation. Not often have circumstances invested an individual with so much responsibility and so little power. He was regarded as the protector and father of the country, but from his own brains and his own resources he was to furnish himself with the means of fulfilling those high functions. He was anxious thoroughly to discharge the duties of a dictatorship without grasping any more of its power than was indispensable to his purpose. But he was alone on that little isthmus, in single combat with the great Spanish monarchy. It was to him that all eyes turned, during the infinite horrors of the Harlem sieges and in the more prosperous leaguer of Alkmaar. What he could do he did. He devised every possible means to succor Harlem, and was only restrained from going personally to its rescue by the tears of the whole population of Holland. By his decision and the spirit which he diffused through the country, the people were lifted to a pitch of heroism by which Alkmaar was saved. Yet, during all this harassing period, he had no one to lean upon but himself. “Our affairs are in pretty good; condition in Holland and Zealand,” he wrote, “if I only had some aid. ’Tis impossible for me to support alone so many labors, and the weight of such great affairs as come upon me hourly—financial, military, political. I have no one to help me, not a single man, wherefore I leave you to suppose in what trouble I find myself.”

For it was not alone the battles and sieges which furnished him with occupation and filled him with anxiety. Alone, he directed in secret the politics of the country, and, powerless and outlawed though he seemed, was in daily correspondence not only with the estates of Holland and Zealand, whose deliberations he guided, but with the principal governments of Europe. The estates of the Netherlands, moreover, had been

Page 682

formally assembled by Alva in September, at Brussels, to devise ways and means for continuing the struggle. It seemed to the Prince a good opportunity to make an appeal to the patriotism of the whole country. He furnished the province of Holland, accordingly, with the outlines of an address which was forthwith despatched in their own and his name, to the general assembly of the Netherlands. The document was a nervous and rapid review of the course of late events in the provinces, with a cogent statement of the reasons which should influence them all to unite in the common cause against the common enemy. It referred to the old affection and true-heartedness with which they had formerly regarded each other, and to the certainty that the inquisition would be for ever established in the land, upon the ruins of all their ancient institutions, unless they now united to overthrow it for ever. It demanded of the people, thus assembled through their representatives, how they could endure the tyranny, murders, and extortions of the Duke of Alva. The princes of Flanders, Burgundy, Brabant, or Holland, had never made war or peace, coined money, or exacted a stiver from the people without the consent of the estates. How could the nation now consent to the daily impositions which were practised? Had Amsterdam and Middelburg remained true; had those important cities not allowed themselves to be seduced from the cause of freedom, the northern provinces would have been impregnable. "'Tis only by the Netherlands that the Netherlands are crushed," said the appeal. "Whence has the Duke of Alva the power of which he boasts, but from yourselves—from Netherland cities? Whence his ships, supplies, money, weapons, soldiers? From the Netherland people. Why has poor Netherland thus become degenerate and bastard? Whither has fled the noble spirit of our brave forefathers, that never brooked the tyranny of foreign nations, nor suffered a stranger even to hold office within our borders? If the little province of Holland can thus hold at bay the power of Spain, what could not all the Netherlands—-Brabant, Flanders, Friesland, and the rest united accomplish?" In conclusion, the estates-general were earnestly adjured to come forward like brothers in blood, and join hands with Holland, that together they might rescue the fatherland and restore its ancient prosperity and bloom.

At almost the same time the Prince drew up and put in circulation one of the most vigorous and impassioned productions which ever came from his pen. It was entitled, an "Epistle, in form of supplication, to his royal Majesty of Spain, from the Prince of Orange and the estates of Holland and Zealand." The document produced a profound impression throughout Christendom. It was a loyal appeal to the monarch's loyalty—a demand that the land-privileges should be restored, and the Duke of Alva removed. It contained a startling picture of his atrocities and the nation's misery, and, with a few energetic

Page 683

strokes, demolished the pretence that these sorrows had been caused by the people's guilt. In this connexion the Prince alluded to those acts of condemnation which the Governor-General had promulgated under the name of pardons, and treated with scorn the hypothesis that any crimes had been committed for Alva to forgive. "We take God and your Majesty to witness," said the epistle, "that if we have done such misdeeds as are charged in the pardon, we neither desire nor deserve the pardon. Like the most abject creatures which crawl the earth, we will be content to atone for our misdeeds with our lives. We will not murmur, O merciful King, if we be seized one after another, and torn limb from limb, if it can be proved that we have committed the crimes of which we have been accused."

After having thus set forth the tyranny of the government and the innocence of the people, the Prince, in his own name and that of the estates, announced the determination at which they had arrived. "The tyrant," he continued, "would rather stain every river and brook with our blood, and hang our bodies upon every tree in the country, than not feed to the full his vengeance, and steep himself to the lips in our misery. Therefore we have taken up arms against the Duke of Alva and his adherents, to free ourselves, our wives and children, from his blood-thirsty hands. If he prove too strong nor us, we will rather die an honorable death and leave a praiseworthy fame, than bend our necks, and reduce our dear fatherland to such slavery. Herein are all our cities pledged to each other to stand every siege, to dare the utmost, to endure every possible misery, yea, rather to set fire to all our homes, and be consumed with them into ashes together, than ever submit to the decrees of this cruel tyrant."

These were brave words, and destined to be bravely fulfilled, as the life and death of the writer and the records of his country proved, from generation unto generation. If we seek for the mainspring of the energy which thus sustained the Prince in the unequal conflict to which he had devoted his life, we shall find it in the one pervading principle of his nature—confidence in God. He was the champion of the political rights of his country, but before all he was the defender of its religion. Liberty of conscience for his people was his first object. To establish Luther's axiom, that thoughts are toll-free, was his determination. The Peace of Passau, and far more than the Peace of Passau, was the goal for which he was striving. Freedom of worship for all denominations, toleration for all forms of faith, this was the great good in his philosophy. For himself, he had now become a member of the Calvinist, or Reformed Church, having delayed for a time his public adhesion to this communion, in order not to give offence to the Lutherans and to the Emperor. He was never a dogmatist, however, and he sought in Christianity for that which unites rather than for that which separates Christians. In the course of October he publicly joined the church at Dort.

Page 684

The happy termination of the siege of Alkmaar was followed, three days afterwards, by another signal success on the part of the patriots. Count Bossu, who had constructed or collected a considerable fleet at Amsterdam, had, early in October, sailed into the Zuyder Zee, notwithstanding the sunken wrecks and other obstructions by which the patriots had endeavored to render the passage of the Y impracticable. The patriots of North Holland had, however, not been idle, and a fleet of five-and-twenty vessels, under Admiral Dirkzoon, was soon cruising in the same waters. A few skirmishes took place, but Bossu's ships, which were larger, and provided with heavier cannon, were apparently not inclined for the close quarters which the patriots sought. The Spanish Admiral, Hollander as he was, knew the mettle of his countrymen in a close encounter at sea, and preferred to trust to the calibre of his cannon. On the 11th October, however, the whole patriot fleet, favored by a strong easterly, breeze, bore down upon the Spanish armada, which, numbering now thirty sail of all denominations, was lying off and on in the neighbourhood of Horn and Enkhuyzen. After a short and general engagement, nearly all the Spanish fleet retired with precipitation, closely pursued by most of the patriot Dutch vessels. Five of the King's ships were eventually taken, the rest effected their escape. Only the Admiral remained, who scorned to yield, although his forces had thus basely deserted him. His ship, the "Inquisition,"—for such was her insolent appellation, was far the largest and best manned of both the fleets. Most of the enemy had gone in pursuit of the fugitives, but four vessels of inferior size had attacked the "Inquisition" at the commencement of the action. Of these, one had soon been silenced, while the other three had grappled themselves inextricably to her sides and prow. The four drifted together, before wind and tide, a severe and savage action going on incessantly, during which the navigation of the ships was entirely abandoned. No scientific gunnery, no military or naval tactics were displayed or required in such a conflict. It was a life-and-death combat, such as always occurred when Spaniard and Netherlander met, whether on land or water. Bossu and his men, armed in bullet-proof coats of mail, stood with shield and sword on the deck of the "Inquisition," ready to repel all attempts to board. The Hollander, as usual, attacked with pitch hoops, boiling oil, and molten lead. Repeatedly they effected their entrance to the Admiral's ship, and as often they were repulsed and slain in heaps, or hurled into the sea. The battle began at three in the afternoon, and continued without intermission through the whole night. The vessels, drifting together, struck on the shoal called the Nek, near Wydeness. In the heat of the action the occurrence was hardly heeded. In the morning twilight, John Haring, of Horn, the hero who had kept one thousand soldiers at bay upon

Page 685

the Diemer dyke, clambered on board the “Inquisition” and hauled her colors down. The gallant but premature achievement cost him his life. He was shot through the body and died on the deck of the ship, which was not quite ready to strike her flag. In the course of the forenoon, however, it became obvious to Bossu that further resistance was idle. The ships were aground near a hostile coast, his own fleet was hopelessly dispersed, three quarters of his crew were dead or disabled, while the vessels with which he was engaged were constantly recruited by boats from the shore, which brought fresh men and ammunition, and removed their killed and wounded. At eleven o’clock, Admiral Bossu surrendered, and with three hundred prisoners was carried into Holland. Bossu was himself imprisoned at Horn, in which city he was received, on his arrival, with great demonstrations of popular hatred. The massacre of Rotterdam, due to his cruelty and treachery, had not yet been forgotten or forgiven.

This victory, following so hard upon the triumph at Alkmaar, was as gratifying to the patriots as it was galling to Alva. As his administration drew to a close, it was marked by disaster and disgrace on land and sea. The brilliant exploits by which he had struck terror into the heart of the Netherlanders, at Jemmingen and in Brabant, had been effaced by the valor of a handful of Hollanders, without discipline or experience. To the patriots, the opportune capture of so considerable a personage as the Admiral and Governor of the northern province was of great advantage. Such of the hostages from Harlem as had not yet been executed, now escaped with their lives. Moreover, Saint Aldegonde, the eloquent patriot and confidential friend of Orange, who was taken prisoner a few weeks later, in an action at Maeslands-luis, was preserved from inevitable destruction by the same cause. The Prince hastened to assure the Duke of Alva that the same measure would be dealt to Bossu as should be meted to Saint Aldegonde. It was, therefore, impossible for the Governor-General to execute his prisoner, and he was obliged to submit to the vexation of seeing a leading rebel and heretic in his power, whom he dared not strike. Both the distinguished prisoners eventually regained their liberty.

The Duke was, doubtless, lower sunk in the estimation of all classes than he had ever been before, during his long and generally successful life. The reverses sustained by his army, the belief that his master had grown cold towards him, the certainty that his career in the Netherlands was closing without a satisfactory result, the natural weariness produced upon men’s minds by the contemplation of so monotonous and unmitigated a tyranny during so many years, all contributed to diminish his reputation. He felt himself odious alike to princes and to plebeians. With his cabinet councillors he had long been upon unsatisfactory terms. President Tisnacq had died early, in the summer, and

Page 686

Viglius, much against his will, had been induced, provisionally, to supply his place. But there was now hardly a pretence of friendship between the learned Frisian and the Governor. Each cordially detested the other. Alva was weary of Flemish and Frisian advisers, however subservient, and was anxious to fill the whole council with Spaniards of the Vargas stamp. He had forced Viglius once more into office, only that, by a little delay, he might expel him and every Netherlander at the same moment. "Till this ancient set of dogmatizers be removed," he wrote to Philip, "with Viglius, their chief, who teaches them all their lessons, nothing will go right. 'Tis of no use adding one or two Spaniards to fill vacancies; that is only pouring a flask of good wine into a hogshead of vinegar; it changes to vinegar likewise. Your Majesty will soon be able to reorganize the council at a blow; so that Italians or Spaniards, as you choose, may entirely govern the country."

Such being his private sentiments with regard to his confidential advisers, it may be supposed that his intercourse with his council during the year was not like to be amicable. Moreover, he had kept himself, for the most part, at a distance from the seat of government. During the military operations in Holland, his head-quarters had been at Amsterdam. Here, as the year drew to its close, he had become as unpopular as in Brussels. The time-serving and unpatriotic burghers, who, at the beginning of the spring, set up his bust in their houses, and would give large sums for his picture in little, now broke his images and tore his portraits from their walls, for it was evident that the power of his name was gone, both with prince and people. Yet, certainly, those fierce demonstrations which had formerly surrounded his person with such an atmosphere of terror had not slackened or become less frequent than heretofore. He continued to prove that he could be barbarous, both on a grand and a minute scale. Even as in preceding years, he could ordain wholesale massacres with a breath, and superintend in person the executions of individuals. This was illustrated, among other instances, by the cruel fate of Uitenhoove. That unfortunate nobleman, who had been taken prisoner in the course of the summer, was accused of having been engaged in the capture of Brill, and was, therefore, condemned by the Duke to be roasted to death before a slow fire. He was accordingly fastened by a chain, a few feet in length, to a stake, around which the fagots were lighted. Here he was kept in slow torture for a long time, insulted by the gibes of the laughing Spaniards who surrounded him—until the executioner and his assistants, more humane than their superior, despatched the victim with their spears—a mitigation of punishment which was ill received by Alva. The Governor had, however, no reason to remain longer in Amsterdam. Harlem had fallen; Alkmaar was relieved; and Leyden—destined in its second siege to furnish so signal a chapter to the history of the war—was beleaguered, it was true, but, because known to be imperfectly supplied, was to be reduced by blockade rather than by active operations. Don Francis Valdez was accordingly left in command of the siege, which, however, after no memorable occurrences, was raised, as will soon be related.

Page 687

The Duke had contracted in Amsterdam an enormous amount of debt, both public and private. He accordingly, early in November, caused a proclamation to be made throughout the city by sound of trumpet, that all persons having demands upon him were to present their claims, in person, upon a specified day. During the night preceding the day so appointed, the Duke and his train very noiselessly took their departure, without notice or beat of drum. By this masterly generalship his unhappy creditors were foiled upon the very eve of their anticipated triumph; the heavy accounts which had been contracted on the faith of the King and the Governor, remained for the most part unpaid, and many opulent and respectable families were reduced to beggary. Such was the consequence of the unlimited confidence which they had reposed in the honor of their tyrant.

On the 17th of November, Don Luis de Requesens y Cuniga, Grand Commander of Saint Jago, the appointed successor of Alva, arrived in Brussels, where he was received with great rejoicings. The Duke, on the same day, wrote to the King, “kissing his feet” for thus relieving him of his functions. There was, of course, a profuse interchange of courtesy between the departing and the newly-arrived Governors. Alva was willing to remain a little while, to assist his successor with his advice, but preferred that the Grand Commander should immediately assume the reins of office. To this Requesens, after much respectful reluctance, at length consented. On the 29th of November he accordingly took the oaths, at Brussels, as Lieutenant-Governor and Captain-General, in presence of the Duke of Aerschot, Baron Berlaymont, the President of the Council, and other functionaries.

On the 18th of December the Duke of Alva departed from the provinces for ever. With his further career this history has no concern, and it is not desirable to enlarge upon the personal biography of one whose name certainly never excites pleasing emotions. He had kept his bed for the greater part of the time during the last few weeks of his government—partly on account of his gout, partly to avoid being seen in his humiliation, but mainly, it was said, to escape the pressing demands of his creditors. He expressed a fear of travelling homeward through France, on the ground that he might very probably receive a shot out of a window as he went by. He complained pathetically that, after all his labors, he had not “gained the approbation of the King,” while he had incurred “the malevolence and universal hatred of every individual in the country.” Mondoucet, to whom he made the observation, was of the same opinion; and informed his master that the Duke “had engendered such an extraordinary hatred in the hearts of all persons in the land, that they would have fireworks in honor of his departure if they dared.”

Page 688

On his journey from the Netherlands, he is said to have boasted that he had caused eighteen thousand six hundred inhabitants of the provinces to be executed during the period of his government. The number of those who had perished by battle, siege, starvation, and massacre, defied computation. The Duke was well received by his royal master, and remained in favor until a new adventure of Don Frederic brought father and son into disgrace. Having deceived and abandoned a maid of honor, he suddenly espoused his cousins in order to avoid that reparation by marriage which was demanded for his offence. In consequence, both the Duke and Don Frederic were imprisoned and banished, nor was Alva released till a general of experience was required for the conquest of Portugal. Thither, as it were with fetters on his legs, he went. After having accomplished the military enterprise entrusted to him, he fell into a lingering fever, at the termination of which he was so much reduced that he was only kept alive by milk, which he drank from a woman's breast. Such was the gentle second childhood of the man who had almost literally been drinking blood for seventy years. He died on the 12th December, 1582.

The preceding pages have been written in vain, if an elaborate estimate be now required of his character. His picture has been painted, as far as possible, by his own hand. His deeds, which are not disputed, and his written words, illustrate his nature more fully than could be done by the most eloquent pen. No attempt has been made to exaggerate his crimes, or to extenuate his superior qualities. Virtues he had none, unless military excellence be deemed, as by the Romans, a virtue. In war, both as a science and a practical art, he excelled all the generals who were opposed to him in the Netherlands, and he was inferior to no commander in the world during the long and belligerent period to which his life belonged. Louis of Nassau possessed high reputation throughout Europe as a skilful and daring General. With raw volunteers he had overthrown an army of Spanish regulars, led by a Netherland chieftain of fame and experience; but when Alva took the field in person the scene was totally changed. The Duke dealt him such a blow at Jemmingen as would have disheartened for ever a less indomitable champion. Never had a defeat been more absolute. The patriot army was dashed out of existence, almost to a man, and its leader, naked and beggared, though not disheartened, sent back into Germany to construct his force and his schemes anew.

Having thus flashed before the eyes of the country the full terrors of his name, and vindicated the ancient military renown of his nation, the Duke was at liberty to employ the consummate tactics, in which he could have given instruction to all the world, against his most formidable antagonist. The country, paralyzed with fear, looked anxiously but supinely upon the scientific combat between the two great champions of

Page 689

Despotism and Protestantism which succeeded. It was soon evident that the conflict could terminate in but one way. The Prince had considerable military abilities, and enthusiastic courage; he lost none of his well-deserved reputation by the unfortunate issue of his campaign; he measured himself in arms with the great commander of the age, and defied him, day after day, in vain, to mortal combat; but it was equally certain that the Duke's quiet game was, played in the most masterly manner. His positions and his encampments were taken with faultless judgment, his skirmishes wisely and coldly kept within the prescribed control, while the inevitable dissolution of the opposing force took place exactly as he had foreseen, and within the limits which he had predicted. Nor in the disastrous commencement of the year 1572 did the Duke less signally manifest his military genius. Assailed as he was at every point, with the soil suddenly upheaving all around him, as by an earthquake, he did not lose his firmness nor his perspicacity. Certainly, if he had not been so soon assisted by that other earthquake, which on Saint Bartholomew's Day caused all Christendom to tremble, and shattered the recent structure of Protestant Freedom in the Netherlands, it might have been worse for his reputation. With Mons safe, the Flemish frontier guarded; France faithful, and thirty thousand men under the Prince of Orange in Brabant, the heroic brothers might well believe that the Duke was "at their mercy." The treason of Charles *ix*. "smote them as with a club," as the Prince exclaimed in the bitterness of his spirit. Under the circumstances, his second campaign was a predestined failure, and Alva easily vanquished him by a renewed application of those dilatory arts which he so well understood.

The Duke's military fame was unquestionable when he came to the provinces, and both in stricken fields and in long campaigns, he showed how thoroughly it had been deserved; yet he left the Netherlands a baffled man. The Prince might be many times defeated, but he was not to be conquered. As Alva penetrated into the heart of the ancient Batavian land he found himself overmatched as he had never been before, even by the most potent generals of his day. More audacious, more inventive, more desperate than all the commanders of that or any other age, the spirit of national freedom, now taught the oppressor that it was invincible; except by annihilation. The same lesson had been read in the same thickets by the Nervii to Julius Caesar, by the Batavians to the legions of Vespasian; and now a loftier and a purer flame than that which inspired the national struggles against Rome glowed within the breasts of the descendants of the same people, and inspired them with the strength which comes, from religious enthusiasm. More experienced, more subtle, more politic than Hermann; more devoted, more patient, more magnanimous than Civilis, and equal to either in valor and determination,

Page 690

William of Orange was a worthy embodiment of the Christian, national resistance of the German race to a foreign tyranny. Alva had entered the Netherlands to deal with them as with conquered provinces. He found that the conquest was still to be made, and he left the land without having accomplished it. Through the sea of blood, the Hollanders felt that they were passing to the promised land. More royal soldiers fell during the seven months' siege of Harlem than the rebels had lost in the defeat of Jemmingen, and in the famous campaign of Brabant. At Alkmaar the rolling waves of insolent conquest were stayed, and the tide then ebbed for ever.

The accomplished soldier struggled hopelessly, with the wild and passionate hatred which his tyranny had provoked. Neither his legions nor his consummate strategy availed him against an entirely desperate people. As a military commander, therefore, he gained, upon the whole, no additional laurels during his long administration of the Netherlands. Of all the other attributes to be expected in a man appointed to deal with a free country, in a state of incipient rebellion, he manifested a signal deficiency. As a financier, he exhibited a wonderful ignorance of the first principles of political economy. No man before, ever gravely proposed to establish confiscation as a permanent source of revenue to the state; yet the annual product from the escheated property of slaughtered heretics was regularly relied upon, during his administration, to replenish the King's treasury, and to support the war of extermination against the King's subjects. Nor did statesman ever before expect a vast income from the commerce of a nation devoted to almost universal massacre. During the daily decimation of the people's lives, he thought a daily decimation of their industry possible. His persecutions swept the land of those industrious classes which had made it the rich and prosperous commonwealth it had been so lately; while, at the same time, he found a "Peruvian mine," as he pretended, in the imposition of a tenth penny upon every one of its commercial transactions. He thought that a people, crippled as this had been by the operations of the Blood Council; could pay ten per cent., not annually but daily; not upon its income, but upon its capital; not once only, but every time the value constituting the capital changed hands. He had boasted that he should require no funds from Spain, but that, on the contrary, he should make annual remittances to the royal treasury at home, from the proceeds of his imposts and confiscations; yet, notwithstanding these resources, and notwithstanding twenty-five millions of gold in five years, sent by Philip from Madrid, the exchequer of the provinces was barren and bankrupt when his successor arrived. Requesens found neither a penny in the public treasury nor the means of raising one.

Page 691

As an administrator of the civil and judicial affairs of the country, Alva at once reduced its institutions to a frightful simplicity. In the place of the ancient laws of which the Netherlanders were so proud, he substituted the Blood Council. This tribunal was even more arbitrary than the Inquisition. Never was a simpler apparatus for tyranny devised, than this great labor-saving machine. Never was so great a, quantity of murder and robbery achieved with such despatch and regularity. Sentences, executions, and confiscations, to an incredible extent, were turned out daily with appalling precision. For this invention, Alva is alone responsible. The tribunal and its councillors were the work and the creatures of his hand, and faithfully did they accomplish the dark purpose of their existence. Nor can it be urged, in extenuation of the Governor's crimes, that he was but the blind and fanatically loyal slave of his sovereign. A noble nature could not have contaminated itself with such slaughter-house work, but might have sought to mitigate the royal policy, without forswearing allegiance. A nature less rigid than iron, would at least have manifested compunction, as it found itself converted into a fleshless instrument of massacre. More decided than his master, however, he seemed, by his promptness, to rebuke the dilatory genius of Philip. The King seemed, at times, to loiter over his work, teasing and tantalising his appetite for vengeance, before it should be gratified: Alva, rapid and brutal, scorned such epicureanism. He strode with gigantic steps over haughty statutes and popular constitutions; crushing alike the magnates who claimed a bench of monarchs for their jury, and the ignoble artisans who could appeal only to the laws of their land. From the pompous and theatrical scaffolds of Egmont and Horn, to the nineteen halters prepared by Master Karl, to hang up the chief bakers and brewers of Brussels on their own thresholds—from the beheading of the twenty nobles on the Horse-market, in the opening of the Governor's career, to the roasting alive of Uitenhoove at its close-from the block on which fell the honored head of Antony Straalen, to the obscure chair in which the ancient gentlewoman of Amsterdam suffered death for an act of vicarious mercy—from one year's end to another's—from the most signal to the most squalid scenes of sacrifice, the eye and hand of the great master directed, without weariness, the task imposed by the sovereign.

No doubt the work of almost indiscriminate massacre had been duly mapped out. Not often in history has a governor arrived to administer the affairs of a province, where the whole population, three millions strong, had been formally sentenced to death. As time wore on, however, he even surpassed the bloody instructions which he had received. He waved aside the recommendations of the Blood Council to mercy; he dissuaded the monarch from attempting the path of clemency, which, for secret reasons, Philip was inclined at one period to attempt. The Governor had, as he assured the King, been using gentleness in vain, and he was now determined to try what a little wholesome severity could effect. These words were written immediately after the massacres at Harlem.

Page 692

With all the bloodshed at Mons, and Naarden, and Mechlin, and by the Council of Tumults, daily, for six years long, still crying from the ground, he taxed himself with a misplaced and foolish tenderness to the people. He assured the King that when Alkmaar should be taken, he would, not spare a “living soul among its whole population;” and, as his parting advice, he recommended that every city in the Netherlands should be burned to the ground, except a few which could he occupied permanently by the royal troops. On the whole, so finished a picture of a perfect and absolute tyranny has rarely been presented to mankind by history, as in Alva’s administration of the Netherlands.

The tens of thousands in those miserable provinces who fell victims to the gallows, the sword, the stake, the living grave, or to living banishment, have never been counted; for those statistics of barbarity are often effaced from human record. Enough, however, is known, and enough has been recited in the preceding pages. No mode in which human beings have ever caused their fellow-creatures to suffer, was omitted from daily practice. Men, women, and children, old and young, nobles and paupers, opulent burghers, hospital patients, lunatics, dead bodies, all were indiscriminately made to furnish food for-the scaffold and the stake. Men were tortured, beheaded, hanged by the neck and by the legs, burned before slow fires, pinched to death with red hot tongs, broken upon the wheel, starved, and flayed alive. Their skins stripped from the living body, were stretched upon drums, to be beaten in the march of their brethren to the gallows. The bodies of many who had died a natural death were exhumed, and their festering remains hanged upon the gibbet, on pretext that they had died without receiving the sacrament, but in reality that their property might become the legitimate prey of the treasury. Marriages of long standing were dissolved by order of government, that rich heiresses might be married against their will to foreigners whom they abhorred. Women and children were executed for the crime of assisting their fugitive husbands and parents with a penny in their utmost need, and even for consoling them with a letter, in their exile. Such was the regular course of affairs as administered by the Blood Council. The additional barbarities committed amid the sack and ruin of those blazing and starving cities, are almost beyond belief; unborn infants were torn from the living bodies of their mothers; women and children were violated by thousands; and whole populations burned and hacked to pieces by soldiers in every mode which cruelty, in its wanton ingenuity, could devise. Such was the administration, of which Vargas affirmed, at its close, that too much mercy, “nimia misericordia,” had been its ruin.

Page 693

Even Philip, inspired by secret views, became wearied of the Governor, who, at an early period, had already given offence by his arrogance. To commemorate his victories, the Viceroy had erected a colossal statue, not to his monarch, but to himself. To proclaim the royal pardon, he had seated himself upon a golden throne. Such insolent airs could be ill forgiven by the absolute King. Too cautious to provoke an open rupture, he allowed the Governor, after he had done all his work, and more than all his work, to retire without disgrace, but without a triumph. For the sins of that administration, master and servant are in equal measure responsible.

The character of the Duke of Alva, so far as the Netherlands are concerned, seems almost like a caricature. As a creation of fiction, it would seem grotesque: yet even that hardy, historical scepticism, which delights in reversing the judgment of centuries, and in re-establishing reputations long since degraded to the dust, must find it difficult to alter this man's position. No historical decision is final; an appeal to a more remote posterity, founded upon more accurate evidence, is always valid; but when the verdict has been pronounced upon facts which are undisputed, and upon testimony from the criminal's lips, there is little chance of a reversal of the sentence. It is an affectation of philosophical candor to extenuate vices which are not only avowed, but claimed as virtues.

[The time is past when it could be said that the cruelty of Alva, or the enormities of his administration, have been exaggerated by party violence. Human invention is incapable of outstripping the truth upon this subject. To attempt the defence of either the man or his measures at the present day is to convict oneself of an amount of ignorance or of bigotry against which history and argument are alike powerless. The publication of the Duke's letters in the correspondence of Simancas and in the Besancon papers, together with that compact mass of horror, long before the world under the title of "Sententien van Alva," in which a portion only of the sentences of death and banishment pronounced by him during his reign, have been copied from the official records—these in themselves would be a sufficient justification of all the charges ever brought by the most bitter contemporary of Holland or Flanders. If the investigator should remain sceptical, however, let him examine the "Registre des Condamnes et Bannia a Cause des Troubles des Pays Bas," in three, together with the Records of the "Conseil des Troubles," in forty-three folio volumes, in the Royal Archives at Brussels. After going through all these chronicles of iniquity, the most determined historic, doubter will probably throw up the case.]

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Page 694

Advised his Majesty to bestow an annual bribe upon Lord Burleigh
Angle with their dissimulation as with a hook
Luther’s axiom, that thoughts are toll-free
Only kept alive by milk, which he drank from a woman’s breast
Scepticism, which delights in reversing the judgment of centuries
So much responsibility and so little power
Sometimes successful, even although founded upon sincerity
We are beginning to be vexed

MOTLEY’S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 22.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By *John Lothrop Motley* 1855 *administration of the grand commander*

PART IV. 1573-74 [CHAPTER I.]

Previous career of Requesens—Philip’s passion for detail—Apparent and real purposes of government—Universal desire for peace— Correspondence of leading royalists with Orange—Bankruptcy of the exchequer at Alva’s departures—Expensive nature of the war— Pretence of mildness on the part of the Commander—His private views—Distress of Mondragon at Middelburg—Crippled condition of Holland—Orange’s secret negotiations with France—St. Aldegonde’s views in captivity—Expedition to relieve Middelburg—Counter preparations of Orange—Defeat of the expedition—Capitulation of Mondragon—Plans of Orange and his brothers—An army under Count Louis crosses the Rhine—Measures taken by Requesens—Manoeuvres of Avila and of Louis—The two armies in face at Mook—Battle of Mook- heath—Overthrow and death of Count Louis—The phantom battle— Character of Louis of Nassau—Painful uncertainty as to his fate— Periodical mutinies of the Spanish troops characterized—Mutiny after the battle of Mook—Antwerp attacked and occupied,—Insolent and oppressive conduct of the mutineers—Offers of Requesens refused—Mutiny in the citadel—Exploits of Salvatierra—Terms of composition—Soldiers’ feast on the mere—Successful expedition of Admiral Boisot

The horrors of Alva’s administration had caused men to look back with fondness upon the milder and more vacillating tyranny of the Duchess Margaret. From the same cause the advent of the Grand Commander was hailed with pleasure and with a momentary gleam of hope. At any rate, it was a relief that the man in whom an almost impossible perfection of cruelty seemed embodied was at last to be withdrawn it was certain that his successor, however ambitious of following in Alva’s footsteps, would never be able to rival the intensity and the unswerving directness of purpose which it had been permitted to the Duke’s nature to attain. The new Governor-General was, doubtless,

human, and it had been long since the Netherlanders imagined anything in common between themselves and the late Viceroy.

Page 695

Apart from this hope, however, there was little encouragement to be derived from anything positively known of the new functionary, or the policy which he was to represent. Don Luis de Requesens and Cuniga, Grand Commander of Castile and late Governor of Milan, was a man of mediocre abilities, who possessed a reputation for moderation and sagacity which he hardly deserved. His military prowess had been chiefly displayed in the bloody and barren battle of Lepanto, where his conduct and counsel were supposed to have contributed, in some measure, to the victorious result. His administration at Milan had been characterized as firm and moderate. Nevertheless, his character was regarded with anything but favorable eyes in the Netherlands. Men told each other of his broken faith to the Moors in Granada, and of his unpopularity in Milan, where, notwithstanding his boasted moderation, he had, in reality, so oppressed the people as to gain their deadly hatred. They complained, too, that it was an insult to send, as Governor-General of the provinces, not a prince of the blood, as used to be the case, but a simple “gentleman of cloak and sword.”

Any person, however, who represented the royal authority in the provinces was under historical disadvantage. He was literally no more than an actor, hardly even that. It was Philip’s policy and pride to direct all the machinery of his extensive empire, and to pull every string himself. His puppets, however magnificently attired, moved only in obedience to his impulse, and spoke no syllable but with his voice. Upon the table in his cabinet was arranged all the business of his various realms, even to the most minute particulars.

Plans, petty or vast, affecting the interests of empires and ages, or bounded within the narrow limits of trivial and evanescent detail, encumbered his memory and consumed his time. His ambition to do all the work of his kingdoms was aided by an inconceivable greediness for labor. He loved the routine of business, as some monarchs have loved war, as others have loved pleasure. The object, alike paltry and impossible, of this ambition, bespoke the narrow mind. His estates were regarded by him as private property; measures affecting the temporal and eternal interests of millions were regarded as domestic affairs, and the eye of the master was considered the only one which could duly superintend these estates and those interests. Much incapacity to govern was revealed in this inordinate passion to administer. His mind, constantly fatigued by petty labors, was never enabled to survey his wide domains from the height of majesty.

In Alva, certainly, he had employed an unquestionable reality; but Alva, by a fortunate coincidence of character, had seemed his second self. He was now gone, however, and although the royal purpose had not altered, the royal circumstances were changed. The moment had arrived when it was thought that the mask and cothurn might again be assumed with effect; when a grave and conventional personage might decorously make his appearance to perform an interlude of clemency and moderation with satisfactory results. Accordingly, the Great Commander, heralded by rumors of amnesty, was commissioned to assume the government which Alva had been permitted to resign.

Page 696

It had been industriously circulated that a change of policy was intended. It was even supposed by the more sanguine that the Duke had retired in disgrace. A show of coldness was manifested towards him on his return by the King, while Vargas, who had accompanied the Governor, was peremptorily forbidden to appear within five leagues of the court. The more discerning, however, perceived much affectation in this apparent displeasure. Saint Goard, the keen observer of Philip's moods and measures, wrote to his sovereign that he had narrowly observed the countenances of both Philip and Alva; that he had informed himself as thoroughly as possible with regard to the course of policy intended; that he had arrived at the conclusion that the royal chagrin was but dissimulation, intended to dispose the Netherlanders to thoughts of an impossible peace, and that he considered the present merely a breathing time, in which still more active preparations might be made for crushing the rebellion. It was now evident to the world that the revolt had reached a stage in which it could be terminated only by absolute conquest or concession.

To conquer the people of the provinces, except by extermination, seemed difficult—to judge by the seven years of execution, sieges and campaigns, which had now passed without a definite result. It was, therefore, thought expedient to employ concession. The new Governor accordingly, in case the Netherlanders would abandon every object for which they had been so heroically contending, was empowered to concede a pardon. It was expressly enjoined upon him, however, that no conciliatory measures should be adopted in which the King's absolute supremacy, and the total prohibition of every form of worship but the Roman Catholic, were not assumed as a basis. Now, as the people had been contending at least ten years long for constitutional rights against prerogative, and at least seven for liberty of conscience against papistry, it was easy to foretell how much effect any negotiations thus commenced were likely to produce.

Yet, no doubt, in the Netherlands there was a most earnest longing for peace. The Catholic portion of the population were desirous of a reconciliation with their brethren of the new religion. The universal vengeance which had descended upon heresy had not struck the heretics only. It was difficult to find a fireside, Protestant or Catholic, which had not been made desolate by execution, banishment, or confiscation. The common people and the grand seigniors were alike weary of the war. Not only Aerschot and Viglius, but Noircarmes and Berlaymont, were desirous that peace should be at last compassed upon liberal terms, and the Prince of Orange fully and unconditionally pardoned. Even the Spanish commanders had become disgusted with the monotonous butchery which had stained their swords. Julian Romero; the fierce and unscrupulous soldier upon whose head rested the guilt of the Naarden

Page 697

massacre, addressed several letters to William of Orange, full of courtesy, and good wishes for a speedy termination of the war, and for an entire reconciliation of the Prince with his sovereign. Noircarmes also opened a correspondence with the great leader of the revolt; and offered to do all in his power to restore peace and prosperity to the country. The Prince answered the courtesy of the Spaniard with equal, but barren, courtesy; for it was obvious that no definite result could be derived from such informal negotiations. To Noircarmes he responded in terms of gentle but grave rebuke, expressing deep regret that a Netherland noble of such eminence, with so many others of rank and authority, should so long have supported the King in his tyranny. He, however, expressed his satisfaction that their eyes, however late, had opened to the enormous iniquity which had been practised in the country, and he accepted the offers of friendship as frankly as they had been made. Not long afterwards, the Prince furnished his correspondent with a proof of his sincerity, by forwarding to him two letters which had been intercepted; from certain agents of government to Alva, in which Noircarmes and others who had so long supported the King against their own country, were spoken of in terms of menace and distrust. The Prince accordingly warned his new correspondent that, in spite of all the proofs of uncompromising loyalty which he had exhibited, he was yet moving upon a dark and slippery-pathway, and might, even like Egmont and Horn, find a scaffold-as the end and the reward of his career. So profound was that abyss of dissimulation which constituted the royal policy, towards the Netherlands, that the most unscrupulous partisans of government could only see doubt and danger with regard to their future destiny, and were sometimes only saved by an opportune death from disgrace and the hangman’s hands.

Such, then, were the sentiments of many eminent personages, even among the most devoted loyalists. All longed for peace; many even definitely expected it, upon the arrival of the Great Commander. Moreover, that functionary discovered, at his first glance into the disorderly state of the exchequer, that at least a short respite was desirable before proceeding with the interminable measures of hostility against the rebellion. If any man had been ever disposed to give Alva credit for administrative ability, such delusion must have vanished at the spectacle of confusion and bankruptcy which presented, itself at the termination of his government. He resolutely declined to give his successor any information whatever as to his financial position. So far from furnishing a detailed statement, such as might naturally be expected upon so momentous an occasion, he informed the Grand Commander that even a sketch was entirely out of the question, and would require more time and labor than he could then afford. He took his departure, accordingly, leaving Requesens in profound ignorance as to his

Page 698

past accounts; an ignorance in which it is probable that the Duke himself shared to the fullest extent. His enemies stoutly maintained that, however loosely his accounts had been kept, he had been very careful to make no mistakes against himself, and that he had retired full of wealth, if not of honor, from his long and terrible administration. His own letters, on the contrary, accused the King of ingratitude, in permitting an old soldier to ruin himself, not only in health but in fortune, for want of proper recompense during an arduous administration. At any rate it is very certain that the rebellion had already been an expensive matter to the Crown. The army in the Netherlands numbered more than sixty-two thousand men, eight thousand being Spaniards, the rest Walloons and Germans. Forty millions of dollars had already been sunk, and it seemed probable that it would require nearly the whole annual produce of the American mines to sustain the war. The transatlantic gold and silver, disinterred from the depths where they had been buried for ages, were employed, not to expand the current of a healthy, life-giving commerce, but to be melted into blood. The sweat and the tortures of the King's pagan subjects in the primeval forests of the New World, were made subsidiary to the extermination of his Netherland people, and the destruction of an ancient civilization. To this end had Columbus discovered a hemisphere for Castile and Aragon, and the new Indies revealed their hidden treasures?

Forty millions of ducats had been spent. Six and a half millions of arrearages were due to the army, while its current expenses were six hundred thousand a month. The military expenses alone of the Netherlands were accordingly more than seven millions of dollars yearly, and the mines of the New World produced, during the half century of Philip's reign, an average of only eleven. Against this constantly increasing deficit, there was not a stiver in the exchequer, nor the means of raising one. The tenth penny had been long virtually extinct, and was soon to be formally abolished. Confiscation had ceased to afford a permanent revenue, and the estates obstinately refused to grant a dollar. Such was the condition to which the unrelenting tyranny and the financial experiments of Alva had reduced the country.

It was, therefore, obvious to Requesens that it would be useful at the moment to hold out hopes of pardon and reconciliation. He saw, what he had not at first comprehended, and what few bigoted supporters of absolutism in any age have ever comprehended, that national enthusiasm, when profound and general, makes a rebellion more expensive to the despot than to the insurgents. "Before my arrival," wrote the Grand Commander to his sovereign, "I did not understand how the rebels could maintain such considerable fleets, while your Majesty could not support a single one. It appears, however, that men who are fighting for their lives, their firesides, their

Page 699

property, and their false religion, for their own cause, in short, are contented to receive rations only, without receiving pay." The moral which the new Governor drew from his correct diagnosis of the prevailing disorder was, not that this national enthusiasm should be respected, but that it should be deceived. He deceived no one but himself, however. He censured Noircarmes and Romero for their intermeddling, but held out hopes of a general pacification. He repudiated the idea of any reconciliation between the King and the Prince of Orange, but proposed at the same time a settlement of the revolt. He had not yet learned that the revolt and William of Orange were one. Although the Prince himself had repeatedly offered to withdraw for ever from the country, if his absence would expedite a settlement satisfactory to the provinces, there was not a patriot in the Netherlands who could contemplate his departure without despair. Moreover, they all knew better than did Requesens, the inevitable result of the pacific measures which had been daily foreshadowed.

The appointment of the Grand Commander was in truth a desperate attempt to deceive the Netherlanders. He approved distinctly and heartily of Alva's policy, but wrote to the King that it was desirable to amuse the people with the idea of another and a milder scheme. He affected to believe, and perhaps really did believe, that the nation would accept the destruction of all their institutions, provided that penitent heretics were allowed to be reconciled to the Mother Church, and obstinate ones permitted to go into perpetual exile, taking with them a small portion of their worldly goods. For being willing to make this last and almost incredible concession, he begged pardon sincerely of the King. If censurable, he ought not, he thought, to be too severely blamed, for his loyalty was known. The world was aware how often he had risked his life for his Majesty, and how gladly and how many more times he was ready to risk it in future. In his opinion, religion had, after all, but very little to do with the troubles, and so he confidentially informed his sovereign. Egmont and Horn had died Catholics, the people did not rise to assist the Prince's invasion in 1568, and the new religion was only a lever by which a few artful demagogues had attempted to overthrow the King's authority.

Such views as these revealed the measures of the new Governor's capacity. The people had really refused to rise in 1568, not because they were without sympathy for Orange, but because they were paralyzed by their fear of Alva. Since those days, however, the new religion had increased and multiplied everywhere, in the blood which had rained upon it. It was now difficult to find a Catholic in Holland and Zealand, who was not a government agent. The Prince had been a moderate Catholic, in the opening scenes of the rebellion, while he came forward as the champion of liberty for all forms of Christianity. He

Page 700

had now become a convert to the new religion without receding an inch from his position in favor of universal toleration. The new religion was, therefore, not an instrument devised by a faction, but had expanded into the atmosphere of the people's daily life. Individuals might be executed for claiming to breathe it, but it was itself impalpable to the attacks of despotism. Yet the Grand Commander persuaded himself that religion had little or nothing to do with the state of the Netherlands. Nothing more was necessary, he thought; or affected to think, in order to restore tranquillity, than once more to spread the net of a general amnesty.

The Duke of Alva knew better. That functionary, with whom, before his departure from the provinces, Requesens had been commanded to confer, distinctly stated his opinion that there was no use of talking about pardon. Brutally, but candidly, he maintained that there was nothing to be done but to continue the process of extermination. It was necessary, he said, to reduce the country to a dead level of unresisting misery; before an act of oblivion could be securely laid down as the foundation of a new and permanent order of society. He had already given his advice to his Majesty, that every town in the country should be burned to the ground, except those which could be permanently occupied by the royal troops. The King, however, in his access of clemency at the appointment of a new administration, instructed the Grand Commander not to resort to this measure unless it should become strictly necessary.—Such were the opposite opinions of the old and new governors with regard to the pardon. The learned Viglius sided with Alva, although manifestly against his will. "It is both the Duke's opinion and my own," wrote the Commander, "that Viglius does not dare to express his real opinion, and that he is secretly desirous of an arrangement with the rebels." With a good deal of inconsistency, the Governor was offended, not only with those who opposed his plans, but with those who favored them. He was angry with Viglius, who, at least nominally, disapproved of the pardon, and with Noircarmes, Aerschot, and others, who manifested a wish for a pacification. Of the chief characteristic ascribed to the people by Julius Caesar, namely, that they forgot neither favors nor injuries, the second half only, in the Grand Commander's opinion, had been retained. Not only did they never forget injuries, but their memory, said he, was so good, that they recollected many which they had never received.

On the whole, however, in the embarrassed condition of affairs, and while waiting for further supplies, the Commander was secretly disposed to try the effect of a pardon. The object was to deceive the people and to gain time; for there was no intention of conceding liberty of conscience, of withdrawing foreign troops, or of assembling the states-general. It was, however, not possible to apply these hypocritical measures

Page 701

of conciliation immediately. The war was in full career and could not be arrested even in that wintry season. The patriots held Mondragon closely besieged in Middelburg, the last point in the Isle of Walcheren which held for the King. There was a considerable treasure in money and merchandise shut up in that city; and, moreover, so deserving and distinguished an officer as Mondragon could not be abandoned to his fate. At the same time, famine was pressing him sorely, and, by the end of the year, garrison and townspeople had nothing but rats, mice, dogs, cats, and such repulsive substitutes for food, to support life withal. It was necessary to take immediate measures to relieve the place.

On the other hand, the situation of the patriots was not very encouraging. Their superiority on the sea was unquestionable, for the Hollanders and Zealanders were the best sailors in the world, and they asked of their country no payment for their blood, but thanks. The land forces, however, were usually mercenaries, who were apt to mutiny at the commencement of an action if, as was too often the case, their wages could not be paid. Holland was entirely cut in twain by the loss of Harlem and the leaguer of Leyden, no communication between the dissevered portions being possible, except with difficulty and danger. The estates, although they had done much for the cause, and were prepared to do much more, were too apt to wrangle about economical details. They irritated the Prince of Orange by huckstering about subsidies to a degree which his proud and generous nature could hardly brook. He had strong hopes from France. Louis of Nassau had held secret interviews with the Duke of Alencon and the Duke of Anjou, now King of Poland, at Blamont. Alencon had assured him secretly, affectionately, and warmly, that he would be as sincere a friend to the cause as were his two royal brothers. The Count had even received one hundred thousand livres in hand, as an earnest of the favorable intentions of France, and was now busily engaged, at the instance of the Prince, in levying an army in Germany for the relief of Leyden and the rest of Holland, while William, on his part, was omitting nothing, whether by representations to the estates or by secret foreign missions and correspondence, to further the cause of the suffering country.

At the same time, the Prince dreaded the effect—of the promised pardon. He had reason to be distrustful of the general temper of the nation when a man like Saint Aldegonde, the enlightened patriot and his own tried friend, was influenced, by the discouraging and dangerous position in which he found himself, to abandon the high ground upon which they had both so long and so firmly stood: Saint Aldegonde had been held a strict prisoner since his capture at Maeslandsluis, at the close of Alva’s administration.—It was, no doubt, a predicament attended with much keen suffering and positive danger. It had hitherto been the uniform policy of the government to kill

Page 702

all prisoners, of whatever rank. Accordingly, some had been drowned, some had been hanged—some beheaded some poisoned in their dungeons—all had been murdered. This had been Alva's course. The Grand Commander also highly approved of the system, but the capture of Count Bossu by the patriots had necessitated a suspension of such rigor. It was certain that Bossu's head would fall as soon as Saint Aldegonde's, the Prince having expressly warned the government of this inevitable result. Notwithstanding that security, however, for his eventual restoration to liberty, a Netherland rebel in a Spanish prison could hardly feel himself at ease. There were so many foot-marks into the cave and not a single one coming forth. Yet it was not singular, however, that the Prince should read with regret the somewhat insincere casuistry with which Saint Aldegonde sought to persuade himself and his fellow-countrymen that a reconciliation with the monarch was desirable, even upon unworthy terms. He was somewhat shocked that so valiant and eloquent a supporter of the Reformation should coolly express his opinion that the King would probably refuse liberty of conscience to the Netherlanders, but would, no doubt, permit heretics to go into banishment. "Perhaps, after we have gone into exile," added Saint Aldegonde, almost with baseness, "God may give us an opportunity of doing such good service to the King, that he will lend us a more favorable ear, and, peradventure, permit our return to the country."

Certainly, such language was not becoming the pen which wrote the famous Compromise. The Prince himself was, however, not to be induced, even by the captivity and the remonstrances of so valued a friend, to swerve from the path of duty. He still maintained, in public and private, that the withdrawal of foreign troops from the provinces, the restoration of the old constitutional privileges, and the entire freedom of conscience in religious matters, were the indispensable conditions of any pacification. It was plain to him that the Spaniards were not ready to grant these conditions; but he felt confident that he should accomplish the release of Saint Aldegonde without condescending to an ignominious peace.

The most pressing matter, upon the Great Commander's arrival, was obviously to relieve the city of Middelburg. Mondragon, after so stanch a defence, would soon be obliged to capitulate, unless he should promptly receive supplies. Requesens, accordingly, collected seventy-five ships at Bergen op Zoom; which were placed nominally under the command of Admiral de Glimes, but in reality under that of Julian Romero. Another fleet of thirty vessels had been assembled at Antwerp under Sancho d'Avila. Both, amply freighted with provisions, were destined to make their way to Middelburg by the two different passages of the Hondo and the Eastern Scheld. On the other hand, the Prince of Orange had repaired to Flushing to superintend the operations of Admiral Boisot, who already; in

Page 703

obedience to his orders, had got a powerful squadron in readiness at that place. Late in January, 1574, d'Avila arrived in the neighbourhood of Flushing, where he awaited the arrival of Romero's fleet. United, the two Commanders were to make a determined attempt to reinforce the starving city of Middelburg. At the same time, Governor Requesens made his appearance in person at Bergen op Zoom to expedite the departure of the stronger fleet, but it was not the intention of the Prince of Orange to allow this expedition to save the city. The Spanish generals, however valiant, were to learn that their genius was not amphibious, and that the Beggars of the Sea were still invincible on their own element, even if their brethren of the land had occasionally quailed.

Admiral Boisot's fleet had already moved up the Scheld and taken a position nearly opposite to Bergen op Zoom. On the 20th of January the Prince of Orange, embarking from Zierick Zee, came to make them a visit before the impending action. His galley, conspicuous for its elegant decorations, was exposed for some time to the artillery of the fort, but providentially escaped unharmed. He assembled all the officers of his armada, and, in brief but eloquent language, reminded them how necessary it was to the salvation of the whole country that they should prevent the city of Middelburg—the key to the whole of Zealand, already upon the point of falling into the hands of the patriots—from being now wrested from their grasp. On the sea, at least, the Hollanders and Zealanders were at home. The officers and men, with one accord, rent the air with their cheers. They swore that they would shed every drop of blood in their veins but they would sustain the Prince and the country; and they solemnly vowed not only to serve, if necessary, without wages, but to sacrifice all that they possessed in the world rather than abandon the cause of their fatherland. Having by his presence and his language aroused their valor to so high a pitch of enthusiasm, the Prince departed for Delft, to make arrangements to drive the Spaniards from the siege of Leyden.

On the 29th of January, the fleet of Romero sailed from Bergen, disposed in three divisions, each numbering twenty-five vessels of different sizes. As the Grand Commander stood on the dyke of Schakerloo to witness the departure, a general salute was fired by the fleet in his honor, but with most unfortunate augury. The discharge, by some accident, set fire to the magazines of one of the ships, which blew up with a terrible explosion, every soul on board perishing. The expedition, nevertheless, continued its way. Opposite Romerswael, the fleet of Boisot awaited them, drawn up in battle array. As an indication of the spirit which animated this hardy race, it may be mentioned that Schot, captain of the flag-ship, had been left on shore, dying of a pestilential fever. Admiral Boisot had appointed a Flushinger, Klaaf Klaafzoon, in his place. Just before the action, however, Schot, "scarcely able to blow a feather from his mouth," staggered on board his ship, and claimed the command.

Page 704

There was no disputing a precedency which he had risen from his death-bed to vindicate. There was, however, a short discussion, as the enemy's fleet approached, between these rival captains regarding the manner in which the Spaniards should be received. Klaafzoon was of opinion that most of the men should go below till after the enemy's first discharge. Schot insisted that all should remain on deck, ready to grapple with the Spanish fleet, and to board them without the least delay.

The sentiment of Schot prevailed, and all hands stood on deck, ready with boarding-pikes and grappling-irons.

The first division of Romero came nearer, and delivered its first broadside, when Schot and Klaafzoon both fell mortally wounded. Admiral Boisot lost an eye, and many officers and sailors in the other vessels were killed or wounded. This was, however, the first and last of the cannonading. As many of Romero's vessels as could be grappled within the narrow estuary found themselves locked in close embrace with their enemies. A murderous hand-to-hand conflict succeeded. Battle-axe, boarding-pike, pistol, and dagger were the weapons. Every man who yielded himself a prisoner was instantly stabbed and tossed into the sea by the remorseless Zealanders. Fighting only to kill, and not to plunder, they did not even stop to take the gold chains which many Spaniards wore on their necks. It had, however, been obvious from the beginning that the Spanish fleet were not likely to achieve that triumph over the patriots which was necessary before they could relieve Middelburg. The battle continued a little longer; but after fifteen ships had been taken and twelve hundred royalists slain, the remainder of the enemy's fleet retreated into Bergen. Romero himself, whose ship had grounded, sprang out of a port-hole and swam ashore, followed by such of his men as were able to imitate him. He landed at the very feet of the Grand Commander, who, wet and cold, had been standing all day upon the dyke of Schakerloo, in the midst of a pouring rain, only to witness the total defeat of his armada at last.

"I told your Excellency," said Romero, coolly, as he climbed, all dripping, on the bank, "that I was a land-fighter and not a sailor. If you were to give me the command of a hundred fleets, I believe that none of them would fare better than this has done." The Governor and his discomfited, but philosophical lieutenant, then returned to Bergen, and thence to Brussels, acknowledging that the city of Middelburg must fall, while Sancho d'Avila, hearing of the disaster which had befallen his countrymen, brought his fleet, with the greatest expedition, back to Antwerp. Thus the gallant Mondragon was abandoned to his fate.

Page 705

That fate could no longer be protracted. The city of Middelburg had reached and passed the starvation point. Still Mondragon was determined not to yield at discretion, although very willing to capitulate. The Prince of Orange, after the victory of Bergen, was desirous of an unconditional surrender, believing it to be his right, and knowing that he could not be supposed capable of practising upon Middelburg the vengeance which had been wreaked on Naarden, Zutfen, and Harlem. Mondragon, however, swore that he would set fire to the city in twenty places, and perish with every soldier and burgher in the flames together, rather than abandon himself to the enemy's mercy. The prince knew that the brave Spaniard was entirely capable of executing his threat. He granted honorable conditions, which, on the 18th February, were drawn up in five articles, and signed. It was agreed that Mondragon and his troops should leave the place, with their arms, ammunition, and all their personal property. The citizens who remained were to take oath of fidelity to the Prince, as stadholder for his Majesty, and were to pay besides a subsidy of three hundred thousand florins. Mondragon was, furthermore, to procure the discharge of Saint Aldegonde, and of four other prisoners of rank, or, failing in the attempt, was to return within two months, and constitute himself prisoner of war. The Catholic priests were to take away from the city none of their property but their clothes. In accordance with this capitulation, Mondragon, and those who wished to accompany him, left the city on the 21st of February, and were conveyed to the Flemish shore at Neuz. It will be seen in the sequel that the Governor neither granted him the release of the five prisoners, nor permitted him to return, according to his parole. A few days afterwards, the Prince entered the city, re-organized the magistracy, received the allegiance of the inhabitants, restored the ancient constitution, and liberally remitted two-thirds of the sum in which they had been, mulcted.

The Spaniards had thus been successfully driven from the Isle of Walcheren, leaving the Hollanders and Zealanders masters of the sea-coast. Since the siege of Alkmaar had been raised, however, the enemy had remained within the territory of Holland. Leyden was closely invested, the country in a desperate condition, and all communication between its different cities nearly suspended. It was comparatively easy for the Prince of Orange to equip and man his fleets. The genius and habits of the people made them at home upon the water, and inspired them with a feeling of superiority to their adversaries. It was not so upon land. Strong to resist, patient to suffer, the Hollanders, although terrible in defence; had not the necessary discipline or experience to meet the veteran legions of Spain, with confidence in the open field. To raise the siege of Leyden, the main reliance of the Prince was upon Count Louis, who was again in Germany. In the latter days of

Page 706

Alva's administration, William had written to his brothers, urging them speedily to arrange the details of a campaign, of which he forwarded them a sketch. As soon as a sufficient force had been levied in Germany, an attempt was to be made upon Maestricht. If that failed, Louis was to cross the Meuse, in the neighbourhood of Stochem, make his way towards the Prince's own city of Gertruidenberg, and thence make a junction with his brother in the neighbourhood of Delft. They were then to take up a position together between Harlem and Leyden. In that case it seemed probable that the Spaniards would find themselves obliged to fight at a great disadvantage, or to abandon the country. "In short," said the Prince, "if this enterprise be arranged with due diligence and discretion, I hold it as the only certain means for putting a speedy end to the war, and for driving these devils of Spaniards out of the country, before the Duke of Alva has time to raise another army to support them."

In pursuance of this plan, Louis had been actively engaged all the earlier part of the winter in levying troops and raising supplies. He had been assisted by the French princes with considerable sums of money, as an earnest of what he was in future to expect from that source. He had made an unsuccessful attempt to effect the capture of Requesens, on his way to take the government of the Netherlands. He had then passed to the frontier of France, where he had held his important interview with Catharine de Medici and the Duke of Anjou, then on the point of departure to ascend the throne of Poland. He had received liberal presents, and still more liberal promises. Anjou had assured him that he would go as far as any of the German princes in rendering active and sincere assistance to the Protestant cause in the Netherlands. The Duc d'Alencon—soon, in his brother's absence, to succeed to the chieftainship of the new alliance between the "politiques" and the Huguenots—had also pressed his hand, whispering in his ear, as he did so, that the government of France now belonged to him, as it had recently done to Anjou, and that the Prince might reckon upon his friendship with entire security.

These fine words, which cost nothing when whispered in secret, were not destined to fructify into a very rich harvest, for the mutual jealousy of France and England, lest either should acquire ascendency in the Netherlands, made both governments prodigal of promises, while the common fear entertained by them of the power of Spain rendered both languid; insincere, and mischievous allies. Count John, however; was indefatigable in arranging the finances of the proposed expedition, and in levying contributions among his numerous relatives and allies in Germany, while Louis had profited by the occasion of Anjou's passage into Poland, to acquire for himself two thousand German and French cavalry, who had served to escort that Prince, and who, being now thrown out of employment, were glad

Page 707

to have a job offered them by a general who was thought to be in funds. Another thousand of cavalry and six thousand foot were soon assembled from those ever-swarming nurseries of mercenary warriors, the smaller German states. With these, towards the end of February; Louis crossed the Rhine in a heavy snow-storm, and bent his course towards Maestricht. All the three brothers of the Prince accompanied this little army, besides Duke Christopher, son of the elector Palatine.

Before the end of the month the army reached the Meuse, and encamped within four miles of Maestricht; on the opposite side of the river. The garrison, commanded by Montesdoca, was weak, but the news of the warlike preparations in Germany had preceded the arrival of Count Louis. Requesens, feeling the gravity of the occasion, had issued orders for an immediate levy of eight thousand cavalry in Germany, with a proportionate number of infantry. At the same time he had directed Don Bernardino de Mendoza, with some companies of cavalry, then stationed in Breda, to throw himself without delay into Maestricht. Don Sancho d'Avila was entrusted with the general care of resisting the hostile expedition. That general had forthwith collected all the troops which could be spared from every town where they were stationed, had strengthened the cities of Antwerp, Ghent, Nimweben, and Valenciennes, where there were known to be many secret adherents of Orange; and with the remainder of his forces had put himself in motion, to oppose the entrance of Louis into Brabant, and his junction with his brother in Holland. Braccamonte had been despatched to Leyden, in order instantly to draw off the forces which were besieging the city. Thus Louis had already effected something of importance by the very hews of his approach.

Meantime the Prince of Orange had raised six thousand infantry, whose rendezvous was the Isle of Bommel. He was disappointed at the paucity of the troops which Louis had been able to collect, but he sent messengers immediately to him; with a statement of his own condition, and with directions to join him in the Isle of Bommel, as soon as Maestricht should be reduced. It was, however, not in the destiny of Louis to reduce Maestricht. His expedition had been marked with disaster from the beginning. A dark and threatening prophecy had, even before its commencement, enwrapped Louis, his brethren, and his little army, in a funeral pall. More than a thousand of his men had deserted before he reached the Meuse. When he encamped, apposite Maestricht, he found the river neither frozen nor open, the ice obstructing the navigation, but being too weak for the weight of an army. While he was thus delayed and embarrassed, Mendoza arrived in the city with reinforcements. It seemed already necessary for Louis to abandon his hopes of Maestricht, but he was at least desirous of crossing the river in that neighbourhood, in order to effect his junction with the Prince at the earliest possible moment. While

Page 708

the stream was still encumbered with ice, however, the enemy removed all the boats. On, the 3rd of March, Avila arrived with a large body of troops at Maestricht, and on the 18th Mendoza crossed the river in the night, giving the patriots so severe an ‘encamisada’, that seven hundred were killed, at the expense of only seven of his own party. Harassed, but not dispirited by these disasters, Louis broke up his camp on the 21st, and took a position farther down the river, at Fauquemont and Gulpen, castles in the Duchy of Limburg. On the 3rd of April, Braccamonite arrived at Maestricht, with twenty-five companies of Spaniards and three of cavalry, while, on the same day Mondragon reached the scene of action with his sixteen companies of veterans.

It was now obvious to Louis, not only that he should not take Maestricht, but that his eventual junction with his brother was at least doubtful, every soldier who could possibly be spared seeming in motion to oppose his progress. He was, to be sure, not yet outnumbered, but the enemy was increasing, and his own force diminishing daily. Moreover, the Spaniards were highly disciplined and experienced troops; while his own soldiers were mercenaries, already clamorous and insubordinate. On the 8th of April he again shifted his encaampment, and took his course along the right bank of the Meuse, between that river and the Rhine, in the direction of Nimwegen. Avila promptly decided to follow him upon the opposite bank of the Meuse, intending to throw himself between Louis and the Prince of Orange, and by a rapid march to give the Count battle, before he could join his brother. On the 8th of April, at early dawn, Louis had left the neighbourhood of Maestricht, and on the 13th he encamped at the village of Mook near the confines of Cleves. Sending out his scouts, he learned to his vexation, that the enemy had outmarched him, and were now within cannonshot. On the 13th, Avila had constructed a bridge of boats, over which he had effected the passage of the Meuse with his whole army, so that on the Count’s arrival at Mook, he found the enemy facing him, on the same side of the river, and directly in his path. It was, therefore, obvious that, in this narrow space between the Waal and the Meuse, where they were now all assembled, Louis must achieve a victory, unaided, or abandon his expedition, and leave the Hollanders to despair. He was distressed at the position in which he found himself, for he had hoped to reduce Maestricht, and to join, his brother in Holland. Together, they could, at least, have expelled the Spaniards from that territory, in which case it was probable that a large part of the population in the different provinces would have risen. According to present aspects, the destiny of the country, for some time to come, was likely to hang upon the issue of a battle which he had not planned, and for which he was not fully prepared. Still he was not the man to be disheartened; nor had he ever possessed the courage

Page 709

to refuse a battle when: offered. Upon this occasion it would be difficult to retreat without disaster and disgrace, but it was equally difficult to achieve a victory. Thrust, as he was, like a wedge into the very heart of a hostile country, he was obliged to force his way through, or to remain in his enemy's power. Moreover, and worst of all, his troops were in a state of mutiny for their wages. While he talked to them of honor, they howled to him for money. It was the custom of these mercenaries to mutiny on the eve of battle —of the Spaniards, after it had been fought. By the one course, a victory was often lost which might have been achieved; by the other, when won it was rendered fruitless.

Avila had chosen his place of battle with great skill. On the right bank of the Meuse, upon a narrow plain which spread from the river to a chain of hills within cannon-shot on the north, lay the little village of Mook. The Spanish general knew that his adversary had the superiority in cavalry, and that within this compressed apace it would not be possible to derive much advantage from the circumstance.

On the 14th, both armies were drawn up in battle array at earliest dawn, Louis having strengthened his position by a deep trench, which extended from Mook, where he had stationed ten companies of infantry, which thus rested on the village and the river. Next came the bulk of his infantry, disposed in a single square. On their right was his cavalry, arranged in four squadrons, as well as the narrow limits of the field would allow. A small portion of them, for want of apace, were stationed on the hill side.

Opposite, the forces of Don Sancho were drawn up in somewhat similar fashion. Twenty-five companies of Spaniards were disposed in four bodies of pikemen and musketeers; their right resting on the river. On their left was the cavalry, disposed by Mendoza in the form of a half moon-the horns garnished by two small bodies of sharpshooters. In the front ranks of the cavalry were the mounted carabineers of Schenk; behind were the Spanish dancers. The village of Mook lay between the two armies.

The skirmishing began at early dawn, with an attack upon the trench, and continued some hours, without bringing on a general engagement. Towards ten o'clock, Count Louis became impatient. All the trumpets of the patriots now rang out a challenge to their adversaries, and the Spaniards were just returning the defiance, and preparing a general onset, when the Seigneur de Hierges and Baron Chevreaux arrived on the field. They brought with them a reinforcement of more than a thousand men, and the intelligence that Valdez was on his way with nearly five thousand more. As he might be expected on the following morning, a short deliberation was held as to the expediency of deferring the action. Count Louis was at the head of six thousand foot and two thousand cavalry. Avila mustered only four thousand infantry and not

Page 710

quite a thousand horse. This inferiority would be changed on the morrow into an overwhelming superiority. Meantime, it was well to remember the punishment endured by Aremberg at Heiliger Lee, for not waiting till Meghen's arrival. This prudent counsel was, however, very generally scouted, and by none more loudly than by Hierges and Chevreaux, who had brought the intelligence. It was thought that at this juncture nothing could be more indiscreet than discretion. They had a wary and audacious general to deal with. While they were waiting for their reinforcements, he was quite capable of giving them the slip. He might thus effect the passage of the stream and that union with his brother which—had been thus far so successfully prevented. This reasoning prevailed, and the skirmishing at the trench was renewed with redoubled vigour, an additional: force being sent against it. After a short and fierce struggle it was carried, and the Spaniards rushed into the village, but were soon dislodged by a larger detachment of infantry, which Count Louis sent to the rescue. The battle now became general at this point.

Nearly all the patriot infantry were employed to defend the post; nearly all the Spanish infantry were ordered to assail it. The Spaniards, dropping on their knees, according to custom, said a Paternoster and an Ave Mary, and then rushed, in mass, to the attack. After a short but sharp conflict, the trench was again carried, and the patriots completely routed. Upon this, Count Louis charged with all his cavalry upon the enemy's horse, which had hitherto remained motionless. With the first shock the mounted arquebusiers of Schenk, constituting the vanguard, were broken, and fled in all directions. So great was their panic, as Louis drove them before him, that they never stopped till they had swum or been drowned in the river; the survivors carrying the news to Grave and to other cities that the royalists had been completely routed. This was, however, very far from the truth. The patriot cavalry, mostly carabineers, wheeled after the first discharge, and retired to reload their pieces, but before they were ready for another attack, the Spanish lancers and the German black troopers, who had all remained firm, set upon them with great spirit: A fierce, bloody, and confused action succeeded, in which the patriots were completely overthrown.

Count Louis, finding that the day was lost, and his army cut to pieces, rallied around him a little band of troopers, among whom were his brother, Count Henry, and Duke Christopher, and together they made a final and desperate charge. It was the last that was ever seen of them on earth. They all went down together, in the midst of the fight, and were never heard of more. The battle terminated, as usual in those conflicts of mutual hatred, in a horrible butchery, hardly any of the patriot army being left to tell the tale of their disaster. At least four thousand were killed, including those who were slain

Page 711

on the field, those who were suffocated in the marshes or the river, and those who were burned in the farm-houses where they had taken refuge. It was uncertain which of those various modes of death had been the lot of Count Louis, his brother, and his friend. The mystery was never solved. They had, probably, all died on the field; but, stripped of their clothing, with their, faces trampled upon by the hoofs of horses, it was not possible to distinguish them from the less illustrious dead. It was the opinion of, many that they had been drowned in the river; of others, that they had been burned. [Meteren, v. 91. Bor, vii. 491, 492. Hoofd, Bentivoglio, ubi sup. The Walloon historian, occasionally cited in these pages, has a more summary manner of accounting for the fate of these distinguished personages. According to his statement, the leaders of the Protestant forces dined and made merry at a convent in the neighbourhood upon Good Friday, five days before the battle, using the sacramental chalices at the banquet, and mixing consecrated wafers with their wine. As a punishment for this sacrilege, the army was utterly overthrown, and the Devil himself flew away with the chieftains, body and soul.]

There was a vague tale that Louis, bleeding but not killed, had struggled forth from the heap of corpses where he had been thrown, had crept to the, river-side, and, while washing his wounds, had been surprised and butchered by a party of rustics. The story was not generally credited, but no man knew, or was destined to learn, the truth.

A dark and fatal termination to this last enterprise of Count Louis had been anticipated by many. In that superstitious age, when emperors and princes daily investigated the future, by alchemy, by astrology, and by books of fate, filled with formula; as gravely and precisely set forth as algebraical equations; when men of every class, from monarch to peasant, implicitly believed in supernatural portents and prophecies, it was not singular that a somewhat striking appearance, observed in the sky some weeks previously to the battle of Mookerheyde, should have inspired many persons with a shuddering sense of impending evil.

Early in February five soldiers of the burgher guard at Utrecht, being on their midnight watch, beheld in the sky above them the representation of a furious battle. The sky was extremely dark, except directly over: their heads; where, for a space equal in extent to the length of the city, and in breadth to that of an ordinary chamber, two armies, in battle array, were seen advancing upon each other. The one moved rapidly up from the north-west, with banners waving; spears flashing, trumpets sounding; accompanied by heavy artillery and by squadrons of cavalry. The other came slowly forward from the southeast; as if from an entrenched camp, to encounter their assailants. There was a fierce action for a few moments, the shouts of the combatants, the heavy discharge

Page 712

of cannon, the rattle of musketry; the tramp of heavy-aimed foot soldiers, the rush of cavalry, being distinctly heard. The firmament trembled with the shock of the contending hosts, and was lurid with the rapid discharges of their artillery. After a short, fierce engagement, the north-western army was beaten back in disorder, but rallied again, after a breathing-time, formed again into solid column, and again advanced. Their foes, arrayed, as the witnesses affirmed, in a square and closely serried grove of spears' and muskets, again awaited the attack. Once more the aerial cohorts closed upon each other, all the signs and sounds of a desperate encounter being distinctly recognised by the eager witnesses. The struggle seemed but short. The lances of the south-eastern army seemed to snap "like hemp-stalks," while their firm columns all went down together in mass, beneath the onset of their enemies. The overthrow was complete, victors and vanquished had faded, the clear blue space, surrounded by black clouds, was empty, when suddenly its whole extent, where the conflict had so lately raged, was streaked with blood, flowing athwart the sky in broad crimson streams; nor was it till the five witnesses had fully watched and pondered over these portents that the vision entirely vanished.

So impressed were the grave magistrates of Utrecht with the account given next day by the sentinels, that a formal examination of the circumstances was made, the deposition of each witness, under oath, duly recorded, and a vast deal of consultation of soothsayers' books and other auguries employed to elucidate the mystery. It was universally considered typical of the anticipated battle between Count Louis and the Spaniards. When, therefore, it was known that the patriots, moving from the south-east, had arrived at Mookerheyde, and that their adversaries, crossing the Meuse at Grave, had advanced upon them from the north-west, the result of the battle was considered inevitable; the phantom battle of Utrecht its infallible precursor.

Thus perished Louis of Nassau in the flower of his manhood, in the midst of a career already crowded with events such as might suffice for a century of ordinary existence. It is difficult to find in history a more frank and loyal character. His life was noble; the elements of the heroic and the genial so mixed in him that the imagination contemplates him, after three centuries, with an almost affectionate interest. He was not a great man. He was far from possessing the subtle genius or the expansive views of his brother; but, called as he was to play a prominent part in one of the most complicated and imposing dramas ever enacted by man, he, nevertheless, always acquitted himself with honor. His direct, fearless and energetic nature commanded alike the respect of friend and foe. As a politician, a soldier, and a diplomatist, he was busy, bold, and true. He, accomplished by sincerity what many thought could only be compassed by trickery.

Page 713

Dealing often with the most adroit and most treacherous of princes and statesmen, he frequently carried his point, and he never stooped to flattery. From the time when, attended by his “twelve disciples,” he assumed the most prominent part in the negotiations with Margaret of Parma, through all the various scenes of the revolution, through, all the conferences with Spaniards, Italians, Huguenots. Malcontents, Flemish councillors, or German princes, he was the consistent and unflinching supporter of religious liberty and constitutional law. The battle of Heiliger Lee and the capture of Mons were his most signal triumphs, but the fruits of both were annihilated by subsequent disaster. His headlong courage was his chief foible. The French accused him of losing the battle of Moncontour by his impatience to engage; yet they acknowledged that to his masterly conduct it was owing that their retreat was effected in so successful, and even so brilliant a manner. He was censured for rashness and precipitancy in this last and fatal enterprise, but the reproach seems entirely without foundation. The expedition as already stated, had been deliberately arranged, with the full co-operation of his brother, and had been preparing several months. That he was able to set no larger force on foot than that which he led into Gueldres was not his fault. But for the floating ice which barred his passage of the Meuse, he would have surprised Maestricht; but for the mutiny, which rendered his mercenary soldiers cowards, he might have defeated Avila at Mookerheyde. Had he done so he would have joined his brother in the Isle of Bommel in triumph; the Spaniards would, probably, have been expelled from Holland, and Leyden saved the horrors of that memorable siege which she was soon called, upon to endure. These results were not in his destiny. Providence had decreed that he should perish in the midst of his usefulness; that the Prince, in his death,’should lose the right hand which had been so swift to execute his various plans, and the faithful fraternal heart which had always responded so readily to every throb of his own.

In figure, he was below the middle height, but martial and noble in his bearing. The expression of his countenance was lively; his manner frank and engaging. All who knew him personally loved him, and he was the idol of his gallant brethren: His mother always addressed him as her dearly beloved, her heart’s-cherished Louis. “You must come soon to me,” she wrote in the last year of his life, “for I have many matters to ask your advice upon; and I thank you beforehand, for you have loved me as your mother all the days of your life; for which may God Almighty have you in his holy keeping.”

Page 714

It was the doom of this high-born, true-hearted dame to be called upon to weep oftener for her children than is the usual lot of mothers. Count Adolphus had already perished in his youth on the field of Heiliger Lee, and now Louis and his young brother Henry, who had scarcely attained his twenty-sixth year, and whose short life had been passed in that faithful service to the cause of freedom which was the instinct of his race, had both found a bloody and an unknown grave. Count John, who had already done so much for the cause, was fortunately spared to do much more. Although of the expedition, and expecting to participate in the battle, he had, at the urgent solicitation of all the leaders, left the army for a brief, season, in order to obtain at Cologne a supply of money, for the mutinous troops: He had started upon this mission two days before the action in which he, too, would otherwise have been sacrificed. The young Duke Christopher, "optimm indolis et magnee spei adolescens," who had perished on the same field, was sincerely mourned by the lovers of freedom. His father, the Elector, found his consolation in the Scriptures, and in the reflection that his son had died in the bed of honor, fighting for the cause of God. "'T was better thus," said that stern Calvinist, whose dearest wish was to "Calvinize the world," than to have passed his time in idleness, "which is the Devil's pillow."

Vague rumors of the catastrophe had spread far and wide. It was soon certain that Louis had been defeated, but, for a long time, conflicting reports were in circulation as to the fate of the leaders. The Prince of Orange, meanwhile, passed days of intense anxiety, expecting hourly to hear from his brothers, listening to dark rumors, which he refused to credit and could not contradict, and writing letters, day after day, long after the eyes which should have read the friendly missives were closed.

The victory of the King's army at Mookerheyde had been rendered comparatively barren by the mutiny which broke forth the day after the battle. Three years' pay were due to the Spanish troops, and it was not surprising that upon this occasion one of those periodic rebellions should break forth, by which the royal cause was frequently so much weakened, and the royal governors so intolerably perplexed. These mutinies were of almost regular occurrence, and attended by as regular a series of phenomena. The Spanish troops, living so far from their own country, but surrounded by their women, and constantly increasing swarms of children, constituted a locomotive city of considerable population, permanently established on a foreign soil. It was a city walled in by bayonets, and still further isolated from the people around by the impassable moat of mutual hatred. It was a city obeying the articles of war, governed by despotic authority, and yet occasionally revealing, in full force, the irrepressible democratic element. At periods which could almost be calculated, the military

Page 715

populace were wont to rise upon the privileged classes, to deprive them of office and liberty, and to set up in their place commanders of their own election. A governor-in-chief, a sergeant-major, a board of councillors and various other functionaries, were chosen by acclamation and universal suffrage. The Eletto, or chief officer thus appointed, was clothed with supreme power, but forbidden to exercise it. He was surrounded by councillors, who watched his every motion, read all his correspondence, and assisted at all his conferences, while the councillors were themselves narrowly watched by the commonalty. These movements were, however, in general, marked by the most exemplary order. Anarchy became a system of government; rebellion enacted and enforced the strictest rules of discipline; theft, drunkenness, violence to women, were severely punished. As soon as the mutiny broke forth, the first object was to take possession of the nearest city, where the Eletto was usually established in the town-house, and the soldiery quartered upon the citizens. Nothing in the shape of food or lodging was too good for these marauders. Men who had lived for years on camp rations—coarse knaves who had held the plough till compelled to handle the musket, now slept in fine linen, and demanded from the trembling burghers the daintiest viands. They ate the land bare, like a swarm of locusts. “Chickens and partridges,” says the thrifty chronicler of Antwerp, “capons and pheasants, hares and rabbits, two kinds of wines;—for sauces, capers and olives, citrons and oranges, spices and sweetmeats; wheaten bread for their dogs, and even wine, to wash the feet of their horses;”—such was the entertainment demanded and obtained by the mutinous troops. They were very willing both to enjoy the luxury of this forage, and to induce the citizens, from weariness of affording compelled hospitality, to submit to a taxation by which the military claims might be liquidated.

A city thus occupied was at the mercy of a foreign soldiery, which had renounced all authority but that of self-imposed laws. The King’s officers were degraded, perhaps murdered; while those chosen to supply their places had only a nominal control. The Eletto, day by day, proclaimed from the balcony of the town-house the latest rules and regulations. If satisfactory, there was a clamor of applause; if objectionable, they were rejected with a tempest of hisses, with discharges of musketry; The Eletto did not govern: he was a dictator who could not dictate, but could only register decrees. If too honest, too firm, or too dull for his place, he was deprived of his office and sometimes of his life. Another was chosen in his room, often to be succeeded by a series of others, destined to the same fate. Such were the main characteristics of those formidable mutinies, the result of the unthriftiness and dishonesty by which the soldiery engaged in these interminable hostilities were deprived of their dearly earned wages. The expense of the war was bad enough at best, but when it is remembered that of three or four dollars sent from Spain, or contributed by the provinces for the support of the army, hardly one reached the pockets of the soldier, the frightful expenditure which took place may be imagined. It was not surprising that so much peculation should engender revolt.

Page 716

The mutiny which broke out after the defeat of Count Louis was marked with the most pronounced and inflammatory of these symptoms. Three years' pay was due, to the Spaniards, who, having just achieved a signal victory, were-disposed to reap its fruits, by fair means or by force. On receiving nothing but promises, in answer to their clamorous demands, they mutinied to a man, and crossed the Meuse to Grave, whence, after accomplishing the usual elections, they took their course to Antwerp. Being in such strong force, they determined to strike at the capital. Rumour flew before them. Champagny, brother of Granvelle, and royal governor of the city, wrote in haste to apprise Requesens of the approaching danger. The Grand Commander, attended only by Vitelli, repaired instantly to Antwerp. Champagny advised throwing up a breastwork with bales of merchandize, upon the esplanade, between the citadel and the town, for it was at this point, where the connection between the fortifications of the castle and those of the city had never been thoroughly completed, that the invasion might be expected. Requesens hesitated. He trembled at a conflict with his own soldiery. If successful, he could only be so by trampling upon the flower of his army. If defeated, what would become of the King's authority, with rebellious troops triumphant in rebellious provinces? Sorely perplexed, the Commander, could think of no expedient. Not knowing what to do, he did nothing. In the meantime, Champagny, who felt himself odious to the soldiery, retreated to the Newtown, and barricaded himself, with a few followers, in the house of the Baltic merchants.

On the 26th of April, the mutinous troops in perfect order, marched into the city, effecting their entrance precisely at the weak point where they had been expected. Numbering at least three thousand, they encamped on the esplanade, where Requesens appeared before them alone on horseback, and made them an oration. They listened with composure, but answered briefly and with one accord, "Dineros y non palabras," dollars not speeches. Requesens promised profusely, but the time was past for promises. Hard Silver dollars would alone content an army which, after three years of bloodshed and starvation, had at last taken the law into their own hands. Requesens withdrew to consult the Broad Council of the city. He was without money himself, but he demanded four hundred thousand crowns of the city. This was at first refused, but the troops knew the strength of their position, for these mutinies were never repressed, and rarely punished. On this occasion the Commander was afraid to employ force, and the burghers, after the army had been quartered upon them for a time, would gladly pay a heavy ransom to be rid of their odious and expensive guests. The mutineers foreseeing that the work might last a few weeks, and determined to proceed leisurely; took possession of the great square. The Eletto, with his staff of councillors, was quartered in the town-house, while the soldiers distributed themselves among the houses of the most opulent citizens, no one escaping a billet who was rich enough to receive such company: bishop or burgomaster, margrave or merchant. The most famous kitchens were naturally the most eagerly sought, and sumptuous apartments, luxurious dishes, delicate wines, were daily demanded. The burghers dared not refuse.

Page 717

The six hundred Walloons, who had been previously quartered in the city, were expelled, and for many days, the mutiny reigned paramount. Day after day the magistracy, the heads of guilds, all the representatives of the citizens were assembled in the Broad Council. The Governor-General insisted on his demand of four hundred thousand crowns, representing, with great justice, that the mutineers would remain in the city until they had eaten and drunk to that amount, and that there would still be the arrearages; for which the city would be obliged to raise the funds. On the 9th of May, the authorities made an offer, which was duly communicated to the Eletto. That functionary stood forth on a window-sill of the town-house, and addressed the soldiery. He informed them that the Grand Commander proposed to pay ten months' arrears in cash, five months in silks and woollen cloths, and the balance in promises, to be fulfilled within a few days. The terms were not considered satisfactory, and were received with groans of derision. The Eletto, on the contrary, declared them very liberal, and reminded the soldiers of the perilous condition in which they stood, guilty to a man of high treason, with a rope around every neck. It was well worth their while to accept the offer made them, together with the absolute pardon for the past, by which it was accompanied. For himself, he washed his hands of the consequences if the offer were rejected. The soldiers answered by deposing the Eletto and choosing another in his room.

Three days after, a mutiny broke out in the citadel—an unexampled occurrence. The rebels ordered Sancho d'Avila, the commandant, to deliver the keys of the fortress. He refused to surrender them but with his life. They then contented themselves with compelling his lieutenant to leave the citadel, and with sending their Eletto to confer with the Grand Commander, as well as with the Eletto of the army. After accomplishing his mission, he returned, accompanied by Chiappin Vitelli, as envoy of the Governor-General. No sooner, however, had the Eletto set foot on the drawbridge than he was attacked by Ensign Salvatierra of the Spanish garrison, who stabbed him to the heart and threw him into the moat. The ensign, who was renowned in the army for his ferocious courage, and who wore embroidered upon his trunk hose the inscription, "El castigador de los Flamencos," then rushed upon the Sergeant-major of the mutineers, despatched him in the same way, and tossed him likewise into the moat. These preliminaries being settled, a satisfactory arrangement was negotiated between Vitelli and the rebellious garrison. Pardon for the past, and payment upon the same terms as those offered in the city, were accepted, and the mutiny of the citadel was quelled. It was, however, necessary that Salvatierra should conceal himself for a long time, to escape being torn to pieces by the incensed soldiery.

Page 718

Meantime, affairs in the city were more difficult to adjust. The mutineers raised an altar of chests and bales upon the public square, and celebrated mass under the open sky, solemnly swearing to be true to each other to the last. The scenes of carousing and merry-making were renewed at the expense of the citizens, who were again exposed to nightly alarms from the boisterous mirth and ceaseless mischief-making of the soldiers. Before the end of the month; the Broad Council, exhausted by the incubus which had afflicted them so many weeks, acceded to the demand of Requesens. The four hundred thousand crowns were furnished, the Grand Commander accepting them as a loan, and giving in return bonds duly signed and countersigned, together with a mortgage upon all the royal domains. The citizens received the documents, as a matter of form, but they had handled such securities before, and valued them but slightly. The mutineers now agreed to settle with the Governor-General, on condition of receiving all their wages, either in cash or cloth, together with a solemn promise of pardon for all their acts of insubordination. This pledge was formally rendered with appropriate religious ceremonies, by Requesens, in the cathedral. The payments were made directly afterwards, and a great banquet was held on the same day, by the whole mass of the soldiery, to celebrate the event. The feast took place on the place of the Meer, and was a scene of furious revelry. The soldiers, more thoughtless than children, had arrayed themselves in extemporaneous costumes, cut from the cloth which they had at last received in payment of their sufferings and their blood. Broadcloths, silks, satins, and gold-embroidered brocades, worthy of a queen's wardrobe, were hung in fantastic drapery around the sinewy forms and bronzed faces of the soldiery, who, the day before, had been clothed in rags. The mirth was fast and furious; and scarce was the banquet finished before every drum-head became a gaming-table, around which gathered groups eager to sacrifice in a moment their dearly-bought gold.

The fortunate or the prudent had not yet succeeded in entirely plundering their companions, when the distant booming of cannon was heard from the river. Instantly, accoutred as they were in their holiday and fantastic costumes, the soldiers, no longer mutinous, were summoned from banquet and gaming-table, and were ordered forth upon the dykes. The patriot Admiral Boisot, who had so recently defeated the fleet of Bergen, under the eyes of the Grand Commander, had unexpectedly sailed up the Scheld, determined to destroy the, fleet of Antwerp, which upon that occasion had escaped. Between, the forts of Lillo and Callao, he met with twenty-two vessels under the command of Vice-Admiral Haemstede. After a short and sharp action, he was completely victorious. Fourteen of the enemy's ships were burned or sunk, with all their crews, and Admiral Haemstede was taken prisoner. The soldiers

Page 719

opened a warm fire of musketry upon Boisot from the dyke, to which he responded with his cannon. The distance of the combatants, however, made the action unimportant; and the patriots retired down the river, after achieving a complete victory. The Grand Commander was farther than ever from obtaining that foothold on the sea, which as he had informed his sovereign, was the only means by which the Netherlands could be reduced.

1574 [*Chapter ii*.]

First siege of Leyden—Commencement of the second—Description of the city—-Preparations for defence—Letters of Orange—Act of amnesty issued by Requesens—-Its conditions—Its reception by the Hollanders—Correspondence of the Glippers—-Sorties and fierce combats beneath the walls of Leyden—Position of the Prince—His project of relief Magnanimity of the people—Breaking of the dykes— Emotions in the city and the besieging camp—Letter of the Estates of Holland—Dangerous illness of the Prince—The “wild Zealanders”— Admiral Boisot commences his voyage—Sanguinary combat on the Land— Scheiding—Occupation of that dyke and of the Green Way—-Pauses and Progress of the flotilla—The Prince visits the fleet—Horrible sufferings in the city—Speech of Van der Werf—Heroism of the inhabitants—The Admiral’s letters—-The storm—Advance of Boisot— Lammen fortress——An anxious night—Midnight retreat of the Spaniards—The Admiral enters the city—Thanksgiving in the great church The Prince in Leyden—Parting words of Valdez—Mutiny—Leyden University founded —The charter—Inauguration ceremonies.

The invasion of Louis of Nassau had, as already stated, effected the raising of the first siege of Leyden. That leaguer had lasted from the 31st of October, 1573, to the 21st of March, 1574, when the soldiers were summoned away to defend the frontier. By an extraordinary and culpable carelessness, the citizens, neglecting the advice of the Prince, had not taken advantage of the breathing time thus afforded them to victual the city and strengthen the garrison. They seemed to reckon more confidently upon the success of Count Louis than he had even done himself; for it was very probable that, in case of his defeat, the siege would be instantly resumed. This natural result was not long in following the battle of Mookerheyde.

On the 26th of May, Valdez reappeared before the place, at the head of eight thousand Walloons and Germans, and Leyden was now destined to pass through a fiery ordeal. This city was one of the most beautiful in the Netherlands. Placed in the midst of broad and fruitful pastures, which had been reclaimed by the hand of industry from the bottom of the sea; it was fringed with smiling villages, blooming gardens, fruitful Orchards. The ancient and, at last, decrepit Rhine, flowing languidly towards its sandy death-bed, had been multiplied into innumerable artificial currents, by which the city was completely interlaced. These watery streets were shaded by lime trees, poplars,

Page 720

and willows, and crossed by one hundred and forty-five bridges, mostly of hammered stone. The houses were elegant, the squares and streets spacious, airy and clean, the churches and public edifices imposing, while the whole aspect, of the place suggested thrift, industry, and comfort. Upon an artificial elevation, in the centre of the city, rose a ruined tower of unknown antiquity. By some it was considered to be of Roman origin, while others preferred to regard it as a work of the Anglo-Saxon Hengist, raised to commemorate his conquest of England.

[Guicciardini, Descript. Holl, et Zelandire. Bor, vii. 502.
Bentivoglio, viii. 151

“Putatur Engistus Britanno
Orbe redus posuisse victor,” *etc*., *etc*.

according to the celebrated poem of John Von der Does, the accomplished and valiant Commandant of the city. The tower, which is doubtless a Roman one, presents, at the present day, almost precisely the same appearance as that described by the contemporaneous historians of the siege. The verses of the Commandant show the opinion, that the Anglo-Saxon conquerors of Britain went from Holland, to have been a common one in the sixteenth century.]

Surrounded by fruit trees, and overgrown in the centre with oaks, it afforded, from its mouldering battlements, a charming prospect over a wide expanse of level country, with the spires of neighbouring cities rising in every direction. It was from this commanding height, during the long and terrible summer days which were approaching, that many an eye was to be strained anxiously seaward, watching if yet the ocean had begun to roll over the land.

Valdez lost no time in securing himself in the possession of Maeslandsluis, Vlaardingen, and the Hague. Five hundred English, under command of Colonel Edward Chester, abandoned the fortress of Valkenburg, and fled towards Leyden. Refused admittance by the citizens, who now, with reason, distrusted them, they surrendered to Valdez, and were afterwards sent back to England. In the course of a few days, Leyden was thoroughly invested, no less than sixty-two redoubts, some of them having remained undestroyed from the previous siege, now girdling the city, while the besiegers already numbered nearly eight thousand, a force to be daily increased. On the other hand, there were no troops in the town, save a small corps of “freebooters,” and five companies of the burgher guard. John Van der Does, Seigneur of Nordwyck, a gentleman of distinguished family, but still more distinguished for his learning, his poetical genius, and his valor, had accepted the office of military commandant.

Page 721

The main reliance of the city, under God, was on the stout hearts of its inhabitants within the walls, and on, the sleepless energy of William the Silent without. The Prince, hastening to comfort and encourage the citizens, although he had been justly irritated by their negligence in having omitted to provide more sufficiently against the emergency while there had yet been time, now reminded them that they were not about to contend for themselves alone, but that the fate of their country and of unborn generations would, in all human probability, depend on the issue about to be tried. Eternal glory would be their portion if they manifested a courage worthy of their race and of the sacred cause of religion and liberty. He implored them to hold out at least three months, assuring them that he would, within that time, devise the means of their deliverance. The citizens responded, courageously and confidently, to these missives, and assured the Prince of their firm confidence in their own fortitude and his exertions.

And truly they had a right to rely on that calm and unflinching soul, as on a rock of adamant. All alone, without a being near him to consult, his right arm struck from him by the death of Louis, with no brother left to him but the untiring and faithful John, he prepared without delay for the new task imposed upon him. France, since the defeat and death of Louis, and the busy intrigues which had followed the accession of Henry *iii*., had but small sympathy for the Netherlands. The English government, relieved from the fear of France; was more cold and haughty than ever. An Englishman employed by Requesens to assassinate the Prince of Orange, had been arrested in Zealand, who impudently pretended that he had undertaken to perform the same office for Count John, with the full consent and privity of Queen Elizabeth. The provinces of Holland and Zealand were stanch and true, but the inequality of the contest between a few brave men, upon that handsbreadth of territory, and the powerful Spanish Empire, seemed to render the issue hopeless.

Moreover, it was now thought expedient to publish the amnesty which had been so long in preparation, and this time the trap was more liberally baited. The pardon, which had: passed the seals upon the 8th of March, was formally issue: by the Grand Commander on the 6th of June. By the terms of this document the King invited all his erring and repentant subjects, to return to his arms; and to accept a full forgiveness for their past offences, upon the sole condition that they should once more throw themselves upon the bosom of the Mother Church. There were but few exceptions to the amnesty, a small number of individuals, all mentioned by name, being alone excluded; but although these terms were ample, the act was liable to a few stern objections. It was easier now for the Hollanders to go to their graves than to mass, for the contest, in its progress, had now entirely assumed the aspect of a religious war.

Page 722

Instead of a limited number of heretics in a state which, although constitutional was Catholic, there was now hardly a Papist to be found among the natives. To accept the pardon then was to concede the victory, and the Hollanders had not yet discovered that they were conquered. They were resolved, too, not only to be conquered, but annihilated, before the Roman Church should be re-established on their soil, to the entire exclusion of the Reformed worship. They responded with steadfast enthusiasm to the sentiment expressed by the Prince of Orange, after the second siege of Leyden had been commenced; “As long as there is a living man left in the country, we will contend for our liberty and our religion.” The single condition of the amnesty assumed, in a phrase; what Spain had fruitlessly striven to establish by a hundred battles, and the Hollanders had not faced their enemy on land and sea for seven years to succumb to a phrase at last.

Moreover, the pardon came from the wrong direction. The malefactor gravely extended forgiveness to his victims. Although the Hollanders had not yet disembarrassed their minds of the supernatural theory of government, and felt still the reverence of habit for regal divinity, they naturally considered themselves outraged by the trick now played before them. The man who had violated all his oaths, trampled upon all their constitutional liberties, burned and sacked their cities, confiscated their wealth, hanged, beheaded, burned, and buried alive their innocent brethren, now came forward, not to implore, but to offer forgiveness. Not in sackcloth, but in royal robes; not with ashes, but with a diadem upon his head, did the murderer present himself vicariously upon the scene of his crimes. It may be supposed that, even in the sixteenth century, there were many minds which would revolt at such blasphemy. Furthermore, even had the people of Holland been weak enough to accept the pardon, it was impossible to believe that the promise would be fulfilled. It was sufficiently known how much faith was likely to be kept with heretics, notwithstanding that the act was fortified by a papal Bull, dated on the 30th of April, by which Gregory XIII. promised forgiveness to those Netherland sinners who duly repented and sought absolution for their crimes, even although they had sinned more than seven times seven.

For a moment the Prince had feared lest the pardon might produce some effect upon men wearied by interminable suffering, but the event proved him wrong. It was received with universal and absolute contempt. No man came forward to take advantage of its conditions, save one brewer in Utrecht, and the son of a refugee peddler from Leyden. With these exceptions, the only ones recorded, Holland remained deaf to the royal voice. The city of Leyden was equally cold to the messages of mercy, which were especially addressed to its population by Valdez and his agents. Certain Netherlanders, belonging to the King’s party,

Page 723

and familiarly called “Glippers,” despatched from the camp many letters to their rebellious acquaintances in the city. In these epistles the citizens of Leyden were urgently and even pathetically exhorted to submission by their loyal brethren, and were implored “to take pity upon their poor old fathers, their daughters, and their wives.” But the burghers of Leyden thought that the best pity which they could show to those poor old fathers, daughters, and wives, was to keep them from the clutches of the Spanish soldiery; so they made no answer to the Glippers, save by this single line, which they wrote on a sheet of paper, and forwarded, like a letter, to Valdez:

“Fistula dulce canit, volucrem cum decipit auceps.”

According to the advice early given by the Prince of Orange, the citizens had taken an account of their provisions of all kinds, including the live stock. By the end of June, the city was placed on a strict allowance of food, all the provisions being purchased by the authorities at an equitable price. Half a pound of meat and half a pound of bread was allotted to a full grown man, and to the rest, a due proportion. The city being strictly invested, no communication, save by carrier pigeons, and by a few swift and skilful messengers called jumpers, was possible. Sorties and fierce combats were, however, of daily occurrence, and a handsome bounty was offered to any man who brought into the city gates the head of a Spaniard. The reward was paid many times, but the population was becoming so excited and so apt, that the authorities felt it dangerous to permit the continuance of these conflicts. Lest the city, little by little, should lose its few disciplined defenders, it was now proclaimed, by sound of church bell, that in future no man should leave the gates.

The Prince had his head-quarters at Delft and at Rotterdam. Between those two cities, an important fortress, called Polderwaert, secured him in the control of the alluvial quadrangle, watered on two sides by the Yssel and the Meuse. On the 29th June, the Spaniards, feeling its value, had made an unsuccessful effort to carry this fort by storm. They had been beaten off, with the loss of several hundred men, the Prince remaining in possession of the position, from which alone he could hope to relieve Leyden. He still held in his hand the keys with which he could unlock the ocean gates and let the waters in upon the land, and he had long been convinced that nothing could save the city but to break the dykes. Leyden was not upon the sea, but he could send the sea to. Leyden, although an army fit to encounter the besieging force under Valdez could not be levied. The battle of Mookerheyde had, for the, present, quite settled the question, of land relief, but it was possible to besiege the besiegers, with the waves of the ocean. The Spaniards occupied the coast from the Hague to Vlaardingen, but the dykes along the Meuse and Yssel were in possession

Page 724

of the Prince. He determined, that these should be pierced, while, at the same time, the great sluices at Rotterdam, Schiedam, and Delftshaven should be opened. The damage to the fields, villages, and growing crops would be enormous, but he felt that no other course could rescue Leyden, and with it the whole of Holland from destruction. His clear expositions and impassioned eloquence at last overcame all resistance. By the middle of July the estates consented to his plan, and its execution was immediately undertaken. “Better a drowned land than a lost land,” cried the patriots, with enthusiasm, as they devoted their fertile fields to desolation. The enterprise for restoring their territory, for a season, to the waves, from which it had been so patiently rescued, was conducted with as much regularity as if it had been a profitable undertaking. A capital was formally subscribed, for which a certain number of bonds were issued, payable at a long date. In addition to this preliminary fund, a monthly allowance of forty-five guldens was voted by the estates, until the work should be completed, and a large sum was contributed by the ladies of the land, who freely furnished their plate, jewellery, and costly furniture to the furtherance of the scheme.

Meantime, Valdez, on the 30th July; issued most urgent and ample offers of pardon to the citizens, if they would consent to open their gates and accept the King’s authority, but his Overtures were received with silent contempt, notwithstanding that the population was already approaching the starvation point. Although not yet fully informed of the active measures taken by the Prince, yet they still chose to rely upon his energy and their own fortitude, rather than upon the honied words which had formerly been heard at the gates of Harlem and of Naarden. On the 3rd of August, the Prince; accompanied by Paul Buys, chief of the commission appointed to execute the enterprise, went in person along the Yssel; as far as Kappelle, and superintended the rupture of the dykes in sixteen places. The gates at Schiedam and Rotterdam were, opened, and the ocean began to pour over the land. While waiting for the waters to rise, provisions were rapidly, collected, according to an edict of the Prince, in all the principal towns of the neighbourhood, and some two hundred vessels, of various sizes, had also been got ready at Rotterdam, Delftshaven, and other ports.

The citizens of Leyden were, however, already becoming impatient, for their bread was gone, and of its substitute malt cake, they had but slender provision. On the 12th of August they received a letter from the Prince, encouraging them to resistance, and assuring them of a speedy relief, and on the 21st they addressed a despatch to him in reply, stating that they had now fulfilled their original promise, for they had held out two months with food, and another month without food. If not soon assisted, human strength could do no more; their malt cake would last but four days,

Page 725

and after that was gone, there was nothing left but starvation. Upon the same day, however, they received a letter, dictated by the Prince, who now lay in bed at Rotterdam with a violent fever, assuring them that the dykes were all pierced, and that the water was rising upon the “Land-Scheiding,” the great outer barrier which separated the city from the sea. He said nothing however of his own illness, which would have cast a deep shadow over the joy which now broke forth among the burghers.

The letter was read publicly in the market-place, and to increase the cheerfulness, burgomaster Van der Werf, knowing the sensibility of his countrymen to music, ordered the city musicians to perambulate the streets, playing lively melodies and martial airs. Salvos of cannon were likewise fired, and the starving city for a brief space put on the aspect of a holiday, much to the astonishment of the besieging forces, who were not yet aware of the Prince’s efforts. They perceived very soon, however, as the water everywhere about Leyden had risen to the depth of ten inches, that they stood in a perilous position. It was no trifling danger to be thus attacked by the waves of the ocean, which seemed about to obey with docility the command of William the Silent. Valdez became anxious and uncomfortable at the strange aspect of affairs, for the besieging army was now in its turn beleaguered, and by a stronger power than man’s. He consulted with the most experienced of his officers, with the country people, with the most distinguished among the Glippers, and derived encouragement from their views concerning the Prince’s plan. They pronounced it utterly futile and hopeless: The Glippers knew the country well, and ridiculed the desperate project in unmeasured terms.

Even in the city itself, a dull distrust had succeeded to the first vivid gleam of hope, while the few royalists among the population boldly taunted their fellow-citizens to their faces with the absurd vision of relief which they had so fondly welcomed. “Go up to the tower, ye Beggars,” was the frequent and taunting cry, “go up to the tower, and tell us if ye can see the ocean coming over the dry land to your relief”—and day after day they did go, up to the ancient tower of Hengist, with heavy heart and anxious eye, watching, hoping, praying, fearing, and at last almost despairing of relief by God or man. On the 27th they addressed a desponding letter to the estates, complaining that the city had been forgotten in, its utmost need, and on the same day a prompt and warm-hearted reply was received, in which the citizens were assured that every human effort was to be made for their relief. “Rather,” said the estates, “will we see our whole land and all our possessions perish in the waves, than forsake thee, Leyden. We know full well, moreover, that with Leyden, all Holland must perish also.” They excused themselves for not having more frequently written, upon the, ground that the whole management of the measures for their relief had been entrusted to the Prince, by whom alone all the details had been administered, and all the correspondence conducted.

Page 726

The fever of the Prince had, meanwhile, reached its height. He lay at Rotterdam, utterly prostrate in body, and with mind agitated nearly to delirium, by the perpetual and almost unassisted schemes which he was constructing. Relief, not only for Leyden, but for the whole country, now apparently sinking into the abyss, was the vision which he pursued as he tossed upon his restless couch. Never was illness more unseasonable. His attendants were in despair, for it was necessary that his mind should for a time be spared the agitation of business. The physicians who attended him agreed, as to his disorder, only in this, that it was the result of mental fatigue and melancholy, and could be cured only by removing all distressing and perplexing subjects from his thoughts, but all the physicians in the world could not have succeeded in turning his attention for an instant from the great cause of his country. Leyden lay, as it were, anxious and despairing at his feet, and it was impossible for him to close his ears to her cry. Therefore, from his sick bed he continued to dictate; words of counsel and encouragement to the city; to Admiral Boisot, commanding, the fleet, minute directions and precautions. Towards the end of August a vague report had found its way into his sick chamber that Leyden had fallen, and although he refused to credit the tale, yet it served to harass his mind, and to heighten fever. Cornelius Van Mierop, Receiver General of Holland, had occasion to visit him at Rotterdam, and strange to relate, found the house almost deserted. Penetrating, unattended, to the Prince's bed-chamber, he found him lying quite alone. Inquiring what had become, of all his attendants, he was answered by the Prince, in a very feeble voice, that he had sent them all away. The Receiver-General seems, from this, to have rather hastily arrived at the conclusion that the Prince's disorder was the pest, and that his servants and friends had all deserted him from cowardice.

This was very far from being the case. His private secretary and his maitre d'hotel watched, day and night, by his couch, and the best physicians of the city were in constant attendance. By a singular accident; all had been despatched on different errands, at the express desire of their master, but there had never been a suspicion that his disorder was the pest, or pestilential. Nerves of steel, and a frame of adamant could alone have resisted the constant anxiety and the consuming fatigue to which he had so long been exposed. His illness had been aggravated by the, rumor of Leyden's fall, a fiction which Cornelius Mierop was now enabled flatly to contradict. The Prince began to mend from that hour. By the end of the first week of September, he wrote along letter to his brother, assuring him of his convalescence, and expressing, as usual; a calm confidence in the divine decrees—"God will ordain for me," said he, "all which is necessary for my good and my salvation. He will load me with no more afflictions than the fragility of this nature can sustain."

Page 727

The preparations for the relief of Leyden, which, notwithstanding his exertions, had grown slack during his sickness, were now vigorously resumed. On the 1st of September, Admiral Boisot arrived out of Zealand with a small number of vessels, and with eight hundred veteran sailors. A wild and ferocious crew were those eight hundred Zealanders. Scarred, hacked, and even maimed, in the unceasing conflicts in which their lives had passed; wearing crescents in their caps, with the inscription, “Rather Turkish than Popish;” renowned far and wide, as much for their ferocity as for their nautical skill; the appearance of these wildest of the “Sea-beggars” was both eccentric and terrific. They were known never to give nor to take quarter, for they went to mortal combat only, and had sworn to spare neither noble nor simple, neither king, kaiser, nor pope, should they fall into their power.

More than two hundred-vessels had been assembled, carrying generally ten pieces of cannon, with from ten to eighteen oars, and manned with twenty-five hundred veterans, experienced both on land and water. The work was now undertaken in earnest. The distance from Leyden to the outer dyke, over whose ruins the ocean had already been admitted, was nearly fifteen miles. This reclaimed territory, however, was not maintained against the sea by these external barriers alone. The flotilla made its way with ease to the Land-Scheiding, a strong dyke within five miles of Leyden, but here its progress was arrested. The approach to the city was surrounded by many strong ramparts, one within the other, by which it was defended against its ancient enemy, the ocean, precisely like the circumvallations by means of which it was now assailed by its more recent enemy, the Spaniard. To enable the fleet, however, to sail over the land; it was necessary to break through this two fold series of defences. Between the Land-Scheiding and Leyden were several dykes, which kept out the water; upon the level, were many villages, together with a chain of sixty-two forts, which completely occupied the land. All these Villages and fortresses were held by the veteran, troops of the King; the besieging force, being about four times as strong as that which was coming to the rescue.

The Prince had given orders that the Land-Scheiding, which was still one-and-a-half foot above water, should be taken possession of; at every hazard. On the night of the 10th and 11th of September this was accomplished; by surprise; and in a masterly manner. The few Spaniards who had been stationed upon the dyke were all, despatched or driven off, and the patriots fortified themselves upon it, without the loss of a man. As the day dawned the Spaniards saw the fatal error which they had committed in leaving thus bulwark so feebly defended, and from two villages which stood close to the dyke, the troops now rushed inconsiderable force to recover what they had lost. A hot action succeeded, but the patriots had too securely established

Page 728

themselves. They completely defeated the enemy, who retired, leaving hundreds of dead on the field, and the patriots in complete possession of the Land-scheiding. This first action was sanguinary and desperate. It gave a earnest of what these people, who came to relieve; their brethren, by sacrificing their, property and their lives; were determined to effect. It gave a revolting proof, too, of the intense hatred which nerved their arms. A Zealander; having struck down a Spaniard on the dyke, knelt on his bleeding enemy, tore his heart from his bosom; fastened his teeth in it for an instant, and then threw it to a dog, with the exclamation, "'Tis too bitter." The Spanish heart was, however, rescued, and kept for years, with the marks of the soldier's teeth upon it, a sad testimonial of the ferocity engendered by this war for national existence.

The great dyke having been thus occupied, no time was lost in breaking it through in several places, a work which was accomplished under the very eyes of the enemy. The fleet sailed through the gaps, but, after their passage had been effected in good order, the Admiral found, to his surprise, that it was not the only rampart to be carried. The Prince had been informed, by those who claimed to know, the country, that, when once the Land-scheiding had been passed, the water would flood the country as far as Leyden, but the "Green-way," another long dyke three-quarters of a mile farther inward, now rose at least a foot above the water, to oppose their further progress. Fortunately, by, a second and still more culpable carelessness, this dyke had been left by the Spaniards in as unprotected a state as the first had been, Promptly and audaciously Admiral Boisot took possession of this barrier also, levelled it in many places, and brought his flotilla, in triumph, over its ruins. Again, however, he was doomed to disappointment. A large mere, called the Freshwater Lake, was known to extend itself directly in his path about midway between the Land-scheiding and the city. To this piece of water, into which he expected to have instantly floated, his only passage lay through one deep canal. The sea which had thus far borne him on, now diffusing itself over a very wide surface, and under the influence of an adverse wind, had become too shallow for his ships. The canal alone was deep enough, but it led directly towards a bridge, strongly occupied by the enemy. Hostile troops, moreover, to the amount of three thousand occupied both sides of the canal. The bold Boisot, nevertheless, determined to force his passage, if possible. Selecting a few of his strongest vessels, his heaviest artillery, and his bravest sailors, he led the van himself, in a desperate attempt to make his way to the mere. He opened a hot fire upon the bridge, then converted into a fortress, while his men engaged in hand-to-hand combat with a succession of skirmishers from the troops along the canal. After losing a few men, and ascertaining the impregnable position of the enemy, he was obliged to withdraw, defeated, and almost despairing.

Page 729

A week had elapsed since the great dyke had been pierced, and the flotilla now lay motionless—in shallow water, having accomplished less than two miles. The wind, too, was easterly, causing the sea rather to sink than to rise. Everything wore a gloomy aspect, when, fortunately, on the 18th, the wind shifted to the north-west, and for three days blew a gale. The waters rose rapidly, and before the second day was closed the armada was afloat again. Some fugitives from Zoetermeer village now arrived, and informed the Admiral that, by making a detour to the right, he could completely circumvent the bridge and the mere. They guided him, accordingly, to a comparatively low dyke, which led between the villages of Zoetermeer and Benthuyzen: A strong force of Spaniards was stationed in each place, but, seized with a panic, instead of sallying to defend the barrier, they fled inwardly towards Leyden, and halted at the village of North Aa. It was natural that they should be amazed. Nothing is more appalling to the imagination than the rising ocean tide, when man feels himself within its power; and here were the waters, hourly deepening and closing around them, devouring the earth beneath their feet, while on the waves rode a flotilla, manned by a determined race; whose courage and ferocity were known throughout the world. The Spanish soldiers, brave as they were on land, were not sailors, and in the naval contests which had taken place between them and the Hollanders had been almost invariably defeated. It was not surprising, in these amphibious skirmishes, where discipline was of little avail, and habitual audacity faltered at the vague dangers which encompassed them, that the foreign troops should lose their presence of mind.

Three barriers, one within the other, had now been passed, and the flotilla, advancing with the advancing waves, and driving the enemy steadily before it, was drawing nearer to the beleaguered city. As one circle after another was passed, the besieging army found itself compressed within a constantly contracting field. The “Ark of Delft,” an enormous vessel, with shot-proof bulwarks, and moved by paddle-wheels turned by a crank, now arrived at Zoetermeer, and was soon followed by the whole fleet. After a brief delay, sufficient to allow the few remaining villagers to escape, both Zoetermeer and Benthuyzen, with the fortifications, were set on fire, and abandoned to their fate. The blaze lighted up the desolate and watery waste around, and was seen at Leyden, where it was hailed as the beacon of hope. Without further impediment, the armada proceeded to North Aa; the enemy retreating from this position also, and flying to Zoeterwoude, a strongly fortified village but a mile and three quarters from the city walls. It was now swarming with troops, for the bulk of the besieging army had gradually been driven into a narrow circle of forts, within the immediate neighbourhood of Leyden. Besides Zoeterwoude, the two posts where they were principally established were Lammen and Leyderdorp, each within three hundred rods of the town. At Leyderdorp were the head-quarters of Valdez; Colonel Borgia commanded in the very strong fortress of Lammen.

Page 730

The fleet was, however, delayed at North Aa by another barrier, called the “Kirk-way.” The waters, too, spreading once more over a wider space, and diminishing under an east wind, which had again arisen, no longer permitted their progress, so that very soon the whole armada was stranded anew. The, waters fell to the depth of nine inches; while the vessels required eighteen and twenty. Day after day the fleet lay motionless upon the shallow sea. Orange, rising from his sick bed as soon as he could stand, now came on board the fleet. His presence diffused universal joy; his words inspired his desponding army with fresh hope. He rebuked the impatient spirits who, weary of their compulsory idleness, had shown symptoms of ill-timed ferocity, and those eight hundred mad Zealanders, so frantic in their hatred to the foreigners, who had so long profaned their land, were as docile as children to the Prince. He reconnoitred the whole ground, and issued orders for the immediate destruction of the Kirkway, the last important barrier which separated the fleet from Leyden. Then, after a long conference with Admiral Boisot, he returned to Delft.

Meantime, the besieged city was at its last gasp. The burghers had been in a state of uncertainty for many days; being aware that the fleet had set forth for their relief, but knowing full well the thousand obstacles which it, had to surmount. They had guessed its progress by the illumination from, the blazing villages; they had heard its salvos of artillery, on its arrival at North Aa; but since then, all had been dark and mournful again, hope and fear, in sickening alternation, distracting every breast. They knew that the wind was unfavorable, and at the dawn of each day every eye was turned wistfully to the vanes of the, steeples. So long as the easterly breeze prevailed, they felt, as they anxiously stood on towers and housetops; that they must look in vain for the welcome ocean. Yet, while thus patiently waiting, they were literally starving; for even the misery endured at Harlem had not reached that depth and intensity of agony to which Leyden was now reduced. Bread, malt-cake, horseflesh, had entirely disappeared; dogs, cats, rats, and other vermin, were esteemed luxuries: A small number of cows, kept as long as possible, for their milk, still remained; but a few were killed from day to day; and distributed in minute proportions, hardly sufficient to support life among the famishing population. Starving wretches swarmed daily around the shambles where these cattle were slaughtered, contending for any morsel which might fall, and lapping eagerly the blood as it ran along the pavement; while the hides; chopped and boiled, were greedily devoured. Women and children, all day long, were seen searching gutters and dunghills for morsels of food, which they disputed fiercely with the famishing dogs. The green leaves were stripped from the trees, every living herb was converted into human food, but these expedients

Page 731

could not avert starvation. The daily mortality was frightful infants starved to death on the maternal breasts, which famine had parched and withered; mothers dropped dead in the streets, with their dead children in their arms. In many a house the watchmen, in their rounds, found a whole family of corpses, father, mother, and children, side by side, for a disorder called the plague, naturally engendered of hardship and famine, now came, as if in kindness, to abridge the agony of the people. The pestilence stalked at noonday through the city, and the doomed inhabitants fell like grass beneath its scythe. From six thousand to eight thousand human beings sank before this scourge alone, yet the people resolutely held out—women and men mutually encouraging each other to resist the entrance of their foreign foe—an evil more horrible than pest or famine.

The missives from Valdez, who saw more vividly than the besieged could do, the uncertainty of his own position, now poured daily into the city, the enemy becoming more prodigal of his vows, as he felt that the ocean might yet save the victims from his grasp. The inhabitants, in their ignorance, had gradually abandoned their hopes of relief, but they spurned the summons to surrender. Leyden was sublime in its despair. A few murmurs were, however, occasionally heard at the steadfastness of the magistrates, and a dead body was placed at the door of the burgomaster, as a silent witness against his inflexibility. A party of the more faint-hearted even assailed the heroic Adrian Van der Werf with threats and reproaches as he passed through the streets. A crowd had gathered around him, as he reached a triangular place in the centre of the town, into which many of the principal streets emptied themselves, and upon one side of which stood the church of Saint Pancras, with its high brick tower surmounted by two pointed turrets, and with two ancient lime trees at its entrance. There stood the burgomaster, a tall, haggard, imposing figure, with dark visage, and a tranquil but commanding eye. He waved his broadleaved felt hat for silence, and then exclaimed, in language which has been almost literally preserved, What would ye, my friends? Why do ye murmur that we do not break our vows and surrender the city to the Spaniards? a fate more horrible than the agony which she now endures. I tell you I have made an oath to hold the city, and may God give me strength to keep my oath! I can die but once; whether by your hands, the enemy's, or by the hand of God. My own fate is indifferent to me, not so that of the city intrusted to my care. I know that we shall starve if not soon relieved; but starvation is preferable to the dishonored death which is the only alternative. Your menaces move me not; my life is at your disposal; here is my sword, plunge it into my breast, and divide my flesh among you. Take my body to appease your hunger, but expect no surrender, so long as I remain alive.

Page 732

The words of the stout burgomaster inspired a new courage in the hearts of those who heard him, and a shout of applause and defiance arose from the famishing but enthusiastic crowd. They left the place, after exchanging new vows of fidelity with their magistrate, and again ascended tower and battlement to watch for the coming fleet. From the ramparts they hurled renewed defiance at the enemy. “Ye call us rat-eaters and dog-eaters,” they cried, “and it is true. So long, then, as ye hear dog bark or cat mew within the walls, ye may know that the city holds out. And when all has perished but ourselves, be sure that we will each devour our left arms, retaining our right to defend our women, our liberty, and our religion, against the foreign tyrant. Should God, in his wrath, doom us to destruction, and deny us all relief, even then will we maintain ourselves for ever against your entrance. When the last hour has come, with our own hands we will set fire to the city and perish, men, women, and children together in the flames, rather than suffer our homes to be polluted and our liberties to be crushed.” Such words of defiance, thundered daily from the battlements, sufficiently informed Valdez as to his chance of conquering the city, either by force or fraud, but at the same time, he felt comparatively relieved by the inactivity of Boisot’s fleet, which still lay stranded at North Aa. “As well,” shouted the Spaniards, derisively, to the citizens, “as well can the Prince of Orange pluck the stars from the sky as bring the ocean to the walls of Leyden for your relief.”

On the 28th of September, a dove flew into the city, bringing a letter from Admiral Boisot. In this despatch, the position of the fleet at North Aa was described in encouraging terms, and the inhabitants were assured that, in a very few days at furthest, the long-expected relief would enter their gates. The letter was read publicly upon the market-place, and the bells were rung for joy. Nevertheless, on the morrow, the vanes pointed to the east, the waters, so far from rising, continued to sink, and Admiral Boisot was almost in despair. He wrote to the Prince, that if the spring-tide, now to be expected, should not, together with a strong and favorable wind, come immediately to their relief, it would be in pain to attempt anything further, and that the expedition would, of necessity, be abandoned. The tempest came to their relief. A violent equinoctial gale, on the night of the 1st and 2nd of October, came storming from the north-west, shifting after a few hours full eight points, and then blowing still more violently from the south-west. The waters of the North Sea were piled in vast masses upon the southern coast of Holland, and then dashed furiously landward, the ocean rising over the earth, and sweeping with unrestrained power across the ruined dykes.

Page 733

In the course of twenty-four hours, the fleet at North Aa, instead of nine inches, had more than two feet of water. No time was lost. The Kirk-way, which had been broken through according to the Prince's instructions, was now completely overflowed, and the fleet sailed at midnight, in the midst of the storm and darkness. A few sentinel vessels of the enemy challenged them as they steadily rowed towards Zoeterwoude. The answer was a flash from Boisot's cannon; lighting up the black waste of waters. There was a fierce naval midnight battle; a strange spectacle among the branches of those quiet orchards, and with the chimney stacks of half-submerged farmhouses rising around the contending vessels. The neighboring village of Zoeterwoude shook with the discharges of the Zealanders' cannon, and the Spaniards assembled in that fortress knew that the rebel Admiral was at last, afloat and on his course. The enemy's vessels were soon sunk, their crews hurled into the waves. On went the fleet, sweeping over the broad waters which lay between Zoeterwoude and Zwieten. As they approached some shallows, which led into the great mere, the Zealanders dashed into the sea, and with sheer strength shouldered every vessel through. Two obstacles lay still in their path—the forts of Zoeterwoude and Lammen, distant from the city five hundred and two hundred and fifty yards respectively. Strong redoubts, both well supplied with troops and artillery, they were likely to give a rough reception to the light flotilla, but the panic; which had hitherto driven their foes before the advancing patriots; had reached Zoeterwoude. Hardly was the fleet in sight when the Spaniards in the early morning, poured out from the fortress, and fled precipitately to the left, along a road which led in a westerly direction towards the Hague. Their narrow path was rapidly vanishing in the waves, and hundreds sank beneath the constantly deepening and treacherous flood. The wild Zealanders, too, sprang from their vessels upon the crumbling dyke and drove their retreating foes into the sea. They hurled their harpoons at them, with an accuracy acquired in many a polar chase; they plunged into the waves in the keen pursuit, attacking them with boat-hook and dagger. The numbers who thus fell beneath these corsairs, who neither gave nor took quarter, were never counted, but probably not less than a thousand perished. The rest effected their escape to the Hague.

The first fortress was thus seized, dismantled, set on fire, and passed, and a few strokes of the oars brought the whole fleet close to Lammen. This last obstacle rose formidable and frowning directly across their path. Swarming as it was with soldiers, and bristling with artillery, it seemed to defy the armada either to carry it by storm or to pass under its guns into the city. It appeared that the enterprise was, after all, to founder within sight of the long expecting and expected haven. Boisot anchored his fleet within a respectful distance, and spent what

Page 734

remained of the day in carefully reconnoitring the fort, which seemed only too strong. In conjunction with Leyderdorp, the head-quarters of Valdez, a mile and a half distant on the right, and within a mile of the city, it seemed so insuperable an impediment that Boisot wrote in despondent tone to the Prince of Orange. He announced his intention of carrying the fort, if it were possible, on the following morning, but if obliged to retreat, he observed, with something like despair, that there would be nothing for it but to wait for another gale of wind. If the waters should rise sufficiently to enable them to make a wide detour, it might be possible, if, in the meantime, Leyden did not starve or surrender, to enter its gates from the opposite side.

Meantime, the citizens had grown wild with expectation. A dove had been despatched by Boisot, informing them of his precise position, and a number of citizens accompanied the burgomaster, at nightfall, toward the tower of Hengist. Yonder, cried the magistrate, stretching out his hand towards Lammen, “yonder, behind that fort, are bread and meat, and brethren in thousands. Shall all this be destroyed by the Spanish guns, or shall we rush to the rescue of our friends?”—“We will tear the fortress to fragments with our teeth and nails,” was the reply, “before the relief, so long expected, shall be wrested from us.” It was resolved that a sortie, in conjunction with the operations of Boisot, should be made against Lammen with the earliest dawn. Night descended upon the scene, a pitch dark night, full of anxiety to the Spaniards, to the armada, to Leyden. Strange sights and sounds occurred at different moments to bewilder the anxious sentinels. A long procession of lights issuing from the fort was seen to flit across the black face of the waters, in the dead of night, and the whole of the city wall, between the Cow-gate and the Tower of Burgundy, fell with a loud crash. The horror-struck citizens thought that the Spaniards were upon them at last; the Spaniards imagined the noise to indicate, a desperate sortie of the citizens. Everything was vague and mysterious.

Day dawned, at length, after the feverish, night, and, the Admiral prepared for the assault. Within the fortress reigned a death-like stillness, which inspired a sickening suspicion. Had the city, indeed, been carried in the night; had the massacre already commenced; had all this labor and audacity been expended in vain? Suddenly a man was descried, wading breast-high through the water from Lammen towards the fleet, while at the same time, one solitary boy was seen to wave his cap from the summit of the fort. After a moment of doubt, the happy mystery was solved. The Spaniards had fled, panic struck, during the darkness. Their position would still have enabled them, with firmness, to frustrate the enterprise of the patriots, but the hand of God, which had sent the ocean and the tempest to the deliverance of Leyden, had struck

Page 735

her enemies with terror likewise. The lights which had been seen moving during the night were the lanterns of the retreating Spaniards, and the boy who was now waving his triumphant signal from the battlements had alone witnessed the spectacle. So confident was he in the conclusion to which it led him, that he had volunteered at daybreak to go thither all alone. The magistrates, fearing a trap, hesitated for a moment to believe the truth, which soon, however, became quite evident. Valdez, flying himself from Leyderdorp, had ordered Colonel Borgia to retire with all his troops from Lammen. Thus, the Spaniards had retreated at the very moment that an extraordinary accident had laid bare a whole side of the city for their entrance. The noise of the wall, as it fell, only inspired them with fresh alarm for they believed that the citizens had sallied forth in the darkness, to aid the advancing flood in the work of destruction. All obstacles being now removed, the fleet of Boisot swept by Lammen, and entered the city on the morning of the 3rd of October. Leyden was relieved.

The quays were lined with the famishing population, as the fleet rowed through the canals, every human being who could stand, coming forth to greet the preservers of the city. Bread was thrown from every vessel among the crowd. The poor creatures who, for two months had tasted no wholesome human food, and who had literally been living within the jaws of death, snatched eagerly the blessed gift, at last too liberally bestowed. Many choked themselves to death, in the greediness with which they devoured their bread; others became ill with the effects of plenty thus suddenly succeeding starvation; but these were isolated cases, a repetition of which was prevented. The Admiral, stepping ashore, was welcomed by the magistracy, and a solemn procession was immediately formed. Magistrates and citizens, wild Zealanders, emaciated burgher guards, sailors, soldiers, women, children, nearly every living person within the walls, all repaired without delay to the great church, stout Admiral Boisot leading the way. The starving and heroic city, which had been so firm in its resistance to an earthly king, now bent itself in humble gratitude before the King of kings. After prayers, the whole vast congregation joined in the thanksgiving hymn. Thousands of voices raised the-song, but few were able to carry it to its conclusion, for the universal emotion, deepened by the music, became too full for utterance. The hymn was abruptly suspended, while the multitude wept like children. This scene of honest pathos terminated; the necessary measures for distributing the food and for relieving the sick were taken by the magistracy. A note dispatched to the Prince of Orange, was received by him at two o’clock, as he sat in church at Delft. It was of a somewhat different purport from that of the letter which he had received early in the same day from Boisot; the letter in which the admiral had, informed him that the success of the enterprise depended; after-all, upon the desperate assault upon a nearly impregnable fort. The joy of the Prince may be easily imagined, and so soon as the sermon was concluded; he handed the letter just received to the minister, to be read to the congregation. Thus, all participated in his joy, and united with him in thanksgiving.

Page 736

The next day, notwithstanding the urgent entreaties of his friends, who were anxious lest his life should be endangered by breathing, in his scarcely convalescent state; the air of the city where so many thousands had been dying of the pestilence, the Prince repaired to Leyden. He, at least, had never doubted his own or his country's fortitude. They could, therefore, most sincerely congratulate each other, now that the victory had been achieved. "If we are doomed to perish," he had said a little before the commencement of the siege, "in the name of God, be it so! At any rate, we shall have the honor to have done what no nation ever, did before us, that of having defended and maintained ourselves, unaided, in so small a country, against the tremendous efforts of such powerful enemies. So long as the poor inhabitants here, though deserted by all the world, hold firm, it will still cost the Spaniards the half of Spain, in money and in men, before they can make an end of us."

The termination of the terrible siege of Leyden was a convincing proof to the Spaniards that they had not yet made an end of the Hollanders. It furnished, also, a sufficient presumption that until they had made an end of them, even unto the last Hollander, there would never be an end of the struggle in which they were engaged. It was a slender consolation to the Governor-General, that his troops had been vanquished, not by the enemy, but by the ocean. An enemy whom the ocean obeyed with such docility might well be deemed invincible by man. In the head-quarters of Valdez, at Leyderdorp, many plans of Leyden and the neighbourhood were found lying in confusion about the room. Upon the table was a hurried farewell of that General to the scenes of his, discomfiture, written in a Latin worthy of Juan Vargas: "Vale civitas, valete castelli parvi, qui relicti estis propter aquam et non per vim inimicorum!" In his precipitate retreat before the advancing rebels, the Commander had but just found time for this elegant effusion, and, for his parting instructions to Colonel Borgia that the fortress of Lammen was to be forthwith abandoned. These having been reduced to writing, Valdez had fled so speedily as to give rise to much censure and more scandal. He was even accused of having been bribed by the Hollanders to desert his post, a tale which many repeated, and a few believed. On the 4th of October, the day following that on which the relief of the city was effected, the wind shifted to the north-east, and again blew a tempest. It was as if the waters, having now done their work, had been rolled back to the ocean by an Omnipotent hand, for in the course of a few days, the land was bare again, and the work of reconstructing the dykes commenced.

After a brief interval of repose, Leyden had regained its former position. The Prince, with advice of the estates, had granted the city, as a reward for its sufferings, a ten days' annual fair, without tolls or taxes, and as a further manifestation of the gratitude entertained by the people of Holland and Zealand for the heroism of the citizens, it was resolved that an academy or university should be forthwith established within their walls. The University of Leyden, afterwards so illustrious, was thus founded in the very darkest period of the country's struggle.

Page 737

The university was endowed with a handsome revenue, principally derived from the ancient abbey of Egmont, and was provided with a number of professors, selected for their genius, learning, and piety among all the most distinguished scholars of the Netherlands. The document by which the institution was founded was certainly a masterpiece of ponderous irony, for as the fiction of the King's sovereignty was still maintained, Philip was gravely made to establish the university, as a reward to Leyden for rebellion to himself. "Considering," said this wonderful charter, "that during these present wearisome wars within our provinces of Holland and Zealand, all good instruction of youth in the sciences and liberal arts is likely to come into entire oblivion. . . . . Considering the differences of religion—considering that we are inclined to gratify our city of Leyden, with its burghers, on account of the heavy burthens sustained by them during this war with such faithfulness—we have resolved, after ripely deliberating with our dear cousin, William, Prince of Orange, stadholder, to erect a free public school and university," *etc*., *etc*., *etc*. So ran the document establishing this famous academy, all needful regulations for the government and police of the institution being entrusted by Philip to his "above-mentioned dear cousin of Orange."

The university having been founded, endowed, and supplied with its, teachers, it was solemnly consecrated in the following winter, and it is agreeable to contemplate this scene of harmless pedantry, interposed, as it was, between the acts of the longest and dreariest tragedy of modern time. On the 5th of February, 1575, the city of Leyden, so lately the victim of famine and pestilence, had crowned itself with flowers. At seven in the morning, after a solemn religious celebration in the Church of St. Peter, a grand procession was formed. It was preceded by a military escort, consisting of the burgher militia and the five companies of infantry stationed in the city. Then came, drawn by four horses, a splendid triumphal chariot, on which sat a female figure, arrayed in snow-white garments. This was the Holy Gospel. She was attended by the Four Evangelists, who walked on foot at each side of her chariot. Next followed Justice, with sword and scales, mounted; blindfold, upon a unicorn, while those learned doctors, Julian, Papinian, Ulpian, and Tribonian, rode on either side, attended by two lackeys and four men at arms. After these came Medicine, on horseback, holding in one hand a treatise of the healing art, in the other a garland of drugs. The curative goddess rode between the four eminent physicians, Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides, and Theophrastus, and was attended by two footmen and four pike-bearers. Last of the allegorical personages came Minerva, prancing in complete steel, with lance in rest, and bearing her Medusa shield. Aristotle and Plato, Cicero and Virgil, all on horseback, with attendants in antique armor at their back, surrounded the daughter of Jupiter, while the city band, discoursing eloquent music from hautboy and viol, came upon the heels of the allegory. Then followed the mace-bearers and other officials, escorting the orator of the day, the newly-appointed professors and doctors, the magistrates and dignitaries, and the body of the citizens generally completing the procession.

Page 738

Marshalled in this order, through triumphal arches, and over a pavement strewed with flowers, the procession moved slowly up and down the different streets, and along the quiet canals of the city. As it reached the Nuns' Bridge, a barge of triumph, gorgeously decorated, came floating slowly down the sluggish Rhine. Upon its deck, under a canopy enwreathed with laurels and oranges, and adorned with tapestry, sat Apollo, attended by the Nine Muses, all in classical costume; at the helm stood Neptune with his trident. The Muses executed some beautiful concerted pieces; Apollo twanged his lute. Having reached the landing-place, this deputation from Parnassus stepped on shore, and stood awaiting the arrival of the procession. Each professor, as he advanced, was gravely embraced and kissed by Apollo and all the Nine Muses in turn, who greeted their arrival besides with the recitation of an elegant Latin poem. This classical ceremony terminated, the whole procession marched together to the cloister of Saint Barbara, the place prepared for the new university, where they listened to an eloquent oration by the Rev. Caspar Kolhas, after which they partook of a magnificent banquet. With this memorable feast, in the place where famine had so lately reigned, the ceremonies were concluded.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Crescents in their caps: Rather Turkish than Popish
Ever-swarming nurseries of mercenary warriors
Weep oftener for her children than is the usual lot of mothers

Etext editor's bookmarks, *the Dutch republic* 1566-74, Complete

1566, the last year of peace Advised his Majesty to bestow an annual bribe upon Lord Burleigh Age when toleration was a vice An age when to think was a crime Angle with their dissimulation as with a hook Beggars of the sea, as these privateersmen designated themselves Business of an officer to fight, of a general to conquer Conde and Coligny Constitutional governments, move in the daylight Consumer would pay the tax, supposing it were ever paid at all Crescents in their caps: Rather Turkish than Popish Cruelties exercised upon monks and papists Deeply criminal in the eyes of all religious parties Dissenters were as bigoted as the orthodox Enthusiasm could not supply the place of experience Envying those whose sufferings had already been terminated Ever-swarming nurseries of mercenary warriors Financial opposition to tyranny is apt to be unanimous For faithful service, evil recompense Furnished, in addition, with a force of two thousand prostitutes God Save the King! It was the last time Great transactions of a reign are sometimes paltry things Great battles often leave the world where they found it Hair and beard unshorn, according to ancient Batavian custom Hanged for having eaten meat-soup upon Friday Having conjugated his paradigm conscientiously He had omitted to execute heretics

Page 739

He came as a conqueror not as a mediator Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands Hope deferred, suddenly changing to despair If he had little, he could live upon little Incur the risk of being charged with forwardness than neglect Indignant that heretics had been suffered to hang Insane cruelty, both in the cause of the Wrong and the Right Leave not a single man alive in the city, and to burn every house Luther's axiom, that thoughts are toll-free Meantime the second civil war in France had broken out Not for a new doctrine, but for liberty of conscience Not to let the grass grow under their feet Not strong enough to sustain many more such victories Oldenbarneveld; afterwards so illustrious Only kept alive by milk, which he drank from a woman's breast Only healthy existence of the French was in a state of war Pathetic dying words of Anne Boleyn Provided not one Huguenot be left alive in France Put all those to the torture out of whom anything can be got Questioning nothing, doubting nothing, fearing nothing Saint Bartholomew's day Scepticism, which delights in reversing the judgment of centuries Science of reigning was the science of lying Sent them word by carrier pigeons Seven Spaniards were killed, and seven thousand rebels Sick and wounded wretches were burned over slow fires Slender stock of platitudes So much responsibility and so little power Sometimes successful, even although founded upon sincerity Spendthrift of time, he was an economist of blood The time for reasoning had passed The calf is fat and must be killed The perpetual reproductions of history The greatest crime, however, was to be rich The faithful servant is always a perpetual ass The tragedy of Don Carlos The illness was a convenient one Three hundred fighting women Time and myself are two Tyranny, ever young and ever old, constantly reproducing herself We are beginning to be vexed Wealth was an unpardonable sin Weep oftener for her children than is the usual lot of mothers Who loved their possessions better than their creed Wonder equally at human capacity to inflict and to endure misery

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS

The rise of the Dutch republic, *volume iii*.

By John Lothrop Motley

1855

1574-1576 [*Chapter iii*.]

Latter days of the Blood Council—Informal and insincere negotiations for peace—-Characteristics of the negotiators and of their diplomatic correspondence—Dr. Junius—-Secret conferences between Dr. Leoninus and Orange—Steadfastness of the Prince—Changes in the internal government of the northern provinces— Generosity and increasing power of the municipalities—Incipient jealousy in regard to Orange rebuked

—His offer of resignation refused by the Estates—His elevation to almost unlimited power— Renewed mediation of Maximilian—Views and positions

Page 740

of the parties —Advice of Orange—Opening of negotiations at Breda—Propositions and counter-propositions—Adroitness of the plenipotentiaries on both sides—Insincere diplomacy and unsatisfactory results—Union of Holland and Zealand under the Prince of Orange—Act defining his powers—Charlotte de Bourbon—Character, fortunes, and fate of Anna of Saxony—Marriage of Orange with Mademoiselle de Bourbon—Indignation thereby excited—Horrible tortures inflicted upon Papists by Sonoy in North Holland—Oudewater and Schoonoven taken by Hierges—The isles of Zealand—A submarine expedition projected— Details of the adventure—Its entire success—Death of Chiappin Vitelli—Deliberations in Holland and Zealand concerning the renunciation of Philip's authority—Declaration at Delft—Doubts as to which of the Great Powers the sovereignty should be offered— Secret international relations—Mission to England—-Unsatisfactory negotiations with Elizabeth—Position of the Grand Commander—Siege of Zieriekzee—Generosity of Count John—Desperate project of the Prince—Death and character of Requesens.

The Council of Troubles, or, as it will be for ever denominated in history, the Council of Blood, still existed, although the Grand Commander, upon his arrival in the Netherlands, had advised his sovereign to consent to the immediate abolition of so odious an institution. Philip accepting the advice of his governor and his cabinet, had accordingly authorized him by a letter of the 10th of March, 1574, to take that step if he continued to believe it advisable.

Requesens had made use of this permission to extort money from the obedient portion of the provinces. An assembly of deputies was held at Brussels on the 7th of June, 1574, and there was a tedious interchange of protocols, reports, and remonstrances. The estates, not satisfied with the extinction of a tribunal which had at last worn itself out by its own violence, and had become inactive through lack of victims, insisted on greater concessions. They demanded the departure of the Spanish troops, the establishment of a council of Netherlanders in Spain for Netherland affairs, the restoration to offices in the provinces of natives and natives only; for these drawers of documents thought it possible, at that epoch, to recover by pedantry what their brethren of Holland and Zealand were maintaining with the sword. It was not the moment for historical disquisition, citations from Solomon, nor chopping of logic; yet with such lucubrations were reams of paper filled, and days and weeks occupied. The result was what might have been expected. The Grand Commander obtained but little money; the estates obtained none of their demands; and the Blood Council remained, as it were, suspended in mid-air. It continued to transact business at intervals during the administration of Requesens, and at last, after nine years of existence, was destroyed by the violent imprisonment of the Council of State at Brussels. This event, however, belongs to a subsequent page of this history.

Page 741

Noircarmes had argued, from the tenor of Saint Aldegonde's letters, that the Prince would be ready to accept his pardon upon almost any terms. Noircarmes was now dead, but Saint Aldegonde still remained in prison, very anxious for his release, and as well disposed as ever to render services in any secret negotiation. It will be recollected that, at the capitulation of Middelburg, it had been distinctly stipulated by the Prince that Colonel Mondragon should at once effect the liberation of Saint Aldegonde, with certain other prisoners, or himself return into confinement. He had done neither the one nor the other. The patriots still languished in prison, some of them being subjected to exceedingly harsh treatment, but Mondragon, although repeatedly summoned as an officer and a gentleman, by the Prince, to return to captivity, had been forbidden by the Grand Commander to redeem his pledge.

Saint Aldegonde was now released from prison upon parole, and despatched on a secret mission to the Prince and estates. As before, he was instructed that two points were to be left untouched—the authority of the King and the question of religion. Nothing could be more preposterous than to commence a negotiation from which the two important points were thus carefully eliminated. The King's authority and the question of religion covered the whole ground upon which the Spaniards and the Hollanders had been battling for six years, and were destined to battle for three-quarters of a century longer. Yet, although other affairs might be discussed, those two points were to be reserved for the more conclusive arbitration of gunpowder. The result of negotiations upon such a basis was easily to be foreseen. Breath, time, and paper were profusely wasted and nothing gained. The Prince assured his friend, as he had done secret agents previously sent to him, that he was himself ready to leave the land, if by so doing he could confer upon it the blessing of peace; but that all hopes of reaching a reasonable conclusion from the premises established was futile. The envoy treated also with the estates, and received from them in return an elaborate report, which was addressed immediately to the King. The style of this paper was bold and blunt, its substance bitter and indigestible. It informed Philip what he had heard often enough before, that the Spaniards must go and the exiles come back, the inquisition be abolished and the ancient privileges restored, the Roman Catholic religion renounce its supremacy, and the Reformed religion receive permission to exist unmolested, before he could call himself master of that little hook of sand in the North Sea. With this paper, which was entrusted to Saint Aldegonde, by him to be delivered to the Grand Commander, who was, after reading it, to forward it to its destination, the negotiator returned to his prison. Thence he did not emerge again till the course of events released him, upon the 15th of October, 1574.

Page 742

This report was far from agreeable to the Governor, and it became the object of a fresh correspondence between his confidential agent, Champagny, and the learned and astute Junius de Jonge, representative of the Prince of Orange and Governor of Yeere. The communication of De Jonge consisted of a brief note and a long discourse. The note was sharp and stinging, the discourse elaborate and somewhat pedantic. Unnecessarily historical and unmercifully extended, it was yet bold, bitter, and eloquent: The presence of foreigners was proved to have been, from the beginning of Philip's reign, the curse of the country. Doctor Sonnius, with his batch of bishops, had sowed the seed of the first disorder. A prince, ruling in the Netherlands, had no right to turn a deaf ear to the petitions of his subjects. If he did so, the Hollanders would tell him, as the old woman had told the Emperor Adrian, that the potentate who had no time to attend to the interests of his subjects, had not leisure enough to be a sovereign. While Holland refused to bow its neck to the Inquisition, the King of Spain dreaded the thunder and lightning of the Pope. The Hollanders would, with pleasure, emancipate Philip from his own thraldom, but it was absurd that he, who was himself a slave to another potentate, should affect unlimited control over a free people. It was Philip's councillors, not the Hollanders, who were his real enemies; for it was they who held him in the subjection by which his power was neutralized and his crown degraded.

It may be supposed that many long pages, conceived in this spirit and expressed with great vigor, would hardly smooth the way for the more official negotiations which were soon to take place, yet Doctor Junius fairly and faithfully represented the sentiment of his nation.

Towards the close of the year, Doctor Elbertus Leoninus, professor of Louvain, together with Hugo Bonte, ex-pensionary of Middelburg, was commissioned by the Grand Commander to treat secretly with the Prince. He was, however, not found very tractable when the commissioners opened the subject of his own pardon and reconciliation with the King, and he absolutely refused to treat at all except with the cooperation of the estates. He, moreover, objected to the use of the word "pardon" on the ground that he had never done anything requiring his Majesty's forgiveness. If adversity should visit him, he cared but little for it; he had lived long enough, he said, and should die with some glory, regretting the disorders and oppressions which had taken place, but conscious that it had not been in his power to remedy them. When reminded by the commissioners of the King's power, he replied that he knew his Majesty to be very mighty, but that there was a King more powerful still—even God the Creator, who, as he humbly hoped, was upon his Side.

Page 743

At a subsequent interview with Hugo Bonte, the Prince declared it almost impossible for himself or the estates to hold any formal communication with the Spanish government, as such communications were not safe. No trust could be reposed either in safe conducts or hostages. Faith had been too often broken by the administration. The promise made by the Duchess of Parma to the nobles, and afterwards violated, the recent treachery of Mondragon, the return of three exchanged prisoners from the Hague, who died next day of poison administered before their release, the frequent attempts upon his own life—all such constantly recurring crimes made it doubtful, in the opinion of the Prince, whether it would be possible to find commissioners to treat with his Majesty's government. All would fear assassination, afterwards to be disavowed by the King and pardoned by the Pope. After much conversation in this vein, the Prince gave the Spanish agents warning that he might eventually be obliged to seek the protection of some foreign power for the provinces. In this connection he made use of the memorable metaphor, so often repeated afterwards, that "the country was a beautiful damsel, who certainly did not lack suitors able and willing to accept her and defend her against the world." As to the matter of religion, he said he was willing to leave it to be settled by the estates-general; but doubted whether anything short of entire liberty of worship would ever satisfy the people.

Subsequently there were held other conferences, between the Prince and Doctor Leoninus, with a similar result, all attempts proving fruitless to induce him to abandon his position upon the subject of religion, or to accept a pardon on any terms save the departure of the foreign troops, the assembling of the estates-general, and entire freedom of religion. Even if he were willing to concede the religious question himself, he observed that it was idle to hope either from the estates or people a hand's-breadth of concession upon that point. Leoninus was subsequently admitted to a secret conferenc with the estates of Holland, where his representations were firmly met by the same arguments as those already used by the Prince.

These proceedings on the part of Saint Aldegonde, Champagny, Junius, and Elbertus Leoninus extended through the whole summer and autumn of 1574, and were not terminated until January of the following year.

Changes fast becoming necessary in the internal government of the provinces, were also undertaken during this year. Hitherto the Prince had exercised his power under the convenient fiction of the King's authority, systematically conducting the rebellion in the name of his Majesty, and as his Majesty's stadholder. By this process an immense power was lodged in his hands; nothing less, indeed, than the supreme executive and legislative functions of the land; while since the revolt had become, as it were, perpetual, ample but anomalous functions had been additionally thrust upon him by the estates and by the general voice of the people.

Page 744

The two provinces, even while deprived of Harlem and Amsterdam, now raised two hundred and ten thousand florins monthly, whereas Alva had never been able to extract from Holland more than two hundred and seventy-one thousand florins yearly. They paid all rather than pay a tenth. In consequence of this liberality, the cities insensibly acquired a greater influence in the government. The coming contest between the centrifugal aristocratic principle, represented by these corporations, and the central popular authority of the stadholder, was already foreshadowed, but at first the estates were in perfect harmony with the Prince. They even urged upon him more power than he desired, and declined functions which he wished them to exercise. On the 7th of September, 1573, it had been formally proposed by the general council to confer a regular and unlimited dictatorship upon him, but in the course of a year from that time, the cities had begun to feel their increasing importance. Moreover, while growing more ambitious, they became less liberal.

The Prince, dissatisfied with the conduct of the cities, brought the whole subject before an assembly of the estates of Holland on the 20th October, 1574. He stated the inconveniences produced by the anomalous condition of the government. He complained that the common people had often fallen into the error that the money raised for public purposes had been levied for his benefit only, and that they had, therefore, been less willing to contribute to the taxes. As the only remedy for these evils, he tendered his resignation of all the powers with which he was clothed, so that the estates might then take the government, which they could exercise without conflict or control. For himself, he had never desired power, except as a means of being useful to his country, and he did not offer his resignation from unwillingness to stand by the cause, but from a hearty desire to save it from disputes among its friends. He was ready, now as ever, to shed the last drop of his blood to maintain the freedom of the land.

This straightforward language produced an instantaneous effect. The estates knew that they were dealing with a man whose life was governed by lofty principles, and they felt that they were in danger of losing him through their own selfishness and low ambition. They were embarrassed, for they did not like to, relinquish the authority which they had begun to relish, nor to accept the resignation of a man who was indispensable. They felt that to give up William of Orange at that time was to accept the Spanish yoke for ever. At an assembly held at Delft on the 12th of November, 1574, they accordingly requested him “to continue in his blessed government, with the council established near him,” and for this end, they formally offered to him, “under the name of Governor or Regent,” absolute power, authority, and sovereign command. In particular, they conferred on him the entire control

Page 745

of all the ships of war, hitherto reserved to the different cities, together with the right to dispose of all prizes and all monies raised for the support of fleets. They gave him also unlimited power over the domains; they agreed that all magistracies, militia bands, guilds, and communities, should make solemn oath to contribute taxes and to receive garrisons, exactly as the Prince, with his council, should ordain; but they made it a condition that the estates should be convened and consulted upon requests, impositions, and upon all changes in the governing body. It was also stipulated that the judges of the supreme court and of the exchequer, with other high officers, should be appointed by and with the consent of the estates.

The Prince expressed himself willing to accept the government upon these terms. He, however, demanded an allowance of forty-five thousand florins monthly for the army expenses and other current outlays. Here, however, the estates refused their consent. In a mercantile spirit, unworthy the occasion and the man with whom they were dealing, they endeavoured to chaffer where they should have been only too willing to comply, and they attempted to reduce the reasonable demand of the Prince to thirty thousand florins. The Prince, who had poured out his own wealth so lavishly in the cause—who, together with his brothers, particularly the generous John of Nassau, had contributed all which they could raise by mortgage, sales of jewellery and furniture, and by extensive loans, subjecting themselves to constant embarrassment, and almost to penury, felt himself outraged by the paltriness of this conduct. He expressed his indignation, and denounced the niggardliness of the estates in the strongest language, and declared that he would rather leave the country for ever, with the maintenance of his own honor, than accept the government upon such disgraceful terms. The estates, disturbed by his vehemence, and struck with its justice, instantly, and without further deliberation, consented to his demand. They granted the forty-five thousand florins monthly, and the Prince assumed the government, thus remodelled.

During the autumn and early winter of the year 1574, the Emperor Maximilian had been actively exerting himself to bring about a pacification of the Netherlands. He was certainly sincere, for an excellent reason. “The Emperor maintains,” said Saint Goard, French ambassador at Madrid, “that if peace is not made with the Beggars, the Empire will depart from the house of Austria, and that such is the determination of the electors.” On the other hand, if Philip were not weary of the war, at any rate his means for carrying it on were diminishing daily. Requesens could raise no money in the Netherlands; his secretary wrote to Spain, that the exchequer was at its last gasp, and the cabinet of Madrid was at its wits’ end, and almost incapable of raising ways and means. The peace party was obtaining the upper hand; the fierce policy of Alva regarded

Page 746

with increasing disfavor. “The people here,” wrote Saint Goard from Madrid, “are completely desperate, whatever pains they take to put a good face on the matter. They desire most earnestly to treat, without losing their character.” It seemed, nevertheless, impossible for Philip to bend his neck. The hope of wearing the Imperial crown had alone made his bigotry feasible. To less potent influences it was adamant; and even now, with an impoverished exchequer, and, after seven years of unsuccessful warfare, his purpose was not less rigid than at first. “The Hollanders demand liberty of conscience,” said Saint Goard, “to which the King will never consent, or I am much mistaken.”

As for Orange, he was sincerely in favor of peace—but not a dishonorable peace, in which should be renounced all the objects of the war. He was far from sanguine on the subject, for he read the signs of the times and the character of Philip too accurately to believe much more in the success of the present than in that of the past efforts of Maximilian. He was pleased that his brother-in-law, Count Schwartzburg, had been selected as the Emperor’s agent in the affair, but expressed his doubts whether much good would come of the proposed negotiations. Remembering the many traps which in times past had been set by Philip and his father, he feared that the present transaction might likewise prove a snare. “We have not forgotten the words I ‘ewig’ and ‘einig’ in the treaty with Landgrave Philip,” he wrote; “at the same time we beg to assure his Imperial Majesty that we desire nothing more than a good peace, tending to the glory of God, the service of the King of Spain, and the prosperity of his subjects.”

This was his language to his brother, in a letter which was meant to be shown to the Emperor. In another, written on the same day, he explained himself with more clearness, and stated his distrust with more energy. There were no papists left, except a few ecclesiastics, he said; so much had the number of the Reformers been augmented, through the singular grace of God. It was out of the question to suppose, therefore, that a measure, dooming all who were not Catholics to exile, could be entertained. None would change their religion, and none would consent, voluntarily, to abandon for ever their homes, friends, and property. “Such a peace,” he said, “would be poor and pitiable indeed.”

These, then, were the sentiments of the party now about to negotiate. The mediator was anxious for a settlement, because the interests of the Imperial house required it. The King of Spain was desirous of peace, but was unwilling to concede a hair. The Prince of Orange was equally anxious to terminate the war, but was determined not to abandon the objects for which it had been undertaken. A favorable result, therefore, seemed hardly possible. A whole people claimed the liberty to stay at home and practice the Protestant religion, while their King asserted the right to banish them for ever, or to

Page 747

burn them if they remained. The parties seemed too far apart to be brought together by the most elastic compromise. The Prince addressed an earnest appeal to the assembly of Holland, then in session at Dort, reminding them that, although peace was desirable, it might be more dangerous than war, and entreating them, therefore, to conclude no treaty which should be inconsistent with the privileges of the country and their duty to God.

It was now resolved that all the votes of the assembly should consist of five: one for the nobles and large cities of Holland, one for the estates of Zealand, one for the small cities of Holland, one for the cities Bommel and Buren, and the fifth for William of Orange. The Prince thus effectually held in his hands three votes: his own, that of the small cities, which through his means only had been admitted to the assembly, and thirdly, that of Buren, the capital of his son's earldom. He thus exercised a controlling influence over the coming deliberations. The ten commissioners, who were appointed by the estates for the peace negotiations, were all his friends. Among them were Saint Aldegonde, Paul Buis, Charles Boisot, and Doctor Junius. The plenipotentiaries of the Spanish government were Leoninus, the Seigneur de Rassinghem, Cornelius Suis, and Arnold Sasbout.

The proceedings were opened at Breda upon the 3rd of March, 1575. The royal commissioners took the initiative, requesting to be informed what complaints the estates had to make, and offering to remove, if possible, all grievances which they might be suffering. The states' commissioners replied that they desired nothing, in the first place, but an answer to the petition which they had already presented to the King. This was the paper placed in the hands of Saint Aldegonde during the informal negotiations of the preceding year. An answer was accordingly given, but couched in such vague and general language as to be quite without meaning. The estates then demanded a categorical reply to the two principal demands in the petition, namely, the departure of the foreign troops and the assembling of the states-general. They, were asked what they understood by foreigners and by the assembly of states-general. They replied that by foreigners they meant those who were not natives, and particularly the Spaniards. By the estates-general they meant the same body before which, in 1555, Charles had resigned his sovereignty to Philip. The royal commissioners made an extremely unsatisfactory answer, concluding with a request that all cities, fortresses, and castles, then in the power of the estates, together with all their artillery and vessels of war, should be delivered to the King. The Roman Catholic worship, it was also distinctly stated, was to be re-established at once exclusively throughout the Netherlands; those of the Reformed religion receiving permission, for that time only, to convert their property into cash within a certain time, and to depart the country.

Page 748

Orange and the estates made answer on the 21st March. It could not be called hard, they said, to require the withdrawal of the Spanish troops, for this had been granted in 1559, for less imperious reasons. The estates had, indeed, themselves made use of foreigners, but those foreigners had never been allowed to participate in the government. With regard to the assembly of the states-general, that body had always enjoyed the right of advising with the Sovereign on the condition of the country, and on general measures of government. Now it was only thought necessary to summon them, in order that they might give their consent to the King's "requests." Touching the delivery of cities and citadels, artillery and ships, the proposition was, pronounced to resemble that made by the wolves to the sheep, in the fable—that the dogs should be delivered up, as a preliminary to a lasting peace. It was unreasonable to request the Hollanders to abandon their religion or their country. The reproach of heresy was unjust, for they still held to the Catholic Apostolic Church, wishing only to purify, it of its abuses. Moreover, it was certainly more cruel to expel a whole population than to dismiss three or four thousand Spaniards who for seven long years had been eating their fill at the expense of the provinces. It would be impossible for the exiles to dispose of their property, for all would, by the proposed measure, be sellers, while there would be no purchasers.

The royal plenipotentiaries, making answer to this communication upon the 1st of April, signified a willingness that the Spanish soldiers should depart, if the states would consent to disband their own foreign troops. They were likewise in favor of assembling the states-general, but could not permit any change in the religion of the country. His Majesty had sworn to maintain the true worship at the moment of assuming the sovereignty. The dissenters might, however, be allowed a period of six months in which to leave the land, and eight or ten years for the sale of their property. After the heretics had all departed, his Majesty did not doubt that trade and manufactures would flourish again, along with the old religion. As for the Spanish inquisition, there was not, and there never had been, any intention of establishing it in the Netherlands.

No doubt there was something specious in this paper. It appeared to contain considerable concessions. The Prince and estates had claimed the departure of the Spaniards. It was now promised that they should depart. They had demanded the assembling of the states-general. It was now promised that they should assemble. They had denounced the inquisition. It was now averred that the Spanish inquisition was not to be established.

Page 749

Nevertheless, the commissioners of the Prince were not deceived by such artifices. There was no parity between the cases of the Spanish soldiery and of the troops in service of the estates. To assemble the estates-general was idle, if they were to be forbidden the settlement of the great question at issue. With regard to the Spanish inquisition, it mattered little whether the slaughter-house were called Spanish or Flemish, or simply the Blood-Council. It was, however, necessary for the states' commissioners to consider their reply very carefully; for the royal plenipotentiaries had placed themselves upon specious grounds. It was not enough to feel that the King's government was paltering with them; it was likewise necessary for the states' agents to impress this fact upon the people.

There was a pause in the deliberations. Meantime, Count Schwartzburg, reluctantly accepting the conviction that the religious question was an insurmountable obstacle to a peace, left the provinces for Germany. The last propositions of the government plenipotentiaries had been discussed in the councils of the various cities, so that the reply of the Prince, and estates was delayed until the 1st of June. They admitted, in this communication, that the offer to restore ancient privileges had an agreeable sound; but regretted that if the whole population were to be banished, there would be but few to derive advantage from the restoration. If the King would put an end to religious persecution, he would find as much loyalty in the provinces as his forefathers had found. It was out of the question, they said, for the states to disarm and to deliver up their strong places, before the Spanish soldiery had retired, and before peace had been established. It was their wish to leave the question of religion, together with all other disputed matters, to the decision of the assembly. Were it possible, in the meantime, to devise any effectual method for restraining hostilities, it would gladly be embraced.

On the 8th of July, the royal commissioners inquired what guarantee the states would be willing to give, that the decision of the general assembly, whatever it might be, should be obeyed. The demand was answered by another, in which the King's agents were questioned as to their own guarantees. Hereupon it was stated that his Majesty would give his word and sign manual, together with the word and signature of the Emperor into the bargain. In exchange for these promises, the Prince and estates were expected to give their own oaths and seals, together with a number of hostages. Over and above this, they were requested to deliver up the cities of Brill and Enkhuizen, Flushing and Arnemuyde. The disparity of such guarantees was ridiculous. The royal word, even when strengthened by the imperial promise, and confirmed by the autographs of Philip and Maximilian, was not so solid a security, in the opinion of Netherlanders, as to outweigh four cities in Holland and Zealand, with all their population and wealth. To give collateral pledges and hostages upon one side, while the King offered none, was to assign a superiority to the royal word, over that of the Prince and the estates which there was no disposition to recognize. Moreover, it was very cogently urged that to give up the cities was to give as security for the contract, some of the principal contracting parties.

Page 750

This closed the negotiations. The provincial plenipotentiaries took their leave by a paper dated 13th July, 1575, which recapitulated the main incidents of the conference. They expressed their deep regret that his Majesty should insist so firmly on the banishment of the Reformers, for it was unjust to reserve the provinces to the sole use of a small number of Catholics. They lamented that the proposition which had been made, to refer the religious question to the estates, had neither been loyally accepted, nor candidly refused. They inferred, therefore, that the object of the royal government had, been to amuse the states, while tine was thus gained for reducing the country into a slavery more abject than any which had yet existed. On the other hand, the royal commissioners as solemnly averred that the whole responsibility for the failure of the negotiations belonged to the, estates.

It was the general opinion in the insurgent provinces that the government had been insincere from the beginning, and had neither expected nor desired to conclude a peace. It is probable, however, that Philip was sincere; so far as it could be called sincerity to be willing to conclude a peace, if the provinces would abandon the main objects of the war. With his impoverished exchequer, and ruin threatening his whole empire, if this mortal combat should be continued many years longer, he could have no motive for further bloodshed, provided all heretics should consent to abandon the country. As usual, however, he left his agents in the dark as to his real intentions. Even Requesens was as much in doubt as to the King’s secret purposes as Margaret of Parma had ever been in former times.

[Compare the remarks of Groen v. Prinst., Archives, *etc*., v 259- 262; Bor, viii. 606, 615; Meteren, v. 100; Hoofd, g. 410.—Count John of Nassau was distrustful and disdainful from the beginning. Against his brother’s loyalty and the straightforward intentions of the estates, he felt that the whole force of the Macchiavelli system of policy would be brought to bear with great effect. He felt that the object of the King’s party was to temporize, to confuse, and to deceive. He did not believe them capable of conceding the real object in dispute, but he feared lest they might obscure the judgment of the plain and well meaning people with whom they had to deal. Alluding to the constant attempts made to poison himself and his brother, he likens the pretended negotiations to Venetian drugs, by which eyesight, hearing, feeling, and intellect were destroyed. Under this pernicious influence, the luckless people would not perceive the fire burning around them, but would shrink at a rustling leaf. Not comprehending then the tendency of their own acts, they would “lay bare their own backs to the rod, and bring faggots for their own funeral pile."-Archives, *etc*., v. 131-137.]

Moreover, the Grand Commander and the government had,

Page 751

after all, made a great mistake in their diplomacy. The estates of Brabant, although strongly desirous that the Spanish troops should be withdrawn, were equally stanch for the maintenance of the Catholic religion, and many of the southern provinces entertained the same sentiments. Had the Governor, therefore, taken the states' commissioners at their word, and left the decision of the religious question to the general assembly, he might perhaps have found the vote in his favor. In this case, it is certain that the Prince of Orange and his party would have been placed in a very awkward position.

The internal government of the insurgent provinces had remained upon the footing which we have seen established in the autumn of 1574, but in the course of this summer (1575), however, the foundation was laid for the union of Holland and Zealand, under the authority of Orange. The selfish principle of municipal aristocracy, which had tended to keep asunder these various groups of cities, was now repressed by the energy of the Prince and the strong determination of the people.

In April, 1575, certain articles of union between Holland and Zealand were proposed, and six commissioners appointed to draw up an ordinance for the government of the two provinces. This ordinance was accepted in general assembly of both. It was in twenty articles. It declared that, during the war the Prince as sovereign, should have absolute power in all matters concerning the defence of the country. He was to appoint military officers, high and low, establish and remove garrisons, punish offenders against the laws of war. He was to regulate the expenditure of all money voted by the estates. He was to maintain the law, in the King's name, as Count of Holland, and to appoint all judicial officers upon nominations by the estates. He was, at the usual times, to appoint and renew the magistracies of the cities, according to their constitutions. He was to protect the exercise of the Evangelical Reformed religion, and to suppress the exercise of the Roman religion, without permitting, however, that search should be made into the creed of any person. A deliberative and executive council, by which the jealousy of the corporations had intended to hamper his government, did not come into more than nominal existence.

The articles of union having been agreed upon, the Prince, desiring an unfettered expression of the national will, wished the ordinance to be laid before the people in their primary assemblies. The estates, however, were opposed to this democratic proceeding. They represented that it had been customary to consult; after the city magistracies, only the captains of companies and the deans of guilds on matters of government. The Prince, yielding the point, the captains of companies and deans of guilds accordingly alone united with the aristocratic boards in ratifying the instrument by which his authority over the two united provinces was established. On the 4th of June this first union was solemnized.

Page 752

Upon the 11th of July, the Prince formally accepted the government. He, however, made an essential change in a very important clause of the ordinance. In place of the words, the “Roman religion,” he insisted that the words, “religion at variance with the Gospel,” should be substituted in the article by which he was enjoined to prohibit the exercise of such religion. This alteration rebuked the bigotry which had already grown out of the successful resistance to bigotry, and left the door open for a general religious toleration.

Early in this year the Prince had despatched Saint Aldegonde on a private mission to the Elector Palatine. During some of his visits to that potentate he had seen at Heidelberg the Princess Charlotte of Bourbon. That lady was daughter of the Due de Montpensier, the most ardent of the Catholic Princes of France, and the one who at the conferences of Bayonne had been most indignant at the Queen Dowager’s hesitation to unite heartily with the, schemes of Alva and Philip for the extermination of the Huguenots. His daughter, a woman of beauty, intelligence, and virtue, forced before the canonical age to take the religious vows, had been placed in the convent of Joliarrs, of which she had become Abbess. Always secretly inclined to the Reformed religion, she had fled secretly from her cloister, in the year of horrors 1572, and had found refuge at the court of the Elector Palatine, after which step her father refused to receive her letters, to contribute a farthing to her support, or even to acknowledge her claims upon him by a single line or message of affection.

Under these circumstances the outcast princess, who had arrived at the years of maturity, might be considered her own mistress, and she was neither morally nor legally bound, when her hand was sought in marriage by the great champion of the Reformation, to ask the consent of a parent who loathed her religion and denied her existence. The legality of the divorce from Anne of Saxony had been settled by a full expression of the ecclesiastical authority which she most respected;

> [Acte de, cinq Ministres du St. Evangile par lequel ils declarent le mariage du Prince d’Orange etre legitime.—Archives, *etc*., v. 216-226.]

the facts upon which the divorce had been founded having been proved beyond peradventure.

Nothing, in truth, could well be more unfortunate in its results than the famous Saxon marriage, the arrangements for which had occasioned so much pondering to Philip, and so much diplomatic correspondence on the part of high personages in Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain. Certainly, it was of but little consequence to what church the unhappy Princess belonged, and they must be lightly versed in history or in human nature who can imagine these nuptials to have exercised any effect upon the religious or political sentiments of Orange. The Princess was of a stormy, ill-regulated

Page 753

nature; almost a lunatic from the beginning. The dislike which succeeded to her fantastic fondness for the Prince, as well as her general eccentricity, had soon become the talk of all the court at Brussels. She would pass week after week without emerging from her chamber, keeping the shutters closed and candles burning, day and night. She quarrelled violently, with Countess Egmont for precedence, so that the ludicrous contentions of the two ladies in antechambers and doorways were the theme and the amusement of society. Her insolence, not only in private but in public, towards her husband became intolerable: "I could not do otherwise than bear it with sadness and patience," said the Prince, with great magnanimity, "hoping that with age would come improvement." Nevertheless, upon one occasion, at a supper party, she had used such language in the presence of Count Horn and many other nobles, "that all wondered that he could endure the abusive terms which she applied to him."

When the clouds gathered about him, when he had become an exile and a wanderer, her reproaches and her violence increased. The sacrifice of their wealth, the mortgages and sales which he effected of his estates, plate, jewels, and furniture, to raise money for the struggling country, excited her bitter resentment. She separated herself from him by degrees, and at last abandoned him altogether. Her temper became violent to ferocity. She beat her servants with her hands and with clubs; she threatened the lives of herself, of her attendants, of Count John of Nassau, with knives and daggers, and indulged in habitual profanity and blasphemy, uttering frightful curses upon all around. Her original tendency to intemperance had so much increased, that she was often unable to stand on her feet. A bottle of wine, holding more than a quart, in the morning, and another in the evening, together with a pound of sugar, was her usual allowance. She addressed letters to Alva complaining that her husband had impoverished himself "in his good-for-nothing Beggar war," and begging the Duke to furnish her with a little ready money and with the means of arriving at the possession of her dower.

An illicit connexion with a certain John Rubens, an exiled magistrate of Antwerp, and father of the celebrated painter, completed the list of her delinquencies, and justified the marriage of the Prince with Charlotte de Bourbon. It was therefore determined by the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave William to remove her from the custody of the Nassaus. This took place with infinite difficulty, at the close of the year 1575. Already, in 1572; Augustus had proposed to the Landgrave that she should be kept in solitary confinement, and that a minister should preach to her daily through the grated aperture by which her, food was to be admitted. The Landgrave remonstrated at so inhuman a proposition, which was, however, carried into effect. The wretched Princess, now completely a lunatic, was imprisoned in the electoral palace, in a chamber where the windows were walled up and a small grating let into the upper part of the door. Through this wicket came her food, as well as the words of the holy man appointed to preach daily for her edification.

Page 754

Two years long, she endured this terrible punishment, and died mad, on the 18th of December, 1577. On the following day, she was buried in the electoral tomb at Meissen; a pompous procession of “school children, clergy, magistrates, nobility, and citizens” conducting her to that rest of which she could no longer be deprived by the cruelty of man nor her own violent temperament.

[It can certainly be considered no violation of the sanctity of archives to make these slender allusions to a tale, the main features of which have already been published, not only by *mm*. Groan v. Prinsterer and Bakhuyzen, in Holland, but by the Saxon Professor Bottiger, in Germany. It is impossible to understand the character and career of Orange, and his relations with Germany, without a complete view of the Saxon marriage. The extracts from the “geomantic letters” of Elector Augustus, however, given in Bottiger (Hist. Taschenb. 1836, p. 169-173), with their furious attacks upon the Prince and upon Charlotte of Bourbon, seem to us too obscene to be admitted, even in a note to these pages, and in a foreign language.]

So far, therefore, as the character of Mademoiselle de Bourbon and the legitimacy of her future offspring were concerned, she received ample guarantees. For the rest, the Prince, in a simple letter, informed her that he was already past his prime, having reached his forty-second year, and that his fortune was encumbered not only with settlements for his, children by previous marriages, but by debts contracted in the cause of his oppressed country. A convention of doctors and bishops of France; summoned by the Duc de Montpensier, afterwards confirmed the opinion that the conventual vows of the Princess Charlotte had been conformable neither to the laws of France nor to the canons of the Trent Council. She was conducted to Brill by Saint Aldegonde, where she was received by her bridegroom, to whom she was united on the 12th of June. The wedding festival was held at Dort with much revelry and holiday making, “but without dancing.”

In this connexion, no doubt the Prince consulted his inclination only. Eminently domestic in his habits, he required the relief of companionship at home to the exhausting affairs which made up his life abroad. For years he had never enjoyed social converse, except at long intervals, with man or woman; it was natural, therefore, that he should contract this marriage. It was equally natural that he should make many enemies by so impolitic a match. The Elector Palatine, who was in place of guardian to the bride, decidedly disapproved, although he was suspected of favoring the alliance. The Landgrave of Hesse for a time was furious; the Elector of Saxony absolutely delirious with rage. The Diet of the Empire was to be held within a few weeks at Frankfort, where it was very certain that the outraged and influential Elector would make his appearance, overflowing with anger,

Page 755

and determined to revenge upon the cause of the Netherland Reformation the injury which he had personally received. Even the wise, considerate, affectionate brother, John of Nassau, considered the marriage an act of madness. He did what he could, by argument and entreaty, to dissuade the Prince from its completion; although he afterwards voluntarily confessed that the Princess Charlotte had been deeply calumniated, and was an inestimable treasure to his brother. The French government made use of the circumstance to justify itself in a still further alienation from the cause of the Prince than it had hitherto manifested, but this was rather pretence than reality.

It was not in the nature of things, however, that the Saxon and Hessian indignation could be easily allayed. The Landgrave was extremely violent. “Truly, I cannot imagine,” he wrote to the Elector of Saxony, “quo consilio that wiseacre of an Aldegonde, and whosoever else has been aiding and abetting, have undertaken this affair. Nam si pietatem respicias, it is to be feared that, considering she is a Frenchwoman, a nun, and moreover a fugitive nun, about whose chastity there has been considerable question, the Prince has got out of the frying-pan into the fire. Si formam it is not to be supposed that it was her beauty which charmed him, since, without doubt, he must be rather frightened than delighted, when he looks upon her. Si spem prolis, the Prince has certainly only too many heirs already, and ought to wish that he had neither wife nor children. Si amicitiam, it is not to be supposed, while her father expresses himself in such threatening language with regard to her, that there will be much cordiality of friendship on his part. Let them look to it, then, lest it fare with them no better than with the Admiral, at his Paris wedding; for those gentlemen can hardly forgive such injuries, sine mercurio et arsenico sublimato.”

The Elector of Saxony was frantic with choler, and almost ludicrous in the vehemence of its expression. Count John was unceasing in his exhortations to his brother to respect the sensitiveness of these important personages, and to remember how much good and how much evil it was in their power to compass, with regard to himself and to the great cause of the Protestant religion. He reminded him, too, that the divorce had not been, and would not be considered impregnable as to form, and that much discomfort and detriment was likely to grow out of the whole proceeding, for himself and his family. The Prince, however, was immovable in his resolution, and from the whole tone of his correspondence and deportment it was obvious that his marriage was one rather of inclination than of policy. “I can assure you, my brother,” he wrote to Count John, “that my character has always tended to this—to care neither for words nor menaces in any matter where I can act with a clear conscience, and without doing injury to my neighbour. Truly, if I had paid regard to the threats of princes, I should never have embarked in so many dangerous affairs, contrary to the will of the King, my master, in times past, and even to the advice of many of my relatives and friends.”

Page 756

The evil consequences which had been foreseen were not slow to manifest themselves. There was much discussion of the Prince's marriage at the Diet of Frankfort, and there was even a proposition, formally to declare the Calvinists excluded in Germany from the benefits of the Peace of Passau. The Archduke Rudolph was soon afterwards elected King of the Romans and of Bohemia, although hitherto, according to the policy of the Prince of Orange, and in the expectation of benefit to the cause of the Reformation in Germany and the Netherlands, there has been a strong disposition to hold out hopes to Henry the Third, and to excite the fears of Maximilian.

While these important affairs, public and private, had been occurring in the south of Holland and in Germany, a very nefarious transaction had disgraced the cause of the patriot party in the northern quarter. Diedrich Sonoy, governor of that portion of Holland, a man of great bravery but of extreme ferocity of character, had discovered an extensive conspiracy among certain of the inhabitants, in aid of an approaching Spanish invasion. Bands of land-loupers had been employed, according to the intimation which he had received or affected to have received, to set fire to villages and towns in every direction, to set up beacons, and to conduct a series of signals by which the expeditions about to be organized were to be furthered in their objects. The Governor, determined to show that the Duke of Alva could not be more prompt nor more terrible than himself, improvised, of his own authority, a tribunal in imitation of the infamous Blood-Council. Fortunately for the character of the country, Sonoy was not a Hollander, nor was the jurisdiction of this newly established court allowed to extend beyond very narrow limits. Eight vagabonds were, however, arrested and doomed to tortures the most horrible, in order to extort from them confessions implicating persons of higher position in the land than themselves. Seven, after a few turns of the pulley and the screw, confessed all which they were expected to confess, and accused all whom they were requested to accuse. The eighth was firmer, and refused to testify to the guilt of certain respectable householders, whose names he had, perhaps, never heard, and against whom there was no shadow of evidence. He was, however, reduced by three hours and a half of sharp torture to confess, entirely according to their orders, so that accusations and evidence were thus obtained against certain influential gentlemen of the province, whose only crime was a secret adherence to the Catholic Faith.

Page 757

The eight wretches who had been induced by promises of unconditional pardon upon one hand, and by savage torture on the other, to bear this false witness, were condemned to be burned alive, and on their way to the stake, they all retracted the statements which had only been extorted from them by the rack. Nevertheless, the individuals who had been thus designated, were arrested. Charged with plotting a general conflagration of the villages and farmhouses, in conjunction with an invasion by Hierges and other Papist generals, they indignantly protested their innocence; but two of them, a certain Kopp Corneliszoon, and his son, Nanning Koppezoon, were selected to undergo the most cruel torture which had yet been practised in the Netherlands. Sonoy, to his eternal shame, was disposed to prove that human ingenuity to inflict human misery had not been exhausted in the chambers of the Blood Council, for it was to be shown that Reformers were capable of giving a lesson even to inquisitors in this diabolical science. Kopp, a man advanced in years, was tortured during a whole day. On the following morning he was again brought to the rack, but the old man was too weak to endure all the agony which his tormentors had provided for him. Hardly had he been placed upon the bed of torture than he calmly expired, to the great indignation of the tribunal. “The Devil has broken his neck and carried him off to hell,” cried they ferociously. “Nevertheless, that shall not prevent him from being hung and quartered.” This decree of impotent vengeance was accordingly executed. The son of Kopp, however, Nanning Koppezoon, was a man in the full vigor of his years. He bore with perfect fortitude a series of incredible tortures, after which, with his body singed from head to heel, and his feet almost entirely flayed, he was left for six weeks to crawl about his dungeon on his knees. He was then brought back to the torture-room, and again stretched upon the rack, while a large earthen vessel, made for the purpose, was placed, inverted, upon his naked body. A number of rats were introduced under this cover, and hot coals were heaped upon the vessel, till the rats, rendered furious by the heat, gnawed into the very bowels of the victim, in their agony to escape.

[Bor (viii. 628) conscientiously furnishes diagrams of the machinery by aid of which this devilish cruelty was inflicted. The rats were sent by the Governor himself.—Vide Letter of the Commissioners to Sonoy, apud Bor, viii. 640, 641. The whole letter is a wonderful monument of barbarity. The incredible tortures to which the poor creatures had been subjected are detailed in a business-like manner, as though the transactions were quite regular and laudable, The Commissioners conclude with pious wishes for the Governor’s welfare: “Noble, wise, virtuous, and very discreet sir,” they say, “we have wished to apprise you of the foregoing, and we now pray that God Almighty may spare you

Page 758

in a happy, healthy and long-continued government"—It will be seen, however, that the wise, virtuous, and very discreet Governor, who thus caused his fellow- citizens bowels to be gnawed by rats, was not allowed to remain much longer in his "happy and healthy government"]

The holes thus torn in his bleeding flesh were filled with red-hot coals. He was afterwards subjected to other tortures too foul to relate; nor was it till he had endured all this agony, with a fortitude which seemed supernatural, that he was at last discovered to be human. Scorched; bitten, dislocated in every joint, sleepless, starving, perishing with thirst, he was at last crushed into a false confession, by a promise of absolute forgiveness. He admitted everything which was brought to his charge, confessing a catalogue of contemplated burnings and beacon firings of which he had never dreamed, and avowing himself in league with other desperate Papists, still more dangerous than himself.

Notwithstanding the promises of pardon, Nanning was then condemned to death. The sentence ordained that his heart should be torn from his living bosom, and thrown in his face, after which his head was to be taken off and exposed on the church steeple of his native village. His body was then to be cut in four, and a quarter fastened upon different towers of the city of Alkmaar, for it was that city, recently so famous for its heroic resistance to the Spanish army, which was now sullied by all this cold-blooded atrocity. When led to execution, the victim recanted indignantly the confessions forced from him by weakness of body, and exonerated the persons whom he had falsely accused. A certain clergyman, named Jurian Epeszoon, endeavored by loud praying to drown his voice, that the people might not rise with indignation, and the dying prisoner with his last breath solemnly summoned this unworthy pastor of Christ Jo meet him within three days before the judgment-seat of God. It is a remarkable and authentic fact, that the clergyman thus summoned, went home pensively from the place of execution, sickened immediately and died upon the appointed day.

Notwithstanding this solemn recantation, the, persons accused were arrested, and in their turn subjected to torture, but the affair now reached the ears of Orange. His peremptory orders, with the universal excitement produced in the neighbourhood, at last checked the course of the outrage, and the accused persons were remanded to prison, where they remained till liberated by the Pacification of Ghent. After their release they commenced legal proceedings against Sonoy, with a view of establishing their own innocence, and of bringing the inhuman functionary to justice. The process languished, however, and was finally abandoned, for the powerful Governor had rendered such eminent service in the cause of liberty, that it was thought unwise to push him to extremity. It is no impeachment upon the character of the Prince that these horrible

Page 759

crimes were not prevented. It was impossible for him to be omnipresent. Neither is it just to consider the tortures and death thus inflicted upon innocent men an indelible stain upon the cause of liberty. They were the crimes of an individual who had been useful, but who, like the Count De la Marck, had now contaminated his hand with the blood of the guiltless. The new tribunal never took root, and was abolished as soon as its initiatory horrors were known.

On the 19th of July, Oudewater, entirely unprepared for such an event, was besieged by Hierges, but the garrison and the population, although weak, were brave. The town resisted eighteen days, and on the 7th of August was carried by assault, after which the usual horrors were fully practised, after which the garrison was put to the sword, and the townspeople fared little better. Men, women, and children were murdered in cold blood, or obliged to purchase their lives by heavy ransoms, while matrons and maids were sold by auction to the soldiers at two or three dollars each. Almost every house in the city was burned to the ground, and these horrible but very customary scenes having been enacted, the army of Hierges took its way to Schoonhoven. That city, not defending itself, secured tolerable terms of capitulation, and surrendered on the 24th of August.

The Grand Commander had not yet given up the hope of naval assistance from Spain, notwithstanding the abrupt termination to the last expedition which had been organized. It was, however, necessary that a foothold should be recovered upon the seaboard, before a descent from without could be met with proper co-operation from the land forces withal; and he was most anxious, therefore, to effect the reconquest of some portion of Zealand. The island of Tholen was still Spanish, and had been so since the memorable expedition of Mondragon to South Beveland. From this interior portion of the archipelago the Governor now determined to attempt an expedition against the outer and more important territory. The three principal islands were Tholen; Duiveland, and Sehouwen. Tholen was the first which detached itself from the continent. Neat, and separated from it by a bay two leagues in width, was Duiveland, or the Isle of Doves. Beyond, and parted by a narrower frith, was Schouwen, fronting directly upon the ocean, fortified by its strong capital city; Zieriekzee, and containing other villages of inferior consequence.

Requesens had been long revolving in his mind the means of possessing himself of this important, island. He had caused to be constructed, a numerous armada of boats and light vessels of various dimensions, and he now came to Tholew to organize the expedition. His prospects were at first not flattering, for the gulfs and estuaries swarmed with Zealand vessels, manned by crews celebrated for their skill and audacity. Traitors, however, from Zealand itself now came forward to teach the Spanish Commander how to strike at the

Page 760

heart of their own country. These refugees explained to Requesens that a narrow flat extended under the sea from Philipsland, a small and uninhabited islet situate close to Tholen, as far as the shore of Duiveland. Upon this submerged tongue of land the water, during ebb-tide, was sufficiently shallow to be waded, and it would therefore be possible for a determined band, under cover of the night, to make the perilous passage. Once arrived at Duiveland, they could more easily cross the intervening creek to Schouwen, which was not so deep and only half as wide, so that a force thus, sent through these dangerous shallows, might take possession of Duiveland and lay siege to Zierickzee, in the very teeth of the Zealand fleet, which would be unable to sail near enough to intercept their passage.

The Commander determined that the enterprise should be attempted. It was not a novelty, because Mondragon, as we have seen, had already most brilliantly conducted a very similar expedition. The present was, however, a much more daring scheme. The other exploit, although sufficiently hazardous, and entirely, successful, had been a victory gained over the sea alone. It had been a surprise, and had been effected without any opposition from human enemies. Here, however, they were to deal, not only with the ocean and darkness, but with a watchful and determined foe. The Zealanders were aware that the enterprise was in contemplation, and their vessels lay about the contiguous waters in considerable force. Nevertheless, the determination of the Grand Commander was hailed with enthusiasm by his troops. Having satisfied himself by personal experiment that the enterprise was possible, and that therefore his brave soldiers could accomplish it, he decided that the glory of the achievement should be fairly shared, as before, among the different nations which served the King.

After completing his preparations, Requesens came to Tholen, at which rendezvous were assembled three thousand infantry, partly Spaniards, partly Germans, partly Walloons. Besides these, a picked corps of two hundred sappers and miners was to accompany the expedition, in order that no time might be lost in fortifying themselves as soon as they had seized possession of Schouwen. Four hundred mounted troopers were, moreover, stationed in the town of Tholen, while the little fleet, which had been prepared at Antwerp; lay near that city ready to co-operate with the land force as soon as they, should complete their enterprise. The Grand Commander now divided the whole force into two parts: One half was to remain in the boats, under the command of Mondragon; the other half, accompanied by the two hundred pioneers, were to wade through the sea from Philipsland to Duiveland and Schouwen. Each soldier of this detachment was provided with a pair of shoes, two pounds of powder, and rations for three days in a canvas bag suspended at his neck. The leader of this expedition was Don Osorio d’Ulloa, an officer distinguished for his experience and bravery.

Page 761

On the night selected for the enterprise, that of the 27th September, the moon was a day old in its fourth quarter, and rose a little before twelve. It was low water at between four and five in the morning. The Grand Commander, at the appointed hour of midnight, crossed to Philipsland, and stood on the shore to watch the setting forth of the little army. He addressed a short harangue to them, in which he skillfully struck the chords of Spanish chivalry, and the national love of glory, and was answered with loud and enthusiastic cheers. Don Osorio d'Ulloa then stripped and plunged into the sea immediately after the guides. He was followed by the Spaniards, after whom came the Germans and then the Walloons. The two hundred sappers and miners came next, and Don Gabriel Peralta, with his Spanish company; brought up the rear. It was a wild night. Incessant lightning, alternately revealed and obscured the progress of the midnight march through the black waters, as the anxious Commander watched the expedition from the shore, but the soldiers were quickly swallowed up in the gloom. As they advanced cautiously, two by two, the daring adventurers found themselves soon nearly up to their necks in the waves, while so narrow was the submerged bank along which they were marching, that a misstep to the right or left was fatal. Luckless individuals repeatedly sank to rise no more. Meantime, as the sickly light, of the waning moon came forth at intervals through the stormy clouds the soldiers could plainly perceive the files of Zealand vessels through which they were to march, and which were anchored as close to the flat as the water would allow. Some had recklessly stranded themselves, in their eagerness to interrupt the passage, of the troops, and the artillery played unceasingly from the larger vessels. Discharges of musketry came continually from all, but the fitful lightning rendered the aim difficult and the fire comparatively harmless while the Spaniards were, moreover, protected, as to a large part of their bodies, by the water in which they were immersed.

At times; they halted for breath, or to engage in fierce skirmishes with their nearest assailants. Standing breast-high in the waves, and surrounded at intervals by total darkness, they were yet able to pour an occasional well-directed volley into the hostile ranks. The Zealanders, however, did, not assail them with fire-arms alone. They transfixed some with their fatal harpoons; they dragged others from the path with boathooks; they beat out the brains of others with heavy flails. Many were the mortal duels thus fought in the darkness, and, as it were, in the bottom of the sea; many were the deeds of audacity which no eye was to mark save those by whom they were achieved. Still, in spite of all impediments and losses, the Spaniards steadily advanced. If other arms proved less available, they were attached by the fierce taunts and invectives of their often invisible foes who reviled them as water-dogs, fetching and carrying for a master who despised them; as mercenaries who coined their blood for gold, and were employed by tyrants for the basest uses. If stung by these mocking voices, they turned in the darkness to chastise their unseen tormentors, they were certain to be trampled upon by their comrades, and to be pushed from their narrow pathway into the depths of the sea. Thus many perished.

Page 762

The night wore on, and the adventurers still fought it out manfully, but very slowly, the main body of Spaniards, Germans, and Walloons, soon after daylight, reaching the opposite shore, having sustained considerable losses, but in perfect order. The pioneers were not so fortunate. The tide rose over them before they could effect their passage, and swept nearly every one away. The rearguard, under Peralta, not surprised, like the pioneers, in the middle of their passage, by the rising tide, but prevented, before it was too late; from advancing far beyond the shore from which they had departed were fortunately enabled to retrace their steps.

Don Osorio, at the head of the successful adventurers, now effected his landing upon Duiveland. Reposing themselves but for an instant after this unparalleled march through the water, of more than six hours, they took a slight refreshment, prayed to the Virgin Mary and to Saint James, and then prepared to meet their new enemies on land. Ten companies of French, Scotch, and English auxiliaries lay in Duiveland, under the command of Charles Van Boisot. Strange to relate, by an inexplicable accident, or by treason, that general was slain by his own soldiers, at the moment when the royal troops landed. The panic created by this event became intense, as the enemy rose suddenly, as it were, out of the depths of the ocean to attack them. They magnified the numbers of their assailants, and fled terror-stricken in every direction. Same swam to the Zealand vessels which lay in the neighbourhood; others took refuge in the forts which had been constructed on the island; but these were soon carried by the Spaniards, and the conquest of Duiveland was effected.

The enterprise was not yet completed, but the remainder was less difficult and not nearly so hazardous, for the creek which separated Duiveland from Schouwen was much narrower than the estuary which they had just traversed. It was less than a league in width, but so encumbered by rushes and briers that, although difficult to wade, it was not navigable for vessels of any kind. This part of the expedition was accomplished with equal resolution, so that, after a few hours' delay, the soldiers stood upon the much-coveted island of Schouwen. Five companies of states' troops, placed to oppose their landing, fled in the most cowardly manner at the first discharge of the Spanish muskets, and took refuge in the city of Zierickzee, which was soon afterwards beleaguered.

The troops has been disembarked upon Duiveland from the armada, which had made its way to the scene of action, after having received, by signal, information that the expedition through the water had been successful. Brouwershaven, on the northern side of Schouwen, was immediately reduced, but Bommenede resisted till the 25th of October, when it was at last carried by assault, and delivered over to fire and sword. Of the whole population and garrison not twenty were left alive. Siege was then laid to Zierickzee, and Colonel Mondragon was left in charge of the operations. Requesens himself came to Schouwen to give directions concerning this important enterprise.

Page 763

Chiapin Vitelli also came thither in the middle of the winter, and was so much injured by a fall from his litter, while making the tour of the island, that he died on shipboard during his return to Antwerp. This officer had gained his laurels upon more than one occasion, his conduct in the important action near Mons, in which the Huguenot force under Genlis was defeated, having been particularly creditable. He was of a distinguished Umbrian family, and had passed his life in camps, few of the generals who had accompanied Alva to the Netherlands being better known or more odious to the inhabitants. He was equally distinguished for his courage, his cruelty, and his corpulence. The last characteristic was so remarkable that he was almost monstrous in his personal appearance. His protuberant stomach was always supported in a bandage suspended from his neck, yet in spite of this enormous impediment, he was personally active on the battle-field, and performed more service, not only as a commander but as a subaltern, than many a younger and lighter man.

The siege of Zierickzee was protracted till the following June, the city holding out with firmness. Want of funds caused the operations to be, conducted with languor, but the same cause prevented the Prince from accomplishing its relief. Thus the expedition from Philipsland, the most brilliant military exploit of the whole war, was attended with important results. The communication between Walcheren and the rest of Zealand was interrupted; the province cut in two; a foothold on the ocean; for a brief interval at least, acquired by Spain. The Prince was inexpressibly chagrined by these circumstances, and felt that the moment had arrived when all honorable means were to be employed to obtain foreign assistance. The Hollanders and Zealanders had fought the battles of freedom alone hitherto, and had fought them well, but poverty was fast rendering them incapable of sustaining much longer the unequal conflict. Offers of men, whose wages the states were to furnish, were refused; as worse than fruitless. Henry of Navarre, who perhaps deemed it possible to acquire the sovereignty of the provinces by so barren a benefit, was willing to send two or three thousand men, but not at his own expense. The proposition was respectfully declined.

The Prince and his little country, were all alone. “Even if we should not only see ourselves deserted by all the world, but also all the world against us,” he said, “we should not cease to defend ourselves even to the last man. Knowing the justice of our cause, we repose, entirely in the mercy of God.” He determined, however, once more to have recourse to the powerful of the earth, being disposed to test the truth of his celebrated observation, that “there would be no lack of suitors for the bride that he had to bestow.” It was necessary, in short, to look the great question of formally renouncing Philip directly in the face.

Page 764

Hitherto the fiction of allegiance had been preserved, and, even by the enemies of the Prince, it, was admitted: that it had been retained with no disloyal intent. The time however, had come when it was necessary to throw off allegiance, provided another could be found strong enough and frank enough to accept the authority which Philip had forfeited. The question was, naturally, between France and England; unless the provinces could effect their re-admission into the body of the Germanic Empire. Already in June the Prince had laid the proposition formally before the states, “whether they should not negotiate with the Empire on the subject of their admission, with maintenance of their own constitutions,” but it was understood that this plan was not to be carried out, if the protection of the Empire could be obtained under easier conditions.

Nothing came of the proposition at that time. The nobles and the deputies of South Holland now voted, in the beginning of the ensuing month, “that it was their duty to abandon the King, as a tyrant who sought to oppress and destroy his subjects; and that it behooved them to seek another protector.” This was while the Breda negotiations were still pending, but when their inevitable result was very visible. There was still a reluctance at taking the last and decisive step in the rebellion, so that the semblance of loyalty was still retained; that ancient scabbard, in which the sword might yet one day be sheathed. The proposition was not adopted at the diet. A committee of nine was merely appointed to deliberate with the Prince upon the “means of obtaining foreign assistance, without accepting foreign authority, or severing their connexion with his Majesty.” The estates were, however, summoned a few months later, by the Prince, to deliberate on this important matter at Rotterdam. On the 1st of October he then formally proposed, either to make terms with their enemy, and that the sooner the better, or else, once for all, to separate entirely from the King of Spain, and to change their sovereign, in order, with the assistance and under protection of another Christian potentate, to maintain the provinces against their enemies. Orange, moreover, expressed the opinion that upon so important a subject it was decidedly incumbent upon them all to take the sense of the city governments. The members for the various municipalities acquiesced in the propriety of this suggestion, and resolved to consult their constituents, while the deputies of the nobility also desired to consult with their whole body. After an adjournment of a few days, the diet again assembled at Delft, and it was then unanimously resolved by the nobles and the cities, “that they would forsake the King and seek foreign assistance; referring the choice to the Prince, who, in regard to the government, was to take the opinion of the estates.”

Page 765

Thus, the great step was taken, by which two little provinces declared themselves independent of their ancient master. That declaration, although taken in the midst of doubt and darkness, was not destined to be cancelled, and the germ of a new and powerful commonwealth was planted. So little, however, did these republican fathers foresee their coming republic, that the resolution to renounce one king was combined with a proposition to ask for the authority of another. It was not imagined that those two slender columns, which were all that had yet been raised of the future stately peristyle, would be strong enough to stand alone. The question now arose, to what foreign power application should be made. But little hope was to be entertained from Germany, a state which existed only in name, and France was still in a condition of religious and intestine discord. The attitude of revolt maintained by the Duc d'Alencon seemed to make it difficult and dangerous to enter into negotiations with a country where the civil wars had assumed so complicated a character, that loyal and useful alliance could hardly be made with any party. The Queen of England, on the other hand; dreaded the wrath of Philip, by which her perpetual dangers from the side of Scotland would be aggravated, while she feared equally the extension of French authority in the Netherlands, by which increase her neighbour would acquire an overshadowing power. She was also ashamed openly to abandon the provinces to their fate, for her realm was supposed to be a bulwark of the Protestant religion. Afraid to affront Philip, afraid to refuse the suit of the Netherlands, afraid to concede as aggrandizement to France, what course was open to the English Queen. That which, politically and personally, she loved the best—a course of barren coquetry. This the Prince of Orange foresaw; and although not disposed to leave a stone unturned in his efforts to find assistance for his country, he on the whole rather inclined for France. He, however, better than any man, knew how little cause there was for sanguine expectation from either source.

It was determined, in the name of his Highness and the estates, first to send a mission to England, but there had already been negotiations this year of an unpleasant character with that power. At the request of the Spanish envoy, the foremost Netherland rebels, in number about fifty, including by name the Prince of Orange, the Counts of Berg and Culemburg, with Saint Aldegonde, Boisot, Junius, and others, had been formally forbidden by Queen Elizabeth to enter her realm. The Prince had, in consequence, sent Aldegonde and Junius on a secret mission to France, and the Queen; jealous and anxious, had thereupon sent Daniel Rogers secretly to the Prince. At the same tine she had sent an envoy to the Grand Commander, counselling, conciliatory measures; and promising to send a special mission to Spain with the offer of her mediation, but it was suspected by those most in the confidence of

Page 766

the Spanish government at Brussels, that there was a great deal of deception in these proceedings. A truce for six months having now been established between the Duc d'Alencon and his brother, it was supposed, that an alliance between France and England, and perhaps between Alencon and Elizabeth, was on the carpet, and that a kingdom of the Netherlands was to be the wedding present of the bride to her husband. These fantasies derived additional color from the fact that, while the Queen was expressing the most amicable intentions towards Spain, and the greatest jealousy of France, the English residents at Antwerp and other cities of the Netherlands, had received private instructions to sell out their property as fast as possible, and to retire from the country. On the whole, there was little prospect either of a final answer, or of substantial assistance from the Queen.

The envoys to England were Advocate Buis and Doctor Francis Maalzon, nominated by the estates, and Saint Aldegonde, chief of the mission, appointed by the Prince. They arrived in England at Christmas-tide. Having represented to the Queen the result of the Breda negotiations, they stated that the Prince and the estates, in despair of a secure peace, had addressed themselves to her as an upright protector of the Faith, and as a princess descended from the blood of Holland. This allusion to the intermarriage of Edward *iii*. of England with Philippa, daughter of Count William *iii*. of Hainault and Holland, would not, it was hoped, be in vain. They furthermore offered to her Majesty, in case she were willing powerfully to assist the states, the sovereignty over Holland and Zealand, under certain conditions.

The Queen listened graciously to the envoys, and appointed commissioners to treat with them on the subject. Meantime, Requesens sent Champagny to England, to counteract the effect of this embassy of the estates, and to beg the Queen to give no heed to the prayers of the rebels, to enter into no negotiations with them, and to expel them at once from her kingdom.

The Queen gravely assured Champagny "that the envoys were no rebels, but faithful subjects of his Majesty." There was certainly some effrontery in such a statement, considering the solemn offer which had just been made by the envoys. If to renounce allegiance to Philip and to propose the sovereignty to Elizabeth did not constitute rebellion, it would be difficult to define or to discover rebellion anywhere. The statement was as honest, however, as the diplomatic grimace with which Champagny had reminded Elizabeth of the ancient and unbroken friendship which had always, existed between herself and his Catholic Majesty. The attempt of Philip to procure her dethronement and assassination but a few years before was, no doubt, thought too trifling a circumstance to have for a moment interrupted those harmonious relations. Nothing came of the negotiations on either side. The Queen coquetted, as was her custom. She could not accept the offer of the estates; she could not say them nay. She would not offend Philip; she would not abandon the provinces; she would therefore

negotiate—thus there was an infinite deal of diplomatic nothing spun and unravelled, but the result was both to abandon the provinces and to offend Philip.

Page 767

In the first answer given by her commissioners to the states' envoys, it was declared, "that her Majesty considered it too expensive to assume the protection of both provinces." She was willing to protect them in name, but she should confer the advantage exclusively on Walcheren in reality. The defence of Holland must be maintained at the expense of the Prince and the estates.

This was certainly not munificent, and the envoys insisted upon more ample and liberal terms. The Queen declined, however, committing herself beyond this niggardly and inadmissible offer. The states were not willing to exchange the sovereignty over their country for so paltry a concession. The Queen declared herself indisposed to go further, at least before consulting parliament. The commissioners waited for the assembling of parliament. She then refused to lay the matter before that body, and forbade the Hollanders taking any steps for that purpose. It was evident that she was disposed to trifle with the provinces, and had no idea of encountering the open hostility of Philip. The envoys accordingly begged for their passports. These were granted in April, 1576, with the assurance on the part of her Majesty that "she would think more of the offer made to her after she had done all in her power to bring about an arrangement between the provinces and Philip."

After the result of the negotiations of Breda, it is difficult to imagine what method she was likely to devise for accomplishing such a purpose. The King was not more disposed than during the preceding summer to grant liberty of religion, nor were the Hollanders more ready than they had been before to renounce either their faith or their fatherland. The envoys, on parting, made a strenuous effort to negotiate a loan, but the frugal Queen considered the proposition quite inadmissible. She granted them liberty to purchase arms and ammunition, and to levy a few soldiers with their own money, and this was accordingly done to a limited extent. As it was not difficult to hire soldiers or to buy gunpowder anywhere, in that warlike age, provided the money were ready, the states had hardly reason to consider themselves under deep obligation for this concession. Yet this was the whole result of the embassy. Plenty of fine words had, been bestowed, which might or might not have meaning, according to the turns taken by coming events. Besides these cheap and empty civilities, they received permission to defend Holland at their own expense; with the privilege, of surrendering its sovereignty, if they liked, to Queen Elizabeth-and this was all.

On the 19th of April, the envoys returned to their country, and laid before the estates the meagre result of their negotiations. Very soon afterwards, upon an informal suggestion from Henry *iii*. and the Queen Mother, that a more favorable result might be expected, if the same applications were made to the Duc d'Alencon which had been received in so unsatisfactory a manner by Elizabeth, commissioners were appointed to France. It proved impossible, however, at that juncture, to proceed with the negotiations, in consequence of the troubles occasioned by the attitude of the Duke. The provinces were still, even as they had been from the beginning, entirely alone.

Page 768

Requesens was more than ever straitened for funds, wringing, with increasing difficulty, a slender subsidy, from time to time, out of the reluctant estates of Brabant, Flanders, and the other obedient provinces. While he was still at Duiveland, the estates-general sent him a long remonstrance against the misconduct of the soldiery, in answer to his demand for supplies. “Oh, these estates! these estates!” cried the Grand Commander, on receiving such vehement reproaches instead of his money; “may the Lord deliver me from these estates!” Meantime, the important siege of Zierickzee continued, and it was evident that the city must fall. There was no money at the disposal of the Prince. Count John, who was seriously embarrassed by reason of the great obligations in money which he, with the rest of his family, had incurred on behalf of the estates, had recently made application to the Prince for his influence towards procuring him relief. He had forwarded an account of the great advances made by himself and his brethren in money, plate, furniture, and endorsements of various kinds, for which a partial reimbursement was almost indispensable to save him from serious difficulties. The Prince, however, unable to procure him any assistance, had been obliged him once more to entreat him to display the generosity and the self-denial which the country had never found wanting at his hands or at those of his kindred. The appeal had not been, in vain, but the Count was obviously not in a condition to effect anything more at that moment to relieve the financial distress of the states. The exchequer was crippled.

[The contributions of Holland and Zealand for war expenses amounted to one hundred and fifty thousand florins monthly. The pay of a captain was eighty florins monthly; that of a lieutenant, forty; that of a corporal, fifteen; that of a drummer, fifer, or Minister, twelve; that of a common soldier, seven and a half. A captain had also one hundred and fifty florins each month to distribute among the most meritorious of his company. Each soldier was likewise furnished with food; bedding, fire, light, and washing.—Renom de France *Ms*, vol. ii. c. 46,]

Holland and Zealand were cut in twain by the occupation of Schouwen and the approaching fall of its capital. Germany, England, France; all refused to stretch out their hands to save the heroic but exhaustless little provinces. It was at this moment that a desperate but sublime resolution took possession of the Prince’s mind. There seemed but one way left to exclude the Spaniards for ever from Holland and Zealand, and to rescue the inhabitants from impending ruin. The Prince had long brooded over the scheme, and the hour seemed to have struck for its fulfilment. His project was to collect all the vessels, of every description, which could be obtained throughout the Netherlands. The whole population of the two provinces, men, women, and children, together with all the moveable property of the country, were then to be embarked on board this numerous fleet, and to seek a new home beyond the seas. The windmills were then to be burned, the dykes pierced, the sluices opened in every direction, and the country restored for ever to the ocean, from which it had sprung.

Page 769

It is difficult to say whether the resolution, if Providence had permitted its fulfilment, would have been, on the whole, better or worse for humanity and civilization. The ships which would have borne the heroic Prince and his fortunes might have taken the direction of the newly-discovered Western hemisphere. A religious colony, planted by a commercial and liberty-loving race, in a virgin soil, and directed by patrician but self-denying hands, might have preceded, by half a century, the colony which a kindred race, impelled by similar motives, and under somewhat similar circumstances and conditions, was destined to plant upon the stern shores of New England. Had they directed their course to the warm and fragrant islands of the East, an independent Christian commonwealth might have arisen among those prolific regions, superior in importance to any subsequent colony of Holland, cramped from its birth by absolute subjection to a far distant metropolis.

The unexpected death of Requesens suddenly dispelled these schemes. The siege of Zierickzee had occupied much of the Governor's attention, but he had recently written to his sovereign, that its reduction was now certain. He had added an urgent request for money, with a sufficient supply of which he assured Philip that he should be able to bring the war to an immediate conclusion. While waiting for these supplies, he had, contrary to all law or reason, made an unsuccessful attempt to conquer the post of Embden, in Germany. A mutiny had at about the same time, broken out among his troops in Harlem, and he had furnished the citizens with arms to defend themselves, giving free permission to use them against the insurgent troops. By this means the mutiny had been quelled, but a dangerous precedent established. Anxiety concerning this rebellion is supposed to have hastened the Grand Commander's death. A violent fever seized him on the 1st, and terminated his existence on the 5th of March, in the fifty-first year of his life.

It is not necessary to review elaborately his career, the chief incidents of which have been sufficiently described. Requesens was a man of high position by birth and office, but a thoroughly commonplace personage. His talents either for war or for civil employments were not above mediocrity. His friends disputed whether he were greater in the field or in the council, but it is certain that he was great in neither. His bigotry was equal to that of Alva, but it was impossible to rival the Duke in cruelty. Moreover, the condition of the country, after seven years of torture under his predecessor, made it difficult for him, at the time of his arrival, to imitate the severity which had made the name of Alva infamous. The Blood Council had been retained throughout his administration, but its occupation was gone, for want of food for its ferocity. The obedient provinces had been purged of Protestants; while crippled, too, by confiscation, they offered no field for further extortion.

Page 770

From Holland and Zealand, whence Catholicism had been nearly excluded, the King of Spain was nearly excluded also. The Blood Council which, if set up in that country, would have executed every living creature of its population, could only gaze from a distance at those who would have been its victims. Requesens had been previously distinguished in two fields of action: the Granada massacres and the carnage of Lepanto. Upon both occasions he had been the military tutor of Don John of Austria, by whom he was soon to be succeeded in the government of the Netherlands. To the imperial bastard had been assigned the pre-eminence, but it was thought that the Grand Commander had been entitled to a more than equal share of the glory.

We have seen how much additional reputation was acquired by Requesens in the provinces. The expedition against Duiveland and Schouwen, was, on the whole, the most brilliant feat of arms during the war, and its success reflects an undying lustre on the hardihood and discipline of the Spanish, German, and Walloon soldiery. As an act of individual audacity in a bad cause, it has rarely been equalled. It can hardly be said, however, that the Grand Commander was entitled to any large measure of praise for the success of the expedition. The plan was laid by Zealand traitors. It was carried into execution by the devotion of the Spanish, Walloon, and German troops; while Requesens was only a spectator of the transaction. His sudden death arrested, for a moment, the ebb-tide in the affairs of the Netherlands, which was fast leaving the country bare and desolate, and was followed by a train of unforeseen transactions, which it is now our duty to describe.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

As the old woman had told the Emperor Adrian
Beautiful damsel, who certainly did not lack suitors
Breath, time, and paper were profusely wasted and nothing gained
Care neither for words nor menaces in any matter
Distinguished for his courage, his cruelty, and his corpulence
He had never enjoyed social converse, except at long intervals
Human ingenuity to inflict human misery
Peace was desirable, it might be more dangerous than war
Proposition made by the wolves to the sheep, in the fable
Rebuked the bigotry which had already grown
Reformers were capable of giving a lesson even to inquisitors
Result was both to abandon the provinces and to offend Philip
Suppress the exercise of the Roman religion
The more conclusive arbitration of gunpowder

Motley's history of the Netherlands, Project Gutenberg Edition, Volume 25.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothop Motley
1855

CHAPTER IV.

Page 771

Assumption of affairs by the state council at Brussels—Hesitation at Madrid—Joachim Hopper—Mal-administration—Vigilance of Orange— The provinces drawn more closely together—Inequality of the conflict—Physical condition of Holland—New act of Union between Holland and Zealand—Authority of the Prince defined and enlarged—Provincial polity characterized—Generous sentiments of the Prince— His tolerant spirit—Letters from the King—Attitude of the great powers towards the Netherlands—-Correspondence and policy of Elizabeth—Secret negotiations with France and Alencon—Confused and menacing aspect of Germany—Responsible, and laborious position of Orange—Attempt to relieve Zierickzee—Death of Admiral Boisot— Capitulation of the city upon honourable terms—Mutiny of the Spanish troops in Schouwen—General causes of discontent—Alarming increase of the mutiny—The rebel regiments enter Brabant—Fruitless attempts to pacify them—They take possession of Alost—Edicts, denouncing them, from the state council—Intense excitement in Brussels and Antwerp—Letters from Philip brought by Marquis Havre— The King's continued procrastination—Ruinous royal confirmation of the authority assumed by the state council—United and general resistance to foreign military oppression—The German troops and the Antwerp garrison, under Avila, join the revolt—Letter of Verdugo— A crisis approaching—Jerome de Roda in the citadel—The mutiny universal.

The death of Requesens, notwithstanding his four days' illness, occurred so suddenly, that he had not had time to appoint his successor. Had he exercised this privilege, which his patent conferred upon him, it was supposed that he would have nominated Count Mansfeld to exercise the functions of Governor-General, until the King should otherwise ordain.

In the absence of any definite arrangement, the Council of State, according to a right which that body claimed from custom, assumed the reins of government. Of the old board, there were none left but the Duke of Aerschot, Count Berlaymont, and Viglins. To these were soon added, however, by royal diploma, the Spaniard, Jerome de Roda, and the Netherlanders, Assonleville, Baron Rassenghiem and Arnold Sasbout. Thus, all the members, save one, of what had now become the executive body, were natives of the country. Roda was accordingly looked askance upon by his colleagues. He was regarded by Viglius as a man who desired to repeat the part which had been played by Juan Vargas in the Blood Council, while the other members, although stanch Catholics, were all of them well-disposed to vindicate the claim of Netherland nobles to a share in the government of the Netherlands.

Page 772

For a time, therefore, the transfer of authority seemed to have been smoothly accomplished. The Council of State conducted the administration of the country. Peter Ernest Mansfeld was entrusted with the supreme military command, including the government of Brussels; and the Spanish commanders; although dissatisfied that any but a Spaniard should be thus honored, were for a time quiescent. When the news reached Madrid, Philip was extremely disconcerted. The death of Requesens excited his indignation. He was angry with him, not for dying, but for dying at so very inconvenient a moment. He had not yet fully decided either upon his successor, or upon the policy to be enforced by his successor. There were several candidates for the vacant post; there was a variety of opinions in the cabinet as to the course of conduct to be adopted. In the impossibility of instantly making up his mind upon this unexpected emergency, Philip fell, as it were, into a long reverie, than which nothing could be more inopportune. With a country in a state of revolution and exasperation, the trance, which now seemed to come over the government, was like to be followed by deadly effects. The stationary policy, which the death of Requesens had occasioned, was allowed to prolong itself indefinitely, and almost for the first time in his life, Joachim Hopper was really consulted about the affairs of that department over which he imagined himself, and was generally supposed by others, to preside at Madrid. The creature of Viglius, having all the subserviency, with none of the acuteness of his patron, he had been long employed as chief of the Netherland bureau, while kept in profound ignorance of the affairs which were transacted in his office. He was a privy councillor, whose counsels were never heeded, a confidential servant in whom the King reposed confidence, only on the ground that no man could reveal secrets which he did not know. This deportment of the King's showed that he had accurately measured the man, for Hopper was hardly competent for the place of a chief clerk. He was unable to write clearly in any language, because incapable of a fully developed thought upon any subject. It may be supposed that nothing but an abortive policy, therefore, would be produced upon the occasion thus suddenly offered. "'Tis a devout man, that poor Master Hopper," said Granvelle, "but rather fitted for platonic researches than for affairs of state."

It was a proof of this incompetency, that now, when really called upon for advice in an emergency, he should recommend a continuance of the interim. Certainly nothing worse could be devised. Granvelle recommended a reappointment of the Duchess Margaret. Others suggested Duke Eric of Brunswick, or an Archduke of the Austrian house; although the opinion held by most of the influential councillors was in favor of Don John of Austria. In the interests of Philip and his despotism, nothing, at any rate, could be more fatal than delay. In the condition of affairs

Page 773

which then existed, the worst or feeblest governor would have been better than none at all. To leave a vacancy was to play directly into the hands of Orange, for it was impossible that so skilful an adversary should not at once perceive the fault, and profit by it to the utmost. It was strange that Philip did not see the danger of inactivity at such a crisis. Assuredly, indolence was never his vice, but on this occasion indecision did the work of indolence. Unwittingly, the despot was assisting the efforts of the liberator. Viglius saw the position of matters with his customary keenness, and wondered at the blindness of Hopper and Philip. At the last gasp of a life, which neither learning nor the accumulation of worldly prizes and worldly pelf could redeem from intrinsic baseness, the sagacious but not venerable old man saw that a chasm was daily widening; in which the religion and the despotism which he loved might soon be hopelessly swallowed. "The Prince of Orange and his Beggars do not sleep," he cried, almost in anguish; "nor will they be quiet till they have made use of this interregnum to do us some immense grievance." Certainly the Prince of Orange did not sleep upon this nor any other great occasion of his life. In his own vigorous language, used to stimulate his friends in various parts of the country, he seized the swift occasion by the forelock. He opened a fresh correspondence with many leading gentlemen in Brussels and other places in the Netherlands; persons of influence, who now, for the first time, showed a disposition to side with their country against its tyrants. Hitherto the land had been divided into two very unequal portions. Holland and Zealand were devoted to the Prince; their whole population, with hardly an individual exception, converted to the Reformed religion. The other fifteen provinces were, on the whole, loyal to the King; while the old religion had, of late years, taken root so rapidly again, that perhaps a moiety of their population might be considered as Catholic. At the same time, the reign of terror under Alva, the paler, but not less distinct tyranny of Requesens, and the intolerable excesses of the foreign soldiery, by which the government of foreigners was supported, had at last maddened all the inhabitants of the seventeen provinces. Notwithstanding, therefore, the fatal difference of religious opinion, they were all drawn into closer relations with each other; to regain their ancient privileges, and to expel the detested foreigners from the soil, being objects common to all. The provinces were united in one great hatred and one great hope.

The Hollanders and Zealanders, under their heroic leader, had well nigh accomplished both tasks, so far as those little provinces were concerned. Never had a contest, however, seemed more hopeless at its commencement. Cast a glance at the map. Look at Holland—not the Republic, with its sister provinces beyond the Zuyder Zee—-but Holland only, with the Zealand archipelago. Look

Page 774

at that narrow tongue of half-submerged earth. Who could suppose that upon that slender sand-bank, one hundred and twenty miles in length, and varying in breadth from four miles to forty, one man, backed by the population of a handful of cities, could do battle nine years long with the master of two worlds, the “Dominator Of Asia, Africa, and America”—the despot of the fairest realms of Europe—and conquer him at last. Nor was William even entirely master of that narrow shoal where clung the survivors of a great national shipwreck. North and South Holland were cut in two by the loss of Harlem, while the enemy was in possession of the natural capital of the little country, Amsterdam. The Prince affirmed that the cause had suffered more from the disloyalty of Amsterdam than from all the efforts of the enemy.

Moreover, the country was in a most desolate condition. It was almost literally a sinking ship. The destruction of the bulwarks against the ocean had been so extensive, in consequence of the voluntary inundations which have been described in previous pages, and by reason of the general neglect which more vital occupations had necessitated, that an enormous outlay, both of labor and money, was now indispensable to save the physical existence of the country. The labor and the money, notwithstanding the crippled and impoverished condition of the nation, were, however, freely contributed; a wonderful example of energy and patient heroism was again exhibited. The dykes which had been swept away in every direction were renewed at a vast expense. Moreover, the country, in the course of recent events, had become almost swept bare of its cattle, and it was necessary to pass a law forbidding, for a considerable period, the slaughter of any animals, “oxen, cows, calves, sheep, or poultry.” It was, unfortunately, not possible to provide by law against that extermination of the human population which had been decreed by Philip and the Pope.

Such was the physical and moral condition of the provinces of Holland and Zealand. The political constitution of both assumed, at this epoch, a somewhat altered aspect. The union between the two states; effected in June, 1575, required improvement. The administration of justice, the conflicts of laws, and more particularly the levying of monies and troops in equitable proportions, had not been adjusted with perfect smoothness. The estates of the two provinces, assembled in congress at Delft, concluded, therefore, a new act of union, which was duly signed upon the 25th of April, 1576. Those estates, consisting of the knights and nobles of Holland, with the deputies from the cities and countships of Holland and Zealand, had been duly summoned by the Prince of Orange. They as fairly included all the political capacities, and furnished as copious a representation of the national will, as could be expected, for it is apparent upon every page of his history, that the Prince, upon all occasions, chose to refer his policy to the approval and confirmation of as large a portion of the people as any man in those days considered capable or desirous of exercising political functions.

Page 775

The new, union consisted of eighteen articles. It was established that deputies from all the estates should meet, when summoned by the Prince of Orange or otherwise, on penalty of fine, and at the risk of measures binding upon them being passed by the rest of the Congress. Freshly arising causes of litigation were to be referred to the Prince. Free intercourse and traffic through the united provinces was guaranteed. The confederates were mutually to assist each other in preventing all injustice, wrong, or violence, even towards an enemy. The authority of law and the pure administration of justice were mutually promised by the contracting states. The common expenses were to be apportioned among the different provinces, “as if they were all included in the republic of a single city.” Nine commissioners, appointed by the Prince on nomination by the estates, were to sit permanently, as his advisers, and as assessors and collectors of the taxes. The tenure of the union was from six months to six months, with six weeks notice.

The framers of this compact having thus defined the general outlines of the confederacy, declared that the government, thus constituted, should be placed under a single head. They accordingly conferred supreme authority on the Prince, defining his powers in eighteen articles. He was declared chief commander by land and sea. He was to appoint all officers, from generals to subalterns, and to pay them at his discretion. The whole protection of the land was devolved upon him. He was to send garrisons or troops into every city and village at his pleasure, without advice or consent of the estates, magistrates of the cities, or any other persons whatsoever. He was, in behalf of the King as Count of Holland and Zealand, to cause justice to be administered by the supreme court. In the same capacity he was to provide for vacancies in all political and judicial offices of importance, choosing, with the advice of the estates, one officer for each vacant post out of three candidates nominated to him by that body. He was to appoint and renew, at the usual times, the magistracies in the cities, according to the ancient constitutions. He was to make changes in those boards, if necessary, at unusual times, with consent of the majority of those representing the great council and corpus of the said cities. He was to uphold the authority and pre-eminence of all civil functionaries, and to prevent governors and military officers from taking any cognizance of political or judicial affairs. With regard to religion, he was to maintain the practice of the Reformed Evangelical religion, and to cause to surcease the exercise of all other religions contrary to the Gospel. He was, however, not to permit that inquisition should be made into any man’s belief or conscience, or that any man by cause thereof should suffer trouble, injury, or hindrance.

Page 776

The league thus concluded was a confederation between a group of virtually independent little republics. Each municipality, was, as it were, a little sovereign, sending envoys to a congress to vote and to sign as plenipotentiaries. The vote of each city was, therefore, indivisible, and it mattered little, practically, whether there were one deputy or several. The nobles represented not only their own order, but were supposed to act also in behalf of the rural population. On the whole, there was a tolerably fair representation of the whole nation. The people were well and worthily represented in the government of each city, and therefore equally so in the assembly of the estates. It was not till later that the corporations, by the extinction of the popular element, and by the usurpation of the right of self-election, were thoroughly stiffened into fictitious personages which never died, and which were never thoroughly alive.

At this epoch the provincial liberties, so far as they could maintain themselves against Spanish despotism, were practical and substantial. The government was a representative one, in which all those who had the inclination possessed, in one mode or another, a voice. Although the various members of the confederacy were locally and practically republics or self-governed little commonwealths, the general government which they, established was, in form, monarchical. The powers conferred upon Orange constituted him a sovereign ad interim, for while the authority of the Spanish monarch remained suspended, the Prince was invested, not only with the whole executive and appointing power, but even with a very large share in the legislative functions of the state.

The whole system was rather practical than theoretical, without any accurate distribution of political powers. In living, energetic communities, where the blood of the body politic circulates swiftly, there is an inevitable tendency of the different organs to sympathize and commingle more closely than a priori philosophy would allow. It is usually more desirable than practicable to keep the executive, legislative, and judicial departments entirely independent of each other.

Certainly, the Prince of Orange did not at that moment indulge in speculations concerning the nature and origin of government. The Congress of Delft had just clothed him with almost regal authority. In his hands were the powers of war and peace, joint control of the magistracies and courts of justice, absolute supremacy over the army and the fleets. It is true that these attributes had been conferred upon him ad interim, but it depended only upon himself to make the sovereignty personal and permanent. He was so thoroughly absorbed in his work, however, that he did not even see the diadem which he put aside. It was small matter to him whether they called him stadholder or guardian, prince or king. He was the father of his country and its defender. The people, from highest to lowest, called him “Father William,” and the title was enough for him. The question with him was not what men should call him, but how he should best accomplish his task.

Page 777

So little was he inspired by the sentiment of self-elevation, that he was anxiously seeking for a fitting person—strong, wise, and willing enough—to exercise the sovereignty which was thrust upon himself, but which he desired to exchange against an increased power to be actively useful to his country. To expel the foreign oppressor; to strangle the Inquisition; to maintain the ancient liberties of the nation; here was labor enough for his own hands. The vulgar thought of carving a throne out of the misfortunes of his country seems not to have entered his mind. Upon one point, however, the Prince had been peremptory. He would have no persecution of the opposite creed. He was requested to suppress the Catholic religion, in terms. As we have seen, he caused the expression to be exchanged for the words, “religion at variance with the Gospel.” He resolutely stood out against all meddling with men’s consciences, or inquiring into their thoughts. While smiting the Spanish Inquisition into the dust, he would have no Calvinist inquisition set up in its place. Earnestly a convert to the Reformed religion, but hating and denouncing only what was corrupt in the ancient Church, he would not force men, with fire and sword, to travel to heaven upon his own road. Thought should be toll-free. Neither monk nor minister should burn, drown, or hang his fellow-creatures, when argument or expostulation failed to redeem them from error. It was no small virtue, in that age, to rise to such a height. We know what Calvinists, Zwinglians, Lutherans, have done in the Netherlands, in Germany, in Switzerland, and almost a century later in New England. It is, therefore, with increased veneration that we regard this large and truly catholic mind. His tolerance proceeded from no indifference. No man can read his private writings, or form a thorough acquaintance with his interior life, without recognizing him as a deeply religious man. He had faith unfaltering in God. He had also faith in man and love for his brethren. It was no wonder that in that age of religious bigotry he should have been assaulted on both sides. While the Pope excommunicated him as a heretic, and the King set a price upon his head as a rebel, the fanatics of the new religion denounced him as a godless man. Peter Dathenus, the unfrocked monk of Poperingen, shrieked out in his pulpit that the “Prince of Orange cared nothing either for God or for religion.”

The death of Requesens had offered the first opening through which the watchful Prince could hope to inflict a wound in the vital part of Spanish authority in the Netherlands. The languor of Philip and the procrastinating counsel of the dull Hopper unexpectedly widened the opening. On the 24th of March letters were written by his Majesty to the states-general, to the provincial estates, and to the courts of justice, instructing them that, until further orders, they were all to obey the Council of State. The King was confident that all would do their utmost to assist that body in securing the holy Catholic Faith and the implicit obedience of the country to its sovereign. He would, in the meantime, occupy himself with the selection of a new Governor-General, who should be of his family and blood. This uncertain and perilous condition of things was watched with painful interest in neighbouring countries.

Page 778

The fate of all nations was more or less involved in the development of the great religious contest now waging in the Netherlands. England and France watched each other's movements in the direction of the provinces with intense jealousy. The Protestant Queen was the natural ally of the struggling Reformers, but her despotic sentiments were averse to the fostering of rebellion against the Lord's anointed. The thrifty Queen looked with alarm at the prospect of large subsidies which would undoubtedly be demanded of her. The jealous Queen could as ill brook the presence of the French in the Netherlands as that of the Spaniards whom they were to expel. She therefore embarrassed, as usual, the operations of the Prince by a course of stale political coquetry. She wrote to him, on the 18th of March, soon after the news of the Grand Commander's death, saying that she could not yet accept the offer which had been made to her, to take the provinces of Holland and Zealand under her safe keeping, to assume, as Countess, the sovereignty over them, and to protect the inhabitants against the alleged tyranny of the King of Spain. She was unwilling to do so until she had made every effort to reconcile them with that sovereign. Before the death of Requesens she had been intending to send him an envoy, proposing a truce, for the purpose of negotiation. This purpose she still retained. She should send commissioners to the Council of State and to the new Governor, when he should arrive. She should also send a special envoy to the King of Spain. She doubted not that the King would take her advice, when he heard her speak in such straightforward language. In the meantime, she hoped that they would negotiate with no other powers.

This was not very satisfactory. The Queen rejected the offers to herself, but begged that they might, by no means, be made to her rivals. The expressed intention of softening the heart of Philip by the use of straightforward language seemed but a sorry sarcasm. It was hardly worth while to wait long for so improbable a result. Thus much for England at that juncture. Not inimical, certainly; but over-cautious, ungenerous, teasing, and perplexing, was the policy of the maiden Queen. With regard to France, events there seemed to favor the hopes of Orange. On the 14th of May, the "Peace of Monsieur," the treaty by which so ample but so short-lived a triumph was achieved by the Huguenots, was signed at Paris. Everything was conceded, but nothing was secured. Rights of worship, rights of office, political and civil, religious enfranchisement, were recovered, but not guaranteed. It seemed scarcely possible that the King could be in earnest then, even if a Medicean Valois could ever be otherwise than treacherous. It was almost, certain, therefore, that a reaction would take place; but it is easier for us, three centuries after the event, to mark the precise moment of reaction, than it was for the most far-seeing contemporary to

Page 779

foretell how soon it would occur. In the meantime, it was the Prince's cue to make use of this sunshine while it lasted. Already, so soon as the union of 25th of April had been concluded between Holland and Zealand, he had forced the estates to open negotiations with France. The provinces, although desirous to confer sovereignty upon him, were indisposed to renounce their old allegiance to their King in order to place it at the disposal of a foreigner. Nevertheless, a resolution, at the reiterated demands of Orange, was passed by the estates, to proceed to the change of master, and, for that, purpose, to treat with the King of France, his brother, or any other foreign potentate, who would receive these provinces of Holland and Zealand under his government and protection. Negotiations were accordingly opened with the Duke-of-Anjou, the dilettante leader of the Huguenots at that remarkable juncture. It was a pity that no better champion could be looked for among the anointed of the earth than the false, fickle, foolish Alencon, whose career, everywhere contemptible, was nowhere so flagitious as in the Netherlands. By the fourteenth article of the Peace of Paris, the Prince was reinstated and secured in his principality of Orange; and his other possessions in France. The best feeling; for the time being, was manifested between the French court and the Reformation.

Thus much for England and France. As for Germany, the prospects of the Netherlands were not flattering. The Reforming spirit had grown languid, from various causes. The self-seeking motives of many Protestant princes had disgusted the nobles. Was that the object of the bloody wars of religion, that a few potentates should be enabled to enrich themselves by confiscating the broad lands and accumulated treasures of the Church? Had the creed of Luther been embraced only for such unworthy ends? These suspicions chilled the ardor of thousands, particularly among the greater ones of the land. Moreover, the discord among the Reformers themselves waxed daily, and became more and more mischievous. Neither the people nor their leaders could learn that, not a new doctrine, but a wise toleration for all Christian doctrines was wanted. Of new doctrines there was no lack. Lutherans, Calvinists, Flaccianists, Majorists, Adiaphorists, Brantianists, Ubiquitists, swarmed and contended pell-mell. In this there would have been small harm, if the Reformers had known what reformation meant. But they could not invent or imagine toleration. All claimed the privilege of persecuting. There were sagacious and honest men among the great ones of the country, but they were but few. Wise William of Hesse strove hard to effect a concordia among the jarring sects; Count John of Nassau, though a passionate Calvinist, did no less; while the Elector of Saxony, on the other hand, raging and roaring like a bull of Bashan, was for sacrificing the interest of millions on the altar of his personal spite. Cursed was his tribe if he forgave the Prince. He had done what he could at the Diet of Ratisbon to exclude all Calvinists from a participation in the religious peace of Germany, and he redoubled his efforts to prevent the extension of any benefits to the Calvinists of the Netherlands. These determinations had remained constant and intense.

Page 780

On the whole, the political appearance of Germany was as menacing as that of France seemed for a time favorable to the schemes of Orange. The quarrels of the princes, and the daily widening schism between Lutherans and Calvinists, seemed to bode little good to the cause of religious freedom. The potentates were perplexed and at variance, the nobles lukewarm and discontented. Among the people, although subdivided into hostile factions, there was more life. Here, at least, were heartiness of love and hate, enthusiastic conviction, earnestness and agitation. “The true religion,” wrote Count John, “is spreading daily among the common men. Among the powerful, who think themselves highly learned, and who sit in roses, it grows, alas, little. Here and there a Nicodemus or two may be found, but things will hardly go better here than in France or the Netherlands.”

Thus, then, stood affairs in the neighbouring countries. The prospect was black in Germany, more encouraging in France, dubious, or worse, in England. More work, more anxiety, more desperate struggles than ever, devolved upon the Prince. Secretary Brunynck wrote that his illustrious chief was tolerably well in health, but so loaded with affairs, sorrows, and travails, that, from morning till night, he had scarcely leisure to breathe. Besides his multitudinous correspondence with the public bodies, whose labors he habitually directed; with the various estates of the provinces, which he was gradually moulding into an organised and general resistance to the Spanish power; with public envoys and with secret agents to foreign cabinets, all of whom received their instructions from him alone; with individuals of eminence and influence, whom he was eloquently urging to abandon their hostile position to their fatherland; and to assist him in the great work which he was doing; besides these numerous avocations, he was actively and anxiously engaged during the spring of 1576, with the attempt to relieve the city of Zierickzee.

That important place, the capital of Schouwen, and the key to half Zealand, had remained closely invested since the memorable expedition to Duiveland. The Prince had passed much of his time in the neighbourhood, during the month of May, in order to attend personally to the contemplated relief, and to correspond daily with the beleaguered garrison. At last, on the 25th of May, a vigorous effort was made to throw in succor by sea. The brave Admiral Boisot, hero of the memorable relief of Leyden, had charge of the expedition. Mondragon had surrounded the shallow harbor with hulks and chains, and with a loose submerged dyke of piles and rubbish. Against this obstacle Boisot drove his ship, the ‘Red Lion,’ with his customary audacity, but did not succeed in cutting it through. His vessel, the largest of the feet, became entangled: he was, at the same time, attacked from a distance by the besiegers. The tide ebbed and left his ship aground, while the

Page 781

other vessels had been beaten back by the enemy. Night approached; and there was no possibility of accomplishing the enterprise. His ship was hopelessly stranded. With the morning's sun his captivity was certain. Rather than fall into the hands of his enemy, he sprang into the sea; followed by three hundred of his companions, some of whom were fortunate enough to effect their escape. The gallant Admiral swam a long time, sustained by a broken spar. Night and darkness came on before assistance could be rendered, and he perished. Thus died Louis Boisot, one of the most enterprising of the early champions of Netherland freedom—one of the bravest precursors of that race of heroes, the commanders of the Holland navy. The Prince deplored his loss deeply, as that of a "valiant gentleman, and one well affectioned to the common cause." His brother, Charles Boisot, as will be remembered, had perished by treachery at the first landing of the Spanish troops; after their perilous passage from Duiveland.—Thus both the brethren had laid down their lives for their country, in this its outer barrier, and in the hour of its utmost need. The fall of the beleaguered town could no longer be deferred. The Spaniards were, at last, to receive the prize of that romantic valor which had led them across the bottom of the sea to attack the city. Nearly nine months had, however, elapsed since that achievement; and the Grand Commander, by whose orders it had been undertaken, had been four months in his grave. He was permitted to see neither the long-delayed success which crowded the enterprise, nor the procession of disasters and crimes which were to mark it as a most fatal success.

On the 21st of June, 1576, Zierickzee, instructed by the Prince of Orange to accept honorable terms, if offered, agreed to surrender. Mondragon, whose soldiers were in a state of suffering, and ready to break out in mutiny, was but too happy to grant an honorable capitulation. The garrison were allowed to go out with their arms and personal baggage. The citizens were permitted to retain or resume their privileges and charters, on payment of two hundred thousand guldens. Of, sacking and burning there was, on this occasion, fortunately, no question; but the first half of the commutation money was to be paid in cash. There was but little money in the impoverished little town, but mint-masters were appointed by the: magistrates to take their seats at once an in the Hotel de Ville. The citizens brought their spoons and silver dishes; one after another, which were melted and coined into dollars and half-dollars, until the payment was satisfactorily adjusted. Thus fell Zierickzee, to the deep regret of the Prince. "Had we received the least succor in the world from any side," he wrote; "the poor city should never have fallen. I could get nothing from France or England, with all my efforts. Nevertheless, we do not lose courage, but hope that, although abandoned by all the world, the Lord God will extend His right hand over us."

Page 782

The enemies were not destined to go farther. From their own hand now came the blow which was to expel them from the soil which they had so long polluted. No sooner was Zierickzee captured than a mutiny broke forth among several companies of Spaniards and Walloons, belonging, to the army in Schouwen. A large number of the most influential officers had gone to Brussels, to make arrangements, if possible; for the payment of the troops. In their absence there was more scope for the arguments of the leading mutineers; arguments assuredly, not entirely destitute of justice or logical precision. If ever laborers were worthy of their hire, certainly it was the Spanish soldiery. Had they not done the work of demons for nine years long? Could Philip or Alva have found in the wide world men to execute their decrees with more unhesitating docility, with more sympathizing eagerness? What obstacle had ever given them pause in their career of duty? What element had they not braved? Had not they fought within the bowels of the earth, beneath the depths of the sea, within blazing cities, and upon fields of ice? Where was the work which had been too dark and bloody for their performance? Had they not slaughtered unarmed human beings by townfuls, at the word of command? Had they not eaten the flesh, and drank the hearts' blood of their enemies? Had they not stained the house of God with wholesale massacre? What altar and what hearthstone had they not profaned? What fatigue, what danger, what crime, had ever checked them for a moment? And for all this obedience, labor, and bloodshed, were they not even to be paid such wages as the commonest clown, who only tore the earth at home, received? Did Philip believe that a few thousand Spaniards were to execute his sentence of death against three millions of Netherlanders, and be cheated of their pay at last?

It was in vain that arguments and expostulations were addressed to soldiers who were suffering from want, and maddened by injustice. They determined to take their cause into their own hand, as they had often done before. By the 15th of July, the mutiny was general on the isle of Schouwen. Promises were freely offered, both of pay and pardon; appeals were made to their old sense of honor and loyalty; but they had had enough of promises, of honor, and of work. What they wanted now were shoes and jerkins, bread and meat, and money. Money they would have, and that at once. The King of Spain was their debtor. The Netherlands belonged to the King of Spain. They would therefore levy on the Netherlands for payment of their debt. Certainly this was a logical deduction. They knew by experience that this process had heretofore excited more indignation in the minds of the Netherland people than in that of their master. Moreover, at this juncture, they cared little for their sovereign's displeasure, and not at all for that of the Netherlanders. By the middle of July, then, the mutineers, now entirely

Page 783

beyond control, held their officers imprisoned within their quarters at Zierickzee. They even surrounded the house of Mondtagon, who had so often led them to victory, calling upon him with threats and taunts to furnish them with money. The veteran, roused to fury by their insubordination and their taunts, sprang from his house into the midst of the throng. Baring his breast before them, he fiercely invited and dared their utmost violence. Of his life-blood, he told them bitterly, he was no niggard, and it was at their disposal. His wealth, had he possessed any, would have been equally theirs. Shamed into temporary respect, but not turned from their purpose by the choler of their chief, they left him to himself. Soon afterwards, having swept Schouwen island bare of every thing which could be consumed, the mutineers swarmed out of Zealand into Brabant, devouring as they went.

It was their purpose to hover for a time in the neighbourhood of the capital, and either to force the Council of State to pay them their long arrears, or else to seize and sack the richest city upon which they could lay their hands. The compact, disciplined mass, rolled hither and thither, with uncertainty of purpose, but with the same military precision of movement which had always characterized these remarkable mutinies. It gathered strength daily. The citizens of Brussels contemplated with dismay the eccentric and threatening apparition. They knew that rapine, murder, and all the worst evils which man can inflict on his brethren were pent within it, and would soon descend. Yet, even with all their past experience, did they not foresee the depth of woe which was really impending. The mutineers had discarded such of their officers as they could not compel to obedience, and had, as usual, chosen their Eletto. Many straggling companies joined them as they swept to and fro. They came to Herenthals, where they were met by Count Mansfeld, who was deputed by the Council of State to treat with them, to appeal to them; to pardon them, to offer, them everything but money. It may be supposed that the success of the commander-in-chief was no better than that of Mondragon and his subalterns. They laughed him to scorn when he reminded them how their conduct was tarnishing the glory which they had acquired by nine years of heroism. They answered with their former cynicism, that glory could be put neither into pocket nor stomach. They had no use for it; they had more than enough of it. Give them money, or give them a City, these were their last terms.

Sorrowfully and bodingly Mansfeld withdrew to consult again with the State Council. The mutineers then made a demonstration upon Mechlin, but that city having fortunately strengthened its garrison, was allowed to escape. They then hovered for a time outside the walls of Brussels. At Grimsberg, where they paused for a short period, they held a parley with Captain Montesdocca, whom they received with fair words

Page 784

and specious pretences. He returned to Brussels with the favourable tidings, and the mutineers swarmed off to Assche. Thither Montesdoeca was again despatched, with the expectation that he would be able to bring them to terms, but they drove him off with jeers and threats, finding that he brought neither money nor the mortgage of a populous city. The next day, after a feint or two in a different direction, they made a sudden swoop upon Alost, in Flanders. Here they had at last made their choice, and the town was carried by storm. All the inhabitants who opposed them were butchered, and the mutiny, at last established in a capital, was able to treat with the State Council upon equal terms. They were now between two and three thousand strong, disciplined, veteran troops, posted in a strong and wealthy city. One hundred parishes belonged to the jurisdiction of Alost, all of which were immediately laid under contribution.

The excitement was now intense in Brussels. Anxiety and alarm had given place to rage, and the whole population rose in arms to defend the capital, which was felt to be in imminent danger. This spontaneous courage of the burghers prevented the catastrophe, which was reserved for a sister city. Meantime, the indignation and horror excited by the mutiny were so universal that the Council of State could not withstand the pressure. Even the women and children demanded daily in the streets that the rebel soldiers should be declared outlaws. On the 26th of July, accordingly, the King of Spain was made to pronounce, his Spaniards traitors and murderers. All men were enjoined to slay one or all of them, wherever they should be found; to refuse them bread, water, and fire, and to assemble at sound of bell; in every city; whenever the magistrates should order an assault upon them. A still more stringent edict was issued on the 2nd of August; and so eagerly had these degrees been expected, that they were published throughout Flanders and Brabant almost as soon as issued. Hitherto the leading officers of the Spanish army had kept aloof from the insurgents, and frowned upon their proceedings. The Spanish member of the State Council, Jerome de Roda, had joined without opposition in the edict. As, however, the mutiny gathered strength on the outside, the indignation waxed daily within the capital. The citizens of Brussels, one and all, stood to their arms. Not a man could enter or leave without their permission. The Spaniards who were in the town, whether soldiers or merchants, were regarded with suspicion and abhorrence. The leading Spanish officers, Romero, Montesdocca, Verdugo, and others, who had attempted to quell the mutiny, had been driven off with threats and curses, their soldiers defying them and brandishing their swords in their very faces. On the other hand, they were looked upon with ill-will by the Netherlanders. The most prominent Spanish personages in Brussels were kept in a state of half-imprisonment.

Page 785

Romero, Roda, Verdugo, were believed to favor at heart the cause of their rebellious troops, and the burghers of Brabant had come to consider all the King's army in a state of rebellion. Believing the State Council powerless to protect them from the impending storm, they regarded that body with little respect, keeping it, as it were, in durance, while the Spaniards were afraid to walk the streets of Brussels for fear of being murdered. A retainer of Rods, who had ventured to defend the character and conduct of his master before a number of excited citizens, was slain on the spot.

In Antwerp, Champagny, brother of Granvelle, and governor of the city, was disposed to cultivate friendly relations with the Prince of Orange. Champagny hated the Spaniards, and the hatred seemed to establish enough of sympathy between himself and the liberal party to authorize confidence in him. The Prince dealt with him, but regarded him warily. Fifteen companies of German troops, under Colonel Altaemst, were suspected of a strong inclination to join the mutiny. They were withdrawn from Antwerp, and in their room came Count Uberstein, with his regiment, who swore to admit no suspicious person inside the gates, and in all things to obey the orders of Champagny. In the citadel, however, matters were very threatening. Sancho d'Avila, the governor, although he had not openly joined the revolt, treated the edict of outlawry against the rebellious soldiery with derision. He refused to publish a decree which he proclaimed infamous, and which had been extorted, in his opinion, from an impotent and trembling council. Even Champagny had not desired or dared to publish the edict within the city. The reasons alleged were his fears of irritating and alarming the foreign merchants, whose position was so critical and friendship so important at that moment. On the other hand, it was loudly and joyfully published in most other towns of Flanders and Brabant. In Brussels there were two parties, one holding the decree too audacious for his Majesty to pardon; the other clamoring for its instantaneous fulfilment. By far the larger and more influential portion of the population favored the measure, and wished the sentence of outlawry and extermination to be extended at once against all Spaniards and other foreigners in the service of the King. It seemed imprudent to wait until all the regiments had formally accepted the mutiny, and concentrated themselves into a single body.

At this juncture, on the last day of July, the Marquis off Havre, brother to the Duke of Aerschot, arrived out of Spain. He was charged by the King with conciliatory but unmeaning phrases to the estates. The occasion was not a happy one. There never was a time when direct and vigorous action had been more necessary. It was probably the King's desire then, as much as it ever had been his desire at all, to make up the quarrel with his provinces. He had been wearied with the policy which Alva had

Page 786

enforced, and for which he endeavoured at that period to make the Duke appear responsible. The barren clemency which the Grand Commander had been instructed to affect, had deceived but few persons, and had produced but small results. The King was, perhaps, really inclined at this juncture to exercise clemency—that is to say he was willing to pardon his people for having contended for their rights, provided they were now willing to resign them for ever. So the Catholic religion and his own authority, were exclusively and inviolably secured, he was willing to receive his disobedient provinces into favor. To accomplish this end, however, he had still no more fortunate conception than to take the advice of Hopper. A soothing procrastination was the anodyne selected for the bitter pangs of the body politic—a vague expression of royal benignity the styptic to be applied to its mortal wounds. An interval of hesitation was to bridge over the chasm between the provinces and their distant metropolis. "The Marquis of Havre has been sent," said the King, "that he may expressly witness to you of our good intentions, and of our desire, with the grace of God, to bring about a pacification." Alas, it was well known whence those pavements of good intentions had been taken, and whither they would lead. They were not the material for a substantial road to reconciliation. "His Majesty," said the Marquis; on delivering his report to the State Council, "has long been pondering over all things necessary to the peace of the land. His Majesty, like a very gracious and bountiful Prince, has ever been disposed, in times past, to treat these, his subjects, by the best and sweetest means." There being, however, room for an opinion that so bountiful a prince might have discovered sweeter means, by all this pondering, than to burn and gibbet his subjects by thousands, it was thought proper to insinuate that his orders had been hitherto misunderstood. Alva and Requesens had been unfaithful agents, who did not know their business, but it was to be set right in future. "As the good-will and meaning of his Majesty has, by no means been followed," continued the envoy, "his Majesty has determined to send Councillor Hopper, keeper of the privy seal, and myself, hitherwards, to execute the resolutions of his Majesty." Two such personages as poor, plodding, confused; time-serving Hopper, and flighty, talkative Havre, whom even Requesens despised, and whom Don John, while shortly afterwards recommending him for a state councillor, characterized, to Philip as "a very great scoundrel;" would hardly be able, even if royally empowered, to undo the work of two preceding administrations. Moreover, Councillor Hopper, on further thoughts, was not despatched at all to the Netherlands.

Page 787

The provinces were, however, assured by the King's letters to the Brabant estates, to the State Council, and other, public bodies, as well as by the report of the Marquis, that efficacious remedies were preparing in Madrid. The people were only too wait patiently till they should arrive. The public had heard before of these nostrums, made up by the royal prescriptions in Spain; and were not likely to accept them as a panacea for their present complicated disorders. Never, in truth, had conventional commonplace been applied more unseasonably. Here was a general military mutiny flaming in the very centre of the land. Here had the intense hatred of race, which for years had been gnawing at the heart of the country, at last broken out into most malignant manifestation. Here was nearly the whole native population of every province, from grand seigneur to plebeian, from Catholic prelate to Anabaptist artisan, exasperated alike by the excesses of six thousand foreign brigands, and united by a common hatred, into a band of brethren. Here was a State Council too feeble to exercise the authority which it had arrogated, trembling between the wrath of its sovereign, the menacing cries of the Brussels burghers, and the wild threats of the rebellious army; and held virtually, captive in the capital which it was supposed to govern.

Certainly, the confirmation of the Council in its authority, for an indefinite, even if for a brief period, was a most unlucky step at this juncture. There were two parties in the provinces, but one was far the most powerful upon the great point of the Spanish soldiery. A vast majority were in favor of a declaration of outlawry against the whole army, and it was thought desirable to improve the opportunity by getting rid of them altogether. If the people could rise en masse, now that the royal government was in abeyance, and, as it were, in the nation's hands, the incubus might be cast off for ever. If any of the Spanish officers had been sincere in their efforts to arrest the mutiny, the sincerity was not believed. If any of the foreign regiments of the King appeared to hesitate at joining the Alost crew, the hesitation was felt to be temporary. Meantime, the important German regiments of Fugger, Fronsberger, and Polwiller, with their colonels and other officers, had openly joined the rebellion, while there was no doubt of the sentiments of Sancho d'Avila and the troops under his command. Thus there were two great rallying-places for the sedition, and the most important fortress of the country, the key which unlocked the richest city in the world, was in the hands of the mutineers. The commercial capital of Europe, filled to the brim with accumulated treasures, and with the merchandize of every clime; lay at the feet of this desperate band of brigands. The horrible result was but too soon to be made manifest.

Page 788

Meantime, in Brussels, the few Spaniards trembled for their lives. The few officers shut up there were in imminent danger. “As the Devil does not cease to do his work,” wrote Colonel Verdugo, “he has put it into the heads of the Brabanters to rebel, taking for a pretext the mutiny of the Spaniards. The Brussels men have handled their weapons so well against those who were placed there to protect them, that they have begun to kill the Spaniards, threatening likewise the Council of State. Such is their insolence, that they care no more for these great lords than for so many varlets.” The writer, who had taken refuge, together with Jerome de Roda and other Spaniards, or “Hispaniolized” persons, in Antwerp citadel, proceeded to sketch the preparations which were going on in Brussels, and the counter measures which were making progress in Antwerp. “The states,” he wrote, “are enrolling troops, saying ’tis to put down the mutiny; but I assure you ’tis to attack the army indiscriminately. To prevent such a villainous undertaking, troops of all nations are assembling here, in order to march straight upon Brussels, there to enforce everything which my lords of the State Council shall ordain.” Events were obviously hastening to a crisis—an explosion, before long, was inevitable. “I wish I had my horses here,” continued the Colonel, “and must beg you to send them. I see a black cloud hanging over our heads. I fear that the Brabantines will play the beasts so much, that they will have all the soldiery at their throats.”

Jerome de Roda had been fortunate enough to make his escape out of Brussels, and now claimed to be sole Governor of the Netherlands, as the only remaining representative of the State Council. His colleagues were in durance at the capital. Their authority was derided. Although not yet actually imprisoned, they were in reality bound hand and foot, and compelled to take their orders either from the Brabant estates or from the burghers of Brussels. It was not an illogical proceeding, therefore, that Roda, under the shadow of the Antwerp citadel, should set up his own person as all that remained of the outraged majesty of Spain. Till the new Governor, Don Juan, should arrive, whose appointment the King had already communicated to the government, and who might be expected in the Netherlands before the close of the autumn, the solitary councillor claimed to embody the whole Council. He caused a new seal to be struck—a proceeding very unreasonably charged as forgery by the provincials—and forthwith began to thunder forth proclamations and counter-proclamations in the King’s name and under the royal seal. It is difficult to see any technical crime or mistake in such a course. As a Spaniard, and a representative of his Majesty, he could hardly be expected to take any other view of his duty. At any rate, being called upon to choose between rebellious Netherlanders and mutinous Spaniards, he was not long in making up his mind.

Page 789

By the beginning of September the, mutiny was general. All the Spanish army, from general to pioneer, were united. The most important German troops had taken side with them. Sancho d'Avila held the citadel of Antwerp, vowing vengeance, and holding open communication with the soldiers at Alost. The Council of State remonstrated with him for his disloyalty. He replied by referring to his long years of service, and by reproving them for affecting an authority which their imprisonment rendered ridiculous. The Spaniards were securely established. The various citadels which had been built by Charles and Philip to curb the country now effectually did their work. With the castles of Antwerp, Valenciennes, Ghent, Utrecht, Culemburg, Viane, Alost, in the hands of six thousand veteran Spaniards, the country seemed chained in every limb. The foreigner's foot was on its neck. Brussels was almost the only considerable town out of Holland and Zealand which was even temporarily safe. The important city of Maestricht was held by a Spanish garrison, while other capital towns and stations were in the power of the Walloon and German mutineers. The depredations committed in the villages, the open country, and the cities were incessant—the Spaniards treating every Netherlander as their foe. Gentleman and peasant, Protestant and Catholic, priest and layman, all were plundered, maltreated, outraged. The indignation became daily more general and more intense. There were frequent skirmishes between the soldiery and promiscuous bands of peasants, citizens, and students; conflicts in which the Spaniards were invariably victorious. What could such half-armed and wholly untrained partisans effect against the bravest and most experienced troops in the whole world? Such results only increased the general exasperation, while they impressed upon the whole people the necessity of some great and general effort to throw off the incubus.

1576-1577 [*Chapter* V.]

Religious and political sympathies and antipathies in the seventeen provinces—-Unanimous hatred for the foreign soldiery—Use made by the Prince of the mutiny—His correspondence—Necessity of Union enforced—A congress from nearly all the provinces meets at Ghent— Skirmishes between the foreign troops and partisan bands—Slaughter at Tisnacq—Suspicions entertained of the State-Council—Arrest of the State-Council—Siege of Ghent citadel—Assistance sent by Orange—Maestricht lost and regained—Wealthy and perilous condition of Antwerp—Preparations of the mutineers under the secret superintendence of Avila—Stupidity of Oberstein—Duplicity of Don Sancho—Reinforcements of Walloons under Havre, Egmont, and others, sent to for the expected assault of Antwerp—Governor Champagny's preparations the mutineers—Insubordination, incapacity, and negligence of all but him—Concentration of all the mutineers from different points, in the citadel—The attack—the panic—the

Page 790

flight —the massacre—the fire—the sack—and other details of the “Spanish Fury”—-Statistics of murder and robbery—Letter of Orange to the states-general—Surrender of Ghent citadel—Conclusion of the “Ghent Pacification”—The treaty characterized—-Forms of ratification—Fall of Zierickzee and recovery of Zealand.

Meantime, the Prince of Orange sat at Middelburg, watching the storm. The position of Holland and Zealand with regard to the other fifteen provinces was distinctly characterized. Upon certain points there was an absolute sympathy, while upon others there was a grave and almost fatal difference. It was the task of the Prince to deepen the sympathy, to extinguish the difference.

In Holland and Zealand, there was a warm and nearly universal adhesion to the Reformed religion, a passionate attachment to the ancient political liberties. The Prince, although an earnest Calvinist himself, did all in his power to check the growing spirit of intolerance toward the old religion, omitted no opportunity of strengthening the attachment which the people justly felt for their liberal institutions.

On the other hand, in most of the other provinces, the Catholic religion had been regaining its ascendency. Even in 1574, the estates assembled at Brussels declared to Requesens “that they would rather die the death than see any change in their religion.” That feeling had rather increased than diminished. Although there was a strong party attached to the new faith, there was perhaps a larger, certainly a more influential body, which regarded the ancient Church with absolute fidelity. Owing partly to the persecution which had, in the course of years, banished so many thousands of families from the soil, partly to the coercion, which was more stringent in the immediate presence of the Crown’s representative, partly to the stronger infusion of the Celtic element, which from the earliest ages had always been so keenly alive to the more sensuous and splendid manifestations of the devotional principle—owing to those and many other causes, the old religion, despite of all the outrages which had been committed in its name, still numbered a host of zealous adherents in the fifteen provinces. Attempts against its sanctity were regarded with jealous eyes. It was believed, and with reason, that there was a disposition on the part of the Reformers to destroy it root and branch. It was suspected that the same enginery of persecution would be employed in its extirpation, should the opposite party gain the supremacy, which the Papists had so long employed against the converts to the new religion.

Page 791

As to political convictions, the fifteen provinces differed much less from their two sisters. There was a strong attachment to their old constitutions; a general inclination to make use of the present crisis to effect their restoration. At the same time, it had not come to be the general conviction, as in Holland and Zealand, that the maintenance of those liberties was incompatible with the continuance of Philip's authority. There was, moreover, a strong aristocratic faction which was by no means disposed to take a liberal view of government in general, and regarded with apprehension the simultaneous advance of heretical notions both in church and, state. Still there were, on the whole, the elements of a controlling constitutional party throughout the fifteen provinces The great bond of sympathy, however, between all the seventeen was their common hatred to the foreign soldiery. Upon this deeply imbedded, immovable fulcrum of an ancient national hatred, the sudden mutiny of the whole Spanish army served as a lever of incalculable power. The Prince seized it as from the hand of God. Thus armed, he proposed to himself the task of upturning the mass of oppression under which the old liberties of the country had so long been crushed. To effect this object, adroitness was as requisite as courage. Expulsion of the foreign soldiery, union of the seventeen provinces, a representative constitution, according to the old charters, by the states-general, under an hereditary chief, a large religious toleration, suppression of all inquisition into men's consciences—these were the great objects to which the Prince now devoted himself with renewed energy.

To bring about a general organization and a general union, much delicacy of handling was necessary. The sentiment of extreme Catholicism and Monarchism was not to be suddenly scared into opposition. The Prince, therefore, in all his addresses and documents was careful to disclaim any intention of disturbing the established religion, or of making any rash political changes. "Let no man think," said he, to the authorities of Brabant, "that, against the will of the estates, we desire to bring about any change in religion. Let no one suspect us capable of prejudicing the rights of any man. We have long since taken up arms to maintain a legal and constitutional freedom, founded upon law. God forbid that we should now attempt to introduce novelties, by which the face of liberty should be defiled."

In a brief and very spirited letter to Count Lalain, a Catholic and a loyalist, but a friend of his country and fervent hater of foreign oppression, he thus appealed to his sense of chivalry and justice: "Although the honorable house from which you spring," he said, "and the virtue and courage of your ancestors have always impressed me with the conviction that you would follow in their footsteps, yet am I glad to have received proofs that my anticipations were correct. I cannot help, therefore, entreating you to maintain the same high heart, and to accomplish that which you have so worthily begun. Be not deluded by false masks, mumming faces, and borrowed titles, which people assume for their own profit, persuading others that the King's service consists in the destruction of his subjects."

Page 792

While thus careful to offend no man's religious convictions, to startle no man's loyalty, he made skillful use of the general indignation felt at, the atrocities of the mutinous army. This chord he struck boldly, powerfully, passionately, for he felt sure of the depth and strength of its vibrations. In his address to the estates of Gelderland, he used vigorous language, inflaming and directing to a practical purpose the just wrath which was felt in that, as in every other province. "I write to warn you," he said, "to seize this present opportunity. Shake from your necks the yoke of the godless Spanish tyranny, join yourselves at once to the lovers of the fatherland, to the defenders of freedom. According to the example of your own ancestors and ours, redeem for the country its ancient laws, traditions, and privileges. Permit no longer, to your shame and ours, a band of Spanish landloupers and other foreigners, together with three or four self-seeking enemies of their own land, to keep their feet upon our necks. Let them no longer, in the very wantonness of tyranny, drive us about like a herd of cattle—like a gang of well-tamed slaves."

Thus, day after day, in almost countless addresses to public bodies and private individuals, he made use of the crisis to pile fresh fuel upon the flames. At the same time, while thus fanning the general indignation, he had the adroitness to point out that the people had already committed themselves. He represented to them that the edict, by which they had denounced his Majesty's veterans as outlaws, and had devoted them to the indiscriminate destruction which such brigands deserved, was likely to prove an unpardonable crime in the eyes of majesty. In short, they had entered the torrent. If they would avoid being dashed over the precipice, they must struggle manfully with the mad waves of civil war into which they had plunged. "I beg you, with all affection," he said to the states of Brabant, "to consider the danger in which you have placed yourselves. You have to deal with the proudest and most overbearing race in the world. For these qualities they are hated by all other nations. They are even hateful to themselves. 'Tis a race which seeks to domineer wheresoever it comes. It particularly declares its intention to crush and to tyrannize you, my masters, and all the land. They have conquered you already, as they boast, for the crime of lese-majesty has placed you at their mercy. I tell you that your last act, by which you have declared this army to be rebels, is decisive. You have armed and excited the whole people against them, even to the peasants and the peasants' children, and the insults and injuries thus received, however richly deserved and dearly avenged, are all set down to your account. Therefore, 'tis necessary for you to decide now, whether to be utterly ruined, yourselves and your children, or to continue firmly the work which you have begun boldly, and rather to die a hundred thousand deaths than to make a treaty with them, which can only end in your ruin. Be assured that the measure dealt to you will be ignominy as well as destruction. Let not your leaders expect the honorable scaffolds of Counts Egmont and Horn. The whipping-post and then the gibbet will be their certain fate."

Page 793

Having by this and similar language, upon various occasions, sought to impress upon his countrymen the gravity of the position, he led them to seek the remedy in audacity and in union. He familiarized them with his theory, that the legal, historical government of the provinces belonged to the states-general, to a congress of nobles, clergy, and commons, appointed from each of the seventeen provinces. He maintained, with reason, that the government of the Netherlands was a representative constitutional government, under the hereditary authority of the King. To recover this constitution, to lift up these down-trodden rights, he set before them most vividly the necessity of union, "'Tis impossible," he said, "that a chariot should move evenly having its wheels unequally proportioned; and so must a confederation be broken to pieces, if there be not an equal obligation on all to tend to a common purpose." Union, close, fraternal, such as became provinces of a common origin and with similar laws, could alone save them from their fate. Union against a common tyrant to save a common fatherland. Union; by which differences of opinion should be tolerated, in order that a million of hearts should beat for a common purpose, a million hands work out, invincibly, a common salvation. "'Tis hardly necessary," he said "to use many words in recommendation of union. Disunion has been the cause of all our woes. There is no remedy, no hope, save in the bonds of friendship. Let all particular disagreements be left to the decision of the states-general, in order that with one heart and one will we may seek the disenthralment of the fatherland from the tyranny of strangers."

The first step to a thorough union among all the provinces was the arrangement of a closer connection between the now isolated states of Holland and Zealand on the one side, and their fifteen sisters on the other. The Prince professed the readiness of those states which he might be said to represent in his single person, to draw as closely as possible the bonds of fellowship. It was almost superfluous for him to promise his own ready co-operation. "Nothing remains to us," said he, "but to discard all jealousy and distrust. Let us, with a firm resolution and a common accord, liberate these lands from the stranger. Hand to hand let us accomplish a just and general peace. As for myself, I present to you, with very, good affection, my person and all which I possess, assuring you that I shall regard all my labors and pains in times which are past, well bestowed, if God now grant me grace to see the desired end. That this end will be reached, if you hold fast your resolution and take to heart the means which God presents to you, I feel to be absolutely certain."

Page 794

Such were the tenor and the motives of the documents which he scattered—broadcast at this crisis. They were addressed to the estates of nearly every province. Those bodies were urgently implored to appoint deputies to a general congress, at which a close and formal union between Holland and Zealand with the other provinces might be effected. That important measure secured, a general effort might, at the same time, be made to expel the Spaniard from the soil. This done, the remaining matters could be disposed of by the assembly of the estates-general. His eloquence and energy were not without effect. In the course of the autumn, deputies were appointed from the greater number of the provinces, to confer with the representatives of Holland and Zealand, in a general congress. The place appointed for the deliberations was the city of Ghent. Here, by the middle of October, a large number of delegates were already assembled.

Events were rapidly rolling together from every quarter, and accumulating to a crisis. A congress—a rebellious congress, as the King might deem it—was assembling at Ghent; the Spanish army, proscribed, lawless, and terrible, was strengthening itself daily for some dark and mysterious achievement; Don John of Austria, the King's natural brother, was expected from Spain to assume the government, which the State Council was too timid to wield and too loyal to resign, while, meantime, the whole population of the Netherlands, with hardly an exception, was disposed to see the great question of the foreign soldiery settled, before the chaos then existing should be superseded by a more definite authority. Everywhere, men of all ranks and occupations—the artisan in the city, the peasant in the fields—were deserting their daily occupations to furbish helmets, handle muskets, and learn the trade of war. Skirmishes, sometimes severe and bloody, were of almost daily occurrence. In these the Spaniards were invariably successful, for whatever may be said of their cruelty and licentiousness, it cannot be disputed that their prowess was worthy of their renown. Romantic valor, unflinching fortitude, consummate skill, characterized them always. What could half-armed artisans achieve in the open plain against such accomplished foes? At Tisnacq, between Louvain and Tirlemont, a battle was attempted by a large miscellaneous mass of students, peasantry, and burghers, led by country squires. It soon changed to a carnage, in which the victims were all on one side. A small number of veterans, headed by Vargas, Mendoza, Tassis, and other chivalrous commanders, routed the undisciplined thousands at a single charge. The rude militia threw away their arms, and fled panic-struck in all directions, at the first sight of their terrible foe. Two Spaniards lost their lives and two thousand Netherlanders. It was natural that these consummate warriors should despise such easily slaughtered victims. A single stroke of the iron flail, and the chaff was

Page 795

scattered to the four winds; a single sweep of the disciplined scythe, and countless acres were in an instant mown. Nevertheless, although beaten constantly, the Netherlanders were not conquered. Holland and Zealand had read the foe a lesson which he had not forgotten, and although on the open fields, and against the less vigorous population of the more central provinces, his triumphs had been easier, yet it was obvious that the spirit of resistance to foreign oppression was growing daily stronger, notwithstanding daily defeats.

Meantime, while these desultory but deadly combats were in daily progress, the Council of State was looked upon with suspicion by the mass of the population. That body, in which resided provisionally the powers of government, was believed to be desirous of establishing relations with the mutinous army. It was suspected of insidiously provoking the excesses which it seemed to denounce. It was supposed to be secretly intriguing with those whom its own edicts had outlawed. Its sympathies were considered, Spanish. It was openly boasted by the Spanish army that, before long, they would descend from their fastnesses upon Brussels, and give the city to the sword. A shuddering sense of coming evil pervaded the population, but no man could say where the blow would first be struck. It was natural that the capital should be thought exposed to imminent danger. At the same time, while every man who had hands was disposed to bear arms to defend the city, the Council seemed paralyzed. The capital was insufficiently garrisoned, yet troops were not enrolling for its protection. The state councillors obviously omitted to provide for defence, and it was supposed that they were secretly assisting the attack. It was thought important, therefore, to disarm, or, at least, to control this body which was impotent for protection, and seemed powerful only for mischief. It was possible to make it as contemptible as it was believed to be malicious.

An unexpected stroke was therefore suddenly levelled against the Council in full session. On the 5th of September, the Seigneur de Heze, a young gentleman of a bold, but unstable character, then entertaining close but secret relations with the Prince of Orange, appeared before the doors of the palace. He was attended by about five hundred troops, under the immediate command of the Seigneur de Glimes, bailiff of Walloon Brabant. He demanded admittance, in the name of the Brabant estates, to the presence of the State Council, and was refused. The doors were closed and bolted. Without further ceremony the soldiers produced iron bars brought with them for the purpose, forced all the gates from the hinges, entered the hall of session, and at a word from their commander, laid hands upon the councillors, and made every one prisoner. The Duke of Aerschot, President of the Council, who was then in close alliance with the Prince, was not present at the meeting, but lay forewarned,

Page 796

at home, confined to his couch by a sickness assumed for the occasion. Viglius, who rarely participated in the deliberations of the board, being already afflicted with the chronic malady under which he was ere long to succumb, also escaped the fate of his fellow-senators. The others were carried into confinement. Berlaymont and Mansfeld were imprisoned in the Brood-Huys, where the last mortal hours of Egmont and Horn had been passed. Others were kept strictly guarded in their own houses. After a few weeks, most of them were liberated. Councillor Del Rio was, however, retained in confinement, and sent to Holland, where he was subjected to a severe examination by the Prince of Orange, touching his past career, particularly concerning the doings of the famous Blood Council. The others were set free, and even permitted to resume their functions, but their dignity was gone, their authority annihilated. Thenceforth the states of Brabant and the community of Brussels were to govern for an interval, for it was in their name that the daring blow against the Council had been struck. All individuals and bodies, however, although not displeased with the result, clamorously disclaimed responsibility for the deed. Men were appalled at the audacity of the transaction, and dreaded the vengeance of the King: The Abbot Van Perch, one of the secret instigators of the act, actually died of anxiety for its possible consequences. There was a mystery concerning the affair. They in whose name it had been accomplished, denied having given any authority to the perpetrators. Men asked each other what unseen agency had been at work, what secret spring had been adroitly touched. There is but little doubt, however, that the veiled but skilful hand which directed the blow, was the same which had so long been guiding the destiny of the Netherlands.

It had been settled that the congress was to hold its sessions in Ghent, although the citadel commanding that city was held by the Spaniards. The garrison was not very strong, and Mondragon, its commander, was absent in Zealand, but the wife of the veteran ably supplied his place, and stimulated the slender body of troops to hold out with heroism, under the orders of his lieutenant, Avilos Maldonado. The mutineers, after having accomplished their victory at Tisnacq, had been earnestly solicited to come to the relief of this citadel. They had refused and returned to Alost. Meantime, the siege was warmly pressed by the states. There being, however, a deficiency of troops, application for assistance was formally made to the Prince of Orange. Count Reulx, governor of Flanders; commissioned the Seigneur d'Haussy, brother of Count Bossu, who, to obtain the liberation of that long-imprisoned and distinguished nobleman, was about visiting the Prince in Zealand, to make a request for an auxiliary force. It was, however, stipulated that care should be taken lest any prejudice should be done to the Roman Catholic

Page 797

religion or the authority of the King. The Prince readily acceded to the request, and agreed to comply with the conditions under which only it could be accepted. He promised to send twenty-eight companies. In his letter announcing this arrangement, he gave notice that his troops would receive strict orders to do no injury to person or property, Catholic or Protestant, ecclesiastic or lay, and to offer no obstruction to the Roman religion or the royal dignity. He added, however, that it was not to be taken amiss, if his soldiers were permitted to exercise their own religious rites, and to sing their Protestant hymns within their own quarters. He moreover, as security for the expense and trouble, demanded the city of Sluys. The first detachment of troops, under command of Colonel Vander Tympel, was, however, hardly on its way, before an alarm was felt among the Catholic party at this practical alliance with the rebel Prince. An envoy, named Ottingen, was despatched to Zealand, bearing a letter from the estates of Hainault, Brabant, and Flanders, countermanding the request for troops, and remonstrating categorically upon the subject of religion and loyalty. Orange deemed such tergiversation paltry, but controlled his anger. He answered the letter in liberal terms, for he was determined that by no fault of his should the great cause be endangered. He reassured the estates as to the probable behaviour of his troops. Moreover, they had been already admitted into the city, while the correspondence was proceeding. The matter of the psalm-singing was finally arranged to the satisfaction of both parties, and it was agreed that Niewport, instead of Sluys, should be given to the Prince as security.

The siege of the citadel was now pressed vigorously, and the deliberations of the congress were opened under the incessant roar of cannon. While the attack was thus earnestly maintained upon the important castle of Ghent, a courageous effort was made by the citizens of Maestricht to wrest their city from the hands of the Spaniards. The German garrison having been gained by the burghers, the combined force rose upon the Spanish troops, and drove them from the city, Montesdocca, the commander, was arrested and imprisoned, but the triumph was only temporary. Don Francis d'Ayala, Montesdocca's lieutenant, made a stand, with a few companies, in Wieck, a village on the opposite side of the Meuse, and connected with the city by a massive bridge of stone. From this point he sent information to other commanders in the neighbourhood. Don Ferdinand de Toledo soon arrived with several hundred troops from Dalem. The Spaniards, eager to wipe out the disgrace to their arms, loudly demanded to be led back to the city. The head of the bridge, however, over which they must pass, was defended by a strong battery, and the citizens were seen clustering in great numbers to defend their firesides against a foe whom they had once expelled. To advance across the bridge seemed certain destruction

Page 798

to the little force. Even Spanish bravery recoiled at so desperate an undertaking, but unscrupulous ferocity supplied an expedient where courage was at fault. There were few fighting men present among the population of Wieck, but there were many females. Each soldier was commanded to seize a woman, and, placing her before his own body, to advance across the bridge. The column, thus bucklered, to the shame of Spanish chivalry, by female bosoms, moved in good order toward the battery. The soldiers leveled their muskets with steady aim over the shoulders or under the arms of the women whom they thus held before them. On the other hand, the citizens dared not discharge their cannon at their own townswomen, among whose numbers many recognized mothers, sisters, or wives. The battery was soon taken, while at the same time Alonzj Vargas, who had effected his entrance from the land side by burning down the Brussels gate, now entered the city at the head of a band of cavalry. Maestricht was recovered, and an indiscriminate slaughter instantly avenged its temporary loss. The plundering, stabbing, drowning, burning, ravishing; were so dreadful that, in the words of a cotemporary historian, “the burghers who had escaped the fight had reason to think themselves less fortunate than those who had died with arms in their hands.”

This was the lot of Maestricht on the 20th of October. It was instinctively felt to be the precursor of fresh disasters. Vague, incoherent, but widely disseminated rumors had long pointed to Antwerp and its dangerous situation. The Spaniards, foiled in their views upon Brussels, had recently avowed an intention of avenging themselves in the commercial capital. They had waited long enough, and accumulated strength enough. Such a trifling city as Alost could no longer content their cupidity, but in Antwerp there was gold enough for the gathering. There was reason for the fears of the inhabitants, for the greedy longing of their enemy. Probably no city in Christendom could at that day vie with Antwerp in wealth and splendor. Its merchants lived in regal pomp and luxury. In its numerous, massive warehouses were the treasures of every clime. Still serving as the main entrepot of the world’s traffic, the Brabantine capital was the centre of that commercial system which was soon to be superseded by a larger international life. In the midst of the miseries which had so long been raining upon the Netherlands, the stately and egotistical city seemed to have taken stronger root and to flourish more freshly than ever. It was not wonderful that its palaces and its magazines, glittering with splendor and bursting with treasure, should arouse the avidity of a reckless and famishing soldiery. Had not a handful of warriors of their own race rifled the golden Indies? Had not their fathers, few in number, strong in courage and discipline, revelled in the plunder of a new world? Here were the Indies in a single city. Here were gold and silver, pearls and diamonds, ready and portable; the precious fruit dropping, ripened, from the bough. Was it to be tolerated that base, pacific burghers should monopolize the treasure by which a band of heroes might be enriched?

Page 799

A sense of coming evil diffused itself through the atmosphere. The air seemed lurid with the impending storm, for the situation was one of peculiar horror. The wealthiest city in Christendom lay at the mercy of the strongest fastness in the world; a castle which had been built to curb, not to protect, the town. It was now inhabited by a band of brigands, outlawed by government, strong in discipline, furious from penury, reckless by habit, desperate in circumstance—a crew which feared not God, nor man, nor Devil. The palpitating quarry lay expecting hourly the swoop of its trained and pitiless enemy, for the rebellious soldiers were now in a thorough state of discipline. Sancho d'Avila, castellan of the citadel, was recognized as the chief of the whole mutiny, the army and the mutiny being now one. The band, entrenched at Alost, were upon the best possible understanding with their brethren in the citadel, and accepted without hesitation the arrangements of their superior. On the aide of the Scheld, opposite Antwerp, a fortification had been thrown up by Don Sancho's orders, and held by Julian Romero. Lier, Breda, as well as Alost, were likewise ready to throw their reinforcements into the citadel at a moment's warning. At the signal of their chief, the united bands might sweep from their impregnable castle with a single impulse.

The city cried aloud for help, for it had become obvious that an attack might be hourly expected. Meantime an attempt, made by Don Sancho d'Avila to tamper with the German troops stationed within the walls, was more than partially, successful. The forces were commanded by Colonel Van Ende and Count Oberatein. Van Ende, a crafty traitor to his country, desired no better than to join the mutiny on so promising an occasion, and his soldiers, shared his sentiments. Oberatein, a brave, but blundering German, was drawn into the net of treachery by the adroitness of the Spaniard and the effrontery of his comrade. On the night of the 29th of October, half-bewildered and half-drunk, he signed a treaty with Sancho d'Avilat and the three colonels—Fugger, Frondsberger, and Polwiller. By this unlucky document, which was of course subscribed also by Van Ende, it was agreed that the Antwerp burghers should be forthwith disarmed; that their weapons should be sent into the citadel; that Oberstein should hold the city at the disposition of Sancho d'Avila; that he should refuse admittance to all troops which might be sent into the city, excepting by command of Don Sancho, and that he should decline compliance with any orders which he might receive from individuals calling themselves the council of state, the states-general, or the estates of Brabant. This treaty was signed, moreover; by Don Jeronimo de Rods, then established in the citadel, and claiming to represent exclusively his Majesty's government.

Page 800

Hardly had this arrangement been concluded than the Count saw the trap into which he had fallen. Without intending to do so, he had laid the city at the mercy of its foe, but the only remedy which suggested itself to his mind was an internal resolution not to keep his promises. The burghers were suffered to retain their arms, while, on the other hand, Don Sancho lost no time in despatching messages to Alost, to Lier, to Breda, and even to Maestricht, that as large a force as possible might be assembled for the purpose of breaking immediately the treaty of peace which he had just concluded. Never was a solemn document, regarded with such perfectly bad faith by all its signers as the accord, of the 29th of October.

Three days afterwards, a large force of Walloons and Germans was despatched from Brussels to the assistance of Antwerp. The command of these troops was entrusted to the Marquis of Havre, whose brother, the Duke of Aerschot; had been recently appointed chief superintendent of military affairs by the deputies assembled at Ghent. The miscellaneous duties comprehended under this rather vague denomination did not permit the Duke to take charge of the expedition in person, and his younger brother, a still more incompetent and unsubstantial character, was accordingly appointed to the post. A number of young men, of high rank but of lamentably low capacity, were associated with him. Foremost among them was Philip, Count of Egmont, a youth who had inherited few of his celebrated father's qualities, save personal courage and a love of personal display. In character and general talents he was beneath mediocrity. Beside these were the reckless but unstable De Heze, who had executed the coup; d'etat against the State Council, De Berselen, De Capres, D'Oyngies, and others, all vaguely desirous of achieving distinction in those turbulent times, but few of them having any political or religious convictions, and none of them possessing experience or influence enough, to render them useful—at the impending crisis.

On Friday morning, the 2nd of November, the troops appeared under the walls of Antwerp. They consisted of twenty-three companies of infantry and fourteen of cavalry, amounting to five thousand foot and twelve hundred horse. They were nearly all Walloons, soldiers who had already seen much active service, but unfortunately of a race warlike and fiery indeed, but upon whose steadiness not much more dependence could be placed at that day than in the age of Civilis. Champagny, brother of Granvelle, was Governor of the city. He was a sincere Catholic, but a still more sincere hater of the Spaniards. He saw in the mutiny a means of accomplishing their expulsion, and had already offered to the Prince of Orange his eager co-operation towards this result. In other matters there could be but small sympathy between William the Silent and the Cardinal's brother; but a common hatred united them, for a time at least, in a common purpose.

Page 801

When the troops first made their appearance before the walls, Champagny was unwilling to grant them admittance. The addle-brained Oberstein had confessed to him the enormous blunder which he had committed in his midnight treaty, and at the same time ingenuously confessed his intention of sending it to the winds. The enemy had extorted from his dulness or his drunkenness a promise, which his mature and sober reason could not consider binding. It is needless to say that Champagny rebuked him for signing, and applauded him for breaking the treaty. At the same time its ill effects were already seen in the dissensions which existed among the German troops. Where all had been tampered with, and where the commanders had set the example of infidelity, it would have been strange if all had held firm. On the whole, however, Oberstein thought he could answer for his own troops: Upon Van Ende's division, although the crafty colonel dissembled his real intentions; very little reliance was placed. Thus there was distraction within the walls. Among those whom the burghers had been told to consider their defenders, there were probably many who were ready to join with their mortal foes at a moment's warning. Under these circumstances, Champagny hesitated about admitting these fresh troops from Brussels. He feared lest the Germans, who knew themselves doubted, might consider themselves doomed. He trembled, lest an irrepressible outbreak should occur within the walls, rendering the immediate destruction of the city by the Spaniards from without inevitable. Moreover, he thought it more desirable that this auxiliary force should be disposed at different points outside, in order to intercept the passage of the numerous bodies of Spaniards and other mutineers, who from various quarters would soon be on their way to the citadel. Havre, however, was so peremptory, and the burghers were so importunate, that Champagny was obliged to recede from his opposition before twenty-four hours had elapsed. Unwilling to take the responsibility of a farther refusal, he admitted the troops through the Burgherhout gate, on Saturday, the 3rd of November, at ten o'clock in the morning.

The Marquis of Havre, as commander-in-chief, called a council of war. It assembled at Count Oberstein's quarters, and consulted at first concerning a bundle of intercepted letters which Havre had brought with him. These constituted a correspondence between Sancho d'Avila with the heads of the mutiny at Alost, and many other places. The letters were all dated subsequently to Don Sancho's treaty with Oberstein, and contained arrangements for an immediate concentration of the whole available Spanish force at the citadel.

Page 802

The treachery was so manifest, that Oberstein felt all self-reproach for his own breach of faith to be superfluous. It was however evident that the attack was to be immediately expected. What was to be done? All the officers counselled the immediate erection of a bulwark on the side of the city exposed to the castle, but there were no miners nor engineers. Champagny, however, recommended a skilful and experienced engineer to superintend; the work in the city; and pledged himself that burghers enough would volunteer as miners. In less than an hour, ten or twelve thousand persons, including multitudes of women of all ranks, were at work upon the lines marked out by the engineer. A ditch and breast-work extending from the gate of the Beguins to the street of the Abbey Saint Michael, were soon in rapid progress. Meantime, the newly arrived troops, with military insolence, claimed the privilege of quartering themselves in the best houses which they could find. They already began to, insult and annoy the citizens whom they had been sent to defend; nor were they destined to atone, by their subsequent conduct in the face of the enemy, for the brutality with which they treated their friends. Champagny, however; was ill-disposed to brook their licentiousness. They had been sent to protect the city and the homes of Antwerp from invasion. They were not to establish themselves, at every fireside on their first arrival. There was work enough for them out of doors, and they were to do that work at once. He ordered them to prepare for a bivouac in, the streets, and flew from house to house, sword in hand; driving forth the intruders at imminent peril of his life. Meantime, a number of Italian and Spanish merchants fled from the city, and took refuge in the castle. The Walloon soldiers were for immediately plundering their houses, as if plunder had been the object for which they had been sent to Antwerp. It was several hours before Champagny, with all his energy, was able to quell these disturbances.

In the course of the day, Oberstein received a letter from Don Sandra d'Avila, calling solemnly upon him to fulfil his treaty of the 29th of October. The German colonels from the citadel had, on the previous afternoon, held a personal interview with Oberstein beneath the walls, which had nearly ended in blows, and they had been obliged to save themselves by flight from the anger of the Count's soldiers, enraged at the deceit by which their leader had been so nearly entrapped. This summons of ridiculous solemnity to keep a treaty which had already been torn to shreds by both parties, Oberstein answered with defiance and contempt. The reply was an immediate cannonade from the batteries of the citadel; which made the position of those erecting the ramparts excessively dangerous. The wall was strengthened with bales of merchandise, casks of earth, upturned wagons, and similar bulky objects, hastily piled together. In, some places it was sixteen feet high; in others

Page 803

less than six. Night fell before the fortification was nearly completed. Unfortunately it was bright moonlight. The cannon from the fortress continued to play upon the half-finished works. The Walloons, and at last the citizens, feared to lift their heads above their frail rampart. The senators, whom Champagny had deputed to superintend the progress of the enterprise, finding the men so indisposed, deserted their posts. They promised themselves that, in the darkest hour of the following night, the work should be thoroughly completed. Alas! all hours of the coming night were destined to be dark enough, but in them was to be done no manner of work for defence. On Champagny alone seemed devolved an the labor and all the responsibility. He did his duty well, but he was but one man. Alone, with a heart full of anxiety, he wandered up and down all the night. With his own hands, assisted only by a few citizens and his own servants, he planted all the cannon with which they were provided, in the “Fencing Court,” at a point where the battery might tell upon the castle. Unfortunately, the troops from Brussels had brought no artillery with them, and the means of defence against the strongest fortress in Europe were meagre indeed. The rampart had been left very weak at many vital points. A single upturned wagon was placed across the entrance to the important street of the Beguins. This negligence was to cost the city dear. At daybreak, there was a council held in Oberstein’s quarters. Nearly all Champagny’s directions had been neglected. He had desired that strong detachments should be posted during the night at various places of Security on the outskirts of the town, for the troops which were expected to arrive in small bodies at the citadel from various parts, might have thus been cut off before reaching their destination. Not even scouts had been stationed in sufficient numbers to obtain information of what was occurring outside. A thick mist hung over the city that eventful morning. Through its almost impenetrable veil, bodies of men had been seen moving into the castle, and the tramp of cavalry had been distinctly heard, and the troops of Romero, Vargas, Oliveira, and Valdez had already arrived from Lier, Breda, Maestricht, and from the forts on the Scheld.

The whole available force in the city was mustered without delay. Havre had claimed for his post the defence of the lines opposite the citadel, the place of responsibility and honor. Here the whole body of Walloons were stationed, together with a few companies of Germans. The ramparts, as stated, were far from impregnable, but it was hoped that this living rampart of six thousand men, standing on their own soil, and in front of the firesides and altars of their own countrymen; would prove a sufficient bulwark even against Spanish fury. Unhappily, the living barrier proved more frail than the feeble breastwork which the hands of burghers and women had constructed. Six thousand men were disposed along

Page 804

the side of the city opposite the fortress. The bulk of the German troops was stationed at different points on the more central streets and squares. The cavalry was posted on the opposite side of the city, along the Horse-market, and fronting the “New-town.” The stars were still in the sky when Champagny got on horseback and rode through the streets, calling on the burghers to arm and assemble at different points. The principal places of rendezvous were the Cattlemarket and the Exchange. He rode along the lines of the Walloon regiments, conversing with the officers, Egmont, De Heze, and others, and encouraging the men, and went again to the Fencing Court, where he pointed the cannon with his own hand, and ordered their first discharge at the fortress. Thence he rode to the end of the Beguin street, where he dismounted and walked out upon the edge of the esplanade which stretched between the city and the castle. On this battle-ground a combat was even then occurring between a band of burghers and a reconnoitring party from the citadel. Champagny saw with satisfaction that the Antwerpers were victorious. They were skirmishing well with their disciplined foe, whom they at last beat back to the citadel. His experienced eye saw, however, that the retreat was only the signal for a general onslaught, which was soon to follow; and he returned into the city to give the last directions.

At ten o’clock, a moving wood was descried, approaching the citadel from the south-west. The whole body of the mutineers from Alost, wearing green branches in their helmets—had arrived under command of their Eletto, Navarrete. Nearly three thousand in number, they rushed into the castle, having accomplished their march of twenty-four miles since three o’clock in the morning. They were received with open arms. Sancho d’Avila ordered food and refreshments to be laid before them, but they refused everything but a draught of wine. They would dine in Paradise, they said, or sup in Antwerp. Finding his allies in such spirit, Don Sancho would not balk their humor. Since early morning, his own veterans had been eagerly awaiting his signal, “straining upon the start.” The troops of Romero, Vargas, Valdez, were no less impatient. At about an hour before noon, nearly every living man in the citadel was mustered for the attack, hardly men enough being left behind to guard the gates. Five thousand veteran foot soldiers, besides six hundred cavalry, armed to the teeth, sallied from the portals of Alva’s citadel. In the counterscarp they fell upon their knees, to invoke, according to custom, the blessing of God upon the Devil’s work, which they were about to commit. The Bletto bore a standard, one side of which was emblazoned with the crucified Saviour, and the other with the Virgin Mary. The image of Him who said, “Love-your enemies,” and the gentle face of the Madonna, were to smile from heaven upon deeds which might cause a shudder in the depths of hell.

Page 805

Their brief orisons concluded, they swept forward to the city. Three thousand Spaniards, under their Eletto, were to enter by the street of Saint Michael; the Germans, and the remainder of the Spanish foot, commanded by Romero, through that of Saint George. Champagny saw them coming, and spoke a last word of encouragement to the Walloons. The next moment the compact mass struck the barrier, as the thunderbolt descends from the cloud. There was scarcely a struggle. The Walloons, not waiting to look their enemy in the face, abandoned the posts which whey had themselves claimed. The Spaniards crashed through the bulwark, as though it had been a wall of glass. The Eletto was first to mount the rampart; the next instant he was shot dead, while his followers, undismayed, sprang over his body, and poured into the streets. The fatal gap, due to timidity and carelessness, let in the destructive tide. Champagny, seeing that the enemies had all crossed the barrier; leaped over a garden wall, passed through a house into a narrow lane, and thence to the nearest station of the German troops. Hastily collecting a small force, he led them in person to the rescue. The Germans fought well, died well, but they could not reanimate the courage of the Walloons, and all were now in full retreat, pursued by the ferocious Spaniards. In vain Champagny stormed among them; in vain he strove to rally their broken ranks. With his own hand he seized a banner from a retreating ensign, and called upon the nearest soldiers to make's stand against the foe. It was to bid the flying clouds pause before the tempest. Torn, broken, aimless, the scattered troops whirled through the streets before the pursuing wrath. Champagny, not yet despairing, galloped hither and thither, calling upon the burghers everywhere to rise in defence of their homes, nor did he call in vain. They came forth from every place of rendezvous, from every alley, from every house. They fought as men fight to defend their hearths and altars, but what could individual devotion avail, against the compact, disciplined, resistless mass of their foes? The order of defence was broken, there was no system, no concert, no rallying point, no authority. So soon as it was known that the Spaniards had crossed the rampart, that its six thousand defenders were in full retreat, it was inevitable that a panic should seize the city.

Their entrance once effected, the Spanish force had separated; according to previous arrangement, into two divisions, one half charging up the long street of Saint Michael, the other forcing its way through the Street of Saint Joris. "Santiago, Santiago! Espana, Espana! a sangre, a carne, a fuego, a Sacco!" Saint James, Spain, blood, flesh, fire, sack!!—such were the hideous cries which rang through every quarter of the city, as the savage horde advanced. Van Ende, with his German troops, had been stationed by the Marquis of Havre to defend the Saint Joris gate, but no sooner, did the Spaniards under Vargas present

Page 806

themselves, than he deserted to them instantly with his whole force. United with the Spanish cavalry, these traitorous defenders of Antwerp dashed in pursuit of those who had only been fainthearted. Thus the burghers saw themselves attacked by many of their friends, deserted by more. Whom were they to trust? Nevertheless, Oberstein's Germans were brave and faithful, resisting to the last, and dying every man in his harness. The tide of battle flowed hither and thither, through every street and narrow lane. It poured along the magnificent Place de Meer, where there was an obstinate contest. In front of the famous Exchange, where in peaceful hours, five thousand merchants met daily, to arrange the commercial affairs of Christendom, there was a determined rally, a savage slaughter. The citizens and faithful Germans, in this broader space, made a stand against their pursuers. The tesselated marble pavement, the graceful, cloister-like arcades ran red with blood. The ill-armed burghers faced their enemies clad in complete panoply, but they could only die for their homes. The massacre at this point was enormous, the resistance at last overcome.

Meantime, the Spanish cavalry had cleft its way through the city. On the side farthest removed from the: castle; along the Horse-market, opposite the New-town, the states dragoons and the light horse of Beveren had been posted, and the flying masses of pursuers and pursued swept at last through this outer circle. Champagny was already there. He essayed, as his last hope, to rally the cavalry for a final stand, but the effort was fruitless. Already seized by the panic, they had attempted to rush from the city through the gate of Eeker. It was locked; they then turned and fled towards the Red-gate, where they were met face to face by Don Pedro Tassis, who charged upon them with his dragoons. Retreat seemed hopeless. A horseman in complete armor, with lance in rest, was seen to leap from the parapet of the outer wall into the moat below, whence, still on horseback, he escaped with life. Few were so fortunate. The confused mob of fugitives and conquerors, Spaniards, Walloons, Germans, burghers, struggling, shouting, striking, cursing, dying, swayed hither and thither like a stormy sea. Along the spacious Horse-market, the fugitives fled toward towards the quays. Many fell beneath the swords of the Spaniards, numbers were trodden to death by the hoofs of horses, still greater multitudes were hunted into the Scheld. Champagny, who had thought it possible, even at the last moment, to make a stand in the Newtown, and to fortify the Palace of the Hansa, saw himself deserted. With great daring and presence of mind, he effected his escape to the fleet of the Prince of Orange in the river. The Marquis of Havre, of whom no deeds of valor on that eventful day have been recorded, was equally successful. The unlucky Oberstein, attempting to leap into a boat, missed his footing, and oppressed by the weight of his armor, was drowned.

Page 807

Meantime, while the short November day was fast declining, the combat still raged in the interior of the city. Various currents of conflict, forcing their separate way through many streets, had at last mingled in the Grande Place. Around this irregular, not very spacious square, stood the gorgeous Hotel de Ville, and the tall, many storied, fantastically gabled, richly decorated palaces of the guilds, Here a long struggle took place. It was terminated for a time by the cavalry of Vargas, who, arriving through the streets of Saint Joris, accompanied by the traitor Van Ende, charged decisively into the melee. The masses were broken, but multitudes of armed men found refuge in the buildings, and every house became a fortress. From, every window and balcony a hot fire was poured into the square, as, pent in a corner, the burghers stood at last at bay. It was difficult to carry the houses by storm, but they were soon set on fire. A large number of sutlers and other varlets had accompanied the Spaniards from the citadel, bringing torches and kindling materials for the express purpose of firing the town. With great dexterity, these means were now applied, and in a brief interval, the City-hall, and other edifices on the square were in flames. The conflagration spread with rapidity, house after house, street after street, taking fire. Nearly a thousand buildings, in the most splendid and wealthy quarter of the city, were soon in a blaze, and multitudes of human beings were burned with them. In the City-hall many were consumed, while others, leaped from the windows to renew the combat below. The many tortuous, streets which led down a slight descent from the rear of the Town house to the quays were all one vast conflagration. On the other side, the magnificent cathedral, separated from the Grande Place by a single row of buildings, was lighted up, but not attacked by the flames. The tall spire cast its gigantic shadow across the last desperate conflict. In the street called the Canal au Sucre, immediately behind the Town-house, there was a fierce struggle, a horrible massacre. A crowd of burghers; grave magistrates, and such of the German soldiers as remained alive, still confronted the ferocious Spaniards. There amid the flaming desolation, Goswyn Verreyck, the heroic margrave of the city, fought with the energy of hatred and despair. The burgomaster, Van der Meere, lay dead at his feet; senators, soldiers, citizens, fell fast around him, and he sank at last upon a heap of slain. With him effectual resistance ended. The remaining combatants were butchered, or were slowly forced downward to perish in the Scheld. Women, children, old men, were killed in countless numbers, and still, through all this havoc, directly over the heads of the struggling throng, suspended in mid-air above the din and smoke of the conflict, there sounded, every half-quarter of every hour, as if in gentle mockery, from the belfry of the cathedral, the tender and melodious chimes.

Page 808

Never was there a more monstrous massacre, even in the blood-stained history of the Netherlands. It was estimated that, in the course of this and the two following days, not less than eight thousand human beings were murdered. The Spaniards seemed to cast off even the vizard of humanity. Hell seemed emptied of its fiends. Night fell upon the scene before the soldiers were masters of the city; but worse horrors began after the contest was ended. This army of brigands had come thither with a definite, practical purpose, for it was not blood-thirst, nor lust, nor revenge, which had impelled them, but it was avarice, greediness for gold. For gold they had waded through all this blood and fire. Never had men more simplicity of purpose, more directness in its execution. They had conquered their India at last; its golden mines lay all before them, and every sword should open a shaft. Riot and rape might be deferred; even murder, though congenial to their taste, was only subsidiary to their business. They had come to take possession of the city's wealth, and they set themselves faithfully to accomplish their task. For gold, infants were dashed out of existence in their mothers' arms; for gold, parents were tortured in their children's presence; for gold, brides were scourged to death before their husbands' eyes. Wherever, treasure was suspected, every expedient which ingenuity; sharpened by greediness, could suggest, was employed to-extort it from its possessors. The fire, spreading more extensively and more rapidly than had been desired through the wealthiest quarter of the city, had unfortunately devoured a vast amount of property. Six millions, at least, had thus been swallowed; a destruction by which no one had profited. There was, however, much left. The strong boxes of the merchants, the gold, silver, and precious jewelry, the velvets, satins, brocades, laces, and similar well concentrated and portable plunder, were rapidly appropriated. So far the course was plain and easy, but in private houses it was more difficult. The cash, plate, and other valuables of individuals were not so easily discovered. Torture was, therefore; at once employed to discover the hidden treasures. After all had been, given, if the sum seemed too little, the proprietors were brutally punished for their poverty or their supposed dissimulation. A gentlewoman, named Fabry, with her aged mother and other females of the family, had taken refuge in the cellar of her mansion. As the day was drawing to a close, a band of plunderers entered, who, after ransacking the house, descended to the cellarage. Finding the door barred, they forced it open with gunpowder. The mother, who was nearest the entrance, fell dead on the threshold. Stepping across her mangled body, the brigands sprang upon her daughter, loudly demanding the property which they believed to be concealed. They likewise insisted on being informed where the master of the house had taken refuge. Protestations of ignorance as to

Page 809

hidden treasure, or the whereabouts of her husband, who, for aught she knew, was lying dead in the streets, were of no avail. To make her more communicative, they hanged her on a beam in the cellar, and after a few moments cut her down before life was extinct. Still receiving no satisfactory reply, where a satisfactory reply was impossible, they hanged her again. Again, after another brief interval they gave her a second release, and a fresh interrogatory. This barbarity they repeated several times, till they were satisfied that there was nothing to be gained by it, while, on, the other hand, they were losing much valuable time. Hoping to be more successful elsewhere, they left her hanging for the last time, and trooped off to fresher fields. Strange to relate, the person thus horribly tortured, survived. A servant in her family, married to a Spanish soldier, providentially entered the house in time to rescue her perishing mistress. She was restored to existence, but never to reason. Her brain was hopelessly crazed, and she passed the remainder of her life wandering about her house, or feebly digging in her garden for the buried treasure which she had been thus fiercely solicited to reveal.

A wedding-feast was rudely interrupted. Two young persons, neighbours of opulent families, had been long betrothed, and the marriage day had been fixed for Sunday, the fatal 4th of November. The guests were assembled, the ceremony concluded, the nuptial banquet in progress, when the horrible outcries in the streets proclaimed that the Spaniards had broken loose. Hour after hour of trembling expectation succeeded. At last, a thundering at the gate proclaimed the arrival of a band of brigands. Preceded by their captain, a large number of soldiers forced their way into the house, ransacking every chamber, no opposition being offered by the family and friends, too few and powerless to cope with this band of well-armed ruffians. Plate chests, wardrobes, desks, caskets of jewelry, were freely offered, eagerly accepted, but not found sufficient, and to make the luckless wretches furnish more than they possessed, the usual brutalities were employed. The soldiers began by striking the bridegroom dead. The bride fell shrieking into her mother’s arms, whence she was torn by the murderers, who immediately put the mother to death, and an indiscriminate massacre then followed the fruitless attempt to obtain by threats and torture treasure which did not exist. The bride, who was of remarkable beauty, was carried off to the citadel. Maddened by this last outrage, the father, who was the only man of the party left alive, rushed upon the Spaniards. Wresting a sword from one of the crew, the old man dealt with it so fiercely, that he stretched more than one enemy dead at his feet, but it is needless to add that he was soon despatched. Meantime, while the party were concluding the plunder of the mansion, the bride was left in a lonely apartment of the fortress.

Page 810

Without wasting time in fruitless lamentation, she resolved to quit the life which a few hours had made so desolate. She had almost succeeded in hanging herself with a massive gold chain which she wore, when her captor entered the apartment. Inflamed, not with lust, but with avarice, excited not by her charms, but by her jewelry; he rescued her from her perilous position. He then took possession of her chain and the other trinkets with which her wedding-dress was adorned, and caused her; to be entirely stripped of her clothing. She was then scourged with rods till her beautiful body was bathed in blood, and at last alone, naked, nearly mad, was sent back into the city. Here the forlorn creature wandered up and down through the blazing streets, among the heaps of dead and dying, till she was at last put out of her misery by a gang of soldiers.

Such are a few isolated instances, accidentally preserved in their details, of the general horrors inflicted on this occasion. Others innumerable have sunk into oblivion. On the morning of the 5th of November, Antwerp presented a ghastly sight. The magnificent marble Town-house, celebrated as a “world’s wonder,” even in that age and country, in which so much splendour was lavished on municipal palaces, stood a blackened ruin—-all but the walls destroyed, while its archives, accounts, and other valuable contents, had perished. The more splendid portion of the city had been consumed; at least five hundred palaces, mostly of marble or hammered stone, being a smouldering mass of destruction. The dead bodies of those fallen in the massacre were on every side, in greatest profusion around the Place de Meer, among the Gothic pillars of the Exchange, and in the streets near the Town-house. The German soldiers lay in their armor, some with their heads burned from their bodies, some with legs and arms consumed by the flames through which they had fought. The Margrave Goswyn Verreyck, the burgomaster Van der Meere, the magistrates Lancelot Van Urselen, Nicholas Van Boekholt, and other leading citizens, lay among piles of less distinguished slain. They remained unburied until the overseers of the poor, on whom the living had then more importunate claims than the dead, were compelled by Roda to bury them out of the pauper fund. The murderers were too thrifty to be at funeral charges for their victims. The ceremony was not hastily performed, for the number of corpses had not been completed. Two days longer the havoc lasted in the city. Of all the crimes which men can commit, whether from deliberate calculation or in the frenzy of passion, hardly one was omitted, for riot, gaming, rape, which had been postponed to the more stringent claims of robbery and murder, were now rapidly added to the sum of atrocities. History has recorded the account indelibly on her brazen tablets; it can be adjusted only at the judgment-seat above.

Page 811

Of all the deeds of darkness yet compassed in the Netherlands, this was the worst. It was called The Spanish Fury, by which dread name it has been known for ages. The city, which had been a world of wealth and splendor, was changed to a charnel-house, and from that hour its commercial prosperity was blasted. Other causes had silently girdled the yet green and flourishing tree, but the Spanish Fury was the fire which consumed it to ashes. Three thousand dead bodies were discovered in the streets, as many more were estimated to have perished in the Scheld, and nearly an equal number were burned or destroyed in other ways. Eight thousand persons undoubtedly were put to death. Six millions of property were destroyed by the fire, and at least as much more was obtained by the Spaniards. In this enormous robbery no class of people was respected. Foreign merchants, living under the express sanction and protection of the Spanish monarch, were plundered with as little reserve as Flemings. Ecclesiastics of the Roman Church were compelled to disgorge their wealth as freely as Calvinists. The rich were made to contribute all their abundance, and the poor what could be wrung from their poverty. Neither paupers nor criminals were safe. Captain Caspar Ortis made a brilliant speculation by taking possession of the Stein, or city prison, whence he ransomed all the inmates who could find means to pay for their liberty. Robbers, murderers, even Anabaptists, were thus again let loose. Rarely has so small a band obtained in three days' robbery so large an amount of wealth. Four or five millions divided among five thousand soldiers made up for long arrearages, and the Spaniards had reason to congratulate themselves upon having thus taken the duty of payment into their own hands. It is true that the wages of iniquity were somewhat unequally distributed, somewhat foolishly squandered. A private trooper was known to lose ten thousand crowns in one day in a gambling transaction at the Bourse, for the soldiers, being thus handsomely in funds, became desirous of aping the despised and plundered merchants, and resorted daily to the Exchange, like men accustomed to affairs. The dearly purchased gold was thus lightly squandered by many, while others, more prudent, melted their portion into sword-hilts, into scabbards, even into whole suits of armor, darkened, by precaution, to appear made entirely of iron. The brocades, laces, and jewelry of Antwerp merchants were converted into coats of mail for their destroyers. The goldsmiths, however, thus obtained an opportunity to outwit their plunderers, and mingled in the golden armor which they were forced to furnish much more alloy than their employers knew. A portion of the captured booty was thus surreptitiously redeemed.

Page 812

In this Spanish Fury many more were massacred in Antwerp than in the Saint Bartholomew at Paris. Almost as many living human beings were dashed out of existence now as there had been statues destroyed in the memorable image-breaking of Antwerp, ten years before, an event which had sent such a thrill of horror through the heart of Catholic Christendom. Yet the Netherlanders and the Protestants of Europe may be forgiven, if they regarded this massacre of their brethren with as much execration as had been bestowed upon that fury against stocks and stones. At least, the image-breakers, had been actuated by an idea, and their hands were polluted neither with blood nor rapine. Perhaps the Spaniards had been. governed equally by religious fanaticism.—Might not they believe they were meriting well of their Mother Church while they were thus disencumbering infidels of their wealth and earth of its infidels? Had not the Pope and his cardinals gone to church in solemn procession, to render thanks unto God for the massacre of Paris? Had not cannon thundered and beacons blazed to commemorate that auspicious event? Why should not the Antwerp executioners claim equal commendation? Even if in their delirium they had confounded friend with foe, Catholic with Calvinist, and church property with lay, could they not point to an equal number of dead bodies, and to an incredibly superior amount of plunder?

Marvellously few Spaniards were slain in these eventful days. Two hundred killed is the largest number stated. The discrepancy seems monstrous, but it is hardly more than often existed between the losses inflicted and sustained by the Spaniards in such combats. Their prowess was equal to their ferocity, and this was enough to make them seem endowed with preterhuman powers. When it is remembered, also, that the burghers were insufficiently armed, that many of their defenders turned against them, that many thousands fled in the first moments of the encounter—and when the effect of a sudden and awful panic is duly considered, the discrepancy between the number of killed on the two sides will not seem so astonishing.

A few officers of distinction were taken, alive and carried to the castle. Among these were the Seigneur de Capres and young Count Egmont. The councillor Jerome de Roda was lounging on a chair in an open gallery when these two gentlemen were brought before him, and Capres was base enough to make a low obeisance to the man who claimed to represent the whole government of his Majesty. The worthy successor of Vargas replied to his captive’s greeting by a “kick in his stomach,” adding, with a brutality which his prototype might have envied, “Ah puto tradidor,—whoreson traitor, let me have no salutations from such as you.” Young Egmont, who had been captured, fighting bravely at the head of coward troops, by Julian Romero, who nine years before had stood on his father’s scaffold, regarded this brutal scene with haughty

Page 813

indignation. This behaviour had more effect upon Roda than the suppleness of Capres. “I am sorry for your misfortune, Count,” said the councillor, without however rising from his chair; “such is the lot of those who take arms against their King.” This was the unfortunate commencement of Philip Egmont’s career, which was destined to be inglorious, vacillating, base, and on more than one occasion unlucky.

A shiver ran through the country as the news of the horrible crime was spread, but it was a shiver of indignation, not of fear. Already the negotiations at Ghent between the representatives of the Prince and of Holland and Zealand with the deputies of the other provinces were in a favorable train, and the effect of this event upon their counsels was rather quickening than appalling. A letter from Jerome de Roda to the King was intercepted, giving an account of the transaction. In that document the senator gave the warmest praise to Sancho d’Avila, Julian Romero, Alonzo de Vargas, Francis Verdugo, as well as to the German colonels Fugger, Frondsberger, Polwiller, and others who had most exerted themselves in the massacre. “I wish your Majesty much good of this victory,” concluded the councillor, “’tis a very great one, and the damage to the city is enormous.” This cynical view was not calculated to produce a soothing effect on the exasperated minds of the people. On the other hand, the estates of Brabant addressed an eloquent appeal to the states-general, reciting their wrongs, and urging immediate action. “’Tis notorious,” said the remonstrants, “that Antwerp was but yesterday the first and principal ornament of all Europe; the refuge of all the nations of the world; the source and supply of countless treasure; the nurse of all arts and industry; the protectress of the Roman Catholic religion; the guardian of science and virtue; and, above all these preeminences; more than faithful and obedient to her sovereign prince and lord. The city is now changed to a gloomy cavern, filled with robbers and murderers, enemies of God, the King, and all good subjects.” They then proceeded to recite the story of the massacre, whereof the memory shall be abominable so long as the world stands, and concluded with an urgent appeal for redress. They particularly suggested that an edict should forthwith be passed, forbidding the alienation of property and the exportation of goods in any form from Antwerp, together with concession of the right to the proprietors of reclaiming their stolen property summarily, whenever and wheresoever it might be found. In accordance with these instructions, an edict was passed, but somewhat tardily, in the hope of relieving some few of the evil consequences by which the Antwerp Fury had been attended.

Page 814

At about the same time the Prince of Orange addressed a remarkable letter to the states-general then assembled at Ghent, urging them to hasten the conclusion of the treaty. The news of the massacre, which furnished an additional and most vivid illustration of the truth of his letter, had not then reached him at Middelburg, but the earnestness of his views, taken in connexion with this last dark deed, exerted a powerful and indelible effect. The letter was a masterpiece, because it was necessary, in his position, to inflame without alarming; to stimulate the feelings which were in unison, without shocking those which, if aroused, might prove discordant. Without; therefore, alluding in terms to the religious question, he dwelt upon the necessity of union, firmness, and wariness. If so much had been done by Holland and Zealand, how much more might be hoped when all the provinces were united? "The principal flower of the Spanish army has fallen," he said, "without having been able to conquer one of those provinces from those whom they call, in mockery, poor beggars; yet what is that handful of cities compared to all the provinces which might join us in the quarrel?" He warned the states of the necessity of showing a strong and united front; the King having been ever led to consider the movement in the Netherlands a mere conspiracy of individuals. "The King told me himself; in 1559," said Orange, "that if the estates had no pillars to lean upon, they would not talk so loud." It was, therefore, "necessary to show that prelates, abbots, monks, seigniors, gentlemen, burghers, and peasants, the whole people in short, now cried with one voice, and desired with one will. To such a demonstration the King would not dare oppose himself. By thus preserving a firm and united front, sinking all minor differences, they would, moreover, inspire their friends and foreign princes with confidence. The princes of Germany, the lords and gentlemen of France, the Queen of England, although sympathizing with the misfortunes of the Netherlanders, had been unable effectually to help them, so long as their disunion prevented them from helping themselves; so long as even their appeal to arms seemed merely a levy of bucklers, an emotion of the populace, which, like a wave of the sea, rises and sinks again as soon as risen."

While thus exciting to union and firmness, he also took great pains to instil the necessity of wariness. They were dealing with an artful foe. Intercepted letters had already proved that the old dissimulation was still to be employed; that while Don John of Austria was on his way, the Netherlanders were to be lulled into confidence by glozing speeches. Roda was provided by the King with a secret programme of instructions for the new Governor's guidance and Don Sancho d'Avila, for his countenance to the mutineers of Alost, had been applauded to the echo in Spain. Was not this applause a frequent indication of the policy to be adopted by Don John, and a thousand times

Page 815

more significative one than the unmeaning phrases of barren benignity with which public documents might be crammed? “The old tricks are again brought into service,” said the Prince; “therefore ’tis necessary to ascertain your veritable friends, to tear off the painted masks from those who, under pretence-of not daring to displease the King, are seeking to swim between two waters. ’Tis necessary to have a touchstone; to sign a declaration in such wise that you may know whom to trust, and whom to suspect.”

The massacre at Antwerp and the eloquence of the Prince produced a most quickening effect upon the Congress at Ghent. Their deliberations had proceeded with decorum and earnestness, in the midst of the cannonading against the citadel, and the fortress fell on the same day which saw the conclusion of the treaty.

This important instrument, by which the sacrifices and exertions of the Prince were, for a brief season, at least, rewarded, contained twenty-five articles. The Prince of Orange, with the estates of Holland and Zealand, on the one side, and the provinces signing, or thereafter to sign the treaty, on the other, agreed that there should be a mutual forgiving and forgetting, as regarded the past. They vowed a close and faithful friendship for the future. They plighted a mutual promise to expel the Spaniards from the Netherlands without delay. As soon as this great deed should be done, there was to be a convocation of the states-general, on the basis of that assembly before which the abdication of the Emperor had taken place. By this congress, the affairs of religion in Holland and Zealand should be regulated, as well as the surrender of fortresses and other places belonging to his Majesty. There was to be full liberty of communication and traffic between the citizens of the one side and the other. It should not be legal, however, for those of Holland and Zealand to attempt anything outside their own territory against the Roman Catholic religion, nor for cause hereof to injure or irritate any one, by deed or word. All the placards and edicts on the subject of heresy, together with the criminal ordinances made by the Duke of Alva, were suspended, until the states-general should otherwise ordain. The Prince was to remain lieutenant, admiral, and general for his Majesty in Holland, Zealand, and the associated places, till otherwise provided by the states-general; after the departure of the Spaniards. The cities and places included in the Prince’s commission, but not yet acknowledging his authority, should receive satisfaction from him, as to the point of religion and other matters, before subscribing to the union. All prisoners, and particularly the Comte de Bossu, should be released without ransom. All estates and other property not already alienated should be restored, all confiscations since 1566 being declared null and void. The Countess Palatine, widow of Brederode, and Count de Buren, son of the Prince of Orange, were expressly

Page 816

named in this provision. Prelates and ecclesiastical persons; having property in Holland and Zealand, should be reinstated, if possible; but in case of alienation, which was likely to be generally the case; there should be reasonable compensation. It was to be decided by the states-general whether the provinces should discharge the debts incurred by the Prince of Orange in his two campaigns. Provinces and cities should not have the benefit of this union until they had signed the treaty, but they should be permitted to sign it when they chose.

This memorable document was subscribed at Ghent, on the 8th of November, by Saint Aldegonde, with eight other commissioners appointed by the Prince of Orange and the estates of Holland on the one side, and by Elbertus Leoninus and other deputies appointed by Brabant, Flanders, Artois, Hainault, Valenciennes, Lille, Douay, Orchies, Namur, Tournay, Utrecht, and Mechlin on the other side.

The arrangement was a masterpiece of diplomacy on the part of the Prince, for it was as effectual a provision for the safety of the Reformed religion as could be expected under the circumstances. It was much, considering the change which had been wrought of late years in the fifteen provinces, that they should consent to any treaty with their two heretic sisters. It was much more that the Pacification should recognize the new religion as the established creed of Holland and Zealand, while at the same time the infamous edicts of Charles were formally abolished. In the fifteen Catholic provinces, there was to be no prohibition of private Reformed worship, and it might be naturally expected that with time and the arrival of the banished religionists, a firmer stand would be taken in favor of the Reformation. Meantime, the new religion was formally established in two provinces, and tolerated, in secret, in the other fifteen; the Inquisition was for ever abolished, and the whole strength of the nation enlisted to expel the foreign soldiery from the soil. This was the work of William the Silent, and the great Prince thus saw the labor of years crowned with, at least, a momentary success. His satisfaction was very great when it was announced to him, many days before the exchange of the signatures, that the treaty had been concluded. He was desirous that the Pacification should be referred for approval, not to the municipal magistrates only, but to the people itself. In all great emergencies, the man who, in his whole character, least resembled a demagogue, either of antiquity or of modern times, was eager for a fresh expression of the popular will. On this occasion, however, the demand for approbation was superfluous. The whole country thought with his thoughts, and spoke with his words, and the Pacification, as soon as published, was received with a shout of joy. Proclaimed in the marketplace of every city and village, it was ratified, not by votes, but by hymns of thanksgiving, by triumphal music, by thundering

Page 817

of cannon, and by the blaze of beacons, throughout the Netherlands. Another event added to the satisfaction of the hour. The country so recently, and by deeds of such remarkable audacity, conquered by the Spaniards in the north, was recovered almost simultaneously with the conclusion of the Ghent treaty. It was a natural consequence of the great mutiny. The troops having entirely deserted Mondragon, it became necessary for that officer to abandon Zierickzee, the city which had been won with so much valor. In the beginning of November, the capital, and with it the whole island of Schouwen, together with the rest of Zealand, excepting Tholen, was recovered by Count Hohenlo, lieutenant-general of the Prince of Orange, and acting according to his instructions.

Thus, on this particular point of time, many great events had been crowded. At the very same moment Zealand had been redeemed, Antwerp ruined, and the league of all the Netherlands against the Spaniards concluded. It now became known that another and most important event had occurred at the same instant. On the day before the Antwerp massacre, four days before the publication of the Ghent treaty, a foreign cavalier, attended by a Moorish slave and by six men-at-arms, rode into the streets of Luxemburg. The cavalier was Don Ottavio Gonzaga, brother of the Prince of Melfi. The Moorish slave was Don John of Austria, the son of the Emperor, the conqueror of Granada, the hero of Lepanto. The new Governor-general had traversed Spain and France in disguise with great celerity, and in the romantic manner which belonged to his character. He stood at last on the threshold of the Netherlands, but with all his speed he had arrived a few days too late.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

A common hatred united them, for a time at least
A most fatal success
All claimed the privilege of persecuting
Blessing of God upon the Devil's work
Daily widening schism between Lutherans and Calvinists
Dying at so very inconvenient a moment
Eight thousand human beings were murdered
Everything was conceded, but nothing was secured
Fanatics of the new religion denounced him as a godless man
Glory could be put neither into pocket nor stomach
He would have no Calvinist inquisition set up in its place
He would have no persecution of the opposite creed
In character and general talents he was beneath mediocrity
Indecision did the work of indolence
Insinuate that his orders had been hitherto misunderstood
King set a price upon his head as a rebel
No man could reveal secrets which he did not know

Of high rank but of lamentably low capacity
Pope excommunicated him as a heretic
Preventing wrong, or violence, even towards an enemy
They could not invent or imagine toleration
Uunmeaning phrases of barren benignity

Page 818

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 26

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley
1855

PART V.

Don John of Austria.
1576-1577 [*Chapter* I.]

Birth and parentage of Don John—Barbara Blomberg—Early education and recognition by Philip—Brilliant military career—Campaign against the Moors—Battle of Lepanto—-Extravagant ambition—Secret and rapid journey of the new Governor to the Netherlands—Contrast between Don John and William of Orange—Secret instructions of Philip and private purposes of the Governor—Cautious policy and correspondence of the Prince—Preliminary, negotiations with Don John at Luxemburg characterized—-Union of Brussels—Resumption of negotiations with the Governor at Huy—The discussions analyzed and characterized—Influence of the new Emperor Rudolph *ii*. and of his envoys—Treaty of Marche en Famine, or the Perpetual Edict, signed— Remarks upon that transaction—Views and efforts of Orange in opposition to the treaty—His letter, in name of Holland and Zealand, to the States-General—Anxiety of the royal government to gain over the Prince—Secret mission of Leoninus—His instructions from Don John—Fruitless attempts to corrupt the Prince—Secret correspondence between Don John and Orange—Don John at Louvain—His efforts to ingratiate himself with the Netherlanders—His incipient popularity—Departure of the Spanish troops—Duke of Aerschot appointed Governor of Antwerp citadel—His insincere character.

Don John of Austria was now in his thirty-second year, having been born in Ratisbon on the 24th of February, 1545. His father was Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany, King of Spain, Dominator of Asia, Africa, and America; his mother was Barbara Blomberg, washerwoman of Ratisbon. Introduced to the Emperor, originally, that she might alleviate his melancholy by her singing, she soon exhausted all that was harmonious in her nature, for never was a more uncomfortable, unmanageable personage than Barbara in her after life. Married to one Pyramus Kegell, who was made a military commissary in the Netherlands, she was left a widow in the beginning of Alva's administration. Placed under the especial superintendence of the Duke, she became the torment of that warrior's life. The terrible Governor, who could almost crush the heart out of a nation of three millions, was unable to curb this single termagant. Philip had expressly forbidden her to marry again, but Alva informed him that she was

surrounded by suitors. Philip had insisted that she should go into a convent, but Alva, who, with great difficulty, had established her quietly in Ghent, assured his master that she would break loose again at the bare suggestion of a convent. Philip wished her to go to Spain, sending her word that Don John

Page 819

was mortified by the life his mother was leading, but she informed the Governor that she would be cut to pieces before she would go to Spain. She had no objection to see her son, but she knew too well how women were treated in that country. The Duke complained most pathetically to his Majesty of the life they all led with the ex-mistress of the Emperor. Never, he frequently observed, had woman so terrible a head. She was obstinate, reckless, abominably extravagant. She had been provided in Ghent with a handsome establishment: "with a duenna, six other women, a major domo, two pages, one chaplain, an almoner, and four men-servants," and this seemed a sufficiently liberal scheme of life for the widow of a commissary. Moreover, a very ample allowance had been made for the education of her only legitimate son, Conrad, the other having perished by an accident on the day of his father's death. While Don John of Austria was, gathering laurels in Granada, his half-brother, Pyramus junior, had been ingloriously drowned in a cistern at Ghent.

Barbara's expenses were exorbitant; her way of life scandalous. To send her money, said Alva, was to throw it into the sea. In two days she would have spent in dissipation and feasting any sums which the King might choose to supply. The Duke, who feared nothing else in the world, stood in mortal awe of the widow Kegell. "A terrible animal, indeed, is an unbridled woman," wrote secretary Gayas, from Madrid, at the close of Alva's administration for, notwithstanding every effort to entice, to intimidate, and to kidnap her from the Netherlands, there she remained, through all vicissitudes, even till the arrival of Don John. By his persuasions or commands she was, at last, induced to accept an exile for the remainder of her days, in Spain, but revenged herself by asserting. that he was quite mistaken: in supposing himself the Emperor's child; a point, certainly, upon which her, authority might be thought conclusive. Thus there was a double mystery about Don John. He might be the issue of august parentage on one side; he was; possibly, sprung of most ignoble blood. Base-born at best, he was not sure whether to look for the author of his being in the halls of the Caesara or the booths of Ratisbon mechanics.

[Cabrera, xii. 1009. An absurd rumor had existed that Barbara Blomberg had only been employed to personate Don John's mother. She died at an estate called Arronjo de Molinos, four leagues from Madrid, some years after the death of Don John.]

Whatever might be the heart of the mystery, it is certain that it was allowed to enwrap all the early life of Don John. The Emperor, who certainly never doubted his responsibility for the infant's existence, had him conveyed instantly to Spain, where he was delivered to Louis Quixada, of the Imperial household, by whom he was brought up in great retirement at Villa-garcia. Magdalen Ulloa, wife of Quixada, watched over his infancy with maternal and magnanimous

Page 820

care, for her husband's extreme solicitude for the infant's welfare had convinced her that he was its father. On one occasion, when their house was in flames, Quixada rescued the infant before he saved his wife, "although Magdalen knew herself to be dearer to him than the apple of his eye." From that time forth she altered her opinion, and believed the mysterious child to be of lofty origin. The boy grew up full of beauty, grace, and agility, the leader of all his companions in every hardy sport. Through the country round there were none who could throw the javelin, break a lance, or ride at the ring like little Juan Quixada. In taming unmanageable horses he was celebrated for his audacity and skill. These accomplishments, however, were likely to prove of but slender advantage in the ecclesiastical profession, to which he had been destined by his Imperial father. The death of Charles occurred before clerical studies had been commenced, and Philip, to whom the secret had been confided at the close of the Emperor's life, prolonged the delay thus interposed. Juan had already reached his fourteenth year, when one day his supposed father Quixada invited him to ride towards Valladolid to see the royal hunt. Two horses stood at the door—a splendidly caparisoned charger and a common hackney. The boy naturally mounted the humbler steed, and they set forth for the mountains of Toro, but on hearing the bugles of the approaching huntsmen, Quixada suddenly halted, and bade his youthful companion exchange horses with himself. When this had been done, he seized the hand of the wondering boy and kissing it respectfully, exclaimed, "Your Highness will be informed as to the meaning of my conduct by his Majesty, who is even now approaching." They had proceeded but a short distance before they encountered the royal hunting party, when both Quixada and young Juan dismounted, and bent the knee to their monarch. Philip, commanding the boy to rise, asked him if he knew his father's name. Juan replied, with a sigh, that he had at that moment lost the only father whom he had known, for Quixada had just disowned him. "You have the same father as myself," cried the King; "the Emperor Charles was the august parent of us both." Then tenderly embracing him, he commanded him to remount his horse, and all returned together to Valladolid, Philip observing with a sentimentality that seems highly apocryphal, that he had never brought home such precious game from any hunt before.

This theatrical recognition of imperial descent was one among the many romantic incidents of Don John's picturesque career, for his life was never destined to know the commonplace. He now commenced his education, in company with his two nephews, the Duchess Margaret's son, and Don Carlos, Prince-royal of Spain. They were all of the same age, but the superiority of Don John was soon recognized. It was not difficult to surpass the limping, malicious, Carlos, either in physical graces or intellectual accomplishments; but the graceful; urbane, and chivalrous Alexander, destined afterwards to such wide celebrity, was a more formidable rival, yet even the professed panegyrist of the Farnese family, exalts the son of Barbara Blomberg over the grandson of Margaret Van Geest.

Page 821

Still destined for the clerical profession, Don John, at the age of eighteen, to avoid compliance with Philip's commands, made his escape to Barcelona. It was his intention to join the Maltese expedition. Recalled peremptorily by Philip, he was for a short time in disgrace; but afterwards made his peace with the monarch by denouncing some of the mischievous schemes of Don Carlos. Between the Prince-royal and the imperial bastard, there had always been a deep animosity, the Infante having on one occasion saluted him with the most vigorous and offensive appellation which his illegitimate birth could suggest. "Base-born or not," returned Don John, "at any rate I had a better father than yours." The words were probably reported to Philip and doubtless rankled in his breast, but nothing appeared on the surface, and the youth rose rapidly in favor. In his twenty-third year, he was appointed to the command of the famous campaign against the insurgent Moors of Granada. Here he reaped his first laurels, and acquired great military celebrity. It is difficult to be dazzled by such glory. He commenced his operations by the expulsion of nearly all the Moorish inhabitants of Granada, bed-ridden men, women, and children, together, and the cruelty inflicted, the sufferings patiently endured in that memorable deportation, were enormous. But few of the many thousand exiles survived the horrid march, those who were so unfortunate as to do so being sold into slavery by their captors. Still a few Moors held out in their mountain fastnesses, and two years long the rebellion of this handful made head against the, power of Spain. Had their envoys to the Porte succeeded in their negotiation, the throne of Philip might have trembled; but Selim hated the Republic of Venice as much as he loved the wine of Cyprus. While the Moors were gasping out their last breath in Granada and Ronda, the Turks had wrested the island of Venus from the grasp of the haughty Republic Fainagosta had fallen; thousands of Venetians had been butchered with a ferocity which even Christians could not have surpassed; the famous General Bragadino had been flayed; stuffed, and sent hanging on the yard-arm of a frigate; to Constantinople, as a present to the Commander of the Faithful; and the mortgage of Catherine Cornaro, to the exclusion of her husband's bastards, had been thus definitely cancelled. With such practical enjoyments, Selim was indifferent to the splendid but shadowy vision of the Occidental caliphate—yet the revolt of the Moors was only terminated, after the departure of Don John, by the Duke of Arcos.

The war which the Sultan had avoided in the West, came to seek him in the East. To lift the Crucifix against the Crescent, at the head of the powerful but quarrelsome alliance between Venice, Spain, and Rome, Don John arrived at Naples. He brought with him more than a hundred ships and twenty-three thousand men, as the Spanish contingent: —Three months long the hostile fleets had been cruising in

Page 822

the same waters without an encounter; three more were wasted in barren manoeuvres. Neither Mussulman nor Christian had much inclination for the conflict, the Turk fearing the consequences of a defeat, by which gains already secured might be forfeited; the allies being appalled at the possibility of their own triumph. Nevertheless, the Ottomans manoeuvred themselves at last into the gulf of Lepanto, the Christians manoeuvred themselves towards its mouth as the foe was coming forth again. The conflict thus rendered inevitable, both Turk and Christian became equally eager for the fray, equally confident of, victory. Six hundred vessels of war met face to face. Rarely in history had so gorgeous a scene of martial array been witnessed. An October sun gilded the thousand beauties of an Ionian landscape. Athens and Corinth were behind the combatants, the mountains of Alexander's Macedon rose in the distance; the rock of Sappho and the heights of Actium, were before their eyes. Since the day when the world had been lost and won beneath that famous promontory, no such combat as the one now approaching had been fought upon the waves. The chivalrous young commander despatched energetic messages to his fellow chieftains, and now that it was no longer possible to elude the encounter, the martial ardor of the allies was kindled. The Venetian High-Admiral replied with words of enthusiasm. Colonna, lieutenant of the league, answered his chief in the language of St. Peter; "Though I die, yet will I not deny thee."

The fleet was arranged in three divisions. The Ottomans, not drawn up in crescent form, as usual, had the same triple disposition. Barbarigo and the other Venetians commanded on the left, John Andrew Doria on the right, while Don John himself and Colonna were in the centre, Crucifix in hand, the High-Admiral rowed from ship to ship exhorting generals and soldiers to show themselves worthy of a cause which he had persuaded himself was holy. Fired by his eloquence and by the sight of the enemy, his hearers answered with eager shouts, while Don John returned to his ship; knelt upon the quarter-deck, and offered a prayer. He then ordered the trumpets to sound the assault, commanded his sailing-master to lay him alongside the Turkish Admiral, and the battle began. The Venetians, who were first attacked, destroyed ship after ship of their assailants after a close and obstinate contest, but Barliarigo fell dead ere the sunset, with an arrow through his brain. Meantime the action, immediately after the first onset, had become general. From noon till evening the battle raged, with a carnage rarely recorded in history. Don John's own ship lay yard-arm and yard-arm with the Turkish Admiral, and exposed to the fire of seven large vessels besides. It was a day when personal, audacity, not skilful tactics, was demanded, and the imperial bastard showed the metal he was made of. The Turkish Admiral's ship was destroyed, his head exposed from Don John's deck upon a pike, and the trophy became the signal for a general panic and a complete victory. By sunset the battle had been won.

Page 823

Of nearly three hundred Turkish galleys, but fifty made their escape. From twenty-five to thirty thousand Turks were slain, and perhaps ten thousand Christians. The galley-slaves on both sides fought well, and the only beneficial result of the victory was the liberation of several thousand Christian captives. It is true that their liberty was purchased with the lives of a nearly equal number of Christian soldiers, and by the reduction to slavery of almost as many thousand Mussulmen, duly distributed among the Christian victors. Many causes—contributed to this splendid triumph. The Turkish ships, inferior in number, were also worse manned than those of their adversaries; and their men were worse armed. Every bullet of the Christians told on muslin turbans and embroidered tunics, while the arrows of the Moslems fell harmless on the casques and corslets of their foes. The Turks, too, had committed the fatal error of fighting upon a lee shore. Having no sea room, and being repelled in their first onset, many galleys were driven upon the rocks, to be destroyed with all their crews.

[Cabrera says that thirty thousand Turks were slain, ten thousand made prisoners, ten thousand Christians killed, and fifteen thousand Christian prisoners liberated, ix. 693. De Thou's estimate is twenty-five thousand Turks killed, three thousand prisoners, and ten thousand Christians killed, vi. 247. Brantome states the number of Turks killed at thirty thousand, without counting those who were drowned or who died afterwards of their wounds; six thousand prisoners, twelve thousand Christian prisoners liberated, and ten thousand Christians killed. Hoofd, vi. 214, gives the figures at twenty-five thousand Turks and ten thousand Christians slain. Bor, v. 354, makes a minute estimate, on the authority of Pietro Contareno, stating the number of Christians killed at seven thousand six hundred and fifty, that of Turks at twenty-five thousand one hundred and fifty, Turkish prisoners at three thousand eight hundred and forty-six, and Christians liberated at twelve thousand; giving the number of Turkish ships destroyed at eighty, captured fifty. According to the "Relation cierta y verdadera," (which was drawn up a few days after the action,) the number of Turks slain was thirty thousand and upwards, besides many prisoners, that of Christians killed was seven thousand, of Christian slaves liberated twelve thousand, of Ottoman ships taken or destroyed two hundred and thirty. Documentos Ineditos, iii. 249. Philip sent an express order, forbidding the ransoming of even the captive officers. The Turkish slaves were divided among the victors in the proportion of one-half to Philip and one-half to the Pope and Venice. The other booty was distributed on the same principle. Out of the Pope's share Don John received, as a present, one hundred and seventy-four slaves (Documentos Ineditos, iii. 229). Alexander of Parma received thirty slaves; Requesens thirty.

Page 824

To each general of infantry was assigned six slaves; to each colonel four; to each ship's captain one. The number of "slaves in chains" (esclavos de cadena) allotted to Philip was thirty-six hundred (Documentoa Ineditos, 257). Seven thousand two hundred Turkish slaves, therefore, at least, were divided among Christians. This number of wretches, who were not fortunate enough to die with their twenty- five thousand comrades, must be set off against the twelve thousand Christian slaves liberated, in the general settlement of the account with Humanity.]

But whatever the cause of the victory, its consequence was to spread the name and fame of Don John of Austria throughout the world. Alva wrote, with enthusiasm, to congratulate him; pronouncing the victory the most brilliant one ever achieved by Christians, and Don John the greatest general since the death of Julius Caesar. At the same time, with a sarcastic fling at the erection of the Escorial, he advised Philip to improve this new success in some more practical way than by building a house for the Lord and a sepulchre for the dead. "If," said the Duke, "the conquests of Spain be extended in consequence of this triumph, then, indeed, will the Cherubim and Seraphim sing glory to God." A courier, despatched post haste to Spain, bore the glorious news, together with the, sacred, standard of the Prophet, the holy of holies, inscribed with the name of Allah twenty-eight thousand nine hundred times, always kept in Mecca during peace, and never since the conquest of Constantinople lost in battle before. The King was at vespers in the Escorial. Entering the sacred precincts, breathless, travel-stained, excited, the messenger found Philip impassible as marble to the wondrous news. Not a muscle of the royal visage was moved, not a syllable escaped the royal lips, save a brief order to the clergy to continue the interrupted vespers. When the service had been methodically concluded, the King made known the intelligence and requested a Te Deum.

The youthful commander-in-chief obtained more than his full mead of glory. No doubt he had fought with brilliant courage, yet in so close and murderous a conflict, the valor of no single individual could decide the day, and the result was due to the combined determination of all. Had Don John remained at Naples, the issue might have easily been the same. Barbarigo, who sealed the victory with his blood; Colonna, who celebrated a solemn triumph on his return to Rome; Parma, Doria, Giustiniani, Venieri, might each as well have claimed a monopoly of the glory, had not the Pope, at Philip's entreaty, conferred the baton of command upon Don John. The meagre result of the contest is as notorious as the victory. While Constantinople was quivering with apprehension, the rival generals were already wrangling with animosity. Had the Christian fleet advanced, every soul would have fled from the capital, but Providence had ordained otherwise, and Don John sailed westwardly with his

Page 825

ships. He made a descent on the Barbary coast, captured Tunis, destroyed Biserta, and brought King Amidas and his two sons prisoners to Italy. Ordered by Philip to dismantle the fortifications of Tunis, he replied by repairing them thoroughly, and by placing a strong garrison within the citadel. Intoxicated with his glory, the young adventurer already demanded a crown, and the Pope was disposed to proclaim him King of Tunis, for the Queen of the Lybian seas was to be the capital of his Empire, the new Carthage which he already dreamed.

Philip thought it time to interfere, for he felt that his own crown might be insecure, with such a restless and ambitious spirit indulging in possible and impossible chimeras. He removed John de Soto, who had been Don John's chief councillor and emissary to the Pope, and substituted in his place the celebrated and ill-starred Escovedo. The new secretary, however, entered as heartily but secretly into all these romantic schemes. Disappointed of the Empire which he had contemplated on the edge of the African desert, the champion of the Cross turned to the cold islands of the northern seas. There sighed, in captivity, the beauteous Mary of Scotland, victim of the heretic Elizabeth. His susceptibility to the charms of beauty—a characteristic as celebrated as his courage—was excited, his chivalry aroused. What holier triumph for the conqueror of the Saracens than the subjugation of these northern infidels? He would dethrone the proud Elizabeth; he would liberate and espouse the Queen of Scots, and together they would reign over, the two united realms. All that the Pope could do with bulls and blessings, letters of excommunication, and patents of investiture, he did with his whole heart. Don John was at liberty to be King of England and Scotland as soon as he liked; all that was left to do was to conquer the kingdoms.

Meantime, while these schemes were flitting through his brain, and were yet kept comparatively secret by the Pope, Escovedo, and himself, the news reached him in Italy that he had been appointed Governor-General of the Netherlands. Nothing could be more opportune. In the provinces were ten thousand veteran Spaniards, ripe for adventure, hardened by years of warfare, greedy for gold, audacious almost beyond humanity, the very instruments for his scheme. The times were critical in the Netherlands, it was true; yet he would soon pacify those paltry troubles, and then sweep forward to his prize. Yet events were rushing forward with such feverish rapidity, that he might be too late for his adventure. Many days were lost in the necessary journey from Italy into Spain to receive the final instructions of the King. The news from the provinces, grew more and more threatening. With the impetuosity and romance of his temperament, he selected his confidential friend Ottavio Gonzaga, six men-at-arms, and an adroit and well-experienced Swiss courier who knew every road of France.

Page 826

It was no light adventure for the Catholic Governor-General of the Netherlands to traverse the kingdom at that particular juncture. Staining his bright locks and fair face to the complexion of a Moor, he started on his journey, attired as the servant of Gonzaga. Arriving at Paris, after a rapid journey, he descended at a hostelry opposite the residence of the Spanish ambassador, Don Diego de Cuniga. After nightfall he had a secret interview with that functionary, and learning, among other matters, that there was to be a great ball that night at the Louvre, he determined to go thither in disguise. There, notwithstanding his hurry, he had time to see and to become desperately enamored of “that wonder of beauty,” the fair and frail Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre. Her subsequent visit to her young adorer at Namur, to be recorded in a future page of this history, was destined to mark the last turning point in his picturesque career. On his way to the Netherlands he held a rapid interview with the Duke of Guise, to arrange his schemes for the liberation and espousal of that noble’s kinswoman, the Scottish Queen; and on the 3rd of November he arrived at Luxemburg.

There stood the young conqueror of Lepanto, his brain full of schemes, his heart full of hopes, on the threshhold of the Netherlands, at the entrance to what he believed the most brilliant chapter of his life—schemes, hopes, and visions—doomed speedily to fade before the cold reality with which he was to be confronted. Throwing off his disguise after reaching Luxemburg, the youthful paladin stood confessed. His appearance was as romantic as his origin and his exploits. Every contemporary chronicler, French, Spanish, Italian, Flemish, Roman, have dwelt upon his personal beauty and the singular fascination of his manner. Symmetrical features, blue eyes of great vivacity, and a profusion of bright curling hair, were combined with a person not much above middle height; but perfectly well proportioned. Owing to a natural peculiarity of his head, the hair fell backward from the temples, and he had acquired the habit of pushing it from his brows. The custom became a fashion among the host of courtiers, who were but too happy to glass themselves in so brilliant a mirror. As Charles the Fifth, on his journey to Italy to assume the iron crown, had caused his hair to be clipped close, as a remedy for the headaches with which, at that momentous epoch, he was tormented, bringing thereby close shaven polls into extreme fashion; so a mass of hair pushed backward from the temples, in the style to which the name of John of Austria was appropriated, became the prevailing mode wherever the favorite son of the Emperor appeared.

Page 827

Such was the last crusader whom the annals of chivalry were to know; the man who had humbled the crescent as it had not been humbled since the days of the Tancreds, the Baldwins, the Plantagenets—yet, after all, what was this brilliant adventurer when weighed against the tranquil Christian champion whom he was to meet face to face? The contrast was striking between the real and the romantic hero. Don John had pursued and achieved glory through victories with which the world was ringing; William was slowly compassing a country's emancipation through a series of defeats. He moulded a commonwealth and united hearts with as much contempt for danger as Don John had exhibited in scenes of slave driving and carnage. Amid fields of blood, and through web's of tortuous intrigue, the brave and subtle son of the Emperor pursued only his own objects. Tawdry schemes of personal ambition, conquests for his own benefit, impossible crowns for his own wearing, were the motives which impelled, him, and the prizes which he sought. His existence was feverish, fitful, and passionate. "Tranquil amid the raging billows," according to his favorite device, the father of his country waved aside the diadem which for him had neither charms nor meaning. Their characters were as contrasted as their persons. The curled-darling of chivalry seemed a youth at thirty-one. Spare of figure, plain in apparel, benignant, but haggard of countenance, with temples bared by anxiety as much as by his helmet, earnest, almost devout in manner, in his own words, "Calvus et Calvinists," William of Orange was an old man at forty-three.

Perhaps there was as much good faith on the part of Don John, when he arrived in Luxemburg, as could be expected of a man coming directly from the cabinet of Philip. The King had secretly instructed him to conciliate the provinces, but to concede nothing, for the Governor was only a new incarnation of the insane paradox that benignity and the system of Charles the Fifth were one. He was directed to restore the government, to its state during the imperial epoch. Seventeen provinces, in two of which the population were all dissenters, in all of which the principle of mutual toleration had just been accepted by Catholics and Protestants, were now to be brought back to the condition according to which all Protestants were beheaded, burned, or buried alive. So that the Inquisition, the absolute authority of the monarch, and the exclusive worship of the Roman Church were preserved intact, the King professed himself desirous of "extinguishing the fires of rebellion, and of saving the people from the last desperation." With these slight exceptions, Philip was willing to be very benignant. "More than this," said he, "cannot and ought not be conceded." To these brief but pregnant instructions was added a morsel of advice, personal in its nature, but very characteristic of the writer. Don John was recommended to take great care of his soul, and also to be very cautious in the management of his amours.

Page 828

Thus counselled and secretly directed, the new Captain-General had been dismissed to the unhappy Netherlands. The position, however, was necessarily false. The man who was renowned for martial exploits, and notoriously devoured by ambition, could hardly inspire deep confidence in the pacific dispositions of the government. The crusader of Granada and Lepanto, the champion of the ancient Church, was not likely to please the rugged Zealanders who had let themselves be hacked to pieces rather than say one Paternoster, and who had worn crescents in their caps at Leyden, to prove their deeper hostility to the Pope than to the Turk. The imperial bastard would derive but alight consideration from his paternal blood, in a country where illegitimate birth was more unfavorably regarded than in most other countries, and where a Brabantine edict, recently issued in name of the King; deprived all political or civil functionaries not born in wedlock; of their offices. Yet he had received instructions, at his departure, to bring about a pacification, if possible, always maintaining, however, the absolute authority of the crown and the exclusive exercise of the Catholic religion. How the two great points of his instructions were to be made entirely palatable, was left to time and chance. There was a vague notion that with the new Governor's fame, fascinating manners, and imperial parentage, he might accomplish a result which neither fraud nor force—not the arts of Granvelle, nor the atrocity of Alva, nor the licentiousness of a buccaneering soldiery had been able to effect. As for Don John himself, he came with no definite plans for the Netherlanders, but with very daring projects of his own, and to pursue these misty visions was his main business on arriving in the provinces. In the meantime he was disposed to settle the Netherland difficulty in some showy, off-hand fashion, which should cost him but little trouble, and occasion no detriment to the cause of Papacy or absolutism. Unfortunately for these rapid arrangements, William of Orange was in Zealand, and the Pacification had just been signed at Ghent.

It was, naturally, with very little satisfaction that the Prince beheld the arrival of Don John. His sagacious combinations would henceforth be impeded, if not wholly frustrated. This he foresaw. He knew that there could be no intention of making any arrangement in which Holland and Zealand could be included. He was confident that any recognition of the Reformed religion was as much out of the question now as ever. He doubted not that there were many Catholic magnates, wavering politicians, aspirants for royal favor, who would soon be ready to desert the cause which had so recently been made a general cause, and who would soon be undermining the work of their own hands. The Pacification of Ghent would never be maintained in letter and spirit by the vicegerent of Philip; for however its sense might be commented upon or perverted, the treaty, while

Page 829

it recognized Catholicism as the state religion, conceded, to a certain extent, liberty of conscience. An immense stride had been taken, by abolishing the edicts, and prohibiting persecution. If that step were now retraced, the new religion was doomed, and the liberties of Holland and Zealand destroyed. “If they make an arrangement with Don John, it will be for us of the religion to run,” wrote the Prince to his brother, “for their intention is to suffer no person of that faith to have a fixed domicile in the Netherlands.” It was, therefore, with a calm determination to counteract and crush the policy of the youthful Governor that William the Silent awaited his antagonist. Were Don John admitted to confidence, the peace of Holland and Zealand was gone. Therefore it was necessary to combat him both openly and secretly—by loud remonstrance and by invisible stratagem. What chance had the impetuous and impatient young hero in such an encounter with the foremost statesman of the age? He had arrived, with all the self-confidence of a conqueror; he did not know that he was to be played upon like a pipe—-to be caught in meshes spread by his own hands—to struggle blindly—to rage impotently—to die ingloriously.

The Prince had lost no time in admonishing the states-general as to the course which should now be pursued. He was of opinion that, upon their conduct at this crisis depended the future destinies of the Netherlands. “If we understand how to make proper use of the new Governor’s arrival,” said he, “it may prove very advantageous to us; if not, it will be the commencement of our total ruin.” The spirit of all his communications was to infuse the distrust which he honestly felt, and which he certainly took no pains to disguise; to impress upon his countrymen the importance of improving the present emergency by the enlargement, instead of the threatened contraction of their liberties, and to enforce with all his energy the necessity of a firm union. He assured the estates that Don John had been sent, in this simple manner, to the country, because the King and cabinet had begun to despair of carrying their point by force. At the same time he warned them that force would doubtless be replaced by fraud. He expressed his conviction that so soon as Don John should attain the ascendency which he had been sent to secure, the gentleness which now smiled upon the surface would give place to the deadlier purposes which lurked below. He went so far as distinctly to recommend the seizure of Don John’s person. By so doing, much bloodshed might be saved; for such was the King’s respect for the Emperor’s son that their demands would be granted rather than that his liberty should be permanently endangered. In a very striking and elaborate letter which he addressed from Middelburg to the estates-general, he insisted on the expediency of seizing the present opportunity in order to secure and to expand their liberties, and urged them to assert

Page 830

broadly the principle that the true historical polity of the Netherlands was a representative, constitutional government, Don John, on arriving at Luxemburg, had demanded hostages for his own security, a measure which could not but strike the calmest spectator as an infraction of all provincial rights. “He asks you to disarm,” continued William of Orange; “he invites you to furnish hostages, but the time has been when the lord of the land came unarmed and uncovered, before the estates-general, and swore to support the constitutions before his own sovereignty could be recognized.”

He reiterated his suspicions as to the honest intentions of the government, and sought, as forcibly as possible, to infuse an equal distrust into the minds of those he addressed. “Antwerp,” said he, “once the powerful and blooming, now the most forlorn and desolate city of Christendom, suffered because she dared to exclude the King’s troops. You may be sure that you are all to have a place at the same banquet. We may forget the past, but princes never forget, when the means of vengeance are placed within their hands. Nature teaches them to arrive at their end by fraud, when violence will not avail them. Like little children, they whistle to the birds they would catch. Promises and pretences they will furnish in plenty.”

He urged them on no account to begin any negotiation with the Governor, except on the basis of the immediate departure of the soldiery. “Make no agreement with him; unless the Spanish and other foreign troops have been sent away beforehand; beware, meantime, of disbanding your own, for that were to put the knife into his hands to cut your own throats withal.” He then proceeded to sketch the out lines of a negotiation, such as he could recommend. The plan was certainly sufficiently bold, and it could hardly cause astonishment, if it were not immediately accepted by Don John; as the basis of an arrangement. “Remember this is not play”, said the Prince, “and that you have to choose between the two, either total ruin or manly self-defence. Don John must command the immediate departure of the Spaniards. All our privileges must be revised, and an oath to maintain them required. New councils of state and finance must be appointed by the estates. The general assembly ought to have power to come together twice or thrice yearly, and, indeed, as often as they choose. The states-general must administer and regulate all affairs. The citadels must be demolished everywhere. No troops ought to be enlisted, nor garrisons established, without the consent of the estates.”

Page 831

In all the documents, whether public memorials or private letters, which came at this period from the hand of the Prince, he assumed, as a matter of course, that in any arrangement with the new Governor the Pacification of Ghent was to be maintained. This, too, was the determination of almost every man in the country. Don John, soon after his arrival at Luxemburg, had despatched messengers to the states-general, informing them of his arrival. It was not before the close of the month of November that the negotiations seriously began. Provost Fonck, on the part of the Governor, then informed them of Don John's intention to enter Namur, attended by fifty mounted troopers. Permission, however, was resolutely refused, and the burghers of Namur were forbidden to render oaths of fidelity until the Governor should have complied with the preliminary demands of the estates. To enunciate these demands categorically, a deputation of the estates-general came to Luxemburg. These gentlemen were received with courtesy by Don John, but their own demeanour was not conciliatory. A dislike to the Spanish government; a disloyalty to the monarch with whose brother and representative they were dealing, pierced through all their language. On the other hand, the ardent temper of Don John was never slow to take offence. One of the deputies proposed to the Governor, with great coolness, that he should assume the government in his own name, and renounce the authority of Philip. Were he willing to do so, the patriotic gentleman pledged himself that the provinces would at once acknowledge him as sovereign, and sustain his government. Don John, enraged at the insult to his own loyalty which the proposition implied, drew his dagger and rushed towards the offender. The deputy would, probably, have paid for his audacity with his life had there not been by-standers enough to prevent the catastrophe. This scene was an unsatisfactory prelude to the opening negotiations.

On the 6th of December the deputies presented to the Governor at Luxemburg a paper, containing their demands, drawn up in eight articles, and their concessions in ten. The states insisted on the immediate removal of the troops, with the understanding that they were never to return, but without prohibition of their departure by sea; they demanded the immediate release of all prisoners; they insisted on the maintenance of the Ghent treaty, there being nothing therein which did not tend to the furtherance of the Catholic religion; they claimed an act of amnesty; they required the convocation of the states-general, on the basis of that assembly before which took place the abdication of Charles the Fifth; they demanded an oath, on the part of Don John, to maintain all the charters and customs of the country.

Should these conditions be complied: with, the deputies consented on the part of the estates, that he should be acknowledged as Governor, and that the Catholic religion and the authority of his Majesty should be maintained. They agreed that all foreign leagues should be renounced, their own foreign soldiery disbanded, and a guard of honor, native Netherlanders, such as his Majesty was contented with at his "Blythe Entrance," provided. A truce of fifteen days, for negotiations, was furthermore proposed.

Page 832

Don John made answers to these propositions by adding a brief comment, as apostille, upon each of the eighteen articles, in succession. He would send away the troops, but, at the same time, the states must disband their own. He declined engaging himself not to recal his foreign soldiery, should necessity require their service. With regard to the Ghent Pacification, he professed himself ready for a general peace negotiation, on condition that the supremacy of the Catholic Church and the authority of his Majesty were properly secured. He would settle upon some act of amnesty after due consultation with the State Council. He was willing that the states should be convoked in general assembly, provided sufficient security were given him that nothing should be there transacted prejudicial to the Catholic religion and the King's sovereignty. As for their privileges, he would govern as had been done in the time of his imperial father. He expressed his satisfaction with most of the promises offered by the estates, particularly with their expression in favor of the Church and of his Majesty's authority; the two all-important points to secure which he had come thither unattended, at the peril of his life, but he received their offer of a body-guard, by which his hirelings were to be superseded, with very little gratitude. He was on the point, he said, of advancing as far as Marche en Famine, and should take with him as strong a guard as he considered necessary, and composed of such troops as he had at hand. Nothing decisive came of this first interview. The parties had taken the measures of their mutual claims, and after a few days, fencing with apostilles, replies, and rejoinders, they separated, their acrimony rather inflamed than appeased.

The departure of the troops and the Ghent treaty were the vital points in the negotiation. The estates had originally been content that the troops should go by sea. Their suspicions were, however, excited by the pertinacity with which Don John held to this mode of removal. Although they did not suspect the mysterious invasion of England, a project which was the real reason why the Governor objected to their departure by land, yet they soon became aware—that he had been secretly tampering with the troops at every point. The effect of these secret negotiations with the leading officers of the army was a general expression of their unwillingness, on account of the lateness of the season, the difficult and dangerous condition of the roads and mountain-passes, the plague in Italy, and other pretexts, to undertake so long a journey by land. On the other hand, the states, seeing the anxiety and the duplicity of Don John upon this particular point, came to the resolution to thwart him at all hazards, and insisted on the land journey. Too long a time, too much money, too many ships would be necessary, they said, to forward so large a force by sea, and in the meantime it would be necessary to permit them to live for another indefinite period at the charge of the estates.

Page 833

With regard to the Ghent Pacification, the estates, in the course of December, procured: an express opinion from the eleven professors of theology, and doctors utriusque juris of Louvain, that the treaty contained nothing which conflicted with the supremacy of the Catholic religion. The various bishops, deacons, abbots, and pastors of the Netherlands made a similar decision. An elaborate paper, drawn, up by the State-Council, at the request of the states-general, declared that there was nothing in the Pacification derogatory to the supreme authority of his Majesty. Thus fortified; with opinions which, it must be confessed, were rather dogmatically than argumentatively drawn up, and which it would have been difficult very logically to, defend, the states looked forward confidently to the eventual acceptance by Don John of the terms proposed. In the meantime, while there was still an indefinite pause in the negotiations, a remarkable measure came to aid the efficacy of the Ghent Pacification.

Early in January, 1577, the celebrated “Union of Brussels” was formed. This important agreement was originally signed by eight leading personages, the Abbot of Saint Gertrude, the Counts Lalain and Bossu, and the Seigneur de Champagny being among the number. Its tenor was to engage its signers to compass the immediate expulsion of the Spaniards and the execution of the Ghent Pacification, to maintain the Catholic religion and the King’s authority, and to defend the fatherland and all its constitutions. Its motive was to generalize the position assumed by the Ghent treaty. The new act was to be signed, not by a few special deputies alone, like a diplomatic convention, but by all the leading individuals of all the provinces, in order to exhibit to Don John such an array of united strength that he would find himself forced to submit to the demands of the estates. The tenor, motive, and effect were all as had been proposed and foreseen. The agreement to expel the Spaniards, under the Catholic and loyal manifestations indicated, passed from hand to hand through all the provinces. It soon received the signature and support of all the respectability, wealth, and intelligence of the whole country. Nobles, ecclesiastics, citizens, hastened to give to it their adhesion. The states-general had sent it, by solemn resolution, to every province, in order that every man might be forced to range himself either upon the side of the fatherland or of despotism. Two copies of the signatures procured in each province were ordered, of which one was to be deposited in its archives, and the other forwarded to Brussels. In a short time, every province, with the single exception of Luxemburg, had loaded the document with signatures. This was a great step in advance. The Ghent Pacification, which was in the nature of a treaty between the Prince and the estates of Holland and Zealand on the one side, and a certain number of provinces on the other, had only been signed by the envoys of the contracting

Page 834

parties. Though received with deserved and universal acclamation, it had not the authority of a popular document. This, however, was the character studiously impressed upon the “Brussels Union.” The people, subdivided according to the various grades of their social hierarchy, had been solemnly summoned to council, and had deliberately recorded their conviction. No restraint had been put upon their freedom of action, and there was hardly a difference of opinion as to the necessity of the measure.

A rapid revolution in Friesland, Groningen, and the dependencies, had recently restored that important country to the national party. The Portuguese De Billy had been deprived of his authority as King’s stadholder, and Count Hoogstraaten’s brother, Baron de Ville, afterwards as Count Renneberg infamous for his, treason to the cause of liberty, had been appointed by the estates in his room. In all this district the “Union of Brussels” was eagerly signed by men of every degree. Holland and Zealand, no less than the Catholic provinces of the south willingly accepted the compromise which was thus laid down, and which was thought to be not only an additional security for the past, not only a pillar more for the maintenance of the Ghent Pacification, but also a sure precursor of a closer union in the future. The Union of Brussels became, in fact, the stepping-stone to the “Union of Utrecht,” itself the foundation-stone of a republic destined to endure more than two centuries. On the other hand, this early union held the seed, of its own destruction within itself. It was not surprising, however, that a strong declaration in favor of the Catholic religion should be contained in a document intended for circulation through all the provinces. The object was to unite as large a force, and to make as striking a demonstration before the eyes of the Governor General as was practicable under the circumstances. The immediate purpose was answered, temporary union was formed, but it was impossible that a permanent crystallization should take place where so strong a dissolvent as the Catholic clause had been admitted. In the sequel, therefore, the union fell asunder precisely at this fatal flaw. The next union was that which definitely separated the provinces into Protestant, and Catholic, into self-governing republics, and the dependencies of a distant despotism. The immediate effect, however, of the “Brussels Union” was to rally all lovers of the fatherland and haters of a foreign tyranny upon one vital point—the expulsion of the stranger from the land. The foot of the Spanish soldier should no longer profane their soil. All men were forced to pronounce themselves boldly and unequivocally, in order that the patriots might stand shoulder to shoulder, and the traitors be held up to infamy. This measure was in strict accordance with the advice given more than once by the Prince of Orange, and was almost in literal fulfilment of the Compromise, which he had sketched before the arrival of Don John.

Page 835

The deliberations were soon resumed with the new Governor, the scene being shifted from Luxemburg to Huy. Hither came a fresh deputation from the states-general—many signers of the Brussels Union among them—and were received by Don John with stately courtesy: They had, however, come, determined to carry matters with a high and firm hand, being no longer disposed to brook his imperious demeanour, nor to tolerate his dilatory policy. It is not surprising, therefore, that the courtesy soon changed to bitterness, and that attack and recrimination usurped the place of the dignified but empty formalities which had characterized the interviews at Luxemburg.

The envoys, particularly Sweveghem and Champagny, made no concealment of their sentiments towards the Spanish soldiery and the Spanish nation, and used a freedom of tone and language which the petulant soldier had not been accustomed to hear. He complained, at the outset, that the Netherlanders seemed new-born—that instead of bending the knee, they seemed disposed to grasp the sceptre. Insolence had taken the place of pliancy, and the former slave now applied the chain and whip to his master. With such exacerbation of temper at the commencement of negotiations, their progress was of necessity stormy and slow.

The envoys now addressed three concise questions to the Governor. Was he satisfied that the Ghent Pacification contained nothing conflicting with the Roman religion and the King's authority? If so, was he willing to approve that treaty in all its articles? Was he ready to dismiss his troops at once, and by land, the sea voyage being liable to too many objections?

Don John answered these three questions—which, in reality, were but three forms of a single question—upon the same day, the 24th of January. His reply was as complex as the demand had been simple. It consisted of a proposal in six articles, and a requisition in twenty-one, making in all twenty-seven articles. Substantially he proposed to dismiss the foreign troops—to effect a general pacification of the Netherlands—to govern on the basis of the administration in his imperial father's reign—to arrange affairs in and with regard to the assembly-general as the King should judge to be fitting—to forgive and forget past offences—and to release all prisoners. On the other hand he required the estates to pay the troops before their departure, and to provide ships enough to transport them, as the Spaniards did not choose to go by land, and as the deputies, at Luxemburg had consented to their removal by sea. Furthermore, he demanded that the states should dismiss their own troops. He required ecclesiastical authority to prove the Ghent Pacification not prejudicial to the Catholic religion; legal authority that it was not detrimental to his Majesty's supremacy; and an oath from the states-general to uphold both points inviolably, and to provide for their maintenance in Holland and Zealand. He claimed the right to employ about his person soldiers and civil functionaries of any nation he might choose, and he exacted from the states a promise to prevent the Prince of Orange from removing his son, Count van Buren, forcibly or fraudulently, from his domicile in Spain.

Page 836

The deputies were naturally indignant at this elaborate trifling. They had, in reality, asked him but one question, and that a simple one—Would he maintain the treaty of Ghent? Here were twenty-seven articles in reply, and yet no answer to that question. They sat up all night, preparing a violent protocol, by which the Governor's claims were to be utterly demolished. Early in the morning, they waited upon his Highness, presented the document, and at the same time asked him plainly, by word of mouth, did he or did he not intend to uphold the treaty. Thus pressed into a corner in presence of the deputies, the members of the State Council who were in attendance from Brussels, and the envoys whom the Emperor had recently sent to assist at these deliberations, the Governor answered, No. He would not and could not maintain the treaty, because the Spanish troops were in that instrument denounced as rebels, because he would not consent to the release of Count Van Buren—and on account of various other reasons not then specified. Hereupon ensued a fierce debate, and all day long the altercation lasted, without a result being reached. At ten o'clock in the evening, the deputies having previously retired for a brief interval, returned with a protest that they were not to be held responsible for the, termination of the proceedings, and that they washed their hands of the bloodshed which might follow the rupture. Upon reading this document; Don John fell into a blazing passion. He vehemently denounced the deputies as traitors. He swore that men who came to him thus prepared with ready-made protests in their pockets, were rebels from the commencement, and had never intended any agreement with him. His language and gestures expressed unbounded fury. He was weary of their ways, he said. They had better look to themselves, for the King would never leave their rebellion unpunished. He was ready to draw the sword at once—not his own, but his Majesty's, and they might be sure that the war which they were thus provoking, should be the fiercest ever, waged. More abusive language in this strain was uttered, but it was not heard with lamb-like submission. The day had gone by when the deputies of the states-general were wont to quail before the wrath of vicarious royalty. The fiery words of Don John were not oil to troubled water, but a match to a mine. The passions of the deputies exploded in their turn, and from hot words they had nearly come to hard blows. One of the deputies replied with so much boldness and vehemence that the Governor, seizing a heavy silver bell which stood on the table, was about to hurl it at the offender's head, when an energetic and providential interference on the part of the imperial envoys, prevented the unseemly catastrophe.

Page 837

The day thus unprofitably spent, had now come to its close, and the deputies left the presence of Don John with tempers as inflamed as his own. They were, therefore, somewhat surprised at being awakened in their beds, after midnight, by a certain Father Trigoso, who came to them with a conciliatory message from the Governor. While they were still rubbing their eyes with sleep and astonishment, the Duke of Aerschot, the Bishop of Liege, and several councillors of state, entered the room. These personages brought the news that Don John had at last consented to maintain the Pacification of Ghent, as would appear by a note written in his own hand, which was then delivered. The billet was eagerly read, but unfortunately did not fulfil the anticipations which had been excited. "I agree," said Don John, "to approve the peace made between the states and the Prince of Orange, on condition that nothing therein may seem detrimental to the authority of his Majesty and the supremacy of the Catholic religion, and also with reservation of the points mentioned in my last communication."

Men who had gone to bed in a high state of indignation were not likely to wake in much better humour, when suddenly aroused in their first nap, to listen to such a message as this. It seemed only one piece of trifling the more. The deputies had offered satisfactory opinions of divines and jurisconsults, as to the two points specified which concerned the Ghent treaty. It was natural, therefore, that this vague condition concerning them, the determination of which was for the Governor's breast alone, should be instantly rejected, and that the envoys should return to their disturbed slumbers with an increase of ill-humour.

On the morrow, as the envoys, booted and spurred, were upon the point of departure for Brussels, another communication was brought to them from Don John. This time, the language of the Governor seemed more to the purpose. "I agree," said he, "to maintain the peace concluded between the states and the Prince of Orange, on condition of receiving from the ecclesiastical authorities, and from the University of Louvain, satisfactory assurance that the said treaty contains nothing derogatory to the Catholic religion—and similar assurance from the State Council, the Bishop of Liege, and the imperial envoys, that the treaty is in no wise prejudicial to the authority of his Majesty." Here seemed, at last, something definite. These conditions could be complied with. They had, in fact, been already complied with. The assurances required as to the two points had already been procured, as the deputies and as Don John well knew. The Pacification of Ghent was, therefore, virtually admitted. The deputies waited upon the Governor accordingly, and the conversation was amicable. They vainly endeavoured, however, to obtain his consent to the departure of the troops by land—the only point then left in dispute. Don John, still clinging to his secret

Page 838

scheme, with which the sea voyage of the troops was so closely connected, refused to concede. He reproached the envoys, on the contrary, with their importunity in making a fresh demand, just as he had conceded the Ghent treaty, upon his entire responsibility and without instructions. Mentally resolving that this point should still be wrung from the Governor, but not suspecting his secret motives for resisting it so strenuously, the deputies took an amicable farewell of the Governor, promising a favorable report upon the proceedings, so soon as they should arrive in Brussels.

Don John, having conceded so much, was soon obliged to concede the whole. The Emperor Rudolph had lately succeeded his father, Maximilian. The deceased potentate, whose sentiments on the great subject of religious toleration were so much in harmony with those entertained by the Prince of Orange, had, on the whole, notwithstanding the ties of relationship and considerations of policy, uniformly befriended the Netherlands, so far as words and protestations could go, at the court of Philip. Active co-operation; practical assistance, he had certainly not rendered. He had unquestionably been too much inclined to accomplish the impossibility of assisting the states without offending the King—an effort which, in the homely language of Hans Jenitz; was “like wishing his skin washed without being wet.” He had even interposed many obstacles to the free action of the Prince, as has been seen in the course of this history, but nevertheless, the cause of the Netherlands, of religion, and of humanity had much to lose by his death. His eldest son and successor, Rudolph the second, was an ardent Catholic, whose relations with a proscribed prince and a reformed population could hardly remain long in a satisfactory state. The New Emperor had, however, received the secret envoys of Orange with bounty, and was really desirous of accomplishing the pacification of the provinces. His envoys had assisted at all the recent deliberations between the estates and Don John, and their vivid remonstrances removed, at this juncture, the last objection on the part of the Governor-General. With a secret sigh, he deferred the darling and mysterious hope which had lighted him to the Netherlands, and consented to the departure of the troops by land.

All obstacles having been thus removed, the memorable treaty called the Perpetual Edict was signed at Marche en Famine on the 12th, and at Brussels on the 17th of February, 1577. This document, issued in the name of the King, contained nineteen articles. It approved and ratified the Peace of Ghent, in consideration that the prelates and clergy, with the doctors ‘utriusque juris’ of Louvain, had decided that nothing in that treaty conflicted either with the supremacy of the Catholic Church or the authority of the King, but, on the contrary, that it advanced the interests of both. It promised that the soldiery should depart “freely, frankly, and without delay;

Page 839

by land, never to return except in case of foreign war”—the Spaniards to set forth within forty days, the Germans and others so soon as arrangements had been made by the states-general for their payment. It settled that all prisoners, on both sides, should be released, excepting the Count Van Buren, who was to be set free so soon as the states-general having been convoked, the Prince of Orange should have fulfilled the resolutions to be passed by that assembly. It promised the maintenance of all the privileges, charters, and constitutions of the Netherlands. It required of the states all oath to maintain the Catholic religion. It recorded their agreement to disband their troops. It settled that Don John should be received as Governor-General, immediately upon the departure of the Spaniards, Italians, and Burgundians from the provinces.

These were the main provisions of this famous treaty, which was confirmed a few weeks afterwards by Philip, in a letter addressed to the states of Brabant, and by an edict issued at Madrid. It will be seen that everything required by the envoys of the states, at the commencement of their negotiations, had been conceded by Don John. They had claimed the departure of the troops, either by land or sea. He had resisted the demand a long time, but had at last consented to despatch them by sea. Their departure by land had then been insisted upon. This again he had most reluctantly conceded. The ratification of the Ghent treaty, he had peremptorily refused. He had come to the provinces, at the instant of its conclusion, and had, of course, no instructions on the subject. Nevertheless, slowly receding, he had agreed, under certain reservations, to accept the treaty. Those reservations relating to the great points of Catholic and royal supremacy, he insisted upon subjecting to his own judgment alone. Again he was overruled. Most unwillingly he agreed to accept, instead of his own conscientious conviction, the dogmas of the State Council and of the Louvain doctors. Not seeing very clearly how a treaty which abolished the edicts of Charles the Fifth and the ordinances of Alva—which removed the religious question in Holland and Zealand from the King’s jurisdiction to that of the states-general—which had caused persecution to surcease—had established toleration—and which moreover, had confirmed the arch rebel and heretic of all the Netherlands in the government of the two rebellious and heretic provinces, as stadholder for the King—not seeing very clearly how such a treaty was “advantageous rather than prejudicial to royal absolutism and an exclusive Catholicism,” he naturally hesitated at first.

Page 840

The Governor had thus disconcerted the Prince of Orange, not by the firmness of his resistance, but by the amplitude of his concessions. The combinations of William the Silent were, for an instant, deranged. Had the Prince expected such liberality, he would have placed his demands upon a higher basis, for it is not probable that he contemplated or desired a pacification. The Duke of Aerschot and the Bishop of Liege in vain essayed to prevail upon his deputies at Marche en Famine, to sign the agreement of the 27th January, upon which was founded the Perpetual Edict. They refused to do so without consulting the Prince and the estates. Meantime, the other commissioners forced the affair rapidly forward. The states sent a deputation to the Prince to ask his opinion, and signed the agreement before it was possible to receive his reply. This was to treat him with little courtesy, if not absolutely with bad faith. The Prince was disappointed and indignant. In truth, as appeared from all his language and letters, he had no confidence in Don John. He believed him a consummate hypocrite, and as deadly a foe to the Netherlands as the Duke of Alva, or Philip himself. He had carefully studied twenty-five intercepted letters from the King, the Governor, Jerome de Roda, and others, placed recently in his hands by the Duke of Aerschot, and had found much to confirm previous and induce fresh suspicion. Only a few days previously to the signature of the treaty, he had also intercepted other letters from influential personages, Alonzo de Vargas and others, disclosing extensive designs to obtain possession of the strong places in the country, and then to reduce the land to absolute Subjection. He had assured the estates, therefore, that the deliberate intention of the Government, throughout the whole negotiation, was to deceive, whatever might be the public language of Don John and his agents. He implored them, therefore, to, have “pity upon the poor country,” and to save the people from falling into the trap which was laid for them. From first to last, he had expressed a deep and wise distrust, and justified it by ample proofs. He was, with reason, irritated, therefore, at the haste with which the states had concluded the agreement with Don John—at the celerity with which, as he afterwards expressed it, “they had rushed upon the boar-spear of that sanguinary heart.” He believed that everything had been signed and Sworn by the Governor, with the mental reservation that such agreements were valid only until he should repent having made them. He doubted the good faith and the stability of the grand seigniors. He had never felt confidence in the professions of the time-serving Aerschot, nor did he trust even the brave Champagny, notwithstanding his services at the sack of Antwerp. He was especially indignant that provision had been made, not for demolishing but for restoring to his Majesty those hateful citadels, nests of tyranny, by which the flourishing cities of

Page 841

the land were kept in perpetual anxiety. Whether in the hands of King, nobles, or magistrates, they were equally odious to him, and he had long since determined that they should be razed to the ground. In short, he believed that the estates had thrust their heads into the lion's mouth, and he foresaw the most gloomy consequences from the treaty which had just been concluded. He believed, to use his own language, "that the only difference between Don John and Alva or Requesens was, that he was younger and more foolish than his predecessors, less capable of concealing his venom, more impatient, to dip his hands in blood."

In the Pacification of Ghent, the Prince had achieved the prize of his life-long labors. He had banded a mass of provinces by the ties of a common history, language, and customs, into a league against a foreign tyranny. He had grappled Holland and Zealand to their sister provinces by a common love for their ancient liberties, by a common hatred to a Spanish soldiery. He had exorcised the evil demon of religious bigotry by which the body politic had been possessed so many years; for the Ghent treaty, largely interpreted, opened the door to universal toleration. In the Perpetual Edict the Prince saw his work undone. Holland and Zealand were again cut adrift from the other fifteen provinces, and war would soon be let loose upon that devoted little territory. The article stipulating the maintenance of the Ghent treaty he regarded as idle wind; the solemn saws of the State Council and the quiddities from Louvain being likely to prove but slender bulwarks against the returning tide of tyranny. Either it was tacitly intended to tolerate the Reformed religion, or to hunt it down. To argue that the Ghent treaty, loyally interpreted, strengthened ecclesiastical or royal despotism, was to contend that a maniac was more dangerous in fetters than when armed with a sword; it was to be blind to the difference between a private conventicle and a public scaffold. The Perpetual Edict, while affecting to sustain the treaty, would necessarily destroy it at a blow, while during the brief interval of repose, tyranny would have renewed its youth like the eagles. Was it possible, then, for William of Orange to sustain the Perpetual Edict, the compromise with Don John? Ten thousand ghosts from the Lake of Harlem, from the famine and plague-stricken streets of Leyden, from the smoking ruins of Antwerp, rose to warn him against such a composition with a despotism as subtle as it was remorseless.

It was, therefore, not the policy of William of Orange, suspecting, as he did, Don John, abhorring Philip, doubting the Netherland nobles, confiding only in the mass of the citizens, to give his support to the Perpetual Edict. He was not the more satisfied because the states had concluded the arrangement without his sanction, and against his express, advice. He refused to publish or recognize the treaty in Holland and Zealand. A few weeks before, he had privately

Page 842

laid before the states of Holland and Zealand a series of questions, in order to test their temper, asking them, in particular, whether they were prepared to undertake a new and sanguinary war for the sake of their religion, even although their other privileges should be recognised by the new government, and a long and earnest debate had ensued, of a satisfactory nature, although no positive resolution was passed upon the subject.

As soon as the Perpetual Edict had been signed, the states-general had sent to the Prince, requesting his opinion and demanding his sanction. Orange, in the name of Holland and Zealand, instantly returned an elaborate answer, taking grave exceptions to the whole tenor of the Edict. He complained that the constitution of the land was violated, because the ancient privilege of the states-general to assemble at their pleasure, had been invaded, and because the laws of every province were set at nought by the continued imprisonment of Count Van Buren, who had committed no crime, and whose detention proved that no man, whatever might be promised, could expect security for life or liberty. The ratification of the Ghent treaty, it was insisted, was in no wise distinct and categorical, but was made dependent on a crowd of deceitful subterfuges. He inveighed bitterly against the stipulation in the Edict, that the states should pay the wages of the soldiers, whom they had just proclaimed to be knaves and rebels, and at whose hands they had suffered such monstrous injuries. He denounced the cowardice which could permit this band of hirelings to retire with so much jewelry, merchandize, and plate, the result of their robberies. He expressed, however, in the name of the two provinces, a willingness to sign the Edict, provided the states-general would agree solemnly beforehand, in case the departure of the Spaniards did not take place within the stipulated tune, to abstain from all recognition of, or communication with, Don John, and themselves to accomplish the removal of the troops by force of arms.

Such was the first and solemn manifesto made by the Prince in reply to the Perpetual Edict; the states of Holland and Zealand uniting heart and hand in all that he thought, wrote, and said. His private sentiments were in strict accordance with the opinions thus publicly recorded. “Whatever appearance Don John may assume to the contrary,” wrote the Prince to his brother, “’tis by no means his intention to maintain the Pacification, and less still to cause the Spaniards to depart, with whom he keeps up the most strict correspondence possible.”

On the other hand, the Governor was most anxious to conciliate the Prince. He was most earnest to win the friendship of the man without whom every attempt to recover Holland and Zealand, and to re-establish royal and ecclesiastical tyranny, he knew to be hopeless. “This is the pilot,” wrote Don John to Philip, “who guides the bark. He alone can destroy or save it. The greatest obstacles would be removed if he could be gained.” He had proposed, and Philip had approved the proposition, that the Count Van Buren should be clothed with his father’s dignities, on condition that the Prince should

himself retire into Germany. It was soon evident, however, that such a proposition would meet with little favor, the office of father of his country and protector of her liberties not being transferable.

Page 843

While at Louvain, whither he had gone after the publication of the Perpetual Edict, Don John had conferred with the Duke of Aerschot, and they had decided that it would be well to send Doctor Leoninus on a private mission to the Prince. Previously to his departure on this errand, the learned envoy had therefore a full conversation with the Governor. He was charged to represent to the Prince the dangers to which Don John had exposed himself in coming from Spain to effect the pacification of the Netherlands. Leoninus was instructed to give assurance that the treaty just concluded should be maintained, that the Spaniards should depart, that all other promises should be inviolably kept, and that the Governor would take up arms against all who should oppose the fulfilment of his engagements. He was to represent that Don John, in proof of his own fidelity, had placed himself in the power of the states. He was to intimate to the Prince that an opportunity was now offered him to do the crown a service, in recompence for which he would obtain, not only pardon for his faults, but the favor of the monarch, and all the honors which could be desired; that by so doing he would assure the future prosperity of his family; that Don John would be his good friend, and, as such; would do more for him than he could imagine. The envoy was also to impress upon the Prince, that if he persisted in his opposition every man's hand would be against him, and the ruin of his house inevitable. He was to protest that Don John came but to forgive and to forget, to restore the ancient government and the ancient prosperity, so that, if it was for those objects the Prince had taken up arms, it was now his duty to lay them down, and to do his utmost to maintain peace and the Catholic religion. Finally, the envoy was to intimate that if he chose to write to Don John, he might be sure to receive a satisfactory answer. In these pacific instructions and friendly expressions, Don John was sincere. "The name of your Majesty," said he, plainly, in giving an account of this mission to the King, "is as much abhorred and despised in the Netherlands as that of the Prince of Orange is loved and feared. I am negotiating with him, and giving him every security, for I see that the establishment of peace, as well as the maintenance of the Catholic religion, and the obedience to your Majesty, depend now upon him. Things have reached that pass that 'tis necessary to make a virtue of necessity. If he lend an ear to my proposals, it will be only upon very advantageous conditions, but to these it will be necessary to submit, rather than to lose everything."

Page 844

Don John was in earnest; unfortunately he was not aware that the Prince was in earnest also. The crusader, who had sunk thirty thousand paynims at a blow, and who was dreaming of the Queen of Scotland and the throne of England, had not room in his mind to entertain the image of a patriot. Royal favors, family prosperity, dignities, offices, orders, advantageous conditions, these were the baits with which the Governor angled for William of Orange. He did not comprehend that attachment to a half-drowned land and to a despised religion, could possibly stand in the way of those advantageous conditions and that brilliant future. He did not imagine that the rebel, once assured not only of pardon but of advancement, could hesitate to refuse the royal hand thus amicably offered. Don John had not accurately measured his great antagonist.

The results of the successive missions which he despatched to the Prince were destined to enlighten him. In the course of the first conversation between Leoninus and the Prince at Middelburg, the envoy urged that Don John had entered the Netherlands without troops, that he had placed himself in the power of the Duke of Aerschot, that he had since come to Louvain without any security but the promise of the citizens and of the students; and that all these things proved the sincerity of his intentions. He entreated the Prince not to let slip so favorable an opportunity for placing his house above the reach of every unfavorable chance, spoke to him of Marius, Sylla, Julius Caesar, and other promoters of civil wars, and on retiring for the day, begged him to think gravely on what he had thus suggested, and to pray that God might inspire him with good resolutions.

Next day, William informed the envoy that, having prayed to God for assistance, he was more than ever convinced of his obligation to lay the whole matter before the states, whose servant he was. He added, that he could not forget the deaths of Egmont and Horn, nor the manner in which the promise made to the confederate nobles by the Duchess of Parma, had been visited, nor the conduct of the French monarch towards Admiral Coligny. He spoke of information which he had received from all quarters, from Spain, France, and Italy, that there was a determination to make war upon him and upon the states of Holland and Zealand. He added that they were taking their measures in consequence, and that they were well aware that a Papal nuncio had arrived in the Netherlands, to intrigue against them. In the evening, the Prince complained that the estates had been so precipitate in concluding their arrangement with Don John. He mentioned several articles in the treaty which were calculated to excite distrust; dwelling particularly on the engagement entered into by the estates to maintain the Catholic religion. This article he declared to be in direct contravention to the Ghent treaty, by which this point was left to the decision of a future assembly of the estates-general. Leoninus

Page 845

essayed, as well as he could, to dispute these positions. In their last interview, the Prince persisted in his intention of laying the whole matter before the states of Holland and Zealand. Not to do so, he said, would be to expose himself to ruin on one side, and on the other, to the indignation of those who might suspect him of betraying them. The envoy begged to be informed if any hope could be entertained of a future arrangement. Orange replied that he had no expectation of any, but advised Doctor Leoninus to be present at Dort when the estates should assemble.

Notwithstanding the unfavorable result, of this mission, Don John did not even yet despair of bending the stubborn character of the Prince. He hoped that, if a personal interview between them could be arranged, he should be able to remove many causes of suspicion from the mind of his adversary. “In such times as these,” wrote the Governor to Philip, “we can make no election, nor do I see any remedy to preserve the state from destruction, save to gain over this man, who has so much influence with the nation.” The Prince had, in truth, the whole game in his hands. There was scarcely a living creature in Holland and Zealand who was not willing to be bound by his decision in every emergency. Throughout the rest of the provinces, the mass of the people looked up to him with absolute confidence, the clergy and the prominent nobles respecting and fearing him, even while they secretly attempted to thwart his designs. Possessing dictatorial power in two provinces, vast influences in the other fifteen, nothing could be easier for him than to betray his country. The time was singularly propitious. The revengeful King was almost on his knees to the denounced rebel. Everything was proffered: pardon, advancement, power. An indefinite vista was opened. “You cannot imagine,” said Don John, “how much it will be within my ability to do for you.” The Governor was extremely anxious to purchase the only enemy whom Philip feared. The Prince had nothing personally to gain by a continuance of the contest. The ban, outlawry, degradation, pecuniary ruin, assassination, martyrdom—-these were the only guerdons he could anticipate. He had much to lose: but yesterday loaded with dignities, surrounded by pomp and luxury, with many children to inherit his worldly gear, could he not recover all; and more than all, to-day? What service had he to render in exchange? A mere nothing. He had but to abandon the convictions of a lifetime, and to betray a million or two of hearts which trusted him.

As to the promises made by the Governor to rule the country with gentleness, the Prince could not do otherwise than commend the intention, even while distrusting the fulfilment. In his reply to the two letters of Don John, he thanked his Highness, with what seemed a grave irony, for the benign courtesy and signal honor which he had manifested to him, by inviting him so humanely and so carefully to a tranquil life,

Page 846

wherein, according to his Highness, consisted the perfection of felicity in this mortal existence, and by promising him so liberally favor and grace. He stated, however, with earnestness, that the promises in regard to the pacification of the poor Netherland people were much more important. He had ever expected, he said, beyond all comparison, the welfare and security of the public before his own; “having always placed his particular interests under his foot, even as he was still resolved to do, as long as life should endure.”

Thus did William of Orange receive the private advances made by the government towards himself. Meantime, Don John of Austria came to Louvain. Until the preliminary conditions of the Perpetual Edict had been fulfilled, and the Spanish troops sent out of the country, he was not to be received as Governor-General, but it seemed unbecoming for him to remain longer upon the threshold of the provinces. He therefore advanced into the heart of the country, trusting himself without troops to the loyalty of the people, and manifesting a show of chivalrous confidence which he was far from feeling. He was soon surrounded by courtiers, time-servers, noble office-seekers. They who had kept themselves invisible, so long as the issue of a perplexed negotiation seemed doubtful, now became obsequious and inevitable as his shadow. One grand seignior wanted a regiment, another a government, a third a chamberlain’s key; all wanted titles, ribbons, offices, livery, wages. Don John distributed favors and promises with vast liberality. The object with which Philip had sent him to the Netherlands, that he might conciliate the hearts of its inhabitants by the personal graces which he had inherited from his imperial father, seemed in a fair way of accomplishment, for it was not only the venal applause of titled sycophants that he strove to merit, but he mingled gaily and familiarly with all classes of citizens. Everywhere his handsome face and charming manner produced their natural effect. He dined and supped with the magistrates in the Town-house, honored general banquets of the burghers with his presence, and was affable and dignified, witty, fascinating, and commanding, by turns. At Louvain, the five military guilds held a solemn festival. The usual invitations were sent to the other societies, and to all the martial brotherhoods, the country round. Gay and gaudy processions, sumptuous banquets, military sports, rapidly succeeded each other. Upon the day of the great trial of skill; all the high functionaries of the land were, according to custom, invited, and the Governor was graciously pleased to honor the solemnity with his presence. Great was the joy of the multitude when Don John, complying with the habit of imperial and princely personages in former days, enrolled himself, cross-bow in hand, among the competitors. Greater still was the enthusiasm, when the conqueror of Lepanto brought down the bird, and was proclaimed king of

Page 847

the year, amid the tumultuous hilarity of the crowd. According to custom, the captains of the guild suspended a golden popinjay around the neck of his Highness, and placing themselves in procession, followed him to the great church. Thence, after the customary religious exercises, the multitude proceeded to the banquet, where the health of the new king of the cross-bowmen was pledged in deep potations. Long and loud was the merriment of this initiatory festival, to which many feasts succeeded during those brief but halcyon days, for the good-natured Netherlanders already believed in the blessed advent of peace. They did not dream that the war, which had been consuming the marrow of their commonwealth for ten flaming years, was but in its infancy, and that neither they nor their children were destined to see its close.

For the moment, however, all was hilarity at Louvain. The Governor, by his engaging deportment, awoke many reminiscences of the once popular Emperor. He expressed unbounded affection for the commonwealth, and perfect confidence in the loyalty of the inhabitants. He promised to maintain their liberties, and to restore their prosperity. Moreover, he had just hit the popinjay with a skill which his imperial father might have envied, and presided at burgher banquets with a grace which Charles could have hardly matched. His personal graces, for the moment, took the rank of virtues. “Such were the beauty and vivacity of his eyes,” says his privy councillor, Tassis, “that with a single glance he made all hearts his own,” yet, nevertheless, the predestined victim secretly felt himself the object of a marksman who had no time for painted popinjays, but who rarely missed his aim. “The whole country is at the devotion of the Prince, and nearly every one of its inhabitants;” such was his secret language to his royal brother, at the very moment of the exuberant manifestations which preceded his own entrance to Brussels.

While the Governor still tarried at Louvain, his secretary, Escovedo, was busily engaged in arranging the departure of the Spaniards, for, notwithstanding his original reluctance and the suspicions of Orange, Don John loyally intended to keep his promise. He even advanced twenty-seven thousand florins towards the expense of their removal, but to raise the whole amount required for transportation and arrears, was a difficult matter. The estates were slow in providing the one hundred and fifty thousand florins which they had stipulated to furnish. The King’s credit, moreover, was at a very low, ebb. His previous bonds had not been duly honored, and there had even been instances of royal repudiation, which by no means lightened the task of the financier, in effecting the new loans required. Escovedo was very blunt in his language upon this topic, and both Don John and himself urged punctuality in all future payments. They entreated that the bills drawn in Philip’s name upon Lombardy bankers, and discounted at a heavy

Page 848

rate of interest, by the Fuggers of Antwerp, might be duly provided for at maturity. "I earnestly beg," said Escovedo, "that your Majesty will see to the payment of these bills, at all events;" adding, with amusing simplicity, "this will be a means of recovering your Majesty's credit, and as for my own; I don't care to lose it, small though it be." Don John was even more solicitous. "For the love of God, Sire," he wrote, "do not be delinquent now. You must reflect upon the necessity of recovering your credit. If this receives now the final blow, all will desert your Majesty, and the soldiers too will be driven to desperation."

By dint of great diligence on the part of Escovedo, and through the confidence reposed in his character, the necessary funds were raised in the course of a few weeks. There was, however, a difficulty among the officers, as to the right of commanding the army on the homeward march. Don Alonzo de Vargas, as chief of the cavalry, was appointed to the post by the Governor, but Valdez, Romero, and other veterans, indignantly refused to serve under one whom they declared their inferior officer. There was much altercation and heartburning, and an attempt was made to compromise the matter by the appointment of Count Mansfeld to the chief command. This was, however, only adding fuel to the flames. All were dissatisfied with the superiority accorded to a foreigner, and Alonzo de Vargas, especially offended, addressed most insolent language to the Governor. Nevertheless, the arrangement was maintained, and the troops finally took their departure from the country, in the latter days of April. A vast concourse of citizens witnessed their departure, and could hardly believe their eyes, as they saw this incubus at last rolling off, by which the land had so many years been crushed. Their joy, although extravagant, was, however, limited by the reflection that ten thousand Germans still remained in the provinces, attached to the royal service, and that there was even yet a possibility that the departure of the Spaniards was a feint. In truth, Escovedo, although seconding the orders of Don John, to procure the removal of these troops, did not scruple to express his regret to the King, and his doubts as to the result. He had been ever in hopes that an excuse might be found in the condition of affairs in France, to justify the retention of the forces near that frontier. He assured the King that he felt very doubtful as to what turn matters might take, after the soldiers were gone, seeing the great unruliness which even their presence had been insufficient completely to check. He had hoped that they might be retained in the neighbourhood, ready to seize the islands at the first opportunity. "For my part," he wrote, "I care nothing for the occupation of places within the interior, but the islands must be secured. To do this," he continued, with a deceitful allusion to the secret projects of Don John, "is, in my opinion, more difficult than to effect the scheme upon England. If the one were accomplished, the other would be easily enough managed, and would require but moderate means. Let not your Majesty suppose that I say this as favoring the plan of Don John, for this I put entirely behind me."

Page 849

Notwithstanding these suspicions on the part of the people, this reluctance on the part of then government, the troops readily took up their line of march, and never paused till they reached Lombardy. Don John wrote repeatedly to the King, warmly urging the claims of these veterans, and of their distinguished officers, Romero, Avila, Valdez, Montesdocca, Verdugo, Mondragon, and others, to his bountiful consideration. They had departed in very ill humour, not having received any recompense for their long and arduous services. Certainly, if unflinching endurance, desperate valor, and congenial cruelty, could atone in the monarch's eyes for the mutiny, which had at last compelled their withdrawal, then were these laborers worthy of their hire. Don John had pacified them by assurances that they should receive adequate rewards on their arrival in Lombardy, and had urged the full satisfaction of their claims and his promises in the strongest language. Although Don Alonzo de Vargas had abused him "with-flying colors," as he expressed himself, yet he hastened to intercede for him with the King in the most affectionate terms. "His impatience has not surprised me," said the Governor, "although I regret that he has been offended, far I love and esteem him much. He has served many years with great distinction, and I can certify that his character for purity and religion is something extraordinary."

The first scene in the withdrawal of the troops had been the evacuation of the citadel of Antwerp, and it had been decided that the command of this most important fortress should be conferred upon the Duke of Aerschot. His claims as commander-in-chief, under the authority of the State Council, and as chief of the Catholic nobility, could hardly be passed over, yet he was a man whom neither party trusted. He was too visibly governed by interested motives. Arrogant where he felt secure of his own, or doubtful as to another's position, he could be supple and cringing when the relations changed. He refused an interview with William of Orange before consulting with Don John, and solicited one afterwards when he found that every effort was to be made to conciliate the Prince. He was insolent to the Governor-General himself in February, and respectful in March. He usurped the first place in the church, before Don John had been acknowledged Governor, and was the first to go forth to welcome him after the matter had been arranged. He made a scene of virtuous indignation in the State Council, because he was accused of place-hunting, but was diligent to secure an office of the highest dignity which the Governor could bestow. Whatever may have been his merits, it is certain that he inspired confidence neither in the adherents of the King nor of the Prince; while he by turns professed the warmest regard both to the one party and the other. Spaniards and patriots, Protestants and Catholics, suspected the man at the same moment, and ever attributed to his conduct a meaning which was the reverse of the apparent. Such is often the judgment passed upon those who fish in troubled waters only to fill their own nets.

Page 850

The Duke, however, was appointed Governor of the citadel. Sancho d'Avila, the former constable, refused, with Castillian haughtiness, to surrender the place to his successor, but appointed his lieutenant, Martin d'Oyo, to perform that ceremony. Escovedo, standing upon the drawbridge with Aerschot, administered the oath: "I, Philip, Duke of Aerschot," said the new constable, "solemnly swear to hold this castle for the King, and for no others." To which Escovedo added, "God help you, with all his angels, if you keep your oath; if not, may the Devil carry you away, body and soul." The few bystanders cried Amen; and with this hasty ceremony, the keys were delivered, the prisoners, Egmont, Capres, Goignies, and others, liberated, and the Spaniards ordered to march forth.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

A terrible animal, indeed, is an unbridled woman
Agreements were valid only until he should repent
All Protestants were beheaded, burned, or buried alive
Arrive at their end by fraud, when violence will not avail them
Attachment to a half-drowned land and to a despised religion
Barbara Blomberg, washerwoman of Ratisbon
Believed in the blessed advent of peace
Compassing a country's emancipation through a series of defeats
Don John of Austria
Don John was at liberty to be King of England and Scotland
Ferocity which even Christians could not have surpassed
Happy to glass themselves in so brilliant a mirror
His personal graces, for the moment, took the rank of virtues
Necessary to make a virtue of necessity
One-half to Philip and one-half to the Pope and Venice (slaves)
Quite mistaken: in supposing himself the Emperor's child
Sentimentality that seems highly apocryphal
She knew too well how women were treated in that country
Those who fish in troubled waters only to fill their own nets
Worn crescents in their caps at Leyden

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 27

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley 1855 1577 [*chapter ii*.]

Triumphal entrance of Don John into Brussels—Reverse of the picture —Analysis of the secret correspondence of Don John and Escovedo with Antonio Perez—Plots against

the Governor’s liberty—His desponding language and gloomy anticipations—-Recommendation of severe measures—Position and principles of Orange and his family— His private views on the question of peace and war—His toleration to Catholics and Anabaptists censured by his friends—Death of Viglius—New mission from the Governor to Orange—Details of the Gertruydenberg conferences—Nature and results of these negotiations—Papers exchanged between the envoys and Orange—Peter Panis executed for heresy—Three parties

Page 851

in the Netherlands— Dissimulation of Don John—His dread of capture.

As already narrated, the soldiery had retired definitely from the country at the end of April, after which Don John made his triumphal entrance into Brussels on the 1st of May. It was long since so festive a May-day had gladdened the hearts of Brabant. So much holiday magnificence had not been seen in the Netherlands for years. A solemn procession of burghers, preceded by six thousand troops, and garnished by the free companies of archers and musketeers, in their picturesque costumes, escorted the young prince along the streets of the capital. Don John was on horseback, wrapped in a long green cloak, riding between the Bishop of Liege and the Papal nuncio. He passed beneath countless triumphal arches. Banners waved before him, on which the battle of Lepanto, and other striking scenes in his life, were emblazoned. Minstrels sang verses, poets recited odes, rhetoric clubs enacted fantastic dramas in his honor, as he rode along. Young virgins crowned him with laurels. Fair women innumerable were clustered at every window, roof, and balcony, their bright robes floating like summer clouds above him. “Softly from those lovely clouds,” says a gallant chronicler, “descended the gentle rain of flowers.” Garlands were strewed before his feet, laurelled victory sat upon his brow. The same conventional enthusiasm and decoration which had characterized the holiday marches of a thousand conventional heroes were successfully produced. The proceedings began with the church, and ended with the banquet, the day was propitious, the populace pleased, and after a brilliant festival, Don John of Austria saw himself Governor-General of the provinces.

Three days afterwards, the customary oaths, to be kept with the customary conscientiousness, were rendered at the Town House, and for a brief moment all seemed smiling and serene.

There was a reverse to the picture. In truth, no language can describe the hatred which Don John entertained for the Netherlands and all the inhabitants. He had come to the country only as a stepping-stone to the English throne, and he never spoke, in his private letters, of the provinces or the people but in terms of abhorrence. He was in a “Babylon of disgust,” in a “Hell,” surrounded by “drunkards,” “wineskins,” “scoundrels,” and the like. From the moment of his arrival he had strained every nerve to retain the Spanish troops, and to send them away by sea when it should be no longer feasible to keep them. Escovedo shared in the sentiments and entered fully into the schemes of his chief. The plot, the secret enterprise, was the great cause of the advent of Don John in the uncongenial clime of Flanders. It had been, therefore, highly important, in his estimation, to set, as soon as possible, about the accomplishment of this important business. He accordingly entered into correspondence with Antonio Perez, the King’s

Page 852

most confidential Secretary of State at that period. That the Governor was plotting no treason is sufficiently obvious from the context of his letters: At the same time, with the expansiveness of his character, when he was dealing with one whom he deemed has close and trusty friend, he occasionally made use of expressions which might be made to seem equivocal. This was still more the case with poor Escovedo. Devoted to his master, and depending most implicitly upon the honor of Perez, he indulged in language which might be tortured into a still more suspicious shape when the devilish arts of Perez and the universal distrust of Philip were tending steadily to that end. For Perez —on the whole, the boldest, deepest, and most unscrupulous villain in that pit of duplicity, the Spanish court—was engaged at that moment with Philip, in a plot to draw from Don John and Escovedo, by means of this correspondence, the proofs of a treason which the King and minister both desired to find. The letters from Spain were written with this view—those from Flanders were interpreted to that end. Every confidential letter received by Perez was immediately laid by him before the King, every letter which the artful demon wrote was filled with hints as to the danger of the King's learning the existence of the correspondence, and with promises of profound secrecy upon his own part, and was then immediately placed in Philip's hands, to receive his comments and criticisms, before being copied and despatched to the Netherlands. The minister was playing a bold, murderous, and treacherous game, and played it in a masterly manner. Escovedo was lured to his destruction, Don John was made to fret his heart away, and Philip—more deceived than all—was betrayed in what he considered his affections, and made the mere tool of a man as false as himself and infinitely more accomplished.

Almost immediately after the arrival of Don John in the Netherlands; he had begun to express the greatest impatience for Escovedo, who had not been able to accompany his master upon his journey, but without whose assistance the Governor could accomplish none of his undertakings. "Being a man, not an angel, I cannot do all which I have to do," said he to Perez, "without a single person in whom I can confide." He protested that he could do no more than he was then doing. He went to bed at twelve and rose at seven, without having an hour in the day in which to take his food regularly; in consequence of all which he had already had three fevers. He was plunged into a world of distrust. Every man suspected him, and he had himself no confidence in a single individual throughout that whole Babylon of disgusts. He observed to Perez that he was at liberty to show his letters to the King, or to read them in the Council, as he meant always to speak the truth in whatever he should write. He was sure that Perez would do all for the best; and there is something touching in these expressions of an honest

Page 853

purpose towards Philip, and of generous confidence in Perez, while the two were thus artfully attempting to inveigle him into damaging revelations. The Netherlanders certainly had small cause to love or trust their new Governor, who very sincerely detested and suspected them, but Philip had little reason to complain of his brother. "Tell me if my letters are read in Council, and what his Majesty says about them," he wrote; "and, above all, send money. I am driven to desperation at finding myself sold to this people, utterly unprovided as I am, and knowing the slow manner in which all affairs are conducted in Spain."

He informed the King that there was but one man in the Netherlands, and that he was called the Prince of Orange. To him everything was communicated, with him everything was negotiated, opinions expressed by him were implicitly followed. The Governor vividly described the misgivings with which he had placed himself in the power of the states by going to Louvain, and the reluctance with which he had consented to send away the troops. After this concession, he complained that the insolence of the states had increased. "They think that they can do and undo what they like, now that I am at their mercy," he wrote to Philip. "Nevertheless, I do what you command without regarding that I am sold, and that I am in great danger of losing, my liberty, a loss which I dread more than anything in the world, for I wish to remain justified before God and men." He expressed, however, no hopes as to the result. Disrespect and rudeness could be pushed no further than it had already gone, while the Prince of Orange, the actual governor of the country, considered his own preservation dependent upon maintaining things as they then were. Don John, therefore, advised the King steadily to make preparations for "a rude and terrible war," which was not to be avoided, save by a miracle, and which ought not—to find him in this unprepared state. He protested that it was impossible to exaggerate the boldness which the people felt at seeing him thus defenseless. "They say publicly," he continued, "that your Majesty is not to be feared, not being capable of carrying on a war, and having consumed and exhausted every resource. One of the greatest injuries ever inflicted upon us was by Marquis Havre, who, after his return from Spain, went about publishing everywhere the poverty of the royal exchequer. This has emboldened them to rise, for they believe that, whatever the disposition, there is no strength to chastise them. They see a proof of the correctness of their reasoning in the absence of new levies, and in the heavy arrearages due to the old troops."

Page 854

He protested that he desired, at least, to be equal to the enemy, without asking, as others had usually done, for double the amount of the hostile force. He gave a glance at the foreign complications of the Netherlands, telling Philip that the estates were intriguing both with France and England. The English envoy had expressed much uneasiness at the possible departure of the Spanish troops from the Netherlands by sea, coupling it with a probable attempt to liberate the Queen of Scots. Don John, who had come to the provinces for no other purpose, and whose soul had been full of that romantic scheme, of course stoutly denied and ridiculed the idea. "Such notions," he had said to the envoy, "were subjects for laughter. If the troops were removed from the country, it was to strengthen his Majesty's force in the Levant." Mr. Rogers, much comforted, had expressed the warm friendship which Elizabeth entertained both for his Majesty and his Majesty's representative; protestations which could hardly seem very sincere, after the series of attempts at the Queen's life, undertaken so recently by his Majesty and his Majesty's former representative. Nevertheless, Don John had responded with great cordiality, had begged for Elizabeth's portrait, and had expressed the intention, if affairs went as he hoped, to go privately to England for the purpose of kissing her royal hand. Don John further informed the King, upon the envoy's authority, that Elizabeth had refused assistance to the estates, saying, if she stirred it would be to render aid to Philip, especially if France should meddle in the matter. As to France, the Governor advised Philip to hold out hopes to Alencon of espousing the Infanta, but by no means ever to fulfil such a promise, as the Duke, "besides being the shield of heretics, was unscrupulously addicted to infamous vices."

A month later, Escovedo described the downfall of Don John's hopes and his own in dismal language.—"You are aware," he wrote to Perez, "that a throne—a chair with a canopy—is our intention and our appetite, and all the rest is good for nothing. Having failed in our scheme, we are desperate and like madmen. All is now weariness and death." Having expressed himself in such desponding accents, he continued, a few days afterwards, in the same lugubrious vein, "I am ready to hang myself," said he, "and I would have done it already, if it were not for keeping myself as executioner for those who have done us so much harm. Ah, Senor Antonio Perez!" he added, "what terrible pertinacity have those devils shown in making us give up our plot. It seems as though Hell were opened and had sent forth heaps of demons to oppose our schemes." After these vigorous ejaculations he proceeded to inform his friend that the English envoy and the estates, governed by the Prince of Orange, in whose power were the much-coveted ships, had prevented the departure of the troops by sea. "These devils complain of the expense," said he; "but we would

Page 855

willingly swallow the cost if we could only get the ships." He then described Don John as so cast down by his disappointment as to be fit for nothing, and most desirous of quitting the Netherlands as soon as possible. He had no disposition to govern these wineskins. Any one who ruled in the provinces was obliged to do exactly what they ordered him to do. Such rule was not to the taste of Don John. Without any comparison, a woman would answer the purpose better than any man, and Escovedo accordingly suggested the Empress Dowager, or Madame de Parma, or even Madame de Lorraine. He further recommended that the Spanish troops, thus forced to leave the Netherlands by land, should be employed against the heretics in France. This would be a salve for the disgrace of removing them. "It would be read in history," continued the Secretary, "that the troops went to France in order to render assistance in a great religious necessity; while, at the same time, they will be on hand to chastise these drunkards, if necessary. To have the troops in France is almost as well as to keep them here." He begged to be forgiven if he spoke incoherently. 'T was no wonder that he should do so, for his reason had been disordered by the blow which had been received. As for Don John, he was dying to leave the country, and although the force was small for so great a general, yet it would be well for him to lead these troops to France in person. "It would sound well in history," said poor Escovedo, who always thought of posterity, without ever dreaming that his own private letters would be destined, after three centuries, to comment and earnest investigation; "it would sound well in history, that Don John went to restore, the French kingdom and to extirpate heretics, with six thousand foot and two thousand horse. 'Tis a better employment, too, than to govern such vile creatures as these."

If, however, all their plans should fail, the Secretary suggested to his friend Antonio, that he must see and make courtiers of them. He suggested that a strong administration might be formed in Spain, with Don John, the Marquis de Los Velez, and the Duke of Sesa. "With such chiefs, and with Anthony and John—[Viz., John of Escovedo and Antony Perez.]—for acolytes," he was of opinion that much good work might be done, and that Don John might become "the staff for his Majesty's old age." He implored Perez, in the most urgent language, to procure Philip's consent that his brother should leave the provinces. "Otherwise," said he, "we shall see the destruction of the friend whom we so much love! He will become seriously ill, and if so, good night to him! His body is too delicate." Escovedo protested that he would rather die himself. "In the catastrophe of Don John's death," he continued, "adieu the court, adieu the world!" He would incontinently bury himself among the mountains of San Sebastian, "preferring to dwell among wild animals than among courtiers." Escovedo,

Page 856

accordingly, not urged by the most disinterested motives certainly, but with as warm a friendship for his master as princes usually inspire, proceeded to urge upon Perez the necessity of, aiding the man who was able to help them. The first step was to get him out of the Netherlands. That was his constant thought, by day and night. As it would hardly be desirable for him to go alone, it seemed proper that Escovedo should, upon some pretext, be first sent to Spain. Such a pretext would be easily found, because, as Don John had accepted the government, "it would be necessary for him to do all which the rascals bade him." After these minute statements, the Secretary warned his correspondent of the necessity of secrecy, adding that he especially feared "all the court ladies, great and small, but that he in everything confided entirely in Perez."

Nearly at the same time, Don John wrote to Perez in a similar tone. "Ah, Senor Antonio," he exclaimed, "how certain is my disgrace and my misfortune. Ruined is our enterprise, after so much labor and such skilful management." He was to have commenced the work with the very Spanish soldiers who were now to be sent off by land, and he had nothing for it but to let them go, or to come to an open rupture with the states. "The last, his conscience, his duty, and the time, alike forbade." He was therefore obliged to submit to the ruin of his plans, and "could think of nothing save to turn hermit, a condition in which a man's labors, being spiritual, might not be entirely in vain." He was so overwhelmed by the blow, he said, that he was constantly thinking of an anchorite's life. That which he had been leading had become intolerable. He was not fitted for the people of the Netherlands, nor they for him. Rather than stay longer than was necessary in order to appoint his successor, there was no resolution he might not take, even to leaving everything and coming upon them when they least expected him, although he were to receive a bloody punishment in consequence. He, too, suggested the Empress, who had all the qualities which he lacked himself, or Madame de Parma, or Madame de Lorraine, as each of them was more fit to govern the provinces than he pretended to be. "The people," said he, plainly, "are beginning to abhor me, and I abhor them already." He entreated Perez to get him out of the country by fair means or foul, "per fas aut per nefas." His friends ought to procure his liberation, if they wished to save him from the sin of disobedience, and even of infamy. He expressed the most unbounded confidence in the honor of his correspondent, adding that if nothing else could procure his release, the letter might be shown to the King. In general, the Governor was always willing that Perez should make what changes he thought advisable in the letters for his Majesty, altering or softening whatever seemed crude or harsh, provided always the main point—that of procuring his recal—were steadily kept in view, in this, said the Governor, vehemently, my life, my honor, and my soul are all at stake; for as to the two first, I shall forfeit them both certainly, and, in my desperate condition, I shall run great risk of losing the last.

Page 857

On the other hand, Perez was profuse in his professions of friendship both to Don John and to Escovedo; dilating in all his letters upon the difficulty of approaching the King upon the subject of his brother's recal, but giving occasional information that an incidental hint had been ventured which might not remain without effect. All these letters, were, however, laid before Philip, for his approval, before being despatched, and the whole subject thoroughly and perpetually discussed between them, about which Perez pretended that he hardly dared breathe a syllable to his Majesty. He had done what he could, he said, while reading, piece by piece, to the King, during a fit of the gout, the official despatches from the Netherlands, to insinuate such of the arguments used by the Governor and Escovedo as might seem admissible, but it was soon obvious that no impression could be made upon the royal mind. Perez did not urge the matter, therefore, "because," said he, "if the King should suspect that we had any other object than his interests, we should all be lost." Every effort should be made by Don John and all his friends to secure his Majesty's entire confidence, since by that course more progress would be made in their secret plans, than by proceedings concerning which the Governor wrote "with such fury and anxiety of heart." Perez warned his correspondent, therefore, most solemnly, against the danger of "striking the blow without hitting the mark," and tried to persuade him that his best interests required him to protract his residence in the provinces for a longer period. He informed Don John that his disappointment as to the English scheme had met with the warmest sympathy of the King, who had wished his brother success. "I have sold to him, at as high a price as I could," said Perez, "the magnanimity with which your Highness had sacrificed, on that occasion, a private object to his service."

The minister held the same language, when writing, in a still more intimate and expansive style, to Escovedo. "We must avoid, by a thousand—leagues, the possibility of the King's thinking us influenced by private motives," he observed; "for we know the King and the delicacy of these matters. The only way to gain the good-will of the man is carefully to accommodate ourselves to his tastes, and to have the appearance of being occupied solely with his interests." The letter, like all the rest, being submitted to "the man" in question before being sent, was underlined by him at this paragraph and furnished with the following annotation: "but you must enlarge upon the passage which I have marked—say more, even if you are obliged to copy the letter, in order that we may see the nature of the reply."

In another letter to Escovedo, Perez enlarged upon the impropriety, the impossibility of Don John's leaving the Netherlands at that time. The King was so resolute upon that point, he said, that 'twas out of the question to suggest the matter. "We should, by so doing, only lose all credit with him in other things. You know what a terrible man he is; if he should once suspect us of having a private end in view, we should entirely miss our mark." Especially the secretary was made acquainted with the enormous error which would be committed by Don John in leaving his post.

Page 858

Perez “had ventured into the water” upon the subject, he said, by praising the Governor warmly to his Majesty. The King had responded by a hearty eulogium, adding that the greatest comfort in having such a brother was, that he might be where his Majesty could not be. Therefore, it was out of the question for Don John to leave the provinces. The greatest tact was necessary, urged Perez, in dealing with the King. If he should once “suspect that we have a private purpose, we are lost, and no Demosthenes or Cicero would be able to influence him afterwards.” Perez begged that his ardent attachment to Don John might be represented in the strongest colors to that high personage, who was to be assured that every effort would be made to place him at the head of affairs in Spain, according to the suggestion of Escovedo. “It would never do, however,” he continued, “to let our man see that we desire it, for then we should never succeed. The only way to conquer him is to make him believe that things are going on as he wishes, not as his Highness may desire, and that we have none of us any will but the King’s.” Upon this passage the “terrible man” made a brief annotation: “this paragraph does admirably,” he said, adding, with characteristic tautology, “and what you say in it is also excellent.”

“Therefore,” continued the minister, “God forbid, Master Escovedo, that you should come hither now; for we should all be lost. In the English matter, I assure you that his Majesty was extremely anxious that the plan should succeed, either through the Pope, or otherwise. That puts me in mind,” added Perez, “to say, body of God! Senor Escovedo! how the devil came you to send that courier to Rome about the English plot without giving me warning?” He then proceeded to state that the papal nuncio in Spain had been much troubled in mind upon the subject, and had sent for him. “I went,” said Perez, “and after he, had closed the door, and looked through the keyhole to see that there were no listeners, he informed me that he had received intelligence from the Pope as to the demands made by Don John upon his Holiness for bulls, briefs, and money to assist him in his English scheme, and that eighty thousand ducats had already been sent to him in consequence.” Perez added that the nuncio was very anxious to know how the affair should best be communicated to the King, without prejudice to his Highness. He had given him the requisite advice, he continued, and had himself subsequently told the King that, no doubt, letters had been written by Don John to his Majesty, communicating these negotiations at Rome, but that probably the despatches had been forgotten. Thus, giving himself the appearance of having smoothed the matter with the King, Perez concluded with a practical suggestion of much importance —the necessity, namely, of procuring the assassination of the Prince of Orange as soon as possible. “Let it never be absent from your mind,” said he, “that a good occasion must be found for finishing Orange, since, besides the service which will thus be rendered to our master, and to the states, it will be worth something to ourselves.”

Page 859

No apology is necessary for laying a somewhat extensive analysis of this secret correspondence before the reader. If there be any value in the examples of history, certainly few chronicles can furnish a more instructive moral. Here are a despotic king and his confidential minister laying their heads together in one cabinet; the viceroy of the most important provinces of the realm, with his secretary, deeply conferring in another, not as to the manner of advancing the great interests, moral or material, of the people over whom God has permitted them to rule, but as to the best means of arranging conspiracies against the throne and life of a neighboring sovereign, with the connivance and subsidies of the Pope. In this scheme, and in this only, the high conspirators are agreed. In every other respect, mutual suspicion and profound deceit characterize the scene. The Governor is filled with inexpressible loathing for the whole nation of “drunkards and wineskins” who are at the very moment strewing flowers in his path, and deafening his ears with shouts of welcome; the king, while expressing unbounded confidence in the viceroy, is doing his utmost, through the agency of the subtlest intriguer in the world, to inveigle him into confessions of treasonable schemes, and the minister is filling reams of paper with protestations of affection for the governor and secretary, with sneers at the character of the King, and with instructions as to the best method of deceiving him, and then laying the despatches before his Majesty for correction and enlargement. To complete the picture, the monarch and his minister are seen urging the necessity of murdering the foremost man of the age upon the very dupe who, within a twelvemonth, was himself to be assassinated by the self-same pair; while the arch-plotter who controls the strings of all these complicated projects is equally false to King, Governor, and Secretary, and is engaging all the others in these blind and tortuous paths, for the accomplishment of his own secret and most ignoble aims.

In reply to the letters of Perez, Don John constantly expressed the satisfaction and comfort which he derived from them in the midst of his annoyances. “He was very disconsolate,” he said, “to be in that hell, and to be obliged to remain in it,” now that the English plot had fallen to the ground, but he would nevertheless take patience, and wait for a more favorable conjuncture.

Escovedo expressed the opinion, however, notwithstanding all the suggestions of Perez, that the presence of Don John in the provinces had become entirely superfluous. “An old woman with her distaff,” suggested the Secretary, “would be more appropriate; for there would be nothing to do, if the states had their way, save to sign everything which they should command.” If there should be war, his Highness would, of course, not abandon his post; even if permitted to do so; but otherwise, nothing could be gained by a prolonged

Page 860

residence. As to the scheme of assassinating the Prince of Orange, Escovedo prayed Perez to believe him incapable of negligence on the subject. “You know that the finishing of Orange is very near my heart,” wrote the poor dupe to the man by whom he was himself so soon to be finished. “You may believe that I have never forgotten it, and never will forget it, until it be done. Much, and very much artifice is, however, necessary to accomplish this object. A proper person to undertake a task fraught with such well-known danger, is hard to find. Nevertheless, I will not withdraw my attention from the subject till such a person be procured, and the deed be done.”

A month later, Escovedo wrote that he was about to visit Spain. He complained that he required rest in his old age, but that Perez could judge how much rest he could get in such a condition of affairs. He was, unfortunately, not aware, when he wrote, how soon his correspondent was to give him a long repose. He said, too, that the pleasure of visiting his home was counterbalanced by the necessity of travelling back to the Netherlands; but he did not know that Perez was to spare him that trouble, and to send him forth upon a much longer journey.

The Governor-General, had, in truth, not inspired the popular party or its leader with confidence, nor did he place the least reliance upon them. While at Louvain, he had complained that a conspiracy had been formed against his life and liberty. Two French gentlemen, Bonnivet and Bellangreville, had been arrested on suspicion of a conspiracy to secure his person, and to carry him off a prisoner to Rochelle. Nothing came of the examination which followed; the prisoners were released, and an apology was sent by the states-general to the Duke of Alencon, as well for the indignity which had been offered to two of his servants, as for the suspicion which had been cast upon himself, Don John, however, was not satisfied. He persisted in asserting the existence of the conspiracy, and made no secret of his belief that the Prince of Orange was acquainted with the arrangement. As may be supposed, nothing was discovered in the course of the investigation to implicate that astute politician. The Prince had indeed secretly recommended that the Governor should be taken into custody on his first arrival, not for the purpose of assassination or personal injury, but in order to extort better terms from Philip, through the affection or respect which he might be supposed to entertain for his brother. It will be remembered that unsuccessful attempts had also been made to capture the Duke of Alva and the Commander Requesens. Such achievements comported with the spirit of the age, and although it is doubtful whether any well-concerted plot existed against the liberty of the Governor, it is certain that he entertained no doubt on the subject himself. In addition to these real or suspected designs, there was an ever-present consciousness in the mind of Don John that the enthusiasm

Page 861

which greeted his presence was hollow, that no real attachment was felt for his person, that his fate was leading him into a false position, that the hearts of the people were fixed upon another, and that they were never to be won by himself. Instinctively he seemed to feel a multitude of invisible threads twining into a snare around him, and the courageous heart and the bounding strength became uneasily conscious of the act in which they were to be held captive till life should be wasted quite away.

The universal affection for the rebel Prince, and the hopeless abandonment of the people to that deadliest of sins, the liberty of conscience, were alike unquestionable. "They mean to remain free, sire," wrote Escovedo to Philip, "and to live as they please. To that end they would be willing that the Turk should come to be master of the country. By the road which they are travelling, however, it will be the Prince of Orange—which comes to quite the same thing." At the same time, however, it was hoped that something might be made of this liberty of conscience. All were not equally sunk in the horrible superstition, and those who were yet faithful to Church and King might be set against their besotted brethren. Liberty of conscience might thus be turned to account. While two great parties were "by the ears, and pulling out each other's hair, all might perhaps be reduced together." His Majesty was warned, nevertheless, to expect the worst, and to believe that the country could only be cared with fire and blood. The position of the Governor was painful and perplexing. "Don John," said Escovedo, "is thirty years old. I promise your Majesty nothing, save that if he finds himself without requisite assistance, he will take himself off when your Majesty is least thinking of such a thing."

Nothing could be more melancholy than the tone of the Governor's letters. He believed himself disliked, even in the midst of affectionate demonstrations. He felt compelled to use moderate counsels, although he considered moderation of no avail. He was chained to his post, even though the post could, in his opinion, be more advantageously filled by another. He would still endeavour to gain the affections of the people, although he believed them hopelessly alienated. If patience would cure the malady of the country, he professed himself capable of applying the remedy, although the medicine had so far done but little good, and although he had no very strong hopes as to its future effects. "Thus far, however," said he, "I am but as one crying in the wilderness." He took occasion to impress upon his Majesty, in very strong language, the necessity of money. Secret agents, spies, and spies upon spies, were more necessary than ever, and were very expensive portions of government machinery. Never was money more wanted. Nothing could be more important than, to attend faithfully to the financial suggestions of Escovedo, and Don John, therefore, urged his Majesty, again and again,

Page 862

not to dishonor their drafts. “Money is the gruel,” said he, “with which we must cure this sick man;” and he therefore prayed all those who wished well to his efforts, to see that his Majesty did not fail him in this important matter. Notwithstanding, however, the vigor of his efforts, and the earnestness of his intentions, he gave but little hope to his Majesty of any valuable fruit from the pacification just concluded. He saw the Prince of Orange strengthening himself, “with great fury,” in Holland and Zealand; he knew that the Prince was backed by the Queen of England, who, notwithstanding her promises to Philip and himself, had offered her support to the rebels in case the proposed terms of peace were rejected in Holland, and he felt that “nearly the whole people was at the devotion of the Prince.”

Don John felt more and more convinced, too, that a conspiracy was on foot against his liberty. There were so many of the one party, and so few of the other, that if he were once fairly “trussed,” he affirmed that not a man among the faithful would dare to budge an inch. He therefore informed his Majesty that he was secretly meditating a retreat to some place of security; judging very properly that, if he were still his own master, he should be able to exert more influence over those who were still well disposed, than if he should suffer himself to be taken captive. A suppressed conviction that he could effect nothing, except with his sword, pierced through all his more prudent reflections. He maintained that, after all, there was no remedy for the body but to cut off the diseased parts at once, and he therefore begged his Majesty for the means of performing the operation handsomely. The general expressions which he had previously used in favor of broths and mild treatment hardly tallied with the severe amputation thus recommended. There was, in truth, a constant struggle going on between the fierceness of his inclinations and the shackles which had been imposed upon him. He already felt entirely out of place, and although he scorned to fly from his post so long as it seemed the post of danger, he was most anxious that the King should grant him his dismissal, so soon as his presence should no longer be imperiously required. He was sure that the people would never believe in his Majesty’s forgiveness until the man concerning whom they entertained so much suspicion should be removed; for they saw in him only the “thunderbolt of his Majesty’s wrath.” Orange and England confirmed their suspicions, and sustained their malice. Should he be compelled, against his will, to remain, he gave warning that he might do something which would be matter of astonishment to everybody.

Page 863

Meantime, the man in whose hands really lay the question of war and peace, sat at Middelburg, watching the deep current of events as it slowly flowed towards the precipice. The whole population of Holland and Zealand hung on his words. In approaching the realms of William the Silent, Don John felt that he had entered a charmed, circle, where the talisman of his own illustrious name lost its power, where his valor was paralyzed, and his sword rusted irrevocably in its sheath. “The people here,” he wrote, “are bewitched by the Prince of Orange. They love him, they fear him, and wish to have him for their master. They inform him of everything, and take no resolution without consulting him.”

While William was thus directing and animating the whole nation with his spirit, his immediate friends became more and more anxious concerning the perils to which he was exposed. His mother, who had already seen her youngest-born, Henry, her Adolphus, her chivalrous Louis, laid in their bloody graves for the cause of conscience, was most solicitous for the welfare of her “heart’s-beloved lord and son,” the Prince of Orange. Nevertheless, the high-spirited old dame was even more alarmed at the possibility of a peace in which that religious liberty for which so much dear blood had been, poured forth should be inadequately secured. “My heart longs for certain tidings from my lord,” she wrote to William, “for methinks the peace now in prospect will prove but an oppression for soul and conscience. I trust my heart’s dearly-beloved lord and son will be supported by Divine grace to do nothing against God and his own soul’s salvation. ’Tis better to lose the temporal than the eternal.” Thus wrote the mother of William, and we can feel the sympathetic thrill which such tender and lofty words awoke in his breast. His son, the ill-starred Philip, now for ten years long a compulsory sojourner in Spain, was not yet weaned from his affection for his noble parent, but sent messages of affection to him whenever occasion offered, while a less commendable proof of his filial affection he had lately afforded, at the expense of the luckless captain of his Spanish guard. That officer having dared in his presence to speak disrespectfully of his father, was suddenly seized about the waist by the enraged young Count, hurled out of the window, and killed stone-dead upon the spot. After this exhibition of his natural feelings, the Spanish government thought it necessary to take more subtle means to tame so turbulent a spirit. Unfortunately they proved successful.

Count John of Nassau, too, was sorely pressed for money. Six hundred thousand florins; at least, had been advanced by himself and brothers to aid the cause of Netherland freedom. Louis and himself had, unhesitatingly and immediately, turned into that sacred fund the hundred thousand crowns which the King of France had presented them for their personal use, for it was not the Prince of Orange alone who

Page 864

had consecrated his wealth and his life to the cause, but the members of his family, less immediately interested in the country, had thus furnished what may well be called an enormous subsidy, and one most disproportioned to their means. Not only had they given all the cash which they could command by mortgaging their lands and rents, their plate and furniture, but, in the words of Count John himself, “they had taken the chains and jewels from the necks of their wives, their children, and their mother, and had hawked them about, as if they had themselves been traders and hucksters.” And yet, even now, while stooping under this prodigious debt, Count John asked not for present repayment. He only wrote to the Prince to signify his extreme embarrassment, and to request some obligation or recognition from the cities of Holland and Zealand, whence hitherto no expression of gratitude or acknowledgment had proceeded.

The Prince consoled and assured, as best he could, his mother, son, wife, and brother, even at the same moment that he comforted his people. He also received at this time a second and more solemn embassy from Don John. No sooner had the Governor exchanged oaths at Brussels, and been acknowledged as the representative of his Majesty, than he hastened to make another effort to conciliate the Prince. Don John saw before him only a grand seignior of lofty birth and boundless influence, who had placed himself towards the Crown in a false position, from which he might even yet be rescued; for to sacrifice the whims of a reforming and transitory religious fanaticism, which had spun itself for a moment about so clear a brain, would, he thought, prove but a trifling task for so experienced a politician as the Prince. William of Orange, on the other hand, looked upon his young antagonist as the most brilliant impersonation which had yet been seen of the foul spirit of persecution.

It will be necessary to follow, somewhat more in detail than is usually desirable, the interchange of conversations, letters, and protocols, out of which the brief but important administration of Don John was composed; for it was exactly in such manifestations that the great fight was really proceeding. Don John meant peace, wise William meant war, for he knew that no other issue was possible. Peace, in reality, was war in its worst shape. Peace would unchain every priestly tongue, and unsheath every knightly sword in the fifteen provinces against little Holland and Zealand. He had been able to bind all the provinces together by the hastily forged chain of the Ghent treaty, and had done what he could to strengthen that union by the principle of mutual religious respect. By the arrival of Don John that work had been deranged. It had, however, been impossible for the Prince thoroughly to infuse his own ideas on the subject of toleration into the hearts of his nearest associates. He could not hope to inspire his deadly enemies with a deeper sympathy. Was he not himself the mark

Page 865

of obloquy among the Reformers, because of his leniency to Catholics? Nay more, was not his intimate councillor, the accomplished Saint Aldegonde, in despair because the Prince refused to exclude the Anabaptists of Holland from the rights of citizenship? At the very moment when William was straining every nerve to unite warring sects, and to persuade men's hearts into a system by which their consciences were to be laid open to God alone—at the moment when it was most necessary for the very existence of the fatherland that Catholic and Protestant should mingle their social and political relations, it was indeed a bitter disappointment for him to see wise statesmen of his own creed unable to rise to the idea of toleration. "The affair of the Anabaptists," wrote Saint Aldegonde, "has been renewed. The Prince objects to exclude them from citizenship. He answered me sharply, that their yea was equal to our oath, and that we should not press this matter, unless we were willing to confess that it was just for the Papists to compel us to a divine service which was against our conscience." It seems hardly credible that this sentence, containing so sublime a tribute to the character of the Prince, should have been indited as a bitter censure, and that, too, by an enlightened and accomplished Protestant. "In short," continued Saint Aldegonde, with increasing vexation, "I don't see how we can accomplish our wish in this matter. The Prince has uttered reproaches to me that our clergy are striving to obtain a mastery over consciences. He praised lately the saying of a monk who was not long ago here, that our pot had not gone to the fire as often as that of our antagonists, but that when the time came it would be black enough. In short, the Prince fears that after a few centuries the clerical tyranny on both sides will stand in this respect on the same footing."

Early in the month of May, Doctor Leoninus and Caspar Schetz, Seigneur de Grobbendonck, had been sent on a mission from the states-general to the Prince of Orange. While their negotiations were still pending, four special envoys from Don John arrived at Middelburg. To this commission was informally adjoined Leoninus, who had succeeded to the general position of Viglius. Viglius was dead. Since the memorable arrest of the State Council, he had not appeared on the scene of public affairs. The house-arrest, to which he had been compelled by a revolutionary committee, had been indefinitely prolonged by a higher power, and after a protracted illness he had noiselessly disappeared from the stage of life. There had been few more learned doctors of both laws than he. There had been few more adroit politicians, considered from his point of view. His punning device was "Vita mortalium vigilia," and he acted accordingly, but with a narrow interpretation. His life had indeed been a vigil, but it must be confessed that the vigils had been for Viglius.

Page 866

[Bor, x. 812. Meteren, vi. 120.—Another motto of his was, “En groot Jurist een booser Christ;” that is to say, A good lawyer is a bad Christian.—Unfortunately his own character did not give the lie satisfactorily to the device.]

The weatherbeaten Palinurus, as he loved to call himself, had conducted his own argosy so warily that he had saved his whole cargo; and perished in port at last, while others, not sailing by his compass, were still tossed by the tempest.

The agents of Don John were the Duke of Aerschot, the Seigneur de Hierges, Seigneur de Willerval, and Doctor Meetkercke, accompanied by Doctor Andrew Gaill, one of the imperial commissioners. The two envoys from the states-general, Leoninus and Schetz, being present at Gertruydenberg were added to the deputation. An important conference took place, the details of which have been somewhat minutely preserved. The Prince of Orange, accompanied by Saint Aldegonde and four other councillors, encountered the seven champions from Brussels in a long debate, which was more like a passage of arms or a trial of skill than a friendly colloquy with a pacific result in prospect; for it must be remembered that the Prince of Orange did not mean peace. He had devised the Pacification of Ghent as a union of the other provinces with Holland and Zealand, against Philip. He did not intend that it should be converted into a union of the other provinces with Philip, against Holland and Zealand.

Meetkercke was the first to speak. He said that the Governor had despatched them to the Prince, to express his good intentions, to represent the fidelity with which his promises had thus far been executed, and to entreat the Prince, together with the provinces of Holland and Zealand, to unite with their sister provinces in common allegiance to his Majesty. His Highness also proposed to advise with them concerning the proper method of convoking the states-general. As soon as Meetkercke had finished his observations, the Prince demanded that the points and articles should be communicated to him in writing. Now this was precisely what the envoys preferred to omit. It was easier, and far more agreeable to expatiate in a general field of controversy,—than to remain tethered to distinct points. It was particularly in these confused conferences, where neither party was entirely sincere, that the volatile word was thought preferable to the permanent letter. Already so many watery lines had been traced, in the course of these fluctuating negotiations, that a few additional records would be if necessary, as rapidly effaced as the rest.

The commissioners, after whispering in each other’s, ears for a few minutes, refused to put down anything in writing. Protocols, they said, only engendered confusion.

Page 867

“No, no,” said the .Prince, in reply, “we will have nothing except in black and white. Otherwise things will be said on both sides, which will afterwards be interpreted in different ways. Nay, it will be denied that some important points have been discussed at all. We know that by experience. Witness the solemn treaty of Ghent, which ye have tried to make fruitless, under pretence that some points, arranged by word of mouth, and not stated particularly in writing, had been intended in a different sense from the obvious one. Governments given by royal commission, for example; what point could be clearer? Nevertheless, ye have hunted up glosses and cavils to obscure the intention of the contracting parties. Ye have denied my authority over Utrecht, because not mentioned expressly in the treaty of Ghent.”

“But,” said one of the envoys, interrupting at this point, “neither the Council of State nor the Court of Mechlin consider Utrecht as belonging to your Excellency’s government.”

“Neither the Council of State,” replied the Prince, “nor the Court of Mechlin have anything to do with the matter. ’Tis in my commission, and all the world knows it.” He added that instead of affairs being thrown into confusion by being reduced to writing, he was of opinion, on the contrary, that it was by that means alone they could be made perfectly clear.

Leoninus replied, good naturedly, that there should be no difficulty upon that score, and that writings should be exchanged. In the meantime, however, he expressed the hope that the Prince would honor them with some preliminary information as to the points in which he felt aggrieved, as well as to the pledges which he and the states were inclined to demand.

“And what reason have we to hope,” cried the Prince, “that your pledges, if made; will be redeemed? That which was promised so solemnly at Ghent, and ratified by Don John and his Majesty, has not been fulfilled.”

“Of what particular point do you complain?” asked Schetz. “Wherein has the Pacification been violated?”

Hereupon the Prince launched forth upon a flowing stream of invective. He spoke to them of his son detained in distant captivity—of his own property at Breda withheld—of a thousand confiscated estates—of garrisons of German mercenaries—of ancient constitutions annihilated—of the infamous edicts nominally suspended, but actually in full vigor. He complained bitterly that the citadels, those nests and dens of tyranny, were not yet demolished. “Ye accuse me of distrust,” he cried; “but while the castles of Antwerp, Ghent, Namur, and so many more are standing, ’tis yourselves who show how utterly ye are without confidence in any permanent and peaceful arrangement.”

“And what,” asked a deputy, smoothly, “is the point which touches you most nearly? What is it that your Excellency most desires? By what means will it be possible for the government fully to give you contentment?”

Page 868

“I wish,” he answered, simply, “the full execution of the Ghent Pacification. If you regard the general welfare of the land, it is well, and I thank you. If not, ’tis idle to make propositions, for I regard my country’s profit, not my own.”

Afterwards, the Prince simply repeated his demand that the Ghent treaty should be executed; adding, that after the states-general should have been assembled, it would be time to propose the necessary articles for mutual security.

Hereupon Doctor Leoninus observed that the assembly of the states-general could hardly be without danger. He alluded to the vast number of persons who would thus be convoked, to the great discrepancy of humors which would thus be manifested. Many men would be present neither discreet nor experienced. He therefore somewhat coolly suggested that it might be better to obviate the necessity of holding any general assembly at all. An amicable conference, for the sake of settling doubtful questions, would render the convocation superfluous, and save the country from the dangers by which the step would be attended. The Doctor concluded by referring to the recent assemblies of France, the only result of which had been fresh dissensions. It thus appeared that the proposition on the part of Don John meant something very different from its apparent signification. To advise with the Prince as to the proper method of assembling the estates really meant, to advise with him as to the best means of preventing any such assembly. Here, certainly, was a good reason for the preference expressed by the deputies, in favor of amicable discussions over formal protocols. It might not be so easy in a written document to make the assembly, and the prevention of the assembly, appear exactly the same thing.

The Prince replied that there was a wide difference between the condition of France and of the Netherlands. Here, was one will and one intention. There, were many factions, many partialities, many family intrigues. Since it had been agreed by the Ghent treaty that certain points should be provisionally maintained and others settled by a speedy convocation of the states-general, the plainest course was to maintain the provisional points, and to summon the states-general at once. This certainly was concise and logical. It is doubtful, however, whether he were really as anxious for the assembly-general as he appeared to be. Both parties were fencing at each other, without any real intention of carrying their points, for neither wished the convocation, while both affected an eagerness for that event. The conversation proceeded.

“At least,” said an envoy, “you can tell beforehand in what you are aggrieved, and what you have to propose.”

“We are aggrieved in nothing, and we have nothing to propose,” answered the Prince, “so long as you maintain the Pacification. We demand no other pledge, and are willing to refer everything afterwards to the assembly.”

Page 869

“But,” asked Schetz, “what security do you offer us that you will yourselves maintain the Pacification?”

“We are not bound to give assurances,” answered the Prince. “The Pacification is itself an assurance. ’Tis a provisional arrangement, to be maintained by both parties, until after the decision of the assembly. The Pacification must therefore be maintained or disavowed. Choose between the two. Only, if you mean still to acknowledge it, you must keep its articles. This we mean to do, and if up to the present time you have any complaint to make of our conduct, as we trust you have not, we are ready to give you satisfaction.”

“In short,” said an envoy, “you mean, after we shall have placed in your hands the government of Utrecht, Amsterdam: and other places, to deny us any pledges on your part to maintain the Pacification.”

“But,” replied the Prince, “if we are already accomplishing the Pacification, what more do you wish?”

“In this fashion,” cried the others, “after having got all that you ask, and having thus fortified yourselves more than you were ever fortified before, you will make war upon us.”

“War?” cried the Prince, “what are you afraid of? We are but a handful of people; a worm compared to the King of Spain. Moreover, ye are fifteen provinces to two. What have you to fear?”

“Ah,” said Meetkercke, “we have seen what you could do, when you were masters of the sea. Don’t make yourselves out quite so little.”

“But,” said the Prince, “the Pacification of Ghent provides for all this. Your deputies were perfectly satisfied with the guarantees it furnished. As to making war upon you, ’tis a thing without foundation or appearance of probability. Had you believed then that you had anything to fear, you world not have forgotten to demand pledges enough. On the contrary, you saw how roundly we were dealing with you then, honestly disgarnishing the country, even before the peace had been concluded. For ourselves, although we felt the right to demand guarantees, we would not do it, for we were treating with you on terms of confidence. We declared expressly that had we been dealing with the King, we should have exacted stricter pledges. As to demanding them of us at the moment, ’tis nonsense. We have neither the means of assailing you, nor do we deem it expedient to do so.”

“To say the truth,” replied Schetz, “we are really confident that you will not make war upon us. On the other hand, however, we see you spreading your religion daily, instead

of keeping it confined within your provinces. What assurance do you give us that, after all your demand shall have been accorded, you will make no innovation in religion."

"The assurance which we give you," answered the Prince, "is that we will really accomplish the Pacification."

"But," persisted Schetz, "do you fairly, promise to submit to all which the states-general shall ordain, as well on this point of religious exercise in Holland and Zealand, as on all the others?"

Page 870

This was a home thrust. The Prince parried it for a while. In his secret thoughts he had no expectation or desire that the states-general, summoned in a solemn manner by the Governor-General, on the basis of the memorable assembly before which was enacted the grand ceremony of the imperial abdication, would ever hold their session, and although he did not anticipate the prohibition by such assembly, should it take place, of the Reformed worship in Holland and Zealand, he did not intend to submit to it, even should it be made.

“I cannot tell,” said he, accordingly, in reply to the last question, “for ye have yourselves already broken and violated the Pacification; having made an accord with Don John without our consent, and having already received him as Governor.”

“So that you don’t mean,” replied Schetz, “to accept the decision of the states?”

“I don’t say that,” returned the Prince, continuing to parry; “it is possible that we might accept it; it is possible that we might not. We are no longer in our entire rights, as we were at the time of our first submission at Ghent.”

“But we will make you whole,” said Schetz.

“That you cannot do,” replied the Prince, “for you have broken the Pacification all to pieces. We have nothing, therefore, to expect from the states, but to be condemned off-hand.

“You don’t mean, then,” repeated Schetz, “to submit to the estates touching the exercise of religion?”

“No, we do not!” replied the Prince, driven into a corner at last, and striking out in his turn. “We certainly do not. To tell you the truth, we see that you intend our extirpation, and we don’t mean to be extirpated.”

“Ho!” said the Duke of Aerschot, “there is nobody who wishes that.”

“Indeed, but you do,” said the Prince. “We have submitted ourselves to you in good faith, and you now would compel us and all the world to maintain exclusively the Catholic religion. This cannot be done except by extirpating us.”

A long, learned, vehement discussion upon abstract points, between Saint Aldegonde, Leoninus, and Doctor Gaill, then ensued, during which the Prince, who had satisfied himself as to the result of the conference, retired from the apartment. He afterwards had a private convention with Schetz and Leoninus, in which he reproached them with their inclination to reduce their fatherland to slavery. He also took occasion to remark to Hiergea, that it was a duty to content the people; that whatever might be accomplished for them was durable, whereas the will of kings was perishing. He told the Duke of Aerschot that if Utrecht were not restored, he would take it by force. He warned the

Duke that to trust the King was to risk his head. He, at least, would never repose confidence in him, having been deceived too often. The King cherished the maxim, ‘hereticis non est servanda fides;’ as for himself he was ’calbo y calbanista,’ and meant to die so.

Page 871

The formal interchange of documents soon afterwards took place. The conversation thus held between the different parties shows, however, the exact position of, affairs. There was no change in the intentions of either; Reformers or Royalists. Philip and his representatives still contended for two points, and claimed the praise of moderation that their demands were so few in number. They were willing to concede everything, save the unlimited authority of the King and the exclusive maintenance of the Catholic religion. The Prince of Orange, on his side, claimed two points also—the ancient constitutions of the country and religious freedom. It was obvious enough that the contest was, the same in reality, as it had ever been. No approximation had been made towards reconciling absolutism with national liberty, persecution with toleration. The Pacification of Ghent had been a step in advance. That Treaty opened the door to civil and religious liberty, but it was an agreement among the provinces, not a compact between the people and the monarch. By the casuists of Brussels and the licentiates of Louvain, it had, to be sure, been dogmatically pronounced orthodox, and had been confirmed by royal edict. To believe, however, that his Catholic Majesty had faith in the dogmas propounded, was as absurd as to believe in the dogmas themselves. If the Ghent Pacification really had made no breach in royal and Roman infallibility, then the efforts of Orange and the exultation of the Reformers had indeed been idle.

The envoys accordingly, in obedience to their instructions, made a formal statement to the Prince of Orange and the states of Holland and Zealand, on the part of Don John. They alluded to the departure of the Spaniards, as if that alone had fulfilled every duty and authorized every claim. They therefore demanded the immediate publication in Holland and Zealand of the Perpetual Edict. They insisted on the immediate discontinuance of all hostile attempts to reduce Amsterdam to the jurisdiction of Orange; required the Prince to abandon his pretensions to Utrecht, and denounced the efforts making by him and his partisans to diffuse their heretical doctrines through the other provinces. They observed, in conclusion, that the general question of religion was not to be handled, because reserved for the consideration of the states-general, according to the treaty of Ghent.

The reply, delivered on the following day by the Prince of Orange and the deputies, maintained that the Perpetual Edict was widely different from the Pacification of Ghent, which it affected to uphold; that the promises to abstain from all violation of the ancient constitutions had not been kept; that the German troops had not been dismissed, that the property of the Prince in the Netherlands and Burgundy had not been restored, that his son was detained in captivity, that the government of Utrecht was withheld from him, that the charters and constitution of the country, instead of being

Page 872

extended, had been contracted, and that the Governor had claimed the right to convoke the states-general at his pleasure, in violation of the ancient right to assemble at their own. The document further complained that the adherents of the Reformed religion were not allowed to frequent the different provinces in freedom, according to the stipulations of Ghent; that Don John, notwithstanding all these short-comings, had been acknowledged as Governor-General, without the consent of the Prince; that he was surrounded with a train of Spaniards Italians, and other foreigners—Gonzaga, Escovedo, and the like—as well as by renegade Netherlanders like Tassis, by whom he was unduly influenced against the country and the people, and by whom a "back door was held constantly open" to the admission of evils innumerable. Finally, it was asserted that, by means of this last act of union, a new form of inquisition had been introduced, and one which was much more cruel than the old system; inasmuch as the Spanish Inquisition did not take information against men: except upon suspicion, whereas, by the new process, all the world would be examined as to their conscience and religion, under pretence of maintaining the union.

Such was the result of this second mission to the Prince of Orange on the part of the Governor-General. Don John never sent another. The swords were now fairly measured between the antagonists, and the scabbard was soon to be thrown away. A few weeks afterwards, the Governor wrote to Philip that there was nothing in the world which William of Orange so much abhorred as his Majesty; adding, with Castillian exaggeration, that if the Prince could drink the King's blood he would do so with great pleasure.

Don John, being thus seated in the saddle, had a moment's leisure to look around him. It was but a moment, for he had small confidence in the aspect of affairs, but one of his first acts after assuming the government afforded a proof of the interpretation which he had adopted of the Ghent Pacification. An edict was issued, addressed to all bishops, "heretic-masters," and provincial councils, commanding the strict enforcement of the Canons of Trent, and other ecclesiastical decrees. These authorities were summoned instantly to take increased heed, of the flocks under their charge, "and to protect them from the ravening wolves which were seeking to devour them."

The measure bore instant fruit. A wretched tailor of Mechlin, Peter Penis by name, an honest man, but a heretic, was arrested upon the charge of having preached or exhorted at a meeting in that city. He confessed that he had been present at the meeting, but denied that he had preached. He was then required to denounce the others who had been present, and the men who had actually officiated. He refused, and was condemned to death. The Prince of Orange, while the process was pending, wrote an earnest letter to the Council of Mechlin, imploring them not now to

Page 873

rekindle the fires of religious persecution. His appeal was in vain. The poor tailor was beheaded at Mechlin on the 15th of June, the Conqueror of Lepanto being present at the execution, and adding dignity to the scene. Thus, at the moment when William of Orange was protecting the Anabaptists of Middelburg in their rights of citizenship, even while they refused its obligations, the son of the Emperor was dipping his hands in the blood of a poor wretch who had done no harm but to listen to a prayer without denouncing the preacher. The most intimate friends of the Prince were offended with his liberality. The imperial shade of Don John's father might have risen to approve the son who had so dutifully revived his bloody edicts and his ruthless policy.

Three parties were now fairly in existence: the nobles, who hated the Spaniards, but who were disposed to hold themselves aloof from the people; the adherents of Don John, commonly called "Johanists;" and the partisans of the Prince of Orange—for William the Silent had always felt the necessity of leaning for support on something more substantial than the court party, a reed shaken by the wind, and failing always when most relied upon. His efforts were constant to elevate the middle class, to build up a strong third party which should unite much of the substantial wealth and intelligence of the land, drawing constantly from the people, and deriving strength from national enthusiasm—a party which should include nearly all the political capacity of the country; and his efforts were successful. No doubt the Governor and his Secretary were right when they said the people of the Netherlands were inclined to brook the Turk as easily as the Spaniard for their master, and that their hearts were in reality devoted to the Prince of Orange.

As to the grandees, they were mostly of those who "sought to swim between two waters," according to the Prince's expression. There were but few unswerving supporters of the Spanish rule, like the Berlaymont and the Tassis families. The rest veered daily with the veering wind. Aerschot, the great chief of the Catholic party, was but a cringing courtier, false and fawning both to Don John and the Prince. He sought to play a leading part in a great epoch; he only distinguished himself by courting and betraying all parties, and being thrown away by all. His son and brother were hardly more respectable. The Prince knew how little dependence could be placed on such allies, even although they had signed and sworn the Ghent Pacification. He was also aware how little it was the intention of the Governor to be bound by that famous Treaty. The Spanish troops had been, indeed, disbanded, but there were still, between ten and fifteen thousand German mercenaries in the service of the King; these were stationed in different important places, and held firm possession of the citadels. The great keys of the country were still in the hands of the Spaniards. Aerschot, indeed, governed the castle of Antwerp, in room of Sancho d'Avila, but how much more friendly would Aerschot be than Avila, when interest prompted him to sustain Don John against the Prince?

Page 874

Meanwhile; the estates, according to their contract, were straining every nerve to raise the requisite sum for the payment of the German troops. Equitable offers were made, by which the soldiers were to receive a certain proportion of the arrears due to them in merchandize, and the remainder in cash. The arrangement was rejected, at the secret instance of Don John. While the Governor affected an ingenuous desire to aid the estates in their efforts to free themselves from the remaining portion of this incumbrance, he was secretly tampering with the leading German officers, in order to prevent their acceptance of any offered terms. He persuaded these military chiefs that a conspiracy existed, by which they were not only to be deprived of their wages but of their lives. He warned them to heed no promises, to accept no terms. Convincing them that he, and he only, was their friend, he arranged secret plans by which they should assist him in taking the fortresses of the country into still more secure possession, for he was not more inclined to trust to the Aerschots and the Havres than was the Prince himself.

The Governor lived in considerable danger, and in still greater dread of capture, if not of assassination. His imagination, excited by endless tales of ambush and half-discovered conspiracies, saw armed soldiers behind every bush; a pitfall in every street. Had not the redoubtable Alva been nearly made a captive? Did not Louis of Nassau nearly entrap the Grand Commander? No doubt the Prince of Orange was desirous of accomplishing a feat by which he would be placed in regard to Philip on the vantage ground which the King had obtained by his seizure of Count Van Buren, nor did Don John need for warnings coming from sources far from obscure. In May, the Viscount De Gand had forced his way to his bedside in the dead of night; and wakening him from his sleep, had assured him, with great solemnity, that his life was not worth a pin’s purchase if he remained in Brussels. He was aware, he said, of a conspiracy by which both his liberty and his life were endangered, and assured him that in immediate flight lay his only safety.

The Governor fled to Mechlin, where the same warnings were soon afterwards renewed, for the solemn sacrifice of Peter Panis, the poor preaching tailor of that city, had not been enough to strike terror to the hearts of all the Netherlanders. One day, toward the end of June, the Duke of Aerschot, riding out with Don John, gave him a circumstantial account of plots, old and new, whose existence he had discovered or invented, and he showed a copy of a secret letter, written by the Prince of Orange to the estates, recommending the forcible seizure of his Highness. It is true that the Duke was, at that period and for long after, upon terms of the most “fraternal friendship” with the Prince, and was in the habit of signing himself “his very affectionate brother and cordial friend to serve him,” yet this did not prevent him from

Page 875

accomplishing what he deemed his duty, in secretly denouncing his plans, It is also true that he, at the same time, gave the Prince private information concerning the government, and sent him intercepted letters from his enemies, thus easing his conscience on both sides, and trimming his sails to every wind which might blow. The Duke now, however, reminded his Highness of the contumely with which he had been treated at Brussels, of the insolent threats with which the citizens had pursued his servants and secretaries even to the very door of his palace. He assured him that the same feeling existed at Mechlin, and that neither himself nor family were much safer there than in the capital, a plot being fully organized for securing his person. The conspirators, he said, were openly supported by a large political party who called themselves anti-Johanists, and who clothed themselves in symbolic costume, as had been done by the disaffected in the days of Cardinal Granvelle. He assured the Governor that nearly all the members of the states-general were implicated in these schemes. “And what becomes, then, of their promises?” asked Don John. “That for their promises!” cried the Duke, snapping his fingers; “no man in the land feels bound by engagements now.” The Governor demanded the object of the states in thus seeking to deprive him of his liberty. The Duke informed him that it was to hold him in captivity until they had compelled him to sign every paper which they chose to lay before him. Such things had been done in the Netherlands in former days, the Duke observed, as he proceeded to narrate how a predecessor of his Highness and a prince of the land, after having been compelled to sign innumerable documents, had been, in conclusion, tossed out of the windows of his own palace, with all his retinue, to perish upon the pikes of an insurgent mob below. The Governor protested that it did not become the son of Charles the Fifth and the representative of his Catholic Majesty to hear such intimations a second time. After his return, he brooded over what had been said to him for a few days, and he then broke up his establishment at Mechlin, selling off his superfluous furniture and even the wine in his cellars. Thus showing that his absence, both from Brussels and Mechlin, was to be a prolonged one, he took advantage of an unforeseen occurrence again to remove his residence.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

A good lawyer is a bad Christian
Claimed the praise of moderation that their demands were so few
Confused conferences, where neither party was entirely sincere
Customary oaths, to be kept with the customary conscientiousness
Deadliest of sins, the liberty of conscience
I regard my country’s profit, not my own
Made no breach in royal and Roman infallibility
Neither wished the convocation, while both affected an eagerness
Our pot had not gone to the fire as often
Peace, in reality, was war in its worst shape

Those who “sought to swim between two waters”
Volatile word was thought preferable to the permanent letter

Page 876

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 28

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley
1855

CHAPTER III.

The city of Namur—Margaret of Valois—Her intrigues in Hainault in favour of Alencon—Her reception by Don John at Namur—Festivities in her, honor—Seizure of Namur citadel by Don John—Plan for seizing that of Antwerp—Letter of the estates to Philip, sent by Escovedo—Fortunes and fate of Escovedo in Madrid—Repairing of dykes—The Prince's visit to Holland—His letter to the estates— general on the subject of Namur citadel—His visit to Utrecht— Correspondence and commissioners between Don John and the estates— Acrimonious and passionate character of these colloquies—Attempt of Treslong upon Antwerp citadel frustrated by De Bourse—Fortunate panic of the German mercenaries—Antwerp evacuated by the foreign troops—Renewed correspondence—Audacity of the Governor's demands— Letters of Escovedo and others intercepted—Private schemes of Don John not understood by the estates—His letter to the Empress Dowager—More correspondence with the estates—Painful and false position of the Governor—Demolition, in part, of Antwerp citadel, and of other fortresses by the patriots Statue of Alva—Letter of estates-general to the King.

There were few cities of the Netherlands more picturesque in situation, more trimly built, and more opulent of aspect than the little city of Namur. Seated at the confluence of the Sombre with the Meuse, and throwing over each river a bridge of solid but graceful structure, it lay in the lap of a most fruitful valley. Abroad crescent-shaped plain, fringed by the rapid Meuse, and enclosed by gently rolling hills cultivated to their crests, or by abrupt precipices of limestone crowned with verdure, was divided by numerous hedgerows, and dotted all over with corn-fields, vineyards, and flower gardens. Many eyes have gazed with delight upon that well-known and most lovely valley, and many torrents of blood have mingled with those glancing waters since that long buried and most sanguinary age which forms our theme; and still placid as ever is the valley, brightly as ever flows the stream. Even now, as in that vanished, but never-forgotten time, nestles the little city in the angle of the two rivers; still directly over its head seems to hang in mid-air the massive and frowning fortress, like the gigantic helmet-in the fiction, as if ready to crush the pigmy town below.

Page 877

It was this famous citadel, crowning an abrupt precipice five hundred feet above the river's bed, and placed near the frontier of France, which made the city so important, and which had now attracted Don John's attention in this hour of his perplexity. The unexpected visit of a celebrated personage, furnished him with the pretext which he desired. The beautiful Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre, was proceeding to the baths of Spa, to drink the waters. Her health was as perfect as her beauty, but she was flying from a husband whom she hated, to advance the interest of a brother whom she loved with a more than sisterly fondness—for the worthless Duke of Alencon was one of the many competitors for the Netherland government; the correspondence between himself and his brother with Orange and his agents being still continued. The hollow truce with the Huguenots in France had, however, been again succeeded by war. Henry of Valois had already commenced operations in Gascony against Henry of Navarre, whom he hated, almost as cordially as Margaret herself could do, and the Duke of Alencon was besieging Issoire. Meantime, the beautiful Queen came to mingle he golden thread of her feminine intrigues with the dark woof of the Netherland destinies.

Few spirits have been more subtle, few faces so fatal as hers. True child of the Medicean mother, worthy sister of Charles, Henry; and Francis—princes for ever infamous in the annals of France—she possessed more beauty and wit than Mary of Scotland, more learning and accomplishments than Elizabeth of England. In the blaze of her beauty, according to the inflated language of her most determined worshiper, the wings of all rivals were melted. Heaven required to be raised higher and earth made wider, before a full sweep could be given to her own majestic flight. We are further informed that she was a Minerva for eloquence, that she composed matchless poems which she sang most exquisitely to the sound of her lute, and that her familiar letters were so full of genius, that "poor Cicero" was but a fool to her in the same branch of composition. The world has shuddered for ages at the dark tragedy of her nuptials. Was it strange that hatred, incest, murder, should follow in the train of a wedding thus hideously solemnized?

Don John, as in his Moorish disguise he had looked upon her perfections, had felt in danger of becoming really the slave he personated—"her beauty is more divine than human," he had cried, "but fitter to destroy men's souls than to bless them;" and now the enchantress was on her way to his dominions. Her road led through Namur to Liege, and gallantry required that he should meet her as she passed. Attended by a select band of gentlemen and a few horsemen of his body-guard, the Governor came to Namur.

Page 878

Meantime the Queen crossed the frontier, and was courteously received at Cambray. The bishop-of the loyal house of Berlaymont—was a stanch supporter of the King, and although a Fleming, was Spanish to the core. On him the cajolery of the beautiful Queen was first essayed, but was found powerless. The prelate gave her a magnificent ball, but resisted her blandishments. He retired with the appearance of the confections, but the governor of the citadel, the Seigneur d'Inchy remained, with whom Margaret was more successful. She found him a cordial hater of Spain, a favorer of France, and very impatient under the authority of the bishop. He obtained permission to accompany the royal visitor a few stages of her journey, and returned to Cambray, her willing slave; holding the castle in future, neither for king nor bishop, but for Margaret's brother, Alencon, alone. At Mons she was received with great state by the Count Lalain, who was governor of Hainault, while his Countess governed him. A week of festivities graced the advent of the Queen, during which period the hearts of both Lalain and his wife were completely subjugated. They agreed that Flanders had been too long separated from the parental France to which it of right belonged. The Count was a stanch Catholic, but he hated Spain. He was a relative of Egmont, and anxious to avenge his death, but he was no lover of the people, and was jealous of Orange. Moreover, his wife had become entirely fascinated by the designing. Queen. So warm a friendship had sprung up between the two fair ladies as to make it indispensable that Flanders and Hainault should be annexed to France. The Count promised to hold his whole government at the service of Alencon, and recommended that an attempt should be made to gain over the incorruptible Governor of Cambray. Margaret did not inform him that she had already turned that functionary round her finger, but she urged Lalain and his wife to seduce him from his allegiance, if possible.

The Count, with a retinue of mounted men, then accompanied her on her way towards Namur, but turned as the distant tramp of Don John's cavalcade was heard approaching, for it was not desirable for Lalain, at that moment, to find himself face to face with the Governor. Don John stood a moment awaiting the arrival of the Queen. He did not dream of her political intrigues, nor see in the fair form approaching him one mortal enemy the more. Margaret travelled in a splendid litter with gilt pillars, lined with scarlet velvet, and entirely enclosed in glass, which was followed by those of the Princess de la Roche sur Yon, and of Madame de Tournon. After these came ten ladies of honor on horseback, and six chariots filled with female domestics. These, with the guards and other attendants, made up the retinue. On meeting the Queen's litter, Don John sprang from his horse and presented his greetings. The Queen returned his salutation, in the French fashion, by offering

Page 879

her cheek to his embrace, extending the same favor to the Duke of Aerschot and the Marquis of Havre. The cavaliers then remounted and escorted the Queen to Namur, Don John riding by the side of the litter and conversing with her all the way. It was late in the evening when the procession arrived in the city. The streets had, however, been brilliantly illuminated; houses and shops, though it was near midnight, being in a blaze of light. Don John believing that no attentions could be so acceptable at that hour as to provide for the repose of his guest, conducted the Queen at once to the lodgings prepared for her. Margaret was astonished at the magnificence of the apartments into which she was ushered. A spacious and stately hall, most gorgeously furnished, opened into a series of chambers and cabinets, worthy, in their appointments, of a royal palace. The tent and bed coverings prepared for the Queen were exquisitely embroidered in needlework with scenes representing the battle of Lepanto. The great hall was hung with gorgeous tapestry of satin and velvet, ornamented with columns of raised silver work, and with many figures in antique costume, of the same massive embroidery. The rest of the furniture was also of satin, velvet, cloth of gold, and brocade. The Queen was dazzled with so much magnificence, and one of the courtiers could not help expressing astonishment at the splendor of the apartments and decorations, which, as he observed to the Duke of Aerschot; seemed more appropriate to the palace of a powerful monarch than to the apartments of a young bachelor prince. The Duke replied by explaining that the expensive embroidery which they saw was the result, not of extravagance, but of valor and generosity. After the battle of Lepanto, Don John had restored the two sons, who had been taken prisoners, of a powerful Turkish bashaw. The father; in gratitude had sent this magnificent tapestry as a present to the conqueror, and Don John had received it, at Milan; in which city, celebrated for the taste of its upholsterers; it had been arranged for furniture.

The next morning a grand mass with military music was performed, followed by a sumptuous banquet in the grand hall. Don John and the Queen sat at a table three feet apart from the rest, and Ottavio Gonzaga served them wine upon his knees. After the banquet came, as usual; the ball, the festivities continuing till late in the night, and Don John scarcely quitting his fair guest for a moment. The next afternoon, a festival had been arranged upon an island in the river. The company embarked upon the Meuse, in a fleet of gaily-scarfed; and painted vessels, many of which were filled with musicians. Margaret reclined in her gilded barge, under a richly embroidered canopy. A fairer and falser Queen than “Egypt,” had bewitched the famous youth who had triumphed not, lost the world, beneath the heights of Actium. The revellers landed on the island, where the banquet was already spread within a spacious bower of ivy, and beneath umbrageous elms. The dance upon the sward was protracted to a late hour, and the summer stars had been long in the sky when the company returned to their barges.

Page 880

Don John, more than ever enthralled by the bride of St. Bartholomew, knew not that her sole purpose in visiting his dominion had been to corrupt his servants and to undermine his authority. His own purpose, however, had been less to pay court to the Queen than to make, use of her presence to cover his own designs. That purpose he proceeded instantly to execute. The Queen next morning pursued her voyage by the river to Liege, and scarcely had she floated out of his sight than he sprang upon his horse and, accompanied by a few trusty attendants, galloped out of the gate and across the bridge which led to the citadel. He had already despatched the loyal Berlaymont, with his four equally loyal sons, the Seigneurs de Meghen, Floyon, Hierges, and Haultepenne to that fortress. These gentlemen had informed the castellan that the Governor was about to ride forth hunting, and that it would be proper to offer him the hospitalities of the castle as he passed on his way. A considerable number of armed men had been concealed in the woods and thickets of the neighbourhood. The Seigneur de Froymont, suspecting nothing, acceded to the propriety of the suggestion made by the Berlaymonts. Meantime, with a blast of his horn, Don John appeared at the castle gate. He entered the fortress with the castellan, while one of the gentlemen watched outside, as the ambushed soldiers came toiling up the precipice. When all was ready the gentleman returned to the hall, and made a signal to Don John, as he sat at breakfast with the constable. The Governor sprang from the table and drew his sword; Berlaymont and his four sons drew their pistols, while at the same instant, the soldiers entered. Don John, exclaiming that this was the first day of his government, commanded the castellan to surrender. De Froymont, taken by surprise, and hardly understanding this very melo-dramatic attack upon a citadel by its own lawful governor, made not much difficulty in complying. He was then turned out of doors, along with his garrison, mostly feeble old men and invalids. The newly arrived soldiers took their places, at command of the Governor, and the stronghold of Namur was his own.

There was little doubt that the representative of Philip had a perfect right to possess himself of any fortress within his government; there could be as little that the sudden stratagem by which he had thus made himself master of this citadel would prove offensive to the estates, while it could hardly be agreeable to the King; and yet it is not certain that he could have accomplished his purpose in any other way. Moreover, the achievement was one of a projected series by which he meant to re-vindicate his dwindling authority. He was weary of playing the hypocrite, and convinced that he and his monarch were both abhorred by the Netherlanders. Peace was impossible—war was forbidden him. Reduced almost to a nullity by the Prince of Orange, it was time for him to make a stand, and in this impregnable fastness his position

Page 881

at least was a good one. Many months before, the Prince of Orange had expressed his anxious desire that this most important town and citadel should be secured-for the estates. “You know,” he had written to Bossu in December, “the evil and the dismay which the loss of the city and fortress of Namur would occasion to us. Let me beseech you that all possible care be taken to preserve them.” Nevertheless, their preservation had been entrusted to a feeble-minded old constable, at the head of a handful of cripples.

We know how intense had been the solicitude of the Prince, not only to secure but to destroy these citadels, “nests of tyranny,” which had been built by despots to crush, not protect, the towns at their feet. These precautions had been neglected, and the consequences were displaying themselves, for the castle of Namur was not the only one of which Don John felt himself secure. Although the Duke of Aerschot seemed so very much his humble servant, the Governor did not trust him, and wished to see the citadel of Antwerp in more unquestionable keeping. He had therefore withdrawn, not only the Duke, but his son, the Prince of Chimay, commander of the castle in his father’s absence, from that important post, and insisted upon their accompanying him to Namur. So gallant a courtier as Aerschot could hardly refuse to pay his homage to so illustrious a princess as Margaret of Valois, while during the absence of the Duke and Prince the keys of Antwerp-citadel had been, at the command of Don John, placed in the keeping of the Seigneur de Treslong, an unscrupulous and devoted royalist. The celebrated Colonel Van Ende, whose participation, at the head of his German cavalry, in the terrible sack of that city, which he had been ordered to defend, has been narrated, was commanded to return to Antwerp. He was to present himself openly to the city authorities, but he was secretly directed by the Governor-General to act in co-operation with the Colonels Fugger, Frondsberger, and Polwiller, who commanded the forces already stationed in the city. These distinguished officers had been all summer in secret correspondence with Don John, for they were the instruments with which he meant by a bold stroke to recover his almost lost authority. While he had seemed to be seconding the efforts of the states-general to pay off and disband these mercenaries, nothing had in reality been farther from his thoughts; and the time had now come when his secret plans were to be executed, according to the agreement between himself and the German colonels. He wrote to them, accordingly, to delay no longer the accomplishment of the deed—that deed being the seizure of Antwerp citadel, as he had already successfully mastered that of Namur. The Duke of Aerschot, his brother, and son, were in his power, and could do nothing to prevent the co-operation of the colonels in the city with Treslong in the castle; so that the Governor would thus be enabled, laying his head tranquilly upon “the pillow of the Antwerp citadel,” according to the reproachful expression subsequently used by the estates, to await the progress of events.

Page 882

The current of his adventurous career was not, however, destined to run thus smoothly. It is true that the estates had not yet entirely lost their confidence in his character; but the seizure of Namur, and the attempt upon Antwerp, together with the contents of the intercepted letters written by himself and Escovedo to Philip, to Perez, to the Empress, to the Colonels Frondsberger and Fugger, were soon destined to open their eyes. In the meantime, almost exactly at the moment when Don John was executing his enterprise against Namur, Escovedo had taken an affectionate farewell of the estates at Brussels for it had been thought necessary, as already intimated, both for the apparent interests and the secret projects of Don John; that the Secretary should make a visit to Spain. At the command of the Governor-General he had offered to take charge of any communication for his Majesty which the estates might be disposed to entrust to him, and they had accordingly addressed a long epistle to the King, in which they gave ample expression to their indignation and their woe. They remonstrated with the King concerning the continued presence of the German mercenaries, whose knives were ever at their throats, whose plunder and insolence impoverished and tortured the people. They reminded him of the vast sums which the provinces had contributed in times past to the support of government, and they begged assistance from his bounty now. They recalled to his vision the melancholy spectacle of Antwerp, but lately the "nurse of Europe, the fairest flower in his royal garland, the foremost and noblest city of the earth, now quite desolate and forlorn," and with additional instructions to Escovedo, that he should not fail, in his verbal communications, to represent the evil consequences of the course hitherto pursued by his Majesty's governors in the Netherlands, they dismissed him with good wishes, and with "crowns for convoy" in his purse to the amount of a revenue of two thousand yearly. His secret correspondence was intercepted and made known a few weeks after his departure for that terrible Spain whence so few travellers returned.

For a moment we follow him thither. With a single word in anticipation, concerning the causes and the consummation of this celebrated murder, which was delayed till the following year, the unfortunate Escovedo may be dismissed from these pages. It has been seen how artfully Antonio Perez, Secretary of State, paramour of Princess Eboli, and ruling councillor at that day of Philip, had fostered in the King's mind the most extravagant suspicions as to the schemes of Don John, and of his confidential secretary. He had represented it as their fixed and secret intention, after Don John should be finally established on the throne of England, to attack Philip himself in Spain, and to deprive him of his crown, Escovedo being represented as the prime instigator and controller of this astounding plot, which lunatics only could have engendered, and which probably never had existence.

Page 883

No proof of the wild design was offered. The language which Escovedo was accused by Perez of having held previously to his departure for Flanders—that it was the intention of Don John and himself to fortify the rock of Mogio, with which, and with the command of the city of Santander, they could make themselves masters of Spain after having obtained possession of England,—is too absurd to have been uttered by a man of Escovedo's capacity. Certainly, had Perez been provided with the least scrap of writing from the hands of Don John or Escovedo which could be tortured into evidence upon this point, it would have been forthcoming, and would have rendered such fictitious hearsay superfluous. Perez in connivance with Philip, had been systematically conducting his correspondence with Don John and Escovedo, in order to elicit some evidence of the imputed scheme. "'T was the only way," said Perez to Philip, "to make them unbare their bosoms to the sword."—"I am quite of the same opinion," replied Philip to Perez, "for, according to my theology, you would do your duty neither to God nor the world, unless you did as you are doing." Yet the excellent pair of conspirators at Madrid could wring no damning proofs from the lips of the supposititious conspirators in Flanders, save that Don John, after Escovedo's arrival in Madrid, wrote, impatiently and frequently, to demand that he should be sent back, together with the money which he had gone to Spain to procure. "Money, more money, and Escovedo," wrote the Governor, and Philip was quite willing to accept this most natural exclamation as evidence of his brother's designs against his crown. Out of these shreds and patches—the plot against England, the Pope's bull, the desire expressed by Don John to march into France as a simple adventurer, with a few thousand men at his back—Perez, according to his own statement, drew up a protocol, afterwards formally approved by Philip, which concluded with the necessity of taking Escovedo's life, instantly but privately, and by poison. The Marquis de Los Velos, to whom the memorial was submitted for his advice, averred that if the death-bed wafer were in his own lips, he should vote for the death of the culprit. Philip had already jumped to the same conclusion; Perez joyfully undertook the business, having received carte blanche from the King, and thus the unfortunate secretary was doomed. Immediately after the arrival of Escovedo in Madrid, he addressed a letter to the King. Philip filed it away among other despatches, with this annotation: "the 'avant courier' has arrived—it is necessary to make great haste, and to despatch him before he murders us."

Page 884

The King, having been thus artfully inflamed against his brother and his unfortunate secretary, became clamorous for the blood of Escovedo. At the same time, that personage, soon after his return to Spain, was shocked by the discovery of the amour of Perez with the Princess Eboli. He considered it his duty, both towards the deceased Prince and the living King, to protest against this perfidy. He threatened to denounce to the King, who seemed the only person about the court ignorant of the affair, this double treason of his mistress and his minister. Perez and Anna of Eboli, furious at Escovedo's insolence, and anxious lest he should execute his menace determined to disembarrass themselves of so meddlesome a person. Philip's rage against Don John was accordingly turned to account, and Perez received the King's secret orders to procure Escovedo's assassination. Thus an imaginary conspiracy of Don John against, the crown of Philip was the pretext, the fears and rage of Eboli and her paramour were the substantial reason, for the crime now projected.

The details of the murder were arranged and executed by Perez, but it must be confessed in justice to Philip, with much inferior nicety to that of his, own performances in the same field. Many persons were privy to the plot. There was much blundering, there was great public scandal in Madrid, and no one ever had a reasonable doubt as to the instigators and the actual perpetrators of the crime. Two attempts to poison Escovedo were made by Perez, at his own table, through the agency of Antonio Enriquez, a confidential servant or page. Both were unsuccessful. A third was equally so, but suspicions were aroused. A female slave in the household of Escovedo, was in consequence arrested, and immediately hanged in the public square, for a pretended attempt to murder her master. A few days afterwards (on the 31st of March, 1578) the deed was accomplished at nightfall in the streets of Madrid, by six conspirators. They consisted of the majordomo of Perez, a page in his household, the page's brother from the country, an ex-scullion from the royal kitchens, Juan Rubio by name, who had been the unsuccessful agent in the poisoning scheme, together with two professional bravos, hired for the occasion. It was Insausti, one of this last-mentioned couple, who despatched Escovedo with a single stab, the others aiding and abetting, or keeping watch in the neighbourhood.

The murderers effected their escape, and made their report to Perez, who for the sake of appearances, was upon a visit in the country. Suspicion soon tracked the real culprits, who were above the reach of justice; nor, as to the motives which had prompted the murders, were many ignorant, save only the murderer himself. Philip had ordered the, assassination; but he was profoundly deceived as to the causes of its accomplishment. He was the dupe of a subtler villain than himself, and thought himself sacrificing a conspirator against his crown, while he had really only crushed a poor creature who had been but too solicitous for what he thought his master's honor.

Page 885

The assassins were, of course, protected from prosecution, and duly recompensed. Miguel Bosque, the country boy, received one hundred crowns in gold, paid by a clerk of Perez. Mesa, one of the bravos, was rewarded with a gold chain, fifty doubloons of eight, and a silver cup, besides receiving from the fair hand of Princess Eboli herself a certificate as under-steward upon her estates. The second bravo, Insausti, who had done the deed, the page Enriquez, and the scullion, were all appointed ensigns in his Majesty's army, with twenty gold crowns of annual pension besides. Their commissions were signed by Philip on the 19th of April, 1578. Such were the wages of murder at that day in Spain; gold chains, silver cups, doubloons, annuities, and commissions in the army! The reward of fidelity, as in poor Escovedo's case, was oftener the stiletto. Was it astonishing that murder was more common than fidelity?

With the subsequent career of Antonio Perez—his famous process, his banishment, his intrigues, his innuendos, his long exile, and his miserable death, this history has no concern. We return from our brief digression.

Before narrating the issue of the plot against Antwerp citadel, it is necessary to recur for a moment to the Prince of Orange. In the deeds and the written words of that one man are comprised nearly all the history of the Reformation in the Netherlands—nearly the whole progress of the infant Republic. The rest, during this period, is made up of the plottings and counter-plottings, the mutual wranglings and recriminations of Don John and the estates.

In the brief breathing-space now afforded them, the inhabitants of Holland and Zealand had been employing themselves in the extensive repairs of their vast system of dykes. These barriers, which protected their country against the ocean, but which their own hands had destroyed to preserve themselves against tyranny, were now thoroughly reconstructed, at a great expense, the Prince everywhere encouraging the people with his presence, directing them by his experience, inspiring them with his energy. The task accomplished was stupendous and worthy, says a contemporary, of eternal memory.

At the popular request, the Prince afterwards made a tour through the little provinces, honoring every city with a brief visit. The spontaneous homage which went up to him from every heart was pathetic and simple. There were no triumphal arches, no martial music, no banners, no theatrical pageantry nothing but the choral anthem from thousands of grateful hearts. "Father William has come! Father William has come!" cried men, women, and children to each other, when the news of his arrival in town or village was announced. He was a patriarch visiting his children, not a conqueror, nor a vulgar potentate displaying himself to his admirers. Happy were they who heard his voice, happier they who touched his hands, for his words were full of tenderness, his

Page 886

hand was offered to all. There were none so humble as to be forbidden to approach him, none so ignorant as not to know his deeds. All knew that to combat in their cause he had descended from princely station, from luxurious ease, to the position of a proscribed and almost beggared outlaw. For them he had impoverished himself and his family, mortgaged his estates, stripped himself of jewels, furniture, almost of food and raiment. Through his exertions the Spaniards had been banished from their little territory, the Inquisition crushed within their borders, nearly all the sister provinces but yesterday banded into a common cause.

He found time, notwithstanding congratulating crowds who thronged his footsteps, to direct the labors of the states-general, who still looked more than ever to his guidance, as their relations with Don John became more complicated and unsatisfactory. In a letter addressed to them, on the 20th of June from Harlem, he warned them most eloquently to hold to the Ghent Pacification as to their anchor in the storm. He assured them, if it was, torn from them, that their destruction was inevitable. He reminded them that hitherto they had got but the shadow, not the substance of the Treaty; that they had been robbed of that which was to have been its chief fruit—union among themselves. He and his brothers, with their labor, their wealth, and their blood, had laid down the bridge over which the country had stepped to the Pacification of Ghent. It was for the nation to maintain what had been so painfully won; yet he proclaimed to them that the government were not acting in good faith, that secret, preparations were making to annihilate the authority of the states; to restore the edicts, to put strangers into high places, and to set up again the scaffold and the whole machinery of persecution.

In consequence of the seizure of Namur Castle, and the accusations made by Don John against Orange, in order to justify that act, the Prince had already despatched Taffin and Saint Aldegonde to the states-general with a commission to declare his sentiments upon the subject. He addressed, moreover, to the same body a letter full of sincere and simple eloquence. “The Seigneur Don John,” said he, “has accused me of violating the peace, and of countenancing attempts against his life, and in endeavouring to persuade you into joining him in a declaration of war against me and against Holland and Zealand; but I pray you, most affectionately, to remember our mutual and solemn obligations to maintain the treaty of Ghent.” He entreated the states, therefore, to beware of the artifices employed to seduce them from the only path which led to the tranquillity of their common country, and her true splendor and prosperity. “I believe there is not one of you,” he continued, “who can doubt me, if he will weigh carefully all my actions, and consider closely the course which I am pursuing and have always pursued. Let all these be confronted with the conduct of Don John,

Page 887

and any man will perceive that all my views of happiness, both for my country and myself, imply a peaceable enjoyment of the union, joined with the legitimate restoration of our liberties, to which all good patriots aspire, and towards which all my designs have ever tended. As all the grandeur of Don John, on the contrary, consists in war, as there is nothing which he so much abhors as repose, as he has given ample proof of these inclinations in all his designs and enterprises, both before and after the Treaty of Marche en Famine, both within the country and beyond its borders, as it is most manifest that his purpose is, and ever has been, to embroil us with our neighbours of England and Scotland in new dissensions, as it must be evident to every one of you that his pretended accusations against me are but colors and shadows to embellish and to shroud his own desire for war, his appetite for vengeance, and his hatred not only to me but to yourselves, and as his determination is, in the words of Escovedo, to chastise some of us by means of the rest, and to excite the jealousy of one portion of the country against the other—therefore, gentlemen, do I most affectionately exhort you to found your decision, as to these matters, not upon words but upon actions. Examine carefully my conduct in the points concerning which the charges are made; listen attentively to what my envoys will communicate to you in my behalf; and then, having compared it with all the proceedings of Seigneur Don John, you will be able to form a resolution worthy the rank which you occupy, and befitting your obligations to the whole people, of whom you have been chosen chiefs and protectors, by God and by men. Put away all considerations which might obscure your clear eye-sight; maintain with magnanimity, and like men, the safety of yourselves, your wives, your children, your estates, your liberties; see that this poor people, whose eyes are fixed upon you, does not perish; preserve them from the greediness of those who would grow great at your expense; guard them from the yoke of miserable servitude; let not all our posterity lament that, by our pusillanimity, they have lost the liberties which our ancestors had conquered for them, and bequeathed to them as well as to us, and that they have been subjugated by the proud tyranny of strangers.

“Trusting,” said the Prince, in conclusion, “that you will accord faith and attention to my envoys, I will only add an expression of my sincere determination to employ myself incessantly in your service, and for the welfare of the whole people, without sparing any means in my power, nor my life itself.”

The vigilant Prince was indeed not slow to take advantage of the Governor’s false move. While in reality intending peace, if it were possible, Don John had thrown down the gauntlet; while affecting to deal openly and manfully, like a warrior and an emperor’s son, he had involved himself in petty stratagems and transparent intrigues, by all which he had gained nothing but the character of a plotter, whose word could not be trusted. Saint Aldegonde expressed the hope that the seizure of Namur Castle would open the eyes of the people, and certainly the Prince did his best to sharpen their vision.

Page 888

While in North Holland, William of Orange received an urgent invitation from the magistracy and community of Utrecht to visit that city. His authority, belonging to him under his ancient commission, had not yet been recognized over that province, but there was no doubt that the contemplated convention of “satisfaction” was soon to be; arranged, for his friends there were numerous and influential. His princess, Charlotte de Bourbon, who accompanied him on his tour, trembled at the danger to which her husband would expose himself by venturing thus boldly into a territory which might be full of his enemies, but the Prince determined to trust the loyalty of a province which he hoped would be soon his own. With anxious forebodings, the Princess followed her husband to the ancient episcopal city. As they entered its gates, where an immense concourse was waiting to receive him, a shot passed through the carriage window, and struck the Prince upon the breast. The affrighted lady threw her arms about his neck; shrieking that they were betrayed, but the Prince, perceiving that the supposed shot was but a wad from one of the cannon, which were still roaring their welcome to him, soon succeeded in calming her fears. The carriage passed lowly through the streets, attended by the vociferous greetings of the multitude; for the whole population had come forth to do him honor. Women and children clustered upon every roof and balcony, but a painful incident again marred the tranquillity of the occasion. An apothecary’s child, a little girl of ten years, leaning eagerly from a lofty balcony, lost her balance and fell to the ground, directly before the horses of the Prince’s carriage. She was killed stone dead by the fall. The procession stopped; the Prince alighted, lifted the little corpse in his arms, and delivered it, with gentle words and looks of consolation, to the unhappy parents. The day seemed marked with evil omens, which were fortunately destined to prove fallacious. The citizens of Utrecht became more than ever inclined to accept the dominion of the Prince, whom they honored and whom they already regarded as their natural chief. They entertained him with banquets and festivities during his brief visit, and it was certain before he took his departure that the treaty of “Satisfaction” would not be long delayed. It was drawn up, accordingly, in the autumn of the same year, upon the basis of that accepted by Harlem and Amsterdam—a basis wide enough to support both religions, with a nominal supremacy to the ancient Church.

Meantime, much fruitless correspondence had taken place between Don John and the states Envoys; despatched by the two parties to each other, had indulged in bitterness and recrimination. As soon as the Governor, had taken: possession of Namur Castle, he had sent the Seigneur, de Rassinghem to the states-general. That gentleman carried with him copies of two anonymous letters, received by Don John upon the 19th and 21st

Page 889

of July, 1577, in which a conspiracy against his life and liberty was revealed. It was believed by the Governor that Count Lalain, who had secretly invited him to a conference, had laid an ambush for him. It was known that the country was full of disbanded soldiers, and the Governor asserted confidently that numbers of desperadoes were lying in wait for him in every village alehouse of Hainault and Flanders. He called on the states to ferret out these conspirators, and to inflict condign punishment upon their more guilty chiefs; he required that the soldiers, as well as the citizens, should be disarmed at Brussels and throughout Brabant, and he justified his seizure of Namur, upon the general ground that his life was no longer safe, except in a fortress.

In reply to the letter of the Governor, which was dated the 24th of July, the states despatched Marolles, Archdeacon of Ypres, and the Seigneur de Bresse, to Namur, with a special mission to enter into the whole subject of these grievances. These gentlemen, professing the utmost devotion to the cause of his Majesty's authority and the Catholic religion, expressed doubts as to the existence of the supposed conspiracy. They demanded that Don John should denounce the culprits, if any such were known, in order that proper chastisement might be instantly inflicted. The conversation which ensued was certainly unsatisfactory. The Governor used lofty and somewhat threatening language, assuring Marolles that he was at that moment in possession, not only of Namur but of Antwerp citadel; and the deputies accordingly departed, having accomplished very little by their journey. Their backs were scarcely turned, when Don John, on his part, immediately appointed another commission, consisting of Rassinghem and Grobbendonck, to travel from Namur to Brussels. These envoys carried a long letter of grievances, enclosing a short list of demands. The letter reiterated his complaints about conspiracies, and his protestations of sincerity. It was full of censure upon the Prince of Orange; stigmatized his intrigues to obtain possession of Amsterdam without a proper "Satisfaction," and of Utrecht, to which he had no claim at all. It maintained that the Hollanders and Zealanders were bent upon utterly exterminating the Catholic religion, and that they avowed publicly their intention to refuse obedience to the assembly-general, should it decree the maintenance of the ancient worship only. His chief demands were that the states should send him a list of persons qualified to be members of the general assembly, that he might see whether there were not individuals among them whom he might choose to reject. He further required that, if the Prince of Orange did not instantly fulfil the treaty of Ghent, the states should cease to hold any communication with him. He also summoned the states to provide him forthwith with a suitable body-guard.

Page 890

To these demands and complaints, the estates replied by a string of resolutions. They made their usual protestations of attachment to his Majesty and the Catholic faith, and they granted willingly a foot-guard of three hundred archers. They, however, stoutly denied the Governor's right to make eliminations in their lists of deputies, because, from time immemorial, these representatives had been chosen by the clergy, nobles, cities, and boroughs. The names might change daily, nor were there any suspicious ones among them, but it was a matter with which the Governor had no concern. They promised that every effort should be made to bring about the execution of the treaty by the Prince of Orange. They begged Don John; however, to abandon the citadel of Namur, and gave him to understand that his secret practices had been discovered, a large packet of letters having recently been intercepted in the neighbourhood of Bourdeaux, and sent to the Prince of Orange. Among them were some of the despatches of Don John and Escovedo, to his Majesty and to Antonio Perez, to which allusion has already been made.

Count Bossu, De Bresse, and Meetkercke were the envoys deputed to convey these resolutions to Namur. They had a long and bitter conversation with Don John, who complained, more furiously than ever of the conspiracies against his person, and of the intrigues of Orange. He insisted that this arch-traitor had been sowing the seed of his damnable doctrines broadcast through the Netherlands; that the earth was groaning with a daily ripening harvest of rebellion and heresy. It was time, he cried, for the states to abandon the Prince, and rally round their King. Patience had been exhausted. He had himself done all, and more than could have been demanded. He had faithfully executed the Ghent Pacification, but his conduct had neither elicited gratitude nor inspired confidence.

The deputies replied, that to the due execution of the Ghent treaty it was necessary that he should disband the German troops, assemble the states-general, and carry out their resolutions. Until these things, now undone, had been accomplished, he had no right to plead his faithful fulfilment of the Pacification. After much conversation—in which the same grievances were repeated, the same statements produced and contradicted, the same demands urged and evaded, and the same menaces exchanged as upon former occasions—the deputies returned to Brussels.

Immediately after their departure, Don John learned the result of his project upon Antwerp Castle. It will be remembered that he had withdrawn Aerschot, under pretext of requiring his company on the visit to Queen Margaret, and that he had substituted Treslong, an unscrupulous partisan of his own, in the government of the citadel. The temporary commander soon found, however, that he had undertaken more than he could perform. The troops under Van Ende were refused admittance into the town, although permission

Page 891

to quarter them there had been requested by the Governor-General. The 'authorities had been assured that the troops were necessary for the protection of their city, but the magistrates had learned, but too recently, the nature of the protection which Van Ende, with his mercenaries, would afford. A detachment of states troops under De Yers, Champagny's nephew, encountered the regiment of Van Ende, and put it to flight with considerable loss. At the same time, an officer in the garrison of the citadel itself, Captain De Bours, undertook secretly to carry the fortress for the estates. His operations were secret and rapid. The Seigneur de Liedekerke had succeeded Champagny in the government of the city. This appointment had been brought about by the agency of the Greffier Martini, a warm partisan of Orange. The new Governor was known to be very much the Prince's friend, and believed to be at heart a convert to the Reformed religion. With Martini and Liedekerke, De Bours arranged his plot. He was supplied with a large sum of money, readily furnished in secret by the leading mercantile houses of the city. These funds were successfully invested in gaining over the garrison, only one company holding firm for Treslong. The rest, as that officer himself informed Don John, were ready at any moment "to take him by the throat."

On the 1st of August, the day firmed upon in concert with the Governor and Greffier, he was, in fact, taken by the throat. There was but a brief combat, the issue of which became accidentally doubtful in the city. The white-plumed hat of De Bours had been struck from his head in the struggle, and had fallen into the foss. Floating out into the river, it had been recognized by the scouts sent out by the personages most interested, and the information was quickly brought to Liedekerke, who was lying concealed in the house of Martini, awaiting the result. Their dismay was great, but Martini, having more confidence than the Governor, sallied forth to learn the whole truth. Scarcely had he got into the streets than he heard a welcome cry, "The Beggars have the castle! the Beggars have the castle!" shouted a hundred voices. He soon met a lieutenant coming straight from the fortress, who related to him the whole affair. Learning that De Bours was completely victorious, and that Treslong was a prisoner, Martini hastened with the important intelligence to his own home, where Liedekerke lay concealed. That functionary now repaired to the citadel, whither the magistrates, the leading citizens, and the chief merchants were instantly summoned. The castle was carried, but the city was already trembling with apprehension lest the German mercenaries quartered within its walls, should rise with indignation or panic, and repeat the horrid tragedy of The Antwerp Fury.

Page 892

In truth, there seemed danger of such a catastrophe. The secret correspondence of Don John with the colonels was already discovered, and it was seen how warmly he had impressed upon the men with whom he had been tampering, “that the die was cast,” and that all their art was necessary to make it turn up successfully. The castle was carried, but what would become of the city? A brief and eager consultation terminated in an immediate offer of three hundred thousand crowns by the leading merchants. This money was to be employed in amicably satisfying, if possible, the German soldiers, who had meanwhile actually come to arms, and were assembled in the Place de Meer. Feeling unsafe; however, in this locality, their colonels had led them into the new town. Here, having barricaded themselves with gun-carriages, bales, and boxes, they awaited, instead of initiating, the events which the day might bring forth. A deputation soon arrived with a white flag from the castle, and commissioners were appointed by the commanding officers of the soldiery. The offer was made to pay over the arrears of their wages, at least to a very large amount, on condition that the troops should forthwith and for ever evacuate the city. One hundred and fifty thousand crowns were offered on the nail. The merchants stood on the bridge leading from the old town-to the new, in full sight of the soldiers. They held in their hands their purses, filled with the glittering gold. The soldiers were frantic with the opportunity, and swore that they would have their officers’ lives, if the tempting and unexpected offer should be declined. Nevertheless, the commissioners went to and fro, ever finding something to alter or arrange. In truth, the merchants had agreed to furnish; if necessary, three hundred thousand Browns; but the thrifty negotiators were disposed, if diplomacy could do it, to save the moiety of that sum. Day began to sink, ere the bargain was completed, when suddenly sails were descried in the distance, and presently a large fleet of war vessels, with, banner and pennon flying before a favoring breeze; came sailing up the Scheld. It was a squadron of the Prince’s ships, under command of Admiral Haultain. He had been sent against Tholen, but, having received secret intelligence, had, with happy audacity, seized the opportunity of striking a blow in the cause which he had served so faithfully. A shot or two fired from the vessels among the barricades had a quickening effect. A sudden and astounding panic seized the soldiers. “The Beggars are coming! the Beggars are coming!” they yelled in dismay; for the deeds of the ocean-beggars had not become less appalling since the memorable siege of Leyden. The merchants still stood on the bridge with their purses in their hand. The envoys from the castle still waved their white flags. It was too late. The horror inspired by the wild Zealanders overpowered the hope of wages, extinguished all confidence in the friendship of the citizens. The mercenaries,

Page 893

yielding to a violent paroxysm of fear, fled hither and thither, panting, doubling, skulking, like wolves before the hounds. Their flight was ludicrous. Without staying to accept the money which the merchants were actually offering, without packing up their own property, in many cases even throwing away their arms, they fled, helter skelter, some plunging into the Scheid, some skimming along the dykes, some rushing across the open fields. A portion of them under Colonel Fugger, afterwards shut themselves up in Bergen op Zoom, where they were at once besieged by Champagny, and were soon glad to compromise the matter by surrendering their colonel and laying down their arms. The remainder retreated to Breda, where they held out for two months, and were at length overcome by a neat stratagem of Orange. A captain, being known to be in the employment of Don John, was arrested on his way to Breda. Carefully sewed up in his waistband was found a letter, of a finger's breadth, written in cipher, and sealed with the Governor-General's seal. Colonel Frondsberger, commanding in Breda, was in this missive earnestly solicited to hold out two months longer, within which time a certain relief was promised. In place of this letter, deciphered with much difficulty, a new one was substituted, which the celebrated printer, William Sylvius, of Antwerp, prepared with great adroitness, adding the signature and seal of Don John. In this counterfeit epistle; the Colonel was directed to do the best he could for himself, by reason that Don John was himself besieged, and unable to render him assistance. The same captain who had brought the real letter was bribed to deliver the counterfeit. This task he faithfully performed, spreading the fictitious intelligence besides, with such ardor through the town, that the troops rose upon their leader, and surrendered him with the city and their own arms, into the custody of the estates. Such was the result of the attempt by Don John to secure the citadel—of Antwerp. Not only was the fortress carried for the estates, but the city itself, for the first time in twelve years, was relieved from a foreign soldiery.

The rage and disappointment of the Governor-General were excessive. He had boasted to Marolles a day too soon. The prize which he thought already in his grasp had slipped through his fingers, while an interminable list of demands which he dreamed not of, and which were likely to make him bankrupt, were brought to his door. To the states, not himself, the triumph seemed for the moment decreed. The "dice" had taken a run against him, notwithstanding his pains in loading and throwing. Nevertheless, he did not yet despair of revenge. "These rebels," he wrote to the Empress-dowager, his sister, "think that fortune is all smiles for them now, and that all is ruin for me. The wretches are growing proud enough, and forget that their chastisement, some fine morning, will yet arrive."

Page 894

On the 7th of August he addressed another long letter to the estates. This document was accompanied, as usual, by certain demands, drawn up categorically in twenty-three articles. The estates considered his terms hard and strange, for in their opinion it was themselves, not the Governor, who were masters of the situation. Nevertheless, he seemed inclined to treat as if he had gained, not missed, the citadel of Antwerp; as if the troops with whom he had tampered were mustered in the field, not shut up in distant towns, and already at the mercy of the states party. The Governor demanded that all the forces of the country should be placed under his own immediate control; that Count Bossu, or some other person nominated by himself, should be appointed to the government of Friesland; that the people of Brabant and Flanders should set themselves instantly to hunting, catching, and chastising all vagrant heretics and preachers. He required, in particular, that Saint Aldegonde and Theron, those most mischievous rebels, should be prohibited from setting their foot in any city of the Netherlands. He insisted that the community of Brussels should lay down their arms, and resume their ordinary handicrafts. He demanded that the Prince of Orange should be made to execute the Ghent treaty; to suppress the exercise of the Reformed religion in Harlem, Schoonhoven, and other places; to withdraw his armed vessels from their threatening stations, and to restore Nieuport, unjustly detained by him. Should the Prince persist in his obstinacy, Don John summoned them to take arms against him, and to support their lawful Governor. He, moreover, required the immediate restitution of Antwerp citadel, and the release of Treslong from prison.

Although, regarded from the Spanish point of view, such demands might seem reasonable, it was also natural that their audacity should astonish the estates. That the man who had violated so openly the Ghent treaty should rebuke the Prince for his default—that the man who had tampered with the German mercenaries until they were on the point of making another Antwerp Fury, should now claim the command over them and all other troops—that the man who had attempted to gain Antwerp citadel by a base stratagem should now coolly demand its restoration, seemed to them the perfection of insolence. The baffled conspirator boldly claimed the prize which was to have rewarded a successful perfidy. At the very moment when the Escovedo letters and the correspondence with the German colonels had been laid before their eyes, it was a little too much that the double-dealing bastard of the double-dealing Emperor should read them a lecture upon sincerity. It was certain that the perplexed, and outwitted warrior had placed himself at last in a very false position. The Prince of Orange, with his usual adroitness, made the most of his adversary's false moves. Don John had only succeeded in digging a pitfall for himself. His stratagems against

Page 895

Namur and Antwerp had produced him no fruit, saving the character, which his antagonist now fully succeeded in establishing for him, of an unscrupulous and artful schemer. This reputation was enhanced by the discovery of the intercepted letters, and by the ingenuity and eagerness with which they were turned to account against him by the Prince, by Saint Aldegonde, and all the anti-Catholic party. The true key to his reluctance against despatching the troops by land, the states had not obtained. They did not dream of his romantic designs upon England, and were therefore excusable in attributing a still deeper perfidy to his arrangements.

Even had he been sent to the Netherlands in the full possession of his faculties, he would have been no match in political combinations for his powerful antagonists. Hoodwinked and fettered, suspected by his master, baffled, bewildered, irritated by his adversary, what could he do but plunge from one difficulty to another and oscillate between extravagant menace, and desponding concession, until his hopes and life were wasted quite away. His instructions came from Philip through Perez, and that most profound dissembler, as we have seen, systematically deceived the Governor, with the view of eliciting treasonable matters, Philip wishing, if possible, to obtain proofs of Don John's secret designs against his own crown. Thus every letter from Spain was filled with false information and with lying persuasions. No doubt the Governor considered himself entitled to wear a crown, and meant to win it, if not in Africa, then in England, or wherever fate might look propitiously upon him. He was of the stuff of which crusaders and dynasty founders had been made, at a somewhat earlier epoch. Who could have conquered the holy sepulchre, or wrested a crown from its lawful wearer, whether in Italy, Muscovy, the Orient, or in the British Ultima Thule, more bravely than this imperial bastard, this valiant and romantic adventurer? Unfortunately, he came a few centuries too late. The days when dynasties were founded, and European thrones appropriated by a few foreign freebooters, had passed, and had not yet returned. He had come to the Netherlands desirous of smoothing over difficulties and of making a peaceful termination to that rebellion a steppingstone to his English throne. He was doomed to a profound disappointment, a broken heart, and a premature grave, instead of the glittering baubles which he pursued. Already he found himself bitterly deceived in his hopes. The obstinate Netherlanders would not love him, notwithstanding the good wishes he had manifested. They would not even love the King of Spain, notwithstanding the blessings which his Majesty was declared to have heaped upon them. On the contrary, they persisted in wasting their perverse affections upon the pestilent Prince of Orange. That heretic was leading them to destruction, for he was showing them the road to liberty, and nothing, in the eyes of the Governor,

Page 896

could be more pitiable than to behold an innocent people setting forth upon such a journey. “In truth,” said he, bitterly, in his memorable letter to his sister the Empress, “they are willing to recognize neither God nor king. They pretend to liberty in all things: so that ’tis a great pity to see how they are going on; to see the impudence and disrespect with which they repay his Majesty for the favors which he has shown them, and me for the labors, indignities, and dangers which I have undergone for their sakes.”

Nothing, indeed, in the Governor’s opinion, could surpass the insolence of the Netherlanders, save their ingratitude. That was the serpent’s tooth which was ever wounding the clement King and his indignant brother. It seemed so bitter to meet with thanklessness, after seven years of Alva and three of Requesens; after the labors of the Blood Council, the massacres of Naarden, Zutphen, and Harlem, the siege of Leyden, and the Fury of Antwerp. “Little profit there has been,” said the Governor to his sister, “or is like to be from all the good which we have done to these bad people. In short, they love and obey in all things the most perverse and heretic tyrant and rebel in the whole world, which is this damned Prince of Orange, while, on the contrary, without fear of God or shame before men, they abhor and dishonor the name and commandments of their natural sovereign.” Therefore, with a doubting spirit, and almost with a broken heart, had the warrior shut himself up in Namur Castle, to await the progress of events, and to escape from the snares of his enemies. “God knows how much I desire to avoid extremities,” said he, “but I know not what to do with men who show themselves so obstinately rebellious.”

Thus pathetically Don John bewailed his fate. The nation had turned from God, from Philip, from himself; yet he still sat in his castle, determined to save them from destruction and his own hands from bloodshed, if such an issue were yet possible. Nor was he entirely deserted, for among the faithless a few were faithful still. Although the people were in open revolt, there was still a handful of nobles resolved to do their duty towards their God and King. “This little band,” said the Governor, “has accompanied me hither, like gentlemen and chevaliers of honor.” Brave Berlaymont and his four sons were loyal to the last, but others of this limited number of gentlemen and chevaliers of honor were already deserting him. As soon as the result of the enterprise against Antwerp citadel was known, and the storm was gathering most darkly over the royal cause, Aerschot and Havre were first to spread their wings and flutter away in search of a more congenial atmosphere. In September, the Duke was again as he had always professed himself to be, with some important interval of exception—“the affectionate brother and cordial friend of the Prince of Orange.”

Page 897

The letter addressed by Don John to the states upon the 7th of August, had not yet been answered. Feeling, soon afterwards, more sensible of his position, and perhaps less inflamed with indignation; he addressed another communication to them, upon the 13th of the same month. In this epistle he expressed an extreme desire for peace, and a hearty desire to be relieved, if possible, from his most painful situation. He protested, before God and man, that his intentions were most honest, and that he abhorred war more than anything else in the world. He averred that, if his person was as odious to them as it seemed, he was only too ready to leave the land, as soon as the King should appoint his successor. He reminded them that the question of peace or war lay not with himself, but with them; and that the world would denounce as guilty those with whom rested the responsibility. He concluded with an observation which, in its humility, seemed sufficiently ironical, that if they had quite finished the perusal of the despatches from Madrid to his address, which they had intercepted, he should be thankful for an opportunity of reading them himself. He expressed a hope, therefore, that they would be forwarded to Namur.

This letter was answered at considerable length, upon the second day. The states made their customary protestations of attachment to his Majesty, their fidelity to the Catholic church, their determination to maintain both the Ghent treaty and the Perpetual Edict. They denied all responsibility for the present disastrous condition of the relations between themselves and government, having disbanded nearly all their own troops, while the Governor had been strengthening his forces up to the period of his retreat into Namur. He protested, indeed, friendship and a sincere desire for peace, but the intercepted letters of Escovedo and his own had revealed to them the evil counsels to which he had been listening, and the intrigues which he had been conducting. They left it to his conscience whether they could reasonably believe, after the perusal of these documents, that it was his intention to maintain the Ghent treaty, or any treaty; and whether they were not justified in their resort to the natural right of self-defence.

Don John was already fully aware of the desperate error which he had committed. In seizing Namur and attempting Antwerp, he had thrown down the gauntlet. Wishing peace, he had, in a panic of rage and anxiety; declared and enacted war. The bridge was broken behind him, the ships burned, a gulf opened, a return to peace rendered almost impossible. Yet it is painful to observe the almost passionate longings which at times seemed to possess him for accommodating the quarrel, together with his absolute incapacity to appreciate his position. The Prince was triumphant; the Governor in a trap. Moreover, it was a trap which he had not only entered voluntarily, but which he had set himself; he had played into the Prince’s

Page 898

hands, and was frantic to see his adversary tranquilly winning the game. It was almost melancholy to observe the gradation of his tone from haughty indignation to dismal concession. In an elaborate letter which he addressed “to the particular states, bishops, councillors, and cities of the Netherlands,” he protested as to the innocence of his intentions, and complained bitterly of the calumnies circulated to his discredit by the Prince of Orange. He denied any intention of recalling the troops which he had dismissed, except in case of absolute necessity: He affirmed that his Majesty sincerely desired peace. He averred that the country was either against the King, against the Catholic religion, against himself, or against all three together. He bitterly asked what further concessions were required. Had he not done all he had ever promised? Had he not discharged the Spaniards, placed the castles in the hands of natives, restored the privileges, submitted to insults and indecencies? Yet, in spite of all which had passed, he declared his readiness to resign, if another prince or princess of the blood more acceptable to them could be appointed. The letter to the states was followed by a proposition for a cessation of hostilities, and for the appointment of a commission to devise means for faithfully executing the Ghent treaty. This proposition was renewed, a few days later, together with an offer for an exchange of hostages.

It was not difficult for the estates to answer the letters of the Governor. Indeed, there was but little lack of argument on either side throughout this unhappy controversy. It is dismal to contemplate the interminable exchange of protocols, declarations, demands, apostilles, replications and rejoinders, which made up the substance of Don John’s administration. Never was chivalrous crusader so out of place. It was not a soldier that was then required for Philip’s exigency, but a scribe. Instead of the famous sword of Lepanto, the “barbarous pen” of Hopperus had been much more suitable for the work required. Scribbling Joachim in a war-galley, yard-arm and yard-arm with the Turkish capitan pacha, could have hardly felt less at ease than did the brilliant warrior thus condemned to scrawl and dissemble. While marching from concession to concession, he found the states conceiving daily more distrust, and making daily deeper encroachments. Moreover, his deeds up to the time when he seemed desirous to retrace his steps had certainly been, at the least, equivocal. Therefore, it was natural for the estates, in reply to the questions in his letter, to observe that he had indeed dismissed the Spaniards, but that he had tampered with and retained the Germans; that he had indeed placed the citadels in the hands of natives, but that he had tried his best to wrest them away again; that he had indeed professed anxiety for peace, but that his intercepted letters proved his preparations for war. Already there were rumors of Spanish

Page 899

troops returning in small detachments out of France. Already the Governor was known to be enrolling fresh mercenaries to supply the place of those whom he had unsuccessfully endeavoured to gain to his standard. As early as the 26th of July, in fact, the Marquis d'Ayamonte in Milan, and Don Juan de Idiaquez in Genoa, had received letters from Don John of Austria, stating that, as the provinces had proved false to their engagements, he would no longer be held by his own, and intimating his desire that the veteran troops which had but so recently been dismissed from Flanders, should forthwith return. Soon afterwards, Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, received instructions from the King to superintend these movements, and to carry the aid of his own already distinguished military genius to his uncle in the Netherlands.

On the other hand, the states felt their strength daily more sensibly. Guided, as usual, by Orange, they had already assumed a tone in their correspondence which must have seemed often disloyal, and sometimes positively insulting, to the Governor. They even answered his hints of resignation in favor of some other prince of the blood, by expressing their hopes that his successor, if a member of the royal house at all, would at least be a legitimate one. This was a severe thrust at the haughty chieftain, whose imperial airs rarely betrayed any consciousness of Barbara Blomberg and the bend sinister on his shield. He was made to understand, through the medium of Brabantine bluntness, that more importance was attached to the marriage, ceremony in the Netherlands than he seemed to imagine. The categorical demands made by the estates seemed even more indigestible than such collateral affronts; for they had now formally affirmed the views of Orange as to the constitutional government of the provinces. In their letter of 26th August, they expressed their willingness, notwithstanding the past delinquencies of the Governor, to yield him their, confidence again; but at the same time; they enumerated conditions which, with his education and views, could hardly seem to him admissible. They required him to disband all the soldiers in his service, to send the Germans instantly out of the country, to dismiss every foreigner from office, whether civil or military, and to renounce his secret league with the Duke of Guise. They insisted that he should thenceforth govern only with the advice and consent of the State Council, that he should execute that which should by a majority of votes be ordained there, that neither measures nor despatches should be binding or authentic unless drawn up at that board. These certainly were views of administration which, even if consonant with a sound historical view of the Netherland constitutions, hardly tallied with his monarch's instructions, his own opinions, or the practice under Alva and Requesens, but the country was still in a state of revolution, and the party of the Prince was gaining the upper hand.

Page 900

It was the determination of that great statesman, according to that which he considered the legitimate practice of the government, to restore the administration to the State Council, which executive body ought of right to be appointed by the states-general. In the states-general, as in the states-particular, a constant care was to be taken towards strengthening the most popular element, the “community” of each city, the aggregate, that is to say, of its guild-representatives and its admitted burghers. This was, in the opinion of the Prince, the true theory of the government—republican in all but form—-under the hereditary protection, not the despotic authority, of a family, whose rights were now nearly forfeited. It was a great step in advance that these views should come to be thus formally announced, not in Holland and Zealand only, but by the deputies of the states-general, although such a doctrine, to the proud stomach of Don John, seemed sufficiently repulsive. Not less so was the cool intimation with which the paper concluded, that if he should execute his threat of resigning, the country would bear his loss with fortitude, coupled as was that statement with a declaration that, until his successor should be appointed, the State Council would consider itself charged ad interim with the government. In the meantime, the Governor was requested not to calumniate the estates to foreign governments, as he had so recently done in his intercepted letter to the Empress-dowager.

Upon receiving this letter, “Don John,” says a faithful old chronicler, “found that the cranes had invited the frog to dinner.” In truth, the illustrious soldier was never very successful in his efforts, for which his enemies gave him credit, to piece out the skin of the lion with that of the fox. He now felt himself exposed and outwitted, while he did not feel conscious of any very dark design. He answered the letter of the states by a long communication, dated from Namur Castle, 28th of August. In style, he was comparatively temperate, but the justification which he attempted of his past conduct was not very happy. He noticed the three different points which formed the leading articles of the accusation brought against him, the matter, namely, of the intercepted letters, of the intrigues with the German colonels, and the seizure of Namur. He did not deny the authorship of the letters, but contented himself with a reference to their date, as if its priority to his installation as Governor furnished a sufficient palliation of the bad faith which the letters revealed. As to the despatches of Escovedo, he denied responsibility for any statements or opinions which they might contain. As the Secretary, however, was known to be his most confidential friend, this attempt to shuffle off his own complicity was held to be both lame and unhandsome. As for the correspondence with the colonels, his defence was hardly more successful, and rested upon a general

Page 901

recrimination upon the Prince of Orange. As that personage was agitating and turbulent, it was not possible, the Governor urged, that he should himself remain quiet. It was out of his power to execute the treaty and the edict, in the face of a notorious omission on the part of his adversary to enforce the one or to publish the other. It comported neither with his dignity nor his safety to lay down his weapons while the Prince and his adherents were arming. He should have placed himself “in a very foolish position,” had he allowed himself unarmed to be dictated to by the armed. In defence of himself on the third point, the seizure of Namur Castle, he recounted the various circumstances with which the reader is already acquainted. He laid particular stress upon the dramatic manner in which the Vicomte De Gand had drawn his curtains at the dead of night; he narrated at great length the ominous warning which he had likewise received from the Duke of Aerschot in Brussels, and concluded with a circumstantial account of the ambush which he believed to have been laid for him by Count De Lalain. The letter concluded with a hope for an arrangement of difficulties, not yet admitted by the Governor to be insurmountable, and with a request for a formal conference, accompanied by an exchange of hostages.

While this correspondence was proceeding between Namur and Brussels, an event was occurring in Antwerp which gave much satisfaction to Orange. The Spanish Fury, and the recent unsuccessful attempt of Don John to master the famous citadel, had determined the authorities to take the counsel which the Prince had so often given in vain, and the fortress of Antwerp was at length razed to the ground, on the side towards the city.—It would be more correct to say that it was not the authorities, but the city itself which rose at last and threw off the saddle by which it had so long been galled. More than ten thousand persons were constantly at work, morning, noon, and night, until the demolition was accomplished. Grave magistrates, great nobles, fair ladies, citizens and their wives, beggars and their children, all wrought together pell-mell. All were anxious to have a hand in destroying the nest where so many murders had been hatched, whence so much desolation had flown. The task was not a long one for workmen so much in earnest, and the fortress was soon laid low in the quarter where it could be injurious to the inhabitants. As the work proceeded, the old statue of Alva was discovered in a forgotten crypt, where it had lain since it had been thrown down by the order of Requesens. Amid the destruction of the fortress, the gigantic phantom of its founder seemed to start suddenly from the gloom, but the apparition added fresh fuel to the rage of the people. The image of the execrated Governor was fastened upon with as much fierceness as if the bronze effigy could feel their blows, or comprehend their wrath. It was brought forth from its dark

Page 902

hiding-place into the daylight. Thousands of hands were ready to drag it through the streets for universal inspection and outrage. A thousand sledge-hammers were ready to dash it to pieces, with a slight portion, at least, of the satisfaction with which those who wielded them would have dealt the same blows upon the head of the tyrant himself. It was soon reduced to a shapeless mass. Small portions were carried away and preserved for generations in families as heirlooms of hatred. The bulk was melted again and reconverted, by a most natural metamorphosis, into the cannon from which it had originally sprung.

The razing of the Antwerp citadel set an example which was followed in other places; the castle of Ghent, in particular, being immediately levelled, amid demonstrations of universal enthusiasm. Meantime, the correspondence between Don John and the estates at Brussels dragged its slow length along, while at the same time, two elaborate letters were addressed to the King, on the 24th of August and the 8th of September, by the estates-general of the Netherlands. These documents, which were long and able, gave a vigorous representation of past evils and of the present complication of disorders under which the commonwealth was laboring. They asked, as usual, for a royal remedy; and expressed their doubts whether there could be any sincere reconciliation so long as the present Governor, whose duplicity and insolence they represented in a very strong light, should remain in office. Should his Majesty, however, prefer to continue Don John in the government, they signified their willingness, in consideration of his natural good qualities, to make the best of the matter. Should, however, the estrangement between themselves and the Governor seem irremediable, they begged that another and a legitimate prince of the blood might be appointed in his place.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Country would bear his loss with fortitude
Its humility, seemed sufficiently ironical
Not upon words but upon actions
Perfection of insolence
Was it astonishing that murder was more common than fidelity?

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

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley
1855

CHAPTER IV.

Orange invited to visit Brussels—His correspondence upon the subject with the estates —general—Triumphant journey of the Prince to the capital——Stop put by him to the negotiations with Don John —New and stringent demands made upon the Governor—-His indignation —Open rupture—Intrigue of Netherland grandees with Archduke Matthias—Policy of Orange—Attitude of Queen Elizabeth—Flight of Matthias from Vienna—Anxiety of Elizabeth—Adroitness of the Prince—The office of Reward—-Election

Page 903

of Orange to that dignity— His complaints against the great nobles—Aerschot Governor of Flanders—A storm brewing in Ghent—Ryhove and Imbize—Blood- Councillor Hessels—Arrogance of the aristocratic party in Flanders —Ryhove's secret interview with Orange—Outbreak at Ghent—Arrest of Aerschot, Hessels, and others of the reactionary party—The Duke liberated at demand of Orange—The Prince's visit to Ghent— Rhetorical demonstrations—The new Brussels Union characterized— Treaty with England—Articles by which Matthias is nominally constituted Governor-General—-His inauguration at Brussels— Brilliant and fantastic ceremonies—Letter of Don John to the Emperor—His anger with England—An army collecting—Arrival of Alexander Farnese—Injudicious distribution of offices in the States' army—The States' army fall back upon Gemblours, followed by Don John—Tremendous overthrow of the patriots—-Wonderful disparity in the respective losses of the two armies.

While these matters were in progress, an important movement was made by the estates-general. The Prince of Orange was formally and urgently invited to come to Brussels to aid them with his counsel and presence. The condemned traitor had not set foot in the capital for eleven years. We have narrated the circumstance of his departure, while the advancing trumpets of Alva's army were almost heard in the distance. His memorable and warning interview with Egmont has been described. Since that period, although his spirit had always been manifesting itself in the capital like an actual presence; although he had been the magnet towards which the states throughout all their, oscillations had involuntarily vibrated, yet he had been ever invisible. He had been summoned by the Blood Council to stand his trial, and had been condemned to death by default. He answered the summons by a defiance, and the condemnation by two campaigns, unsuccessful in appearance, but which had in reality prostrated the authority of the sovereign.

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

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

Page 904

And now again the scene was changed. The son of the Emperor, the King's brother, was virtually beleaguered; the proscribed rebel had arrived at victory through a long series of defeats. The nation everywhere acknowledged him master, and was in undisguised revolt against the anointed sovereign. The great nobles, who hated Philip on the one hand, and the Reformed religion on the other, were obliged, in obedience to the dictates of a people with whom they had little sympathy, to accept the ascendency of the Calvinist Prince, of whom they were profoundly jealous. Even the fleeting and incapable Aerschot was obliged to simulate adhesion; even the brave Champagny, cordial hater of Spaniards, but most devotedly Catholic, "the chiefest man of wysedome and stomach at that tyme in Brussels," so envoy Wilson wrote to Burghley, had become "Brabantized," as his brother Granvelle expressed himself, and was one of the commissioners to invite the great rebel to Brussels. The other envoys were the Abbot of Saint Gertrude, Dr. Leoninus, and the Seigneur de Liesvelt. These gentlemen, on arriving at Gertruydenberg, presented a brief but very important memorial to the Prince. In that document they informed him that the states-general, knowing how efficacious would be his presence, by reason of his singular prudence, experience, and love for the welfare and repose of the country, had unanimously united in a supplication that he would incontinently transport himself to the city of Brussels, there to advise with them concerning the necessities of the land; but, as the principal calumny employed by their adversaries was that all the provinces and leading personages intended to change both sovereign and religion, at the instigation of his Excellency, it was desirable to disprove such fictions. They therefore very earnestly requested the Prince to make some contrary demonstration, by which it might be manifest to all that his Excellency, together with the estates of Holland and Zealand, intended faithfully to keep what they had promised. They prayed, therefore, that the Prince, permitting the exercise of the Roman Catholic religion in the places which had recently accepted his authority, would also allow its exercise in Holland and Zealand. They begged, further, that he would promise by a new and authentic act, that the provinces of Holland and Zealand, would not suffer the said exercise to be impugned, or any new worship to be introduced, in the other provinces of the Netherlands.

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

Page 905

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

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

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

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

Page 906

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

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

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

Page 907

William's first act was to put a stop to the negotiations already on foot with Don John. He intended that they should lead to war, because peace was impossible, except a peace for which civil and religious liberty would be bartered, for it was idle, in his opinion, to expect the maintenance by the Spanish Governor of the Ghent Pacification, whatever promises might be extorted from his fears. A deputation, in the name of the states, had already been sent with fresh propositions to Don John, at Namur. The envoys were Caspar Schetz and the Bishop of Bruges. They had nearly come to an amicable convention with the Governor, the terms of which had been sent to the states-general for approval, at the very moment of the Prince's arrival in Brussels. Orange, with great promptness, prevented the ratification of these terms, which the estates had in reality already voted to accept. New articles were added to those which had originally been laid before Don John. It was now stipulated that the Ghent treaty and the Perpetual Edict should be maintained. The Governor was required forthwith to abandon Namur Castle, and to dismiss the German troops. He was to give up the other citadels and strong places, and to disband all the soldiers in his service. He was to command the governors of every province to prohibit the entrance of all foreign levies. He was forthwith to release captives, restore confiscated property, and reinstate officers who had been removed; leaving the details of such restorations to the council of Mechlin and the other provincial tribunals. He was to engage that the Count Van Buren should be set free within two months. He was himself, while waiting for the appointment of his successor, to take up his residence in Luxemburg, and while there, he was to be governed entirely by the decision of the State Council, expressed by a majority of its members. Furthermore, and as not the least stinging of these sharp requisitions, the Queen of England—she who had been the secret ally of Orange, and whose crown the Governor had secretly meant to appropriate—was to be included in the treaty.

It could hardly excite surprise that Don John, receiving these insolent propositions at the very moment in which he heard of the triumphant entrance into Brussels of the Prince, should be filled with rage and mortification. Never was champion of the Cross thus braved by infidels before. The Ghent treaty, according to the Orange interpretation, that is to say, heresy made legitimate, was to be the law of the land. His Majesty was to surrender—colors and cannon—to his revolted subjects. The royal authority was to be superseded by that of a State Council, appointed by the states-general, at the dictation of the Prince. The Governor-General himself, brother of his Catholic Majesty, was to sit quietly with folded arms in Luxemburg, while the arch-heretic and rebel reigned supreme in Brussels. It was too much to expect that the choleric soldier would be content with what he could not help

Page 908

regarding as a dishonorable capitulation. The arrangement seemed to him about as reasonable as it would have been to invite Sultan Selim to the Escorial, and to send Philip to reside at Bayonne. He could not but regard the whole proposition as an insolent declaration of war. He was right. It was a declaration of war; as much so as if proclaimed by trump of herald. How could Don John refuse the wager of battle thus haughtily proffered?

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

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

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

Page 909

Another important movement had, meanwhile, been made by the third party in this complicated game. The Catholic nobles, jealous of the growing influence of Orange, and indignant at the expanding power of the people, had opened secret negotiations with the Archduke Matthias, then a mild, easy-tempered youth of twenty, brother of the reigning emperor, Rudolph. After the matter had been discussed some time in secret, it was resolved, towards the end of September, to send a messenger to Vienna, privately inviting the young Prince to Brussels, but much to the surprise of these nobles, it was discovered that some fifteen or sixteen of the grandees of the land, among them Aerschot, Havre, Champagny, De Ville, Lalain, De Heze, and others, had already taken .the initiative in the matter. On the 26th of August, the Seigneur de Maalsteede had set forth, by their appointment, for Vienna. There is no doubt that this step originated in jealousy felt towards Orange, but at the same time it is certain that several of the leaders in the enterprise were still his friends. Some, like Champagny, and De Heze, were honestly so; others, like Aerschot, Havrd, and De Ville, always traitors in heart to the national cause, loyal to nothing but their own advancement, were still apparently upon the best terms with him. Moreover, it is certain that he had been made aware of the scheme, at least, before the arrival of the Archduke in the Netherlands, for the Marquis Havre, on his way to England, as special envoy from the estates, had a conference with him at Gertruydenberg. This was in the middle of September, and before his departure for Brussels. Naturally, the proposition seemed, at first, anything but agreeable; but the Marquis represented himself afterwards as having at last induced the Prince to look upon it with more favorable eyes. Nevertheless, the step had been taken before the consultation was held; nor was it the first time that the advice, of Orange had been asked concerning the adoption of a measure after the measure had been adopted.

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

Page 910

Costly presents were transmitted by her to his wife; among others, an ornament, of which a sculptured lizard formed a part. The Princess, in a graceful letter to her husband, desiring that her acknowledgments should be presented to her English Majesty, accepted the present as significative. “Tis the fabled virtue of the lizard (she said) to awaken sleepers whom a serpent is about to sting. You are the lizard, and the Netherlands the sleepers,—pray Heaven they may escape the serpent’s bite.” The Prince was well aware, therefore, of the plots which were weaving against him. He had small faith in the great nobles, whom he trusted “as he would adders fanged,” and relied only upon the communities, upon the mass of burghers. They deserved his confidence, and watched over his safety with jealous care. On one occasion, when he was engaged at the State Council till a late hour, the citizens conceived so much alarm, that a large number of them spontaneously armed themselves, and repaired to the palace. The Prince, informed of the circumstance, threw open a window and addressed them, thanking them for their friendship and assuring them of his safety. They were not satisfied, however, to leave him alone, but remained under arms below till the session was terminated, when they escorted him with affectionate respect to his own hotel.

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

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

Page 911

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

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

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

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

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

Page 912

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

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

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

Page 913

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

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

Page 914

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

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

Page 915

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

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

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

Page 916

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

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

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

Page 917

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

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

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

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

Page 918

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

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

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

Page 919

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

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

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

Page 920

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

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

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

Page 921

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

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

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

Page 922

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

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

Page 923

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

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

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

Page 924

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

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

Page 925

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

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

Page 926

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

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

Page 927

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

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

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

Page 928

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

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

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

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

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

Page 929

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

Page 930

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

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

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

On the 25th of January he issued a proclamation, couched in three languages—French, German, and Flemish. He declared in this document that he had not come to enslave the provinces, but to protect them. At the same time he meant to re-establish his Majesty’s authority, and the down-trod religion of Rome. He summoned all citizens and all soldiers throughout the provinces to join his banners, offering them pardon for their past offences, and protection against heretics and rebels. This declaration was the natural consequence of the exchange of defiances which had already taken place, and it was evident also that the angry manifesto was soon to be followed up by vigorous blows. The army of Don John already numbered more than twenty thousand well-seasoned and disciplined veterans. He was himself the most illustrious chieftain in Europe. He was surrounded by lieutenants cf the most brilliant reputation. Alexander of Parma, who had fought with distinction at Lepanto, was already recognised as possessing that signal military genius which was soon to stamp him as the first soldier

of his age, while Mansfeld, Mondragon, Mendoza, and other distinguished officers, who had already won so much fame in the Netherlands, had now returned to the scene of their former achievements.

Page 931

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

The two armies had been mustered in the latter days of January. The Pope had issued a bull for the benefit of Don John, precisely similar to those formerly employed in the crusades against the Saracens. Authority was given him to levy contributions upon ecclesiastical property, while full absolution, at the hour of death, for all crimes committed during a whole lifetime, was proclaimed to those who should now join the standard of the Cross. There was

Page 932

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

Small detachments of cavalry had been sent forward; under Olivera and Acosta, to scour the roads and forests, and to disturb all ambuscades which might have been prepared. From some stragglers captured by these officers, the plans of the retreating generals were learned. The winter's day was not far advanced, when the rearward columns of the states' army were descried in the distance. Don John, making a selection of some six hundred cavalry, all picked men, with a thousand infantry, divided the whole into two bodies, which he placed under command of Gonzaga and the famous old Christopher Mondragon. These

Page 933

officers received orders to hang on the rear of the enemy, to harass him, and to do him all possible damage consistent with the possibility of avoiding a general engagement, until the main army under Parma and Don John should arrive. The orders were at first strictly obeyed. As the skirmishing grew hotter, however, Goazaga observed that a spirited cavalry officer, named Perotti, had already advanced, with a handful of men, much further within the reach of the hostile forces than was deemed expedient. He sent hastily to recal the too eager chieftain. The order, delivered in a tone more peremptory than agreeable, was flatly disobeyed. "Tell Ottavio Gonzaga," said Perotti, "that I never yet turned my back on the enemy, nor shall I now begin. Moreover, were I ever so much inclined to do so, retreat is impossible." The retiring army was then proceeding along the borders of a deep ravine, filled with mire and water, and as broad and more dangerous than a river. In the midst of the skirmishing, Alexander of Parma rode up to reconnoitre. He saw at once that the columns of the enemy were marching unsteadily to avoid being precipitated into this creek. He observed the waving of their spears, the general confusion of their ranks, and was quick to take advantage of the fortunate moment. Pointing out to the officers about him the opportunity thus offered of attacking the retiring army unawares in flank, he assembled, with great rapidity, the foremost companies of cavalry already detached from the main body. Mounting a fresh and powerful horse, which Camillo Monte held in readiness for him, he signified his intention of dashing through the dangerous ravine, and dealing a stroke where it was least expected, "Tell Don John of Austria," he cried to an officer whom he sent back to the Commander-in-chief, "that Alexander of Parma has plunged into the abyss, to perish there, or to come-forth again victorious."

The sudden thought was executed with lightning-like celerity. In an instant the bold rider was already struggling through the dangerous swamp; in another, his powerful charger had carried him across. Halting for a few minutes, lance in rest, till his troops had also forced their passage, gained the level ground unperceived, and sufficiently breathed their horses, he drew up his little force in a compact column. Then, with a few words of encouragement, he launched them at the foe. The violent and entirely unexpected shock was even more successful than the Prince had anticipated. The hostile cavalry reeled and fell into hopeless confusion, Egmont in vain striving to rally them to resistance. That name had lost its magic. Goignies also attempted, without success, to restore order among the panic-struck ranks. The sudden conception of Parma, executed as suddenly and in so brilliant a manner, had been decisive. Assaulted in flank and rear at the same moment, and already in temporary confusion, the cavalry of the enemy turned their backs and fled. The centre

Page 934

of the states' army thus left exposed, was now warmly attacked by Parma. It had, moreover, been already thrown into disorder by the retreat of its own horse, as they charged through them in rapid and disgraceful panic. The whole army bloke to pieces at once, and so great was the trepidation, that the conquered troops had hardly courage to run away. They were utterly incapable of combat. Not a blow was struck by the fugitives. Hardly a man in the Spanish ranks was wounded; while, in the course of an hour and a half, the whole force of the enemy was exterminated. It is impossible to state with accuracy the exact numbers slain. Some accounts spoke of ten thousand killed, or captive, with absolutely no loss on the royal side. Moreover, this slaughter was effected, not by the army under Don John, but by so small a fragment of it, that some historians have even set down the whole number of royalists engaged at the commencement of the action, at six hundred, increased afterwards to twelve hundred. By this calculation, each Spaniard engaged must have killed ten enemies with his own hand; and that within an hour and a half's space! Other historians more wisely omit the exact statistics of the massacre, and allow that a very few—ten or eleven, at most—were slain within the Spanish ranks. This, however, is the utmost that is claimed by even the Netherland historians, and it is, at any rate, certain that the whole states' army was annihilated.

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

And so another proof was added—if proofs were still necessary of Spanish prowess. The Netherlanders may be pardoned if their foes seemed to them supernatural, and almost invulnerable. How else could these enormous successes be accounted for? How else could thousands fall before the Spanish swords, while hardly a single Spanish corpse told of effectual resistance? At Jemmingen, Alva had lost seven soldiers, and slain seven thousand; in the Antwerp Fury, two hundred Spaniards, at most, had fallen, while eight thousand burghers and states' troops had been butchered; and now at Gemblours, six,

Page 935

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

Etext editor's bookmarks:

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

BOOKRAGS

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 30

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley
1855

CHAPTER V.

Page 936

Towns taken by Don John—Wrath excited against the aristocratic party by the recent defeat—Attempts upon Amsterdam—“Satisfaction” of Amsterdam and its effects—De Selles sent with royal letters from Spain—Terms offered by Philip—Proclamation of Don John— Correspondence between de Selles and the States-General—Between the King and the Governor-General—New forces raised by the States—St. Aldegonde at the Diet—Municipal revolution in Amsterdam—The Prince’s letter on the subject of the Anabaptists of Middelburg— The two armies inactive—De la None—Action at Rijnemants—John Casimir—Perverse politics of Queen Elizabeth—Alencon in the Netherlands—Portrait of the Duke—Orange’s position in regard to him—Avowed and supposed policy of the French court—Anger of Elizabeth—Terms arranged between Alencon and the Estates—Renewed negotiations with Don John—Severe terms offered him—Interview of the English envoys with the Governor—Despondency of Don John—Orange’s attempts to enforce a religious peace—His isolation in sentiment—The malcontent party—Count John Governor of Gelderland —Proposed form of religious peace—Proclamation to that effect by Orange, in Antwerp—A petition in favor of the Roman Church presented by Champagny and other Catholic nobles to the States—General—Consequent commotion in Brussels—Champagny and others imprisoned—-Indolence and poverty of the two armies—Illness and melancholy of Don John—His letters to Doria, to Mendoza, and to the King—Death of Don John—Suspicions of poison—Pompous burial— Removal of his body to Spain—Concluding remarks upon his character.

Don John having thus vindicated his own military fame and the amazing superiority of the Spanish arms, followed up his victory by the rapid reduction of many towns of second-rate importance Louvain, Judoigne, Tirlemont, Aerschot, Bauvignes, Sichem, Nivelle, Roeux, Soignies, Binch, Beaumont, Walcourt, Tviaubeuge, and Chimay, either submitted to their conqueror, or were taken after short sieges. The usual atrocities were inflicted upon the unfortunate inhabitants of towns where resistance was attempted. The commandant of Sichem was hanged out of his own window, along with several chief burghers and officers, while the garrison was put to the sword, and the bodies cast into the Denver. The only crime committed by these unfortunates was to have ventured a blow or two in behalf of the firesides which they were employed to protect.

In Brussels, on the other hand, there was less consternation excited by these events than boundless rage against the aristocratic party, for the defeat of Gemblours was attributed, with justice, to the intrigues and the incapacity of the Catholic magnates. It was with difficulty that Orange, going about by night from house to house, from street to street, succeeded in calming the indignation of the people, and in preventing them from sweeping in a mass to the residence of the leading nobles, in order to inflict summary vengeance

Page 937

on the traitors. All looked to the Prince as their only saviour, not a thought nor a word being wasted upon Matthias. Not a voice was raised in the assembly to vindicate the secret proceedings of the Catholic party, nor to oppose the measures which the Prince might suggest. The terrible disaster had taught the necessity of union. All parties heartily joined in the necessary steps to place the capital in a state of complete defence, and to assemble forthwith new troops to take the place of the army just annihilated. The victor gained nothing by his victory, in comparison with the profit acquired by the states through their common misfortune. Nor were all the towns which had recently fallen into the hands of Don John at all comparable in importance to the city of Amsterdam, which now, by a most timely arrangement, furnished a rich compensation to the national party for the disaster of Gemblours.

Since the conclusion of the Ghent Pacification, it had been the most earnest wish of the Prince, and of Holland and Zealand, to recover possession of this most important city. The wish was naturally shared by every true patriot in the states-general. It had, however, been extremely difficult to arrange the terms of the “Satisfaction.” Every fresh attempt at an amicable compromise was wrecked upon the obstinate bigotry of the leading civic authorities. They would make no agreement to accept the authority of Orange, except, as Saint Aldegonde expressed himself; upon terms which would enable them “to govern their governor.” The influence of the monks, who were resident in large numbers within the city, and of the magistrates, who were all stanch Catholics, had been hitherto sufficient to outweigh the efforts made by the large masses of the Reformed religionists composing the bulk of the population. It was, however, impossible to allow Amsterdam to remain in this isolated and hostile attitude to the rest of Holland. The Prince, having promised to use no coercion, and loyally adhering to his pledge, had only with extreme difficulty restrained the violence of the Hollanders and Zealanders, who were determined, by fair means or foul, to restore the capital city to its natural place within his stadholderate. He had been obliged, on various occasions, particularly on the 21st of October of the preceding year, to address a most decided and peremptory letter to the estates of Holland and Zealand, forbidding the employment of hostile measures against Amsterdam. His commands had been reluctantly, partially, and only temporarily obeyed. The states desisted from their scheme of reducing the city by famine, but they did not the less encourage the secret and unofficial expeditions which were daily set on foot to accomplish the annexation by a sudden enterprise.

Page 938

Late in November, a desperate attempt had been made by Colonel Helling, in conjunction with Governor Sonoy, to carry the city by surprise. The force which the adventurer collected for the purpose was inadequate, and his plans were unskilfully arranged. He was himself slain in the streets, at the very commencement of the action; whereupon, in the quaint language of the contemporary chronicler, “the hearts of his soldiers sank in their shoes,” and they evacuated the city with much greater rapidity than they had entered it. The Prince was indignant at these violent measures, which retarded rather than advanced the desired consummation. At the same time it was an evil of immense magnitude—this anomalous condition of his capital. Ceaseless schemes were concerted by the municipal and clerical conspirators within its walls, and various attempts were known, at different times, to have been contemplated by Don John, to inflict a home-thrust upon the provinces of Holland and Zealand at the most vulnerable and vital point. The “Satisfaction” accepted by Utrecht, in the autumn of 1577, had, however, paved the way for the recovery of Amsterdam; so that upon February the 8th, 1578, certain deputies from Utrecht succeeded at last in arranging terms, which were accepted by the sister city. The basis of the treaty was, as usual, the nominal supremacy of the Catholic religion, with toleration for the Reformed worship. The necessary effect would be, as in Harlem, Utrecht, and other places, to establish the new religion upon an entire equality with the old. It was arranged that no congregations were to be disturbed in their religious exercises in the places respectively assigned to them. Those of the Reformed faith were to celebrate their worship without the walls. They were, however, to enjoy the right of burying their dead within these precincts, and it is singular how much importance was attached at that day to a custom, at which the common sentiment and the common sense of modern times revolt. “To bury our dead within our own cities is a right hardly to be denied to a dog,” said the Prince of Orange; and accordingly this right was amply secured by the new Satisfaction of Amsterdam. It was, however, stipulated that the funerals should be modest, and attended by no more than twenty-four persons at once. The treaty was hailed with boundless joy in Holland and Zealand, while countless benedictions were invoked upon the “blessed peace-makers,” as the Utrecht deputies walked through the streets of Amsterdam. There is no doubt that the triumph thus achieved by the national party far counterbalanced the Governor-General’s victory at Gemblours.

Page 939

Meantime, the Seigneur de Selles, brother of the deceased Noircarmes, had arrived from Spain. He was the special bearer of a letter from the King to the states-general, written in reply to their communications of the 24th of August and 8th of September of the previous year. The tone of the royal despatch was very affectionate, the substance such as entirely to justify the whole policy of Orange. It was obvious that the penetrating and steadfast statesman had been correct in refusing to be moved to the right or the left by the specious language of Philip's former letters, or by the apparent frankness of Don John. No doubt the Governor had been sincere in his desire for peace, but the Prince knew very well his incapacity to confer that blessing. The Prince knew—what no man else appeared fully to comprehend at that epoch—that the mortal combat between the Inquisition and the Reformation was already fully engaged. The great battle between divine reason and right divine, on which the interests of unborn generations were hanging, was to be fought out, before the eyes of all Christendom, on the plain of the Netherlands.

Orange was willing to lay down his arms if he could receive security for the Reformed worship. He had no desire to exterminate the ancient religion, but he meant also to protect the new against extermination. Such security, he felt, would never be granted, and he had therefore resolutely refused to hearken to Don John, for he was sure that peace with him was impossible. The letters now produced by De Selles confirmed his positions completely. The King said not a word concerning the appointment of a new governor-general, but boldly insisted upon the necessity of maintaining the two cardinal points—his royal supremacy, and the Catholic religion upon the basis adopted by his father, the Emperor Charles the Fifth.

This was the whole substance of his communication: the supremacy of royalty and of papacy as in the time of Charles the Fifth. These cabalistic words were repeated twice in the brief letter to the estates. They were repeated five times in the instructions furnished by his Majesty to De Selles. The letter and the instructions indeed contained nothing else. Two simples were offered for the cure of the body politic, racked by the fever and convulsion of ten horrible years—two simples which the patient could hardly be so unreasonable as to reject—unlimited despotism and religious persecution. The whole matter lay in a nut-shell, but it was a nut-shell which enclosed the flaming edicts of Charles the Fifth, with their scaffolds, gibbets, racks, and funeral piles. The Prince and the states-general spurned such pacific overtures, and preferred rather to gird themselves for the combat.

Page 940

That there might be no mistake about the matter, Don John, immediately after receiving the letter, issued a proclamation to enforce the King's command. He mentioned it as an acknowledged fact that the states-general had long ago sworn the maintenance of the two points of royal and Catholic supremacy, according to the practice under the Emperor Charles. The states instantly published an indignant rejoinder, affirming the indisputable truth, that they had sworn to the maintenance of the Ghent Pacification, and proclaiming the assertion of Don John an infamous falsehood. It was an outrage upon common sense, they said, that the Ghent treaty could be tortured into sanctioning the placards and the Inquisition, evils which that sacred instrument had been expressly intended to crush.

A letter was then formally addressed to his Majesty, in the name of the Archduke Matthias—and of the estates, demanding the recal of Don John and the, maintenance of the Ghent Pacification. De Seller, in reply, sent a brief, deprecatory paper, enclosing a note from Don John, which the envoy acknowledged might seem somewhat harsh in its expressions. The letter contained, indeed, a sufficiently fierce and peremptory summons to the states to obey the King's commands with regard to the system of Charles the Fifth, according to their previous agreement, together with a violent declaration of the Governor's displeasure that they had dared to solicit the aid of foreign princes. On the 18th of February came a proposition from De Seller that the Prince, of Orange should place himself in the hands of Don John, while the Prince of Parma, alone and without arms, would come before the assembly, to negotiate with them upon these matters. The reply returned by the states-general to this absurd suggestion expressed their regret that the son of the Duchess Margaret should have taken part with the enemy of the Netherlanders, complained of the bull by which the Pope had invited war against them as if they had been Saracens, repeated their most unanswerable argument—that the Ghent Pacification had established a system directly the reverse of that which existed under Charles the Fifth—and affirmed their resolution never more to submit to Spanish armies, executioners, edicts, or inquisitions, and never more to return to the principles of the Emperor and of Alva. To this diplomatic correspondence succeeded a war of words and of pamphlets, some of them very inflammatory and very eloquent. Meantime, the preparations for active hostilities were proceeding daily. The Prince of Orange, through his envoys in England, had arranged for subsidies in the coming campaign, and for troops which were to be led to the Netherlands, under Duke Casimir of the palatinate. He sent commissioners through the provinces to raise the respective contributions agreed upon, besides an extraordinary quota of four hundred thousand guilders monthly. He also negotiated a loan of a hundred and twenty thousand guilders from the citizens of

Page 941

Antwerp. Many new taxes were imposed by his direction, both upon income and upon consumption. By his advice, however, and with the consent of the states-general, the provinces of Holland and Zealand held no community of burthens with the other provinces, but of their own free will contributed more than the sums for which they would have been assessed. Mr. Leyton, who was about to return from his unsuccessful mission from Elizabeth to Don John, was requested by the states-general to convey to her Majesty a faithful report of the recent correspondence, and especially of the language held by the Governor-General. He was also urged to use his influence with the Queen, to the end that her promises of assistance might be speedily fulfilled.

Troops were rapidly enrolled, and again, by the same honest but mistaken policy, the chief offices were conferred upon the great nobles—Aerschot, Champagny, Bossu, Egmont, Lalain, the Viscount of Ghent, Baron de Ville, and many others, most of whom were to desert the cause in the hour of its need. On the other hand, Don John was proceeding with his military preparations upon an extensive scale. The King had recently furnished him with one million nine hundred thousand dollars, and had promised to provide him with two hundred thousand more, monthly. With these funds his Majesty estimated that an army of thirty thousand foot, sixteen thousand cavalry, and thirty pieces of artillery, could be levied and kept on foot. If more remittances should prove to be necessary, it was promised that they should be forthcoming.

This was the result of many earnest remonstrances made by the Governor concerning the dilatory policy of the King. Wearied with being constantly ordered “to blow hot and cold with the same, breath,” he had insisted that his Majesty should select the hot or the cold, and furnish him with the means of enforcing the choice. For himself, Don John assured his brother that the hottest measures were most to his taste, and most suitable to the occasion. Fire and sword could alone save the royal authority, for all the provinces had “abandoned themselves, body and soul, to the greatest heretic and tyrant that prince ever had for vassal.” Unceasing had been the complaints and entreaties of the Captain-General, called forth by the apathy or irresolution of Philip. It was—only by assuring him that the Netherlands actually belonged to Orange, that the monarch could be aroused. “His they are; and none other’s,” said the Governor, dolefully. The King had accordingly sent back De Billy, Don John’s envoy; with decided injunctions to use force and energy to put down the revolt at once, and with an intimation that funds might be henceforth more regularly depended upon, as the Indian fleets were expected in July. Philip also advised his brother to employ a portion of his money in purchasing the governors and principal persons who controlled the cities and other strong places belonging to the states.

Page 942

Meantime, Don John thundered forth a manifesto which had been recently prepared in Madrid, by which the estates, both general and particular, were ordered forthwith to separate, and forbidden to assemble again, except by especial licence. All commissions, civil or military, granted by states' authority, were moreover annulled, together with a general prohibition of any act of obedience to such functionaries, and of contribution to any imposts which might be levied by their authority. Such thunders were now comparatively harmless, for the states had taken their course, and were busily engaged, both at home and abroad, in arming for the conflict. Saint Aldegonde was deputed to attend the Imperial diet, then in session at Worms, where he delivered an oration, which was very celebrated in its day as a composition, but, which can hardly be said to have produced much practical effect. The current was setting hard in Germany against the Reformed religion and against the Netherland cause, the Augsburg Confessionists showing hardly more sympathy with Dutch Calvinists than with Spanish Papists.

Envoys from Don John also attended the diet, and requested Saint Aldegonde to furnish them with a copy of his oration. This he declined to do. While in Germany, Saint Aldegonde was informed by John Casimir that Duke Charles of Sweden, had been solicited to furnish certain ships of war for a contemplated operation against Amsterdam. The Duke had himself given information of this plot to the Prince Palatine. It was therefore natural that Saint Aldegonde should forthwith despatch the intelligence to his friends in the Netherlands, warning them of the dangers still to be apprehended from the machinations of the Catholic agents and functionaries in Amsterdam; for although the Reformation had made rapid progress in that important city since the conclusion of the Satisfaction, yet the magistracy remained Catholic.

William Bardez, son of a former high-sheriff, a warm partisan of Orange and of the "religion," had already determined to overthrow that magistracy and to expel the friars who infested the city. The recent information despatched by Saint Aldegonde confirmed him in his purpose. There had been much wrangling between the Popish functionaries and those of the Reformed religion concerning the constitution of the burgher guard. The Calvinists could feel no security for their own lives, or the repose of the commonwealth of Holland, unless they were themselves allowed a full participation in the government of those important bands. They were, moreover, dissatisfied with the assignment which had been made of the churchyards to the members of their communion. These causes of discord had maintained a general irritation among the body of the inhabitants, and were now used as pretexts by Bardez for his design. He knew the city to be ripe for the overthrow of the magistracy, and he had arranged with Governor Sonoy to be furnished with a sufficient number of well-tried soldiers, who were to be concealed in the houses of the confederates. A large number of citizens were also ready to appear at his bidding with arms in their hands.

Page 943

On the 24th of May, he wrote to Sonoy, begging him to hold himself in readiness, as all was prepared within the city. At the same time, he requested the governor to send him forthwith a “morion and a buckler of proof;” for, he intended to see the matter fairly through. Sonoy answered encouragingly, and sent him the armor, as directed. On the 28th of May, Bardez, with four confederates, went to the council-room, to remonstrate with the senate concerning the grievances which had been so often discussed. At about mid-day, one of the confederates, upon leaving the council-room, stepped out for a moment upon the balcony, which looked towards the public square. Standing there for a moment, he gravely removed his hat, and then as gravely replaced it upon his head. This was a preconcerted signal. At the next instant a sailor was seen to rush across the square, waving a flag in both hands. “All ye who love the Prince of Orange, take heart and follow me!” he shouted. In a moment the square was alive. Soldiers and armed citizens suddenly sprang forth, as if from the bowels of the earth. Bardez led a strong force directly into the council-chamber, and arrested every one of the astonished magistrates. At the same time, his confederates had scoured the town and taken every friar in the city into custody. Monks and senators were then marched solemnly down towards the quay, where a vessel was in readiness to receive them. “To the gallows with them—to the gallows with them!” shouted the populace, as they passed along. “To the gibbet, whither they have brought many a good fellow before his time!” Such were the openly, expressed desires of their fellow-citizens, as these dignitaries and holy men proceeded to what they believed their doom. Although treated respectfully by those who guarded them, they were filled with trepidation, for they believed the execrations of the populace the harbingers of their fate. As they entered the vessel, they felt convinced that a watery death had been substituted for the gibbet. Poor old Heinrich Dirckzoon, ex-burgomaster, pathetically rejected a couple of clean shirts which his careful wife had sent him by the hands of the housemaid. “Take them away; take them home again,” said the rueful burgomaster; “I shall never need clean shirts again in this world.” He entertained no doubt that it was the intention of his captors to scuttle the vessel as soon as they had put a little out to sea, and so to leave them to their fate. No such tragic end was contemplated, however, and, in fact, never was a complete municipal revolution accomplished in so good-natured and jocose a manner. The Catholic magistrates and friars escaped with their fright. They were simply turned out of town, and forbidden, for their lives, ever to come back again. After the vessel had proceeded a little distance from the city, they were all landed high and dry upon a dyke, and so left unharmed within the open country.

Page 944

A new board of magistrates, of which stout William Bardez was one, was soon appointed; the train-bands were reorganized, and the churches thrown open to the Reformed worship—to the exclusion, at first, of the Catholics. This was certainly contrary to the Ghent treaty, and to the recent Satisfaction; it was also highly repugnant to the opinions of Orange. After a short time, accordingly, the Catholics were again allowed access to the churches, but the tables had now been turned for ever in the capital of Holland, and the Reformation was an established fact throughout that little province.

Similar events occurring upon the following day at Harlem, accompanied with some bloodshed—for which, however, the perpetrator was punished with death—opened the great church of that city to the Reformed congregations, and closed them for a time to the Catholics.

Thus, the cause of the new religion was triumphant in Holland and Zealand, while it was advancing with rapid strides through the other provinces. Public preaching was of daily occurrence everywhere. On a single Sunday; fifteen different ministers of the Reformed religion preached in different places in Antwerp. “Do you think this can be put down?” said Orange to the remonstrating burgomaster of that city. “’Tis for you to repress it,” said the functionary, “I grant your Highness full power to do so.” “And do you think,” replied the Prince, “that I can do at this late moment, what the Duke of Alva was unable to accomplish in the very plenitude of his power?” At the same time, the Prince of Orange was more than ever disposed to rebuke his own Church for practising persecution in her turn. Again he lifted his commanding voice in behalf of the Anabaptists of Middelburg. He reminded the magistrates of that city that these peaceful burghers were always perfectly willing to bear their part in all the common burthens, that their word was as good as their oath, and that as to the matter of military service, although their principles forbade them to bear arms, they had ever been ready to provide and pay for substitutes. “We declare to you therefore,” said he, “that you have no right to trouble yourselves with any man’s conscience, so long as nothing is done to cause private harm or public scandal. We therefore expressly ordain that you desist from molesting these Baptists, from offering hindrance to their handicraft and daily trade, by which they can earn bread for their wives and children, and that you permit them henceforth to open their shops and to do their work, according to the custom of former days. Beware, therefore, of disobedience and of resistance to the ordinance which we now establish.”

Page 945

Meantime, the armies on both sides had been assembled, and had been moving towards each other. Don John was at the head of nearly thirty thousand troops, including a large proportion of Spanish and Italian veterans. The states' army hardly numbered eighteen thousand foot and two thousand cavalry, under the famous Francois de la None, surnamed Bras de Fer, who had been recently appointed Marechal de Camp, and, under Count Bossu, commander-in-chief. The muster-place of the provincial forces was in the plains between Herenthals and Lier. At this point they expected to be reinforced by Duke Casimir, who had been, since the early part of the summer, in the country of Zutfen, but who was still remaining there inglorious and inactive, until he could be furnished with the requisite advance-money to his troops. Don John was determined if possible, to defeat the states army, before Duke Casimir, with his twelve thousand Germans, should effect his juncture with Bossu. The Governor therefore crossed the Demer, near Aerschot, towards the end of July, and offered battle, day after day, to the enemy. A series of indecisive skirmishes was the result, in the last of which, near Rijnemants, on the first day of August, the royalists were worsted and obliged to retire, after a desultory action of nearly eight hours, leaving a thousand dead upon the field. Their offer of "double or quits," the following morning was steadily refused by Bossu, who, secure within his intrenchments, was not to be induced at that moment to encounter the chances of a general engagement. For this he was severely blamed by the more violent of the national party.

His patriotism, which was of such recent origin, was vehemently suspected; and his death, which occurred not long afterwards, was supposed to have alone prevented his deserting the states to fight again under Spanish colours. These suspicions were probably unjust. Bossu's truth of character had been as universally recognized as was his signal bravery. If he refused upon this occasion a general battle, those who reflected upon the usual results to the patriot banner of such engagements, might confess, perhaps, that one disaster the more had been avoided. Don John, finding it impossible to accomplish his purpose, and to achieve another Gemblours victory, fell back again to the neighbourhood of Namur.

The states' forces remained waiting for the long-promised succor of John Casimir. It was the 26th of August, however, before the Duke led his twelve thousand men to the neighbourhood of Mechlin, where Bossu was encamped. This young prince possessed neither the ability nor the generosity which were requisite for the heroic part which he was ambitious to perform in the Netherland drama. He was inspired by a vague idea of personal aggrandizement, although he professed at the same time the utmost deference to William of Orange. He expressed the hope that he and the Prince "should be but two heads under

Page 946

one hat;" but he would have done well to ask himself whether his own contribution to this partnership of brains would very much enrich the silent statesman. Orange himself regarded him with respectful contempt, and considered his interference with Netherland matters but as an additional element of mischief. The Duke's right hand man, however, Peter Peutterich, the "equestrian doctor"—as Sir Philip Sydney called him—equally skilful with the sword as with the pen, had succeeded, while on a mission to England, in acquiring the Queen's favor for his master. To Casimir, therefore, had been entrusted the command of the levies, and the principal expenditure of the subsidies which she had placed at the disposition of the states. Upon Casimir she relied, as a counterweight to the Duke of Alencon, who, as she knew, had already entered the provinces at the secret solicitation of a large faction among the nobles. She had as much confidence as ever in Orange, but she imagined herself to be strengthening his cause by providing him with such a lieutenant. Casimir's immediate friends had but little respect for his abilities. His father-in-law, Augustus of Saxony, did not approve his expedition. The Landgrave William, to whom he wrote for counsel, answered, in his quaint manner, that it was always difficult for one friend to advise another in three matters—to wit, in taking a wife, going to sea, and going to war; but that, nevertheless, despite the ancient proverb, he would assume the responsibility of warning Casimir not to plunge into what he was pleased to call the "'confusum chaos' of Netherland politics." The Duke felt no inclination, however, to take the advice which he had solicited. He had been stung by the sarcasm which Alva had once uttered, that the German potentates carried plenty of lions, dragons, eagles, and griffins on their shields; but that these ferocious animals were not given to biting or scratching. He was therefore disposed, once for all, to show that the teeth and claws of German princes could still be dangerous. Unfortunately, he was destined to add a fresh element of confusion to the chaos, and to furnish rather a proof than a refutation of the correctness of Alva's gibe.

This was the hero who was now thrust, head and shoulders as it were, into the entangled affairs of the Netherlanders, and it was Elizabeth of England, more than ever alarmed at the schemes of Alencon, who had pushed forward this Protestant champion, notwithstanding the disinclination of Orange.

The Queen was right in her uneasiness respecting the French prince. The Catholic nobles, relying upon the strong feeling still rife throughout the Walloon country against the Reformed religion, and inflamed more than ever by their repugnance to Orange, whose genius threw them so completely into the shade, had already drawn closer to the Duke. The same influences were at work to introduce Alencon, which had formerly been employed to bring Matthias from Vienna.

Page 947

Now that the Archduke, who was to have been the rival, had become the dependent of William, they turned their attention to the son of Catherine de Medici, Orange himself having always kept the Duke in reserve, as an instrument to overcome the political coquetry of Elizabeth. That great Princess never manifested less greatness than in her earlier and most tormenting connexion with the Netherlands. Having allured them for years with bright but changeful face, she still looked coldly down upon the desolate sea where they were drifting She had promised much; her performance had been nothing. Her jealousy of French influence had at length been turned to account; a subsidy and a levy extorted from her fears. Her ministers and prominent advisers were one and all in favor of an open and generous support to the provinces. Walsingham, Burleigh, Knollys, Davidson, Sidney, Leicester, Fleetwood, Wilson, all desired that she should frankly espouse their cause. A bold policy they believed to be the only prudent one in this case; yet the Queen considered it sagacious to despatch envoys both to Philip and to Don John, as if after what they knew of her secret practices, such missions could effect any useful purpose. Better, therefore, in the opinion of the honest and intrepid statesmen of England, to throw down the gauntlet at once in the cause of the oppressed than to shuffle and palter until the dreaded rival should cross the frontier. A French Netherlands they considered even mere dangerous than a Spanish, and Elizabeth partook of their sentiments, although incapable of their promptness. With the perverseness which was the chief blot upon her character, she was pleased that the Duke should be still a dangler for her hand, even while she was intriguing against his political hopes. She listened with undisguised rapture to his proposal of love, while she was secretly thwarting the plans of his ambition.

Meanwhile, Alencon had arrived at Mons, and we have seen already the feminine adroitness with which his sister of Navarre had prepared his entrance. Not in vain had she cajoled the commandant of Cambray citadel; not idly had she led captive the hearts of Lalain and his Countess, thus securing the important province of Hainault for the Duke. Don John might, indeed, gnash his teeth with rage, as he marked the result of all the feasting and flattery, the piping and dancing at Namur.

Francis Duke of Alencon, and since the accession of his brother Henry to the French throne—Duke of Anjou was, upon the whole, the most despicable personage who had ever entered the Netherlands. His previous career at home had, been so flagrantly false that he had forfeited the esteem of every honest man in Europe, Catholic or Lutheran, Huguenot or Malcontent. The world has long known his character. History will always retain him as an example, to show mankind the amount of mischief which may be perpetrated by a prince, ferocious without courage, ambitious without

Page 948

talent, and bigoted without opinions. Incapable of religious convictions himself, he had alternately aspired to be a commander of Catholic and of Huguenot zealots, and he had acquired nothing by his vacillating course, save the entire contempt of all parties and of both religions. Scared from the aide of Navarre and Conde by the menacing attitude of the “league,” fearing to forfeit the succession to the throne, unless he made his peace with the court, he had recently resumed his place among the Catholic commanders. Nothing was easier for him than to return shamelessly to a party which he had shamelessly deserted, save perhaps to betray it again, should his interest prompt him to do so, on the morrow. Since the peace of 1576, it had been evident that the Protestants could not count upon his friendship, and he had soon afterwards been placed at the head of the army which was besieging the Huguenots of Issoire. He sought to atone for having commanded the troops of the new religion by the barbarity with which he now persecuted its votaries. When Issoire fell into his hands, the luckless city was spared none of the misery which can be inflicted by a brutal and frenzied soldiery. Its men were butchered, its females outraged; its property plundered with a thoroughness which rivalled the Netherland practice of Alva, or Frederic Toledo, or Julian Romero. The town was sacked and burned to ashes by furious Catholics, under the command of Francis Alencon,—almost at the very moment when his fair sister, Margaret, was preparing the way in the Netherlands for the fresh treason—which he already meditated to the Catholic cause. The treaty of Bergerac, signed in the autumn of 1577, again restored a semblance of repose to France, and again afforded an opportunity for Alencon to change his politics, and what he called his religion. Reeking with the blood of the Protestants of Issoire, he was now at leisure to renew his dalliance with the Queen of Protestant England, and to resume his correspondence with the great-chieftain of the Reformation in the Netherlands.

It is perhaps an impeachment upon the perspicacity of Orange, that he could tolerate this mischievous and worthless “son of France,” even for the grave reasons which influenced him. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that he only intended to keep him in reserve, for the purpose of irritating the jealousy and quickening the friendship of the English Queen. Those who see anything tortuous in such politics must beware of judging the intriguing age of Philip and Catherine de’ Medici by the higher standard of later, and possibly more candid times. It would have been puerile for a man of William the Silent’s resources, to allow himself to be outwitted by the intrigues of all the courts and cabinets in Europe. Moreover, it must be remembered that, if he alone could guide himself and his country through the perplexing labyrinth in which they were involved; it was because he held in his hand the clue of an honest purpose. His position in regard to the Duke of Alencon, had now become sufficiently complicated, for the tiger that he had led in a chain had been secretly unloosed by those who meant mischief. In the autumn of the previous year, the aristocratic and Catholic party in the states-general had opened their communications with a prince, by whom they hoped to be indemnified for their previous defeat.

Page 949

The ill effects of Elizabeth's coquetry too plainly manifested themselves at last, and Alencon had now a foothold in the Netherlands. Precipitated by the intrigues of the party which had always been either openly or secretly hostile to Orange, his advent could no longer be delayed. It only remained for the Prince to make himself his master, as he had already subdued each previous rival. This he accomplished with his customary adroitness. It was soon obvious, even to so dull and so base a nature as that of the Duke, that it was his best policy to continue to cultivate so powerful a friendship. It cost him little to crouch, but events were fatally, to prove at a later day, that there are natures too malignant to be trusted or to be tamed. For the present, however, Alencon professed the most friendly sentiments towards the Prince. Solicited by so ardent and considerable a faction, the Duke was no longer to be withheld from trying the venture, and if, he could not effect his entrance by fair means, was determined to do so by force.—He would obtrude his assistance, if it were declined. He would do his best to dismember the provinces, if only a portion of them would accept his proffered friendship. Under these circumstances, as the Prince could no longer exclude him from the country, it became necessary to accept his friendship, and to hold him in control. The Duke had formally offered his assistance to the states-general, directly after the defeat of Gemblours, and early in July had made his appearance in *Mons*. Hence he despatched his envoys, Des Pruneaux and Rochefort, to deal with the States-general and with Orange, while he treated Matthias with contempt, and declared that he had no intention to negotiate with him. The Archduke burst into tears when informed of this slight; and feebly expressed a wish that succor might be found in Germany which would render this French alliance unnecessary. It was not the first nor the last mortification which the future Emperor was to undergo. The Prince was addressed with distinguished consideration; Des Pruneaux protesting that he desired but three things —the glory of his master, the glory of God, and the glory of William of Orange.

The French King was naturally supposed to be privy to his brother's schemes, for it was thought ridiculous to suggest that Henry's own troops could be led by his own brother, on this foreign expedition, without his connivance. At the same time, private letters, written by him at this epoch, expressed disapprobation of the schemes of Alencon, and jealousy of his aggrandizement. It was, perhaps, difficult to decide as to the precise views of a monarch who was too weak to form opinions for himself, and too false to maintain those with which he had been furnished by others. With the Medicean mother it was different, and it was she who was believed to be at the bottom of the intrigue. There was even a vague idea that the Spanish Sovereign himself might be privy to the plot, and that a possible

Page 950

marriage between Alencon and the Infanta might be on the cards. In truth, however, Philip felt himself outraged by the whole proceedings. He resolutely refused to accept the excuses proffered by the French court, or to doubt the complicity of the Queen Dowager, who, it was well known, governed all her sons. She had, to be sure, thought proper to read the envoys of the states-general a lecture upon the impropriety of subjects opposing the commands of their lawful Prince, but such artifices were thought too transparent to deceive. Granvelle scouted the idea of her being ignorant of Anjou's scheme, or opposed to its success. As for William of Hesse, while he bewailed more than ever the luckless plunge into "confusum chaos" which Casimir had taken, he unhesitatingly expressed his conviction that the invasion of Alencon was a master-piece of Catherine. The whole responsibility of the transaction he divided, in truth, between the Dowager and the comet, which just then hung over the world, filling the soul of the excellent Landgrave with dismal apprehension.

The Queen of England was highly incensed by the actual occurrence of the invasion which she had so long dreaded. She was loud in her denunciations of the danger and dishonor which would be the result to the provinces of this French alliance. She threatened not only to withdraw herself from their cause, but even to take arms against a commonwealth which had dared to accept Alencon for its master. She had originally agreed to furnish one hundred thousand pounds by way of loan. This assistance had been afterwards commuted into a levy of three thousand foot and-two thousand horse, to be added to the forces of John Casimir, and to be placed under his command. It had been stipulated; also, that the Palatine should have the rank and pay of an English general-in-chief, and be considered as the Queen's lieutenant. The money had been furnished and the troops enrolled. So much had been already bestowed, and could not be recalled, but it was not probable that, in her present humor, the Queen would be induced to add to her favors.

The Prince, obliged by the necessity of the case, had prescribed the terms and the title under which Alencon should be accepted. Upon the 13th of August the Duke's envoy concluded a convention in twenty-three articles; which were afterwards subscribed by the Duke himself, at Mons, upon the twentieth of the same month. The substance of this arrangement was that Alencon should lend his assistance to the provinces against the intolerable tyranny of the Spaniards and the unjustifiable military invasion of Don John. He was, moreover, to bring into the field ten thousand foot and two thousand horse for three months. After the expiration of this term, his forces might be reduced to three thousand foot and five hundred horse. The states were to confer upon him the title of "Defender of the Liberty of the Netherlands against the Tyranny of the Spaniards and their adherents."

Page 951

He was to undertake no hostilities against Queen Elizabeth. The states were to aid him, whenever it should become necessary, with the same amount of force with which he now assisted them. He was to submit himself contentedly to the civil government of the country, in everything regarding its internal polity. He was to make no special contracts or treaties with any cities or provinces of the Netherlands. Should the states-general accept another prince as sovereign, the Duke was to be preferred to all others, upon conditions afterwards to be arranged. All cities which might be conquered within the territory of the united provinces were to belong to the states. Such places not in that territory, as should voluntarily surrender, were to be apportioned, by equal division, between the Duke and the states. The Duke was to bring no foreign troops but French into the provinces. The month of August was reserved, during which the states were, if possible, to make a composition with Don John.

These articles were certainly drawn up with skill. A high-sounding but barren title, which gratified the Duke's vanity and signified nothing, had been conferred upon him, while at the same time he was forbidden to make conquests or contracts, and was obliged to submit himself to the civil government of the country: in short, he was to obey the Prince of Orange in all things—and so here was another plot of the Prince's enemies neutralized. Thus, for the present at least, had the position of Anjou been defined.

As the month of August, during which it was agreed that negotiations with the Governor-General should remain open, had already half expired, certain articles, drawn up by the states-general, were at once laid before Don John. Lord Cobham and Sir Francis Walsingham were then in the Netherlands, having been sent by Elizabeth for the purpose of effecting a pacification of the estates with the Governor, if possible. They had also explained—so far as an explanation was possible—the assistance which the English government had rendered to the rebels, upon the ground that the French invasion could be prevented in no other way. This somewhat lame apology had been passed over in silence rather than accepted by Don John. In the same interview the envoys made an equally unsuccessful effort to induce the acceptance by the Governor of the terms offered by the states. A further proposition, on their part, for an "Interim," upon the plan attempted by Charles the Fifth in Germany, previously to the Peace of Passau, met with no more favor than it merited, for certainly that name—which became so odious in Germany that cats and dogs were called "Interim" by the common people, in derision—was hardly a potent word to conjure with, at that moment, in the Netherlands. They then expressed their intention of retiring to England, much grieved at the result of their mission. The Governor replied that they might do as they liked, but that he, at least, had done all in his power to bring about a peace, and that the King had been equally pacific in his intentions. He then asked the envoys what they themselves thought of the terms proposed. "Indeed, they are too hard, your Highness," answered Walsingham, "but 'tis only by pure menace that we have extorted them from the states, unfavorable though they, seem."

Page 952

“Then you may tell them,” replied the Governor, “to keep their offers to themselves. Such terms will go but little way in any negotiation with me.”

The envoys shrugged their shoulders.

“What is your own opinion on the whole affair?” resumed Don John. “Perhaps your advice may yet help me to a better conclusion.”

The envoys continued silent and pensive.

“We can only answer,” said Walsingham, at length, “by imitating the physician, who would prescribe no medicine until he was quite sure that the patient was ready to swallow it. ’Tis no use wasting counsel or drugs.”

The reply was not satisfactory, but the envoys had convinced themselves that the sword was the only surgical instrument likely to find favor at that juncture. Don John referred, in vague terms, to his peaceable inclinations, but protested that there was no treating with so unbridled a people as the Netherlanders. The ambassadors soon afterwards took their leave. After this conference, which was on the 24th of August, 1578, Walsingham and Cobham addressed a letter to the states-general, deploring the disingenuous and procrastinating conduct of the Governor, and begging that the failure to effect a pacification might not be imputed to them. They then returned to England.

The Imperial envoy, Count Schwartzburg, at whose urgent solicitation this renewed attempt at a composition had been made, was most desirous that the Governor should accept the articles. They formed, indeed, the basis of a liberal, constitutional, representative government, in which the Spanish monarch was to retain only a strictly limited sovereignty. The proposed convention required Don John, with all his troops and adherents, forthwith to leave the land after giving up all strongholds and cities in his possession. It provided that the Archduke Matthias should remain as Governor general, under the conditions according to which he had been originally accepted. It left the question of religious worship to the decision of the states-general. It provided for the release of all prisoners, the return of all exiles, the restoration of all confiscated property. It stipulated that upon the death or departure of Matthias, his Majesty was not to appoint a governor-general without the consent of the states-general.

When Count Schwartzburg waited upon the Governor with these astonishing propositions—which Walsingham might well call somewhat hard—he found him less disposed to explode with wrath than he had been in previous conferences. Already the spirit of the impetuous young soldier was broken, both by the ill health which was rapidly undermining his constitution and by the helpless condition in which he had been left while contending with the great rebellion. He had soldiers, but no money to pay them withal; he had no means of upholding that supremacy of crown and church which he was so vigorously instructed to maintain; and he was heartily wearied of fulminating

Page 953

edicts which he had no power to enforce. He had repeatedly solicited his recal, and was growing daily more impatient that his dismissal did not arrive. Moreover, the horrible news of Escovedo's assassination had sickened him to the soul. The deed had flashed a sudden light into the abyss of dark duplicity in which his own fate was suspended. His most intimate and confidential friend had been murdered by royal command, while he was himself abandoned by Philip, exposed to insult, left destitute of defence. No money was forthcoming, in spite of constant importunities and perpetual promises. Plenty of words were sent him; he complained, as if he possessed the art of extracting gold from them, or as if war could be carried on with words alone.

Being in so desponding a mood, he declined entering into any controversy with regard to the new propositions, which, however, he characterized as most iniquitous. He stated merely that his Majesty had determined to refer the Netherland matters to the arbitration of the Emperor; that the Duke de Terra Nova would soon be empowered to treat upon the subject at the imperial court; and that, in the meantime, he was himself most anxiously awaiting his recal.

A synod of the Reformed churches had been held, during the month of June, at Dort. There they had laid down a platform of their principles of church government in one hundred and one articles. In the same month, the leading members of the Reformed Church had drawn up an ably reasoned address to Matthias and the Council of State on the subject of a general peace of religion for the provinces.

William of Orange did his utmost to improve the opportunity. He sketched a system of provisional toleration, which he caused to be signed by the Archduke Matthias, and which, at least for a season, was to establish religious freedom. The brave; tranquil, solitary man still held his track across the raging waves, shedding as much light as one clear human soul could dispense; yet the dim lantern, so far in advance, was swallowed in the mist, ere those who sailed in his wake could shape their course by his example. No man understood him. Not even his nearest friends comprehended his views, nor saw that he strove to establish not freedom for Calvinism, but freedom for conscience. Saint Aldegonde complained that the Prince would not persecute the Anabaptists, Peter Dathenus denounced him as an atheist, while even Count John; the only one left of his valiant and generous brothers, opposed the religious peace—except where the advantage was on the side of the new religion. Where the Catholics had been effectually put down, as in Holland and Zealand, honest John saw so reason for allowing them to lift themselves up again. In the Popish provinces, on the other hand, he was for a religious peace. In this bigoted spirit he was followed by too many of the Reforming mass, while, on their part, the Walloons were already banding themselves

Page 954

together in the more southern provinces, under the name of Malcontents. Stigmatized by the Calvinists as “Paternoster Jacks,” they were daily drawing closer their alliance with Alencon; and weakening the bands which united them with their Protestant brethren. Count John had at length become a permanent functionary in the Netherlands. Urgently solicited by the leaders and the great multitude of the Reformers, he had long been unwilling to abandon his home, and to neglect the private affairs which his devotion to the Netherland cause had thrown into great confusion. The Landgrave, too, whose advice he had asked, had strongly urged him not to “dip his fingers into the olla podrida.” The future of the provinces was, in his opinion, so big with disaster, that the past, with all its horrors; under Alva and Requesens, had only furnished the “preludia” of that which was to ensue. For these desperate views his main reason, as usual, was the comet; that mischievous luminary still continuing to cast a lurid glare across the Landgrave’s path. Notwithstanding these direful warnings from a prince of the Reformation, notwithstanding the “olla podrida” and the “comet,” Count John had nevertheless accepted the office of Governor of Gelderland, to which he had been elected by the estates of that province on the 11th of March. That important bulwark of Holland, Zealand, and Utrecht on the one side, and of Groningen and Friesland on the other—the main buttress, in short, of the nascent republic, was now in hands which would defend it to the last.

As soon as the discussion came up in the states-general on the subject of the Dort petitions, Orange requested that every member who had formed his opinions should express them fully and frankly. All wished, however, to be guided and governed by the sentiments of the Prince. Not a man spoke, save to demand their leader’s views, and to express adhesion in advance to the course which his wisdom might suggest. The result was a projected convention, a draft for a religious peace, which, if definitely established, would have healed many wounds and averted much calamity. It was not, however, destined to be accepted at that time by the states of the different provinces where it was brought up for discussion; and several changes were made, both of form and substance, before the system was adopted at all. Meantime, for the important city of Antwerp, where religious broils were again on the point of breaking out, the Prince preferred a provisional arrangement, which he forthwith carried into execution. A proclamation, in the name of the Archduke Matthias and of the State Council, assigned five special places in the city where the members of the “pretended Reformed religion” should have liberty to exercise their religious worship, with preaching, singing, and the sacraments. The churchyards of the parochial churches were to be opened for the burial of their dead, but the funerals were to be unaccompanied with exhortation, or any

Page 955

public demonstration which might excite disturbance. The adherents of one religion were forbidden to disturb, to insult, or in any way to interfere with the: solemnities of the other. All were to abstain from mutual jeerings—by pictures, ballads, books, or otherwise—and from all injuries to ecclesiastical property. Every man, of whatever religion, was to be permitted entrance to the churches of either religion, and when there, all were to conform to the regulations of the church with modesty and respect. Those of the new religion were to take oaths of obedience to the authorities, and to abstain from meddling with the secular administration of affairs. Preachers of both religions were forbidden to preach out of doors, or to make use of language tending to sedition. All were to bind themselves to assist the magistrates in quelling riots, and in sustaining the civil government.

This example of religious peace, together with the active correspondence thus occasioned with the different state assemblies, excited the jealousy of the Catholic leaders and of the Walloon population. Champagny, who despite his admirable qualities and brilliant services, was still unable to place himself on the same platform of toleration with Orange, now undertook a decided movement against the policy of the Prince. Catholic to the core, he drew up a petition, remonstrating most vigorously against the draft for a religions peace, then in circulation through the provinces. To this petition he procured many signatures among the more ardent Catholic nobles. De Heze, De Glimes, and others of the same stamp, were willing enough to follow the lead of so distinguished a chieftain. The remonstrance was addressed to the Archduke, the Prince of Orange, the State Council, and the States-general, and called upon them all to abide by their solemn promises to permit no schism in the ancient Church. Should the exercise of the new religion be allowed, the petitioners insisted that the godless licentiousness of the Netherlands would excite the contempt of all peoples and potentates. They suggested, in conclusion, that all the principal cities of France—and in particular the city of Paris—had kept themselves clear of the exercise of the new religion, and that repose and prosperity had been the result.

This petition was carried with considerable solemnity by Champagny, attended by many of his confederates, to the Hotel-de Ville, and presented to the magistracy of Brussels. These functionaries were requested to deliver it forthwith to the Archduke and Council. The magistrates demurred. A discussion ensued, which grew warmer and warmer as it proceeded. The younger nobles permitted themselves abusive language, which the civic dignitaries would not brook. The session was dissolved, and the magistrates, still followed by the petitioners, came forth into the street. The confederates, more inflamed than ever, continued to vociferate and to threaten. A crowd soon collected

Page 956

in the square. The citizens were naturally curious to know why their senators were thus browbeaten and insulted by a party of insolent young Catholic nobles. The old politician at their head, who, in spite of many services, was not considered a friend to the nation, inspired them with distrust. Being informed of the presentation of the petition, the multitude loudly demanded that the document should be read. This was immediately done. The general drift of the remonstrance was anything but acceptable, but the allusion to Paris, at the close, excited a tempest of indignation. “Paris! Paris! Saint Bartholomew! Saint Bartholomew! Are we to have Paris weddings in Brussels also?” howled the mob, as is often the case, extracting but a single idea, and that a wrong one; from the public lecture which had just been made. “Are we to have a Paris massacre, a Paris blood-bath here in the Netherland capital? God forbid! God forbid! Away with the conspirators! Down with the Papists!”

It was easily represented to the inflamed imaginations of the populace that a Brussels Saint Bartholomew had been organized, and that Champagny, who stood there before them, was its originator and manager. The ungrateful Netherlanders forgot the heroism with which the old soldier had arranged the defence of Antwerp against the “Spanish Fury” but two years before. They heard only the instigations of his enemies; they remembered only that he was the hated Granvelle’s brother; they believed only that there was a plot by which, in some utterly incomprehensible manner, they were all to be immediately engaged in cutting each others throats and throwing each other out of the windows, as had been done half a dozen years before in Paris. Such was the mischievous intention ascribed to a petition, which Champagny and his friends had as much right to offer—however narrow and mistaken their, opinions might now be considered—as had the, synod of Dort to present their remonstrances. Never was a more malignant or more stupid perversion of a simple and not very alarming phrase. No allusion had been made to Saint Bartholomew, but all its horrors were supposed to be concealed in the sentence which referred to Paris. The nobles were arrested on the spot and hurried to prison, with the exception of Champagny, who made his escape at first, and lay concealed for several days. He was, however, finally ferreted out of his hiding-place and carried off to Ghent. There he was thrown into strict confinement, being treated in all respects as the accomplice of Aerschot and the other nobles who had been arrested in the time of Ryhove’s revolution. Certainly, this conduct towards a brave and generous gentleman was ill calculated to increase general sympathy for the cause, or to merit the approbation of Orange. There was, however, a strong prejudice against Champagny. His brother Granvelle had never been forgotten by the Netherlanders, and, was still regarded as their most untiring foe, while Champagny was supposed to be in close league with the Cardinal. In these views the people were entirely wrong.

Page 957

While these events were taking place in Brussels and Antwerp, the two armies of the states and of Don John were indolently watching each other. The sinews of war had been cut upon both sides. Both parties were cramped by the most abject poverty. The troops under Bossu and Casimir, in the camp sear Mechlin, were already discontented, for want of pay. The one hundred thousand pounds of Elizabeth had already been spent, and it was not probable that the offended Queen would soon furnish another subsidy. The states could with difficulty extort anything like the assessed quotas from the different provinces. The Duke of Alencon was still at Mons, from which place he had issued a violent proclamation of war against Don John—a manifesto which had, however, not been followed up by very vigorous demonstrations. Don John himself was in his fortified camp at Bouge, within a league of Namur, but the here was consuming with mental and with bodily fever. He was, as it were, besieged. He was left entirely without funds, while his royal brother obstinately refused compliance with his earnest demands to be recalled, and coldly neglected his importunities for pecuniary assistance.

Compelled to carry on a war against an armed rebellion with such gold only as could be extracted from loyal swords; stung to the heart by the suspicion of which he felt himself the object at home, and by the hatred with which he was regarded in the provinces; outraged in his inmost feelings by the murder of Escovedo; foiled, outwitted, reduced to a political nullity by the masterly tactics of the “odious heretic of heretics” to whom he had originally offered his patronage and the royal forgiveness, the high-spirited soldier was an object to excite the tenderness even of religious and political opponents. Wearied with the turmoil of camps without battle and of cabinets without counsel, he sighed for repose, even if it could be found only in a cloister or the grave. “I rejoice to see by your letter,” he wrote, pathetically, to John Andrew Doria, at Genoa, “that your life is flowing on with such calmness, while the world around me is so tumultuously agitated. I consider you most fortunate that you are passing the remainder of your days for God and yourself; that you are not forced to put yourself perpetually in the scales of the world’s events, nor to venture yourself daily on its hazardous games.” He proceeded to inform his friend of his own painful situation, surrounded by innumerable enemies, without means of holding out more than three months, and cut off from all assistance by a government which could not see that if the present chance were lost all was lost. He declared it impossible for him to fight in the position to which he was reduced, pressed as he was within half a mile of the point which he had always considered as his last refuge. He stated also that the French were strengthening themselves in Hainault, under Alencon, and that the King of France was in readiness to break in through Burgundy, should

Page 958

his brother obtain a firm foothold in the provinces. “I have besought his Majesty over and over again,” he continued, “to send to me his orders; if they come they shall be executed, unless they arrive too late. They have cut of our hands and we have now nothing for it but to stretch forth our heads also to the axe. I grieve to trouble you with my sorrows, but I trust to your sympathy as a man and a friend. I hope that you will remember me in your prayers, for you can put your trust where, in former days, I never could place my own.”

The dying crusader wrote another letter, in the same mournful strain, to another intimate friend, Don Pedro Mendoza, Spanish envoy in Genoa. It was dated upon the same day from his camp near Namur, and repeated the statement that the King of France was ready to invade the Netherlands, so soon as Alencon should prepare an opening. “His Majesty,” continued Don John, “is resolved upon nothing; at least, I am kept in ignorance of his intentions. Our life is doled out to us here by moments. I cry aloud, but it profits me little. Matters will soon be disposed, through our negligence, exactly as the Devil would best wish them. It is plain that we are left here to pine away till our last breath. God direct us all as He may see fit; in His hands are all things.”

Four days later he wrote to the King, stating that he was confined to his chamber with a fever, by which he was already as much reduced as if he had been ill for a month. “I assure your Majesty,” said he “that the work here is enough to destroy any constitution and any life.” He reminded Philip how often he had been warned by him as to the insidious practices of the French. Those prophecies had now become facts. The French had entered the country, while some of the inhabitants were frightened, others disaffected. Don John declared himself in a dilemma. With his small force, hardly enough to make head against the enemy immediately in front, and to protect the places which required guarding, ’twas impossible for him to leave his position to attack the enemy in Burgundy. If he remained stationary, the communications were cut off through which his money and supplies reached him. “Thus I remain,” said he, “perplexed and confused, desiring, more than life, some decision on your Majesty’s part, for which I have implored so many times.” He urged the King most vehemently to send him instructions as to the course to be pursued, adding that it wounded him to the soul to find them so long delayed. He begged to be informed whether he was to attack the enemy in Burgundy, whether he should await where he then was the succor of his Majesty, or whether he was to fight, and if so with which of his enemies: in fine, what he was to do; because, losing or winning, he meant to conform to his Majesty’s will. He felt deeply pained, he said, at being disgraced and abandoned by the King, having served him, both as a brother, and a man, with love and faith and heartiness.

Page 959

“Our lives,” said he, “are at stake upon this game, and all we wish is to lose them honorably.” He begged the King to send a special envoy to France, with remonstrances on the subject of Alencon, and another to the Pope to ask for the Duke’s excommunication. He protested that he would give his blood rather than occasion so much annoyance to the King, but that he felt it his duty to tell the naked truth. The pest was ravaging his little army. Twelve hundred were now in hospital, besides those nursed in private houses, and he had no means or money to remedy the evil. Moreover, the enemy, seeing that they were not opposed in the open field, had cut off the passage into Liege by the Meuse, and had advanced to Nivelles and Chimay for the sake of communications with France, by the same river.

Ten days after these pathetic passages had been written, the writer was dead. Since the assassination of Escovedo, a consuming melancholy had settled upon his spirits, and a burning fever came, in the month of September, to destroy his physical strength. The house where he lay was a hovel, the only chamber of which had been long used as a pigeon-house. This wretched garret was cleansed, as well as it could be of its filth, and hung with tapestry emblazoned with armorial bearings. In that dovecot the hero of Lepanto was destined to expire. During the last few, days of his illness, he was delirious. Tossing upon his uneasy couch, he again arranged in imagination, the combinations of great battles, again shouted his orders to rushing squadrons, and listened with brightening eye to the trumpet of victory. Reason returned, however, before the hour of death, and permitted him, the opportunity to make the dispositions rendered necessary by his condition. He appointed his nephew, Alexander of Parma, who had been watching assiduously over his deathbed, to succeed him, provisionally, in the command of the army and in his other dignities, received the last sacraments with composure, and tranquilly breathed his last upon the first day of October, the month which, since the battle of Lepanto, he had always considered a festive and a fortunate one.

It was inevitable that suspicion of poison should be at once excited by his decease. Those suspicions have been never set at rest, and never proved. Two Englishmen, Ratcliff and Gray by name, had been arrested and executed on a charge of having been employed by Secretary Walsingham to assassinate the Governor. The charge was doubtless an infamous falsehood; but had Philip, who was suspected of being the real criminal, really compassed the death of his brother, it was none the less probable that an innocent victim or two would be executed, to save appearances. Now that time has unveiled to us many mysteries, now that we have learned from Philip’s own lips and those of his accomplices the exact manner in which Montigny and Escovedo were put to death, the world will hardly be very charitable with regard to other imputations. It was vehemently suspected that Don John had been murdered by the command of Philip; but no such fact was ever proved.

Page 960

The body, when opened that it might be embalmed, was supposed to offer evidence of poison. The heart was dry, the other internal organs were likewise so desiccated as to crumble when touched, and the general color of the interior was of a blackish brown, as if it had been singed. Various persona were mentioned as the probable criminals; various motives assigned for the commission of the deed. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that there were causes, which were undisputed, for his death, sufficient to render a search for the more mysterious ones comparatively superfluous. A disorder called the pest was raging in his camp, and had carried off a thousand of his soldiers within a few days, while his mental sufferings had been acute enough to turn his heart to ashes. Disappointed, tormented by friend and foe, suspected, insulted, broken spirited, it was not strange that he should prove an easy victim to a pestilent disorder before which many stronger men were daily falling.

On the third day after his decease, the funeral rites were celebrated. A dispute between the Spaniards, Germans, and Netherlanders in the army arose, each claiming precedence in the ceremony, on account of superior national propinquity to the illustrious deceased. All were, in truth, equally near to him, for different reasons, and it was arranged that all should share equally in the obsequies. The corpse disembowelled and embalmed, was laid upon a couch of state. The hero was clad in complete armor; his swords helmet, and steel gauntlets lying at his feet, a coronet, blazing with precious stones, upon his head, the jewelled chain and insignia of the Golden Fleece about his neck, and perfumed gloves upon his hands. Thus royally and martially arrayed, he was placed upon his bier and borne forth from the house where he had died, by the gentlemen of his bedchamber. From them he was received by the colonels of the regiments stationed next his own quarters. These chiefs, followed by their troops with inverted arms and mined drums, escorted the body to the next station, where it was received by the commanding officers of other national regiments, to be again transmitted to those of the third. Thus by soldiers of the three nations, it was successively conducted to the gates of Namur, where it was received by the civic authorities. The pall-bearers, old Peter Ernest Mansfeld, Ottavio Gonzaga, the Marquis de Villa Franca, and the Count de Reux, then bore it to the church, where it was deposited until the royal orders should be received from Spain. The heart of the hero was permanently buried beneath the pavement of the little church, and a monumental inscription, prepared by Alexander Farnese, still indicates the spot where that lion heart returned to dust.

Page 961

It had been Don John's dying request to Philip that his remains might be buried in the Escorial by the side of his imperial father, and the prayer being granted, the royal order in due time arrived for the transportation of the corpse to Spain. Permission had been asked and given for the passage of a small number of Spanish troops through France. The thrifty king had, however, made no allusion to the fact that those soldiers were to bear with them the mortal remains of Lepanto's hero, for he was disposed to save the expense which a public transportation of the body and the exchange of pompous courtesies with the authorities of every town upon the long journey would occasion. The corpse was accordingly divided into three parts, and packed in three separate bags; and thus the different portions, to save weight, being suspended at the saddle-bows of different troopers, the body of the conqueror was conveyed to its distant resting-place.

"Expende Hannibalem: quot libras in duce summo
Invenies?". . . . . .

Thus irreverently, almost blasphemously, the disjointed relics of the great warrior were hurried through France; France, which the romantic Saracen slave had traversed but two short years before, filled with high hopes, and pursuing extravagant visions. It has been recorded by classic historians, that the different fragments, after their arrival in Spain, were re-united, and fastened together with wire; that the body was then stuffed, attired in magnificent habiliments, placed upon its feet, and supported by a martial staff, and that thus prepared for a royal interview, the mortal remains of Don John were presented to his Most Catholic Majesty. Philip is said to have manifested emotion at sight of the hideous spectre—for hideous and spectral, despite of jewels, balsams, and brocades, must have been that unburied corpse, aping life in attitude and vestment, but standing there only to assert its privilege of descending into the tomb. The claim was granted, and Don John of Austria at last found repose by the side of his imperial father.

A sufficient estimate of his character has been apparent in the course of the narrative. Dying before he had quite completed his thirty-third year, he excites pity and admiration almost as much as censure. His military career was a blaze of glory. Commanding in the Moorish wars at twenty-three, and in the Turkish campaigns at twenty-six, he had achieved a matchless renown before he had emerged from early youth; but his sun was destined to go down at noon. He found neither splendor nor power in the Netherlands, where he was deserted by his king and crushed by the superior genius of the Prince of Orange. Although he vindicated his martial skill at Gembloux, the victory was fruitless. It was but the solitary sprig of the tiger from his jungle, and after that striking conflict his life was ended in darkness and obscurity. Possessing military genius of a high order, with extraordinary

Page 962

personal bravery, he was the last of the paladins and the crusaders. His accomplishments were also considerable, and he spoke Italian, German, French, and Spanish with fluency. His beauty was remarkable; his personal fascinations acknowledged by either sex; but as a commander of men, excepting upon the battle-field, he possessed little genius. His ambition was the ambition of a knight-errant, an adventurer, a Norman pirate; it was a personal and tawdry ambition. Vague and contradictory dreams of crowns, of royal marriages, of extemporized dynasties, floated ever before him; but he was himself always the hero of his own romance. He sought a throne in Africa or in Britain; he dreamed of espousing Mary of Scotland at the expense of Elizabeth, and was even thought to aspire secretly to the hand of the great English Queen herself. Thus, crusader and bigot as he was, he was willing to be reconciled with heresy, if heresy could furnish him with a throne.

It is superfluous to state that he was no match, by mental endowments, for William of Orange; but even had he been so, the moral standard by which each measured himself placed the Conqueror far below the Father of a people. It must be admitted that Don John is entitled to but small credit for his political achievements in the Netherlands. He was incapable of perceiving that the great contest between the Reformation and the Inquisition could never be amicably arranged in those provinces, and that the character of William of Orange was neither to be softened by royal smiles, nor perverted by appeals to sordid interests. It would have been perhaps impossible for him, with his education and temperament, to have embraced what seems to us the right cause, but it ought, at least, to have been in his power to read the character of his antagonist, and to estimate his own position with something like accuracy. He may be forgiven that he did not succeed in reconciling hostile parties, when his only plan to accomplish such a purpose was the extermination of the most considerable faction; but although it was not to be expected that he would look on the provinces with the eyes of William the Silent, he might have comprehended that the Netherland chieftain was neither to be purchased nor cajoled. The only system by which the two religions could live together in peace had been discovered by the Prince; but toleration, in the eyes of Catholics, and of many Protestants, was still thought the deadliest heresy of all.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Difficult for one friend to advise another in three matters
Establish not freedom for Calvinism, but freedom for conscience
Taxes upon income and upon consumption
Toleration thought the deadliest heresy of all

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 31

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

Page 963

By John Lothrop Motley
1855

PART VI.

Alexander of Parma
1578-1584.

CHAPTER I.

Birth, education, marriage, and youthful character of Alexander Farnese—His private adventures—Exploits at Lepanto and at Gemblours—He succeeds to the government —Personal appearance and characteristics—Aspect of affairs—Internal dissensions—-Anjou at Mons—John Casimir's intrigues at Ghent—Anjou disbands his soldiers—The Netherlands ravaged by various foreign troops—Anarchy and confusion in Ghent—-Imbize and Ryhove—Fate of Hessels and Visch—New Pacification drawn up by Orange —Representations of Queen Elizabeth—Remonstrance of Brussels Riots and image-breaking in Ghent—Displeasure of Orange—His presence implored at Ghent, where he establishes a Religious Peace—Painful situation of John Casimir —Sharp rebukes of Elizabeth—He takes his departure—His troops apply to Farnese, who allows them to leave the country—Anjou's departure and manifesto—Elizabeth's letters to the states-general with regard to him—Complimentary addresses by the Estates to the Duke—-Death of Bossu—Calumnies against Orange—Venality of the malcontent grandees—La Motte's treason—Intrigues of the Prior of Renty—Saint Aldegonde at Arras—The Prior of St. Vaast's exertions —Opposition of the clergy in the Walloon provinces to the taxation of the general government—Triangular contest—Municipal revolution in Arras led by Gosson and others—Counter-revolution—Rapid trials and executions—-"Reconciliation" of the malcontent chieftains— Secret treaty of Mount St. Eloi: Mischief made by the Prior of Renty—His accusations against the reconciled lords—Vengeance taken upon him—Counter movement by the liberal party—Union of Utrecht— The Act analyzed and characterized.

A fifth governor now stood in the place which had been successively vacated by Margaret of Parma, by Alva, by the Grand Commander, and by Don John of Austria. Of all the eminent personages to whom Philip had confided the reins of that most difficult and dangerous administration, the man who was now to rule was by far the ablest and the best fitted for his post. If there were living charioteer skilful enough to guide the wheels of state, whirling now more dizzily than ever through "confusum chaos," Alexander Farnese was the charioteer to guide—his hand the only one which could control.

He was now in his thirty-third year—his uncle Don John, his cousin Don Carlos, and himself, having all been born within a few months of each other. His father was Ottavio Farnese, the faithful lieutenant of Charles the Fifth, and grandson of Pope Paul the Third; his mother was Margaret of Parma, first Regent of the Netherlands after the departure of Philip from the provinces. He was one of the twins by which the reunion of Margaret and her youthful husband had

Page 964

been blessed, and the only one that survived. His great-grandfather, Paul, whose secular name of Alexander he had received, had placed his hand upon the new-born infant's head, and prophesied that he would grow up to become a mighty warrior. The boy, from his earliest years, seemed destined to verify the prediction. Though apt enough at his studies, he turned with impatience from his literary tutors to military exercises and the hardiest sports. The din of arms surrounded his cradle. The trophies of Ottavio, returning victorious from beyond the Alps, had dazzled the eyes of his infancy, and when but six years of age he had witnessed the siege of his native Parma, and its vigorous defence by his martial father. When Philip was in the Netherlands—in the years immediately succeeding the abdication of the Emperor—he had received the boy from his parents as a hostage for their friendship. Although but eleven years of age, Alexander had begged earnestly to be allowed to serve as a volunteer on the memorable day of Saint Quentin, and had wept bitterly when the amazed monarch refused his request.—His education had been, completed at Alcala, and at Madrid, under the immediate supervision of his royal uncle, and in the companionship of the Infante Carlos and the brilliant Don John. The imperial bastard was alone able to surpass, or even to equal the Italian prince in all martial and manly pursuits. Both were equally devoted to the chase and to the tournay; both longed impatiently for the period when the irksome routine of monkish pedantry, and the fictitious combats which formed their main recreation, should be exchanged for the substantial delights of war. At the age of twenty he had been affianced to Maria of Portugal; daughter of Prince Edward, granddaughter of King Emanuel, and his nuptials with that peerless princess were; as we have seen, celebrated soon afterwards with much pomp in Brussels. Sons and daughters were born to him in due time, during his subsequent residence in Parma. Here, however, the fiery and impatient spirit of the future illustrious commander was doomed for a time to fret under restraint, and to corrode in distasteful repose. His father, still in the vigor of his years, governing the family duchies of Parma and Piacenza, Alexander had no occupation in the brief period of peace which then existed. The martial spirit, pining for a wide and lofty sphere of action, in which alone its energies could be fitly exercised, now sought delight in the pursuits of the duellist and gladiator. Nightly did the hereditary prince of the land perambulate the streets of his capital, disguised, well armed, alone, or with a single confidential attendant. Every chance passenger of martial aspect whom he encountered in the midnight streets was forced to stand and measure swords with an unknown, almost unseen but most redoubtable foe, and many were the single combats which he thus enjoyed, so long as his incognito was preserved. Especially,

Page 965

it was his wont to seek and defy every gentleman whose skill or bravery had ever been commended in his hearing: At last, upon one occasion it was his fortune to encounter a certain Count Torelli, whose reputation as a swordsman and duellist was well established in Parma. The blades were joined, and the fierce combat had already been engaged in the darkness, when the torch of an accidental passenger gashed full in the face of Alexander. Torelli, recognising thus suddenly his antagonist, dropped his sword and implored forgiveness, for the wily Italian was too keen not to perceive that even if the death of neither combatant should be the result of the fray, his own position was, in every event, a false one. Victory would ensure him the hatred, defeat the contempt of his future sovereign. The unsatisfactory issue and subsequent notoriety of this encounter put a termination to these midnight joys of Alexander, and for a season he felt obliged to assume more pacific habits, and to solace himself with the society of that "phoenix of Portugal," who had so long sat brooding on his domestic hearth.

At last the holy league was formed, the new and last crusade proclaimed, his uncle and bosom friend appointed to the command of the united troops of Rome, Spain, and Venice. He could no longer be restrained. Disdaining the pleadings of his mother and of his spouse, he extorted permission from Philip, and flew to the seat of war in the Levant. Don John received him with open arms, just before the famous action of Lepanto, and gave him an, excellent position in the very front of the battle, with the command of several Genoese galleys. Alexander's exploits on that eventful day seemed those of a fabulous hero of romance. He laid his galley alongside of the treasure-ship of the Turkish fleet, a vessel, on account of its importance, doubly manned and armed. Impatient that the Crescent was not lowered, after a few broadsides, he sprang on board the enemy alone, waving an immense two-handed sword—his usual weapon—and mowing a passage right and left through the hostile ranks for the warriors who tardily followed the footsteps of their vehement chief. Mustapha Bey, the treasurer and commander of the ship, fell before his sword, besides many others, whom he hardly saw or counted. The galley was soon his own, as well as another, which came to the rescue of the treasure-ship only to share its defeat. The booty which Alexander's crew secured was prodigious, individual soldiers obtaining two and three thousand ducats each. Don John received his nephew after the battle with commendations, not, however, unmingled with censure. The successful result alone had justified such insane and desperate conduct, for had he been slain or overcome, said the commander-in-chief, there would have been few to applaud his temerity. Alexander gaily replied by assuring his uncle that he had felt sustained by a more than mortal confidence, the prayers which his saintly wife was incessantly offering in his behalf since he went to the wars being a sufficient support and shield in even greater danger than he had yet confronted.

Page 966

This was Alexander's first campaign, nor was he permitted to reap any more glory for a few succeeding years. At last, Philip was disposed to send both his mother and himself to the Netherlands; removing Don John from the rack where he had been enduring such slow torture. Granvelle's intercession proved fruitless with the Duchess, but Alexander was all eagerness to go where blows were passing current, and he gladly led the reinforcements which were sent to Don John at the close of the year 1577. He had reached Luxemburg, on the 18th of December of that year, in time, as we have seen, to participate, and, in fact, to take the lead in the signal victory of Gemblours. He had been struck with the fatal change which disappointment and anxiety had wrought upon the beautiful and haughty features of his illustrious kinsman. He had since closed his eyes in the camp, and erected a marble tablet over his heart in the little church. He now governed in his stead.

His personal appearance corresponded with his character. He had the head of a gladiator, round; compact, combative, with something alert and snake-like in its movements. The black, closely-shorn hair was erect and bristling. The forehead was lofty and narrow. The features were, handsome, the nose regularly aquiline, the eyes well opened, dark piercing, but with something dangerous and sinister in their expression. There was an habitual look askance; as of a man seeking to parry or inflict a mortal blow—the look of a swordsman and professional fighter. The lower part of the face was swallowed in a bushy beard; the mouth and chin being quite invisible. He was of middle stature, well formed, and graceful in person, princely in demeanor, sumptuous and stately in apparel. His high ruff of point lace, his badge of the Golden Fleece, his gold-inlaid Milan armor, marked him at once as one of high degree. On the field of battle he possessed the rare gift of inspiring his soldiers with his own impetuous and chivalrous courage. He ever led the way upon the most dangerous and desperate ventures, and, like his uncle and his imperial grandfather, well knew how to reward the devotion of his readiest followers with a poniard, a feather, a riband, a jewel, taken with his own hands from his own attire.

His military, abilities—now for the first time to be largely called into employment—were unquestionably superior to those of Don John; whose name had been surrounded with such splendor by the World-renowned battle of Lepanto. Moreover, he possessed far greater power for governing men, whether in camp or cabinet. Less attractive and fascinating, he was more commanding than his kinsman. Decorous and self-poised, he was only passionate before the enemy, but he rarely permitted a disrespectful look or word to escape condign and deliberate chastisement. He was no schemer or dreamer. He was no knight errant. He would not have crossed seas and mountains to rescue a captive queen, nor have sought to place

Page 967

her crown on his own head as a reward for his heroism. He had a single and concentrated kind of character. He knew precisely the work which Philip required, and felt himself to be precisely the workman that had so long been wanted. Cool, incisive, fearless, artful, he united the unscrupulous audacity of a condottiere with the wily patience of a Jesuit. He could coil unperceived through unsuspected paths, could strike suddenly, sting mortally. He came prepared, not only to smite the Netherlanders in the open field, but to cope with them in tortuous policy; to outwatch and outweary them in the game to which his impatient predecessor had fallen a baked victim. He possessed the art and the patience—as time was to prove—not only to undermine their most impregnable cities, but to delve below the intrigues of their most accomplished politicians. To circumvent at once both their negotiators and their men-at-arms was his appointed task. Had it not been for the courage, the vigilance, and the superior intellect of a single antagonist, the whole of the Netherlands would have shared the fate which was reserved for the more southern portion. Had the life of William of Orange been prolonged, perhaps the evil genius of the Netherlands might have still been exorcised throughout the whole extent of the country. As for religion, Alexander Farnese was, of course, strictly Catholic, regarding all seceders from Romanism as mere heathen dogs. Not that he practically troubled himself much with sacred matters—for, during the life-time of his wife, he had cavalierly thrown the whole burden of his personal salvation upon her saintly shoulders. She had now flown to higher spheres, but Alexander was, perhaps, willing to rely upon her continued intercessions in his behalf. The life of a bravo in time of peace—the deliberate project in war to exterminate whole cities full of innocent people, who had different notions on the subject of image-worship and ecclesiastical ceremonies from those entertained at Rome, did not seem to him at all incompatible with the precepts of Jesus. Hanging, drowning, burning and butchering heretics were the legitimate deductions of his theology. He was no casuist nor pretender to holiness: but in those days every man was devout, and Alexander looked with honest horror upon the impiety of the heretics, whom he persecuted and massacred. He attended mass regularly—in the winter mornings by torch-light—and would as soon have foregone his daily tennis as his religious exercises. Romanism was the creed of his caste. It was the religion of princes and gentlemen of high degree. As for Lutheranism, Zwinglism, Calvinism, and similar systems, they were but the fantastic rites of weavers, brewers, and the like—an ignoble herd whose presumption in entitling themselves Christian, while rejecting the Pope; called for their instant extermination. His personal habits were extremely temperate. He was accustomed to say that he ate only to support life; and he rarely finished a dinner without having risen three or four times from table to attend to some public business which, in his opinion, ought not to be deferred.

Page 968

His previous connections in the Netherlands were of use to him, and he knew how to turn them to immediate account. The great nobles, who had been uniformly actuated by jealousy of the Prince of Orange, who had been baffled in their intrigue with Matthias, whose half-blown designs upon Anjou had already been nipped in the bud, were now peculiarly in a position to listen to the wily tongue of Alexander Farnese. The Montignys, the La Mottes, the Meluns, the Egmonts, the Aerschots, the Havres, foiled and doubly foiled in all their small intrigues and their base ambition, were ready to sacrifice their country to the man they hated, and to the ancient religion which they thought that they loved. The Malcontents ravaging the land of Hainault and threatening Ghent, the “Paternoster Jacks” who were only waiting for a favorable opportunity and a good bargain to make their peace with Spain, were the very instruments which Parma most desired to use at this opening stage of his career. The position of affairs was far more favorable for him than it had been for Don John when he first succeeded to power. On the whole, there seemed a bright prospect of success. It seemed quite possible that it would be in Parma’s power to reduce, at last, this chronic rebellion, and to reestablish the absolute supremacy of Church and King. The pledges of the Ghent treaty had been broken, while in the unions of Brussels which had succeeded, the fatal religious cause had turned the instrument of peace into a sword. The “religion-peace” which had been proclaimed at Antwerp had hardly found favor anywhere. As the provinces, for an instant, had seemingly got the better of their foe, they turned madly upon each other, and the fires of religious discord, which had been extinguished by the common exertions of a whole race trembling for the destruction of their fatherland, were now re-lighted with a thousand brands plucked from the sacred domestic hearth. Fathers and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, were beginning to wrangle, and were prepared to persecute. Catholic and Protestant, during the momentary relief from pressure, forgot their voluntary and most blessed Pacification, to renew their internecine feuds. The banished Reformers, who had swarmed back in droves at the tidings of peace and good-will to all men, found themselves bitterly disappointed. They were exposed in the Walloon provinces to the persecutions of the Malcontents, in the Frisian regions to the still powerful coercion of the royal stadholders.

Persecution begat counter-persecution. The city of Ghent became the centre of a system of insurrection, by which all the laws of God and man were outraged under the pretence of establishing a larger liberty in civil and religious matters. It was at Ghent that the opening scenes, in Parma’s administration took place. Of the high-born suitors for the Netherland bride, two were still watching each other with jealous eyes. Anjou was at Mons, which city

Page 969

he had secretly but unsuccessfully attempted to master for, his, own purposes. John Casimir was at Ghent, fomenting an insurrection which he had neither skill to guide, nor intelligence to comprehend. There was a talk of making him Count of Flanders,—and his paltry ambition was dazzled by the glittering prize. Anjou, who meant to be Count of Flanders himself, as well as Duke or Count of all the other Netherlands, was highly indignant at this report, which he chose to consider true. He wrote to the estates to express his indignation. He wrote to Ghent to offer his mediation between the burghers and the Malcontents. Casimir wanted money for his troops. He obtained a liberal supply, but he wanted more. Meantime, the mercenaries were expatiating on their own account throughout the southern provinces; eating up every green leaf, robbing and pillaging, where robbery and pillage had gone so often that hardly anything was left for rapine. Thus dealt the soldiers in the open country, while their master at Ghent was plunging into the complicated intrigues spread over that unfortunate city by the most mischievous demagogues that ever polluted a sacred cause. Well had Cardinal Granvelle, his enemy, William of Hesse, his friend and kinsman, understood the character of John Casimir. Robbery and pillage were his achievements, to make chaos more confounded was his destiny. Anjou—disgusted with the temporary favor accorded to a rival whom he affected to despise—disbanded his troops in dudgeon, and prepared to retire to France. Several thousand of these mercenaries took service immediately with the Malcontents under Montigny, thus swelling the ranks of the deadliest foes to that land over which Anjou had assumed the title of protector. The states' army, meanwhile, had been rapidly dissolving. There were hardly men enough left to make a demonstration in the field, or properly to garrison the more important towns. The unhappy provinces, torn by civil and religious dissensions, were overrun by hordes of unpaid soldiers of all nations, creeds, and tongues-Spaniards, Italians, Burgundians, Walloons, Germans, Scotch and English; some who came to attack and others to protect, but who all achieved nothing and agreed in nothing save to maltreat and to outrage the defenceless peasantry and denizens of the smaller towns. The contemporary chronicles are full of harrowing domestic tragedies, in which the actors are always the insolent foreign soldiery and their desperate victims.

Ghent energetic, opulent, powerful, passionate, unruly Ghent—was now the focus of discord, the centre from whence radiated not the light and warmth of reasonable and intelligent liberty, but the bale-fires of murderous licence and savage anarchy. The second city of the Netherlands, one of the wealthiest and most powerful cities of Christendom, it had been its fate so often to overstep the bounds of reason and moderation in its devotion to freedom, so often to incur ignominious chastisement from power which

Page 970

its own excesses had made more powerful, that its name was already becoming a bye-word. It now, most fatally and for ever, was to misunderstand its true position. The Prince of Orange, the great architect of his country's fortunes, would have made it the keystone of the arch which he was laboring to construct. Had he been allowed to perfect his plan, the structure might have endured for ages, a perpetual bulwark against, tyranny and wrong. The temporary and slender frame by which the great artist had supported his arch while still unfinished, was plucked away by rude and ribald hands; the keystone plunged into the abyss, to be lost for ever, and the great work of Orange remained a fragment from its commencement. The acts of demagogues, the conservative disgust at licence, the jealousy of rival nobles, the venality of military leaders, threw daily fresh stumbling-blocks in his heroic path. It was not six months after the advent of Farnese to power, before that bold and subtle chieftain had seized the double-edged sword of religious dissension as firmly as he had grasped his celebrated brand when he boarded the galley of Muatapha Bey, and the Netherlands were cut in twain, to be re-united nevermore. The separate treaty of the Walloon provinces was soon destined to separate the Celtic and Romanesque elements from the Batavian and Frisian portion of a nationality, which; thoroughly fused in all its parts, would have formed as admirable a compound of fire and endurance as history has ever seen.

Meantime, the grass was growing and the cattle were grazing in the streets of Ghent, where once the tramp of workmen going to and from their labor was like the movement of a mighty army. The great majority of the burghers were of the Reformed religion, and disposed to make effectual resistance to the Malcontents, led by the disaffected nobles. The city, considering itself the natural head of all the southern country, was indignant that the Walloon provinces should dare to reassert that supremacy of Romanism which had been so effectually suppressed, and to admit the possibility of friendly relations with a sovereign who had been virtually disowned. There were two parties, however, in Ghent. Both were led by men of abandoned and dangerous character. Imbize, the worse of the two demagogues, was inconstant, cruel, cowardly, and treacherous, but possessed of eloquence and a talent for intrigue. Ryhove was a bolder ruffian—-wrathful, bitter, and unscrupulous. Imbize was at the time opposed to Orange, disliking his moderation, and trembling at his firmness. Ryhove considered himself the friend of the Prince. We have seen that he had consulted him previously to his memorable attack upon Aerschot, in the autumn of the preceding year, and we know the result of that conference.

Page 971

The Prince, with the slight dissimulation which belonged less to his character than to his theory of politics, and which was perhaps not to be avoided, in that age of intrigue, by any man who would govern his fellow-men, whether for good or evil, had winked at a project which he would not openly approve. He was not thoroughly acquainted, however, with the desperate character of the man, for he would have scorned an instrument so thoroughly base as Ryhove subsequently proved. The violence of that personage on the occasion of the arrest of Aerschot and his colleagues was mildness compared with the deed with which he now disgraced the cause of freedom. He had been ordered out from Ghent to oppose a force of Malcontents which was gathering in the neighbourhood of Courtray; but he swore that he would not leave the gates so long as two of the gentlemen whom he had arrested on the twenty-eighth of the previous October, and who yet remained in captivity, were still alive. These two prisoners were ex-procurator Visch and Blood-Councillor Hessels. Hessels, it seemed, had avowed undying hostility to Ryhove for the injury sustained at his hands, and he had sworn, “by his grey beard,” that the ruffian should yet hang for the outrage. Ryhove, not feeling very safe in the position of affairs which then existed, and knowing that he could neither trust Imbize, who had formerly been his friend, nor the imprisoned nobles, who had ever been his implacable enemies, was resolved to make himself safe in one quarter at least, before he set forth against the Malcontents. Accordingly, Hessels and Visch, as they sat together in their prison, at chess, upon the 4th of October, 1578, were suddenly summoned to leave the house, and to enter a carriage which stood at the door. A force of armed men brought the order, and were sufficiently strong to enforce it. The prisoners obeyed, and the coach soon rolled slowly through the streets, left the Courtray gate, and proceeded a short distance along the road towards that city.

After a few minutes a halt was made. Ryhove then made his appearance at the carriage-window, and announced to the astonished prisoners that, they were forthwith to be hanged upon a tree which stood by the road-side. He proceeded to taunt the aged Hessels with his threat against himself, and with his vow “by his grey beard.” “Such grey beard shalt thou never live thyself to wear, ruffian,” cried Hessels, stoutly-furious rather than terrified at the suddenness of his doom. “There thou liest, false traitor!” roared Ryhove in reply; and to prove the falsehood, he straightway tore out a handful of the old man’s beard, and fastened it upon his own cap like a plume. His action was imitated by several of his companions, who cut for themselves locks from the same grey beard, and decorated themselves as their leader had done. This preliminary ceremony having been concluded, the two aged prisoners were forthwith hanged on a tree, without-the least pretence of trial or even sentence.

Page 972

Such was the end of the famous councillor who had been wont to shout “ad patibulum” in his sleep. It was cruel that the fair face of civil liberty showing itself after years of total eclipse, should be insulted by such bloody deeds on the part of her votaries. It was sad that the crimes of men like Imbize and Ryhove should have cost more to the cause of religious and political freedom than the lives of twenty thousand such ruffians were worth. But for the influence of demagogues like these, counteracting the lofty efforts and pure life of Orange, the separation might never have occurred between the two portions of the Netherlands. The Prince had not power enough, however, nor the nascent commonwealth sufficient consistency, to repress the disorganizing tendency of a fanatical Romanism on the one side, and a retaliatory and cruel ochlocracy on the other.

Such events, with the hatred growing daily more intense between the Walloons and the Ghenters, made it highly important that some kind of an accord should be concluded, if possible. In the country, the Malcontents, under pretence of protecting the Catholic clergy, were daily abusing and plundering the people, while in Ghent the clergy were maltreated, the cloisters pillaged, under the pretence of maintaining liberty. In this emergency the eyes of all honest men turned naturally to Orange.

Deputies went to and fro between Antwerp and Ghent, Three points were laid down by the Prince as indispensable to any arrangement—firstly, that the Catholic clergy should be allowed the free use of their property; secondly, that they should not be disturbed in the exercise of their religion; thirdly, that the gentlemen kept in prison since the memorable twenty-eighth of October should be released. If these points should be granted, the Archduke Matthias, the states-general, and the Prince of Orange would agree to drive off the Walloon soldiery, and to defend Ghent against all injury. The two first points were granted, upon condition that sufficient guarantees should be established for the safety of the Reformed religion. The third was rejected, but it was agreed that the prisoners, Champagny, Sweveghem, and the rest—who, after the horrid fate of Hessels and Visch, might be supposed to be sufficiently anxious as to their own doom—should have legal trial, and be defended in the meantime from outrage.

On the 3rd of November, 1578, a formal act of acceptance of these terms was signed at Antwerp. At the same time, there was murmuring at Ghent, the extravagant portion of the liberal party averring that they had no intention of establishing the “religious peace” when they agreed not to molest the Catholics. On the 11th of November, the Prince of Orange sent messengers to Ghent in the name of the Archduke and the states-general, summoning the authorities to a faithful execution of the act of acceptance. Upon the same day the English envoy, Davidson, made an energetic representation to the same magistrates,

Page 973

declaring that the conduct of the Ghenters was exciting regret throughout the world, and affording a proof that it was their object to protract, not suppress, the civil war which had so long been raging. Such proceedings, he observed, created doubts whether they were willing to obey any law or any magistracy. As, however, it might be supposed that the presence of John Casimir in Ghent at that juncture was authorized by Queen Elizabeth—inasmuch as it was known that he had received a subsidy from her—the envoy took occasion to declare that her Majesty entirely disavowed his proceedings. He observed further that, in the opinion of her Majesty, it was still possible to maintain peace by conforming to the counsels of the Prince of Orange and of the states-general. This, however, could be done only by establishing the three points which he had laid down. Her Majesty likewise warned the Ghenters that their conduct would soon compel her to abandon the country's cause altogether, and, in conclusion, she requested, with characteristic thriftiness, to be immediately furnished with a city bond for forty-five thousand pounds sterling.

Two days afterwards, envoys arrived from Brussels to remonstrate, in their turn, with the sister city, and to save her, if possible, from the madness which had seized upon her. They recalled to the memory of the magistrates the frequent and wise counsels of the Prince of Orange. He had declared that he knew of no means to avert the impending desolation of the fatherland save union of all the provinces and obedience to the general government. His own reputation, and the honor of his house, he felt now to be at stake; for, by reason of the offices which he now held, he had been ceaselessly calumniated as the author of all the crimes which had been committed at Ghent. Against these calumnies he had avowed his intention of publishing his defence. After thus citing the opinion of the Prince, the envoys implored the magistrates to accept the religious peace which he had proposed, and to liberate the prisoners as he had demanded. For their own part, they declared that the inhabitants of Brussels would never desert him; for, next to God, there was no one who understood their cause so entirely, or who could point out the remedy so intelligently.

Thus reasoned the envoys from the states-general and from Brussels, but even while they were reasoning, a fresh tumult occurred at Ghent. The people had been inflamed by demagogues, and by the insane howlings of Peter Dathenus, the unfrocked monk of Poperingen, who had been the servant and minister both of the Pope and of Orange, and who now hated each with equal fervor. The populace, under these influences, rose in its wrath upon the Catholics, smote all their images into fragments, destroyed all their altar pictures, robbed them of much valuable property, and turned all the Papists themselves out of the city. The riot was so furious that it seemed, says a chronicler, as if all the inhabitants had gone raving mad. The drums beat the alarm, the magistrates went forth to expostulate, but no commands were heeded till the work of destruction had been accomplished, when the tumult expired at last by its own limitation.

Page 974

Affairs seemed more threatening than ever. Nothing more excited the indignation of the Prince of Orange than such senseless iconomachy. In fact, he had at one time procured an enactment by the Ghent authorities, making it a crime punishable with death. He was of Luther's opinion, that idol-worship was to be eradicated from the heart, and that then the idols in the churches would fall of themselves. He felt too with Landgrave William, that "the destruction of such worthless idols was ever avenged by torrents of good human blood." Therefore it may be well supposed that this fresh act of senseless violence, in the very teeth of his remonstrances, in the very presence of his envoys, met with his stern disapprobation. He was on the point of publishing his defence against the calumnies which his toleration had drawn upon him from both Catholic and Calvinist. He was deeply revolving the question, whether it were not better to turn his back at once upon a country which seemed so incapable of comprehending his high purposes, or seconding his virtuous efforts. From both projects he was dissuaded; and although bitterly wronged by both friend and foe, although, feeling that even in his own Holland, there were whispers against his purity, since his favorable inclinations towards Anjou had become the general topic, yet he still preserved his majestic tranquillity, and smiled at the arrows which fell harmless at his feet. "I admire his wisdom, daily more and more," cried Hubert Languet; "I see those who profess themselves his friends causing him more annoyance than his foes; while, nevertheless, he ever remains true to himself, is driven by no tempests from his equanimity, nor provoked by repeated injuries to immoderate action."

The Prince had that year been chosen unanimously by the four "members" of Flanders to be governor of that province, but had again declined the office. The inhabitants, notwithstanding the furious transactions at Ghent, professed attachment to his person, and respect for his authority. He was implored to go to the city. His presence, and that alone, would restore the burghers to their reason, but the task was not a grateful one. It was also not unattended with danger; although this was a consideration which never influenced him, from the commencement of his career to its close. Imbize and his crew were capable of resorting to any extremity or any ambush; to destroy the man whom they feared and hated. The presence of John Casimir was an additional complication; for Orange, while he despised the man, was unwilling to offend his friends. Moreover, Casimir had professed a willingness to assist the cause, and to, defer to the better judgment of the Prince: He had brought an army into the field, with which, however, he had accomplished nothing except a thorough pillaging of the peasantry, while, at the same time, he was loud in his demands upon the states to pay his soldiers' wages. The soldiers of the different armies who

Page 975

now overran the country, indeed, vied with each other in extravagant insolence. “Their outrages are most execrable,” wrote Marquis Havre; “they demand the most exquisite food, and drink Champagne and Burgundy by the bucketfull.” Nevertheless, on the 4th of December, the Prince came to Ghent. He held constant and anxious conferences with the magistrates. He was closeted daily with John Casimir, whose vanity and extravagance of temper he managed with his usual skill. He even dined with Imbue, and thus, by smoothing difficulties and reconciling angry passions, he succeeded at last in obtaining the consent of all to a religious peace, which was published on the 27th of December, 1578. It contained the same provisions as those of the project prepared and proposed during the previous summer throughout the Netherlands. Exercise of both religions was established; mutual insults and irritations—whether by word, book, picture, song, or gesture—were prohibited, under severe penalties, while all persons were sworn to protect the common tranquillity by blood, purse, and life. The Catholics, by virtue of this accord, re-entered into possession of their churches and cloisters, but nothing could be obtained in favor of the imprisoned gentlemen.

The Walloons and Malcontents were now summoned to lay down their arms; but, as might be supposed, they expressed dissatisfaction with the religious peace, proclaiming it hostile to the Ghent treaty and the Brussels union. In short, nothing would satisfy them but total suppression of the Reformed religion; as nothing would content Imbize and his faction but the absolute extermination of Romanism. A strong man might well seem powerless in the midst of such obstinate and worthless fanatics.

The arrival of the Prince in Ghent was, on the whole, a relief to John Casimir. As usual, this addle-brained individual had plunged headlong into difficulties, out of which he was unable to extricate himself. He knew not what to do, or which way to turn. He had tampered with Imbue and his crew, but he had found that they were not the men for a person of his quality to deal with. He had brought a large army into the field, and had not a stiver in his coffers. He felt bitterly the truth of the Landgrave’s warning—“that ’twas better to have thirty thousand devils at one’s back than thirty thousand German troopers, with no money to give them;” it being possible to pay the devils with the sign of the cross, while the soldiers could be discharged only with money or hard knocks. Queen Elizabeth, too, under whose patronage he had made this most inglorious campaign, was incessant in her reproofs, and importunate in her demands for reimbursement. She wrote to him personally, upbraiding him with his high pretensions and his shortcomings. His visit to Ghent, so entirely unjustified and mischievous; his failure to effect that junction of his army with the states’ force under Bossu, by which the royal army was to have been surprised and annihilated;

Page 976

his having given reason to the common people to suspect her Majesty and the Prince of Orange of collusion with his designs, and of a disposition to seek their private advantage and not the general good of the whole Netherlands; the imminent danger, which he had aggravated, that the Walloon provinces, actuated by such suspicions, would fall away from the “generality” and seek a private accord with Parma; these and similar sins of omission and commission were sharply and shrewishly set forth in the Queen’s epistle. ’Twas not for such marauding and intriguing work that she had appointed him her lieutenant, and furnished him with troops and subsidies. She begged him forthwith to amend his ways, for the sake of his name and fame, which were sufficiently soiled in the places where his soldiers had been plundering the country which they came to protect.

The Queen sent Daniel Rogers with instructions of similar import to the states-general, repeatedly and expressly disavowing Casimir’s proceedings and censuring his character. She also warmly insisted on her bonds. In short, never was unlucky prince more soundly berated by his superiors, more thoroughly disgraced by his followers. In this contemptible situation had Casimir placed himself by his rash ambition to prove before the world that German princes could bite and scratch like griffins and tigers as well as carry them in their shields. From this position Orange partly rescued him. He made his peace with the states-general. He smoothed matters with the extravagant Reformers, and he even extorted from the authorities of Ghent the forty-five thousand pounds bond, on which Elizabeth had insisted with such obduracy. Casimir repaid these favors of the Prince in the coin with which narrow minds and jealous tempers are apt to discharge such obligations—ingratitude. The friendship which he openly manifested at first grew almost immediately cool. Soon afterwards he left Ghent and departed for Germany, leaving behind him a long and tedious remonstrance, addressed to the states-general, in which document he narrated the history of his exploits, and endeavored to vindicate the purity of his character. He concluded this very tedious and superfluous manifesto by observing that—for reasons which he thought proper to give at considerable length—he felt himself “neither too useful nor too agreeable to the provinces.” As he had been informed, he said, that the states-general had requested the Queen of England to procure his departure, he had resolved, in order to spare her and them inconvenience, to return of his own accord, “leaving the issue of the war in the high and mighty hand of God.”

The estates answered this remonstrance with words of unlimited courtesy; expressing themselves “obliged to all eternity” for his services, and holding out vague hopes that the monies which he demanded on behalf of his troops should ere long be forthcoming.

Page 977

Casimir having already answered Queen Elizabeth's reproachful letter by throwing the blame of his apparent misconduct upon the states-general, and having promised soon to appear before her Majesty in person, tarried accordingly but a brief season in Germany, and then repaired to England. Here he was feasted, flattered, caressed, and invested with the order of the Garter. Pleased with royal blandishments, and highly enjoying the splendid hospitalities of England he quite forgot the "thirty thousand devils" whom he had left running loose in the Netherlands, while these wild soldiers, on their part, being absolutely in a starving condition—for there was little left for booty in a land which had been so often plundered—now had the effrontery to apply to the Prince of Parma for payment of their wages. Alexander Farnese laughed heartily at the proposition, which he considered an excellent jest. It seemed in truth, a jest, although but a sorry one. Parma replied to the messenger of Maurice of Saxony who had made the proposition, that the Germans must be mad to ask him for money, instead of offering to pay him, a heavy sum for permission to leave the country. Nevertheless, he was willing to be so far indulgent as to furnish them with passports, provided they departed from the Netherlands instantly. Should they interpose the least delay, he would set upon them without further preface, and he gave them notice, with the arrogance becoming a Spanish general; that the courier was already waiting to report to Spain the number of them left alive after the encounter. Thus deserted by their chief, and hectored by the enemy, the mercenaries, who had little stomach for fight without wages, accepted the passports proffered by Parma. They revenged themselves for the harsh treatment which they had received from Casimir and from the states-general, by singing, everywhere as they retreated, a doggerel ballad—half Flemish, half German—-in which their wrongs were expressed with uncouth vigor.

Casimir received the news of the departure of his ragged soldiery on the very day which witnessed his investment with the Garter by the fair hands of Elizabeth herself. A few days afterwards he left England, accompanied by an escort of lords and gentlemen, especially appointed for that purpose by the Queen. He landed in Flushing, where he was received with distinguished hospitality, by order of the Prince of Orange, and on the 14th of February, 1579, he passed through Utrecht. Here he conversed freely at his lodgings in the "German House" on the subject of his vagabond troops, whose final adventures and departure seemed to afford him considerable amusement; and he, moreover, diverted his company by singing, after supper, a few verses of the ballad already mentioned.

O, have you been in Brabant, fighting for the states?
O, have you brought back anything except your broken pates?
O, I have been in Brabant, myself and all my mates.
We'll go no more to Brabant, unless our brains were addle,
We're coming home on foot, we went there in the saddle;
For there's neither gold nor glory got, in fighting for the states.

Page 978

The Duke of Anjou, meantime, after disbanding his troops, had lingered for a while near the frontier. Upon taking his final departure, he sent his resident minister, Des Pruneaux, with a long communication to the states-general, complaining that they had not published their contract with himself, nor fulfilled its conditions. He excused, as well as he could, the awkward fact that his disbanded troops had taken refuge with the Walloons, and he affected to place his own departure upon the ground of urgent political business in France, to arrange which his royal brother had required his immediate attendance. He furthermore most hypocritically expressed a desire for a speedy reconciliation of the provinces with their sovereign, and a resolution that—although for their sake he had made himself a foe to his Catholic Majesty—he would still interpose no obstacle to so desirable a result.

To such shallow discourse the states answered with infinite urbanity, for it was the determination of Orange not to make enemies, at that juncture, of France and England in the same breath. They had foes enough already, and it seemed obvious at that moment, to all persons most observant of the course of affairs, that a matrimonial alliance was soon to unite the two crowns. The probability of Anjou's marriage with Elizabeth was, in truth, a leading motive with Orange for his close alliance with the Duke. The political structure, according to which he had selected the French Prince as protector of the Netherlands, was sagaciously planned; but unfortunately its foundation was the shifting sandbank of female and royal coquetry. Those who judge only by the result, will be quick to censure a policy which might have had very different issue. They who place themselves in the period anterior to Anjou's visit to England, will admit that it was hardly human not to be deceived by the apolitical aspects of that moment. The Queen, moreover, took pains to upbraid the states-general, by letter, with their disrespect and ingratitude towards the Duke of Anjou—behaviour with which he had been "justly scandalized." For her own part, she assured them of her extreme displeasure at learning that such a course of conduct had been held with a view to her especial contentment—"as if the person of Monsieur, son of France, brother of the King, were disagreeable to her, or as if she wished him ill;" whereas, on the contrary, they would best satisfy her wishes by showing him all the courtesy to which his high degree and his eminent services entitled him.

The estates, even before receiving this letter, had, however, acted in its spirit. They had addressed elaborate apologies and unlimited professions to the Duke. They thanked him heartily for his achievements, expressed unbounded regret at his departure, with sincere hopes for his speedy return, and promised "eternal remembrance" of his heroic virtues. They assured him, moreover, that should the first of the

Page 979

following March arrive without bringing with it an honorable peace with his Catholic Majesty, they should then feel themselves compelled to declare that the King had forfeited his right to the sovereignty of these provinces. In this case they concluded that, as the inhabitants would be then absolved from their allegiance to the Spanish monarch, it would then be in their power to treat with his Highness of Anjou concerning the sovereignty, according to the contract already existing.

These assurances were ample, but the states, knowing the vanity of the man, offered other inducements, some of which seemed sufficiently puerile. They promised that "his statue, in copper, should be placed in the public squares of Antwerp and Brussels, for the eternal admiration of posterity," and that a "crown of olive-leaves should be presented to him every year." The Duke—not inexorable to such courteous solicitations—was willing to achieve both immortality and power by continuing his friendly relations with the states, and he answered accordingly in the most courteous terms. The result of this interchange of civilities it will be soon our duty to narrate.

At the close of the year the Count of Bossu died, much to the regret of the Prince of Orange, whose party—since his release from prison by virtue of the Ghent treaty—he had warmly espoused. "We are in the deepest distress in the world," wrote the Prince to his brother, three days before the Count's death, "for the dangerous malady of M. de Bossu. Certainly, the country has much to lose in his death, but I hope that God will not so much afflict us." Yet the calumniators of the day did not scruple to circulate, nor the royalist chroniclers to perpetuate, the most senseless and infamous fables on the subject of this nobleman's death. He died of poison, they said, administered to him "in oysters," by command of the Prince of Orange, who had likewise made a point of standing over him on his death-bed, for the express purpose of sneering at the Catholic ceremonies by which his dying agonies were solaced. Such were the tales which grave historians have recorded concerning the death of Maximilian of Bossu, who owed so much to the Prince. The command of the states' army, a yearly pension of five thousand florins, granted at the especial request of Orange but a few months before, and the profound words of regret in the private letter jest cited, are a sufficient answer to such slanders.

The personal courage and profound military science of Parma were invaluable to the royal cause; but his subtle, unscrupulous, and subterranean combinations of policy were even more fruitful at this period. No man ever understood the art of bribery more thoroughly or practised it more skillfully. He bought a politician, or a general, or a grandee, or a regiment of infantry, usually at the cheapest price at which those articles could be purchased, and always with the utmost delicacy with which such traffic could

Page 980

be conducted. Men conveyed themselves to government for a definite price—fixed accurately in florins and groats, in places and pensions—while a decent gossamer of conventional phraseology was ever allowed to float over the nakedness of unblushing treason. Men high in station, illustrious by ancestry, brilliant in valor, huckstered themselves, and swindled a confiding country for as ignoble motives as ever led counterfeiters or bravoes to the gallows, but they were dealt with in public as if actuated only by the loftiest principles. Behind their ancient shields, ostentatiously emblazoned with fidelity to church and king, they thrust forth their itching palms with the mendicity which would be hardly credible, were it not attested by the monuments more perennial than brass, of their own letters and recorded conversations.

Already, before the accession of Parma to power, the true way to dissever the provinces had been indicated by the famous treason of the Seigneur de la Motte. This nobleman commanded a regiment in the service of the states-general, and was Governor of Gravelines. On promise of forgiveness for all past disloyalty, of being continued in the same military posts under Philip which he then held for the patriots, and of a “merced” large enough to satisfy his most avaricious dreams, he went over to the royal government. The negotiation was conducted by Alonzo Curiel, financial agent of the King, and was not very nicely handled. The paymaster, looking at the affair purely as a money transaction—which in truth it was—had been disposed to drive rather too hard a bargain. He offered only fifty thousand crowns for La Motte and his friend Baron Montigny, and assured his government that those gentlemen, with the soldiers under their command, were very dear at the price. La Motte higgled very hard for more, and talked pathetically of his services and his wounds—for he had been a most distinguished and courageous campaigner—but Alonzo was implacable. Moreover, one Robert Bien-Aime, Prior of Renty, was present at all the conferences. This ecclesiastic was a busy intriguer, but not very adroit. He was disposed to make himself useful to government, for he had set his heart upon putting the mitre of Saint Omer upon his head, and he had accordingly composed a very ingenious libel upon the Prince of Orange, in which production, “although the Prior did not pretend to be Apelles or Lysippus,” he hoped that the Governor-General would recognize a portrait colored to the life. This accomplished artist was, however, not so successful as he was picturesque and industrious. He was inordinately vain of his services, thinking himself, said Alonzo, splenetically, worthy to be carried in a procession like a little saint, and as he had a busy brain, but an unruly tongue, it will be seen that he possessed a remarkable faculty of making himself unpleasant. This was not the way to earn his bishopric. La Motte, through the candid communications of the Prior, found himself

Page 981

the subject of mockery in Parma's camp and cabinet, where treachery to one's country and party was not, it seemed, regarded as one of the loftier virtues, however convenient it might be at the moment to the royal cause. The Prior intimated especially that Ottavio Gonzaga had indulged in many sarcastic remarks at La Motte's expense. The brave but venal warrior, highly incensed at thus learning the manner in which his conduct was estimated by men of such high rank in the royal service, was near breaking off the bargain. He was eventually secured, however, by still larger offers—Don John allowing him three hundred florins a month, presenting him with the two best horses in his stable, and sending him an open form, which he was to fill out in the most stringent language which he could devise, binding the government to the payment of an ample and entirely satisfactory "merced." Thus La Motte's bargain was completed a crime which, if it had only entailed the loss of the troops under his command, and the possession of Gravelines, would have been of no great historic importance. It was, however, the first blow of a vast and carefully sharpened treason, by which the country was soon to be cut in twain for ever—the first in a series of bargains by which the noblest names of the Netherlands were to be contaminated with bribery and fraud.

While the negotiations with La Notte were in progress, the government of the states-general at Brussels had sent Saint Aldegonde to Arras. The states of Artois, then assembled in that city, had made much difficulty in acceding to an assessment of seven thousand florins laid upon them by the central authority. The occasion was skillfully made use of by the agents of the royal party to weaken the allegiance of the province, and of its sister Walloon provinces, to the patriot cause. Saint Aldegonde made his speech before the assembly, taking the ground boldly, that the war was made for liberty of conscience and of fatherland, and that all were bound, whether Catholic or Protestant, to contribute to the sacred fund. The vote passed, but it was provided that a moiety of the assessment should be paid by the ecclesiastical branch, and the stipulation excited a tremendous uproar. The clerical bench regarded the tax as both a robbery and an affront. "We came nearly to knife-playing," said the most distinguished priest in the assembly, "and if we had done so, the ecclesiastics would not have been the first to cry enough." They all withdrew in a rage, and held a private consultation upon "these exorbitant and more than Turkish demands." John Sarrasin, Prior of Saint Yaast, the keenest, boldest, and most indefatigable of the royal partisans of that epoch, made them an artful harangue. This man—a better politician than the other prior—was playing for a mitre too, and could use his cards better. He was soon to become the most invaluable agent in the great treason preparing. No one could, be more delicate, noiseless, or unscrupulous, and he

Page 982

was soon recognized both by Governor-General and King as the individual above all others to whom the re-establishment of the royal authority over the Walloon provinces was owing. With the shoes of swiftness on his feet, the coat of darkness on his back, and the wishing purse in his hand, he sped silently and invisibly from one great Malcontent chieftain to another, buying up centurions, and captains, and common soldiers; circumventing Orangists, Ghent democrats, Anjou partisans; weaving a thousand intrigues, ventilating a hundred hostile mines, and passing unharmed through the most serious dangers and the most formidable obstacles. Eloquent, too, at a pinch, he always understood his audience, and upon this occasion unsheathed the most incisive, if not the most brilliant weapon which could be used in the debate. It was most expensive to be patriotic, he said, while silver was to be saved, and gold to be earned by being loyal. They ought to keep their money to defend themselves, not give it to the Prince of Orange, who would only put it into his private pocket on pretence of public necessities. The Ruward would soon be slinking back to his lair, he observed, and leave them all in the fangs of their enemies. Meantime, it was better to rush into the embrace of a bountiful king, who was still holding forth his arms to them. They were approaching a precipice, said the Prior; they were entering a labyrinth; and not only was the “sempiternal loss of body and soul impending over them, but their property was to be taken also, and the cat to be thrown against their legs.” By this sudden descent into a very common proverbial expression, Sarrasin meant to intimate that they were getting themselves into a difficult position, in which they were sure to reap both danger and responsibility.

The harangue had much effect upon his hearers, who were now more than ever determined to rebel against the government which they had so recently accepted, preferring, in the words of the Prior, “to be maltreated by their prince, rather than to be barbarously tyrannized over by a heretic.” So much anger had been excited in celestial minds by a demand of thirty-five hundred florins.

Saint Aldegonde was entertained in the evening at a great banquet, followed by a theological controversy, in which John Sarrasin complained that “he had been attacked upon his own dunghill.” Next day the distinguished patriot departed on a canvassing tour among the principal cities; the indefatigable monk employing the interval of his absence in aggravating the hostility of the Artesian orders to the pecuniary demands of the general government. He was assisted in his task by a peremptory order which came down from Brussels, ordering, in the name of Matthias, a levy upon the ecclesiastical property, “rings, jewels, and reliquaries,” unless the clerical contribution should be forthcoming. The rage of the bench was now intense, and by the time of Saint Aldegonde’s return a general opposition had

Page 983

been organized. The envoy met with a chilling reception; there were no banquets anymore—no discussions of any kind. To his demands for money, “he got a fine nihil,” said Saint Vaast; and as for polemics, the only conclusive argument for the country would be, as he was informed on the same authority, the “finishing of Orange and of his minister along with him.” More than once had the Prior intimated to government—as so many had done before him—that to “despatch Orange, author of all the troubles,” was the best preliminary to any political arrangement. From Philip and his Governor-General, down to the humblest partisan, this conviction had been daily strengthening. The knife or bullet of an assassin was the one thing needful to put an end to this incarnated rebellion.

Thus matters grew worse and worse in Artois. The Prior, busier than ever in his schemes, was one day arrested along with other royal emissaries, kept fifteen days “in a stinking cellar, where the scullion washed the dishes,” and then sent to Antwerp to be examined by the states-general. He behaved with great firmness, although he had good reason to tremble for his neck. Interrogated by Leoninus on the part of the central government, he boldly avowed that these pecuniary demands upon the Walloon estates, and particularly upon their ecclesiastical branches, would never be tolerated. “In Alva’s time,” said Sarrasin, “men were flayed, but not shorn.” Those who were more attached to their skin than their fleece might have thought the practice in the good old times of the Duke still more objectionable. Such was not the opinion of the Prior and the rest of his order. After an unsatisfactory examination and a brief duresse, the busy ecclesiastic was released; and as his secret labors had not been detected, he resumed them after his return more ardently than ever.

A triangular intrigue was now fairly established in the Walloon country. The Duke of Alencon’s head-quarters were at Mons; the rallying-point of the royalist faction was with La Motte at Gravelines; while the ostensible leader of the states’ party, Viscount Ghent, was governor of Artois, and supposed to be supreme in Arras. La Motte was provided by government with a large fund of secret-service money, and was instructed to be very liberal in his bribes to men of distinction; having a tender regard, however, to the excessive demands of this nature now daily made upon the royal purse. The “little Count,” as the Prior called Lalain, together with his brother, Baron Montigny, were considered highly desirable acquisitions for government, if they could be gained. It was thought, however, that they had the “fleur-de-lys imprinted too deeply upon their hearts,” for the effect produced upon Lalain, governor of Hainault, by Margaret of Valois, had not yet been effaced. His brother also had been disposed to favor the French prince, but his mind was more open to conviction. A few private conferences with La Motte, and a course of ecclesiastical tuition

Page 984

from the Prior—whose golden opinions had irresistible resonance—soon wrought a change in the Malcontent chieftain's mind. Other leading seigniors were secretly dealt with in the same manner. Lalain, Heze, Havre, Capres, Egmont, and even the Viscount of Ghent, all seriously inclined their ears to the charmer, and looked longingly and lovingly as the wily Prior rolled in his tangles before them—"to mischief swift." Few had yet declared themselves; but of the grandees who commanded large bodies of troops, and whose influence with their order was paramount, none were safe for the patriot cause throughout the Walloon country.

The nobles and ecclesiastics were ready to join hands in support of church and king, but in the city of Arras, the capital of the whole country, there was a strong Orange and liberal party. Gosson, a man of great wealth, one of the most distinguished advocates in the Netherlands, and possessing the gift of popular eloquence to a remarkable degree, was the leader of this burgess faction. In the earlier days of Parma's administration, just as a thorough union of the Walloon provinces in favor of the royal government had nearly been formed, these Orangists of Arras risked a daring stroke. Inflamed by the harangues of Gosson, and supported by five hundred foot soldiers and fifty troopers under one Captain Ambrose, they rose against the city magistracy, whose sentiments were unequivocally for Parma, and thrust them all into prison. They then constituted a new board of fifteen, some Catholics and some Protestants, but all patriots, of whom Gosson was chief. The stroke took the town by surprise; and was for a moment successful. Meantime, they depended upon assistance from Brussels. The royal and ecclesiastical party was, however, not so easily defeated, and an old soldier, named Bourgeois, loudly denounced Captain Ambrose, the general of the revolutionary movement, as a vile coward, and affirmed that with thirty good men-at-arms he would undertake to pound the whole rebel army to powder—" a pack of scarecrows," he said, "who were not worth as many owls for military purposes."

Three days after the imprisonment of the magistracy, a strong Catholic rally was made in their behalf in the Fishmarket, the ubiquitous Prior of Saint Vaast flitting about among the Malcontents, blithe and busy as usual when storms were brewing. Matthew Doucet, of the revolutionary faction—a man both martial and pacific in his pursuits, being eminent both as a gingerbread baker and a swordplayer—swore he would have the little monk's life if he had to take him from the very horns of the altar; but the Prior had braved sharper threats than these. Moreover, the grand altar would have been the last place to look fox him on that occasion. While Gosson was making a tremendous speech in favor of conscience and fatherland at the Hotel de Ville, practical John Sarrasin, purse in hand, had challenged the rebel general, Ambrose to private combat. In half an

Page 985

hour, that warrior was routed, and fled from the field at the head of his scarecrows, for there was no resisting the power before which the Montignys and the La Mottes had succumbed. Eloquent Gosson was left to his fate. Having the Catholic magistracy in durance, and with nobody to guard them, he felt, as was well observed by an ill-natured contemporary, like a man holding a wolf by the ears, equally afraid to let go or to retain his grasp.

His dilemma was soon terminated. While he was deliberating with his colleagues—-Mordacq, an old campaigner, Crugeot, Bertoul, and others—whether to stand or, fly, the drums and trumpets of the advancing royalists were heard. In another instant the Hotel de Ville was swarming with men-at-arms, headed by Bourgeois, the veteran who had expressed so alighting an opinion as to the prowess of Captain Ambrose. The tables were turned, the miniature revolution was at an end, the counter-revolution effected. Gosson and his confederates escaped out of a back door, but were soon afterwards arrested. Next morning, Baron Capres, the great Malcontent seignior, who was stationed with his regiment in the neighbourhood, and who had long been secretly coquetting with the Prior and Parma, marched into the city at the head of a strong detachment, and straightway proceeded to erect a very tall gibbet in front of the Hotel de Ville. This looked practical in the eyes of the liberated and reinstated magistrates, and Gosson, Crugeot, and the rest were summoned at once before them. The advocate thought, perhaps, with a sigh, that his judges, so recently his prisoners, might have been the fruit for another gallowstree, had he planted it when the ground was his own; but taking heart of grace, he encouraged his colleagues—now his fellow-culprits. Crugeot, undismayed, made his appearance before the tribunal, arrayed in a corslet of proof, with a golden hilted sword, a scarf embroidered with pearls and gold, and a hat bravely plumaged with white, blue, and, orange feathers—the colors of William the Silent—of all which finery he was stripped, however, as soon as he entered the court.

The process was rapid. A summons from Brussels was expected every hour from the general government, ordering the cases to be brought before the federal tribunal; and as the Walloon provinces were not yet ready for open revolt, the order would be an inconvenient one. Hence the necessity for haste. The superior court of Artois, to which an appeal from the magistrates lay, immediately held a session in another chamber of the Hotel de Ville while the lower court was trying the prisoners, and Bertoul, Crugeot, Mordacq, with several others, were condemned in a few hours to the gibbet. They were invited to appeal, if they chose, to the council of Artois, but hearing that the court was sitting next door, so that there was no chance of a rescue in the streets, they declared themselves satisfied with the sentence. Gosson had not been tried, his case being reserved for the morrow.

Page 986

Meantime, the short autumnal day had drawn to a close. A wild, stormy, rainy night then set in, but still the royalist party—citizens and soldiers intermingled—all armed to the teeth, and uttering fierce cries, while the whole scene was fitfully illuminated with the glare of flambeaux and blazing tar-barrels, kept watch in the open square around the city hall. A series of terrible Rembrandt-like nightpieces succeeded—grim, fantastic, and gory. Bertoul, an old man, who for years had so surely felt himself predestined to his present doom that he had kept a gibbet in his own house to accustom himself to the sight of the machine, was led forth the first, and hanged at ten in the evening. He was a good man, of perfectly blameless life, a sincere Catholic, but a warm partisan of Orange.

Valentine de Mordacq, an old soldier, came from the Hotel de Ville to the gallows at midnight. As he stood on the ladder, amid the flaming torches, he broke forth into furious execrations, wagging his long white beard to and fro, making hideous grimaces, and cursing the hard fate which, after many dangers on the battle-field and in beleaguered cities, had left him to such a death. The cord strangled his curses. Crugeot was executed at three in the morning, having obtained a few hours' respite in order to make his preparations, which he accordingly occupied himself in doing as tranquilly as if he had been setting forth upon an agreeable journey. He looked like a phantom, according to eye-witnesses, as he stood under the gibbet, making a most pious and, Catholic address to the crowd.

The whole of the following day was devoted to the trial of Gosson. He was condemned at nightfall, and heard by appeal before the superior court directly afterwards. At midnight, of the 25th of October, 1578, he was condemned to lose his head, the execution to take place without delay. The city guards and the infantry under Capres still bivouacked upon the square; the howling storm still continued, but the glare of fagots and torches made the place as light as day. The ancient advocate, with haggard eyes and features distorted by wrath, walking between the sheriff and a Franciscan monk, advanced through the long lane of halberdiers, in the grand hall of the Town House, and thence emerged upon the scaffold erected before the door. He shook his fists with rage at the released magistrates, so lately his prisoners, exclaiming that to his misplaced mercy it was owing that his head, instead of their own, was to be placed upon the block. He bitterly reproached the citizens for their cowardice in shrinking from dealing a blow for their fatherland, and in behalf of one who had so faithfully served them. The clerk of the court then read the sentence amid a silence so profound that every syllable he uttered, and, every sigh and ejaculation of the victim were distinctly heard in the most remote corner of the square. Gosson then, exclaiming that he was murdered without cause, knelt upon the scaffold. His head fell while an angry imprecation was still upon his lips.

Page 987

Several other persons of lesser note were hanged daring the week-among others, Matthew Doucet, the truculent man of gingerbread, whose rage had been so judiciously but so unsuccessfully directed against the Prior of Saint Vaast. Captain Ambrose, too, did not live long to enjoy the price of his treachery. He was arrested very soon afterwards by the states' government in Antwerp, put to the torture, hanged and quartered. In troublous times like those, when honest men found it difficult to keep their heads upon their shoulders, rogues were apt to meet their deserts, unless they had the advantage of lofty lineage and elevated position.

"Ille crucem sceleris pretium tulit, hic diadema."

This municipal revolution and counter-revolution, obscure though they seem, were in reality of very grave importance. This was the last blow struck for freedom in the Walloon country. The failure of the movement made that scission of the Netherlands certain, which has endured till our days, for the influence of the ecclesiastics in the states of Artois and Hainault, together with the military power of the Malcontent grandees, whom Parma and John Sarrasin had purchased, could no longer be resisted. The liberty of the Celtic provinces was sold, and a few high-born traitors received the price. Before the end of the year (1578) Montigny had signified to the Duke of Alencon that a prince who avowed himself too poor to pay for soldiers was no master for him. The Baron, therefore, came, to an understanding with La Motte and Sarrasin, acting for Alexander Farnese, and received the command of the infantry in the Walloon provinces, a merced of four thousand crowns a year, together with as large a slice of La Motte's hundred thousand florins for himself and soldiers, as that officer could be induced to part with.

Baron Capres, whom Sarrasin—being especially enjoined to purchase him—had, in his own language, "sweated blood and water" to secure, at last agreed to reconcile himself with the King's party upon condition of receiving the government-general of Artois, together with the particular government of Hesdin—very lucrative offices, which the Viscount of Ghent then held by commission of the states-general. That politic personage, however, whose disinclination to desert the liberty party which had clothed him with such high functions, was apparently so marked that the Prior had caused an ambush to be laid both for him and the Marquis Havre, in-order to obtain bodily possession of two such powerful enemies, now, at the last moment, displayed his true colors. He consented to reconcile himself also, on condition of receiving the royal appointment to the same government which he then held from the patriot authorities, together with the title of Marquis de Richebourg, the command of all the cavalry in the royalist provinces, and certain rewards in money besides. By holding himself at a high mark, and keeping at a distance, he had obtained his price. Capres,

Page 988

for whom Philip, at Parma's suggestion, had sent the commission as governor of Artois and of Hesdin, was obliged to renounce those offices, notwithstanding his earlier "reconciliation," and the "blood and water" of John Sarrasin. Ghent was not even contented with these guerdons, but insisted upon the command of all the cavalry, including the band of ordnance which, with handsome salary, had been assigned to Lalain as a part of the wages for his treason, while the "little Count"—fiery as his small and belligerent cousin whose exploits have been recorded in the earlier pages of this history—boldly taxed Parma and the King with cheating him out of his promised reward, in order to please a noble whose services had been less valuable than those of the Lalain family. Having thus obtained the lion's share, due, as he thought, to his well known courage and military talents, as well as to the powerful family influence, which he wielded—his brother, the Prince of Espinoy, hereditary seneschal of Hainault, having likewise rallied to the King's party—Ghent jocosely intimated to Parma his intention of helping himself to the two best horses in the Prince's stables in exchange for those lost at Gemblours, in which disastrous action he had commanded the cavalry for the states. He also sent two terriers to Farnese, hoping that they would "prove more useful than beautiful." The Prince might have thought, perhaps, as much of the Viscount's treason.

John Sarrasin, the all-accomplished Prior, as the reward of his exertions, received from Philip the abbey of Saint Vaast, the richest and most powerful ecclesiastical establishment in the Netherlands. At a subsequent period his grateful Sovereign created him Archbishop of Cambray.

Thus the "troubles of Arras"—as they were called—terminated. Gosson the respected, wealthy, eloquent, and virtuous advocate; together with his colleagues—all Catholics, but at the same time patriots and liberals—died the death of felons for their unfortunate attempt to save their fatherland from an ecclesiastical and venal conspiracy; while the actors in the plot, having all performed well their parts, received their full meed of prizes and applause.

The private treaty by which the Walloon provinces of Artois, Hainault, Lille, Douay, and Orchies, united themselves in a separate league was signed upon the 6th of January, 1579; but the final arrangements for the reconciliation of the Malcontent nobles and their soldiers were not completed until April 6th, upon which day a secret paper was signed at Mount Saint Eloi.

The secret current of the intrigue had not, however, flowed on with perfect smoothness until this placid termination. On the contrary, here had been much bickering, heart-burning, and mutual suspicions and recriminations. There had been violent wranglings among the claimants of the royal rewards. Lalain and Capres were not the only Malcontents who had cause to complain of being cheated of the promised largess.

Page 989

Montigny, in whose favor Parma had distinctly commanded La Motte to be liberal of the King's secret-service money, furiously charged the Governor of Gravelines with having received a large supply of gold from Spain, and of "locking the rascal counters from his friends," so that Parma was obliged to quiet the Baron, and many other barons in the same predicament, out of his own purse. All complained bitterly, too, that the King, whose promises had been so profuse to the nobles while the reconciliation was pending, turned a deaf ear to their petitions and left their letters unanswered; after the deed was accomplished.

The unlucky Prior of Renty, whose disclosures to La Motte concerning the Spanish sarcasms upon his venality, had so nearly caused the preliminary negotiation with that seignior to fail, was the cause of still further mischief through the interception of Alonzo Curiel's private letters. Such revelations of corruption, and of contempt on the part of the corrupters, were eagerly turned to account by the states' government. A special messenger was despatched to Montigny with the intercepted correspondence, accompanied by an earnest prayer that he would not contaminate his sword and his noble name by subserviency to men who despised even while they purchased traitors. That noble, both confounded and exasperated, was for a moment inclined to listen to the voice of honor and patriotism, but reflection and solitude induced him to pocket up his wrongs and his "merced" together. The states-general also sent the correspondence to the Walloon provincial authorities, with an eloquent address, begging them to study well the pitiful part which La Motte had enacted in the private comedy then performing, and to behold as in a mirror their own position, if they did not recede ere it was too late.

The only important effect produced by the discovery was upon the Prior of Renty himself. Ottavio Gonzaga, the intimate friend of Don John, and now high in the confidence of Parma, wrote to La Motte, indignantly denying the truth of Bien Aime's tattle, and affirming that not a word had ever been uttered by himself or by any gentleman in his presence to the disparagement of the Governor of Gravelines. He added that if the Prior had worn another coat, and were of quality equal to his own, he would have made him eat his words or a few inches of steel. In the same vehement terms he addressed a letter to Bien Aime himself. Very soon afterwards, notwithstanding his coat and his quality, that unfortunate ecclesiastic found himself beset one dark night by two soldiers, who left him, severely wounded and bleeding nearly to death upon the high road, but escaping with life, he wrote to Parma, recounting his wrongs and the "sword-thrust in his left thigh," and made a demand for a merced.

Page 990

The Prior recovered from this difficulty only to fall into another, by publishing what he called an apologue, in which he charged that the reconciled nobles were equally false to the royal and to the rebel government, and that, although “the fatted calf had been killed for them, after they had so long been feeding with perverse heretical pigs,” they were, in truth, as mutinous as ever, being bent upon establishing an oligarchy in the Netherlands, and dividing the territory among themselves, to the exclusion of the sovereign. This naturally excited the wrath of the Viscount and others. The Seigneur d’Auberlieu, in a letter written in what the writer himself called the “gross style of a gendarme,” charged the Prior with maligning honorable lords and—in the favorite colloquial phrase of the day—with attempting “to throw the cat against their legs.” The real crime of the meddling priest, however, was to have let that troublesome animal out of the bag. He was accordingly waylaid again, and thrown into prison by Count Lalain. While in durance he published an abject apology for his apologue, explaining that his allusions to “returned prodigals,” “heretic swine,” and to “Sodom and Gomorrah,” had been entirely misconstrued. He was, however, retained in custody until Parma ordered his release on the ground that the punishment had been already sufficient for the offence. He then requested to be appointed Bishop of Saint Omer, that see being vacant. Parma advised the King by no means to grant the request—the Prior being neither endowed with the proper age nor discretion for such a dignity—but to bestow some lesser reward, in money or otherwise, upon the discomfited ecclesiastic, who had rendered so many services and incurred so many dangers.

The states-general and the whole national party regarded, with prophetic dismay, the approaching dismemberment of their common country. They sent deputation on deputation to the Walloon states, to warn them of their danger, and to avert, if possible, the fatal measure. Meantime, as by the already accomplished movement, the “generality” was fast disappearing, and was indeed but the shadow of its former self, it seemed necessary to make a vigorous effort to restore something like unity to the struggling country. The Ghent Pacification had been their outer wall, ample enough and strong enough to enclose and to protect all the provinces. Treachery and religious fanaticism had undermined the bulwark almost as soon as reared. The whole beleaguered country was in danger of becoming utterly exposed to a foe who grew daily more threatening. As in besieged cities, a sudden breastwork is thrown up internally, when the outward defences are crumbling—so the energy of Orange had been silently preparing the Union of Utrecht, as a temporary defence until the foe should be beaten back, and there should be time to decide on their future course of action.

Page 991

During the whole month of December, an active correspondence had been carried on by the Prince and his brother John with various agents in Gelderland, Friesland, and Groningen, as well as with influential personages in the more central provinces and cities. Gelderland, the natural bulwark to Holland and Zealand, commanding the four great rivers of the country, had been fortunately placed under the government of the trusty John of Nassau, that province being warmly in favor of a closer union with its sister provinces, and particularly with those more nearly allied to itself in religion and in language.

Already, in December (1578), Count John, in behalf of his brother, had laid before the states of Holland and Zealand, assembled at Gorcum, the project of a new union with "Gelderland, Ghent, Friesland, Utrecht, Overyssel, and Groningen." The proposition had been favorably entertained, and commissioners had been appointed to confer with other commissioners at Utrecht, whenever they should be summoned by Count John. The Prince, with the silence and caution which belonged to his whole policy, chose not to be the ostensible mover in the plan himself. He did not choose to startle unnecessarily the Archduke Matthias—the cipher who had been placed by his side, whose sudden subtraction would occasion more loss than his presence had conferred benefit. He did not choose to be cried out upon as infringing the Ghent Pacification, although the whole world knew that treaty to be hopelessly annulled. For these and many other weighty motives, he proposed that the new Union should be the apparent work of other hands, and only offered to him and to the country, when nearly completed. January, the deputies of Gelderland and Zutfelt, with Count John, stadholder of these provinces, at their head, met with the deputies of Holland, Zealand, and the provinces between the Ems and the Lauwers, early in January, 1579, and on the 23rd of that month, without waiting longer for the deputies of the other provinces, they agreed provisionally upon a treaty of union which was published afterwards on the 29th, from the Town House of Utrecht.

This memorable document—which is ever regarded as the foundation of the Netherland Republic—contained twenty-six articles.

The preamble stated the object of the union. It was to strengthen, not to forsake the Ghent Pacification, already nearly annihilated by the force of foreign soldiery. For this purpose, and in order more conveniently to defend themselves against their foes, the deputies of Gelderland, Zutfen, Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, and the Frisian provinces, thought it desirable to form a still closer union. The contracting provinces agreed to remain eternally united, as if they were but one province. At the same time, it was understood that each was to retain its particular privileges, liberties, laudable and traditionary customs, and other laws. The cities, corporations, and inhabitants of every province were to be guaranteed

Page 992

as to their ancient constitutions. Disputes concerning these various statutes and customs were to be decided by the usual tribunals, by “good men,” or by amicable compromise. The provinces, by virtue of the Union, were to defend each other “with life, goods, and blood,” against all force brought against them in the King’s name or behalf. They were also to defend each other against all foreign or domestic potentates, provinces, or cities, provided such defence were controlled by the “generality” of the union. For the expense occasioned by the protection of the provinces, certain imposts and excises were to be equally assessed and collected. No truce or peace was to be concluded, no war commenced, no impost established affecting the “generality,” but by unanimous advice and consent of the provinces. Upon other matters the majority was to decide; the votes being taken in the manner then customary in the assembly of states-general. In case of difficulty in coming to a unanimous vote when required, the matter was to be referred to the stadholders then in office. In case cf their inability to agree, they were to appoint arbitrators, by whose decision the parties were to be governed. None of the united provinces, or of their cities or corporations, were to make treaties with other potentates or states, without consent of their confederates. If neighbouring princes, provinces, or cities, wished to enter into this confederacy, they were to be received by the unanimous consent of the united provinces. A common currency was to be established for the confederacy. In the matter of divine worship, Holland and Zealand were to conduct themselves as they should think proper. The other provinces of the union, however, were either to conform to the religious peace already laid down by Archduke Matthias and his council, or to make such other arrangements as each province should for itself consider appropriate for the maintenance of its internal tranquillity—provided always that every individual should remain free in his religion, and that no man should be molested or questioned on the subject of divine worship, as had been already established by the Ghent Pacification. As a certain dispute arose concerning the meaning of this important clause, an additional paragraph was inserted a few days afterwards. In this it was stated that there was no intention of excluding from the confederacy any province or city which was wholly Catholic, or in which the number of the Reformed was not sufficiently large to entitle them, by the religious peace, to public worship. On the contrary, the intention was to admit them, provided they obeyed the articles of union, and conducted themselves as good patriots; it being intended that no province or city should interfere with another in the matter of divine service. Disputes between two provinces were to be decided by the others, or—in case the generality were concerned—by the provisions of the ninth article.

Page 993

The confederates were to assemble at Utrecht whenever summoned by those commissioned for that purpose. A majority of votes was to decide on matters then brought before them, even in case of the absence of some members of the confederacy, who might, however, send written proxies. Additions or amendments to these articles could only be made by unanimous consent. The articles were to be signed by the stadholders, magistrates, and principal officers of each province and city, and by all the train-bands, fraternities, and sodalities which might exist in the cities or villages of the union.

Such were the simple provisions of that instrument which became the foundation of the powerful Commonwealth of the United Netherlands. On the day when it was concluded, there were present deputies from five provinces only. Count John of Nassau signed first, as stadholder of Gelderland and Zutfen. His signature was followed by those of four deputies from that double province; and the envoys of Holland, Zealand, Utrecht and the Frisian provinces, then signed the document.

The Prince himself, although in reality the principal director of the movement, delayed appending his signature until May the 3rd, 1579. Herein he was actuated by the reasons already stated, and by the hope which he still entertained that a wider union might be established, with Matthias for its nominal chief. His enemies, as usual, attributed this patriotic delay to baser motives. They accused him of a desire to assume the governor-generalship himself, to the exclusion of the Archduke—an insinuation which the states of Holland took occasion formally to denounce as a calumny. For those who have studied the character and history of the man, a defence against such slander is superfluous. Matthias was but the shadow, Orange the substance. The Archduke had been accepted only to obviate the evil effects of a political intrigue, and with the express condition that the Prince should be his lieutenant-general in name, his master in fact. Directly after his departure in the following year, the Prince's authority, which nominally departed also, was re-established in his own person, and by express act of the states-general.

The Union of Utrecht was the foundation-stone of the Netherland Republic; but the framers of the confederacy did not intend the establishment of a Republic, or of an independent commonwealth of any kind. They had not forsworn the Spanish monarch. It was not yet their intention to forswear him. Certainly the act of union contained no allusion to such an important step. On the contrary, in the brief preamble they expressly stated their intention to strengthen the Ghent Pacification, and the Ghent Pacification acknowledged obedience to the King. They intended no political innovation of any kind. They expressly accepted matters as they were. All statutes, charters, and privileges of provinces, cities, or corporations were to remain untouched. They intended to form neither an independent state nor an independent federal system. No doubt the formal renunciation of allegiance, which was to follow within two years, was contemplated by many as a future probability; but it could not be foreseen with certainty.

Page 994

The simple act of union was not regarded as the constitution of a commonwealth. Its object was a single one—defence against a foreign oppressor. The contracting parties bound themselves together to spend all their treasure and all their blood in expelling the foreign soldiery from their soil. To accomplish this purpose, they carefully abstained from intermeddling with internal politics and with religion. Every man was to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Every combination of citizens, from the provincial states down to the humblest rhetoric club, was to retain its ancient constitution. The establishment of a Republic, which lasted two centuries, which threw a girdle of rich dependencies entirely round the globe, and which attained so remarkable a height of commercial prosperity and political influence, was the result of the Utrecht Union; but, it was not a premeditated result. A state, single towards the rest of the world, a unit in its external relations, while permitting internally a variety of sovereignties and institutions—in many respects the prototype of our own much more extensive and powerful union—was destined to spring from the act thus signed by the envoys of five provinces. Those envoys were acting, however, under the pressure of extreme necessity, and for what was believed an evanescent purpose. The future confederacy was not to resemble the system of the German empire, for it was to acknowledge no single head. It was to differ from the Achaian league, in the far inferior amount of power which it permitted to its general assembly, and in the consequently greater proportion of sovereign attributes which were retained by the individual states. It was, on the other hand, to furnish a closer and more intimate bond than that of the Swiss confederacy, which was only a union for defence and external purposes, of cantons otherwise independent. It was, finally, to differ from the American federal commonwealth in the great feature that it was to be merely a confederacy of sovereignties, not a representative Republic. Its foundation was a compact, not a constitution. The contracting parties were states and corporations, who considered themselves as representing small nationalities ‘dejure et de facto’, and as succeeding to the supreme power at the very instant in which allegiance to the Spanish monarch was renounced. The general assembly was a collection of diplomatic envoys, bound by instructions from independent states. The voting was not by heads, but by states. The deputies were not representatives of the people, but of the states; for the people of the United States of the Netherlands never assembled—as did the people of the United States of America two centuries later—to lay down a constitution, by which they granted a generous amount of power to the union, while they reserved enough of sovereign attributes to secure that local self-government which is the life-blood of liberty.

Page 995

The Union of Utrecht; narrowed as it was to the nether portion of that country which, as a whole, might have formed a commonwealth so much more powerful, was in origin a proof of this lamentable want of patriotism. Could the jealousy of great nobles, the rancour of religious differences, the Catholic bigotry of the Walloon population, on the one side, contending with the democratic insanity of the Ghent populace on the other, have been restrained within bounds by the moderate counsels of William of Orange, it would have been possible to unite seventeen provinces instead of seven, and to save many long and blighting years of civil war.

The Utrecht Union was, however, of inestimable value. It was time for some step to be taken, if anarchy were not to reign until the inquisition and absolutism were restored. Already, out of Chaos and Night, the coming Republic was assuming substance and form. The union, if it created nothing else, at least constructed a league against a foreign foe whose armed masses were pouring faster and faster into the territory of the provinces. Farther than this it did not propose to go. It maintained what it found. It guaranteed religious liberty, and accepted the civil and political constitutions already in existence. Meantime, the defects of those constitutions, although visible and sensible, had not grown to the large proportions which they were destined to attain.

Thus by the Union of Utrecht on the one hand, and the fast approaching reconciliation of the Walloon provinces on the other, the work of decomposition and of construction went Land in hand.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Are apt to discharge such obligations—(by) ingratitude
Like a man holding a wolf by the ears
Local self-government which is the life-blood of liberty
No man ever understood the art of bribery more thoroughly
Not so successful as he was picturesque
Plundering the country which they came to protect
Presumption in entitling themselves Christian
Protect the common tranquillity by blood, purse, and life
Republic, which lasted two centuries
Throw the cat against their legs
Worship God according to the dictates of his conscience

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 32

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley
1855

CHAPTER II.

Parma’s feint upon Antwerp—He invests Maestricht—Deputation and letters from the states-general, from Brussels, and from Parma, to the Walloon provinces—Active negotiations by Orange and by Farnese —Walloon envoys in Parma’s camp before Maestricht—Festivities—The Treaty of Reconciliation—Rejoicings of the royalist party —Comedy enacted at

Page 996

the Paris theatres—Religious tumults in Antwerp, Utrecht, and other cities—Religious Peace enforced by Orange— Philip Egmont's unsuccessful attempt upon Brussels—-Siege of Maestricht—Failure at the Tongres gate—Mining and countermining— Partial destruction of the Tongres ravelin—Simultaneous attack upon the Tongres and Bolls-le-Duo gates—The Spaniards repulsed with great loss—Gradual encroachments of the besiegers—Bloody contests —The town taken—Horrible massacre—Triumphal entrance and solemn thanksgiving—Calumnious attacks upon Orange—Renewed troubles in Ghent—Imbue and Dathenus—The presence of the Prince solicited— Coup d'etat of Imbue—Order restored, and Imbue expelled by Orange

The political movements in both directions were to be hastened by the military operations of the opening season. On the night of the 2nd of March, 1579, the Prince of Parma made a demonstration against Antwerp. A body of three thousand Scotch and English, lying at Borgerhout, was rapidly driven in, and a warm skirmish ensued, directly under the walls of the city. The Prince of Orange, with the Archduke Matthias, being in Antwerp at the time, remained on the fortifications; superintending the action, and Parma was obliged to retire after an hour or two of sharp fighting, with a loss of four hundred men. This demonstration was, however, only a feint. His real design was upon Maestricht; before which important city he appeared in great force, ten days afterwards, when he was least expected.

Well fortified, surrounded by a broad and deep moat; built upon both sides of the Meuse, upon the right bank of which river, however, the portion of the town was so inconsiderable that it was merely called the village of Wyk, this key to the German gate of the Netherlands was, unfortunately, in brave but feeble hands. The garrison was hardly one thousand strong; the trained bands of burghers amounted to twelve hundred more; while between three and four thousand peasants; who had taken refuge within the city walls, did excellent service as sappers and miners. Parma, on the other hand, had appeared before the walls with twenty thousand men; to which number he received constant reinforcements. The Bishop of Liege, too, had sent him four thousand pioneers—a most important service; for mining and countermining was to decide the fate of Maestricht.

Early in January the royalists had surprised the strong chateau of Carpen, in the neighbourhood of the city, upon which occasion the garrison were all hanged by moonlight on the trees in the orchard. The commandant shared their fate; and it is a curious fact that he had, precisely a year previously, hanged the royalist captain, Blomaert, on the same spot, who, with the rope around his neck, had foretold a like doom to his destroyer.

The Prince of Orange, feeling the danger of Maestricht, lost no time in warning the states to the necessary measures, imploring them "not to fall asleep in the shade of a peace negotiation," while meantime Parma threw two bridges over the Meuse, above

and below the city, and then invested the place so closely that all communication was absolutely suspended. Letters could pass to and fro only at extreme peril to the messengers, and all possibility of reinforcing the city at the moment was cut off.

Page 997

While this eventful siege was proceeding, the negotiations with the Walloons were ripening. The siege and the conferences went hand in hand. Besides the secret arrangements already described for the separation of the Walloon provinces, there had been much earnest and eloquent remonstrance on the part of the states-general and of Orange—many solemn embassies and public appeals. As usual, the Pacification of Ghent was the two-sided shield which hung between the parties to cover or to justify the blows which each dealt at the other. There is no doubt as to the real opinion entertained concerning that famous treaty by the royal party. “Through the peace of Ghent,” said Saint Vaast, “all our woes have been brought upon us.” La Motte informed Parma that it was necessary to pretend a respect for the Pacification, however, on account of its popularity, but that it was well understood by the leaders of the Walloon movement, that the intention was to restore the system of Charles the Fifth. Parma signified his consent to make use of that treaty as a basis, “provided always it were interpreted healthily, and not dislocated by cavillations and sinister interpolations, as had been done by the Prince of Orange.” The Malcontent generals of the Walloon troops were inexpressibly anxious lest the cause of religion should be endangered; but the arguments by which Parma convinced those military casuists as to the compatibility of the Ghent peace with sound doctrine have already been exhibited. The influence of the reconciled nobles was brought to bear with fatal effect upon the states of Artois, Hainault, and of a portion of French Flanders. The Gallic element in their blood, and an intense attachment to the Roman ceremonial, which distinguished the Walloon population from their Batavian brethren, were used successfully by the wily Parma to destroy the unity of the revolted Netherlands. Moreover, the King offered good terms. The monarch, feeling safe on the religious point, was willing to make liberal promises upon the political questions. In truth, the great grievance of which the Walloons complained was the insolence and intolerable outrages of the foreign soldiers. This, they said, had alone made them malcontent. It was; therefore, obviously the cue of Parma to promise the immediate departure of the troops. This could be done the more easily, as he had no intention of keeping the promise.

Meantime the efforts of Orange, and of the states-general, where his influence was still paramount, were unceasing to counteract the policy of Parma. A deputation was appointed by the generality to visit the estates of the Walloon provinces. Another was sent by the authorities of Brussels. The Marquis of Havre, with several colleagues on behalf of the states-general, waited upon the Viscount of Ghent, by whom they were received with extreme insolence. He glared upon them, without moving, as they were admitted to his presence; “looking like a dead man, from whom

Page 998

the soul had entirely departed." Recovering afterwards from this stony trance of indignation, he demanded a sight of their instructions. This they courteously refused, as they were accredited not to him, but to the states of Artois. At this he fell into a violent passion, and threatened them with signal chastisement for daring to come thither with so treasonable a purpose. In short, according to their own expression; he treated them "as if they had been rogues and vagabonds." The Marquis of Havre, high-born though he was, had been sufficiently used to such conduct. The man who had successively served and betrayed every party, who had been the obsequious friend and the avowed enemy of Don John within the same fortnight, and who had been able to swallow and inwardly digest many an insult from that fiery warrior, was even fain to brook the insolence of Robert Melun.

The papers which the deputation had brought were finally laid before the states of Artois, and received replies as prompt and bitter as the addresses were earnest and eloquent. The Walloons, when summoned to hold to that aegis of national unity, the Ghent peace, replied that it was not they, but the heretic portion of the states-general, who were for dashing it to the ground. The Ghent treaty was never intended to impair the supremacy of the Catholic religion, said those provinces, which were already on the point of separating for ever from the rest. The Ghent treaty was intended expressly to destroy the inquisition and the placards, answered the national-party. Moreover, the "very marrow of that treaty" was the-departure of the foreign soldiers, who were even then overrunning the land. The Walloons answered that Alexander had expressly conceded the withdrawal of the troops. "Believe not the fluting and the piping of the crafty foe," urged the patriots. "Promises are made profusely enough—but only to lure you to perdition. Your enemies allow you to slake your hunger and thirst with this idle hope of the troops' departure, but you are still in fetters, although the chain be of Spanish pinchbeck, which you mistake for gold." "'Tis not we," cried the Walloons, "who wish to separate from the generality; 'tis the generality which separates from us. We had rather die the death than not maintain the union. In the very same breath, however, they boasted of the excellent terms which the monarch was offering, and of their strong inclination to accept them." "Kings, struggling to recover a lost authority, always promise golden mountains and every sort of miracles," replied the patriots; but the warning was uttered in vain.

Page 999

Meantime the deputation from the city of Brussels arrived on the 28th of March at Mons, in Hainault, where they were received with great courtesy by Count de Lalain, governor of the province. The enthusiasm with which he had espoused the cause of Queen Margaret and her brother Anjou had cooled, but the Count received the Brussels envoys with a kindness in marked contrast with the brutality of Melun. He made many fine speeches—protesting his attachment to, the union, for which he was ready to shed the last drop of his blood—entertained the deputies at dinner, proposed toasts to the prosperity of the united provinces, and dismissed his guests at last with many flowery professions. After dancing attendance for a few days, however, upon the estates of the Walloon provinces, both sets of deputies were warned to take their instant departure as mischief-makers and rebels. They returned, accordingly, to Brussels, bringing the written answers which the estates had vouchsafed to send.

The states-general, too, inspired by William of Orange, addressed a solemn appeal to their sister provinces, thus about to abjure the bonds of relationship for ever. It seemed right, once for all, to grapple with the Ghent Pacification for the last time, and to strike a final blow in defence of that large statesmanlike interpretation, which alone could make the treaty live. This was done eloquently and logically. The Walloons were reminded that at the epoch of the Ghent peace the number of Reformers outside of Holland and Zealand was supposed small. Now the new religion had spread its roots through the whole land, and innumerable multitudes desired its exercise. If Holland and Zealand chose to reestablish the Catholic worship within their borders, they could manifestly do so without violating the treaty of Ghent. Why then was it not competent to other provinces, with equal allegiance to the treaty, to sanction the Reformed religion within their limits?

Parma, on his part, publicly invited the states-general, by letter, to sustain the Ghent treaty by accepting the terms offered to the Walloons, and by restoring the system of the Emperor Charles, of very lofty memory. To this superfluous invitation the states-general replied, on the 19th of March, that it had been the system of the Emperor Charles; of lofty memory, to maintain the supremacy of Catholicism and of Majesty in the Netherlands by burning Netherlanders—a custom which the states, with common accord, had thought it desirable to do away with.

In various fervently-written appeals by Orange, by the states-general, and by other bodies, the wavering provinces were warned against seduction. They were reminded that the Prince of Parma was using this minor negotiation “as a second string to his bow;” that nothing could be more puerile than to suppose the Spaniards capable, after securing Maestricht, of sending away their troops thus “deserting the bride in the midst of the honeymoon.”

Page 1000

They expressed astonishment at being invited to abandon the great and general treaty which had been made upon the theatre of the whole world by the intervention of the principal princes of Christendom, in order to partake in underhand negotiation with the commissioners of Parma-men, “who, it would not be denied, were felons and traitors.” They warned their brethren not to embark on the enemy’s ships in the dark, for that, while chaffering as to the price of the voyage, they would find that the false pilots had hoisted sail and borne them away in the night. In vain would they then seek to reach the shore again. The example of La Motte and others, “bird-limed with Spanish gold,” should be salutary for all-men who were now driven forward with a whip, laughed to scorn by their new masters, and forced to drink the bitter draught of humiliation along with the sweet poison of bribery. They were warned to study well the intercepted letters of Curiel, in order fully to fathom the deep designs and secret contempt of the enemy.

Such having been the result of the negotiations between the states-general and the Walloon provinces, a strong deputation now went forth from those provinces, towards the end of April, to hold a final colloquy with Parma, then already busied with the investment of Maestricht. They were met upon the road with great ceremony, and escorted into the presence of Farnese with drum, trumpet, and flaunting banners. He received them with stately affability, in a magnificently decorated pavilion, carelessly inviting them to a repast, which he called an afternoon’s lunch, but which proved a most sumptuous and splendidly appointed entertainment. This “trifling foolish banquet” finished, the deputies were escorted, with great military parade, to the lodgings which had been provided for them in a neighbouring village. During the period of their visit, all the chief officers of the army and the household were directed to entertain the Walloons with showy festivals, dinners, suppers, dances, and carousals of all kinds. At one of the most brilliant of these revels—a magnificent ball, to which all the matrons and maids of the whole country round had been bidden—the Prince of Parma himself unexpectedly made his appearance. He gently rebuked the entertainers for indulging in such splendid hospitality without, at least, permitting him to partake of it. Charmingly affable to the ladies assembled in the ball-room, courteous, but slightly reserved, towards the Walloon envoys, he excited the admiration of all by the splendid decorum of his manners. As he moved through the halls, modulating his steps in grave cadence to the music, the dignity and grace of his deportment seemed truly majestic; but when he actually danced a measure himself the enthusiasm was at its height. They should, indeed, be rustics, cried the Walloon envoys in a breath, not to give the hand of fellowship at once to a Prince so condescending and amiable. The exclamation seemed to embody the general wish, and to foreshadow a speedy conclusion.

Page 1001

Very soon afterwards a preliminary accord was signed between the King's government and the Walloon provinces. The provisions on his Majesty's part were sufficiently liberal. The religious question furnishing no obstacle, it was comparatively easy for Philip to appear benignant. It was stipulated that the provincial privileges should be respected; that a member of the King's own family, legitimately born, should always be Governor-General, and that the foreign troops should be immediately withdrawn. The official exchange and ratification of this treaty were delayed till the 4th of the following September, but the news that, the reconciliation had been definitely settled soon spread through the country. The Catholics were elated, the patriots dismayed. Orange-the "Prince of Darkness," as the Walloons of the day were fond of calling him—still unwilling to despair, reluctant to accept this dismemberment, which he foresaw was to be a perpetual one, of his beloved country, addressed the most passionate and solemn adjurations to the Walloon provinces, and to their military chieftains. He offered all his children as hostages for his good faith in keeping sacredly any covenant which his Catholic countrymen might be willing to close with him. It was in vain. The step was irretrievably taken; religious bigotry, patrician jealousy, and wholesale bribery, had severed the Netherlands in twain for ever. The friends of Romanism, the enemies of civil and religious liberty, exulted from one end of Christendom to the other, and it was recognized that Parma had, indeed, achieved a victory which although bloodless, was as important to the cause of absolutism as any which even his sword was likely to achieve.

The joy of the Catholic party in Paris manifested itself in a variety of ways. At the principal theatre an uncouth pantomime was exhibited, in which his Catholic Majesty was introduced upon the stage, leading by a halter a sleek cow, typifying the Netherlands. The animal by a sudden effort, broke the cord, and capered wildly about. Alexander of Parma hastened to fasten the fragments together, while sundry personages, representing the states-general, seized her by the horns, some leaping upon her back, others calling upon the bystanders to assist in holding the restive beast. The Emperor, the King of France, and the Queen of England—which last personage was observed now to smile upon one party, now to affect deep sympathy with the other—remained stationary; but the Duke of Alencon rushed upon the stage, and caught the cow by the tail. The Prince of Orange and Hans Casimir then appeared with a bucket, and set themselves busily to milk her, when Alexander again seized the halter. The cow gave a plunge, upset the pail, prostrated Casimir with one kick and Orange with another, and then followed Parma with docility as he led her back to Philip. This seems not very "admirable fooling," but it was highly relished by the polite Parisians of the sixteenth century, and has been thought worthy of record by classical historians.

Page 1002

The Walloon accord was an auspicious prelude, in the eyes of the friends of absolutism, to the negotiations which were opened in the month of May, at Cologne. Before sketching, as rapidly as possible, those celebrated but barren conferences, it is necessary, for the sake of unity in the narrative, to cast a glance at certain synchronical events in different parts of the Netherlands.

The success attained by the Catholic party in the Walloon negotiations had caused a corresponding bitterness in the hearts of the Reformers throughout the country. As usual, bitterness had begot bitterness; intolerance engendered intolerance. On the 28th of May, 1579, as the Catholics of Antwerp were celebrating the Ommegang—the same festival which had been the exciting cause of the memorable tumults of the year sixty-five—the irritation of the populace could not be repressed. The mob rose in its wrath to put down these demonstrations—which, taken in connection with recent events, seemed ill-timed and insolent—of a religion whose votaries then formed but a small minority of the Antwerp citizens. There was a great tumult. Two persons were killed. The Archduke Matthias, who was himself in the Cathedral of Notre Dame assisting at the ceremony, was in danger of his life. The well known cry of “paapen uit” (out with the papists) resounded through the streets, and the priests and monks were all hustled out of town amid a tempest of execrations. Orange did his utmost to quell the mutiny, nor were his efforts fruitless—for the uproar, although seditious and disgraceful, was hardly sanguinary. Next day the Prince summoned the magistracy, the Monday council, the guild officers, with all the chief municipal functionaries, and expressed his indignation in decided terms. He protested that if such tumults, originating in that very spirit of intolerance which he most deplored, could not be repressed for the future, he was determined to resign his offices, and no longer to affect authority in a city where his counsels were derided. The magistrates, alarmed at his threats, and sympathizing with his anger, implored him not to desert them, protesting that if he should resign his offices, they would instantly lay down their, own. An ordinance was then drawn up and immediately, proclaimed at the Town House, permitting the Catholics to re-enter the city, and to enjoy the privileges of religious worship. At the same time, it was announced that a new draft of a religious peace would be forthwith issued for the adoption of every city.

A similar tumult, arising from the same cause, at Utrecht, was attended with the like result. On the other hand, the city of Brussels was astonished by a feeble and unsuccessful attempts at treason, made by a youth who bore an illustrious name. Philip, Count of Egmont, eldest son of the unfortunate Lamoral, had command of a regiment in the service of the states. He had, besides, a small body of cavalry in immediate

Page 1003

attendance upon his person. He had for some time felt inclined—like the Lalains, Meluns, La Mottes, and others to reconcile himself with the Crown, and he wisely thought that the terms accorded to him would be more liberal if he could bring the capital of Brabant with him as a peace offering to his Majesty. His residence was in Brussels. His regiment was stationed outside the gates, but in the immediate neighbourhood of the city. On the morning of the 4th of June he despatched his troopers—as had been frequently his custom—on various errands into the country. On their return, after having summoned the regiment, they easily mastered and butchered the guard at the gate through which they had re-entered, supplying their place with men from their own ranks. The Egmont regiment then came marching through the gate in good order—Count Philip at their head—and proceeded to station themselves upon the Grande Place in the centre of the city. All this was at dawn of day. The burghers, who looked forth from their houses, were astounded and perplexed by this movement at so unwonted an hour, and hastened to seize their weapons. Egmont sent a detachment to take possession of the palace. He was too late. Colonel Van der Tympel, commandant of the city, had been beforehand with him, had got his troops under arms, and now secured the rebellious detachment. Meantime, the alarm had spread. Armed burghers came from every house, and barricades were hastily thrown up across every one of the narrow streets leading to the square. Every issue was closed. Not a man of Egmont's adherents—if he indeed had adherents among the townsmen—dared to show his face. The young traitor and his whole regiment, drawn up on the Grande Place, were completely entrapped. He had not taken Brussels, but assuredly Brussels had taken him. All day long he was kept in his self-elected prison and pillory, bursting with rage and shame. His soldiers, who were without meat or drink, became insolent and uproarious, and he was doomed also to hear the bitter and well-merited taunts of the towns-people. A thousand stinging gibes, suggested by his name and the locality, were mercilessly launched upon him. He was asked if he came thither to seek his father's head. He was reminded that the morrow was the anniversary of that father's murder upon that very spot—by those with whom the son would now make his treasonable peace. He was bidden to tear up but a few stones from the pavement beneath his feet, that the hero's blood might cry out against him from the very ground.

Tears of shame and fury sprang from the young man's eyes as he listened to these biting sarcasms, but the night closed upon that memorable square, and still the Count was a prisoner. Eleven years before, the summer stars had looked down upon a more dense array of armed men within that place. The preparations for the pompous and dramatic execution, which on the morrow was to startle all Europe, had been carried out in the midst of a hushed and overawed population; and now, on the very anniversary of the midnight in which that scaffold had risen, should not the grand spectre of the victim have started from the grave to chide his traitorous son?

Page 1004

Thus for a whole day and night was the baffled conspirator compelled to remain in the ignominious position which he had selected for himself. On the morning of the 5th of June he was permitted to depart, by a somewhat inexplicable indulgence, together with all his followers. He rode out of the gate at early dawn, contemptible and crest-fallen, at the head of his regiment of traitors, and shortly afterwards—pillaging and levying black mail as he went—made his way to Montigny's quarters.

It might have seemed natural, after such an exhibition, that Philip Egmont should accept his character of renegade, and confess his intention of reconciling himself with the murderers of his father. On the contrary, he addressed a letter to the magistracy of Brussels, denying with vehemence "any intention of joining the party of the pernicious Spaniards," warmly protesting his zeal and affection for the states, and denouncing the "perverse inventors of these calumnies against him as the worst enemies of the poor afflicted country." The magistrates replied by expressing their inability to comprehend how the Count, who had suffered villainous wrongs from the Spaniards, such as he could never sufficiently deplore or avenge, should ever be willing to enslave himself, to those tyrants. Nevertheless, exactly at the moment of this correspondence, Egmont was in close negotiation with Spain, having fifteen days before the date of his letter to the Brussels senate, conveyed to Parma his resolution to "embrace the cause of his Majesty and the ancient religion"—an intention which he vaunted himself to have proved "by cutting the throats of three companies of states' soldiers at Nivelle, Grandmont, and Ninove." Parma had already written to communicate the intelligence to the King, and to beg encouragement for the Count. In September, the monarch wrote a letter to Egmont, full of gratitude and promises, to which the Count replied by expressing lively gratification that his Majesty was pleased with his little services, by avowing profound attachment to Church and King, and by asking eagerly for money, together with the government of Alost. He soon became singularly importunate for rewards and promotion, demanding, among other posts, the command of the "band of ordnance," which had been his father's. Parma, in reply, was prodigal of promises, reminding the young noble "that he was serving a sovereign who well knew how to reward the distinguished exploits of his subjects." Such was the language of Philip the Second and his Governor to the son of the headless hero of Saint Quentin; such was the fawning obsequiousness with which Egmont could kiss that royal hand reeking with his father's blood.

Page 1005

Meanwhile the siege of Maestricht had been advancing with steady precision. To military minds of that epoch—perhaps of later ages—this achievement of Parma seemed a masterpiece of art. The city commanded the Upper Meuse, and was the gate into Germany. It contained thirty-four thousand inhabitants. An army, numbering almost as many Souls, was brought against it; and the number of deaths by which its capture was at last effected, was probably equal to that of a moiety of the population. To the technical mind, the siege no doubt seemed a beautiful creation of human intelligence. To the honest student of history, to the lover of human progress, such a manifestation of intellect seems a sufficiently sad exhibition. Given, a city with strong walls and towers, a slender garrison and a devoted population on one side; a consummate chieftain on the other, with an army of veterans at his back, no interruption to fear, and a long season to work in; it would not seem to an unsophisticated mind a very lofty exploit for the soldier to carry the city at the end of four months' hard labor.

The investment of Maestricht was commenced upon the 12th of March, 1579. In the city, besides the population, there were two thousand peasants, both men and women, a garrison of one thousand soldiers; and a trained burgher guard; numbering about twelve hundred. The name of the military commandant was Melchior. Sebastian Tappin, a Lorraine officer of much experience and bravery, was next in command, and was, in truth, the principal director of the operations. He had been despatched thither by the Prince of Orange, to serve under La None, who was to have commanded in Maestricht, but had been unable to enter the city. Feeling that the siege was to be a close one, and knowing how much depended upon the issue, Sebastian lost no time in making every needful preparation for coming events. The walls were strengthened everywhere; shafts were sunk, preparatory to the countermining operations which were soon to become necessary; the moat was deepened and cleared, and the forts near the gates were put in thorough repair. On the other hand, Alexander had encircled the city, and had thrown two bridges, well fortified, across the river. There were six gates to the town, each provided with ravelins, and there was a doubt in what direction the first attack should be made. Opinions wavered between the gate of Bois-le-Duc, next the river, and that of Tongres on the south-western side, but it was finally decided to attempt the gate of Tongres.

Over against that point the platforms were accordingly constructed, and after a heavy cannonade from forty-six great guns continued for several days, it was thought, by the 25th of March, that an impression had been made upon the city. A portion of the brick curtain had crumbled, but through the breach was seen a massive terreplein, well moated, which, after six thousand shots already delivered on the outer wall—still

Page 1006

remained uninjured. It was recognized that the gate of Tongres was not the most assailable, but rather the strongest portion of the defences, and Alexander therefore determined to shift his batteries to the gate of Bois-le-Duc. At the same time, the attempt upon that of Tongres was to be varied, but not abandoned. Four thousand miners, who had passed half their lives in burrowing for coal in that anthracite region, had been furnished by the Bishop of Liege, and this force was now set to their subterranean work. A mine having been opened at a distance, the besiegers slowly worked their way towards the Tongres gate, while at the same time the more ostensible operations were in the opposite direction. The besieged had their miners also, for the peasants in the city had been used to work with mattock and pickaxe. The women, too, enrolled themselves into companies, chose their officers—or “mine-mistresses,” as they were called—and did good service daily in the caverns of the earth. Thus a whole army of gnomes were noiselessly at work to destroy and defend the beleaguered city. The mine advanced towards the gate; the besieged delved deeper, and intersected it with a transverse excavation, and the contending forces met daily, in deadly encounter, within these sepulchral gangways. Many stratagems were, mutually employed. The citizens secretly constructed a dam across the Spanish mine, and then deluged their foe with hogsheads of boiling water. Hundreds were thus scalded to death. They heaped branches and light fagots in the hostile mine, set fire to the pile, and blew thick volumes of smoke along the passage with organ-bellows brought from the churches for the purpose. Many were thus suffocated. The discomfited besiegers abandoned the mine where they had met with such able countermining, and sunk another shaft, at midnight, in secret, at a long distance from the Tongres gate. Still towards that point, however, they burrowed in the darkness; guiding themselves to their destination with magnet, plumbline and level, as the mariner crosses the trackless ocean with compass and chart. They worked their way, unobstructed, till they arrived at their subterranean port, directly beneath the doomed ravelin. Here they constructed a spacious chamber, supporting it with columns, and making all their architectural arrangements with as much precision and elegance as if their object had been purely esthetic. Coffers full of powder, to an enormous amount, were then placed in every direction across the floor, the train was laid, and Parma informed that all was ready. Alexander, having already arrayed the troops destined for the assault, then proceeded in person to the mouth of the shaft, and gave orders to spring the mine. The explosion was prodigious; a part of the tower fell with the concussion, and the moat was choked with heaps of rubbish. The assailants sprang across the passage thus afforded, and mastered the ruined portion of the fort. They were met in the breach, however, by the unflinching defenders of the city, and, after a fierce combat of some hours, were obliged to retire; remaining masters, however, of the moat, and of the ruined portion of the ravelin. This was upon the 3rd of April.

Page 1007

Five days afterwards, a general assault was ordered. A new mine having been already constructed towards the Tongres ravelin, and a faithful cannonade having been kept up for a fortnight against the Bois-le-Duc gate, it was thought advisable to attack at both points at once. On the 8th of April, accordingly, after uniting in prayer, and listening to a speech from Alexander Farnese, the great mass of the Spanish army advanced to the breach. The moat had been rendered practicable in many places by the heaps of rubbish with which it had been encumbered, and by the fagots and earth with which it had been filled by the besiegers. The action at the Bois-le-Duc gate was exceedingly warm. The tried veterans of Spain, Italy, and Burgundy, were met face to face by the burghers of Maestricht, together with their wives and children. All were armed to the teeth, and fought with what seemed superhuman valor. The women, fierce as tigresses defending their young, swarmed to the walls, and fought in the foremost rank. They threw pails of boiling water on the besiegers, they hurled firebrands in their faces; they quoited blazing pitch-hoops with, unerring dexterity about their necks. The rustics too, armed with their ponderous flails, worked as cheerfully at this bloody harvesting as if thrashing their corn at home. Heartily did they winnow the ranks of the royalists who came to butcher them, and thick and fast fell the invaders, fighting bravely, but baffled by these novel weapons used by peasant and woman, coming to the aid of the sword; spear, and musket of trained soldiery. More than a thousand had fallen at the Bois-le-Duc gate, and still fresh besiegers mounted the breach, only to be beaten back, or to add to the mangled heap of the slain. At the Tongres gate, meanwhile, the assault had fared no better. A herald had been despatched thither in hot haste, to shout at the top of his lungs, “Santiago! Santiago! the Lombards have the gate of Bois-le-Duc!” while the same stratagem was employed to persuade the invaders on the other side of the town that their comrades had forced the gate of Tongres. The soldiers, animated by this fiction, and advancing with fury against the famous ravelin; which had been but partly destroyed, were received with a broadside from the great guns of the unshattered portion, and by a rattling discharge of musketry from the walls. They wavered a little. At the same instant the new mine—which was to have been sprung between the ravelin and the gate, but which had been secretly countermined by the townspeople, exploded with a horrible concussion, at a moment least expected by the besiegers. Five hundred royalists were blown into the air. Ortiz, a Spanish captain of engineers, who had been inspecting the excavations, was thrown up bodily from the subterranean depth. He fell back again instantly into the same cavern, and was buried by the returning shower of earth which had spouted from the mine. Forty-five years afterwards, in digging for the foundations of a new wall, his skeleton was found. Clad in complete armor, the helmet and cuirass still sound, with his gold chain around his neck, and his mattock and pickaxe at his feet, the soldier lay unmutilated, seeming almost capable of resuming his part in the same war which—even after his half century’s sleep—was still ravaging the land.

Page 1008

Five hundred of the Spaniards, perished by the explosion, but none of the defenders were injured, for they, had been prepared. Recovering from the momentary panic, the besiegers again rushed to the attack. The battle raged. Six hundred and seventy officers, commissioned or non-commissioned, had already fallen, more than half mortally wounded. Four thousand royalists, horribly mutilated, lay on the ground. It was time that the day's work should be finished, for Maastricht was not to be carried upon that occasion. The best and bravest of the surviving officers besought Parma to put an end to the carnage by recalling the troops; but the gladiator heart of the commander was heated, not softened, by the savage spectacle. "Go back to the breach," he cried, "and tell the soldiers that Alexander is coming to lead them into the city in triumph, or to perish with his comrades." He rushed forward with the fury which had marked him when he boarded Mustapha's galley at Lepanto; but all the generals who were near him threw themselves upon his path, and implored him to desist from such insensate rashness. Their expostulations would have probably been in vain, had not his confidential friend, Serbelloni, interposed with something like paternal authority, reminding him of the strict commands contained in his Majesty's recent letters, that the Governor-General, to whom so much was entrusted, should refrain, on pain of the royal displeasure, from exposing his life like a common fighter.

Alexander reluctantly gave the signal of recal at last, and accepted the defeat. For the future he determined to rely more upon the sapper and miner, and less upon the superiority of veterans to townsmen and rustics in open fight. Sure to carry the city at last, according to line and rule, determined to pass the whole summer beneath the walls, rather than abandon his purpose, he calmly proceeded to complete his circumvallations. A chain of eleven forts upon the left, and five upon the right side of the Meuse, the whole connected by a continuous wall, afforded him perfect security against interruptions, and allowed him to continue the siege at leisure. His numerous army was well housed and amply supplied, and he had built a strong and populous city in order to destroy another. Relief was impossible. But a few thousand men were now required to defend Farnese's improvised town, while the bulk of his army could be marched at any moment against an advancing foe. A force of seven thousand, painfully collected by the Prince of Orange, moved towards the place, under command of Hohenlo and John of Nassau, but struck with wonder at what they saw, the leaders recognized the hopelessness of attempting relief. Maestricht was surrounded by a second Maestricht.

Page 1009

The efforts of Orange were now necessarily directed towards obtaining, if possible, a truce of a few weeks from the negotiators at Cologne. Parma was too crafty, however, to allow Terranova to consent, and as the Duke disclaimed any power over the direct question of peace and war, the siege proceeded. The gates of Bois-le-Duc and Tongres having thus far resisted the force brought against them, the scene was changed to the gate of Brussels. This adjoined that of Tongres, was farthest from the river, and faced westwardly towards the open country. Here the besieged had constructed an additional ravelin, which they had christened, in derision, “Parma,” and against which the batteries of Parma were now brought to bear. Alexander erected a platform of great extent and strength directly opposite the new work, and after a severe and constant cannonade from this elevation, followed by a bloody action, the “Parma” fort was carried. One thousand, at least, of the defenders fell, as, forced gradually from one defence to another, they saw the triple walls of their ravelin crumble successively before their eyes. The tower was absolutely annihilated before they abandoned its ruins, and retired within their last defences. Alexander being now master of the fosa and the defences of the Brussels gate, drew up a large force on both aides of that portal, along the margin of the moat, and began mining beneath the inner wall of the city.

Meantime, the garrison had been reduced to four hundred soldiers, nearly all of whom were wounded: wearied and driven to despair, these soldiers were willing to treat. The townspeople, however, answered the proposition with a shout of fury, and protested that they would destroy the garrison with their own hands if such an insinuation were repeated. Sebastian Tappin, too, encouraged them with the hope of speedy relief, and held out to them the wretched consequences of trusting to the mercy of their foes. The garrison took heart again, while that of the burghers and their wives had, never faltered. Their main hope now was in a fortification which they had been constructing inside the Brussels gate—a demilune of considerable strength. Behind it was a breastwork of turf and masonry, to serve as a last bulwark when every other defence should be forced. The whole had been surrounded by a foss thirty feet in depth, and the besiegers, as they mounted upon the breaches which they had at last effected in the outer curtain, near the Brussels gate, saw for the first time this new fortification.

The general condition of the defences, and the disposition of the inhabitants, had been revealed to Alexander by a deserter from the town. Against this last fortress the last efforts of the foe were now directed. Alexander ordered a bridge to be thrown across the city moat. As it was sixty feet wide and as many deep, and lay directly beneath the guns of the new demilune, the enterprise was sufficiently hazardous.

Page 1010

Alexander led the way in person, with a mallet in one hand and a mattockin the other. Two men fell dead instantly, one on his right hand and his left, while he calmly commenced, in his own person, the driving of the first piles for the bridge. His soldiers fell fast around him. Count Berlaymont was shot dead, many officers of distinction were killed or wounded, but no soldier dared recoil while their chieftain wrought amid the bullets like a common pioneer. Alexander, unharmed, as by a miracle, never left the spot till the bridge had been constructed, and till ten great guns had been carried across it, and pointed against the demilune. The battery was opened, the mines previously excavated were sprung, a part of the demilune was blown into the air, and the assailants sprang into the breach. Again a furious hand-to-hand conflict succeeded; again, after an obstinate resistance, the townspeople were forced to yield. Slowly abandoning the shattered fort, they retired behind the breastwork in its rear—their innermost and last defence. To this barrier they clung as to a spar in shipwreck, and here at last they stood at bay, prepared dearly to sell their lives.

The breastwork, being still strong, was not attempted upon that day. The assailants were recalled, and in the mean time a herald was sent by Parma, highly applauding the courage of the defenders, and begging them to surrender at discretion. They answered the messenger with words of haughty defiance, and, rushing in a mass to the breastwork, began with spade, pickax, and trowel, to add to its strength. Here all the able-bodied men of the town took up their permanent position, and here they ate, drank, and slept upon their posts, while their food was brought to them by the women and children.

A little letter, “written in a fine neat handwriting,” now mysteriously arrived in the city, encouraging them in the name of the Archduke and the Prince of Orange, and assuring them of relief within fourteen days. A brief animation was thus produced, attended by a corresponding languor upon the part of the besiegers, for Alexander had been lying ill with a fever since the day when the demilune had been carried. From his sick bed he rebuked his officers severely that a temporary breastwork, huddled together by boors and burghers in the midst of a siege, should prove an insurmountable obstacle to men who had carried everything before them. The morrow was the festival of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and it was meet that so sacred a day should be hallowed by a Christian and Apostolic victory. Saint Peter would be there with, his keys to open the gate; Saint Paul would lead them to battle with his invincible sword. Orders were given accordingly, and the assault was assigned for the following morning.

Page 1011

Meantime, the guards were strengthened and commanded to be more than usually watchful. The injunction had a remarkable effect. At the dead of night, a soldier of the watch was going his rounds on the outside of the breastwork, listening, if perchance he might catch, as was not unusual, a portion of the conversation among the beleaguered burghers within. Prying about on every side, he at last discovered a chink in the wall, the result, doubtless, of the last cannonade, and hitherto overlooked. He enlarged the gap with his fingers, and finally made an opening wide enough to admit his person. He crept boldly through, and looked around in the clear starlight. The sentinels were all slumbering at their posts. He advanced stealthily in the dusky streets. Not a watchman was going his rounds. Soldiers, burghers, children, women, exhausted by incessant fatigue, were all asleep. Not a footfall was heard; not a whisper broke the silence; it seemed a city of the dead. The soldier crept back through the crevice, and hastened to apprise his superiors of his adventure.

Alexander, forthwith instructed as to the condition of the city, at once ordered the assault, and the last wall was suddenly stormed before the morning broke. The soldiers forced their way through the breach or sprang over the breastwork, and surprised at last —in its sleep—the city which had so long and vigorously defended itself. The burghers, startled from their slumber, bewildered, unprepared, found themselves engaged in unequal conflict with alert and savage foes. The battle, as usual when Netherland towns were surprised by Philip's soldiers, soon changed to a massacre. The townspeople rushed hither and thither, but there was neither escape, nor means of resisting an enemy who now poured into the town by thousands upon thousands. An indiscriminate slaughter succeeded: Women, old men, and children, had all been combatants; and all, therefore, had incurred the vengeance of the conquerors. A cry of agony arose which was distinctly heard at the distance of a league. Mothers took their infants in their arms, and threw themselves by hundreds into the Meuse—and against women the blood-thirst of the assailants was especially directed. Females who had fought daily in the trenches, who had delved in mines and mustered on the battlements, had unsexed themselves in the opinion of those whose comrades they had helped to destroy. It was nothing that they had laid aside the weakness of women in order to defend all that was holy and dear to them on earth. It was sufficient that many a Spanish, Burgundian, or Italian mercenary had died by their hands. Women were pursued from house to house, and hurled from roof and window. They were hunted into the river; they were torn limb from limb in the streets. Men and children fared no better; but the heart sickens at the oft-repeated tale. Horrors, alas, were commonplaces in the Netherlands. Cruelty too monstrous for description, too vast to be believed by a mind not familiar with the outrages practised by the soldiers of Spain and Italy upon their heretic fellow-creatures, were now committed afresh in the streets of Maestricht.

Page 1012

On the first day four thousand men and women were slaughtered. The massacre lasted two days longer; nor would it be an exaggerated estimate, if we assume that the amount of victims upon the two last days was equal to half the number sacrificed on the first. It was said that not four hundred citizens were left alive after the termination of the siege. These soon wandered away, their places being supplied by a rabble rout of Walloon sutlers and vagabonds. Maestricht was depopulated as well as captured. The booty obtained after the massacre was very large, for the city had been very thriving, its cloth manufacture extensive and important. Sebastian Tappin, the heroic defender of the place, had been shot through the shoulder at the taking of the Parma ravelin, and had been afterwards severely injured at the capture of the demilune. At the fall of the city he was mortally wounded, and carried a prisoner to the hostile camp, only to expire. The governor, Swartsenberg, also lost his life.

Alexander, on the contrary, was raised from his sick bed with the joyful tidings of victory, and as soon as he could be moved, made his appearance in the city. Seated in a splendid chair of state, borne aloft on the shoulders of his veterans, with a golden canopy above his head to protect him from the summer's sun, attended by the officers of his staff, who were decked by his special command in, their gayest trappings, escorted by his body-guard, followed by his "plumed troops," to the number of twenty thousand, surrounded by all the vanities of war, the hero made his stately entrance into the town. His way led through deserted streets of shattered houses. The pavement ran red with blood. Headless corpses, mangled limbs—an obscene mass of wretchedness and corruption, were spread on every side, and tainted the summer air. Through the thriving city which, in the course of four months Alexander had converted into a slaughter-house and a solitude, the pompous procession took its course to the church of Saint Servais. Here humble thanks were offered to the. God of Love, and to Jesus of Nazareth, for this new victory. Especially was gratitude expressed to the Apostles Paul and Peter; upon whose festival, and by whose sword and key the crowning mercy had been accomplished,—and by whose special agency eight thousand heretics now lay unburied in the streets. These acts of piety performed, the triumphal procession returned to the camp, where, soon afterwards, the joyful news of Alexander Farnese's entire convalescence was proclaimed.

The Prince of Orange, as usual, was blamed for the tragical termination to this long drama. All that one man could do, he had done to awaken his countrymen to the importance of the siege. He had repeatedly brought the subject solemnly before the assembly, and implored for Maestricht, almost upon his knees. Lukewarm and parsimonious, the states had responded to his eloquent appeals with wrangling addressee and

Page 1013

insufficient votes. With a special subsidy obtained in April and May, he had organized the slight attempt at relief, which was all which he had been empowered to make, but which proved entirely unsuccessful. Now that the massacre to be averted was accomplished, men were loud in reproof, who had been silent, and passive while there was yet time to speak and to work. It was the Prince, they said, who had delivered so many thousands of his fellow-countrymen to, butchery. To save himself, they insinuated he was now plotting to deliver the land into the power of the treacherous Frenchman, and he alone, they asserted, was the insuperable obstacle to an honorable peace with Spain.

A letter, brought by an unknown messenger, was laid before the states' assembly, in full session, and sent to the clerk's table, to be read aloud. After the first few sentences, that functionary faltered in his recital. Several members also peremptorily ordered him to stop; for the letter proved to be a violent and calumnious libel upon Orange, together with a strong appeal in favor of the peace propositions then under debate at Cologne. The Prince alone, of all the assembly, preserving his tranquillity, ordered the document to be brought to him, and forthwith read it aloud himself, from beginning to end. Afterwards, he took occasion to express his mind concerning the ceaseless calumnies of which he was the mark. He especially alluded to the oft-repeated accusation that he was the only obstacle to peace, and repeated that he was ready at that moment to leave the land, and to close his lips for ever, if by so doing he could benefit his country, and restore her to honorable repose. The outcry, with the protestations of attachment and confidence which at once broke from the assembly, convinced him, however, that he was deeply rooted in the hearts of all patriotic Netherlanders, and that it was beyond the power of slanderers to loosen his hold upon their affection.

Meantime, his efforts had again and again been demanded to restore order in that abode of anarchy, the city of Ghent. After his visit during the previous winter, and the consequent departure of John Casimir to the palatinate, the pacific arrangements made by the Prince had for a short time held good. Early in March, however, that master of misrule, John van Imbize, had once more excited the populace to sedition. Again the property of Catholics, clerical and lay, was plundered; again the persons of Catholics, of every degree, were maltreated. The magistrates, with first senator Imbize at their head, rather encouraged than rebuked the disorder; but Orange, as soon as he received official intelligence of the event, hastened to address them in the words of earnest warning and wisdom. He allowed that the inhabitants of the province had reason to be discontented with the presence and the misconduct of the Walloon soldiery. He granted that violence and the menaces of a foreign tyranny made it difficult for honest burghers to gain a livelihood. At the same time he expressed astonishment that reasonable men should seek a remedy for such evils in tumults which would necessarily bring utter destruction upon the land. "It was," he observed, "as if a patient should from

impatience, tear the bandages from his wounds, and, like a maniac, instead of allowing himself to be cured, plunge a dagger into his own heart."

Page 1014

These exhortations exerted a wholesome effect for a moment, but matters soon went from bad to worse. Imbize, fearing the influence of the Prince, indulged in open-mouthed abuse of a man whose character he was unable even to comprehend, He accused him of intriguing with France for his own benefit, of being a Papist in disguise, of desiring to establish what he called a “religious peace,” merely to restore Roman idolatry. In all these insane ravings, the demagogue was most ably seconded by the ex-monk. Incessant and unlicensed were the invectives hurled by Peter Dathenus from his pulpit upon William the Silent’s head. He denounced him—as he had often done before—as an atheist in heart; as a man who changed his religion as easily as his garments; as a man who knew no God but state expediency, which was the idol of his worship; a mere politician who would tear his shirt from his back and throw it in the fire, if he thought it were tainted with religion.

Such witless but vehement denunciation from a preacher who was both popular and comparatively sincere, could, not but affect the imagination of the weaker portion of his, healers. The faction of Imbize became triumphant. Ryhove—the ruffian whose hands were stained with the recent blood of Visch and Hessels—rather did damage than service to the cause of order. He opposed himself to the demagogue who was prating daily of Greece, Rome, and Geneva, while his clerical associate was denouncing William of Orange, but he opposed himself in vain. An attempt to secure the person of Imbize failed, but by the influence of Ryhove, however, a messenger was despatched to Antwerp in the name of a considerable portion of the community of Ghent. The counsel and the presence of the man to whom all hearts in every part of the Netherlands instinctively turned in the hour of need, were once more invoked.

The Prince again addressed them in language which none but he could employ with such effect. He told them that his life, passed in service and sacrifice, ought to witness sufficiently for his fidelity. Nevertheless, he thought it necessary—in view of the calumnies which were circulated—to repeat once more his sentiment that no treaty of peace, war, or alliance, ought to be negotiated, save with the consent of the people. His course in Holland and Zealand had proved, he said, his willingness always to consult the wishes of his countrymen. As for the matter of religion it was almost incredible that there should be any who doubted the zeal which he bore the religion for which he had suffered so much. “I desire,” he continued, fervently, “that men should compare that which has been done by my accusers during ten years past with that which I have done. In that which touches the true advancement of religion, I will yield to no man. They who so boldly accuse me have no liberty of speech, save that which has been acquired for them by the blood of my kindred, by my labors, and my excessive expenditures. To me they owe it that they dare speak at all.” This letter, (which was dated on the 24th of July, 1579) contained an assurance that the writer was about to visit Ghent.

Page 1015

On the following day, Imbize executed a coup d'etat. Having a body of near two thousand soldiers at his disposal, he suddenly secured the persons of all the magistrates and other notable individuals not friendly to his policy, and then, in violation of all law, set up a new board of eighteen irresponsible functionaries, according to a list prepared by himself alone. This was his way of enforcing the democratic liberty of Greece, Rome, and Geneva, which was so near to his heart. A proclamation, in fourteen articles, was forthwith issued, justifying this arbitrary proceeding. It was declared that the object of the somewhat irregular measure "was to prevent the establishment of the religious peace, which was merely a method of replanting uprooted papistry and the extirpated tyranny of Spain." Although the arrangement's had not been made in strict accordance with formal usage and ceremony, yet they were defended upon the ground that it had been impossible, by other means, to maintain their ancient liberties and their religious freedom. At the same time a pamphlet, already prepared for the occasion by Dathenus, was extensively circulated. In this production the arbitrary revolution effected by a demagogue was defended with effrontery, while the character, of Orange, was loaded with customary abuse. To prevent the traitor from coming to Ghent, and establishing what he called his religious peace, these irregular measures, it was urged, had been wisely taken.

Such were the efforts of John Imbize—such the calumnies of Peter Dathenus—in order to counteract the patriotic endeavors of the Prince; but neither the ruffianism of John nor the libels of Peter were destined upon this occasion to be successful. William the Silent treated the slanders of the scolding monk with dignified contempt. "Having been informed," said he to the magistrates of Ghent, "that Master Peter Dathenns has been denouncing me as a man without religion or fidelity, and full of ambition, with other propositions hardly becoming his cloth; I do not think it worth while to answer more at this time than that I willingly refer myself to the judgment of all who know me."

The Prince came to Ghent, great as had been the efforts of Imbize and his partisans to prevent his coming. His presence was like magic. The demagogue and his whole flock vanished like unclean birds at the first rays of the sun. Imbize dared not look the Father of his country in the face. Orange rebuked the populace in the strong and indignant language that public and private virtue, energy, and a high purpose enabled such a leader of the people to use. He at once set aside the board of eighteen—the Grecian-Roman-Genevese establishment of Imbize—and remained in the city until the regular election, in conformity with the privileges, had taken place. Imbize, who had shrunk at his approach, was meantime discovered by his own companions. He had stolen forth secretly on the night before the Prince's arrival, and was found cowering in the cabin of a vessel, half dead with fear, by an ale-house keeper who had been his warm partisan. "No Skulking," cried the honest friend; seizing the tribune of the people by the shoulder; "no sailing away in the night-time. You have got us all into this bog, and must come back, and abide the issue with your supporters."

Page 1016

In this collapsed state was the windy demagogue, who had filled half Flanders with his sound and fury, conveyed before the patriot Prince. He met with grave and bitter rebukes, but felt sufficiently relieved when allowed to depart unharmed. Judging of his probable doom by the usual practice of himself and his fellows in similar cases, he had anticipated nothing short of the gibbet. That punishment, however, was to be inflicted at a later period, by other hands, and not until he had added treason to his country and a shameless recantation of all his violent professions in favor of civil and religious liberty to the list of his crimes. On the present occasion he was permitted to go free. In company with his clerical companion, Peter Dathenus, he fled to the abode of his excellent friend, John Casimir, who received both with open arms, and allowed them each a pension.

Order being thus again restored in Ghent by the exertions of the Prince, when no other human hand could have dispelled the anarchy which seemed to reign supreme, William the Silent, having accepted the government of Flanders, which had again and again been urged upon him, now returned to Antwerp.

CHAPTER III.

The Cologne conferences—Intentions of the parties—Preliminary attempt by government to purchase the Prince of Orange—Offer and rejection of various articles among the plenipotentiaries—Departure of the imperial commissionere—Ultimatum of the States compared with that of the royal government—Barren negotiations terminated— Treason of De Bours, Governor of Mechlin—Liberal theories concerning the nature of government—Abjuration of Philip imminent— Self-denial of Orange—Attitude of Germany—of England—Marriage negotiations between Elizabeth and Anjou—Orange favors the election of the Duke as sovereign—Address and speeches of the Prince—Parsimony and interprovincial jealousy rebuked——Secret correspondence of Count Renneberg with the royal government— His treason at Groningen.

Since the beginning of May, the Cologne negotiations had been dragging their slow length along. Few persons believed that any good was likely to result from these stately and ponderous conferences; yet men were so weary of war, so desirous that a termination might be put to the atrophy under which the country was languishing, that many an eager glance was turned towards the place where the august assembly was holding its protracted session. Certainly, if wisdom were to be found in mitred heads—if the power to heal angry passions and to settle the conflicting claims of prerogative and conscience were to be looked for among men of lofty station, then the Cologne conferences ought to have made the rough places smooth and the crooked paths straight throughout all Christendom. There was the Archbishop of Rossano, afterwards Pope Urban *vii*, as plenipotentiary from Rome; there

Page 1017

was Charles of Aragon, Duke of Terranova, supported by five councillors, as ambassador from his Catholic Majesty; there were the Duke of Aerschot, the Abbot of Saint Gertrude, the Abbot of Marolles, Doctor Bucho Aytta, Caspar Schetz, Lord of Grobbendonck, that learned Frisian, Aggeus van Albada, with seven other wise men, as envoys from the states-general: There were their Serene Highnesses the Elector and Archbishops of Cologne and Treves, with the Bishop of Wurtzburg. There was also a numerous embassy from his Imperial Majesty, with Count Otto de Schwartzenburg at its head.

Here then were holiness, serenity, dignity, law, and learning in abundance. Here was a pope 'in posse', with archbishops, princes, dukes, jurisconsults, and doctors of divinity 'in esse', sufficient to remodel a world, if worlds were to be remodelled by such instruments. If protocols, replications, annotations, apostilles, could heal a bleeding country, here were the physicians to furnish those drugs in unlimited profusion. If reams of paper, scrawled over with barbarous technicalities, could smother and bury a quarrel which had its origin in the mutual antagonism of human elements, here were the men to scribble unflinchingly, till the reams were piled to a pyramid. If the same idea presented in many aspects could acquire additional life, here were the word-mongers who, could clothe one shivering thought in a hundred thousand garments, till it attained all the majesty which decoration could impart. In truth, the envoys came from Spain, Rome, and Vienna, provided with but two ideas. Was it not a diplomatic masterpiece, that from this frugal store they could contrive to eke out seven mortal months of negotiation? Two ideas—the supremacy of his Majesty's prerogative, the exclusive exercise of the Roman Catholic religion—these were the be-all and the end-all of their commission. Upon these two strings they were to harp, at least till the walls of Maestricht had fallen. The envoys did their duty well; they were sent to enact a solemn comedy, and in the most stately manner did they walk through their several parts. Not that the King was belligerent; on, the contrary, he was heartily weary of the war. Prerogative was weary —Romanism was weary—Conscience was weary—the Spirit of Freedom was weary but the Prince of Orange was not weary. Blood and treasure had been pouring forth so profusely during twelve flaming years, that all but that one tranquil spirit were beginning to flag.

At the same time, neither party had more disposition to concede than stomach to fight. Certainly the royal party had no inclination to yield. The King had granted easy terms to the Walloons, because upon the one great point of religion there was, no dispute, and upon the others there was no intention of keeping faith. With regard to the present negotiation, it was desirable to gain a little time. It was thought probable that the religious difference, judiciously managed at this juncture, might be used

Page 1018

to effect a permanent severance of the provinces so lately banded together in a common union. “To, divide them,” wrote Tassis, in a very confidential letter, “no better method can be found than to amuse them with this peace negotiation. Some are ready for a pacification from their desire of repose, some from their fear of war, some from the differences which exist among themselves, and which it is especially important to keep alive.” Above all things, it was desirable to maintain the religious distraction till Maestricht had been taken. That siege was the key to the whole situation. If the separate Walloon accord could be quietly made in a corner, while Parma was battering that stronghold on the Meuse, and while decorous negotiation was smoothly holding its course on the Rhine, much disorganization, it was hoped, would be handsomely accomplished before the end of the year.

“As for a suspension of arms,” wrote Alexander to Terranova, on the 21st of May, “the longer ’tis deferred the better. With regard to Maestricht, everything depends upon it that we possess, or desire to possess. Truly, if the Prince of Orange can relieve the city he will do it. If he does so, neither will this expedition of ours, nor any other expedition, be brought to a good end. As soon as men are aware that our affairs are looking badly, they will come again to a true union, and all will join together, in hope to accomplish their boasts.” Therefore, it was natural that the peace-wrights of Cologne should industriously ply their task.

It is not desirable to disturb much of that learned dust, after its three centuries’ repose. A rapid sketch of the course of the proceedings, with an indication of the spirit which animated the contending parties, will be all that is necessary. They came and they separated with precisely opposite views. “The desires of Terranova and of the estates,” says the royalist, Tassis, “were diametrically contrary, to each other. The King wished that the exercise of the Roman Catholic religion should be exclusively established, and the absolute prerogative preserved in its integrity.” On the other hand, the provinces desired their charters and a religious’ peace. In these perpetual lines and curves ran the asymptotical negotiation from beginning to end—and so it might have run for two centuries, without hope of coincidence. Neither party was yet vanquished. The freshly united provinces were no readier now than before to admit that the Holy Office formed part of their national institutions. The despotic faction was not prepared to renounce that establishment. Foiled, but not disheartened, sat the Inquisition, like a beldame, upon the border, impotently threatening the land whence she had been for ever excluded; while industrious as the Parcae, distaff in hand, sat, in Cologne, the inexorable three—Spain, the Empire, and Rome—grimly, spinning and severing the web of mortal destinies.

Page 1019

The first step in the proceedings had been a secret one. If by any means the Prince of Orange could be detached from his party—if by bribery, however enormous, he could be induced—to abandon a tottering cause, and depart for the land of his birth—he was distinctly but indirectly given to understand that he had but to name his terms. We have seen the issue of similar propositions made by Don John of Austria. Probably there was no man living who would care to make distinct application of this dishonorable nature to the Father of his country. The Aerschots, the Meluns, the Lalains, and a swarm of other nobles, had their price, and were easily transferable from one to another, but it was not easy to make a direct offer to William of Orange. They knew—as he said shortly afterwards in his famous Apology—that "neither for property nor for life, neither for wife nor for children, would he mix in his cup a single drop of treason." Nevertheless, he was distinctly given to understand that "there was nothing he could demand for himself personally that would not be granted." All his confiscated property, restoration of his imprisoned son, liberty of worship for himself, payment of all his debts, reimbursement of all his past expenses, and anything else which he could desire, were all placed within his reach. If he chose to retire into another land, his son might be placed in possession of all his cities, estates, and dignities, and himself indemnified in Germany; with a million of money over and above as a gratuity. The imperial envoy, Count Schwartzenburg, pledged his personal honor and reputation that every promise which might be made to the Prince should be most sacredly fulfilled.

It was all in vain. The indirect applications of the imperial commissioners made to his servants and his nearest relations were entirely unsuccessful. The Prince was not to be drawn into a negotiation in his own name or for his own benefit. If the estates were satisfied, he was satisfied. He wanted no conditions but theirs; "nor would he directly, or indirectly," he said, "separate himself from the cause on which hung all his evil or felicity." He knew that it was the object of the enemy to deprive the country of its head, and no inducements were sufficient to make him a party to the plot. At the same time, he was unwilling to be an obstacle, in his own person, to the conclusion of an honorable peace. He would resign his offices which he held at the solicitation of the whole country, if thus a negotiation were likely to be more successful. "The Prince of Parma and the disunited provinces," said he to the states-general, "affect to consider this war as one waged against me and in my name—as if the question alone concerned the name and person of the general. If it be so, I beg you to consider whether it is not because I have been ever faithful to the land. Nevertheless, if I am an obstacle, I am ready to remove it. If you, therefore, in order to deprive the enemy of every right to inculpate us, think proper to choose another head and conductor of your affairs, I promise you to serve and to be obedient to him with all my heart. Thus shall we leave the enemy no standing-place to work dissensions among us." Such was his language to friend and foe, and here, at least, was one man in history whom kings were not rich enough to purchase.

Page 1020

On the 18th of May, the states' envoys at Cologne presented fourteen articles, demanding freedom of religion and the ancient political charters. Religion, they said, was to be referred; not to man, but to God. To him the King was subject as well as the people. Both King and people—"and by people was meant every individual in the land"—were bound to serve God according to their conscience.

The imperial envoys found such language extremely reprehensible, and promptly refused, as umpires, to entertain the fourteen articles. Others drawn up by Terranova and colleagues, embodying the claims of the royal and Roman party, were then solemnly presented, and as promptly rejected. Then the imperial umpires came forward with two bundles of proposisitions—approved beforehand by the Spanish plenipotentiaries. In the political bundle; obedience due to the King was insisted upon, "as in the time of the Emperor Charles." The religious category declared that "the Roman religion—all others excluded—should thenceforth be exercised in all the provinces." Both these categories were considered more objectionable by the states' envoys than the terms of Terranova, and astonishment was expressed that "mention should again be made of the edicts—as if blood enough had not been shed already in the cause of religion."

The Netherland envoys likewise gave the imperial commissioners distinctly to understand that—in case peace were not soon made—"the states would forthwith declare the King fallen from his sovereignty;" would for ever dispense the people from their oaths of allegiance to him, and would probably accept the Duke of Anjou in his place. The states-general, to which body the imperial propositions had been sent, also rejected the articles in a logical and historical argument of unmerciful length.

An appeal secretly made by the imperial and Spanish commissioners, from the states' envoys to the states themselves, and even to the people of the various provinces, had excited the anger of the plenipotentiaries. They complained loudly of this violation of all diplomatic etiquette, and the answer of the states-general, fully confirming the views of their ambassadors, did not diminish their wrath.

On the 13th of November, 1579, the states' envoys were invited into the council chamber of the imperial commissioners, to hear the last solemn commonplaces of those departing, functionaries. Seven months long they had been waiting in vain, they said, for the states' envoys to accede to moderate demands. Patience was now exhausted. Moreover, their mediatory views had been the subject of bitter lampooning throughout the country, while the authorities of many cities had publicly declared that all the inhabitants would rather, die the death than accept such terms. The peace-makers, accordingly, with endless protestations as to, their own purity, wisdom, and benevolence, left the whole "in the hands of God and the parties concerned."

Page 1021

The reply to this elaborate farewell was curt and somewhat crusty. “Had they known,” said the states’ envoys, “that their transparencies and worthinesses had no better intention, and the Duke of Terranova no ampler commission, the whole matter might have been despatched, not in six months, but in six days.”

Thus ended the conferences, and the imperial commissioners departed. Nevertheless, Schwartzenburg remained yet a little time at Cologne, while five of the states’ envoys also protracted their stay, in order to make their private peace with the King. It is hardly necessary to observe that the chief of these penitents was the Duke of Aerschot. The ultimatum of the states was deposited by the departing envoys with Schwartzenburg, and a comparison of its terms with those offered by the imperial mediators, as the best which could be obtained from Spain, shows the hopelessness of the pretended negotiation. Departure of the foreign troops, restitution of all confiscated property, unequivocal recognition of the Ghent treaty and the perpetual edict, appointment to office of none but natives, oaths of allegiance to the King and the states-general, exercise of the Reformed religion and of the Confession of Augsburg in all places where it was then publicly practised: such were the main demands of the patriot party.

In the secret instructions furnished by the states to their envoys, they were told to urge upon his Majesty the absolute necessity, if he wished to retain the provinces, of winking at the exercise of the Reformed and the Augsburg creeds. “The new religion had taken too deep root,” it was urged, “ever to be torn forth, save with the destruction of the whole country.”

Thus, after seven dreary months of negotiation, after protocols and memoranda in ten thousand folia, the august diplomatists had travelled round to the points from which they had severally started. On the one side, unlimited prerogative and exclusive Catholicism; on the other, constitutional liberty, with freedom of conscience for Catholic and Protestant alike: these were the claims which each party announced at the commencement, and to which they held with equal firmness at the close of the conferences.

The congress had been expensive. Though not much had been accomplished for the political or religious advancement of mankind, there had been much excellent eating and drinking at Cologne during the seven months. Those drouthy deliberations had needed moistening. The Bishop of Wurtzburg had consumed “eighty hogsheads of Rhenish wine and twenty great casks of beer.” The expense of the states’ envoys were twenty-four thousand guldens. The Archbishop of Cologne had expended forty thousand thalers. The deliberations were, on the whole, excessively detrimental to the cause of the provinces, “and a great personage” wrote to the states-general, that the King had been influenced by no motive save to cause dissension. This was an exaggeration, for his Majesty would have been well pleased to receive the whole of the country on the same terms which had been accepted by the Walloons. Meantime, those southern provinces had made their separate treaty, and the Netherlands were

permanently dissevered. Maestricht had fallen. Disunion and dismay had taken possession of the country.

Page 1022

During the course of the year other severe misfortunes had happened to the states. Treachery, even among the men who had done good service to the cause of freedom, was daily showing her hateful visage. Not only the great chieftains who had led the Malcontent Walloon party, with the fickle Aerschot and the wavering Havre besides, had made their separate reconciliation with Parma, but the epidemic treason had mastered such bold partisans as the Seigneur de Bours, the man whose services in rescuing the citadel of Antwerp had been so courageous and valuable. He was governor of Mechlin; Count Renneberg was governor of Friesland. Both were trusted implicitly by Orange and by the estates; both were on the eve of repaying the confidence reposed in them by the most venal treason.

It was already known that Parma had tampered with De Bours; but Renneberg was still unsuspected. “The Prince,” wrote Count John, “is deserted by all the noblemen; save the stadholder of Friesland and myself, and has no man else in whom he can repose confidence.” The brothers were doomed to be rudely awakened from the repose with regard to Renneberg, but previously the treason of a less important functionary was to cause a considerable but less lasting injury to the national party.

In Mechlin was a Carmelite friar, of audacious character and great eloquence; a man who, “with his sweet, poisonous tongue, could ever persuade the people to do his bidding.” This dangerous monk, Peter Lupus, or Peter Wolf, by name, had formed the design of restoring Mechlin to the Prince of Parma, and of obtaining the bishopric of Namur as the reward of his services. To this end he had obtained a complete mastery over the intellect of the bold but unprincipled De Bours. A correspondence was immediately opened between Parma and the governor, and troops were secretly admitted into the city. The Prince of Orange, in the name of the Archduke and the estates, in vain endeavoured to recal the infatuated governor to his duty. In vain he conjured him, by letter after letter, to be true to his own bright fame so nobly earned. An old friend of De Bours, and like himself a Catholic, was also employed to remonstrate with him. This gentleman, De Fromont by name, wrote him many letters; but De Bours expressed his surprise that Fromont, whom he had always considered a good Catholic and a virtuous gentleman, should wish to force him into a connection with the Prince of Orange and his heretic supporters. He protested that his mind was quite made up, and that he had been guaranteed by Parma not only the post which he now held, but even still farther advancement.

Page 1023

De Fromont reminded him, in reply, of the frequent revolutions of fortune's wheel, and warned him that the advancement of which he boasted would probably be an entire degradation. He bitterly recalled to the remembrance of the new zealot for Romanism his former earnest efforts to establish Calvinism. He reproached him, too, with having melted up the silver images of the Mechlin churches, including even the renowned shrine of Saint Rombout, which the Prince of Orange had always respected. "I don't say how much you took of that plunder for your own share," continued the indignant De Fromont, "for the very children cry it in your ears as you walk the streets. 'Tis known that if God himself had been changed into gold you would have put him in your pocket."

This was plain language, but as just as it was plain. The famous shrine of Saint Rombout—valued at seventy thousand guldens, of silver gilt, and enriched with precious stones—had been held sacred alike by the fanatical iconoclasts and the greedy Spaniards who had successively held the city. It had now been melted up, and appropriated by Peter Lupin; the Carmelite, and De Bours, the Catholic convert, whose mouths were full of devotion to the ancient Church and of horror for heresy.

The efforts of Orange and of the states were unavailing. De Bours surrendered the city, and fled to Parma, who received him with cordiality, gave him five thousand florins—the price promised for his treason, besides a regiment of infantry—but expressed surprise that he should have reached the camp alive. His subsequent career was short, and he met his death two years afterwards, in the trenches before Tournay. The archiepiscopal city was thus transferred to the royal party, but the gallant Van der Tympel, governor of Brussels, retook it by surprise within six months of its acquisition by Parma, and once more restored it to the jurisdiction of the states. Peter Lupus, the Carmelite, armed to the teeth, and fighting fiercely at the head of the royalists, was slain in the street, and thus forfeited his chance for the mitre of Namur.

During the weary progress of the Cologne negotiations, the Prince had not been idle, and should this august and slow-moving congress be unsuccessful in restoring peace, the provinces were pledged to an act of abjuration. They would then be entirely without a head. The idea of a nominal Republic was broached by none. The contest had not been one of theory, but of facts; for the war had not been for revolution, but for conservation, so far as political rights were concerned. In religion, the provinces had advanced from one step to another, till they now claimed the largest liberty—freedom of conscience—for all. Religion, they held, was God's affair, not man's, in which neither people nor king had power over each other, but in which both were subject to God alone. In politics it was different. Hereditary sovereignty was acknowledged as a fact, but at the same time, the spirit of freedom was already learning its appropriate language. It already claimed boldly the natural right of mankind to be governed according to the laws of reason and of divine justice. If a prince were a shepherd, it was at least lawful to deprive him of his crook when he butchered the flock which he had been appointed to protect.

Page 1024

“What reason is there,” said the states-general, “why the provinces should suffer themselves to be continually oppressed by their sovereign, with robbings, burnings, stranglings, and murderings? Why, being thus oppressed, should they still give their sovereign—exactly as if he were well conducting himself—the honor and title of lord of the land?” On the other hand, if hereditary rule were an established fact, so also were ancient charters. To maintain, not to overthrow, the political compact, was the purpose of the states. “Je maintiendrai” was the motto of Orange’s escutcheon. That a compact existed between prince and people, and that the sovereign held office only on condition of doing his duty, were startling truths which men were beginning, not to whisper to each other in secret, but to proclaim in the market-place. “’Tis well known to all,” said the famous Declaration of Independence, two years afterwards, “that if a prince is appointed by God over the land, ’tis to protect them from harm, even as a shepherd to the guardianship of his flock. The subjects are not appointed by God for the behoof of the prince, but the prince for his subjects, without whom he is no prince. Should he violate the laws, he is to be forsaken by his meanest subject, and to be recognized no longer as prince.”

William of Orange always recognized these truths, but his scheme of government contemplated a permanent chief, and as it was becoming obvious that the Spanish sovereign would soon be abjured, it was necessary to fix upon a substitute. “As to governing these provinces in the form of a republic,” said he, speaking for the states-general, “those who know the condition, privileges, and ordinances of the country, can easily understand that ’tis hardly possible to dispense with a head or superintendent.” At the same time, he plainly intimated that this “head or superintendent” was to be, not a monarch—a one-ruler—but merely the hereditary chief magistrate of a free commonwealth.

Where was this hereditary chief magistrate to be found? His own claims he absolutely withdrew. The office was within his grasp, and he might easily have constituted himself sovereign of all the Netherlands. Perhaps it would have been better at that time had he advanced his claims and accepted the sovereignty which Philip had forfeited. As he did not believe in the possibility of a republic, he might honestly have taken into his own hands the sceptre which he considered indispensable. His self-abnegation was, however, absolute. Not only did he decline sovereignty, but he repeatedly avowed his readiness to, lay down all the offices which he held, if a more useful substitute could be found. “Let no man think,” said he, in a remarkable speech to the states-general,” that my good-will is in any degree changed or diminished. I agree to obey—as the least of the lords or gentlemen of the land could do—whatever person it may, please you to select. You have but to command my services wheresoever they are most wanted; to guard a province or a single city, or in any capacity in which I may be found most useful. I promise to do my duty, with all my strength and skill, as God and my conscience are witnesses that I have done it hitherto.”

Page 1025

The negotiations pointed to a speedy abjuration of Philip; the Republic was contemplated by none; the Prince of Orange absolutely refused to stretch forth his own hand; who then was to receive the sceptre which was so soon to be bestowed? A German Prince—had been tried—in a somewhat abnormal position—but had certainly manifested small capacity for aiding the provinces. Nothing could well be more insignificant than the figure of Matthias; and, moreover, his imperial brother was anything but favorably disposed. It was necessary to manage Rudolph. To treat the Archduke with indignity, now that he had been partly established in the Netherlands, would be to incur the Emperor's enmity. His friendship, however, could hardly be secured by any advancement bestowed upon his brother; for Rudolph's services against prerogative and the Pope were in no case to be expected. Nor was there much hope from the Protestant princes of Germany. The day had passed for generous sympathy with those engaged in the great struggle which Martin Luther had commenced. The present generation of German Protestants were more inclined to put down the Calvinistic schism at home than to save it from oppression abroad. Men were more disposed to wrangle over the thrice-gnawed bones of ecclesiastical casuistry, than to assist their brethren in the field. "I know not," said Gaultherus, "whether the calamity of the Netherlands, or the more than bestial stupidity of the Germans, be most deplorable. To the insane contests on theological abstractions we owe it that many are ready to breathe blood and slaughter against their own brethren. The hatred of the Lutherans has reached that point that they can rather tolerate Papists than ourselves."

In England, there was much sympathy for the provinces and there—although the form of government was still arbitrary—the instincts for civil and religious freedom, which have ever characterized the Anglo-Saxon race, were not to be repressed. Upon many a battle-field for liberty in the Netherlands, "men whose limbs were made in England" were found contending for the right. The blood and treasure of Englishmen flowed freely in the cause of their relatives by religion and race, but these were the efforts of individuals. Hitherto but little assistance had been rendered by the English Queen, who had, on the contrary, almost distracted the provinces by her fast-and-loose policy, both towards them and towards Anjou. The political rivalry between that Prince and herself in the Netherlands had, however, now given place to the memorable love-passage from which important results were expected, and it was thought certain that Elizabeth would view with satisfaction any dignity conferred upon her lover.

Page 1026

Orange had a right to form this opinion. At the same time, it is well known that the chief councillors of Elizabeth—while they were all in favor of assisting the provinces—looked with anything but satisfaction upon the Anjou marriage. "The Duke," wrote Davidson to Walsingham in July, 1579, "seeks, forsooth, under a pretext of marriage with her Highness, the rather to espouse the Low Countries—the chief ground and object of his pretended love, howsoever it be disguised." The envoy believed both Elizabeth and the provinces in danger of taking unto themselves a very bad master. "Is there any means," he added, "so apt to sound the very bottom of our estate, and to hinder and breake the neck of all such good purpose as the necessity of the tyme shall set abroch?"

The provinces of Holland and Zealand, notwithstanding the love they bore to William of Orange, could never be persuaded by his arguments into favoring Anjou. Indeed, it was rather on account of the love they bore the Prince—whom they were determined to have for their sovereign—that they refused to listen to any persuasion in favor of his rival, although coming from his own lips. The states-general, in a report to the states of Holland, drawn up under the superintendence of the Prince, brought forward all the usual arguments for accepting the French duke, in case the abjuration should take place. They urged the contract with Anjou (of August 13th, 1578), the great expenses he had already incurred in their behalf; the danger of offending him; the possibility that in such case he would ally himself with Spain; the prospect that, in consequence of such a result, there would be three enemies in the field against them—the Walloons, the Spaniards, and the French, all whose forces would eventually be turned upon Holland and Zealand alone. It was represented that the selection of Anjou would, on the other hand, secure the friendship of France—an alliance which would inspire both the Emperor and the Spanish monarch with fear; for they could not contemplate without jealousy a possible incorporation of the provinces with that kingdom. Moreover, the geographical situation of France made its friendship inexpressibly desirable. The states of Holland and Zealand were, therefore, earnestly invited to send deputies to an assembly of the states-general, in order to conclude measures touching the declaration of independence to be made against the King, and concerning the election of the Duke of Anjou.

The official communications by speech or writing of Orange to the different corporations and assemblies, were at this period of enormous extent. He was moved to frequent anger by the parsimony, the inter-provincial jealousy, the dull perception of the different estates, and he often expressed his wrath in unequivocal language. He dealt roundly with all public bodies. His eloquence was distinguished by a bold, uncompromising, truth-telling spirit, whether the words might prove palatable or bitter to his audience. His language rebuked his hearers more frequently than it caressed them, for he felt it impossible, at all times, to consult both the humors and the high interests of the people, and he had no hesitation, as guardian of popular liberty, in denouncing the popular vices by which it was endangered.

Page 1027

By both great parties, he complained, his shortcomings were all noted, the good which he had accomplished passed over in silence.

[Letter to the States-general, August, 1579, apud Bor, xiv. 97, sqq. This was the opinion frequently expressed by Languet: "Cherish the friendship of the Prince, I beseech you," he writes to Sir Philip Sydney, "for there is no man like him in all Christendom. Nevertheless, his is the lot of all men of prudence—to be censured by all parties. The people complain that he despises them; the nobility declare that it is their order which he hates; and this is as sensible as if you were to tell me that you were the son of a clown."]

He solemnly protested that he desired, out of his whole heart, the advancement of that religion which he publicly professed, and with God's blessing, hoped to profess to the end of his life, but nevertheless, he reminded the states that he had sworn, upon taking office as Lieutenant-General, to keep "all the subjects of the land equally under his protection," and that he had kept his oath. He rebuked the parsimony which placed the accepted chief of the provinces in a sordid and contemptible position. "The Archduke has been compelled," said he, in August, to the states-general, "to break up housekeeping, for want of means. How shameful and disreputable for the country, if he should be compelled, for very poverty, to leave the land!" He offered to lay down all the power with which he had himself been clothed, but insisted, if he were to continue in office, upon being provided with, larger means of being useful. "'Twas impossible," he said, "for him to serve longer on the same footing as heretofore; finding himself without power or authority, without means, without troops, without money, without obedience." He reminded the states-general that the enemy—under pretext of peace negotiations—were ever circulating calumnious statements to the effect that he was personally the only obstacle to peace. The real object of these hopeless conferences was to sow dissension through the land, to set burgher against burgher, house against house. As in Italy, Guelphs and Ghibellines—as in Florence, the Neri and Bianchi—as in Holland, the Hooks and Cabbeljaws had, by their unfortunate quarrels, armed fellow countrymen and families against each other—so also, nothing was so powerful as religious difference to set friend against friend, father against son, husband against wife.

He warned the States against the peace propositions of the enemy. Spain had no intention to concede, but was resolved to extirpate. For himself; he had certainly everything to lose by continued war. His magnificent estates were withheld, and—added he with simplicity—there is no man who does not desire to enjoy his own. The liberation of his son, too, from his foreign captivity, was, after the glory of God and the welfare of the fatherland, the dearest object of his heart. Moreover, he

Page 1028

was himself approaching the decline of life. Twelve years he had spent in perpetual anxiety and labor for the cause. As he approached old age, he had sufficient reason to desire repose. Nevertheless, considering the great multitude of people who were leaning upon him, he should account himself disgraced if, for the sake of his own private advantage, he were to recommend a peace which was not perfectly secure. As regarded his own personal interests, he could easily place himself beyond danger—yet it would be otherwise with the people. The existence of the religion which, through the mercy of God he professed, would be sacrificed, and countless multitudes of innocent men would, by his act, be thrown bodily into the hands of the blood-thirsty inquisitors who, in times past, had murdered so many persons, and so utterly desolated the land. In regard to the ceaseless insinuations against his character which men uttered “over their tables and in the streets,” he observed philosophically, that “mankind were naturally inclined to calumny, particularly against those who exercised government over them. His life was the best answer to those slanders. Being overwhelmed with debt, he should doubtless do better in a personal point of view to accept the excellent and profitable offers which were daily made to him by the enemy.” He might be justified in such a course, when it was remembered how many had deserted him and forsworn their religion. Nevertheless, he had ever refused, and should ever refuse to listen to offers by which only his own personal interests were secured. As to the defence of the country, he had thus far done all in his power, with the small resources placed at his command. He was urged by the “nearer-united states” to retain the poet of Lieutenant-General. He was ready to consent. He was, however, not willing to hold office a moment, unless he had power to compel cities to accept garrisons, to enforce the collection of needful supplies throughout the provinces, and in general to do everything which he judged necessary for the best interests of the country.

Three councils were now established—one to be in attendance upon the Archduke and the Prince of Orange, the two others to reside respectively in Flanders and in Utrecht. They were to be appointed by Matthias and the Prince, upon a double nomination from the estates of the united provinces. Their decisions were to be made according to a majority of votes,—and there was to be no secret cabinet behind and above their deliberations. It was long, however, before these councils were put into working order. The fatal jealousy of the provincial authorities, the, small ambition of local magistrates, interposed daily obstacles to the vigorous march of the generality. Never was jealousy more mischievous, never circumspection more misapplied. It was not a land nor a crisis in which there was peril of centralization: Local municipal government was in truth the only force

Page 1029

left. There was no possibility of its being merged in a central authority which did not exist. The country was without a centre. There was small chance of apoplexy where there was no head. The danger lay in the mutual repulsiveness of these atoms of sovereignty—in the centrifugal tendencies which were fast resolving a nebulous commonwealth into chaos. Disunion and dissension would soon bring about a more fatal centralization—that of absorption in a distant despotism.

At the end of November, 1579, Orange made another remarkable speech in the states-general at Antwerp. He handled the usual topics with his customary vigor, and with that grace and warmth of delivery which always made his eloquence so persuasive and impressive. He spoke of the countless calumnies against himself, the chaffering niggardliness of the provinces, the slender result produced by his repeated warnings. He told them bluntly the great cause of all their troubles. It was the absence of a broad patriotism; it was the narrow power grudged rather than given to the deputies who sat in the general assembly. They were mere envoys, tied by instructions. They were powerless to act, except after tedious reference to the will of their masters, the provincial boards. The deputies of the Union came thither, he said, as advocates of their provinces or their cities, not as councillors of a commonwealth—and sought to further those narrow interests, even at the risk of destruction to their sister states. The contributions, he complained, were assessed unequally, and expended selfishly. Upon this occasion, as upon all occasions, he again challenged inquiry into the purity of his government, demanded chastisement, if any act of mal-administration on his part could be found, and repeated his anxious desire either to be relieved from his functions, or to be furnished with the means of discharging them with efficiency.

On the 12th of December, 1579, he again made a powerful speech in the states-general. Upon the 9th of January 1580, following, he made an elaborate address upon the state of the country, urging the necessity of raising instantly a considerable army of good and experienced soldiers. He fixed the indispensable number of such a force at twelve thousand foot, four thousand horse, and at least twelve hundred pioneers. “Weigh well the matters,” said he, in conclusion; “which I have thus urged, and which are of the most extreme necessity. Men in their utmost need are daily coming to me for refuge, as if I held power over all things in my hand.” At the same time he complained that by reason of the dilatoriness of the states, he was prevented from alleviating misery when he knew the remedy to be within reach. “I beg you, however, my masters,” he continued, “to believe that this address of mine is no simple discourse. ’Tis a faithful presentment of matters which, if not reformed, will cause the speedy and absolute ruin of the land. Whatever betide, however, I pray you to hold yourselves assured, that with God’s help, I am determined to live with you or to die with you.”

Page 1030

Early in the year 1580, the Prince was doomed to a bitter disappointment, and the provinces to a severe loss, in the treason of Count Renneberg, governor of Friesland. This young noble was of the great Lalain family. He was a younger brother of: Anthony, Count of Hoogstraaten—the unwavering friend of Orange. He had been brought up in the family of his cousin, the Count de Lalain, governor of Hainault, and had inherited the title of Renneberg from an uncle, who was a dignitary of the church. For more than a year there had been suspicions of his fidelity. He was supposed to have been tampered with by the Duke of Terranova, on the first arrival of that functionary in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the Prince of Orange was unwilling to listen to the whispers against him. Being himself the mark of calumny, and having a tender remembrance of the elder brother, he persisted in reposing confidence in a man who was in reality unworthy of his friendship. George Lalain, therefore, remained stadholder of Friesland and Drenthe, and in possession of the capital city, Groningen.

The rumors concerning him proved correct. In November, 1579, he entered into a formal treaty with Terranova, by which he was to receive—as the price of “the virtuous resolution which he contemplated”—the sum of ten thousand crowns in hand, a further sum of ten thousand crowns within three months, and a yearly pension of ten thousand florins. Moreover, his barony of Ville was to be erected into a marquisate, and he was to receive the order of the Golden Fleece at the first vacancy. He was likewise to be continued in the same offices under the King which he now held from the estates. The bill of sale, by which he agreed with a certain Quislain le Bailly to transfer himself to Spain, fixed these terms with the technical scrupulousness of any other mercantile transaction. Renneberg sold himself as one would sell a yoke of oxen, and his motives were no whit nobler than the cynical contract would indicate. “See you not,” said he in a private letter to a friend, “that this whole work is brewed by the Nassaus for the sake of their own greatness, and that they are everywhere provided with the very best crumbs. They are to be stadholders of the principal provinces; we are to content ourselves with Overyssel and Drente. Therefore I have thought it best to make my peace with the King, from whom more benefits are to be got.”

Jealousy and selfishness; then, were the motives of his “virtuous resolution.” He had another, perhaps a nobler incentive. He was in love with the Countess Meghen, widow of Lancelot Berlaymont, and it was privately stipulated that the influence of his Majesty’s government should be employed to bring about his marriage with the lady. The treaty, however, which Renneberg had made with Quislain le Bailly was not immediately carried out. Early in February, 1580, his sister and evil genius, Cornelia Lalain, wife of Baron Monceau, made him a visit at

Page 1031

Groningen. She implored him not to give over his soul to perdition by oppressing the Holy Church. She also appealed to his family pride, which should keep him, she said, from the contamination of companionship with “base-born weavers and furriers.” She was of opinion that to contaminate his high-born fingers with base bribes were a lower degradation. The pension, the crowns in hand, the marquisate, the collar of the Golden Fleece, were all held before his eyes again. He was persuaded, moreover, that the fair hand of the wealthy widow would be the crowning prize of his treason, but in this he was destined to disappointment. The Countess was reserved for a more brilliant and a more bitter fate. She was to espouse a man of higher rank, but more worthless character, also a traitor to the cause of freedom, to which she was herself devoted, and who was even accused of attempting her life in her old age, in order to supply her place with a younger rival.

The artful eloquence of Cornelia de Lalain did its work, and Renneberg entered into correspondence with Parma. It is singular with how much indulgence his conduct and character were regarded both before and subsequently to his treason. There was something attractive about the man. In an age when many German and Netherland nobles were given to drunkenness and debauchery, and were distinguished rather for coarseness of manner and brutality of intellect than for refinement or learning, Count Renneberg, on the contrary, was an elegant and accomplished gentleman—the Sydney of his country in all but loyalty of character. He was a classical scholar, a votary of music and poetry, a graceful troubadour, and a valiant knight. He was “sweet and lovely of conversation,” generous and bountiful by nature. With so many good gifts, it was a thousand pities that the gift of truth had been denied him. Never did treason look more amiable, but it was treason of the blackest die. He was treacherous, in the hour of her utmost need, to the country which had trusted him. He was treacherous to the great man who had leaned upon his truth, when all others had abandoned him. He was treacherous from the most sordid of motives jealousy of his friend and love of place and pelf; but his subsequent remorse and his early death have cast a veil over the blackness of his crime.

While Cornelia de Lalain was in Groningen, Orange was in Holland. Intercepted letters left no doubt of the plot, and it was agreed that the Prince, then on his way to Amsterdam, should summon the Count to an interview. Renneberg’s trouble at the proximity of Orange could not be suppressed. He felt that he could never look his friend in the face again. His plans were not ripe; it was desirable to dissemble for a season longer; but how could he meet that tranquil eye which “looked quite through the deeds of men?” It was obvious to Renneberg that his deed was to be done forthwith, if he would escape discomfiture. The Prince would soon be in Groningen, and his presence would dispel the plots which had been secretly constructed.

Page 1032

On the evening of March the 3rd, 1580, the Count entertained a large number of the most distinguished families of the place at a ball and banquet. At the supper-table, Hildebrand, chief burgomaster of the city, bluntly interrogated his host concerning the calumnious reports which were in circulation, expressing the hope that there was no truth in these inventions of his enemies. Thus summoned, Renneberg, seizing the hands of Hildebrand in both his own, exclaimed, “Oh; my father! you whom I esteem as my father, can you suspect me of such guilt? I pray you, trust me, and fear me not!”

With this he restored the burgomaster and all the other guests to confidence. The feast and dance proceeded, while Renneberg was quietly arranging his plot. During the night all the leading patriots were taken out of their beds, and carried to prison, notice being at the same time given to the secret adherents of Renneberg. Before dawn, a numerous mob of boatmen and vagrants, well armed, appeared upon the public square. They bore torches and standards, and amazed the quiet little city with their shouts. The place was formally taken into possession, cannon were planted in front of the Town House to command the principal streets, and barricades erected at various important points. Just at daylight, Renneberg himself, in complete armor, rode into the square, and it was observed that he looked ghastly as a corpse. He was followed by thirty troopers, armed like himself, from head to foot. “Stand by me now,” he cried to the assembled throng; “fail me not at this moment, for now I am for the first time your stadholder.”

While he was speaking, a few citizens of the highest class forced their way through the throng and addressed the mob in tones of authority. They were evidently magisterial persons endeavoring to quell the riot. As they advanced, one of Renneberg’s men-at-arms discharged his carabine at the foremost gentleman, who was no other than burgomaster Hildebrand. He fell dead at the feet of the stadholder—of the man who had clasped his hands a few hours before, called him father, and implored him to entertain no suspicions of his honor. The death of this distinguished gentleman created a panic, during which Renneberg addressed his adherents, and stimulated them to atone by their future zeal in the King’s service for their former delinquency. A few days afterwards the city was formally reunited to the royal government; but the Count’s measures had been precipitated to such an extent, that he was unable to carry the province with him, as he had hoped. On the contrary, although he had secured the city, he had secured nothing else. He was immediately beleaguered by the states’ force in the province under the command of Barthold Entes, Hohenlo, and Philip Louis Nassau, and it was necessary to send for immediate assistance from Parma.

The Prince of Orange, being thus bitterly disappointed by the treachery of his friend, and foiled in his attempt to avert the immediate consequences, continued his interrupted journey to Amsterdam. Here he was received with unbounded enthusiasm.

BOOKRAGS

Page 1033

Etext editor's bookmarks:

All the majesty which decoration could impart
Amuse them with this peace negotiation
Conflicting claims of prerogative and conscience
It is not desirable to disturb much of that learned dust
Logical and historical argument of unmerciful length
Mankind were naturally inclined to calumny
Men were loud in reproof, who had been silent
More easily, as he had no intention of keeping the promise
Not to fall asleep in the shade of a peace negotiation
Nothing was so powerful as religious difference
On the first day four thousand men and women were slaughtered
Power grudged rather than given to the deputies
The disunited provinces
There is no man who does not desire to enjoy his own
To hear the last solemn commonplaces
Word-mongers who, could clothe one shivering thought

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 33

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley
1855

CHAPTER IV.

Captivity of La Noue—Cruel propositions of Philip—Siege of Groningen—Death of Barthold Enter—His character—Hohenlo commands in the north—His incompetence—-He is defeated on Hardenberg Heath— Petty operations—Isolation of Orange—-Dissatisfaction and departure of Count John—Remonstrance of Archduke Matthias—-Embassy to Anjou— Holland and Zealand offer the sovereignty to Orange—Conquest of Portugal—Granvelle proposes the Ban against the Prince—It is published—The document analyzed—The Apology of Orange analyzed and characterized—Siege of Steenwyk by Renneberg—Forgeries—Siege relieved—Death of Renneberg—Institution of the "land-Council"— Duchess of Parma sent to the Netherlands—Anger of Alexander — Prohibition of Catholic worship in Antwerp, Utrecht, and elsewhere— Declaration of Independence by the United Provinces—Negotiations with Anjou—The sovereignty of Holland and Zealand provisionally accepted by Orange—Tripartition of the Netherlands —Power of the Prince described—Act of Abjuration analyzed—Philosophy of

Netherland politics.—Views of the government compact—Acquiescence by the people in the action of the estates—Departure of Archduke Matthias.

The war continued in a languid and desultory manner in different parts of the country. At an action near Ingelmunster, the brave and accomplished De la Noue was made prisoner. This was a severe loss to the states, a cruel blow to Orange, for he was not only one of the most experienced soldiers, but one of the most accomplished writers of his age. His pen was as celebrated as his sword. In exchange for the illustrious Frenchman the states in vain offered Count Egmont, who had been made prisoner a few weeks

Page 1034

before, and De Belles, who was captured shortly afterwards. Parma answered contemptuously, that he would not give a lion for two sheep. Even Champagny was offered in addition, but without success. Parma had written to Philip, immediately upon the capture, that, were it not for Egmont, Seller, and others, then in the power of Oranges he should order the execution of La Noue. Under the circumstances, however, he had begged to be in formed as to his Majesty's pleasure, and in the meantime had placed the prisoner in the castle of Limburg, under charge of De Billy.
[Strada, d. 2, iii. 155, 156. Parma is said to have hinted to Philip that De Billy would willingly undertake, the private assassination of La Noue.—Popeliniere, Hist. des Pays Bas; 1556- 1584.]

His Majesty, of course, never signified his pleasure, and the illustrious soldier remained for five years in a loathsome dungeon more befitting a condemned malefactor than a prisoner of war. It was in the donjon keep of the castle, lighted only by an aperture in the roof, and was therefore exposed to the rain and all inclemencies of the sky, while rats, toads, and other vermin housed in the miry floor. Here this distinguished personage, Francis with the Iron Arm, whom all Frenchmen, Catholic or Huguenot, admired far his genius, bravery, and purity of character, passed five years of close confinement. The government was most anxious to take his life, but the captivity of Egmont and others prevented the accomplishment of their wishes. During this long period, the wife and numerous friends of La Noue were unwearied in, their efforts to effect his ransom or exchange, but none of the prisoners in the hands of the patriots were considered a fair equivalent. The hideous proposition was even made by Philip the Second to La Noue, that he should receive his liberty if he would permit his eyes to be put out, as a preliminary condition. The fact is attested by several letters written by La Noue to his wife. The prisoner, wearied, shattered in health, and sighing for air and liberty, was disposed and even anxious to accept the infamous offer, and discussed the matter philosophically in his letters. That lady, however, horror-struck at the suggestion, implored him to reject the condition, which he accordingly consented to do. At last, in June, 1585, he was exchanged, on extremely rigorous terms, for Egmont. During his captivity in this vile dungeon, he composed not only his famous political and military discourses, but several other works, among the rest; Annotations upon Plutarch and upon the Histories of Guicciardini.

Page 1035

The siege of Groningen proceeded, and Parma ordered some forces under Martin Schenck to advance to its relief. On the other hand, the meagre states' forces under Sonoy, Hohenlo, Entes, and Count John of Nassau's young son, William Louis, had not yet made much impression upon the city. There was little military skill to atone for the feebleness of the assailing army, although there was plenty of rude valor. Barthold Entes, a man of desperate character, was impatient at the dilatoriness of the proceedings. After having been in disgrace with the states, since the downfall of his friend and patron, the Count De la Marck, he had recently succeeded to a regiment in place of Colonel Ysselstein, "dismissed for a homicide or two." On the 17th of May, he had been dining at Rolda, in company with Hohenlo and the young Count of Nassau. Returning to the trenches in a state of wild intoxication, he accosted a knot of superior officers, informing them that they were but boys, and that he would show them how to carry the faubourg of Groningen on the instant. He was answered that the faubourg, being walled and moated, could be taken only by escalade or battery. Laughing loudly, he rushed forward toward the counterscarp, waving his sword, and brandishing on his left arm the cover of a butter firkin, which he had taken instead of his buckler. He had advanced, however, but a step, when a bullet from the faubourg pierced his brain, and he fell dead without a word.

So perished one of the wild founders of the Netherland commonwealth—one of the little band of reckless adventurers who had captured the town of Brill in 1572, and thus laid the foundation stone of a great republic, which was to dictate its laws to the empire of Charles the Fifth. He was in some sort a type. His character was emblematical of the worst side of the liberating movement. Desperate, lawless, ferocious—a robber on land, a pirate by sea—he had rendered great service in the cause of his fatherland, and had done it much disgrace. By the evil deeds of men like himself, the fair face of liberty had been profaned at its first appearance. Born of a respectable family, he had been noted, when a student in this very Groningen where he had now found his grave, for the youthful profligacy of his character. After dissipating his partrimony, he had taken to the sea, the legalized piracy of the mortal struggle with Spain offering a welcome refuge to spendthrifts like himself. In common with many a banished noble of ancient birth and broken fortunes, the riotous student became a successful corsair, and it is probable that his prizes were made as well among the friends as the enemies of his country. He amassed in a short time one hundred thousand crowns—no contemptible fortune in those days. He assisted La Marck in the memorable attack upon Brill, but behaved badly and took to flight when Mondragon made his memorable expedition to relieve Tergoes. He had subsequently been imprisoned, with La Marck for insubordination,

Page 1036

and during his confinement had dissipated a large part of his fortune. In 1574, after the violation of the Ghent treaty, he had returned to, his piratical pursuits, and having prospered again as rapidly as he had done during his former cruises, had been glad to exchange the ocean for more honorable service on shore. The result was the tragic yet almost ludicrous termination which we have narrated. He left a handsome property, the result of his various piracies, or, according to the usual euphemism, prizes. He often expressed regret at the number of traders whom he had cast into the sea, complaining, in particular, of one victim whom he had thrown overboard, who would never sink, but who for years long ever floated in his wake, and stared him in the face whenever he looked over his vessel's side. A gambler, a profligate, a pirate, he had yet rendered service to the cause of freedom, and his name—sullying the purer and nobler ones of other founders of the commonwealth—"is enrolled in the capitol."

Count Philip Hohenlo, upon whom now, devolved the, entire responsibility of the Groningen siege and of the Friesland operations, was only a few degrees superior to this northern corsair. A noble of high degree, nearly connected with the Nassau family, sprung of the best blood in Germany, handsome and dignified in appearance, he was, in reality only a debauchee and a drunkard. Personal bravery was his main qualification for a general; a virtue which he shared with many of his meanest soldiers. He had never learned the art of war, nor had he the least ambition to acquire it. Devoted to his pleasures, he depraved those under his command, and injured the cause for which he was contending. Nothing but defeat and disgrace were expected by the purer patriots from such guidance. "The benediction of God," wrote Albada, "cannot be hoped for under this chieftain, who by life and manners is fitter to drive swine than to govern pious and honorable men."

The event justified the prophecy. After a few trifling operations before Groningen, Hohenlo was summoned to the neighbourhood of Coewerden, by the reported arrival of Martin Schenck, at the head of a considerable force. On the 15th of June, the Count marched all night and a part of the follow morning, in search of the enemy. He came up with them upon Hardenberg Heath, in a broiling summer forenoon. His men were jaded by the forced march, overcame with the heat, tormented with thirst, and unable to procure even a drop of water. The royalists were fresh so that the result of the contest was easily to be foreseen. Hohenlo's army was annihilated in an hour's time, the whole population fled out of Coewerden, the siege of Groningen was raised; Renneberg was set free to resume his operations on a larger scale, and the fate of all the north-eastern provinces was once more swinging in the wind. The boors of Drenthe and Friesland rose again. They had already mustered in the field at an earlier

Page 1037

season of the year, in considerable force. Calling themselves “the desperates,” and bearing on their standard an eggshell with the yolk running out—to indicate that, having lost the meat they were yet ready to fight for the shell—they had swept through the open country, pillaging and burning. Hohenlo had defeated them in two enchanters, slain a large number of their forces, and reduced them for a time to tranquillity. His late overthrow once more set them loose. Renneberg, always apt to be over-elated in prosperity, as he was unduly dejected in adversity, now assumed all the airs of a conqueror. He had hardly eight thousand men under his orders, but his strength lay in the weakness of his adversaries. A small war now succeeded, with small generals, small armies, small campaigns, small sieges. For the time, the Prince of Orange was even obliged to content himself with such a general as Hohenlo. As usual, he was almost alone. “Donec eris felix,” said he, emphatically—

> “multos numerabis amicos,
> Tempera cum erunt nubila, nullus erit,”

and he was this summer doomed to a still harder deprivation by the final departure of his brother John from the Netherlands.

The Count had been wearied out by petty miseries. His stadholderate of Gelderland had overwhelmed him with annoyance, for throughout the north-eastern provinces there was neither system nor subordination. The magistrates could exercise no authority over an army which they did not pay, or a people whom they did not protect. There were endless quarrels between the various boards of municipal and provincial government—-particularly concerning contributions and expenditures.

[When the extraordinary generosity of the Count himself; and the altogether unexampled sacrifices of the Prince are taken into account, it may well be supposed that the patience of the brothers would be sorely tried by the parsimony of the states. It appears by a document laid before the states-general in the winter of 1580- 1581, that the Count had himself advanced to Orange 570,000 florins in the cause. The total of money spent by the Prince himself for the sake of Netherland liberty was 2,200,000. These vast sums had been raised in various ways and from various personages. His estates were deeply hypothecated, and his creditors so troublesome, that, in his own language, he was unable to attend properly to public affairs, so frequent and so threatening were the applications made upon him for payment. Day by day he felt the necessity advancing more closely upon him of placing himself personally in the hands of his creditors and making over his estates to their mercy until the uttermost farthing should be paid. In his two campaigns against Alva (1568 and 1572) he had spent 1,050,000 florins. He owed the Elector Palatine 150,000 florins, the Landgrave 60,000, Count John 670,000, and other sums to other individuals.]

Page 1038

During this wrangling, the country was exposed to the forces of Parma, to the private efforts of the Malcontents, to the unpaid soldiery of the states, to the armed and rebellious peasantry. Little heed was paid to the admonitions of Count John, who was of a hotter temper than was the tranquil Prince. The stadholder gave way to fits of passion at the meanness and the insolence to which he was constantly exposed. He readily recognized his infirmity, and confessed himself unable to accommodate his irascibility to the “humores” of the inhabitants. There was often sufficient cause for his petulance. Never had praetor of a province a more penurious civil list. “The baker has given notice,” wrote Count John, in November, “that he will supply no more bread after to-morrow, unless he is paid.” The states would furnish no money to pay the, bill. It was no better with the butcher. “The cook has often no meat to roast,” said the Count, in the same letter, “so that we are often obliged to go supperless to bed.” His lodgings were a half-roofed, half-finished, unfurnished barrack, where the stadholder passed his winter days and evenings in a small, dark, freezing-cold chamber, often without fire-wood. Such circumstances were certainly not calculated to excite envy. When in addition to such wretched parsimony, it is remembered that the Count was perpetually worried by the quarrels of the provincial authorities with each other and with himself, he may be forgiven for becoming thoroughly exhausted at last. He was growing “grey and grizzled” with perpetual perplexity. He had been fed with annoyance, as if—to use his own homely expression—“he had eaten it with a spoon.” Having already loaded himself with a debt of six hundred thousand florins, which he had spent in the states’ service, and having struggled manfully against the petty tortures of his situation, he cannot be severely censured for relinquishing his post. The affairs of his own Countship were in great confusion. His children—boys and girls—were many, and needed their fathers’ guidance, while the eldest, William Louis, was already in arms for the-Netherlands, following the instincts of his race. Distinguished for a rash valor, which had already gained the rebuke of his father and the applause of his comrades, he had commenced his long and glorious career by receiving a severe wound at Coewerden, which caused him to halt for life. Leaving so worthy a representative, the Count was more justified in his departure.

His wife, too, had died in his absence, and household affairs required his attention. It must be confessed, however, that if the memory of his deceased spouse had its claims, the selection of her successor was still more prominent among his anxieties. The worthy gentleman had been supernaturally directed as to his second choice, ere that choice seemed necessary, for before the news of his wife’s death had reached him, the Count dreamed that he was already united

Page 1039

in second nuptials to the fair Cunigunda, daughter of the deceased Elector Palatine—a vision which was repeated many times. On the morrow he learned, to his amazement, that he was a widower, and entertained no doubt that he had been specially directed towards the princess seen in his slumbers, whom he had never seen in life. His friends were in favor of his marrying the Electress Dowager, rather than her daughter, whose years numbered less than half his own. The honest Count, however, "after ripe consideration," decidedly preferred the maid to the widow. "I confess," he said, with much gravity, "that the marriage with the old Electress, in respect of her God-fearing disposition, her piety, her virtue, and the like, would be much more advisable. Moreover, as she hath borne her cross, and knows how to deal with gentlemen, so much the better would it be for me. Nevertheless, inasmuch as she has already had two husbands, is of a tolerable age, and is taller of stature than myself, my inclination is less towards her than towards her daughter."

For these various considerations, Count John, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his brother, definitely laid down his government of Gelderland, and quitted the Netherlands about midsummer. Enough had not been done, in the opinion of the Prince, so long as aught remained to do, and he could not bear that his brother should desert the country in the hour of its darkness, or doubt the Almighty when his hand was veiled in clouds. "One must do one's best," said he, "and believe that when such misfortunes happen, God desires to prove us. If He sees that we do not lose our courage, He will assuredly help us. Had we thought otherwise, we should never have pierced the dykes on a memorable occasion, for it was an uncertain thing and a great sorrow for the poor people; yet did God bless the undertaking. He will bless us still, for his arm hath not been shortened."

On the 22nd of July, 1580, the Archduke Matthias, being fully aware of the general tendency of affairs, summoned a meeting of the generality in Antwerp. He did not make his appearance before the assembly, but requested that a deputation might wait upon him at his lodgings, and to this committee he unfolded his griefs. He expressed his hope that the states were not—in violation of the laws of God and man—about to throw themselves into the arms of a foreign prince. He reminded them of their duty to the holy Catholic religion to the illustrious house of Austria, while he also pathetically called their attention to the necessities of his own household, and hoped that they would, at least, provide for the arrears due to his domestics.

The states-general replied with courtesy as to the personal claims of the Archduke. For the rest, they took higher grounds, and the coming declaration of independence already pierced through the studied decorum of their language. They defended their negotiation with Anjou on the ground of necessity, averring that the King of Spain had proved inexorable to all intercession, while, through the intrigues of their bitterest enemies, they had been entirely forsaken by the Empire.

Page 1040

Soon afterwards, a special legation, with Saint Aldegonde at its head, was despatched to France to consult with the Duke of Anjou, and settled terms of agreement with him by the treaty of Plessis les Tours (on the 29th of September, 1580), afterwards definitely ratified by the convention of Bordeaux, signed on the 23rd of the following January.

The states of Holland and Zealand, however, kept entirely aloof from this transaction, being from the beginning opposed to the choice of Anjou. From the first to the last, they would have no master but Orange, and to him, therefore, this year they formally offered the sovereignty of their provinces; but they offered it in vain.

The conquest of Portugal had effected a diversion in the affairs of the Netherlands. It was but a transitory one. The provinces found the hopes which they had built upon the necessity of Spain for large supplies in the peninsula—to their own consequent relief—soon changed into fears, for the rapid success of Alva in Portugal gave his master additional power to oppress the heretics of the north. Henry, the Cardinal King, had died in 1580, after succeeding to the youthful adventurer, Don Sebastian, slain during his chivalrous African campaign (4th of August, 1578). The contest for the succession which opened upon the death of the aged monarch was brief, and in fifty-eight days, the bastard Antonio, Philip's only formidable competitor, had been utterly defeated and driven forth to lurk, like 'a hunted wild beast, among rugged mountain caverns, with a price of a hundred thousand crowns upon his head. In the course of the succeeding year, Philip received homage at Lisbon as King of Portugal. From the moment of this conquest, he was more disposed, and more at leisure than ever, to vent his wrath against the Netherlands, and against the man whom he considered the incarnation of their revolt.

Cardinal Granvelle had ever whispered in the King's ear the expediency of taking off the Prince by assassination. It has been seen how subtly distilled, and how patiently hoarded, was this priest's venom against individuals, until the time arrived when he could administer the poison with effect. His hatred of Orange was intense and of ancient date. He was of opinion, too, that the Prince might be scared from the post of duty, even if the assassin's hand were not able to reach his heart. He was in favor of publicly setting a price upon his head-thinking that if the attention of all the murderers in the world were thus directed towards the illustrious victim, the Prince would tremble at the dangers which surrounded him. "A sum of money would be well employed in this way," said the Cardinal, "and, as the Prince of Orange is a vile coward, fear alone will throw him into confusion." Again, a few months later, renewing the subject, he observed, "'twould be well to offer a reward of thirty or forty thousand crowns to any one who will deliver the Prince, dead or alive; since from very fear of it—as he is pusillanimous—it would not be unlikely that he should die of his own accord."

Page 1041

It was insulting even to Philip's intelligence to insinuate that the Prince would shrink before danger, or die of fear. Had Orange ever been inclined to bombast, he might have answered the churchman's calumny, as Caesar the soothsayer's warning:—

"----------Danger knows full well
That Caesar is more dangerous than he—"

and in truth, Philip had long trembled on his throne before the genius of the man who had foiled Spain's boldest generals and wiliest statesmen. The King, accepting the priest's advice, resolved to fulminate a ban against the Prince, and to set a price upon his head. "It will be well," wrote Philip to Parma, "to offer thirty thousand crowns or so to any one who will deliver him dead or alive. Thus the country may be rid of a man so pernicious; or at any rate he will be held in perpetual fear, and therefore prevented from executing leisurely his designs."

In accordance with these suggestions and these hopes, the famous ban was accordingly drawn up, and dated on the 15th of March, 1580. It was, however, not formally published in the Netherlands until the month of June of the same year.

This edict will remain the most lasting monument to the memory of Cardinal Granvelle. It will be read when all his other state-papers and epistles—able as they incontestably are—shall have passed into oblivion. No panegyric of friend, no palliating magnanimity of foe, can roll away this rock of infamy from his tomb. It was by Cardinal Granvelle and by Philip that a price was set upon the head of the foremost man of his age, as if he had been a savage beast, and that admission into the ranks of Spain's haughty nobility was made the additional bribe to tempt the assassin.

The ban consisted of a preliminary narrative to justify the penalty with which it was concluded. It referred to the favors conferred by Philip and his father upon the Prince; to his-signal ingratitude and dissimulation. It accused him of originating the Request, the image-breaking, and the public preaching. It censured his marriage with an abbess —even during the lifetime of his wife; alluded to his campaigns against Alva, to his rebellion in Holland, and to the horrible massacres committed by Spaniards in that province—the necessary consequences of his treason. It accused him of introducing liberty of conscience, of procuring his own appointment as Ruward, of violating the Ghent treaty, of foiling the, efforts of Don John, and of frustrating the counsels of the Cologne commissioners by his perpetual distrust. It charged him with a newly-organized conspiracy, in the erection of the Utrecht Union; and for these and similar crimes—set forth, with involutions, slow, spiral, and cautious as the head and front of the indictment was direct and deadly—it denounced the chastisement due to the "wretched hypocrite" who had committed such offences.

Page 1042

“For these causes,” concluded the ban, “we declare him traitor and miscreant, enemy of ourselves and of the country. As such we banish him perpetually from all our realms, forbidding all our subjects, of whatever quality, to communicate with him openly or privately—to administer to him victuals, drink, fire, or other necessaries. We allow all to injure him in property or life. We expose the, said William Nassau, as an enemy of the human-race—giving his property to all who may; seize it. And if anyone of our subjects or any stranger should be found sufficiently generous of heart to rid us of this pest, delivering him to us, alive or dead, or taking his life, we will cause to be furnished to him immediately after the deed shall have been done, the sum of twenty-five thousand crowns; in gold. If he have committed any crime, however heinous, we promise to pardon him; and if he be not already noble, we will ennoble him for his valor.”

Such was the celebrated ban against the Prince of Orange. It was answered before the end of the year by the memorable “Apology of the Prince of Orange” one of the moat startling documents in history. No defiance was ever thundered forth in the face of a despot in more terrible tones. It had become sufficiently manifest to the royal party that the Prince was not to be purchased by “millions of money,” or by unlimited family advancement—not to be cajoled by flattery or offers of illustrious friendship. It had been decided, therefore, to terrify him into retreat, or to remove him by murder. The Government had been thoroughly convinced that the only way to finish the revolt, was to “finish Orange,” according to the ancient advice of Antonio Perez. The mask was thrown off. It had been decided to forbid the Prince bread, water, fire, and shelter; to give his wealth to the fisc, his heart to the assassin, his soul, as it was hoped, to the Father of Evil. The rupture being thus complete, it was right that the “wretched hypocrite” should answer ban with ban, royal denunciation with sublime scorn. He had ill-deserved, however, the title of hypocrite, he said. When the friend of government, he had warned them that by their complicated and perpetual persecutions they were twisting the rope of their own ruin. Was that hypocrisy? Since becoming their enemy, there had likewise been little hypocrisy found in him—unless it were hypocrisy to make open war upon government, to take their cities, to expel their armies from the country.

The proscribed rebel, towering to a moral and even social superiority over the man who affected to be his master by right divine, swept down upon his antagonist with crushing effect. He repudiated the idea of a king in the Netherlands. The word might be legitimate in Castillo, or Naples, or the Indies, but the provinces knew no such title. Philip had inherited in those countries only the power of Duke or Count—a power closely limited by constitutions more ancient than his birthright. Orange was

Page 1043

no rebel then—Philip no legitimate monarch. Even were the Prince rebellious, it was no more than Philip's ancestor, Albert of Austria, had been towards his anointed sovereign, Emperor Adolphus of Nassau, ancestor of William. The ties of allegiance and conventional authority being, severed, it had become idle for the King to affect superiority of lineage to the man whose family had occupied illustrious stations when the Habsburgs were obscure squires in Switzerland, and had ruled as sovereign in the Netherlands before that overshadowing house had ever been named.

But whatever the hereditary claims of Philip in the country, he had forfeited them by the violation of his oaths, by his tyrannical suppression of the charters of the land; while by his personal crimes he had lost all pretension to sit in judgment upon his fellow man. Was a people not justified in rising against authority when all their laws had been trodden under foot, "not once only, but a million of times?"—and was William of Orange, lawful husband of the virtuous Charlotte de Bourbon, to be denounced for moral delinquency by a lascivious, incestuous, adulterous, and murderous king? With horrible distinctness he laid before the monarch all the crimes of which he believed him guilty, and having thus told Philip to his beard, "thus diddest thou," he had a withering word for the priest who stood at his back. "Tell me," he cried, "by whose command Cardinal Granvelle administered poison to the Emperor Maximilian? I know what the Emperor told me, and how much fear he felt afterwards for the King and for all Spaniards."

He ridiculed the effrontery of men like Philip and Granvelle; in charging "distrust" upon others, when it was the very atmosphere of their own existence. He proclaimed that sentiment to be the only salvation for the country. He reminded Philip of the words which his namesake of Macedon—a schoolboy in tyranny, compared to himself—had heard from the lips of Demosthenes—that the strongest fortress of a free people against a tyrant was distrust. That sentiment, worthy of eternal memory, the Prince declared that he had taken from the "divine philippic," to engrave upon the heart, of the nation, and he prayed God that he might be more readily believed than the great orator had been by his people.

He treated with scorn the price set upon his head, ridiculing this project to terrify him, for its want of novelty, and asking the monarch if he supposed the rebel ignorant of the various bargains which had frequently been made before with cutthroats and poisoners to take away his life. "I am in the hand of God," said William of Orange; "my worldly goods and my life have been long since dedicated to His service. He will dispose of them as seems best for His glory and my salvation."

On the contrary, however, if it could be demonstrated, or even hoped, that his absence would benefit the cause of the country, he proclaimed himself ready to go into exile.

Page 1044

“Would to God,” said he, in conclusion, that my perpetual banishment, or even my death, could bring you a true deliverance from so many calamities. Oh, how consoling would be such banishment—how sweet such a death! For why have I exposed my property? Was it that I might enrich myself? Why have I lost my brothers? Was it that I might find new; ones? Why have I left my son so long a prisoner? Can you give me another? Why have I put my life so often in, danger? What reward, can I hope after my long services, and the almost total wreck, of my earthly fortunes, if not the prize, of having acquired, perhaps at the expense of my life, your liberty?—If then, my masters, if you judge that my absence or my death can serve you, behold me ready to obey. Command me—send me to the ends of the earth—I will obey. Here is my head, over which no prince, no monarch, has power but yourselves. Dispose of it for your good, for the preservation of your Republic, but if you judge that the moderate amount of experience and industry which is in me, if you judge that the remainder of my property and of my life can yet be of service to you, I dedicate them afresh to you and to the country.”

His motto—most appropriate to his life and character—“Je maintiendrai,” was the concluding phrase of the document. His arms and signature were also formally appended, and the Apology, translated into most modern languages, was sent, to nearly every potentate in Christendom. It had been previously, on the 13th of December, 1580, read before the assembly of the united states at Delft, and approved as cordially as the ban was indignantly denounced.

During the remainder of the year 1580, and the half of the following year, the seat of hostilities was mainly in the northeast-Parma, while waiting the arrival of fresh troops, being inactive. The operations, like the armies and the generals, were petty. Hohenlo was opposed to Renneberg. After a few insignificant victories, the latter laid siege to Steenwyk, a city in itself of no great importance, but the key to the province of Drenthe. The garrison consisted of six hundred soldiers, and half as many trained burghers. Renneberg, having six thousand foot and twelve hundred horse, summoned the place to surrender, but was answered with defiance. Captain Cornput, who had escaped from Groningen, after unsuccessfully warning the citizens of Renneberg’s meditated treason, commanded in Steenwyk, and his courage and cheerfulness sustained the population of the city during a close winter siege. Tumultuous mobs in the streets demanding that the place should be given over ere it was too late, he denounced to their faces as “flocks of gabbling geese,” unworthy the attention of brave men. To a butcher who, with the instinct of his craft, begged to be informed what the population were to eat when the meat was all gone, he coolly observed, “We will eat you, villain, first of all, when the time comes; so go home and rest assured that you, at least, are not to die of starvation.”

Page 1045

With such rough but cheerful admonitions did the honest soldier, at the head of his little handful, sustain the courage of the beleaguered city. Meantime Renneberg pressed it hard. He bombarded it with red-hot balls, a new invention introduced five years before by Stephen Bathor, King of Poland, at the siege of Dantzig. Many houses were consumed, but still Cornput and the citizens held firm. As the winter advanced, and the succor which had been promised still remained in the distance, Renneberg began to pelt the city with sarcasms, which, it was hoped, might prove more effective than the red-hot balls. He sent a herald to know if the citizens had eaten all their horses yet; a question which was answered by an ostentatious display of sixty starving hacks—all that could be mustered-upon the heights. He sent them on another occasion, a short letter, which ran as follows:

"*Most honorable*, *most steadfast*,—As, during the present frost, you have but little exercise in the trenches—as you cannot pass your time in twirling your finger-rings, seeing that they have all been sold to pay your soldiers' wages—as you have nothing to rub your teeth upon, nor to scour your stomachs withal, and as, nevertheless, you require something if only to occupy your minds, I send you the enclosed letter, in hope it may yield amusement.—January 15, 1581."

The enclosure was a letter from the Prince of Orange to the Duke of Anjou, which, as it was pretended, had been intercepted. It was a clumsy forgery, but it answered the purpose of more skilful counterfeiting, at a period when political and religious enmity obscured men's judgment. "As to the point of religion," the Prince was made to observe, for example, to his illustrious correspondent, "that is all plain and clear. No sovereign who hopes to come to any great advancement ought to consider religion, or hold it in regard. Your Highness, by means of the garrisons, and fortresses, will be easily master of the principal cities in Flanders and Brabant, even if the citizens were opposed to you. Afterwards you will compel them without difficulty to any religion which may seem most conducive to the interests of your Highness."

Odious and cynical as was the whole tone of the letter, it was extensively circulated. There were always natures base and brutal enough to accept the calumny and to make it current among kindred souls. It may be doubted whether Renneberg attached faith to the document; but it was natural that he should take a malicious satisfaction in spreading this libel against the man whose perpetual scorn he had so recently earned. Nothing was more common than such forgeries, and at that very moment a letter, executed with equal grossness, was passing from hand to hand, which purported to be from the Count himself to Parma. History has less interest in contradicting the calumnies against a man like Renneberg. The fictitious epistle

Page 1046

of Orange, however, was so often republished, and the copies so carefully distributed, that the Prince had thought it important to add an express repudiation of its authorship, by way of appendix to his famous Apology. He took the occasion to say, that if a particle of proof could be brought that he had written the letter, or any letter resembling it, he would forthwith leave the Netherlands, never to show his face there again.

Notwithstanding this well known denial, however, Renneberg thought it facetious to send the letter into Steenvayk, where it produced but small effect upon the minds' of the burghers. Meantime, they had received intimation that succor was on its way. Hollow balls containing letters were shot into the town, bringing the welcome intelligence that the English colonel, John Norris, with six thousand states' troops, would soon make his appearance for their relief, and the brave Cornput added his cheerful exhortations to heighten the satisfaction thus produced. A day or two afterwards, three quails were caught in the public square, and the commandant improved the circumstance by many quaint homilies. The number three, he observed, was typical of the Holy Trinity, which had thus come symbolically to their relief. The Lord had sustained the fainting Israelites with quails. The number three indicated three weeks, within which time the promised succor was sure to arrive. Accordingly, upon the 22nd of February, 1581, at the expiration of the third week, Norris succeeded in victualling the town, the merry and steadfast Cornput was established as a true prophet, and Count Renneberg abandoned the siege in despair.

The subsequent career of that unhappy nobleman was brief. On the 19th of July his troops were signally defeated by Sonny—and Norris, the fugitive royalists retreating into Groningen at the very moment when their general, who had been prevented by illness from commanding them, was receiving the last sacraments. Remorse, shame, and disappointment had literally brought Renneberg to his grave.

"His treason," says a contemporary, "was a nail in his coffin, and on his deathbed he bitterly bemoaned his crime. 'Groningen! Groningen!' would that I had never seen thy walls!" he cried repeatedly in his last hours. He refused to see his sister, whose insidious counsels had combined with his own evil passions to make him a traitor; and he died on the 23rd of July, 1581, repentant and submissive. His heart, after his decease, was found "shrivelled to the dimensions of a walnut," a circumstance attributed to poison by some, to remorse by others. His regrets; his early death, and his many attractive qualities, combined to: save his character from universal denunciation, and his name, although indelibly stained by treason, was ever mentioned with pity rather than with rancor.

Page 1047

Great changes, destined to be perpetual, were steadily preparing in the internal condition of the provinces. A preliminary measure of an important character had been taken early this year by the assembly of the united provinces held in the month of January at Delft. This was the establishment of a general executive council. The constitution of the board was arranged on the 13th of the month, and was embraced in eighteen articles. The number of councillors was fixed at thirty, all to be native Netherlanders; a certain proportion to be appointed from each province by its estates. The advice and consent of this body as to treaties with foreign powers were to be indispensable, but they were not to interfere with the rights and duties of the states-general, nor to interpose any obstacle to the arrangements with the Duke of Anjou.

While this additional machine for the self-government of the provinces was in the course of creation; the Spanish monarch, on the other hand, had made another effort to recover the authority which he felt slipping from his grasp. Philip was in Portugal, preparing for his coronation in, that, new kingdom—an event to be nearly contemporaneous with his deposition from the Netherland sovereignty, so solemnly conferred upon him a quarter of a century before in Brussels; but although thus distant, he was confident that he could more wisely govern the Netherlands than the inhabitants could do, and unwilling as ever to confide in the abilities of those to whom he had delegated his authority. Provided; as he unquestionably was at that moment, with a more energetic representative than any who had before exercised the functions of royal governor in the provinces, he was still disposed to harass, to doubt, and to interfere. With the additional cares of the Portuguese Conquest upon his hands, he felt as irresistibly impelled as ever to superintend the minute details of provincial administration. To do this was impossible. It was, however, not impossible, by attempting to do it, to produce much mischief. “It gives me pain,” wrote Granvelle, “to see his Majesty working as before—choosing to understand everything and to do everything. By this course, as I have often said before, he really accomplishes much less.” The King had, moreover, recently committed the profound error of sending the Duchess Margaret of Parma to the Netherlands again. He had the fatuity to believe her memory so tenderly cherished in the provinces as to ensure a burst of loyalty at her reappearance, while the irritation which he thus created in the breast of her son he affected to disregard. The event was what might have been foreseen. The Netherlanders were very moderately excited by the arrival of their former regent, but the Prince of Parma was furious. His mother actually arrived at Namur in the month of August, 1580, to assume the civil administration of the provinces,—and he was himself, according to the King’s request, to continue in the command of the army. Any one

Page 1048

who had known human nature at all, would have recognized that Alexander Farnese was not the man to be put into leading strings. A sovereign who was possessed of any administrative sagacity, would have seen the absurdity of taking the reins of government at that crisis from the hands of a most determined and energetic man, to confide them to the keeping of a woman. A king who was willing to reflect upon the consequences of his own acts, must have foreseen the scandal likely to result from an open quarrel for precedence between such a mother and son. Margaret of Parma was instantly informed, however, by Alexander, that a divided authority like that proposed was entirely out of the question. Both offered to resign; but Alexander was unflinching in his determination to retain all the power or none. The Duchess, as docile to her son after her arrival as she had been to the King on undertaking the journey, and feeling herself unequal to the task imposed upon her, implored Philip's permission to withdraw, almost as soon as she had reached her destination. Granvelle's opinion was likewise opposed to this interference with the administration of Alexander, and the King at last suffered himself to be overruled. By the end of the year 1581, letters arrived confirming the Prince of Parma in his government, but requesting the Duchess of Parma to remain, privately in the Netherlands. She accordingly continued to reside there under an assumed name until the autumn of 1583, when she was at last permitted to return to Italy.

During the summer of 1581, the same spirit of persecution which had inspired the Catholics to inflict such infinite misery upon those of the Reformed faith in the Netherlands, began to manifest itself in overt acts against the Papists by those who had at last obtained political. ascendency over them. Edicts were published in Antwerp, in Utrecht, and in different cities of Holland, suspending the exercise of the Roman worship. These statutes were certainly a long way removed in horror from those memorable placards which sentenced the Reformers by thousands to the axe; the cord, and the stake, but it was still melancholy to see the persecuted becoming persecutors in their turn. They were excited to these stringent measures by the noisy zeal of certain Dominican monks in Brussels, whose extravagant discourses were daily inflaming the passions of the Catholics to a dangerous degree. The authorities of the city accordingly thought it necessary to suspend, by proclamation, the public exercise of the ancient religion, assigning, as their principal reason for this prohibition, the shocking jugglery by which simple-minded persons were constantly deceived. They alluded particularly to the practice of working miracles by means of relics, pieces of the holy cross, bones of saints, and the perspiration of statues. They charged that bits of lath were daily exhibited as fragments of the cross; that the bones of dogs and monkeys were held up for adoration

Page 1049

as those of saints; and that oil was poured habitually into holes drilled in the heads of statues, that the populace might believe in their miraculous sweating. For these reasons, and to avoid the tumult and possible bloodshed to which the disgust excited by such charlatanry might give rise, the Roman Catholic worship was suspended until the country should be restored to greater tranquillity. Similar causes led to similar proclamations in other cities. The Prince of Orange lamented the intolerant spirit thus showing itself among those who had been its martyrs, but it was not possible at that moment to keep it absolutely under control.

A most important change was now to take place in his condition, a most vital measure was to be consummated by the provinces. The step, which could never be retraced was, after long hesitation, finally taken upon the 26th of July, 1581, upon which day the united provinces, assembled at the Hague, solemnly declared their independence of Philip, and renounced their allegiance for ever.

This act was accomplished with the deliberation due to its gravity. At the same time it left the country in a very divided condition. This was inevitable. The Prince had done all that one man could do to hold the Netherlands together and unite them perpetually into one body politic, and perhaps, if he had been inspired by a keener personal ambition, this task might have been accomplished.—The seventeen provinces might have accepted his dominion, but they would agree to that of no other sovereign. Providence had not decreed that the country, after its long agony, should give birth to a single and perfect commonwealth. The Walloon provinces had already fallen off from the cause, notwithstanding the entreaties of the Prince. The other Netherlands, after long and tedious negotiation with Anjou, had at last consented to his supremacy, but from this arrangement Holland and Zealand held themselves aloof. By a somewhat anomalous proceeding, they sent deputies along with those of the other provinces, to the conferences with the Duke, but it was expressly understood that they would never accept him as sovereign. They were willing to contract with him and with their sister provinces—over which he was soon to exercise authority—a firm and perpetual league, but as to their own chief, their hearts were fixed. The Prince of Orange should be their lord and master, and none other. It lay only in his self-denying character that he had not been clothed with this dignity long before. He had, however, persisted in the hope that all the provinces might be brought to acknowledge the Duke of Anjou as their sovereign, under conditions which constituted a free commonwealth with an hereditary chief, and in this hope he had constantly refused concession to the wishes of the northern provinces. He in reality exercised sovereign power over nearly the whole population, of the Netherlands. Already in 1580, at the assembly held in April, the states

Page 1050

of Holland had formally requested him to assume the full sovereignty over them, with the title of Count of Holland and Zealand forfeited by Philip. He had not consented, and the proceedings had been kept comparatively secret. As the negotiations with Anjou advanced, and as the corresponding abjuration of Philip was more decisively indicated, the consent of the Prince to this request was more warmly urged. As it was evident that the provinces thus bent upon placing him at their head, could by no possibility be induced to accept the sovereignty of Anjou—as, moreover; the act of renunciation of Philip could no longer be deferred, the Prince of Orange reluctantly and provisionally accepted the supreme power over Holland and Zealand. This arrangement was finally accomplished upon the 24th of July, 1581, and the act of abjuration took place two days afterwards. The offer of the sovereignty over the other united provinces had been accepted by Anjou six months before.

Thus, the Netherlands were divided into three portions—the reconciled provinces, the united provinces under Anjou, and the northern provinces under Orange; the last division forming the germ, already nearly developed, of the coming republic. The constitution, or catalogue of conditions, by which the sovereignty accorded to Anjou was reduced to such narrow limits as to be little more than a nominal authority, while the power remained in the hands of the representative body of the provinces, will be described, somewhat later, together with the inauguration of the Duke. For the present it is necessary that the reader should fully understand the relative position of the Prince and of the northern provinces. The memorable act of renunciation—the Netherland declaration of independence—will then be briefly explained.

On the 29th of March, 1580, a resolution passed the assembly of Holland and Zealand never to make peace or enter into any negotiations with the King of Spain on the basis of his sovereignty. The same resolution provided that his name—hitherto used in all public acts—should be for ever discarded, that his seal should be broken, and that the name and seal of the Prince of Orange should be substituted in all commissions and public documents. At almost the same time the states of Utrecht passed a similar resolution. These offers were, however, not accepted, and the affair was preserved profoundly secret. On the 5th of July, 1581, “the knights, nobles, and cities of Holland and Zealand,” again, in an urgent and solemn manner, requested the Prince to accept the “entire authority as sovereign and chief of the land, as long as the war should continue.” This limitation as to time was inserted most reluctantly by the states, and because it was perfectly well understood that without it the Prince would not accept the sovereignty at all. The act by which this dignity was offered, conferred full power to command all forces by land and sea, to appoint all military officers, and to

Page 1051

conduct all warlike operations, without the control or advice of any person whatsoever. It authorized him, with consent of the states, to appoint all financial and judicial officers, created him the supreme executive chief, and fountain of justice and pardon, and directed him “to maintain the exercise only of the Reformed evangelical religion, without, however, permitting that inquiries should be made into any man’s belief or conscience, or that any injury or hindrance should be offered to any man on account of his religion.”

The sovereignty thus pressingly offered, and thus limited as to time, was finally accepted by William of Orange, according to a formal act dated at the Hague, 5th of July, 1581, but it will be perceived that no powers were conferred by this new instrument beyond those already exercised by the Prince. It was, as it were, a formal continuance of the functions which he had exercised since 1576 as the King’s stadholder, according to his old commission of 1555, although a vast, difference existed in reality. The King’s name was now discarded and his sovereignty disowned, while the proscribed rebel stood in his place, exercising supreme functions, not vicariously, but in his own name. The limitation as to time was, moreover, soon afterwards secretly, and without the knowledge of Orange, cancelled by the states. They were determined that the Prince should be their sovereign—if they could make him so—for the term of his life.

The offer having thus been made and accepted upon the 5th of July, oaths of allegiance and fidelity were exchanged between the Prince and the estates upon the 24th of the same month. In these solemnities, the states, as representing the provinces, declared that because the King of Spain, contrary to his oath as Count of Holland and Zealand, had not only not protected these provinces, but had sought with all his might to reduce them to eternal slavery, it had been found necessary to forsake him. They therefore proclaimed every inhabitant absolved from allegiance, while at the same time, in the name of the population, they swore fidelity to the Prince of Orange, as representing the supreme authority.

Two days afterwards, upon the 26th of July, 1581, the memorable declaration of independence was issued by the deputies of the united provinces, then solemnly assembled at the Hague. It was called the Act of Abjuration. It deposed Philip from his sovereignty, but was not the proclamation of a new form of government, for the united provinces were not ready to dispense with an hereditary chief. Unluckily, they had already provided themselves with a very bad one to succeed Philip in the dominion over most of their territory, while the northern provinces were fortunate enough and wise enough to take the Father of the country for their supreme magistrate.

Page 1052

The document by which the provinces renounced their allegiance was not the most felicitous of their state papers. It was too prolix and technical. Its style had more of the formal phraseology of legal documents than befitted this great appeal to the whole world and to all time. Nevertheless, this is but matter of taste. The Netherlanders were so eminently a law-abiding people, that, like the American patriots of the eighteenth century, they on most occasions preferred punctilious precision to florid declamation. They chose to conduct their revolt according to law. At the same time, while thus decently wrapping herself in conventional garments, the spirit of Liberty revealed none the less her majestic proportions.

At the very outset of the Abjuration, these fathers of the Republic laid down wholesome truths, which at that time seemed startling blasphemies in the ears of Christendom. “All mankind know,” said the preamble, “that a prince is appointed by God to cherish his subjects, even as a shepherd to guard his sheep. When, therefore, the prince—does not fulfil his duty as protector; when he oppresses his subjects, destroys their ancient liberties, and treats them as slaves, he is to be considered, not a prince, but a tyrant. As such, the estates of the land may lawfully and reasonably depose him, and elect another in his room.”

Having enunciated these maxims, the estates proceeded to apply them to their own case, and certainly never was an ampler justification for renouncing a prince since princes were first instituted. The states ran through the history of the past quarter of a century, patiently accumulating a load of charges against the monarch, a tithe of which would have furnished cause for his dethronement. Without passion or exaggeration, they told the world their wrongs. The picture was not highly colored. On the contrary, it was rather a feeble than a striking portrait of the monstrous iniquity which had so long been established over them. Nevertheless, they went through the narrative conscientiously and earnestly. They spoke of the King’s early determination to govern the Netherlands, not by natives but by Spaniards; to treat them not as constitutional countries, but as conquered provinces; to regard the inhabitants not as liege subjects, but as enemies; above all, to supersede their ancient liberty by the Spanish Inquisition, and they alluded to the first great step in this scheme—the creation of the new bishoprics, each with its staff of inquisitors.

They noticed the memorable Petition, the mission of Berghen and Montigny, their imprisonment and taking off, in violation of all national law, even that which had ever been held sacred by the most cruel and tyrannical princes. They sketched the history of Alva’s administration; his entrapping the most eminent nobles by false promises, and delivering them to the executioner; his countless sentences of death, outlawry, and confiscation;

Page 1053

his erection of citadels to curb, his imposition of the tenth and twentieth penny to exhaust the land; his Blood Council and its achievements; and the immeasurable, woe produced by hanging, burning, banishing, and plundering, during his seven years of residence. They adverted to the Grand Commander, as having been sent, not to improve the condition of the country, but to pursue the same course of tyranny by more concealed ways. They spoke of the horrible mutiny which broke forth at his death; of the Antwerp Fury; of the express approbation rendered to that great outrage by the King, who had not only praised the crime, but promised to recompense the criminals. They alluded to Don John of Austria and his duplicity; to his pretended confirmation of the Ghent treaty; to his attempts to divide the country against itself; to the Escovedo policy; to the intrigues with the German regiments. They touched upon the Cologne negotiations, and the fruitless attempt of the patriots upon that occasion to procure freedom of religion, while the object of the royalists was only to distract and divide the nation. Finally, they commented with sorrow and despair upon that last and crowning measure of tyranny—the ban against the Prince of Orange.

They calmly observed, after this recital, that they were sufficiently justified in forsaking a sovereign who for more than twenty years had forsaken them. Obeying the law of nature—desirous of maintaining the rights, charters, and liberties of their fatherland—-determined to escape from slavery to Spaniards—and making known their decision to the world, they declared the King of Spain deposed from his sovereignty, and proclaimed that they should recognize thenceforth neither his title nor jurisdiction. Three days afterwards, on the 29th of July, the assembly adopted a formula, by which all persons were to be required to signify their abjuration.

Such were the forms by which the united provinces threw off their allegiance to Spain, and ipso facto established a republic, which was to flourish for two centuries. This result, however, was not exactly foreseen by the congress which deposed Philip. The fathers of the commonwealth did not baptize it by the name of Republic. They did not contemplate a change in their form of government. They had neither an aristocracy nor a democracy in their thoughts. Like the actors in our own great national drama, these Netherland patriots were struggling to sustain, not to overthrow; unlike them, they claimed no theoretical freedom for humanity—promulgated no doctrine of popular sovereignty: they insisted merely on the fulfilment of actual contracts, signed sealed, and sworn to by many successive sovereigns. Acting, upon the principle that government should be for the benefit of the governed, and in conformity to the dictates of reason and justice, they examined the facts by those divine lights, and discovered cause to discard their ruler. They did not object to

Page 1054

being ruled. They were satisfied with their historical institutions, and preferred the mixture of hereditary sovereignty with popular representation, to which they were accustomed. They did not devise an a priori constitution. Philip having violated the law of reason and the statutes of the land, was deposed, and a new chief magistrate was to be elected in his stead. This was popular sovereignty in fact, but not in words. The deposition and election could be legally justified only by the inherent right of the people to depose and to elect; yet the provinces, in their Declaration of Independence, spoke of the divine right of kings, even while dethroning, by popular right, their own King!

So also, in the instructions given by the states to their envoys charged to justify the abjuration before the Imperial diet held at Augsburg, twelve months later, the highest ground was claimed for the popular right to elect or depose the sovereign, while at the same time, kings were spoken of as “appointed by God.” It is true that they were described, in the same clause, as “chosen by the people”—which was, perhaps, as exact a concurrence in the maxim of Vox populi, vox Dei, as the boldest democrat of the day could demand. In truth, a more democratic course would have defeated its own ends. The murderous and mischievous pranks of Imbize, Ryhove, and such demagogues, at Ghent and elsewhere, with their wild theories of what they called Grecian, Roman, and Helvetian republicanism, had inflicted damage enough on the cause of freedom, and had paved the road for the return of royal despotism. The senators assembled at the Hague gave more moderate instructions to their delegates at Augsburg. They were to place the King’s tenure upon contract—not an implied one, but a contract as literal as the lease of a farm. The house of Austria, they were to maintain, had come into the possession of the seventeen Netherlands upon certain express conditions, and with the understanding that its possession was to cease with the first condition broken. It was a question of law and fact, not of royal or popular right. They were to take the ground, not only that the contract had been violated, but that the foundation of perpetual justice upon which it rested; had likewise been undermined. It was time to vindicate both written charters and general principles. “God has given absolute power to no mortal man,” said Saint Aldegonde, “to do his own will against all laws and all reason.” “The contracts which the King has broken are no pedantic fantasies,” said the estates, “but laws planted by nature in the universal heart of mankind, and expressly acquiesced in by prince and people.” All men, at least, who speak the English tongue, will accept the conclusion of the provinces, that when laws which protected the citizen against arbitrary imprisonment and guaranteed him a trial in his own province—which forbade the appointment of foreigners to high office—which secured the property of the citizen from taxation,

Page 1055

except by the representative body—which forbade intermeddling on the part of the sovereign with the conscience of the subject in religious matters—when such laws had been subverted by blood tribunals, where drowsy judges sentenced thousands to stake and scaffold without a hearing by excommunication, confiscation, banishment-by hanging, beheading, burning, to such enormous extent and with such terrible monotony that the executioner's sword came to be looked upon as the only symbol of justice—-then surely it might be said, without exaggeration, that the complaints of the Netherlanders were "no pedantic fantasies," and that the King had ceased to perform his functions as dispenser of God's justice.

The Netherlanders dealt with facts. They possessed a body of laws, monuments of their national progress, by which as good a share of individual liberty was secured to the citizen as was then enjoyed in any country of the world. Their institutions admitted of great improvement, no doubt; but it was natural that a people so circumstanced should be unwilling to exchange their condition for the vassalage of "Moors or Indians."

At the same time it may be doubted whether the instinct for political freedom only would have sustained them in the long contest, and whether the bonds which united them to the Spanish Crown would have been broken, had it not been for the stronger passion for religious liberty, by which so large a portion of the people was animated. Boldly as the united states of the Netherlands laid down their political maxima, the quarrel might perhaps have been healed if the religious question had admitted of a peaceable solution. Philip's bigotry amounting to frenzy, and the Netherlanders of "the religion" being willing, in their own words, "to die the death" rather than abandon the Reformed faith, there was upon this point no longer room for hope. In the act of abjuration, however, it was thought necessary to give offence to no class of the inhabitants, but to lay down such principles only as enlightened Catholics would not oppose. All parties abhorred the Inquisition, and hatred to that institution is ever prominent among the causes assigned for the deposition of the monarch. "Under pretence of maintaining the Roman religion," said the estates, "the King has sought by evil means to bring into operation the whole strength of the placards and of the Inquisition—the first and true cause of all our miseries."

Without making any assault upon the Roman Catholic faith, the authors of the great act by which Philip was for ever expelled from the Netherlands showed plainly enough that religious persecution had driven them at last to extremity. At the same time, they were willing—for the sake of conciliating all classes of their countrymen—to bring the political causes of discontent into the foreground, and to use discreet language upon the religious question.

Page 1056

Such, then, being the spirit which prompted the provinces upon this great occasion, it may be asked who were the men who signed a document of such importance? In whose-name and by what authority did they act against the sovereign? The signers of the declaration of independence acted in the name and by the authority of the Netherlands people. The estates were the constitutional representatives of that people. The statesmen of that day discovering, upon cold analysis of facts, that Philip's sovereignty was, legally forfeited; formally proclaimed that forfeiture. Then inquiring what had become of the sovereignty, they found it not in the mass of the people, but in the representative body, which actually personated the people. The estates of the different provinces—consisting of the knights, nobles, and burgesses of each—sent, accordingly, their deputies to the general assembly at the Hague; and by this congress the decree of abjuration was issued. It did, not occur to any one to summon the people in their primary assemblies, nor would the people of that day, have comprehended the objects of such a summons. They were accustomed to the action of the estates, and those bodies represented as large a number of political capacities as could be expected of assemblies chosen then upon general principles. The hour had not arrived for more profound analysis of the social compact. Philip was accordingly deposed justly, legally formally justly, because it had become necessary to abjur a monarch who was determined not only to oppress; but to exterminate his people; legally, because he had habitually violated the constitutions which he had sworn to support; formally, because the act was done in the name of the people, by the body historically representing the people.

What, then, was the condition of the nation, after this great step had been taken? It stood, as it were, with its sovereignty in its hand, dividing it into two portions, and offering it, thus separated, to two distinct individuals. The sovereignty of Holland and Zealand had been reluctantly accepted by Orange. The sovereignty of the united provinces had been offered to Anjou, but the terms of agreement with that Duke had not yet been ratified. The movement was therefore triple, consisting of an abjuration and of two separate elections of hereditary chiefs; these two elections being accomplished in the same manner, by the representative bodies respectively of the united provinces, and of Holland and Zealand. Neither the abjuration nor the elections were acted upon beforehand by the communities, the train-bands, or the guilds of the cities—all represented, in fact, by the magistrates and councils of each; nor by the peasantry of the open country—all supposed to be represented by the knights and nobles. All classes of individuals, however; arranged in various political or military combinations, gave their acquiescence afterwards, together with their oaths of allegiance. The people approved the important steps taken by their representatives.

Page 1057

Without a direct intention on the part of the people or its leaders to establish a republic, the Republic established itself. Providence did not permit the whole country, so full of wealth intelligence, healthy political action—so stocked with powerful cities and an energetic population, to be combined into one free and prosperous commonwealth. The factious ambition of a few grandees, the cynical venality of many nobles, the frenzy of the Ghent democracy, the spirit of religious intolerance, the consummate military and political genius of Alexander Farnese, the exaggerated self-abnegation and the tragic fate of Orange, all united to dissever this group of flourishing and kindred provinces.

The want of personal ambition on the part of William the Silent inflicted perhaps a serious damage upon his country. He believed a single chief requisite for the united states; he might have been, but always refused to become that chief; and yet he has been held up for centuries by many writers as a conspirator and a self-seeking intriguer. “It seems to me,” said he, with equal pathos and truth, upon one occasion, “that I was born in this bad planet that all which I do might be misinterpreted.” The people worshipped him, and there was many an occasion when his election would have been carried with enthusiasm. “These provinces,” said John of Nassau, “are coming very unwillingly into the arrangement with the Duke of Alencon, The majority feel much more inclined to elect the Prince, who is daily, and without intermission, implored to give his consent. His Grace, however, will in no wise agree to this; not because he fears the consequences, such as loss of property or increased danger, for therein he is plunged as deeply as he ever could be;—on the contrary, if he considered only the interests of his race and the grandeur of his house, he could expect nothing but increase of honor, gold, and gear, with all other prosperity. He refuses only on this account that it may not be thought that, instead of religious freedom for the country, he has been seeking a kingdom for himself and his own private advancement. Moreover, he believes that the connexion with France will be of more benefit to the country and to Christianity than if a peace should be made with Spain, or than if he should himself accept the sovereignty, as he is desired to do.”

The unfortunate negotiations with Anjou, to which no man was more opposed than Count John, proceeded therefore. In the meantime, the sovereignty over the united provinces was provisionally held by the national council, and, at the urgent solicitation of the states-general, by the Prince. The Archduke Matthias, whose functions were most unceremoniously brought to an end by the transactions which we have been recording, took his leave of the states, and departed in the month of October. Brought to the country a beardless boy, by the intrigues of a faction who wished to use him as a tool against William of

Page 1058

Orange, he had quietly submitted, on the contrary, to serve as the instrument of that great statesman. His personality during his residence was null, and he had to expiate, by many a petty mortification, by many a bitter tear, the boyish ambition which brought him to the Netherlands. He had certainly had ample leisure to repent the haste with which he had got out of his warm bed in Vienna to take his bootless journey to Brussels. Nevertheless, in a country where so much baseness, cruelty, and treachery was habitually practised by men of high position, as was the case in the Netherlands; it is something in favor of Matthias that he had not been base, or cruel, or treacherous. The states voted him, on his departure, a pension of fifty thousand guldens annually, which was probably not paid with exemplary regularity.

CHAPTER V.

Policy of electing Anjou as sovereign—Commode et incommode—Views of Orange—-Opinions at the French Court,—Anjou relieves Cambray— Parma besieges Tourney—-Brave defence by the Princess of Espinoy— Honorable capitulation—Anjou's courtship in England—The Duke's arrival in the Netherlands—Portrait of Anjou—Festivities in Flushing—Inauguration at Antwerp—The conditions or articles subscribed to by the Duke—Attempt upon the life of Orange—The assassin's papers—Confession of Venero —Gaspar Anastro—His escape —Execution of Venero and Zimmermann—Precarious condition of the Prince—His recovery—Death of the Princess—Premature letters of Parma—Further negotiations with Orange as to the sovereignty of Holland and Zealand —Character of the revised Constitution— Comparison of the positions of the Prince before and after his acceptance of the countship.

Thus it was arranged that, for the—present, at least, the Prince should exercise sovereignty over Holland and Zealand; although he had himself used his utmost exertions to induce those provinces to join the rest of the United Netherlands in the proposed election of Anjou. This, however, they sternly refused to do. There was also a great disinclination felt by many in the other states to this hazardous offer of their allegiance, and it was the personal influence of Orange that eventually carried the measure through. Looking at the position of affairs and at the character of Anjou, as they appear to us now, it seems difficult to account for the Prince's policy. It is so natural to judge only by the result, that we are ready to censure statesmen for consequences which beforehand might seem utterly incredible, and for reading falsely human characters whose entire development only a late posterity has had full opportunity to appreciate. Still, one would think that Anjou had been sufficiently known to inspire distrust.

Page 1059

There was but little, too, in the aspect of the French court to encourage hopes of valuable assistance from that quarter. It was urged, not without reason, that the French were as likely to become as dangerous as the Spaniards; that they would prove nearer and more troublesome masters; that France intended the incorporation of the Netherlands into her own kingdom; that the provinces would therefore be dispersed for ever from the German Empire; and that it was as well to hold to the tyrant under whom they had been born, as to give themselves voluntarily to another of their own making. In short, it was maintained, in homely language, that “France and Spain were both under one coverlid.” It might have been added that only extreme misery could make the provinces take either bedfellow. Moreover, it was asserted, with reason, that Anjou would be a very expensive master, for his luxurious and extravagant habits were notorious—that he was a man in whom no confidence could be placed, and one who would grasp at arbitrary power by any means which might present themselves. Above all, it was urged that he was not of the true religion, that he hated the professors of that faith in his heart, and that it was extremely unwise for men whose dearest interests were their religious ones, to elect a sovereign of opposite creed to their own. To these plausible views the Prince of Orange and those who acted with him, had, however; sufficient answers. The Netherlands had waited long enough for assistance from other quarters. Germany would not lift a finger in the cause; on the contrary, the whole of Germany, whether Protestant or Catholic, was either openly or covertly hostile. It was madness to wait till assistance came to them from unseen sources. It was time for them to assist themselves, and to take the best they could get; for when men were starving they could not afford to be dainty. They might be bound, hand and foot, they might be overwhelmed a thousand times before they would receive succor from Germany, or from any land but France. Under the circumstances in which they found themselves, hope delayed was but a cold and meagre consolation.

“To speak plainly,” said Orange, “asking us to wait is very much as if you should keep a man three days without any food in the expectation of a magnificent banquet, should persuade him to refuse bread, and at the end of three days should tell him that the banquet was not ready, but that a still better one was in preparation. Would it not be better, then, that the poor man, to avoid starvation, should wait no longer, but accept bread wherever he might find it? Such is our case at present.”

Page 1060

It was in this vein that he ever wrote and spoke: The Netherlands were to rely upon their own exertions, and to procure the best alliance, together with the most efficient protection possible. They were not strong enough to cope singlehanded with their powerful tyrant, but they were strong enough if they used the instruments which Heaven offered. It was not trusting but tempting Providence to wait supinely, instead of grasping boldly at the means of rescue within reach. It became the character of brave men to act, not to expect. "Otherwise," said the Prince, "we may climb to the top of trees, like the Anabaptists of Munster, and expect God's assistance to drop from the clouds." It is only by listening to these arguments so often repeated, that we can comprehend the policy of Orange at thin period. "God has said that he would furnish the ravens with food, and the lions with their prey," said he; "but the birds and the lions do not, therefore, sit in their nests and their lairs waiting for their food to descend from heaven, but they seek it where it is to be found." So also, at a later day, when events seemed to have justified the distrust so, generally felt in Anjou, the Prince; nevertheless, held similar language. "I do not," said he, calumniate those who tell us to put our trust in God. That is my opinion also. But it is trusting God to use the means which he places in our hands, and to ask that his blessings may come upon them.

There was a feeling entertained by the more sanguine that the French King would heartily assist the Netherlands, after his brother should be fairly installed. He had expressly written to that effect, assuring Anjou that he would help him with all his strength, and would enter into close alliance with those Netherlands which should accept him as prince and sovereign. In another and more private letter to the Duke, the King promised to assist his brother, "even to his last shirt." There is no doubt that it was the policy of the statesmen of France to assist the Netherlands, while the "mignons" of the worthless King were of a contrary opinion. Many of them were secret partizans of Spain; and found it more agreeable to receive the secret pay of Philip than to assist his revolted provinces. They found it easy to excite the jealousy of the monarch against his brother—a passion which proved more effective than the more lofty ambition of annexing the Low Countries, according to the secret promptings of many French politicians. As for the Queen Mother, she was fierce in her determination to see fulfilled in this way the famous prediction of Nostradamus. Three of her sons had successively worn the crown of France. That she might be "the mother of four kings," without laying a third child in the tomb, she was greedy for this proffered sovereignty to her youngest and favorite son. This well-known desire of Catherine de Medici was duly insisted upon by the advocates of the election; for her influence, it was urged, would bring the whole power of France to support the Netherlands.

Page 1061

At any rate, France could not be worse—could hardly be so bad—as their present tyranny. “Better the government of the Gaul, though suspect and dangerous,” said Everard Reyd, “than the truculent dominion of the Spaniard. Even thus will the partridge fly to the hand of man, to escape the talons of the hawk.” As for the individual character of Anjou, proper means would be taken, urged the advocates of his sovereignty, to keep him in check, for it was intended so closely to limit the power conferred upon him, that it would be only supreme in name. The Netherlands were to be, in reality, a republic, of which Anjou was to be a kind of Italian or Frisian podesta. “The Duke is not to act according to his pleasure,” said one of the negotiators, in a private letter to Count John; “we shall take care to provide a good muzzle for him.” How conscientiously the “muzzle” was prepared, will appear from the articles by which the states soon afterwards accepted the new sovereign. How basely he contrived to slip the muzzle—in what cruel and cowardly fashion he bathed his fangs in the blood of the flock committed to him, will also but too soon appear.

As for the religious objection to Anjou, on which more stress was laid than upon any other, the answer was equally ready. Orange professed himself “not theologian enough” to go into the subtleties brought forward. As it was intended to establish most firmly a religious peace, with entire tolerance for all creeds, he did not think it absolutely essential to require a prince of the Reformed faith. It was bigotry to dictate to the sovereign, when full liberty in religious matters was claimed for the subject. Orange was known to be a zealous professor of the Reformed worship himself; but he did not therefore reject political assistance, even though offered by a not very enthusiastic member of the ancient Church.

“If the priest and the Levite pass us by when we are fallen among thieves,” said he, with much aptness and some bitterness, “shall we reject the aid proffered by the Samaritan, because he is of a different faith from the worthy fathers who have left us to perish?” In short, it was observed with perfect truth that Philip had been removed, not because he was a Catholic, but because he was a tyrant; not because his faith was different from that of his subjects, but because he was resolved to exterminate all men whose religion differed from his own. It was not, therefore, inconsistent to choose another Catholic for a sovereign, if proper guarantees could be obtained that he would protect and not oppress the Reformed churches. “If the Duke have the same designs as the King,” said Saint Aldegonde, “it would be a great piece of folly to change one tyrant and persecutor for another. If, on the contrary, instead of oppressing our liberties, he will maintain them, and in place of extirpating the disciples of the true religion, he will protect them, then are all the reasons of our opponents without vigor.”

Page 1062

By midsummer the Duke of Anjou made his appearance in the western part of the Netherlands. The Prince of Parma had recently come before Cambray with the intention of reducing that important city. On the arrival of Anjou, however, at the head of five thousand cavalry—nearly all of them gentlemen of high degree, serving as volunteers—and of twelve thousand infantry, Alexander raised the siege precipitately, and retired towards Tournay. Anjou victualled the city, strengthened the garrison, and then, as his cavalry had only enlisted for a summer's amusement, and could no longer be held together, he disbanded his forces. The bulk of the infantry took service for the states under the Prince of Espinoy, governor of Tournay. The Duke himself, finding that, notwithstanding the treaty of Plessis les Tours and the present showy demonstration upon his part, the states were not yet prepared to render him formal allegiance, and being, moreover, in the heyday of what was universally considered his prosperous courtship of Queen Elizabeth, soon afterwards took his departure for England.

Parma; being thus relieved of his interference, soon afterwards laid siege to the important city of Tournay. The Prince of Espinoy was absent with the army in the north, but the Princess commanded in his absence. She fulfilled her duty in a manner worthy of the house from which she sprang, for the blood of Count Horn was in her veins. The daughter of Mary, de Montmorency, the admiral's sister, answered the summons of Parma to surrender at discretion with defiance. The garrison was encouraged by her steadfastness. The Princess appeared daily among her troops, superintending the defences, and personally directing the officers. During one of the assaults, she is said, but perhaps erroneously; to have been wounded in the arm, notwithstanding which she refused to retire.

The siege lasted two months. Meantime, it became impossible for Orange and the estates, notwithstanding their efforts, to raise a sufficient force to drive Parma from his entrenchments. The city was becoming gradually and surely undermined from without, while at the same time the insidious art of a Dominican friar, Father Gery by name, had been as surely sapping the fidelity of the garrison from within. An open revolt of the Catholic population being on the point of taking place, it became impossible any longer to hold the city. Those of the Reformed faith insisted that the place should be surrendered; and the Princess, being thus deserted by all parties, made an honorable capitulation with Parma. She herself, with all her garrison, was allowed to retire with personal property, and with all the honors of war, while the sack of the city was commuted for one hundred thousand crowns, levied upon the inhabitants: The Princess, on leaving the gates, was received with such a shout of applause from the royal army that she seemed less like a defeated commander than a conqueror. Upon the 30th November, Parma accordingly entered the place which he had been besieging since the 1st of October.

Page 1063

By the end of the autumn, the Prince of Orange, more than ever dissatisfied with the anarchical condition of affairs, and with the obstinate jealousy and parsimony of the different provinces, again summoned the country in the most earnest language to provide for the general defence, and to take measures for the inauguration of Anjou. He painted in sombre colors the prospect which lay before them, if nothing was done to arrest the progress of the internal disorders and of the external foe, whose forces were steadily augmenting: Had the provinces followed his advice, instead of quarreling among themselves, they would have had a powerful army on foot to second the efforts of Anjou, and subsequently to save Tournay. They had remained supine and stolid, even while the cannonading against these beautiful cities was in their very ears. No man seemed to think himself interested in public affair, save when his own province or village was directly attacked. The general interests of the commonwealth were forgotten, in local jealousy. Had it been otherwise, the enemy would have long since been driven over the Meuse. "When money," continued the Prince, "is asked for to carry on the war, men answer as if they were talking with the dead Emperor. To say, however, that they will pay no more, is as much as to declare that they will give up their land and their religion both. I say this, not because I have any desire to put my hands into the common purse. You well know that I have never touched the public money, but it is important that you should feel that there is no war in the country except the one which concerns you all."

The states, thus shamed and stimulated, set themselves in earnest to obey the mandates of the Prince, and sent a special mission to England, to arrange with the Duke of Anjou for his formal installation as sovereign. Saint Aldegonde and other commissioners were already there. It was the memorable epoch in the Anjou wooing, when the rings were exchanged between Elizabeth and the Duke, and when the world thought that the nuptials were on the point of being celebrated. Saint Aldegonde wrote to the Prince of Orange on the 22nd of November, that the marriage had been finally settled upon that day. Throughout the Netherlands, the auspicious tidings were greeted with bonfires, illuminations, and cannonading, and the measures for hailing the Prince, thus highly favored by so great a Queen, as sovereign master of the provinces, were pushed forward with great energy.

Nevertheless, the marriage ended in smoke. There were plenty of tournays, pageants, and banquets; a profusion of nuptial festivities, in short, where nothing was omitted but the nuptials. By the end of January, 1582, the Duke was no nearer the goal than upon his arrival three months before. Acceding, therefore, to the wishes of the Netherland envoys, he prepared for a visit to their country, where the ceremony of his joyful entrance as Duke of Brabant

Page 1064

and sovereign of the other provinces was to take place. No open rupture with Elizabeth occurred. On the contrary, the Queen accompanied the Duke, with a numerous and stately retinue, as far as Canterbury, and sent a most brilliant train of her greatest nobles and gentlemen to escort him to the Netherlands, communicating at the same time, by special letter, her wishes to the estates-general, that he should be treated with as much honor “as if he were her second self.”

On the 10th of February, fifteen large vessels cast anchor at Flushing. The Duke of Anjou, attended by the Earl of Leicester, the Lords Hunsdon, Willoughby, Sheffield, Howard, Sir Philip Sidney, and many other personages of high rank and reputation, landed from this fleet. He was greeted on his arrival by the Prince of Orange, who, with the Prince of Espinoy and a large deputation of the states-general, had been for some days waiting to welcome him. The man whom the Netherlands had chosen for their new master stood on the shores of Zealand. Francis Hercules, Son of France, Duke of Alencon and Anjou, was at that time just twenty-eight years of age; yet not even his flatterers, or his “minions,” of whom he had as regular a train as his royal brother, could claim for him the external graces of youth or of princely dignity. He was below the middle height, puny and ill-shaped. His hair and eyes were brown, his face was seamed with the small-pox, his skin covered with blotches, his nose so swollen and distorted that it seemed to be double. This prominent feature did not escape the sarcasms of his countrymen, who, among other gibes, were wont to observe that the man who always wore two faces, might be expected to have two noses also. It was thought that his revolting appearance was the principal reason for the rupture of the English marriage, and it was in vain that his supporters maintained that if he could forgive her age, she might, in return, excuse his ugliness. It seemed that there was a point of hideousness beyond which even royal princes could not descend with impunity, and the only wonder seemed that Elizabeth, with the handsome Robert Dudley ever at her feet, could even tolerate the addresses of Francis Valois.

His intellect was by no means contemptible. He was not without a certain quickness of apprehension and vivacity of expression which passed current, among his admirers for wit and wisdom. Even the experienced. Saint Aldegonde was deceived in his character, and described him after an hour and half’s interview, as a Prince overflowing with bounty, intelligence, and sincerity. That such men as Saint Aldegonde and the Prince of Orange should be at fault in their judgment, is evidence not so much of their want of discernment, as of the difference between the general reputation of the Duke at that period, and that which has been eventually established for him in history. Moreover, subsequent events were to exhibit the utter baseness of his character more signally than it had

Page 1065

been displayed during his previous career, however vacillating. No more ignoble yet more dangerous creature had yet been loosed upon the devoted soil of the Netherlands. Not one of the personages who had hitherto figured in the long drama of the revolt had enacted so sorry a part. Ambitious but trivial, enterprising but cowardly, an intriguer and a dupe, without religious convictions or political principles, save that he was willing to accept any creed or any system which might advance his own schemes, he was the most unfit protector for a people who, whether wrong or right; were at least in earnest, and who were accustomed to regard truth as one of the virtues. He was certainly not deficient in self-esteem. With a figure which was insignificant, and a countenance which was repulsive, he had hoped to efface the impression made upon Elizabeth's imagination by the handsomest man in Europe. With a commonplace capacity, and with a narrow political education, he intended to circumvent the most profound statesman of his age. And there, upon the pier at Flushing, he stood between them both; between the magnificent Leicester, whom he had thought to outshine, and the silent Prince of Orange, whom he was determined to outwit. Posterity has long been aware how far he succeeded in the one and the other attempt.

The Duke's arrival was greeted with the roar of artillery, the ringing of bells, and the acclamations of a large concourse of the inhabitants; suitable speeches were made by the magistrates of the town, the deputies of Zealand, and other functionaries, and a stately banquet was provided, so remarkable "for its sugar-work and other delicacies, as to entirely astonish the French and English lords who partook thereof." The Duke visited Middelburg, where he was received with great state, and to the authorities of which he expressed his gratification at finding two such stately cities situate so close to each other on one little island.

On the 17th of February, he set sail for Antwerp. A fleet of fifty-four vessels, covered with flags and streamers, conveyed him and his retinue, together with the large deputation which had welcomed him at Flushing, to the great commercial metropolis. He stepped on shore at Kiel within a bowshot of the city—for, like other Dukes of Brabant, he was not to enter Antwerp until he had taken the oaths to respect the constitution—and the ceremony of inauguration was to take place outside the walls. A large platform had been erected for this purpose, commanding a view of the stately city, with its bristling fortifications and shady groves. A throne, covered with velvet and gold, was prepared, and here the Duke took his seat, surrounded by a brilliant throng, including many of the most distinguished personages in Europe.

Page 1066

It was a bright winter's morning. The gaily bannered fleet lay conspicuous in the river, while an enormous concourse of people were thronging from all sides to greet the new sovereign. Twenty thousand burgher troops, in bright uniforms, surrounded the platform, upon the tapestried floor of which stood the magistrates of Antwerp, the leading members of the Brabant estates, with the Prince of Orange at their head, together with many other great functionaries. The magnificence everywhere displayed, and especially the splendid costumes of the military companies, excited the profound astonishment of the French, who exclaimed that every soldier seemed a captain, and who regarded with vexation their own inferior equipments.

Andrew Hesaels, 'doctor utriusque juris', delivered a salutatory oration, in which, among other flights of eloquence, he expressed the hope of the provinces that the Duke, with the beams of his greatness, wisdom, and magnanimity, would disipate all the mists, fogs, and other exhalations which were pernicious to their national prosperity, and that he would bring back the sunlight of their ancient glory.

Anjou answered these compliments with equal courtesy, and had much to say of his willingness to shed every drop of his blood in defence of the Brabant liberties; but it might have damped the enthusiasm of the moment could the curtain of the not very distant future have been lifted. The audience, listening to these promises, might have seen that it was not so much his blood as theirs which he was disposed to shed, and less, too, in defence than in violation of those same liberties which he was swearing to protect.

Orator Hessels then read aloud the articles of the Joyous Entry, in the Flemish language, and the Duke was asked if he required any explanations of that celebrated constitution. He replied that he had thoroughly studied its provisions, with the assistance of the Prince of Orange, during his voyage from Flushing, and was quite prepared to swear to maintain them. The oaths, according to the antique custom, were then administered. Afterwards, the ducal hat and the velvet mantle, lined with ermine, were brought, the Prince of Orange assisting his Highness to assume this historical costume of the Brabant dukes, and saying to him, as he fastened the button at the throat, "I must secure this robe so firmly, my lord, that no man may ever tear it from your shoulders."

Thus arrayed in his garment of sovereignty, Anjou was compelled to listen to another oration from, the pensionary of Antwerp, John Van der Werken. He then exchanged oaths with the magistrates of the city, and received the keys, which he returned for safe-keeping to the burgomaster. Meanwhile the trumpets sounded, largess of gold and silver coins was scattered among the people, and the heralds cried aloud, "Long live the Duke of Brabant."

Page 1067

A procession was then formed to escort the new Duke to his commercial capital. A stately and striking procession it was. The Hanseatic merchants in ancient German attires the English merchants in long velvet cassocks, the heralds is their quaint costume, the long train of civic militia with full, bands of music, the chief functionaries of city and province in their black mantles and gold chains, all marching under emblematical standards or time-honored blazons, followed each other in dignified order. Then came the Duke himself on a white Barbary horse, caparisoned with cloth of gold. He was surrounded with English, French, and Netherland grandees, many of them of world-wide reputation. There was the stately Leicester; Sir Philip Sidney, the mirror of chivalry; the gaunt and imposing form of William the Silent; his son; Count Maurice of Nassau, destined to be the first captain of his age, then a handsome, dark-eyed lad of fifteen; the Dauphin of Auvergne; the Marechal de Biron and his sons; the Prince of Espinoy; the Lords Sheffield; Willoughby, Howard; Hunsdon, and many others of high degree and distinguished reputation. The ancient guilds of the crossbow-men; and archers of Brabant, splendidly accoutred; formed the bodyguard of the Duke, while his French cavaliers, the life-guardsmen of the Prince of Orange, and the troops of they line; followed in great numbers, their glittering uniforms all, gaily intermingled, “like the flowers de luce upon a royal mantle!” The procession, thus gorgeous and gay, was terminated by, a dismal group of three hundred malefactors, marching in fetters, and imploring pardon of the Duke, a boon which was to be granted at evening. Great torches, although it was high noon were burning along the road, at intervals of four or five feet, in a continuous line reaching from the platform at Kiel to the portal of Saint Joris, through which the entrance to the city was to be made.

Inside the gate a stupendous allegory was awaiting the approach of the new sovereign. A huge gilded car, crowded with those emblematical and highly bedizened personages so dear to the Netherlanders, obstructed the advance of the procession. All the virtues seemed to have come out for an airing in one chariot, and were now waiting to offer their homage to Francis Hercules Valois. Religion in “red satin,” holding the gospel in her hand, was supported by Justice, “in orange velvet,” armed with blade and beam. Prudence and Fortitude embraced each other near a column enwreathed by serpents “with their tails in their ears to typify deafness to flattery,” while Patriotism as a pelican, and Patience as a brooding hen, looked benignantly upon the scene. This greeting duly acknowledged, the procession advanced into the city. The streets were lined with troops and with citizens; the balconies were filled with fair women; “the very gables,” says an enthusiastic contemporary, “seemed to laugh with ladies’ eyes.” The market-place was filled with

Page 1068

waxen torches and with blazing tar barrels, while in its centre stood the giant Antigonus—founder of the city thirteen hundred years before the Christian era—the fabulous personage who was accustomed to throw the right hands of all smuggling merchants into the Scheld. This colossal individual, attired in a “surcoat of sky-blue,” and holding a banner emblazoned with the arms of Spain, turned its head as the Duke entered the square, saluted the new sovereign, and then dropping the Spanish scutcheon upon the ground, raised aloft another bearing the arms of Anjou.

And thus, amid exuberant outpouring of confidence, another lord and master had made his triumphal entrance into the Netherlands. Alas how often had this sanguine people greeted with similar acclamations the advent of their betrayers and their tyrants! How soon were they to discover that the man whom they were thus receiving with the warmest enthusiasm was the most treacherous tyrant of all.

It was nightfall before the procession at last reached the palace of Saint Michael, which had been fitted up for the temporary reception of the Duke. The next day was devoted to speech-making; various deputations waiting upon the new Duke of Brabant with congratulatory addresses. The Grand Pensionary delivered a pompous oration upon a platform hung with sky-blue silk, and carpeted with cloth of gold. A committee of the German and French Reformed Churches made a long harangue, in which they expressed the hope that the Lord would make the Duke “as valiant as David, as wise as Solomon, and as pious as Hezekiah.” A Roman Catholic deputation informed his Highness that for eight months the members of the Ancient Church had been forbidden all religious exercises, saving baptism, marriage, visitation of the sick, and burials. A promise was therefore made that this prohibition, which had been the result of the disturbances recorded in a preceding chapter, should be immediately modified, and on the 15th of March, accordingly, it was arranged, by command of the magistrates, that all Catholics should have permission to attend public worship, according to the ancient ceremonial, in the church of Saint Michael, which had been originally designated for the use of the new Duke of Brabant. It was, however, stipulated that all who desired to partake of this privilege should take the oath of abjuration beforehand, and go to the church without arms.

Here then had been oaths enough, orations enough, compliments enough, to make any agreement steadfast, so far as windy suspirations could furnish a solid foundation for the social compact. Bells, trumpets, and the brazen throats of men and of cannons had made a sufficient din, torches and tar-barrels had made a sufficient glare, to confirm—so far as noise and blazing pitch could confirm—the decorous proceedings of church and town-house, but time was soon to show the value of such demonstrations. Meantime, the “muzzle” had been fastened

Page 1069

with solemnity and accepted with docility. The terms of the treaty concluded at Plessis lea Tours and Bordeaux were made public. The Duke had subscribed to twenty-seven articles; which made as stringent and sensible a constitutional compact as could be desired by any Netherland patriot. These articles, taken in connection with the ancient charters which they expressly upheld, left to the new sovereign no vestige of arbitrary power. He was merely the hereditary president of a representative republic. He was to be Duke, Count, Margrave, or Seignior of the different provinces on the same terms which his predecessors had accepted. He was to transmit the dignities to his children. If there were more than one child, the provinces were to select one of the number for their sovereign. He was to maintain all the ancient privileges, charters, statutes, and customs, and to forfeit his sovereignty at the first violation. He was to assemble the states-general at least once a year. He was always to reside in the Netherlands. He was to permit none but natives to hold office. His right of appointment to all important posts was limited to a selection from three candidates, to be proposed by the estates of the province concerned, at each vacancy. He was to maintain “the Religion” and the religious peace in the same state in which they then were, or as should afterwards be ordained by the estates of each province, without making any innovation on his own part. Holland and Zealand were to remain as they were, both in the matter of religion and otherwise. His Highness was not to permit that any one should be examined or molested in his house, or otherwise, in the matter or under pretext of religion. He was to procure the assistance of the King of France for the Netherlands. He was to maintain a perfect and a perpetual league, offensive and defensive, between that kingdom and the provinces; without; however, permitting any incorporation of territory. He was to carry on the war against Spain with his own means and those furnished by his royal brother, in addition to a yearly, contribution by the estates of two million four hundred thousand guldens. He was to dismiss all troops at command of the states-general. He was to make no treaty with Spain without their consent.

It would be superfluous to point out the great difference between the notions entertained upon international law in the sixteenth century and in our own. A state of nominal peace existed between Spain, France and England; yet here was the brother of the French monarch, at the head of French troops, and attended by the grandees of England solemnly accepting the sovereignty over the revolted provinces of Spain. It is also curious to observe that the constitutional compact, by which the new sovereign of the Netherlands was admitted to the government, would have been repudiated as revolutionary and republican by the monarchs of France or England, if an attempt had been made to

Page 1070

apply it to their own realms, for the ancient charters—which in reality constituted a republican form of government—had all been re-established by the agreement with Anjou. The first-fruits of the ban now began to display themselves. Sunday, 18th of March, 1582, was the birthday of the Duke of Anjou, and a great festival had been arranged, accordingly, for the evening, at the palace of Saint Michael, the Prince of Orange as well as all the great French lords being of course invited. The Prince dined, as usual, at his house in the neighbourhood of the citadel, in company with the Counts Hohenlo and Laval, and the two distinguished French commissioners, Bonnivet and Des Pruneaux. Young Maurice of Nassau, and two nephews of the Prince, sons of his brother John, were also present at table. During dinner the conversation was animated, many stories being related of the cruelties which had been practised by the Spaniards in the provinces. On rising from the table, Orange led the way from the dining room to his own apartments, showing the noblemen in his company as he passed along, a piece of tapestry upon which some Spanish soldiers were represented. At this moment, as he stood upon the threshold of the ante-chamber, a youth of small stature, vulgar mien, and pale dark complexion, appeared from among the servants and offered him a petition. He took the paper, and as he did so, the stranger suddenly drew a pistol and discharged it at the head of the Prince. The ball entered the neck under the right ear, passed through the roof of the mouth, and came out under the left jaw-bone, carrying with it two teeth. The pistol had been held so near, that the hair and beard of the Prince were set on fire by the discharge. He remained standing, but blinded, stunned, and for a moment entirely ignorant of what had occurred. As he afterwards observed, he thought perhaps that a part of the house had suddenly fallen. Finding very soon that his hair and beard were burning, he comprehended what had occurred; and called out quickly, “Do not kill him—I forgive him my death!” and turning to the French noblemen present, he added, “Alas! what a faithful servant does his Highness lose in me!”

These were his first words, spoken when, as all believed, he had been mortally wounded. The, message of mercy came, however, too late; for two of the gentlemen present, by an irresistible impulse, had run the assassin through with their rapiers. The halberdiers rushed upon him immediately after wards, so that he fell pierced in thirty-two vital places. The Prince, supported by his friends, walked to his chamber, where he was put to bed, while the surgeons examined and bandaged the wound. It was most dangerous in appearance, but a very strange circumstance gave more hope than could otherwise have been entertained. The flame from the pistol had been so close that it had actually cauterized the wound inflicted by the ball. But for this, it was supposed that the

Page 1071

flow of blood from the veins which had been shot through would have proved fatal before the wound could be dressed. The Prince, after the first shock, had recovered full possession of his senses, and believing himself to be dying, he expressed the most unaffected sympathy for the condition in which the Duke of Anjou would be placed by his death. “Alas, poor Prince!” he cried frequently; “alas, what troubles will now beset thee!” The surgeons enjoined and implored his silence, as speaking might cause the wound to prove immediately fatal. He complied, but wrote incessantly. As long as his heart could beat, it was impossible for him not to be occupied with his country.

Lion Petit, a trusty Captain of the city guard, forced his way to the chamber, it being, absolutely necessary, said the honest burgher, for him to see with his own eyes that the Prince was living, and report the fact to the townspeople otherwise, so great was the excitement, it was impossible to say what might be the result. It was in fact believed that the Prince was already dead, and it was whispered that he had been assassinated by the order of Anjou. This horrible suspicion was flying through the city, and producing a fierce exasperation, as men talked of the murder of Coligny, of Saint Bartholomew, of the murderous propensities of the Valois race. Had the attempt taken place in the evening, at the birth-night banquet of Anjou, a horrible massacre would have been the inevitable issue. As it happened, however, circumstances soon, occurred to remove, the suspicion from the French, and to indicate the origin of the crime. Meantime, Captain Petit was urged by the Prince, in writing, to go forth instantly with the news that he yet survived, but to implore the people, in case God should call him to Himself, to hold him in kind remembrance, to make no tumult, and to serve the Duke obediently and faithfully.

Meantime, the youthful Maurice of Nassau was giving proof of that cool determination which already marked his character. It was natural that a boy of fifteen should be somewhat agitated at seeing such a father shot through the head before his eyes. His situation was rendered doubly grave by the suspicions which were instantly engendered as to the probable origin of the attempt. It was already whispered in the hall that the gentlemen who had been so officious in slaying the assassin, were his accomplices, who—upon the principle that dead men would tell no tales—were disposed, now that the deed was done, to preclude inconvenient revelations as to their own share in the crime. Maurice, notwithstanding these causes for perturbation, and despite his grief at his father’s probable death, remained steadily by the body of the murderer. He was determined, if possible, to unravel the plot, and he waited to possess himself of all papers and other articles which might be found upon the person of the deceased.

Page 1072

A scrupulous search was at once made by the attendants, and everything placed in the young Count's own hands. This done, Maurice expressed a doubt lest some of the villain's accomplices might attempt to take the articles from him, whereupon a faithful old servant of his father came forward, who with an emphatic expression of the importance of securing such important documents, took his young master under his cloak, and led him to a retired apartment of the house. Here, after a rapid examination, it was found that the papers were all in Spanish, written by Spaniards to Spaniards, so that it was obvious that the conspiracy, if one there were, was not a French conspiracy. The servant, therefore, advised Maurice to go to his father, while he would himself instantly descend to the hall with this important intelligence. Count Hohenlo had, from the instant of the murder, ordered the doors to be fastened, and had permitted no one to enter or to leave the apartment without his permission. The information now brought by the servant as to the character of the papers caused great relief to the minds of all; for, till that moment, suspicion had even lighted upon men who were the firm friends of the Prince.

Saint Aldegonde, who had meantime arrived, now proceeded, in company of the other gentlemen, to examine the papers and other articles taken from the assassin. The pistol with which he had done the deed was lying upon the floor; a naked poniard, which he would probably have used also, had his thumb not been blown off by the discharge of the pistol, was found in his trunk hose. In his pockets were an Agnus Dei, a taper of green wax, two bits of hareskin, two dried toads—which were supposed to be sorcerer's charms—a, crucifix, a Jesuit catechism, a prayer-book, a pocket-book containing two Spanish bills of exchange—one for two thousand, and one for eight hundred and seventy-seven crowns—and a set of writing tablets. These last were covered with vows and pious invocations, in reference to the murderous affair which the writer had in hand. He had addressed fervent prayers to the "Virgin Mary, to the Angel Gabriel, to the Saviour, and to the Saviour's Son as if," says the Antwerp chronicler, with simplicity, "the Lord Jesus had a son"—that they might all use their intercession with the Almighty towards the certain and safe accomplishment of the contemplated deed. Should he come off successful and unharmed, he solemnly vowed to fast a week on bread and water. Furthermore, he promised to Christ a "new coat of costly pattern;" to the Mother of God, at Guadalupe, a new gown; to Our Lady of Montserrat, a crown, a gown, and a lamp; and so on through along list of similar presents thus contemplated for various Shrines. The poor fanatical fool had been taught by deeper villains than himself that his pistol was to rid the world of a tyrant, and to open his own pathway to Heaven, if his career should be cut short on earth. To prevent so undesirable a catastrophe to himself, however, his most natural conception had been to bribe the whole heavenly host, from the Virgin Mary downwards, for he had been taught that absolution for murder was to be bought and sold like other merchandise. He had also been persuaded that, after accomplishing the deed, he would become invisible.

Page 1073

Saint Aldegonde hastened to lay the result of this examination before the Duke of Anjou. Information was likewise instantly conveyed to the magistrates at the Town House, and these measures were successful in restoring confidence throughout the city as to the intentions of the new government. Anjou immediately convened the State Council, issued a summons for an early meeting of the states-general, and published a proclamation that all persons having information to give concerning the crime which had just been committed, should come instantly forward, upon pain of death. The body of the assassin was forthwith exposed upon the public square, and was soon recognized as that of one Juan Jaureguy, a servant in the employ of Gaspar d'Anastro, a Spanish merchant of Antwerp. The letters and bills of exchange had also, on nearer examination at the Town House, implicated Anastro in the affair. His house was immediately searched, but the merchant had taken his departure, upon the previous Tuesday, under pretext of pressing affairs at Calais. His cashier, Venero, and a Dominican friar, named Antony Zimmermann, both inmates of his family, were, however, arrested upon suspicion. On the following day the watch stationed at the gate carried the foreign post-bags, as soon as they arrived, to the magistracy, when letters were found from Anastro to Venero, which made the affair quite plain. After they had been thoroughly studied, they were shown to Venero, who, seeing himself thus completely ruined, asked for pen and ink, and wrote a full confession.

It appeared that the crime was purely a commercial speculation on the part of Anastro. That merchant, being on the verge of bankruptcy, had entered with Philip into a mutual contract, which the King had signed with his hand and sealed with his seal, and according to which Anastro, within a certain period, was to take the life of William of Orange, and for so doing was to receive eighty thousand ducats, and the cross of Santiago. To be a knight companion of Spain's proudest order of chivalry was the guerdon, over and above the eighty thousand pieces of silver, which Spain's monarch promised the murderer, if he should succeed. As for Anastro himself, he was too frugal and too wary to risk his own life, or to lose much of the premium. With, tears streaming down his cheeks, he painted to his faithful cashier the picture which his master would present, when men should point at him and say, "Behold yon bankrupt!" protesting, therefore, that he would murder Orange and secure the reward, or perish in the attempt. Saying this, he again shed many tears. Venero, seeing his master thus disconsolate, wept bitterly likewise; and begged him not to risk his own precious life. After this pathetic commingling of their grief, the merchant and his book-keeper became more composed, and it was at last concerted between them that John Jaureguy should be entrusted with the job. Anastro had intended—as he said in a letter

Page 1074

afterwards intercepted—“to accomplish the deed with his own hand; but, as God had probably reserved him for other things, and particularly to be of service to his very affectionate friends, he had thought best to entrust the execution of the design to his servant.” The price paid by the master to the man, for the work, seems to have been but two thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven crowns. The cowardly and crafty principal escaped. He had gone post haste to Dunkirk, pretending that the sudden death of his agent in Calais required his immediate presence in that city. Governor Sweveseel, of Dunkirk, sent an orderly to get a passport for him from La Motte, commanding at Gravelingen. Anastro being on tenter-hooks lest the news should arrive that the projected murder had been consummated before he had crossed the border, testified extravagant joy on the arrival of the passport, and gave the messenger who brought it thirty pistoles. Such conduct naturally excited a vague suspicion in the mind of the governor, but the merchant’s character was good, and he had brought pressing letters from Admiral Treslong. Sweveseel did not dare to arrest him without cause, and he neither knew that any crime had been committed; nor that the man before him was the criminal. Two hours after the traveller’s departure, the news arrived of the deed, together with orders to arrest Anastro, but it was too late. The merchant had found refuge within the lines of Parma.

Meanwhile, the Prince lay in a most critical condition. Believing that his end was fast approaching; he dictated letters to the states-general, entreating them to continue in their obedience to the Duke, than whom he affirmed that he knew no better prince for the government of the provinces. These letters were despatched by Saint Aldegonde to the assembly, from which body a deputation, in obedience to the wishes of Orange, was sent to Anjou, with expressions of condolence and fidelity.

On Wednesday a solemn fast was held, according to proclamation, in Antwerp, all work and all amusements being prohibited, and special prayers commanded in all the churches for the recovery of the Prince. “Never, within men’s memory,” says an account published at the moment, in Antwerp, “had such crowds been seen in the churches, nor so many tears been shed.”

The process against Venero and Zimmermann was rapidly carried through, for both had made a full confession of their share in the crime. The Prince had enjoined from his sick bed, however, that the case should be conducted with strict regard to justice, and, when the execution could no longer be deferred, he had sent a written request, by the hands of Saint Aldegonde, that they should be put to death in the least painful manner. The request was complied with, but there can be no doubt that the criminals, had it not been made, would have expiated their offence by the most lingering tortures. Owing to the intercession of the man who was to have been their victim, they were strangled, before being quartered, upon a scaffold erected in the market-place, opposite the Town House. This execution took place on Wednesday, the 28th of March.

Page 1075

The Prince, meanwhile, was thought to be mending, and thanksgivings began to be mingled with the prayers offered almost every hour in the churches; but for eighteen days he lay in a most precarious state. His wife hardly left his bedside, and his sister, Catharine Countess of Schwartzburg, was indefatigable in her attentions. The Duke of Anjou visited him daily, and expressed the most filial anxiety for his recovery, but the hopes, which had been gradually growing stronger, were on the 5th of April exchanged for the deepest apprehensions. Upon that day the cicatrix by which the flow of blood from the neck had been prevented, almost from the first infliction of the wound, fell off. The veins poured forth a vast quantity of blood; it seemed impossible to check the haemorrhage, and all hope appeared to vanish. The Prince resigned himself to his fate, and bade his children “good night for ever,” saying calmly, “it is now all over with me.”

It was difficult, without suffocating the patient, to fasten a bandage tightly enough to staunch the wound, but Leonardo Botalli, of Asti, body physician of Anjou, was nevertheless fortunate enough to devise a simple mechanical expedient, which proved successful. By his advice; a succession of attendants, relieving each other day and night, prevented the flow of blood by keeping the orifice of the wound slightly but firmly compressed with the thumb. After a period of anxious expectation, the wound again closed; and by the end of the month the Prince was convalescent. On the 2nd of May he went to offer thanksgiving in the Great Cathedral, amid the joyful sobs of a vast and most earnest throng.

The Prince, was saved, but unhappily the murderer had yet found an illustrious victim. The Princess of Orange; Charlotte de Bourbon—the devoted wife who for seven years, had so faithfully shared his joys and sorrows—lay already on her death-bed. Exhausted by anxiety, long watching; and the alternations of hope and fear during the first eighteen days, she had been prostrated by despair at the renewed haemorrhage. A violent fever seized her, under which she sank on the 5th of May, three days after the solemn thanksgiving for her husband’s recovery. The Prince, who loved her tenderly, was in great danger of relapse upon the sad event, which, although not sudden, had not been anticipated. She was laid in her grave on the 9th of May, amid the lamentations of the whole country, for her virtues were universally known and cherished. She was a woman of rare intelligence, accomplishment, and gentleness of disposition; whose only offence had been to break, by her marriage, the Church vows to which she had been forced in her childhood, but which had been pronounced illegal by competent authority, both ecclesiastical and lay. For this, and for the contrast which her virtues afforded to the vices of her predecessor, she was the mark of calumny and insult. These attacks, however, had cast no shadow

Page 1076

upon the serenity of her married life, and so long as she lived she was the trusted companion and consoler of her husband. “His Highness,” wrote Count John in 1580, “is in excellent health, and, in spite of adversity, incredible labor, perplexity, and dangers, is in such good spirits that, it makes me happy to witness it. No doubt a chief reason is the consolation he derives from the pious and highly-intelligent wife whom, the Lord has given him—a woman who ever conforms to his wishes, and is inexpressibly dear to him.”

The Princess left six daughters—Louisa Juliana, Elizabeth, Catharina Belgica, Flandrina, Charlotta Brabantica, and Emilia Secunda.

Parma received the first intelligence of the attempt from the mouth of Anastro himself, who assured him that the deed had been entirely successful, and claimed the promised reward.

Alexander, in consequence, addressed circular letters to the authorities of Antwerp, Brussels, Bruges, and other cities, calling upon them, now that they had been relieved of their tyrant and their betrayer, to return again to the path of their duty and to the ever open arms of their lawful monarch. These letters were premature. On the other hand, the states of Holland and Zealand remained in permanent session, awaiting with extreme anxiety the result of the Prince’s wound. “With the death of his Excellency, if God should please to take him to himself,” said the magistracy of Leyden, “in the death of the Prince we all foresee our own death.” It was, in truth, an anxious moment, and the revulsion of feeling consequent on his recovery was proportionately intense.

In consequence of the excitement produced by this event, it was no longer possible for the Prince to decline accepting the countship of Holland and Zealand, which he had refused absolutely two years before, and which he had again rejected, except for a limited period, in the year 1581. It was well understood, as appears by the treaty with Anjou, and afterwards formally arranged, “that the Duke was never, to claim sovereignty over Holland and Zealand,” and the offer of the sovereign countship of Holland was again made to the Prince of Orange in most urgent terms. It will be recollected that he had accepted the sovereignty on the 5th of July, 1581, only for the term of the war. In a letter, dated Bruges, 14th of August, 1582, he accepted the dignity without limitation. This offer and acceptance, however, constituted but the preliminaries, for it was further necessary that the letters of “Renversal” should be drawn up, that they should be formally delivered, and that a new constitution should be laid down, and confirmed by mutual oaths. After these steps had been taken, the ceremonious inauguration or rendering of homage was to be celebrated.

All these measures were duly arranged, except the last. The installation of the new Count of Holland was prevented by his death, and the northern provinces remained a Republic, not only in fact but in name.

Page 1077

In political matters; the basis of the new constitution was the “Great Privilege” of the Lady Mary, the Magna Charta of the country. That memorable monument in the history of the Netherlands and of municipal progress had, been overthrown by Mary’s son, with the forced acquiescence of the states, and it was therefore stipulated by the new article, that even such laws and privileges as had fallen into disuse should be revived. It was furthermore provided that the little state should be a free Countship, and should thus silently sever its connexion with the Empire.

With regard to the position of the Prince, as hereditary chief of the little commonwealth, his actual power was rather diminished than increased by his new dignity. What was his position at the moment? He was sovereign during the war, on the general basis of the authority originally bestowed upon him by the King’s commission of stadholder. In 1581, his Majesty had been abjured and the stadholder had become sovereign. He held in his hands the supreme power, legislative, judicial, executive. The Counts of Holland—and Philip as their successor—were the great fountains of that triple stream. Concessions and exceptions had become so extensive; no doubt, that the provincial charters constituted a vast body of “liberties” by which the whole country was reasonably well supplied. At the same time, all the power not expressly granted away remained in the breast of the Count. If ambition, then, had been William’s ruling principle, he had exchanged substance for shadow, for the new state now constituted was a free commonwealth—a republic in all but name.

By the new constitution he ceased to be the source of governmental life, or to derive his own authority from above by right divine. The sacred oil which had flowed from Charles the Simple’s beard was dried up. Orange’s sovereignty was from the estates; as legal representatives of the people; and, instead of exercising all the powers not otherwise granted away, he was content with those especially conferred upon him. He could neither declare war nor conclude peace without the co-operation of the representative body. The appointing power was scrupulously limited. Judges, magistrates, governors, sheriffs, provincial and municipal officers, were to be nominated by the local authorities or by the estates, on the triple principle. From these triple nominations he had only the right of selection by advice and consent of his council. He was expressly enjoined to see that the law was carried to every man’s door, without any distinction of persons; to submit himself to its behests, to watch against all impedimenta to the even flow of justice, to prevent false imprisonments, and to secure trials for every accused person by the local tribunals. This was certainly little in accordance with the arbitrary practice of the past quarter of a century.

Page 1078

With respect to the great principle of taxation, stricter bonds even were provided than those which already existed. Not only the right of taxation remained with the states, but the Count was to see that, except for war purposes, every impost was levied by a unanimous vote. He was expressly forbidden to tamper with the currency. As executive head, save in his capacity as Commander-in-chief by land or sea, the new sovereign was, in short, strictly limited by self-imposed laws. It had rested with him to dictate or to accept a constitution. He had in his memorable letter of August, 1582, from Bruges, laid down generally the articles prepared at Plessia and Bourdeaux, for Anjou-together with all applicable provisions of the Joyous Entry of Brabant—as the outlines of the constitution for the little commonwealth then forming in the north. To these provisions he was willing to add any others which, after ripe deliberation, might be thought beneficial to the country.

Thus limited were his executive functions. As to his judicial authority it had ceased to exist. The Count of Holland was now the guardian of the laws, but the judges were to administer them. He held the sword of justice to protect and to execute, while the scales were left in the hands which had learned to weigh and to measure.

As to the Count's legislative authority, it had become coordinate with, if not subordinate to, that of the representative body. He was strictly prohibited from interfering with the right of the separate or the general states to assemble as often as they should think proper; and he was also forbidden to summon them outside their own territory. This was one immense step in the progress of representative liberty, and the next was equally important. It was now formally stipulated that the estates were to deliberate upon all measures which "concerned justice and polity," and that no change was to be made—that is to say, no new law was to pass without their consent as well as that of the council. Thus, the principle was established of two legislative chambers, with the right, but not the exclusive right, of initiation on the part of government, and in the sixteenth century one would hardly look for broader views of civil liberty and representative government. The foundation of a free commonwealth was thus securely laid, which had William lived, would have been a representative monarchy, but which his death converted into a federal republic. It was necessary for the sake of unity to give a connected outline of these proceedings with regard to the sovereignty of Orange. The formal inauguration, only remained, and this, as will be seen, was for ever interrupted.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Character of brave men to act, not to expect
Colonel Ysselstein, "dismissed for a homicide or two"
God has given absolute power to no mortal man
Hope delayed was but a cold and meagre consolation
Natural to judge only by the result
No authority over an army which they did not pay
Unduly dejected in adversity

BOOKRAGS

Page 1079

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 34

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley
1855

CHAPTER VI.

Parma recals the foreign troops—Siege of Oudenarde—Coolness of Alexander—-Capture of the city and of Nineve—Inauguration of Anjou at Ghent—Attempt upon his life and that of Orange—Lamoral Egmont's implication in the plot—Parma's unsuccessful attack upon Ghent— Secret plans of Anjou—Dunkirk, Ostend, and other towns surprised by his adherents—Failure at Bruges—Suspicions at Antwerp—Duplicity of Anjou—The "French Fury"—Details of that transaction— Discomfiture and disgrace of the Duke—His subsequent effrontery— His letters to the magistracy of Antwerp, to, the Estates, and to Orange—Extensive correspondence between Anjou and the, French Court with Orange and the Estates—Difficult position of the Prince—His policy—-Remarkable letter to the States-general—Provisional arrangement with Anjou—-Marriage of the Archbishop of Cologne— Marriage of Orange with Louisa de Coligny—-Movements in Holland, Brabant, Flanders, and other provinces, to induce the Prince to accept sovereignty over the whole country—His steady refusal— Treason of Van den Berg in Gueldres—Intrigues of Prince Chimay and Imbize in Flanders—Counter efforts of Orange and the patriot party —Fate of Imbize—Reconciliation of Bruges—Death of Anjou

During the course of the year 1582, the military operations on both sides had been languid and desultory, the Prince of Parma, not having a large force at his command, being comparatively inactive. In consequence, however, of the treaty concluded between the United states and Anjou, Parma had persuaded the Walloon provinces that it had now become absolutely necessary for them to permit the entrance of fresh Italian and Spanish troops. This, then, was the end of the famous provision against foreign soldiery in the Walloon treaty of reconciliation. The Abbot of Saint Vaast was immediately despatched on a special mission to Spain, and the troops, by midsummer, had already begun to pour, into the Netherlands.

In the meantime, Farnese, while awaiting these reinforcements, had not been idle, but had been quietly picking up several important cities. Early in the spring he had laid siege to Oudenarde, a place of considerable importance upon the Scheld, and celebrated as the birthplace of his grandmother, Margaret van Geest. The burghers were obstinate; the defence was protracted; the sorties were bold; the skirmishes

frequent and sanguinary: Alexander commanded personally in the trenches, encouraging his men by his example, and often working with the mattock, or handling a spear in the assault, Like a private pioneer or soldier. Towards the end of the siege, he scarcely ever left the scene of operation,

Page 1080

and he took his meals near the outer defences, that he might lose no opportunity of superintending the labors of his troops. One day his dinner was laid for himself and staff in the open air, close to the entrenchment. He was himself engaged in planting a battery against a weak point in the city wall, and would on no account withdraw for all instant. The tablecloth was stretched over a number of drum-heads, placed close together, and several, nobles of distinction—Aremberg, Montigny, Richebourg, La Motte, and others, were his guests at dinner. Hardly had the repast commenced, when a ball came flying over the table, taking off the head of a, young Walloon officer who was sitting near Parma, and, who was earnestly requesting a foremost place in the morrow's assault. A portion of his skull struck out the eye of another gentleman present. A second ball from the town fortifications, equally well directed, destroyed two more of the guests as they sat at the banquet—one a German captain, the other the Judge-Advocate-General. The blood and brains of these unfortunate individuals were strewn over the festive board, and the others all started to their feet, having little appetite left for their dinner. Alexander alone remained in his seat, manifesting no discomposure. Quietly ordering the attendants to remove the dead bodies, and to bring a clean tablecloth, he insisted that his guests should resume their places at the banquet which had been interrupted in such ghastly fashion. He stated with very determined aspect that he could not allow the heretic burghers of Oudenarde the triumph of frightening him from his dinner, or from the post of danger. The other gentlemen could, of course, do no less than imitate the impassibility of their chief, and the repast was accordingly concluded without further interruption. Not long afterwards, the city, close pressed by so determined a commander, accepted terms, which were more favorable by reason of the respect which Alexander chose to render to his mother's birthplace. The pillage was commuted for thirty thousand, crowns, and on the 5th of July the place was surrendered to Parma almost under the very eyes of Anjou, who was making a demonstration of relieving the siege.

Ninove, a citadel then belonging to the Egmont family, was next reduced. Here, too, the defence was more obstinate than could have been expected from the importance of the place, and as the autumn advanced, Parma's troops were nearly starved in their trenches, from the insufficient supplies furnished them. They had eaten no meat but horseflesh for weeks, and even that was gone. The cavalry horses were all consumed, and even the chargers of the officers were not respected. An aid-de-camp of Parma fastened his steed one day at the door of the Prince's tent, while he entered to receive his commander's instructions. When he came out again, a few minutes afterwards, he found nothing but the saddle and bridle hanging where he had fastened the horse. Remonstrance was useless, for the animal had already been cut into quarters, and the only satisfaction offered to the aid-de-camp was in the shape of a steak. The famine was long familiarly known as the "Ninove starvation," but notwithstanding this obstacle, the place was eventually surrendered.

Page 1081

An attempt upon Lochum, an important city, in Gelderland, was unsuccessful, the place being relieved by the Duke of Anjou's forces, and Parma's troops forced to abandon the siege. At Steenwyk, the royal arms were more successful, Colonel Tassis, conducted by a treacherous Frisian peasant, having surprised the city which had so, long and so manfully sustained itself against Renneberg during the preceding winter. With this event the active operations under Parma closed for the year. By the end of the autumn, however, he had the satisfaction of numbering, under his command, full sixty thousand well-appointed and disciplined troops, including the large reinforcements recently despatched: from Spain and Italy. The monthly expense of this army-half of which was required for garrison duty, leaving only the other moiety for field Operations—was estimated at six hundred and fifty thousand florins. The forces under Anjou and the united provinces were also largely increased, so that the marrow of the land was again in fair way of being thoroughly exhausted by its defenders and its foes.

The incidents of Anjou's administration, meantime, during the year 1582, had been few and of no great importance. After the pompous and elaborate "homage-making" at Antwerp, he had, in the month of July, been formally accepted, by writing, as Duke of Guelders and Lord of Friesland. In the same month he had been ceremoniously, inaugurated at Bruges as Count of Flanders—an occasion upon which the Prince of Orange had been present. In that ancient and stately city there had been, accordingly, much marching about under triumphal arches, much cannonading and haranguing, much symbol work of suns dispelling fogs, with other cheerful emblems, much decoration of ducal shoulders with velvet robes lined with weasel skin, much blazing of tar-barrels and torches. In the midst of this event, an attempt was made upon the lives both of Orange and Anjou. An Italian, named Basa, and a Spaniard, called Salseda, were detected in a scheme to administer poison to both princes, and when arrested, confessed that they had been hired by the Prince of Parma to compass this double assassination. Basa destroyed himself in prison. His body was, however, gibbeted, with an inscription that he had attempted, at the instigation of Parma, to take the lives of Orange and Anjou. Salseda, less fortunate, was sent to Paris, where he was found guilty, and executed by being torn to pieces by four horses. Sad to relate, Lamoral Egmont, younger son and namesake of the great general, was intimate with Salseda, and implicated in this base design. His mother, on her death-bed, had especially recommended the youth to the kindly care of Orange. The Prince had ever recognized the claim, manifesting uniform tenderness for the son of his ill-started friend; and now the youthful Lamoral—as if the name of Egmont had not been sufficiently contaminated by the elder brother's treason at Brussels—had

Page 1082

become the comrade of hired conspirators against his guardian's life. The affair was hushed up, but the story was current and generally believed that Egmont had himself undertaken to destroy the Prince at his own table by means of poison which he kept concealed in a ring. Saint Aldegonde was to have been taken off in the same way, and a hollow ring filled with poison was said to have been found in Egmont's lodgings.

The young noble was imprisoned; his guilt was far from doubtful; but the powerful intercessions of Orange himself, combined with Egmont's near relationship to the French Queen saved his life, and he was permitted, after a brief captivity, to take his departure for France.

The Duke of Anjou, a month later, was received with equal pomp, in the city of Ghent. Here the ceremonies were interrupted in another manner. The Prince of Parma, at the head of a few regiments of Walloons, making an attack on a body of troops by which Anjou had been escorted into Flanders, the troops retreated in good order, and without much loss, under the walls of Ghent, where a long and sharp action took place, much to the disadvantage of Parma, The Prince, of Orange and the Duke; of Anjou were on the city walls during the whole skirmish giving orders and superintending the movements of their troops, and at nightfall Parma was forced, to retire, leaving a large number of dead behind him.

The 15th day of December, in this year was celebrated according to the new ordinance of Gregory the Thirteenth—as Christmas. It was the occasion of more than usual merry-making among the Catholics of Antwerp, who had procured, during the preceding summer, a renewed right of public worship from Anjou and the estates. Many nobles of high rank came from France, to pay their homage to the new Duke of Brabant. They secretly expressed their disgust, however, at the close constitutional bonds in which they found their own future sovereign imprisoned by the provinces. They thought it far beneath the dignity of the "Son of France" to play the secondary part of titular Duke of Brabant, Count of Flanders, Lord of Friesland, and the like, while the whole power of government was lodged with the states. They whispered that it was time to take measures for the incorporation of the Netherlands into France, and they persuaded the false and fickle Anjou that there would never be any hope of his royal brother's assistance, except upon the understanding that the blood and treasure of Frenchmen were to be spent to increase the power, not of upstart and independent provinces, but of the French crown.

Page 1083

They struck the basest chords of the Duke's base nature by awakening his jealousy of Orange. His whole soul vibrated to the appeal. He already hated the man by whose superior intellect he was overawed, and by whose pure character he was shamed. He stoutly but secretly swore that he would assert his own rights; and that he would no longer serve as a shadow, a statue, a zero, a Matthias. It is needless to add, that neither in his own judgment nor in that of his mignons, were the constitutional articles which he had recently sworn to support, or the solemn treaty which he had signed and sealed at Bordeaux, to furnish any obstacles to his seizure of unlimited power, whenever the design could be cleverly accomplished. He rested not, day or night, in the elaboration of his plan.

Early in January, 1583, he sent one night for several of his intimate associates, to consult with him after he had retired to bed. He complained of the insolence of the states, of the importunity of the council which they had forced upon him, of the insufficient sums which they furnished both for him and his troops, of the daily insults offered to the Catholic religion. He protested that he should consider himself disgraced in the eyes of all Christendom, should he longer consent to occupy his present ignoble position. But two ways were open to him, he observed; either to retire altogether from the Nether lands, or to maintain his authority with the strong hand, as became a prince. The first course would cover him with disgrace. It was therefore necessary for him to adopt the other. He then unfolded his plan to his confidential friends, La Fougere, De Fazy, Palette, the sons of Marechal Biron, and others. Upon the same day, if possible, he was determined to take possession, with his own troops, of the principal cities in Flanders. Dunkirk, Dixmuyde, Denremonde, Bruges, Ghent, Vilvoorde, Alost, and other important places, were to be simultaneously invaded, under pretext of quieting tumults artfully created and encouraged between the burghers and the garrisons, while Antwerp was reserved for his own especial enterprise. That important capital he would carry by surprise at the same moment in which the other cities were to be secured by his lieutenants.

The plot was pronounced an excellent one by the friends around his bed—all of them eager for Catholic supremacy, for the establishment of the right divine on the part of France to the Netherlands, and for their share in the sacking of so many wealthy cities at once. These worthless mignons applauded their weak master to the echo; whereupon the Duke leaped from his bed, and kneeling on the floor in his night-gown, raised his eyes and his clasped hands to heaven, and piously invoked the blessing of the Almighty upon the project which he had thus announced. He added the solemn assurance that; if favored with success in his undertaking, he would abstain in future from all unchastity, and forego the irregular habits by which his youth had

Page 1084

been stained. Having thus bribed the Deity, and received the encouragement of his flatterers, the Duke got into bed again. His next care was to remove the Seigneur du Plessis, whom he had observed to be often in colloquy with the Prince of Orange, his suspicious and guilty imagination finding nothing but mischief to himself in the conjunction of two such natures. He therefore dismissed Du Plessis, under pretext of a special mission to his sister, Margaret of Navarre; but in reality, that he might rid himself of the presence of an intelligent and honorable countryman.

On the a 15th January, 1583, the day fixed for the execution of the plot, the French commandant of Dunkirk, Captain Chamois, skillfully took advantage of a slight quarrel between the citizens and the garrison, to secure that important frontier town. The same means were employed simultaneously, with similar results, at Ostend, Dixmuyde, Denremonde, Alost, and Vilvoorde, but there was a fatal delay at one important city. La Fougere, who had been with Chamois at Dunkirk, was arrested on his way to Bruges by some patriotic citizens who had got wind of what had just been occurring in the other cities, so that when Palette, the provost of Anjou, and Colonel la Rebours, at the head of fifteen hundred French troops, appeared before the gates, entrance was flatly refused. De Grijse, burgomaster of Bruges, encouraged his fellow townsmen by words and stout action, to resist the nefarious project then on foot against religious liberty and free government, in favor of a new foreign tyranny. He spoke to men who could sympathize with, and second his courageous resolution, and the delay of twenty-four hours, during which the burghers had time to take the alarm, saved the city. The whole population was on the alert, and the baffled Frenchmen were forced to retire from the gates, to avoid being torn to pieces by the citizens whom they had intended to surprise.

At Antwerp, meanwhile, the Duke of Anjou had been rapidly maturing his plan, under pretext of a contemplated enterprise against the city of Endhoven, having concentrated what he esteemed a sufficient number of French troops at Borgerhout, a village close to the walls of Antwerp.

On the 16th of January, suspicion was aroused in the city. A man in a mask entered the main guard-house in the night, mysteriously gave warning that a great crime was in contemplation, and vanished before he could be arrested. His accent proved him to be a Frenchman. Strange rumors flew about the streets. A vague uneasiness pervaded the whole population as to the intention of their new master, but nothing was definitely known, for of course there was entire ignorance of the events which were just occurring in other cities. The colonels and captains of the burgher guard came to consult the Prince of Orange. He avowed the most entire confidence in the Duke of Anjou, but, at the same time; recommended that the chains should be drawn, the lanterns hung out, and the drawbridge raised an hour earlier than usual, and that other precautions; customary in the expectation of an attack, should be duly taken. He likewise sent the Burgomaster of the interior, Dr. Alostanus, to the Duke of Anjou, in order to

communicate the suspicions created in the minds of the city authorities by the recent movements of troops.

Page 1085

Anjou, thus addressed, protested in the most solemn manner that nothing was farther from his thoughts than any secret enterprise against Antwerp. He was willing, according to the figure of speech which he had always ready upon every emergency, “to shed every drop of his blood in her defence.” He swore that he would signally punish all those who had dared to invent such calumnies against himself and his faithful Frenchmen, declaring earnestly, at the same time, that the troops had only been assembled in the regular course of their duty. As the Duke was so loud and so fervent; as he, moreover, made no objections to the precautionary measures which had been taken; as the burgomaster thought, moreover, that the public attention thus aroused would render all evil designs futile, even if any had been entertained; it was thought that the city might sleep in security for that night at least.

On the following, morning, as vague suspicions were still entertained by many influential persons, a deputation of magistrates and militia officers waited upon the Duke, the Prince of Orange—although himself still feeling a confidence which seems now almost inexplicable—consenting to accompany them. The Duke was more vehement than ever in his protestations of loyalty to his recent oaths, as well as of deep affection for the Netherlands—for Brabant in particular, and for Antwerp most of all, and he made use of all his vivacity to persuade the Prince, the burgomasters, and the colonels, that they had deeply wronged him by such unjust suspicions. His assertions were accepted as sincere, and the deputation withdrew, Anjou having first solemnly promised—at the suggestion of Orange—not to leave the city during the whole day, in order that unnecessary suspicion might be prevented.

This pledge the Duke proceeded to violate almost as soon as made. Orange returned with confidence to his own house, which was close to the citadel, and therefore far removed from the proposed point of attack, but he had hardly arrived there when he received a visit from the Duke’s private secretary, Quinsay, who invited him to accompany his Highness on a visit to the camp. Orange declined the request, and sent an earnest prayer to the Duke not to leave the city that morning. The Duke dined as usual at noon. While at dinner he received a letter; was observed to turn pale on reading it, and to conceal it hastily in a muff which he wore on his left arm. The repast finished, the Duke ordered his horse. The animal was restive, and so, strenuously resisted being mounted that, although it was his usual charger; it was exchanged for another. This second horse started in such a flurry that the Duke lost his cloak, and almost his seat. He maintained his self-possession, however, and placing himself at the head of his bodyguard and some troopers, numbering in all three hundred mounted men, rode out of the palace-yard towards the Kipdorp gate.

Page 1086

This portal opened on the road towards Borgerhout, where his troops were stationed, and at the present day bears the name of that village: It is on the side of the city farthest removed from and exactly opposite the river. The town was very quiet, the streets almost deserted; for it was one o'clock, the universal dinner-hour, and all suspicion had been disarmed by the energetic protestations of the Duke. The guard at the gate looked listlessly upon the cavalcade as it approached, but as soon as Anjou had crossed the first drawbridge, he rose in his stirrups and waved his hand. "There is your city, my lads," said he to the troopers behind him; "go and take possession of it!"

At the same time he set spurs to his horse, and galloped off towards the camp at Borgerhout. Instantly afterwards; a gentleman of his suite, Count Bochepot, affected to have broken his leg through the plunging of his horse, a circumstance by which he had been violently pressed, against the wall as he entered the gate. Kaiser, the commanding officer at the guard-house, stepped kindly forward to render him assistance, and his reward was a desperate thrust from the Frenchman's rapier. As he wore a steel cuirass, he fortunately escaped with a slight wound.

The expression, "broken leg," was the watch-word, for at one and the same instant, the troopers and guardsmen of Anjou set upon the burgher watch at the gate, and butchered every man. A sufficient force was left to protect the entrance thus easily mastered, while the rest of the Frenchmen entered the town at full gallop, shrieking "Ville gaignee, ville gaignee! vive la messe! vive le Due d'Anjou!" They were followed by their comrades from the camp outside, who now poured into the town at the preconcerted signal, at least six hundred cavalry and three thousand musketeers, all perfectly appointed, entering Antwerp at once. From the Kipdorp gate two main arteries —the streets called the Kipdorp and the Meer—led quite through the heart of the city, towards the townhouse and the river beyond. Along these great thoroughfares the French soldiers advanced at a rapid pace; the cavalry clattering furiously in the van, shouting "Ville gaignee, ville gaignee! vive la messe, vive la messe! tue, tue, tue!"

The burghers coming to door and window to look for the cause of all this disturbance, were saluted with volleys of musketry. They were for a moment astonished, but not appalled, for at first they believed it to be merely an accidental tumult. Observing, however, that the soldiers, meeting with but little effective resistance, were dispersing into dwellings and warehouses, particularly into the shops of the goldsmiths and lapidaries, the citizens remembered the dark suspicions which had been so rife, and many recalled to mind that distinguished French officers had during, the last few days been carefully examining the treasures of the jewellers, under pretext of purchasing, but, as it now appeared, with intent to rob intelligently.

Page 1087

The burghers, taking this rapid view of their position, flew instantly to arms. Chains and barricades were stretched across the streets; the trumpets sounded through the city; the municipal guards swarmed to the rescue. An effective rally was made, as usual, at the Bourse, whither a large detachment of the invaders had forced their way. Inhabitants of all classes and conditions, noble and simple, Catholic and Protestant, gave each other the hand, and swore to die at each other's side in defence of the city against the treacherous strangers. The gathering was rapid and enthusiastic. Gentlemen came with lance and cuirass, burghers with musket and bandoleer, artisans with axe, mallet, and other implements of their trade. A bold baker, standing by his oven-stark naked, according to the custom of bakers at that day—rushed to the street as the sound of the tumult reached his ear. With his heavy bread shovel, which he still held in his hand, he dealt a French cavalry, officer, just riding and screaming by, such a hearty blow that he fell dead from his horse. The baker seized the officer's sword, sprang all unattired as he was, upon his steed, and careered furiously through the streets, encouraging his countrymen everywhere to the attack, and dealing dismay through the ranks of the enemy. His services in that eventful hour were so signal that he was publicly thanked afterwards by the magistrates for his services, and rewarded with a pension of three hundred florins for life.

The invaders had been forced from the Bourse, while another portion of them had penetrated as far as the Market-place. The resistance which they encountered became every instant more formidable, and Fervacques, a leading French officer, who was captured on the occasion, acknowledged that no regular troops could have fought more bravely than did these stalwart burghers. Women and children mounted to roof and window, whence they hurled, not only tiles and chimney pots, but tables, ponderous chairs, and other bulky articles, upon the heads of the assailants, while such citizens as had used all their bullets, loaded their pieces with the silver buttons from their doublets, or twisted gold and silver coins with their teeth into ammunition. With a population so resolute, the four thousand invaders, however audacious, soon found themselves swallowed up. The city had closed over them like water, and within an hour nearly a third of their whole number had been slain. Very few of the burghers had perished, and fresh numbers were constantly advancing to the attack. The Frenchmen, blinded, staggering, beaten, attempted to retreat. Many threw themselves from the fortifications into the moat. The rest of the survivors struggled through the streets—falling in large numbers at every step-towards the point at which they had so lately entered the city. Here at the Kipdorp gate was a ghastly spectacle, the slain being piled up in the narrow passage full ten feet high, while some of the heap, not quite dead, were striving to extricate a hand or foot, and others feebly thrust forth their heads to gain a mouthful of air.

Page 1088

From the outside, some of Anjou's officers were attempting to climb over this mass of bodies in order to enter the city; from the interior, the baffled and fugitive remnant of their comrades were attempting to force their passage through the same horrible barrier; while many dropped at, every instant upon the heap of slain, under the blows of the unrelenting burghers. On the other hand, Count Rochepot himself, to whom the principal command of the enterprise had been entrusted by Anjou, stood directly in the path of his fugitive soldiers, not only bitterly upbraiding them with their cowardice, but actually slaying ten or twelve of them with his own hands, as the most effectual mode of preventing their retreat. Hardly an hour had elapsed from the time when the Duke of Anjou first rode out of the Kipdorp gate, before nearly the whole of the force which he had sent to accomplish his base design was either dead or captive. Two hundred and fifty nobles of high rank and illustrious name were killed; recognized at once as they lay in the streets by their magnificent costume. A larger number of the gallant chivalry of France had been sacrificed—as Anjou confessed—in this treacherous and most shameful enterprise, than had often fallen upon noble and honorable fields. Nearly two thousand of the rank and file had perished, and the rest were prisoners. It was at first asserted that exactly fifteen hundred and eighty-three Frenchmen had fallen, but this was only because this number happened to be the date of the year, to which the lovers of marvellous coincidences struggled very hard to make the returns of the dead correspond. Less than one hundred burghers lost their lives.

Anjou, as he looked on at a distance, was bitterly reproached for his treason by several of the high-minded gentlemen about his person, to whom he had not dared to confide his plot. The Duke of Montpensier protested vehemently that he washed his hands of the whole transaction, whatever might be the issue. He was responsible for the honor of an illustrious house, which should never be stained, he said, if he could prevent it, with such foul deeds. The same language was held by Laval, by Rochefoucauld, and by the Marechal de Biron, the last gentleman, whose two sons were engaged in the vile enterprise, bitterly cursing the Duke to his face, as he rode through the gate after revealing his secret undertaking.

Meanwhile, Anjou, in addition to the punishment of hearing these reproaches from men of honor, was the victim of a rapid and violent fluctuation of feeling. Hope, fear, triumph, doubt, remorse, alternately swayed him. As he saw the fugitives leaping from the walls, he shouted exultingly, without accurately discerning what manner of men they were, that the city was his, that four thousand of his brave soldiers were there, and were hurling the burghers from the battlements. On being made afterwards aware of his error, he was proportionably depressed; and when it was obvious at last that the result of the enterprise was an absolute and disgraceful failure, together with a complete exposure of his treachery, he fairly mounted his horse, and fled conscience-stricken from the scene.

Page 1089

The attack had been so unexpected, in consequence of the credence that had been rendered by Orange and the magistracy to the solemn protestations of the Duke, that it had been naturally out of any one's power to prevent the catastrophe. The Prince was lodged in apart of the town remote from the original scene of action, and it does not appear that information had reached him that anything unusual was occurring, until the affair was approaching its termination. Then there was little for him to do. He hastened, however, to the scene, and mounting the ramparts, persuaded the citizens to cease cannonading the discomfited and retiring foe. He felt the full gravity of the situation, and the necessity of diminishing the rancor of the inhabitants against their treacherous allies, if such a result were yet possible. The burghers had done their duty, and it certainly would have been neither in his power nor his inclination to protect the French marauders from expulsion and castigation.

Such was the termination of the French Fury, and it seems sufficiently strange that it should have been so much less disastrous to Antwerp than was the Spanish Fury of 1576, to which men could still scarcely allude without a shudder. One would have thought the French more likely to prove successful in their enterprise than the Spaniards in theirs. The Spaniards were enemies against whom the city had long been on its guard. The French were friends in whose sincerity a somewhat shaken confidence had just been restored. When the Spanish attack was made, a large force of defenders was drawn up in battle array behind freshly strengthened fortifications. When the French entered at leisure through a scarcely guarded gate, the whole population and garrison of the town were quietly eating their dinners. The numbers of the invading forces on the two occasions did not materially differ; but at the time of the French Fury there was not a large force of regular troops under veteran generals to resist the attack. Perhaps this was the main reason for the result, which seems at first almost inexplicable. For protection against the Spanish invasion, the burghers relied on mercenaries, some of whom proved treacherous, while the rest became panic-struck. On the present occasion the burghers relied on themselves. Moreover, the French committed the great error of despising their enemy. Recollecting the ease with which the Spaniards had ravished the city, they believed that they had nothing to do but to enter and take possession. Instead of repressing their greediness, as the Spaniards had done, until they had overcome resistance, they dispersed almost immediately into by-streets, and entered warehouses to search for plunder. They seemed actuated by a fear that they should not have time to rifle the city before additional troops should be sent by Anjou to share in the spoil. They were less used to the sacking of Netherland cities than were the Spaniards, whom long practice had made perfect in the art of

Page 1090

methodically butchering a population at first, before attention should be diverted to plundering, and supplementary outrages. At any rate, whatever the causes, it is certain that the panic, which upon such occasions generally decides the fate of the day, seized upon the invaders and not upon the invaded, almost from the very first. As soon as the marauders faltered in their purpose and wished to retreat, it was all over with them. Returning was worse than advance, and it was the almost inevitable result that hardly a man escaped death or capture.

The Duke retreated the same day in the direction of Denremonde, and on his way met with another misfortune, by which an additional number of his troops lost their lives. A dyke was cut by the Mechlin citizens to impede his march, and the swollen waters of the Dill, liberated and flowing across the country which he was to traverse, produced such an inundation, that at least a thousand of his followers were drowned.

As soon as he had established himself in a camp near Berghem, he opened a correspondence with the Prince of Orange, and with the authorities of Antwerp. His language was marked by wonderful effrontery. He found himself and soldiers suffering for want of food; he remembered that he had left much plate and valuable furniture in Antwerp; and he was therefore desirous that the citizens, whom he had so basely outraged, should at once send him supplies and restore his property. He also reclaimed the prisoners who still remained in the city, and to obtain all this he applied to the man whom he had bitterly deceived, and whose life would have been sacrificed by the Duke, had the enterprise succeeded.

It had been his intention to sack the city, to re-establish exclusively the Roman Catholic worship, to trample upon the constitution which he had so recently sworn to maintain, to deprive Orange, by force, of the Renversal by which the Duke recognized the Prince as sovereign of Holland; Zealand; and Utrecht, yet notwithstanding that his treason had-been enacted in broad daylight, and in a most deliberate manner, he had the audacity to ascribe the recent tragic occurrences to chance. He had the farther originality to speak of himself as an aggrieved person, who had rendered great services to the Netherlands, and who had only met with ingratitude in return. His envoys, Messieurs Landmater and Escolieres, despatched on the very day of the French Fury to the burgomasters and senate of Antwerp, were instructed to remind those magistrates that the Duke had repeatedly exposed his life in the cause of the Netherlands. The affronts, they were to add, which he had received, and the approaching ruin of the country, which he foresaw, had so altered his excellent nature, as to engender the present calamity, which he infinitely regretted. Nevertheless, the senate was to be assured that his affection for the commonwealth was still so strong, as to induce a desire on his part to be informed what course was now to be pursued with, regard to him. Information upon that important point was therefore to be requested, while at the same time the liberation of the

prisoners at Antwerp, and the restaration of the Duke’s furniture and papers, were to be urgently demanded.

Page 1091

Letters of similar, import were also despatched by the Duke to the states of the Union, while to the Prince of Orange; his application was brief but brazen. “You know well,—-my cousin,” said he “the just and frequent causes of offence which this people has given me. The insults which I, this morning experienced cut me so deeply to the heart that they are the only reasons of the misfortune which has happened today. Nevertheless, to those who desire my friendship I shall show equal friendship and affection. Herein I shall follow the counsel you have uniformly given me, since I know it comes from one who has always loved me. Therefore I beg that you will kindly bring it to pass, that I may obtain some decision, and that no injury may be inflicted upon my people. Otherwise the land shall pay for it dearly.”

To these appeals, neither the Prince nor the authorities of Antwerp answered immediately in their own names. A general consultation was, however, immediately held with the estates-general, and an answer forthwith despatched to the Duke by the hands of his envoys. It was agreed to liberate the prisoners, to restore the furniture, and to send a special deputation for the purpose of making further arrangements with the Duke by word of mouth, and for this deputation his Highness was requested to furnish a safe conduct.

Anjou was overjoyed when he received this amicable communication. Relieved for a time from his fears as to the result of his crime, he already assumed a higher ground. He not only spoke to the states in a paternal tone, which was sufficiently ludicrous, but he had actually the coolness to assure them of his forgiveness. “He felt hurt,” he said, “that they should deem a safe conduct necessary for the deputation which they proposed to send. If they thought that he had reason on account of the past, to feel offended, he begged them to believe that he had forgotten it all, and that he had buried the past in its ashes, even as if it had never been.” He furthermore begged them—and this seemed the greatest insult of all—“in future to trust to his word, and to believe that if any thing should be attempted to their disadvantage, he would be the very first to offer himself for their protection.”

It will be observed that in his first letters the Duke had not affected to deny his agency in the outrage—an agency so flagrant that all subterfuge seemed superfluous. He in fact avowed that the attempt had been made by his command, but sought to palliate the crime on the ground that it had been the result of the ill-treatment which he had experienced from the states. “The affronts which I have received,” said he, both to the magistrates of Antwerp and to Orange, “have engendered the present calamity.” So also, in a letter written at the same time to his brother, Henry the Third, he observed that “the indignities which were put upon him, and the manifest intention of the states to make a Matthias of him, had been the cause of the catastrophe.”

Page 1092

He now, however, ventured a step farther. Presuming upon the indulgence which he had already experienced; and bravely assuming the tone of injured innocence, he ascribed the enterprise partly to accident, and partly to the insubordination of his troops. This was the ground which he adopted in his interviews with the states' commissioners. So also, in a letter addressed to Van der Tympel, commandant of Brussels, in which he begged for supplies for his troops, he described the recent invasion of Antwerp as entirely unexpected by himself, and beyond his control. He had been intending, he said, to leave the city and to join his army. A tumult had accidentally arisen between his soldiers and the guard at the gate. Other troops rushing in from without, had joined in the affray, so that to, his great sorrow, an extensive disorder had arisen. He manifested the same Christian inclination to forgive, however, which he had before exhibited. He observed that "good men would never grow cold in his regard, or find his affection diminished." He assured Van der Tympel, in particular, of his ancient goodwill, as he knew him to be a lover of the common weal.

In his original communications he had been both cringing and threatening but, at least, he had not denied truths which were plain as daylight. His new position considerably damaged his cause. This forgiving spirit on the part of the malefactor was a little more than the states could bear, disposed as they felt, from policy, to be indulgent, and to smooth over the crime as gently as possible. The negotiations were interrupted, and the authorities of Antwerp published a brief and spirited defence of their own conduct. They denied that any affront or want of respect on their part could have provoked the outrage of which the Duke had been guilty. They severely handled his self-contradiction, in ascribing originally the recent attempt to his just vengeance for past injuries, and in afterwards imputing it to accident or sudden mutiny, while they cited the simultaneous attempts at Bruges, Denremonde, Alost, Digmuyde, Newport, Ostend, Vilvoorde, and Dunkirk, as a series of damning proofs of a deliberate design.

The publication of such plain facts did not advance the negotiations when resumed. High and harsh words were interchanged between his Highness and the commissioners, Anjou complaining, as usual, of affronts and indignities, but when pushed home for particulars, taking refuge in equivocation. "He did not wish," he said, "to re-open wounds which had been partially healed." He also affected benignity, and wishing to forgive and to forget, he offered some articles as the basis of a fresh agreement. Of these it is sufficient to state that they were entirely different from the terms of the Bordeaux treaty, and that they were rejected as quite inadmissible.

Page 1093

He wrote again to the Prince of Orange, invoking his influence to bring about an arrangement. The Prince, justly indignant at the recent treachery and the present insolence of the man whom he had so profoundly trusted, but feeling certain that the welfare of the country depended at present upon avoiding, if possible, a political catastrophe, answered the Duke in plain, firm, mournful, and appropriate language. He had ever manifested to his Highness, he said, the most uniform and sincere friendship. He had, therefore, the right to tell him that affairs were now so changed that his greatness and glory had departed. Those men in the Netherlands, who, but yesterday, had been willing to die at the feet of his Highness, were now so exasperated that they avowedly preferred an open enemy to a treacherous protector. He had hoped, he said, that after what had happened in so many cities at the same moment, his Highness would have been pleased to give the deputies a different and a more becoming answer. He had hoped for some response which might lead to an arrangement. He, however, stated frankly, that the articles transmitted by his Highness were so unreasonable that no man in the land would dare open his mouth to recommend them. His Highness, by this proceeding, had much deepened the distrust. He warned the Duke accordingly, that he was not taking the right course to reinstate himself in a position of honor and glory, and he begged him, therefore, to adopt more appropriate means. Such a step was now demanded of him, not only by the country, but by all Christendom.

This moderate but heartfelt appeal to the better nature of the Duke, if he had a better nature, met with no immediate response.

While matters were in this condition, a special envoy arrived out of France, despatched by the King and Queen-mother, on the first reception of the recent intelligence from Antwerp. M. de Mirambeau, the ambassador, whose son had been killed in the Fury, brought letters of credence to the states of the; Union and to the Prince of Orange. He delivered also a short confidential note, written in her own hand, from Catherine de Medici to the Prince, to the following effect:

“My *cousin*,—The King, my son, and myself, send you Monsieur de Mirambeau, to prove to you that we do not believe—for we esteem you an honorable man—that you would manifest ingratitude to my son, and to those who have followed him for the welfare of your country. We feel that you have too much affection for one who has the support of so powerful a prince as the King of France, as to play him so base a trick. Until I learn the truth, I shall not renounce the good hope which I have always indulged—that you would never have invited my son to your country, without intending to serve him faithfully. As long as you do this, you may ever reckon on the support of all who belong to him.

“Your good Cousin,

“*Catherine*.”

Page 1094

It would have been very difficult to extract much information or much comfort from this wily epistle. The menace was sufficiently plain, the promise disagreeably vague. Moreover, a letter from the same Catherine de Medici, had been recently found in a casket at the Duke's lodgings in Antwerp. In that communication, she had distinctly advised her son to re-establish the Roman Catholic religion, assuring him that by so doing, he would be enabled to marry the Infanta of Spain. Nevertheless, the Prince, convinced that it was his duty to bridge over the deep and fatal chasm which had opened between the French Prince and the provinces, if an honorable reconciliation were possible, did not attach an undue importance either to the stimulating or to the upbraiding portion of the communication from Catherine. He was most anxious to avert the chaos which he saw returning. He knew that while the tempers of Rudolph, of the English Queen, and of the Protestant princes of Germany, and the internal condition of the Netherlands remained the same, it were madness to provoke the government of France, and thus gain an additional enemy, while losing their only friend. He did not renounce the hope of forming all the Netherlands—excepting of course the Walloon provinces already reconciled to Philip—into one independent commonwealth, freed for ever from Spanish tyranny. A dynasty from a foreign house he was willing to accept, but only on condition that the new royal line should become naturalized in the Netherlands, should, conform itself to the strict constitutional compact established, and should employ only natives in the administration of Netherland affairs. Notwithstanding, therefore, the recent treachery of Anjou, he was willing to treat with him upon the ancient basis. The dilemma was a very desperate one, for whatever might be his course, it was impossible that it should escape censure. Even at this day, it is difficult to decide what might have been the result of openly braving the French government, and expelling Anjou. The Prince of Parma—subtle, vigilant, prompt with word and blow—was waiting most anxiously to take advantage of every false step of his adversary. The provinces had been already summoned in most eloquent language, to take warning by the recent fate of Antwerp, and to learn by the manifestation just made by Anjou, of his real intentions; that their only salvation lay in a return to the King's arms. Anjou himself, as devoid of shame as of honor, was secretly holding interviews with Parma's agents, Acosta and Flaminio Carnero, at the very moment when he was alternately expressing to the states his resentment that they dared to doubt his truth, or magnanimously extending to them his pardon for their suspicions. He was writing letters full of injured innocence to Orange and to the states, while secretly cavilling over the terms of the treaty by which he was to sell himself to Spain. Scruples as to enacting so base a part did not trouble the "Son of France."

Page 1095

He did not hesitate at playing this doubly and trebly false game with the provinces, but he was anxious to drive the best possible bargain for himself with Parma. He, offered to restore Dunkirk, Dixmuyde, and the other cities which he had so recently filched from the states, and to enter into a strict alliance with Philip; but he claimed that certain Netherland cities on the French frontier, should be made over to him in exchange. He required; likewise; ample protection for his retreat from a country which was likely to be sufficiently exasperated. Parma and his agents smiled, of course, at such exorbitant terms. Nevertheless, it was necessary to deal cautiously with a man who, although but a poor baffled rogue to-day, might to-morrow be seated on the throne of France. While they were all secretly haggling over the terms of the bargain, the Prince of Orange discovered the intrigue. It convinced him of the necessity of closing with a man whose baseness was so profound, but whose position made his enmity, on the whole, more dangerous than his friendship. Anjou, backed by so astute and unscrupulous a politician as Parma, was not to be trifled with. The feeling of doubt and anxiety was spreading daily through the country: many men, hitherto firm, were already wavering, while at the same time the Prince had no confidence in the power of any of the states, save those of Holland and Utrecht; to maintain a resolute attitude of defiance, if not assisted from without.

He therefore endeavored to repair the breach, if possible, and thus save the Union. Mirambeau, in his conferences with the estates, suggested, on his part, all that words could effect. He expressed the hope that the estates would use their discretion “in compounding some sweet and friendly medicine” for the present disorder; and that they would not judge the Duke too harshly for a fault which he assured them did not come from his natural disposition. He warned them that the enemy would be quick to take advantage of the present occasion to bring about, if possible, their destruction, and he added that he was commissioned to wait upon the Duke of Anjou, in order to assure him that, however alienated he might then be from the Netherlands, his Majesty was determined to effect an entire reconciliation.

The envoy conferred also with the Prince of Orange, and urged him most earnestly to use his efforts to heal the rupture. The Prince, inspired by the sentiments already indicated, spoke with perfect sincerity. His Highness, he said, had never known a more faithful and zealous friend than himself, He had begun to lose his own credit with the people by reason of the earnestness with which he had ever advocated the Duke’s cause, and he could not flatter himself that his recommendation would now be of any advantage to his Highness. It would be more injurious than his silence. Nevertheless, he was willing to make use of all the influence which was left to him for the purpose of

Page 1096

bringing about a reconciliation, provided that the Duke were acting in good faith. If his Highness were now sincerely desirous of conforming to the original treaty, and willing to atone for the faults committed by him on the same day in so many cities—offences which could not be excused upon the ground of any affronts which he might have received from the citizens of Antwerp—it might even now be possible to find a remedy for the past. He very bluntly told the envoy, however, that the frivolous excuses offered by the Duke caused more bitterness than if he had openly acknowledged his fault. It were better, he said, to express contrition, than to excuse himself by laying blame on those to whom no blame belonged, but who, on the contrary, had ever shown themselves faithful servants of his Highness.

The estates of the Union, being in great perplexity as to their proper course, now applied formally, as they always did in times of danger and doubt, to the Prince, for a public expression of his views. Somewhat reluctantly, he complied with their wishes in one of the most admirable of his state papers.

He told the states-that he felt some hesitation in expressing his views. The blame of the general ill success was always laid upon his shoulders; as if the chances of war could be controlled even by a great potentate with ample means at his disposal. As for himself, with so little actual power that he could never have a single city provided with what he thought a sufficient garrison, it could not be expected that he could command fortune. His advice, he said, was always asked, but ever judged good or evil according to the result, as if the issue were in any hands but God's. It did not seem advisable for a man of his condition and years, who had so often felt the barb of calumny's tongue, to place his honor, again in the judgment scale of mankind, particularly as he was likely to incur fresh censure for another man's crime. Nevertheless, he was willing, for the love he bore the land, once more to encounter this danger.

He then rapidly reviewed the circumstances which had led to the election of Anjou, and reminded the estates that they had employed sufficient time to deliberate concerning that transaction. He recalled to their remembrance his frequent assurances of support and sympathy if they would provide any other means of self-protection than the treaty with the French Prince. He thought it, therefore, unjust, now that calamity had sprung from the measure, to ascribe the blame entirely to him, even had the injury been greater than the one actually sustained. He was far from palliating the crime, or from denying that the Duke's rights under the Treaty of Bordeaux had been utterly forfeited. He was now asked what was to be done. Of three courses, he said, one must be taken: they must make their peace with the King, or consent to a reconciliation with Anjou, or use all the strength which God had given them to resist, single-handed,

Page 1097

the enemy. With regard to the first point, he resumed the argument as to the hopelessness of a satisfactory arrangement with the monarch of Spain. The recent reconciliation of the Walloon provinces and its shameful infraction by Parma in the immediate recal of large masses of Spanish and Italian troops, showed too plainly the value of all solemn stipulations with his Catholic Majesty. Moreover, the time was unpropitious. It was idle to look, after what had recently occurred, for even fair promises. It was madness then to incur the enmity of two such powers at once. The French could do the Netherlands more harm as enemies than the Spaniards. The Spaniards would be more dangerous as friends, for in cases of a treaty with Philip the Inquisition would be established in the place of a religious peace. For these reasons the Prince declared himself entirely opposed to any negotiations with the Crown of Spain.

As to the second point, he admitted that Anjou had gained little honor by his recent course; and that it would be a mistake on their part to stumble a second time over the same stone. He foresaw, nevertheless, that the Duke—irritated as he was by the loss of so many of his nobles, and by the downfall of all his hopes in the Netherlands—would be likely to inflict great injuries upon their cause. Two powerful nations like France and Spain would be too much to have on their hands at once. How much danger, too, would be incurred by braving at once the open wrath of the French King, and, the secret displeasure of the English Queen. She had warmly recommended the Duke of Anjou. She had said—that honors to him were rendered to herself; and she was now entirely opposed to their keeping the present quarrel alive. If France became their enemy, the road was at once opened through that kingdom for Spain. The estates were to ponder well whether they possessed the means to carry on such a double war without assistance. They were likewise to remember how many cities still remained in the hands of Anjou, and their possible fate if the Duke were pushed to extremity.

The third point was then handled with vigor. He reminded the states of the perpetual difficulty of raising armies, of collecting money to pay for troops, of inducing cities to accept proper garrisons, of establishing a council which could make itself respected. He alluded briefly and bitterly to the perpetual quarrels of the states among themselves; to their mutual jealousy; to their obstinate parsimony; to their jealousy of the general government; to their apathy and inertness before impending ruin. He would not calumniate those, he said, who counselled trust in God. That was his sentiment also: To attempt great affairs, however, and, through avarice, to-withhold sufficient means, was not trusting, but tempting God.—On the contrary, it was trusting God to use the means which He offered to their hands.

Page 1098

With regard, then, to the three points, he rejected the first. Reconciliation with the King of Spain was impossible. For his own part, he would much prefer the third course. He had always been in favor of their maintaining independence by their own means and the assistance of the Almighty. He was obliged, however, in sadness; to confess that the narrow feeling of individual state rights, the general tendency to disunion, and the constant wrangling, had made this course a hopeless one. There remained, therefore, only the second, and they must effect an honorable reconciliation with Anjou. Whatever might be their decision, however, it was meet that it should be a speedy one. Not an hour was to be lost. Many fair churches of God, in Anjou's power, were trembling on the issue, and religious and political liberty was more at stake than ever. In conclusion, the Prince again expressed his determination, whatever might be their decision, to devote the rest of his days to the services of his country.

The result of these representations by the Prince—of frequent letters from Queen Elizabeth, urging a reconciliation—and of the professions made by the Duke and the French envoys, was a provisional arrangement, signed on the 26th and 28th of March. According to the terms of this accord, the Duke was to receive thirty thousand florins for his troops, and to surrender the cities still in his power. The French prisoners were to be liberated, the Duke's property at Antwerp was to be restored, and the Duke himself was to await at Dunkirk the arrival of plenipotentiaries to treat with him as to a new and perpetual arrangement.

The negotiations, however, were languid. The quarrel was healed on the surface, but confidence so recently and violently uprooted was slow to revive. On the 28th of June, the Duke of Anjou left Dunkirk for Paris, never to return to the Netherlands, but he exchanged on his departure affectionate letters with the Prince and the estates. M. des Pruneaux remained as his representative, and it was understood that the arrangements for re-installing him as soon as possible in the sovereignty which he had so basely forfeited, were to be pushed forward with earnestness.

In the spring of the same year, Gerard Truchses, Archbishop of Cologne, who had lost his see for the love of Agnes Mansfeld, whom he had espoused in defiance of the Pope; took refuge with the Prince of Orange at Delft. A civil war in Germany broke forth, the Protestant princes undertaking to support the Archbishop, in opposition to Ernest of Bavaria, who had been appointed in his place. The Palatine, John Casimir, thought it necessary to mount and ride as usual. Making his appearance at the head of a hastily collected force, and prepared for another plunge into chaos, he suddenly heard, however, of his elder brother's death at Heidelberg. Leaving his men, as was his habit, to shift for themselves, and Baron Truchses, the Archbishop's brother, to fall into the hands of the enemy, he disappeared from the scene with great rapidity, in order that his own interests in the palatinate and in the guardianship of the young palatines might not suffer by his absence.

Page 1099

At this time, too, on the 12th of April, the Prince of Orange was married, for the fourth time, to Louisa, widow of the Seigneur de Teligny, and daughter of the illustrious Coligny.

In the course of the summer, the states of Holland and Zealand, always bitterly opposed to the connection with Anjou, and more than ever dissatisfied with the resumption of negotiations since the Antwerp catastrophe, sent a committee to the Prince in order to persuade him to set his face against the whole proceedings. They delivered at the same time a formal remonstrance, in writing (25th of August, 1583), in which they explained how odious the arrangement with the Duke had ever been to them. They expressed the opinion that even the wisest might be sometimes mistaken, and that the Prince had been bitterly deceived by Anjou and by the French court. They besought him to rely upon the assistance of the Almighty, and upon the exertions of the nation, and they again hinted at the propriety of his accepting that supreme sovereignty over all the united provinces which would be so gladly conferred, while, for their own parts, they voluntarily offered largely to increase the sums annually contributed to the common defence.

Very soon afterwards, in August, 1583, the states of the united provinces assembled at Middelburg formally offered the general government—which under the circumstances was the general sovereignty—to the Prince, warmly urging his acceptance of the dignity. He manifested, however, the same reluctance which he had always expressed, demanding that the project should beforehand be laid before the councils of all the large cities, and before the estates of certain provinces which had not been represented at the Middelburg diet. He also made use of the occasion to urge the necessity of providing more generously for the army expenses and other general disbursements. As to ambitious views, he was a stranger to them, and his language at this moment was as patriotic and self-denying as at any previous period. He expressed his thanks to the estates for this renewed proof of their confidence in his character, and this additional approbation of his course,—a sentiment which he was always ready “as a good patriot to justify by his most faithful service.” He reminded them, however, that he was no great monarch, having in his own hands the means to help and the power to liberate them; and that even were he in possession of all which God had once given him, he should be far from strong enough to resist, single-handed, their powerful enemy. All that was left to him, he said, was an “honest and moderate experience in affairs.” With this he was ever ready to serve them to the utmost; but they knew very well that the means to make that experience available were to be drawn from the country itself. With modest simplicity, he observed that he had been at work fifteen or sixteen years, doing his best, with the grace of God, to secure the freedom of the fatherland and to

Page 1100

resist tyranny of conscience; that he alone—assisted by his brothers and some friends and relatives—had borne the whole burthen in the beginning, and that he had afterwards been helped by the states of Holland and Zealand, so that he could not but render thanks to God for His great mercy in thus granting His blessing to so humble an instrument, and thus restoring so many beautiful provinces to their ancient freedom and to the true religion. The Prince protested that this result was already a sufficient reward for his labors—a great consolation in his sufferings. He had hoped, he said, that the estates, “taking into consideration his long-continued labors, would have been willing to excuse him from a new load of cares, and would have granted him some little rest in his already advanced age;” that they would have selected “some other person more fitted for the labor, whom he would himself faithfully promise to assist to the best of his abilities, rendering him willing obedience proportionate to the authority conferred upon him.”

Like all other attempts to induce the acceptance, by the Prince, of supreme authority, this effort proved ineffectual, from the obstinate unwillingness of his hand to receive the proffered sceptre.

In connection with this movement, and at about the same epoch, Jacob Swerius, member of the Brabant Council, with other deputies, waited upon Orange, and formally tendered him the sovereign dukedom of Brabant, forfeited and vacant by the late crime of Anjou. The Prince, however, resolutely refused to accept the dignity, assuring the committee that he had not the means to afford the country as much protection as they had a right to expect from their sovereign. He added that “he would never give the King of Spain the right-to say that the Prince of Orange had been actuated by no other motives in his career than the hope of self-aggrandizement, and the desire to deprive his Majesty of the provinces in order to appropriate them to himself.”

Accordingly, firmly refusing to heed the overtures of the United States, and of Holland in particular, he continued to further the re-establishment of Anjou—a measure in which, as he deliberately believed, lay the only chance of union and in dependence.

The Prince of Parma, meantime, had not been idle. He had been unable to induce the provinces to listen to his wiles, and to rush to the embrace of the monarch whose arms he described as ever open to the repentant. He had, however, been busily occupied in the course of the summer in taking up many of the towns which the treason of Anjou had laid open to his attacks.

Page 1101

Eindhoven, Diest, Dunkirk, Newport, and other places, were successively surrendered to royalist generals. On the 22nd of September, 1583, the city of Zutfen, too, was surprised by Colonel Tassis, on the fall of which most important place, the treason of Orange's brother-in-law, Count Van den Berg, governor of Gueldres, was revealed. His fidelity had been long suspected, particularly by Count John of Nassau, but always earnestly vouched for by his wife and by his sons. On the capture of Zutfen, however, a document was found and made public, by which Van den Berg bound himself to deliver the principal cities of Gueldres and Zutfen, beginning with Zutfen itself, into the hands of Parma, on condition of receiving the pardon and friendship of the King.

Not much better could have been expected of Van den Berg. His pusillanimous retreat from his post in Alva's time will be recollected; and it is certain that the Prince had never placed implicit confidence in his character. Nevertheless, it was the fate of this great man to be often deceived by the friends whom he trusted, although never to be outwitted by his enemies. Van den Berg was arrested, on the 15th of November, carried to the Hague, examined and imprisoned for a time in Delftshaven. After a time he was, however, liberated, when he instantly, with all his sons, took service under the King.

While treason was thus favoring the royal arms in the north, the same powerful element, to which so much of the Netherland misfortunes had always been owing was busy in Flanders.

Towards the end of the year 1583, the Prince of Chimay, eldest son of the Duke of Aerschot, had been elected governor of that province. This noble was as unstable in character, as vain, as unscrupulous, and as ambitious as his father and uncle. He had been originally desirous of espousing the eldest daughter of the Prince of Orange, afterwards the Countess of Hohenlo, but the Duchess of Aerschot was too strict a Catholic to consent to the marriage, and her son was afterwards united to the Countess of Meghem, widow of Lan celot Berlaymont.

As affairs seemed going on prosperously for the states in the beginning, of this year, the Prince of Chimay had affected a strong inclination for the Reformed religion, and as governor of Bruges, he had appointed many members of that Church to important offices, to the exclusion of Catholics. By so decided a course, he acquired the confidence of the patriot party and at the end of the year he became governor of Flanders. No sooner was he installed in this post, than he opened a private correspondence with Parma, for it was his intention to make his peace with the King, and to purchase pardon and advancement by the brilliant service which he now undertook, of restoring this important province to the royal authority. In the arrangement of his plans he was assisted by Champagny, who, as will be recollected, had long been a prisoner in Ghent, but whose confinement was not

Page 1102

so strict as to prevent frequent intercourse with his friends without. Champagny was indeed believed to be the life of the whole intrigue. The plot was, however, forwarded by Imbize, the roaring demagogue whose republicanism could never reconcile itself with what he esteemed the aristocratic policy of Orange, and whose stern puritanism could be satisfied with nothing short of a general extermination of Catholics. This man, after having been allowed to depart, infamous and contemptible, from the city which he had endangered, now ventured after five years, to return, and to engage in fresh schemes which were even more criminal than his previous enterprises. The uncompromising foe to Romanism, the advocate of Grecian and Genevan democracy, now allied himself with Champagny and with Chimay, to effect a surrender of Flanders to Philip and to the Inquisition. He succeeded in getting himself elected chief senator in Ghent, and forthwith began to use all his influence to further the secret plot. The joint efforts and intrigues of Parma, Champagny, Chimay, and Imbize, were near being successful. Early, in the spring of 1584 a formal resolution was passed by the government of Ghent, to open negotiations with Parma. Hostages were accordingly exchanged, and a truce of three weeks was agreed upon, during which an animated correspondence was maintained between the authorities of Ghent and the Prince of Chimay on the one side, and the United States-general, the magistracy of Antwerp, the states of Brabant, and other important bodies on the other.

The friends of the Union and of liberty used all their eloquence to arrest the city of Ghent in its course, and to save the province of Flanders from accepting the proposed arrangement with Parma. The people of Ghent were reminded that the chief promoter of this new negotiation was Champagny, a man who owed a deep debt of hatred to their city, for the long, and as he believed, the unjust confinement which he had endured within its walls. Moreover, he was the brother of Granvelle, source of all their woes. To take counsel with Champagny, was to come within reach of a deadly foe, for “he who confesses himself to a wolf,” said the burgomasters of Antwerp, “will get wolf’s absolution.” The Flemings were warned by all their correspondents that it was puerile to hope for faith in Philip; a monarch whose first principle was, that promises to heretics were void. They were entreated to pay no heed to the “sweet singing of the royalists,” who just then affected to disapprove of the practice adopted by the Spanish Inquisition, that they might more surely separate them from their friends. “Imitate not,” said the magistrates of Brussels, “the foolish sheep who made with the wolves a treaty of perpetual amity, from which the faithful dogs were to be excluded.” It was affirmed—-and the truth was certainly beyond peradventure—that religious liberty was dead at the moment when the treaty with Parma should be signed. “To

Page 1103

look for political privilege or evangelical liberty," said the Antwerp authorities, "in any arrangement with the Spaniards, is to look for light in darkness, for fire in water." "Philip is himself the slave of the Inquisition," said the states-general, "and has but one great purpose in life—to cherish the institution everywhere, and particularly in the Netherlands. Before Margaret of Parma's time, one hundred thousand Netherlanders had been burned or strangled, and Alva had spent seven years in butchering and torturing many thousands more." The magistrates of Brussells used similar expressions. "The King of Spain," said they to their brethren of Ghent, "is fastened to the Inquisition. Yea, he is so much in its power, that even if he desired, he is unable to maintain his promises." The Prince of Orange too, was indefatigable in public and private efforts to counteract the machinations of Parma and the Spanish party in Ghent. He saw with horror the progress which the political decomposition of that most important commonwealth was making, for he considered the city the keystone to the union of the provinces, for he felt with a prophetic instinct that its loss would entail that of all the southern provinces, and make a united and independent Netherland state impossible. Already in the summer of 1583, he addressed a letter full of wisdom and of warning to the authorities of Ghent, a letter in which he set fully before them the iniquity and stupidity of their proceedings, while at the same time he expressed himself with so much dexterity and caution as to avoid giving offence, by accusations which he made, as it were, hypothetically, when, in truth, they were real ones.

These remonstrances were not fruitless, and the authorities and citizens of Ghent once more paused ere they stepped from the precipice. While they were thus wavering, the whole negotiation with Parma was abruptly brought to a close by a new incident, the demagogue Imbize having been discovered in a secret attempt to obtain possession of the city of Denremonde, and deliver it to Parma. The old acquaintance, ally, and enemy of Imbize, the Seigneur de Ryhove, was commandant of the city, and information was privately conveyed to him of the design, before there had been time for its accomplishment. Ryhove, being thoroughly on his guard, arrested his old comrade, who was shortly afterwards brought to trial, and executed at Ghent. John van Imbize had returned to the city from which the contemptuous mercy of Orange had permitted him formerly to depart, only to expiate fresh turbulence and fresh treason by a felon's death. Meanwhile the citizens: of Ghent; thus warned by word and deed, passed an earnest resolution to have no more intercourse with Parma, but to abide faithfully by the union. Their example was followed by the other Flemish cities, excepting, unfortunately, Bruges, for that important town, being entirely in the power of Chimay, was now surrendered by him to the royal

Page 1104

government. On the 20th of May, 1584, Baron Montigny, on the part of Parma, signed an accord with the Prince of Chimay, by which the city was restored to his Majesty, and by which all inhabitants not willing to abide by the Roman Catholic religion were permitted to leave the land. The Prince was received with favor by Parma, on conclusion of the transaction, and subsequently met with advancement from the King, while the Princess, who had embraced the Reformed religion, retired to Holland.

The only other city of importance gained on this occasion by the government was Ypres, which had been long besieged, and was, soon afterwards forced to yield. The new Bishop, on taking possession, resorted to instant measures for cleansing a place which had been so long in the hands of the infidels, and as the first step in this purification, the bodies of many heretics who had been buried for years were taken from their graves, and publicly hanged in their coffins. All living adherents to the Reformed religion were instantly expelled from the place.

Ghent and the rest of Flanders were, for the time, saved from the power of Spain, the inhabitants being confirmed in their resolution of sustaining their union with the other provinces by the news from France. Early in the spring the negotiations between Anjou and the states-general had been earnestly renewed, and Junius, Mouillerie, and. Asseliers, had been despatched on a special mission to France, for the purpose of arranging a treaty with the Duke. On the 19th of April, 1584, they arrived in Delft, on their return, bringing warm letters from the French court, full of promises to assist the Netherlands; and it was understood that a constitution, upon the basis of the original arrangement of Bordeaux, would be accepted by the Duke. These arrangements were, however, for ever terminated by the death of Anjou, who had been ill during the whole course of the negotiations. On the 10th of June, 1584, he expired at Chateau Thierry, in great torture, sweating blood from every pore, and under circumstances which, as usual, suggested strong suspicions of poison.

CHAPTER VII.

Various attempts upon the life of Orange—Delft—Mansion of the Prince described—-Francis Guion or Balthazar Girard—His antecedents—His correspondence and interviews with Parma and with d’Assonleville—His employment in France—His return to Delft and interview with Orange—The crime—The confession—The punishment—The consequences—Concluding remarks.

It has been seen that the Ban against the Prince of Orange had not been hitherto without fruits, for although unsuccessful, the efforts to take his life and earn the promised guerdon had been incessant. The attempt of Jaureguy, at Antwerp, of

Salseda and Baza at Bruges, have been related, and in March, 1583, moreover, one Pietro Dordogno was executed in Antwerp for endeavoring

Page 1105

to assassinate the Prince. Before his death, he confessed that he had come from Spain solely for the purpose, and that he had conferred with La Motte, governor of Gravelines, as to the best means of accomplishing his design. In April, 1584, Hans Hanzoon, a merchant of Flushing, had been executed for attempting to destroy the Prince by means of gunpowder, concealed under his house in that city, and under his seat in the church. He confessed that he had deliberately formed the intention of performing the deed, and that he had discussed the details of the enterprise with the Spanish ambassador in Paris. At about the same time, one Le Goth, a captive French officer, had been applied to by the Marquis de Richebourg, on the part of Alexander of Parma, to attempt the murder of the Prince. Le Goth had consented, saying that nothing could be more easily done; and that he would undertake to poison him in a dish of eels, of which he knew him to be particularly fond. The Frenchman was liberated with this understanding; but being very much the friend of Orange, straightway told him the whole story, and remained ever afterwards a faithful servant of the states. It is to be presumed that he excused the treachery to which he owed his escape from prison on the ground that faith was no more to be kept with murderers than with heretics. Thus within two years there had been five distinct attempts to assassinate the Prince, all of them, with the privity of the Spanish government. A sixth was soon to follow.

In the summer of 1584, William of Orange was residing at Delft, where his wife, Louisa de Coligny, had given birth, in the preceding winter, to a son, afterwards the celebrated stadholder, Frederic Henry. The child had received these names from his two godfathers, the Kings of Denmark and of Navarre, and his baptism had been celebrated with much rejoicing on the 12th of June, in the place of his birth.

It was a quiet, cheerful, yet somewhat drowsy little city, that ancient burgh of Delft. The placid canals by which it was intersected in every direction were all planted with whispering, umbrageous rows of limes and poplars, and along these watery highways the traffic of the place glided so noiselessly that the town seemed the abode of silence and tranquillity. The streets were clean and airy, the houses well built, the whole aspect of the place thriving.

One of the principal thoroughfares was called the old Delftstreet. It was shaded on both sides by lime trees, which in that midsummer season covered the surface of the canal which flowed between them with their light and fragrant blossoms. On one side of this street was the “old kirk,” a plain, antique structure of brick, with lancet windows, and with a tall, slender tower, which inclined, at a very considerable angle, towards a house upon the other side of the canal. That house was the mansion of William the Silent. It stood directly opposite the church, being separated by a spacious courtyard from the street, while the stables and other offices in the rear extended to the city wall. A narrow lane, opening out of Delft-street, ran along the side of the house and court, in the direction of the ramparts. The house was a plain, two-storied edifice of brick, with red-

tiled roof, and had formerly been a cloister dedicated to Saint Agatha, the last prior of which had been hanged by the furious Lumey de la Merck.

Page 1106

The news of Anjou's death had been brought to Delft by a special messenger from the French court. On Sunday morning, the 8th of July, 1584, the Prince of Orange, having read the despatches before leaving his bed, caused the man who had brought them to be summoned, that he might give some particular details by word of mouth concerning the last illness of the Duke. The courier was accordingly admitted to the Prince's bed-chamber, and proved to be one Francis Guion, as he called himself. This man had, early in the spring, claimed and received the protection of Orange, on the ground of being the son of a Protestant at Besancon, who had suffered death for—his religion, and of his own ardent attachment to the Reformed faith. A pious, psalm-singing, thoroughly Calvinistic youth he seemed to be having a bible or a hymn-book under his arm whenever he walked the street, and most exemplary in his attendance at sermon and lecture. For, the rest, a singularly unobtrusive personage, twenty-seven years of age, low of stature, meagre, mean-visaged, muddy complexioned, and altogether a man of no account—quite insignificant in the eyes of all who looked upon him. If there were one opinion in which the few who had taken the trouble to think of the puny, somewhat shambling stranger from Burgundy at all coincided, it was that he was inoffensive but quite incapable of any important business. He seemed well educated, claimed to be of respectable parentage and had considerable facility of speech, when any person could be found who thought it worth while to listen to him; but on the whole he attracted little attention.

Nevertheless, this insignificant frame locked up a desperate and daring character; this mild and inoffensive nature had gone pregnant seven years with a terrible crime, whose birth could not much longer be retarded. Francis Guion, the Calvinist, son of a martyred Calvinist, was in reality Balthazar Gerard, a fanatical Catholic, whose father and mother were still living at Villefans in Burgundy. Before reaching man's estate, he had formed the design of murdering the Prince of Orange, "who, so long as he lived, seemed like to remain a rebel against the Catholic King, and to make every effort to disturb the repose of the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion."

When but twenty years of age, he had struck his dagger with all his might into a door, exclaiming, as he did so, "Would that the blow had been in the heart of Orange!" For this he was rebuked by a bystander, who told him it was not for him to kill princes, and that it was not desirable to destroy so good a captain as the Prince, who, after all, might one day reconcile himself with the King.

Page 1107

As soon as the Ban against Orange was published, Balthazar, more anxious than ever to execute his long-cherished design, left Dole and came to Luxemburg. Here he learned that the deed had already been done by John Jaureguy. He received this intelligence at first with a sensation of relief, was glad to be excused from putting himself in danger, and believing the Prince dead, took service as clerk with one John Duprel, secretary to Count Mansfeld, governor of Luxemburg. Ere long, the ill success of Jaureguy's attempt becoming known, the "inveterate determination" of Gerard aroused itself more fiercely than ever. He accordingly took models of Mansfeld's official seals in wax, in order that he might make use of them as an acceptable offering to the Orange party, whose confidence he meant to gain.

Various circumstances detained him, however. A sum of money was stolen, and he was forced to stay till it was found, for fear of being arrested as the thief. Then his cousin and employer fell sick, and Gerard was obliged to wait for his recovery. At last, in March, 1584, "the weather, as he said, appearing to be fine," Balthazar left Luxemburg and came to Treves. While there, he confided his scheme to the regent of the Jesuit college—a "red-haired man" whose name has not been preserved. That dignitary expressed high approbation of the plan, gave Gerard his blessing, and promised him that, if his life should be sacrificed in achieving his purpose, he should be enrolled among the martyrs. Another Jesuit, however, in the same college, with whom he likewise communicated, held very different language, making great efforts to turn the young man from his design, on the ground of the inconveniences which might arise from the forging of Mansfeld's seals—adding, that neither he nor any of the Jesuits liked to meddle with such affairs, but advising that the whole matter should be laid before the Prince of Parma. It does not appear that this personage, "an excellent man and a learned," attempted to dissuade the young man from his project by arguments, drawn from any supposed criminality in the assassination itself, or from any danger, temporal or eternal, to which the perpetrator might expose himself.

Not influenced, as it appears, except on one point, by the advice of this second ghostly confessor, Balthazar came to Tournay, and held council with a third—the celebrated Franciscan, Father Gery—by whom he was much comforted and strengthened in his determination. His next step was to lay the project before Parma, as the "excellent and learned" Jesuit at Treves had advised. This he did by a letter, drawn up with much care, and which he evidently thought well of as a composition. One copy of this letter he deposited with the guardian of the Franciscan convent at Tournay; the other he presented with his own hand to the Prince of Parma. "The vassal," said he, "ought always to prefer justice and the will of the king to his own life."

Page 1108

That being the case, he expressed his astonishment that no man had yet been found to execute the sentence against William of Nassau, “except the gentle Biscayan, since defunct.” To accomplish the task, Balthazar observed, very judiciously, that it was necessary to have access, to the person of the Prince—wherein consisted the difficulty. Those who had that advantage, he continued, were therefore bound to extirpate the pest at once, without obliging his Majesty to send to Rome for a chevalier, because not one of them was willing to precipitate himself into the venomous gulf, which by its contagion infected and killed the souls and bodies, of all poor abused subjects, exposed to its influence. Gerard avowed himself to have been so long goaded and stimulated by these considerations—so extremely nettled with displeasure and bitterness at seeing the obstinate wretch still escaping his just judgment—as to have formed the design of baiting a trap for the fox, hoping thus to gain access to him, and to take him unawares. He added—without explaining the nature of the trap and the bait—that he deemed it his duty to lay the subject before the most serene Prince of Parma, protesting at the same time that he did not contemplate the exploit for the sake of the reward mentioned in the sentence, and that he preferred trusting in that regard to the immense liberality of his Majesty.

Parma had long been looking for a good man to murder Orange, feeling—as Philip, Granvelle, and all former governors of the Netherlands had felt—that this was the only means of saving the royal authority in any part of the provinces. Many unsatisfactory assassins had presented themselves from time to time, and Alexander had paid money in hand to various individuals—Italians, Spaniards, Lorrainers; Scotchmen, Englishmen, who had generally spent the sums received without attempting the job. Others were supposed to be still engaged in the enterprise; and at that moment there were four persons—each unknown to the others, and of different nations—in the city of Delft, seeking to compass the death of William the Silent. Shag-eared, military, hirsute ruffians—ex-captains of free companies and such marauders—were daily offering their services; there was no lack of them, and they had done but little. How should Parma, seeing this obscures undersized, thin-bearded, runaway clerk before him, expect pith and energy from him? He thought him quite unfit for an enterprise of moment, and declared as much to his secret councillors and to the King.

He soon dismissed him, after receiving his letters; and it may be supposed that the bombastic style of that epistle would not efface the unfavorable impression produced by Balthazar’s exterior. The representations of Haultepenne and others induced him so far to modify his views as to send his confidential councillor, d’Assonleville, to the stranger, in order to learn the details of the scheme. Assonleville had accordingly an interview with Gerard, in which he requested the young man to draw up a statement of his plan in writing, ani this was done upon the 11th of April, 1584.

Page 1109

In this letter Gerard explained his plan of introducing himself to the notice of Orange, at Delft, as the son of an executed Calvinist; as himself warmly, though secretly, devoted to the Reformed faith, and as desirous, therefore, of placing himself in the Prince's service, in order to avoid the insolence of the Papists. Having gained the confidence of those about the Prince, he would suggest to them the great use which might be made of Mansfeld's signet in forging passports for spies and other persons whom it might be desirous to send into the territory of the royalists. "With these or similar feints and frivolities," continued Gerard, "he should soon obtain access to the person of the said Nassau," repeating his protestation that nothing had moved him to his enterprise "save the good zeal which he bore to the faith and true religion guarded by the Holy Mother Church Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman, and to the service of his Majesty." He begged pardon for having purloined the impressions of the seals—a turpitude which he would never have committed, but would sooner have suffered a thousand deaths, except for the great end in view. He particularly wished forgiveness for that crime before going to his task, "in order that he might confess, and receive the holy communion at the coming Easter, without scruples of conscience." He likewise begged the Prince of Parma to obtain for him absolution from his Holiness for this crime of pilfering—the more so "as he was about to keep company for some time with heretics and atheists, and in some sort to conform himself to their customs."

From the general tone of the letters of Gerard, he might be set down at once as a simple, religious fanatic, who felt sure that, in executing the command of Philip publicly issued to all the murderers of Europe, he was meriting well of God and his King. There is no doubt that he was an exalted enthusiast, but not purely an enthusiast. The man's character offers more than one point of interest, as a psychological phenomenon. He had convinced himself that the work which he had in hand was eminently meritorious, and he was utterly without fear of consequences. He was, however, by no means so disinterested as he chose to represent himself in letters which, as he instinctively felt, were to be of perennial interest. On the contrary, in his interviews with Assonleville, he urged that he was a poor fellow, and that he had undertaken this enterprise in order to acquire property—to make himself rich—and that he depended upon the Prince of Parma's influence in obtaining the reward promised by the Ban to the individual who should put Orange to death.

Page 1110

This second letter decided Parma so far that he authorized Assonleville to encourage the young man in his attempt, and to promise that the reward should be given to him in case of success, and to his heirs in the event of his death. Assonleville, in the second interview, accordingly made known these assurances in the strongest manner to Gerard, warning him, at the same time, on no account; if arrested, to inculpate the Prince of Parma. The councillor, while thus exhorting the stranger, according to Alexander's commands, confined himself, however, to generalities, refusing even to advance fifty crowns, which Balthazar had begged from the Governor-General in order to provide for the necessary expenses of his project. Parma had made similar advances too often to men who had promised to assassinate the Prince and had then done little, and he was resolute in his refusal to this new adventurer, of whom he expected absolutely nothing. Gerard, notwithstanding this rebuff, was not disheartened. "I will provide myself out of my own purse," said he to Assonleville, "and within six weeks you will hear of me."—"Go forth, my son," said Assonleville, paternally, upon this spirited reply, "and if you succeed in your enterprise, the King will fulfil all his promises, and you will gain an immortal name beside."

The "inveterate deliberation," thus thoroughly matured, Gerard now proceeded to carry into effect. He came to Delft; obtained a hearing of Millers, the clergyman and intimate friend of Orange, showed him the Mansfeld seals, and was, somewhat against his will, sent to France, to exhibit them to Marechal Biron, who, it was thought, was soon to be appointed governor of Cambray. Through Orange's recommendation, the Burgundian was received into the suite of Noel de Caron, Seigneur de Schoneval, then setting forth on a special mission to the Duke of Anjou. While in France, Gerard could rest neither by day nor night, so tormented was he by the desire of accomplishing his project, and at length he obtained permission, upon the death of the Duke, to carry this important intelligence to the Prince of Orange. The despatches having been entrusted to him, he travelled posthaste to Delft, and, to his astonishment, the letters had hardly been delivered before he was summoned in person to the chamber of the Prince. Here was an opportunity such as he had never dared to hope for. The arch-enemy to the Church and to the human race, whose death, would confer upon his destroyer wealth and nobility in this world, besides a crown of glory in the next, lay unarmed, alone, in bed, before the man who had thirsted seven long years for his blood.

Balthazar could scarcely control his emotions sufficiently to answer the questions which the Prince addressed to him concerning the death of Anjou, but Orange, deeply engaged with the despatches, and with the reflections which their deeply-important contents suggested, did not observe the countenance of the humble Calvinist exile, who had been recently recommended to his patronage by Millers. Gerard, had, moreover, made no preparation for an interview so entirely unexpected, had come unarmed, and had formed no plan for escape. He was obliged to forego his prey when most within his reach, and after communicating all the information which the Prince required, he was dismissed from the chamber.

Page 1111

It was Sunday morning, and the bells were tolling for church. Upon leaving the house he loitered about the courtyard, furtively examining the premises, so that a sergeant of halberdiers asked him why he was waiting there. Balthazar meekly replied that he was desirous of attending divine worship in the church opposite, but added, pointing to, his shabby and travel-stained attire, that, without at least a new pair of shoes and stockings, he was unfit to join the congregation. Insignificant as ever, the small, pious, dusty stranger excited no suspicion in the mind of the good-natured sergeant. He forthwith spoke of the wants of Gerard to an officer, by whom they were communicated to Orange himself, and the Prince instantly ordered a sum of money to be given him. Thus Balthazar obtained from William's charity what Parma's thrift had denied—a fund for carrying out his purpose.

Next morning, with the money thus procured he purchased a pair of pistols, or small carabines, from a soldier, chaffering long about the price because the vender could not supply a particular kind of chopped bullets or slugs which he desired. Before the sunset of the following day that soldier had stabbed himself to the heart, and died despairing, on hearing for what purpose the pistols had been bought.

On Tuesday, the 10th of July, 1584, at about half-past twelve, the Prince, with his wife on his arm, and followed by the ladies and gentlemen of his family, was going to the dining-room. William the Silent was dressed upon that day, according to his usual custom, in very plain fashion. He wore a wide-leaved, loosely-shaped hat of dark felt; with a silken cord round the crown-such as had been worn by the Beggars in the early days of the revolt. A high ruff encircled his neck, from which also depended one of the Beggar's medals, with the motto, "Fideles au roy jusqu'a la besace," while a loose surcoat of grey frieze cloth, over a tawny leather doublet, with wide, slashed underclothes completed his costume. Gerard presented himself at the doorway, and demanded a passport. The Princess, struck with the pale and agitated countenance of the man, anxiously questioned her husband concerning the stranger. The Prince carelessly observed that "it was merely a person who came for a passport," ordering, at the same time, a secretary forthwith to prepare one. The Princess, still not relieved, observed in an under-tone that "she had never seen so villainous a countenance." Orange, however, not at all impressed with the appearance of Gerard, conducted himself at table with his usual cheerfulness, conversing much with the burgomaster of Leewarden, the only guest present at the family dinner, concerning the political and religious aspects of Friesland. At two o'clock the company rose from table. The Prince led the way, intending to pass to his private apartments above. The dining-room, which was on the ground floor, opened into a little square vestibule, which communicated,

Page 1112

through an arched passageway, with the main entrance into the court-yard. This vestibule was also directly at the foot of the wooden staircase leading to the next floor, and was scarcely six feet in width. Upon its left side, as one approached the stairway, was an, obscure arch, sunk deep in the wall, and completely in the shadow of the door. Behind this arch a portal opened to the narrow lane at the side of the house. The stairs themselves were completely lighted by a large window, half way up the flight. The Prince came from the dining-room, and began leisurely to ascend. He had only reached the second stair, when a man emerged from the sunken arch, and, standing within a foot or two of him, discharged a pistol full at his heart. Three balls entered his body, one of which, passing quite through him, struck with violence against the wall beyond. The Prince exclaimed in French, as he felt the wound, “O my God; have mercy upon my soul! O my God, have mercy upon this poor people.”

These were the last words he ever spoke, save that when his sister, Catherine of Schwartzburg, immediately afterwards asked him if he commended his soul to Jesus Christ, he faintly answered, “Yes.” His master of the horse, Jacob van Maldere, had caught him in his arms as the fatal shot was fired. The Prince was then placed on the stairs for an instant, when he immediately began to swoon. He was afterwards laid upon a couch in the dining-room, where in a few minutes, he breathed his last in the arms of his wife and sister.

The murderer succeeded in making his escape through the side door, and sped swiftly up the narrow lane. He had almost reached the ramparts, from which he intended to spring into the moat, when he stumbled over a heap of rubbish. As he rose, he was seized by several pages and halberdiers, who had pursued him from the house. He had dropped his pistols upon the spot where he had committed the crime, and upon his person were found a couple, of bladders, provided with apiece of pipe with which he had intended to assist himself across the moat, beyond which a horse was waiting for him. He made no effort to deny his identity, but boldly avowed himself and his deed. He was brought back to the house, where he immediately underwent a preliminary examination before the city magistrates. He was afterwards subjected to excruciating tortures; for the fury against the wretch who had destroyed the Father of the country was uncontrollable, and William the Silent was no longer alive to intercede—as he had often done before—in behalf of those who assailed his life.

Page 1113

The organization of Balthazar Gerard would furnish a subject of profound study, both for the physiologist and the metaphysician. Neither wholly a fanatic, nor entirely a ruffian, he combined the most dangerous elements of both characters. In his puny body and mean exterior were enclosed considerable mental powers and accomplishments, a daring ambition, and a courage almost superhuman. Yet those qualities led him only to form upon the threshold of life a deliberate determination to achieve greatness by the assassin's trade. The rewards held out by the Ban, combining with his religious bigotry and his passion for distinction, fixed all his energies with patient concentration upon the one great purpose for which he seemed to have been born, and after seven years' preparation, he had at last fulfilled his design.

Upon being interrogated by the magistrates, he manifested neither despair nor contrition, but rather a quiet exultation. "Like David," he said, "he had slain Goliath of Gath."

When falsely informed that his victim was not dead, he showed no credulity or disappointment. He had discharged three poisoned balls into the Prince's stomach, and he knew that death must have already ensued. He expressed regret, however, that the resistance of the halberdiers had prevented him from using his second pistol, and avowed that if he were a thousand leagues away he would return in order to do the deed again, if possible. He deliberately wrote a detailed confession of his crime, and of the motives and manner of its commission, taking care, however, not to implicate Parma in the transaction. After sustaining day after day the most horrible tortures, he subsequently related his interviews with Assonleville and with the president of the Jesuit college at Treves adding that he had been influenced in his work by the assurance of obtaining the rewards promised by the Ban. During the intervals of repose from the rack he conversed with ease, and even eloquence, answering all questions addressed to him with apparent sincerity. His constancy in suffering so astounded his judges that they believed him supported by witchcraft. "Ecce homo!" he exclaimed, from time to time, with insane blasphemy, as he raised his blood-streaming head from the bench. In order to destroy the charm which seemed to render him insensible to pain, they sent for the shirt of a hospital patient, supposed to be a sorcerer. When clothed in this garment, however, Balthazar was none the less superior to the arts of the tormentors, enduring all their inflictions, according to an eye-witness, "without once exclaiming, Ah me!" and avowing that he would repeat his enterprise, if possible, were he to die a thousand deaths in consequence. Some of those present refused to believe that he was a man at all. Others asked him how long since he had sold himself to the Devil? to which he replied, mildly, that he had no acquaintance whatever with the Devil. He thanked the judges politely for the food which he received in prison, and promised to recompense them for the favor. Upon being asked how that was possible, he replied; that he would serve as their advocate in Paradise.

Page 1114

The sentence pronounced against the assassin was execrable—a crime against the memory of the great man whom it professed to avenge. It was decreed that the right hand of Gerard should be burned off with a red-hot iron, that his flesh should be torn from his bones with pincers in six different places, that he should be quartered and disembowelled alive, that his heart should be torn from his bosom and flung in his face, and that, finally, his head should be taken off. Not even his horrible crime, with its endless consequences, nor the natural frenzy of indignation which it had excited, could justify this savage decree, to rebuke which the murdered hero might have almost risen from the sleep of death. The sentence was literally executed on the 14th of July, the criminal supporting its horrors with the same astonishing fortitude. So calm were his nerves, crippled and half roasted as he was ere he mounted the scaffold, that when one of the executioners was slightly injured in the ear by the flying from the handle of the hammer with which he was breaking the fatal pistol in pieces, as the first step in the execution—a circumstance which produced a general laugh in the crowd—a smile was observed upon Balthazar's face in sympathy with the general hilarity. His lips were seen to move up to the moment when his heart was thrown in his face—"Then," said a looker-on, "he gave up the ghost."

The reward promised by Philip to the man who should murder Orange was paid to the heirs of Gerard. Parma informed his sovereign that the "poor man" had been executed, but that his father and mother were still living; to whom he recommended the payment of that "merced" which "the laudable and generous deed had so well deserved." This was accordingly done, and the excellent parents, ennobled and enriched by the crime of their son, received instead of the twenty-five thousand crowns promised in the Ban, the three seignories of Lievremont, Hostal, and Dampmartin in the Franche Comte, and took their place at once among the landed aristocracy. Thus the bounty of the Prince had furnished the weapon by which his life was destroyed, and his estates supplied the fund out of which the assassin's family received the price of blood. At a later day, when the unfortunate eldest son of Orange returned from Spain after twenty-seven years' absence, a changeling and a Spaniard, the restoration of those very estates was offered to him by Philip the Second, provided he would continue to pay a fixed proportion of their rents to the family of his father's murderer. The education which Philip William had received, under the King's auspices, had however, not entirely destroyed all his human feelings, and he rejected the proposal with scorn. The estates remained with the Gerard family, and the patents of nobility which they had received were used to justify their exemption from certain taxes, until the union of Franche Comte, with France, when a French governor tore the documents in pieces and trampled them under foot.

Page 1115

William of Orange, at the period of his death, was aged fifty-one years and sixteen days. He left twelve children. By his first wife, Anne of Egmont, he had one son, Philip, and one daughter, Mary, afterwards married to Count Hohenlo. By his second wife, Anna of Saxony; he had one son, the celebrated Maurice of Nassau, and two daughters, Anna, married afterwards to her cousin, Count William Louis, and Emilie, who espoused the Pretender of Portugal, Prince Emanuel. By Charlotte of Bourbon, his third wife, he had six daughters; and by his fourth, Louisa de Coligny, one son, Frederic William, afterwards stadholder of the Republic in her most palmy days. The Prince was entombed on the 3rd of August, at Delft, amid the tears of a whole nation. Never was a more extensive, unaffected, and legitimate sorrow felt at the death of any human being.

The life and labors of Orange had established the emancipated common-wealth upon a secure foundation, but his death rendered the union of all the Netherlands into one republic hopeless. The efforts of the Malcontent nobles, the religious discord, the consummate ability, both political and military, of Parma, all combined with the lamentable loss of William the Silent to separate for ever the southern and Catholic provinces from the northern confederacy. So long as the Prince remained alive, he was the Father of the whole country; the Netherlands—saving only the two Walloon provinces—constituting a whole. Notwithstanding the spirit of faction and the blight of the long civil war, there was at least one country; or the hope of a country, one strong heart, one guiding head, for the patriotic party throughout the land. Philip and Granvelle were right in their estimate of the advantage to be derived from the Prince’s death, in believing that an assassin’s hand could achieve more than all the wiles which Spanish or Italian statesmanship could teach, or all the armies which Spain or Italy could muster. The pistol of the insignificant Gerard destroyed the possibility of a united Netherland state, while during the life of William there was union in the policy, unity in the history of the country.

In the following year, Antwerp, hitherto the centre around which all the national interests and historical events group themselves, fell before the scientific efforts of Parma. The city which had so long been the freest, as well as the most opulent, capital in Europe, sank for ever to the position of a provincial town. With its fall, combined with other circumstances, which it is not necessary to narrate in anticipation, the final separation of the Netherlands was completed. On the other hand, at the death of Orange, whose formal inauguration as sovereign Count had not yet taken place, the states of Holland and Zealand reassumed the Sovereignty. The commonwealth which William had liberated for ever from Spanish tyranny continued to exist as a great and flourishing republic during, more than two centuries, under the successive stadholderates of his sons and descendants.

Page 1116

His life gave existence to an independent country—his death defined its limits. Had he lived twenty years longer, it is probable that the seven provinces would have been seventeen; and that the Spanish title would have been for ever extinguished both in Nether Germany and Celtic Gaul. Although there was to be the length of two human generations more of warfare ere Spain acknowledged the new government, yet before the termination of that period the United States had become the first naval power and one of the most considerable commonwealths in the world; while the civil and religious liberty, the political independence of the land, together with the total expulsion of the ancient foreign tyranny from the soil, had been achieved ere the eyes of William were closed. The republic existed, in fact, from the moment of the abjuration in 1581.

The most important features of the polity which thus assumed a prominent organization have been already indicated. There was no revolution, no radical change. The ancient rugged tree of Netherland liberty—with its moss-grown trunk, gnarled branches, and deep-reaching roots—which had been slowly growing for ages, was still full of sap, and was to deposit for centuries longer its annual rings of consolidated and concentric strength. Though lopped of some luxuriant boughs, it was sound at the core, and destined for a still larger life than even in the healthiest moments of its mediveval existence.

The history of the rise of the Netherland Republic has been at the same time the biography of William the Silent. This, while it gives unity to the narrative, renders an elaborate description of his character superfluous. That life was a noble Christian epic; inspired with one great purpose from its commencement to its close; the stream flowing ever from one fountain with expanding fulness, but retaining all its original pity. A few general observations are all which are necessary by way of conclusion.

In person, Orange was above the middle height, perfectly well made and sinewy, but rather spare than stout. His eyes, hair, beard, and complexion were brown. His head was small, symmetrically-shaped, combining the alertness and compactness characteristic of the soldier; with the capacious brow furrowed prematurely with the horizontal lines of thought, denoting the statesman and the sage. His physical appearance was, therefore, in harmony, with his organization, which was of antique model. Of his moral qualities, the most prominent was his piety. He was more than anything else a religious man. From his trust in God, he ever derived support and consolation in the darkest hours. Implicitly relying upon Almighty wisdom and goodness, he looked danger in the face with a constant smile, and endured incessant labors and trials with a serenity which seemed more than human. While, however, his soul was full of piety, it was tolerant of error. Sincerely and deliberately himself a convert to the Reformed Church, he was ready to extend freedom of worship to Catholics on the one hand, and to Anabaptists on the other, for no man ever felt more keenly than he, that the Reformer who becomes in his turn a bigot is doubly odious.

Page 1117

His firmness was allied to his piety. His constancy in bearing the whole weight of struggle as unequal as men have ever undertaken, was the theme of admiration even to his enemies. The rock in the ocean, “tranquil amid raging billows,” was the favorite emblem by which his friends expressed, their sense of his firmness. From the time when, as a hostage in France, he first discovered the plan of Philip to plant the Inquisition in the Netherlands, up to the last moment of his life, he never faltered in his determination to resist that iniquitous scheme. This resistance was the labor of his life. To exclude the Inquisition; to maintain the ancient liberties of his country, was the task which he appointed to himself when a youth of three-and-twenty. Never speaking a word concerning a heavenly mission, never deluding himself or others with the usual phraseology of enthusiasts, he accomplished the task, through danger, amid toils, and with sacrifices such as few men have ever been able to make on their country’s altar; for the disinterested benevolence of the man was as prominent as his fortitude. A prince of high rank, and, with royal revenues, he stripped himself of station, wealth, almost at times of the common necessaries of life, and became, in his country’s cause, nearly a beggar as well as an outlaw. Nor was he forced into his career by an accidental impulse from which there was no recovery. Retreat was ever open to him. Not only pardon but advancement was urged upon him again and again. Officially and privately, directly and circuitously, his confiscated estates, together with indefinite and boundless favors in addition, were offered to him on every great occasion. On the arrival of Don John, at the Breda negotiations, at the Cologne conferences, we have seen how calmly these offers were waved aside, as if their rejection was so simple that it hardly required many words for its signification, yet he had mortgaged his estates so deeply that his heirs hesitated at accepting their inheritance, for fear it should involve them in debt. Ten years after his death, the account between his executors and his brother John amounted to one million four hundred thousand florins—due to the Count, secured by various pledges of real and personal property; and it was finally settled upon this basis. He was besides largely indebted to every one of his powerful relatives, so that the payment of the incumbrances upon his estate very nearly justified the fears of his children. While on the one hand, therefore, he poured out these enormous sums like water, and firmly refused a hearing to the tempting offers of the royal government, upon the other hand he proved the disinterested nature of his services by declining, year after year, the sovereignty over the provinces; and by only accepting, in the last days of his life, when refusal had become almost impossible, the limited, constitutional supremacy over that portion of them which now makes the realm of his descendants. He lived and died, not for himself, but for his country: “God pity this poor people!” were his dying words.

Page 1118

His intellectual faculties were various and of the highest order. He had the exact, practical, and combining qualities which make the great commander, and his friends claimed that, in military genius, he was second to no captain in Europe. This was, no doubt, an exaggeration of partial attachment, but it is certain that the Emperor Charles had an exalted opinion of his capacity for the field. His fortification of Philippeville and Charlemont, in the face of the enemy his passage of the Meuse in Alva's sight—his unfortunate but well-ordered campaign against that general—his sublime plan of relief, projected and successfully directed at last from his sick bed, for the besieged city of Leyden—will always remain monuments of his practical military skill.

Of the soldier's great virtues—constancy in disaster, devotion to duty, hopefulness in defeat—no man ever possessed a larger share. He arrived, through a series of reverses, at a perfect victory. He planted a free commonwealth under the very battery of the Inquisition, in defiance of the most powerful empire existing. He was therefore a conqueror in the loftiest sense, for he conquered liberty and a national existence for a whole people. The contest was long, and he fell in the struggle, but the victory was to the dead hero, not to the living monarch. It is to be remembered, too, that he always wrought with inferior instruments. His troops were usually mercenaries, who were but too apt to mutiny upon the eve of battle, while he was opposed by the most formidable veterans of Europe, commanded successively by the first captains of the age. That, with no lieutenant of eminent valor or experience, save only his brother Louis, and with none at all after that chieftain's death, William of Orange should succeed in baffling the efforts of Alva, Requesens, Don John of Austria, and Alexander Farnese—men whose names are among the most brilliant in the military annals of the world—is in itself, sufficient evidence of his warlike ability. At the period of his death he had reduced the number of obedient provinces to two; only Artois and Hainault acknowledging Philip, while the other fifteen were in open revolt, the greater part having solemnly forsworn their sovereign.

The supremacy of his political genius was entirely beyond question. He was the first statesman of the age. The quickness of his perception was only equalled by the caution which enabled him to mature the results of his observations. His knowledge of human nature was profound. He governed the passions and sentiments of a great nation as if they had been but the keys and chords of one vast instrument; and his hand rarely failed to evoke harmony even out of the wildest storms. The turbulent city of Ghent, which could obey no other master, which even the haughty Emperor could only crush without controlling, was ever responsive to the master-hand of Orange. His presence scared away Imbize and his bat-like crew, confounded the schemes of John Casimir, frustrated the wiles of Prince Chimay, and while he lived, Ghent was what it ought always to have remained, the bulwark, as it had been the cradle, of popular liberty. After his death it became its tomb.

Page 1119

Ghent, saved thrice by the policy, the eloquence, the self-sacrifices of Orange, fell within three months of his murder into the hands of Parma. The loss of this most important city, followed in the next year by the downfall of Antwerp, sealed the fate of the Southern Netherlands. Had the Prince lived, how different might have been the country's fate! If seven provinces could dilate, in so brief a space, into the powerful commonwealth which the Republic soon became, what might not have been achieved by the united seventeen; a confederacy which would have united the adamantine vigor of the Batavian and Frisian races with the subtler, more delicate, and more graceful national elements in which the genius of the Frank, the Roman, and the Romanized Celt were so intimately blended. As long as the Father of the country lived, such a union was possible. His power of managing men was so unquestionable, that there was always a hope, even in the darkest hour, for men felt implicit reliance, as well on his intellectual resources as on his integrity.

This power of dealing with his fellow-men he manifested in the various ways in which it has been usually exhibited by statesmen. He possessed a ready eloquence—-sometimes impassioned, oftener argumentative, always rational. His influence over his audience was unexampled in the annals of that country or age; yet he never condescended to flatter the people. He never followed the nation, but always led her in the path of duty and of honor, and was much more prone to rebuke the vices than to pander to the passions of his hearers. He never failed to administer ample chastisement to parsimony, to jealousy, to insubordination, to intolerance, to infidelity, wherever it was due, nor feared to confront the states or the people in their most angry hours, and to tell them the truth to their faces. This commanding position he alone could stand upon, for his countrymen knew the generosity which had sacrificed his all for them, the self-denial which had eluded rather than sought political advancement, whether from king or people, and the untiring devotion which had consecrated a whole life to toil and danger in the cause of their emancipation. While, therefore, he was ever ready to rebuke, and always too honest to flatter, he at the same time possessed the eloquence which could convince or persuade. He knew how to reach both the mind and the heart of his hearers. His orations, whether extemporaneous or prepared—his written messages to the states-general, to the provincial authorities, to the municipal bodies—his private correspondence with men of all ranks, from emperors and kings down to secretaries, and even children—all show an easy flow of language, a fulness of thought, a power of expression rare in that age, a fund of historical allusion, a considerable power of imagination, a warmth of sentiment, a breadth of view, a directness of purpose—a range of qualities, in short, which would in themselves have stamped him as one

Page 1120

of the master-minds of his century, had there been no other monument to his memory than the remains of his spoken or written eloquence. The bulk of his performances in this department was prodigious. Not even Philip was more industrious in the cabinet. Not even Granvelle held a more facile pen. He wrote and spoke equally well in French German, or Flemish; and he possessed, besides; Spanish, Italian, Latin. The weight of his correspondence alone would have almost sufficed for the common industry of a lifetime, and although many volumes of his speeches and, letters have been published, there remain in the various archives of the Netherlands and Germany many documents from his hand which will probably never see the light. If the capacity for unremitted intellectual labor in an honorable cause be the measure of human greatness, few minds could be compared to the “large composition” of this man. The efforts made to destroy the Netherlands by the most laborious and painstaking of tyrants were counteracted by the industry of the most indefatigable of patriots.

Thus his eloquence, oral or written, gave him almost boundless power over his countrymen. He possessed, also, a rare perception of human character, together with an iron memory which never lost a face, a place, or an event, once seen or known. He read the minds even the faces of men, like printed books. No man could overreach him, excepting only those to whom he gave his heart. He might be mistaken where he had confided, never where he had been distrustful or indifferent. He was deceived by Renneberg, by his brother-in-law Van den Berg, by the Duke of Anjou. Had it been possible for his brother Louis or his brother John to have proved false, he might have been deceived by them. He was never outwitted by Philip, or Granvelle, or Don John, or Alexander of Parma. Anna of Saxony was false to him; and entered into correspondence with the royal governors and with the King of Spain; Charlotte of Bourbon or Louisa de Coligny might have done the same had it been possible for their natures also to descend to such depths of guile.

As for the Aerschots, the Havres, the Chimays, he was never influenced either by their blandishments or their plots. He was willing to use them when their interest made them friendly, or to crush them when their intrigues against his policy rendered them dangerous. The adroitness with which he converted their schemes in behalf of Matthias, of Don John, of Anjou, into so many additional weapons for his own cause, can never be too often studied. It is instructive to observe the wiles of the Macchiavelian school employed by a master of the craft, to frustrate, not to advance, a knavish purpose. This character, in a great measure, marked his whole policy. He was profoundly skilled in the subtleties of Italian statesmanship, which he had learned as a youth at the Imperial court, and which he employed in his manhood in the service, not of tyranny, but of liberty. He fought the Inquisition with its own weapons. He dealt with Philip on his own ground. He excavated the earth beneath the King’s feet by a more subtle process than that practised by the most fraudulent monarch that ever governed

the Spanish empire, and Philip, chain-mailed as he was in complicated wiles, was pierced to the quick by a keener policy than his own.

Page 1121

Ten years long the King placed daily his most secret letters in hands which regularly transmitted copies of the correspondence to the Prince of Orange, together with a key to the ciphers and every other illustration which might be required. Thus the secrets of the King were always as well known to Orange as to himself; and the Prince being as prompt as Philip was hesitating, the schemes could often be frustrated before their execution had been commenced. The crime of the unfortunate clerk, John de Castillo, was discovered in the autumn of the year 1581, and he was torn to pieces by four horses. Perhaps his treason to the monarch whose bread he was eating, while he received a regular salary from the King's most determined foe, deserved even this horrible punishment, but casuists must determine how much guilt attaches to the Prince for his share in the transaction. This history is not the eulogy of Orange, although, in discussing his character, it is difficult to avoid the monotony of panegyric. Judged by a severe moral standard, it cannot be called virtuous or honorable to suborn treachery or any other crime, even to accomplish a lofty purpose; yet the universal practice of mankind in all ages has tolerated the artifices of war, and no people has ever engaged in a holier or more mortal contest than did the Netherlands in their great struggle with Spain. Orange possessed the rare quality of caution, a characteristic by which he was distinguished from his youth. At fifteen he was the confidential counsellor, as at twenty-one he became the general-in-chief, to the most politic, as well as the most warlike potentate of his age, and if he at times indulged in wiles which modern statesmanship, even while it practises, condemns, he ever held in his hand the clue of an honorable purpose to guide him through the tortuous labyrinth.

It is difficult to find any other characteristic deserving of grave censure, but his enemies have adopted a simpler process. They have been able to find few flaws in his nature, and therefore have denounced it in gross. It is not that his character was here and there defective, but that the eternal jewel was false. The patriotism was counterfeit; the self-abnegation and the generosity were counterfeit. He was governed only by ambition —by a desire of personal advancement. They never attempted to deny his talents, his industry, his vast sacrifices of wealth and station; but they ridiculed the idea that he could have been inspired by any but unworthy motives. God alone knows the heart of man. He alone can unweave the tangled skein of human motives, and detect the hidden springs of human action, but as far as can be judged by a careful observation of undisputed facts, and by a diligent collation of public and private documents, it would seem that no man—not even Washington—has ever been inspired by a purer patriotism. At any rate, the charge of ambition and self-seeking can only be answered by a reference to the whole picture which these volumes have attempted to portray. The words, the deeds of the man are there. As much as possible, his inmost soul is revealed in his confidential letters, and he who looks in a right spirit will hardly fail to find what he desires.

Page 1122

Whether originally of a timid temperament or not, he was certainly possessed of perfect courage at last. In siege and battle—in the deadly air of pestilential cities—in the long exhaustion of mind and body which comes from unduly protracted labor and anxiety—-amid the countless conspiracies of assassins—he was daily exposed to death in every shape. Within two years, five different attempts against his life had been discovered. Rank and fortune were offered to any malefactor who would compass the murder. He had already been shot through the head, and almost mortally wounded. Under such circumstances even a brave man might have seen a pitfall at every step, a dagger in every hand, and poison in every cup. On the contrary, he was ever cheerful, and hardly took more precaution than usual. “God in his mercy,” said he, with unaffected simplicity, “will maintain my innocence and my honor during my life and in future ages. As to my fortune and my life, I have dedicated both, long since, to His service. He will do therewith what pleases Him for His glory and my salvation.” Thus his suspicions were not even excited by the ominous face of Gerard, when he first presented himself at the dining-room door. The Prince laughed off his wife’s prophetic apprehension at the sight of his murderer, and was as cheerful as usual to the last.

He possessed, too, that which to the heathen philosopher seemed the greatest good—-the sound mind in the sound body. His physical frame was after death found so perfect that a long life might have been in store for him, notwithstanding all which he had endured. The desperate illness of 1574, the frightful gunshot wound inflicted by Jaureguy in 1582, had left no traces. The physicians pronounced that his body presented an aspect of perfect health. His temperament was cheerful. At table, the pleasures of which, in moderation, were his only relaxation, he was always animated and merry, and this jocoseness was partly natural, partly intentional. In the darkest hours of his country’s trial, he affected a serenity which he was far from feeling, so that his apparent gaiety at momentous epochs was even censured by dullards, who could not comprehend its philosophy, nor applaud the flippancy of William the Silent.

He went through life bearing the load of a people’s sorrows upon his shoulders with a smiling face. Their name was the last word upon his lips, save the simple affirmative, with which the soldier who had been battling for the right all his lifetime, commended his soul in dying “to his great captain, Christ.” The people were grateful and affectionate, for they trusted the character of their “Father William,” and not all the clouds which calumny could collect ever dimmed to their eyes the radiance of that lofty mind to which they were accustomed, in their darkest calamities, to look for light. As long as he lived, he was the guiding-star of a whole brave nation, and when he died the little children cried in the streets.

Page 1123

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Bribed the Deity
Forgiving spirit on the part of the malefactor
Great error of despising their enemy
Mistake to stumble a second time over the same stone
Modern statesmanship, even while it practises, condemns
Preferred an open enemy to a treacherous protector
Reformer who becomes in his turn a bigot is doubly odious
Unremitted intellectual labor in an honorable cause
Usual phraseology of enthusiasts
Writing letters full of injured innocence

Etext editor's bookmarks, *rise of the Dutch republic*, 1574-84

A terrible animal, indeed, is an unbridled woman
A good lawyer is a bad Christian
A most fatal success
A common hatred united them, for a time at least
Absurd affectation of candor
Agreements were valid only until he should repent
All the majesty which decoration could impart
All Protestants were beheaded, burned, or buried alive
All claimed the privilege of persecuting
Always less apt to complain of irrevocable events
Amuse them with this peace negotiation
Are apt to discharge such obligations—(by) ingratitude
Arrive at their end by fraud, when violence will not avail them
As the old woman had told the Emperor Adrian
Attachment to a half-drowned land and to a despised religion
Barbara Blomberg, washerwoman of Ratisbon
Beautiful damsel, who certainly did not lack suitors
Believed in the blessed advent of peace
Blessing of God upon the Devil's work
Breath, time, and paper were profusely wasted and nothing gained
Bribed the Deity
Care neither for words nor menaces in any matter
Character of brave men to act, not to expect
Claimed the praise of moderation that their demands were so few
Colonel Ysselstein, "dismissed for a homicide or two"
Compassing a country's emancipation through a series of defeats
Conflicting claims of prerogative and conscience
Confused conferences, where neither party was entirely sincere
Country would bear his loss with fortitude

Customary oaths, to be kept with the customary conscientiousness
Daily widening schism between Lutherans and Calvinists
Deadliest of sins, the liberty of conscience
Difficult for one friend to advise another in three matters
Distinguished for his courage, his cruelty, and his corpulence
Don John of Austria
Don John was at liberty to be King of England and Scotland
Dying at so very inconvenient a moment
Eight thousand human beings were murdered
Establish not freedom for Calvinism, but freedom for conscience
Everything was conceded,

Page 1124

but nothing was secured
- Fanatics of the new religion denounced him as a godless man
- Ferocity which even Christians could not have surpassed
- Forgiving spirit on the part of the malefactor
- Glory could be put neither into pocket nor stomach
- God has given absolute power to no mortal man
- Great error of despising their enemy
- Happy to glass themselves in so brilliant a mirror
- He had never enjoyed social converse, except at long intervals
- He would have no Calvinist inquisition set up in its place
- He would have no persecution of the opposite creed
- His personal graces, for the moment, took the rank of virtues
- Hope delayed was but a cold and meagre consolation
- Human ingenuity to inflict human misery
- I regard my country’s profit, not my own
- Imagined, and did the work of truth
- In character and general talents he was beneath mediocrity
- Indecision did the work of indolence
- Insinuate that his orders had been hitherto misunderstood
- It is not desirable to disturb much of that learned dust
- Its humility, seemed sufficiently ironical
- Judas Maccabaeus
- King set a price upon his head as a rebel
- Like a man holding a wolf by the ears
- Local self-government which is the life-blood of liberty
- Logical and historical argument of unmerciful length
- Made no breach in royal and Roman infallibility
- Mankind were naturally inclined to calumny
- Men were loud in reproof, who had been silent
- Mistake to stumble a second time over the same stone
- Modern statesmanship, even while it practises, condemns
- More easily, as he had no intention of keeping the promise
- Natural to judge only by the result
- Necessary to make a virtue of necessity
- Neither wished the convocation, while both affected an eagerness
- Neither ambitious nor greedy
- No man ever understood the art of bribery more thoroughly
- No authority over an army which they did not pay
- No man could reveal secrets which he did not know
- Not so successful as he was picturesque
- Not upon words but upon actions
- Not to fall asleep in the shade of a peace negotiation

Nothing was so powerful as religious difference
Of high rank but of lamentably low capacity
On the first day four thousand men and women were slaughtered
One-half to Philip and one-half to the Pope and Venice (slaves)
Our pot had not gone to the fire as often
Peace was desirable, it might be more dangerous than war
Peace, in reality, was war in its worst shape
Perfection of insolence
Plundering the country which they came to protect
Pope excommunicated him as a heretic
Power grudged rather than given to the deputies
Preferred an open enemy

Page 1125

to a treacherous protector
Presumption in entitling themselves Christian
Preventing wrong, or violence, even towards an enemy
Proposition made by the wolves to the sheep, in the fable
Protect the common tranquillity by blood, purse, and life
Quite mistaken: in supposing himself the Emperor’s child
Rebuked the bigotry which had already grown
Reformer who becomes in his turn a bigot is doubly odious
Reformers were capable of giving a lesson even to inquisitors
Republic, which lasted two centuries
Result was both to abandon the provinces and to offend Philip
Sentimentality that seems highly apocryphal
She knew too well how women were treated in that country
Superfluous sarcasm
Suppress the exercise of the Roman religion
Taxes upon income and upon consumption
The disunited provinces
The more conclusive arbitration of gunpowder
There is no man who does not desire to enjoy his own
They could not invent or imagine toleration
Those who “sought to swim between two waters”
Those who fish in troubled waters only to fill their own nets
Throw the cat against their legs
To hear the last solemn commonplaces
Toleration thought the deadliest heresy of all
Unduly dejected in adversity
Unremitted intellectual labor in an honorable cause
Usual phraseology of enthusiasts
Uunmeaning phrases of barren benignity
Volatile word was thought preferable to the permanent letter
Was it astonishing that murder was more common than fidelity?
Word-mongers who, could clothe one shivering thought
Worn crescents in their caps at Leyden
Worship God according to the dictates of his conscience
Writing letters full of injured innocence

Etext editor’s bookmarks the Dutch republic, 1555-1584, Complete:

1566, the last year of peace A country disinherited by nature of its rights A pleasantry called voluntary contributions or benevolences A good lawyer is a bad Christian A terrible animal, indeed, is an unbridled woman A common hatred united them, for a time at least A most fatal success Absolution for incest was afforded at thirty-six livres Absurd

affectation of candor Achieved the greatness to which they had not been born Advancing age diminished his tendency to other carnal pleasures Advised his Majesty to bestow an annual bribe upon Lord Burleigh Affecting to discredit them Age when toleration was a vice Agreements were valid only until he should repent All offices were sold to the highest bidder All denounced the image-breaking All his disciples and converts are to be punished with death All the majesty which decoration could impart All reading of the scriptures (forbidden) All Protestants were beheaded, burned, or buried alive All claimed

Page 1126

the privilege of persecuting Altercation between Luther and Erasmus, upon predestination Always less apt to complain of irrevocable events Amuse them with this peace negotiation An hereditary papacy, a perpetual pope-emperor An inspiring and delightful recreation (auto-da-fe) An age when to think was a crime Angle with their dissimulation as with a hook Announced his approaching marriage with the Virgin Mary Annual harvest of iniquity by which his revenue was increased Anxiety to do nothing wrong, the senators did nothing at all Are apt to discharge such obligations—(by) ingratitude Arrested on suspicion, tortured till confession Arrive at their end by fraud, when violence will not avail them As ready as papists, with age, fagot, and excommunication As the old woman had told the Emperor Adrian Attachment to a half-drowned land and to a despised religion Attacking the authority of the pope Attempting to swim in two waters Barbara Blomberg, washerwoman of Ratisbon Batavian legion was the imperial body guard Beating the Netherlanders into Christianity Beautiful damsel, who certainly did not lack suitors Before morning they had sacked thirty churches Beggars of the sea, as these privateersmen designated themselves Believed in the blessed advent of peace Bigotry which was the prevailing characteristic of the age Bishop is a consecrated pirate Blessing of God upon the Devil’s work Bold reformer had only a new dogma in place of the old ones Breath, time, and paper were profusely wasted and nothing gained Brethren, parents, and children, having wives in common Bribed the Deity Burned alive if they objected to transubstantiation Burned, strangled, beheaded, or buried alive (100,000) Business of an officer to fight, of a general to conquer Care neither for words nor menaces in any matter Character of brave men to act, not to expect Charles the Fifth autocrat of half the world Claimed the praise of moderation that their demands were so few Colonel Ysselstein, “dismissed for a homicide or two” Compassing a country’s emancipation through a series of defeats Conde and Coligny Condemning all heretics to death Conflicting claims of prerogative and conscience Confused conferences, where neither party was entirely sincere Consign to the flames all prisoners whatever (Papal letter) Constitutional governments, move in the daylight Consumer would pay the tax, supposing it were ever paid at all Country would bear his loss with fortitude Courage of despair inflamed the French Craft meaning, simply, strength Crescents in their caps: Rather Turkish than Popish Criminal whose guilt had been established by the hot iron Criminals buying Paradise for money Cruelties exercised upon monks and papists Crusades made great improvement in the condition of the serfs Customary oaths, to be kept with the customary conscientiousness Daily widening schism between Lutherans and Calvinists Deadliest of sins, the liberty of conscience Decrees for burning, strangling, and burying alive Deeply

Page 1127

criminal in the eyes of all religious parties Democratic instincts of the ancient German savages Denies the utility of prayers for the dead Despot by birth and inclination (Charles V.) Difference between liberties and liberty Difficult for one friend to advise another in three matters Dispute between Luther and Zwingli concerning the real presence Dissenters were as bigoted as the orthodox Dissimulation and delay Distinguished for his courage, his cruelty, and his corpulence Divine right Don John of Austria Don John was at liberty to be King of England and Scotland Drank of the water in which, he had washed Dying at so very inconvenient a moment Eight thousand human beings were murdered Endure every hardship but hunger English Puritans Enormous wealth (of the Church) which engendered the hatred Enriched generation after generation by wealthy penitence Enthusiasm could not supply the place of experience Envying those whose sufferings had already been terminated Erasmus encourages the bold friar Erasmus of Rotterdam Establish not freedom for Calvinism, but freedom for conscience Even for the rape of God’s mother, if that were possible Ever-swarming nurseries of mercenary warriors Everything was conceded, but nothing was secured Excited with the appearance of a gem of true philosophy Executions of Huss and Jerome of Prague Fable of divine right is invented to sanction the system Fanatics of the new religion denounced him as a godless man Felix Mants, the anabaptist, is drowned at Zurich Ferocity which even Christians could not have surpassed Few, even prelates were very dutiful to the pope Fiction of apostolic authority to bind and loose Fifty thousand persons in the provinces (put to death) Financial opposition to tyranny is apt to be unanimous Fishermen and river raftsmen become ocean adventurers For myself I am unworthy of the honor (of martyrdom) For faithful service, evil recompense For women to lament, for men to remember Forbids all private assemblies for devotion Force clerical—the power of clerks Forgiving spirit on the part of the malefactor Furious fanaticism Furnished, in addition, with a force of two thousand prostitutes Gallant and ill-fated Lamoral Egmont Gaul derided the Roman soldiers as a band of pigmies German finds himself sober—he believes himself ill Glory could be put neither into pocket nor stomach God has given absolute power to no mortal man God Save the King! It was the last time Govern under the appearance of obeying Great Privilege, the Magna Charta of Holland Great transactions of a reign are sometimes paltry things Great science of political equilibrium Great error of despising their enemy Great battles often leave the world where they found it Guarantees of forgiveness for every imaginable sin Habeas corpus Hair and beard unshorn, according to ancient Batavian custom Halcyon days of ban, book and candle Hanged for having eaten meat-soup upon Friday Happy to glass themselves in so brilliant a mirror Having conjugated his paradigm conscientiously

Page 1128

He did his best to be friends with all the world He came as a conqueror not as a mediator He would have no persecution of the opposite creed He would have no Calvinist inquisition set up in its place He had never enjoyed social converse, except at long intervals He knew men, especially he knew their weaknesses He had omitted to execute heretics Heresy was a plant of early growth in the Netherlands His imagination may have assisted his memory in the task His personal graces, for the moment, took the rank of virtues History shows how feeble are barriers of paper Holland, England, and America, are all links of one chain Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands Hope delayed was but a cold and meagre consolation Hope deferred, suddenly changing to despair Human ingenuity to inflict human misery I would carry the wood to burn my own son withal I regard my country's profit, not my own If he had little, he could live upon little Imagined, and did the work of truth In Holland, the clergy had neither influence nor seats In character and general talents he was beneath mediocrity Incur the risk of being charged with forwardness than neglect Indecision did the work of indolence Indignant that heretics had been suffered to hang Informer, in case of conviction, should be entitled to one half Inquisition was not a fit subject for a compromise Inquisition of the Netherlands is much more pitiless Insane cruelty, both in the cause of the Wrong and the Right Insinuate that his orders had been hitherto misunderstood Insinuating suspicions when unable to furnish evidence Invented such Christian formulas as these (a curse) Inventing long speeches for historical characters It is not desirable to disturb much of that learned dust Its humility, seemed sufficiently ironical Judas Maccabaeus July 1st, two Augustine monks were burned at Brussels King set a price upon his head as a rebel King of Zion to be pinched to death with red-hot tongs Labored under the disadvantage of never having existed Learn to tremble as little at priestcraft as at swordcraft Leave not a single man alive in the city, and to burn every house Let us fool these poor creatures to their heart's content Licences accorded by the crown to carry slaves to America Like a man holding a wolf by the ears Little grievances would sometimes inflame more than vast Local self-government which is the life-blood of liberty Logical and historical argument of unmerciful length Long succession of so many illustrious obscure Look through the cloud of dissimulation Luther's axiom, that thoughts are toll-free Lutheran princes of Germany, detested the doctrines of Geneva Made no breach in royal and Roman infallibility Made to swing to and fro over a slow fire Maintaining the attitude of an injured but forgiving Christian Man had only natural wrongs (No natural rights) Mankind were naturally inclined to calumny Many greedy priests, of lower rank, had turned shop-keepers Meantime the second civil war in France had broken

Page 1129

out Men were loud in reproof, who had been silent Mistake to stumble a second time over the same stone Modern statesmanship, even while it practises, condemns Monasteries, burned their invaluable libraries More accustomed to do well than to speak well More easily, as he had no intention of keeping the promise Natural to judge only by the result Necessary to make a virtue of necessity Neither wished the convocation, while both affected an eagerness Neither ambitious nor greedy No qualities whatever but birth and audacity to recommend him No man could reveal secrets which he did not know No law but the law of the longest purse No calumny was too senseless to be invented No one can testify but a householder No man ever understood the art of bribery more thoroughly No authority over an army which they did not pay Not strong enough to sustain many more such victories Not to fall asleep in the shade of a peace negotiation Not for a new doctrine, but for liberty of conscience Not to let the grass grow under their feet Not so successful as he was picturesque Not upon words but upon actions Not of the stuff of which martyrs are made (Erasmus) Nothing was so powerful as religious difference Notre Dame at Antwerp Nowhere was the persecution of heretics more relentless Obstinate, of both sexes, to be burned Of high rank but of lamentably low capacity Often much tyranny in democracy Oldenbarneveld; afterwards so illustrious On the first day four thousand men and women were slaughtered One-half to Philip and one-half to the Pope and Venice (slaves) One golden grain of wit into a sheet of infinite platitude Only kept alive by milk, which he drank from a woman’s breast Only healthy existence of the French was in a state of war Orator was, however, delighted with his own performance Others go to battle, says the historian, these go to war Our pot had not gone to the fire as often Panegyrists of royal houses in the sixteenth century Pardon for crimes already committed, or about to be committed Pardon for murder, if not by poison, was cheaper Pathetic dying words of Anne Boleyn Paying their passage through, purgatory Peace, in reality, was war in its worst shape Peace was desirable, it might be more dangerous than war Perfection of insolence Perpetually dropping small innuendos like pebbles Persons who discussed religious matters were to be put to death Petty passion for contemptible details Philip, who did not often say a great deal in a few words Planted the inquisition in the Netherlands Plundering the country which they came to protect Poisoning, for example, was absolved for eleven ducats Pope and emperor maintain both positions with equal logic Pope excommunicated him as a heretic Power to read and write helped the clergy to much wealth Power grudged rather than given to the deputies Preferred an open enemy to a treacherous protector Premature zeal was prejudicial to the cause Presumption in entitling themselves Christian Preventing wrong, or violence, even towards an enemy Procrastination

Page 1130

was always his first refuge Promises which he knew to be binding only upon the weak Proposition made by the wolves to the sheep, in the fable Protect the common tranquillity by blood, purse, and life Provided not one Huguenot be left alive in France Purchased absolution for crime and smoothed a pathway to heaven Put all those to the torture out of whom anything can be got Questioning nothing, doubting nothing, fearing nothing Quite mistaken: in supposing himself the Emperor’s child Rashness alternating with hesitation Readiness to strike and bleed at any moment in her cause Rearing gorgeous temples where paupers are to kneel Rebuked the bigotry which had already grown Reformer who becomes in his turn a bigot is doubly odious Reformers were capable of giving a lesson even to inquisitors Repentant females to be buried alive Repentant males to be executed with the sword Republic, which lasted two centuries Result was both to abandon the provinces and to offend Philip Revocable benefices or feuds Ruinous honors Saint Bartholomew’s day Sale of absolutions was the source of large fortunes to the priests Same conjury over ignorant baron and cowardly hind Scaffold was the sole refuge from the rack Scepticism, which delights in reversing the judgment of centuries Schism which existed in the general Reformed Church Science of reigning was the science of lying Scoffing at the ceremonies and sacraments of the Church Secret drowning was substituted for public burning Sent them word by carrier pigeons Sentimentality that seems highly apocryphal Seven Spaniards were killed, and seven thousand rebels Sharpened the punishment for reading the scriptures in private She knew too well how women were treated in that country Sick and wounded wretches were burned over slow fires Slavery was both voluntary and compulsory Slender stock of platitudes So much responsibility and so little power Soldier of the cross was free upon his return Sometimes successful, even although founded upon sincerity Sonnets of Petrarch Sovereignty was heaven-born, anointed of God Spendthrift of time, he was an economist of blood St. Bartholomew was to sleep for seven years longer St. Peter’s dome rising a little nearer to the clouds Storm by which all these treasures were destroyed (in 7 days) Superfluous sarcasm Suppress the exercise of the Roman religion Tanchelyn Taxation upon sin Taxes upon income and upon consumption Ten thousand two hundred and twenty individuals were burned That vile and mischievous animal called the people The noblest and richest temple of the Netherlands was a wreck The Gaul was singularly unchaste The vivifying becomes afterwards the dissolving principle The bad Duke of Burgundy, Philip surnamed “the Good,” The greatest crime, however, was to be rich The more conclusive arbitration of gunpowder The disunited provinces The faithful servant is always a perpetual ass The time for reasoning had passed The perpetual reproductions of history The egg had been laid by Erasmus,

Page 1131

hatched by Luther The illness was a convenient one The calf is fat and must be killed The tragedy of Don Carlos There is no man who does not desire to enjoy his own These human victims, chained and burning at the stake They could not invent or imagine toleration They had at last burned one more preacher alive Those who “sought to swim between two waters” Those who fish in troubled waters only to fill their own nets Thousands of burned heretics had not made a single convert Three hundred fighting women Throw the cat against their legs Thus Hand-werpen, hand-throwing, became Antwerp Time and myself are two To think it capable of error, is the most devilish heresy of all To hear the last solemn commonplaces To prefer poverty to the wealth attendant upon trade Toleration thought the deadliest heresy of all Torquemada’s administration (of the inquisition) Tranquillity of despotism to the turbulence of freedom Two witnesses sent him to the stake, one witness to the rack Tyrannical spirit of Calvinism Tyranny, ever young and ever old, constantly reproducing herself Understood the art of managing men, particularly his superiors Unduly dejected in adversity Unremitted intellectual labor in an honorable cause Upon one day twenty-eight master cooks were dismissed Usual phraseology of enthusiasts Uunmeaning phrases of barren benignity Villagers, or villeins Volatile word was thought preferable to the permanent letter Was it astonishing that murder was more common than fidelity? We believe our mothers to have been honest women We are beginning to be vexed Wealth was an unpardonable sin Weep oftener for her children than is the usual lot of mothers When the abbot has dice in his pocket, the convent will play Who loved their possessions better than their creed William of Nassau, Prince of Orange Wiser simply to satisfy himself Wonder equally at human capacity to inflict and to endure misery Word-mongers who, could clothe one shivering thought Worn crescents in their caps at Leyden Worship God according to the dictates of his conscience Would not help to burn fifty or sixty thousand Netherlanders Writing letters full of injured innocence

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS, 1584-1609, Complete

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year’s Truce

Volume I.

By John Lothrop Motley

PREFACE.

The indulgence with which the History of the Rise of the Dutch Republic was received has encouraged me to prosecute my task with renewed industry.

Page 1132

A single word seems necessary to explain the somewhat increased proportions which the present work has assumed over the original design. The intimate connection which was formed between the Kingdom of England and the Republic of Holland, immediately after the death of William the Silent, rendered the history and the fate of the two commonwealths for a season almost identical. The years of anxiety and suspense during which the great Spanish project for subjugating England and reconquering the Netherlands, by the same invasion, was slowly matured, were of deepest import for the future destiny of those two countries, and for the cause of national liberty. The deep-laid conspiracy of Spain and Rome against human rights deserves to be patiently examined, for it is one of the great lessons of history. The crisis was long and doubtful, and the health—perhaps the existence—of England and Holland, and, with them, of a great part of Christendom, was on the issue.

History has few so fruitful examples of the dangers which come from superstition and despotism, and the blessings which flow from the maintenance of religious and political freedom, as those afforded by the struggle between England and Holland on the one side, and Spain and Rome on the other, during the epoch which I have attempted to describe. It is for this reason that I have thought it necessary to reveal, as minutely as possible, the secret details of this conspiracy of king and priest against the people, and to show how it was baffled at last by the strong self-helping energy of two free nations combined.

The period occupied by these two volumes is therefore a short one, when counted by years, for it begins in 1584 and ends with the commencement of 1590. When estimated by the significance of events and their results for future ages, it will perhaps be deemed worthy of the close examination which it has received. With the year 1588 the crisis was past; England was safe, and the new Dutch commonwealth was thoroughly organized. It is my design, in two additional volumes, which, with the two now published, will complete the present work, to carry the history of the Republic down to the Synod of Dort. After this epoch the Thirty Years' War broke out in Germany; and it is my wish, at a future day, to retrace the history of that eventful struggle, and to combine with it the civil and military events in Holland, down to the epoch when the Thirty Years' War and the Eighty Years' War of the Netherlands were both brought to a close by the Peace of Westphalia.

The materials for the volumes now offered to the public were so abundant that it was almost impossible to condense them into smaller compass without doing injustice to the subject. It was desirable to throw full light on these prominent points of the history, while the law of historical perspective will allow long stretches of shadow in the succeeding portions, in which less important objects may be more slightly indicated. That I may not be thought capable of abusing the reader's confidence by inventing conversations, speeches, or letters, I would take this opportunity of stating—although I have repeated the remark in the foot-notes—that no personage in these pages is made

to write or speak any words save those which, on the best historical evidence, he is known to have written or spoken.

Page 1133

A brief allusion to my sources of information will not seem superfluous: I have carefully studied all the leading contemporary chronicles and pamphlets of Holland, Flanders, Spain, France, Germany, and England; but, as the authorities are always indicated in the notes, it is unnecessary to give a list of them here. But by far my most valuable materials are entirely unpublished ones.

The archives of England are especially rich for the history of the sixteenth century; and it will be seen, in the course of the narrative, how largely I have drawn from those mines of historical wealth, the State Paper Office and the *Ms*. department of the British Museum. Although both these great national depositories are in admirable order, it is to be regretted that they are not all embraced in one collection, as much trouble might then be spared to the historical student, who is now obliged to pass frequently from the one place to the other, in order to, find different portions of the same correspondence.

From the royal archives of Holland I have obtained many most important, entirely unpublished documents, by the aid of which I have endeavoured to verify, to illustrate, or sometimes to correct, the recitals of the elder national chroniclers; and I have derived the greatest profit from the invaluable series of Archives and Correspondence of the Orange-Nassau Family, given to the world by M. Groen van Prinsterer. I desire to renew to that distinguished gentleman, and to that eminent scholar M. Bakhuyzen van den Brink, the expression of my gratitude for their constant kindness and advice during my residence at the Hague. Nothing can exceed the courtesy which has been extended to me in Holland, and I am deeply grateful for the indulgence with which my efforts to illustrate the history of the country have been received where that history is best known.

I have also been much aided by the study of a portion of the Archives of Simancas, the originals of which are in the Archives de l'Empire in Paris, and which were most liberally laid before me through the kindness of M. le Comte de La Borde.

I have, further; enjoyed an inestimable advantage in the perusal of the whole correspondence between Philip *ii*., his ministers, and governors, relating to the affairs of the Netherlands, from the epoch at which this work commences down to that monarch's death. Copies of this correspondence have been carefully made from the originals at Simancas by order of the Belgian Government, under the superintendence of the eminent archivist M. Gachard, who has already published a synopsis or abridgment of a portion of it in a French translation. The translation and abridgment of so large a mass of papers, however, must necessarily occupy many years, and it may be long, therefore, before the whole of the correspondence—and particularly that portion of it relating to the epoch occupied by these volumes sees the light. It was,

Page 1134

therefore, of the greatest importance for me to see the documents themselves unabridged and untranslated. This privilege has been accorded me, and I desire to express my thanks to his Excellency M. van de Weyer, the distinguished representative of Belgium at the English Court, to whose friendly offices I am mainly indebted for the satisfaction of my wishes in this respect. A letter from him to his Excellency M. Rogier, Minister of the Interior in Belgium—who likewise took the most courteous interest in promoting my views—obtained for me the permission thoroughly to study this correspondence; and I passed several months in Brussels, occupied with reading the whole of it from the year 1584 to the end of the reign of Philip *ii*.

I was thus saved a long visit to the Archives of Simancas, for it would be impossible conscientiously to write the history of the epoch without a thorough examination of the correspondence of the King and his ministers. I venture to hope, therefore—whatever judgment may be passed upon my own labours—that this work may be thought to possess an intrinsic value; for the various materials of which it is composed are original, and—so far as I am aware—have not been made use of by any historical writer.

I would take this opportunity to repeat my thanks to M. Gachard, Archivist of the kingdom of Belgium, for the uniform courtesy and kindness which I have received at his hands, and to bear my testimony to the skill and critical accuracy with which he has illustrated so many passages of Belgian and Spanish history.

31, *Hertford-street*, *may-fair*, November llth 1860.

THE UNITED NETHERLANDS.

CHAPTER I.

Murder of Orange—Extension of Protestantism—Vast Power of Spain— Religious Origin of the Revolt—Disposal of the Sovereignty—Courage of the Estates of Holland —Children of William the Silent— Provisional Council of State—Firm attitude of Holland and Zeeland— Weakness of Flanders—Fall of Ghent—Adroitness of Alexander Farnese.

William the silent, Prince of Orange, had been murdered on the 10th of July, 1584. It is difficult to imagine a more universal disaster than the one thus brought about by the hand of a single obscure fanatic. For nearly twenty years the character of the Prince had been expanding steadily as the difficulties of his situation increased. Habit, necessity, and the natural gifts of the man, had combined to invest him at last with an authority which seemed more than human. There was such general confidence in his sagacity, courage, and purity, that the nation had come to think with his brain and to act

with his hand. It was natural that, for an instant, there should be a feeling as of absolute and helpless paralysis.

Page 1135

Whatever his technical attributes in the polity of the Netherlands—and it would be difficult to define them with perfect accuracy—there is no doubt that he stood there, the head of a commonwealth, in an attitude such as had been maintained by but few of the kings, or chiefs, or high priests of history. Assassination, a regular and almost indispensable portion of the working machinery of Philip's government, had produced, in this instance, after repeated disappointments, the result at last which had been so anxiously desired. The ban of the Pope and the offered gold of the King had accomplished a victory greater than any yet achieved by the armies of Spain, brilliant as had been their triumphs on the blood-stained soil of the Netherlands.

Had that "exceeding proud, neat, and spruce" Doctor of Laws, William Parry, who had been busying himself at about the same time with his memorable project against the Queen of England, proved as successful as Balthazar Gerard, the fate of Christendom would have been still darker. Fortunately, that member of Parliament had made the discovery in time—not for himself, but for Elizabeth—that the "Lord was better pleased with adverbs than nouns;" the well-known result being that the traitor was hanged and the Sovereign saved.

Yet such was the condition of Europe at that day. A small, dull, elderly, imperfectly-educated, patient, plodding invalid, with white hair and protruding under jaw, and dreary visage, was sitting day after day; seldom speaking, never smiling, seven or eight hours out of every twenty-four, at a writing table covered with heaps of interminable despatches, in a cabinet far away beyond the seas and mountains, in the very heart of Spain. A clerk or two, noiselessly opening and shutting the door, from time to time, fetching fresh bundles of letters and taking away others—all written and composed by secretaries or high functionaries—and all to be scrawled over in the margin by the diligent old man in a big schoolboy's hand and style—if ever schoolboy, even in the sixteenth century, could write so illegibly or express himself so awkwardly; couriers in the court-yard arriving from or departing for the uttermost parts of earth-Asia, Africa America, Europe-to fetch and carry these interminable epistles which contained the irresponsible commands of this one individual, and were freighted with the doom and destiny of countless millions of the world's inhabitants—such was the system of government against which the Netherlands had protested and revolted. It was a system under which their fields had been made desolate, their cities burned and pillaged, their men hanged, burned, drowned, or hacked to pieces; their women subjected to every outrage; and to put an end to which they had been devoting their treasure and their blood for nearly the length of one generation. It was a system, too, which, among other results, had just brought about the death of the foremost statesman

Page 1136

of Europe, and had nearly effected simultaneously the murder of the most eminent sovereign in the world. The industrious Philip, safe and tranquil in the depths of the Escorial, saying his prayers three times a day with exemplary regularity, had just sent three bullets through the body of William the Silent at his dining-room door in Delft. "Had it only been done two years earlier," observed the patient old man, "much trouble might have been spared me; but 'tis better late than never." Sir Edward Stafford, English envoy in Paris, wrote to his government—so soon as the news of the murder reached him—that, according to his information out of the Spanish minister's own house, "the same practice that had been executed upon the Prince of Orange, there were practisers more than two or three about to execute upon her Majesty, and that within two months." Without vouching for the absolute accuracy of this intelligence, he implored the Queen to be more upon her guard than ever. "For there is no doubt," said the envoy, "that she is a chief mark to shoot at; and seeing that there were men cunning enough to inchant a man and to encourage him to kill the Prince of Orange, in the midst of Holland, and that there was a knave found desperate enough to do it, we must think hereafter that anything may be done. Therefore God preserve her Majesty."

Invisible as the Grand Lama of Thibet, clothed with power as extensive and absolute as had ever been wielded by the most imperial Caesar, Philip the Prudent, as he grew older and feebler in mind and body seemed to become more gluttonous of work, more ambitious to extend his sceptre over lands which he had never seen or dreamed of seeing, more fixed in his determination to annihilate that monster Protestantism, which it had been the business of his life to combat, more eager to put to death every human creature, whether anointed monarch or humble artizan, that defended heresy or opposed his progress to universal empire.

If this enormous power, this fabulous labour, had, been wielded or performed with a beneficent intention; if the man who seriously regarded himself as the owner of a third of the globe, with the inhabitants thereof, had attempted to deal with these extensive estates inherited from his ancestors with the honest intention of a thrifty landlord, an intelligent slave-owner, it would have yet been possible for a little longer to smile at the delusion, and endure the practice.

But there was another old man, who lived in another palace in another remote land, who, in his capacity of representative of Saint Peter, claimed to dispose of all the kingdoms of the earth—and had been willing to bestow them upon the man who would go down and worship him. Philip stood enfeoffed, by divine decree, of all America, the East Indies, the whole Spanish Peninsula, the better portion of Italy, the seventeen Netherlands, and many other possessions far and near; and he contemplated annexing to this

Page 1137

extensive property the kingdoms of France, of England, and Ireland. The Holy League, maintained by the sword of Guise, the pope's ban, Spanish ducats, Italian condottieri, and German mercenaries, was to exterminate heresy and establish the Spanish dominion in France. The same machinery, aided by the pistol or poniard of the assassin, was to substitute for English protestantism and England's queen the Roman Catholic religion and a foreign sovereign. "The holy league," said Duplessis-Mornay, one of the noblest characters of the age, "has destined us all to the name sacrifice. The ambition of the Spaniard, which has overleaped so many lands and seas, thinks nothing inaccessible."

The Netherland revolt had therefore assumed world-wide proportions. Had it been merely the rebellion of provinces against a sovereign, the importance of the struggle would have been more local and temporary. But the period was one in which the geographical land-marks of countries were almost removed. The dividing-line ran through every state, city, and almost every family. There was a country which believed in the absolute power of the church to dictate the relations between man and his Maker, and to utterly exterminate all who disputed that position. There was another country which protested against that doctrine, and claimed, theoretically or practically, a liberty of conscience. The territory of these countries was mapped out by no visible lines, but the inhabitants of each, whether resident in France, Germany, England, or Flanders, recognised a relationship which took its root in deeper differences than those of race or language. It was not entirely a question of doctrine or dogma. A large portion of the world had become tired of the antiquated delusion of a papal supremacy over every land, and had recorded its determination, once for all, to have done with it. The transition to freedom of conscience became a necessary step, sooner or later to be taken. To establish the principle of toleration for all religions was an inevitable consequence of the Dutch revolt; although thus far, perhaps only one conspicuous man in advance of his age had boldly announced that doctrine and had died in its defence. But a great true thought never dies—though long buried in the earth—and the day was to come, after long years, when the seed was to ripen into a harvest of civil and religious emancipation, and when the very word toleration was to sound like an insult and an absurdity.

A vast responsibility rested upon the head of a monarch, placed as Philip *ii*. found himself, at this great dividing point in modern history. To judge him, or any man in such a position, simply from his own point of view, is weak and illogical. History judges the man according to its point of view. It condemns or applauds the point of view itself. The point of view of a malefactor is not to excuse robbery and murder. Nor is the spirit of the age to be pleaded in defence of the evil-doer at a

Page 1138

time when mortals were divided into almost equal troops. The age of Philip *ii*. was also the age of William of Orange and his four brethren, of Sainte Aldegonde, of Olden-Barneveldt, of Duplessis-Mornay, La Noue, Coligny, of Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin, Walsingham, Sidney, Raleigh, Queen Elizabeth, of Michael Montaigne, and William Shakspeare. It was not an age of blindness, but of glorious light. If the man whom the Maker of the Universe had permitted to be born to such boundless functions, chose to put out his own eyes that he might grope along his great pathway of duty in perpetual darkness, by his deeds he must be judged. The King perhaps firmly believed that the heretics of the Netherlands, of France, or of England, could escape eternal perdition only by being extirpated from the earth by fire and sword, and therefore; perhaps, felt it his duty to devote his life to their extermination. But he believed, still more firmly, that his own political authority, throughout his dominions, and his road to almost universal empire, lay over the bodies of those heretics. Three centuries have nearly past since this memorable epoch; and the world knows the fate of the states which accepted the dogma which it was Philip's life-work to enforce, and of those who protested against the system. The Spanish and Italian Peninsulas have had a different history from that which records the career of France, Prussia, the Dutch Commonwealth, the British Empire, the Transatlantic Republic.

Yet the contest between those Seven meagre Provinces upon the sand-banks of the North Sea, and—the great Spanish Empire, seemed at the moment with which we are now occupied a sufficiently desperate one. Throw a glance upon the map of Europe. Look at the broad magnificent Spanish Peninsula, stretching across eight degrees of latitude and ten of longitude, commanding the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, with a genial climate, warmed in winter by the vast furnace of Africa, and protected from the scorching heats of summer by shady mountain and forest, and temperate breezes from either ocean. A generous southern territory, flowing with wine and oil, and all the richest gifts of a bountiful nature-splendid cities—the new and daily expanding Madrid, rich in the trophies of the most artistic period of the modern world—Cadiz, as populous at that day as London, seated by the straits where the ancient and modern systems of traffic were blending like the mingling of the two oceans—Granada, the ancient wealthy seat of the fallen Moors—Toledo, Valladolid, and Lisbon, chief city of the recently-conquered kingdom of Portugal, counting, with its suburbs, a larger population than any city, excepting Paris, in Europe, the mother of distant colonies, and the capital of the rapidly-developing traffic with both the Indies—these were some of the treasures of Spain herself. But she possessed Sicily also, the better portion of Italy, and important dependencies in Africa, while the famous maritime discoveries of

Page 1139

the age had all enured to her aggrandizement. The world seemed suddenly to have expanded its wings from East to West, only to bear the fortunate Spanish Empire to the most dizzy heights of wealth and power. The most accomplished generals, the most disciplined and daring infantry the world has ever known, the best-equipped and most extensive navy, royal and mercantile, of the age, were at the absolute command of the sovereign. Such was Spain.

Turn now to the north-western corner of Europe. A morsel of territory, attached by a slight sand-hook to the continent, and half-submerged by the stormy waters of the German Ocean—this was Holland. A rude climate, with long, dark, rigorous, winters, and brief summers, a territory, the mere wash of three great rivers, which had fertilized happier portions of Europe only to desolate and overwhelm this less-favoured land, a soil so ungrateful, that if the whole of its four hundred thousand acres of arable land had been sowed with grain, it could not feed the labourers alone, and a population largely estimated at one million of souls—these were the characteristics of the Province which already had begun to give its name to the new commonwealth. The isles of Zeeland—-entangled in the coils of deep slow-moving rivers, or combating the ocean without—and the ancient episcopate of Utrecht, formed the only other Provinces that had quite shaken off the foreign yoke. In Friesland, the important city of Groningen was still held for the King, while Bois-le-Duc, Zutphen, besides other places in Gelderland and North Brabant, also in possession of the royalists, made the position of those provinces precarious.

The limit of the Spanish or “obedient” Provinces, on the one hand, and of the United Provinces on the other, cannot, therefore, be briefly and distinctly stated. The memorable treason—or, as it was called, the “reconciliation” of the Walloon Provinces in the year 1583-4—had placed the Provinces of Hainault, Arthois, Douay, with the flourishing cities Arran, Valenciennes, Lille, Tournay, and others—all Celtic Flanders, in short-in the grasp of Spain. Cambray was still held by the French governor, Seigneur de Balagny, who had taken advantage of the Duke of Anjou’s treachery to the States, to establish himself in an unrecognized but practical petty sovereignty, in defiance both of France and Spain; while East Flanders and South Brabant still remained a disputed territory, and the immediate field of contest. With these limitations, it may be assumed, for general purposes, that the territory of the United States was that of the modern Kingdom of the Netherlands, while the obedient Provinces occupied what is now the territory of Belgium.

Page 1140

Such, then, were the combatants in the great eighty years' war for civil and religious liberty; sixteen of which had now passed away. On the one side, one of the most powerful and, populous world-empires of history, then in the zenith of its prosperity; on the other hand, a slender group of cities, governed by merchants and artisans, and planted precariously upon a meagre, unstable soil. A million and a half of souls against the autocrat of a third part of the known world. The contest seemed as desperate as the cause was certainly sacred; but it had ceased to be a local contest. For the history which is to occupy us in these volumes is not exclusively the history of Holland. It is the story of the great combat between despotism, sacerdotal and regal, and the spirit of rational human liberty. The tragedy opened in the Netherlands, and its main scenes were long enacted there; but as the ambition of Spain expanded, and as the resistance to the principle which she represented became more general, other nations were, of necessity, involved in the struggle. There came to be one country, the citizens of which were the Leaguers; and another country, whose inhabitants were Protestants. And in this lay the distinction between freedom and absolutism. The religious question swallowed all the others. There was never a period in the early history of the Dutch revolt when the Provinces would not have returned to their obedience, could they have been assured of enjoying liberty of conscience or religious peace; nor was there ever a single moment in Philip *ii*.'s life in which he wavered in his fixed determination never to listen to such a claim. The quarrel was in its nature irreconcilable and eternal as the warfare between wrong and right; and the establishment of a comparative civil liberty in Europe and America was the result of the religious war of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The struggle lasted eighty years, but the prize was worth the contest.

The object of the war between the Netherlands and Spain was not, therefore, primarily, a rebellion against established authority for the maintenance of civil rights. To preserve these rights was secondary. The first cause was religion. The Provinces had been fighting for years against the Inquisition. Had they not taken arms, the Inquisition would have been established in the Netherlands, and very probably in England, and England might have become in its turn a Province of the Spanish Empire.

The death of William the Silent produced a sudden change in the political arrangements of the liberated Netherlands. During the year 1583, the United Provinces had elected Francis, Duke of Anjou, to be Duke of Brabant and sovereign of the whole country, under certain constitutional provisions enumerated in articles of solemn compact. That compact had been grossly violated. The Duke had made a treacherous attempt to possess himself of absolute power and to seize several important cities. He had been signally

Page 1141

defeated in Antwerp, and obliged to leave the country, covered with ignominy. The States had then consulted William of Orange as to the course to be taken in the emergency. The Prince had told them that their choice was triple. They might reconcile themselves with Spain, and abandon the contest for religious liberty which they had so long been waging; they might reconcile themselves with Anjou, notwithstanding that he had so utterly forfeited all claims to their consideration; or they might fight the matter out with Spain single-handed. The last course was, in his opinion, the most eligible one, and he was ready to sacrifice his life to its furtherance. It was, however, indispensable, should that policy be adopted, that much larger supplies should be voted than had hitherto been raised, and, in general, that a much more extensive and elevated spirit of patriotism should manifest itself than had hitherto been displayed.

It was, on the whole, decided to make a second arrangement with the Duke of Anjou, Queen Elizabeth warmly urging that course. At the same time, however, that articles of agreement were drawn up for the installation of Anjou as sovereign of the United Provinces, the Prince had himself consented to accept the title of Count of Holland, under an ample constitutional charter, dictated by his own lips. Neither Anjou nor Orange lived to be inaugurated into the offices thus bestowed upon them. The Duke died at Chateau-Thierry on the 10th June, and the Prince was assassinated a month later at Delft.

What now was the political position of the United Provinces at this juncture? The sovereignty which had been held by the Estates, ready to be conferred respectively upon Anjou and Orange, remained in the hands of the Estates. There was no opposition to this theory. No more enlarged view of the social compact had yet been taken. The people, as such, claimed no sovereignty. Had any champion claimed it for them they would hardly have understood him. The nation dealt with facts. After abjuring Philip in 1581—an act which had been accomplished by the Estates—the same Estates in general assembly had exercised sovereign power, and had twice disposed of that sovereign power by electing a hereditary ruler. Their right and their power to do this had been disputed by none, save by the deposed monarch in Spain. Having the sovereignty to dispose of, it seemed logical that the Estates might keep it, if so inclined. They did keep it, but only in trust. While Orange lived, he might often have been elected sovereign of all the Provinces, could he have been induced to consent. After his death, the Estates retained, ex necessitate, the sovereignty; and it will soon be related what they intended to do with it. One thing is very certain, that neither Orange, while he lived, nor the Estates, after his death, were actuated in their policy by personal ambition. It will be seen that the first object of the Estates was to dispossess themselves of the sovereignty which had again fallen into their hands.

Page 1142

What were the Estates? Without, at the present moment, any farther inquiries into that constitutional system which had been long consolidating itself, and was destined to exist upon a firmer basis for centuries longer, it will be sufficient to observe, that the great characteristic of the Netherland government was the municipality.

Each Province contained a large number of cities, which were governed by a board of magistrates, varying in number from twenty to forty. This college, called the Vroedschap (Assembly of Sages), consisted of the most notable citizens, and was a self-electing body—a close corporation—the members being appointed for life, from the citizens at large. Whenever vacancies occurred from death or loss of citizenship, the college chose new members—sometimes immediately, sometimes by means of a double or triple selection of names, the choice of one from among which was offered to the stadtholder of the province. This functionary was appointed by the Count, as he was called, whether Duke of Bavaria or of Burgundy, Emperor, or King. After the abjuration of Philip, the governors were appointed by the Estates of each Province.

The Sage-Men chose annually a board of senators, or schepens, whose functions were mainly judicial; and there were generally two, and sometimes three, burgomasters, appointed in the same way. This was the popular branch of the Estates. But, besides this body of representatives, were the nobles, men of ancient lineage and large possessions, who had exercised, according to the general feudal law of Europe, high, low, and intermediate jurisdiction upon their estates, and had long been recognized as an integral part of the body politic, having the right to appear, through delegates of their order, in the provincial and in the general assemblies.

Regarded as a machine for bringing the most decided political capacities into the administration of public affairs, and for organising the most practical opposition to the system of religious tyranny, the Netherland constitution was a healthy, and, for the age, an enlightened one. The officeholders, it is obvious, were not greedy for the spoils of office; for it was, unfortunately, often the case that their necessary expenses in the service of the state were not defrayed. The people raised enormous contributions for carrying on the war; but they could not afford to be extremely generous to their faithful servants.

Thus constituted was the commonwealth upon the death of William the Silent. The gloom produced by that event was tragical. Never in human history was a more poignant and universal sorrow for the death of any individual. The despair was, for a brief season, absolute; but it was soon succeeded by more lofty sentiments. It seemed, after they had laid their hero in the tomb, as though his spirit still hovered above the nation which he had loved so well, and was inspiring it with a portion of his own energy and wisdom.

Page 1143

Even on the very day of the murder, the Estates of Holland, then sitting at Delft, passed a resolution “to maintain the good cause, with God’s help, to the uttermost, without sparing gold or blood.” This decree was communicated to Admiral de Warmont, to Count Hohenlo, to William Lewis of Nassau, and to other commanders by land and sea. At the same time, the sixteen members—for no greater number happened to be present at the session—addressed letters to their absent colleagues, informing them of the calamity which had befallen them, summoning them at once to conference, and urging an immediate convocation of the Estates of all the Provinces in General Assembly. They also addressed strong letters of encouragement, mingled with manly condolence, upon the common affliction, to prominent military and naval commanders and civil functionaries, begging them to “bear themselves manfully and valiantly, without faltering in the least on account of the great misfortune which had occurred, or allowing themselves to be seduced by any one from the union of the States.” Among these sixteen were Van Zuylen, Van Nyvelt, the Seigneur de Warmont, the Advocate of Holland, Paul Buys, Joost de Menin, and John van Olden-Barneveldt. A noble example was thus set at once to their fellow citizens by these their representatives—a manful step taken forward in the path where Orange had so long been leading.

The next movement, after the last solemn obsequies had been rendered to the Prince was to provide for the immediate wants of his family. For the man who had gone into the revolt with almost royal revenues, left his estate so embarrassed that his carpets, tapestries, household linen—nay, even his silver spoons, and the very clothes of his wardrobe were disposed of at auction for the benefit of his creditors. He left eleven children—a son and daughter by the first wife, a son and daughter by Anna of Saxony, six daughters by Charlotte of Bourbon, and an infant, Frederic Henry, born six months before his death. The eldest son, Philip William, had been a captive in Spain for seventeen years, having been kidnapped from school, in Leyden, in the year 1567. He had already become so thoroughly Hispaniolized under the masterly treatment of the King and the Jesuits, that even his face had lost all resemblance to the type of his heroic family, and had acquired a sinister, gloomy, forbidding expression, most painful to contemplate. All of good that he had retained was a reverence for his father’s name—a sentiment which he had manifested to an extravagant extent on a memorable occasion in Madrid, by throwing out of window, and killing on the spot a Spanish officer who had dared to mention the great Prince with insult.

Page 1144

The next son was Maurice, then seventeen years of age, a handsome youth, with dark blue eyes, well-chiselled features, and full red lips, who had already manifested a courage and concentration of character beyond his years. The son of William the Silent, the grandson of Maurice of Saxony, whom he resembled in visage and character, he was summoned by every drop of blood in his veins to do life-long battle with the spirit of Spanish absolutism, and he was already girding himself for his life's work. He assumed at once for his device a fallen oak, with a young sapling springing from its root. His motto, "Tandem fit surculus arbor," "the twig shall yet become a tree"—was to be nobly justified by his career.

The remaining son, then a six months' child, was also destined to high fortunes, and to win an enduring name in his country's history. For the present he remained with his mother, the noble Louisa de Coligny, who had thus seen, at long intervals, her father and two husbands fall victims to the Spanish policy; for it is as certain that Philip knew beforehand, and testified his approbation of, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, as that he was the murderer of Orange.

The Estates of Holland implored the widowed Princess to remain in their territority, settling a liberal allowance upon herself and her child, and she fixed her residence at Leyden.

But her position was most melancholy. Married in youth to the Seigneur de Teligny, a young noble of distinguished qualities, she had soon become both a widow and an orphan in the dread night of St. Bartholomew. She had made her own escape to Switzerland; and ten years afterwards she had united herself in marriage with the Prince of Orange. At the age of thirty-two, she now found herself desolate and wretched in a foreign land, where she had never felt thoroughly at home. The widow and children of William the Silent were almost without the necessaries of life. "I hardly know," wrote the Princess to her brother-in-law, Count John, "how the children and I are to maintain ourselves according to the honour of the house. May God provide for us in his bounty, and certainly we have much need of it." Accustomed to the more luxurious civilisation of France, she had been amused rather than annoyed, when, on her first arrival in Holland for her nuptials, she found herself making the journey from Rotterdam to Delft in an open cart without springs, instead of the well-balanced coaches to which she had been used, arriving, as might have been expected, "much bruised and shaken." Such had become the primitive simplicity of William the Silent's household. But on his death, in embarrassed circumstances, it was still more straightened. She had no cause either to love Leyden, for, after the assassination of her husband, a brutal preacher, Hakkius by name, had seized that opportunity for denouncing the French marriage, and the sumptuous christening of the infant in January, as the deeds which had provoked

Page 1145

the wrath of God and righteous chastisement. To remain there in her widowhood, with that six months' child, "sole pledge of her dead lord, her consolation and only pleasure," as she pathetically expressed herself, was sufficiently painful, and she had been inclined to fix her residence in Flushing, in the edifice which had belonged to her husband, as Marquis of Vere. She had been persuaded, however, to remain in Holland, although "complaining, at first, somewhat of the unkindness of the people."

A small well-formed woman, with delicate features, exquisite complexion, and very beautiful dark eyes, that seemed in after-years, as they looked from beneath her coif, to be dim with unshed tears; with remarkable powers of mind, angelic sweetness of disposition, a winning manner, and a gentle voice, Louisa de Coligny became soon dear to the rough Hollanders, and was ever a disinterested and valuable monitress both to her own child and to his elder brother Maurice.

Very soon afterwards the States General established a State Council, as a provisional executive board, for the term of three months, for the Provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, and such parts of Flanders and Brabant as still remained in the Union. At the head of this body was placed young Maurice, who accepted the responsible position, after three days' deliberation. The young man had been completing his education, with a liberal allowance from Holland and Zeeland, at the University of Leyden; and such had been their tender care for the child of so many hopes, that the Estates had given particular and solemn warning, by resolution, to his governor during the previous summer, on no account to allow him to approach the sea-shore, lest he should be kidnapped by the Prince of Parma, who had then some war-vessels cruising on the coast.

The salary of Maurice was now fixed at thirty thousand florins a year, while each of the councillors was allowed fifteen hundred annually, out of which stipend he was to support at least one servant; without making any claim for travelling or other incidental expenses.

The Council consisted of three members from Brabant, two from Flanders, four from Holland, three from Zeeland, two from Utrecht, one from Mechlin, and three from Friesland—eighteen in all. They were empowered and enjoined to levy troops by land and sea, and to appoint naval and military officers; to establish courts of admiralty, to expend the moneys voted by the States, to maintain the ancient privileges of the country, and to see that all troops in service of the Provinces made oath of fidelity to the Union. Diplomatic relations, questions of peace and war, the treaty-making power, were not entrusted to the Council, without the knowledge and consent of the States General, which body was to be convoked twice a year by the State Council.

Thus the Provinces in the hour of danger and darkness were true to themselves, and were far from giving way to a despondency which under the circumstances would not have been unnatural.

Page 1146

For the waves of bitterness were rolling far and wide around them. A medal, struck in Holland at this period, represented a dismasted hulk reeling through the tempest. The motto, “incertum quo fate ferent” (who knows whither fate is sweeping her?) expressed most vividly the ship wrecked condition of the country. Alexander of Parma, the most accomplished general and one of the most adroit statesmen of the age, was swift to take advantage of the calamity which had now befallen the rebellious Provinces. Had he been better provided with men and money, the cause of the States might have seemed hopeless. He addressed many letters to the States General, to the magistracies of various cities, and to individuals, affecting to consider that with the death of Orange had died all authority, as well as all motive for continuing the contest with Spain. He offered easy terms of reconciliation with the discarded monarch—-always reserving, however, as a matter of course, the religious question—for it was as well known to the States as to Parma that there was no hope of Philip making concessions upon that important point.

In Holland and Zeeland the Prince’s blandishments were of no avail. His letters received in various towns of those Provinces, offered, said one who saw them, “almost every thing they would have or demand, even till they should repent.” But the bait was not taken. Individuals and municipalities were alike stanch, remembering well that faith was not to be kept with heretics. The example was followed by the Estates of other Provinces, and all sent in to the General Assembly, soon in session at Delft, “their absolute and irrevocable authority to their deputies to stand to that which they, the said States General, should dispose of as to their persons, goods and country; a resolution and agreement which never concurred before among them, to this day, in what age or government soever.”

It was decreed that no motion of agreement “with the tyrant of Spain” should be entertained either publicly or privately, “under pain to be reputed ill patriots.” It was also enacted in the city of Dort that any man that brought letter or message from the enemy to any private person “should be forthwith hanged.” This was expeditious and business-like. The same city likewise took the lead in recording its determination by public act, and proclaiming it by sound of trumpet, “to live and die in the cause now undertaken.”

In Flanders and Brabant the spirit was less noble. Those Provinces were nearly lost already. Bruges seconded Parma’s efforts to induce its sister-city Ghent to imitate its own baseness in surrendering without a struggle; and that powerful, turbulent, but most anarchical little commonwealth was but too ready to listen to the voice of the tempter. “The ducats of Spain, Madam, are trotting about in such fashion,” wrote envoy Des Pruneaux to Catherine de Medici, “that they have vanquished a great quantity of courages. Your Majesties, too, must employ money if you wish to advance one step.” No man knew better than Parma how to employ such golden rhetoric to win back a wavering rebel to his loyalty, but he was not always provided with a sufficient store of those practical arguments.

Page 1147

He was, moreover, not strong in the field, although he was far superior to the States at this contingency. He had, besides his garrisons, something above 18,000 men. The Provinces had hardly 3000 foot and 2500 horse, and these were mostly lying in the neighbourhood of Zutphen. Alexander was threatening at the same time Ghent, Dendermonde, Mechlin, Brussels, and Antwerp. These five powerful cities lie in a narrow circle, at distances varying from six miles to thirty, and are, as it were, strung together upon the Scheldt, by which river, or its tributary, the Senne, they are all threaded. It would have been impossible for Parma, with 100,000 men at his back, to undertake a regular and simultaneous siege of these important places. His purpose was to isolate them from each other and from the rest of the country, by obtaining the control of the great river, and so to reduce them by famine. The scheme was a masterly one, but even the consummate ability of Farnese would have proved inadequate to the undertaking, had not the preliminary assassination of Orange made the task comparatively easy. Treason, faint-heartedness, jealousy, were the fatal allies that the Governor-General had reckoned upon, and with reason, in the council-rooms of these cities. The terms he offered were liberal. Pardon, permission for soldiers to retreat with technical honour, liberty to choose between apostacy to the reformed religion or exile, with a period of two years granted to the conscientious for the winding up of their affairs; these were the conditions, which seemed flattering, now that the well-known voice which had so often silenced the Flemish palterers and intriguers was for ever hushed.

Upon the 17th August (1584) Dendermonde surrendered, and no lives were taken save those of two preachers, one of whom was hanged, while the other was drowned. Upon the 7th September Vilvoorde capitulated, by which event the water-communication between Brussels and Antwerp was cut off. Ghent, now thoroughly disheartened, treated with Parma likewise; and upon the 17th September made its reconciliation with the King. The surrender of so strong and important a place was as disastrous to the cause of the patriots as it was disgraceful to the citizens themselves. It was, however, the result of an intrigue which had been long spinning, although the thread had been abruptly, and, as it was hoped, conclusively, severed several months before. During the early part of the year, after the reconciliation of Bruges with the King—an event brought about by the duplicity and adroitness of Prince Chimay—the same machinery had been diligently and almost successfully employed to produce a like result in Ghent. Champagny, brother of the famous Cardinal Granvelle, had been under arrest for six years in that city. His imprisonment was not a strict one however; and he avenged himself for what he considered very unjust treatment at the hands of the patriots, by completely abandoning a

Page 1148

cause which he had once begun to favour. A man of singular ability, courage, and energy, distinguished both for military and diplomatic services, he was a formidable enemy to the party from which he was now for ever estranged. As early as April of this year, secret emissaries of Parma, dealing with Champagny in his nominal prison, and with the disaffected burghers at large, had been on the point of effecting an arrangement with the royal governor. The negotiation had been suddenly brought to a close by the discovery of a flagrant attempt by Imbue, one of the secret adherents of the King, to sell the city of Dendermonde, of which he was governor, to Parma. For this crime he had been brought to Ghent for trial, and then publicly beheaded. The incident came in aid of the eloquence of Orange, who, up to the latest moment of his life, had been most urgent in his appeals to the patriotic hearts of Ghent, not to abandon the great cause of the union and of liberty. William the Silent knew full well, that after the withdrawal of the great keystone-city of Ghent, the chasm between the Celtic-Catholic and the Flemish-Calvinist Netherlands could hardly be bridged again. Orange was now dead. The negotiations with France, too, on which those of the Ghenters who still held true to the national cause had fastened their hopes, had previously been brought to a stand-still by the death of Anjou; and Champagny, notwithstanding the disaster to Imbize, became more active than ever. A private agent, whom the municipal government had despatched to the French court for assistance, was not more successful than his character and course of conduct would have seemed to warrant; for during his residence in Paris, he had been always drunk, and generally abusive. This was not good diplomacy, particularly on the part of an agent from a weak municipality to a haughty and most undecided government.

“They found at this court,” wrote Stafford to Walsingham, “great fault with his manner of dealing that was sent from Gaunt. He was scarce sober from one end of the week to the other, and stood so much on his tiptoes to have present answer within three days, or else that they of Gaunt could tell where to bestow themselves. They sent him away after keeping him three weeks, and he went off in great dudgeon, swearing by yea and nay that he will make report thereafter.”

Accordingly, they of Ghent did bestow themselves very soon thereafter upon the King of Spain. The terms were considered liberal, but there was, of course, no thought of conceding the great object for which the patriots were contending—religious liberty. The municipal privileges—such as they might prove to be worth under the interpretation of a royal governor and beneath the guns of a citadel filled with Spanish troops—were to be guaranteed; those of the inhabitants who did not choose to go to mass were allowed two years to wind up their affairs before going into perpetual exile, provided they behaved themselves “without scandal;” while on the other hand, the King’s authority as Count of Flanders was to be fully recognised, and all the dispossessed monks and abbots to be restored to their property.

Page 1149

Accordingly, Champagny was rewarded for his exertions by being released from prison and receiving the appointment of governor of the city: and, after a very brief interval, about one-half of the population, the most enterprising of its merchants and manufacturers, the most industrious of its artizans, emigrated to Holland and Zeeland. The noble city of Ghent—then as large as Paris, thoroughly surrounded with moats, and fortified with bulwarks, ravelins, and counterscarps, constructed of earth, during the previous two years, at great expense, and provided with bread and meat, powder and shot, enough to last a year—was ignominiously surrendered. The population, already a very reduced and slender one for the great extent of the place and its former importance, had been estimated at 70,000. The number of houses was 35,000, so that as the inhabitants were soon farther reduced to one-half, there remained but one individual to each house. On the other hand, the twenty-five monasteries and convents in the town were repeopled—with how much advantage as a set-off to the thousands of spinners and weavers who had wandered away, and who in the flourishing days of Ghent had sent gangs of workmen through the streets “whose tramp was like that of an army”—may be sufficiently estimated by the result.

The fall of Brussels was deferred till March, and that of Mechlin (19th July, 1585) and of Antwerp (19th August, 1585), till Midsummer of the following year; but, the surrender of Ghent (10th March 1585) foreshadowed the fate of Flanders and Brabant. Ostend and Sluys, however, were still in the hands of the patriots, and with them the control of the whole Flemish coast. The command of the sea was destined to remain for centuries with the new republic.

The Prince of Parma, thus encouraged by the great success of his intrigues, was determined to achieve still greater triumphs with his arms, and steadily proceeded with his large design of closing the Scheldt—and bringing about the fall of Antwerp. The details of that siege-one of the most brilliant military operations of the age and one of the most memorable in its results—will be given, as a connected whole, in a subsequent series of chapters. For the present, it will be better for the reader who wishes a clear view of European politics at this epoch, and of the position of the Netherlands, to give his attention to the web of diplomatic negotiation and court-intrigue which had been slowly spreading over the leading states of Christendom, and in which the fate of the world was involved. If diplomatic adroitness consists mainly in the power to deceive, never were more adroit diplomatists than those of the sixteenth century. It would, however, be absurd to deny them a various range of abilities; and the history of no other age can show more subtle, comprehensive, indefatigable—but, it must also be added, often unscrupulous—intellects engaged in the great game of politics in which the highest interests of millions were the stakes, than were those of several leading minds in England, France, Germany, and Spain. With such statesmen the burgher-diplomatists of the new-born commonwealth had to measure themselves; and the result was to show whether or not they could hold their own in the cabinet as on the field,

Page 1150

For the present, however, the new state was unconscious of its latent importance, The new-risen republic remained for a season nebulous, and ready to unsphere itself so soon as the relative attraction of other great powers should determine its absorption. By the death of Anjou and of Orange the United Netherlands had became a sovereign state, an independent republic; but they stood with that sovereignty in their hands, offering it alternately, not to the highest bidder, but to the power that would be willing to accept their allegiance, on the sole condition of assisting them in the maintenance of their religious freedom.

CHAPTER II.

Relations of the Republic to France—Queen's Severity towards Catholics and Calvinists —Relative Positions of England and France— Timidity of Germany—Apathy of Protestant Germany—Indignation of the Netherlanders—Henry *iii*. of France—The King and his Minions— Henry of Guise—Henry of Navarre—Power of France—Embassy of the States to France—Ignominious position of the Envoys—Views of the French Huguenots—Efforts to procure Annexation—Success of Des Pruneaux.

The Prince of Orange had always favoured a French policy. He had ever felt a stronger reliance upon the support of France than upon that of any other power. This was not unreasonable, and so long as he lived, the tendency of the Netherlands had been in that direction. It had never been the wish of England to acquire the sovereignty of the Provinces. In France on the contrary, the Queen Dowager, Catharine de' Medici had always coveted that sovereignty for her darling Francis of Alencon; and the design had been favoured, so far as any policy could be favoured, by the impotent monarch who occupied the French throne.

The religion of the United Netherlands was Calvinistic. There were also many Anabaptists in the country. The Queen of England hated Anabaptists, Calvinists, and other sectarians, and banished them from her realms on pain of imprisonment and confiscation of property. As firmly opposed as was her father to the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, she felt much of the paternal reluctance to accept the spirit of the Reformation. Henry Tudor hanged the men who believed in the Pope, and burnt alive those who disbelieved in transubstantiation, auricular confession, and the other 'Six Articles.' His daughter, whatever her secret religious convictions, was stanch in her resistance to Rome, and too enlightened a monarch not to see wherein the greatness and glory of England were to be found; but she had no thought of tolerating liberty of conscience. All opposed to the Church of England, whether Papists or Puritans, were denounced as heretics, and as such imprisoned or banished. "To allow churches with contrary rites and ceremonies," said Elizabeth, "were nothing else but to sow religion out of religion, to distract good men's minds, to cherish factious

Page 1151

men’s humours, to disturb religion and commonwealth, and mingle divine and human things; which were a thing in deed evil, in example worst of all; to our own subjects hurtful, and to themselves—to whom it is granted, neither greatly commodious, nor yet at all safe.”—[Camden] The words were addressed, it is true, to Papists, but there is very little doubt that Anabaptists or any other heretics would have received a similar reply, had they, too, ventured to demand the right of public worship. It may even be said that the Romanists in the earlier days of Elizabeth’s reign fared better than the Calvinists. The Queen neither banished nor imprisoned the Catholics. She did not enter their houses to disturb their private religious ceremonies, or to inquire into their consciences. This was milder treatment than the burning alive, burying alive, hanging, and drowning, which had been dealt out to the English and the Netherland heretics by Philip and by Mary, but it was not the spirit which William the Silent had been wont to manifest in his measures towards Anabaptists and Papists alike. Moreover, the Prince could hardly forget that of the nine thousand four hundred Catholic ecclesiastics who held benefices at the death of Queen Mary, all had renounced the Pope on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and acknowledged her as the head of the church, saving only one hundred and eighty-nine individuals. In the hearts of the nine thousand two hundred and eleven others, it might be thought perhaps that some tenderness for the religion from which they had so suddenly been converted, might linger, while it could hardly be hoped that they would seek to inculcate in the minds of their flocks or of their sovereign any connivance with the doctrines of Geneva.

When, at a later period, the plotting of Catholics, suborned by the Pope and Philip, against the throne and person of the Queen, made more rigorous measures necessary; when it was thought indispensable to execute as traitors those Roman seedlings—-seminary priests and their disciples—who went about preaching to the Queen’s subjects the duty of carrying out the bull by which the Bishop of Rome had deposed and excommunicated their sovereign, and that “it was a meritorious act to kill such princes as were excommunicate,” even then, the men who preached and practised treason and murder experienced no severer treatment than that which other “heretics” had met with at the Queen’s hands. Jesuits and Popish priests were, by Act of Parliament, ordered to depart the realm within forty days. Those who should afterwards return to the kingdom were to be held guilty of high treason. Students in the foreign seminaries were commanded to return within six months and recant, or be held guilty of high treason. Parents and guardians supplying money to such students abroad were to incur the penalty of a preamunire—perpetual exile, namely, with loss of all their goods.

Page 1152

Many seminary priests and others were annually executed in England under these laws, throughout the Queen's reign, but nominally at least they were hanged not as Papists, but as traitors; not because they taught transubstantiation, ecclesiastical celibacy, auricular confession, or even Papal supremacy, but because they taught treason and murder—because they preached the necessity of killing the Queen. It was not so easy, however, to defend or even comprehend the banishment and imprisonment of those who without conspiring against the Queen's life or throne, desired to see the Church of England reformed according to the Church of Geneva. Yet there is no doubt that many sectaries experienced much inhuman treatment for such delinquency, both in the early and the later years of Elizabeth's reign.

There was another consideration, which had its due weight in this balance, and that was the respective succession to the throne in the two kingdoms of France and England. Mary Stuart, the Catholic, the niece of the Guises, emblem and exponent of all that was most Roman in Europe, the sworn friend of Philip, the mortal foe to all heresy, was the legitimate successor to Elizabeth. Although that sovereign had ever refused to recognize that claim; holding that to confirm Mary in the succession was to "lay her own winding sheet before her eyes, yea, to make her, own grave, while she liveth and looketh on;" and although the unfortunate claimant of two thrones was a prisoner in her enemy's hands, yet, so long as she lived, there was little security for Protestantism, even in Elizabeth's lifetime, and less still in case of her sudden death. On the other hand, not only were the various politico-religious forces of France kept in equilibrium by their action upon each other—so that it was reasonable to believe that the House of Valois, however Catholic itself, would be always compelled by the fast-expanding strength of French Calvinism, to observe faithfully a compact to tolerate the Netherland churches—but, upon the death of Henry *iii*. the crown would be legitimately placed upon the head of the great champion and chief of the Huguenots, Henry of Navarre.

It was not unnatural, therefore, that the Prince of Orange, a Calvinist himself, should expect more sympathy with the Netherland reformers in France than in England. A large proportion of the population of that kingdom, including an influential part of the nobility, was of the Huguenot persuasion, and the religious peace, established by royal edict, had endured so long, that the reformers of France and the Netherlands had begun to believe in the royal clemency, and to confide in the royal word. Orange did not live to see the actual formation of the Holy League, and could only guess at its secrets.

Page 1153

Moreover, it should be remembered that France at that day was a more formidable state than England, a more dangerous enemy, and, as it was believed, a more efficient protector. The England of the period, glorious as it was for its own and all future ages, was, not the great British Empire of to-day. On the contrary, it was what would now be considered, statistically speaking, a rather petty power. The England of Elizabeth, Walsingham, Burghley, Drake, and Raleigh, of Spenser and Shakspeare, hardly numbered a larger population than now dwells in its capital and immediate suburbs. It had neither standing army nor considerable royal navy. It was full of conspirators, daring and unscrupulous, loyal to none save to Mary of Scotland, Philip of Spain, and the Pope of Rome, and untiring in their efforts to bring about a general rebellion. With Ireland at its side, nominally a subject province, but in a state of chronic insurrection—a perpetual hot-bed for Spanish conspiracy and stratagem; with Scotland at its back, a foreign country, with half its population exasperated enemies of England, and the rest but doubtful friends, and with the legitimate sovereign of that country, “the daughter of debate, who discord still did sow,”—[Sonnet by Queen Elizabeth.]—a prisoner in Elizabeth’s hands, the central point around which treason was constantly crystallizing itself, it was not strange that with the known views of the Queen on the subject of the reformed Dutch religion, England should seem less desirable as a protector for the Netherlands than the neighbouring kingdom of France.

Elizabeth was a great sovereign, whose genius Orange always appreciated, in a comparatively feeble realm. Henry of Valois was the contemptible monarch of a powerful state, and might be led by others to produce incalculable mischief or considerable good. Notwithstanding the massacre of St. Bartholomew, therefore, and the more recent “French fury” of Antwerp, Orange had been willing to countenance fresh negociations with France.

Elizabeth, too, it should never be forgotten, was, if not over generous, at least consistent and loyal in her policy towards the Provinces. She was not precisely jealous of France, as has been unjustly intimated on distinguished authority, for she strongly advocated the renewed offer of the sovereignty to Anjou, after his memorable expulsion from the Provinces. At that period, moreover, not only her own love-coquetries with Anjou were over, but he was endeavouring with all his might, though in secret, to make a match with the younger Infanta of Spain. Elizabeth furthered the negociation with France, both publicly and privately. It will soon be narrated how those negociations prospered.

If then England were out of the, question, where, except in France, should the Netherlanders, not deeming themselves capable of standing alone, seek for protection and support?

Page 1154

We have seen the extensive and almost ubiquitous power of Spain. Where she did not command as sovereign, she was almost equally formidable as an ally. The Emperor of Germany was the nephew and the brother-in-law of Philip, and a strict Catholic besides. Little aid was to be expected from him or the lands under his control for the cause of the Netherland revolt. Rudolph hated his brother-in-law, but lived in mortal fear of him. He was also in perpetual dread of the Grand Turk. That formidable potentate, not then the "sick man" whose precarious condition and territorial inheritance cause so much anxiety in modern days, was, it is true, sufficiently occupied for the moment in Persia, and had been sustaining there a series of sanguinary defeats. He was all the more anxious to remain upon good terms with Philip, and had recently sent him a complimentary embassy, together with some rather choice presents, among which were "four lions, twelve unicorns, and two horses coloured white, black, and blue." Notwithstanding these pacific manifestations towards the West, however, and in spite of the truce with the German Empire which the Turk had just renewed for nine years,—-Rudolph and his servants still trembled at every report from the East.

"He is much deceived," wrote Busbecq, Rudolph's ambassador in Paris, "who doubts that the Turk has sought any thing by this long Persian war, but to protect his back, and prepare the way, after subduing that enemy, to the extermination of all Christendom, and that he will then, with all his might, wage an unequal warfare with us, in which the existence of the Empire will be at stake."

The envoy expressed, at the same period, however, still greater awe of Spain. "It is to no one," he wrote, "endowed with good judgment, in the least obscure, that the Spanish nation, greedy of empire, will never be quiet, even with their great power, but will seek for the dominion of the rest of Christendom. How much remains beyond what they have already acquired? Afterwards, there will soon be no liberty, no dignity, for other princes and republics. That single nation will be arbiter of all things, than which nothing can be more miserable, nothing more degrading. It cannot be doubted that all kings, princes, and states, whose safety or dignity is dear to them, would willingly associate in arms to extinguish the common conflagration. The death of the Catholic king would seem the great opportunity 'miscendis rebus'."

Unfortunately neither Busbecq's master nor any other king or prince manifested any of this commendable alacrity to "take up arms against the conflagration." Germany was in a shiver at every breeze from East or West-trembling alike before Philip and Amurath. The Papists were making rapid progress, the land being undermined by the steady and stealthy encroachments of the Jesuits. Lord Burghley sent many copies of his pamphlet, in Latin, French, and Italian, against the Seminaries, to Gebhard Truchsess; and the deposed

Page 1155

archbishop made himself busy in translating that wholesome production into German, and in dispersing it “all Germany over.” The work, setting duly forth “that the executions of priests in England were not for religion but for treason,” was “marvellously liked” in the Netherlands. “In uttering the truth,” said Herle, “’tis likely to do great good;” and he added, that Duke Augustus of Saxony “did now see so far into the sect of Jesuits, and to their inward mischiefs, as to become their open enemy, and to make friends against them in the Empire.”

The love of Truchsess for Agnes Mansfeld had created disaster not only for himself but for Germany. The whole electorate of Cologne had become the constant seat of partisan warfare, and the resort of organised bands of brigands. Villages were burned and rifled, highways infested, cities threatened, and the whole country subjected to perpetual black mail (brandschatzung)—fire-insurance levied by the incendiaries in person—by the supporters of the rival bishops. Truchsess had fled to Delft, where he had been countenanced and supported by Orange. Two cities still held for him, Rheinberg and Neuss. On the other hand, his rival, Ernest of Bavaria; supported by Philip *ii.*, and the occasional guest of Alexander of Parma, had not yet succeeded in establishing a strong foothold in the territory. Two pauper archbishops, without men or means of their own, were thus pushed forward and back, like puppets, by the contending highwaymen on either side; while robbery and murder, under the name of Protestantism or Catholicism, were for a time the only motive or result of the contest.

Thus along the Rhine, as well as the Maas and the Scheldt, the fires of civil war were ever burning. Deeper within the heart of Germany, there was more tranquillity; but it was the tranquillity rather of paralysis than of health. A fearful account was slowly accumulating, which was evidently to be settled only by one of the most horrible wars which history has ever recorded. Meantime there was apathy where there should have been enthusiasm; parsimony and cowardice where generous and combined effort were more necessary than ever; sloth without security. The Protestant princes, growing fat and contented on the spoils of the church, lent but a deaf ear to the moans of Truchsess, forgetting that their neighbour’s blazing roof was likely soon to fire their own. “They understand better, ’proximus sum egomet mild’,” wrote Lord Willoughby from Kronenburg, “than they have learned, ’humani nihid a me alienum puto’. These German princes continue still in their lethargy, careless of the state of others, and dreaming of their ubiquity, and some of them, it is thought, inclining to be Spanish or Popish more of late than heretofore.”

Page 1156

The beggared archbishop, more forlorn than ever since the death of his great patron, cried woe from his resting-place in Delft, upon Protestant Germany. His tones seemed almost prophetic of the thirty years' wrath to blaze forth in the next generation. "Courage is wanting to the people throughout Germany," he wrote to William Lewis of Nassau. "We are becoming the laughing-stock of the nations. Make sheep of yourselves, and the wolf will eat you. We shall find our destruction in our immoderate desire for peace. Spain is making a Papistical league in Germany. Therefore is Assonleville despatched thither, and that's the reason why our trash of priests are so insolent in the empire. 'Tis astonishing how they are triumphing on all sides. God will smite them. Thou dear God! What are our evangelists about in Germany? Asleep on both ears. 'Dormiunt in utramque aurem'. I doubt they will be suddenly enough awakened one day, and the cry will be, 'Who'd have thought it?' Then they will be for getting oil for the lamp, for shutting the stable-door when the steed is stolen," and so on, with a string of homely proverbs worthy of Sancho Panza, or landgrave William of Hesse.

In truth, one of the most painful features is the general aspect of affairs was the coldness of the German Protestants towards the Netherlands. The enmity between Lutherans and Calvinists was almost as fatal as that between Protestants and Papists. There was even a talk, at a little later period, of excluding those of the "reformed" church from the benefits of the peace of Passau. The princes had got the Augsburg confession and the abbey-lands into the bargain; the peasants had got the Augsburg confession without the abbey-lands, and were to believe exactly what their masters believed. This was the German-Lutheran sixteenth-century idea of religious freedom. Neither prince nor peasant stirred in behalf of the struggling Christians in the United Provinces, battling, year after year, knee-deep in blood, amid blazing cities and inundated fields, breast to breast with the yellow jerkined pikemen of Spain and Italy, with the axe and the faggot and the rack of the Holy Inquisition distinctly visible behind them. Such were the realities which occupied the Netherlanders in those days, not watery beams of theological moonshine, fantastical catechism-making, intermingled with scenes of riot and wantonness, which drove old John of Nassau half frantic; with banquetting and guzzling, drinking and devouring, with unchristian flaunting and wastefulness of apparel, with extravagant and wanton dancing, and other lewd abominations; all which, the firm old reformer prophesied, would lead to the destruction of Germany.

For the mass, slow moving but apparently irresistible, of Spanish and papistical absolutism was gradually closing over Christendom. The Netherlands were the wedge by which alone the solid bulk could be riven asunder. It was the cause of German, of French, of English liberty, for which the Provinces were contending. It was not surprising that they were bitter, getting nothing in their hour of distress from the land of Luther but dogmas and Augsburg catechisms instead of money and gunpowder, and seeing German reiters galloping daily to reinforce the army of Parma in exchange for Spanish ducats.

Page 1157

Brave old La Noue, with the iron arm, noblest of Frenchmen and Huguenots—who had just spent five years in Spanish bondage, writing military discourses in a reeking dungeon, filled with toads and vermin, after fighting the battle of liberty for a life-time, and with his brave son already in the Netherlands emulating his father's valour on the same field—denounced at a little later day, the lukewarmness of Protestant Germany with whimsical vehemence:—"I am astounded," he cried, "that these princes are not ashamed of themselves; doing nothing while they see the oppressed cut to pieces at their gates. When will God grant me grace to place me among those who are doing their duty, and afar from those who do nothing, and who ought to know that the cause is a common one. If I am ever caught dancing the German cotillon, or playing the German flute, or eating pike with German sauce, I hope it may be flung in my teeth."

The great league of the Pope and Philip was steadily consolidating itself, and there were but gloomy prospects for the counter-league in Germany. There was no hope but in England and France. For the reasons already indicated, the Prince of Orange, taking counsel with the Estates, had resolved to try the French policy once more. The balance of power in Europe, which no man in Christendom so well understood as he, was to be established by maintaining (he thought) the equilibrium between France and Spain. In the antagonism of those two great realms lay the only hope for Dutch or European liberty. Notwithstanding the treason of Anjou, therefore, it had been decided to renew negociations with that Prince. On the death of the Duke, the envoys of the States were accordingly instructed to make the offer to King Henry *iii*. which had been intended for his brother. That proposition was the sovereignty of all the Netherlands, save Holland and Zeeland, under a constitution maintaining the reformed religion and the ancient laws and privileges of the respective provinces.

But the death of Francis of Anjou had brought about a considerable change in French policy. It was now more sharply defined than ever, a right-angled triangle of almost mathematical precision. The three Henrys and their partizans divided the realm into three hostile camps—threatening each other in simulated peace since the treaty of Fleig (1580), which had put an end to the "lover's war" of the preceding year,—Henry of Valois, Henry of Guise, and Henry of Navarre.

Henry *iii*., last of the Valois line, was now thirty-three years of age. Less than king, less even than man, he was one of those unfortunate personages who seem as if born to make the idea of royalty ridiculous, and to test the capacity of mankind to eat and drink humiliation as if it were wholesome food. It proved how deeply engraved in men's minds of that century was the necessity of kingship, when the hardy Netherlanders, who had abjured one tyrant, and had been fighting a generation long rather than return to him, were now willing to accept the sovereignty of a thing like Henry of Valois.

Page 1158

He had not been born without natural gifts, such as Heaven rarely denies to prince or peasant; but the courage which he once possessed had been exhausted on the field of Moncontour, his manhood had been left behind him at Venice, and such wit as Heaven had endowed him withal was now expended in darting viperous epigrams at court-ladies whom he was only capable of dishonouring by calumny, and whose charms he burned to outrival in the estimation of his minions. For the monarch of France was not unfrequently pleased to attire himself like a woman and a harlot. With silken flounces, jewelled stomacher, and painted face, with pearls of great price adorning his bared neck and breast, and satin-slippered feet, of whose delicate shape and size he was justly vain, it was his delight to pass his days and nights in a ceaseless round of gorgeous festivals, tourneys, processions; masquerades, banquets, and balls, the cost of which glittering frivolities caused the popular burthen and the popular execration to grow, from day to day, more intolerable and more audible. Surrounded by a gang of “minions,” the most debauched and the most desperate of France, whose bedizened dresses exhaled perfumes throughout Paris, and whose sanguinary encounters dyed every street in blood, Henry lived a life of what he called pleasure, careless of what might come after, for he was the last of his race. The fortunes of his minions rose higher and higher, as their crimes rendered them more and more estimable in the eyes of a King who took a woman’s pride in the valour of such champions to his weakness, and more odious to a people whose miserable homes were made even more miserable, that the coffers of a few court-favourites might be filled: Now sauntering, full-dressed, in the public promenades, with ghastly little death’s heads strung upon his sumptuous garments, and fragments of human bones dangling among his orders of knighthood—playing at cup and ball as he walked, and followed by a few select courtiers who gravely pursued the same exciting occupation—now presiding like a queen of beauty at a tournament to assign the prize of valour, and now, by the advice of his mother, going about the streets in robes of penitence, telling his beads as he went, that the populace might be edified by his piety, and solemnly offering up prayers in the churches that the blessing of an heir might be vouchsafed to him,—Henry of Valois seemed straining every nerve in order to bring himself and his great office into contempt.

As orthodox as he was profligate, he hated the Huguenots, who sought his protection and who could have saved his throne, as cordially as he loved the Jesuits, who passed their lives in secret plottings against his authority and his person, or in fierce denunciations from the Paris pulpits against his manifold crimes. Next to an exquisite and sanguinary fop, he dearly loved a monk. The presence of a friar, he said, exerted as agreeable an effect upon his mind as the most delicate and gentle tickling could produce upon his body; and he was destined to have a fuller dose of that charming presence than he coveted.

Page 1159

His party—for he was but the nominal chief of a faction, 'tanquam unus ex nobis'—was the party in possession—the office-holders' party; the spoilsmen, whose purpose was to rob the exchequer and to enrich themselves. His minions—for the favourites were called by no other name—were even more hated, because less despised than the King. Attired in cloth of gold—for silk and satin were grown too coarse a material for them—with their little velvet porringer-caps stuck on the sides of their heads, with their long hair stiff with pomatum, and their heads set inside a well-starched ruff a foot wide, "like St. John's head in a charger," as a splenetic contemporary observed, with a nimbus of musk and violet-powder enveloping them as they passed before vulgar mortals, these rapacious and insolent courtiers were the impersonation of extortion and oppression to the Parisian populace. They were supposed, not unjustly, to pass their lives in dancing, blasphemy, dueling, dicing, and intrigue, in following the King about like hounds, fawning at his feet, and showing their teeth to all besides; and for virtues such as these they were rewarded by the highest offices in church, camp, and state, while new taxes and imposts were invented almost daily to feed their avarice and supply their extravagance. France, doomed to feel the beak and talons of these harpies in its entrails, impoverished by a government that robbed her at home while it humiliated her abroad, struggled vainly in its misery, and was now on the verge of another series of internecine combats—civil war seeming the only alternative to a voluptuous and licentious peace.

"We all stood here at gaze," wrote ambassador Stafford to Walsingham, "looking for some great matter to come of this sudden journey to Lyons; but, as far as men can find, 'parturient montes', for there hath been nothing but dancing and banquetting from one house to another, bravery in apparel, glittering like the sun." He, mentioned that the Duke of Epernon's horse, taking fright at a red cloak, had backed over a precipice, breaking his own neck, while his master's shoulder merely was put out of joint. At the same time the Duke of Joyeuse, coming over Mount Cenis, on his return from Savoy, had broken his wrist. The people, he said, would rather they had both broken their necks "than any other joint, the King having racked the nation for their sakes, as he hath-done." Stafford expressed much compassion for the French in the plight in which they found themselves. "Unhappy people!" he cried, "to have such a King, who seeketh nothing but to impoverish them to enrich a couple, and who careth not what cometh after his death, so that he may rove on while he liveth, and careth neither for doing his own estate good nor his neighbour's state harm." Sir Edward added, however, in a philosophizing vein, worthy of Corporal Nym, that, "seeing we cannot be so happy as to have a King to concur with us to do us any good, yet we are happy to have one that his humour serveth him not to concur with others to do us harm; and 'tis a wisdom for us to follow these humours, that we may keep him still in that humour, and from hearkening to others that may egg him on to worse."

Page 1160

It was a dark hour for France, and rarely has a great nation been reduced to a lower level by a feeble and abandoned government than she was at that moment under the distaff of Henry *iii*. Society was corrupted to its core. "There is no more truth, no more justice, no more mercy," moaned President L'Etoile. "To slander, to lie, to rob, to wench, to steal; all things are permitted save to do right and to speak the truth." Impiety the most cynical, debauchery the most unveiled, public and unpunished homicides, private murders by what was called magic, by poison, by hired assassins, crimes natural, unnatural, and preternatural, were the common characteristics of the time. All posts and charges were venal. Great offices of justice were sold to the highest bidder, and that which was thus purchased by wholesale was retailed in the same fashion. Unhappy the pauper client who dreamed of justice at the hands of law. The great ecclesiastical benefices were equally matter of merchandise, and married men, women, unborn children, enjoyed revenues as dignitaries of the church. Infants came into the world, it was said, like the mitre-fish, stamped with the emblems of place.

"'Twas impossible," said L'Etoile, "to find a crab so tortuous and backsliding as the government."

This was the aspect of the first of the three factions in France. Such was the Henry at its head, the representative of royalty.

Henry with the Scar, Duke of Guise, the well-known chief of the house of Lorraine, was the chief of the extreme papistical party. He was now thirty-four years of age, tall, stately, with a dark, martial face and dangerous eyes, which Antonio Moro loved to paint; a physiognomy made still more expressive by the arquebus-shot which had damaged his left cheek at the fight near Chateau-Thierry and gained him his name of Balafre. Although one of the most turbulent and restless plotters of that plotting age, he was yet thought more slow and heavy in character than subtle, Teutonic rather than Italian. He was the idol of the Parisian burghers. The grocers, the market-men, the members of the arquebus and crossbow clubs, all doated on him. The fishwomen worshipped him as a god. He was the defender of the good old religion under which Paris and the other cities of France had thriven, the uncompromising opponent of the new-fangled doctrines which western clothiers, and dyers, and tapestry-workers, had adopted, and which the nobles of the mountain-country, the penniless chevaliers of Bearn and Gascony and Guienne, were ceaselessly taking the field and plunging France into misery and bloodshed to support. But for the Balafre and Madam League —as the great Spanish Catholic conspiracy against the liberties of France, and of England, and of all Europe, was affectionately termed by the Paris populace—honest Catholics would fare no better in France than they did in England, where, as it was well known, they were every day subjected to fearful tortures:

Page 1161

The shopwindows were filled with coloured engravings, representing, in exaggerated fashion, the sufferings of the English Catholics under bloody Elizabeth, or Jezebel, as she was called; and as the gaping burghers stopped to ponder over these works of art, there were ever present, as if by accident, some persons of superior information who would condescendingly explain the various pictures, pointing out with a long stick the phenomena most worthy of notice. These caricatures proving highly successful, and being suppressed by order of government, they were repeated upon canvas on a larger scale, in still more conspicuous situations, as if in contempt of the royal authority, which sullied itself by compromise with Calvinism! The pulpits, meanwhile, thundered denunciations on the one hand against the weak and wicked King, who worshipped idols, and who sacrificed the dearly-earned pittance of his subjects to feed the insolent pomp of his pampered favourites; and on the other, upon the arch-heretic, the arch-apostate, the Bearnese Huguenot, who, after the death of the reigning monarch, would have the effrontery to claim his throne, and to introduce into France the persecutions and the horrors under which unhappy England was already groaning.

The scarce-concealed instigator of these assaults upon the royal and upon the Huguenot faction was, of course, the Duke of Guise,—the man whose most signal achievement had been the Massacre of St. Bartholomew—all the preliminary details of that transaction having been arranged by his skill. So long as Charles *ix*. was living, the Balafre had created the confusion which was his element, by entertaining and fomenting the perpetual intrigues of Anjou and Alencon against their brother; while the altercations between them and the Queen Mother and the furious madman who then sat upon the throne, had been the cause of sufficient disorder and calamity for France. On the death of Charles *ix*. Guise had sought the intimacy of Henry of Navarre, that by his means he might frustrate the hopes of Alencon for the succession. During the early period of the Bearnese's residence at the French court the two had been inseparable, living together, going to the same festivals, tournaments, and masquerades, and even sleeping in the same bed. "My master," was ever Guise's address to Henry; "my gossip," the young King of Navarre's reply. But the crafty Bearnese had made use of the intimacy only to read the secrets of the Balafre's heart; and on Navarre's flight from the court, and his return to Huguenotism, Guise knew that he had been played upon by a subtler spirit than his own. The simulated affection was now changed into undisguised hatred. Moreover, by the death of Alencon, Navarre now stood next the throne, and Guise's plots became still more extensive and more open as his own ambition to usurp the crown on the death of the childless Henry *iii*. became more fervid.

Page 1162

Thus, by artfully inflaming the populace of Paris, and through his organized bands of confederates—that of all the large towns of France, against the Huguenots and their chief, by appeals to the religious sentiment; and at the same time by stimulating the disgust and indignation of the tax-payers everywhere at the imposts and heavy burthens which the boundless extravagance of the court engendered, Guise paved the way for the advancement of the great League which he represented. The other two political divisions were ingeniously represented as mere insolent factions, while his own was the true national and patriotic party, by which alone the ancient religion and the cherished institutions of France could be preserved.

And the great chief of this national patriotic party was not Henry of Guise, but the industrious old man who sat writing despatches in the depths of the Escorial. Spanish counsels, Spanish promises, Spanish ducats—these were the real machinery by which the plots of Guise against the peace of France and of Europe were supported. Madam League was simply Philip *ii*. Nothing was written, officially or unofficially, to the French government by the Spanish court that was not at the same time communicated to "Mucio"—as the Duke of Guise was denominated in the secret correspondence of Philip, and Mucio was in Philip's pay, his confidential agent, spy, and confederate, long before the actual existence of the League was generally suspected.

The Queen-Mother, Catharine de' Medici, played into the Duke's hands. Throughout the whole period of her widowhood, having been accustomed to govern her sons, she had, in a certain sense, been used to govern the kingdom. By sowing dissensions among her own children, by inflaming party against party, by watching with care the oscillations of France—so than none of the great divisions should obtain preponderance—by alternately caressing and massacring the Huguenots, by cajoling or confronting Philip, by keeping, as she boasted, a spy in every family that possessed the annual income of two thousand livres, by making herself the head of an organized system of harlotry, by which the soldiers and politicians of France were inveigled, their secrets faithfully revealed to her by her well-disciplined maids of honour, by surrounding her unfortunate sons with temptation from earliest youth, and plunging them by cold calculation into deepest debauchery, that their enervated faculties might be ever forced to rely in political affairs on the maternal counsel, and to abandon the administration to the maternal will; such were the arts by which Catharine had maintained her influence, and a great country been governed for a generation—Machiavellian state-craft blended with the more simple wiles of a procuress.

Page 1163

Now that Alencon was dead, and Henry *iii*. hopeless of issue, it was her determination that the children of her daughter, the Duchess of Lorraine, should succeed to the throne. The matter was discussed as if the throne were already vacant, and Guise and the Queen-Mother, if they agreed in nothing else, were both cordial in their detestation of Henry of Navarre. The Duke affected to support the schemes in favour of his relatives, the Princes of Lorraine, while he secretly informed the Spanish court that this policy was only a pretence. He was not likely, he said, to advance the interests of the younger branch of a house of which he was himself the chief, nor were their backs equal to the burthen. It was necessary to amuse the old queen, but he was profoundly of opinion that the only sovereign for France, upon the death of Henry, was Philip *ii*. himself. This was the Duke's plan of arriving, by means of Spanish assistance, at the throne of France; and such was Henry le Balafre, chief of the League.

And the other Henry, the Huguenot, the Bearnese, Henry of Bourbon, Henry of Navarre, the chieftain of the Gascon chivalry, the king errant, the hope and the darling of the oppressed Protestants in every land—of him it is scarce needful to say a single word. At his very name a figure seems to leap forth from the mist of three centuries, instinct with ruddy vigorous life. Such was the intense vitality of the Bearnese prince, that even now he seems more thoroughly alive and recognizable than half the actual personages who are fretting their hour upon the stage.

We see, at once, a man of moderate stature, light, sinewy, and strong; a face browned with continual exposure; small, mirthful, yet commanding blue eyes, glittering from beneath an arching brow, and prominent cheekbones; a long hawk's nose, almost resting upon a salient chin, a pendent moustache, and a thick, brown, curly beard, prematurely grizzled; we see the mien of frank authority and magnificent good humour, we hear the ready sallies of the shrewd Gascon mother-wit, we feel the electricity which flashes out of him, and sets all hearts around him on fire, when the trumpet sounds to battle. The headlong desperate charge, the snow-white plume waving where the fire is hottest, the large capacity for enjoyment of the man, rioting without affectation in the 'certaminis gaudia', the insane gallop, after the combat, to lay its trophies at the feet of the Cynthia of the minute, and thus to forfeit its fruits; all are as familiar to us as if the seven distinct wars, the hundred pitched battles, the two hundred sieges; in which the Bearnese was personally present, had been occurrences of our own day.

He at least was both king and man, if the monarch who occupied the throne was neither. He was the man to prove, too, for the instruction of the patient letter-writer of the Escorial, that the crown of France was to be won with foot in stirrup and carbine in hand, rather than to be caught by the weaving and casting of the most intricate nets of diplomatic intrigue, though thoroughly weighted with Mexican gold.

Page 1164

The King of Navarre was now thirty-one years old; for the three Henrys were nearly of the same age. The first indications of his existence had been recognized amid the cannon and trumpets of a camp in Picardy, and his mother had sung a gay Bearnese song as he was coming into the world at Pau. Thus, said his grandfather, Henry of Navarre, thou shalt not bear to us a morose and sulky child. The good king, without a kingdom, taking the child, as soon as born, in the lappel of his dressing-gown, had brushed his infant lips with a clove of garlic, and moistened them with a drop of generous Gascon wine. Thus, said the grandfather again, shall the boy be both merry and bold. There was something mythologically prophetic in the incidents of his birth.

The best part of Navarre had been long since appropriated by Ferdinand of Aragon. In France there reigned a young and warlike sovereign with four healthy boys. But the new-born infant had inherited the lilies of France from St. Louis, and a later ancestor had added to the escutcheon the motto “Espoir.” His grandfather believed that the boy was born to revenge upon Spain the wrongs of the House of Albret, and Henry’s nature seemed ever pervaded with Robert of Clermont’s device.

The same sensible grandfather, having different views on the subject of education from those manifested by Catherine de Medici towards her children, had the boy taught to run about bare-headed and bare-footed, like a peasant, among the mountains and rocks of Bearn, till he became as rugged as a young bear, and as nimble as a kid. Black bread, and beef, and garlic, were his simple fare; and he was taught by his mother and his grandfather to hate lies and liars, and to read the Bible.

When he was fifteen, the third religious war broke out. Both his father and grandfather were dead. His mother, who had openly professed the reformed faith, since the death of her husband, who hated it, brought her boy to the camp at Rochelle, where he was received as the chief of the Huguenots. His culture was not extensive. He had learned to speak the truth, to ride, to shoot, to do with little sleep and less food. He could also construe a little Latin, and had read a few military treatises; but the mighty hours of an eventful life were now to take him by the hand, and to teach him much good and much evil, as they bore him onward. He now saw military treatises expounded practically by professors, like his uncle Condo, and Admiral Coligny, and Lewis Nassau, in such lecture-rooms as Laudun, and Jarnac, and Montcontour, and never was apter scholar.

The peace of Arnay-le-Duc succeeded, and then the fatal Bartholomew marriage with the Messalina of Valois. The faith taught in the mountains of Bearn was no buckler against the demand of “the mass or death,” thundered at his breast by the lunatic Charles, as he pointed to thousands of massacred Huguenots. Henry yielded to such conclusive arguments, and became a Catholic. Four years of court imprisonment succeeded, and the young King of Navarre, though proof to the artifices of his gossip Guise, was not adamant to the temptations spread for him by Catherine de’ Medici. In the harem entertained for him in the Louvre many pitfalls entrapped him; and he became a stock-performer in the state comedies and tragedies of that plotting age.

Page 1165

A silken web of palace-politics, palace-diplomacy, palace revolutions, enveloped him. Schemes and counter-schemes, stratagems and conspiracies, assassinations and poisonings; all the state-machinery which worked so exquisitely in fair ladies' chambers, to spread havoc and desolation over a kingdom, were displayed before his eyes. Now campaigning with one royal brother against Huguenots, now fighting with another on their side, now solicited by the Queen-Mother to attempt the life of her son, now implored by Henry *iii*. to assassinate his brother, the Bearnese, as fresh antagonisms, affinities; combinations, were developed, detected, neutralized almost daily, became rapidly an adept in Medicean state-chemistry. Charles *ix*. in his grave, Henry *iii*. on the throne, Alencon in the Huguenot camp—Henry at last made his escape. The brief war and peace of Monsieur succeeded, and the King of Navarre formally abjured the Catholic creed. The parties were now sharply defined. Guise mounted upon the League, Henry astride upon the Reformation, were prepared to do battle to the death. The temporary "war of the amorous" was followed by the peace of Fleix.

Four years of peace again; four fat years of wantonness and riot preceding fourteen hungry famine-stricken years of bloodiest civil war. The voluptuousness and infamy of the Louvre were almost paralleled in vice, if not in splendour, by the miniature court at Pau. Henry's Spartan grandfather would scarce have approved the courses of the youth, whose education he had commenced on so simple a scale. For Margaret of Valois, hating her husband, and living in most undisguised and promiscuous infidelity to him, had profited by her mother's lessons. A seraglio of maids of honour ministered to Henry's pleasures, and were carefully instructed that the peace and war of the kingdom were playthings in their hands. While at Paris royalty was hopelessly sinking in a poisonous marsh, there was danger that even the hardy nature of the Bearnese would be mortally enervated by the atmosphere in which he lived.

The unhappy Henry *iii*., baited by the Guises, worried by Alencon and his mother, implored the King of Navarre to return to Paris and the Catholic faith. M. de Segur, chief of Navarre's council, who had been won over during a visit to the capital, where he had made the discovery that "Henry *iii*. was an angel, and his ministers devils," came back to Pau, urging his master's acceptance of the royal invitation. Henry wavered. Bold D'Aubigne, stanchest of Huguenots, and of his friends, next day privately showed Segur a palace-window opening on a very steep precipice over the Bayae, and cheerfully assured him that he should be flung from it did he not instantly reverse his proceedings, and give his master different advice. If I am not able to do the deed myself, said D'Aubigne, here are a dozen more to help me. The chief of the council cast a glance behind him, saw a number of grim Puritan soldiers, with their hats plucked down upon their brows, looking very serious; so made his bow, and quite changed his line of conduct.

Page 1166

At about the same time, Philip *ii*. confidentially offered Henry of Navarre four hundred thousand crowns in hand, and twelve hundred thousand yearly, if he would consent to make war upon Henry *iii*. Mucio, or the Duke of Guise, being still in Philip's pay, the combination of Leaguers and Huguenots against the unfortunate Valois would, it was thought, be a good triangular contest.

But Henry—no longer the unsophisticated youth who had been used to run barefoot among the cliffs of Coarasse—was grown too crafty a politician to be entangled by Spanish or Medicean wiles. The Duke of Anjou was now dead. Of all the princes who had stood between him and the throne, there was none remaining save the helpless, childless, superannuated youth, who was its present occupant. The King of Navarre was legitimate heir to the crown of France. "Espoir" was now in letters of light upon his shield, but he knew that his path to greatness led through manifold dangers, and that it was only at the head of his Huguenot chivalry that he could cut his way. He was the leader of the nobles of Gascony, and Dauphins, and Guienne, in their mountain fastnesses, of the weavers, cutlers, and artizans, in their thriving manufacturing and trading towns. It was not Spanish gold, but carbines and cutlasses, bows and bills, which could bring him to the throne of his ancestors.

And thus he stood the chieftain of that great austere party of Huguenots, the men who went on, their knees before the battle, beating their breasts with their iron gauntlets, and singing in full chorus a psalm of David, before smiting the Philistines hip and thigh.

Their chieftain, scarcely their representative—fit to lead his Puritans on the battle-field, was hardly a model for them elsewhere. Yet, though profligate in one respect, he was temperate in every other. In food, wine, and sleep, he was always moderate. Subtle and crafty in self-defence, he retained something of his old love of truth, of his hatred for liars. Hardly generous perhaps, he was a friend of justice, while economy in a wandering King, like himself, was a necessary virtue, of which France one day was to feel the beneficent action. Reckless and headlong in appearance, he was in truth the most careful of men. On the religious question, most cautious of all, he always left the door open behind him, disclaimed all bigotry of opinion, and earnestly implored the Papists to seek, not his destruction, but his instruction. Yet prudent as he was by nature in every other regard, he was all his life the slave of one woman or another, and it was by good luck rather than by sagacity that he did not repeatedly forfeit the fruits of his courage and conduct, in obedience to his master-passion.

Page 1167

Always open to conviction on the subject of his faith, he repudiated the appellation of heretic. A creed, he said, was not to be changed like a shirt, but only on due deliberation, and under special advice. In his secret heart he probably regarded the two religions as his chargers, and was ready to mount alternately the one or the other, as each seemed the more likely to bear him safely in the battle. The Bearnese was no Puritan, but he was most true to himself and to his own advancement. His highest principle of action was to reach his goal, and to that principle he was ever loyal. Feeling, too, that it was the interest of France that he should succeed, he was even inspired—compared with others on the stage—by an almost lofty patriotism.

Amiable by nature and by habit, he had preserved the most unimpaired good-humour throughout the horrible years which succeeded St. Bartholomew, during which he carried his life in his hand, and learned not to wear his heart upon his sleeve. Without gratitude, without resentment, without fear, without remorse, entirely arbitrary, yet with the capacity to use all men's judgments; without convictions, save in regard to his dynastic interests, he possessed all the qualities, necessary to success. He knew how to use his enemies. He knew how to use his friends, to abuse them, and to throw them away. He refused to assassinate Francis Alencon at the bidding of Henry *iii*., but he attempted to procure the murder of the truest of his own friends, one of the noblest characters of the age—whose breast showed twelve scars received in his services—-Agrippa D'Aubigne, because the honest soldier had refused to become his pimp—a service the King had implored upon his knees.

Beneath the mask of perpetual careless good-humour, lurked the keenest eye, a subtle, restless, widely combining brain, and an iron will. Native sagacity had been tempered into consummate elasticity by the fiery atmosphere in which feebler natures had been dissolved. His wit was as flashing and as quickly unsheathed as his sword. Desperate, apparently reckless temerity on the battle-field was deliberately indulged in, that the world might be brought to recognise a hero and chieftain in a King. The do-nothings of the Merovingian line had been succeeded by the Pepins; to the effete Carlovingians had come a Capet; to the impotent Valois should come a worthier descendant of St. Louis. This was shrewd Gascon calculation, aided by constitutional fearlessness. When despatch-writing, invisible Philips, stargazing Rudolphs, and petticoated Henrys, sat upon the thrones of Europe, it was wholesome to show the world that there was a King left who could move about in the bustle and business of the age, and could charge as well as most soldiers at the head of his cavalry; that there was one more sovereign fit to reign over men, besides the glorious Virgin who governed England.

Thus courageous, crafty, far-seeing, consistent, untiring, imperturbable, he was born to command, and had a right to reign. He had need of the throne, and the throne had still more need of him.

Page 1168

This then was the third Henry, representative of the third side of the triangle, the reformers of the kingdom.

And before this bubbling cauldron of France, where intrigues, foreign and domestic, conflicting ambitions, stratagems, and hopes, were whirling in never-ceasing tumult, was it strange if the plain Netherland envoys should stand somewhat aghast?

Yet it was necessary that they should ponder well the aspect of affairs; for all their hopes, the very existence of themselves and of their religion, depended upon the organization which should come of this chaos.

It must be remembered, however, that those statesmen—even the wisest or the best-informed of them—could not take so correct a view of France and its politics as it is possible for us, after the lapse of three centuries, to do. The interior leagues, subterranean schemes, conflicting factions, could only be guessed at; nor could the immediate future be predicted, even by such far-seeing politicians as William of Orange; at a distance, or Henry of Navarre, upon the spot.

It was obvious to the Netherlanders that France, although torn by faction, was a great and powerful realm. There had now been, with the brief exception of the lovers' war in 1580, a religious peace of eight years' duration. The Huguenots had enjoyed tranquil exercise of their worship during that period, and they expressed perfect confidence in the good faith of the King. That the cities were inordinately taxed to supply the luxury of the court could hardly be unknown to the Netherlanders. Nevertheless they knew that the kingdom was the richest and most populous of Christendom, after that of Spain. Its capital, already called by contemporaries the "compendium of the world," was described by travellers as "stupendous in extent and miraculous for its numbers." It was even said to contain eight hundred thousand souls; and although, its actual population did not probably exceed three hundred and twenty thousand, yet this was more than double the number of London's inhabitants, and thrice as many as Antwerp could then boast, now that a great proportion of its foreign denizens had been scared away. Paris was at least by one hundred thousand more populous than any city of Europe, except perhaps the remote and barbarous Moscow, while the secondary cities of France, Rouen in the north, Lyons in the centre, and Marseilles in the south, almost equalled in size, business, wealth, and numbers, the capitals of other countries. In the whole kingdom were probably ten or twelve millions of inhabitants, nearly as many as in Spain, without her colonies, and perhaps three times the number that dwelt in England.

Page 1169

In a military point of view, too, the alliance of France was most valuable to the contiguous Netherlands. A few regiments of French troops, under the command of one of their experienced Marshals, could block up the Spaniards in the Walloon Provinces, effectually stop their operations against Ghent, Antwerp, and the other great cities of Flanders and Brabant, and, with the combined action of the United Provinces on the north, so surround and cripple the forces of Parma, as to reduce the power of Philip, after a few vigorous and well-concerted blows, to an absolute nullity in, the Low Countries. As this result was of as vital importance to the real interests of France and of Europe, whether Protestant or Catholic, as it was to the Provinces, and as the French government had privately manifested a strong desire to oppose the progress of Spain towards universal empire, it was not surprising that the States General, not feeling capable of standing alone, should make their application to France. This they had done with the knowledge and concurrence of the English government. What lay upon the surface the Netherland statesmen saw and pondered well. What lurked beneath, they surmised as shrewdly as they could, but it was impossible, with plummet and fathom-line ever in hand, to sound the way with perfect accuracy, where the quicksands were ever shifting, and the depth or shallowness of the course perpetually varying. It was not easy to discover the intentions of a government which did not know its own intentions, and whose changing policy was controlled by so many hidden currents.

Moreover, as already indicated, the envoys and those whom they represented had not the same means of arriving at a result as are granted to us. Thanks to the liberality of many modern governments of Europe, the archives where the state-secrets of the buried centuries have so long mouldered, are now open to the student of history. To him who has patience and industry many mysteries are thus revealed, which no political sagacity or critical acumen could have divined. He leans over the shoulder of Philip the Second at his writing-table, as the King spells patiently out, with cipher-key in hand, the most concealed hieroglyphics of Parma or Guise or Mendoza. He reads the secret thoughts of “Fabius,”—[The name usually assigned to Philip himself in the Paris-Simancas Correspondence.]—as that cunctative Roman scrawls his marginal apostilles on each despatch; he pries into all the stratagems of Camillus, Hortensius, Mucius, Julius, Tullius, and the rest of those ancient heroes who lent their names to the diplomatic masqueraders of the 16th century; he enters the cabinet of the deeply-pondering Burghley, and takes from the most private drawer the memoranda which record that minister’s unutterable doubtings; he pulls from the dressing-gown folds of the stealthy, softly-gliding Walsingham the last secret which he has picked from the Emperor’s pigeon-holes, or the Pope’s pocket, and which,

Page 1170

not Hatton, nor Buckhurst, nor Leicester, nor the Lord Treasurer, is to see; nobody but Elizabeth herself; he sits invisible at the most secret councils of the Nassaus and Barneveldt and Buys, or pores with Farnese over coming victories, and vast schemes of universal conquest; he reads the latest bit of scandal, the minutest characteristic of king or minister, chronicled by the gossiping Venetians for the edification of the Forty; and, after all this prying and eavesdropping, having seen the cross-purposes, the bribings, the windings, the fencings in the dark, he is not surprised, if those who were systematically deceived did not always arrive at correct conclusions.

Noel de Caron, Seigneur de Schoneval, had been agent of the States at the French court at the time of the death of the Duke of Anjou. Upon the occurrence of that event, La Mouillerie and Asseliers were deputed by the Provinces to King Henry *iii*., in order to offer him the sovereignty, which they had intended to confer upon his brother. Meantime that brother, just before his death, and with the privity of Henry, had been negotiating for a marriage with the younger daughter of Philip *ii*.—an arrangement somewhat incompatible with his contemporaneous scheme to assume the sovereignty of Philip's revolted Provinces. An attempt had been made at the same time to conciliate the Duke of Savoy, and invite him to the French court; but the Duc de Joyeuse, then on his return from Turin, was bringing the news, not only that the match with Anjou was not favored—which, as Anjou was dead, was of no great consequence—but that the Duke of Savoy was himself to espouse the Infanta, and was therefore compelled to decline the invitation to Paris, for fear of offending his father-in-law. Other matters were in progress, to be afterwards indicated, very much interfering with the negotiations of the Netherland envoys.

When La Mouillerie and Asseliers arrived at Rouen, on their road from Dieppe to Paris, they received a peremptory order from the Queen-Mother to proceed no farther. This prohibition was brought by an unofficial personage, and was delivered, not to them, but to Des Pruneaux, French envoy to the States General, who had accompanied the envoys to France.

After three weeks' time, during which they "kept themselves continually concealed in Rouen," there arrived in that city a young nephew of Secretary Brulart, who brought letters empowering him to hear what they had in charge for the King. The envoys, not much flattered by such cavalier treatment on the part of him to, whom they were offering a crown, determined to digest the affront as they best might, and, to save time, opened the whole business to this subordinate stripling. He received from them accordingly an ample memoir to be laid before his Majesty, and departed by the post the same night. Then they waited ten days longer, concealed as if they had been thieves or spies, rather than the representatives of a friendly power, on a more than friendly errand.

Page 1171

At last, on the 24th July 1854, after the deputies had been thus shut up a whole month, Secretary Brulart himself arrived from Fontainebleau.

He stated that the King sent his royal thanks to the States for the offer which they had made him, and to the deputies in particular for taking the trouble of so long a journey; but that he did not find his realm in condition to undertake a foreign war so inopportunely. In every other regard, his Majesty offered the States “all possible favours and pleasures.”

Certainly, after having been thus kept in prison for a month, the ambassadors had small cause to be contented with this very cold communication. To be forbidden the royal presence, and to be turned out of the country without even an official and accredited answer to a communication in which they had offered the sovereignty of their fatherland, was not flattering to their dignity. “We little thought,” said they to Brulart, after a brief consultation among themselves, “to receive such a reply as this. It displeases us infinitely that his Majesty will not do us the honour to grant us an audience. We must take the liberty of saying, that ’tis treating the States, our masters, with too much contempt. Who ever heard before of refusing audience to public personages? Kings often grant audience to mere letter-carriers. Even the King of Spain never refused a hearing to the deputies from the Netherlands when they came to Spain to complain of his own government. The States General have sent envoys to many other kinds and princes, and they have instantly granted audience in every case. His Majesty, too, has been very ill-informed of the contracts which we formerly made with the Duke of Anjou, and therefore a personal interview is the more necessary.” As the envoys were obstinate on the point of Paris, Brulart said “that the King, although he should himself be at Lyons, would not prevent any one from going to the capital on his own private affairs; but would unquestionably take it very ill if, they should visit that city in a public manner, and as deputies.”

Des Pruneaux professed himself “very grievous at this result, and desirous of a hundred deaths in consequence.”

They stated that they should be ready within a month to bring an army of 3,000 horse and 13,000 foot into the field for the relief of Ghent, besides their military operations against Zutphen; and that the enemy had recently been ignominiously defeated in his attack upon Fort Lille, and had lost 2,000 of his best soldiers.

Here were encouraging facts; and it certainly was worth the while of the French sovereign to pause a moment before rejecting without a hearing, the offer of such powerful and conveniently-situated provinces.

Des Pruneaux, a man of probity and earnestness, but perhaps of insufficient ability to deal with such grave matters as now fell almost entirely upon his shoulders, soon afterwards obtained audience of the King. Being most sincerely in favour of the

annexation of the Netherlands to France, and feeling that now or never was the opportunity of bringing it about, he persuaded the King to send him back to the Provinces, in order to continue the negotiation directly with the States General. The timidity and procrastination of the court could be overcome no further.

Page 1172

The two Dutch envoys, who had stolen secretly to Paris, were indulged in a most barren and unmeaning interview with the Queen-Mother. Before their departure from France, however, they had the advantage of much conversation with leading members of the royal council, of the parliaments of Paris and Rouen, and also with various persons professing the reformed religion. They endeavoured thus to inform themselves, as well as they could, why the King made so much difficulty in accepting their propositions, and whether, and by what means, his Majesty could be induced to make war in their behalf upon the King of Spain.

They were informed that, should Holland and Zeeland unite with the rest of the Netherlands, the King "without any doubt would undertake the cause most earnestly." His councillors, also—even those who had been most active in dissuading his Majesty from such a policy—would then be unanimous in supporting the annexation of the Provinces and the war with Spain. In such a contingency, with the potent assistance of Holland and Zeeland, the King would have little difficulty, within a very short time, in chasing every single Spaniard out of the Netherlands. To further this end, many leading personages in France avowed to the envoys their determination "to venture their lives and their fortunes, and to use all the influence which they possessed at court."

The same persons expressed their conviction that the King, once satisfied by the Provinces as to conditions and reasons, would cheerfully go into the war, without being deterred by any apprehension as to the power of Spain. It was, however, fitting that each Province should chaffer as little as possible about details, but should give his Majesty every reasonable advantage. They should remember that they were dealing with "a great, powerful monarch, who was putting his realm in jeopardy, and not with a Duke of Anjou, who had every thing to gain and nothing to lose."

All the Huguenots, with whom the envoys conversed, were excessively sanguine. Could the King be once brought they said, to promise the Netherlands his protection, there was not the least fear but that he would keep his word. He would use all the means within his power; "yea, he would take the crown from his head," rather than turn back. Although reluctant to commence a war with so powerful a sovereign, having once promised his help, he would keep his pledge to the utmost, "for he was a King of his word," and had never broken and would never break his faith with those of the reformed religion.

Thus spoke the leading Huguenots of France, in confidential communication with the Netherland envoys, not many months before the famous edict of extermination, published at Nemours.

At that moment the reformers were full of confidence; not foreseeing the long procession of battles and sieges which was soon to sweep through the land. Notwithstanding the urgency of the Papists for their extirpation, they extolled loudly the liberty of religious worship which Calvinists, as well as Catholics, were enjoying in

France, and pointed to the fact that the adherents of both religions were well received at court, and that they shared equally in offices of trust and dignity throughout the kingdom.

Page 1173

The Netherland envoys themselves bore testimony to the undisturbed tranquillity and harmony in which the professors of both religions were living and worshipping side by side “without reproach or quarrel” in all the great cities which they had visited. They expressed the conviction that the same toleration would be extended to all the Provinces when under French dominion; and, so far as their ancient constitutions and privileges were concerned, they were assured that the King of France would respect and maintain them with as much fidelity as the States could possibly desire.

Des Pruneaux, accompanied by the two States’ envoys, departed forthwith for the Netherlands. On the 24th August, 1584 he delivered a discourse before the States General, in which he disclosed, in very general terms, the expectations of Henry *iii*., and intimated very clearly that the different Provinces were to lose no time in making an unconditional offer to that monarch. With regard to Holland and Zeeland he observed that he was provided with a special commission to those Estates. It was not long before one Province after the other came to the conclusion to offer the sovereignty to the King without written conditions, but with a general understanding that their religious freedom and their ancient constitutions were to be sacredly respected. Meantime, Des Pruneaux made his appearance in Holland and Zeeland, and declared the King’s intentions of espousing the cause of the States, and of accepting the sovereignty of all the Provinces. He distinctly observed, however, that it was as sovereign, not as protector, that his Majesty must be recognised in Holland and Zeeland, as well as in the rest of the country.

Upon this grave question there was much debate and much difference of opinion. Holland and Zeeland had never contemplated the possibility of accepting any foreign sovereignty, and the opponents of the present scheme were loud and angry, but very reasonable in their remarks.

The French, they said, were no respecters of privileges nor of persons. The Duke of Anjou had deceived William of Orange and betrayed the Provinces. Could they hope to see farther than that wisest and most experienced prince? Had not the stout hearts of the Antwerp burghers proved a stronger defence to Brabant liberties than the “joyous entry” on the dread day of the “French fury,” it would have fared ill then and for ever with the cause of freedom and religion in the Netherlands. The King of France was a Papist, a Jesuit. He was incapable of keeping his pledges. Should they make the arrangement now proposed and confer the sovereignty upon him, he would forthwith make peace with Spain, and transfer the Provinces back to that crown in exchange for the duchy of Milan, which France had ever coveted. The Netherlands, after a quarter of a century of fighting in defence of their hearths and altars, would find themselves handed over again, bound and fettered, to the tender mercies of the Spanish Inquisition.

Page 1174

The Kings of France and of Spain always acted in concert, for religion was the most potent of bonds. Witness the sacrifice of thousands of French soldiers to Alva by their own sovereign at Mons, witness the fate of Genlis, witness the bloody night of St. Bartholomew, witness the Antwerp fury. Men cited and relied upon the advice of William of Orange as to this negotiation with France. But Orange never dreamed of going so far as now proposed. He was ever careful to keep the Provinces of Holland and Zeeland safe from every foreign master. That spot was to be holy ground. Not out of personal ambition. God forbid that they, should accuse his memory of any such impurity, but because he wished one safe refuge for the spirit of freedom.

Many years long they had held out by land and sea against the Spaniards, and should they now, because this Des Pruneaux shrugged his shoulders, be so alarmed as to open the door to the same Spaniard wearing the disguise of a Frenchman?

Prince Maurice also made a brief representation to the States' Assembly of Holland, in which, without distinctly opposing the negotiation with France, he warned them not to proceed too hastily with so grave a matter. He reminded them how far they had gone in the presentation of the sovereignty to his late father, and requested them, in their dealings with France, not to forget his interests and those of his family. He reminded them of the position of that family, overladen with debt contracted in their service alone. He concluded by offering most affectionately his service in any way in which he, young and inexperienced as he knew himself to be, might be thought useful; as he was long since resolved to devote his life to the welfare of his country.

These passionate appeals were answered with equal vehemence by those who had made up their minds to try the chances of the French sovereignty. Des Pruneaux, meanwhile, was travelling from province to province, and from city to city, using the arguments which have already been sufficiently indicated, and urging a speedy compliance with the French King's propositions. At the same time, in accordance with his instructions, he was very cautious to confine himself to generalities, and to avoid hampering his royal master with the restrictions which had proved so irksome to the Duke of Anjou.

"The States General demanded a copy of my speech," he wrote the day after that harangue had been delivered, "but I only gave them a brief outline; extending myself [25th August, 1584] as little as I possibly could, according to the intention and command of your Majesty. When I got here, I found them without hope of our assistance, and terribly agitated by the partizans of Spain. There was some danger of their going over in a panic to the enemy. They are now much changed again, and the Spanish partizans are beginning to lose their tongues. I invite them, if they intend to address your Majesty, to proceed

Page 1175

as they ought towards a veritably grand monarch, without hunting up any of their old quibbles, or reservations of provinces, or any thing else which could inspire suspicion. I have sent into Gelderland and Friesland, for I find I must stay here in Holland and Zeeland myself. These two provinces are the gates and ramparts through which we must enter. 'Tis, in my opinion, what could be called superb, to command all the sea, thus subject to the crown of France. And France, too, with assistance of this country, will command the land as well. They are much astonished here, however, that I communicate nothing of the intention of your Majesty. They say that if your Majesty does not accept this offer of their country, your Majesty puts the rope around their necks."

The French envoy was more and more struck with the brilliancy of the prize offered to his master. "If the King gets these Provinces," said he to Catharine, "'t will be the most splendid inheritance which Prince has ever conquered."

In a very few weeks the assiduity of the envoy and of the French party was successful. All the other provinces had very soon repeated the offer which they had previously made through Asseliers and La Mouillerie. By the beginning of October the opposition of Holland was vanquished. The estates of that Province—three cities excepted, however—determined "to request England and France to assume a joint protectorate over the Netherlands. In case the King of France should refuse this proposition, they were then ready to receive him as prince and master, with knowledge and consent of the Queen of England, and on such conditions as the United States should approve."

Immediately afterwards, the General Assembly of all the States determined to offer the sovereignty to King Henry "on conditions to be afterwards settled."

Des Pruneaux, thus triumphant, received a gold chain of the value of two thousand florins, and departed before the end of October for France.

The departure of the solemn embassy to that country, for the purpose of offering the sovereignty to the King, was delayed till the beginning of January. Meantime it is necessary to cast a glance at the position of England in relation to these important transactions.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Diplomatic adroitness consists mainly in the power to deceive
Enmity between Lutherans and Calvinists
Find our destruction in our immoderate desire for peace
German-Lutheran sixteenth-century idea of religious freedom
Intentions of a government which did not know its own intentions

Lord was better pleased with adverbs than nouns
Make sheep of yourselves, and the wolf will eat you
Necessity of kingship
Neighbour’s blazing roof was likely soon to fire their own
Nor is the spirit of the age to be pleaded in defence
Pauper client who dreamed

Page 1176

of justice at the hands of law
Seem as if born to make the idea of royalty ridiculous
Shutting the stable-door when the steed is stolen
String of homely proverbs worthy of Sancho Panza
The very word toleration was to sound like an insult
There was apathy where there should have been enthusiasm
Tranquillity rather of paralysis than of health
Write so illegibly or express himself so awkwardly

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, 1584-1585

CHAPTER III.

Policy of England—Schemes of the Pretender of Portugal—Hesitation of the French Court—Secret Wishes of France—Contradictory Views as to the Opinions of Netherlanders—Their Love for England and Elizabeth—Prominent Statesmen of the Provinces—Roger Williams the Welshman Views of Walsingham, Burghley, and the Queen—An Embassy to Holland decided upon—Davison at the Hague—Cautious and Secret Measures of Burghley—Consequent Dissatisfaction of Walsingham— English and Dutch Suspicion of France—Increasing Affection of Holland for England.

The policy of England towards the Provinces had been somewhat hesitating, but it had not been disloyal. It was almost inevitable that there should be timidity in the councils of Elizabeth, when so grave a question as that of confronting the vast power of Spain was forcing itself day by day more distinctly upon the consideration of herself and her statesmen. It was very clear, now that Orange was dead, that some new and decided step would be taken. Elizabeth was in favour of combined action by the French and English governments, in behalf of the Netherlands—a joint protectorate of the Provinces, until such time as adequate concessions on the religious question could be obtained from Spain. She was unwilling to plunge into the peril and expense of a war with the strongest power in the world. She disliked the necessity under which she should be placed of making repeated applications to her parliament, and of thus fostering the political importance of the Commons; she was reluctant to encourage rebellious subjects in another land, however just the cause of their revolt. She felt

herself vulnerable in Ireland and on the Scottish border. Nevertheless, the Spanish power was becoming so preponderant, that if the Netherlands were conquered, she could never feel a moment's security within her own territory. If the Provinces were annexed to France, on the other hand, she could not contemplate with complacency the increased power thus placed in the hands of the treacherous and jesuitical house of Valois.

Page 1177

The path of the Queen was thickly strewed with peril: her advisers were shrewd, far-seeing, patriotic, but some of them were perhaps over cautious. The time had, however, arrived when the danger was to be faced, if the whole balance of power in Europe were not to come to an end, and weak states, like England and the Netherlands, to submit to the tyranny of an overwhelming absolutism. The instinct of the English sovereign, of English statesmen, of the English nation, taught them that the cause of the Netherlands was their own. Nevertheless, they were inclined to look on yet a little longer, although the part of spectator had become an impossible one. The policy of the English government was not treacherous, although it was timid. That of the French court was both the one and the other, and it would have been better both for England and the Provinces, had they more justly appreciated the character of Catharine de' Medici and her son.

The first covert negotiations between Henry and the States had caused much anxiety among the foreign envoys in France. Don Bernardino de Mendoza, who had recently returned from Spain after his compulsory retreat from his post of English ambassador, was now established in Paris, as representative of Philip. He succeeded Tasais—a Netherlander by birth, and one of the ablest diplomatists in the Spanish service—and his house soon became the focus of intrigue against the government to which he was accredited—the very head-quarters of the League. His salary was large, his way of living magnificent, his insolence intolerable.

"Tassis is gone to the Netherlands," wrote envoy Busbecq to the Emperor, "and thence is to proceed to Spain. Don Bernardino has arrived in his place. If it be the duty of a good ambassador to expend largely, it would be difficult to find a better one than he; for they say 'tis his intention to spend sixteen thousand dollars yearly in his embassy. I would that all things were in correspondence; and that he were not in other respects so inferior to Tassis."

It is, however, very certain that Mendoza was not only a brave soldier, but a man of very considerable capacity in civil affairs, although his inordinate arrogance interfered most seriously with his skill as a negotiator. He was, of course, watching with much fierceness the progress of these underhand proceedings between the French court and the rebellious subjects of his master, and using threats and expostulations in great profusion. "Mucio," too, the great stipendiary of Philip, was becoming daily more dangerous, and the adherents of the League were multiplying with great celerity.

Page 1178

The pretender of Portugal, Don Antonio, prior of Crato, was also in Paris; and it was the policy of both the French and the English governments to protect his person, and to make use of him as a rod over the head of Philip. Having escaped, after the most severe sufferings, in the mountains of Spain, where he had been tracked like a wild beast, with a price of thirty thousand crowns placed upon his head, he was now most anxious to stir the governments of Europe into espousing his cause, and into attacking Spain through the recently acquired kingdom of Portugal. Meantime, he was very desirous of some active employment, to keep himself from starving, and conceived the notion, that it would be an excellent thing for the Netherlands and himself, were he to make good to them the loss of William the Silent.

“Don Antonio,” wrote Stafford, “made a motion to me yesterday, to move her Majesty, that now upon the Prince of Orange’s death, as it is a necessary thing for them to have a governor and head, and him to be at her Majesty’s devotion, if her Majesty would be at the means to work it for him, she should be assured nobody should be more faithfully tied in devotion to her than he. Truly you would pity the poor man’s case, who is almost next door to starving in effect.”

A starving condition being, however, not the only requisite in a governor and head to replace the Prince of Orange, nothing came of this motion. Don Antonio remained in Paris, in a pitiable plight, and very much environed by dangers; for the Duke of Guise and his brother had undertaken to deliver him into the hands of Philip the Second, or those of his ministers, before the feast of St. John of the coming year. Fifty thousand dollars were to be the reward of this piece of work, combined with other services; “and the sooner they set about it the better,” said Philip, writing a few months later, “for the longer they delay it, the less easy will they find it."’

The money was never earned, however, and meantime Don Antonio made himself as useful as he could, in picking up information for Sir Edward Stafford and the other opponents of Spanish policy in Paris.

The English envoy was much embarrassed by the position of affairs. He felt sure that the French monarch would never dare to enter the lists against the king of Spain, yet he was accurately informed of the secret negotiations with the Netherlands, while in the dark as to the ultimate intentions of his own government.

“I was never set to school so much,” he wrote to Walsingham (27th July, 1584), “as I have been to decipher the cause of the deputies of the Low Countries coming hither, the offers that they made the King here, and the King’s manner of dealing with them!”

He expressed great jealousy at the mystery which enveloped the whole transaction; and much annoyance with Noel de Caron, who “kept very secret, and was angry at the motion,” when he endeavoured to discover the business in which they were engaged.

Yet he had the magnanimity to request Walsingham not to mention the fact to the Queen, lest she should be thereby prejudiced against the States.

Page 1179

“For my part,” said he, “I would be glad in any thing to further them, rather than to hinder them—though they do not deserve it—yet for the good the helping them at this time may bring ourselves.”

Meantime, the deputies went away from France, and the King went to Lyons, where he had hoped to meet both the Duke of Savoy and the King of Navarre. But Joyeuse, who had been received at Chambery with “great triumphs and tourneys,” brought back only a broken wrist, without bringing the Duke of Savoy; that potentate sending word that the “King of Spain had done him the honour to give him his daughter, and that it was not fit for him to do any thing that might bring jealousy.”

Henry of Navarre also, as we have seen, declined the invitation sent him, M. de Segur not feeling disposed for the sudden flight out of window suggested by Agrippa D’ Aubigne; so that, on the whole, the King and his mother, with all the court, returned from Lyons in marvellous ill humour.

“The King storms greatly,” said Stafford, “and is in a great dump.” It was less practicable than ever to discover the intentions of the government; for although it was now very certain that active exertions were making by Des Pruneaux in the Provinces, it was not believed by the most sagacious that a serious resolution against Spain had been taken in France. There was even a talk of a double matrimonial alliance, at that very moment, between the two courts.

“It is for certain here said,” wrote Stafford, “that the King of Spain doth presently marry the dowager of France, and ’tis thought that if the King of Spain marry, he will not live a year. Whensoever the marriage be,” added the envoy, “I would to God the effect were true, for if it be not by some such handy work of God, I am afraid things will not go so well as I could wish.”

There was a lull on the surface of affairs, and it was not easy to sound the depths of unseen combinations and intrigues.

There was also considerable delay in the appointment and the arrival of the new deputies from the Netherlands; and Stafford was as doubtful as ever as to the intentions of his own government.

“They look daily here for the States,” he wrote to Walsingham (29th Dec. 1584), “and I pray that I may hear from you as soon as you may, what course I shall take when they be here, either hot or cold or lukewarm in the matter, and in what sort I shall behave myself. Some badly affected have gone about to put into the King’s head, that they never meant to offer the sovereignty, which, though the King be not thoroughly persuaded of, yet so much is won by this means that the King hearkeneth to see the end, and then to believe as he seeth cause, and in the meantime to speak no more of any such matter than if it had never been moved.”

Page 1180

While his Majesty was thus hearkening in order to see more, according to Sir Edward's somewhat Hibernian mode of expressing himself, and keeping silent that he might see the better, it was more difficult than ever for the envoy to know what course to pursue. Some persons went so far as to suggest that the whole negotiation was a mere phantasmagoria devised by Queen Elizabeth—her purpose being to breed a quarrel between Henry and Philip for her own benefit; and "then, seeing them together by the ears, as her accustomed manner was, to let them go alone, and sit still to look on."

The King did not appear to be much affected by these insinuations against Elizabeth; but the doubt and the delay were very harrassing. "I would to God," wrote the English envoy, "that if the States mean to do anything here with the King, and if her. Majesty and the council think it fit, they would delay no time, but go roundly either to an agreement or to a breach with the King. Otherwise, as the matter now sleepeth, so it will die, for the King must be taken in his humour when he begins to nibble at any bait, for else he will come away, and never bite a full bite while he liveth."

There is no doubt that the bait, at which Henry nibbled with much avidity, was the maritime part of the Netherlands. Holland and Zeeland in the possession of either England or Spain, was a perpetual inconvenience to France. The King, or rather the Queen-Mother and her advisers—for Henry himself hardly indulged in any profound reflections on state-affairs,—desired and had made a sine qua non of those Provinces. It had been the French policy, from the beginning, to delay matters, in order to make the States feel the peril of their position to the full.

"The King, differing and temporising," wrote Herle to the Queen, "would have them fall into that necessity and danger, as that they should offer unto him simply the possession of all their estates. Otherwise, they were to see, as in a glass, their evident and hasty ruin."

Even before the death of Orange, Henry had been determined, if possible, to obtain possession of the island of Walcheren, which controlled the whole country. "To give him that," said Herle, "would be to turn the hot end of the poker towards themselves, and put the cold part in the King's hand. He had accordingly made a secret offer to William of Orange, through the Princess, of two millions of livres in ready money, or, if he preferred it, one hundred thousand livres yearly of perpetual inheritance, if he would secure to him the island of Walcheren. In that case he promised to declare war upon the King of Spain, to confirm to the States their privileges, and to guarantee to the Prince the earldoms of Holland and Zeeland, with all his other lands and titles."

It is superfluous to say that such offers were only regarded by the Prince as an affront. It was, however, so necessary, in his opinion; to maintain the cause of the reformed churches in France, and to keep up the antagonism between that country and Spain, that the French policy was not abandoned, although the court was always held in suspicion.

Page 1181

But on the death of William, there was a strong reaction against France and in favour of England. Paul Buys, one of the ablest statesmen of the Netherlands, Advocate of Holland, and a confidential friend of William the Silent up to the time of his death, now became the leader of the English party, and employed his most strenuous efforts against the French treaty-having “seen the scope of that court.”

With regard to the other leading personages, there was a strong inclination in favour of Queen Elizabeth, whose commanding character inspired great respect. At the same time warmer sentiments of adhesion seem to have been expressed towards the French court, by the same individuals, than the, mere language of compliment justified.

Thus, the widowed Princess of Orange was described by Des Pruneaux to his sovereign, as “very desolate, but nevertheless doing all in her power to advance his interests; the Count Maurice, of gentle hopes, as also most desirous of remaining his Majesty’s humble servant, while Elector Truchsess was said to be employing himself, in the same cause, with very great affection.”

A French statesman resident in the Provinces, whose name has not been preserved, but who was evidently on intimate terms with many eminent Netherlanders, declared that Maurice, “who had a mind entirely French, deplored infinitely the misfortunes of France, and regretted that all the Provinces could not be annexed to so fair a kingdom. I do assure you,” he added, “that he is in no wise English.”

Of Count Hohenlo, general-in-chief of the States’ army under Prince Maurice, and afterwards his brother-in-law, the same gentleman spoke with even greater confidence. “Count d’Oloc,” said he (for by that ridiculous transformation of his name the German general was known to French and English), “with whom I have passed three weeks on board the fleet of the States, is now wholly French, and does not love the English at all. The very first time I saw him, he protested twice or thrice, in presence of members of the States General and of the State Council, that if he had no Frenchmen he could never carry on the war. He made more account,” he said, “of two thousand French than of six thousand others, English, or Germans.”

Yet all these distinguished persons—the widowed Princess of Orange, Count Maurice, ex-elector Truchsess, Count Holenlo—were described to Queen Elizabeth by her confidential agent, then employed in the Provinces, as entirely at that sovereign’s devotion.

“Count Maurice holds nothing of the French, nor esteems them,” said Herle, “but humbly desired me to signify unto your Majesty that he had in his mind and determination faithfully vowed his service to your Majesty, which should be continued in his actions with all duty, and sealed with his blood; for he knew how much his father and the cause were beholden ever to your Highness’s goodness.”

The Princess, together with her sister-in-law Countess Schwartzenburg, and the young daughters of the late Prince were described on the same occasion “as recommending their service unto her Majesty with a most tender affection, as to a lady of all ladies.” “Especially,” said Herle, “did the two Princesses in most humble and wise sort, express a certain fervent devotion towards your Majesty.”

Page 1182

Elector Truchsess was spoken of as “a prince well qualified and greatly devoted to her Majesty; who, after many grave and sincere words had of her Majesty’s virtue, calling her ’la fille unique de Dieu, and le bien heureuse Princesse’, desired of God that he might do her service as she merited.”

And, finally, Count Hollock—who seemed to “be reformed in sundry things, if it hold” (a delicate allusion to the Count’s propensity for strong potations), was said “to desire humbly to be known for one that would obey the commandment of her Majesty more than of any earthly prince living besides.”

There can be no doubt that there was a strong party in favour of an appeal to England rather than to France. The Netherlanders were too shrewd a people not to recognize the difference between the king of a great realm, who painted his face and wore satin petticoats, and the woman who entertained ambassadors, each in his own language, on gravest affairs of state, who matched in her wit and wisdom the deepest or the most sparkling intellects of her council, who made extemporaneous Latin orations to her universities, and who rode on horseback among her generals along the lines of her troops in battle-array, and yet was only the unmarried queen of a petty and turbulent state.

“The reverend respect that is borne to your Majesty throughout these countries is great,” said William Herle. They would have thrown themselves into her arms, heart and soul, had they been cordially extended at that moment of their distress; but she was coy, hesitating, and, for reasons already sufficiently indicated, although not so conclusive as they seemed, disposed to temporize and to await the issue of the negotiations between the Provinces and France.

In Holland and Zeeland especially, there was an enthusiastic feeling in favour of the English alliance. “They recommend themselves,” said Herleo “throughout the country in their consultations and assemblies, as also in their common and private speeches, to the Queen of England’s only favour and goodness, whom they call their saviour, and the Princess of greatest perfection in wisdom and sincerity that ever governed. Notwithstanding their treaty now on foot by their deputies with France, they are not more disposed to be governed by the French than to be tyrannized over by the Spaniard; concluding it to be alike; and even ’commutare non sortem sed servitutem’.”

Paul Buys was indefatigable in his exertions against the treaty with France, and in stimulating the enthusiasm for England and Elizabeth. He expressed sincere and unaffected devotion to the Queen on all occasions, and promised that no negotiations should take place, however secret and confidential, that were not laid before her Majesty. “He has the chief administration among the States,” said Herle, “and to his credit and dexterity they attribute the despatch of most things. He showed unto me the state of the enemy throughout the provinces, and of the negotiation in France, whereof

he had no opinion at all of success, nor any will of his own part but to please the Prince of Orange in his life-time.”

Page 1183

It will be seen in the sequel whether or not the views of this experienced and able statesman were lucid and comprehensive. It will also be seen whether his strenuous exertions in favour of the English alliance were rewarded as bountifully as they deserved, by those most indebted to him.

Meantime he was busily employed in making the English government acquainted with the capacity, disposition, and general plans of the Netherlanders.

“They have certain other things in consultation amongst the States to determine of,” wrote Herle, “which they were sworn not to reveal to any, but Buys protested that nothing should pass but to your liking and surety, and the same to be altered and disposed as should seem good to your Highness’s own authority; affirming to me sincerely that Holland and Zeeland, with the rest of the provinces, for the estimation they had of your high virtue and temperancy, would yield themselves absolutely to your Majesty and crown for ever, or to none other (their liberties only reserved), whereof you should have immediate possession, without reservation of place or privilege.”

The important point of the capability of the Provinces to defend themselves, about which Elizabeth was most anxious to be informed, was also fully elucidated by the Advocate. “The means should be such, proceeding from the Provinces,” said he, “as your Majesty might defend your interest therein with facility against the whole world.” He then indicated a plan, which had been proposed by the States of Brabant to the States General, according to which they were to keep on foot an army of 15,000 foot and 5000 horse, with which they should be able, “to expulse the enemy and to reconquer their towns and country lost, within three months.” Of this army they hoped to induce the Queen to furnish 5000 English footmen and 500 horse, to be paid monthly by a treasurer of her own; and for the assistance thus to be furnished they proposed to give Ostend and Sluys as pledge of payment. According to this scheme the elector palatine, John Casimir, had promised to furnish, equip, and pay 2000 cavalry, taking the town of Maestricht and the country of Limburg, when freed from the enemy, in pawn for his disbursements; while Antwerp and Brabant had agreed to supply 300,000 crowns in ready money for immediate use. Many powerful politicians opposed this policy, however, and urged reliance upon France, “so that this course seemed to be lame in many parts.”—[Letter of Herle].

Agents had already been sent both to England and France, to procure, if possible, a levy of troops for immediate necessity. The attempt was unsuccessful in France, but the Dutch community of the reformed religion in London subscribed nine thousand and five florins. This sum, with other contributions, proved sufficient to set Morgan’s regiment on foot, which soon after began to arrive in the Netherlands by companies. “But if it were all here at once,” said Stephen Le Sieur, “’t would be but a breakfast for the enemy.”

Page 1184

The agent for the matter in England was De Griyse, formerly bailiff of Bruges; and although tolerably successful in his mission, he was not thought competent for so important a post, nor officially authorised for the undertaking. While procuring this assistance in English troops he had been very urgent with the Queen to further the negotiations between the States and France; and Paul Buys was offended with him as a mischief-maker and an intriguer. He complained of him as having “thrust himself in, to deal and intermeddle in the affairs of the Low Countries unavowed,” and desired that he might be closely looked after.

After the Advocate, the next most important statesman in the provinces was, perhaps, Meetkerk, President of the High Court of Flanders, a man of much learning, sincerity, and earnestness of character; having had great experience in the diplomatic service of the country on many important occasions. “He stands second in reputation here,” said Herle, “and both Buys and he have one special care in all practises that are discovered, to examine how near anything may concern your person or kingdom, whereof they will advertise as matter shall fall out in importance.”

John van Olden-Barneveldt, afterwards so conspicuous in the history of the country, was rather inclined, at this period, to favour the French party; a policy which was strenuously furthered by Villiers and by Sainte Aldegonde.

Besides the information furnished to the English government, as to the state of feeling and resources of the Netherlands, by Buys, Meetkerk, and William Herle, Walsingham relied much upon the experienced eye and the keen biting humour of Roger Williams.

A frank open-hearted Welshman, with no fortune but his sword, but as true as its steel, he had done the States much important service in the hard-fighting days of Grand Commander Requesens and of Don John of Austria. With a shrewd Welsh head under his iron morion, and a stout Welsh heart under his tawny doublet, he had gained little but hard knocks and a dozen wounds in his campaigning, and had but recently been ransomed, rather grudgingly by his government, from a Spanish prison in Brabant. He was suffering in health from its effects, but was still more distressed in mind, from his sagacious reading of the signs of the times. Fearing that England was growing lukewarm, and the Provinces desperate, he was beginning to find himself out of work, and was already casting about him for other employment. Poor, honest, and proud, he had repeatedly declined to enter the Spanish service. Bribes, such as at a little later period were sufficient to sully conspicuous reputations and noble names, among his countrymen in better circumstances than his own, had been freely but unsuccessfully offered him. To serve under any but the English or States’ flag in the Provinces he scorned; and he thought the opportunity fast slipping away there for taking the Papistical party in Europe handsomely by the beard. He had done much manful work in the Netherlands, and was destined to do much more; but he was now discontented, and thought himself slighted. In more remote regions of the world, the, thrifty soldier thought

that there might be as good harvesting for his sword as in the thrice-trampled stubble of Flanders.

Page 1185

“I would refuse no hazard that is possible to be done in the Queen’s service,” he said to Walsingham; “but I do persuade myself she makes no account of me. Had it not been for the duty that nature bound me towards her and my country, I needed not to have been in that case that I am in. Perhaps I could have fingered more pistoles than Mr. Newell, the late Latiner, and had better usage and pension of the Spaniards than he. Some can tell that I refused large offers, in the misery of Alost, of the Prince of Parma. Last of all, Verdugo offered me very fair, being in Loccum, to quit the States’ service, and accept theirs, without treachery or betraying of place or man.”

Not feeling inclined to teach Latin in Spain, like the late Mr. Newell, or to violate oaths and surrender fortresses, like brave soldiers of fortune whose deeds will be afterwards chronicled, he was disposed to cultivate the “acquaintance of divers Pollacks,” from which he had received invitations. “Find I nothing there,” said he, “Duke Matthias has promised me courtesy if I would serve in Hungary. If not, I will offer service to one of the Turk’s bashaws against the Persians.”

Fortunately, work was found for the trusty Welshman in the old fields. His brave honest face often reappeared; his sharp sensible tongue uttered much sage counsel; and his ready sword did various solid service, in leaguer, battle-field, and martial debate, in Flanders, Holland, Spain, and France.

For the present, he was casting his keen glances upon the negotiations in progress, and cavilling at the general policy which seemed predominant.

He believed that the object of the French was to trifle with the States, to protract interminably their negotiations, to prevent the English government from getting any hold upon the Provinces, and then to leave them to their fate.

He advised Walsingham to advance men and money, upon the security of Sluys and Ostend.

“I dare venture my life,” said he, with much energy, “that were Norris, Bingham, Yorke, or Carlisle, in those ports, he would keep them during the Spanish King’s life.”

But the true way to attack Spain—a method soon afterwards to be carried into such brilliant effect by the naval heroes of England and the Netherlands—the long-sighted Welshman now indicated; a combined attack, namely, by sea upon the colonial possessions of Philip.

“I dare be bound,” said he, “if you join with Treslong, the States Admiral, and send off, both, three-score sail into his Indies, we will force him to retire from conquering further, and to be contented to let other princes live as well as he.”

In particular, Williams urged rapid action, and there is little doubt, that had the counsels of prompt, quick-witted, ready-handed soldiers like himself, and those who thought with him, been taken; had the stealthy but quick-darting policy of Walsingham prevailed over the solemn and stately but somewhat ponderous proceedings of Burghley, both Ghent and Antwerp might have been saved, the trifling and treacherous diplomacy of Catharine de' Medici neutralized, and an altogether more fortunate aspect given at once to the state of Protestant affairs.

Page 1186

“If you mean to do anything,” said he, “it is more than time now. If you will send some man of credit about it, will it please your honour, I will go with him, because I know the humour of the people, and am acquainted with a number of the best. I shall be able to show him a number of their dealings, as well with the French as in other affairs, and perhaps will find means to send messengers to Ghent, and to other places, better than the States; for the message of one soldier is better than twenty boors.”

It was ultimately decided—as will soon be related—to send a man of credit to the Provinces. Meantime, the policy of England continued to be expectant and dilatory, and Advocate Buys, after having in vain attempted to conquer the French influence, and bring about the annexation of the Provinces to England, threw down his office in disgust, and retired for a time from the contest. He even contemplated for a moment taking service in Denmark, but renounced the notion of abandoning his country, and he will accordingly be found, at a later period, conspicuous in public affairs.

The deliberations in the English councils were grave and anxious, for it became daily more obvious that the Netherland question was the hinge upon which the, whole fate of Christendom was slowly turning. To allow the provinces to fall back again into the grasp of Philip, was to offer England herself as a last sacrifice to the Spanish Inquisition. This was felt by all the statesmen in the land; but some of them, more than the rest, had a vivid perception of the danger, and of the necessity of dealing with it at once.

To the prophetic eye of Walsingham, the mists of the future at times were lifted; and the countless sails of the invincible Armada, wafting defiance and destruction to England, became dimly visible. He felt that the great Netherland bulwark of Protestantism and liberty was to be defended at all hazards, and that the death-grapple could not long be deferred.

Burghley, deeply pondering, but less determined, was still disposed to look on and to temporize.

The Queen, far-seeing and anxious, but somewhat hesitating, still clung to the idea of a joint protectorate. She knew that the reestablishment of Spanish authority in the Low Countries would be fatal to England, but she was not yet prepared to throw down the gauntlet to Philip. She felt that the proposed annexation of the Provinces to France would be almost as formidable; yet she could not resolve, frankly and fearlessly, to assume, the burthen of their protection. Under the inspiration of Burghley, she was therefore willing to encourage the Netherlanders underhand; preventing them at every hazard from slackening in their determined hostility to Spain; discountenancing, without absolutely forbidding, their proposed absorption by France; intimating, without promising, an ultimate and effectual assistance from herself. Meantime, with something of feline and feminine duplicity, by which the sex of the great sovereign would so often manifest itself in the most momentous affairs, she would watch and wait, teasing the

Provinces, dallying with the danger, not quite prepared as yet to abandon the prize to Henry or Philip, or to seize it herself.

Page 1187

The situation was rapidly tending to become an impossible one.

Late in October a grave conference was held council, “upon the question whether her Majesty should presently relieve the States of the Low Countries.”

It was shown, upon one side, that the “perils to the Queen and to the realm were great, if the King of Spain should recover Holland and Zeeland, as he had the other countries, for lack of succour in seasonable time, either by the French King or the Queen’s Majesty.”

On the other side, the great difficulties in the way of effectual assistance by England, were “fully remembered.”

“But in the end, and upon comparison made,” said Lord Burghley, summing up, “betwixt the perils on the one part, and the difficulties on the other,” it was concluded that the Queen would be obliged to succumb to the power of Spain, and the liberties of England be hopelessly lost, if Philip were then allowed to carry out his designs, and if the Provinces should be left without succour at his mercy.

A “wise person” was accordingly to be sent into Holland; first, to ascertain whether the Provinces had come to an actual agreement with the King of France, and, if such should prove to be the case, to enquire whether that sovereign had pledged himself to declare war upon Philip. In this event, the wise person was to express her Majesty’s satisfaction that the Provinces were thus to be “relieved from the tyranny of the King of Spain.”

On the other hand, if it should appear that no such conclusive arrangements had been made, and that the Provinces were likely to fall again victims to the “Spanish tyranny,” her Majesty would then “strain herself as far as, with preservation of her own estate, she might, to succour them at this time.”

The agent was then to ascertain “what conditions the Provinces would require” upon the matter of succour, and, if the terms seemed reasonable, he would assure them that “they should not be left to the cruelties of the Spaniards.”

And further, the wise person, “being pressed to answer, might by conference of speeches and persuasions provoke them to offer to the Queen the ports of Flushing and Middelburg and the Brill, wherein she meant not to claim any property, but to hold them as gages for her expenses, and for performances of their covenants.”

He was also to make minute inquiries as to the pecuniary resources of the Provinces, the monthly sums which they would be able to contribute, the number of troops and of ships of war that they would pledge themselves to maintain. These investigations were very important, because the Queen, although very well disposed to succour them, “so

nevertheless she was to consider how her power might be extended, without ruin or manifest peril to her own estate."

It was also resolved, in the same conference, that a preliminary step of great urgency was to "procure a good peace with the King of Scots." Whatever the expense of bringing about such a pacification might be, it was certain that a "great deal more would be expended in defending the realm against Scotland," while England was engaged in hostilities with Spain. Otherwise, it was argued that her Majesty would be "so impeached by Scotland in favour of the King of Spain, that her action against that King would be greatly weakened."

Page 1188

Other measures necessary to be taken in view of the Spanish war were also discussed. The ex-elector of Cologne, “a man of great account in Germany,” was to be assisted with money to make head against his rival supported by the troops of Philip.

Duke Casimir of the Palatinate was to be solicited to make a diversion in Gelderland.

The King of France was to be reminded of his treaty with England for mutual assistance in case of the invasion by a foreign power of either realm, and to be informed “not only of the intentions of the Spaniards to invade England, upon their conquest of the Netherlands, but of their actual invasion of Ireland.”

It was “to be devised how the King of Navarre and Don Antonio of Portugal, for their respective titles, might be induced to offend and occupy the King of Spain, whereby to diminish his forces bent upon the Low Countries.”

It was also decided that Parliament should be immediately summoned, in which, besides the request of a subsidy, many other necessary, provisions should be made for her Majesty’s safety.

“The conclusions of the whole,” said Lord Burghley, with much earnestness, “was this. Although her Majesty should hereby enter into a war presently, yet were she better to do it now, while she may make the same out of her realm, having the help of the people of Holland, and before the King of Spain shall have consummated his conquests in those countries, whereby he shall be so provoked with pride, solicited by the Pope, and tempted by the Queen’s own subjects, and shall be so strong by sea, and so free from all other actions and quarrels,—yea, shall be so formidable to all the rest of Christendom, as that her Majesty shall no wise be able, with her own power, nor with aid of any other, neither by sea nor land, to withstand his attempts, but shall be forced to give place to his insatiable malice, which is most terrible to be thought of, but miserable to suffer.”

Thus did the Lord Treasurer wisely, eloquently, and well, describe the danger by which England was environed. Through the shield of Holland the spear was aimed full at the heart of England. But was it a moment to linger? Was that buckler to be suffered to fall to the ground, or to be raised only upon the arm of a doubtful and treacherous friend? Was it an hour when the protection of Protestantism and of European liberty against Spain was to be entrusted to the hand of a feeble and priest-ridden Valois? Was it wise to indulge any longer in doubtings and dreamings, and in yet a little more folding of the arms to sleep, while that insatiable malice, so terrible to be thought of, so miserable to feel, was bowing hourly more formidable, and approaching nearer and nearer?

Early in December, William Davison, gentleman-in-ordinary of her Majesty’s household, arrived at the Hague; a man painstaking, earnest, and zealous, but who was fated, on

more than one great occasion, to be made a scape-goat for the delinquencies of greater personages than himself.

Page 1189

He had audience of the States General on the 8th December. He then informed that body that the Queen had heard, with, sorrowful heart, of the great misfortunes which the United Provinces had sustained since the death of the Prince of Orange; the many cities which they had lost, and the disastrous aspect of the common cause. Moved by the affection which she had always borne the country, and anxious for its preservation, she had ordered her ambassador Stafford to request the King of France to undertake, jointly with herself, the defence of the provinces against the king of Spain. Not till very lately, however, had that envoy succeeded in obtaining an audience, and he had then received "a very cold answer." It being obvious to her Majesty, therefore, that the French government intended to protract these matters indefinitely, Davison informed the States that she had commissioned him to offer them "all possible assistance, to enquire into the state of the country, and to investigate the proper means of making that assistance most useful." He accordingly requested the appointment of a committee to confer with him upon the subject; and declared that the Queen did not desire to make herself mistress of the Provinces, but only to be informed how she best could aid their cause.

A committee was accordingly appointed, and a long series of somewhat concealed negotiations was commenced. As the deputies were upon the eve of their departure for France, to offer the sovereignty of the Provinces to Henry, these proceedings were necessarily confused, dilatory, and at tines contradictory.

After the arrival of the deputies in France, the cunctative policy inspired by the Lord Treasurer was continued by England. The delusion of a joint protectorate was still clung to by the Queen, although the conduct of France was becoming very ambiguous, and suspicion growing darker as to the ultimate and secret purport of the negotiations in progress.

The anxiety and jealousy of Elizabeth were becoming keener than ever. If the offers to the King were unlimited; he would accept them, and would thus become as dangerous as Philip. If they were unsatisfactory, he would turn his back upon the Provinces, and leave them a prey to Philip. Still she would not yet renounce the hope of bringing the French King over to an ingenuous course of action. It was thought, too, that something might be done with the great malcontent nobles of Flanders, whose defection from the national cause had been so disastrous, but who had been much influenced in their course, it was thought, by their jealousy of William the Silent.

Now that the Prince was dead, it was thought probable that the Arschots, and Havres, Chimays, and Lalaings, might arouse themselves to more patriotic views than they had manifested when they espoused the cause of Spain.

Page 1190

It would be desirable to excite their jealousy of French influence, and, at the same time, to inspire throughout the popular mind the fear of another tyranny almost as absolute as that of Spain. “And if it be objected,” said Burghley, “that except they shall admit the French King to the absolute dominion, he will not aid them, and they, for lack of succour, be forced to yield to the Spaniard, it may be answered that rather than they should be wholly subjected to the French, or overcome by the Spaniard, her Majesty would yield unto them as much as, with preservation of her estate, and defence of her own country, might be demanded.”

The real object kept in view by the Queen’s government was, in short, to obtain for the Provinces and for the general cause of liberty the greatest possible amount of assistance from Henry, and to allow him to acquire in return the least possible amount of power. The end proposed was a reasonable one, but the means employed savoured too much of intrigue.

“It may be easily made probable to the States,” said the Lord Treasurer, “that the government of the French is likely to prove as cumbersome and perilous as that of the Spaniards; and likewise it may probably be doubted how the French will keep touch and covenants with them, when any opportunity shall be offered to break them; so that her Majesty thinketh no good can be looked for to those countries by yielding this large authority to the French. If they shall continue their title by this grant to be absolute lords, there is no end, for a long time, to be expected of this war; and, contrariwise, if they break off, there is an end of any good composition with the King of Spain.”

Shivering and shrinking, but still wading in deeper and deeper, inch by inch, the cautious minister was fast finding himself too far advanced to retreat. He was rarely decided, however, and never lucid; and least of all in emergencies, when decision and lucidity would have been more valuable than any other qualities.

Deeply doubting, painfully balancing, he at times drove the unfortunate Davison almost distraught. Puzzled himself and still more puzzling to others, he rarely permitted the Netherlanders, or even his own agents, to perceive his drift. It was fair enough, perhaps, to circumvent the French government by its own arts, but the Netherlanders meanwhile were in danger of sinking into despair.

“Thus,” wrote the Lord Treasurer to the envoy, “I have discoursed to you of these uncertainties and difficulties, things not unknown to yourself, but now being imparted to you by her Majesty’s commandment, you are, by your wisdom, to consider with whom to deal for the stay of this French course, and yet, so to use it (as near as you may) that they of the French faction there be not able to charge you therewith, by-advertising into France. For it hath already appeared, by some speeches past between our ambassador there and Des Pruneaux, that you are had in some jealousy as a hinderer of this French course, and at work for her Majesty to have some entrance and partage

in that country. Nevertheless our ambassador; by his answer, hath satisfied them to think the contrary."

Page 1191

They must have been easily satisfied, if they knew as much of the dealings of her Majesty's government as the reader already knows. To inspire doubt of the French, to insinuate the probability of their not "keeping touch and covenant," to represent their rule as "cumbersome and perilous," was wholesome conduct enough towards the Netherlanders—and still more so, had it been accompanied with frank offers of assistance—but it was certainly somewhat to "hinder the courses of the French."

But in truth all parties were engaged for a season in a round game of deception, in which nobody was deceived.

Walsingham was impatient, almost indignant at this puerility. "Your doings, no doubt of it," he wrote to Davison, "are observed by the French faction, and therefore you cannot proceed so closely but it will be espied. Howsoever it be, seeing direction groweth from hence, we cannot but blame ourselves, if the effects thereof do not fall out to our liking."

That sagacious statesman was too well informed, and too much accustomed to penetrate the designs of his antagonists, to expect anything from the present intrigues.

To loiter thus, when mortal blows should be struck, was to give the Spanish government exactly that of which it was always most gluttonous—time; and the Netherlanders had none of it to spare. "With time and myself, there are two of us," was Philip *ii*.'s favourite observation; and the Prince of Parma was at this moment sorely perplexed by the parsimony and the hesitations of his own government, by which his large, swift and most creative genius was so often hampered.

Thus the Spanish soldiers, deep in the trenches, went with bare legs and empty stomachs in January; and the Dutchmen, among their broken dykes, were up to their ears in mud and water; and German mercenaries, in the obedient Provinces, were burning the peasants' houses in order to sell the iron to buy food withal; while grave-visaged statesmen, in comfortable cabinets, wagged their long white beards at each other from a distance, and exchanged grimaces and protocols which nobody heeded.

Walsingham was weary of this solemn trifling. "I conclude," said he to Davison, "that her Majesty—with reverence be it spoken—is ill advised, to direct you in a course that is like to work so great peril. I know you will do your best endeavour to keep all things upright, and yet it is hard—the disease being now come to this state, or, as the physicians term it, crisis—to carry yourself in such sort, but that it will, I fear, breed a dangerous alteration in the cause."

Page 1192

He denounced with impatience, almost with indignation, the insincerity and injustice of these intolerable hesitations. “Sorry am I,” said he, “to see the course that is taken in this weighty cause, for we will neither help those poor countries ourselves, nor yet suffer others to do it. I am not ignorant that in time to come the annexing of these countries to the crown of France may prove prejudicial to England, but if France refuse to deal with them, and the rather for that we shall minister some cause of impediment by a kind of dealing underhand, then shall they be forced to return into the hands of Spain, which is like to breed such a present peril towards her Majesty’s self, as never a wise man that seeth it, and loveth her, but lamenteth it from the bottom of his heart.”

Walsingham had made up his mind that it was England, not France, that should take up the cause of the Provinces, and defend them at every hazard. He had been overruled, and the Queen’s government had decided to watch the course of the French negotiation, doing what it could, underhand, to prevent that negotiation from being successful. The Secretary did not approve of this disingenuous course. At the same time he had no faith in the good intentions of the French court.

“I could wish,” said he, “that the French King were carried with that honourable mind into the defence of these countries that her Majesty is, but France has not been used to do things for God’s sake; neither do they mean to use our advice or assistance in making of the bargain. For they still hold a jealous conceit that when Spain and they are together by the ears, we will seek underhand to work our own peace.” Walsingham, therefore, earnestly deprecated the attitude provisionally maintained by England.

Meantime, early in January, (Jan. 3, 1585) the deputation from the Provinces had arrived in France. The progress of their 1585 negotiation will soon be related, but, before its result was known, a general dissatisfaction had already manifested itself in the Netherlands. The factitious enthusiasm which had been created in favour of France, as well as the prejudice against England, began to die out. It became probable in the opinion of those most accustomed to read the signs of the times, that the French court was acting in connivance with Philip, and that the negotiation was only intended to amuse the Netherlanders, to circumvent the English, and to gain time both for France and Spain. It was not believed that the character of Henry or the policy of his mother was likely to the cause of any substantial aid to the cause of civil liberty or Protestant principles.

Page 1193

“They look for no better fruit from the commission to France,” wrote Davison, who surveyed the general state of affairs with much keenness and breadth of vision, “than a dallying entertainment of the time, neither leaving them utterly hopeless, nor at full liberty to seek for relief elsewhere, especially in England, or else some pleasing motion of peace, wherein the French King will offer his mediation with Spain. Meantime the people, wearied with the troubles, charges, and hazard of the war, shall be rocked asleep, the provision for their defence neglected, some Provinces nearest the danger seduced, the rest by their defection astonished, and the enemy by their decay and confusions, strengthened. This is the scope whereto the doings of the French King, not without intelligence with the Spanish sovereign, doth aim, whatever is pretended.”

There was a wide conviction that the French King was dealing falsely with the Provinces. It seemed certain that he must be inspired by intense jealousy of England, and that he was unlikely, for the sake of those whose “religion, popular liberty, and rebellion against their sovereign,” he could not but disapprove, to allow Queen Elizabeth to steal a march upon him, and “make her own market with Spain to his cost and disadvantage.”

In short, it was suspected—whether justly or not will be presently shown—that Henry *iii*. “was seeking to blear the eyes of the world, as his brother Charles did before the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.” As the letters received from the Dutch envoys in France became less and less encouraging, and as the Queen was informed by her ambassador in Paris of the tergiversations in Paris, she became the more anxious lest the States should be driven to despair. She therefore wrote to Davison, instructing him “to nourish in them underhand some hope—as a thing proceeding from himself—that though France should reject them, yet she would not abandon them.”

He was directed to find out, by circuitous means, what towns they would offer to her as security for any advances she might be induced to make, and to ascertain the amount of monthly contributions towards the support of the war that they were still capable of furnishing. She was beginning to look with dismay at the expatriation of wealthy merchants and manufacturers going so rapidly forward, now that Ghent had fallen and Brussels and Antwerp were in such imminent peril. She feared that, while so much valuable time had been thrown away, the Provinces had become too much impoverished to do their own part in their own defence; and she was seriously alarmed at rumours which had become prevalent of a popular disposition towards treating for a peace at any price with Spain. It soon became evident that these rumours were utterly without foundation, but the other reasons for Elizabeth’s anxiety were sufficiently valid.

On the whole, the feeling in favour of England was rapidly gaining ground. In Holland especially there was general indignation against the French party. The letters of the deputies occasioned “murmur and mislike” of most persons, who noted them to contain “more ample report of ceremonies and compliments than solid argument of comfort.”

Page 1194

Sir Edward Stafford, who looked with great penetration into the heart of the mysterious proceedings at Paris, assured his government that no better result was to be looked for, “after long dalliance and entertainment, than either a flat refusal or such a masked embracing of their cause, as would rather tend to the increasing of their miseries and confusion than relief for their declining estate.” While “reposing upon a broken reed,” they were, he thought, “neglecting other means more expedient for their necessities.”

This was already the universal opinion in Holland. Men now remembered, with bitterness, the treachery of the Duke of Anjou, which they had been striving so hard to forget, but which less than two years ago had nearly proved fatal to the cause of liberty in the Provinces. A committee of the States had an interview with the Queen’s envoy at the Hague; implored her Majesty through him not to abandon their cause; expressed unlimited regret for the course which had been pursued, and avowed a determination “to pluck their heads out of the collar,” so soon as the opportunity should offer.

They stated, moreover, that they had been directed by the assembly to lay before him the instructions for the envoys to France, and the articles proposed for the acceptance of the King. The envoy knew his business better than not to have secretly provided himself with copies of these documents, which he had already laid before his own government.

He affected, however, to feel hurt that he had been thus kept in ignorance of papers which he really knew by heart. “After some pretended quarrel,” said he, “for their not acquainting me therewith sooner, I did accept them, as if. I had before neither seen nor heard of them.”

This then was the aspect of affairs in the provinces during the absence of the deputies in France. It is now necessary to shift the scene to that country.

CHAPTER IV.

Reception of the Dutch Envoys at the Louvre—Ignominious Result of the Embassy—-Secret Influences at work—Bargaining between the French and Spanish Courts—-Claims of Catharine de’ Medici upon Portugal—Letters of Henry and Catharine—Secret Proposal by France to invade England—States’ Mission to Henry of Navarre—Subsidies of Philip to Guise—Treaty of Joinville—Philip’s Share in the League denied by Parma—-Philip in reality its Chief—Manifesto of the League—Attitude of Henry *iii*. and of Navarre —The League demands a Royal Decree—Designs of France and Spain against England —Secret Interview of Mendoza and Villeroy—Complaints of English Persecution—Edict of Nemours—Excommunication of Navarre and his Reply.

The King, notwithstanding his apparent reluctance, had, in Sir Edward Stafford's language, "nibbled at the bait." He had, however, not been secured at the first attempt, and now a second effort was to be made, under what were supposed to be most

Page 1195

favourable circumstances. In accordance with his own instructions, his envoy, Des Pruneaux, had been busily employed in the States, arranging the terms of a treaty which should be entirely satisfactory. It had been laid down as an indispensable condition that Holland and Zeeland should unite in the offer of sovereignty, and, after the expenditure of much eloquence, diplomacy, and money, Holland and Zeeland had given their consent. The court had been for some time anxious and impatient for the arrival of the deputies. Early in December, Des Pruneaux wrote from Paris to Count Maurice, urging with some asperity, the necessity of immediate action.

"When I left you," he said, "I thought that performance would follow promises. I have been a little ashamed, as the time passed by, to hear nothing of the deputies, nor of any excuse on the subject. It would seem as though God had bandaged the eyes of those who have so much cause to know their own adversity."

To the States his language was still more insolent. "Excuse me, Gentlemen," he said, "if I tell you that I blush at hearing nothing from you. I shall have the shame and you the damage. I regret much the capture of De Teligny, and other losses which are occasioned by your delays and want of resolution."

Thus did the French court, which a few months before had imprisoned, and then almost ignominiously dismissed the envoys who came to offer the sovereignty of the Provinces, now rebuke the governments which had ever since been strenuously engaged in removing all obstacles to the entire fulfillment of the King's demands. The States were just despatching a solemn embassy to renew that offer, with hardly any limitation as to terms.

The envoys arrived on January 3rd, 1585, at Boulogne, after a stormy voyage from Brielle. Yet it seems incredible to relate, that, after all the ignominy heaped upon the last, there was nothing but solemn trifling in reserve for the present legation; although the object of both embassies was to offer a crown. The deputies were, however, not kept in prison, upon this occasion, nor treated like thieves or spies. They were admirably lodged, with plenty of cooks and lacqueys to minister to them; they fared sumptuously every day, at Henry's expense, and, after they had been six weeks in the kingdom, they at last succeeded in obtaining their first audience.

On the 13th February the King sent five "very splendid, richly-gilded, court-coach-waggons" to bring the envoys to the palace. At one o'clock they arrived at the Louvre, and were ushered through four magnificent antechambers into the royal cabinet. The apartments through which they passed swarmed with the foremost nobles, court-functionaries, and ladies of France, in blazing gala costume, who all greeted the envoys with demonstrations of extreme respect: The halls and corridors were lined with archers, halbardiers, Swiss guards, and grooms "besmeared with gold," and it was

thought that all this rustle of fine feathers would be somewhat startling to the barbarous republicans, fresh from the fens of Holland.

Page 1196

Henry received them in his cabinet, where he was accompanied only by the Duke of Joyeuse—his foremost and bravest “minion”—by the Count of Bouscaige, M. de Valette, and the Count of Chateau Vieux.

The most Christian King was neatly dressed, in white satin doublet and hose, and well-starched ruff, with a short cloak on his shoulders, a little velvet cap on the side of his head, his long locks duly perfumed and curled, his sword at his side, and a little basket, full of puppies, suspended from his neck by a broad ribbon. He held himself stiff and motionless, although his face smiled a good-humoured welcome to the ambassadors; and he moved neither foot, hand, nor head, as they advanced.

Chancellor Leoninus, the most experienced, eloquent, and tedious of men, now made an interminable oration, fertile in rhetoric and barren in facts; and the King made a short and benignant reply, according to the hallowed formula in such cases provided. And then there was a presentation to the Queen, and to the Queen-Mother, when Leoninus was more prolix than before, and Catharine even more affectionate than her son; and there were consultations with Chiverny and Villeroy, and Brulart and Pruneaux, and great banquets at the royal expense, and bales of protocols, and drafts of articles, and conditions and programmes and apostilles by the hundred weight, and at last articles of annexation were presented by the envoys, and Pruneaux looked at and pronounced them “too raw and imperative,” and the envoys took them home again, and dressed them and cooked them till there was no substance left in them; for whereas the envoys originally offered the crown of their country to France, on condition that no religion but the reformed religion should be tolerated there, no appointments made but by the States, and no security offered for advances to be made by the Christian King, save the hearts and oaths of his new subjects—so they now ended by proposing the sovereignty unconditionally, almost abjectly; and, after the expiration of nearly three months, even these terms were absolutely refused, and the deputies were graciously permitted to go home as they came. The annexation and sovereignty were definitely declined. Henry regretted and sighed, Catharine de’ Medici wept—for tears were ever at her command—Chancellor Chiverny and Secretary Brulart wept likewise, and Pruneaux was overcome with emotion at the parting interview of the ambassadors with the court, in which they were allowed a last opportunity for expressing what was called their gratitude.

And then, on the lath March, M. d’Oignon came to them, and presented, on the part of the King, to each of the envoys a gold chain weighing twenty-one ounces and two grains.

Des Pruneaux, too—Des Pruneaux who had spent the previous summer in the Netherlands, who had travelled from province to province, from city to city, at the King’s command, offering boundless assistance, if they would unanimously offer their sovereignty; who had vanquished by his importunity the resistance of the stern Hollanders, the last of all the Netherlanders to yield to the royal blandishments—Des

Pruneaux, who had “blushed”—Des Pruneaux who had wept—now thought proper to assume an airy tone, half encouragement, half condolence.

Page 1197

“Man proposes, gentlemen,” said he “but God disposes. We are frequently called on to observe that things have a great variety of times and terms. Many a man is refused by a woman twice, who succeeds the third time,” and so on, with which wholesome apothegms Des Pruneaux faded away then and for ever from the page of Netherland history.

In a few days afterwards the envoys took shipping at Dieppe, and arrived early in April at the Hague.

And thus terminated the negotiation of the States with France.

It had been a scene of elaborate trifling on the King’s part from beginning to end. Yet the few grains of wheat which have thus been extracted from the mountains of diplomatic chaff so long mouldering in national storehouses, contain, however dry and tasteless, still something for human nourishment. It is something to comprehend the ineffable meanness of the hands which then could hold the destiny of mighty empires. Here had been offered a magnificent prize to France; a great extent of frontier in the quarter where expansion was most desirable, a protective network of towns and fortresses on the side most vulnerable, flourishing, cities on the sea-coast where the marine traffic was most lucrative, the sovereignty of a large population, the most bustling, enterprising, and hardy in Europe—a nation destined in a few short years to become the first naval and commercial power in the world—all this was laid at the feet of Henry Valois and Catharine de’ Medici, and rejected.

The envoys, with their predecessors, had wasted eight months of most precious time; they had heard and made orations, they had read and written protocols, they had witnessed banquets, masquerades, and revels of stupendous frivolity, in honour of the English Garter, brought solemnly to the Valois by Lord Derby, accompanied by one hundred gentlemen “marvellously, sumptuously, and richly accoutred,” during that dreadful winter when the inhabitants of Brussels, Antwerp, Mechlin—to save which splendid cities and to annex them to France, was a main object of the solemn embassy from the Netherlands—were eating rats, and cats, and dogs, and the weeds from the pavements, and the grass from the churchyards; and were finding themselves more closely pressed than ever by the relentless genius of Farnese; and in exchange for all these losses and all this humiliation, the ambassadors now returned to their constituents, bringing an account of Chiverny’s magnificent banquets and long orations, of the smiles of Henry *iii*., the tears of Catharine de’ Medici, the regrets of M. des Pruneaux, besides sixteen gold chains, each weighing twenty-one ounces and two grains.

It is worth while to go for a moment behind the scene; We have seen the actors, with mask and cothurn and tinsel crown, playing their well-conned parts upon the stage. Let us hear them threaten, and whimper, and chaffer among themselves.

So soon as it was intimated that Henry *iii*. was about to grant the Netherland, envoys an audience, the wrath of ambassador Mendoza was kindled. That magniloquent Spaniard instantly claimed an interview with the King, before whom, according to the statement of his colleagues, doing their best to pry into these secrets, he blustered and bounced, and was more fantastical in his insolence than even Spanish envoy had ever been before.

Page 1198

“He went presently to court,” so Walsingham was informed by Stafford, “and dealt very passionately with the King and Queen-Mother to deny them audience, who being greatly offended with his presumptuous and malapert manner of proceeding, the King did in choler and with some sharp speeches, let him plainly understand that he was an absolute king, bound to yield account of his doings to no man, and that it was lawful for him to give access to any man within his own realm. The Queen-Mother answered him likewise very roundly, whereupon he departed for the time, very much discontented.”

Brave words, on both sides, if they had ever been spoken, or if there had been any action corresponding to their spirit.

But, in truth, from the beginning, Henry and his mother saw in the Netherland embassy only the means of turning a dishonest penny. Since the disastrous retreat of Anjou from the Provinces, the city of Cambray had remained in the hands of the Seigneur de Balagny, placed there by the duke. The citadel, garrisoned by French troops, it was not the intention of Catharine de’ Medici to restore to Philip, and a truce on the subject had been arranged provisionally for a year. Philip, taking Parma’s advice to prevent the French court, if possible, from “fomenting the Netherland rebellion,” had authorized the Prince to conclude that truce, as if done on his own responsibility, and not by royal order. Meantime, Balagny was gradually swelling into a petty potentate, on his own account, making himself very troublesome to the Prince of Parma, and requiring a great deal of watching. Cambray was however apparently acquired for France.

But, besides this acquisition, there was another way of earning something solid, by turning this Netherland matter handsomely to account. Philip *ii*. had recently conquered Portugal. Among the many pretensions to that crown, those of Catherine de’ Medici had been put forward, but had been little heeded. The claim went back more than three hundred years, and to establish its validity would have been to convert the peaceable possession of a long line of sovereigns into usurpation. To ascend to Alphonso *iii*. was like fetching, as it was said, a claim from Evander’s grandmother. Nevertheless, ever since Philip had been upon the Portuguese throne, Catherine had been watching the opportunity, not of unseating that sovereign, but of converting her claim into money.

The Netherland embassy seemed to offer the coveted opportunity. There was, therefore, quite as much warmth at the outset, on the part of Mendoza, in that first interview after the arrival of the deputies, as had been represented. There was however less dignity and more cunning on the part of Henry and Catherine than was at all suspected. Even before that conference the King had been impatiently expecting overtures from the Spanish envoy, and had been disappointed. “He told me,” said Henry, “that he would make proposals so soon as Tassis should be

Page 1199

gone, but he has done nothing yet. He said to Gondi that all he meant was to get the truce of Cambray accomplished. I hope, however, that my brother, the King of Spain, will do what is right in regard to madam my mother's pretensions. 'Tis likely that he will be now incited thereto, seeing that the deputies of all the Netherland provinces are at present in my kingdom, to offer me carte blanche. I shall hear what they have to say, and do exactly what the good of my own affairs shall seem to require. The Queen of England, too, has been very pressing and urgent with me for several months on this subject. I shall hear, too, what she has to say, and I presume, if the King of Spain will now disclose himself, and do promptly what he ought, that we may set Christendom at rest."

Henry then instructed his ambassador in Spain to keep his eyes wide open, in order to penetrate the schemes of Philip, and to this end ordered him an increase of salary by a third, that he might follow that monarch on his journey to Arragon.

Meanwhile Mendoza had audience of his Majesty. "He made a very pressing remonstrance," said the King, "concerning the arrival of these deputies, urging me to send them back at once; denouncing them as disobedient rebels and heretics. I replied that my kingdom was free, and that I should hear from them all that they had to say, because I could not abandon madam my mother in her pretensions, not only for the filial obedience which I owe her, but because I am her only heir. Mendoza replied that he should go and make the same remonstrance to the Queen-Mother, which he accordingly did, and she will herself write you what passed between them. If they do not act up to their duty down there I know how to take my revenge upon them."

This is the King's own statement—his veriest words—and he was surely best aware of what occurred between himself and Mendoza, under their four eyes only. The ambassador is not represented as extremely insolent, but only pressing; and certainly there is little left of the fine periods on Henry's part about listening to the cry of the oppressed, or preventing the rays of his ancestors' diadem from growing pale, with which contemporary chronicles are filled.

There was not one word of the advancement and glory of the French nation; not a hint of the fame to be acquired by a magnificent expansion of territory, still less of the duty to deal generously or even honestly with an oppressed people, who in good faith were seeking an asylum in exchange for offered sovereignty, not a syllable upon liberty of conscience, of religious or civil rights; nothing but a petty and exclusive care for the interests of his mother's pocket, and of his own as his mother's heir. This farthing-candle was alone to guide the steps of "the high and mighty King," whose reputation was perpetually represented as so precious to him in all the conferences between his ministers and the Netherland deputies. Was it possible for those envoys to imagine the almost invisible meanness of such childish tricks?

Page 1200

The Queen-Mother was still more explicit and unblushing throughout the whole affair.

“The ambassador of Spain,” she said, “has made the most beautiful remonstrances he could think of about these deputies from the Netherlands. All his talk, however, cannot persuade me to anything else save to increase my desire to have reparation for the wrong that has been done me in regard to my claims upon Portugal, which I am determined to pursue by every means within my power. Nevertheless I have told Don Bernardino that I should always be ready to embrace any course likely to bring about a peaceful conclusion. He then entered into a discussion of my rights, which, he said, were not thought in Spain to be founded in justice. But when I explained to him the principal points (of which I possess all the pieces of evidence and justification), he hardly knew what to say, save that he was astounded that I had remained so long without speaking of my claims. In reply, I told him ingenuously the truth.”

The truth which the ingenuous Catharine thus revealed was, in brief, that all her predecessors had been minors, women, and persons in situations not to make their rights valid. Finding herself more highly placed, she had advanced her claims, which had been so fully recognized in Portugal, that she had been received as Infanta of the kingdom. All pretensions to the throne being now through women only, hers were the best of any. At all this Don Bernardino expressed profound astonishment, and promised to send a full account to his master of “the infinite words” which had passed between them at this interview!

“I desire,” said Catharine, “that the Lord King of Spain should open his mind frankly and promptly upon the recompense which he is willing to make me for Portugal, in order that things may pass rather with gentleness than otherwise.”

It was expecting a great deal to look for frankness and promptness from the Lord King of Spain, but the Queen-Mother considered that the Netherland envoys had put a whip into her hand. She was also determined to bring Philip up to the point, without showing her own game. “I will never say,” said Catharine—ingenuous no longer—“I will never say how much I ask, but, on the contrary, I shall wait for him to make the offer. I expect it to be reasonable, because he has seen fit to seize and occupy that which I declare to be my property.”

This is the explanation of all the languor and trifling of the French court in the Netherland negotiation. A deep, constant, unseen current was running counter to all the movement which appeared upon the surface. The tergiversations of the Spanish cabinet in the Portugal matter were the cause of the shufflings of the French ministers on the subject of the Provinces.

“I know well,” said Henry a few days later, “that the people down there, and their ambassador here, are leading us on with words, as far as they can, with regard to the recompense of madam my mother for her claims upon Portugal. But they had better

remember (and I think they will), that out of the offers which these sixteen deputies of the Netherlands are bringing me—and I believe it to be carte blanche—I shall be able to pay myself. 'Twill be better to come promptly to a good bargain and a brief conclusion, than to spin the matter out longer."

Page 1201

“Don Bernardino,” said the Queen-Mother on the same day, “has been keeping us up to this hour in hopes of a good offer, but ’tis to be feared, for the good of Christendom, that ’twill be too late. The deputies are come, bringing carte blanche. Nevertheless, if the King of Spain is willing to be reasonable, and that instantly, it will be well, and it would seem as if God had been pleased to place this means in our hands.”

After the conferences had been fairly got under way between the French government and the envoys, the demands upon Philip for a good bargain and a handsome offer became still more pressing.

“I have given audience to the deputies from the Provinces,” wrote Henry, “and the Queen-Mother has done the same. Chancellor Chiverny, Villequier, Bellievre, and Brulart, will now confer with them from day today. I now tell you that it will be well, before things go any farther, for the King of Spain to come to reason about the pretensions of madam mother. This will be a means of establishing the repose of Christendom. I shall be very willing to concur in such an arrangement, if I saw any approximation to it on the part of the King or his ministers. But I fear they will delay too long, and so you had better tell them. Push them to the point as much as possible, without letting them suspect that I have been writing about it, for that would make them rather draw back than come forward.”

At the same time, during this alternate threatening and coaxing between the French and the Spanish court, and in the midst of all the solemn and tedious protocolling of the ministry and the Dutch envoys, there was a most sincere and affectionate intercourse maintained between Henry *iii*. and the Prince of Parma. The Spanish Governor-General was assured that nothing but the warmest regard was entertained for him and his master on the part of the French court. Parma had replied, however, that so many French troops had in times past crossed the frontier to assist the rebels, that he hardly knew what to think. He expressed the hope, now that the Duke of Anjou was dead, that his Christian Majesty would not countenance the rebellion, but manifest his good-will.

“How can your Highness doubt it,” said Malpierre, Henry’s envoy, “for his Majesty has given proof enough of his good will, having prevented all enterprises in this regard, and preferred to have his own subjects cut into pieces rather than that they should carry out their designs. Had his Majesty been willing merely to connive at these undertakings, ’tis probable that the affairs of your highness would not have succeeded so well as they have done.”

Page 1202

With regard to England, also, the conduct of Henry and his mother in these negotiations was marked by the same unfathomable duplicity. There was an appearance of cordiality on the surface; but there was deep plotting, and bargaining, and even deadly hostility lurking below. We have seen the efforts which Elizabeth's government had been making to counteract the policy which offered the sovereignty of the provinces to the French monarch. At the same time there was at least a loyal disposition upon the Queen's part to assist the Netherlands, in concurrence with Henry. The demeanour of Burghley and his colleagues was frankness itself, compared with the secret schemings of the Valois; for at least peace and good-will between the "triumvirate" of France, England and the Netherlands, was intended, as the true means of resisting the predominant influence of Spain.

Yet very soon after the solemn reception by Henry of the garter brought by Lord Derby, and in the midst of the negotiations between the French court and the United Provinces, the French king was not only attempting to barter the sovereignty offered him by the Netherlanders against a handsome recompense for the Portugal claim, but he was actually proposing to the King of Spain to join with him in an invasion of England! Even Philip himself must have admired and respected such a complication of villany on the part of his most Christian brother. He was, however, not disposed to put any confidence in his schemes.

"With regard to the attempt against England," wrote Philip to Mendoza, "you must keep your eyes open—you must look at the danger of letting them, before they have got rid of their rivals and reduced their heretics, go out of their own house and kingdom, and thus of being made fools of when they think of coming back again. Let them first exterminate the heretics of France, and then we will look after those of England; because 'tis more important to finish those who are near than those afar off. Perhaps the Queen-Mother proposes this invasion in order to proceed more feebly with matters in her own kingdom; and thus Mucio (Duke of Guise) and his friends will not have so safe a game, and must take heed lest they be deceived."

Thus it is obvious that Henry and Catharine intended, on the whole, to deceive the English and the Netherlanders, and to get as good a bargain and as safe a friendship from Philip as could be manufactured out of the materials placed in the French King's hands by the United Provinces. Elizabeth honestly wished well to the States, but allowed Burghley and those who acted with him to flatter themselves with the chimera that Henry could be induced to protect the Netherlands without assuming the sovereignty of that commonwealth. The Provinces were fighting for their existence, unconscious of their latent strength, and willing to trust to France or to England, if they could only save themselves from being swallowed by Spain. As for Spain itself, that country was more practised in duplicity even than the government of the Medici-Valois, and was of course more than a match at the game of deception for the franker politicians of England and Holland.

Page 1203

The King of Navarre had meanwhile been looking on at a distance. Too keen an observer, too subtle a reasoner to doubt the secret source of the movements then agitating France to its centre, he was yet unable to foresee the turn that all these intrigues were about to take. He could hardly doubt that Spain was playing a dark and desperate game with the unfortunate Henry *iii*.; for, as we have seen, he had himself not long before received a secret and liberal offer from Philip *ii*., if he would agree to make war upon the King. But the Bearnese was not the man to play into the hands of Spain, nor could he imagine the possibility of the Valois or even of his mother taking so suicidal a course.

After the Netherland deputies had received their final dismissal from the King, they sent Calvart, who had been secretary to their embassy, on a secret mission to Henry of Navarre, then resident at Chartres.

The envoy communicated to the Huguenot chief the meagre result of the long negotiation with the French court. Henry bade him be of good cheer, and assured him of his best wishes for their cause. He expressed the opinion that the King of France would now either attempt to overcome the Guise faction by gentle means, or at once make war upon them. The Bishop of Acqs had strongly recommended the French monarch to send the King of Navarre, with a strong force, to the assistance of the Netherlands, urging the point with much fervid eloquence and solid argument. Henry for a moment had seemed impressed, but such a vigorous proceeding was of course entirely beyond his strength, and he had sunk back into his effeminate languor so soon as the bold bishop's back was turned.

The Bearnese had naturally conceived but little hope that such a scheme would be carried into effect; but he assured Calvart, that nothing could give him greater delight than to mount and ride in such a cause.

"Notwithstanding," said the Bearnese, "that the villanous intentions of the Guises are becoming plainer and plainer, and that they are obviously supplied with Spanish dollars, I shall send a special envoy to the most Christian King, and, although 'tis somewhat late, implore him to throw his weight into the scale, in order to redeem your country from its misery. Meantime be of good heart, and defend as you have done your hearths, your liberty, and the honour of God."

He advised the States unhesitatingly to continue their confidence in the French King, and to keep him informed of their plans and movements; expressing the opinion that these very intrigues of the Guise party would soon justify or even force Henry *iii*. openly to assist the Netherlands.

So far, at that very moment, was so sharp a politician as the Bearnese from suspecting the secret schemes of Henry of Valois. Calvart urged the King of Navarre to assist the States at that moment with some slight subsidy. Antwerp was in such imminent danger

as to fill the hearts of all true patriots with dismay; and a timely succour, even if a slender one, might be of inestimable value.

Page 1204

Henry expressed profound regret that his own means were so limited, and his own position so dangerous, as to make it difficult for him to manifest in broad daylight the full affection which he bore the Provinces.

“To my sorrow,” said he, “your proposition is made in the midst of such dark and stormy weather, that those who have clearest sight are unable to see to what issue these troubles of France are tending.”

Nevertheless, with much generosity and manliness, he promised Calvart to send two thousand soldiers, at his own charges, to the Provinces without delay; and authorised that envoy to consult with his agent at the court of the French King, in order to obtain the royal permission for the troops to cross the frontier.

The crownless and almost houseless King had thus, at a single interview, and in exchange for nothing but good wishes, granted what the most Christian monarch of France had refused, after months of negotiation, and with sovereignty as the purchase-money. The envoy, well pleased, sped as swiftly as possible to Paris; but, as may easily be imagined, Henry of Valois forbade the movement contemplated by Henry of Navarre.

“His Majesty,” said Villeroy, secretary of state, “sees no occasion, in so weighty a business, thus suddenly to change his mind; the less so, because he hopes to be able ere long to smooth over these troubles which have begun in France. Should the King either openly or secretly assist the Netherlands or allow them to be assisted, ’twould be a reason for all the Catholics now sustaining his Majesty’s party to go over to the Guise faction. The Provinces must remain firm, and make no pacification with the enemy. Meantime the Queen of England is the only one to whom God has given means to afford you succour. One of these days, when the proper time comes, his Majesty will assist her in affording you relief.”

Calvart, after this conference with the King of Navarre, and subsequently with the government, entertained a lingering hope that the French King meant to assist the Provinces. “I know well who is the author of these troubles,” said the unhappy monarch, who never once mentioned the name of Guise in all those conferences, “but, if God grant me life, I will give him as good as he sends, and make him rue his conduct.”

They were not aware after how many strange vacillations Henry was one day to wreak this threatened vengeance. As for Navarre, he remained upon the watch, good humoured as ever, more merry and hopeful as the tempest grew blacker; manifesting the most frank and friendly sentiments towards the Provinces, and writing to Queen Elizabeth in the chivalrous style so dear to the heart of that sovereign, that he desired nothing better than to be her “servant and captain-general against the common enemy.”

Page 1205

But, indeed, the French King was not so well informed as he imagined himself to be of the authorship of these troubles. Mucio, upon whose head he thus threatened vengeance, was but the instrument. The concealed hand that was directing all these odious intrigues, and lighting these flames of civil war which were so long to make France a scene of desolation, was that of the industrious letter-writer in the Escorial. That which Henry of Navarre shrewdly suspected, when he talked of the Spanish dollars in the Balafre's pocket, that which was dimly visible to the Bishop of Acqs when he told Henry *iii*. that the "Tagus had emptied itself into the Seine and Loire, and that the gold of Mexico was flowing into the royal cabinet," was much more certain than they supposed.

Philip, in truth, was neglecting his own most pressing interests that he might direct all his energies towards entertaining civil war in France. That France should remain internally at peace was contrary to all his plans. He had therefore long kept Guise and his brother, the Cardinal de Lorraine, in his pay, and he had been spending large sums of money to bribe many of the most considerable functionaries in the kingdom.

The most important enterprises in the Netherlands were allowed to languish, that these subterranean operations of the "prudent" monarch of Spain should be pushed forward. The most brilliant and original genius that Philip had the good fortune to have at his disposal, the genius of Alexander Farnese, was cramped and irritated almost to madness, by the fetters imposed upon it, by the sluggish yet obstinate nature of him it was bound to obey. Farnese was at that moment engaged in a most arduous military undertaking, that famous siege of Antwerp, the details of which will be related in future chapters, yet he was never furnished with men or money enough to ensure success to a much more ordinary operation. His complaints, subdued but intense, fell almost unheeded on his master's ear. He had not "ten dollars at his command," his cavalry horses were all dead of hunger or had been eaten by their riders, who were starving to death themselves, his army had dwindled to a "handful," yet he still held on to his purpose, in spite of famine, the desperate efforts of indefatigable enemies, and all the perils and privations of a deadly winter. He, too, was kept for a long time in profound ignorance of Philip's designs.

Meantime, while the Spanish soldiers were starving in Flanders, Philip's dollars were employed by Mucio and his adherents in enlisting troops in Switzerland and Germany, in order to carry on the civil war in France. The French king was held systematically up to ridicule or detestation in every village-pulpit in his own kingdom, while the sister of Mucio, the Duchess of Montpensier, carried the scissors at her girdle, with which she threatened to provide Henry with a third crown, in addition to those of France and Poland, which he had disgraced—the coronal tonsure of a monk. The convent should be, it was intimated, the eventual fate of the modern Childeric, but meantime it was more important than ever to supersede the ultimate pretensions of Henry of Navarre. To prevent that heretic of heretics, who was not to be bought with Spanish gold, from ever reigning, was the first object of Philip and Mucio.

Page 1206

Accordingly, on the last day of the year 1584, a secret treaty had been signed at Joinville between Henry of Guise and his brother the Duc de Mayenne, holding the proxies of their brother the Cardinal and those of their uncles, Aumale and Elbeuf, on the one part, and John Baptist Tassis and Commander Moreo, on the other, as representatives of Philip. This transaction, sufficiently well known now to the most superficial student of history, was a profound mystery then, so far as regarded the action of the Spanish king. It was not a secret, however, that the papistical party did not intend that the Bearnese prince should ever come to the throne, and the matter of the succession was discussed, precisely as if the throne had been vacant.

It was decided that Charles, paternal uncle to Henry of Navarre, commonly called the Cardinal Bourbon, should be considered successor to the crown, in place of Henry, whose claim was forfeited by heresy. Moreover, a great deal of superfluous money and learning was expended in ordering some elaborate legal arguments to be prepared by venal jurisconsults, proving not only that the uncle ought to succeed before the nephew, but that neither the one nor the other had any claim to succeed at all. The pea having thus been employed to do the work which the sword alone could accomplish, the poor old Cardinal was now formally established by the Guise faction as presumptive heir to the crown.

A man of straw, a superannuated court-dangler, a credulous trifler, but an earnest Papist as his brother Antony had been, sixty-six years old, and feeble beyond his years, who, his life long, had never achieved one manly action, and had now one foot in the grave; this was the puppet placed in the saddle to run a tilt against the Bearnese, the man with foot ever in the stirrup, with sword rarely in its sheath.

The contracting parties at Joinville agreed that the Cardinal should succeed on the death of the reigning king, and that no heretic should ever ascend the throne, or hold the meanest office in the kingdom. They agreed further that all heretics should be “exterminated” without distinction throughout France and the Netherlands. In order to procure the necessary reforms among the clergy, the council of Trent was to be fully carried into effect. Philip pledged himself to furnish at least fifty thousand crowns monthly, for the advancement of this Holy League, as it was denominated, and as much more as should prove necessary. The sums advanced were to be repaid by the Cardinal on his succeeding to the throne. All the great officers of the crown, lords and gentlemen, cities, chapters, and universities, all Catholics, in short, in the kingdom, were deemed to be included in the league. If any foreign Catholic prince desired to enter the union, he should be admitted with the consent of both parties. Neither his Catholic majesty nor the confederated princes should treat with the most Christian King, either directly or indirectly. The compact was to remain strictly secret—one copy of it being sent to Philip, while the other was to be retained by Cardinal Bourbon and his fellow leaguers.

Page 1207

And now—in accordance with this program—Philip proceeded stealthily and industriously to further the schemes of Mucio, to the exclusion of more urgent business. Noiseless and secret himself, and delighting in clothing so much as to glide, as it were, throughout Europe, wrapped in the mantle of invisibility, he was perpetually provoked by the noise, the bombast, and the bustle, which his less prudent confederates permitted themselves. While Philip for a long time hesitated to confide the secret of the League to Parma, whom it most imported to understand these schemes of his master, the confederates were openly boasting of the assistance which they were to derive from Parma's cooperation. Even when the Prince had at last been informed as to the state of affairs, he stoutly denied the facts of which the leaguers made their vaunt; thus giving to Mucio and his friends a lesson in dissimulation."

"Things have now arrived at a point," wrote Philip to Tassis, 15th March, 1585, "that this matter of the League cannot and ought not to be concealed from those who have a right to know it. Therefore you must speak clearly to the Prince of Parma, informing him of the whole scheme, and enjoining the utmost secrecy. You must concert with him as to the best means of rendering aid to this cause, after having apprised him of the points which regarded him, and also that of the security of Cardinal de Bourbon, in case of necessity."

The Prince was anything but pleased, in the midst of his anxiety and his almost superhuman labour in the Antwerp siege, to be distracted, impoverished, and weakened, in order to carry out these schemes against France; but he kept the secret manfully.

To Malpierre, the French envoy in Brussels—for there was the closest diplomatic communication between Henry *iii*. and Philip, while each was tampering with the rebellious subjects of the other—to Malpierre Parma flatly contradicted all complicity on the part of the Spanish King or himself with the Holy League, of which he knew Philip to be the originator and the chief.

"If I complain to the Prince of Parma," said the envoy, "of the companies going from Flanders to assist the League, he will make me no other reply than that which the President has done—that there is nothing at all in it—until they are fairly arrived in France. The President (Richardot) said that if the Catholic King belonged to the League, as they insinuate, his Majesty would declare the fact openly."

And a few days later, the Prince himself averred, as Malpierre had anticipated, that "as to any intention on the part of himself or his Catholic Majesty, to send succour to the League, according to the boast of these gentlemen, he had never thought of such a thing, nor had received any order on the subject from his master. If the King intended to do anything of the kind, he would do it openly. He protested that he had never seen anything, or known anything of the League."

Page 1208

Here was a man who knew how to keep a secret, and who had no scruples in the matter of dissimulation, however enraged he might be at seeing men and money diverted from his own masterly combinations in order to carry out these schemes of his master.

Mucio, on the contrary, was imprudent and inclined to boast. His contempt for Henry *iii*, made him blind to the dangers to be apprehended from Henry of Navarre. He did little, but talked a great deal.

Philip was very anxious that the work should be done both secretly and thoroughly. "Let the business be finished before Saint John's day," said he to Tassis, when sending fifty thousand dollars for the use of the brothers Guise. "Tell Iniquez to warn them not to be sluggish. Let them not begin in a lukewarm manner, but promise them plenty of assistance from me, if they conduct themselves properly. Let them beware of wavering, or of falling into plans of conciliation. If they do their duty, I will do mine."

But the Guise faction moved slowly despite of Philip's secret promptings. The truth is, that the means proposed by the Spanish monarch were ludicrously inadequate to his plans, and it was idle to suppose that the world was to be turned upside down for his benefit, at the very low price which he was prepared to pay.

Nothing less than to exterminate all the heretics in Christendom, to place himself on the thrones of France and of England, and to extinguish the last spark of rebellion in the Netherlands, was his secret thought, and yet it was very difficult to get fifty thousand dollars from him from month to month. Procrastinating and indolent himself, he was for ever rebuking the torpid movements of the Guises.

"Let Mucio set his game well at the outset," said he; "let him lay the axe to the root of the tree, for to be wasting time fruitlessly is sharpening the knife for himself."

This was almost prophetic. When after so much talking and tampering, there began to be recrimination among the leaguers, Philip was very angry with his subordinate.

"Here is Mucio," said he, "trying to throw the blame of all the difficulties, which have arisen, upon us. Not hastening, not keeping his secret, letting the execution of the enterprise grow cold, and lending an ear to suggestions about peace, without being sure of its conclusion, he has turned his followers into cowards, discredited his cause, and given the King of France opportunity to strengthen his force and improve his party. These are all very palpable things. I am willing to continue my friendship for them, but not, if, while they accept it, they permit themselves to complain, instead of manifesting gratitude."

On the whole, however, the affairs of the League seemed prosperous. There was doubtless too much display among the confederates, but there was a growing

uneasiness among the royalists. Cardinal Bourbon, discarding his ecclesiastical robes and scarlet stockings, paraded himself daily in public, clothed in military costume, with all the airs of royalty. Many persons thought him mad. On the other hand, Epergnon, the haughty minion-in-chief, who governed Henry *iii*., and insulted all the world, was becoming almost polite.

Page 1209

“The progress of the League,” said Busbecq, “is teaching the Duc d’ Epergnon manners. ’Tis a youth of such insolence, that without uncovering he would talk with men of royal descent, while they were bareheaded. ’Tis a common jest now that he has found out where his hat is.”

Thus, for a long time, a network of secret political combinations had been stretching itself over Christendom. There were great movements of troops throughout Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, slowly concentrating themselves upon France; yet, on the whole, the great mass of the populations, the men and women who were to pay, to fight, to starve, to be trampled upon, to be outraged, to be plundered, to be burned out of houses and home, to bleed, and to die, were merely ignorant, gaping spectators. That there was something very grave in prospect was obvious, but exactly what was impending they knew no more than the generation yet unborn. Very noiselessly had the patient manager who sat in the Escorial been making preparations for that European tragedy in which most of the actors had such fatal parts assigned them, and of which few of the spectators of its opening scenes were doomed to witness the conclusion. A shifting and glancing of lights, a vision of vanishing feet, a trampling and bustling of unseen crowds, movements of concealed machinery, a few incoherent words, much noise and confusion vague and incomprehensible, till at last the tinkling of a small bell, and a glimpse of the modest manager stealing away as the curtain was rising—such was the spectacle presented at Midsummer 1585,

And in truth the opening picture was effective. Sixteen black-robed, long-bearded Netherland envoys stalking away, discomfited and indignant upon one side; Catharine de’ Medici on the other, regarding them with a sneer, painfully contorted into a pathetic smile; Henry the King, robed in a sack of penitence, trembling and hesitating, leaning on the arm of Epergnon, but quailing even under the protection of that mighty swordsman; Mucio, careering, truncheon in hand, in full panoply, upon his war-horse, waving forward a mingled mass of German lanzknechts, Swiss musketeers, and Lorraine pikemen; the redoubtable Don Bernardino de Mendoza, in front, frowning and ferocious, with his drawn sword in his hand; Elizabeth of England, in the back ground, with the white-bearded Burghley and the monastic Walsingham, all surveying the scene with eyes of deepest meaning; and, somewhat aside, but in full view, silent, calm, and imperturbably good-humoured, the bold Bearnese, standing with a mischievous but prophetic smile glittering through his blue eyes and curly beard—thus grouped were the personages of the drama in the introductory scenes.

The course of public events which succeeded the departure of the Netherland deputies is sufficiently well known. The secret negotiations and intrigues, however, by which those external facts were preceded or accompanied rest mainly in dusty archives, and it was therefore necessary to dwell somewhat at length upon them in the preceding pages.

Page 1210

The treaty of Joinville was signed on the last day of the year 1584.

We have seen the real nature of the interview of Ambassador Mendoza with Henry *iii*. and his mother, which took place early in January, 1585. Immediately after that conference, Don Bernardino betook himself to the Duke of Guise, and lost no time in stimulating his confederate to prompt but secret action.

The Netherland envoys had their last audience on the 18th March, and their departure and disappointment was the signal for the general exhibition and explosion. The great civil war began, and the man who refused to annex the Netherlands to the French kingdom soon ceased to be regarded as a king.

On the 31st March, the heir presumptive, just manufactured by the Guises, sent forth his manifesto. Cardinal Bourbon, by this document, declared that for twenty-four years past no proper measures had been taken to extirpate the heresy by which France was infested. There was no natural heir to the King. Those who claimed to succeed at his death had deprived themselves, by heresy, of their rights. Should they gain their ends, the ancient religion would be abolished throughout the kingdom, as it had been in England, and Catholics be subjected to the same frightful tortures which they were experiencing there. New men, admitted to the confidence of the crown, clothed with the highest honours, and laden with enormous emoluments, had excluded the ancient and honoured functionaries of the state, who had been obliged to sell out their offices to these upstart successors. These new favourites had seized the finances of the kingdom, all of which were now collected into the private coffers of the King, and shared by him with his courtiers. The people were groaning under new taxes invented every day, yet they knew nothing of the distribution of the public treasure, while the King himself was so impoverished as to be unable to discharge his daily debts. Meantime these new advisers of the crown had renewed to the Protestants of the kingdom the religious privileges of which they had so justly been deprived, yet the religious peace which had followed had not brought with it the promised diminution of the popular burthens. Never had the nation been so heavily taxed or reduced to such profound misery. For these reasons, he, Cardinal Bourbon, with other princes of the blood, peers, gentlemen, cities, and universities, had solemnly bound themselves by oath to extirpate heresy down to the last root, and to save the people from the dreadful load under which they were languishing. It was for this that they had taken up arms, and till that purpose was accomplished they would never lay them down.

The paper concluded with the hope that his Majesty would not take these warlike demonstrations amiss; and a copy of the document was placed in the royal hands.

Page 1211

It was very obvious to the most superficial observer, that the manifesto was directed almost as much against the reigning sovereign as against Henry of Navarre. The adherents of the Guise faction, and especially certain theologians in their employ, had taken very bold grounds upon the relations between king and subjects, and had made the public very familiar with their doctrines. It was a duty, they said, “to depose a prince who did not discharge his duty. Authority ill regulated was robbery, and it was as absurd to call him a king who knew not how to govern, as it was to take a blind man for a guide, or to believe that a statue could influence the movements of living men.”

Yet to the faction, inspired by such rebellious sentiments, and which was thundering in his face such tremendous denunciations, the unhappy Henry could not find a single royal or manly word of reply. He threw himself on his knees, when, if ever, he should have assumed an attitude of command. He answered the insolence of the men, who were parading their contempt for his authority, by humble excuses, and supplications for pardon. He threw his crown in the dust before their feet, as if such humility would induce them to place it again upon his head. He abandoned the minions who had been his pride, his joy, and his defence, and deprecated, with an abject whimper, all responsibility for the unmeasured ambition and the insatiable rapacity of a few private individuals. He conjured the party-leaders, who had hurled defiance in his face, to lay down their arms, and promised that they should find in his wisdom and bounty more than all the advantages which they were seeking to obtain by war.

Henry of Navarre answered in a different strain. The gauntlet had at last been thrown down to him, and he came forward to take it up; not insolently nor carelessly, but with the cold courtesy of a Christian knight and valiant gentleman. He denied the charge of heresy. He avowed detestation of all doctrines contrary to the Word of God, to the decrees of the Fathers of the Church, or condemned by the Councils.

The errors and abuses which had from time to time crept into the church, had long demanded, in the opinion of all pious persons, some measures of reform. After many bloody wars, no better remedy had been discovered to arrest the cause of these dire religious troubles, whether in France or Germany, than to permit all men to obey the dictates of their own conscience. The Protestants had thus obtained in France many edicts by which the peace of the kingdom had been secured. He could not himself be denounced as a heretic, for he had always held himself ready to receive instruction, and to be set right where he had erred. To call him “relapsed” was an outrage. Were it true, he were indeed unworthy of the crown, but the world knew that his change at the Massacre of St. Bartholomew had been made under duresse, and that he had returned to the reformed faith when he had recovered

Page 1212

his liberty. Religious toleration had been the object of his life. In what the tyranny of the popes and the violence of the Spaniards had left him of his kingdom of Navarre, Catholics and Protestants enjoyed a perfect religious liberty. No man had the right, therefore, to denounce him as an enemy of the church, or a disturber of the public repose, for he had ever been willing to accept all propositions of peace which left the rights of conscience protected.

He was a Frenchman, a prince of France, a living member of the kingdom; feeling with its pains, and bleeding with its wounds. They who denounced him were alien to France, factitious portions of her body, feeling no suffering, even should she be consuming with living fire. The Leaguers were the friends and the servants of the Spaniards, while he had been born the enemy, and with too good reason, of the whole Spanish race.

“Let the name of Papist and of Huguenot,” he said, “be heard no more among us. Those terms were buried in the edict of peace. Let us speak only of Frenchmen and of Spaniards. It is the counter-league which we must all unite to form, the natural union of the head with all its members.”

Finally, to save the shedding of so much innocent blood, to spare all the countless miseries of civil war, he implored the royal permission to terminate this quarrel in person, by single combat with the Duke of Guise, one to one, two to two, or in as large a number as might be desired, and upon any spot within or without the kingdom that should be assigned. “The Duke of Guise,” said Henry of Navarre, “cannot but accept my challenge as an honour, coming as it does from a prince infinitely his superior in rank; and thus, may God defend the right.”

This paper, drawn up by the illustrious Duplessis-Mornay, who was to have been the second of the King of Navarre in the proposed duel, was signed 10 June 1585.

The unfortunate Henry *iii*., not so dull as to doubt that the true object of the Guise party was to reduce him to insignificance, and to open their own way to the throne, was too impotent of purpose to follow the dictates which his wisest counsellors urged and his own reason approved. His choice had lain between open hostility with his Spanish enemy and a more terrible combat with that implacable foe wearing the mask of friendship. He had refused to annex to his crown the rich and powerful Netherlands, from dread of a foreign war; and he was now about to accept for himself and kingdom all the horrors of a civil contest, in which his avowed antagonist was the first captain of the age, and his nominal allies the stipendiaries of Philip *ii*.

Villeroy, his prime minister, and Catharine de’ Medici, his mother, had both devoted him to disgrace and ruin. The deputies from the Netherlands had been dismissed, and now, notwithstanding the festivities and exuberant demonstrations of friendship with which

the Earl of Derby’s splendid embassy had been greeted, it became necessary to bind Henry hand and foot to the conspirators, who had sworn the destruction of that Queen, as well as his own, and the extirpation of heresy and heretics in every realm of Christendom.

Page 1213

On the 9th June the league demanded a royal decree, forbidding the practice of all religion but the Roman Catholic, on pain of death. In vain had the clear-sighted Bishop of Acqs uttered his eloquent warnings. Despite such timely counsels, which he was capable at once of appreciating and of neglecting, Henry followed slavishly the advice of those whom he knew in his heart to be his foes, and authorised the great conspiracy against Elizabeth, against Protestantism, and against himself.

On the 5th June Villeroy had expressed a wish for a very secret interview with Mendoza, on the subject of the invasion of England.

“It needed not this overture,” said that magniloquent Spaniard, “to engender in a person of my talents, and with the heart of a Mendoza, venom enough for vengeance. I could not more desire than I did already to assist in so holy a work; nor could I aspire to greater honour than would be gained in uniting those crowns (of France and Spain) in strict friendship, for the purpose of extirpating heresy throughout Europe, and of chastising the Queen of England—whose abominations I am never likely to forget, having had them so long before my eyes—and of satisfying my just resentment for the injuries she has inflicted on myself. It was on this subject,” continued the ambassador, “that Monsieur de Villeroy wished a secret interview with me, pledging himself—if your Majesty would deign to unite yourself with this King, and to aid him with your forces—to a successful result.”

Mendoza accordingly expressed a willingness to meet the ingenuous Secretary of State—who had so recently been assisting at the banquets and rejoicings with Lord Derby and his companions, which had so much enlivened the French capital—and assured him that his most Catholic Majesty would be only too glad to draw closer the bonds of friendship with the most Christian King, for the service of God and the glory of his Church.

The next day the envoy and the Secretary of State met, very secretly, in the house of the Signor Gondi. Villeroy commenced his harangue by an allusion to the current opinion, that Mendoza had arrived in France with a torch in his hand, to light the fires of civil war in that kingdom, as he had recently done in England.

“I do not believe,” replied Mendoza, “that discreet and prudent persons in France attribute my actions to any such motives. As for the ignorant people of the kingdom, they do not appal me, although they evidently imagine that I have imbibed, during my residence in England, something of the spirit of the enchanter Merlin, that, by signs and cabalistic words alone, I am thought capable of producing such commotions.”

After this preliminary flourish the envoy proceeded to complain bitterly of the most Christian King and his mother, who, after the propositions which they had made him, when on his way to Spain, had, since his return, become so very cold and dry towards him. And on this theme he enlarged for some time.

Page 1214

Villeroy replied, by complaining, in his turn, about the dealings of the most Catholic King, with the leaguers and the rebels of France; and Mendoza rejoined by an intimation that harping upon past grievances and suspicions was hardly the way to bring about harmony in present matters.

Struck with the justice of this remark, the French Secretary of State entered at once upon business. He made a very long speech upon the tyranny which “that Englishwoman” was anew inflicting upon the Catholics in her kingdom, upon the offences which she had committed against the King of Spain, and against the King of France and his brothers, and upon the aliment which she had been yielding to the civil war in the Netherlands and in France for so many years. He then said that if Mendoza would declare with sincerity, and “without any of the duplicity of a minister”—that Philip would league himself with Henry for the purpose of invading England, in order to reduce the three kingdoms to the Catholic faith, and to place their crowns on the head of the Queen of Scotland, to whom they of right belonged; then that the King, his master, was most ready to join in so holy an enterprise. He begged Mendoza to say with what number of troops the invasion could be made; whether Philip could send any from Flanders or from Spain; how many it would be well to send from France, and under what chieftain; in what manner it would be best to communicate with his most Catholic Majesty; whether it were desirable to despatch a secret envoy to him, and of what quality such agent ought to be. He also observed that the most Christian King could not himself speak to Mendoza on the subject before having communicated the matter to the Queen-Mother, but expressed a wish that a special carrier might be forthwith despatched to Spain; for he might be sure that, on an affair of such weight, he would not have permitted himself to reveal the secret wishes of his master, except by his commands.

Mendoza replied, by enlarging with much enthusiasm on the facility with which England could be conquered by the combined power of France and Spain. If it were not a very difficult matter before—even with the jealousy between the two crowns—how much less so, now that they could join their fleets and armies; now that the arming by the one prince would not inspire the other with suspicion; now that they would be certain of finding safe harbour in each other’s kingdoms, in case of unfavourable weather and head-winds, and that they could arrange from what ports to sail, in what direction, and under what commanders. He disapproved, however, of sending a special messenger to Spain, on the ground of wishing to keep the matter entirely secret, but in reality—as he informed Philip—because he chose to keep the management in his own hands; because he could always let slip Mucio upon them, in case they should play him false; because he feared that the leaking out of the secret might discourage the Leaguers, and because he felt that the bolder and more lively were the Cardinal of Bourbon and his confederates, the stronger was the party of the King, his master, and the more intimidated and dispirited would be the mind and the forces of the most Christian King. “And this is precisely the point,” said the diplomatist, “at which a minister of your Majesty should aim at this season.”

Page 1215

Thus the civil war in France—an indispensable part of Philip's policy—was to be maintained at all hazards; and although the ambassador was of opinion that the most Christian King was sincere in his proposition to invade England, it would never do to allow any interval of tranquillity to the wretched subjects of that Christian King.

"I cannot doubt," said Mendoza, "that the making of this proposal to me with so much warmth was the especial persuasion of God, who, hearing the groans of the Catholics of England, so cruelly afflicted, wished to force the French King and his minister to feel, in the necessity which surrounds them, that the offending Him, by impeding the grandeur of your Majesty, would be their total ruin, and that their only salvation is to unite in sincerity and truth with your Majesty for the destruction of the heretics."

Therefore, although judging from the nature of the French—he might imagine that they were attempting to put him to sleep, Mendoza, on the whole, expressed a conviction that the King was in earnest, having arrived at the conclusion that he could only get rid of the Guise faction by sending them over to England. "Seeing that he cannot possibly eradicate the war from his kingdom," said the envoy, "because of the boldness with which the Leaguers maintain it, with the strong assistance of your Majesty, he has determined to embrace with much fervour, and without any deception at all, the enterprise against England, as the only remedy to quiet his own dominions. The subjugation of those three kingdoms, in order to restore them to their rightful owner, is a purpose so holy, just, and worthy of your Majesty, and one which you have had so constantly in view, that it is superfluous for me to enlarge upon the subject. Your Majesty knows that its effects will be the tranquillity and preservation of all your realms. The reasons for making the attempt, even without the aid of France, become demonstrations now that she is unanimously in favour of the scheme. The most Christian King is resolutely bent—so far as I can comprehend the intrigues of Villeroy—-to carry out this project on the foundation of a treaty with the Guise party. It will not take much time, therefore, to put down the heretics here; nor will it consume much more to conquer England with the armies of two such powerful Princes. The power of that island is of little moment, there being no disciplined forces to oppose us, even if they were all unanimous in its defence; how much less then, with so many Catholics to assist the invaders, seeing them so powerful. If your Majesty, on account of your Netherlands, is not afraid of putting arms into the hands of the Guise family in France, there need be less objection to sending one of that house into England, particularly as you will send forces of your own into that kingdom, by the reduction of which the affairs of Flanders will be secured. To effect the pacification of the Netherlands the sooner, it would be desirable to conquer England as early as October."

Page 1216

Having thus sufficiently enlarged upon the sincerity of the French King and his prime minister, in their dark projects against a friendly power, and upon the ease with which that friendly power could be subjected, the ambassador begged for a reply from his royal master without delay. He would be careful, meantime, to keep the civil war alive in France—thus verifying the poetical portrait of himself, the truth of which he had just been so indignantly and rhetorically denying—but it was desirable that the French should believe that this civil war was not Philip's sole object. He concluded by drawing his master's attention to the sufferings of the English Catholics. "I cannot refrain," he said, "from placing before your eyes the terrible persecutions which the Catholics are suffering in England; the blood of the martyrs flowing in so many kinds of torments; the groans of the prisoners, of the widows and orphans; the general oppression and servitude, which is the greatest ever endured by a people of God, under any tyrant whatever. Your Majesty, into whose hands God is now pleased to place the means, so long desired, of extirpating and totally destroying the heresies of our time, can alone liberate them from their bondage."

The picture of these kings, prime ministers, and ambassadors, thus plotting treason, stratagem, and massacre, is a dark and dreary one. The description of English sufferings for conscience' sake, under the Protestant Elizabeth, is even more painful; for it had unfortunately too much, of truth, although as wilfully darkened and exaggerated as could be done by religious hatred and Spanish bombast. The Queen was surrounded by legions of deadly enemies. Spain, the Pope, the League, were united in one perpetual conspiracy against her; and they relied on the cooperation of those subjects of hers whom her own cruelty was converting into traitors.

We read with a shudder these gloomy secrets of conspiracy and wholesale murder, which make up the diplomatic history of the sixteenth century, and we cease to wonder that a woman, feeling herself so continually the mark at which all the tyrants and assassins of Europe were aiming—although not possessing perhaps the evidences of her peril so completely as they have been revealed to us—should come to consider every English Papist as a traitor and an assassin. It was unfortunate that she was not able to rise beyond the vile instincts of the age, and by a magnanimous and sublime toleration, to convert her secret enemies into loyal subjects.

And now Henry of Valois was to choose between league and counter-league, between Henry of Guise and Henry of Navarre, between France and Spain. The whole chivalry of Gascony and Guienne, the vast swarm of industrious and hardy Huguenot artisans, the Netherland rebels, the great English Queen, stood ready to support the cause of French nationality, and of all nationalities, against a threatening world-empire, of religious liberty against sacerdotal absolutism, and the crown of a King, whose only merit had hitherto been to acquiesce in a religious toleration dictated to him by others, against those who derided his authority and insulted his person. The bold knight-errant of Christendom, the champion to the utterance against Spain, stood there with lance in rest, and the King scarcely hesitated.

Page 1217

The League, gliding so long unheeded, now reared its crest in the very palace of France, and full in the monarch's face. With a single shudder the victim fell into its coils.

The choice was made. On the 18th of July (1585) the edict of Nemours was published, revoking all previous edicts by which religious peace had been secured. Death and confiscation of property were now proclaimed as the penalty of practising any religious rites save those of the Roman Catholic Church. Six months were allowed to the Nonconformists to put their affairs in order, after which they were to make public profession of the Catholic religion, with regular attendance upon its ceremonies, or else go into perpetual exile. To remain in France without abjuring heresy was thenceforth a mortal crime, to be expiated upon the gallows. As a matter of course, all Huguenots were instantaneously incapacitated from public office, the mixed chambers of justice were abolished, and the cautionary towns were to be restored. On the other hand, the Guise faction were to receive certain cities into their possession, as pledges that this sanguinary edict should be fulfilled.

Thus did Henry *iii*. abjectly kiss the hand which smote him. His mother, having since the death of Anjou no further interest in affecting to favour the Huguenots, had arranged the basis of this treaty with the Spanish party. And now the unfortunate King had gone solemnly down to the Parliament of Paris, to be present at the registration of the edict. The counsellors and presidents were all assembled, and as they sat there in their crimson robes, they seemed, to the excited imagination of those who loved their country, like embodiments of the impending and most sanguinary tragedy. As the monarch left the parliament-house a faint cry of 'God save the King' was heard in the street. Henry hung his head, for it was long since that cry had met his ears, and he knew that it was a false and languid demonstration which had been paid for by the Leaguers.

And thus was the compact signed—an unequal compact. Madam League was on horseback, armed in proof, said a contemporary; the King was on foot, and dressed in a shirt of penitence. The alliance was not an auspicious one. Not peace, but a firebrand —'facem, non pacem'—had the King held forth to his subjects.

When the news came to Henry of Navarre that the King had really promulgated this fatal edict, he remained for a time, with amazement and sorrow, leaning heavily upon a table, with his face in his right hand. When he raised his head again—so he afterwards asserted—one side of his moustachio had turned white.

Meantime Gregory XIII., who had always refused to sanction the League, was dead, and Cardinal Peretti, under the name of Sixtus V., now reigned in his place. Born of an illustrious house, as he said—for it was a house without a roof—this monk of humble origin was of inordinate ambition. Feigning a humility which was but the cloak to his pride, he was in reality as grasping, self-seeking, and revengeful, as he seemed gentle and devout. It was inevitable that a pontiff of this character should seize the opportunity

offered him to mimic Hildebrand, and to brandish on high the thunderbolts of the Church.

Page 1218

With a flaming prelude concerning the omnipotence delegated by Almighty God to St. Peter and his successors—an authority infinitely superior to all earthly powers—the decrees of which were irresistible alike by the highest and the meanest, and which hurled misguided princes from their thrones into the abyss, like children of Beelzebub, the Pope proceeded to fulminate his sentence of excommunication against those children of wrath, Henry of Navarre and Henry of Conde. They were denounced as heretics, relapsed, and enemies of God (28th Aug.1585). The King was declared dispossessed of his principality of Bearne, and of what remained to him of Navarre. He was stripped of all dignities, privileges, and property, and especially proclaimed incapable of ever ascending the throne of France.

The Bearnese replied by a clever political squib. A terse and spirited paper found its way to Rome, and was soon affixed, to the statutes of Pasquin and Marforio, and in other public places of that city, and even to the gates of the papal palace. Without going beyond his own doors, his Holiness had the opportunity of reading, to his profound amazement, that Mr. Sixtus, calling himself Pope, had foully and maliciously lied in calling the King of Navarre a heretic. This Henry offered to prove before any free council legitimately chosen. If the Pope refused to submit to such decision, he was himself no better than excommunicate and Antichrist, and the King of Navarre thereby declared mortal and perpetual war upon him. The ancient kings of France had known how to chastise the insolence of former popes, and he hoped, when he ascended the throne, to take vengeance on Mr. Sixtus for the insult thus offered to all the kings of Christendom—and so on, in a vein which showed the Bearnese to be a man rather amused than blasted by these papal fireworks.

Sixtus V., though imperious, was far from being dull. He knew how to appreciate a man when he found one, and he rather admired the cheerful attitude maintained by Navarre, as he tossed back the thunderbolts. He often spoke afterwards of Henry with genuine admiration, and declared that in all the world he knew but two persons fit to wear a crown—Henry of Navarre and Elizabeth of England. "'Twas pity," he said, "that both should be heretics."

And thus the fires of civil war had been lighted throughout Christendom, and the monarch of France had thrown himself head foremost into the flames.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Hibernian mode of expressing himself
His inordinate arrogance
His insolence intolerable
Humility which was but the cloak to his pride
Longer they delay it, the less easy will they find it
Oration, fertile in rhetoric and barren in facts
Round game of deception, in which nobody was deceived

Wasting time fruitlessly is sharpening the knife for himself
With something of feline and feminine duplicity
’Twas pity, he said, that both should be heretics

Page 1219

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History of The United Netherlands, 1585

Alexander Farnese, The Duke of Parma

CHAPTER V., Part 1.

Position and Character of Farnese—Preparations for Antwerp Siege— Its Characteristics—Foresight of William the Silent—Sainte Aldegonde, the Burgomaster—-Anarchy in Antwerp—Character of Sainte Aldegonde—Admiral Treslong—Justinus de Nassau—Hohenlo—Opposition to the Plan of Orange—Liefkenshoek—Head—Quarters of Parma at Kalloo—Difficulty of supplying the City—Results of not piercing the Dykes —Preliminaries of the Siege—Successes of the Spaniards— Energy of Farnese with Sword and Pen—His Correspondence with the Antwerpers—Progress of the Bridge—-Impoverished Condition of Parma —Patriots attempt Bois-le-Duc—Their Misconduct—-Failure of the Enterprise—The Scheldt Bridge completed—Description of the Structure

The negotiations between France and the Netherlands have been massed, in order to present a connected and distinct view of the relative attitude of the different countries of Europe. The conferences and diplomatic protocolling had resulted in nothing positive; but it is very necessary for the reader to understand the negative effects of all this dissimulation and palace-politics upon the destiny of the new commonwealth, and upon Christendom at large. The League had now achieved a great triumph; the King of France had virtually abdicated, and it was now requisite for the King of Navarre, the Netherlands, and Queen Elizabeth, to draw more closely together than before, if the last hope of forming a counter-league were not to be abandoned. The next step in political combination was therefore a solemn embassy of the States-General to England. Before detailing those negotiations, however, it is proper to direct attention to the external public events which had been unrolling themselves in the Provinces, contemporaneously with the secret history which has been detailed in the preceding chapters.

By presenting in their natural groupings various distinct occurrences, rather than by detailing them in strict chronological order, a clearer view of the whole picture will be furnished than could be done by intermingling personages, transactions, and scenery, according to the arbitrary command of Time alone.

The Netherlands, by the death of Orange, had been left without a head. On the other hand, the Spanish party had never been so fortunate in their chief at any period since the destiny of the two nations had been blended with each other. Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, was a general and a politician, whose character had been steadily ripening since he came into the command of the country. He was now thirty-seven

Page 1220

years of age—with the experience of a sexagenarian. No longer the impetuous, arbitrary, hot-headed youth, whose intelligence and courage hardly atoned for his insolent manner and stormy career, he had become pensive, modest, almost gentle. His genius was rapid in conception, patient in combination, fertile in expedients, adamantine in the endurance or suffering; for never did a heroic general and a noble army of veterans manifest more military virtue in the support of an infamous cause than did Parma and his handful of Italians and Spaniards. That which they considered to be their duty they performed. The work before them they did with all their might.

Alexander had vanquished the rebellion in the Celtic provinces, by the masterly diplomacy and liberal bribery which have been related in a former work. Artois, Hainault, Douay, Orchies, with the rich cities of Lille, Tournay, Valenciennes, Arras, and other important places, were now the property of Philip. These unhappy and misguided lands, however, were already reaping the reward of their treason. Beggared, trampled upon, plundered, despised, they were at once the prey of the Spaniards, and the cause that their sister-states, which still held out, were placed in more desperate condition than ever. They were also, even in their abject plight, made still more forlorn by the forays of Balagny, who continued in command of Cambray. Catharine de' Medici claimed that city as her property, by will of the Duke of Anjou. A strange title—founded upon the treason and cowardice of her favourite son—but one which, for a time, was made good by the possession maintained by Balagny. That usurper meantime, with a shrewd eye to his own interests, pronounced the truce of Cambray, which was soon afterwards arranged, from year to year, by permission of Philip, as a "most excellent milch-cow;" and he continued to fill his pails at the expense of the "reconciled" provinces, till they were thoroughly exhausted.

This large south-western section of the Netherlands being thus permanently re-annexed to the Spanish crown, while Holland, Zeeland, and the other provinces, already constituting the new Dutch republic, were more obstinate in their hatred of Philip than ever, there remained the rich and fertile territory of Flanders and Brabant as the great debateable land. Here were the royal and political capital, Brussels, the commercial capital, Antwerp, with Mechlin, Dendermonde, Vilvoorde, and other places of inferior importance, all to be struggled for to the death. With the subjection of this district the last bulwark between the new commonwealth and the old empire would be overthrown, and Spain and Holland would then meet face to face.

If there had ever been a time when every nerve in Protestant Christendom should be strained to weld all those provinces together into one great commonwealth, as a bulwark for European liberty, rather than to allow them to be broken into stepping-stones, over which absolutism could stride across France and Holland into England, that moment had arrived. Every sacrifice should have been cheerfully made by all Netherlanders, the uttermost possible subsidies and auxiliaries should have been

furnished by all the friends of civil and religious liberty in every land to save Flanders and Brabant from their impending fate.

Page 1221

No man felt more keenly the importance of the business in which he was engaged than Parma. He knew his work exactly, and he meant to execute it thoroughly. Antwerp was the hinge on which the fate of the whole country, perhaps of all Christendom, was to turn. "If we get Antwerp," said the Spanish soldiers—so frequently that the expression passed into a proverb—"you shall all go to mass with us; if you save Antwerp, we will all go to conventicle with you."

Alexander rose with the difficulty and responsibility of his situation. His vivid, almost poetic intellect formed its schemes with perfect distinctness. Every episode in his great and, as he himself termed it, his "heroic enterprise," was traced out beforehand with the tranquil vision of creative genius; and he was prepared to convert his conceptions into reality, with the aid of an iron nature that never knew fatigue or fear.

But the obstacles were many. Alexander's master sat in his cabinet with his head full of Mucio, Don Antonio, and Queen Elizabeth; while Alexander himself was left neglected, almost forgotten. His army was shrinking to a nullity. The demands upon him were enormous, his finances delusive, almost exhausted. To drain an ocean dry he had nothing but a sieve. What was his position? He could bring into the field perhaps eight or ten thousand men over and above the necessary garrisons. He had before him Brussels, Antwerp, Mechlin, Ghent, Dendermonde, and other powerful places, which he was to subjugate. Here was a problem not easy of solution. Given an army of eight thousand, more or less, to reduce therewith in the least possible time, half-a-dozen cities; each containing fifteen or twenty thousand men able to bear arms. To besiege these places in form was obviously a mere chimera. Assault, battery, and surprises—-these were all out of the question.

Yet Alexander was never more truly heroic than in this position of vast entanglement. Untiring, uncomplaining, thoughtful of others, prodigal of himself, generous, modest, brave; with so much intellect and so much devotion to what he considered his duty, he deserved to be a patriot and a champion of the right, rather than an instrument of despotism.

And thus he paused for a moment—with much work already accomplished, but his hardest life-task before him; still in the noon of manhood, a fine martial figure, standing, spear in hand, full in the sunlight, though all the scene around him was wrapped in gloom—a noble, commanding shape, entitled to the admiration which the energetic display of great powers, however unscrupulous, must always command. A dark, meridional physiognomy, a quick; alert, imposing head; jet black, close-clipped hair; a bold eagle's face, with full, bright, restless eye; a man rarely reposing, always ready, never alarmed; living in the saddle, with harness on his back—such was the Prince of Parma; matured and mellowed, but still unharmed by time.

Page 1222

The cities of Flanders and Brabant he determined to reduce by gaining command of the Scheldt. The five principal ones Ghent, Dendermonde, Mechlin, Brussels Antwerp, lie narrow circle, at distances from each other varying from five miles to thirty, and are all strung together by the great Netherland river or its tributaries. His plan was immensely furthered by the success of Balthasar Gerard, an ally whom Alexander had despised and distrusted, even while he employed him. The assassination of Orange was better to Parma than forty thousand men. A crowd of allies instantly started up for him, in the shape of treason, faintheartedness, envy, jealousy, insubordination, within the walls of every beleaguered city. Alexander knew well how to deal with those auxiliaries. Letters, artfully concocted, full of conciliation and of promise, were circulated in every council-room, in almost every house.

The surrender of Ghent—brought about by the governor's eloquence, aided by the golden arguments which he knew so well how to advance—had by the middle of September (19th Sept. 1584), put him in possession of West Flanders, with the important exception of the coast. Dendermonde capitulated at a still earlier day; while the fall of Brussels, which held out till many persons had been starved to death, was deferred till the 10th March of the following year, and that of Mechlin till midsummer.

The details of the military or political operations, by which the reduction of most of these places were effected, possess but little interest. The siege of Antwerp, however, was one of the most striking events of the age; and although the change in military tactics and the progress of science may have rendered this leaguer of less technical importance than it possessed in the sixteenth century, yet the illustration that it affords of the splendid abilities of Parma, of the most cultivated mode of warfare in use at that period, and of the internal politics by which the country was then regulated, make it necessary to dwell upon the details of an episode which must ever possess enduring interest.

It is agreeable to reflect, too, that the fame of the general is not polluted with the wholesale butchery, which has stained the reputation of other Spanish commanders so indelibly. There was no killing for the mere love of slaughter. With but few exceptions, there was no murder in cold blood; and the many lives that were laid down upon those watery dykes were sacrificed at least in bold, open combat; in a contest, the ruling spirits of which were patriotism, or at least honour.

Page 1223

It is instructive, too, to observe the diligence and accuracy with which the best lights of the age were brought to bear upon the great problem which Parma had undertaken to solve. All the science then at command was applied both by the Prince and by his burgher antagonists to the advancement of their ends. Hydrostatics, hydraulics, engineering, navigation, gunnery, pyrotechnics, mining, geometry, were summoned as broadly, vigorously, and intelligently to the destruction or preservation of a trembling city, as they have ever been, in more commercial days, to advance a financial or manufacturing purpose. Land converted into water, and water into land, castles built upon the breast of rapid streams, rivers turned from their beds and taught new courses; the distant ocean driven across ancient bulwarks, mines dug below the sea, and canals made to percolate obscene morasses—which the red hand of war, by the very act, converted into blooming gardens—a mighty stream bridged and mastered in the very teeth of winter, floating ice-bergs, ocean-tides, and an alert and desperate foe, ever ready with fleets and armies and batteries—such were the materials of which the great spectacle was composed; a spectacle which enchained the attention of Europe for seven months, and on the result of which, it was thought, depended the fate of all the Netherlands, and perhaps of all Christendom.

Antwerp, then the commercial centre of the Netherlands and of Europe, stands upon the Scheldt. The river, flowing straight, broad, and full along the verge of the city, subtends the arc into which the place arranges itself as it falls back from the shore. Two thousand ships of the largest capacity then known might easily find room in its ample harbours. The stream, nearly half a mile in width, and sixty feet in depth, with a tidal rise and fall of eleven feet, moves, for a few miles, in a broad and steady current between the provinces of Brabant and Flanders. Then, dividing itself into many ample estuaries, and gathering up the level isles of Zeeland into its bosom, it seems to sweep out with them into the northern ocean. Here, at the junction of the river and the sea, lay the perpetual hope of Antwerp, for in all these creeks and currents swarmed the fleets of the Zeelanders, that hardy and amphibious race, with which few soldiers or mariners could successfully contend, on land or water.

Even from the beginning of the year 1584 Parma had been from time to time threatening Antwerp. The victim instinctively felt that its enemy was poising and hovering over head, although he still delayed to strike. Early in the summer Sainte Aldegonde, Recorder Martini, and other official personages, were at Delft, upon the occasion of the christening ceremonies of Frederic Henry, youngest child of Orange. The Prince, at that moment, was aware of the plans of Parma, and held a long conversation with his friends upon the measures which he desired to see immediately

Page 1224

undertaken. Unmindful of his usual hospitality, he insisted that these gentlemen should immediately leave for Antwerp. Alexander Farnese, he assured them, had taken the firm determination to possess himself of that place, without further delay. He had privately signified his purpose of laying the axe at once to the root of the tree, believing that with the fall of the commercial capital the infant confederacy of the United States would fall likewise. In order to accomplish this object, he would forthwith attempt to make himself master of the banks of the Scheldt, and would even throw a bridge across the stream, if his plans were not instantly circumvented.

William of Orange then briefly indicated his plan; adding that he had no fears for the result; and assuring his friends, who expressed much anxiety on the subject, that if Parma really did attempt the siege of Antwerp it should be his ruin. The plan was perfectly simple. The city stood upon a river. It was practicable, although extremely hazardous, for the enemy to bridge that river, and by so doing ultimately to reduce the place. But the ocean could not be bridged; and it was quite possible to convert Antwerp, for a season, into an ocean-port. Standing alone upon an island, with the sea flowing around it, and with full and free marine communication with Zeeland and Holland, it might safely bid defiance to the land-forces, even of so great a commander as Parma. To the furtherance of this great measure of defence, it was necessary to destroy certain bulwarks, the chief of (10th June, 1584) which was called the Blaw-garen Dyke; and Sainte Aldegonde was therefore requested to return to the city, in order to cause this task to be executed without delay.

Nothing could be more judicious than this advice. The low lands along the Scheldt were protected against marine encroachments, and the river itself was confined to its bed, by a magnificent system of dykes, which extended along its edge towards the ocean, in parallel lines. Other barriers of a similar nature ran in oblique directions, through the wide open pasture lands, which they maintained in green fertility, against the ever-threatening sea. The Blaw-garen, to which the prince mainly alluded, was connected with the great dyke upon the right bank of the Scheldt. Between this and the city, another bulwark called the Kowenstyn Dyke, crossed the country at right angles to the river, and joined the other two at a point, not very far from Lillo, where the States had a strong fortress.

The country in this neighbourhood was low, spongy, full of creeks, small meres, and the old bed of the Scheldt. Orange, therefore, made it very clear, that by piercing the great dyke just described, such a vast body of water would be made to pour over the land as to submerge the Kowenstyn also, the only other obstacle in the passage of fleets from Zeeland to Antwerp. The city would then be connected with the sea and its islands, by so vast an expanse of navigable water, that any attempt on Parma's part to cut off supplies and succour would be hopeless. Antwerp would laugh the idea of famine to scorn; and although this immunity would be purchased by the sacrifice of a large

amount of agricultural territory the price so paid was but a slender one, when the existence of the capital, and with it perhaps of the whole confederacy was at stake.

Page 1225

Sainte Aldegonde and Martini suggested, that, as there would be some opposition to the measure proposed, it might be as well to make a similar attempt on the Flemish side, in preference, by breaking through the dykes in the neighbourhood of Saftingen. Orange replied, by demonstrating that the land in the region which he had indicated was of a character to ensure success, while in the other direction there were certain very unfavourable circumstances which rendered the issue doubtful. The result was destined to prove the sagacity of the Prince, for it will be shown in the sequel, that the Saftingen plan, afterwards really carried out, was rather advantageous than detrimental to the enemy's projects.

Sainte Aldegonde, accordingly, yielded to the arguments and entreaties of his friend, and repaired without delay to Antwerp.

The advice of William the Silent—as will soon be related—was not acted upon; and, within a few weeks after it had been given, he was in his grave. Nowhere was his loss more severely felt than in Antwerp. It seemed, said a contemporary, that with his death had died all authority. The Prince was the only head which the many-membered body of that very democratic city ever spontaneously obeyed. Antwerp was a small republic—in time of peace intelligently and successfully administered—which in the season of a great foreign war, amid plagues, tumults, famine, and internal rebellion, required the firm hand and the clear brain of a single chief. That brain and hand had been possessed by Orange alone.

Before his death he had desired that Sainte Aldegonde should accept the office of burgomaster of the city. Nominally, the position was not so elevated as were many of the posts which that distinguished patriot had filled. In reality, it was as responsible and arduous a place as could be offered to any man's acceptance throughout the country. Sainte Aldegonde consented, not without some reluctance. He felt that there was odium to be incurred; he knew that much would be expected of him, and that his means would be limited. His powers would be liable to a constant and various restraint. His measures were sure to be the subject of perpetual cavil. If the city were besieged, there were nearly one hundred thousand mouths to feed, and nearly one hundred thousand tongues to dispute about furnishing the food.

For the government of Antwerp had been degenerating from a well-organised municipal republicanism into anarchy. The clashing of the various bodies exercising power had become incessant and intolerable. The burgomaster was charged with the chief executive authority, both for peace and war. Nevertheless he had but a single vote in the board of magistrates, where a majority decided. Moreover, he could not always attend the sessions, because he was also member of the council of Brabant. Important measures might therefore be decided by the magistracy, not only against his judgment, but without his knowledge. Then

Page 1226

there was a variety of boards or colleges, all arrogating concurrent—which in truth was conflicting-authority. There was the board of militia-colonels, which claimed great powers. Here, too, the burgomaster was nominally the chief, but he might be voted down by a majority, and of course was often absent. Then there were sixteen captains who came into the colonels' sessions whenever they liked, and had their word to say upon all subjects broached. If they were refused a hearing, they were backed by eighty other captains, who were ready at any moment to carry every disputed point before the "broadcouncil."

There were a college of ward-masters, a college of select men, a college of deacons, a college of ammunition, of fortification, of ship-building, all claiming equal authority, and all wrangling among themselves; and there was a college of "peace-makers," who wrangled more than all the rest together.

Once a week there was a session of the board or general council. Dire was the hissing and confusion, as the hydra heads of the multitudinous government were laid together. Heads of colleges, presidents of chambers, militia-chieftains; magistrates, ward-masters, deans of fishmongers, of tailors, gardeners, butchers, all met together pell-mell; and there was no predominant authority. This was not a convenient working machinery for a city threatened with a siege by the first captain of the age. Moreover there was a deficiency of regular troops: The burgher-militia were well trained and courageous, but not distinguished for their docility. There was also a regiment of English under Colonel Morgan, a soldier of great experience, and much respected; but, as Stephen Le Sieur said, "this force, unless seconded with more, was but a breakfast for the enemy." Unfortunately, too, the insubordination, which was so ripe in the city, seemed to affect these auxiliaries. A mutiny broke out among the English troops. Many deserted to Parma, some escaped to England, and it was not until Morgan had beheaded Captain Lee and Captain Powell, that discipline could be restored.

And into this scene of wild and deafening confusion came Philip de Marnix, Lord of Sainte Aldegonde.

There were few more brilliant characters than he in all Christendom. He was a man, of a most rare and versatile genius. Educated in Geneva at the very feet of Calvin, he had drunk, like mother's milk, the strong and bitter waters of the stern reformer's, creed; but he had in after life attempted, although hardly with success, to lift himself to the height of a general religious toleration. He had also been trained in the severe and thorough literary culture which characterised that rigid school. He was a scholar, ripe and rare; no holiday trifler in the gardens of learning. He spoke and wrote Latin like his native tongue. He could compose poignant Greek epigrams. He was so familiar with Hebrew, that he had rendered the Psalms of David out of the

Page 1227

original into flowing Flemish verse, for the use of the reformed churches. That he possessed the modern tongues of civilized Europe, Spanish, Italian, French, and German, was a matter of course. He was a profound jurisconsult, capable of holding debate against all competitors upon any point of theory or practice of law, civil, municipal, international. He was a learned theologian, and had often proved himself a match for the doctors, bishops, or rabbin of Europe, in highest argument of dogma, creed, or tradition. He was a practised diplomatist, constantly employed in delicate and difficult negotiations by William the Silent, who ever admired his genius, cherished his friendship, and relied upon his character. He was an eloquent orator, whose memorable harangue, beyond all his other efforts, at the diet of Worms, had made the German princes hang their heads with shame, when, taking a broad and philosophical view of the Netherland matter, he had shown that it was the great question of Europe; that Nether Germany was all Germany; that Protestantism could not be unravelled into shreds; that there was but one cause in Christendom—that of absolutism against national liberty, Papacy against the reform; and that the seventeen Provinces were to be assisted in building themselves into an eternal barrier against Spain, or that the "burning mark of shame would be branded upon the forehead of Germany;" that the war, in short, was to be met by her on the threshold; or else that it would come to seek her at home —a prophecy which the horrible Thirty Years' War was in after time most signally to verify.

He was a poet of vigour and originality, for he had accomplished what has been achieved by few; he had composed a national hymn, whose strophes, as soon as heard, struck a chord in every Netherland heart, and for three centuries long have rung like a clarion wherever the Netherland tongue is spoken. "Wilhelmus van Nassouwe," regarded simply as a literary composition, has many of the qualities which an ode demands; an electrical touch upon the sentiments, a throb of patriotism, sympathetic tenderness, a dash of indignation, with rhythmical harmony and graceful expression; and thus it has rung from millions of lips, from generation to generation.

He was a soldier, courageous, untiring, prompt in action, useful in council, and had distinguished himself in many a hard-fought field. Taken prisoner in the sanguinary skirmish at Maaslandssluys, he had been confined a year, and, for more than three months, had never laid his head, as he declared, upon the pillow without commending his soul as for the last time to his Maker, expecting daily the order for his immediate execution, and escaping his doom only because William the Silent proclaimed that the proudest head among the Spanish prisoners should fall to avenge his death; so that he was ultimately exchanged against the veteran Mondragon.

From the incipient stages of the revolt he had been foremost among the patriots. He was supposed to be the author of the famous "Compromise of the Nobles," that earliest and most conspicuous of the state-papers of the republic, and of many other important

political documents; and he had contributed to general literature many works of European celebrity, of which the ‘Roman Bee-Hive’ was the most universally known.

Page 1228

Scholar, theologian, diplomatist, swordsman, orator, poet, pamphleteer, he had genius for all things, and was eminent in all. He was even famous for his dancing, and had composed an intelligent and philosophical treatise upon the value of that amusement, as an agent of civilisation, and as a counteractor of the grosser pleasures of the table to which Upper and Nether Germans were too much addicted.

Of ancient Savoyard extraction, and something of a southern nature, he had been born in Brussels, and was national to the heart's core.

A man of interesting, sympathetic presence; of a physiognomy where many of the attaching and attractive qualities of his nature revealed themselves; with crisp curling hair, surmounting a tall, expansive forehead—full of benevolence, idealism, and quick perceptions; broad, brown, melancholy eyes, overflowing with tenderness; a lean and haggard cheek, a rugged Flemish nose; a thin flexible mouth; a slender moustache, and a peaked and meagre beard; so appeared Sainte Aldegonde in the forty-seventh year of his age, when he came to command in Antwerp.

Yet after all—many-sided, accomplished, courageous, energetic, as he was—it may be doubted whether he was the man for the hour or the post. He was too impressionable; he had too much of the temperament of genius. Without being fickle, he had, besides his versatility of intellect, a character which had much facility in turning; not, indeed, in the breeze of self-interest, but because he seemed placed in so high and clear an atmosphere of thought that he was often acted upon and swayed by subtle and invisible influences. At any rate his conduct was sometimes inexplicable. He had been strangely fascinated by the ignoble Duke of Anjou, and, in the sequel, it will be found that he was destined to experience other magnetic or magical impulses, which were once thought suspicious, and have remained mysterious even to the present day.

He was imaginative. He was capable of broad and boundless hopes. He was sometimes prone to deep despair. His nature was exquisitely tempered; too fine and polished a blade to be wielded among those hydra-heads by which he was, now surrounded; and for which the stunning sledgehammer of arbitrary force was sometimes necessary.

He was perhaps deficient in that gift, which no training and no culture can bestow, and which comes from above alone by birth-right divine—that which men willingly call master, authority; the effluence which came so naturally from the tranquil eyes of William the Silent.

Nevertheless, Sainte Aldegonde was prepared to do his best, and all his best was to be tasked to the utmost. His position was rendered still more difficult by the unruly nature of some of his coordinates.

“From the first day to the last,” said one who lived in Antwerp during the siege, “the mistakes committed in the city were incredible.” It had long been obvious that a siege was contemplated by Parma. A liberal sum of money had been voted by the States-General, of which Holland and Zeeland contributed a very large proportion (two hundred thousand florins); the city itself voted another large subsidy, and an order was issued to purchase at once and import into the city at least a year’s supply of every kind of provisions of life and munitions of war.

Page 1229

William de Blois, Lord of Treslong, Admiral of Holland and Zeeland, was requested to carry out this order, and superintend the victualling of Antwerp. But Treslong at once became troublesome. He was one of the old “beggars of the sea,” a leader in the wild band who had taken possession of the Brill, in the teeth of Alva, and so laid the foundation of the republic. An impetuous noble, of wealthy family, high connections, and refractory temper—a daring sailor, ever ready for any rash adventure, but possessed of a very moderate share of prudence or administrative ability, he fell into loose and lawless courses on the death of Orange, whose firm hand was needed to control him. The French negotiation had excited his profound disgust, and knowing Sainte Aldegonde to be heart and soul in favour of that alliance, he was in no haste whatever to carry out his orders with regard to Antwerp. He had also an insignificant quarrel with President Meetkerk. The Prince of Parma—ever on the watch for such opportunities—was soon informed of the Admiral’s discontent, and had long been acquainted with his turbulent character. Alexander at once began to inflame his jealousy and soothe his vanity by letters and messengers, urging upon him the propriety of reconciling himself with the King, and promising him large rewards and magnificent employments in the royal service. Even the splendid insignia of the Golden Fleece were dangled before his eyes. It is certain that the bold Hollander was not seduced by these visions, but there is no doubt that he listened to the voice of the tempter. He unquestionably neglected his duty. Week after week he remained, at Ostend, sneering at the French and quaffing huge draughts in honour of Queen Elizabeth. At last, after much time had elapsed, he agreed to victual Antwerp if he could be furnished with thirty krom-stevens,—a peculiar kind of vessel, not to be found in Zeeland. The krom-stevens were sent to him from Holland. Then, hearing that his negligence had been censured by the States-General, he became more obstinate than ever, and went up and down proclaiming that if people made themselves disagreeable to him he would do that which should make all the women and children in the Netherlands shriek and tremble. What this nameless horror was to be he never divulged, but meantime he went down to Middelburg, and swore that not a boat-load of corn should go up to Antwerp until two members of the magistracy, whom he considered unpleasant, had been dismissed from their office. Wearied with all this bluster, and imbued with grave suspicion as to his motives, the States at last rose upon their High Admiral and threw him into prison. He was accused of many high crimes and misdemeanours, and, it was thought, would be tried for his life. He was suspected and even openly accused of having been tampered with by Spain, but there was at any rate a deficiency of proof.

“Treslong is apprehended,” wrote Davison to Burghley, “and, is charged to have been the cause that the fleet passed not up to Antwerp. He is suspected to have otherwise forgotten himself, but whether justly or not will appear by his trial. Meantime he is kept in the common prison of Middelburg, a treatment which it is thought they would not offer him if they had not somewhat of importance against him.”

Page 1230

He was subsequently released at the intercession of Queen Elizabeth, and passed some time in England. He was afterwards put upon trial, but no accuser appearing to sustain the charges against him, he was eventually released. He never received a command in the navy again, but the very rich sinecures of Grand Falconer and Chief Forester of Holland were bestowed upon him, and he appears to have ended his days in peace and plenty.

He was succeeded in the post of Admiral of Holland and Zeeland by Justinus de Nassau, natural son of William the Silent, a young man of much promise but of little experience.

General Count Hohenlo, too, lieutenant for young Maurice, and virtual commander-in-chief of the States' forces, was apt to give much trouble. A German noble, of ancient descent and princely rank; brave to temerity, making a jest of danger; and riding into a foray as if to a merry-making; often furiously intoxicated, and always turbulent and uncertain; a handsome, dissipated cavalier, with long curls floating over his shoulders, an imposing aristocratic face, and a graceful, athletic figure, he needed some cool brain and steady hand to guide him—valuable as he was to fulfil any daring project but was hardly willing to accept the authority of a burgomaster. While the young Maurice yet needed tutelage, while "the sapling was growing into the tree," Hohenlo was a dangerous chieftain and a most disorderly lieutenant.

With such municipal machinery and such coadjutors had Sainte Aldegonde to deal, while, meantime, the delusive French negociation was dragging its slow length along, and while Parma was noiselessly and patiently proceeding with his preparations.

The burgomaster—for Sainte Aldegonde, in whom vulgar ambition was not a foible, had refused the dignity and title of Margrave of Antwerp, which had been tendered him—had neglected no effort towards carrying into effect the advice of Orange, given almost with his latest breath. The manner in which that advice was received furnished a striking illustration of the defective machinery which has been pourtrayed.

Upon his return from Delft, Sainte Aldegonde had summoned a meeting of the magistracy of Antwerp. He laid before the board the information communicated by Orange as to Parma's intentions. He also explained the scheme proposed for their frustration, and urged the measures indicated with so much earnestness that his fellow-magistrates were convinced. The order was passed for piercing the Blauw-garen Dyke, and Sainte Aldegonde, with some engineers, was requested to view the locality, and to take order for the immediate fulfilment of the plan.

Unfortunately there were many other boards in session besides that of the Schepens, many other motives at work besides those of patriotism. The guild of butchers held a meeting, so soon as the plan suggested was known, and resolved with all their strength to oppose its execution.

Page 1231

The butchers were indeed furious. Twelve thousand oxen grazed annually upon the pastures which were about to be submerged, and it was represented as unreasonable that all this good flesh and blood should be sacrificed. At a meeting of the magistrates on the following day, sixteen butchers, delegates from their guild, made their appearance, hoarse with indignation. They represented the vast damage which would be inflicted upon the estates of many private individuals by the proposed inundation, by this sudden conversion of teeming meadows, fertile farms, thriving homesteads, prolific orchards, into sandy desolation. Above all they depicted, in glowing colours and with natural pathos, the vast destruction of beef which was imminent, and they urged—with some show of reason—that if Parma were really about to reduce Antwerp by famine, his scheme certainly would not be obstructed by the premature annihilation of these wholesome supplies.

That the Scheldt could be, closed in any manner was, however, they said, a preposterous conception. That it could be bridged was the dream of a lunatic. Even if it were possible to construct a bridge, and probable that the Zeelanders and Antwerpers would look on with folded arms while the work proceeded, the fabric, when completed, would be at the mercy of the ice-floods of the winter and the enormous power of the ocean-tides. The Prince of Orange himself, on a former occasion, when Antwerp was Spanish, had attempted to close the river with rafts, sunken piles, and other obstructions, but the whole had been swept away, like a dam of bulrushes, by the first descent of the ice-blocks of winter. It was witless to believe that Parma contemplated any such measure, and utterly monstrous to believe in its success.

Thus far the butchers. Soon afterwards came sixteen colonels of militia, as representatives of their branch of the multiform government. These personages, attended by many officers of inferior degree, sustained the position of the butchers with many voluble and vehement arguments. Not the least convincing of their conclusions was the assurance that it would be idle for the authorities to attempt the destruction of the dyke, seeing that the municipal soldiery itself would prevent the measure by main force, at all hazards, and without regard to their own or others' lives.

The violence of this opposition, and the fear of a serious internecine conflict at so critical a juncture, proved fatal to the project. Much precious time was lost, and when at last the inhabitants of the city awoke from their delusion, it was to find that repentance, as usual, had come many hours too late.

For Parma had been acting while his antagonists had been wrangling. He was hampered in his means, but he was assisted by what now seems the incredible supineness of the Netherlanders. Even Sainte Aldegonde did not believe in the possibility of erecting the bridge; not a man in Antwerp seemed to believe it. "The preparations," said one who lived in the city, "went on before our very noses, and every one was ridiculing the Spanish commander's folly."

Page 1232

A very great error was, moreover, committed in abandoning Herenthals to the enemy. The city of Antwerp governed Brabant, and it would have been far better for the authorities of the commercial capital to succour this small but important city, and, by so doing, to protract for a long time their own defence. Mondragon saw and rejoiced over the mistake. “Now ’tis easy to see that the Prince of Orange is dead,” said the veteran, as he took possession, in the Icing’s name, of the forsaken Herenthals.

Early in the summer, Parma’s operations had been, of necessity, desultory. He had sprinkled forts up and down the Scheldt, and had gradually been gaining control of the navigation upon that river. Thus Ghent and Dendermonde, Vilvoorde, Brussels, and Antwerp, had each been isolated, and all prevented from rendering mutual assistance. Below Antwerp, however, was to be the scene of the great struggle. Here, within nine miles of the city, were two forts belonging to the States, on opposite sides of the stream, Lille, and Liefkenshoek. It was important for the Spanish commander to gain possession of both; before commencing his contemplated bridge.

Unfortunately for the States, the fortifications of Liefkenshoek, on the Flemish side of the river, had not been entirely completed. Eight hundred men lay within it, under Colonel John Pettin of Arras, an old patriotic officer of much experience. Parma, after reconnoitring the place in person, despatched the famous Viscount of Ghent—now called Marquis of Roubaix and Richebourg—to carry it by assault. The Marquis sent one hundred men from his Walloon legion, under two officers, in whom he had confidence, to attempt a surprise, with orders, if not successful, to return without delay. They were successful. The one hundred gained entrance into the fort at a point where the defences had not been put into sufficient repair.

They were immediately followed by Richebourg, at the head of his regiment. The day was a fatal one. It was the 10th July, 1584 and William of Orange was falling at Delft by the hand of Balthazar Gerard. Liefkenshoek was carried at a blow. Of the eight hundred patriots in the place, scarcely a man escaped. Four hundred were put to the sword, the others were hunted into the river, when nearly all were drowned. Of the royalists a single man was killed, and two or three more were wounded. “Our Lord was pleased,” wrote Parma piously to Philip, that we “should cut the throats of four hundred of them in a single instant, and that a great many more should be killed upon the dykes; so that I believe very few to have escaped with life. We lost one man, besides two or three wounded.” A few were taken prisoners, and among them was the commander John Pettin. He was at once brought before Richebourg, who was standing in the presence of the Prince of Parma. The Marquis drew his sword, walked calmly up to the captured Colonel, and ran him through the body. Pettin fell dead upon the spot. The

Page 1233

Prince was displeased. “Too much choler, Marquis, too much choler,”—said he reprovingly. “Troppa colera, Signor Marchese, a questa.” But Richebourg knew better. He had, while still Viscount of Ghent, carried on a year previously a parallel intrigue with the royalists and the patriots. The Prince of Parma had bid highest for his services, and had, accordingly, found him a most effectual instrument in completing the reduction of the Walloon Provinces. The Prince was not aware, however, that his brave but venal ally had, at the very same moment, been secretly treating with William of Orange; and as it so happened that Colonel Pettin had been the agent in the unsuccessful negotiation, it was possible that his duplicity would now be exposed. The Marquis had, therefore, been prompt to place his old confederate in the condition wherein men tell no tales, and if contemporary chronicles did not bely him, it was not the first time that he had been guilty of such cold-blooded murder. The choler had not been superfluous.

The fortress of Lille was garrisoned by the Antwerp volunteers, called the “Young Bachelors.” Teligny, the brave son of the illustrious “Iron-armed” La None, commanded in chief: and he had, besides the militia, a company of French under Captain Gascoigne, and four hundred Scotchmen under Colonel Morgan—perhaps two thousand men in all.

Mondragon, hero of the famous submarine expeditions of Philipsland and Zierickzee, was ordered by Parma to take the place at every hazard. With five thousand men—a large proportion of the Spanish effective force at that moment—the veteran placed himself before the fort, taking possession, of the beautiful country-house and farm of Lille, where he planted his batteries, and commenced a regular cannonade. The place was stronger than Liefkenshoek, however, and Teligny thoroughly comprehended the importance of maintaining it for the States. Mondragon dug mines, and Teligny countermined. The Spanish daily cannonade was cheerfully responded to by the besieged, and by the time Mondragon had shot away fifty thousand pounds of powder, he found that he had made no impression upon the fortress, while the number of his troops had been diminishing with great rapidity. Mondragon was not so impetuous as he had been on many former occasions. He never ventured an assault. At last Teligny made a sortie at the head of a considerable force. A warm action succeeded, at the conclusion of which, without a decided advantage on either side, the sluice-gate in the fortress was opened, and the torrent of the Scheldt, swollen by a high tide, was suddenly poured upon the Spaniards. Assailed at once by the fire from the Lillo batteries, and by the waters of the river, they were forced to a rapid retreat. This they effected with great loss, but with signal courage; struggling breast high in the waves, and bearing off their field-pieces in their arms in the very face of the enemy.

Three weeks long Mondragon had been before Fort Lille, and two thousand of his soldiers had been slain in the trenches. The attempt was now abandoned. Parma directed permanent batteries to be established at Lillo-house, at Oordam, and at other

places along the river, and proceeded quietly with his carefully-matured plan for closing the river.

Page 1234

His own camp was in the neighbourhood of the villages of Beveren, Kalloo, and Borght. Of the ten thousand foot and seventeen hundred horse, which composed at the moment his whole army, about one-half lay with him, while the remainder were with Count Peter Ernest Mansfield, in the neighbourhood of Stabroek. Thus the Prince occupied a position on the left bank of the Scheldt, nearly opposite Antwerp, while Mansfield was stationed upon the right bank, and ten miles farther down the river. From a point in the neighbourhood of Kalloo, Alexander intended to throw a fortified bridge to the opposite shore. When completed, all traffic up the river from Zeeland would be cut off; and as the country on the land-side; abut Antwerp, had been now reduced, the city would be effectually isolated. If the Prince could hold his bridge until famine should break the resistance of the burghers, Antwerp would fall into his hands.

His head-quarters were at Kalloo, and this obscure spot soon underwent a strange transformation. A drowsy placid little village—with a modest parish spire peeping above a clump of poplars, and with half a dozen cottages, with storks nests on their roofs, sprinkled here and there among pastures and orchards—suddenly saw itself changed as it were into a thriving bustling town; for, saving the white tents which dotted the green turf in every direction, the aspect of the scene was, for a time, almost pacific. It was as if, some great manufacturing enterprise had been set on foot, and the world had suddenly awoke to the hidden capabilities of the situation.

A great dockyard and arsenal suddenly revealed themselves—rising like an exhalation—where ship-builders, armourers, blacksmiths, joiners, carpenters, caulkers, gravers, were hard at work all day long. The din and hum of what seemed a peaceful industry were unceasing. From Kalloo, Parma dug a canal twelve miles long to a place called Steeken, hundreds of pioneers being kept constantly at work with pick and spade till it was completed. Through this artificial channel—so soon as Ghent and Dendermonde had fallen—came floats of timber, fleets of boats laden with provisions of life and munitions of death, building-materials, and every other requisite for the great undertaking, all to be disembarked at Kalloo. The object was a temporary and destructive one, but it remains a monument of the great general’s energy and a useful public improvement. The amelioration of the fenny and barren soil, called the Waesland, is dated from that epoch; and the spot in Europe which is the most prolific, and which nourishes the largest proportion of inhabitants to the square mile, is precisely the long dreary swamp which the Prince thus drained for military purposes, and converted into a garden. Drusus and Corbulo, in the days of the Roman Empire, had done the same good service for their barbarian foes.

Page 1235

At Kalloo itself, all the shipwrights, cutlers, masons, brass-founders, rope-makers, anchor-forgers, sailors, boatmen, of Flanders and Brabant, with a herd of bakers, brewers, and butchers, were congregated by express order of Parma. In the little church itself the main workshop was established, and all day long, week after week, month after month, the sound of saw and hammer, adze and plane, the rattle of machinery, the cry of sentinels, the cheers of mariners, resounded, where but lately had been heard nothing save the drowsy homily and the devout hymn of rustic worship.

Nevertheless the summer and autumn wore on, and still the bridge was hardly commenced. The navigation of the river—although impeded and rendered dangerous by the forts which Parma held along the banks—was still open; and, so long as the price of corn in Antwerp remained three or four times as high as the sum for which it could be purchased in Holland and Zeeland, there were plenty of daredevil skippers ready to bring cargoes. Fleets of fly-boats, convoyed by armed vessels, were perpetually running the gauntlet. Sharp actions on shore between the forts of the patriots and those of Parma, which were all intermingled promiscuously along the banks, and amphibious and most bloody encounters on ship-board, dyke, and in the stream itself, between the wild Zeelanders and the fierce pikemen of Italy and Spain, were of repeated occurrence. Many a lagging craft fell into the enemy's hands, when, as a matter of course, the men, women, and children, on board, were horribly mutilated by the Spaniards, and were then sent drifting in their boat with the tide—their arms, legs, and ears lopped off up to the city, in order that—the dangerous nature of this provision-trade might be fully illustrated.

Yet that traffic still went on. It would have continued until Antwerp had been victualled for more than a year, had not the city authorities, in the plentitude of their wisdom, thought proper to issue orders for its regulation. On the 25th October (1584) a census was taken, when the number of persons inside the walls was found to be ninety thousand. For this population it was estimated that 300,000 veertell, or about 900,000 bushels of corn, would be required annually. The grain was coming in very fast, notwithstanding the perilous nature of the trade; for wheat could be bought in Holland for fifty florins the last, or about fifteen pence sterling the bushel, while it was worth five or six florins the veertel, or about four shillings the bushel, in Antwerp.

The magistrates now committed a folly more stupendous than it seemed possible for human creatures, under such circumstances, to compass. They established a maximum upon corn. The skippers who had run their cargoes through the gauntlet, all the way from Flushing to Antwerp, found on their arrival, that, instead of being rewarded, according to the natural laws of demand and supply, they were required to exchange

Page 1236

their wheat, rye, butter, and beef, against the exact sum which the Board of Schepens thought proper to consider a reasonable remuneration. Moreover, in order to prevent the accumulation of provisions in private magazines, it was enacted, that all consumers of grain should be compelled to make their purchases directly from the ships. These two measures were almost as fatal as the preservation of the Blaw-garen Dyke, in the interest of the butchers. Winter and famine were staring the city in the face, and the maximum now stood sentinel against the gate, to prevent the admission of food. The traffic ceased without a struggle. Parma himself could not have better arranged the blockade.

Meantime a vast and almost general inundation had taken place. The aspect of the country for many miles around was strange and desolate. The sluices had been opened in the neighbourhood of Saftingen, on, the Flemish side, so that all the way from Hulst the waters were out, and flowed nearly to the gates of Antwerp. A wide and shallow sea rolled over the fertile plains, while church-steeples, the tops of lofty trees, and here and there the turrets of a castle, scarcely lifted themselves above the black waters; the peasants' houses, the granges, whole rural villages, having entirely disappeared. The high grounds of Doel, of Kalloo, and Beveren, where Alexander was established, remained out of reach of the flood. Far below, on the opposite side of the river, other sluices had been opened, and the sea had burst over the wide, level plain. The villages of Wilmerdonk, Orderen, Ekeren, were changed to islands in the ocean, while all the other hamlets, for miles around, were utterly submerged.

Still, however, the Blaw-garen Dyke and its companion the Kowenstyn remained obstinately above the waters, forming a present and more fatal obstruction to the communication between Antwerp and Zeeland than would be furnished even by the threatened and secretly-advancing bridge across the Scheldt. Had Orange's prudent advice been taken, the city had been safe. Over the prostrate dykes, whose destruction he had so warmly urged, the ocean would have rolled quite to the gates of Antwerp, and it would have been as easy to bridge the North Sea as to control the free navigation of the patriots over so wide a surface.

When it was too late, the butchers, and colonels, and captains, became penitent enough. An order was passed, by acclamation, in November, to do what Orange had recommended in June. It was decreed that the Blaw-garen and the Kowenstyn should be pierced. Alas, the hour had long gone by. Alexander of Parma was not the man to undertake the construction of a bridge across the river, at a vast expense, and at the same time to permit the destruction of the already existing barrier. There had been a time for such a deed. The Seigneur de Kowenstyn, who had a castle and manor on and near the dyke which bore his name, had repeatedly urged upon the Antwerp

Page 1237

magistracy the propriety of piercing this bulwark, even after their refusal to destroy the outer barrier. Sainte Aldegonde, who vehemently urged the measure, protested that his hair had stood on end, when he found, after repeated entreaty, that the project was rejected. The Seigneur de Kowenstyn, disgusted and indignant, forswore his patriotism, and went over to Parma. The dyke fell into the hands of the enemy. And now from Stabroek, where old Mansfeid lay with his army, all the way across the flooded country, ran the great bulwark, strengthened with new palisade-work and block-houses, bristling with Spanish cannon, pike, and arquebus, even to the bank of the Scheldt, in the immediate vicinity of Fort Lille. At the angle of its junction with the main dyke of the river's bank, a strong fortress called Holy Cross (Santa Cruz) had been constructed. That fortress and the whole line of the Kowenstyn were held in the iron grip of Mondragon. To wrench it from him would be no child's play. Five new strong redoubts upon the dyke, and five or six thousand Spaniards established there, made the enterprise more formidable than it would have been in June. It had been better to sacrifice the twelve thousand oxen. Twelve thousand Hollanders might now be slaughtered, and still the dyke remain above the waves.

Here was the key to the fate of Antwerp.

On the other hand, the opening of the Saftingen Sluice had done Parma's work for him. Even there, too, Orange had been prophetic. Kalloo was high and dry, but Alexander had experienced some difficulty in bringing a fleet of thirty vessels, laden with cannon and other valuable materials, from Ghent along the Scheldt, into his encampment, because it was necessary for them, before reaching their destination, to pass in front of Antwerp. The inundation, together with a rupture in the Dyke of Borght, furnished him with a watery road; over which his fleet completely avoided the city, and came in triumph to Kalloo.

Sainte Aldegonde, much provoked by this masterly movement on the part of Parma, had followed the little squadron closely with some armed vessels from the city. A sharp action had succeeded, in which the burgomaster, not being properly sustained by the Zeeland ships on which he relied, had been defeated. Admiral Jacob Jacobzoon behaved with so little spirit on the occasion that he acquired with the Antwerp populace the name of "Run-away Jacob," "Koppen gaet loppen;" and Sainte Aldegonde declared, that, but for his cowardice, the fleet of Parma would have fallen into their hands. The burgomaster himself narrowly escaped becoming a prisoner, and owed his safety only to the swiftness of his barge, which was called the "Flying Devil."

The patriots, in order to counteract similar enterprises in future, now erected a sconce, which they called Fort Teligny; upon the ruptured dyke of Borght, directly in front of the Borght blockhouse, belonging to the Spaniards, and just opposite Fort Hoboken. Here, in this narrow passage, close under the walls of Antwerp, where friends and foes were

brought closely, face to face, was the scene of many a sanguinary skirmish, from the commencement of the siege until its close.

Page 1238

Still the bridge was believed to be a mere fable, a chimaera. Parma, men said, had become a lunatic from pride. It was as easy to make the Netherlands submit to the yoke of the Inquisition as to put a bridle on the Scheldt. Its depth; breadth, the ice-floods of a northern winter, the neighbourhood of the Zeeland fleets, the activity of the Antwerp authorities, all were pledges that the attempt would be signally frustrated.

And they should have been pledges—more than enough. Unfortunately, however, there was dissension within, and no chieftain in the field, no sage in the council, of sufficient authority to sustain the whole burthen of the war, and to direct all the energies of the commonwealth. Orange was dead. His son, one day to become the most illustrious military commander in Europe, was a boy of seventeen, nominally captain-general, but in reality but a youthful apprentice to his art. Hohenlo was wild, wilful, and obstinate. Young William Lewis Nassau, already a soldier of marked abilities, was fully occupied in Friesland, where he was stadholder, and where he had quite enough to do in making head against the Spanish governor and general, the veteran Verdugo: Military operations against Zutphen distracted the attention of the States, which should have been fixed upon Antwerp.

Admiral Treslong, as we have seen, was refractory, the cause of great delinquency on the part of the fleets, and of infinite disaster to the commonwealth. More than all, the French negotiation was betraying the States into indolence and hesitation; and creating a schism between the leading politicians of the country. Several thousand French troops, under Monsieur d'Allaynes, were daily expected, but never arrived; and thus, while English and French partisans were plotting and counter-plotting, while a delusive diplomacy was usurping the place of lansquenettes and gun-boats—the only possible agents at that moment to preserve Antwerp—the bridge of Parma was slowly advancing. Before the winter had closed in, the preparatory palisades had been finished.

Between Kalloo and Ordam, upon the opposite side, a sandbar had been discovered in the river's bed, which diminished the depth of the stream, and rendered the pile-driving comparatively easy. The breadth of the Scheldt at this passage was twenty-four hundred feet; its depth, sixty feet. Upon the Flemish side, near Kalloo, a strong fort was erected, called Saint Mary, in honour of the blessed Virgin, to whom the whole siege of Antwerp had been dedicated from the beginning. On the opposite bank was a similar fort, flamed Philip, for the King. From each of these two points, thus fortified, a framework of heavy timber, supported upon huge piles, had been carried so far into the stream on either side that the distance between the ends had at last been reduced to thirteen hundred feet. The breadth of the roadway—formed of strong sleepers firmly bound together—was twelve feet, along which block-houses of great thickness were placed to defend the whole against assault.

Page 1239

Thus far the work had been comparatively easy. To bridge the remaining open portion of the river, however, where its current was deepest and strongest, and where the action of tide, tempest, and icebergs, would be most formidable, seemed a desperate undertaking; for as the enterprise advanced, this narrow open space became the scene of daily amphibious encounters between the soldiers and sailors of Parma and the forces of the States. Unfortunately for the patriots, it was only skirmishing. Had a strong, concerted attack, in large force, from Holland and Zeeland below and from the city above, been agreed upon, there was hardly a period, until very late in the winter, when it might not have had the best chances of success. With a vigorous commander against him, Parma, weak in men, and at his wits' end for money, might, in a few hours, have seen the labour of several months hopelessly annihilated. On the other hand, the Prince was ably seconded by his lieutenant, Marquis Richebourg, to whom had been delegated the immediate superintendence of the bridge-building in its minutest details. He was never idle. Audacious, indefatigable, ubiquitous, he at least atoned by energy and brilliant courage for his famous treason of the preceding year, while his striking and now rapidly approaching doom upon the very scene of his present labours, made him appear to have been building a magnificent though fleeting monument to his own memory.

Sainte Aldegonde, shut up in Antwerp, and hampered by dissension within and obstinate jealousy without the walls, did all in his power to frustrate the enemy's enterprise and animate the patriots. Through the whole of the autumn and early winter, he had urged the States of Holland and Zeeland to make use of the long winter nights, when moonless and stormy, to attempt the destruction of Parma's undertaking, but the fatal influences already indicated were more efficient against Antwerp than even the genius of Farnese; and nothing came of the burgomaster's entreaties save desultory skirmishing and unsuccessful enterprises. An especial misfortune happened in one of these midnight undertakings. Teligny ventured forth in a row-barge, with scarcely any companions, to notify the Zeelanders of a contemplated movement, in which their co-operation was desired. It was proposed that the Antwerp troops should make a fictitious demonstration upon Fort Ordam, while at the same moment the States' troops from Fort Lillo should make an assault upon the forts on Kowenstyn Dyke; and in this important enterprise the Zeeland vessels were requested to assist. But the brave Teligny nearly forfeited his life by his rashness, and his services were, for a long time, lost to the cause of liberty. It had been better to send a less valuable officer upon such hazardous yet subordinate service. The drip of his oars was heard in the darkness. He was pursued by a number of armed barges, attacked, wounded severely in the shoulder, and captured. He threw his letters

Page 1240

overboard, but they were fished out of the water, carried to Parma, and deciphered, so that the projected attack upon the Kowenstyn was discovered, and, of necessity, deferred. As for Teligny, he was taken, as a most valuable prize, into the enemy's camp, and was soon afterwards thrust into prison at Tournay, where he remained six years—one year longer than the period which his illustrious father had been obliged to consume in the infamous dungeon at *Mons*. Few disasters could have been more keenly felt by the States than the loss of this brilliant and devoted French chieftain, who, young as he was, had already become very dear to the republic; and Sainte Aldegonde was severely blamed for sending so eminent a personage on that dangerous expedition, and for sending him, too, with an insufficient convoy.

Still Alexander felt uncertain as to the result. He was determined to secure Antwerp, but he yet thought it possible to secure it by negotiation. The enigmatical policy maintained by France perplexed him; for it did not seem possible that so much apparent solemnity and earnestness were destined to lead to an impotent and infamous conclusion. He was left, too, for a long time in ignorance of his own master's secret schemes, he was at liberty to guess, and to guess only, as to the projects of the league, he was without adequate means to carry out to a certain triumph his magnificent enterprise, and he was in constant alarm lest he should be suddenly assailed by an overwhelming French force. Had a man sat upon the throne of Henry *iii*., at that moment, Parma's bridge-making and dyke-fortifying skilful as they were—would have been all in vain. Meantime, in uncertainty as to the great issue, but resolved to hold firmly to his purpose, he made repeated conciliatory offers to the States with one hand, while he steadily prosecuted his aggressive schemes with the other.

Parma had become really gentle, almost affectionate, towards the Netherlanders. He had not the disposition of an Alva to smite and to blast, to exterminate the rebels and heretics with fire and sword, with the axe, the rack, and the gallows. Provided they would renounce the great object of the contest, he seemed really desirous that they should escape further chastisement; but to admit the worship of God according to the reformed creed, was with him an inconceivable idea. To do so was both unrighteous and impolitic. He had been brought up to believe that mankind could be saved from eternal perdition only by believing in the infallibility of the Bishop of Rome; that the only keys to eternal paradise were in the hands of St. Peter's representative. Moreover, he instinctively felt that within this religious liberty which the Netherlanders claimed was hidden the germ of civil liberty; and though no bigger than a grain of mustard-seed, it was necessary to destroy it at once; for of course the idea of civil liberty could not enter the brain of the brilliant general of Philip *ii*.

Page 1241

On the 13th of November he addressed a letter to the magistracy and broad-council of Antwerp. He asserted that the instigators of the rebellion were not seeking to further the common weal, but their own private ends. Especially had this been the ruling motive with the prince of Orange and the Duke of Anjou, both of whom God had removed from the world, in order to manifest to the States their own weakness, and the omnipotence of Philip, whose, prosperity the Lord was constantly increasing. It was now more than time for the authorities of the country to have regard for themselves, and for the miseries of the poor people. The affection Which he had always felt for the Provinces from which he had himself sprung and the favours which he had received from them in his youth, had often moved him to propose measures, which, before God and his conscience, he believed adequate to the restoration of peace. But his letters had been concealed or falsely interpreted by the late Prince of Orange, who had sought nothing but to spread desolation over the land, and to shed the blood of the innocent. He now wrote once more, and for the last time, in all fervour and earnestness, to implore them to take compassion on their own wives and children and forlorn fatherland, to turn their eyes backward on the peace and prosperity which they had formerly enjoyed when obedient to his Majesty, and to cast a glance around them upon the miseries which were so universal since the rebellion. He exhorted them to close their ears to the insidious tongues of those who were leading them into delusion as to the benevolence and paternal sweetness of their natural lord and master, which were even now so boundless that he did not hesitate once more to offer them his entire forgiveness. If they chose to negotiate, they would find everything granted that with right and reason could be proposed. The Prince concluded by declaring that he made these advances not from any doubt as to the successful issue of the military operations in which he was engaged, but simply out of paternal anxiety for the happiness of the Provinces. Did they remain obstinate, their ultimate conditions would be rendered still more severe, and themselves, not he, would be responsible for the misery and the bloodshed to ensue.

Ten days afterwards, the magistrates, thus addressed—after communication with the broad-council—answered Parma's. 23rd Nov., letter manfully, copiously, and with the customary but superfluous historical sketch. They begged leave to entertain a doubt as to the paternal sweetness of a king who had dealt so long in racks and gibbets. With Parma's own mother, as they told the Prince, the Netherlanders had once made a treaty, by which the right to worship God according to their consciences had been secured; yet for maintaining that treaty they had been devoted to indiscriminate destruction, and their land made desolate with fire and sword. Men had been massacred by thousands, who had never been heard in their own defence, and who had never been accused of any crime, "save that they had assembled together in the name of God, to pray to Him through their only mediator and advocate Jesus Christ, according to His command."

Page 1242

The axis of the revolt was the religious question; and it was impossible to hope anything from a monarch who was himself a slave of the Inquisition, and who had less independence of action than that enjoyed by Jews and Turks, according to the express permission of the Pope. Therefore they informed Parma that they had done with Philip for ever, and that in consequence of the extraordinary wisdom, justice, and moderation, of the French King, they had offered him the sovereignty of their land, and had implored his protection.

They paid a tribute to the character of Farnese, who after gaining infinite glory in arms, had manifested so much gentleness and disposition to conciliate. They doubted not that he would, if he possessed the power, have guided the royal councils to better and more generous results, and protested that they would not have delayed to throw themselves into his arms, had they been assured that he was authorized to admit that which alone could form the basis of a successful negotiation—religious freedom. They would in such case have been willing to close with him, without talking about other conditions than such as his Highness in his discretion and sweetness might think reasonable.

Moreover, as they observed in conclusion, they were precluded, by their present relations with France, from entering into any other negotiation; nor could they listen to any such proposals without deserving to be stigmatized as the most lewd, blasphemous, and thankless mortals, that ever cumbered the earth.

Being under equal obligations both to the Union and to France, they announced that Parma's overtures would be laid before the French government and the assembly of the States-General.

A day was to come, perhaps, when it would hardly seem lewdness and blasphemy for the Netherlanders to doubt the extraordinary justice and wisdom of the French King. Meantime, it cannot be denied that they were at least loyal to their own engagements, and long-suffering where they had trusted and given their hearts.

Parma replied by another letter, dated December 3rd. He assured the citizens that Henry *iii*. was far too discreet, and much too good a friend to Philip *ii*., to countenance this rebellion. If he were to take up their quarrel, however, the King of Spain had a thousand means of foiling all his attempts. As to the religious question—which they affirmed to be the sole cause of the war—he was not inclined to waste words upon that subject; nevertheless, so far as he in his simplicity could understand the true nature of a Christian, he could not believe that it comported with the doctrines of Jesus, whom they called their only mediator, nor with the dictates of conscience, to take up arms against their lawful king, nor to burn, rob, plunder, pierce dykes, overwhelm their fatherland, and reduce all things to misery and chaos, in the name of religion.

Page 1243

Thus moralizing and dogmatizing, the Prince concluded his letter, and so the correspondence terminated. This last despatch was communicated at once both to the States-General and to the French government, and remained unanswered. Soon afterwards the Netherlands and England, France and Spain, were engaged in that vast game of delusion which has been described in the preceding chapters. Meantime both Antwerp and Parma remained among the deluded, and were left to fight out their battle on their own resources.

Having found it impossible to subdue Antwerp by his rhetoric, Alexander proceeded with his bridge. It is impossible not to admire the steadiness and ingenuity with which the Prince persisted in his plans, the courage with which he bore up against the parsimony and neglect of his sovereign, the compassionate tenderness which he manifested for his patient little army. So much intellectual energy commands enthusiasm, while the supineness on the other side sometimes excites indignation. There is even a danger of being entrapped into sympathy with tyranny, when the cause of tyranny is maintained by genius; and of being surprised into indifference for human liberty, when the sacred interests of liberty are endangered by self-interest, perverseness, and folly.

Even Sainte Aldegonde did not believe that the bridge could be completed. His fears were that the city would be ruined rather by the cessation of its commerce than by want of daily food. Already, after the capture of Liefkenshoek and the death of Orange, the panic among commercial people had been so intense that seventy or eighty merchants, representing the most wealthy mercantile firms in Antwerp, made their escape from the place, as if it had been smitten with pestilence, or were already in the hands of Parma. All such refugees were ordered to return on peril of forfeiting their property. Few came back, however, for they had found means of converting and transferring their funds to other more secure places, despite the threatened confiscation. It was insinuated that Holland and Zeeland were indifferent to the fate of Antwerp, because in the sequel the commercial cities of those Provinces succeeded to the vast traffic and the boundless wealth which had been forfeited by the Brabantine capital. The charge was an unjust one. At the very commencement of the siege the States of Holland voted two hundred thousand florins for its relief; and, moreover, these wealthy refugees were positively denied admittance into the territory of the United States, and were thus forced to settle in Germany or England. This cessation of traffic was that which principally excited the anxiety of Aldegonde. He could not bring himself to believe in the possibility of a blockade, by an army of eight or ten thousand men, of a great and wealthy city, where at least twenty thousand citizens were capable of bearing arms. Had he thoroughly understood the deprivations under which Alexander was labouring, perhaps he would have been even more confident as to the result.

Page 1244

“With regard to the affair of the river Scheldt,” wrote Parma to Philip, “I should like to send your Majesty a drawing of the whole scheme; for the work is too vast to be explained by letters. The more I examine it, the more astonished I am that it should have been conducted to this point; so many forts, dykes, canals, new inventions, machinery, and engines, have been necessarily required.”

He then proceeded to enlighten the King—as he never failed to do in all his letters—as to his own impoverished, almost helpless condition. Money, money, men! This was his constant cry. All would be in vain, he said, if he were thus neglected. “’Tis necessary,” said he, “for your Majesty fully to comprehend, that henceforth the enterprise is your own. I have done my work faithfully thus far; it is now for your Majesty to take it thoroughly to heart; and embrace it with the warmth with which an affair involving so much of your own interests deserves to be embraced.”

He avowed that without full confidence in his sovereign’s sympathy he would never have conceived the project. “I confess that the enterprise is great,” he said, “and that by many it will be considered rash. Certainly I should not have undertaken it, had I not felt certain of your Majesty’s full support.”

But he was already in danger of being forced to abandon the whole scheme—although so nearly carried into effect—for want of funds. “The million promised,” he wrote, “has arrived in bits and morsels, and with so many ceremonies, that I haven’t ten crowns at my disposal. How I am to maintain even this handful of soldiers—for the army is diminished to such a mere handful that it would astonish your Majesty—I am unable to imagine. It would move you to witness their condition. They have suffered as much as is humanly possible.”

Many of the troops, indeed, were deserting, and making their escape, beggared and desperate, into France, where, with natural injustice, they denounced their General, whose whole heart was occupied with their miseries, for the delinquency of his master, whose mind was full of other schemes.

“There past this way many Spanish soldiers,” wrote Stafford from Paris, “so poor and naked as I ever saw any. There have been within this fortnight two hundred at a time in this town, who report the extremity of want of victuals in their camp, and that they have been twenty-four months without pay. They exclaim greatly upon the Prince of Parma. Mendoza seeks to convey them away, and to get money for them by all means he can.”

Stafford urged upon his government the propriety of being at least as negligent as Philip had showed himself to be of the Spaniards. By prohibiting supplies to the besieging army, England might contribute, negatively, if not otherwise, to the relief of Antwerp. “There is no place,” he wrote to Walsingham, “whence the Spaniards are so thoroughly victualled as from us. English boats go by sixteen and seventeen into Dunkirk, well laden with provisions.”

Page 1245

This was certainly not in accordance with the interests nor the benevolent professions of the English ministers.

These supplies were not to be regularly depended upon however. They were likewise not to be had without paying a heavy price for them, and the Prince had no money in his coffer. He lived from hand to mouth, and was obliged to borrow from every private individual who had anything to lend. Merchants, nobles, official personages, were all obliged to assist in eking out the scanty pittance allowed by the sovereign.

“The million is all gone,” wrote Parma to his master; “some to Verdugo in Friesland; some to repay the advances of Marquis Richebourg and other gentlemen. There is not a farthing for the garrisons. I can’t go on a month longer, and, if not supplied, I shall be obliged to abandon the work. I have not money enough to pay my sailors, joiners, carpenters, and other mechanics, from week to week, and they will all leave me in the lurch, if I leave them unpaid. I have no resource but to rely on your Majesty. Otherwise the enterprise must wholly fail.”

In case it did fail, the Prince wiped his hands of the responsibility. He certainly had the right to do so.

One of the main sources of supply was the city of Hertogenbosch, or Bois-le-Duc. It was one of the four chief cities of Brabant, and still held for the King, although many towns in its immediate neighbourhood had espoused the cause of the republic. The States had long been anxious to effect a diversion for the relief of Antwerp, by making an attack on Bois-le-Duc. Could they carry the place, Parma would be almost inevitably compelled to abandon the siege in which he was at present engaged, and he could moreover spare no troops for its defence. Bois-le-Duc was a populous, wealthy, thriving town, situate on the Deeze, two leagues above its confluence with the Meuse, and about twelve leagues from Antwerp. It derived its name of `Duke’s Wood’ from a magnificent park and forest, once the favourite resort and residence of the old Dukes of Brabant, of which some beautiful vestiges still remained. It was a handsome well-built city, with two thousand houses of the better class, besides more humble tenements. Its citizens were celebrated for their courage and belligerent skill, both on foot and on horseback. They were said to retain more of the antique Belgic ferocity which Caesar had celebrated than that which had descended to most of their kinsmen. The place was, moreover, the seat of many prosperous manufactures. Its clothiers sent the products of their looms over all Christendom, and its linen and cutlery were equally renowned.

It would be a most fortunate blow in the cause of freedom to secure so, thriving and conspicuous a town, situated thus in the heart of what seemed the natural territory of the United States; and, by so doing, to render nugatory the mighty preparations of Parma against Antwerp. Moreover, it was known that there was no Spanish or other

garrison within its walls, so that there was no opposition to be feared, except from the warlike nature of the citizens.

Page 1246

Count Hohenlo was entrusted, early in January, with this important enterprise. He accordingly collected a force of four thousand infantry, together with two hundred mounted lancers; having previously reconnoitered the ground. He relied very much, for the success of the undertaking, on Captain Kleerhagen, a Brussels nobleman, whose wife was a native of Bois-le-Duc, and who was thoroughly familiar with the locality. One dark winter's night, Kleerhagen, with fifty picked soldiers, advanced to the Antwerp gate of Bois-le-Duc, while Hohenlo, with his whole force, lay in ambuscade as near as possible to the city.

Between the drawbridge and the portcullis were two small guard-houses, which, very carelessly, had been left empty. Kleerhagen, with his fifty followers, successfully climbed into these lurking-places, where they quietly ensconced themselves for the night. At eight o'clock of the following morning (20th January) the guards of the gate drew up the portcullis, and reconnoitered. At the same instant, the ambushed fifty sprang from their concealment, put them to the sword, and made themselves masters of the gate. None of the night-watch escaped with life, save one poor old invalided citizen, whose business had been to draw up the portcullis, and who was severely wounded, and left for dead. The fifty immediately summoned all of Rohenlo's ambuscade that were within hearing, and then, without waiting for them, entered the town pell-mell in the best of spirits, and shouting victory! victory! till they were hoarse. A single corporal, with two men, was left to guard the entrance. Meantime, the old wounded gate-opener, bleeding and crippled, crept into a dark corner, and laid himself down, unnoticed, to die.

Soon afterwards Hohenlo galloped into the town, clad in complete armour, his long curls floating in the wind, with about two hundred troopers clattering behind him, closely followed by five hundred pike-men on foot.

Very brutally, foolishly, and characteristically, he had promised his followers the sacking of the city so soon as it should be taken. They accordingly set about the sacking, before it was taken. Hardly had the five or six hundred effected their entrance, than throwing off all control, they dispersed through the principal streets, and began bursting open the doors of the most opulent households. The cries of "victory!" "gained city!" "down with the Spaniards!" resounded on all sides. Many of the citizens, panic-struck, fled from their homes, which they thus abandoned to pillage, while, meantime, the loud shouts of the assailants reached the ears of the sergeant and his two companies who had been left in charge of the gate. Fearing that they should be cheated of their rightful share in the plunder, they at once abandoned their post, and set forth after their comrades, as fast as their legs could carry them.

Page 1247

Now it so chanced—although there was no garrison in the town—that forty Burgundian and Italian lancers, with about thirty foot-soldiers, had come in the day before to escort a train of merchandise. The Seigneur de Haultepenne, governor of Breda, a famous royalist commander—son of old Count Berlaymont, who first gave the name of "beggars" to the patriots-had accompanied them in the expedition. The little troop were already about to mount their horses to depart, when they became aware of the sudden tumult. Elmont, governor of the city, had also flown to the rescue, and had endeavoured to rally the burghers. Not unmindful of their ancient warlike fame, they had obeyed his entreaties. Elmont, with a strong party of armed citizens, joined himself to Haultepenne's little band of lancers. They fired a few shots at straggling parties of plunderers, and pursued others up some narrow streets. They were but an handful in comparison with the number of the patriots, who had gained entrance to the city. They were, however, compact, united, and resolute. The assailants were scattered, disorderly, and bent only upon plunder. When attacked by an armed and regular band, they were amazed. They had been told that there was no garrison; and behold a choice phalanx of Spanish lancers, led on by one of the most famous of Philip's Netherland chieftains. They thought themselves betrayed by Kleerhagen, entrapped into a deliberately arranged ambush. There was a panic. The soldiers, dispersed and doubtful, could not be rallied. Hohenlo, seeing that nothing was to be done with his five hundred, galloped furiously out of the gate, to bring in the rest of his troops who had remained outside the walls. The prize of the wealthy city of Bois-le-Duc was too tempting to be lightly abandoned; but he had much better have thought of making himself master of it himself before he should present it as a prey to his followers.

During his absence the panic spread. The States' troops, bewildered, astonished, vigorously assaulted, turned their backs upon their enemies, and fled helter-skelter towards the gates, through which they had first gained admittance. But unfortunately for them, so soon as the corporal had left his position, the wounded old gate-opener, in a dying condition, had crawled forth on his hands and knees from a dark hole in the tower, cut, with a pocket-knife, the ropes of the portcullis, and then given up the ghost. Most effective was that blow struck by a dead man's hand. Down came the portcullis. The flying plunderers were entrapped. Close behind them came the excited burghers—their antique Belgic ferocity now fully aroused—firing away with carbine and matchlock, dealing about them with bludgeon and cutlass, and led merrily on by Haultepenne and Elmont armed in proof, at the head of their squadron of lancers. The unfortunate patriots had risen very early in the morning only to shear the wolf. Some were cut to pieces in the streets; others climbed

Page 1248

the walls, and threw themselves head foremost into the moat. Many were drowned, and but a very few effected their escape. Justinus de Nassau. sprang over the parapet, and succeeded in swimming the ditch. Kleerhagen, driven into the Holy Cross tower, ascended to its .roof, leaped, all accoutred as he was, into the river, and with the assistance of a Scotch soldier, came safe to land. Ferdinand Truchsess, brother of the ex-elector of Cologne, was killed. Four or five hundred of the assailants—nearly all who had entered the city—were slain, and about fifty of the burghers.

Hohenlo soon came back, with Colonel Ysselstein, and two thousand fresh troops. But their noses, says a contemporary, grew a hundred feet long with surprise when they saw the gate shut in their faces. It might have occurred to the Count, when he rushed out of the town for reinforcements, that it would be as well to replace the guard, which —as he must have seen—had abandoned their post.

Cursing his folly, he returned, mavellously discomfited, and deservedly censured, to Gertruydenberg. And thus had a most important enterprise; which had nearly been splendidly successful, ended in disaster and disgrace. To the recklessness of the general, to the cupidity which he had himself awakened in his followers, was the failure alone to be attributed. Had he taken possession of the city with a firm grasp at the head of his four thousand men, nothing could have resisted him; Haultepenne, and his insignificant force, would have been dead, or his prisoners; the basis of Parma's magnificent operations would have been withdrawn; Antwerp would have been saved.

"Infinite gratitude," wrote Parma to Philip, "should be rendered to the Lord. Great thanks are also due to Haultepenne. Had the rebels succeeded in their enterprise against Bolduc, I should have been compelled to abandon the siege of Antwerp. The town; by its strength and situation, is of infinite importance for the reduction both of that place and of Brussels, and the rebels in possession of Bolduc would have cut off my supplies."

The Prince recommended Haultepenne most warmly to the King as deserving of a rich "merced." The true hero of the day, however—at least the chief agent in the victory was the poor, crushed, nameless victim who had cut the ropes of the portcullis at the Antwerp gate.

Hohenlo was deeply stung by the disgrace which he had incurred. For a time he sought oblivion in hard drinking; but—brave and energetic, though reckless—he soon became desirous of retrieving his reputation by more successful enterprises. There was no lack of work, and assuredly his hands were rarely idle.

"Hollach (Hohenlo) is gone from hence on Friday last," wrote Davison to Walsingham, "he will do what he may to recover his reputation lost in the attempt, of Bois-le-Duc;

which, for the grief and trouble he hath conceived thereof, hath for the time greatly altered him."

Page 1249

Meantime the turbulent Scheldt, lashed by the storms of winter, was becoming a more formidable enemy to Parma's great enterprise than the military demonstrations of his enemies, or the famine which was making such havoc, with his little army. The ocean-tides were rolling huge ice-blocks up and down, which beat against his palisade with the noise of thunder, and seemed to threaten its immediate destruction. But the work stood firm. The piles supporting the piers, which had been thrust out from each bank into the stream, had been driven fifty feet into the river's bed, and did their duty well. But in the space between, twelve hundred and forty feet in width, the current was too deep for pile-driving and a permanent bridge was to be established upon boats. And that bridge was to be laid across the icy and tempestuous flood, in the depth of winter, in the teeth of a watchful enemy, with the probability of an immediate invasion from France, where the rebel envoys were known to be negotiating on express invitation of the King—by half-naked, half-starving soldiers and sailors, unpaid for years, and for the sake of a master who seemed to have forgotten their existence.

"Thank God," wrote Alexander, "the palisade stands firm in spite of the ice. Now with the favour of the Lord, we shall soon get the fruit we have been hoping, if your Majesty is not wanting in that to which your grandeur, your great Christianity, your own interests, oblige you. In truth 'tis a great and heroic work, worthy the great power of your Majesty." "For my own part," he continued, "I have done what depended upon me. From your own royal hand must emanate the rest;—men, namely, sufficient to maintain the posts, and money enough to support them there."

He expressed himself in the strongest language concerning the danger to the royal cause from the weak and gradually sinking condition of the army. Even without the French intrigues with the rebels, concerning which, in his ignorance of the exact state of affairs, he expressed much anxiety, it would be impossible, he said, to save the royal cause without men and money.

"I have spared myself," said the Prince, "neither day nor night. Let not your Majesty impute the blame to me if we fail. Verdugo also is uttering a perpetual cry out of Friesland for men—men and money."

Yet, notwithstanding all these obstacles, the bridge was finished at last. On the 25th February, (1585) the day sacred to Saint Matthew, and of fortunate augury to the Emperor Charles, father of Philip and grandfather of Alexander, the Scheldt was closed.

Page 1250

As already stated, from Fort Saint Mary on the Kalloo side, and from Fort Philip, not far from Ordain on the Brabant shore of the Scheldt, strong structures, supported upon piers, had been projected, reaching, respectively, five hundred feet into the stream. These two opposite ends were now connected by a permanent bridge of boats. There were thirty-two of these barges, each of them sixty-two feet in length and twelve in breadth, the spaces between each couple being twenty-two feet wide, and all being bound together, stem, stern, and midships, by quadruple hawsers and chains. Each boat was anchored at stem and stern with loose cables. Strong timbers, with cross rafters, were placed upon the boats, upon which heavy frame-work the planked pathway was laid down. A thick parapet of closely-fitting beams was erected along both the outer edges of the whole fabric. Thus a continuous and well-fortified bridge, two thousand four hundred feet in length, was stretched at last from shore to shore. Each of the thirty-two boats on which the central portion of the structure reposed, was a small fortress provided with two heavy pieces of artillery, pointing, the one up, the other down the stream, and manned by thirty-two soldiers and four sailors, defended by a breastwork formed of gabions of great thickness.

The forts of Saint Philip and St. Mary, at either end of the bridge, had each ten great guns, and both were filled with soldiers. In front of each fort, moreover, was stationed a fleet of twenty armed vessels, carrying heavy pieces of artillery; ten anchored at the angle towards Antwerp, and as many looking down the river. One hundred and seventy great guns, including the armaments of the boats under the bridge of the armada and the forts, protected the whole structure, pointing up and down the stream.

But, besides these batteries, an additional precaution had been taken. On each side, above and below the bridge, at a moderate distance—a bow shot—was anchored a heavy, raft floating upon empty barrels. Each raft was composed of heavy timbers, bound together in bunches of three, the spaces between being connected by ships' masts and lighter spar-work, and with a tooth-like projection along the whole outer edge, formed of strong rafters, pointed and armed with sharp prongs and hooks of iron. Thus a serried phalanx, as it were, of spears stood ever on guard to protect the precious inner structure. Vessels coming from Zeeland or Antwerp, and the floating ice-masses, which were almost as formidable, were obliged to make their first attack upon these dangerous outer defences. Each raft; floating in the middle of the stream, extended twelve hundred, and fifty-two feet across, thus protecting the whole of the bridge of boats and a portion of that resting upon piles.

Page 1251

Such was the famous bridge of Parma. The magnificent undertaking has been advantageously compared with the celebrated Rhine-bridge of Julius Caesar. When it is remembered; however; that the Roman work was performed in summer, across a river only half as broad as the Scheldt, free from the disturbing, action of the tides; and flowing through an unresisting country; while the whole character of the structure; intended only to, serve for the single passage of an army, was far inferior to the massive solidity of Parma's bridge; it seems not unreasonable to assign the superiority to the general who had surmounted all the obstacles of a northern winter, vehement ebb and flow from the sea, and enterprising and desperate enemies at every point.

When the citizens, at last, looked upon the completed fabric, converted from the "dream," which they had pronounced it to be, into a terrible reality; when they saw the shining array of Spanish and Italian legions marching and counter-marching upon their new road; and trampling, as it were; the turbulent river beneath their feet; when they witnessed the solemn military spectacle with which the Governor-General celebrated his success, amid peals of cannon and shouts of triumph from his army, they bitterly bewailed their own folly. Yet even then they could hardly believe that the work had been accomplished by human agency, but they loudly protested that invisible demons had been summoned to plan and perfect this fatal and preter-human work. They were wrong. There had been but one demon—one clear, lofty intelligence, inspiring a steady and untiring hand. The demon was the intellect of Alexander Farnese; but it had been assisted in its labour by the hundred devils of envy, covetousness, jealousy, selfishness, distrust, and discord, that had housed, not, in his camp, but in the ranks of those who were contending for their hearths and altars.

And thus had the Prince arrived at success in spite of every obstacle. He took a just pride in the achievement, yet he knew by how many dangers he was still surrounded, and he felt hurt at his sovereign's neglect. "The enterprise at Antwerp," he wrote to Philip on the day the bridge was completed, "is so great and heroic that to celebrate it would require me to speak more at large than I like, to do, for fear of being tedious to your Majesty. What I will say, is that the labours and difficulties have been every day so, great, that if your Majesty knew them, you would estimate, what we have done more highly than-you do; and not forget us so utterly, leaving us to die of hunger."

He considered the fabric in itself almost impregnable, provided he were furnished with the means to maintain what he had so painfully constructed.

"The whole is in such condition," said he, "that in opinion of all competent military judges it would stand though all Holland and Zeeland should come to destroy our, palisades. Their attacks must be made at immense danger, and disadvantage, so severely can we play upon them with our artillery and musketry. Every boat is, garnished with the most dainty captains and soldiers, so that if the enemy should attempt to assail us now, they would come back with broken heads."

Page 1252

Yet in the midst of his apparent triumph he had, at times, almost despair in his heart. He felt really at the last gasp. His troops had dwindled to the mere shadow of an army, and they were forced to live almost upon air. The cavalry had nearly vanished. The garrisons in the different cities were starving. The burghers had no food for the soldiers nor for themselves. “As for the rest of the troops,” said Alexander, “they are stationed where they have nothing to subsist upon, save salt water and the dykes, and if the Lord does not grant a miracle, succour, even if sent by your Majesty, will arrive too late.” He assured his master, that he could not go on more than five or six days longer, that he had been feeding his soldiers for a long time from hand to mouth, and that it would soon be impossible for him to keep his troops together. If he did not disband them they would run away.

His pictures were most dismal, his supplications for money very moving but he never alluded to himself. All his anxiety, all his tenderness, were for his soldiers. “They must have food,” he said: “’Tis impossible to sustain them any longer by driblets, as I have done for a long time. Yet how can I do it without money? And I have none at all, nor do I see where to get a single florin.”

But these revelations were made only to his master’s most secret ear. His letters, deciphered after three centuries, alone make manifest the almost desperate condition in which the apparently triumphant general was placed, and the facility with which his antagonists, had they been well guided and faithful to themselves, might have driven him into the sea.

But to those adversaries he maintained an attitude of serene and smiling triumph. A spy, sent from the city to obtain intelligence for the anxious burghers, had gained admission into his lines, was captured and brought before the Prince. He expected, of course, to be immediately hanged. On the contrary, Alexander gave orders that he should be conducted over every part of the encampment. The forts, the palisades, the bridge, were all to be carefully exhibited and explained to him as if he had been a friendly visitor entitled to every information. He was requested to count the pieces of artillery in the forts, on the bridge, in the armada. After thoroughly studying the scene he was then dismissed with a safe-conduct to the city.

“Go back to those who sent you,” said the Prince. “Convey to them the information in quest of which you came. Apprize them of every thing which you have inspected, counted, heard explained. Tell them further, that the siege will never be abandoned, and that this bridge will be my sepulcher or my pathway into Antwerp.”

Page 1253

And now the aspect of the scene was indeed portentous. The chimera had become a very visible bristling reality. There stood the bridge which the citizens had ridiculed while it was growing before their faces. There scowled the Kowenstyn—black with cannon, covered all over with fortresses which the butchers had so sedulously preserved. From Parma's camp at Beveren and Kalloo a great fortified road led across the river and along the fatal dyke all the way to the entrenchments at Stabroek, where Mansfeld's army lay. Grim Mondragon held the "holy cross" and the whole Kowenstyn in his own iron grasp. A chain of forts, built and occupied by the contending hosts of the patriots and the Spaniards, were closely packed together along both banks of the Scheldt, nine miles long from Antwerp to Lillo, and interchanged perpetual cannonades. The country all around, once fertile as a garden, had been changed into a wild and wintry sea where swarms of gun-boats and other armed vessels manoeuvred and contended with each other over submerged villages and orchards, and among half-drowned turrets and steeples. Yet there rose the great bulwark—whose early destruction would have made all this desolation a blessing—unbroken and obstinate; a perpetual obstacle to communication between Antwerp and Zeeland. The very spirit of the murdered Prince of Orange seemed to rise sadly and reproachfully out of the waste of waters, as if to rebuke the men who had been so deaf to his solemn warnings.

Brussels, too, wearied and worn, its heart sick with hope deferred, now fell into despair as the futile result of the French negotiation became apparent. The stately and opulent city had long been in a most abject condition. Many of its inhabitants attempted to escape from the horrors of starving by flying from its walls. Of the fugitives, the men were either scourged back by the Spaniards into the city, or hanged up along the road-side. The women were treated, leniently, even playfully, for it was thought an excellent jest to cut off the petticoats of the unfortunate starving creatures up to their knees, and then command them to go back and starve at home with their friends and fellow-citizens. A great many persons literally died of hunger. Matrons with large families poisoned their children and themselves to avoid the more terrible death by starving. At last, when Vilvoorde was taken, when the baseness of the French King was thoroughly understood, when Parma's bridge was completed and the Scheldt bridled, Brussels capitulated on as favourable terms as could well have been expected.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

College of "peace-makers," who wrangled more than all
Military virtue in the support of an infamous cause
Not distinguished for their docility
Repentance, as usual, had come many hours too late

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

Page 1254

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, 1585

Alexander Farnese, The Duke of Parma

CHAPTER V., Part 2.

Position of Alexander and his Army—La Motte attempts in vain Ostend—Patriots gain Liefkenshoek—Projects of Gianibelli—Alarm on the Bridge—The Fire Ships—The Explosion—Its Results—Death of the Viscount of Ghent—Perpetual Anxiety of Farnese—Impoverished State of the Spaniards—Intended Attack of the Kowenstyn—Second Attack of the Kowenstyn—A Landing effected—A sharp Combat—The Dyke pierced —-Rally of the Spaniards—Parma comes to the Rescue—Fierce Struggle on the Dyke—-The Spaniards successful—Premature Triumph at Antwerp —Defeat of the Patriots—-The Ship War's End—Despair of the Citizens

Notwithstanding these triumphs, Parma was much inconvenienced by not possessing the sea-coast of Flanders. Ostend was a perpetual stumbling-block to him. He therefore assented, with pleasure to a proposition made by La Motte, one of the most experienced and courageous of the Walloon royalist, commanders, to attempt the place by surprise. And La Motte; at the first blow; was more than half successful.

On the night of the 29th March, (1585) with two thousand foot and twelve hundred cavalry, he carried the whole of the old port of Ostend. Leaving a Walloon officer, in whom he had confidence, to guard the position already gained, he went back in person for reinforcements. During his advance, the same ill luck attended his enterprise which had blasted Hohenlo's achievement at Bois-le-Duc. The soldiers he left behind him deserted their posts for the sake of rifling the town. The officer in command, instead of keeping them to their duty, joined in the chase. The citizens roused themselves, attacked their invaders, killed many of them, and put the rest to flight. When La Motte returned; he found the panic general. His whole force, including the fresh soldiers just brought to the rescue, were beside themselves with fear. He killed several with his own hand, but the troops were not to be rallied. His quick triumph was changed into an absolute defeat.

Parma, furious at the ignominious result of a plan from which so much had been expected, ordered the Walloon captain, from whose delinquency so much disaster had resulted, to be forthwith hanged. "Such villainy," said he, "must never go unpunished."

It was impossible for the Prince to send a second expedition to attempt the reduction of Ostend, for the patriots were at last arousing themselves to the necessity of exertion. It

was very obvious—now that the bridge had been built, and the Kowenstyn fortified—-that one or the other was to be destroyed, or Antwerp abandoned to its fate.

The patriots had been sleeping, as it were, all the winter, hugging the delusive dream of French sovereignty and French assistance. No language can exaggerate the deadly effects from the slow poison of that negotiation. At any rate, the negotiation was now concluded. The dream was dispelled. Antwerp must now fall, or a decisive blow must be struck by the patriots themselves, and a telling blow had been secretly and maturely meditated. Certain preparatory steps were however necessary.

Page 1255

The fort of Liefkenshoek, “darling’s corner,” was a most important post. The patriots had never ceased to regret that precious possession, lost, as we have seen, in so tragical a manner on the very day of Orange’s death. Fort Lillo, exactly opposite, on the Brabant shore of the Scheldt, had always been securely held by them; and was their strongest position. Were both places in their power, the navigation of the river, at least as far as the bridge, would be comparatively secure.

A sudden dash was made upon Liefkenshoek. A number of armed vessels sailed up from Zeeland, under command of Justinus de Nassau. They were assisted from Fort Lillo by a detachment headed by Count Hohenlo. These two officers were desirous of retrieving the reputation which they had lost at Bois-le-Duc. They were successful, and the “darling” fort was carried at a blow. After a brief cannonade, the patriots made a breach, effected a landing, and sprang over the ramparts. The Walloons and Spaniards fled in dismay; many of them were killed in the fort, and along the dykes; others were hurled into the Scheldt. The victors followed up their success by reducing, with equal impetuosity, the fort of Saint Anthony, situate in the neighbourhood farther down the river. They thus gained entire command of all the high ground, which remained in that quarter above the inundation, and was called the Doel.

The dyke, on which Liefkenshoek stood, led up the river towards Kalloo, distant less than a league. There were Parma’s head-quarters and the famous bridge. But at Fort Saint Mary; where the Flemish head of that bridge rested, the dyke was broken. Upon that broken end the commanders of the expedition against Liefkenshoek were ordered to throw up an entrenchment, without loss of a moment, so soon as they should have gained the fortresses which they were ordered first to assault. Sainte Aldegonde had given urgent written directions to this effect. From a redoubt situated thus, in the very face of Saint Mary’s, that position, the palisade-work, the whole bridge, might be battered with all the artillery that could be brought from Zeeland.

But Parma was beforehand with them. Notwithstanding his rage and mortification that Spanish soldiers should have ignominiously lost the important fortress which Richebourg had conquered so brilliantly nine months before, he was not the man to spend time in unavailing regrets. His quick eye instantly, detected the flaw which might soon be fatal. In the very same night of the loss of Liefkenshoek, he sent as strong a party as could be spared, with plenty of sappers and miners, in flat-bottomed boats across from Kalloo. As the morning dawned, an improvised fortress, with the Spanish flag waving above its bulwarks, stood on the broken end of the dyke. That done, he ordered one of the two captains who had commanded in Liefkenshoek and Saint Anthony to be beheaded on the same dyke. The other was dismissed with ignominy. Ostend was, of course, given up; “but it was not a small matter,” said Parma, “to fortify ourselves that very night upon the ruptured place, and so prevent the rebels from doing it, which would have been very mal-a-propos.”

Page 1256

Nevertheless, the rebels had achieved a considerable success; and now or never the telling blow, long meditated, was to be struck.

There lived in Antwerp a subtle Mantuan, Gianibelli by name, who had married and been long settled in the city. He had made himself busy with various schemes for victualling the place. He had especially urged upon the authorities, at an early period of the siege, the propriety of making large purchases of corn and storing it in magazines at a time when famine-price had by no means been reached. But the leading men had then their heads full of a great ship, or floating castle, which they were building, and which they had pompously named the 'War's End,' 'Fin de la Guerre.' We shall hear something of this phenomenon at a later period. Meanwhile, Gianibelli, who knew something of shipbuilding, as he did of most other useful matters, ridiculed the design, which was likely to cost, in itself before completion, as much money as would keep the city in bread for a third of a year.

Gianibelli was no patriot. He was purely a man of science and of great acquirements, who was looked upon by the ignorant populace alternately as a dreamer and a wizard. He was as indifferent to the cause of freedom as of despotism, but he had a great love for chemistry. He was also a profound mechanician, second to no man of his age in theoretic and practical engineering.

He had gone from Italy to Spain that he might offer his services to Philip, and give him the benefit of many original and ingenious inventions. Forced to dance attendance, day after day, among sneering courtiers and insolent placemen, and to submit to the criticism of practical sages and philosophers of routine, while, he was constantly denied an opportunity of explaining his projects, the quick-tempered Italian had gone away at last, indignant. He had then vowed revenge upon the dulness by which his genius had been slighted, and had sworn that the next time the Spaniards heard the name of the man whom they had dared to deride, they should hear it with tears.

He now laid before the senate of Antwerp a plan for some vessels likely to prove more effective than the gigantic 'War's End,' which he had prophesied would prove a failure. With these he pledged himself to destroy the bridge. He demanded three ships which he had selected from the city fleet; the 'Orange,' the 'Post,' and the 'Golden Lion,' measuring, respectively, one hundred and fifty, three hundred and fifty, and five hundred tons. Besides these, he wished sixty flat-bottomed scows, which he proposed to send down the river, partially submerged, disposed in the shape of a half moon, with innumerable anchors and grapnel's thrusting themselves out of the water at every point. This machine was intended to operate against the raft.

Ignorance and incredulity did their work, as usual, and Gianbelli's request was refused. As a quarter-measure, nevertheless, he was allowed to take two smaller vessels of seventy and eighty tons. The Italian was disgusted with parsimony upon so momentous

an occasion, but he at the same time determined, even with these slender materials, to give an exhibition of his power.

Page 1257

Not all his the glory, however, of the ingenious project. Associated with him were two skilful artizans of Antwerp; a clockmaker named Bory, and a mechanician named Timmerman—but Gianibelli was the chief and superintendent of the whole daring enterprise.

He gave to his two ships the cheerful names of the ‘Fortune’ and the ‘Hope,’ and set himself energetically to justify their titles by their efficiency. They were to be marine volcanos, which, drifting down the river with tide, were to deal destruction where the Spaniards themselves most secure.

In the hold of each vessel, along the whole length, was laid down a solid flooring of brick and mortar, one foot thick and five feet wide. Upon this was built a chamber of marble mason-work, forty feet long, three and a half feet broad, as many high, and with side-walks [walls? D.W.] five feet in thickness.

This was the crater. It was filled with seven thousand of gunpowder, of a kind superior to anything known, and prepared by Gianibelli himself. It was covered with a roof, six feet in thickness, formed of blue tombstones, placed edgewise. Over this crater, rose a hollow cone, or pyramid, made of heavy marble slabs, and filled with mill-stones, cannon balls, blocks of marble, chain-shot, iron hooks, plough-coulters, and every dangerous missile that could be imagined. The spaces between the mine and the sides of each ship were likewise filled with paving stones, iron-bound stakes, harpoons, and other projectiles. The whole fabric was then covered by a smooth light flooring of planks and brick-work, upon which was a pile of wood: This was to be lighted at the proper time, in order that the two vessels might present the appearance of simple fire-ships, intended only to excite a conflagration of the bridge. On the ‘Fortune’ a slow match, very carefully prepared, communicated with the submerged mine, which was to explode at a nicely-calculated moment. The eruption of the other floating volcano was to be regulated by an ingenious piece of clock-work, by which, at the appointed time, fire, struck from a flint, was to inflame the hidden mass of gunpowder below.

In addition to these two infernal machines, or “hell-burners,” as they were called, a fleet of thirty-two smaller vessels was prepared. Covered with tar, turpentine, rosin, and filled with inflammable and combustible materials, these barks were to be sent from Antwerp down the river in detachments of eight every half hour with the ebb tide. The object was to clear the way, if possible, of the raft, and to occupy the attention of the Spaniards, until the ‘Fortune’ and the `Hope’ should come down upon the bridge.

Page 1258

The 5th April, (1885) being the day following that on which the successful assault upon Liefkenshoek and Saint Anthony had taken place, was fixed for the descent of the fire-ships. So soon as it should be dark, the thirty-two lesser burning-vessels, under the direction of Admiral Jacob Jacobzoon, were to be sent forth from the neighborhood of the 'Boor's Sconce'—a fort close to the city walls—in accordance with the Italian's plan. "Run-a-way Jacob," however, or "Koppen Loppen," had earned no new laurels which could throw into the shade that opprobrious appellation. He was not one of Holland's naval heroes, but, on the whole, a very incompetent officer; exactly the man to damage the best concerted scheme which the genius of others could invent. Accordingly, Koppen-Loppen began with a grave mistake. Instead of allowing the precursory fire-ships to drift down the stream, at the regular intervals agreed upon, he despatched them all rapidly, and helter skelter, one after another, as fast as they could be set forth on their career. Not long afterwards, he sent the two "hellburners," the 'Fortune' and the 'Hope,' directly in their wake. Thus the whole fiery fleet had set forth, almost at once, upon its fatal voyage.

It was known to Parma that preparations for an attack were making at Antwerp, but as to the nature of the danger he was necessarily in the dark. He was anticipating an invasion by a fleet from the city in combination with a squadron of Zeelanders coming up from below. So soon as the first vessels, therefore, with their trains not yet lighted, were discovered bearing down from the city, he was confirmed in his conjecture. His drama and trumpets instantly called to arms, and the whole body of his troops was mustered upon the bridge; the palisades, and in the nearest forts. Thus the preparations to avoid or to contend with the danger, were leading the Spaniards into the very jaws of destruction. Alexander, after crossing and recrossing the river, giving minute directions for repelling the expected assault, finally stationed himself in the block-house at the point of junction, on the Flemish aide, between the palisade and the bridge of boats. He was surrounded by a group of superior officers, among whom Richebourg, Billy, Gaetano, Cessis, and the Englishman Sir Rowland Yorke, were conspicuous.

It was a dark, mild evening of early spring. As the fleet of vessels dropped slowly down the river, they suddenly became luminous, each ship flaming out of the darkness, a phantom of living fire. The very waves of the Scheldt seemed glowing with the conflagration, while its banks were lighted up with a preternatural glare. It was a wild, pompous, theatrical spectacle. The array of soldiers on both aides the river, along the dykes and upon the bridge, with banners waving, and spear and cuirass glancing in the lurid light; the demon fleet, guided by no human hand, wrapped in flames, and flitting through the darkness, with irregular movement; but portentous aspect, at the caprice of wind and tide; the death-like silence of expectation, which had succeeded the sound of trumpet and the shouts of the soldiers; and the weird glow which had supplanted the darkness-all combined with the sense of imminent and mysterious danger to excite and oppress the imagination.

Page 1259

Presently, the Spaniards, as they gazed from the bridge, began to take heart again. One after another, many of the lesser vessels drifted blindly against the raft, where they entangled themselves among the hooks and gigantic spearheads, and burned slowly out without causing any extensive conflagration. Others grounded on the banks of the river, before reaching their destination. Some sank in the stream.

Last of all came the two infernal ships, swaying unsteadily with the current; the pilots of course, as they neared the bridge, having noiselessly effected their escape in the skiffs. The slight fire upon the deck scarcely illuminated the dark phantom-like hulls. Both were carried by the current clear of the raft, which, by a great error of judgment, as it now appeared, on the part of the builders, had only been made to protect the floating portion of the bridge. The ‘Fortune’ came first, staggering inside the raft, and then lurching clumsily against the dyke, and grounding near Kalloo, without touching the bridge. There was a moment’s pause of expectation. At last the slow match upon the deck burned out, and there was a faint and partial explosion, by which little or no damage was produced.

Parma instantly called for volunteers to board the mysterious vessel. The desperate expedition was headed by the bold Roland York, a Londoner, of whom one day there was more to be heard in Netherland history. The party sprang into the deserted and now harmless volcano, extinguishing the slight fires that were smouldering on the deck, and thrusting spears and long poles into the hidden recesses of the hold. There was, however, little time to pursue these perilous investigations, and the party soon made their escape to the bridge.

The troops of Parma, crowding on the palisade, and looking over the parapets, now began to greet the exhibition with peals of derisive laughter. It was but child’s play, they thought, to threaten a Spanish army, and a general like Alexander Farnese, with such paltry fire-works as these. Nevertheless all eyes were anxiously fixed upon the remaining fire-ship, or “hell-burner,” the ‘Hope,’ which had now drifted very near the place of its destination. Tearing her way between the raft and the shore, she struck heavily against the bridge on the Kalloo side, close to the block-house at the commencement of the floating portion of the bridge. A thin wreath of smoke was seen curling over a slight and smouldering fire upon her deck.

Marquis Richebourg, standing on the bridge, laughed loudly at the apparently impotent conclusion of the whole adventure. It was his last laugh on earth. A number of soldiers, at Parma’s summons, instantly sprang on board this second mysterious vessel, and occupied themselves, as the party on board the ‘Fortune’ had done, in extinguishing, the flames, and in endeavoring to ascertain the nature of the machine. Richebourg boldly directed from the bridge their hazardous experiments.

Page 1260

At the same moment a certain ensign De Vega, who stood near the Prince of Parma, close to the block-house, approached him with vehement entreaties that he should retire. Alexander refused to stir from the spot, being anxious to learn the result of these investigations. Vega, moved by some instinctive and irresistible apprehension, fell upon his knees, and plucking the General earnestly by the cloak, implored him with such passionate words and gestures to leave the place, that the Prince reluctantly yielded.

It was not a moment too soon. The clockwork had been better adjusted than the slow match in the 'Fortune.' Scarcely had Alexander reached the entrance of Saint Mary's Fort, at the end of the bridge, when a horrible explosion was heard. The 'Hope' disappeared, together with the men who had boarded her, and the block-house, against which she had struck, with all its garrison, while a large portion of the bridge, with all the troops stationed upon it, had vanished into air. It was the work of a single instant. The Scheldt yawned to its lowest depth, and then cast its waters across the dykes, deep into the forts, and far over the land. The earth shook as with the throb of a volcano. A wild glare lighted up the scene for one moment, and was then succeeded by pitchy darkness. Houses were toppled down miles away, and not a living thing, even in remote places, could keep its feet. The air was filled with a rain of plough-shares, grave-stones, and marble balls, intermixed with the heads, limbs, and bodies, of what had been human beings. Slabs of granite, vomited by the flaming ship, were found afterwards at a league's distance, and buried deep in the earth. A thousand soldiers were destroyed in a second of time; many of them being torn to shreds, beyond even the semblance of humanity.

Richebourg disappeared, and was not found until several days later, when his body was discovered; doubled around an iron chain, which hung from one of the bridge-boats in the centre of the river. The veteran Robles, Seigneur de Billy, a Portuguese officer of eminent service and high military rank, was also destroyed. Months afterwards, his body was discovered adhering to the timber-work of the bridge, upon the ultimate removal of that structure, and was only recognized by a peculiar gold chain which he habitually wore. Parma himself was thrown to the ground, stunned by a blow on the shoulder from a flying stake. The page, who was behind him, carrying his helmet, fell dead without a wound, killed by the concussion of the air.

Several strange and less tragical incidents occurred. The Viscomte de Bruxelles was blown out of a boat on the Flemish side, and descended safe and, sound into another in the centre of the stream. Captain Tucci, clad in complete armour, was whirled out of a fort, shot perpendicularly into the air, and then fell back into the river. Being of a cool temperament, a good swimmer, and very pious, he skilfully divested

Page 1261

himself of cuirass and helmet, recommended himself to the Blessed Virgin, and swam safely ashore. Another young officer of Parma's body-guard, Francois de Liege by name, standing on the Kalloo end of the bridge, rose like a feather into the clouds, and, flying quite across the river, alighted on the opposite bank with no further harm than a contused shoulder. He imagined himself (he said afterwards) to have been changed into a cannon-ball, as he rushed through the pitchy atmosphere, propelled by a blast of irresistible fury.
[The chief authorities used in the foregoing account of this famous enterprise are those already cited on a previous page, *viz*.: the *Ms*. Letters of the Prince of Parma in the Archives of Simancas; Bor, ii. 596, 597; Strada, H. 334 seq.; Meteren, xii. 223; Hoofd Vervolgh, 91; Baudartii Polemographia, ii. 24-27; Bentivoglio, *etc*., I have not thought it necessary to cite them step by step; for all the accounts, with some inevitable and unimportant discrepancies, agree with each other. The most copious details are to be found in Strada and in Bor.]

It had been agreed that Admiral Jacobzoon should, immediately after the explosion of the fire-ships, send an eight-oared barge to ascertain the amount of damage. If a breach had been effected, and a passage up to the city opened, he was to fire a rocket. At this signal, the fleet stationed at Lillo, carrying a heavy armament, laden with provisions enough to relieve Antwerp from all anxiety, and ready to sail on the instant, was at once to force its way up the river.

The deed was done. A breach, two hundred feet in width was made. Had the most skilful pilot in Zeeland held the helm of the 'Hope,' with a choice crew obedient to his orders, he could not have guided her more carefully than she had been directed by wind and tide. Avoiding the raft which lay in her way, she had, as it were, with the intelligence of a living creature, fulfilled the wishes of the daring genius that had created her; and laid herself alongside the bridge, exactly at the most telling point. She had then destroyed herself, precisely at the right moment. All the effects, and more than all, that had been predicted by the Mantuan wizard had come to pass. The famous bridge was cleft through and through, and a thousand picked men—Parma's very "daintiest"—were blown out of existence. The Governor-General himself was lying stark and stiff upon the bridge which he said should be his triumphal monument or his tomb. His most distinguished officers were dead, and all the survivors were dumb and blind with astonishment at the unheard of, convulsion. The passage was open for the fleet, and the fleet, lay below with sails spread, and oars in the rowlocks, only waiting for the signal to bear up at once to the scene of action, to smite out of existence all that remained of the splendid structure, and to carry relief and triumph into Antwerp.

Page 1262

Not a soul slept in the city. The explosion had shook its walls, and thousands of people thronged the streets, their hearts beating high with expectation. It was a moment of exquisite triumph. The 'Hope,' word of happy augury, had not been relied upon in vain, and Parma's seven months of patient labour had been annihilated in a moment. Sainte Aldegonde and Gianibelli stood in the 'Boors' Sconce' on the edge of the river. They had felt and heard the explosion, and they were now straining their eyes through the darkness to mark the flight of the welcome rocket.

That rocket never rose. And it is enough, even after the lapse of three centuries, to cause a pang in every heart that beats for human liberty to think of the bitter disappointment which crushed these great and legitimate hopes. The cause lay in the incompetency and cowardice of the man who had been so unfortunately entrusted with a share in a noble enterprise.

Admiral Jacobzoon, paralyzed by the explosion, which announced his own triumph, sent off the barge, but did not wait for its return. The boatmen, too, appalled by the sights and sounds which they had witnessed, and by the murky darkness which encompassed them, did not venture near the scene of action, but, after rowing for a short interval hither and thither, came back with the lying report that nothing had been accomplished, and that the bridge remained unbroken. Sainte Aldegonde and Gianibelli were beside themselves with rage, as they surmised the imbecility of the Admiral, and devoted him in their hearts to the gallows, which he certainly deserved. The wrath of the keen Italian may be conceived, now that his ingenious and entirely successful scheme was thus rendered fruitless by the blunders of the incompetent Fleming.

On the other side, there was a man whom no danger could appall. Alexander had been thought dead, and the dismay among his followers was universal. He was known to have been standing an instant before the explosion on the very block-house where the 'Hope' had struck. After the first terrible moments had passed, his soldiers found their general lying, as if in a trance, on the threshold of St. Mary's Fort, his drawn sword in his hand, with Cessis embracing his knees, and Gaetano extended at his side, stunned with a blow upon the head.

Recovering from his swoon, Parma was the first to spring to his feet. Sword in hand, he rushed at once upon the bridge to mark the extent of the disaster. The admirable structure, the result of so much patient and intelligent energy, was fearfully shattered; the bridge, the river, and the shore, strewed with the mangled bodies of his soldiers. He expected, as a matter of certainty, that the fleet from below would instantly force its passage, destroy, the remainder of his troops-stunned as they were with the sudden catastrophe complete the demolition of the bridge, and then make its way to Antwerp, with ample reinforcements and supplies. And Alexander saw that the expedition would be successful. Momently expecting the attack, he maintained his courage and semblance of cheerfulness, with despair in his heart.

Page 1263

His winter's work seemed annihilated, and it was probable that he should be obliged to raise the siege. Nevertheless, he passed in person from rank to rank, from post to post, seeing that the wounded were provided for, encouraging those that remained unhurt, and endeavouring to infuse a portion of his own courage into the survivors of his panic-stricken army.

Nor was he entirely unsuccessful, as the night wore on and the expected assault was still delayed. Without further loss of time, he employed his men to collect the drifting boats, timber, and spar-work, and to make a hasty and temporary restoration—in semblance at least—of the ruined portion of his bridge. And thus he employed himself steadily all the night, although expecting every instant to hear the first broadside of the Zeeland cannon. When morning broke, and it became obvious that the patriots were unable or unwilling to follow up their own success, the Governor-General felt as secure as ever. He at once set about the thorough repairs of his great work, and—before he could be again molested—had made good the damage which it had sustained.

It was not till three days afterwards that the truth was known in Antwerp. Hohenlo then sent down a messenger, who swam, under the bridge, ascertained the exact state of affairs, and returned, when it was too late, with the first intelligence of the triumph which had been won and lost. The disappointment and mortification were almost intolerable. And thus had. Run-a-way Jacob, 'Koppen Loppen,' blasted the hopes of so many wiser and braver spirits than his own.

The loss to Parma and to the royalist cause in Marquis Richebourg, was very great. The death of De Billy, who was a faithful, experienced, and courageous general, was also much lamented. "The misfortune from their death," said Parma, "is not to be exaggerated. Each was ever ready to do his duty in your Majesty's service, and to save me much fatigue in all my various affairs. Nevertheless," continued the Prince, with great piety, "we give the Lord thanks for all, and take as a favour everything which comes from His hand."

Alexander had indeed reason to deplore the loss of Robert de Melun, Viscount of Ghent, Marquis of Roubaix and Richebourg. He was a most valuable officer. His wealth was great. It had been recently largely increased by the confiscation of his elder brother's estates for his benefit, a measure which at Parma's intercession had been accorded by the King. That brother was the patriotic Prince of Espinoy, whom we have recently seen heading the legation of the States to France. And Richebourg was grateful to Alexander, for besides these fraternal spoils, he had received two marquisates through his great patron, in addition to the highest military offices. Insolent, overbearing, truculent to all the world, to Parma he was ever docile, affectionate, watchful, obsequious. A man who knew not fatigue, nor fear, nor remorse, nor natural

Page 1264

affection, who could patiently superintend all the details of a great military work, or manage a vast political intrigue by alternations of browbeating and bribery, or lead a forlorn hope, or murder a prisoner in cold blood, or leap into the blazing crater of what seemed a marine volcano, the Marquis of Richebourg had ever made himself most actively and unscrupulously useful to his master. Especially had he rendered invaluable services in the reduction, of the Walloon Provinces, and in the bridging of the Scheldt, the two crowning triumphs of Alexander's life. He had now passed from the scene where he had played so energetic and dazzling a part, and lay doubled round an iron cable beneath the current of the restless river.

And in this eventful night, Parma, as always, had been true to himself and to his sovereign. "We expected," said he, "that the rebels would instantly attack us on all sides after the explosion. But all remained so astonished by the unheard-of accident, that very few understood what was going on. It seemed better that I—notwithstanding the risk of letting myself be seen—should encourage the people not to run away. I did so, and remedied matters a little but not so much as that—if the enemy had then attacked us—we should not have been in the very greatest risk and peril. I did not fail to do what I am obliged to do, and always hope to do; but I say no more of what passed, or what was done by myself, because it does not become me to speak of these things."

Notwithstanding this discomfiture, the patriots kept up heart, and were incessantly making demonstrations against Parma's works. Their proceedings against the bridge, although energetic enough to keep the Spanish commander in a state of perpetual anxiety, were never so efficient however as on the memorable occasion when the Mantuan engineer and the Dutch watchmaker had exhausted all their ingenuity. Nevertheless, the rebel barks swarmed all over the submerged territory, now threatening this post, and now that, and effecting their retreat at pleasure; for nearly the whole of Parma's little armada was stationed at the two extremities of his bridge. Many fire-ships were sent down from time to time, but Alexander had organized a systematic patrol of a few sentry-boats, armed with scythes and hooks, which rowed up and down in front of the rafts, and protected them against invasion.

Some little effect was occasionally produced, but there was on the whole more anxiety excited than damage actually inflicted. The perturbation of spirit among the Spaniards when any of these 'demon fine-ships,' as they called them, appeared bearing down upon their bridge, was excessive. It could not be forgotten, that the `Hope' had sent into space a thousand of the best soldiers of the little army within one moment of time.

Such rapid proceedings had naturally left an uneasy impression on the minds of the survivors. The fatigue of watching was enormous. Hardly an officer or soldier among the besieging forces knew what it was to sleep. There was a perpetual exchanging of signals and beacon-fires and rockets among the patriots—not a day or night, when a

concerted attack by the Antwerpers from above, and the Hollanders from below, with gun-boats and fire-ships, and floating mines, and other devil’s enginry, was not expected.

Page 1265

“We are always upon the alert,” wrote Parma, “with arms in our hands. Every one must mount guard, myself as well as the rest, almost every night, and the better part of every day.”

He was quite aware that something was ever in preparation; and the nameless, almost sickening apprehension which existed among his stout-hearted veterans, was a proof that the Mantuan’s genius—notwithstanding the disappointment as to the great result—had not been exercised entirely in vain. The image of the Antwerp devil-ships imprinted itself indelibly upon the Spanish mind, as of something preternatural, with which human valour could only contend at a disadvantage; and a day was not very far distant—one of the memorable days of the world’s history, big with the fate of England, Spain, Holland, and all Christendom—when the sight of a half-dozen blazing vessels, and the cry of “the Antwerp fireships,” was to decide the issue of a most momentous enterprise. The blow struck by the obscure Italian against Antwerp bridge, although ineffective then, was to be most sensibly felt after a few years had passed, upon a wider field.

Meantime the uneasiness and the watchfulness in the biesieging army were very exhausting. “They are never idle in the city,” wrote Parma. “They are perpetually proving their obstinacy and pertinacity by their industrious genius and the machines which they devise. Every day we are expecting some new invention. On our side we endeavour to counteract their efforts by every human means in our power. Nevertheless, I confess that our merely human intellect is not competent to penetrate the designs of their diabolical genius. Certainly, most wonderful and extraordinary things have been exhibited, such as the oldest soldiers here have never before witnessed.”

Moreover, Alexander saw himself growing weaker and weaker. His force had dwindled to a mere phantom of an army. His soldiers, ill-fed, half-clothed, unpaid, were fearfully overworked. He was obliged to concentrate all the troops at his disposal around Antwerp. Diversions against Ostend, operations in Friesland and Gelderland, although most desirable, had thus been rendered quite impossible.

“I have recalled my cavalry and infantry from Ostend,” he wrote, “and Don Juan de Manrique has fortunately arrived in Stabroek with a thousand good German folk. The commissary-general of the cavalry has come in, too, with a good lot of the troops that had been encamped in the open country. Nevertheless, we remain wretchedly weak—quite insufficient to attempt what ought to be done. If the enemy were more in force, or if the French wished to make trouble, your Majesty would see how important it had been to provide in time against such contingencies. And although our neighbours, crestfallen, and rushing upon their own destruction, leave us in quiet, we are not without plenty of work. It would be of inestimable advantage to make diversions in Gelderland

Page 1266

and Friesland, because, in that case, the Hollanders, seeing the enemy so near their own borders, would be obliged to withdraw their assistance from Antwerp. 'Tis pity to see how few Spaniards your Majesty has left, and how diminished is our army. Now, also, is the time to expect sickness, and this affair of Antwerp is obviously stretching out into large proportions. Unless soon reinforced, we must inevitably go to destruction. I implore your Majesty to ponder the matter well, and not to defer the remedy."

His Majesty was sure to ponder the matter well, if that had been all. Philip was good at pondering; but it was equally certain that the remedy would be deferred. Meantime Alexander and his starving but heroic little army were left to fight their battles as they could.

His complaints were incessant, most reasonable, but unavailing. With all the forces he could muster, by withdrawing from the neighbourhood of Ghent, Brussels, Vilvoorde, and from all the garrisons, every man that could be spared, he had not strength enough to guard his own posts. To attempt to win back the important forts recently captured by the rebels on the Doel, was quite out of the question. The pictures he painted of his army were indeed most dismal.

The Spaniards were so reduced by sickness that it was pitiful to see them. The Italians were not in much better condition, nor the Germans. "As for the Walloons," said he, "they are deserting, as they always do. In truth, one of my principal dangers is that the French civil wars are now tempting my soldiers across the frontier; the country there is so much richer, and offers so much more for the plundering."

During the few weeks which immediately followed them famous descent of the 'Hope' and the 'Fortune,' there had accordingly been made a variety of less elaborate, but apparently mischievous, efforts against the bridge. On the whole, however, the object was rather to deceive and amuse the royalists, by keeping their attention fixed in that quarter, while a great attack was, in reality, preparing against the Kowenstyn. That strong barrier, as repeatedly stated, was even a more formidable obstacle than the bridge to the communication between the beleagured city and their allies upon the outside. Its capture and demolition, even at this late period, would open the navigation to all the fleets of Zeeland.

In the undertaking of the 5th of April all had been accomplished that human ingenuity could devise; yet the triumph had been snatched away even at the very moment when it was complete. A determined and vigorous effort was soon to be made upon the Kowenstyn, in the very face of Parma; for it now seemed obvious that the true crisis was to come upon that fatal dyke. The great bulwark was three miles long. It reached from Stabroek in Brabant, near which village Mansfeld's troops were encamped, across the inundated country, up to the line of the Scheldt. Thence, along the river-dyke, and

across the bridge to Kalloo and Beveren, where Parma’s forces lay, was a continuous fortified road some three leagues in length; so that the two divisions of the besieging army, lying four leagues apart, were all connected by this important line.

Page 1267

Could the Kowenstyn be pierced, the water, now divided by that great bulwark into two vast lakes, would flow together in one continuous sea. Moreover the Scheldt, it was thought, would, in that case, return to its own cannel through Brabant, deserting its present bed, and thus leaving the famous bridge high and dry. A wide sheet of navigable water would then roll between Antwerp and the Zeeland coasts, and Parma's bridge, the result of seven months' labour, would become as useless as a child's broken toy.

Alexander had thoroughly comprehended the necessity of maintaining the Kowenstyn. All that it was possible to do with the meagre forces at his disposal, he had done. He had fringed both its margins, along its whole length, with a breastwork of closely-driven stakes. He had strengthened the whole body of the dyke with timber-work and piles. Upon its river-end, just at the junction with the great Scheldt dyke, a strong fortress, called the Holy Cross, had been constructed, which was under the special command of Mondragon. Besides this, three other forts had been built, at intervals of about a mile, upon the dyke. The one nearest to Mondragon was placed at the Kowenstyn manor-house, and was called Saint James. This was entrusted to Camillo Bourbon del Monte, an Italian officer, who boasted the blood royal of France in his veins, and was disposed on all occasions to vindicate that proud pedigree by his deeds. The next fort was Saint George's, sometimes called the Black Sconce. It had been built by La Motte, but it was now in command of the Spanish officer, Benites. The third was entitled the Fort of the Palisades, because it had been necessary to support it by a stockade-work in the water, there being absolutely not earth enough to hold the structure. It was placed in the charge of Captain Gamboa. These little castles had been created, as it were, out of water and upon water, and under a hot fire from the enemy's forts and fleets, which gave the pioneers no repose.

"'Twas very hard work," said Parma, "our soldiers are so exposed during their labour, the rebels playing upon them perpetually from their musket-proof vessels. They fill the submerged land with their boats, skimming everywhere as they like, while we have none at all. We have been obliged to build these three forts with neither material nor space; making land enough for the foundation by bringing thither bundles of hurdles and of earth. The fatigue and anxiety are incredible. Not a man can sleep at night; not an officer nor soldier but is perpetually mounting guard. But they are animated to their hard work by seeing that I share in it, like one of themselves. We have now got the dyke into good order, so far as to be able to give them a warm reception, whenever they choose to come."

Quite at the farther or land end of the Kowenstyn, was another fort, called the Stabroek, which commanded and raked the whole dyke, and was in the neighbourhood of Mansfeld's head-quarters.

Page 1268

Placed as were these little citadels upon a slender, and—at brief distance—invisible thread of land, with the dark waters rolling around them far and near, they presented an insubstantial dream-like aspect, seeming rather like castles floating between air and ocean than actual fortifications—a deceptive mirage rather than reality. There was nothing imaginary, however, in the work which they were to perform.

A series of attacks, some serious, others fictitious, had been made, from time to time, upon both bridge and dyke; but Alexander was unable to inspire his soldiers with his own watchfulness. Upon the 7th of May a more determined attempt was made upon the Kowenstyn, by the fleet from Lillo. Hohenlo and Colonel Ysselstein conducted the enterprise. The sentinels at the point selected—having recently been so often threatened by an enemy, who most frequently made a rapid retreat, as to have grown weary and indifferent-were surprised, at dawn of day, and put to the sword. "If the truth must be told," said Parma, "the sentries were sound asleep." Five hundred Zeelanders, with a strong party of sappers and miners, fairly established themselves upon the dyke, between St. George's and Fort Palisade. The attack, although spirited at its commencement, was doomed to be unsuccessful. A co-operation, agreed upon by the fleet from Antwerp, failed through a misunderstanding. Sainte Aldegonde had stationed certain members of the munition-chamber in the cathedral tower, with orders to discharge three rockets, when they should perceive a beacon-fire which he should light in Fort Tholouse. The watchmen mistook an accidental camp-fire in the neighbourhood for the preconcerted signal, and sent up the rockets. Hohenlo understanding, accordingly, that the expedition was on the point of starting from Antwerp, hastened to perform his portion of the work, and sailed up from Lillo. He did his duty faithfully and well, and established himself upon the dyke, but found himself alone and without sufficient force to maintain his position. The Antwerp fleet never sailed. It was even whispered that the delinquency was rather intended than accidental; the Antwerpers being supposed desirous to ascertain the result of Hohenlo's attempt before coming forth to share his fate. Such was the opinion expressed by Farnese in his letters to Philip, but it seems probable that he was mistaken. Whatever the cause, however, the fact of the Zeelanders' discomfiture was certain. The St. George battery and that of the Palisade were opened at once upon them, the balls came plunging among the sappers and miners before they had time to throw up many spade-fulls of earth, and the whole party were soon dead or driven from the dyke. The survivors effected their retreat as they best could, leaving four of their ships behind them and three or four hundred men.

"Forty rebels lay dead on the dyke," said Parma, "and one hundred and fifty more, at least, were drowned. The enemy confess a much larger loss than the number I state, but I am not a friend of giving details larger than my ascertained facts; nor do I know how many were killed in the boats."

Page 1269

This enterprise was but a prelude, however, to the great undertaking which had now been thoroughly matured. Upon the 26th May, another and most determined attack was to be made upon the Kowenstyn, by the Antwerpers and Hollanders acting in concert. This time, it was to be hoped, there would be no misconception of signals. “It was a determination,” said Parma, “so daring and desperate that there was no substantial reason why we should believe they would carry it out; but they were at last solemnly resolved to die or to effect their purpose.”

Two hundred ships in all had been got ready, part of them under Hohenlo and Justinus de Nassau, to sail up from Zeeland; the others to advance from Antwerp under Sainte Aldegonde. Their destination was the Kowenstyn Dyke. Some of the vessels were laden with provisions, others with gabions, hurdles, branches, sacks of sand and of wool, and with other materials for the rapid throwing up of fortifications.

It was two o’clock, half an hour before the chill dawn of a May morning, Sunday, the 26th of the month. The pale sight of a waning moon was faintly perceptible in the sky. Suddenly the sentinels upon the Kowenstyn—this time not asleep—descried, as they looked towards Lillo, four fiery apparitions gliding towards them across the waves. The alarm was given, and soon afterwards the Spaniards began to muster, somewhat reluctantly, upon the dyke, filled as they always were with the mysterious dread which those demon-vessels never failed to inspire.

The fire-ships floated slowly nearer, and at last struck heavily against the stockade-work. There, covered with tar, pitch, rosin, and gunpowder, they flamed, flared, and exploded, during a brief period, with much vigour, and then burned harmlessly out. One of the objects for which they had been sent—to set fire to the palisade—was not accomplished. The other was gained; for the enemy, expecting another volcanic shower of tombstones and plough-coulters, and remembering the recent fate of their comrades on the bridge, had retired shuddering into the forts. Meantime, in the glare of these vast torches, a great swarm of gunboats and other vessels, skimming across the leaden-coloured waters, was seen gradually approaching the dyke. It was the fleet of Hohenlo and Justinus de Nassau, who had been sailing and rowing since ten o’clock of the preceding night. The burning ships lighted them on their way, while it had scared the Spaniards from their posts.

The boats ran ashore in the mile-long space between forts St. George and the Palisade, and a party of Zeelanders, Admiral Haultain, governor of Walcheren, at their head, sprang upon the dyke. Meantime, however, the royalists, finding that the fire-ships had come to so innocent an end, had rallied and emerged from their forts. Haultain and his Zeelanders, by the time they had fairly mounted the dyke, found themselves in the iron embrace of several hundred Spaniards. After a brief fierce struggle, face

Page 1270

to face, and at push of pike, the patriots reeled backward down the bank, and took refuge in their boats. Admiral Haultain slipped as he left the shore, missed a rope's end which was thrown to him, fell into the water, and, borne down by the weight of his armour, was drowned. The enemy, pursuing them, sprang to the waist in the ooze on the edge of the dyke, and continued the contest. The boats opened a hot fire, and there was a severe skirmish for many minutes, with no certain result. It was, however, beginning to go hard with the Zeelanders, when, just at the critical moment, a cheer from the other side of the dyke was heard, and the Antwerp fleet was seen coming swiftly to the rescue. The Spaniards, taken between the two bands of assailants, were at a disadvantage, and it was impossible to prevent the landing of these fresh antagonists. The Antwerpers sprang ashore. Among the foremost was Sainte Aldegonde, poet, orator, hymn-book maker, burgomaster, lawyer, polemical divine—now armed to the teeth and cheering on his men, in the very thickest of the fight. The diversion was successful, and Sainte Aldegonde gallantly drove the Spaniards quite off the field. The whole combined force from Antwerp and Zeeland now effected their landing. Three thousand men occupied all the space between Fort George and the Palisade.

With Sainte Aldegonde came the unlucky Koppen Loppen, and all that could be spared of the English and Scotch troops in Antwerp, under Balfour and Morgan. With Hohenlo and Justinus de Nassau came Reinier Kant, who had just succeeded Paul Buys as Advocate of Holland. Besides these came two other men, side by side, perhaps in the same boat, of whom the world was like to hear much, from that time forward, and whose names are to be most solemnly linked together, so long as Netherland history shall endure; one, a fair-faced flaxen-haired boy of eighteen, the other a square-visaged, heavy-browed man of forty—Prince Maurice and John of Olden-Barneveldt. The statesman had been foremost to urge the claim of William the Silent's son upon the stadholderate of Holland and Zeeland, and had been, as it were, the youth's political guardian. He had himself borne arms more than once before, having shouldered his matchlock under Batenburg, and marched on that officer's spirited but disastrous expedition for the relief of Haarlem. But this was the life of those Dutch rebels. Quill-driving, law-expounding, speech-making, diplomatic missions, were intermingled with very practical business in besieged towns or open fields, with Italian musketeers and Spanish pikemen. And here, too, young Maurice was taking his first solid lesson in the art of which he was one day to be so distinguished a professor. It was a sharp beginning. Upon this ribband of earth, scarce six paces in breadth, with miles of deep water on both sides—a position recently fortified by the first general of the age, and held by the famous infantry of Spain and Italy—there was likely to be no prentice-work.

Page 1271

To assault such a position was in truth, as Alexander had declared it to be, a most daring and desperate resolution on the part of the States. “Soldiers, citizens, and all,” said Parma, “they are obstinate as dogs to try their fortune.”

With wool-sacks, sand-bags, hurdles, planks, and other materials brought with them, the patriots now rapidly entrenched themselves in the position so brilliantly gained; while, without deferring for an instant the great purpose which they had come to effect, the sappers and miners fastened upon the ironbound soil of the dyke, tearing it with pick, mattock, and shovel, digging, delving, and throwing up the earth around them, busy as human beavers, instinctively engaged in a most congenial task.

But the beavers did not toil unmolested. The large and determined force of Antwerpers and English, Hollanders and Zeelanders, guarded the fortifications as they were rapidly rising, and the pioneers as they were so manfully delving; but the enemy was not idle. From Fort Saint James, next beyond Saint George, Camillo del Monte led a strong party to the rescue. There was a tremendous action, foot to foot, breast to breast, with pike and pistol, sword and dagger. Never since the beginning of the war had there been harder fighting than now upon that narrow isthmus. “’Twas an affair of most brave obstinacy on both sides,” said Parma, who rarely used strong language. “Soldiers, citizens, and all—they were like mad bulldogs.” Hollanders, Italians, Scotchmen, Spaniards, Englishmen, fell thick and fast. The contest was about the entrenchments before they were completed, and especially around the sappers and miners, in whose picks and shovels lay the whole fate of Antwerp. Many of the dyke-breakers were digging their own graves, and rolled, one after another, into the breach which they were so obstinately creating. Upon that slender thread of land the hopes of many thousands were hanging. To tear it asunder, to roll the ocean-waves up to Antwerp, and thus to snatch the great city triumphantly from the grasp of Philip—to accomplish this, the three thousand had come forth that May morning. To prevent it, to hold firmly that great treasure entrusted to them, was the determination of the Spaniards. And so, closely pent and packed, discharging their carbines into each other’s faces, rolling, coiled together, down the slimy sides of the dyke into the black waters, struggling to and fro, while the cannon from the rebel fleet and from the royal forts mingled their roar with the sharp crack of the musketry, Catholics and patriots contended for an hour, while still, through all the confusion and uproar, the miners dug and delved.

At last the patriots were victorious. They made good their entrenchments, drove the Spaniards, after much slaughter, back to the fort of Saint George on the one side, and of the Palisade on the other, and cleared the whole space between the two points. The centre of the dyke was theirs; the great Kowenstyn, the only key by which the gates of Antwerp could be unlocked, was in the deliverers’ hands. They pursued their victory, and attacked the Palisade Fort. Gamboa, its commandant, was severely wounded; many other officers dead or dying; the outworks were in the hands of the Hollanders; the slender piles on which the fortress rested in the water were rudely shaken; the victory was almost complete.

Page 1272

And now there was a tremendous cheer of triumph. The beavers had done their work, the barrier was bitten through and through, the salt water rushed like a river through the ruptured dyke. A few moments later, and a Zeeland barge, freighted with provisions, floated triumphantly into the waters beyond, now no longer an inland sea. The deed was done—the victory achieved. Nothing more was necessary than to secure it, to tear the fatal barrier to fragments, to bury it, for its whole length, beneath the waves. Then, after the isthmus had been utterly submerged, when the Scheldt was rolled back into its ancient bed, when Parma's famous bridge had become useless, when the maritime communication between Antwerp and Holland had been thoroughly established, the Spaniards would have nothing left for it but to drown like rats in their entrenchments or to abandon the siege in despair. All this was in the hands of the patriots. The Kowenstyn was theirs. The Spaniards were driven from the field, the batteries of their forts silenced. For a long period the rebels were unmolested, and felt themselves secure.

"We remained thus some three hours," says Captain James, an English officer who fought in the action, and described it in rough, soldierly fashion to Walsingham the same day, "thinking all things to be secure." Yet in the very supreme moment of victory, the leaders, both of the Hollanders and of the Antwerpers, proved themselves incompetent to their position. With deep regret it must be admitted, that not only the reckless Hohenlo, but the all-accomplished Sainte Aldegonde, committed the gravest error. In the hour of danger, both had comported themselves with perfect courage and conduct. In the instant of triumph, they gave way to puerile exultation. With a celerity as censurable as it seems incredible, both these commanders sprang into the first barge which had thus floated across the dyke, in order that they might, in person, carry the news of the victory to Antwerp, and set all the bells ringing and the bonfires blazing. They took with them Ferrante Spinola, a mortally-wounded Italian officer of rank, as a trophy of their battle, and a boatload of beef and flour, as an earnest of the approaching relief.

While the conquerors were thus gone to enjoy their triumph, the conquered, though perplexed and silenced, were not yet disposed to accept their defeat. They were even ignorant that they were conquered. They had been forced to abandon the field, and the patriots had entrenched themselves upon the dyke, but neither Fort Saint George nor the Palisade had been carried, although the latter was in imminent danger.

Page 1273

Old Count Peter Ernest Mansfeld—a grizzled veteran, who had passed his childhood, youth, manhood, and old age, under fire—commanded at the land-end of the dyke, in the fortress of Stabroek, in which neighbourhood his whole division was stationed. Seeing how the day was going, he called a council of war. The patriots had gained a large section of the dyke. So much was certain. Could they succeed in utterly demolishing that bulwark in the course of the day? If so, how were they to be dislodged before their work was perfected? It was difficult to assault their position. Three thousand Hollanders, Antwerpers, Englishmen—"mad bulldogs all," as Parma called them—showing their teeth very mischievously, with one hundred and sixty Zeeland vessels throwing in their broadsides from both margins of the dyke, were a formidable company to face.

"Oh for one half hour of Alexander in the field!" sighed one of the Spanish officers in council. But Alexander was more than four leagues away, and it was doubtful whether he even knew of the fatal occurrence. Yet how to send him a messenger. Who could reach him through that valley of death? Would it not be better to wait till nightfall? Under the cover of darkness something might be attempted, which in the daylight would be hopeless. There was much anxiety, and much difference of opinion had been expressed, when Camillo Capizucca, colonel of the Italian Legion, obtained a hearing. A man bold in words as in deeds, he vehemently denounced the pusillanimity which would wait either for Parma or for nightfall. "What difference will it make," he asked, "whether we defer our action until either darkness or the General arrives? In each case we give the enemy time enough to destroy the dyke, and thoroughly to relieve the city. That done, what good can be accomplished by our arms? Then our disheartened soldiers will either shrink from a fruitless combat or march to certain death." Having thus, very warmly but very sagaciously, defined the position in which all were placed, he proceeded to declare that he claimed, neither for himself nor for his legion, any superiority over the rest of the army. He knew not that the Italians were more to be relied upon than others in the time of danger, but this he did know, that no man in the world was so devoted as he was to the Prince of Parma. To show that devotion by waiting with folded arms behind a wall until the Prince should arrive to extricate his followers, was not in his constitution. He claimed the right to lead his Italians against the enemy at once—in the front rank, if others chose to follow; alone, if the rest preferred to wait till a better leader should arrive.

Page 1274

The words of the Italian colonel sent a thrill through all who heard him. Next in command under Capizucca was his camp-marshal, an officer who bore the illustrious name of Piccolomini—father of the Duke Ottavio, of whom so much was to be heard at a later day throughout the fell scenes of that portion of the eighty years' tragedy now enacting, which was to be called the Thirty Years' War of Germany. The camp-marshal warmly seconded the proposition of his colonel. Mansfeld, pleased with such enthusiasm among his officers, yielded to their wishes, which were, in truth, his own. Six companies of the Italian Legion were in his encampment while the remainder were stationed, far away, upon the bridge, under command of his son, Count Charles. Early in the morning, before the passage across the dyke had been closed the veteran condottiere, pricking his ears as he snuffed the battle from afar, had contrived to send a message to his son.

"Charles, my boy," were his words, "to-day we must either beat them or burst."

Old Peter Ernest felt that the long-expected, long-deferred assault was to be made that morning in full force, and that it was necessary for the royalists, on both bridge and dyke, to hold their own. Piccolomini now drew up three hundred of his Italians, picked veterans all, and led them in marching order to Mansfeld. That general at the same moment, received another small but unexpected reinforcement. A portion of the Spanish Legion, which had long been that of Pedro Pacchi, lay at the extreme verge of the Stabroek encampment, several miles away. Aroused by the distant cannonading, and suspecting what had occurred, Don Juan d'Aquila, the colonel in command, marched without a moment's delay to Mansfeld's head-quarters, at the head of all the force he could muster—about two hundred strong. With him came Cardona, Gonzales de Castro, Toralva, and other distinguished officers. As they arrived, Capizucca was just setting forth for the field. There arose a dispute for precedence between the Italians and the Spaniards. Capizucca had first demanded the privilege of leading what seemed a forlorn hope, and was unwilling to yield his claim to the new comer. On the other hand, the Spaniards were not disposed to follow where they felt entitled to lead. The quarrel was growing warm, when Aquila, seizing his Italian rival by the hand, protested that it was not a moment for friends to wrangle for precedence.

"Shoulder to shoulder," said he, "let us go into this business, and let our blows rather fall on our enemies' heads than upon each other's." This terminated the altercation. The Italians and Spaniards—in battle array as they were—all dropped on their knees, offered a brief prayer to the Holy Virgin, and then, in the best possible spirits, set forth along the dyke. Next to fort Stabroek—whence they issued—was the Palisade Fort, nearly a mile removed, which the patriots had nearly carried, and between which and St. George, another mile farther on, their whole force was established.

Page 1275

The troops under Capizucca and Aquila soon reached the Palisade, and attacked the besiegers, while the garrison, cheered by the unexpected relief, made a vigorous sortie. There was a brief sharp contest, in which many were killed on both sides; but at last the patriots fell back upon their own entrenchments, and the fort was saved. Its name was instantly changed to Fort Victory, and the royalists then prepared to charge the fortified camp of the rebels, in the centre of which the dyke-cutting operations were still in progress. At the same moment, from the opposite end of the bulwark, a cry was heard along the whole line of the dyke. From Fort Holy Cross, at the Scheldt end, the welcome intelligence was suddenly communicated—as if by a magnetic impulse—that Alexander was in the field!

It was true. Having been up half the night, as usual, keeping watch along his bridge, where he was ever expecting a fatal attack, he had retired for a few hours' rest in his camp at Beveren. Aroused at day-break by the roar of the cannon, he had hastily thrown on his armour, mounted his horse, and, at the head of two hundred pikemen, set forth for the scene of action. Detained on the bridge by a detachment of the Antwerp fleet, which had been ordered to make a diversion in that quarter, he had, after beating off their vessels with his boat-artillery, and charging Count Charles Mansfeld to heed well the brief injunction of old Peter Ernest, made all the haste he could to the Kowenstyn. Arriving at Fort Holy Cross, he learned from Mondragon how the day was going. Three thousand rebels, he learned, were established on the dyke, Fort Palisade was tottering, a fleet from both sides was cannonading the Spanish entrenchments, the salt water was flowing across the breach already made. His seven months' work, it seemed, had come to nought. The navigation was already open from the sea to Antwerp, the Lowenstyn was in the rebels' hands. But Alexander was not prone to premature despair. "I arrived," said he to Philip in a letter written on the same evening, "at the very nick of time." A less hopeful person might have thought that he had arrived several hours too late. Having brought with him every man that could be spared from Beveren and from the bridge, he now ordered Camillo del Monte to transport some additional pieces of artillery from Holy Cross and from Saint James to Fort Saint Georg. At the same time a sharp cannonade was to be maintained upon the rebel fleet from all the forts.

Mondragon, with a hundred musketeers and pikemen, was sent forward likewise as expeditiously as possible to Saint George. No one could be more alert. The battered veteran, hero of some of the most remarkable military adventures that history has ever recorded,' fought his way on foot, in the midst of the fray, like a young ensign who had his first laurels to win. And, in truth, the day was not one for cunning manoeuvres, directed, at a distance, by a skillful tactician.

Page 1276

It was a brisk close contest, hand to hand and eye to eye—a Homeric encounter, in which the chieftains were to prove a right to command by their personal prowess. Alexander, descending suddenly—dramatically, as it were—when the battle seemed lost—like a deity from the clouds-was to justify, by the strength of his arm, the enthusiasm which his name always awakened. Having, at a glance, taken in the whole situation, he made his brief arrangements, going from rank to rank, and disposing his troops in the most effective manner. He said but few words, but his voice had always a telling effect.

“The man who refuses, this day, to follow me,” he said, “has never had regard to his own honour, nor has God’s cause or the King’s ever been dear to his heart.”

His disheartened Spaniards and Italians—roused as by a magic trumpet—eagerly demanded to be led against the rebels. And now from each end of the dyke, the royalists were advancing toward the central position occupied by the patriots. While Capizucca and Aquila were occupied at Fort Victory, Parma was steadily cutting his way from Holy Cross to Saint George. On foot, armed with sword and shield, and in coat of mail, and marching at the head of his men along the dyke, surrounded by Bevilacqua, Bentivoglio, Manriquez, Sforza, and other officers of historic name and distinguished courage, now upon the summit of the causeway, now on its shelving banks, now breast-high in the waters, through which lay the perilous path, contending at every inch with the scattered bands of the patriots, who slowly retired to their entrenched camp, and with the Antwerp and Zeeland vessels, whose balls tore through the royalist ranks, the General at last reached Saint George. On the preservation of that post depended the whole fortune of the day, for Parma had already received the welcome intelligence that the Palisade—now Fort Victory—had been regained. He instantly ordered an outer breast-work of wool-sacks and sand-bags to be thrown up in front of Saint George, and planted a battery to play point-blank at the enemy’s entrenchments. Here the final issue was to be made.

The patriots and Spaniards were thus all enclosed in the mile-long space between St. George and the Palisade. Upon that narrow strip of earth, scarce six paces in width, more than five thousand men met in mortal combat—a narrow arena for so many gladiators, hemmed in on both sides by the sea. The patriots had, with solemn ceremony, before starting upon their enterprise, vowed to destroy the dyke and relieve Antwerp, or to perish in the attempt. They were true to their vow. Not the ancient Batavians or Nervii had ever manifested more tenacity against the Roman legions than did their descendants against the far-famed Spanish infantry upon this fatal day. The fight on the Kowenstyn was to be long remembered in the military annals of Spain and Holland. Never, since the curtain first rose upon the great Netherland tragedy, had there been a fiercer encounter. Flinching was impossible. There was scant room for the play of pike and dagger, and, close packed as were the combatants, the dead could

hardly fall to the ground. It was a mile-long series of separate mortal duels, and the oozy dyke was soon slippery with blood.

Page 1277

From both sides, under Capizucca and Aquila on the one band, and under Alexander on the other, the entrenchments of the patriots were at last assaulted, and as the royalists fell thick and fast beneath the breast-work which they were storming, their comrades clambered upon their bodies, and attempted, from such vantage-ground, to effect an entrance. Three times the invaders were beaten back with heavy loss, and after each repulse the attack was renewed with fresh vigour, while within the entrenchments the pioneers still plied the pick and shovel, undismayed by the uproar around them.

A fourth assault, vigorously made, was cheerfully repelled by the Antwerpers and Hollanders, clustering behind their breast-works, and looking steadily into their enemies' eyes. Captain Heraugiere—of whom more was to be heard one day—had led two hundred men into action, and now found himself at the head of only thirteen. The loss had been as severe among many other patriot companies, as well as in the Spanish ranks, and again the pikemen of Spain and Italy faltered before the iron visages and cordial blows of the Hollanders.

This work had lasted a good hour and a half, when at last, on the fifth assault, a wild and mysterious apparition renewed the enthusiasm of the Spaniards. The figure of the dead commander of the old Spanish Legion, Don Pedro Pacchi, who had fallen a few months before at the siege of Dendermonde was seen charging in front of his regiment, clad in his well-known armour, and using the gestures which had been habitual with him in life. No satisfactory explanation was ever made of this singular delusion, but it was general throughout the ranks, and in that superstitious age was as effective as truth. The wavering Spaniards rallied once more under the guidance of their phantom leader, and again charged the breast-work of the patriots. Toralva, mounting upon the back of one of his soldiers, was first to vault into the entrenchments. At the next instant he lay desperately wounded on the ground, but was close followed by Capizucca, sustained by a determined band. The entrenchment was carried, but the furious conflict still continued. At nearly the same moment, however, several of the patriot vessels were observed to cast off their moorings, and to be drifting away from the dyke. A large number of the rest had been disabled by the hot fire, which by Alexander's judicious orders had been directed upon the fleet. The ebbing tide left no choice to the commander of the others but to retreat or to remain and fall into the enemy's hands, should he gain the day. Had they risked the dangerous alternative, it might have ensured the triumph of the whole enterprise, while their actual decision proved most disastrous in the end.

Page 1278

“We have conquered,” cried Alexander, stretching his arm towards the receding waters. “The sea deserts the impious heretics. Strike from them now their last hope, and cut off their retreat to the departing ships.” The Spaniards were not slow to perceive their advantage, while the courage of the patriots at last began to ebb with the tide. The day was lost. In the hour of transitory triumph the leaders of the expedition had turned their backs on their followers, and now, after so much heroism had been exhibited, fortune too had averted her face. The grim resistance changed to desperate panic, and a mad chase began along the blood-stained dyke. Some were slain with spear and bullet, others were hunted into the sea, many were smothered in the ooze along the edge of the embankment. The fugitives, making their way to the retreating vessels, were pursued by the Spaniards, who swam after them, with their swords in their teeth, and engaged them in mortal combat in the midst of the waves.

“And so we cut all their throats,” said Parma, “the rebels on every side remaining at our mercy, and I having no doubt that my soldiers would avenge the loss of their friends.”

The English and the Scotch, under Balfour and Morgan, were the very last to abandon the position which they had held so manfully seven hours long. Honest Captain James, who fought to the last, and described the action the same night in the fewest possible words, was of opinion that the fleet had moved away only to obtain a better position. “They put off to have more room to play on the enemy,” said he; “but the Hollanders and Zeelanders, seeing the enemy come on so hotly, and thinking our galleys would leave them, abandoned their string. The Scots, seeing them to retire, left their string. The enemy pursued very hotly; the Englishmen stood to repulse, and are put most to the sword. In this shameful retreat there were slain or drowned to the number of two thousand.” The blunt Englishman was justly indignant that an enterprise, so nearly successful, had been ruined by the desertion of its chiefs. “We had cut the dyke in three places,” said he; “but left it most shamefully for want of commandment.”

Poor Koppen Loppen—whose blunders on former occasions had caused so much disaster—was now fortunate enough to expiate them by a soldier’s death. Admiral Haultain had, as we have seen, been drowned at the commencement of the action. Justinus de Nassau, at its close, was more successful in his retreat to the ships. He, too, sprang into the water when the overthrow was absolute; but, alighting in some shallows, was able to conceal himself among weeds and waterlilies till he had divested himself of his armour, when he made his escape by swimming to a boat, which conveyed him to Lillo. Roelke van Deest, an officer of some note, was so horribly wounded in the face, that he was obliged to wear a mask for the remainder of his life.

Page 1279

Parma, overjoyed at his victory, embraced Capizucca before the whole army, with warm expressions of admiration for his conduct. Both the Italian colonel and his Spanish rival Aquila were earnestly recommended to Philip for reward and promotion. The wounded Toralva was carried to Alexander's own quarters, and placed in Alexander's own bed, where he remained till his recovery, and was then presented—a distinction which he much valued—with the armour which the Prince had worn on the day of the battle. Parma himself, so soon as the action was concluded, went with his chief officers straight from the field to the little village-church of Stabroek, where he fell upon his knees and offered up fervent thanks for his victory. He next set about repairing the ruptured dyke, damaged in many places but not hopelessly ruined, and for this purpose the bodies of the rebels, among other materials, were cast by hundreds into the ditches which their own hands had dug.

Thus ended the eight hours' fight on the Kowenstyn. "The feast lasted from seven to eight hours," said Parma, "with the most brave obstinacy on both sides that has been seen for many a long day." A thousand royalists were killed and twice as many patriots, and the issue of the conflict was most uncertain up to the very last.

"Our loss is greater than I wish it was," wrote Alexander to Philip: "It was a very close thing, and I have never been more anxious in my life as to the result for your Majesty's service. The whole fate of the battle was hanging all the time by a thread." More than ever were reinforcements necessary, and it was only by a miracle that the victory had at last been gained with such slender resources. "'Tis a large, long, laborious, expensive, and most perilous war," said Parma, when urging the claims of Capizucca and Aquila, "for we have to fight every minute; and there are no castles and other rewards, so that if soldiers are not to have promotion, they will lose their spirit." Thirty-two of the rebel vessels grounded, and fell into the hands of the Spaniards, who took from them many excellent pieces of artillery. The result was most conclusive and most disheartening for the patriots.

Meantime—as we have seen—Hohenlo and Sainte Aldegonde had reached Antwerp in breathless haste to announce their triumph. They had been met on the quay by groups of excited citizens, who eagerly questioned the two generals arriving thus covered with laurels from the field of battle, and drank with delight all the details of the victory. The poor dying Spinola was exhibited in triumph, the boat-load of breadstuffs received with satisfaction, and vast preparations were made to receive, on wharves and in storehouses, the plentiful supplies about to arrive. Beacons and bonfires were lighted, the bells from all the steeples rang their merriest peals, cannon thundered in triumph not only in Antwerp itself, but subsequently at Amsterdam and other more distant

Page 1280

cities. In due time a magnificent banquet was spread in the town-house to greet the conquering Hohenlo. Immense gratification was expressed by those of the reformed religion; dire threats were uttered against the Catholics. Some were for hanging them all out of hand, others for throwing them into the Scheldt; the most moderate proposed packing them all out of town so soon as the siege should be raised—an event which could not now be delayed many days longer.

Hohenlo, placed on high at the head of the banquet-table, assumed the very god of war. Beside and near him sat the loveliest dames of Antwerp, rewarding his bravery with their brightest smiles. The Count drained huge goblets to their health, to the success of the patriots, and to the confusion of the royalists, while, as he still drank and feasted, the trumpet, kettle-drum, and cymbal, and merry peal of bell without, did honour to his triumph. So gay and gallant was the victor, that he announced another banquet on the following day, still further to celebrate the happy release of Antwerp, and invited the fair ladies around him again to grace the board. It is recorded that the gentlewoman next him responded with a sigh, that, if her presentiments were just, the morrow would scarcely be so joyful as the present day had been, and that she doubted whether the triumph were not premature.

Hardly had she spoken when sinister sounds were heard in the streets. The first few stragglers, survivors of the deadly fight, had arrived with the fatal news that all was lost, the dyke regained, the Spaniards victorious, the whole band of patriots cut to pieces. A few frightfully-wounded and dying sufferers were brought into the banqueting-hall. Hohenlo sprang from the feast—interrupted in so ghastly a manner—pursued by shouts and hisses. Howls of execration, saluted him in the streets, and he was obliged to conceal himself for a time, to escape the fury of the populace.

On the other hand, Parma was, not unnaturally, overjoyed at the successful issue to the combat, and expressed himself on the subject in language of (for him) unusual exultation. “To-day, Sunday, 26th of June,” said he, in a letter to Philip, despatched by special courier on the very same night, “the Lord has been pleased to grant to your Majesty a great and most signal victory. In this conjuncture of so great importance it may be easily conceived that the best results that can be desired will be obtained if your Majesty is now ready to do what is needful. I congratulate your Majesty very many times on this occasion, and I desire to render infinite thanks to Divine Providence.”

Page 1281

He afterwards proceeded, in a rapid and hurried manner, to give his Majesty the outlines of the battle, mentioning, with great encomium, Capizucca and Aquila, Mondragon and Vasto, with many other officers, and recommending them for reward and promotion; praising, in short, heartily and earnestly, all who had contributed to the victory, except himself, to whose personal exertions it was chiefly due. “As for good odd Mansfeld,” said he, “he bore himself like the man he is, and he deserves that your Majesty should send him a particular mark of your royal approbation, writing to him yourself pleasantly in Spanish, which is that which will be most highly esteemed by him.” Alexander hinted also that Philip would do well to bestow upon Mansfeld the countship of Biart, as a reward for his long years of faithful service!

This action on the Kowenstyn terminated the effective resistance of Antwerp. A few days before, the monster-vessel, in the construction of which so much time and money had been consumed, had at last been set afloat. She had been called the War’s End, and, so far as Antwerp was concerned, the fates that presided over her birth seemed to have been paltering in a double sense when the ominous name was conferred. She was larger than anything previously known in naval architecture; she had four masts and three helms. Her bulwarks were ten feet thick; her tops were musket-proof. She had twenty guns of largest size, besides many other pieces of artillery of lesser calibre, the lower tier of which was almost at the water’s level. She was to carry one thousand men, and she was so supported on corks and barrels as to be sure to float under any circumstances. Thus she was a great swimming fortress which could not be sunk, and was impervious to shot. Unluckily, however, in spite of her four masts and three helms, she would neither sail nor steer, and she proved but a great, unmanageable and very ridiculous tub, fully justifying all the sarcasms that had been launched upon her during the period of her construction, which had been almost as long as the siege itself.

The Spaniards called her the Bugaboo—a monster to scare children withal. The patriots christened her the Elephant, the Antwerp Folly, the Lost Penny, with many similar appellations. A small army might have been maintained for a month, they said, on the money she had cost, or the whole city kept in bread for three months. At last, late in May, a few days before the battle of the Kowenstyn, she set forth from Antwerp, across the submerged land, upon her expedition to sweep all the Spanish forts out of existence, and to bring the war to its end. She came to her own end very briefly, for, after drifting helplessly about for an hour, she stuck fast in the sand in the neighbourhood of Ordam, while the crew and soldiers made their escape, and came back to the city to share in the ridicule which, from first to last, had attached itself to the monster-ship.

Page 1282

Two days after the Kowenstyn affair, Alexander sent an expedition under Count Charles Mansfeld to take possession of the great Bugaboo. The boat, in which were Count Charles, Count Aremberg, his brother de Barbancon, and other noble volunteers, met with an accident: a keg of gun powder accidentally exploding, blowing Aremberg into the water, whence he escaped unharmed by swimming, and frightfully damaging Mansfeld in the face. This indirect mischief—the only injury ever inflicted by the War's End upon the enemy—did not prevent the rest of the party in the boats from taking possession of the ship, and bringing her in triumph to the Prince of Parma. After being thoroughly examined and heartily laughed at by the Spaniards, she was broken up—her cannon, munitions, and other valuable materials, being taken from her—and then there was an end of the War's End.

This useless expenditure-against the judgment and entreaties of many leading personages—was but a type of the difficulties with which Sainte Aldegonde had been obliged to contend from the first day of the siege to the last. Every one in the city had felt himself called on to express an opinion as to the proper measures for defence. Diversity of humours, popular license, anarchy, did not constitute the best government for a city beleagured by Alexander Farnese. We have seen the deadly injury inflicted upon the cause at the outset by the brutality of the butchers, and the manful struggle which Sainte Aldegonde had maintained against their cupidity and that of their friends. He had dealt with the thousand difficulties which rose up around him from day to day, but his best intentions were perpetually misconstrued, his most strenuous exertions steadily foiled. It was a city where there was much love of money, and where commerce—always timid by nature, particularly when controlled by alien residents—-was often the cause of almost abject cowardice.

From time to time there had been threatening demonstrations made against the burgomaster, who, by protracting the resistance of Antwerp, was bringing about the absolute destruction of a worldwide trade, and the downfall of the most opulent capital in Christendom. There were also many popular riots—very easily inflamed by the Catholic portion of the inhabitants—for bread. "Bread, bread, or peace!" was hoarsely shouted by ill-looking mischievous crowds, that dogged the steps and besieged the doors of Sainte Aldegonde; but the burgomaster had done his best by eloquence of tongue and personal courage, both against mobs and against the enemy, to inspire the mass of his fellow-citizens with his own generous spirit. He had relied for a long time on the negotiation with France, and it would be difficult to exaggerate the disastrous effects produced by the treachery of the Valois court. The historian Le Petit, a resident of Antwerp at the time of the siege, had been despatched on secret mission to Paris, and had communicated to

Page 1283

the States' deputies Sainte Aldegonde's earnest adjurations that they should obtain, if possible, before it should be too late, an auxiliary force and a pecuniary subsidy. An immediate assistance, even if slight, might be sufficient to prevent Antwerp and its sister cities from falling into the hands of the enemy. On that messenger's return, the burgomaster, much encouraged by his report, had made many eloquent speeches in the senate, and for a long time sustained the sinking spirits of the citizens.

The irritating termination to the triumph actually achieved against the bridge, and the tragical result to the great enterprise against the Kowenstyn, had now thoroughly broken the heart of Antwerp. For the last catastrophe Sainte Aldegonde himself was highly censurable, although the chief portion of the blame rested on the head of Hohenlo. Nevertheless the States of Holland were yet true to the cause of the Union and of liberty. Notwithstanding their heavy expenditures, and their own loss of men, they urged warmly and earnestly the continuance of the resistance, and promised, within at latest three months' time, to raise an army of twelve thousand foot and seven thousand horse, with which they pledged themselves to relieve the city, or to perish in the endeavour. At the same time, the legation, which had been sent to England to offer the sovereignty to Queen Elizabeth, sent encouraging despatches to Antwerp, assuring the authorities that arrangements for an auxiliary force had been effected; while Elizabeth herself wrote earnestly upon the subject with her own hand.

"I am informed," said that Princess, "that through the closing of the Scheldt you are likely to enter into a treaty with the Prince of Parma, the issue of which is very much to be doubted, so far as the maintenance of your privileges is concerned. Remembering the warm friendship which has ever existed between this crown and the house of Burgundy, in the realms of which you are an important member, and considering that my subjects engaged in commerce have always met with more privilege and comity in the Netherlands than in any other country, I have resolved to send you at once, assistance, comfort, and aid. The details of the plan will be stated by your envoys; but be assured that by me you will never be forsaken or neglected."

The negotiations with Queen Elizabeth—most important for the Netherlands, for England, and for the destinies of Europe—which succeeded the futile diplomatic transactions with France, will be laid before the reader in a subsequent chapter. It is proper that they should be massed by themselves, so that the eye can comprehend at a single glance their whole progress and aspect, as revealed both by public and official, and by secret and hitherto unpublished records. Meantime, so far as regards Antwerp, those negotiations had been too deliberately conducted for the hasty and impatient temper of the citizens.

Page 1284

The spirit of the commercial metropolis, long flagging, seemed at last broken. Despair was taking possession of all hearts. The common people did nothing but complain, the magistrates did nothing but wrangle. In the broad council the debates and dissensions were discouraging and endless. Six of the eight militia-colonels were for holding out at all hazards, while a majority of the eighty captains were for capitulation. The populace was tumultuous and threatening, demanding peace and bread at any price. Holland sent promises in abundance, and Holland was sincere; but there had been much disappointment, and there was now infinite bitterness. It seemed obvious that a crisis was fast approaching, and—unless immediate aid should come from Holland or from England—that a surrender was inevitable. La None, after five years' imprisonment, had at last been exchanged against Count Philip Egmont. That noble, chief of an ancient house, cousin of the Queen of France, was mortified at being ransomed against a simple Huguenot gentleman—even though that gentleman was the illustrious "iron-armed" La Noue—but he preferred to sacrifice his dignity for the sake of his liberty. He was still more annoyed that one hundred thousand crowns as security were exacted from La Noue—for which the King of Navarre became bondsman—that he would never again bear arms in the Netherlands except in obedience to the French monarch, while no such pledges were required of himself. La None visited the Prince of Parma at Antwerp, to take leave, and was received with the courtesy due to his high character and great distinction. Alexander took pleasure in showing him all his fortifications, and explaining to him the whole system of the siege, and La Noue was filled with honest amazement. He declared afterwards that the works were superb and impregnable; and that if he had been on the outside at the head of twelve thousand troops, he should have felt obliged to renounce the idea of relieving the city. "Antwerp cannot escape you," confessed the veteran Huguenot, "but must soon fall into your hands. And when you enter, I would counsel you to hang up your sword at its gate, and let its capture be the crowning trophy in your list of victories."

"You are right," answered Parma, "and many of my friends have given me the same advice; but how am I to retire, engaged as I am for life in the service of my King?"

Such was the opinion of La None, a man whose love for the reformed religion and for civil liberty can be as little doubted as his competency to form an opinion upon great military subjects. As little could he be suspected just coming as he did from an infamous prison, whence he had been at one time invited by Philip *ii*. to emerge, on condition of allowing his eyes to be put out—of any partiality for that monarch or his representative.

Page 1285

Moreover, although the States of Holland and the English government were earnestly desirous of relieving the city, and were encouraging the patriots with well-founded promises, the Zeeland authorities were lukewarm. The officers of the Zeeland navy, from which so much was expected, were at last discouraged. They drew up, signed, and delivered to Admiral Justinus de Nassau, a formal opinion to the effect that the Scheldt had now so many dry and dangerous places, and that the tranquil summer-nights—so different from those long, stormy ones of winter—were so short as to allow of no attempt by water likely to be successful to relieve the city.

Here certainly was much to discourage, and Sainte Aldegonde was at length discouraged. He felt that the last hope of saving Antwerp was gone, and with it all possibility of maintaining the existence of a United Netherland commonwealth. The Walloon Provinces were lost already; Ghent, Brussels, Mechlin, had also capitulated, and, with the fall of Antwerp, Flanders and Brabant must fall. There would be no barrier left even to save Holland itself. Despair entered the heart of the burgomaster, and he listened too soon to its treacherous voice. Yet while he thought a free national state no longer a possibility, he imagined it practicable to secure religious liberty by negotiation with Philip *ii*. He abandoned with a sigh one of the two great objects for which he had struggled side by side with Orange for twenty years, but he thought it possible to secure the other. His purpose was now to obtain a favourable capitulation for Antwerp, and at the same time to bring about the submission of Holland, Zeeland, and the other United Provinces, to the King of Spain. Here certainly was a great change of face on the part of one so conspicuous, and hitherto so consistent, in the ranks of Netherland patriots, and it is therefore necessary, in order thoroughly to estimate both the man and the crisis, to follow carefully his steps through the secret path of negotiation into which he now entered, and in which the Antwerp drama was to find its conclusion. In these transactions, the chief actors are, on the one side, the Prince of Parma, as representative of absolutism and the Papacy; on the other, Sainte Aldegonde, who had passed his life as the champion of the Reformation.

No doubt the pressure upon the burgomaster was very great. Tumults were of daily occurrence. Crowds of rioters beset his door with cries of denunciations and demands for bread. A large and turbulent mob upon one occasion took possession of the horse-market, and treated him with personal indignity and violence, when he undertook to disperse them. On the other hand, Parma had been holding out hopes of pardon with more reasonable conditions than could well be expected, and had, with a good deal of art, taken advantage of several trivial circumstances to inspire the burghers with confidence in his good-will. Thus, an infirm

Page 1286

old lady in the city happened to imagine herself so dependent upon asses milk as to have sent her purveyor out of the city, at the peril of his life, to procure a supply from the neighbourhood. The young man was captured, brought to Alexander, from whose hands he very naturally expected the punishment of a spy. The prince, however, presented him, not only with his liberty, but with a she-ass; and loaded the animal with partridges and capons, as a present for the invalid. The magistrates, hearing of the incident, and not choosing to be outdone in courtesy, sent back a waggon-load of old wine and remarkable confectionary as an offering to Alexander, and with this interchange of dainties led the way to the amenities of diplomacy.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Courage and semblance of cheerfulness, with despair in his heart
Demanding peace and bread at any price
Not a friend of giving details larger than my ascertained facts

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, v41, 1584

Alexander Farnese, The Duke of Parma

CHAPTER V., Part 3.

Sainte Aldegonde discouraged—His Critical Position—His Negotiations with the Enemy—Correspondence with Richardot—Commotion in the City—Interview of Marnix with Parma—Suspicious Conduct of Marnix—Deputation to the Prince—Oration of Marnix—Private Views of Parma—Capitulation of Antwerp—Mistakes of Marnix—Philip on the Religious Question—Triumphal Entrance of Alexander—Rebuilding of the Citadel—Gratification of Philip—Note on Sainte Aldegonde

Sainte Aldegonde's position had become a painful one. The net had been drawn closely about the city. The bridge seemed impregnable, the great Kowenstyn was irrecoverably in the hands of the enemy, and now all the lesser forts in the immediate vicinity of Antwerp-Borght, Hoboken, Cantecroix, Stralen, Berghen, and the rest—had

likewise fallen into his grasp. An account of grain, taken on the 1st of June, gave an average of a pound a-head for a month long, or half a pound for two months. This was not the famine-point, according to the standard which had once been established in Leyden; but the courage of the burghers had been rapidly oozing away, under the pressure of their recent disappointments. It seemed obvious to the burgomaster, that the time for yielding had arrived.

Page 1287

“I had maintained the city,” he said, “for a long period, without any excessive tumult or great effusion of blood—a city where there was such a multitude of inhabitants, mostly merchants or artisans deprived of all their traffic, stripped of their manufactures, destitute of all commodities and means of living. I had done this in the midst of a great diversity of humours and opinions, a vast popular license, a confused anarchy, among a great number of commanders, most of them inexperienced in war; with very little authority of my own, with slender forces of ships, soldiers, and sailors; with alight appearance of support from king or prince without, or of military garrison within; and under all these circumstances I exerted myself to do my uttermost duty in preserving the city, both in regard to its internal government, and by force of arms by land and sea, without sparing myself in any labour or peril.

“I know very well that there are many persons, who, finding themselves quite at their ease, and far away from the hard blows that are passing, are pleased to exhibit their wisdom by sitting in judgment upon others, founding their decision only upon the results. But I demand to be judged by equity and reason, when passion has been set aside. I claim that my honour shall be protected against my calumniators; for all should remember that I am not the first man, nor shall I be the last, that has been blamed unjustly. All persons employed in public affairs are subject to such hazards, but I submit myself to Him who knows all hearts, and who governs all. I take Him to witness that in the affair of Antwerp, as in all my other actions since my earliest youth, I have most sincerely sought His glory and the, welfare of His poor people, without regard to my own private interests.”

For it is not alone the fate of Antwerp that is here to be recorded. The fame of Sainte Aldegonde was now seriously compromised. The character of a great man must always be closely scanned and scrutinised; protected, if needful, against calumny, but always unflinchingly held up to the light. Names illustrious by genius and virtue are History’s most precious treasures, faithfully to be guarded by her, jealously to be watched; but it is always a misfortune when her eyes are deceived by a glitter which is not genuine.

Sainte Aldegonde was a man of unquestionable genius. His character had ever been beyond the reproach of self-seeking or ignoble ambition. He had multiplied himself into a thousand forms to serve the cause of the United Netherland States, and the services so rendered had been brilliant and frequent. A great change in his conduct and policy was now approaching, and it is therefore the more necessary to examine closely at this epoch his attitude and his character.

Early in June, Richardot, president of the council of Artois, addressed a letter to Sainte Aldegonde, by command of Alexander of Parma, suggesting a secret interview between the burgomaster and the Prince.

Page 1288

On the 8th of June, Sainte Aldegonde replied, in favourable terms, as to the interview; but observed, that, as he was an official personage, it was necessary for him to communicate the project to the magistracy of the city. He expressed likewise the hope that Parma would embrace the present opportunity for making a general treaty with all the Provinces. A special accord with Antwerp, leaving out Holland and Zeeland, would, he said, lead to the utter desolation of that city, and to the destruction of its commerce and manufactures, while the occasion now presented itself to the Prince of "winning praise and immortal glory by bringing back all the country to a voluntary and prompt obedience to his Majesty." He proposed, that, instead of his coming alone, there should be a number of deputies sent from Antwerp to confer with Alexander.

On the 11th June, Richardot replied by expressing, his own regrets and those of the Prince, that the interview could not have been with the burgomaster alone, but acknowledging the weight of his reasons, and acquiescing in the proposition to send a larger deputation. Three days afterwards, Sainte Aldegonde, on private consultation with some confidential personages, changed his ground; announced his preference for a private interview, under four eyes, with Parma; and requested that a passport might be sent. The passport was accordingly forwarded the same day, with an expression of Alexander's gratification, and with the offer, on the part of Richardot, to come himself to Antwerp as hostage during the absence of the burgomaster in Parma's camp at Beveren.

Sainte Aldegonde was accordingly about to start on the following day (16th of June), but meantime the affair had got wind. A secret interview, thus projected, was regarded by the citizens as extremely suspicious. There was much bitter insinuation against the burgomaster—many violent demonstrations. "Aldegonde, they say, is going to see Parma," said one of the burghers, "which gives much dissatisfaction, because, 'tis feared that he will make a treaty according to the appetite and pleasure of his Highness, having been gained over to the royal cause by money. He says that it would be a misfortune to send a large number of burghers. Last Sunday (16th June) there was a meeting of the broad council. The preachers came into the assembly and so animated the citizens by demonstrations of their religion, that all rushed from the council-house, crying with loud voices that they did not desire peace but war."

This desire was a healthy and a reasonable one; but, unfortunately, the Antwerpers had not always been so vigorous or so united in their resistance to Parma. At present, however, they were very furious, so soon as the secret purpose of Sainte Aldegonde became generally known. The proposed capitulation, which great mobs had been for weeks long savagely demanding at the hands of the burgomaster, was now ascribed to the burgomaster's unblushing corruption. He

Page 1289

had obviously, they thought, been purchased by Spanish ducats to do what he had hitherto been so steadily refusing. A certain Van Werne had gone from Antwerp into Holland a few days before upon his own private affairs, with a safe-conduct from Parma. Sainte Aldegonde had not communicated to him the project then on foot, but he had permitted him to seek a secret interview with Count Mansfeld. If that were granted, Van Werne was to hint that in case the Provinces could promise themselves a religious peace it would be possible, in the opinion of Sainte Aldegonde, to induce Holland and Zealand and all the rest of the United Provinces, to return to their obedience. Van Werne, on his return to Antwerp, divulged these secret negotiations, and so put a stop to Sainte Aldegonde's scheme of going alone to Parma. "This has given a bad suspicion to the people," wrote the burgomaster to Richardot, "so much so that I fear to have trouble. The broad council has been in session, but I don't know what has taken place there, and I do not dare to ask."

Sainte Aldegonde's motive, as avowed by himself, for seeking a private interview, was because he had received no answer to the main point in his first letter, as to the proposition for a general accord. In order therefore to make the deliberations more rapid, he had been disposed to discuss that preliminary question in secret. "But now," said he to Richardot, "as the affair had been too much divulged, as well by diverse reports and writings sown about, very inopportunely, as by the arrival of M. Van Werne, I have not found it practicable to set out upon my road, without communication with the members of the government. This has been done, however, not in the way of consultation, but as the announcement of a thing already resolved upon."

He proceeded to state, that great difficulties had arisen, exactly as he had foreseen. The magistrates would not hear of a general accord, and it was therefore necessary that a delay should be interposed before it would be possible for him to come. He begged Richardot to persuade Alexander, that he was not trifling with him. "It is not," said he, "from lightness, or any other passion, that I am retarding this affair. I will do all in my power to obtain leave to make a journey to the camp of his Highness, at whatever price it may cost and I hope before long to arrive at my object. If I fail, it must be ascribed to the humours of the people; for my anxiety to restore all the Provinces to obedience to his Majesty is extreme."

Richardot, in reply, the next day, expressed regret, without astonishment, on the part of Alexander and himself, at the intelligence thus received. People had such difference of humour, he said, and all men were not equally capable of reason. Nevertheless the citizens were warned not to misconstrue Parma's gentleness, because he was determined to die, with his whole army, rather than not take Antwerp. "As for the King," said Richardot, "he

Page 1290

will lay down all his crowns sooner than abandon this enterprise." Van Werne was represented as free from blame, and sincerely desirous of peace. Richardot had only stated to him, in general terms, that letters had been received from Sainte Aldegonde, expressing an opinion in favour of peace. As for the royalists, they were quite innocent of the reports and writings that had so inopportunely been circulated in the city. It was desirable, however, that the negotiation should not too long be deferred, for otherwise Antwerp might perish, before a general accord with Holland and Zeeland could be made. He begged Sainte Aldegonde to banish all anxiety as to Parma's sentiments towards himself or the community. "Put yourself, Sir, quite at your ease," said he. "His Highness is in no respects dissatisfied with you, nor prone to conceive any indignation against this poor people." He assured the burgomaster that he was not suspected of lightness, nor of a wish to delay matters, but he expressed solicitude with regard to the threatening demonstrations which had been made against him in Antwerp. "For," said he, "popular governments are full of a thousand hazards, and it would be infinitely painful to me, if you should come to harm."

Thus it would appear that it was Sainte Aldegonde who was chiefly anxious to effect the reconciliation of Holland and Zeeland with the King. The initiative of this project to include all the United Provinces in one scheme with the reduction of Antwerp came originally from him, and was opposed, at the outset, by the magistrates of that city, by the Prince of Parma and his councillors, and, by the States of Holland and Zeeland. The demonstrations on the part of the preachers, the municipal authorities, and the burghers, against Sainte Aldegonde and his plan for a secret interview, so soon as it was divulged, made it impossible to carry that project into effect.

"Aldegonde, who governs Antwerp," wrote Parma to Philip, "was endeavouring, eight days ago, to bring about some kind of negotiation for an accord. He manifested a desire to come hither for the sake of a personal interview with me, which I permitted. It was to have taken place last Sunday, 16th of this month, but by reason of a certain popular tumult, which arose out of these circumstances, it has been necessary to defer the meeting."

There was much disappointment felt by the royalist at this unsatisfactory result. "These bravadoes and impertinent demonstrations on the part of some of your people," wrote Richardot, ten days later, "will be the destruction of the whole country, and will convert the Prince's gentleness into anger. 'Tis these good and zealous patriots, trusting to a little favourable breeze that blew for a few days past, who have been the cause of all this disturbance, and who are ruining their miserable country—miserable, I say, for having produced such abortions as themselves."

Notwithstanding what had passed, however, Richardot intimated that Alexander was still ready to negotiate. "And if you, Sir," he concluded, in his letter to Aldegonde,

“concerning whom many of our friends have at present a sinister opinion, as if your object was to circumvent us, are willing to proceed roundly and frankly, as I myself firmly believe that you will do, we may yet hope for a favourable issue.”

Page 1291

Thus the burgomaster was already the object of suspicion to both parties. The Antwerpers denounced him as having been purchased by Spanish gold; the royalists accused him of intending to overreach the King. It was not probable therefore that all were correct in their conjectures.

At last it was arranged that deputies should be appointed by the broad council to commence a negotiation with Parma. Sainte Aldegonde informed Richardot, that he would (5th July, 1585) accompany them, if his affairs should permit. He protested his sincerity and frankness throughout the whole affair. "They try to calumniate me," he said, "as much on one side as on the other, but I will overcome by my innocence all the malice of my slanderers. If his Highness should be pleased to grant us some liberty for our religion, I dare to promise such faithful service as will give very great satisfaction."

Four days later, Sainte Aldegonde himself, together with M. de Duffel, M. de Schoonhoven, and Adrian Hesselt, came to Parma's camp at Beveren, as deputies on the part of the Antwerp authorities. They were courteously received by the Prince, and remained three days as his guests. During the period of this visit, the terms of a capitulation were thoroughly discussed, between Alexander and his councillors upon one part, and the four deputies on the other. The envoys endeavoured, with all the arguments at their command, to obtain the consent of the Prince to three preliminary points which they laid down as indispensable. Religious liberty must be granted, the citadel must not be reconstructed, a foreign garrison must not be admitted; they said. As it was the firm intention of the King, however, not to make the slightest concession on any one of these points, the discussion was not a very profitable one. Besides the public interviews at which all the negotiators were present, there was a private conference between Parma and Sainte Aldegonde which lasted more than four hours, in which each did his best to enforce his opinions upon the other. The burgomaster endeavoured to persuade the Prince with all the eloquence for which he was so renowned, that the hearts not of the Antwerpers only, but of the Hollanders and Zeelanders, were easily to be won at that moment. Give them religious liberty, and attempt to govern them by gentleness rather than by Spanish garrisons, and the road was plain to a complete reconciliation of all the Provinces with his Majesty.

Alexander, who knew his master to be inexorable upon these three points, was courteous but peremptory in his statements. He recommended that the rebels should take into consideration their own declining strength, the inexhaustible resources of the King, the impossibility of obtaining succour from France, and the perplexing dilatoriness of England, rather than waste their time in idle expectations of a change in the Spanish policy. He also intimated, obliquely but very plainly, to Sainte Aldegonde, that his own fortune would be made, and that he had everything to hope from his Majesty's bounty, if he were now willing to make himself useful in carrying into effect the royal plans.

Page 1292

The Prince urged these views with so much eloquence, that he seemed, in his own words, to have been directly inspired by the Lord for this special occasion! Sainte Aldegonde, too, was signally impressed by Alexander's language, and thoroughly fascinated-magnetized, as it were—by his character. He subsequently declared, that he had often conversed familiarly with many eloquent personages, but that he had never known a man more powerful or persuasive than the Prince of Parma. He could honestly say of him—as Hasdrubal had said of Scipio—that Farnese was even more admirable when seen face to face, than he had seemed when one only heard of his glorious achievements.

"The burgomaster and three deputies," wrote Parma to Philip, "were here until the 12th July. We discussed (30th July, 1585) the points and form of a capitulation, and they have gone back thoroughly satisfied. Sainte Aldegonde especially was much pleased with the long interview which he had with me, alone, and which lasted more than three hours. I told him, as well as my weakness and suffering from the tertian fever permitted, all that God inspired me to say on our behalf."

Nevertheless, if Sainte Aldegonde and his colleagues went away thoroughly satisfied, they had reason, soon after their return, to become thoroughly dejected. The magistrates and burghers would not listen to a proposition to abandon the three points, however strongly urged to do so by arguments drawn from the necessity of the situation, and by representations of Parma's benignity. As for the burgomaster, he became the target for calumny, so soon as his three hours' private interview became known; and the citizens loudly declared that his head ought to be cut off, and sent in a bag, as a present, to Philip, in order that the traitor might meet the sovereign with whom he sought a reconciliation, face to face, as soon as possible.

The deputies, immediately after their return, made their report to the magistrates, as likewise to the colonels and captains, and to the deans of guilds. Next day, although it was Sunday, there was a session of the broad council, and Sainte Aldegonde made a long address, in which—as he stated in a letter to Richardot—he related everything that had passed in his private conversation with Alexander. An answer was promised to Parma on the following Tuesday, but the burgomaster spoke very discouragingly as to the probability of an accord.

"The joy with which our return was greeted," he said, "was followed by a general disappointment and sadness, so soon as the result was known. The want of a religious toleration, as well as the refusal to concede on the other two points, has not a little altered the hearts of all, even of the Catholics. A citadel and a garrison are considered ruin and desolation to a great commercial city. I have done what I can to urge the acceptance of such conditions as the Prince is willing to give, and have spoken in general terms of his benign intentions. The citizens still desire peace. Had his Highness been willing to take both religions under his protection, he might have won all hearts, and very soon all the other Provinces would have returned to their obedience,

while the clemency and magnanimity of his Majesty would thus have been rendered admirable throughout the world.”

Page 1293

The power to form an accurate conception as to the nature of Philip and of other personages with whom he was dealing, and as to the general signs of his times, seems to have been wanting in the character of the gifted Aldegonde. He had been dazzled by the personal presence of Parma, and he now spoke of Philip *ii*., as if his tyranny over the Netherlands—which for twenty years had been one horrible and uniform whole—-were the accidental result of circumstances, not the necessary expression of his individual character, and might be easily changed at will—as if Nero, at a moment's warning, might transform himself into Trajan. It is true that the innermost soul of the Spanish king could by no possibility be displayed to any contemporary, as it reveals itself, after three centuries, to those who study the record of his most secret thoughts; but, at any rate, it would seem that his career had been sufficiently consistent, to manifest the amount of "clemency and magnanimity" which he might be expected to exercise.

"Had his Majesty," wrote Sainte Aldegonde, "been willing, since the year sixty-six, to pursue a course of toleration, the memory of his reign would have been sacred to all posterity, with an immortal praise of sapience, benignity, and sovereign felicity."

This might be true, but nevertheless a tolerating Philip, in the year 1585, ought to have seemed to Sainte Aldegonde an impossible idea.

"The emperors," continued the burgomaster, "who immediately succeeded Tiberius were the cause of the wisdom which displayed itself in the good Trajan—also a Spaniard—-and in Antoninus, Verus, and the rest: If you think that this city, by the banishment of a certain number of persons, will be content to abandon the profession of the reformed faith, you are much mistaken. You will see, with time, that the exile of this religion will be accompanied by a depopulation and a sorrowful ruin and desolation of this flourishing city. But this will be as it pleases God. Meantime I shall not fail to make all possible exertions to induce the citizens to consent to a reconciliation with his Majesty. The broad council will soon give their answer, and then we shall send a deputation. We shall invite Holland and Zeeland to join with us, but there is little hope of their consent."

Certainly there was little hope of their consent. Sainte Aldegonde was now occupied in bringing about the capitulation of Antwerp, without any provision for religious liberty—a concession which Parma had most distinctly refused—and it was not probable that Holland and Zeeland, after twenty years of hard fighting, and with an immediate prospect of assistance from England—could now be induced to resign the great object of the contest without further struggle.

Page 1294

It was not until a month had elapsed that the authorities of Antwerp sent their propositions to the Prince of Parma. On the 12th August, however, Sainte Aldegonde, accompanied by the same three gentlemen who had been employed on the first mission, and by seventeen others besides, proceeded with safe-conduct to the camp at Beveren. Here they were received with great urbanity, and hospitably entertained by Alexander, who received their formal draft of articles for a capitulation, and referred it to be reported upon to Richardot, Pamel, and Vanden Burgh. Meantime there were many long speeches and several conferences, sometimes between all the twenty-one envoys and the Prince together; on other occasions, more secret ones, at which only Aldegonde and one or two of his colleagues were present. It had been obvious, from the date of the first interview, in the preceding month, that the negotiation would be of no avail until the government of Antwerp was prepared to abandon all the conditions which they had originally announced as indispensable. Alexander had not much disposition and no authority whatever to make concessions.

“So far as I can understand,” Parma had written on the 30th July, “they are very far from a conclusion. They have most exorbitant ideas, talking of some kind of liberty of conscience, besides refusing on any account to accept of garrisons, and having many reasons to allege on such subjects.”

The discussions, therefore, after the deputies had at last arrived, though courteously conducted, could scarcely be satisfactory to both parties. “The articles were thoroughly deliberated upon,” wrote Alexander, “by all the deputies, nor did I fail to have private conferences with Aldegonde, that most skilful and practised lawyer and politician, as well as with two or three of the others. I did all in my power to bring them to a thorough recognition of their errors, and to produce a confidence in his Majesty’s clemency, in order that they might concede what was needful for the interests of the Catholic religion and the security of the city. They heard all I had to say without exasperating themselves, and without interposing any strong objections, except in the matter of religion, and, still more, in the matter of the citadel and the garrison. Aldegonde took much pains to persuade me that it would be ruinous for a great, opulent, commercial city to submit to a foreign military force. Even if compelled by necessity to submit now, the inhabitants would soon be compelled by the same necessity to abandon the place entirely, and to leave in ruins one of the most splendid and powerful cities in the world, and in this opinion Catholics and heretics unanimously concurred. The deputies protested, with one accord, that so pernicious and abominable a thing as a citadel and garrison could not even be proposed to their constituents. I answered, that, so long as the rebellion of Holland and Zeeland lasted, it would be necessary for your Majesty to make sure of Antwerp, by one or the other of those means, but promised that the city should be relieved of the incumbrance so soon as those islands should be reduced.

Page 1295

“Sainte Aldegonde was not discouraged by this statement, but in the hope of convincing others, or with the wish of showing that he had tried his best, desired that I would hear him before the council of state. I granted the request, and Sainte Aldegonde then made another long and very elegant oration, intended to divert me from my resolution.”

It must be confessed—if the reports, which have come down to us of that long and elegant oration be correct—that the enthusiasm of the burgomaster for Alexander was rapidly degenerating into idolatry.

“We are not here, O invincible Prince,” he said, “that we may excuse, by an anxious legation, the long defence which we have made of our homes. Who could have feared any danger to the most powerful city in the Netherlands from so moderate a besieging force? You would yourself have rather wished for, than approved of, a greater facility on our part, for the brave cannot love the timid. We knew the number of your troops, we had discovered the famine in your camp, we were aware of the paucity of your ships, we had heard of the quarrels in your army, we were expecting daily to hear of a general mutiny among your soldiers. Were we to believe that with ten or eleven thousand men you would be able to block up the city by land and water, to reduce the open country of Brabant, to cut off all aid as well from the neighbouring towns as from the powerful provinces of Holland and Zeeland, to oppose, without a navy, the whole strength of our fleets, directed against the dyke? Truly, if you had been at the head of fifty thousand soldiers, and every soldier had possessed one hundred hands, it would have seemed impossible for you to meet so many emergencies in so many places, and under so many distractions. What you have done we now believe possible to do, only because we see that it has been done. You have subjugated the Scheldt, and forced it to bear its bridge, notwithstanding the strength of its current, the fury of the ocean-tides, the tremendous power of the icebergs, the perpetual conflicts with our fleets. We destroyed your bridge, with great slaughter of your troops. Rendered more courageous by that slaughter, you restored that mighty work. We assaulted the great dyke, pierced it through and through, and opened a path for our ships. You drove us off when victors, repaired the ruined bulwark, and again closed to us the avenue of relief. What machine was there that we did not employ? what miracles of fire did we not invent? what fleets and floating cidadels did we not put in motion? All that genius, audacity, and art, could teach us we have executed, calling to our assistance water, earth, heaven, and hell itself. Yet with all these efforts, with all this enginry, we have not only failed to drive you from our walls, but we have seen you gaining victories over other cities at the same time. You have done a thing, O Prince, than which there is nothing greater either in ancient or modern story. It has often occurred, while a general was besieging one city that he lost another situate farther off. But you, while besieging Antwerp, have reduced simultaneously Dendermonde, Ghent, Nymegen, Brussels, and Mechlin.”

Page 1296

All this, and much more, with florid rhetoric, the burgomaster pronounced in honour of Farnese, and the eulogy was entirely deserved. It was hardly becoming, however, for such lips, at such a moment, to sound the praise of him whose victory had just decided the downfall of religious liberty, and of the national independence of the Netherlands. His colleagues certainly must have winced, as they listened to commendations so lavishly bestowed upon the representative of Philip, and it is not surprising that Sainte Aldegonde's growing unpopularity should, from that hour, have rapidly increased. To abandon the whole object of the siege, when resistance seemed hopeless, was perhaps pardonable, but to offer such lip-homage to the conqueror was surely transgressing the bounds of decorum.

His conclusion, too, might to Alexander seem as insolent as the whole tenor of his address had been humble; for, after pronouncing this solemn eulogy upon the conqueror, he calmly proposed that the prize of the contest should be transferred to the conquered.

"So long as liberty of religion, and immunity from citadel and garrison can be relied upon," he said, "so long will Antwerp remain the most splendid and flourishing city in Christendom; but desolation will ensue if the contrary policy is to prevail."

But it was very certain that liberty of religion, as well as immunity from citadel and garrison, were quite out of the question. Philip and Parma had long been inexorably resolved upon all the three points.

"After the burgomaster had finished his oration," wrote Alexander to his sovereign, "I discussed the matter with him in private, very distinctly and minutely."

The religious point was soon given up, Sainte Aldegonde finding it waste of breath to say anything more about freedom of conscience. A suggestion was however made on the subject of the garrison, which the prince accepted, because it contained a condition which it would be easy to evade.

"Aldegonde proposed," said Parma, "that a garrison might be admissible if I made my entrance into the city merely with infantry and cavalry of nations which were acceptable —Walloons, namely, and Germans—and in no greater numbers than sufficient for a body-guard. I accepted, because, in substance, this would amount to a garrison, and because, also, after the magistrates shall have been changed, I shall have no difficulty in making myself master of the people, continuing the garrison, and rebuilding the citadel."

The Prince proceeded to give his reasons why he was willing to accept the capitulation on what he considered so favourable terms to the besieged. Autumn was approaching. Already the fury of the storms had driven vessels clean over the dykes; the rebels in Holland and Zeeland were preparing their fleets—augmented by many new ships of war

and fire-machines—for another desperate attack upon the Palisades, in which there was great possibility of their succeeding; an auxiliary force from England was soon expected; so that, in view of all these circumstances, he had resolved to throw himself at his Majesty's feet and implore his clemency. "If this people of Antwerp, as the head, is gained," said he, "there will be tranquillity in all the members."

Page 1297

These reasons were certainly conclusive; nor is it easy to believe, that, under the circumstances thus succinctly stated by Alexander, it would have been impossible for the patriots to hold out until the promised succour from Holland and from England should arrive. In point of fact, the bridge could not have stood the winter which actually ensued; for it was the repeatedly expressed opinion of the Spanish officers in Antwerp, that the icebergs which then filled the Scheldt must inevitably have shattered twenty bridges to fragments, had there been so many. It certainly was superfluous for the Prince to make excuses to Philip for accepting the proposed capitulation. All the prizes of victory had been thoroughly secured, unless pillage, massacre, and rape, which had been the regular accompaniments of Alva's victories, were to be reckoned among the indispensable trophies of a Spanish triumph.

Nevertheless, the dearth in the city had been well concealed from the enemy; for, three days after the surrender, not a loaf of bread was to be had for any money in all Antwerp, and Alexander declared that he would never have granted such easy conditions had he been aware of the real condition of affairs.

The articles of capitulation agreed upon between Parma and the deputies were brought before the broad council on the 9th August. There was much opposition to them, as many magistrates and other influential personages entertained sanguine expectations from the English negotiation, and were beginning to rely with confidence upon the promises of Queen Elizabeth. The debate was waxing warm, when some of the councillors, looking out of window of the great hall, perceived that a violent mob had collected in the streets. Furious cries for bread were uttered, and some meagre-looking individuals were thrust forward to indicate the famine which was prevailing, and the necessity of concluding the treaty without further delay. Thus the municipal government was perpetually exposed to democratic violence, excited by diametrically opposite influences. Sometimes the burgomaster was denounced for having sold himself and his country to the Spaniards, and was assailed with execrations for being willing to conclude a sudden and disgraceful peace. At other moments he was accused of forging letters containing promises of succour from the Queen of England and from the authorities of Holland, in order to protract the lingering tortures of the war. Upon this occasion the peace-mob carried its point. The councillors, looking out of window, rushed into the hall with direful accounts of the popular ferocity; the magistrates and colonels who had been warmest in opposition suddenly changed their tone, and the whole body of the broad council accepted the articles of capitulation by a unanimous vote.

The window was instantly thrown open, and the decision publicly announced. The populace, wild with delight, rushed through the streets, tearing down the arms of the Duke of Anjou, which had remained above the public edifices since the period of that personage's temporary residence in the Netherlands, and substituting, with wonderful celerity, the escutcheon of Philip the Second. Thus suddenly could an Antwerp mob pass from democratic insolence to intense loyalty.

Page 1298

The articles, on the whole, were as liberal as could have been expected. The only hope for Antwerp and for a great commonwealth of all the Netherlands was in holding out, even to the last gasp, until England and Holland, now united, had time to relieve the city. This was, unquestionably, possible. Had Antwerp possessed the spirit of Leyden, had William of Orange been alive, that Spanish escutcheon, now raised with such indecent haste, might have never been seen again on the outside wall of any Netherland edifice. Belgium would have become at once a constituent portion of a great independent national realm, instead of languishing until our own century, the dependency of a distant and a foreign metropolis. Nevertheless, as the Antwerpers were not disposed to make themselves martyrs, it was something that they escaped the nameless horrors which had often alighted upon cities subjected to an enraged soldiery. It redounds to the eternal honour of Alexander Farnese—when the fate of Naarden and Haarlem and Maestricht, in the days of Alva, and of Antwerp itself in the horrible “Spanish fury,” is remembered—that there were no scenes of violence and outrage in the populous and wealthy city, which was at length at his mercy after having defied him so long.

Civil and religious liberty were trampled in the dust, commerce and manufactures were destroyed, the most valuable portion of the citizens sent into hopeless exile, but the remaining inhabitants were not butchered in cold blood.

The treaty was signed on the 17th August. Antwerp was to return to its obedience. There was to be an entire amnesty and oblivion for the past, without a single exception. Royalist absentees were to be reinstated in their possessions. Monasteries, churches, and the King’s domains were to be restored to their former proprietors. The inhabitants of the city were to practise nothing but the Catholic religion. Those who refused to conform were allowed to remain two years for the purpose of winding up their affairs and selling out their property, provided that during that period they lived “without scandal towards the ancient religion”—a very vague and unsatisfactory condition. All prisoners were to be released excepting Teligny. Four hundred thousand florins were to be paid by the authorities as a fine. The patriot garrison was to leave the city with arms and baggage and all the honours of war.

This capitulation gave more satisfaction to the hungry portion of the Antwerpers than to the patriot party of the Netherlands. Sainte Aldegonde was vehemently and unsparingly denounced as a venal traitor. It is certain, whatever his motives, that his attitude had completely changed. For it was not Antwerp alone that he had reconciled or was endeavouring to reconcile with the King of Spain, but Holland and Zeeland as well, and all the other independent Provinces. The ancient champion of the patriot army, the earliest signer of the ‘Compromise,’ the bosom friend

Page 1299

of William the Silent, the author of the ‘Wilhelmus’ national song, now avowed his conviction, in a published defence of his conduct against the calumnious attacks upon it, “that it was impossible, with a clear conscience, for subjects, under any circumstances, to take up arms against Philip, their king.” Certainly if he had always entertained that opinion he must have suffered many pangs of remorse during his twenty years of active and illustrious rebellion. He now made himself secretly active in promoting the schemes of Parma and in counteracting the negotiation with England. He flattered himself, with an infatuation which it is difficult to comprehend, that it would be possible to obtain religious liberty for the revolting Provinces, although he had consented to its sacrifice in Antwerp. It is true that he had not the privilege of reading Philip’s secret letters to Parma, but what was there in the character of the King—what intimation had ever been given by the Governor-General—to induce a belief in even the possibility of such a concession?

Whatever Sainte Aldegonde’s opinions, it is certain that Philip had no intention of changing his own policy. He at first suspected the burgomaster of a wish to protract the negotiations for a perfidious purpose.

“Necessity has forced Antwerp,” he wrote on the 17th of August—the very day on which the capitulation was actually signed—“to enter into negotiation. I understand the artifice of Aldegonde in seeking to prolong and make difficult the whole affair, under pretext of treating for the reduction of Holland and Zeeland at the same time. It was therefore very adroit in you to defeat this joint scheme at once, and urge the Antwerp matter by itself, at the same time not shutting the door on the others. With the prudence and dexterity with which this business has thus far been managed I am thoroughly satisfied.”

The King also expressed his gratification at hearing from Parma that the demand for religious liberty in the Netherlands would soon be abandoned.

“In spite of the vehemence,” he said, “which they manifest in the religious matter, desiring some kind of liberty, they will in the end, as you say they will, content themselves with what the other cities, which have returned to obedience, have obtained. This must be done in all cases without flinching, and without permitting any modification.”

What “had been obtained” by Brussels, Mechlin, Ghent, was well known. The heretics had obtained the choice of renouncing their religion or of going into perpetual exile, and this was to be the case “without flinching” in Holland and Zeeland, if those provinces chose to return to obedience. Yet Sainte Aldegonde deluded himself with the thought of a religious peace.

In another and very important letter of the same date Philip laid down his policy very distinctly. The Prince of Parma, by no means such a bigot as his master, had hinted at the possibility of tolerating the reformed religion in the places recovered from the rebels, sub silentio, for a period not defined, and long enough for the heretics to awake from their errors.

Page 1300

“You have got an expression of opinion, I see,” wrote the King to Alexander, “of some grave men of wisdom and conscience, that the limitation of time, during which the heretics may live without scandal, may be left undefined; but I feel very keenly the danger of such a proposition. With regard to Holland and Zeeland, or any other provinces or towns, the first step must be for them to receive and maintain alone the exercise of the Catholic religion, and to subject themselves to the Roman church, without tolerating the exercise of any other religion, in city, village, farm-house, or building thereto destined in the fields, or in any place whatsoever; and in this regulation there is to be no flaw, no change, no concession by convention or otherwise of a religious peace, or anything of the sort. They are all to embrace the Roman Catholic religion, and the exercise of that is alone to be permitted.”

This certainly was distinct enough, and nothing had been ever said in public to induce a belief in any modification of the principles on which Philip had uniformly acted. That monarch considered himself born to suppress heresy, and he had certainly been carrying out this work during his whole lifetime.

The King was willing, however, as Alexander had intimated in his negotiations with Antwerp, and previously in the capitulation of Brussels, Ghent, and other places, that there should be an absence of investigation into the private chambers of the heretics, during the period allotted them for choosing between the Papacy and exile.

“It may be permitted,” said Philip, “to abstain from inquiring as to what the heretics are doing within their own doors, in a private way, without scandal, or any public exhibition of their rites during a fixed time. But this connivance, and the abstaining from executing the heretics, or from chastising them, even although they may be living very circumspectly, is to be expressed in very vague terms.”

Being most anxious to provide against a second crop of heretics to succeed the first, which he was determined to uproot, he took pains to enjoin with his own hand upon Parma the necessity of putting in Catholic schoolmasters and mistresses to the exclusion of reformed teachers into all the seminaries of the recovered Provinces, in order that all the boys and girls might grow up in thorough orthodoxy.

Yet this was the man from whom Sainte Aldegonde imagined the possibility of obtaining a religious peace.

Ten days after the capitulation, Parma made his triumphal entrance into Antwerp; but, according to his agreement, he spared the citizens the presence of the Spanish and Italian soldiers, the military procession being composed of the Germans and Walloons. Escorted by his body-guard, and surrounded by a knot of magnates and veterans, among whom the Duke of Arschot, the Prince of Chimay, the Counts Mansfeld, Egmont, and Aremberg, were conspicuous, Alexander proceeded towards

Page 1301

the captured city. He was met at the Keyser Gate by a triumphal chariot of gorgeous workmanship, in which sat the fair nymph Antwerpia, magnificently bedizened, and accompanied by a group of beautiful maidens. Antwerpia welcomed the conqueror with a kiss, recited a poem in his honour, and bestowed upon him the keys of the city, one of which was in gold. This the Prince immediately fastened to the chain around his neck, from which was suspended the lamb of the golden fleece, with which order he had just been, amid great pomp and ceremony, invested.

On the public square called the Mere, the Genoese merchants had erected two rostral columns, each surmounted by a colossal image, representing respectively Alexander of Macedon and Alexander of Parma. Before the house of Portugal was an enormous phoenix, expanding her wings quite across the street; while, in other parts of the town, the procession was met by ships of war, elephants, dromedaries, whales, dragons, and other triumphal phenomena. In the market-place were seven statues in copper, personifying the seven planets, together with an eighth representing Bacchus; and perhaps there were good mythological reasons why the god of wine, together with so large a portion of our solar system, should be done in copper by Jacob Jongeling, to honour the triumph of Alexander, although the key to the enigma has been lost.

The cathedral had been thoroughly fumigated with frankincense, and besprinkled with holy water, to purify the sacred precincts from their recent pollution by the reformed rites; and the Protestant pulpits which had been placed there, had been soundly beaten with rods, and then burned to ashes. The procession entered within its walls, where a magnificent Te Deum was performed, and then, after much cannon-firing, bell-ringing, torch-light exhibition, and other pyrotechnics, the Prince made his way at last to the palace provided for him. The glittering display, by which the royalists celebrated their triumph, lasted three days' long, the city being thronged from all the country round with eager and frivolous spectators, who were never wearied with examining the wonders of the bridge and the forts, and with gazing at the tragic memorials which still remained of the fight on the Kowenstyn.

During this interval, the Spanish and Italian soldiery, not willing to be outdone in demonstrations of respect to their chief, nor defrauded of their rightful claim to a holiday amused themselves with preparing a demonstration of a novel character. The bridge, which, as it was well known, was to be destroyed within a very few days, was adorned with triumphal arches, and decked with trees and flowering plants; its roadway was strewed with branches; and the palisades, parapets, and forts, were garnished with wreaths, emblems, and poetical inscriptions in honour of the Prince. The soldiers themselves, attired in verdurous garments of foliage and flower-work, their swart faces adorned with roses

Page 1302

and lilies, paraded the bridge and the dyke in fantastic procession with clash of cymbal and flourish of trumpet, dancing, singing, and discharging their carbines, in all the delirium of triumph. Nor was a suitable termination to the festival wanting, for Alexander, pleased with the genial character of these demonstrations, repaired himself to the bridge, where he was received with shouts of rapture by his army, thus whimsically converted into a horde of fauns and satyrs. Afterwards, a magnificent banquet was served to the soldiers upon the bridge. The whole extent of its surface, from the Flemish to the Brabant shore—the scene so lately of deadly combat, and of the midnight havoc caused by infernal enginery—was changed, as if by the stroke of a wand, into a picture of sylvan and Arcadian merry-making, and spread with tables laden with delicate viands. Here sat that host of war—bronzed figures, banqueting at their ease, their heads crowned with flowers, while the highest magnates of the army, humouring them in their masquerade, served them with dainties, and filled their goblets with wine.

After these festivities had been concluded, Parma set himself to practical business. There had been a great opposition, during the discussion of the articles of capitulation to the reconstruction of the famous citadel. That fortress had been always considered, not as a defence of the place against a foreign enemy, but as an instrument to curb the burghers themselves beneath a hostile power. The city magistrates, however, as well as the dean and chief officers in all the guilds and fraternities, were at once changed by Parma—Catholics being uniformly substituted for heretics. In consequence, it was not difficult to bring about a change of opinion in the broad council. It is true that neither Papists nor Calvinists regarded with much satisfaction the prospect of military violence being substituted for civic rule, but in the first effusion of loyalty, and in the triumph of the ancient religion, they forgot the absolute ruin to which their own action was now condemning their city. Champagny, who had once covered himself with glory by his heroic though unsuccessful efforts to save Antwerp from the dreadful “Spanish fury” which had descended from that very citadel, was now appointed governor of the town, and devoted himself to the reconstruction of the hated fortress. “Champagny has particularly aided me,” wrote Parma, “with his rhetoric and clever management, and has brought the broad council itself to propose that the citadel should be rebuilt. It will therefore be done, as by the burghers themselves, without your Majesty or myself appearing to desire it.”

This was, in truth, a triumph of “rhetoric and clever management,” nor could a city well abase itself more completely, kneeling thus cheerfully at its conqueror’s feet, and requesting permission to put the yoke upon its own neck. “The erection of the castle has thus been determined upon,” said Parma, “and I am supposed to know nothing of the resolution.”

Page 1303

A little later he observed that they, were “working away most furiously at the citadel, and that within a month it would be stronger than it ever had been before.”

The building went on, indeed, with astonishing celerity, the fortress rising out of its ruins almost as rapidly, under the hands of the royalists, as it had been demolished, but a few years before, by the patriots. The old foundations still remained, and blocks of houses, which had been constructed out of its ruins, were thrown down that the materials might be again employed in its restoration.

The citizens, impoverished and wretched, humbly demanded that the expense of building the citadel might be in part defrayed by the four hundred thousand florins in which they had been mulcted by the capitulation. “I don’t marvel at this,” said Parma, “for certainly the poor city is most forlorn and poverty-stricken, the heretics having all left it.” It was not long before it was very satisfactorily established, that the presence of those same heretics and liberty of conscience for all men, were indispensable conditions for the prosperity of the great capital. Its downfall was instantaneous. The merchants and industrious artisans all wandered away from the place which had been the seat of a world-wide traffic. Civilisation and commerce departed, and in their stead were the citadel and the Jesuits. By express command of Philip, that order, banished so recently, was reinstated in Antwerp, as well as throughout the obedient provinces; and all the schools and colleges were placed under its especial care. No children could be thenceforth instructed except by the lips of those fathers. Here was a curb more efficacious even than the citadel. That fortress was at first garrisoned with Walloons and Germans. “I have not yet induced the citizens,” said Parma, “to accept a Spanish garrison, nor am I surprised; so many of them remembering past events (alluding to the ‘Spanish fury,’ but not mentioning it by name), and observing the frequent mutinies at the present time. Before long, I expect, however, to make the Spaniards as acceptable and agreeable as the inhabitants of the country themselves.”

It may easily be supposed that Philip was pleased with the triumphs that had thus been achieved. He was even grateful, or affected to be grateful, to him who had achieved them. He awarded great praise to Alexander for his exertions, on the memorable occasions of the attack upon the bridge, and the battle of the Kowenstyn; but censured him affectionately for so rashly exposing his life. “I have no words,” he said, “to render the thanks which are merited for all that you have been doing. I recommend you earnestly however to have a care for the security of your person, for that is of more consequence than all the rest.”

Page 1304

After the news of the reduction of the city, he again expressed gratification, but in rather cold language. “From such obstinate people,” said he, “not more could be extracted than has been extracted; therefore the capitulation is satisfactory.” What more he wished to extract it would be difficult to say, for certainly the marrow had been extracted from the bones, and the dead city was thenceforth left to moulder under the blight of a foreign garrison and an army of Jesuits. “Perhaps religious affairs will improve before long,” said Philip. They did improve very soon, as he understood the meaning of improvement. A solitude of religion soon brought with it a solitude in every other regard, and Antwerp became a desert, as Sainte Aldegonde had foretold would be the case.

The King had been by no means so calm, however, when the intelligence of the capitulation first reached him at Madrid. On the contrary, his oldest courtiers had never seen him exhibit such marks of hilarity.

When he first heard of the glorious victory at Lepanto, his countenance had remained impassive, and he had continued in the chapel at the devotional exercises which the messenger from Don John had interrupted. Only when the news of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew first reached him, had he displayed an amount of cheerfulness equal to that which he manifested at the fall of Antwerp. “Never,” said Granvelle, “had the King been so radiant with joy as when he held in his hand the despatches which announced the capitulation.” The letters were brought to him after he had retired to rest, but his delight was so great that he could not remain in his bed. Rushing from his chamber, so soon as he had read them, to that of his dearly-beloved daughter, Clara Isabella, he knocked loudly at the door, and screaming through the keyhole the three words, “Antwerp is ours,” returned precipitately again to his own apartment.

It was the general opinion in Spain, that the capture of this city had terminated the resistance of the Netherlands. Holland and Zeeland would, it was thought, accept with very little hesitation the terms which Parma had been offering, through the agency of Sainte Aldegonde; and, with the reduction of those two provinces, the Spanish dominion over the whole country would of course become absolute. Secretary Idiaquez observed, on drawing up instructions for Carlo Coloma, a Spanish financier then departing on special mission for the Provinces, that he would soon come back to Spain, for the Prince of Parma was just putting an end to the whole Belgic war.

Time was to show whether Holland and Zeeland were as malleable as Antwerp, and whether there would not be a battle or two more to fight before that Belgic war would come to its end. Meantime Antwerp was securely fettered, while the spirit of commerce —to which its unexampled prosperity had been due—now took its flight to the lands where civil and religious liberty had found a home.

Page 1305

==========

Note on *Marnix de Sainte Aldegonde*.

As every illustration of the career and character of this eminent personage excites constant interest in the Netherlands, I have here thrown together, in the form of an Appendix, many important and entirely unpublished details, drawn mainly from the Archives of Simancas, and from the State Paper Office and British Museum in London.

The ex-burgomaster seemed determined to counteract the policy of those Netherlanders who wished to offer the sovereignty of the Provinces to the English Queen. He had been earnestly in favour of annexation to France, for his sympathies and feelings were eminently French. He had never been a friend to England, and he was soon aware that a strong feeling of indignation—whether just or unjust—existed against him both in that country and in the Netherlands, on account of the surrender of Antwerp.

"I have had large conference with Villiers," wrote Sir John Norris to Walsingham, "he condemneth *Ste*. Aldegonde's doings, but will impute it to fear and not to malice. *Ste*. Aldegonde, notwithstanding that he was forbidden to come to Holland, and laid for at the fleet, yet stole secretly to Dort, where they say he is staid, but I doubt he will be heard speak, and then assuredly he will do great hurt."

It was most certainly Sainte Aldegonde's determination, so soon as the capitulation of Antwerp had been resolved upon, to do his utmost to restore all the independent Provinces to their ancient allegiance. Rather Spanish than English was his settled resolution. Liberty of religion, if possible—that was his cherished wish—but still more ardently, perhaps, did he desire to prevent the country from falling into the hands of Elizabeth.

"The Prince of Parma hath conceived such an assured hope of the fidelity of Aldegonde," wrote one of Walsingham's agents, Richard Tomson, "in reducing the Provinces, yet enemies, into a perfect subjection, that the Spaniards are so well persuaded of the man as if he had never been against them. They say, about the middle of this month, he departed for Zeeland and Holland, to prosecute the effect of his promises, and I am the more induced to believe that he is become altogether Spanish, for that the common bruit goeth that he hastened the surrendering of the town of Antwerp, after he had intelligence of the coming of the English succours."

There was naturally much indignation felt in the independent Provinces, against all who had been thought instrumental in bringing about the reduction of the great cities of Flanders. Famars, governor of Mechlin, Van den Tympel, governor of Brussels, Martini, who had been active in effecting the capitulation of Antwerp, were all arrested in

Holland. “From all that I can hear,” said Parma, “it is likely that they will be very severely handled, which is the reason why *Ste*. Aldegonde, although he sent

Page 1306

his wife and children to Holland, has not ventured thither himself: It appears that they threaten him there, but he means now to go, under pretext of demanding to justify himself from the imputations against him. Although he tells me freely that, without some amplification of the concessions hitherto made on the point of religion, he hopes for no good result, yet I trust that he will do good offices in the meantime, in spite of the difficulties which obstruct his efforts. On my part, every exertion will be made, and not without hope of some fruit, if not before, at least after, these people have become as tired of the English as they were of the French."

Of this mutual ill-feeling between the English and the burgomaster, there can be no doubt whatever. The Queen's government was fully aware of his efforts to counteract its negotiation with the Netherlands, and to bring about their reconciliation with Spain. When the Earl of Leicester—as will soon be related—arrived in the Provinces, he was not long in comprehending his attitude and his influence.

"I wrote somewhat of Sir Aldegonde in putting his case," wrote Leicester, "but this is certain, I have the copy of his very letters sent hither to practise the peace not two days before I came, and this day one hath told me that loves him well, that he hates our countrymen unrecoverably. I am sorry for it."

On the other hand, the Queen was very indignant with the man whom she looked upon as the paid agent of Spain. She considered him a renegade, the more dangerous because his previous services had been so illustrious. "Her Majesty's mislike towards *Ste*. Aldegonde continueth," wrote Walsingham to Leicester, "and she taketh offence that he was not restrained of his liberty by your Lordship's order." It is unquestionable that the exburgomaster intended to do his best towards effecting the reconciliation of all the Provinces with Spain; and it is equally certain that the King had offered to pay him well, if he proved successful in his endeavours. There is no proof, however, and no probability that Sainte Aldegonde ever accepted or ever intended to accept the proffered bribe. On the contrary, his whole recorded career ought to disprove the supposition. Yet it is painful, to find him, at this crisis, assiduous in his attempts to undo the great work of his own life, and still more distressing to find that great rewards were distinctly offered to him for such service. Immense promises had been frequently made no doubt to William the Silent; nor could any public man, in such times, be so pure that an attempt to tamper with him might not be made: but when the personage, thus solicited, was evidently acting in the interests of the tempters, it is not surprising that he should become the object of grave suspicion.

"It does not seem to me bad," wrote Philip to Parma, "this negotiation which you have commenced with *Ste*. Aldegonde, in order to gain him, and thus to employ his services in bringing about a reduction of the islands (Holland and Zeeland). In exchange for this

work, any thing which you think proper to offer to him as a reward, will be capital well invested; but it must not be given until the job is done."

Page 1307

But the job was hard to do, and Sainte Aldegonde cared nothing for the offered bribe. He was, however, most strangely confident of being able to overcome, on the one hand, the opposition of Holland and Zeeland to the hated authority of Spain, and, on the other, the intense abhorrence entertained by Philip to liberty of conscience.

Soon after the capitulation, he applied for a passport to visit those two Provinces. Permission to come was refused him. Honest men from Antwerp, he was informed, would be always welcome, but there was no room for him. There was, however—or Parma persuaded himself that there was—a considerable party in those countries in favour of reconciliation with Spain. If the ex-burgomaster could gain a hearing, it was thought probable that his eloquence would prove very effective.

“We have been making efforts to bring about negotiations with Holland and Zeeland,” wrote Alexander to Philip. “Gelderland and Overyssel likewise show signs of good disposition, but I have not soldiers enough to animate the good and terrify the bad. As for Holland and Zeeland, there is a strong inclination on the part of the people to a reconciliation, if some concession could be made on the religious question, but the governors oppose it, because they are perverse, and are relying on assistance from England. Could this religious concession be made, an arrangement could, without doubt, be accomplished, and more quickly than people think. Nevertheless, in such a delicate matter, I am obliged to await your Majesty’s exact instructions and ultimatum.”

He then proceeded to define exactly the position and intentions of the burgomaster.

“The government of Holland and Zeeland,” he said, “have refused a passport to *Ste*. Aldegonde, and express dissatisfaction with him for having surrendered Antwerp so soon. They know that he has much credit with the people and with the ministers of the sects, and they are in much fear of him because he is inclined for peace, which is against their interests. They are, therefore, endeavouring to counteract my negotiations with him. These have been, thus far, only in general terms. I have sought to induce him to perform the offices required, without giving him reason to expect any concession as to the exercise of religion. He persuades himself that, in the end, there will be some satisfaction obtained upon this point, and, under this impression he considers the peace as good as concluded, there remaining no doubt as to other matters. He has sent his wife to Zeeland, and is himself going to Germany, where, as he says, he will do all the good service that he can. He hopes that very shortly the Provinces will not only invite, but implore him to come to them; in which case, he promises me to perform miracles.”

Alexander then proceeded to pay a distinct tribute to Sainte Aldegonde’s motives; and, when it is remembered that the statement thus made is contained in a secret despatch, in cipher, to the King, it may be assumed to convey the sincere opinion of the man most qualified to judge correctly as to this calumniated person’s character.

Page 1308

“Ste. Aldegonde offers me wonders,” he said, “and I have promised him that he shall be recompensed very largely; yet, although he is poor, I do not find him influenced by mercenary or selfish considerations, but only very set in opinions regarding his religion.”

The Prince had however no doubt of Sainte Aldegonde’s sincerity, for sincerity was a leading characteristic of the man. His word, once given, was sacred, and he had given his word to do his best towards effecting a reconciliation of the Provinces with Spain, and frustrating the efforts of England. “Through the agency of *Ste*. Aldegonde and that of others” wrote Parma, “I shall watch, day and night, to bring about a reduction of Holland and Zeeland, if humanly possible. I am quite persuaded that they will soon be sick of the English, who are now arriving, broken down, without arms or money, and obviously incapable of holding out very long. Doubtless, however, this English alliance, and the determination of the Queen to do her utmost against us, complicates matters, and assists the government of Holland and Zeeland in opposing the inclinations of their people.”

Nothing ever came of these intended negotiations. The miracles were never wrought, and even had Sainte Aldegonde been as venal as he was suspected of being—which we have thus proof positive that he was not—he never could have obtained the recompense, which, according to Philip’s thrifty policy, was not to be paid until it had been earned. Sainte Aldegonde’s hands were clean. It is pity that we cannot render the same tribute to his political consistency of character. It is also certain that he remained—not without reason—for a long time under a cloud. He became the object of unbounded and reckless calumny. Antwerp had fallen, and the necessary consequence of its reduction was the complete and permanent prostration of its commerce and manufactures. These were transferred to the new, free, national, independent, and prosperous commonwealth that had risen in the “islands” which Parma and Sainte Aldegonde had vainly hoped to restore to their ancient servitude. In a very few years after the subjugation of Antwerp, it appeared by statistical documents that nearly all the manufactures of linen, coarse and fine cloths, serges, fustians, tapestry, gold-embroidery, arms-work, silks, and velvets, had been transplanted to the towns of Holland and Zeeland, which were flourishing and thriving, while the Flemish and Brabantine cities had become mere dens of thieves and beggars. It was in the mistaken hope of averting this catastrophe—as melancholy as it was inevitable and in despair of seeing all the Netherlands united, unless united in slavery, and in deep-rooted distrust of the designs and policy of England, that this statesman, once so distinguished, had listened to the insidious tongue of Parma. He had sought to effect a general reconciliation with Spain, and the only result of his efforts was a blight upon his own illustrious name.

Page 1309

He published a defence of his conduct, and a detailed account of the famous siege. His apology, at the time, was not considered conclusive, but his narrative remains one of the clearest and most trustworthy sources for the history of these important transactions. He was never brought to trial, but he discovered, with bitterness, that he had committed a fatal error, and that his political influence had passed away. He addressed numerous private epistles to eminent persons, indignantly denying the imputations against his character, and demanding an investigation. Among other letters he observed in one to Count Hohenlo, that he was astonished and grieved to find that all his faithful labours and sufferings in the cause of his fatherland had been forgotten in an hour. In place of praise and gratitude, he had reaped nothing but censure and calumny; because men ever judged, not by the merits, but by the issue. That common people should be so unjust, he said, was not to be wondered at, but of men like Hohenlo be had hoped better things. He asserted that he had saved Antwerp from another “Spanish fury,” and from impending destruction—a city in which there was not a single regular soldier, and in which his personal authority was so slight that he was unable to count the number of his masters. If a man had ever performed a service to his country, he claimed to have done so in this capitulation. Nevertheless, he declared that he was the same Philip Marnix, earnestly devoted to the service of God, the true religion, and the fatherland; although he avowed himself weary of the war, and of this perpetual offering of the Netherland sovereignty to foreign potentates. He was now going, he said, to his estates in Zeeland; there to turn farmer again; renouncing public affairs, in the administration of which he had experienced so much ingratitude from his countrymen. Count Maurice and the States of Holland and Zeeland wrote to him, however, in very plain language, describing the public indignation as so strong as to make it unsafe for him to visit the country.

The Netherlands and England—so soon as they were united in policy—were, not without reason, indignant with the man who had made such strenuous efforts to prevent that union. The English were, in truth, deeply offended. He had systematically opposed their schemes, and to his prejudice against their country, and distrust of their intentions, they attributed the fall of Antwerp. Envoy Davison, after his return to Holland, on the conclusion of the English treaty, at once expressed his suspicions of the ex-burgomaster, and the great dangers to be apprehended from his presence in the free States. “Here is some working underhand,” said he to Walsingham, “to draw hither Sainte Aldegonde, under a pretext of his justification, which—as it has hitherto been denied him—so is the sequel suspected, if he should obtain it before they were well settled here, betwixt her Majesty and them, considering the manifold presumptions that the subject

Page 1310

of his journey should be little profitable or advantageous to the state of these poor countries, as tending, at the best, to the propounding of some general reconcilement." It was certainly not without substantial grounds that the English and Hollanders, after concluding their articles of alliance, felt uneasy at the possibility of finding their plans reversed by the intrigues of a man whom they knew to be a mediator between Spain and her revolted Provinces, and whom they suspected of being a venal agent of the Catholic King. It was given out that Philip had been induced to promise liberty of religion, in case of reconciliation. We have seen that Parma was at heart in favour of such a course, and that he was very desirous of inducing Marnix to believe in the possibility of obtaining such a boon, however certain the Prince had been made by the King's secret letters, that such a belief was a delusion. "Martini hath been examined," wrote Davison, "who confesseth both for himself and others, to become hither by direction of the Prince of Parma and intelligence of Sainte Aldegonde, from whom he was first addressed by Villiers and afterwards to others for advice and assistance. That the scope of this direction was to induce them here to hearken to a peace, wherein the Prince of Parma promiseth them toleration of religion, although he confesseth yet to have no absolute power in that behalf, but hath written thereof to the King expressly, and holdeth himself assured thereof by the first post, as I have likewise been advertised from Rowland York, which if it had been propounded openly here before things had been concluded with her Majesty, and order taken for her assurance, your honour can judge what confusion it must of necessity have brought forth."

At last, when Marnix had become convinced that the toleration would not arrive "by the very next mail from Spain," and that, in truth, such a blessing was not to be expected through the post-office at all, he felt an inward consciousness of the mistake which he had committed. Too credulously had he inclined his ear to the voice of Parma; too obstinately had he steeled his heart against Elizabeth, and he was now the more anxious to clear himself at least from the charges of corruption so clamorously made against him by Holland and by England. Conscious of no fault more censurable than credulity and prejudice, feeling that his long fidelity to the reformed religion ought to be a defence for him against his calumniators, he was desirous both to clear his own honour, and to do at least a tardy justice to England. He felt confident that loyal natures, like those of Davison and his colleagues at home, would recognize his own loyalty. He trusted, not without cause, to English honour, and coming to his manor-house of Zoubourg, near Flushing, he addressed a letter to the ambassador of Elizabeth, in which the strong desire to vindicate his aspersed integrity is quite manifest.

Page 1311

“I am very joyous,” said he, “that coming hither in order to justify myself against the false and malignant imputations with which they charge me, I have learned your arrival here on the part of her Majesty, as well as the soon expected coming of the Earl of Leicester. I see, in truth, that the Lord God is just, and never abandons his own. I have never spared myself in the service of my country, and I would have sacrificed my life, a thousand times, had it been possible, in her cause. Now, I am receiving for all this a guerdon of blame and calumny, which is cast upon me in order to cover up faults which have been committed by others in past days. I hope, however, to come soon to give you welcome, and to speak more particularly to you of all these things. Meantime demanding my justification before these gentlemen, who ought to have known me better than to have added faith to such villanous imputations, I will entreat you that my definite justification, or condemnation, if I have merited it, may be reserved till the arrival of Lord Leicester.”

This certainly was not the language of a culprit, Nevertheless, his words did not immediately make a deep impression on the hearts of those who heard him. He had come secretly to his house at Zoubourg, having previously published his memorable apology; and in accordance with the wishes of the English government, he was immediately confined to his own house. Confidence in the intention of a statesman, who had at least committed such grave errors of judgment, and who had been so deeply suspected of darker faults, was not likely very soon to revive. So far from shrinking from an investigation which would have been dangerous, even to his life, had the charges against his honour been founded in fact, he boldly demanded to be confronted with his accusers, in order that he might explain his conduct before all the world. “Sir, yesternight, at the shutting of the gates,” wrote Davison to Walsingham, transmitting the little note from Marnix, which has just been cited—“I was advertised that *Ste*. Aldegonde was not an hour before secretly landed at the head on the other side the Rammekens, and come to his house at Zoubourg, having prepared his way by an apology, newly published in his defence, whereof I have as yet recovered one only copy, which herewith I send your honour. This day, whilst I was at dinner, he sent his son unto me, with a few lines, whereof I send you the copy, advertising me of his arrival (which he knew I understood before), together with the desire he had to see me, and speak with me, if the States, before whom he was to come to purge himself of the crimes wherewith he stood, as he with, unjustly charged, would vouchsafe him so much liberty. The same morning, the council of Zeeland, taking knowledge of his arrival, sent unto him the pensioner of Middelburgh and this town, to sound the causes of his coming, and to will him, in their behalf, to keep his house, and to forbear all

Page 1312

meddling by word or writing, with any whatsoever, till they should further advise and determine in his cause. In defence thereof, he fell into large and particular discourse with the deputies, accusing his enemies of malice and untruth, offering himself to any trial, and to abide what punishment the laws should lay upon him, if he were found guilty of the crimes imputed to him. Touching the cause of his coming, he pretended and protested that he had no other end than his simple justification, preferring any hazard he might incur thereby, to his honour and good fame." As to the great question at issue, Marnix had at last become conscious that he had been a victim to Spanish dissimulation, and that Alexander Fainese was in reality quite powerless to make that concession of religious liberty, without which a reconciliation between Holland and Philip was impossible. "Whereas," said Davison, "it was supposed that *Ste*. Aldegonde had commission from the Prince of Parma to make some offer of peace, he assured them of the contrary as a thing which neither the Prince had any power to yield unto with the surety of religion, or himself would, in conscience, persuade without it; with a number of other particularities in his excuse; amongst the rest, allowing and commending in his speech, the course they had taken with her Majesty, as the only safe way of deliverance for these afflicted countries—letting them understand how much the news thereof—specially since the entry of our garrison into this place (which before they would in no sort believe), hath troubled the enemy, who doth what he may to suppress the bruit thereof, and yet comforteth himself with the hope that between the factions and partialities nourished by his industry, and musters among the towns, especially in Holland and Zeeland (where he is persuaded to find some pliable to a reconcilement) and the disorders and misgovernment of our people, there will be yet occasion offered him to make his profit and advantage. I find that the gentleman hath here many friends indifferently persuaded of his innocency, notwithstanding the closing up of his apology doth make but little for him. Howsoever it be, it falleth out the better that the treaty with her Majesty is finished, and the cautionary towns assured before his coming, which, if he be ill affected, will I hope either reform his judgment or restrain his will. I will not forget to do the best I can to sift and decipher him yet more narrowly and particularly."

Thus, while the scales had at length fallen from the eyes of Marnix, it was not strange that the confidence which he now began to entertain in the policy of England, should not be met, at the outset, with a corresponding sentiment on the part of the statesman by whom that policy was regulated. "Howsoever *Ste*. Aldegonde would seem to purge himself," said Davison, "it is suspected that his end is dangerous. I have done what I may to restrain him, so nevertheless as it may not seem to come from me." And again —"Ste. Aldegonde," he wrote, "contimieth still our neighbor at his house between this and Middelburg; yet unmolested. He findeth many favourers, and, I fear, doth no good offices. He desireth to be reserved till the coming of my Lord of Leicester, before whom he pretends a desired trial."

Page 1313

This covert demeanour on the part of the ambassador was in accordance with, the wishes of his government. It was thought necessary that Sainte Aldegonde should be kept under arrest until the arrival of the Earl, but deemed preferable that the restraint should proceed from the action of the States rather than from the order of the Queen. Davison was fulfilling orders in attempting, by underhand means, to deprive Marnix, for a time, of his liberty. "Let him, I pray you, remain in good safety in any wise," wrote Leicester, who was uneasy at the thought of so influential, and, as he thought, so ill-affected a person being at large, but at the same time disposed to look dispassionately upon his past conduct, and to do justice, according to the results of an investigation. "It is thought meet," wrote Walsingham to Davison, "that you should do your best endeavour to procure that *Ste*. Aldegonde may be restrained, which in mine opinion were fit to be handled in such sort, as the restraint might rather proceed from themselves than by your solicitation. And yet rather than he should remain at liberty to practise underhand, whereof you seem to stand in great doubt, it is thought meet that you should make yourself a partizan, to seek by all the means that you may to have him restrained under the guard of some well affected patriot until the Earl's coming, at what time his cause may receive examination."

This was, however, a result somewhat difficult to accomplish; for twenty years of noble service in the cause of liberty had not been utterly in vain, and there were many magnanimous spirits to sympathize with a great man struggling thus in the meshes of calumny. That the man who challenged rather than shunned investigation, should be thrown into prison, as if he were a detected felon upon the point of absconding, seemed a heartless and superfluous precaution. Yet Davison and others still feared the man whom they felt obliged to regard as a baffled intriguer. "Touching the restraint of *Ste*. Aldegonde," wrote Davison to Lord Burghley, "which I had order from Mr. Secretary to procure underhand, I find the difficulty will be great in regard of his many friends and favourers, preoccupied with some opinion of his innocence, although I have travailled with divers of them underhand, and am promised that some order shall be taken in that behalf, which I think will be harder to execute as long as Count Maurice is here. For *Ste*. Aldegonde's affection, I find continual matter to suspect it inclined to a peace, and that as one notably prejudging our scope and proceeding in this cause, doth lie in wait for an occasion to set it forward, being, as it seems, fed with a hope of 'telle quelle liberte de conscience,' which the Prince of Parma and others of his council have, as he confesseth, earnestly solicited at the King's hands. This appeareth, in truth, the only apt and easy way for them to prevail both against religion and the liberty of these poor countries, having thereby once

Page 1314

recovered the authority which must necessarily follow a peace, to renew and alter the magistrates of the particular towns, which, being at their devotion, may turn, as we say, all upside down, and so in an instant being under their servitude, if not wholly, at the least in a great part of the country, leaving so much the less to do about the rest, a thing confessed and looked for of all men of any judgment here, if the drift of our peace-makers may take effect."

Sainte Aldegonde had been cured of his suspicions of England, and at last the purity of his own character shone through the mists.

One winter's morning, two days after Christmas, 1585, Colonel Morgan, an ingenuous Welshman, whom we have seen doing much hard fighting on Kowenstyn Dyke, and at other places, and who now commanded the garrison at Flushing, was taking a walk outside the gates, and inhaling the salt breezes from the ocean. While thus engaged he met a gentleman coming along, staff in hand, at a brisk pace towards the town, who soon proved to be no other than the distinguished and deeply suspected Sainte Aldegonde. The two got at once into conversation. "He began," said Morgan, "by cunning insinuations, to wade into matters of state, and at the last fell to touching the principal points, to wit, her Majesty's entrance into the cause now in hand, which, quoth he, was an action of high importance, considering how much it behoved her to go through the same, as well in regard of the hope that thereby was given to the distressed people of these parts, as also in consideration of that worthy personage whom she hath here placed, whose estate and credit may not be suffered to quail, but must be upholden as becometh the lieutenant of such a princess as her Majesty."

"The opportunity thus offered," continued honest Morgan, "and the way opened by himself, I thought good to discourse with him to the full, partly to see the end and drift of his induced talk, and consequently to touch his quick in the suspected cause of Antwerp." And thus, word for word, taken down faithfully the same day, proceeded the dialogue that wintry morning, near three centuries ago. From that simple record—-mouldering unseen and unthought of for ages, beneath piles of official dust—the forms of the illustrious Fleming and the bold Welsh colonel, seem to start, for a brief moment, out of the three hundred years of sleep which have succeeded their energetic existence upon earth. And so, with the bleak winds of December whistling over the breakers of the North Sea, the two discoursed together, as they paced along the coast.

Morgan.—"I charge you with your want of confidence in her Majesty's promised aid. 'Twas a thing of no small moment had it been embraced when it was first most graciously offered."

Page 1315

Sainte Aldegonde.—“I left not her prince-like purpose unknown to the States, who too coldly and carelessly passed over the benefit thereof, until it was too late to put the same in practice. For my own part, I acknowledge that indeed I thought some further advice would either alter or at least detract from the accomplishment of her determination. I thought this the rather because she had so long been wedded to peace, and I supposed it impossible to divorce her from so sweet a spouse. But, set it down that she were resolute, yet the sickness of Antwerp was so dangerous, as it was to be doubted the patient would be dead before the physician could come. I protest that the state of the town was much worse than was known to any but myself and some few private persons. The want of victuals was far greater than they durst bewray, fearing lest the common people, perceiving the plague of famine to be at hand, would rather grow desperate than patiently expect some happy event. For as they were many in number, so were they wonderfully divided: some being Martinists, some Papists, some neither the one nor the other, but generally given to be factious, so that the horror at home was equal to the hazard abroad.”

Morgan.—“But you forget the motion made by the martial men for putting out of the town such as were simple artificers, with women and children, mouths that consumed meat, but stood in no stead for defence.”

Sainte Aldegonde.—“Alas, alas! would you have had me guilty of the slaughter of so many innocents, whose lives were committed to my charge, as well as the best? Or might I have answered my God when those massacred creatures should have stood up against me, that the hope of Antwerp’s deliverance was purchased with the blood of so many simple souls? No, no. I should have found my conscience such a hell and continual worm as the gnawing thereof would have been more painful and bitter than the possession of the whole world would have been pleasant.”

Morgan continued to press the various points which had created suspicion as to the character and motives of Marnix, and point by point Marnix answered his antagonist, impressing him, armed as he had been in distrust, with an irresistible conviction as to the loftiness of the nature which had been so much calumniated.

Sainte Aldegonde (with vehemence).—“I do assure you, in conclusion, that I have solemnly vowed service and duty to her Majesty, which I am ready to perform where and when it may best like her to use the same. I will add moreover that I have oftentimes determined to pass into England to make my own purgation, yet fearing lest her Highness would mislike so bold a resolution, I have checked that purpose with a resolution to tarry the Lord’s leisure, until some better opportunity might answer my desire. For since I know not how I stand in her grace, unwilling I am to attempt her presence without permission; but might it please her to command my attendance, I should not only most joyfully accomplish the same, but also satisfy her of and in all such matters as I stand charged with, and afterwards spend life, land, and goods, to witness my duty towards her Highness.”

Page 1316

Morgan.—“I tell you plainly, that if you are in heart the same man that you seem outwardly to be, I doubt not but her Majesty might easily be persuaded to conceive a gracious opinion of you. For mine own part, I will surely advertise Sir Francis Walsingham of as much matter as this present conference hath ministered.

“Hereof,” said the Colonel—when, according to his promise, faithfully recording the conversation in all its details for Mr. Secretary’s benefit, “he seemed not only content but most glad. Therefore I beseech your honour to vouchsafe some few lines herein, that I may return him some part of your mind. I have already written thereof to Sir Philip Sidney, lord governor of Flushing, with request that his Excellency the Earl of Leicester may presently be made acquainted with the cause.”

Indeed the brave Welshman was thoroughly converted from his suspicions by the earnest language and sympathetic presence of the fallen statesman. This result of the conference was creditable to the ingenuous character of both personages.

“Thus did he,” wrote Morgan to Sir Francis, “from point to point, answer all objections from the first to the last, and that in such sound and substantial manner, with a strong show of truth, as I think his very enemies, having heard his tale, would be satisfied. And truly, Sir, as heretofore I have thought hardly of him, being led by a superficial judgment of things as they stood in outward appearance; so now, having pierced deep, and weighed causes by a sounder and more deliberate consideration, I find myself somewhat changed in conceit—not so much carried away by the sweetness of his speech, as confirmed by the force of his religious profession, wherein he remaineth constant, without wavering—an argument of great strength to set him free from treacherous attempts; but as I am herein least able and most unworthy to yield any censure, much less to give advice, so I leave the man and the matter to your honour’s opinion. Only (your graver judgment reserved) thus I think, that it were good either to employ him as a friend, or as an enemy to remove him farther from us, being a man of such action as the world knoweth he is. And to conclude,” added Morgan, “this was the upshot between us.”

Nevertheless, he remained in this obscurity for a long period. When, towards the close of the year 1585, the English government was established in Holland, he was the object of constant suspicion.

“Here is Aldegonde,” wrote Sir Philip Sidney to Lord Leicester from Flushing, “a man greatly suspected, but by no man charged. He lives restrained to his own house, and for aught I can find, deals with nothing, only desiring to have his cause wholly referred to your Lordship, and therefore, with the best heed I can to his proceedings, I will leave him to his clearing or condemning, when your Lordship shall hear him.”

In another letter, Sir Philip again spoke of Sainte Aldegonde as “one of whom he kept a good opinion, and yet a suspicious eye.”

Page 1317

Leicester himself was excessively anxious on the subject, deeply fearing the designs of a man whom he deemed so mischievous, and being earnestly desirous that he should not elude the chastisement which he seemed to deserve.

“Touching *Ste*. Aldegonde,” he wrote to Davison, “I grieve that he is at his house without good guard. I do earnestly pray you to move such as have power presently to commit a guard about him, for I know he is a dangerous and a bold man, and presumes yet to carry all, for he hath made many promises to the Prince of Parma. I would he were in Fort Rammekyns, or else that Mr. Russell had charge of him, with a recommendation from me to Russell to look well to him till I shall arrive. You must have been so commanded in this from her Majesty, for she thinks he is in close and safe guard. If he is not, look for a turn of all things, for he hath friends, I know.”

But very soon after his arrival, the Earl, on examining into the matter, saw fit to change his opinions and his language. Persuaded, in spite of his previous convictions, even as the honest Welsh colonel had been, of the upright character of the man, and feeling sure that a change had come over the feelings of Marnix himself in regard to the English alliance, Leicester at once interested himself in removing the prejudices entertained towards him by the Queen.

“Now a few words for *Ste*. Aldegonde,” said he in his earliest despatches from Holland; “I will beseech her Majesty to stay her judgment till I write next. If the man be as he now seemeth, it were pity to lose him, for he is indeed marvellously friended. Her Majesty will think, I know, that I am easily pacified or led in such a matter, but I trust so to deal as she shall give me thanks. Once if he do offer service it is sure enough, for he is esteemed that way above all the men in this country for his word, if he give it. His worst enemies here procure me to win him, for sure, just matter for his life there is none. He would fain come into England, so far is he come already, and doth extol her Majesty for this work of hers to heaven, and confesseth, till now an angel could not make him believe it.”

Here certainly was a noble tribute paid unconsciously, as it were, to the character of the maligned statesman. “Above all the men in the country for his word, if he give it.” What wonder that Orange had leaned upon him, that Alexander had sought to gain him, and how much does it add to our bitter regret that his prejudices against England should not have been removed until too late for Antwerp and for his own usefulness. Had his good angel really been present to make him believe in that “work of her Majesty,” when his ear was open to the seductions of Parma, the destiny of Belgium and his own subsequent career might have been more fortunate than they became.

The Queen was slow to return from her prejudices. She believed—not without reason—that the opposition of *Ste*. Aldegonde to her policy had been disastrous to the cause both of England and the Netherlands; and it had been her desire that he should be imprisoned, and tried for his life. Her councillors came gradually to take a more

favourable view of the case, and to be moved by the pathetic attitude of the man who had once been so conspicuous.

Page 1318

“I did acquaint Sir Christopher Hatton,” wrote Walsingham to Leicester, “with the letter which *Ste*. Aldegonde wrote to your Lordship, which, carrying a true picture of an afflicted mind, cannot but move an honest heart, weighing the rare parts the gentleman is endowed withal, to pity his distressed estate, and, to procure him relief and comfort, which Mr. Vice-Chamberlain (Hatton) bath promised on his part to perform. I thought good to send *Ste*. Aldegonde’s letter unto the Lord Treasurer (Burghley), who heretofore has carried a hard conceit of the gentleman, hoping that the view of his letter will breed some remorse towards him. I have also prayed his Lordship, if he see cause, to acquaint her Majesty with the said letter.”

But his high public career was closed. He lived down calumny; and put his enemies to shame, but the fatal error which he had committed, in taking the side of Spain rather than of England at so momentous a crisis, could never be repaired. He regained the good opinion of the most virtuous and eminent personages in Europe, but in the noon of life he voluntarily withdrew from public affairs. The circumstances just detailed had made him impossible as a political leader, and it was equally impossible for him to play a secondary part. He occasionally consented to be employed in special diplomatic missions, but the serious avocations of his life now became theological and literary. He sought—in his own words—to penetrate himself still more deeply than ever with the spirit of the reformation, and to imbue the minds of the young with that deep love for the reformed religion which had been the guiding thought of his own career. He often spoke with a sigh of his compulsory exile from the field where he had been so conspicuous all his lifetime; he bitterly lamented the vanished dream of the great national union between Belgium and Holland, which had flattered his youth and his manhood; and he sometimes alluded with bitterness to the calumny which had crippled him of his usefulness. He might have played a distinguished part in that powerful commonwealth which was so steadily and splendidly arising out of the lagunes of Zeeland and Holland, but destiny and calumny and his own error had decided otherwise.

“From the depth of my exile—” he said, “for I am resolved to retire, I know not where, into Germany, perhaps into Sarmatia, I shall look from afar upon the calamities of my country. That which to me is most mournful is no longer to be able to assist my fatherland by my counsels and my actions.” He did not go into exile, but remained chiefly at his mansion of Zoubourg, occupied with agriculture and with profound study. Many noble works conspicuous in the literature of the epoch—were the results of his learned leisure; and the name of Marnix of Sainte Aldegonde will be always as dear to the lovers of science and letters as to the believers in civil and religious liberty. At the request

Page 1319

of the States of Holland he undertook, in 1593, a translation of the Scriptures from the original, and he was at the same time deeply engaged with a History of Christianity, which he intended for his literary master-piece. The man whose sword had done knightly service on many a battle-field for freedom, whose tongue had controlled mobs and senates, courts and councils, whose subtle spirit had metamorphosed itself into a thousand shapes to do battle with the genius of tyranny, now quenched the feverish agitation of his youth and manhood in Hebrew and classical lore. A grand and noble figure always: most pathetic when thus redeeming by vigorous but solitary and melancholy hard labor, the political error which had condemned him to retirement. To work, ever to work, was the primary law of his nature. Repose in the other world, "Repos ailleurs" was the device which he assumed in earliest youth, and to which he was faithful all his days.

A great and good man whose life had been brim-full of noble deeds, and who had been led astray from the path, not of virtue, but of sound policy, by his own prejudices and by the fascination of an intellect even more brilliant than his own, he at least enjoyed in his retirement whatever good may come from hearty and genuine labor, and from the high regard entertained for him by the noblest spirits among his contemporaries.

"They tell me," said La Noue, "that the Seigneur de *Ste*. Aldegonde has been suspected by the Hollanders and the English. I am deeply grieved, for 'tis a personage worthy to be employed. I have always known him to be a zealous friend of his religion and his country, and I will bear him this testimony, that his hands and his heart are clean. Had it been otherwise, I must have known it. His example has made me regret the less the promise I was obliged to make, never to bear arms again in the Netherlands. For I have thought that since this man, who has so much credit and authority among your people, after having done his duty well, has not failed to be calumniated and ejected from service, what would they have done with me, who am a stranger, had I continued in their employment? The consul Terentius Varro lost, by his fault, the battle of Canna; nevertheless, when he returned to Rome, offering the remainder of his life in the cause of his Republic reduced to extremity, he was not rejected, but well received, because he hoped well for the country. It is not to be imputed as blame to *Ste*. Aldegonde that he lost Antwerp, for he surrendered when it could not be saved. What I now say is drawn from me by the compassion I feel when persons of merit suffer without cause at the hands of their fellow citizens. In these terrible tempests, as it is a duty rigorously to punish the betrayers of their country, even so it is an obligation upon us to honor good patriots, and to support them in venial errors, that we may all encourage each other to do the right."

Page 1320

Strange too as it may now seem to us, a reconciliation of the Netherlands with Philip was not thought an impossibility by other experienced and sagacious patriots, besides Marnix. Even Olden-Barneveld, on taking office as Holland's Advocate, at this period, made it a condition that his service was to last only until the reunion of the Provinces with Spain.

There was another illustrious personage in a foreign land who ever rendered homage to the character of the retired Netherland statesman. Amid the desolation of France, Duplessis Mornay often solaced himself by distant communion with that kindred and sympathizing spirit.

"Plunged in public annoyances," he wrote to Sainte Aldegonde, "I find no consolation, except in conference with the good, and among the good I hold you for one of the best. With such men I had rather sigh profoundly than laugh heartily with others. In particular, Sir, do me the honor to love me, and believe that I honor you singularly. Impart to me something from your solitude, for I consider your deserts to be more fruitful and fertile than our most cultivated habitations. As for me, think of me as of a man drowning in the anxieties of the time, but desirous, if possible, of swimming to solitude."

Thus solitary, yet thus befriended,—remote from public employment, yet ever employed, doing his daily work with all his soul and strength, Marnix passed the fifteen years yet remaining to him. Death surprised him at last, at Leyden, in the year 1598, while steadily laboring upon his Flemish translation of the Old Testament, and upon the great political, theological, controversial, and satirical work on the differences of religion, which remains the most stately, though unfinished, monument of his literary genius. At the age of sixty he went at last to the repose which he had denied to himself on earth. "Repos ailleurs."

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Honor good patriots, and to support them in venial errors
Possible to do, only because we see that it has been done
Repose in the other world, "Repos ailleurs"
Soldiers enough to animate the good and terrify the bad
To work, ever to work, was the primary law of his nature
When persons of merit suffer without cause

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 42, 1585

CHAPTER VI., Part 1.

Policy of England—Diplomatic Coquetry—Dutch Envoys in England—
Conference of Ortel and Walsingham—Interview with Leicester—
Private Audience of the Queen—Letters of the States—General—
Ill Effects of Gilpin’s Despatch—Close Bargaining of the Queen and

Page 1321

States—Guarantees required by England—England's comparative Weakness—The English characterised—Paul Hentzner—The Envoys in London—Their Characters—Olden-Barneveldt described—Reception at Greenwich—Speech of Menin—Reply of the Queen—Memorial of the Envoys—Discussions with the Ministers—Second Speech of the Queen —Third Speech of the Queen

England as we have seen—had carefully watched the negotiations between France and the Netherlands. Although she had—upon the whole, for that intriguing age—been loyal in her bearing towards both parties, she was perhaps not entirely displeased with the result. As her cherished triumvirate was out of the question, it was quite obvious that, now or never, she must come forward to prevent the Provinces from falling back into the hands of Spain. The future was plainly enough foreshadowed, and it was already probable, in case of a prolonged resistance on the part of Holland, that Philip would undertake the reduction of his rebellious subjects by a preliminary conquest of England. It was therefore quite certain that the expense and danger of assisting the Netherlands must devolve upon herself, but, at the same time it was a consolation that her powerful next-door neighbour was not to be made still more powerful by the annexation to his own dominion of those important territories.

Accordingly, so soon as the deputies in France had received their definite and somewhat ignominious repulse from Henry *iii*. and his mother, the English government lost no time in intimating to the States that they were not to be left without an ally. Queen Elizabeth was however resolutely averse from assuming that sovereignty which she was not unwilling to see offered for her acceptance; and her accredited envoy at the Hague, besides other more secret agents, were as busily employed in the spring of 1585—as Des Pruneaux had been the previous winter on the part of France—to bring about an application, by solemn embassy, for her assistance.

There was, however, a difference of view, from the outset, between the leading politicians of the Netherlands and the English Queen. The Hollanders were extremely desirous of becoming her subjects; for the United States, although they had already formed themselves into an independent republic, were quite ignorant of their latent powers. The leading personages of the country—those who were soon to become the foremost statesmen of the new commonwealth—were already shrinking from the anarchy which was deemed inseparable from a non-regal form of government, and were seeking protection for and against the people under a foreign sceptre. On the other hand, they were indisposed to mortgage large and important fortified towns, such as Flushing, Brill, and others, for the repayment of the subsidies which Elizabeth might be induced to advance. They preferred to pay in sovereignty rather than in money. The

Queen, on the contrary, preferred money to sovereignty, and was not at all inclined to sacrifice economy to ambition. Intending to drive a hard bargain with the States, whose cause was her own, and whose demands for aid she; had secretly prompted, she meant to grant a certain number of soldiers for as brief a period as possible, serving at her expense, and to take for such outlay a most ample security in the shape of cautionary towns.

Page 1322

Too intelligent a politician not to feel the absolute necessity of at last coming into the field to help the Netherlanders to fight her own battle, she was still willing, for a season longer, to wear the mask of coyness and coquetry, which she thought most adapted to irritate the Netherlanders into a full compliance with her wishes. Her advisers in the Provinces were inclined to take the same view. It seemed obvious, after the failure in France, that those countries must now become either English or Spanish; yet Elizabeth, knowing the risk of their falling back, from desperation, into the arms of her rival, allowed them to remain for a season on the edge of destruction—which would probably have been her ruin also—in the hope of bringing them to her feet on her own terms. There was something of feminine art in this policy, and it was not without the success which often attends such insincere manoeuvres. At the same time, as the statesmen of the republic knew that it was the Queen's affair, when so near a neighbour's roof was blazing, they entertained little doubt of ultimately obtaining her alliance. It was pity—in so grave an emergency—that a little frankness could not have been substituted for a good deal of superfluous diplomacy.

Gilpin, a highly intelligent agent of the English government in Zeeland, kept Sir Francis Walsingham thoroughly informed of the sentiments entertained by the people of that province towards England. Mixing habitually with the most influential politicians, he was able to render material assistance to the English council in the diplomatic game which had been commenced, and on which a no less important stake than the crown of England was to be hazarded.

"In conference," he said, "with particular persons that bear any rule or credit, I find a great inclination towards her Majesty, joined notwithstanding with a kind of coldness. They allege that matters of such importance are to be maturely and thoroughly pondered, while some of them harp upon the old string, as if her Majesty, for the security of her own estate, was to have the more care of theirs here."

He was also very careful to insinuate the expediency of diplomatic coquetry into the mind of a Princess who needed no such prompting. "The less by outward appearance," said he, "this people shall perceive that her Majesty can be contented to take the protection of them upon her, the forwarder they will be to seek and send unto her, and the larger conditions in treaty may be required. For if they see it to come from herself, then do they persuade themselves that it is for the greater security of our own country and her Highness to fear the King of Spain's greatness. But if they become seekers unto her Majesty, and if they may, by outward show, deem that she accounteth not of the said King's might, but able and sufficient to defend her own realms, then verily I think they may be brought to whatsoever points her Majesty may desire."

Page 1323

Certainly it was an age of intrigue, in which nothing seemed worth getting at all unless it could be got by underhand means, and in which it was thought impossible for two parties to a bargain to meet together except as antagonists, who believed that one could not derive a profit from the transaction unless the other had been overreached. This was neither good morality nor sound diplomacy, and the result of such trifling was much loss of time and great disaster. In accordance with this crafty system, the agent expressed the opinion that it would "be good and requisite for the English government somewhat to temporise," and to dally for a season longer, in order to see what measures the States would take to defend themselves, and how much ability and resources they would show for belligerent purposes. If the Queen were too eager, the Provinces would become jealous, "yielding, as it were, their power, and yet keeping the rudder in their own hands."

At the same time Gilpin was favourably impressed with the character both of the country and the nation, soon to be placed in such important relations with England. "This people," he said, "is such as by fair means they will be won to yield and grant any reasonable motion or demand. What these islands of Zeeland are her Majesty and all my lords of her council do know. Yet for their government thus much I must write; that during these troubles it never was better than now. They draw, in a manner, one line, long and carefully in their resolution; but the same once taken and promises made, they would perform them to the uttermost."

Such then was the character of the people, for no man was better enabled to form an opinion on the subject than was Gilpin. Had it not been as well, then, for Englishmen—-who were themselves in that age, as in every other, apt to "perform to the uttermost promises once taken and made," and to respect those endowed with the same wholesome characteristic—to strike hands at once in a cause which was so vital to both nations?

So soon as the definite refusal of Henry *iii*, was known in England, Leicester and Walsingham wrote at once to the Netherlands. The Earl already saw shining through the distance a brilliant prize for his own ambition, although he was too haughty, perhaps too magnanimous, but certainly far too crafty, to suffer such sentiments as yet to pierce to the surface.

"Mr. Davison," he wrote, "you shall perceive by Mr. Secretary's letters how the French have dealt with these people. They are well enough served; but yet I think, if they will heartily and earnestly seek it, the Lord hath appointed them a far better defence. But you must so use the matter as that they must seek their own good, although we shall be partakers thereof also. They may now, if they will effectually and liberally deal, bring themselves to a better end than ever France would have brought them."

Page 1324

At that moment there were two diplomatic agents from the States resident in England—-Jacques de Gryze; whom Paul Buys had formerly described as having thrust himself head and shoulders into the matter without proper authority, and Joachim Ortel, a most experienced and intelligent man, speaking and writing English like a native, and thoroughly conversant with English habits and character. So soon as the despatches from France arrived, Walsingham, 18th March, 1585, sent for Ortel, and the two held a long conference.

Walsingham.—"We have just received letters from Lord Derby and Sir Edward Stafford, dated the 13th March. They inform us that your deputies—contrary to all expectation and to the great hopes that had been hold out to them—have received, last Sunday, their definite answer from the King of France. He tells them, that, considering the present condition of his kingdom, he is unable to undertake the protection of the Netherlands; but says that if they like, and if the Queen of England be willing to second his motion, he is disposed to send a mission of mediation to Spain for the purpose of begging the King to take the condition of the provinces to heart, and bringing about some honourable composition, and so forth, and so forth.

"Moreover the King of France has sent Monsieur de Bellievre to Lord Derby and Mr. Stafford, and Bellievre has made those envoys a long oration. He explained to them all about the original treaty between the States and Monsieur, the King's brother, and what had taken place from that day to this, concluding, after many allegations and divers reasons, that the King could not trouble himself with the provinces at present; but hoped her Majesty would make the best of it, and not be offended with him.

"The ambassadors say further, that they have had an interview with your deputies, who are excessively provoked at this most unexpected answer from the King, and are making loud complaints, being all determined to take themselves off as fast as possible. The ambassadors have recommended that some of the number should come home by the way of England."

Ortel.—"It seems necessary to take active measures at once, and to leave no duty undone in this matter. It will be advisable to confer, so soon as may be, with some of the principal counsellors of her Majesty, and recommend to them most earnestly the present condition of the provinces. They know the affectionate confidence which the States entertain towards England, and must now, remembering the sentiments of goodwill which they have expressed towards the Netherlands, be willing to employ their efforts with her Majesty in this emergency."

Page 1325

Walsingham (with much show of vexation).—“This conduct on the part of the French court has been most pernicious. Your envoys have been delayed, fed with idle hopes, and then disgracefully sent away, so that the best part of the year has been consumed, and it will be most difficult now, in a great hurry, to get together a sufficient force of horse and foot folk, with other necessaries in abundance. On the contrary, the enemy, who knew from the first what result was to be expected in France, has been doing his best to be beforehand with you in the field: add, moreover, that this French negotiation has given other princes a bad taste in their mouths. This is the case with her Majesty. The Queen is, not without reason, annoyed that the States have not only despised her friendly and good-hearted offers, but have all along been endeavouring to embark her in this war, for the defence of the Provinces, which would have cost her several millions, without offering to her the slightest security. On the contrary, others, enemies of the religion, who are not to be depended upon—who had never deserved well of the States or assisted them in their need, as she has done—have received this large offer of sovereignty without any reserve whatever.”

Ortel (not suffering himself to be disconcerted at this unjust and somewhat insidious attack).—“That which has been transacted with France was not done except with the express approbation and full foreknowledge of her Majesty, so far back as the lifetime of his Excellency (William of Orange), of high and laudable memory. Things had already gone so far, and the Provinces had agreed so entirely together, as to make it inexpedient to bring about a separation in policy. It was our duty to hold together, and, once for all, thoroughly to understand what the King of France, after such manifold presentations through Monsieur Des Pruneaulx and others, and in various letters of his own, finally intended to do. At the same time, notwithstanding these negotiations, we had always an especial eye upon her Majesty. We felt a hopeful confidence that she would never desert us, leaving us without aid or counsel, but would consider that these affairs do not concern the Provinces alone or even especially, but are just as deeply important to her and to all other princes of the religion.”

After this dialogue, with much more conversation of a similar character, the Secretary and the envoy set themselves frankly and manfully to work. It was agreed between them that every effort should be made with the leading members of the Council to induce the Queen “in this terrible conjuncture, not to forsake the Provinces, but to extend good counsel and prompt assistance to them in their present embarrassments.”

There was, however, so much business in Parliament just then, that it was impossible to obtain immediately the desired interviews.

Page 1326

On the 20th, Ortel and De Gryze had another interview with Walsingham at the Palace of Greenwich. The Secretary expressed the warmest and most sincere affection for the Provinces, and advised that one of the two envoys should set forth at once for home in order to declare to the States, without loss of time, her Majesty's good inclination to assume the protection of the land, together with the maintenance of the reformed religion and the ancient privileges. Not that she was seeking her own profit, or wished to obtain that sovereignty which had just been offered to another of the contrary religion, but in order to make manifest her affectionate solicitude to preserve the Protestant faith and to support her old allies and neighbours. Nevertheless, as she could not assume this protectorate without embarking in a dangerous war with the King of Spain, in which she would not only be obliged to spend the blood of her subjects, but also at least two millions of gold, there was the more reason that the States should give her certain cities as security. Those cities would be held by certain of her gentlemen, nominated thereto, of quality, credit, and religion, at the head of good, true, and well-paid garrisons, who should make oath never to surrender them to the King of Spain or to any one else without consent of the States. The Provinces were also reciprocally to bind themselves by oath to make no treaty with the King, without the advice and approval of her Majesty. It was likewise thoroughly to be understood that such cautionary towns should be restored to the States so soon as payment should be made of all moneys advanced during the war.

Next day the envoys had an interview with the Earl of Leicester, whom they found as amicably disposed towards their cause as Secretary Walsingham had been. "Her Majesty," said the Earl, "is excessively indignant with the King of France, that he should so long have abused the Provinces, and at last have dismissed their deputies so contemptuously. Nevertheless," he continued, "'tis all your own fault to have placed your hopes so entirely upon him as to entirely forget other princes, and more especially her Majesty. Notwithstanding all that has passed, however, I find her fully determined to maintain the cause of the Provinces. For my own part, I am ready to stake my life, estates, and reputation, upon this issue, and to stand side by side with other gentlemen in persuading her Majesty to do her utmost for the assistance of your country."

He intimated however, as Walsingham had done, that the matter of cautionary towns would prove an indispensable condition, and recommended that one of the two envoys should proceed homeward at once, in order to procure, as speedily as possible, the appointment of an embassy for that purpose to her Majesty. "They must bring full powers," said the Earl, "to give her the necessary guarantees, and make a formal demand for protection; for it would be unbecoming, and against her reputation, to be obliged to present herself, unsought by the other party."

Page 1327

In conclusion, after many strong expressions of good-will, Leicester promised to meet them next day at court, where he would address the Queen personally on the subject, and see that they spoke with her as well. Meantime he sent one of his principal gentlemen to keep company with the envoys, and make himself useful to them. This personage, being “of good quality and a member of Parliament,” gave them much useful information, assuring them that there was a strong feeling in England in favour of the Netherlands, and that the matter had been very vigorously taken up in the national legislature. That assembly had been strongly encouraging her Majesty boldly to assume the protectorate, and had manifested a willingness to assist her with the needful. “And if,” said he, “one subsidy should not be enough, she shall have three, four, five, or six, or as much as may be necessary.”

The same day, the envoys had an interview with Lord Treasurer Burghley, who held the same language as Walsingham and Leicester had done. “The Queen, to his knowledge,” he said, “was quite ready to assume the protectorate; but it was necessary that it should be formally offered, with the necessary guarantees, and that without further loss of time.”

On the 22nd March, according to agreement, Ortel and De Gryze went to the court at Greenwich. While waiting there for the Queen, who had ridden out into the country, they had more conversation with Walsingham, whom they found even more energetically disposed in their favour than ever, and who assured them that her Majesty was quite ready to assume the protectorate so soon as offered. “Within a month,” he said, “after the signing of a treaty, the troops would be on the spot, under command of such a personage of quality and religion as would be highly satisfactory.” While they were talking, the Queen rode into the court-yard, accompanied by the Earl of Leicester and other gentlemen. Very soon afterwards the envoys were summoned to her presence, and allowed to recommend the affairs of the Provinces to her consideration. She lamented the situation of their country, and in a few words expressed her inclination to render assistance, provided the States would manifest full confidence in her. They replied by offering to take instant measures to gratify all her demands, so soon as those demands should be made known; and the Queen finding herself surrounded by so many gentlemen and by a crowd of people, appointed them accordingly to come to her private apartments the same afternoon.

At that interview none were present save Walsingham and Lord Chamberlain Howard. The Queen showed herself “extraordinarily resolute” to take up the affairs of the Provinces. “She had always been sure,” she said, “that the French negotiation would have no other issue than the one which they had just seen. She was fully aware what a powerful enemy she was about to make—one who could easily create mischief for her in Scotland

Page 1328

and Ireland; but she was nevertheless resolved, if the States chose to deal with her frankly and generously, to take them under her protection. She assured the envoys that if a deputation with full powers and reasonable conditions should be immediately sent to her, she would not delay and dally with them, as had been the case in France, but would despatch them back again at the speediest, and would make her good inclination manifest by deeds as well as words. As she was hazarding her treasure together with the blood and repose of her subjects, she was not at liberty to do this except on receipt of proper securities."

Accordingly De Gryze went to the Provinces, provided with complimentary and affectionate letters from the Queen, while Ortel remained in England. So far all was plain and above-board; and Walsingham, who, from the first, had been warmly in favour of taking up the Netherland cause, was relieved by being able to write in straightforward language. Stealthy and subtle, where the object was to get within the guard of an enemy who menaced a mortal blow, he was, both by nature and policy, disposed to deal frankly with those he called his friends.

"Monsieur de Gryze repaireth presently," he wrote to Davison, "to try if he can induce the States to send their deputies hither, furnished with more ample instructions than they had to treat with the French King, considering that her Majesty carryeth another manner of princely disposition than that sovereign. Meanwhile, for that she doubteth lest in this hard estate of their affairs, and the distrust they have conceived to be relieved from hence, they should from despair throw themselves into the course of Spain, her pleasure therefore is—though by Burnham I sent you directions to put them in comfort of relief, only as of yourself—that you shall now, as it were, in her name, if you see cause sufficient, assure some of the aptest instruments that you shall make choice of for that purpose, that her Majesty, rather than that they should perish, will be content to take them under her protection."

He added that it was indispensable for the States, upon their part, to offer "such sufficient cautions and assurances as she might in reason demand."

Matters were so well managed that by the 22nd April the States-General addressed a letter to the Queen, in which they notified her, that the desired deputation was on the point of setting forth. "Recognizing," they said, "that there is no prince or potentate to whom they are more obliged than they are to your Majesty, we are about to request you very humbly to accept the sovereignty of these Provinces, and the people of the same for your very humble vassals and subjects." They added that, as the necessity of the case was great, they hoped the Queen would send, so soon as might be, a force of four or five thousand men for the purpose of relieving the siege of Antwerp.

A similar letter was despatched by the same courier to the Earl of Leicester.

Page 1329

On the 1st of May, Ortel had audience of the Queen, to deliver the letters from the States-General. He found that despatches, very encouraging and agreeable in their tenor, had also just arrived from Davison. The Queen was in good humour. She took the letter from Ortel, read it attentively, and paused a good while. Then she assured him that her good affection towards the Provinces was not in the least changed, and that she thanked the States for the confidence in her that they were manifesting. "It is unnecessary," said the Queen, "for me to repeat over and over again sentiments which I have so plainly declared. You are to assure the States that they shall never be disappointed in the trust that they have reposed in my good intentions. Let them deal with me sincerely, and without holding open any back-door. Not that I am seeking the sovereignty of the Provinces, for I wish only to maintain their privileges and ancient liberties, and to defend them in this regard against all the world. Let them ripely consider, then, with what fidelity I am espousing their cause, and how, without fear of any one, I am arousing most powerful enemies."

Ortel had afterwards an interview with Leicester, in which the Earl assured him that her Majesty had not in the least changed in her sentiments towards the Provinces. "For myself," said he, "I am ready, if her Majesty choose to make use of me, to go over there in person, and to place life, property, and all the assistance I can gain from my friends, upon the issue. Yea, with so good a heart, that I pray the Lord may be good to me, only so far as I serve faithfully in this cause." He added a warning that the deputies to be appointed should come with absolute powers, in order that her Majesty's bountiful intentions might not be retarded by their own fault.

Ortel then visited Walsingham at his house, Barn-Elms, where he was confined by illness. Sir Francis assured the envoy that he would use every effort, by letter to her Majesty and by verbal instructions to his son-in-law, Sir Philip Sidney, to further the success of the negotiation, and that he deeply regretted his enforced absence from the court on so important an occasion.

Matters were proceeding most favourably, and the all-important point of sending an auxiliary force of Englishmen to the relief of Antwerp—before it should be too late, and in advance of the final conclusion of the treaty between the countries-had been nearly conceded. Just at that moment, however, "as ill-luck would have it," said Ortel, "came a letter from Gilpin. I don't think he meant it in malice, but the effect was most pernicious. He sent the information that a new attack was to be made by the 10th May upon the Kowenstyn, that it was sure to be successful, and that the siege of Antwerp was as good as raised. So Lord Burghley informed me, in presence of Lord Leicester, that her Majesty was determined to await the issue of this enterprise.

Page 1330

It was quite too late to get troops in readiness; to co-operate with the States' army, so soon as the 10th May, and as Antwerp was so sure to be relieved, there was no pressing necessity for haste. I uttered most bitter complaints to these lords and to other counsellors of the Queen, that she should thus draw back, on account of a letter from a single individual, without paying sufficient heed to the despatches from the States-General, who certainly knew their own affairs and their own necessities better than any one else could do, but her Majesty sticks firm to her resolution."

Here were immense mistakes committed on all sides. The premature shooting up of those three rockets from the cathedral-tower, on the unlucky 10th May, had thus not only ruined the first assault against the Kowenstyn, but also the second and the more promising adventure. Had the four thousand bold Englishmen there enlisted, and who could have reached the Provinces in time to cooperate in that great enterprise, have stood side by side with the Hollanders, the Zeelanders, and the Antwerpers, upon that fatal dyke, it is almost a certainty that Antwerp would have been relieved, and the whole of Flanders and Brabant permanently annexed to the independent commonwealth, which would have thus assumed at once most imposing proportions.

It was a great blunder of Sainte Aldegonde to station in the cathedral, on so important an occasion, watchmen in whose judgment he could not thoroughly rely. It was a blunder in Gilpin, intelligent as he generally showed himself, to write in such sanguine style before the event. But it was the greatest blunder of all for Queen Elizabeth to suspend her cooperation at the very instant when, as the result showed, it was likely to prove most successful. It was a chapter of blunders from first to last, but the most fatal of all the errors was the one thus prompted by the great Queen's most traitorous characteristic, her obstinate parsimony.

And now began a series of sharp chafferings on both sides, not very much to the credit of either party. The kingdom of England, and the rebellious Provinces of Spain, were drawn to each other by an irresistible law of political attraction. Their absorption into each other seemed natural and almost inevitable; and the weight of the strong Protestant organism, had it been thus completed, might have balanced the great Catholic League which was clustering about Spain.

It was unfortunate that the two governments of England and the Netherlands should now assume the attitude of traders driving a hard bargain with each other, rather than that of two important commonwealths, upon whose action, at that momentous epoch, the weal and wo of Christendom was hanging. It is quite true that the danger to England was great, but that danger in any event was to be confronted—Philip was to be defied, and, by assuming the cause of the Provinces to be her own, which it unquestionably was,

Page 1331

Elizabeth was taking the diadem from her head—as the King of Sweden well observed—and adventuring it upon the doubtful chance of war. Would it not have been better then—her mind being once made up—promptly to accept all the benefits, as well as all the hazards, of the bold game to which she was of necessity a party? But she could not yet believe in the incredible meanness of Henry *iii*. "I asked her Majesty" (3rd May, 1585), said Ortel, "whether, in view of these vast preparations in France, it did not behove her to be most circumspect and upon her guard. For, in the opinion of many men, everything showed one great scheme already laid down—a general conspiracy throughout Christendom against the reformed religion. She answered me, that thus far she could not perceive this to be the case; 'nor could she believe,' she said, 'that the King of France could be so faint-hearted as to submit to such injuries from the Guises.'"

Time was very soon to show the nature of that unhappy monarch with regard to injuries, and to prove to Elizabeth the error she had committed in doubting his faint-heartedness. Meanwhile, time was passing, and the Netherlands were shivering in the storm. They, needed the open sunshine which her caution kept too long behind the clouds. For it was now enjoined upon Walsingham to manifest a coldness upon the part of the English government towards the States. Davison was to be allowed to return; "but," said Sir Francis, "her Majesty would not have you accompany the commissioners who are coming from the Low Countries; but to come over, either before them or after them, lest it be thought they come over by her Majesty's procurement."

As if they were not coming over by her Majesty's most especial procurement, and as if it would matter to Philip—the union once made between England and Holland—whether the invitation to that union came first from the one party or the other!

"I am retired for my health from the court to mine own house," said Walsingham, "but I find those in whose judgment her Majesty reposeth greatest trust so coldly affected unto the cause, as I have no great hope of the matter; and yet, for that the hearts of princes are in the hands of God, who both can will and dispose them at his pleasure, I would be loath to hinder the repair of the commissioners."

Here certainly, had the sun gone most suddenly into a cloud. Sir Francis would be loath to advise the commissioners to stay at home, but he obviously thought them coming on as bootless an errand as that which had taken their colleagues so recently into France.

The cause of the trouble was Flushing. Hence the tears, and the coldness, and the scoldings, on the part of the imperious and the economical Queen. Flushing was the patrimony—a large portion of that which was left to him—of Count Maurice. It was deeply mortgaged for the payment of the debts of William the Silent, but his son Maurice, so long as the elder brother Philip William remained

Page 1332

a captive in Spain, wrote himself Marquis of Flushing and Kampveer, and derived both revenue and importance from his rights in that important town. The States of Zeeland, while desirous of a political fusion of the two countries, were averse from the prospect of converting, by exception, their commercial, capital into an English city, the remainder of the Provinces remaining meanwhile upon their ancient footing. The negociations on the subject caused a most ill-timed delay. The States finding the English government cooling, affected to grow tepid themselves. This was the true mercantile system, perhaps, for managing a transaction most thriftily, but frankness and promptness would have been more statesmanlike at such a juncture.

"I am sorry to understand," wrote Walsingham, "that the States are not yet grown to a full resolution for the delivering of the town of Flushing into her Majesty's hands. The Queen finding the people of that island so wavering and inconstant, besides that they can hardly, after the so long enjoying a popular liberty, bear a regal authority, would be loath to embark herself into so dangerous a war without some sufficient caution received from them. It is also greatly to be doubted, that if, by practice and corruption, that town might be recovered by the Spaniards, it would put all the rest of the country in peril. I find her Majesty, in case that town may be gotten, fully resolved to receive them into her protection, so as it may also be made probable unto her that the promised three hundred thousand guilders the month will be duly paid."

A day or two after writing this letter, Walsingham sent one afternoon, in a great hurry, for Ortel, and informed him very secretly, that, according to information just received, the deputies from the States were coming without sufficient authority in regard to this very matter. Thus all the good intentions of the English government were likely to be frustrated, and the Provinces to be reduced to direful extremity.

"What can we possibly advise her Majesty to do?" asked Walsingham, "since you are not willing to put confidence in her intentions. You are trying to bring her into a public war, in which she is to risk her treasure and the blood of her subjects against the greatest potentates of the world, and you hesitate meantime at giving her such security as is required for the very defence of the Provinces themselves. The deputies are coming hither to offer the sovereignty to her Majesty, as was recently done in France, or, if that should not prove acceptable, they are to ask assistance in men and money upon a mere 'taliter qualiter' guaranty. That's not the way. And there are plenty of ill-disposed persons here to take advantage of this position of affairs to ruin the interest of the Provinces now placed on so good a footing. Moreover, in this perpetual sending of despatches back and forth, much precious time is consumed; and this is exactly what our enemies most desire."

Page 1333

In accordance with Walsingham's urgent suggestions, Ortel wrote at once to his constituents, imploring them to remedy this matter. Do not allow," he said, any, more time to be wasted. Let us not painfully, build a wall only to knock our own heads against it, to the dismay of our friends and the gratification of our enemies."

It was at last arranged that an important blank should be left in the articles to be brought by the deputies, upon which vacant place the names of certain cautionary towns, afterwards to be agreed upon, were to be inscribed by common consent.

Meantime the English ministers were busy in preparing to receive the commissioners, and to bring the Netherland matter handsomely before the legislature.

The integrity, the caution, the thrift, the hesitation, which characterized Elizabeth's government, were well pourtrayed in the habitual language of the Lord Treasurer, chief minister of a third-rate kingdom now called on to play a first-rate part, thoroughly acquainted with the moral and intellectual power of the nation whose policy he directed, and prophetically conscious of the great destinies which were opening upon her horizon. Lord Burghley could hardly be censured—least of all ridiculed—for the patient and somewhat timid attributes of his nature: The ineffable ponderings, which might now be ludicrous, on the part of a minister of the British Empire, with two hundred millions of subjects and near a hundred millions of revenue, were almost inevitable in a man guiding a realm of four millions of people with half a million of income.

It was, on the whole, a strange negotiation, this between England and Holland. A commonwealth had arisen, but was unconscious of the strength which it was to find in the principle of states' union, and of religious equality. It sought, on the contrary, to exchange its federal sovereignty for provincial dependence, and to imitate, to a certain extent, the very intolerance by which it had been driven into revolt. It was not unnatural that the Netherlanders should hate the Roman Catholic religion, in the name of which they had endured such infinite tortures, but it is, nevertheless, painful to observe that they requested Queen Elizabeth, whom they styled defender, not of "the faith" but of the "reformed religion," to exclude from the Provinces, in case she accepted the sovereignty, the exercise of all religious rites except those belonging to the reformed church. They, however, expressly provided against inquisition into conscience. Private houses were to be sacred, the, papists free within their own walls, but the churches were to be closed to those of the ancient faith. This was not so bad as to hang, burn, drown, and bury alive nonconformists, as had been done by Philip and the holy inquisition in the name of the church of Rome; nor is it very surprising that the horrible past should have caused that church to be regarded with sentiments of such deep-rooted hostility as to make the Hollanders

Page 1334

shudder at the idea of its re-establishment. Yet, no doubt, it was idle for either Holland or England, at that day, to talk of a reconciliation with Rome. A step had separated them, but it was a step from a precipice. No human power could bridge the chasm. The steep contrast between the league and the counter-league, between the systems of Philip and Mucio, and that of Elizabeth and Olden-Barneveld, ran through the whole world of thought, action, and life.

But still the negociation between Holland and England was a strange one. Holland wished to give herself entirely, and England feared to accept. Elizabeth, in place of sovereignty, wanted mortgages; while Holland was afraid to give a part, although offering the whole. There was no great inequality between the two countries. Both were instinctively conscious, perhaps, of standing on the edge of a vast expansion. Both felt that they were about to stretch their wings suddenly for a flight over the whole earth. Yet each was a very inferior power, in comparison with the great empires of the past or those which then existed.

It is difficult, without a strong effort of the imagination, to reduce the English empire to the slender proportions which belonged to her in the days of Elizabeth. That epoch was full of light and life. The constellations which have for centuries been shining in the English firmament were then human creatures walking English earth. The captains, statesmen, corsairs, merchant-adventurers, poets, dramatists, the great Queen herself, the Cecils, Raleigh, Walsingham, Drake, Hawkins, Gilbert, Howard, Willoughby, the Norrises, Essex, Leicester, Sidney, Spenser, Shakspeare and the lesser but brilliant lights which surrounded him; such were the men who lifted England upon an elevation to which she was not yet entitled by her material grandeur. At last she had done with Rome, and her expansion dated from that moment.

Holland and England, by the very condition of their existence, were sworn foes to Philip. Elizabeth stood excommunicated of the Pope. There was hardly a month in which intelligence was not sent by English agents out of the Netherlands and France, that assassins, hired by Philip, were making their way to England to attempt the life of the Queen. The Netherlanders were rebels to the Spanish monarch, and they stood, one and all, under death-sentence by Rome. The alliance was inevitable and wholesome. Elizabeth was, however, consistently opposed to the acceptance of a new sovereignty. England was a weak power. Ireland was at her side in a state of chronic rebellion—a stepping-stone for Spain in its already foreshadowed invasion. Scotland was at her back with a strong party of Catholics, stipendiaries of Philip, encouraged by the Guises and periodically inflamed to enthusiasm by the hope of rescuing Mary Stuart from her imprisonment, bringing her rival’s head to the block, and elevating the long-suffering martyr upon the throne

Page 1335

of all the British Islands. And in the midst of England itself, conspiracies were weaving every day. The mortal duel between the two queens was slowly approaching its termination. In the fatal form of Mary was embodied everything most perilous to England's glory and to England's Queen. Mary Stuart meant absolutism at home, subjection to Rome and Spain abroad. The uncle Guises were stipendiaries of Philip, Philip was the slave of the Pope. Mucio had frightened the unlucky Henry *iii*. into submission, and there was no health nor hope in France. For England, Mary Stuart embodied the possible relapse into sloth, dependence, barbarism. For Elizabeth, Mary Stuart embodied sedition, conspiracy, rebellion, battle, murder, and sudden death.

It was not to be wondered at that the Queen thus situated should be cautious, when about throwing down the gauntlet to the greatest powers of the earth. Yet the commissioners from the United States were now on their way to England to propose the throwing of that gauntlet. What now was that England?

Its population was, perhaps, not greater than the numbers which dwell to-day within its capital and immediate suburbs. Its revenue was perhaps equal to the sixtieth part of the annual interest on the present national debt. Single, highly-favoured individuals, not only in England but in other countries cis-and trans-Atlantic, enjoy incomes equal to more than half the amount of Elizabeth's annual budget. London, then containing perhaps one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, was hardly so imposing a town as Antwerp, and was inferior in most material respects to Paris and Lisbon. Forty-two hundred children were born every year within its precincts, and the deaths were nearly as many. In plague years, which were only too frequent, as many as twenty and even thirty thousand people had been annually swept away.

At the present epoch there are seventeen hundred births every week, and about one thousand deaths.

It is instructive to throw a glance at the character of the English people as it appeared to intelligent foreigners at that day; for the various parts of the world were not then so closely blended, nor did national colours and characteristics flow so liquidly into each other, as is the case in these days of intimate juxta-position.

"The English are a very clever, handsome, and well-made people," says a learned Antwerp historian and merchant, who had resided a long time in London, "but, like all islanders, by nature weak and tender. They are generally fair, particularly the women, who all—even to the peasant women—protect their complexions from the sun with fans and veils, as only the stately gentlewomen do in Germany and the Netherlands. As a people they are stout-hearted, vehement, eager, cruel in war, zealous in attack, little fearing: death; not revengeful, but fickle, presumptuous, rash, boastful, deceitful, very suspicious, especially of strangers,

Page 1336

whom they despise. They are full of courteous and hypocritical gestures and words, which they consider to imply good manners, civility, and wisdom. They are well spoken, and very hospitable. They feed well, eating much meat, which-owing to the rainy climate and the ranker character of the grass—is not so firm and succulent as the meat of France and the Netherlands. The people are not so laborious as the French and Hollanders, preferring to lead an indolent life, like the Spaniards. The most difficult and ingenious of the handicrafts are in the hands of foreigners, as is the case with the lazy inhabitants of Spain. They feed many sheep, with fine wool, from which, two hundred years ago, they learned to make cloth. They keep many idle servants, and many wild animals for their pleasure, instead of cultivating the sail. They have many ships, but they do not even catch fish enough for their own consumption, but purchase of their neighbours. They dress very elegantly. Their costume is light and costly, but they are very changeable and capricious, altering their fashions every year, both the men and the women. When they go away from home, riding or travelling, they always wear their best clothes, contrary to the habit of other nations. The English language is broken Dutch, mixed with French and British terms and words, but with a lighter pronunciation. They do not speak from the chest, like the Germans, but prattle only with the tongue."

Here are few statistical facts, but certainly it is curious to see how many national traits thus photographed by a contemporary, have quite vanished, and have been exchanged for their very opposites. Certainly the last physiological criticism of all would indicate as great a national metamorphosis, during the last three centuries, as is offered by many other of the writer's observations.

"With regard to the women," continues the same authority, "they are entirely in the power of the men, except in matters of life and death, yet they are not kept so closely and strictly as in Spain and elsewhere. They are not locked up, but have free management of their household, like the Netherlanders and their other neighbours. They are gay in their clothing, taking well their ease, leaving house-work to the servant-maids, and are fond of sitting, finely-dressed, before their doors to see the passers-by and to be seen of them. In all banquets and dinner-parties they have the most honour, sitting at the upper end of the board, and being served first.

"Their time is spent in riding, lounging, card-playing, and making merry with their gossips at child-bearings, christenings, churchings, and buryings; and all this conduct the men wink at, because such are the customs of the land. They much commend however the industry and careful habits of the German and Netherland women, who do the work which in England devolves upon the men. Hence, England is called the paradise of married women, for the unmarried girls are kept much more strictly than upon the continent. The women are, handsome, white, dressy, modest; although they go freely about the streets without bonnet, hood, or veil; but lately learned to cover their

faces with a silken mask or vizard with a plumage of feathers, for they change their fashions every year, to the astonishment of many.”

Page 1337

Paul Hentzner, a tourist from Germany at precisely the same epoch, touches with equal minuteness on English characteristics. It may be observed, that, with some discrepancies, there is also much similarity, in the views of the two critics.

“The English,” says the whimsical Paul, are serious, like the Germans, lovers of show, liking to be followed, wherever they go, by troops of servants, who wear their master’s arms, in silver, fastened to their left sleeves, and are justly ridiculed for wearing tails hanging down their backs. They excel in dancing and music, for they are active and lively, although they are of thicker build than the Germans. They cut their hair close on the forehead, letting it hang down on either side. They are good sailors, and better pirates, cunning, treacherous, thievish. Three hundred and upwards are hanged annually in London. Hawking is the favourite sport of the nobility. The English are more polite in eating than the French, devouring less bread, but more meat, which they roast in perfection. They put a great deal of sugar in their drink. Their beds are covered with tapestry, even those of farmers. They are powerful in the field, successful against their enemies, impatient of anything like slavery, vastly fond of great ear-filling noises, such as cannon-firing, drum-beating, and bell-ringing; so that it is very common for a number of them, when they have got a cup too much in their heads, to go up to some belfry, and ring the bells for an hour together, for the sake of the amusement. If they see a foreigner very well made or particularly handsome, they will say “’tis pity he is not an Englishman.”

It is also somewhat amusing, at the present day, to find a German elaborately explaining to his countrymen the mysteries of tobacco-smoking, as they appeared to his unsophisticated eyes in England. “At the theatres and everywhere else,” says the traveller, “the English are constantly smoking tobacco in the following manner. They have pipes, made on purpose, of clay. At the further end of these is a bowl. Into the bowl they put the herb, and then setting fire to it, they draw the smoke into their mouths, which they puff out again through their nostrils, like funnels,” and so on; conscientious explanations which a German tourist of our own times might think it superfluous to offer to his compatriots.

It is also instructive to read that the light-fingered gentry of the metropolis were nearly as adroit in their calling as they are at present, after three additional centuries of development for their delicate craft; for the learned Tobias Salander, the travelling companion of Paul Hentzner, finding himself at a Lord Mayor’s Show, was eased of his purse, containing nine crowns, as skilfully as the feat could have been done by the best pickpocket of the nineteenth century, much to that learned person’s discomfiture.

Into such an England and among such English the Netherland envoys had now been despatched on their most important errand.

Page 1338

After twice putting back, through stress of weather, the commissioners, early in July, arrived at London, and were “lodged and very worshipfully appointed at charges of her Majesty in the Clothworkers’ Hall in Pynchon-lane, near Tower-street.” About the Tower and its faubourgs the buildings were stated to be as elegant as they were in the city itself, although this was hardly very extravagant commendation. From this district a single street led along the river’s strand to Westminster, where were the old and new palaces, the famous hall and abbey, the Parliament chambers, and the bridge to Southwark, built of stone, with twenty arches, sixty feet high, and with rows of shops and dwelling-houses on both its sides. Thence, along the broad and beautiful river, were dotted here and there many stately mansions and villas, residences of bishops and nobles, extending farther and farther west as the city melted rapidly into the country. London itself was a town lying high upon a hill—the hill of Lud—and consisted of a coil of narrow, tortuous, unseemly streets, each with a black, noisome rivulet running through its centre, and with rows of three-storied, leaden-roofed houses, built of timber-work filled in with lime, with many gables, and with the upper stories overhanging and darkening the basements. There were one hundred and twenty-one churches, small and large, the most conspicuous of which was the Cathedral. Old Saint Paul’s was not a very magnificent edifice—but it was an extremely large one, for it was seven hundred and twenty feet long, one hundred and thirty broad, and had a massive quadrangular tower, two hundred and sixty feet high. Upon this tower had stood a timber-steeple, rising, to a height of five hundred and thirty-four feet from the ground, but it had been struck by lightning in the year 1561, and consumed to the stone-work.

The Queen’s favourite residence was Greenwich Palace, the place of her birth, and to this mansion, on the 9th of July, the Netherland envoys were conveyed, in royal barges, from the neighbourhood of Pynchon-lane, for their first audience.

The deputation was a strong one. There was Falck of Zeeland, a man of consummate adroitness, perhaps not of as satisfactory integrity; “a shrewd fellow and a fine,” as Lord Leicester soon afterwards characterised him. There was Menin, pensionary of Dort, an eloquent and accomplished orator, and employed on this occasion as chief spokesman of the legation—“a deeper man, and, I think, an honester,” said the same personage, adding, with an eye to business, “and he is but poor, which you must consider, but with great secrecy.” There was Paul Buys, whom we have met with before; keen, subtle, somewhat loose of life, very passionate, a most most energetic and valuable friend to England, a determined foe to France, who had resigned the important post of Holland’s Advocate, when the mission offering sovereignty to Henry *iii*. had been resolved

Page 1339

upon, and who had since that period been most influential in procuring the present triumph of the English policy. Through his exertions the Province of Holland had been induced at an early moment to furnish the most ample instructions to the commissioners for the satisfaction of Queen Elizabeth in the great matter of the mortgages. “Judge if this Paul Buys has done his work well,” said a French agent in the Netherlands, who, despite the infamous conduct of his government towards the Provinces, was doing his best to frustrate the subsequent negotiation with England, “and whether or no he has Holland under his thumb.” The same individual had conceived hopes from Falck of Zeeland. That Province, in which lay the great bone of contention between the Queen and the States—the important town of Flushing—was much slower than Holland to agree to the English policy. It is to be feared that Falck was not the most ingenuous and disinterested politician that could be found even in an age not distinguished for frankness or purity; for even while setting forth upon the mission to Elizabeth, he was still clingihg, or affecting to cling, to the wretched delusion of French assistance. “I regret infinitely,” said Falck to the French agent just mentioned, “that I am employed in this affair, and that it is necessary in our present straits to have recourse to England. There is—so to speak—not a person in our Province that is inclined that way, all recognizing very well that France is much more salutary for us, besides that we all bear her a certain affection. Indeed, if I were assured that the King still felt any goodwill towards us, I would so manage matters that neither the Queen of England, nor any other prince whatever except his most Christian-Majesty should take a bite at this country, at least at this Province, and with that view, while waiting for news from France, I will keep things in suspense, and spin them out as long as it is possible to do.”

The news from France happened soon to be very conclusive, and it then became difficult even for Falek to believe—after intelligence received of the accord between Henry *iii*. and the Guises—that his Christian Majesty, would be inclined for a bite at the Netherlands. This duplicity on the part of so leading a personage furnishes a key to much of the apparent dilatoriness on the part of the English government: It has been seen that Elizabeth, up to the last moment, could not fairly comprehend the ineffable meanness of the French monarch. She told Ortel that she saw no reason to believe in that great Catholic conspiracy against herself and against all Protestantism which was so soon to be made public by the King’s edict of July, promulgated at the very instant of the arrival in England of the Netherland envoys. Then that dread fiat had gone forth, the most determined favourer of the French alliance could no longer admit its possibility, and Falck became the more open to that peculiar line of argument which Leicester had suggested with regard to one of the other deputies. “I will do my best,” wrote Walsingham, “to procure that Paul Buys and Falck shall receive underhand some reward.”

Page 1340

Besides Menin, Falck, and Buys, were Noel de Caron, an experienced diplomatist; the poet-soldier, Van der Does; heroic defender of Leyden; De Gryze, Hersolte, Francis Maalzoon, and three legal Frisians of pith and substance, Feitsma, Aisma, and Jongema; a dozen Dutchmen together—as muscular champions as ever little republic sent forth to wrestle with all comers in the slippery ring of diplomacy. For it was instinctively felt that here were conclusions to be tried with a nation of deep, solid thinkers, who were aware that a great crisis in the world's history had occurred, and would put forth their most substantial men to deal with it: Burghley and Walsingham, the great Queen herself, were no feather-weights like the frivolous Henry *iii*., and his minions. It was pity, however, that the discussions about to ensue presented from the outset rather the aspect of a hard hitting encounter of antagonists than that of a frank and friendly congress between two great parties whose interests were identical.

Since the death of William the Silent, there was no one individual in the Netherlands to impersonate the great struggle of the Provinces with Spain and Rome, and to concentrate upon his own head a poetical, dramatic, and yet most legitimate interest. The great purpose of the present history must be found in its illustration of the creative power of civil and religious freedom. Here was a little republic, just born into the world, suddenly bereft of its tutelary saint, left to its own resources, yet already instinct with healthy vigorous life, and playing its difficult part among friends and enemies with audacity, self-reliance, and success. To a certain extent its achievements were anonymous, but a great principle manifested itself through a series of noble deeds. Statesmen, soldiers, patriots, came forward on all sides to do the work which was to be done, and those who were brought into closest contact with the commonwealth acknowledged in strongest language the signal ability with which, self-guided, she steered her course. Nevertheless, there was at this moment one Netherlander, the chief of the present mission to England, already the foremost statesman of his country, whose name will not soon be effaced from the record of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. That man was John of Olden-Barneveld.

He was now in his thirty-eighth year, having been born at Amersfoot on the 14th of September, 1547. He bore an imposing name, for the Olden-Barnevelds of Gelderland were a race of unquestionable and antique nobility. His enemies, however, questioned his right to the descent which he claimed. They did not dispute that the great grandfather, Class van Olden-Barneveld, was of distinguished lineage and allied to many illustrious houses, but they denied that Class was really the great grandfather of John. John's father, Gerritt, they said, was a nameless outcast, a felon, a murderer, who had escaped the punishment

Page 1341

due to his crimes, but had dragged out a miserable existence in the downs, burrowing like a rabbit in the sand. They had also much to say in disparagement of all John's connections. Not only was his father a murderer, but his wife, whom he had married for money, was the child of a most horrible incest, his sisters were prostitutes, his sons and brothers were debauchees and drunkards, and, in short, never had a distinguished man a more uncomfortable and discreditable family-circle than that which surrounded Barneveld, if the report of his enemies was to be believed. Yet it is agreeable to reflect that, with all the venom which they had such power of secreting, these malignant tongues had been unable to destroy the reputation of the man himself. John's character was honourable and upright, his intellectual power not disputed even by those who at a later period hated him the most bitterly. He had been a profound and indefatigable student from his earliest youth. He had read law at Leyden, in France, at Heidelberg. Here, in the head-quarters of German Calvinism, his youthful mind had long pondered the dread themes of foreknowledge, judgment absolute, free will, and predestination: To believe it worth the while of a rational and intelligent Deity to create annually several millions of thinking beings, who were to struggle for a brief period on earth, and to consume in perpetual brimstone afterwards, while others were predestined to endless enjoyment, seemed to him an indifferent exchange for a faith in the purgatory and paradise of Rome. Perplexed in the extreme, the youthful John bethought himself of an inscription over the gateway of his famous but questionable great grandfather's house at Amersfort—'nil scire tutissima fides.' He resolved thenceforth to adopt a system of ignorance upon matters beyond the flaming walls of the world; to do the work before him manfully and faithfully while he walked the earth, and to trust that a benevolent Creator would devote neither him nor any other man to eternal hellfire. For this most offensive doctrine he was howled at by the strictly pious, while he earned still deeper opprobrium by daring to advocate religious toleration: In face of the endless horrors inflicted by the Spanish Inquisition upon his native land, he had the hardihood—-although a determined Protestant himself—to claim for Roman Catholics the right to exercise their religion in the free States on equal terms with those of the reformed faith. "Anyone," said his enemies, "could smell what that meant who had not a wooden nose." In brief, he was a liberal Christian, both in theory and practice, and he nobly confronted in consequence the wrath of bigots on both sides. At a later period the most zealous Calvinists called him Pope John, and the opinions to which he was to owe such appellations had already been formed in his mind.

Page 1342

After completing his very thorough legal studies, he had practised as an advocate in Holland and Zeeland. An early defender of civil and religious freedom, he had been brought at an early day into contact with William the Silent, who recognized his ability. He had borne a snap-hance on his shoulder as a volunteer in the memorable attempt to relieve Haarlem, and was one of the few survivors of that bloody night. He had stood outside the walls of Leyden in company of the Prince of Orange when that magnificent destruction of the dykes had taken place by which the city had been saved from the fate impending over it. At a still more recent period we have seen him landing from the gun-boats upon the Kowenstyn, on the fatal 26th May. These military adventures were, however, but brief and accidental episodes in his career, which was that of a statesman and diplomatist. As pensionary of Rotterdam, he was constantly a member of the General Assembly, and had already begun to guide the policy of the new commonwealth. His experience was considerable, and he was now in the high noon of his vigour and his usefulness.

He was a man of noble and imposing presence, with thick hair pushed from a broad forehead rising dome-like above a square and massive face; a strong deeply-coloured physiognomy, with shaggy brow, a chill blue eye, not winning but commanding, high cheek bones, a solid, somewhat scornful nose, a firm mouth and chin, enveloped in a copious brown beard; the whole head not unfitly framed in the stiff formal ruff of the period; and the tall stately figure well draped in magisterial robes of velvet and sable—-such was John of Olden-Barneveld.

The Commissioners thus described arrived at Greenwich Stairs, and were at once ushered into the palace, a residence which had been much enlarged and decorated by Henry *viii*.

They were received with stately ceremony. The presence-chamber was hung with Gobelin tapestry, its floor strewn with rushes. Fifty-gentlemen pensioners, with gilt battle-ages, and a throng of ‘buffetiers’, or beef-eaters, in that quaint old-world garb which has survived so many centuries, were in attendance, while the counsellors of the Queen, in their robes of state, waited around the throne.

There, in close skull-cap and dark flowing gown, was the subtle, monastic-looking Walsingham, with long, grave, melancholy face and Spanish eyes. There too, white staff in hand, was Lord High Treasurer Burghley, then sixty-five years of age, with serene blue eye, large, smooth, pale, scarce-wrinkled face and forehead; seeming, with his placid, symmetrical features, and great velvet bonnet, under which such silver hairs as remained were soberly tucked away, and with his long dark robes which swept the ground, more like a dignified gentlewoman than a statesman, but for the wintery beard which lay like a snow-drift on his ancient breast.

Page 1343

The Queen was then in the fifty-third year of her age, and considered herself in the full bloom of her beauty. Her, garments were of satin and velvet, with fringes of pearl as big as beans. A small gold crown was upon her head, and her red hair, throughout its multiplicity of curls, blazed with diamonds and emeralds. Her forehead was tall, her face long, her complexion fair, her eyes small, dark, and glittering, her nose high and hooked, her lips thin, her teeth black, her bosom white and liberally exposed. As she passed through the ante-chamber to the presence-hall, supplicants presented petitions upon their knees. Wherever she glanced, all prostrated themselves on the ground. The cry of “Long live Queen Elizabeth” was spontaneous and perpetual; the reply; “I thank you, my good people,” was constant and cordial. She spoke to various foreigners in their respective languages, being mistress, besides the Latin and Greek, of French, Spanish, Italian, and German. As the Commissioners were presented to her by Lord Buckhurst it was observed that she was perpetually gloving and ungloving, as if to attract attention to her hand, which was esteemed a wonder of beauty. She spoke French with purity and elegance, but with a drawling, somewhat affected accent, saying “Paar maa foi; paar le Dieeu vivaant,” and so forth, in a style which was ridiculed by Parisians, as she sometimes, to her extreme annoyance, discovered.

Joos de Menin, pensionary of Dort, in the name of all the envoys, made an elaborate address. He expressed the gratitude which the States entertained for her past kindness, and particularly for the good offices rendered by Ambassador Davison after the death of the Prince of Orange, and for the deep regret expressed by her Majesty for their disappointment in the hopes they had founded upon France.

“Since the death of the Prince of Orange,” he said, “the States have lost many important cities, and now, for the preservation of their existence, they have need of a prince and sovereign lord to defend them against the tyranny and iniquitous oppression of the Spaniards and their adherents, who are more and more determined utterly to destroy their country, and reduce the poor people to a perpetual slavery worse than that of Indians, under the insupportable and detestable yoke of the Spanish Inquisition. We have felt a confidence that your Majesty will not choose to see us perish at the hands of the enemy against whom we have been obliged to sustain this long and cruel war. That war we have undertaken in order to preserve for the poor people their liberty, laws, and franchises, together with the exercise of the true Christian religion, of which your Majesty bears rightfully the title of defender, and against which the enemy and his allies have made so many leagues and devised so many ambushes and stratagems, besides organizing every day so many plots against the life of your Majesty and the safety of your realms—schemes

Page 1344

which thus far the good God has averted for the good of Christianity and the maintenance of His churches. For these reasons, Madam, the States have taken a firm resolution to have recourse to your Majesty, seeing that it is an ordinary thing for all oppressed nations to apply in their calamity to neighbouring princes, and especially to such as are endowed with piety, justice, magnanimity, and other kingly virtues. For this reason we have been deputed to offer to your Majesty the sovereignty over these Provinces, under certain good and equitable conditions, having reference chiefly to the maintenance of the reformed religion and of our ancient liberties and customs. And although, in the course of these long and continued wars, the enemy has obtained possession of many cities and strong places within our couniry, nevertheless the Provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, and Friesland, are, thank God, still entire. And in those lands are many large and stately cities, beautiful and deep rivers, admirable seaports, from which your Majesty and your successors can derive much good fruit and commodity, of which it is scarcely, necessary to make a long recital. This point, however, beyond the rest, merits a special consideration; namely, that the conjunction of those Provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, and Friesland, together with the cities of Sluys and Ostend, with the kingdoms of your Majesty, carries with it the absolute empire of the great ocean, and consequently an assurance of perpetual felicity for your subjects. We therefore humbly entreat you to agree to our conditions, to accept the sovereign seignory of these Provinces, and consequently to receive the people of the same as your very humble and obedient subjects, under the perpetual safeguard of your crown—a people certainly as faithful and loving towards their princes and sovereign lords, to speak without boasting, as any in all Christendom.

“So doing, Madam, you will preserve many beautiful churches which it has pleased God to raise up in these lands, now much afflicted and shaken, and you will deliver this country and people—before the iniquitous invasion of the Spaniards, so rich and flourishing by the great Commodity of the sea, their ports and rivers, their commerce and manufactures, for all which they have such natural advantages—from ruin and perpetual slavery of body and soul. This will be a truly excellent work, agreeable to God, profitable to Christianity, worthy of immortal praise, and comporting with the heroic virtues of your Majesty, and ensuring the prosperity of your country and people. With this we present to your Majesty our articles and conditions, and pray that the King of Kings may preserve you from all your enemies and ever have you in His holy keeping.”

Page 1345

The Queen listened intently and very courteously to the delivery of this address, and then made answer in French to this effect:—“Gentlemen,—Had I a thousand tongues I should not be able to express my obligation to you for the great and handsome offers which you have just made. I firmly believe that this proceeds from the true zeal, devotion, and affection, which you have always borne me, and I am certain that you have ever preferred me to all the princes and potentates in the world. Even when you selected the late Duke of Anjou, who was so dear to me, and to whose soul I hope that God has been merciful, I know that you would sooner have offered your country to me if I had desired that you should do so. Certainly I esteem it a great thing that you wish to be governed by me, and I feel so much obliged to you in consequence that I will never abandon you, but, on the contrary, assist you till the last sigh of my life. I know very well that your princes have treated you ill, and that the Spaniards are endeavouring to ruin you entirely; but I will come to your aid, and I will consider what I can do, consistently with my honour, in regard to the articles which you have brought me. They shall be examined by the members of my council, and I promise that I will not keep you three or four months, for I know very well that your affairs require haste, and that they will become ruinous if you are not assisted. It is not my custom to procrastinate, and upon this occasion I shall not dally, as others have done, but let you have my answer very soon.”

Certainly, if the Provinces needed a king, which they had most unequivocally declared to be the case, they might have wandered the whole earth over, and, had it been possible, searched through the whole range of history, before finding a monarch with a more kingly spirit than the great Queen to whom they had at last had recourse.

Unfortunately, she was resolute in her refusal to accept the offered sovereignty. The first interview terminated with this exchange of addresses, and the deputies departed in their barges for their lodgings in Pynchon-lane.

The next two days were past in perpetual conferences, generally at Lord Burghley’s house, between the envoys and the lords of the council, in which the acceptance of the sovereignty was vehemently urged on the part of the Netherlanders, and steadily declined in the name of her Majesty.

“Her Highness,” said Burghley, “cannot be induced, by any writing or harangue that you can make, to accept the principality or proprietorship as sovereign, and it will therefore be labour lost for you to exhibit any writing for the purpose of changing her intention. It will be better to content yourselves with her Majesty’s consent to assist you, and to take you under her protection.”

Page 1346

Nevertheless, two days afterwards, a writing was exhibited, drawn up by Menin, in which another elaborate effort was made to alter the Queen's determination. This anxiety, on the part of men already the principal personages in a republic, to merge the independent existence of their commonwealth in another and a foreign political organism, proved, at any rate; that they were influenced by patriotic motives alone. It is also instructive to observe the intense language with which the necessity of a central paramount sovereignty for all the Provinces, and the inconveniences of the separate States' right principle were urged by a deputation, at the head of which stood Olden-Barneveld. "Although it is not becoming in us," said they, "to enquire into your Majesty's motives for refusing the sovereignty of our country, nevertheless, we cannot help observing that your consent would be most profitable, as well to your Majesty, and your successors, as to the Provinces themselves. By your acceptance of the sovereignty the two peoples would be, as it were, united in one body. This would cause a fraternal benevolence between them, and a single reverence, love, and obedience to your Majesty.—The two peoples being thus under the government of the same sovereign prince, the intrigues and practices which the enemy could attempt with persons under a separate subjection, would of necessity surcease. Moreover, those Provinces are all distinct duchies, counties, seignories, governed by their own magistrates, laws, and ordinances; each by itself, without any authority or command to be exercised by one Province over another. To this end they have need of a supreme power and of one sovereign prince or seignor, who may command all equally, having a constant regard to the public weal—considered as a generality, and not with regard to the profit of the one or the other individual Province—and, causing promptly and universally to be executed such ordinances as may be made in the matter of war or police, according to various emergencies. Each Province, on the contrary, retaining its sovereignty over its own inhabitants, obedience will not be so promptly and completely rendered to the commands of the lieutenant-general of your Majesty, and many, a good enterprise and opportunity, will be lost. Where there is not a single authority it is always found that one party endeavours to usurp power over another, or to escape doing his duty so thoroughly as the others. And this has notoriously been the case in the matter of contributions, imposts, and similar matters."

Thus much, and more of similar argument, logically urged, made it sufficiently evident that twenty years of revolt and of hard fighting against one king, had not destroyed in the minds of the leading Netherlanders their conviction of the necessity of kingship. If the new commonwealth was likely to remain a republic, it was, at that moment at any rate, because they could not find a king. Certainly they did their best

Page 1347

to annex themselves to England, and to become loyal subjects of England's Elizabeth. But the Queen, besides other objections to the course proposed by the Provinces, thought that she could do a better thing in the way of mortgages. In this, perhaps, there was something of the penny-wise policy, which sprang from one great defect in her character. At any rate much mischief was done by the mercantile spirit which dictated the hard chaffering on both sides the Channel at this important juncture; for during this tedious flint-paring, Antwerp, which might have been saved, was falling into the hands of Philip. It should never be forgotten, however, that the Queen had no standing army, and but a small revenue. The men to be sent from England to the Netherland wars were first to be levied wherever it was possible to find them. In truth, many were pressed in the various wards of London, furnished with red coats and matchlocks at the expense of the citizens, and so despatched, helter-skelter, in small squads as opportunity offered. General Sir John Norris was already superintending these operations, by command of the Queen, before the present formal negotiation with the States had begun.

Subsequently to the 11th July, on which day the second address had been made to Elizabeth, the envoys had many conferences with Leicester, Burghley, Walsingham, and other councillors, without making much progress. There was perpetual wrangling about figures and securities.

"What terms will you pledge for the repayment of the monies to be advanced?" asked Burghley and Walsingham.

"But if her Majesty takes the sovereignty," answered the deputies, "there will be no question of guarantees. The Queen will possess our whole land, and there will be no need of any repayment."

"And we have told you over and over again," said the Lord Treasurer, "that her Majesty will never think of accepting the sovereignty. She will assist you in money and men, and must be repaid to the last farthing when the war is over; and, until that period, must have solid pledges in the shape of a town in each Province."

Then came interrogatories as to the amount of troops and funds to be raised respectively by the Queen and the States for the common cause. The Provinces wished her Majesty to pay one-third of the whole expense, while her Majesty was reluctant to pay one-quarter. The States wished a permanent force to be kept on foot in the Netherlands of thirteen thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry for the field, and twenty-three thousand for garrisons. The councillors thought the last item too much. Then there were queries as to the expense of maintaining a force in the Provinces. The envoys reckoned one pound sterling, or ten florins, a month for the pay of each foot soldier, including officers; and for the cavalry, three times as much. This seemed

reasonable, and the answers to the inquiries touching the expense of the war-vessels and sailors

Page 1348

were equally satisfactory. Nevertheless it was difficult to bring the Queen up to the line to which the envoys had been limited by their instructions. Five thousand foot and one thousand horse serving at the Queen's expense till the war should be concluded, over and above the garrisons for such cautionary towns as should be agreed upon; this was considered, by the States, the minimum. The Queen held out for giving only four thousand foot and four hundred horse, and for deducting the garrisons even from this slender force. As guarantee for the expense thus to be incurred, she required that Flushing and Brill should be placed in her hands. Moreover the position of Antwerp complicated the negotiation. Elizabeth, fully sensible of the importance of preserving that great capital, offered four thousand soldiers to serve until that city should be relieved, requiring repayment within three months after the object should have been accomplished. As special guarantee for such repayment she required Sluys and Ostend. This was sharp bargaining, but, at any rate, the envoys knew that the Queen, though cavilling to the ninth-part of a hair, was no trifler, and that she meant to perform whatever she should promise.

There was another exchange of speeches at the Palace of Nonesuch, on the 5th August; and the position of affairs and the respective attitudes of the Queen and envoys were plainly characterized by the language then employed.

After an exordium about the cruelty of the Spanish tyranny and the enormous expense entailed by the war upon the Netherlands, Menin, who, as usual, was the spokesman, alluded to the difficulty which the States at last felt in maintaining themselves.

"Five thousand foot and one thousand horse," he said, "over and above the maintenance of garrisons in the towns to be pledged as security to your Majesty, seemed the very least amount of succour that would be probably obtained from your royal bounty. Considering the great demonstrations of affection and promises of support, made as well by your Majesty's own letters as by the mouth of your ambassador Davison, and by our envoys De Gryse and Ortel, who have all declared publicly that your Majesty would never forsake us, the States sent us their deputies to this country in full confidence that such reasonable demands as we had been authorized to make would be satisfied."

The speaker then proceeded to declare that the offer made by the royal councillors of four thousand foot and four hundred horse, to serve during the war, together with a special force of four thousand for the relief of Antwerp, to be paid for within three months after the siege should be raised, against a concession of the cities of Flushing, Brill, Sluys, and Ostend, did not come within the limitations of the States-General. They therefore begged the Queen to enlarge her offer to the number of five thousand foot and one thousand horse, or at least to allow the envoys to conclude the treaty provisionally, and subject to approval of their constituents.

Page 1349

So soon as Menin had concluded his address, her Majesty instantly replied, with much earnestness and fluency of language.

“Gentlemen,” she said, “I will answer you upon the first point, because it touches my honour. You say that I promised you, both by letters and through my agent Davison, and also by my own lips, to assist you and never to abandon you, and that this had moved you to come to me at present. Very well, masters, do you not think I am assisting you when I am sending you four thousand foot and four hundred horse to serve during the war? Certainly, I think yes; and I say frankly that I have never been wanting to my word. No man shall ever say, with truth, that the Queen of England had at any time and ever so slightly failed in her promises, whether to the mightiest monarch, to republics, to gentlemen, or even to private persons of the humblest condition. Am I, then, in your opinion, forsaking you when I send you English blood, which I love, and which is my own blood, and which I am bound to defend? It seems to me, no. For my part I tell you again that I will never forsake you.

“‘Sed de modo?’ That is matter for agreement. You are aware, gentlemen, that I have storms to fear from many quarters—from France, Scotland, Ireland, and within my own kingdom. What would be said if I looked only on one side, and if on that side I employed all my resources. No, I will give my subjects no cause for murmuring. I know that my counsellors desire to manage matters with prudence; ‘sed aetatem habeo’, and you are to believe, that, of my own motion, I have resolved not to extend my offer of assistance, at present, beyond the amount already stated. But I don’t say that at another time I may not be able to do more for you. For my intention is never to abandon your cause, always to assist you, and never more to suffer any foreign nation to have dominion over you.

“It is true that you present me with two places in each of your Provinces. I thank you for them infinitely, and certainly it is a great offer. But it will be said instantly, the Queen of England wishes to embrace and devour everything; while, on the contrary, I only wish to render you assistance. I believe, in truth, that if other monarchs should have this offer, they would not allow such an opportunity to escape. I do not let it slip because of fears that I entertain for any prince whatever. For to think that I am not aware—doing what I am doing—that I am embarking in a war against the King of Spain, is a great mistake. I know very well that the succour which I am affording you will offend him as much as if I should do a great deal more. But what care I? Let him begin, I will answer him. For my part, I say again, that never did fear enter my heart. We must all die once. I know very well that many princes are my enemies, and are seeking my ruin; and that where malice is joined with force, malice often arrives at its ends. But I am not so feeble a princess that I have not the means and the will to defend myself against them all. They are seeking to take my life, but it troubles me not. He who is on high has defended me until this hour, and will keep me still, for in Him do I trust.

Page 1350

“As to the other point, you say that your powers are not extensive enough to allow your acceptance of the offer I make you. Nevertheless, if I am not mistaken, I have remarked in passing—for princes look very close to words—that you would be content if I would give you money in place of men, and that your powers speak only of demanding a certain proportion of infantry and another of cavalry. I believe this would be, as you say, an equivalent, ‘secundum quod’. But I say this only because you govern yourselves so precisely by the measure of your instructions. Nevertheless I don’t wish to contest these points with you. For very often ’dum Romae disputatur Saguntum perit.’ Nevertheless, it would be well for you to decide; and, in any event, I do not think it good that you should all take your departure, but that, on the contrary, you should leave some of your number here. Otherwise it would at once be said that all was broken off, and that I had chosen to nothing for you; and with this the bad would comfort themselves, and the good would be much discouraged.

“Touching the last point of your demand—according to which you desire a personage of quality—I know, gentlemen, that you do not always agree very well among yourselves, and that it would be good for you to have some one to effect such agreement. For this reason I have always intended, so soon as we should have made our treaty, to send a lord of name and authority to reside with you, to assist you in governing, and to aid, with his advice, in the better direction of your affairs.

“Would to God that Antwerp were relieved! Certainly I should be very glad, and very well content to lose all that I am now expending if that city could be saved. I hope, nevertheless, if it can hold out six weeks longer, that we shall see something good. Already the two thousand men of General Norris have crossed, or are crossing, every day by companies. I will hasten the rest as much as possible; and I assure you, gentlemen, that I will spare no diligence. Nevertheless you may, if you choose, retire with my council, and see if together you can come to some good conclusion.”

Thus spoke Elizabeth, like the wise, courageous, and very parsimonious princess that she was. Alas, it was too true, that Saguntum was perishing while the higgling went on at Rome. Had those two thousand under Sir John Norris and the rest of the four thousand but gone a few weeks earlier, how much happier might have been the result!

Nevertheless, it was thought in England that Antwerp would still hold out; and, meantime, a treaty for its relief, in combination with another for permanent assistance to the Provinces, was agreed upon between the envoys and the lords of council.

On the 12th August, Menin presented himself at Nonesuch at the head of his colleagues, and, in a formal speech, announced the arrangement which had thus been entered into, subject to the approval of the States. Again Elizabeth, whose “tongue,” in the homely phrase of the Netherlanders, “was wonderfully well hung,” replied with energy and ready eloquence.

Page 1351

“You see, gentlemen,” she said, “that I have opened the door; that I am embarking once for all with you in a war against the King of Spain. Very well, I am not anxious about the matter. I hope that God will aid us, and that we shall strike a good blow in your cause. Nevertheless, I pray you, with all my heart, and by the affection you bear me, to treat my soldiers well; for they are my own Englishmen, whom I love as I do myself. Certainly it would be a great cruelty, if you should treat them ill, since they are about to hazard their lives so freely in your defence, and I am sure that my request in this regard will be received by you as it deserves.

“In the next place, as you know that I am sending, as commander of these English troops, an honest gentleman, who deserves most highly for his experience in arms, so I am also informed that you have on your side a gentleman of great valour. I pray you, therefore, that good care be taken lest there be misunderstanding between these two, which might prevent them from agreeing well together, when great exploits of war are to be taken in hand. For if that should happen—which God forbid—my succour would be rendered quite useless to you. I name Count Hohenlo, because him alone have I heard mentioned. But I pray you to make the same recommendation to all the colonels and gentlemen in your army; for I should be infinitely sad, if misadventures should arise from such a cause, for your interest and my honour are both at stake.

“In the third place, I beg you, at your return, to make a favourable report of me, and to thank the States, in my behalf, for their great offers, which I esteem so highly as to be unable to express my thanks. Tell them that I shall remember them for ever. I consider it a great honour, that from the commencement, you have ever been so faithful to me, and that with such great constancy you have preferred me to all other princes, and have chosen me for your Queen. And chiefly do I thank the gentlemen of Holland and Zeeland, who, as I have been informed, were the first who so singularly loved me. And so on my own part I will have a special care of them, and will do my best to uphold them by every possible means, as I will do all the rest who have put their trust in me. But I name Holland and Zeeland more especially, because they have been so constant and faithful in their efforts to assist the rest in shaking off the yoke of the enemy.

“Finally, gentlemen, I beg you to assure the States that I do not decline the sovereignty of your country from any dread of the King of Spain. For I take God to witness that I fear him not; and I hope, with the blessing of God, to make such demonstrations against him, that men shall say the Queen of England does not fear the Spaniards.”

Elizabeth then smote herself upon the breast, and cried, with great energy, “‘Illa que virgo viri;’ and is it not quite the same to you, even if I do not assume the sovereignty, since I intend to protect you, and since therefore the effects will be the same? It is true that the sovereignty would serve to enhance my grandeur, but I am content to do without it, if you, upon your own part, will only do your duty.

Page 1352

“For myself, I promise you, in truth, that so long as I live, and even to my last sigh, I will never forsake you. Go home and tell this boldly to the States which sent you hither.”

Menin then replied with fresh expressions of thanks and compliments, and requested, in conclusion, that her Majesty would be pleased to send, as soon as possible, a personage of quality to the Netherlands.

“Gentlemen,” replied Elizabeth, “I intend to do this, so soon as our treaty shall be ratified, for, in contrary case, the King of Spain, seeing your government continue on its present footing, would do nothing but laugh at us. Certainly I do not mean this year to provide him with so fine a banquet.”

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

Anarchy which was deemed inseparable from a non-regal form
Dismay of our friends and the gratification of our enemies
Her teeth black, her bosom white and liberally exposed (Eliz.)
Holland was afraid to give a part, although offering the whole
Resolved thenceforth to adopt a system of ignorance
Say “’tis pity he is not an Englishman”
Seeking protection for and against the people
Three hundred and upwards are hanged annually in London
We must all die once
Wrath of bigots on both sides

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year’s Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 43, 1585

CHAPTER VI., Part 2.

Sir John Norris sent to Holland—Parsimony of Elizabeth—Energy of Davison—-Protracted Negotiations—Friendly Sentiments of Count Maurice—Letters from him and Louisa de Coligny—Davison vexed by the Queen’s Caprice—Dissatisfaction of Leicester—His vehement Complaints—The Queen’s Avarice—Perplexity of Davison—-Manifesto of Elizabeth—Sir Philip Sidney—His Arrival at Flushing.

The envoys were then dismissed, and soon afterwards a portion of the deputation took their departure from the Netherlands with the proposed treaty. It was however, as we

know, quite too late for Saguntum. Two days after the signing of the treaty, the remaining envoys were at the palace of Nonesuch, in conference with the Earl of Leicester, when a gentleman rushed suddenly into the apartment, exclaiming with great manifestations of anger:

“Antwerp has fallen! A treaty has been signed with the Prince of Parma. Aldegonde is the author of it all. He is the culprit, who has betrayed us;” with many more expressions of vehement denunciation.

The Queen was disappointed, but stood firm. She had been slow in taking her resolution, but she was unflinching when her mind was made up. Instead of retreating from her, position, now that it became doubly dangerous, she advanced several steps nearer towards her allies. For it was obvious, if more precious time should be lost, that Holland and Zeeland would share the fate of Antwerp. Already the belief, that, with the loss of that city, all had been lost, was spreading both in the Provinces and in England, and Elizabeth felt that the time had indeed come to confront the danger.

Page 1353

Meantime the intrigues of the enemy in the independent Provinces were rife. Blunt Roger Williams wrote in very plain language to Walsingham, a very few days after the capitulation of Antwerp:

“If her Majesty means to have Holland and Zeeland,” said he, “she must resolve presently. Aldegonde hath promised the enemy to bring them to compound. Here arrived already his ministers which knew all his dealings about Antwerp from first to last. Count Maurice is governed altogether by Villiers, and Villiers was never worse for the English than at this hour. To be short, the people say in general, they will accept a peace, unless her Majesty do sovereign them presently. All the men of war will be at her Highness’ devotion, if they be in credit in time. What you do, it must be done presently, for I do assure your honour there is large offers presented unto them by the enemies. If her Majesty deals not roundly and resolutely with them now, it will be too late two months hence.”

Her Majesty meant to deal roundly and resolutely. Her troops had already gone in considerable numbers. She wrote encouraging letters with her own hand to the States, imploring them not to falter now, even though the great city had fallen. She had long since promised never to desert them, and she was, if possible, more determined than ever to redeem her pledge. She especially recommended to their consideration General Norris, commander of the forces that had been despatched to the relief of Antwerp.

A most accomplished officer, sprung of a house renowned for its romantic valour, Sir John was the second of the six sons of Lord Norris of Rycot, all soldiers of high reputation, “chickens of Mars,” as an old writer expressed himself. “Such a bunch of brethren for eminent achievement,” said he, “was never seen. So great their states and stomachs that they often jostled with others.” Elizabeth called their mother, “her own crow;” and the darkness of her hair and visage was thought not unbecoming to her martial issue, by whom it had been inherited. Daughter of Lord Williams of Tame, who had been keeper of the Tower in the time of Elizabeth’s imprisonment, she had been affectionate and serviceable to the Princess in the hour of her distress, and had been rewarded with her favour in the days of her grandeur. We shall often meet this crow-black Norris, and his younger brother Sir Edward—the most daring soldiers of their time, posters of sea and land—wherever the buffeting was closest, or adventure the wildest on ship-board or shore, for they were men who combined much of the knight-errantry of a vanishing age with the more practical and expansive spirit of adventure that characterized the new epoch.

Nor was he a stranger in the Netherlands. “The gentleman to whom we have committed the government of the forces going to the relief of Antwerp,” said Elizabeth, “has already given you such proofs of his affection by the good services he has rendered you, that without recommendation on our part, he should stand already recommended. Nevertheless, in respect for his quality, the house from which he is

descended, and the valour which he has manifested in your own country, we desire to tell you that we hold him dear, and that he deserves also to be dear to you.”

Page 1354

When the fall of Antwerp was certain, the Queen sent Davison, who had been for a brief period in England, back again to his post. “We have learned,” she said in the letter which she sent by that envoy; “with very great regret of the surrender of Antwerp. Fearing lest some apprehension should take possession of the people’s mind in consequence, and that some dangerous change might ensue, we send you our faithful and well-beloved Davison to represent to you how much we have your affairs at heart, and to say that we are determined to forget nothing that may be necessary to your preservation. Assure yourselves that we shall never fail to accomplish all that he may promise you in our behalf.”

Yet, notwithstanding the gravity of the situation, the thorough discussion that had taken place of the whole matter, and the enormous loss which had resulted from the money-saving insanity upon both sides, even then the busy devil of petty economy was not quite exorcised. Several precious weeks were wasted in renewed chafferings. The Queen was willing that the permanent force should now be raised to five thousand foot and one thousand horse—the additional sixteen, hundred men being taken from the Antwerp relieving-force—but she insisted that the garrisons for the cautionary towns should be squeezed out of this general contingent. The States, on the contrary, were determined to screw these garrisons out of her grip, as an additional subsidy. Each party complained with reason of the other’s closeness. No doubt the states were shrewd bargainers, but it would have been difficult for the sharpest Hollander that ever sent a cargo of herrings to Cadiz, to force open Elizabeth’s beautiful hand when she chose to shut it close. Walsingham and Leicester were alternately driven to despair by the covetousness of the one party or the other.

It was still uncertain what “personage of quality” was to go to the Netherlands in the Queen’s name, to help govern the country. Leicester had professed his readiness to risk his life, estates, and reputation, in the cause, and the States particularly desired his appointment. “The name of your Excellency is so very agreeable to this people,” said they in a letter to the Earl, “as to give promise of a brief and happy end to this grievous and almost immortal war.” The Queen was, or affected to be, still undecided as to the appointment. While waiting week after week for the ratifications of the treaty from Holland, affairs were looking gloomy at home, and her Majesty was growing very uncertain in her temper.

“I see not her Majesty disposed to use the service of the Earl of Leicester,” wrote Walsingham. “I suppose the lot of government will light on Lord Gray. I would to God the ability of his purse were answerable to his sufficiency otherwise.” This was certainly a most essential deficiency on the part of Lord Gray, and it will soon be seen that the personage of quality to be selected as chief in

Page 1355

the arduous and honourable enterprise now on foot, would be obliged to rely quite as much on that same ability of purse as upon the sufficiency of his brain or arm. The Queen did not mean to send her favourite forth to purchase anything but honour in the Netherlands; and it was not the Provinces only that were likely to struggle against her parsimony. Yet that parsimony sprang from a nobler motive than the mere love of pelf. Dangers encompassed her on every side, and while husbanding her own exchequer, she was saving her subjects' resources. "Here we are but book-worms," said Walsingham, "yet from sundry quarters we hear of great practices against this poor crown. The revolt in Scotland is greatly feared, and that out of hand."

Scotland, France, Spain, these were dangerous enemies and neighbours to a maiden Queen, who had a rebellious Ireland to deal with on one side the channel, and Alexander of Parma on the other.

Davison experienced great inconvenience and annoyance before the definite arrangements could be made. There is no doubt that the Spanish party had made great progress since the fall of Antwerp. Roger Williams was right in advising the Queen to deal "roundly and resolutely" with the States, and to "sovereign them presently."

They had need of being sovereigned, for it must be confessed that the self-government which prevailed at that moment was very like no government. The death of Orange, the treachery of Henry *iii*., the triumphs of Parma, disastrous facts, treading rapidly upon each other, had produced a not very unnatural effect. The peace-at-any-price party was struggling hard for the ascendancy, and the Spanish partizans were doing their best to hold up to suspicion the sharp practice of the English Queen. She was even accused of underhand dealing with Spain, to the disadvantage of the Provinces; so much had slander, anarchy, and despair, been able to effect. The States were reluctant to sign those articles with Elizabeth which were absolutely necessary to their salvation.

"In how doubtful and uncertain terms I found things at my coming hither," wrote Davison to Burghley, "how thwarted and delayed since for a resolution, and with what conditions, and for what reasons I have been finally drawn to conclude with them as I have done, your Lordship may perceive by that I have written to Mr. Secretary. The chief difficulty has rested upon the point of entertaining the garrisons within the towns of assurance, over and besides the five thousand footmen and one thousand horse."

This, as Davison proceeded to observe, was considered a 'sine qua non' by the States, so that, under the perilous circumstances in which both countries were placed, he had felt it his duty to go forward as far as possible to meet their demands. Davison always did his work veraciously, thoroughly, and resolutely; and it was seldom that his advice, in all matters pertaining to Netherland matters, did not prove the very best that could be offered. No man knew better than he the interests and the temper of both countries.

Page 1356

The imperious Elizabeth was not fond of being thwarted, least of all by any thing savouring of the democratic principle, and already there was much friction between the Tudor spirit of absolutism and the rough “mechanical” nature with which it was to ally itself in the Netherlands. The economical Elizabeth was not pleased at being overreached in a bargain; and, at a moment when she thought herself doing a magnanimous act, she was vexed at the cavilling with which her generosity was received. “’Tis a manner of proceeding,” said Walsingham, “not to be allowed of, and may very well be termed mechanical, considering that her Majesty seeketh no interest in that country—as Monsieur and the French King did—but only their good and benefit, without regard had of the expenses of her treasure and the hazard of her subjects’ lives; besides throwing herself into a present war for their sakes with the greatest prince and potentate in Europe. But seeing the government of those countries resteth in the hands of merchants and advocates—the one regarding profit, the other standing upon vantage of quirks—there is no better fruit to be looked to from them.”

Yet it was, after all, no quirk in those merchants and advocates to urge that the Queen was not going to war with the great potentate for their sakes alone. To Elizabeth’s honour, she did thoroughly comprehend that the war of the Netherlands was the war of England, of Protestantism, and of European liberty, and that she could no longer, without courting her own destruction, defer taking a part in active military operations. It was no quirk, then, but solid reasoning, for the States to regard the subject in the same light. Holland and England were embarked in one boat, and were to sink or swim together. It was waste of time to wrangle so fiercely over pounds and shillings, but the fault was not to be exclusively imputed to the one side or the other. There were bitter recriminations, particularly on the part of Elizabeth, for it was not safe to touch too closely either the pride or the pocket of that frugal and despotic heroine. “The two thousand pounds promised by the States to Norris upon the muster of the two thousand volunteers,” said Walsingham, “were not paid. Her Majesty is not a little offended therewith, seeing how little care they have to yield her satisfaction, which she imputeth to proceed rather from contempt, than from necessity. If it should fall out, however, to be such as by them is pretended, then doth she conceive her bargain to be very ill made, to join her fortune with so weak and broken an estate.” Already there were indications that the innocent might be made to suffer for the short-comings of the real culprits; nor would it be, the first time, or by any means the last, for Davison to appear in the character of a scape-goat.

“Surely, sir,” continued Mr. Secretary, “it is a thing greatly to be feared that the contributions they will yield will fall not more true in paper than in payment; which if it should so happen, it would turn some to blame, whereof you among others are to bear your part.”

Page 1357

And thus the months of September and of October wore away, and the ratifications of the treaty had not arrived from the Netherlands. Elizabeth became furious, and those of the Netherland deputation who had remained in England were at their wits' end to appease her choler. No news arrived for many weeks. Those were not the days of steam and magnetic telegraphs—inventions by which the nature of man and the aspect of history seem altered—and the Queen had nothing for it but to fret, and the envoys to concert with her ministers expedients to mitigate her spleen. Towards the end of the month, the commissioners chartered a vessel which they despatched for news to Holland. On his way across the sea the captain was hailed on the 28th October by a boat, in which one Hans Wyghans was leisurely proceeding to England with Netherland despatches dated on the 5th of the same month. This was the freshest intelligence that had yet been received.

So soon as the envoys were put in possession of the documents, they obtained an audience of the Queen. This was the last day of October. Elizabeth read her letters, and listened to the apologies made by the deputies for the delay with anything but a benignant countenance. Then, with much vehemence of language, and manifestations of ill-temper, she expressed her displeasure at the dilatoriness of the States. Having sent so many troops, and so many gentlemen of quality, she had considered the whole affair concluded.

"I have been unhandsomely treated," she said, "and not as comports with a prince of my quality. My inclination for your support—because you show yourselves unworthy of so great benefits—will be entirely destroyed, unless you deal with me and mine more worthily for the future than you have done in the past. Through my great and especial affection for your welfare, I had ordered the Earl of Leicester to proceed to the Netherlands, and conduct your affairs; a man of such quality as all the world knows, and one whom I love, as if he were my own brother. He was getting himself ready in all diligence, putting himself in many perils through the practices of the enemy, and if I should have reason to believe that he would not be respected there according to his due, I should be indeed offended. He and many others are not going thither to advance their own affairs, to make themselves rich, or because they have not means enough to live magnificently at home. They proceed to the Netherlands from pure affection for your cause. This is the case, too, with many other of my subjects, all dear to me, and of much worth. For I have sent a fine heap of folk thither—in all, with those his Excellency is taking with him, not under ten thousand soldiers of the English nation. This is no small succour, and no little unbaring of this realm of mine, threatened as it is with war from many quarters. Yet I am seeking no sovereignty, nor anything else prejudicial to the freedom of your country. I wish only, in your utmost need, to help you out of this lamentable war, to maintain for you liberty of conscience, and to see that law and justice are preserved."

Page 1358

All this, and more, with great eagerness of expression and gesture, was urged by the Queen, much to the discomfiture of the envoys. In vain they attempted to modify and to explain. Their faltering excuses were swept rapidly away upon the current of royal wrath; until at last Elizabeth stormed herself into exhaustion and comparative tranquillity. She then dismissed them with an assurance that her goodwill towards the States was not diminished, as would be found to be the case, did they not continue to prove themselves unworthy of her favour that a permanent force of five thousand foot and one thousand horse should serve in the Provinces at the Queen's expense; and that the cities of Flushing and Brill should be placed in her Majesty's hands until the entire reimbursement of the debt thus incurred by the States. Elizabeth also—at last overcoming her reluctance—agreed that the force necessary to garrison these towns should form an additional contingent, instead of being deducted from the general auxiliary force.

Count Maurice of Nassau had been confirmed by the States of Holland and Zeeland as permanent stadholder of those provinces. This measure excited some suspicion on the part of Leicester, who, as it was now understood, was the "personage of quality" to be sent to the Netherlands as representative of the Queen's authority. "Touching the election of Count Maurice," said the Earl, "I hope it will be no impairing of the authority heretofore allotted to me, for if it will be, I shall tarry but awhile."

Nothing, however, could be more frank or chivalrously devoted than the language of Maurice to the Queen. "Madam, if I have ever had occasion," he wrote, "to thank God for his benefits, I confess that it was when, receiving in all humility the letters with which it pleased your Majesty to honour me, I learned that the great disaster of my lord and father's death had not diminished the debonaire affection and favour which it has always pleased your Majesty to manifest to my father's house. It has been likewise grateful to me to learn that your Majesty, surrounded by so many great and important affairs, had been pleased to approve the command which the States-General have conferred upon me. I am indeed grieved that my actions cannot correspond with the ardent desire which I feel to serve your Majesty and these Provinces, for which I hope that my extreme youth will be accepted as an excuse. And although I find myself feeble enough for the charge thus imposed upon me, yet God will assist my efforts to supply by diligence and sincere intention the defect of the other qualities requisite for my thorough discharge of my duty to the contentment of your Majesty. To fulfil these obligations, which are growing greater day by day, I trust to prove by my actions that I will never spare either my labour or life."

Page 1359

When it was found that the important town of Flushing was required as part of the guaranty to the Queen, Maurice, as hereditary seignor and proprietor of the place—-during the captivity of his elder brother in Spain—signified his concurrence in the transfer, together with the most friendly feelings towards the Earl of Leicester, and to Sir Philip Sidney, appointed English governor of the town. He wrote to Davison, whom he called “one of the best and most certain friends that the house of Nassau possessed in England,” begging that he would recommend the interests of the family to the Queen, “whose favour could do more than anything else in the world towards maintaining what remained of the dignity of their house.” After solemn deliberation with his step-mother, Louisa de Coligny, and the other members of his family, he made a formal announcement of adhesion on the part of the House of Nassau to the arrangements concluded with the English government, and asked the benediction of God upon the treaty. While renouncing, for the moment, any compensation for his consent to the pledging of Flushing his “patrimonial property, and a place of such great importance”—-he expressed a confidence that the long services of his father, as well as those which he himself hoped to render, would meet in time with “condign recognition.” He requested the Earl of Leicester to consider the friendship which had existed between himself and the late Prince of Orange, as an hereditary affection to be continued to the children, and he entreated the Earl to do him the honour in future to hold him as a son, and to extend to him counsel and authority; declaring, on his part, that he should ever deem it an honour to be allowed to call him father. And in order still more strongly to confirm his friendship, he begged Sir Philip Sidney to consider him as his brother, and as his companion in arms, promising upon his own part the most faithful friendship. In the name of Louisa de Coligny, and of his whole family, he also particularly recommended to the Queen the interests of the eldest brother of the house, Philip William, “who had been so long and so iniquitously detained captive in Spain,” and begged that, in case prisoners of war of high rank should fall into the hands of the English commanders, they might be employed as a means of effecting the liberation of that much-injured Prince. He likewise desired the friendly offices of the Queen to protect the principality of Orange against the possible designs of the French monarch, and intimated that occasions might arise in which the confiscated estates of the family in Burgundy might be recovered through the influence of the Swiss cantons, particularly those of the Grisons and of Berne.

And, in conclusion, in case the Queen should please—as both Count Maurice and the Princess of Orange desired with all their hearts—to assume the sovereignty of these Provinces, she was especially entreated graciously to observe those suggestions regarding the interests of the House of Nassau, which had been made in the articles of the treaty.

Page 1360

Thus the path had been smoothed, mainly through the indefatigable energy of Davison. Yet that envoy was not able to give satisfaction to his imperious and somewhat whimsical mistress, whose zeal seemed to cool in proportion to the readiness with which the obstacles to her wishes were removed. Davison was, with reason, discontented. He had done more than any other man either in England or the Provinces, to bring about a hearty cooperation in the common cause, and to allay mutual heart-burnings and suspicions. He had also, owing to the negligence of the English treasurer for the Netherlands, and the niggardliness of Elizabeth, been placed in a position, of great financial embarrassment. His situation was very irksome.

“I mused at the sentence you sent me,” he wrote, “for I know no cause her Majesty hath to shrink at her charges hitherto. The treasure she hath yet disbursed here is not above five or six thousand pounds, besides that which I have been obliged to take up for the saving of her honour, and necessity of her service, in danger otherwise of some notable disgrace. I will not, for shame, say how I have been left here to myself.”

The delay in the formal appointment of Leicester, and, more particularly, of the governors for the cautionary towns, was the cause of great confusion and anarchy in the transitional condition of the country. “The burden I am driven to sustain,” said Davison, “doth utterly weary me. If Sir Philip Sidney were here, and if my Lord of Leicester follow not all the sooner, I would use her Majesty’s liberty to return home. If her Majesty think me worthy the reputation of a poor, honest, and loyal servant, I have that contents me. For the rest, I wish

> ’Vivere sine invidia, mollesque inglorius annos
> Egigere, amicitias et mihi jungere pares.’”

There was something almost prophetic in the tone which this faithful public servant—to whom, on more than one occasion, such hard measure was to be dealt—habitually adopted in his private letters and conversation. He did his work, but he had not his reward; and he was already weary of place without power, and industry without recognition.

“For mine own particular,” he said, “I will say with the poet,

> ’Crede mihi, bene qui latuit bene vixit,
> Et intra fortunam debet quisque manere suam.’”

For, notwithstanding the avidity with which Elizabeth had sought the cautionary towns, and the fierceness with which she had censured the tardiness of the States, she seemed now half inclined to drop the prize which she had so much coveted, and to imitate the very languor which she had so lately rebuked. “She hath what she desired,” said Davison, “and might yet have more, if this content her not. Howsoever you value the places at home, they are esteemed here, by such as know them best, no little

increase to her Majesty's honour, surety, and greatness, if she be as careful to keep them as happy in getting them. Of this, our cold beginning doth already make me jealous."

Page 1361

Sagacious and resolute Princess as she was, she showed something of feminine caprice upon this grave occasion. Not Davison alone, but her most confidential ministers and favourites at home, were perplexed and provoked by her misplaced political coquetries. But while the alternation of her hot and cold fits drove her most devoted courtiers out of patience, there was one symptom that remained invariable throughout all her paroxysms, the rigidity with which her hand was locked. Walsingham, stealthy enough when an advantage was to be gained by subtlety, was manful and determined in his dealings with his friends; and he had more than once been offended with Elizabeth's want of frankness in these transactions.

"I find you grieved, and not without cause," he wrote to Davison, "in respect to the over thwart proceedings as well there as here. The disorders in those countries would be easily redressed if we could take a thoroughly resolute course here—a matter that men may rather pray for than hope for. It is very doubtful whether the action now in hand will be accompanied by very hard success, unless they of the country there may be drawn to bear the greatest part of the burden of the wars."

And now the great favourite of all had received the appointment which he coveted. The Earl of Leicester was to be Commander-in-Chief of her Majesty's forces in the Netherlands, and representative of her authority in those countries, whatever that office might prove to be. The nature of his post was anomalous from the beginning. It was environed with difficulties, not the least irritating of which proceeded from the captious spirit of the Queen. The Earl was to proceed in great pomp to Holland, but the pomp was to be prepared mainly at his own expense. Besides the auxiliary forces that had been shipped during the latter period of the year, Leicester was raising a force of lancers, from four to eight hundred in number; but to pay for that levy he was forced to mortgage his own property, while the Queen not only refused to advance ready money, but declined endorsing his bills.

It must be confessed that the Earl's courtship of Elizabeth was anything at that moment but a gentle dalliance. In those thorny regions of finance were no beds of asphodel or amaranthine bowers. There was no talk but of troopers, saltpetre, and sulphur, of books of assurance, and bills of exchange; and the aspect of Elizabeth, when the budget was under discussion, must effectually have neutralized for the time any very tender sentiment. The sharpness with which she clipped Leicester's authority, when authority was indispensable to his dignity, and the heavy demands upon his resources that were the result of her avarice, were obstacles more than enough to the calm fruition of his triumphs. He had succeeded, in appearance at least, in the great object of his ambition, this appointment to the Netherlands; but the appointment was no sinecure, and least of all a promising pecuniary speculation. Elizabeth had told the envoys, with reason, that she was not sending forth that man—whom she loved as a brother—in order that he might make himself rich. On the contrary, the Earl seemed likely to make himself comparatively poor before he got to the Provinces, while his political power, at the moment, did not seem of more hopeful growth.

Page 1362

Leicester had been determined and consistent in this great enterprize from the beginning. He felt intensely the importance of the crisis. He saw that the time had come for swift and uncompromising action, and the impatience with which he bore the fetters imposed upon him may be easily conceived.

“The cause is such,” he wrote to Walsingham, “that I had as lief be dead as be in the case I shall be in if this restraint hold for taking the oath there, or if some more authority be not granted than I see her Majesty would I should have. I trust you all will hold hard for this, or else banish me England withal. I have sent you the books to be signed by her Majesty. I beseech you return them with all haste, for I get no money till they be under seal.”

But her Majesty would not put them under her seal, much to the favourite’s discomfiture.

“Your letter yieldeth but cold answer,” he wrote, two days afterwards. “Above all things yet that her Majesty doth stick at, I marvel most at her refusal to sign my book of assurance; for there passeth nothing in the earth against her profit by that act, nor any good to me but to satisfy the creditors, who were more scrupulous than needs. I did complain to her of those who did refuse to lend me money, and she was greatly offended with them. But if her Majesty were to stay this, if I were half seas over, I must of necessity come back again, for I may not go without money. I beseech, if the matter be refused by her, bestow a post on me to Harwich. I lie this night at Sir John Peters’, and but for this doubt I had been to-morrow at Harwich. I pray God make you all that be counsellors plain and direct to the furtherance of all good service for her Majesty and the realm; and if it be the will of God to plague us that go, and you that tarry, for our sins, yet let us not be negligent to seek to please the Lord.”

The Earl was not negligent at any rate in seeking to please the Queen, but she was singularly hard to please. She had never been so uncertain in her humours as at this important crisis. She knew, and had publicly stated as much, that she was “embarking in a war with the greatest potentate in Europe;” yet now that the voyage had fairly commenced, and the waves were rolling around her, she seemed anxious to put back to the shore. For there was even a whisper of peace-negotiations, than which nothing could have been more ill-timed. “I perceive by your message,” said Leicester to Walsingham, “that your peace with Spain will go fast on, but this is not the way.” Unquestionably it was not the way, and the whisper was, for the moment at least, suppressed. Meanwhile Leicester had reached Harwich, but the post “bestowed on him,” contained, as usual, but cold comfort. He was resolved, however, to go manfully forward, and do the work before him, until the enterprise should prove wholly impracticable. It is by the light afforded by the secret never-published correspondence of the

Page 1363

period with which we are now occupied, that the true characteristics of Elizabeth, the Earl of Leicester, and other prominent personages, must be scanned, and the study is most important, for it was by those characteristics, in combination with other human elements embodied in distant parts of Christendom, that the destiny of the world was determined. In that age, more than in our own perhaps, the influence of the individual was widely and intensely felt. Historical chymistry is only rendered possible by a detection of the subtle emanations, which it was supposed would for ever elude analysis, but which survive in those secret, frequently ciphered intercommunications. Philip *ii*., William of Orange, Queen Elizabeth, Alexander Farnese, Robert Dudley, never dreamed—when disclosing their inmost thoughts to their trusted friends at momentous epochs—that the day would come on earth when those secrets would be no longer hid from the patient enquirer after truth. Well for those whose reputations before the judgment-seat of history appear even comparatively pure, after impartial comparison of their motives with their deeds.

"For mine own part, Mr. Secretary," wrote Leicester, "I am resolved to do that which shall be fit for a poor man's honour, and honestly to obey her Majesty's commandment. Let the rest fall out to others, it shall not concern me. I mean to assemble myself to the camp, where my authority must wholly lie, and will there do that which in good reason and duty I shall be bound to do. I am sorry that her Majesty doth deal in this sort, and if content to overthrow so willingly her own cause. If there can be means to salve this sore, I will. If not,—I tell you what shall become of me, as truly as God lives."

Yet it is remarkable, that, in spite of this dark intimation, the Earl, after all, did not state what was to become of him if the sore was not salved. He was, however, explicit enough as to the causes of his grief, and very vehement in its manifestations. "Another matter which shall concern me deeply," he said, "and all the subjects there, is now by you to be carefully considered, which is—money. I find that the money is already gone, and this now given to the treasurer will do no more than pay to the end of the month. I beseech you look to it, for by the Lord! I will bear no more so miserable burdens; for if I have no money to pay them, let them come home, or what else. I will not starve them, nor stay them. There was never gentleman nor general so sent out as I am; and if neither Queen nor council care to help it, but leave men desperate, as I see men shall be, that inconvenience will follow which I trust in the Lord I shall be free of."

He then used language about himself, singularly resembling the phraseology employed by Elizabeth concerning him, when she was scolding the Netherland commissioners for the dilatoriness and parsimony of the States.

Page 1364

“For mine own part,” he said, “I have taken upon me this voyage, not as a desperate nor forlorn man, but as one as well contented with his place and calling at home as any subject was ever. My cause was not, nor is, any other than the Lord’s and the Queen’s. If the Queen fail, yet must I trust in the Lord, and on Him, I see, I am wholly to depend. I can say no more, but pray to God that her Majesty never send General again as I am sent. And yet I will do what I can for her and my country.”

The Earl had raised a choice body of lancers to accompany him to the Netherlands, but the expense of the levy had come mainly upon his own purse. The Queen had advanced five thousand pounds, which was much less than the requisite amount, while for the balance required, as well as for other necessary expenses, she obstinately declined to furnish Leicester with funds, even refusing him, at last, a temporary loan. She violently accused him of cheating her, reclaimed money which he had wrung from her on good security, and when he had repaid the sum, objected to give him a discharge. As for receiving anything by way of salary, that was quite out of the question. At that moment he would have been only too happy to be reimbursed for what he was already out of pocket. Whether Elizabeth loved Leicester as a brother, or better than a brother, may be a historical question, but it is no question at all that she loved money better than she did Leicester. Unhappy the man, whether foe or favourite, who had pecuniary transactions with her Highness.

“I am sorry,” said the Earl, “that her Majesty hath so hard a conceit of me, that I should go about to cozen her, as though I had got a fee simple from her, and had it not before, or that I had not had her full release for payment of the money I borrowed. I pray God, any that did put such scruple in her, have not deceived her more than I have done. I thank God I have a clear conscience for deceiving her, and for money matters. I think I may justly say I have been the only cause of more gain to her coffers than all her chequer-men have been. But so is the hap of some, that all they do is nothing, and others that do nothing, do all, and have all the thanks. But I would this were all the grief I carry with me; but God is my comfort, and on Him I cast all, for there is no surety in this world beside. What hope of help can I have, finding her Majesty so strait with myself as she is? I did trust that—the cause being hers and this realm’s—if I could have gotten no money of her merchants, she would not have refused to have lent money on so easy prized land as mine, to have been gainer and no loser by it. Her Majesty, I see, will make trial of me how I love her, and what will discourage me from her service. But resolved am I that no worldly respect shall draw me back from my faithful discharge of my duty towards her, though she shall show to hate me, as it goeth very near; for I find no love or favour

Page 1365

at all. And I pray you to remember that I have not had one penny of her Majesty towards all these charges of mine—not one penny-and, by all truth, I have already laid out above five thousand pounds. Her Majesty appointed eight thousand pounds for the levy, which was after the rate of four hundred horse, and, upon my fidelity, there is shipped, of horse of service, eight hundred, so that there ought eight thousand more to have been paid me. No general that ever went that was not paid to the uttermost of these things before he went, but had cash for his provision, which her Majesty would not allow me—not one groat. Well, let all this go, it is like I shall be the last shall bear this, and some must suffer for the people. Good Mr. Secretary, let her Majesty know this, for I deserve God-a-mercy, at the least."

Leicester, to do him justice, was thoroughly alive to the importance of the Crisis. On political principle, at any rate, he was a firm supporter of Protestantism, and even of Puritanism; a form of religion which Elizabeth detested, and in which, with keen instinct, she detected a mutinous element against the divine right of kings. The Earl was quite convinced of the absolute necessity that England should take up the Netherland matter most vigorously, on pain of being herself destroyed. All the most sagacious counsellors of Elizabeth were day by day more and more confirmed in this opinion, and were inclined heartily to support the new Lieutenant-General. As for Leicester himself, while fully conscious of his own merits, and of his firm intent to do his duty, he was also grateful to those who were willing to befriend him in his arduous enterprise.

"I have received a letter from my Lord Willoughby," he said, "to my seeming, as wise a letter as I have read a great while, and not unfit for her Majesty's sight. I pray God open her eyes, that they may behold her present estate indeed, and the wonderful means that God doth offer unto her. If she lose these opportunities, who can look for other but dishonour and destruction? My Lord Treasurer hath also written me a most hearty and comfortable letter touching this voyage, not only in showing the importance of it, both for her Majesty's own safety and the realm's, but that the whole state of religion doth depend thereon, and therefore doth faithfully promise his whole and best assistance for the supply of all wants. I was not a little glad to receive such a letter from him at this time."

And from on board the 'Amity,' ready to set sail, he expressed his thanks to Burghley, at finding him so "earnestly bent for the good supply and maintenance of us poor men sent in her Majesty's service and our country's."

As for Walsingham, earnestly a defender of the Netherland cause from the beginning, he was wearied and disgusted with fighting against the Queen's parsimony and caprice. "He is utterly discouraged," said Leicester to Burghley, "to deal any more in these causes. I pray God your Lordship grow not so too; for then all will to the ground; on my poor side especially."

Page 1366

And to Sir Francis himself, he wrote, even as his vessel was casting off her moorings:—"I am sorry, Mr. Secretary," he said, "to find you so discouraged, and that her Majesty doth deem you so partial. And yet my suits to her Majesty have not of late been so many nor great, while the greatest, I am sure, are for her Majesty's own service. For my part, I will discharge my duty as far as my poor ability and capacity shall serve, and if I shall not have her gracious and princely support and supply, the lack will be to us, for the present, but the shame and dishonour will be hers."

And with these parting words the Earl committed himself to the December seas.

Davison had been meantime doing his best to prepare the way in the Netherlands for the reception of the English administration. What man could do, without money and without authority, he had done. The governors for Flushing and the Brill, Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Thomas Cecil, eldest son of Lord Burghley, had been appointed, but had not arrived. Their coming was anxiously looked for, as during the interval the condition of the garrisons was deplorable. The English treasurer—by some unaccountable and unpardonable negligence, for which it is to be feared the Queen was herself to blame—-was not upon the spot, and Davison was driven out of his wits to devise expedients to save the soldiers from starving.

"Your Lordship has seen by my former letters," wrote the Ambassador to Burghley from Flushing, "what shift I have been driven to for the relief of this garrison here, left 'a l'abandon;' without which means they had all fallen into wild and shameful disorder, to her Majesty's great disgrace and overthrow of her service. I am compelled, unless I would see the poor men famish, and her Majesty dishonoured, to try my poor credit for them."

General Sir John Norris was in the Betuwe, threatening Nvymegen, a town which he found "not so flexible as he had hoped;" and, as he had but two thousand men, while Alexander Farnese was thought to be marching upon him with ten thousand, his position caused great anxiety. Meantime, his brother, Sir Edward, a hot-headed and somewhat wilful young man, who "thought that all was too little for him," was giving the sober Davison a good deal of trouble. He had got himself into a quarrel, both with that envoy and with Roger Williams, by claiming the right to control military matters in Flushing until the arrival of Sidney. "If Sir Thomas and Sir Philip," said Davison, "do not make choice of more discreet, staid, and expert commanders than those thrust into these places by Mr. Norris, they will do themselves a great deal of worry, and her Majesty a great deal of hurt."

Page 1367

As might naturally be expected, the lamentable condition of the English soldiers, unpaid and starving—according to the report of the Queen's envoy himself—exercised anything but a salutary influence upon the minds of the Netherlanders and perpetually fed the hopes of the Spanish partizans that a composition with Philip and Parma would yet take place. On the other hand, the States had been far more liberal in raising funds than the Queen had shown herself to be, and were somewhat indignant at being perpetually taunted with parsimony by her agents. Davison was offended by the injustice of Norris in this regard. "The complaints which the General hath made of the States to her Majesty," said he, "are without cause, and I think, when your Lordship shall examine it well, you will find it no little sum they have already disbursed unto him for their part. Wherein, nevertheless, if they had been looked into, they were somewhat the more excusable, considering how ill our people at her Majesty's entertainment were satisfied hitherto—a thing that doth much prejudice her reputation, and hurt her service."

At last, however, the die had been cast. The Queen, although rejecting the proposed sovereignty of the Netherlands, had espoused their cause, by solemn treaty of alliance, and thereby had thrown down the gauntlet to Spain. She deemed it necessary, therefore, out of respect for the opinions of mankind, to issue a manifesto of her motives to the world. The document was published, simultaneously in Dutch, French, English, and Italian.

In this solemn state-paper she spoke of the responsibility of princes to the Almighty, of the ancient friendship between England and the Netherlands, of the cruelty and tyranny of the Spaniards, of their violation of the liberties of the Provinces, of their hanging, beheading, banishing without law and against justice, in the space of a few months, so many of the highest nobles in the land. Although in the beginning of the cruel persecution, the pretext had been the maintenance of the Catholic religion, yet it was affirmed they had not failed to exercise their barbarity upon Catholics also, and even upon ecclesiastics. Of the principal persons put to death, no one, it was asserted, had been more devoted to the ancient church than was the brave Count Egmont, who, for his famous victories in the service of Spain, could never be forgotten in veracious history any more than could be the cruelty of his execution.

The land had been made desolate, continued the Queen, with fire, sword, famine, and murder. These misfortunes had ever been bitterly deplored by friendly nations, and none could more truly regret such sufferings than did the English, the oldest allies, and familiar neighbours of the Provinces, who had been as close to them in the olden time by community of connexion and language, as man and wife. She declared that she had frequently, by amicable embassies, warned her brother of Spain—speaking

Page 1368

to him like a good, dear sister and neighbour—that unless he restrained the cruelty of his governors and their soldiers, he was sure to force his Provinces into allegiance to some other power. She expressed the danger in which she should be placed if the Spaniards succeeded in establishing their absolute government in the Netherlands, from which position their attacks upon England would be incessant. She spoke of the enterprise favoured and set on foot by the Pope and by Spain, against the kingdom of Ireland. She alluded to the dismissal of the Spanish envoy, Don Bernardino de Mendoza, who had been treated by her with great regard for a long time, but who had been afterwards discovered in league with certain ill-disposed and seditious subjects of hers, and with publicly condemned traitors. That envoy had arranged a plot according to which, as appeared by his secret despatches, an invasion of England by a force of men, coming partly from Spain, and partly from the Netherlands, might be successfully managed, and he had even noted down the necessary number of ships and men, with various other details. Some of the conspirators had fled, she observed, and were now consorting with Mendoza, who, after his expulsion from England, had been appointed ambassador in Paris; while some had been arrested, and had confessed the plot. So soon as this envoy had been discovered to be the chief of a rebellion and projected invasion, the Queen had requested him, she said, to leave the kingdom within a reasonable time, as one who was the object of deadly hatred to the English people. She had then sent an agent to Spain, in order to explain the whole transaction. That agent had not been allowed even to deliver despatches to the King.

When the French had sought, at a previous period, to establish their authority in Scotland, even as the Spaniards had attempted to do in the Netherlands, and through the enormous ambition of the House of Guise, to undertake the invasion of her kingdom, she had frustrated their plots, even as she meant to suppress these Spanish conspiracies. She spoke of the Prince of Parma as more disposed by nature to mercy and humanity, than preceding governors had been, but as unable to restrain the blood-thirstiness of Spaniards, increased by long indulgence. She avowed, in assuming the protection of the Netherlands, and in sending her troops to those countries, but three objects: peace, founded upon the recognition of religious freedom in the Provinces, restoration of their ancient political liberties, and security for England. Never could there be tranquillity, for her own realm until these neighbouring countries were tranquil. These were her ends and aims, despite all that slanderous tongues might invent. The world, she observed, was overflowing with blasphemous libels, calumnies, scandalous pamphlets; for never had the Devil been so busy in supplying evil tongues with venom against the professors of the Christian religion.

Page 1369

She added that in a pamphlet, ascribed to the Archbishop of Milan, just published, she had been accused of ingratitude to the King of Spain, and of plots to take the life of Alexander Farnese. In answer to the first charge, she willingly acknowledged her obligations to the King of Spain during the reign of her sister. She pronounced it, however, an absolute falsehood that he had ever saved her life, as if she had ever been condemned to death. She likewise denied earnestly the charge regarding the Prince of Parma. She protested herself incapable of such a crime, besides declaring that he had never given her offence. On the contrary, he was a man whom she had ever honoured for the rare qualities that she had noted in him, and for which he had deservedly acquired a high reputation.

Such, in brief analysis, was the memorable Declaration of Elizabeth in favour of the Netherlands—a document which was a hardly disguised proclamation of war against Philip. In no age of the world could an unequivocal agreement to assist rebellious subjects, with men and money, against their sovereign, be considered otherwise than as a hostile demonstration. The King of Spain so regarded the movement, and forthwith issued a decree, ordering the seizure of all English as well as all Netherland vessels within his ports, together with the arrest of persons, and confiscation of property.

Subsequently to the publication of the Queen's memorial, and before the departure of the Earl of Leicester, Sir Philip Sidney, having received his appointment, together with the rank of general of cavalry, arrived in the Isle of Walcheren, as governor of Flushing, at the head of a portion of the English contingent.

It is impossible not to contemplate with affection so radiant a figure, shining through the cold mists of that Zeeland winter, and that distant and disastrous epoch. There is hardly a character in history upon which the imagination can dwell with more unalloyed delight. Not in romantic fiction was there ever created a more attractive incarnation of martial valour, poetic genius, and purity of heart. If the mocking spirit of the soldier of Lepanto could "smile chivalry away," the name alone of his English contemporary is potent enough to conjure it back again, so long as humanity is alive to the nobler impulses.

"I cannot pass him over in silence," says a dusty chronicler, "that glorious star, that lively pattern of virtue, and the lovely joy of all the learned sort. It was God's will that he should be born into the world, even to show unto our age a sample of ancient virtue." The descendant of an ancient Norman race, and allied to many of the proudest nobles in England, Sidney himself was but a commoner, a private individual, a soldier of fortune. He was now in his thirty second year, and should have been foremost among the states men of Elizabeth, had it not been, according to Lord Bacon, a maxim of the Cecils, that "able men should

Page 1370

be by design and of purpose suppressed." Whatever of truth there may have been in the bitter remark, it is certainly strange that a man so gifted as Sidney—of whom his father-in-law Walsingham had declared, that "although he had influence in all countries, and a hand upon all affairs, his Philip did far overshoot him with his own bow"—should have passed so much of his life in retirement, or in comparatively insignificant employments. The Queen, as he himself observed, was most apt to interpret everything to his disadvantage. Among those who knew him well, there seems never to have been a dissenting voice. His father, Sir Henry Sidney, lord-deputy of Ireland, and president of Wales, a states man of accomplishments and experience, called him "lumen familiae suae," and said of him, with pardonable pride, "that he had the most virtues which he had ever found in any man; that he was the very formular that all well-disposed young gentlemen do form their manners and life by."

The learned Hubert Languet, companion of Melancthon, tried friend of William the Silent, was his fervent admirer and correspondent. The great Prince of Orange held him in high esteem, and sent word to Queen Elizabeth, that having himself been an actor in the most important affairs of Europe, and acquainted with her foremost men, he could "pledge his credit that her Majesty had one of the ripest and greatest councillors of state in Sir Philip Sidney that lived in Europe."

The incidents of his brief and brilliant life, up to his arrival upon the fatal soil of the Netherlands, are too well known to need recalling. Adorned with the best culture that, in a learned age, could be obtained in the best seminaries of his native country, where, during childhood and youth, he had been distinguished for a "lovely and familiar gravity beyond his years," he rapidly acquired the admiration of his comrades and the esteem of all his teachers.

Travelling for three years, he made the acquaintance and gained the personal regard of such opposite characters as Charles *ix*. of France, Henry of Navarre, Don John of Austria, and William of Orange, and perfected his accomplishments by residence and study, alternately, in courts, camps, and learned universities. He was in Paris during the memorable days of August, 1572, and narrowly escaped perishing in the St. Bartholomew Massacre. On his return, he was, for a brief period, the idol of the English court, which, it was said, "was maimed without his company." At the age of twenty-one he was appointed special envoy to Vienna, ostensibly for the purpose of congratulating the Emperor Rudolph upon his accession, but in reality that he might take the opportunity of sounding the secret purposes of the Protestant princes of Germany, in regard to the great contest of the age. In this mission, young as he was, he acquitted himself, not only to the satisfaction, but to the admiration of Walsingham, certainly a master himself in that occult science, the diplomacy of the sixteenth century. "There hath not been," said he, "any gentleman, I am sure, that hath gone through so honourable a charge with as great commendations as he."

Page 1371

When the memorable marriage-project of Queen Elizabeth with Anjou seemed about to take effect, he denounced the scheme in a most spirited and candid letter, addressed to her Majesty; nor is it recorded that the Queen was offended with his frankness. Indeed we are informed that “although he found a sweet stream of sovereign humours in that well-tempered lady to run against him, yet found he safety in herself against that selfness which appeared to threaten him in her.” Whatever this might mean, translated out of euphuism into English, it is certain that his conduct was regarded with small favour by the court-grandees, by whom “worth, duty, and justice, were looked upon with no other eyes than Lamia’s.”

The difficulty of swimming against that sweet stream of sovereign humours in the well-tempered Elizabeth, was aggravated by his quarrel, at this period, with the magnificent Oxford. A dispute at a tennis-court, where many courtiers and foreigners were looking on, proceeded rapidly from one extremity to another. The Earl commanded Sir Philip to leave the place. Sir Philip responded, that if he were of a mind that he should go, he himself was of a mind that he should remain; adding that if he had entreated, where he had no right to command, he might have done more than “with the scourge of fury.”—-“This answer,” says Fulke Greville, in a style worthy of Don Adriano de Armado, “did, like a bellows, blowing up the sparks of excess already kindled, make my lord scornfully call Sir Philip by the name of puppy. In which progress of heat, as the tempest grew more and more vehement within, so did their hearts breathe out their perturbations in a more loud and shrill accent;” and so on; but the impending duel was the next day forbidden by express command of her Majesty. Sidney, not feeling the full force of the royal homily upon the necessity of great deference from gentlemen to their superiors in rank, in order to protect all orders from the insults of plebeians, soon afterwards retired from the court. To his sylvan seclusion the world owes the pastoral and chivalrous romance of the ‘Arcadia’ and to the pompous Earl, in consequence, an emotion of gratitude. Nevertheless, it was in him to do, rather than to write, and humanity seems defrauded, when forced to accept the ‘Arcadia,’ the `Defence of Poesy,’ and the ‘Astrophel and Stella,’ in discharge of its claims upon so great and pure a soul.

Notwithstanding this disagreeable affair, and despite the memorable letter against Anjou, Sir Philip suddenly flashes upon us again, as one of the four challengers in a tournament to honour the Duke’s presence in England. A vision of him in blue gilded armour—with horses caparisoned in cloth of gold, pearl-embroidered, attended by pages in cloth of silver, Venetian hose, laced hats, and by gentlemen, yeomen, and trumpeters, in yellow velvet cassocks, buskins, and feathers—as one of “the four fostered children of virtuous desire” (to wit, Anjou) storming “the castle of perfect Beauty” (to wit, Queen Elizabeth, aetatis 47) rises out of the cloud-dusts of ancient chronicle for a moment, and then vanishes into air again.

Page 1372

"Having that day his hand, his horse, his lance,
Guided so well that they attained the prize
Both in the judgment of our English eyes,
But of some sent by that sweet enemy, France,"

as he chivalrously sings, he soon afterwards felt inclined for wider fields of honourable adventure. It was impossible that knight-errant so true should not feel keenest sympathy with an oppressed people struggling against such odds, as the Netherlanders were doing in their contest with Spain. So soon as the treaty with England was arranged, it was his ambition to take part in the dark and dangerous enterprise, and, being son-in-law to Walsingham and nephew to Leicester, he had a right to believe that his talents and character would, on this occasion, be recognised. But, like his "very friend," Lord Willoughby, he was "not of the genus Reptilia, and could neither creep nor crouch," and he failed, as usual, to win his way to the Queen's favour. The governorship of Flushing was denied him, and, stung to the heart by such neglect, he determined to seek his fortune beyond the seas.

"Sir Philip hath taken a very hard resolution," wrote Walsingham to Davison, "to accompany Sir Francis Drake in this voyage, moved thereto for that he saw her Majesty disposed to commit the charge of Flushing unto some other; which he reputed would fall out greatly to his disgrace, to see another preferred before him, both for birth and judgment inferior unto him. The despair thereof and the disgrace that he doubted he should receive have carried him into a different course."

The Queen, however, relenting at last, interfered to frustrate his design. Having thus balked his ambition in the Indian seas, she felt pledged to offer him the employment which he had originally solicited, and she accordingly conferred upon him the governorship of Flushing, with the rank of general of horse, under the Earl of Leicester. In the latter part of November, he cast anchor, in the midst of a violent storm, at Rammekins, and thence came to the city of his government. Young, and looking even younger than his years—"not only of an excellent wit, but extremely beautiful of face"—-with delicately chiselled Anglo-Norman features, smooth fair cheek, a faint moustache, blue eyes, and a mass of amber-coloured hair; such was the author of 'Arcadia' and the governor of Flushing.

And thus an Anglo-Norman representative of ancient race had come back to the home of his ancestors. Scholar, poet, knight-errant, finished gentleman, he aptly typified the result of seven centuries of civilization upon the wild Danish pirate. For among those very quicksands of storm-beaten Walachria that wondrous Normandy first came into existence whose wings were to sweep over all the high places of Christendom. Out of these creeks, lagunes, and almost inaccessible sandbanks, those bold freebooters sailed forth on their forays against England, France, and other adjacent

Page 1373

countries, and here they brought and buried the booty of many a wild adventure. Here, at a later day, Rollo the Dane had that memorable dream of leprosy, the cure of which was the conversion of North Gaul into Normandy, of Pagans into Christians, and the subsequent conquest of every throne in Christendom from Ultima Thule to Byzantium. And now the descendant of those early freebooters had come back to the spot, at a moment when a wider and even more imperial swoop was to be made by their modern representatives. For the sea-kings of the sixteenth century—the Drakes, Hawkinses, Frobishers, Raleighs, Cavendishes—the De Moors, Heemskerks, Barendts—all sprung of the old pirate-lineage, whether called Englanders or Hollanders, and instinct with the same hereditary love of adventure, were about to wrestle with ancient tyrannies, to explore the most inaccessible regions, and to establish new commonwealths in worlds undreamed of by their ancestors—to accomplish, in short, more wondrous feats than had been attempted by the Knuts, and Rollos, Rurics, Ropers, and Tancreds, of an earlier age.

The place which Sidney was appointed to govern was one of great military and commercial importance. Flushing was the key to the navigation of the North Seas, ever since the disastrous storm of a century before, in which a great trading city on the outermost verge of the island had been swallowed bodily by the ocean. The Emperor had so thoroughly recognized its value, as to make special mention of the necessity for its preservation, in his private instructions to Philip, and now the Queen of England had confided it to one who was competent to appreciate and to defend the prize. “How great a jewel this place (Flushing) is to the crown of England,” wrote Sidney to his Uncle Leicester, “and to the Queen’s safety, I need not now write it to your lordship, who knows it so well. Yet I must needs say, the better I know it, the more I find the preciousness of it.”

He did not enter into his government, however, with much pomp and circumstance, but came afoot into Flushing in the midst of winter and foul weather. “Driven to land at Rammekins,” said he, “because the wind began to rise in such sort as from thence our mariners durst not enter the town, I came with as dirty a walk as ever poor governor entered his charge withal.” But he was cordially welcomed, nor did he arrive by any means too soon.

“I find the people very glad of our coming,” he said, “and promise myself as much surety in keeping this town, as popular good-will, gotten by light hopes, and by as slight conceits, may breed; for indeed the garrison is far too weak to command by authority, which is pity . . . . I think, truly, that if my coming had been longer delayed, some alteration would have followed; for the truth is, this people is weary of war, and if they do not see such a course taken as may be likely to defend them, they will in a sudden give over the cause. . . . All will be lost if government be not presently used.”

Page 1374

He expressed much anxiety for the arrival of his uncle, with which sentiments he assured the Earl that the Netherlanders fully sympathized. “Your Lordship’s coming,” he said, “is as much longed for as Messias is of the Jews. It is indeed most necessary that your Lordship make great speed to reform both the Dutch and English abuses.”

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

Able men should be by design and of purpose suppressed
He did his work, but he had not his reward
Matter that men may rather pray for than hope for
Not of the genus Reptilia, and could neither creep nor crouch
Others that do nothing, do all, and have all the thanks
Peace-at-any-price party
The busy devil of petty economy
Thought that all was too little for him
Weary of place without power

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year’s Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 44, 1585-1586

CHAPTER VII., Part 1.

The Earl of Leicester—His Triumphal Entrance into Holland—English Spies about him —Importance of Holland to England—Spanish Schemes for invading England—Letter of the Grand Commander—Perilous Position of England—True Nature of the Contest—-wealth and Strength of the Provinces—Power of the Dutch and English People—-Affection of the Hollanders for the Queen—Secret Purposes of Leicester— Wretched condition of English Troops—The Nassaus and Hohenlo—The Earl’s Opinion of them —Clerk and Killigrew—Interview with the States Government General offered to the Earl —Discussions on the Subject—The Earl accepts the Office—His Ambition and Mistakes —His Installation at the Hague—Intimations of the Queen’s Displeasure— Deprecatory Letters of Leicester—Davison’s Mission to England— Queen’s Anger and Jealousy—-Her angry Letters to the Earl and the States—Arrival of Davison—Stormy Interview with the Queen—The second one is calmer—Queen’s Wrath somewhat mitigated—Mission of Heneago to the States—Shirley sent to England by the Earl—His Interview with Elizabeth

At last the Earl of Leicester came. Embarking at Harwich, with a fleet of fifty ships, and attended “by the flower and chief gallants of England”—the Lords Sheffield, Willoughby, North, Burroughs, Sir Gervase Clifton, Sir William Russell, Sir Robert Sidney, and others among the number—the new lieutenant-general of the English forces in the Netherlands arrived on the 19th December, 1585, at Flushing.

His nephew, Sir Philip Sidney, and Count Maurice of Nassau, with a body of troops and a great procession of civil functionaries; were in readiness to receive him, and to escort him to the lodgings prepared for him.

Page 1375

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was then fifty-four years of age. There are few personages in English history whose adventures, real or fictitious, have been made more familiar to the world than his have been, or whose individuality has been presented in more picturesque fashion, by chronicle, tragedy, or romance. Born in the same day of the month and hour of the day with the Queen, but two years before her birth, the supposed synastry of their destinies might partly account, in that age of astrological superstition, for the influence which he perpetually exerted. They had, moreover, been fellow-prisoners together, in the commencement of the reign of Mary, and it is possible that he may have been the medium through which the indulgent expressions of Philip *ii*. were conveyed to the Princess Elizabeth.

His grandfather, John Dudley, that "caterpillar of the commonwealth," who lost his head in the first year of Henry *viii*. as a reward for the grist which he brought to the mill of Henry *vii*.; his father, the mighty Duke of Northumberland, who rose out of the wreck of an obscure and ruined family to almost regal power, only to perish, like his predecessor, upon the scaffold, had bequeathed him nothing save rapacity, ambition, and the genius to succeed. But Elizabeth seemed to ascend the throne only to bestow gifts upon her favourite. Baronies and earldoms, stars and garters, manors and monopolies, castles and forests, church livings and college chancellorships, advowsons and sinecures, emoluments and dignities, the most copious and the most exalted, were conferred upon him in breathless succession. Wine, oil, currants, velvets, ecclesiastical benefices, university headships, licences to preach, to teach, to ride, to sail, to pick and to steal, all brought "grist to his mill." His grandfather, "the horse leach and shearer," never filled his coffers more rapidly than did Lord Robert, the fortunate courtier. Of his early wedlock with the ill-starred Amy Robsart, of his nuptial projects with the Queen, of his subsequent marriages and mock-marriages with Douglas Sheffield and Lettice of Essex, of his plottings, poisonings, imaginary or otherwise, of his countless intrigues, amatory and political—of that luxuriant, creeping, flaunting, all-pervading existence which struck its fibres into the mould, and coiled itself through the whole fabric, of Elizabeth's life and reign—of all this the world has long known too much to render a repetition needful here. The inmost nature and the secret deeds of a man placed so high by wealth and station, can be seen but darkly through the glass of contemporary record. There was no tribunal to sit upon his guilt. A grandee could be judged only when no longer a favourite, and the infatuation of Elizabeth for Leicester terminated only with his life. He stood now upon the soil of the Netherlands in the character of a "Messiah," yet he has been charged with crimes sufficient to send twenty humbler malefactors to the gibbet. "I think," said a most malignant arraigner of the man, in a published pamphlet, "that the Earl of Leicester hath more blood lying upon his head at this day, crying for vengeance, than ever had private man before, were he never so wicked."

Page 1376

Certainly the mass of misdemeanours and infamies hurled at the head of the favourite by that “green-coated Jesuit,” father Parsons, under the title of ‘Leycester’s Commonwealth,’ were never accepted as literal verities; yet the value of the precept, to calumniate boldly, with the certainty that much of the calumny would last for ever, was never better illustrated than in the case of Robert Dudley. Besides the lesser delinquencies of filling his purse by the sale of honours and dignities, by violent ejectments from land, fraudulent titles, rapacious enclosures of commons, by taking bribes for matters of justice, grace, and supplication to the royal authority, he was accused of forging various letters to the Queen, often to ruin his political adversaries, and of plottings to entrap them into conspiracies, playing first the comrade and then the informer. The list of his murders and attempts to murder was almost endless. “His lordship hath a special fortune,” saith the Jesuit, “that when he desireth any woman’s favour, whatsoever person standeth in his way hath the luck to die quickly.” He was said to have poisoned Alice Drayton, Lady Lennox, Lord Sussex, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, Lord Sheffield, whose widow he married and then poisoned, Lord Essex, whose widow he also married, and intended to poison, but who was said to have subsequently poisoned him—besides murders or schemes for murder of various other individuals, both French and English. “He was a rare artist in poison,” said Sir Robert Naunton, and certainly not Caesar Borgia, nor his father or sister, was more accomplished in that difficult profession than was Dudley, if half the charges against him could be believed. Fortunately for his fame, many of them were proved to be false. Sir Henry Sidney, lord deputy of Ireland, at the time of the death of Lord Essex, having caused a diligent inquiry to be made into that dark affair, wrote to the council that it was usual for the Earl to fall into a bloody flux when disturbed in his mind, and that his body when opened showed no signs of poison. It is true that Sir Henry, although an honourable man, was Leicester’s brother-in-law, and that perhaps an autopsy was not conducted at that day in Ireland on very scientific principles.

His participation in the strange death of his first wife was a matter of current belief among his contemporaries. “He is infamed by the death of his wife,” said Burghley, and the tale has since become so interwoven with classic and legendary fiction, as well as with more authentic history, that the phantom of the murdered Amy Robsart is sure to arise at every mention of the Earl’s name. Yet a coroner’s inquest—as appears from his own secret correspondence with his relative and agent at Cumnor—was immediately and persistently demanded by Dudley. A jury was impaneled—every man of them a stranger to him, and some of them enemies. Antony Forster, Appleyard, and Arthur Robsart, brother-in-law and brother of the lady, were present, according to Dudley’s

Page 1377

special request; “and if more of her friends could have been sent,” said he, “I would have sent them;” but with all their minuteness of inquiry, “they could find,” wrote Blount, “no presumptions of evil,” although he expressed a suspicion that “some of the jurymen were sorry that they could not.” That the unfortunate lady was killed by a fall down stairs was all that could be made of it by a coroner’s inquest, rather hostile than otherwise, and urged to rigorous investigation by the supposed culprit himself. Nevertheless, the calumny has endured for three centuries, and is likely to survive as many more.

Whatever crimes Dudley may have committed in the course of his career, there is no doubt whatever that he was the most abused man in Europe. He had been deeply wounded by the Jesuit’s artful publication, in which all the misdeeds with which he was falsely or justly charged were drawn up in awful array, in a form half colloquial, half judicial. “You had better give some contentment to my Lord Leicester,” wrote the French envoy from London to his government, “on account of the bitter feelings excited in him by these villainous books lately written against him.”

The Earl himself ascribed these calumnies to the Jesuits, to the Guise faction, and particularly to—the Queen of Scots. He was said, in consequence, to have vowed an eternal hatred to that most unfortunate and most intriguing Princess. “Leicester has lately told a friend,” wrote Charles Paget, “that he will persecute you to the uttermost, for that he supposeth your Majesty to be privy to the setting forth of the book against him.” Nevertheless, calumniated or innocent he was at least triumphant over calumny. Nothing could shake his hold upon Elizabeth’s affections. The Queen scorned but resented the malignant attacks upon the reputation of her favourite. She declared “before God and in her conscience, that she knew the libels against him to be most scandalous, and such as none but an incarnate devil himself could dream to be true.” His power, founded not upon genius nor virtue, but upon woman’s caprice, shone serenely above the gulf where there had been so many shipwrecks. “I am now passing into another world,” said Sussex, upon his death-bed, to his friends, “and I must leave you to your fortunes; but beware of the gipsy, or he will be too hard for you. You know not the beast so well as I do.”

The “gipsy,” as he had been called from his dark complexion, had been renowned in youth for the beauty of his person, being “tall and singularly well-featured, of a sweet aspect, but high foreheaded, which was of no discommendation,” according to Naunton. The Queen, who had the passion of her father for tall and proper men, was easier won by externals, from her youth even to the days of her dotage, than befitted so very sagacious a personage. Chamberlains, squires of the body, carvers, cup-bearers, gentlemen-ushers, porters, could obtain neither place

Page 1378

nor favour at court, unless distinguished for stature, strength, or extraordinary activity. To lose a tooth had been known to cause the loss of a place, and the excellent constitution of leg which helped Sir Christopher Hatton into the chancellorship, was not more remarkable perhaps than the success of similar endowments in other contemporaries. Leicester, although stately and imposing, had passed his summer solstice. A big bulky man, with a long red face, a bald head, a defiant somewhat sinister eye, a high nose, and a little torrent of foam-white curly beard, he was still magnificent in costume. Rustling in satin and feathers, with jewels in his ears, and his velvet toque stuck as airily as ever upon the side of his head, he amazed the honest Hollanders, who had been used to less gorgeous chieftains.

"Every body is wondering at the great magnificence and splendour of his clothes," said the plain chronicler of Utrecht. For, not much more than a year before, Fulke Greville had met at Delft a man whose external adornments were simpler; a somewhat slip-shod personage, whom he thus pourtrayed: "His uppermost garment was a gown," said the euphuistic Fulke, "yet such as, I confidently affirm, a mean-born student of our Inns of Court would not have been well disposed to walk the streets in. Unbuttoned his doublet was, and of like precious matter and form to the other. His waistcoat, which showed itself under it, not unlike the best sort of those woollen knit ones which our ordinary barge-watermen row us in. His company about him, the burgesses of that beerbrewing town. No external sign of degree could have discovered the inequality of his worth or estate from that multitude. Nevertheless, upon conversing with him, there was an outward passage of inward greatness."

Of a certainty there must have been an outward passage of inward greatness about him; for the individual in unbuttoned doublet and bargeman's waistcoat, was no other than William the Silent. A different kind of leader had now descended among those rebels, yet it would be a great mistake to deny the capacity or vigorous intentions of the magnificent Earl, who certainly was like to find himself in a more difficult and responsible situation than any he had yet occupied.

And now began a triumphal progress through the land, with a series of mighty banquets and festivities, in which no man could play a better part than Leicester. From Flushing he came to Middelburg, where, upon Christmas eve (according to the new reckoning), there was an entertainment, every dish of which has been duly chronicled. Pigs served on their feet, pheasants in their feathers, and baked swans with their necks thrust through gigantic pie-crust; crystal castles of confectionery with silver streams flowing at their base, and fair virgins leaning from the battlements, looking for their new English champion, "wine in abundance, variety of all sorts, and wonderful welcomes "—such

Page 1379

was the bill of fare. The next day the Lieutenant-General returned the compliment to the magistrates of Middelburg with a tremendous feast. Then came an interlude of unexpected famine; for as the Earl sailed with his suite in a fleet of two hundred vessels for Dort—a voyage of not many hours' usual duration—there descended a mighty frozen fog upon the waters, and they lay five whole days and nights in their ships, almost starved with hunger and cold—offering in vain a "pound of silver for a pound of bread." Emerging at last from this dismal predicament, he landed at Dort, and so went to Rotterdam and Delft, everywhere making his way through lines of musketeers and civic functionaries, amid roaring cannon, pealing bells, burning cressets, blazing tar-barrels, fiery winged dragons, wreaths of flowers, and Latin orations.

The farther he went the braver seemed the country, and the better beloved his. Lordship. Nothing was left undone, in the language of ancient chronicle, to fill the bellies and the heads of the whole company. At the close of the year he came to the Hague, where the festivities were unusually magnificent. A fleet of barges was sent to escort him. Peter, James, and John, met him upon the shore, while the Saviour appeared walking upon the waves, and ordered his disciples to cast their nets, and to present the fish to his Excellency. Farther on, he was confronted by Mars and Bellona, who recited Latin odes in his honour. Seven beautiful damsels upon a stage, representing the United States, offered him golden keys; seven others equally beautiful, embodying the seven sciences, presented him with garlands, while an enthusiastic barber adorned his shop with seven score of copper basins, with a wax-light in each, together with a rose, and a Latin posy in praise of Queen Elizabeth. Then there were tiltings in the water between champions mounted upon whales, and other monsters of the deep-representatives of siege, famine, pestilence, and murder—the whole interspersed with fireworks, poetry, charades, and Matthias, nor Anjou, nor King Philip, nor the Emperor Charles, in their triumphal progresses, had been received with more spontaneous or more magnificent demonstrations. Never had the living pictures been more startling, the allegories more incomprehensible, the banquets more elaborate, the orations more tedious. Beside himself with rapture, Leicester almost assumed the God. In Delft, a city which he described as "another London almost for beauty and fairness," he is said so far to have forgotten himself as to declare that his family had—in the person of Lady Jane Grey, his father, and brother—been unjustly deprived of the crown of England; an indiscretion which caused a shudder in all who heard him. It was also very dangerous for the Lieutenant-General to exceed the bounds of becoming modesty at that momentous epoch. His power, as we shall soon have occasion to observe, was anomalous, and he was surrounded by

Page 1380

enemies. He was not only to grapple with a rapidly developing opposition in the States, but he was surrounded with masked enemies, whom he had brought with him from England. Every act and word of his were liable to closest scrutiny, and likely to be turned against him. For it was most characteristic of that intriguing age, that even the astute Walsingham, who had an eye and an ear at every key-hole in Europe, was himself under closest domestic inspection. There was one Poley, a trusted servant of Lady Sidney, then living in the house of her father Walsingham, during Sir Philip's absence, who was in close communication with Lord Montjoy's brother, Blount, then high in favour of Queen Elizabeth—"whose grandmother she might be for his age and hers"—and with another brother Christopher Blount, at that moment in confidential attendance upon Lord Leicester in Holland. Now Poley, and both the Blounts, were, in reality, Papists, and in intimate correspondence with the agents of the Queen of Scots, both at home and abroad, although "forced to fawn upon Leicester, to see if they might thereby live quiet." They had a secret "alphabet," or cipher, among them, and protested warmly, that they "honoured the ground whereon Queen Mary trod better than Leicester with all his generation; and that they felt bound to serve her who was the only saint living on the earth."

It may be well understood then that the Earl's position was a slippery one, and that great assumption might be unsafe. "He taketh the matter upon him," wrote Morgan to the Queen of Scots, "as though he were an absolute king; but he hath many personages about him of good place out of England, the best number whereof desire nothing more than his confusion. Some of them be gone with him to avoid the persecution for religion in England. My poor advice and labour shall not be wanting to give Leicester all dishonour, which will fall upon him in the end with shame enough; though for the present he be very strong." Many of these personages of good place, and enjoying "charge and credit" with the Earl had very serious plans in their heads. Some of them meant "for the service of God, and the advantage of the King of Spain, to further the delivery of some notable towns in Holland and Zeeland to the said King and his ministers," and we are like to hear of these individuals again.

Meantime, the Earl of Leicester was at the Hague. Why was he there? What was his work? Why had Elizabeth done such violence to her affection as to part with her favourite-in-chief; and so far overcome her thrift, as to furnish forth, rather meagrely to be sure, that little army of Englishmen? Why had the flower of England's chivalry set foot upon that dark and bloody ground where there seemed so much disaster to encounter, and so little glory to reap? Why had England thrown herself so heroically into the breach, just as the last bulwarks were falling which protected Holland from the overwhelming onslaught

Page 1381

of Spain? It was because Holland was the threshold of England; because the two countries were one by danger and by destiny; because the naval expedition from Spain against England was already secretly preparing; because the deposed tyrant of Spain intended the Provinces, when again subjugated, as a steppingstone to the conquest of England; because the naval and military forces of Holland—her numerous ships, her hardy mariners, her vast wealth, her commodious sea-ports, close to the English coast—if made Spanish property would render Philip invincible by sea and land; and because the downfall of Holland and of Protestantism would be death to Elizabeth, and annihilation to England.

There was little doubt on the subject in the minds of those engaged in this expedition. All felt most keenly the importance of the game, in which the Queen was staking her crown, and England its national existence.

“I pray God,” said Wilford, an officer much in Walsingham’s confidence, “that I live not to see this enterprise quail, and with it the utter subversion of religion throughout all Christendom. It may be I may be judged to be afraid of my own shadow. God grant it be so. But if her Majesty had not taken the helm in hand, and my Lord of Leicester sent over, this country had been gone ere this. . . . This war doth defend England. Who is he that will refuse to spend his life and living in it? If her Majesty consume twenty thousand men in the cause, the experimented men that will remain will double that strength to the realm.”

This same Wilford commanded a company in Ostend, and was employed by Leicester in examining the defences of that important place. He often sent information to the Secretary, “troubling him with the rude stile of a poor soldier, being driven to scribble in haste.” He reiterated, in more than one letter, the opinion, that twenty thousand men consumed in the war would be a saving in the end, and his own determination—-although he had intended retiring from the military profession—to spend not only his life in the cause, but also the poor living that God had given him. “Her Highness hath now entered into it,” he said; “the fire is kindled; whosoever suffers it to go out, it will grow dangerous to that side. The whole state of religion is in question, and the realm of England also, if this action quail. God grant we never live to see that doleful day. Her Majesty hath such footing now in these parts, as I judge it impossible for the King to weary her out, if every man will put to the work his helping hand, whereby it may be lustily followed, and the war not suffered to cool. The freehold of England will be worth but little, if this action quail, and therefore I wish no subject to spare his purse towards it.”

Page 1382

Spain moved slowly. Philip the Prudent was not sudden or rash, but his whole life had proved, and was to prove, him inflexible in his purposes, and patient in his attempts to carry them into effect, even when the purposes had become chimerical, and the execution impossible. Before the fall of Antwerp he had matured his scheme for the invasion of England, in most of its details—a necessary part of which was of course the reduction of Holland and Zeeland. "Surely no danger nor fear of any attempt can grow to England," wrote Wilford, "so long as we can hold this country good." But never was honest soldier more mistaken than he, when he added:—"The Papists will make her Highness afraid of a great fleet now preparing in Spain. We hear it also, but it is only a scare-crow to cool the enterprise here."

It was no scare-crow. On the very day on which Wilford was thus writing to Walsingham, Philip the Second was writing to Alexander Farnese. "The English," he said, "with their troops having gained a footing in the islands (Holland and Zeeland) give me much anxiety. The English Catholics are imploring me with much importunity to relieve them from the persecution they are suffering. When you sent me a plan, with the coasts, soundings, quicksands, and ports of England, you said that the enterprise of invading that country should be deferred till we had reduced the isles; that, having them, we could much more conveniently attack England; or that at least we should wait till we had got Antwerp. As the city is now taken, I want your advice now about the invasion of England. To cut the root of the evils constantly growing up there, both for God's service and mine, is desirable. So many evils will thus be remedied, which would not be by only warring with the islands. It would be an uncertain and expensive war to go to sea for the purpose of chastising the insolent English corsairs, however much they deserve chastisement. I charge you to be secret, to give the matter your deepest attention, and to let me have your opinions at once." Philip then added a postscript, in his own hand, concerning the importance of acquiring a sea-port in Holland, as a basis of operations against England. "Without a port," he said, "we can do nothing whatever."

A few weeks later, the Grand Commander of Castile, by Philip's orders, and upon subsequent information received from the Prince of Parma, drew up an elaborate scheme for the invasion of England, and for the government of that country afterwards; a program according to which the King was to shape his course for a long time to come. The plot was an excellent plot. Nothing could be more artistic, more satisfactory to the prudent monarch; but time was to show whether there might not be some difficulty in the way of its satisfactory development.

Page 1383

“The enterprise,” said the Commander, “ought certainly to be undertaken as serving the cause of the Lord. From the Pope we must endeavour to extract a promise of the largest aid we can get for the time when the enterprise can be undertaken. We must not declare that time however, in order to keep the thing a secret, and because perhaps thus more will be promised, under the impression that it will never take effect. He added that the work could not well be attempted before August or September of the following year; the only fear of such delay being that the French could hardly be kept during all that time in a state of revolt.” For this was a uniform portion of the great scheme. France was to be kept, at Philip’s expense, in a state of perpetual civil war; its every city and village to be the scene of unceasing conflict and bloodshed—subjects in arms against king, and family against family; and the Netherlands were to be ravaged with fire and sword; all this in order that the path might be prepared for Spanish soldiers into the homes of England. So much of misery to the whole human race was it in the power of one painstaking elderly valetudinarian to inflict, by never for an instant neglecting the business of his life.

Troops and vessels for the English invasion ought, in the Commander’s opinion, to be collected in Flanders, under colour of an enterprise against Holland and Zeeland, while the armada to be assembled in Spain, of galleons, galeazas, and galleys, should be ostensibly for an expedition to the Indies.

Then, after the conquest, came arrangements for the government of England. Should Philip administer his new kingdom by a viceroy, or should he appoint a king out of his own family? On the whole the chances for the Prince of Parma seemed the best of any. “We must liberate the Queen of Scotland,” said the Grand Commander, “and marry her to some one or another, both in order to put her out of love with her son, and to conciliate her devoted adherents. Of course the husband should be one of your Majesty’s nephews, and none could be so appropriate as the Prince of Parma, that great captain, whom his talents, and the part he has to bear in the business, especially indicate for that honour.”

Then there was a difficulty about the possible issue of such a marriage. The Farneses claimed Portugal; so that children sprung from the bloodroyal of England blended with that of Parma, might choose to make those pretensions valid. But the objection was promptly solved by the Commander:—“The Queen of Scotland is sure to have no children,” he said.

That matter being adjusted, Parma’s probable attitude as King of England was examined. It was true his ambition might cause occasional uneasiness, but then he might make himself still more unpleasant in the Netherlands. “If your Majesty suspects him,” said the Commander, “which, after all, is unfair, seeing the way, in which he has been conducting himself—it is to be remembered

Page 1384

that in Flanders are similar circumstances and opportunities, and that he is well armed, much beloved in the country, and that the natives are of various humours. The English plan will furnish an honourable departure for him out of the Provinces; and the principle of loyal obligation will have much influence over so chivalrous a knight as he, when he is once placed on the English throne. Moreover, as he will be new there, he will have need of your Majesty's favour to maintain himself, and there will accordingly be good correspondence with Holland and the Islands. Thus your Majesty can put the Infanta and her husband into full possession of all the Netherlands; having provided them with so excellent a neighbour in England, and one so closely bound and allied to them. Then, as he is to have no English children" (we have seen that the Commander had settled that point) "he will be a very good mediator to arrange adoptions, especially if you make good provision for his son Rainuccio in Italy. The reasons in favour of this plan being so much stronger than those against it, it would be well that your Majesty should write clearly to the Prince of Parma, directing him to conduct the enterprise" (the English invasion), "and to give him the first offer for this marriage (with Queen Mary) if he likes the scheme. If not, he had better mention which of the Archdukes should be substituted in his place."

There happened to be no lack of archdukes at that period for anything comfortable that might offer—such as a throne in England, Holland, or France—and the Austrian House was not remarkable for refusing convenient marriages; but the immediate future only could show whether Alexander I. of the House of Farnese was to reign in England, or whether the next king of that country was to be called Matthias, Maximilian, or Ernest of Hapsburg.

Meantime the Grand Commander was of opinion that the invasion-project was to be pushed forward as rapidly and as secretly as possible; because, before any one of Philip's nephews could place himself upon the English throne, it was first necessary to remove Elizabeth from that position. Before disposing of the kingdom, the preliminary step of conquering it was necessary. Afterwards it would be desirable, without wasting more time than was requisite, to return with a large portion of the invading force out of England, in order to complete the conquest of Holland. For after all, England was to be subjugated only as a portion of one general scheme; the main features of which were the reannexation of Holland and "the islands," and the acquisition of unlimited control upon the seas.

Thus the invasion of England was no "scarecrow," as Wilford imagined, but a scheme already thoroughly matured. If Holland and Zeeland should meantime fall into the hands of Philip, it was no exaggeration on that soldier's part to observe that the "freehold of England would be worth but little."

Page 1385

To oppose this formidable array against the liberties of Europe stood Elizabeth Tudor and the Dutch Republic. For the Queen, however arbitrary her nature, fitly embodied much of the nobler elements in the expanding English national character. She felt instinctively that her reliance in the impending death-grapple was upon the popular principle, the national sentiment, both in her own country and in Holland. That principle and that sentiment were symbolized in the Netherland revolt; and England, although under a somewhat despotic rule, was already fully pervaded with the instinct of self-government. The people held the purse and the sword.

No tyranny could be permanently established so long as the sovereign was obliged to come every year before Parliament to ask for subsidies; so long as all the citizens and yeomen of England had weapons in their possession, and were carefully trained to use them; so long, in short, as the militia was the only army, and private adventurers or trading companies created and controlled the only navy. War, colonization, conquest, traffic, formed a joint business and a private speculation. If there were danger that England, yielding to purely mercantile habits of thought and action, might degenerate from the more martial standard to which she had been accustomed, there might be virtue in that Netherland enterprise, which was now to call forth all her energies. The Provinces would be a seminary for English soldiers.

“There can be no doubt of our driving the enemy out of the country through famine and excessive charges,” said the plain-spoken English soldier already quoted, who came out with Leicester, “if every one of us will put our minds to go forward without making a miserable gain by the wars. A man may see, by this little progress journey, what this long peace hath wrought in us. We are weary of the war before we come where it groweth, such a danger hath this long peace brought us into. This is, and will be, in my opinion, a most fit school and nursery to nourish soldiers to be able to keep and defend our country hereafter, if men will follow it.”

Wilford was vehement in denouncing the mercantile tendencies of his countrymen, and returned frequently to that point in his communications with Walsingham and other statesmen. “God hath stirred up this action,” he repeated again, “to be a school to breed up soldiers to defend the freedom of England, which through these long times of peace and quietness is brought into a most dangerous estate, if it should be attempted. Our delicacy is such that we are already weary, yet this journey is naught in respect to the misery and hardship that soldiers must and do endure.”

Page 1386

He was right in his estimate of the effect likely to be produced by the war upon the military habits of Englishmen; for there can be no doubt that the organization and discipline of English troops was in anything but a satisfactory state at that period. There was certainly vast room for improvement. Nevertheless he was wrong in his views of the leading tendencies of his age. Holland and England, self-helping, self-moving, were already inaugurating a new era in the history of the world. The spirit of commercial maritime enterprise—then expanding rapidly into large proportions—was to be matched against the religious and knightly enthusiasm which had accomplished such wonders in an age that was passing away. Spain still personified, and had ever personified, chivalry, loyalty, piety; but its chivalry, loyalty, and piety, were now in a corrupted condition. The form was hollow, and the sacred spark had fled. In Holland and England intelligent enterprise had not yet degenerated into mere greed for material prosperity. The love of danger, the thirst for adventure, the thrilling sense of personal responsibility and human dignity—not the base love for land and lucre—were the governing sentiments which led those bold Dutch and English rovers to circumnavigate the world in cockle-shells, and to beard the most potent monarch on the earth, both at home and abroad, with a handful of volunteers.

This then was the contest, and this the machinery by which it was to be maintained. A struggle for national independence, liberty of conscience, freedom of the seas, against sacerdotal and world-absorbing tyranny; a mortal combat of the splendid infantry of Spain and Italy, the professional reiters of Germany, the floating castles of a world-empire, with the militiamen and mercantile-marine of England and Holland united. Holland had been engaged twenty years long in the conflict. England had thus far escaped it; but there was no doubt, and could be none, that her time had come. She must fight the battle of Protestantism on sea and shore, shoulder to shoulder, with the Netherlanders, or await the conqueror’s foot on her own soil.

What now was the disposition and what the means of the Provinces to do their part in the contest? If the twain as Holland wished, had become of one flesh, would England have been the loser? Was it quite sure that Elizabeth—had she even accepted the less compromising title which she refused—would not have been quite as much the protected as the “protectress?”

It is very certain that the English, on their arrival in the Provinces, were singularly impressed by the opulent and stately appearance of the country and its inhabitants. Notwithstanding the tremendous war which the Hollanders had been waging against Spain for twenty years, their commerce had continued to thrive, and their resources to increase. Leicester was in a state of constant rapture at the magnificence which surrounded him, from his first entrance into

Page 1387

the country. Notwithstanding the admiration expressed by the Hollanders for the individual sumptuousness of the Lieutenant-General; his followers, on their part, were startled by the general luxury of their new allies. “The realm is rich and full of men,” said Wilford, “the sums men exceed in apparel would bear the brunt of this war;” and again, “if the excess used in sumptuous apparel were only abated, and that we could convert the same to these wars, it would stop a great gap.”

The favourable view taken by the English as to the resources and inclination of the Netherland commonwealth was universal. “The general wish and desire of these countrymen,” wrote Sir Thomas Shirley, “is that the amity begun between England and this nation may be everlasting, and there is not any of our company of judgment but wish the same. For all they that see the goodliness and stateliness of these towns, strengthened both with fortification and natural situation, all able to defend themselves with their own abilities, must needs think it too fair a prey to be let pass, and a thing most worthy to be embraced.”

Leicester, whose enthusiasm continued to increase as rapidly as the Queen’s zeal seemed to be cooling, was most anxious lest the short-comings of his own Government should work irreparable evil. “I pray you, my lord,” he wrote to Burghley, “forget not us poor exiles; if you do, God must and will forget you. And great pity it were that so noble provinces and goodly havens, with such infinite ships and mariners, should not be always as they may now easily be, at the assured devotion of England. In my opinion he can neither love Queen nor country that would not wish and further it should be so. And seeing her Majesty is thus far entered into the cause, and that these people comfort themselves in full hope of her favour, it were a sin and a shame it should not be handled accordingly, both for honour and surety.”

Sir John Conway, who accompanied the Earl through the whole of his “progress journey,” was quite as much struck as he by the flourishing aspect and English proclivities of the Provinces. “The countries which we have passed,” he said, “are fertile in their nature; the towns, cities, buildings, of snore state and beauty, to such as have travelled other countries, than any they have ever seen. The people the most industrious by all means to live that be in the world, and, no doubt, passing rich. They outwardly show themselves of good heart, zeal, and loyalty, towards the Queen our mistress. There is no doubt that the general number of them had rather come under her Majesty’s regiment, than to continue under the States and burgomasters of their country. The impositions which they lay in defence of their State is wonderful. If her Highness proceed in this beginning, she may retain these parts hers, with their good love, and her great glory and gain. I would she might as perfectly see the whole country, towns, profits, and pleasures

Page 1388

thereof, in a glass, as she may her own face; I do then assure myself she would with careful consideration receive them, and not allow of any man's reason to the contrary . . . . The country is worthy any prince in the world, the people do reverence the Queen, and in love of her do so believe that the Grace of Leicester is by God and her sent among them for her good. And they believe in him for the redemption of their bodies, as they do in God for their souls. I dare pawn my soul, that if her Majesty will allow him the just and rightful mean to manage this cause, that he will so handle the manner and matter as shall highly both please and profit her Majesty, and increase her country, and his own honour."

Lord North, who held a high command in the auxiliary force, spoke also with great enthusiasm. "Had your Lordship seen," he wrote to Burghley, "with what thankful hearts these countries receive all her Majesty's subjects, what multitudes of people they be, what stately cities and buildings they have, how notably fortified by art, how strong by nature, flow fertile the whole country, and how wealthy it is, you would, I know, praise the Lord that opened your lips to undertake this enterprise, the continuance and good success whereof will eternise her Majesty, beautify her crown, with the most shipping, with the most populous and wealthy countries, that ever prince added to his kingdom, or that is or can be found in Europe. I lack wit, good my Lord, to dilate this matter."

Leicester, better informed than some of those in his employment, entertained strong suspicions concerning Philip's intentions with regard to England; but he felt sure that the only way to laugh at a Spanish invasion was to make Holland and England as nearly one as it was possible to do.

"No doubt that the King of Spain's preparations by sea be great," he, said; "but I know that all that he and his friends can make are not able to match with her Majesty's forces, if it please her to use the means that God hath given her. But besides her own, if she need; I will undertake to furnish her from hence, upon two months' warning, a navy for strong and tall ships, with their furniture and mariners, that the King of Spain, and all that he can make, shall not be able to encounter with them. I think the bruit of his preparations is made the greater to terrify her Majesty and this country people. But, thanked be God, her Majesty hath little cause to fear him. And in this country they esteem no more of his power by sea than I do of six fisher-boats off Rye."

Thus suggestive is it to peep occasionally behind the curtain. In the calm cabinet of the Escorial, Philip and his comendador mayor are laying their heads together, preparing the invasion of England; making arrangements for King Alexander's coronation in that island, and—like sensible, farsighted persons as they are—even settling the succession to the throne after Alexander's death, instead

Page 1389

of carelessly leaving such distant details to chance, or subsequent consideration. On the other hand, plain Dutch sea-captains, grim beggars of the sea, and the like, denizens of a free commonwealth and of the boundless ocean-men who are at home on blue water, and who have burned gunpowder against those prodigious slave-rowed galleys of Spain—together with their new allies, the dauntless mariners of England—-who at this very moment are “singeing the King of Spain’s beard,” as it had never been singed before—are not so much awestruck with the famous preparations for invasion as was perhaps to be expected. There may be a delay, after all, before Parma can be got safely established in London, and Elizabeth in Orcus, and before the blood-tribunal of the Inquisition can substitute its sway for that of the “most noble, wise, and learned United States.” Certainly, Philip the Prudent would have been startled, difficult as he was to astonish, could he have known that those rebel Hollanders of his made no more account of his slowly-preparing invincible armada than of six fisher-boats off Rye. Time alone could show where confidence had been best placed. Meantime it was certain, that it well behoved Holland and England to hold hard together, nor let “that enterprise quail.”

The famous expedition of Sir Francis Drake was the commencement of a revelation. “That is the string,” said Leicester, “that touches the King indeed.” It was soon to be made known to the world that the ocean was not a Spanish Lake, nor both the Indies the private property of Philip. “While the riches of the Indies continue,” said Leicester, “he thinketh he will be able to weary out all other princes; and I know, by good means, that he more feareth this action of Sir Francis than he ever did anything that has been attempted against him.” With these continued assaults upon the golden treasure-houses of Spain, and by a determined effort to maintain the still more important stronghold which had been wrested from her in the Netherlands, England might still be safe. “This country is so full of ships and mariners,” said Leicester, “so abundant in wealth, and in the means to make money, that, had it but stood neutral, what an aid had her Majesty been deprived of. But if it had been the enemy’s also, I leave it to your consideration what had been likely to ensue. These people do now honour and love her Majesty in marvellous sort.”

There was but one feeling on this most important subject among the English who went to the Netherlands. All held the same language. The question was plainly presented to England whether she would secure to herself the great bulwark of her defence, or place it in the hands of her mortal foe? How could there be doubt or supineness on such a momentous subject? “Surely, my Lord,” wrote Richard Cavendish to Burghley, “if you saw the wealth, the strength, the shipping, and abundance of mariners, whereof these countries stand furnished, your heart would quake to think that so hateful an enemy as Spain should again be furnished with such instruments; and the Spaniards themselves do nothing doubt upon the hope of the consequence hereof, to assure themselves of the certain ruin of her Majesty and the whole estate.”

Page 1390

And yet at the very outset of Leicester's administration, there was a whisper of peace-overtures to Spain, secretly made by Elizabeth in her own behalf, and in that of the Provinces. We shall have soon occasion to examine into the truth of these rumours, which, whether originating in truth or falsehood, were most pernicious in their effects. The Hollanders were determined never to return to slavery again, so long as they could fire a shot in their own defence. They earnestly wished English cooperation, but it was the cooperation of English matchlocks and English cutlasses, not English protocols and apostilles. It was military, not diplomatic machinery that they required. If they could make up their minds to submit to Philip and the Inquisition again, Philip and the Holy office were but too ready to receive the erring penitents to their embrace without a go-between.

It was war, not peace, therefore, that Holland meant by the English alliance. It was war, not peace, that Philip intended. It was war, not peace, that Elizabeth's most trusty counsellors knew to be inevitable. There was also, as we have shown, no doubt whatever as to the good disposition, and the great power of the republic to bear its share in the common cause. The enthusiasm of the Hollanders was excessive. "There was such a noise, both in Delft, Rotterdam, and Dort," said Leicester, "in crying 'God save the Queen!' as if she had been in Cheapside." Her own subjects could not be more loyal than were the citizens and yeomen of Holland. "The members of the States dare not but be Queen Elizabeth's," continued the Earl, "for by the living God! if there should fall but the least unkindness through their default, the people would kill them. All sorts of people, from highest to lowest, assure themselves, now that they have her Majesty's good countenance, to beat all the Spaniards out of their country. Never was there people in such jollity as these be. I could be content to lose a limb, could her Majesty see these countries and towns as I have done." He was in truth excessively elated, and had already, in imagination, vanquished Alexander Farnese, and eclipsed the fame of William the Silent. "They will serve under me," he observed, "with a better will than ever they served under the Prince of Orange. Yet they loved him well, but they never hoped of the liberty of this country till now."

Thus the English government had every reason to be satisfied with the aspect of its affairs in the Netherlands. But the nature of the Earl's authority was indefinite. The Queen had refused the sovereignty and the protectorate. She had also distinctly and peremptorily forbidden Leicester to assume any office or title that might seem at variance with such a refusal on her part. Yet it is certain that, from the very first, he had contemplated some slight disobedience to these prohibitions. "What government is requisite"—wrote he in a secret memorandum of "things most necessary

Page 1391

to understand"—"to be appointed to him that shall be their governor? First, that he have as much authority as the Prince of Orange, or any other governor or captain-general, hath had heretofore." Now the Prince of Orange hath been stadholder of each of the United Provinces, governor-general, commander-in-chief, count of Holland in prospect, and sovereign, if he had so willed it. It would doubtless have been most desirable for the country, in its confused condition, had there been a person competent to wield, and willing to accept, the authority once exercised by William I. But it was also certain that this was exactly the authority which Elizabeth had forbidden Leicester to assume. Yet it is difficult to understand what position the Queen intended that her favourite should maintain, nor how he was to carry out her instructions, while submitting to her prohibitions. He was directed to cause the confused government of the Provinces to be redressed, and a better form of polity to be established. He was ordered, in particular, to procure a radical change in the constitution, by causing the deputies to the General Assembly to be empowered to decide upon important matters, without, as had always been the custom, making direct reference to the assemblies of the separate Provinces. He was instructed to bring about, in some indefinite way, a complete reform in financial matters, by compelling the States-General to raise money by liberal taxation, according to the "advice of her Majesty, delivered unto them by her lieutenant."

And how was this radical change in the institutions of the Provinces to be made by an English earl, whose only authority was that of commander-in-chief over five thousand half-starved, unpaid, utterly-forlorn English troops?

The Netherland envoys in England, in their parting advice, most distinctly urged him "to hale authority with the first, to declare himself chief head and governor-general" of the whole country,—for it was a political head that was wanted in order to restore unity of action—not an additional general, where there were already generals in plenty. Sir John Norris, valiant, courageous, experienced—even if not, as Walsingham observed, a "religious soldier," nor learned in anything "but a kind of licentious and corrupt government"—was not likely to require the assistance of the new lieutenant-general in field operations nor could the army be brought into a state of thorough discipline and efficiency by the magic of Leicester's name. The rank and file of the English army—not the commanders-needed strengthening. The soldiers required shoes and stockings, bread and meat, and for these articles there were not the necessary funds, nor would the title of Lieutenant-General supply the deficiency. The little auxiliary force was, in truth, in a condition most pitiable to behold: it was difficult to say whether the soldiers who had been already for a considerable period in the Netherlands, or those who had been recently

Page 1392

levied in the purlieus of London, were in the most unpromising plight. The beggarly state in which Elizabeth had been willing that her troops should go forth to the wars was a sin and a disgrace. Well might her Lieutenant-General say that her “poor subjects were no better than abjects.” There were few effective companies remaining of the old force. “There is but a small number of the first bands left,” said Sir John Conway, “and those so pitiful and unable ever to serve again, as I leave to speak further of theirs, to avoid grief to your heart. A monstrous fault there hath been somewhere.”

Leicester took a manful and sagacious course at starting. Those who had no stomach for the fight were ordered to depart. The chaplain gave them sermons; the Lieutenant-General, on St. Stephen’s day, made them a “pithy and honourable” oration, and those who had the wish or the means to buy themselves out of the adventure, were allowed to do so: for the Earl was much disgusted with the raw material out of which he was expected to manufacture serviceable troops. Swaggering ruffians from the disreputable haunts of London, cockney apprentices, brokendown tapsters, discarded serving men; the Bardolphs and Pistols, Mouldys, Warts, and the like—more at home in tavern-brawls or in dark lanes than on the battle-field—were not the men to be entrusted with the honour of England at a momentous crisis. He spoke with grief and shame of the worthless character and condition of the English youths sent over to the Netherlands. “Believe me,” said he, “you will all repent the cockney kind of bringing up at this day of young men. They be gone hence with shame enough, and too many, that I will warrant, will make as many frays with bludgeons and bucklers as any in London shall do; but such shall never have credit with me again. Our simplest men in show have been our best men, and your gallant blood and ruffian men the worst of all others.”

Much winnowed, as it was, the small force might in time become more effective; and the Earl spent freely of his own substance to supply the wants of his followers, and to atone for the avarice of his sovereign. The picture painted however by muster-master Digger of the plumed troops that had thus come forth to maintain the honour of England and the cause of liberty, was anything but imposing. None knew better than Digges their squalid and slovenly condition, or was more anxious to effect a reformation therein. “A very wise, stout fellow he is,” said the Earl, “and very careful to serve thoroughly her Majesty.” Leicester relied much upon his efforts. “There is good hope,” said the muster-master, “that his excellency will shortly establish such good order for the government and training of our nation, that these weak, bad-furnished, ill-armed, and worse-trained bands, thus rawly left unto him, shall within a few months prove as well armed, trained, complete, gallant companies as shall be found elsewhere in Europe.”

Page 1393

The damage they were likely to inflict upon the enemy seemed very problematical, until they should have been improved by some wholesome ball-practice. “They are so unskilful,” said Digger, “that if they should be carried to the field no better trained than yet they are, they would prove much more dangerous to their own leaders and companies than any ways serviceable on their enemies. The hard and miserable estate of the soldiers generally, excepting officers, hath been such, as by the confessions of the captains themselves, they have been offered by many of their soldiers thirty and forty pounds a piece to be dismissed and sent away; whereby I doubt not the flower of the pressed English bands are gone, and the remnant supplied with such paddy persons as commonly, in voluntary procurements, men are glad to accept.”

Even after the expiration of four months the condition of the paddy persons continued most destitute. The English soldiers became mere barefoot starving beggars in the streets, as had never been the case in the worst of times, when the States were their paymasters. The little money brought from the treasury by the Earl, and the large sums which he had contributed out of his own pocket, had been spent in settling, and not fully settling, old scores. “Let me entreat you,” wrote Leicester to Walsingham, “to be a mean to her Majesty, that the poor soldiers be not beaten for my sake. There came no penny of treasure over since my coming hither. That which then came was most part due before it came. There is much still due. They cannot get a penny, their credit is spent, they perish for want of victuals and clothing in great numbers. The whole are ready to mutiny. They cannot be gotten out to service, because they cannot discharge the debts they owe in the places where they are. I have let of my own more than I may spare.”—“There was no soldier yet able to buy himself a pair of hose,” said the Earl again, “and it is too, too great shame to see how they go, and it kills their hearts to show themselves among men.”

There was no one to dispute the Earl’s claims. The Nassau family was desperately poor, and its chief, young Maurice, although he had been elected stadholder of Holland and Zeeland, had every disposition—as Sir Philip upon his arrival in Flushing immediately informed his uncle—to submit to the authority of the new governor. Louisa de Coligny, widow of William the Silent, was most anxious for the English alliance, through which alone she believed that the fallen fortunes of the family could be raised. It was thus only, she thought, that the vengeance for which she thirsted upon the murderers of her father and her husband could be obtained. “We see now,” she wrote to Walsingham, in a fiercer strain than would seem to comport with so gentle a nature —deeply wronged as the daughter of Coligny and the wife of Orange had been by Papists—“we see now the effects of our God’s promises. He knows when it pleases Him to avenge the blood of

Page 1394

His own; and I confess that I feel most keenly the joy which is shared in by the whole Church of God. There is none that has received more wrong from these murderers than I have done, and I esteem myself happy in the midst of my miseries that God has permitted me to see some vengeance. These beginnings make me hope that I shall see yet more, which will be not less useful to the good, both in your country and in these isles."

There was no disguise as to the impoverished condition to which the Nassau family had been reduced by the self-devotion of its chief. They were obliged to ask alms of England, until the "sapling should become a tree."—"Since it is the will of God," wrote the Princess to Davison, "I am not ashamed to declare the necessity of our house, for it is in His cause that it has fallen. I pray you, Sir, therefore to do me and these children the favour to employ your thoughts in this regard." If there had been any strong French proclivities on their part—as had been so warmly asserted—they were likely to disappear. Villiers, who had been a confidential friend of William the Silent, and a strong favourer of France, in vain endeavoured to keep alive the ancient sentiments towards that country, although he was thought to be really endeavouring to bring about a submission of the Nassaus to Spain. "This Villiers," said Leicester, "is a most vile traitorous knave, and doth abuse a young nobleman here extremely, the Count Maurice. For all his religion, he is a more earnest persuader secretly to have him yield to a reconciliation than Sainte Aldegonde was. He shall not tarry ten days neither in Holland nor Zeeland. He is greatly hated here of all sorts, and it shall go hard but I will win the young Count."

As for Hohenlo, whatever his opinions might once have been regarding the comparative merits of Frenchmen and Englishmen, he was now warmly in favour of England, and expressed an intention of putting an end to the Villiers' influence by simply drowning Villiers. The announcement of this summary process towards the counsellor was not untinged with rudeness towards the pupil. "The young Count," said Leicester, "by Villiers' means, was not willing to have Flushing rendered, which the Count Hollock perceiving, told the Count Maurice, in a great rage, that if he took any course than that of the Queen of England, and swore by no beggars, he would drown his priest in the haven before his face, and turn himself and his mother-in-law out of their house there, and thereupon went with Mr. Davison to the delivery of it." Certainly, if Hohenlo permitted himself such startling demonstrations towards the son and widow of William the Silent, it must have been after his habitual potations had been of the deepest. Nevertheless it was satisfactory for the new chieftain to know that the influence of so vehement a partisan was secured for England. The Count's zeal deserved gratitude upon Leicester's part, and Leicester was grateful. "This

Page 1395

man must be cherished," said the Earl; "he is sound and faithful, and hath indeed all the chief holds in his hands, and at his commandment. Ye shall do well to procure him a letter of thanks, taking knowledge in general of his good-will to her Majesty. He is a right Almayn in manner and fashion, free of his purse and of his drink, yet do I wish him her Majesty's pensioner before any prince in Germany, for he loves her and is able to serve her, and doth desire to be known her servant. He hath been laboured by his nearest kinsfolk and friends in Germany to have left the States and to have the King of Spain's pension and very great reward; but he would not. I trust her Majesty will accept of his offer to be her servant during his life, being indeed a very noble soldier." The Earl was indeed inclined to take so cheerful view of matters as to believe that he should even effect a reform in the noble soldier's most unpleasant characteristic. "Hollock is a wise gallant gentleman," he said, "and very well esteemed. He hath only one fault, which is drinking; but good hope that he will amend it. Some make me believe that I shall be able to do much with him, and I mean to do my best, for I see no man that knows all these countries, and the people of all sorts, like him, and this fault overthrows all."

Accordingly, so long as Maurice continued under the tutelage of this uproarious cavalier —who, at a later day, was to become his brother-in-law-he was not likely to interfere with Leicester's authority. The character of the young Count was developing slowly. More than his father had ever done, he deserved the character of the taciturn. A quiet keen observer of men and things, not demonstrative nor talkative, nor much given to writing—a modest, calm, deeply-reflecting student of military and mathematical science —he was not at that moment deeply inspired by political ambition. He was perhaps more desirous of raising the fallen fortunes of his house than of securing the independence of his country. Even at that early age, however, his mind was not easy to read, and his character was somewhat of a puzzle to those who studied it. "I see him much discontented with the States," said Leicester; "he hath a sullen deep wit. The young gentleman is yet to be won only to her Majesty, I perceive, of his own inclination. The house is marvellous poor and little regarded by the States, and if they get anything it is like to be by her Majesty, which should be altogether, and she may easily, do for him to win him sure. I will undertake it." Yet the Earl was ever anxious about some of the influences which surrounded Maurice, for he thought him more easily guided than he wished him to be by any others but himself. "He stands upon making and marring," he said, "as he meets with good counsel." And at another time he observed, "The young gentleman hath a solemn sly wit; but, in troth, if any be to be doubted toward the King of Spain, it is he and his counsellors, for they have been altogether, so far, French, and so far in mislike with England as they cannot almost hide it."

Page 1396

And there was still another member of the house of Nassau who was already an honour to his illustrious race. Count William Lewis, hardly more than a boy in years, had already served many campaigns, and had been desperately wounded in the cause for which so much of the heroic blood of his race had been shed. Of the five Nassau brethren, his father Count John was the sole survivor, and as devoted as ever to the cause of Netherland liberty. The other four had already laid down their lives in its defence. And William Lewis, was worthy to be the nephew of William and Lewis, Henry and Adolphus, and the son of John. Not at all a beautiful or romantic hero in appearance, but an odd-looking little man, with a round bullet-head, close-clipped hair, a small, twinkling, sagacious eye, rugged, somewhat puffy features screwed whimsically awry, with several prominent warts dotting, without ornamenting, all that was visible of a face which was buried up to the ears in a furzy thicket of yellow-brown beard, the tough young stadholder of Friesland, in his iron corslet, and halting upon his maimed leg, had come forth with other notable personages to the Hague.

He wished to do honour heartily and freely to Queen Elizabeth and her representative. And Leicester was favourably impressed with his new acquaintance. “Here is another little fellow,” he said, “as little as may be, but one of the gravest and wisest young men that ever I spake withal; it is the Count Guilliam of Nassau. He governs Friesland; I would every Province had such another.”

Thus, upon the great question which presented itself upon the very threshold—the nature and extent of the authority to be exercised by Leicester—the most influential Netherlanders were in favour of a large and liberal interpretation of his powers. The envoys in England, the Nassau family Hohenlo, the prominent members of the States, such as the shrewd, plausible Menin, the “honest and painful” Falk, and the chancellor of Gelderland—“that very great, wise, old man Leoninus,” as Leicester called him,—were all desirous that he should assume an absolute governor-generalship over the whole country. This was a grave and a delicate matter, and needed to be severely scanned, without delay. But besides the natives, there were two Englishmen—together with ambassador Davison—who were his official advisers. Bartholomew Clerk, LL.D., and Sir Henry Killigrew had been appointed by the Queen to be members of the council of the United States, according to the provisions of the August treaty. The learned Bartholomew hardly seemed equal to his responsible position among those long-headed Dutch politicians. Philip Sidney—the only blemish in whose character was an intolerable tendency to puns—observed that “Doctor Clerk was of those clerks that are not always the wisest, and so my lord too late was finding him.” The Earl himself, who never undervalued the intellect of the Netherlanders whom he came to govern, anticipated but small assistance

Page 1397

from the English civilian. “I find no great stuff in my little colleague,” he said, “nothing that I looked for. It is a pity you have no more of his profession, able men to serve. This man hath good will, and a pretty scholar’s wit; but he is too little for these big fellows, as heavy as her Majesty thinks them to be. I would she had but one or two, such as the worst of half a score be here.” The other English statecounsellor seemed more promising. “I have one here,” said the Earl, “in whom I take no small comfort; that is little Hal Killigrew. I assure you, my lord, he is a notable servant, and more in him than ever I heretofore thought of him, though I always knew him to be an honest man and an able.”

But of all the men that stood by Leicester’s side, the most faithful, devoted, sagacious, experienced, and sincere of his counsellors, English or Flemish, was envoy Davison. It is important to note exactly the opinion that had been formed of him by those most competent to judge, before events in which he was called on to play a prominent and responsible though secondary part, had placed him in a somewhat false position.

“Mr. Davison,” wrote Sidney, “is here very careful in her Majesty’s causes, and in your Lordship’s. He takes great pains and goes to great charges for it.” The Earl himself was always vehement in his praise. “Mr. Davison,” said he at another time, “has dealt most painfully and chargeably in her Majesty’s service here, and you shall find him as sufficiently able to deliver the whole state of this country as any man that ever was in it, acquainted with all sorts here that are men of dealing. Surely, my Lord, you shall do a good deed that he may be remembered with her Majesty’s gracious consideration, for his being here has been very chargeable, having kept a very good countenance, and a very good table, all his abode here, and of such credit with all the chief sort, as I know no stranger in any place hath the like. As I am a suitor to you to be his good friend to her Majesty, so I must heartily pray you, good my Lord, to procure his coming hither shortly to me again, for I know not almost how to do without him. I confess it is a wrong to the gentleman, and I protest before God, if it were for mine own particular respect, I would not require it for L5000. But your Lordship doth little think how greatly I have to do, as also how needful for her Majesty’s service his being here will, be. Wherefore, good my Lord, if it may not offend her Majesty, be a mean for this my request, for her own service’ sake wholly.”

Such were the personages who surrounded the Earl on his arrival in the Netherlands, and such their sentiments respecting the position that it was desirable for him to assume. But there was one very important fact. He had studiously concealed from Davison that the Queen had peremptorily and distinctly forbidden his accepting the office of governor-general. It seemed reasonable, if he came thither at all, that he should come in that elevated capacity. The Staten wished it. The Earl ardently longed for it. The ambassador, who knew more of Netherland politics and Netherland humours

than any man did, approved of it. The interests of both England and Holland seemed to require it. No one but Leicester knew that her Majesty had forbidden it.

Page 1398

Accordingly, no sooner had the bell-ringing, cannon-explosions, bonfires, and charades, come to an end, and the Earl got fairly housed in the Hague, than the States took the affair of government seriously in hand.

On the 9th January, Chancellor Leoninus and Paul Buys waited upon Davison, and requested a copy of the commission granted by the Queen to the Earl. The copy was refused, but the commission was read; by which it appeared that he had received absolute command over her Majesty's forces in the Netherlands by land and sea, together with authority to send for all gentlemen and other personages out of England that he might think useful to him. On the 10th the States passed a resolution to offer him the governor-generalship over all the Provinces. On the same day another committee waited upon his "Excellency"—as the States chose to denominate the Earl, much to the subsequent wrath of the Queen—and made an appointment for the whole body to wait upon him the following morning.

Upon that day accordingly—New Year's Day, by the English reckoning, 11th January by the New Style—the deputies of all the States at an early hour came to his lodgings, with much pomp, preceded by a herald and trumpeters. Leicester, not expecting them quite so soon, was in his dressing-room, getting ready for the solemn audience, when, somewhat to his dismay, a flourish of trumpets announced the arrival of the whole body in his principal hall of audience. Hastening his preparations as much as possible, he descended to that apartment, and was instantly saluted by a flourish of rhetoric still more formidable; for that "very great, and wise old Leoninus," forthwith began an oration, which promised to be of portentous length and serious meaning. The Earl was slightly flustered, when, fortunately; some one whispered in his ear that they had come to offer him the much-coveted prize of the stadholderate-general. Thereupon he made bold to interrupt the flow of the chancellor's eloquence in its first outpourings. "As this is a very private matter," said he, "it will be better to treat of it in a more private place I pray you therefore to come into my chamber, where these things may be more conveniently discussed."

"You hear what my Lord says," cried Leoninus, turning to his companions; "we are to withdraw into his chamber."

Accordingly they withdrew, accompanied by the Earl, and by five or six select counsellors, among whom were Davison and Dr. Clerk. Then the chancellor once more commenced his harangue, and went handsomely through the usual forms of compliment, first to the Queen, and then to her representative, concluding with an earnest request that the Earl—although her Majesty had declined the sovereignty "would take the name and place of absolute governor and general of all their forces and soldiers, with the disposition of their whole revenues and taxes."

So soon as the oration was concluded, Leicester; who did not speak French, directed Davison to reply in that language.

Page 1399

The envoy accordingly, in name of the Earl, expressed the deepest gratitude for this mark of the affection and confidence of the States-General towards the Queen. He assured them that the step thus taken by them would be the cause of still more favour and affection on the part of her Majesty, who would unquestionably, from day to day, augment the succour that she was extending to the Provinces in order to relieve men from their misery. For himself, the Earl protested that he could never sufficiently recompense the States for the honour which had thus been conferred upon him, even if he should live one hundred lives. Although he felt himself quite unable to sustain the weight of so great an office, yet he declared that they might repose with full confidence on his integrity and good intentions. Nevertheless, as the authority thus offered to him was very arduous, and as the subject required deep deliberation, he requested that the proposition should be reduced to writing, and delivered into his hands. He might then come to a conclusion thereupon, most conducive to the glory of God and the welfare of the land.

Three days afterwards, 14th January, the offer, drawn up formally in writing, was presented to envoy Davison, according to the request of Leicester. Three days latter, 17th January, his Excellency having deliberated upon the proposition, requested a committee of conference. The conference took place the same day, and there was some discussion upon matters of detail, principally relating to the matter of contributions. The Earl, according to the report of the committee, manifested no repugnance to the acceptance of the office, provided these points could be satisfactorily adjusted. He seemed, on the contrary, impatient, rather than reluctant; for, on the day following the conference, he sent his secretary Gilpin with a somewhat importunate message. “His Excellency was surprised,” said the secretary, “that the States were so long in coming to a resolution on the matters suggested by him in relation to the offer of the government-general; nor could his Excellency imagine the cause of the delay.”

For, in truth, the delay was caused by an excessive, rather than a deficient, appetite for power on the part of his Excellency. The States, while conferring what they called the “absolute” government, by which it afterwards appeared that they meant absolute, in regard to time, not to function—were very properly desirous of retaining a wholesome control over that government by means of the state-council. They wished not only to establish such a council, as a check upon the authority of the new governor, but to share with him at least in the appointment of the members who were to compose the board. But the aristocratic Earl was already restive under the thought of any restraint—-most of all the restraint of individuals belonging to what he considered the humbler classes.

Page 1400

“Cousin, my lord ambassador,” said he to Davison, “among your sober companions be it always remembered, I beseech you, that your cousin have no other alliance but with gentle blood. By no means consent that he be linked in faster bonds than their absolute grant may yield him a free and honourable government, to be able to do such service as shall be meet for an honest man to perform in such a calling, which of itself is very noble. But yet it is not more to be embraced, if I were to be led in alliance by such keepers as will sooner draw my nose from the right scent of the chace, than to lead my feet in the true pace to pursue the game I desire to reach. Consider, I pray you, therefore, what is to be done, and how unfit it will be in respect of my poor self, and how unacceptable to her Majesty, and how advantageous to enemies that will seek holes in my coat, if I should take so great a name upon me, and so little power. They challenge acceptation already, and I challenge their absolute grant and offer to me, before they spoke of any instructions; for so it was when Leoninus first spoke to me with them all on New Years Day, as you heard—offering in his speech all manner of absolute authority. If it please them to confirm this, without restraining instructions, I will willingly serve the States, or else, with such advising instructions as the Dowager of Hungary had.”

This was explicit enough, and Davison, who always acted for Leicester in the negotiations with the States, could certainly have no doubt as to the desires of the Earl, on the subject of “absolute” authority. He did accordingly what he could to bring the States to his Excellency’s way of thinking; nor was he unsuccessful.

On the 22nd January, a committee of conference was sent by the States to Leyden, in which city Leicester was making a brief visit. They were instructed to procure his consent, if possible, to the appointment, by the States themselves, of a council consisting of members from each Province. If they could not obtain this concession, they were directed to insist as earnestly as possible upon their right to present a double. list of candidates, from which he was to make nominations. And if the one and the other proposition should be refused, the States were then to agree that his Excellency should freely choose and appoint a council of state, consisting of native residents from every Province, for the period of one year. The committee was further authorised to arrange the commission for the governor, in accordance with these points; and to draw up a set of instructions for the state-council, to the satisfaction of his Excellency. The committee was also empowered to conclude the matter at once, without further reference to the States.

Page 1401

Certainly a committee thus instructed was likely to be sufficiently pliant. It had need to be, in order to bend to the humour of his Excellency, which was already becoming imperious. The adulation which he had received; the triumphal marches, the Latin orations, the flowers strewn in his path, had produced their effect, and the Earl was almost inclined to assume the airs of royalty. The committee waited upon him at Leyden. He affected a reluctance to accept the “absolute” government, but his coyness could not deceive such experienced statesmen as the “wise old Leoliinus,” or Menin, Maalzoon, Florin Thin, or Aitzma, who composed the deputation. It was obvious enough to them that it was not a King Log that had descended among them, but it was not a moment for complaining. The governor elect insisted, of course, that the two Englishmen, according to the treaty with her Majesty, should be members of, the council. He also, at once, nominated Leoninus, Meetkerk, Brederode, Falck, and Paul Buys, to the same office; thinking, no doubt, that these were five keepers—if keepers he must have—who would not draw his nose off the scent, nor prevent his reaching the game he hunted, whatever that game might be. It was reserved for the future, however, to show, whether, the five were like to hunt in company with him as harmoniously as he hoped. As to the other counsellors, he expressed a willingness that candidates should be proposed for him, as to whose qualifications he would make up his mind at leisure.

This matter being satisfactorily adjusted-and certainly unless the game pursued by the Earl was a crown royal, he ought to have been satisfied with his success—the States received a letter from their committee at Leyden, informing them that his Excellency, after some previous protestations, had accepted the government (24th January, 1586).

It was agreed that he should be inaugurated Governor-General of the United Provinces of Gelderland and Zutphen, Flanders, Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, and all others in confederacy with them. He was to have supreme military command by land and sea. He was to exercise supreme authority in matters civil and political, according to the customs prevalent in the reign of the Emperor Charles V. All officers, political, civil, legal, were to be appointed by him out of a double or triple nomination made by the States of the Provinces in which vacancies might occur. The States-General were to assemble whenever and wherever he should summon them. They were also—as were the States of each separate Province—competent to meet together by their own appointment. The Governor-General was to receive an oath of fidelity from the States, and himself to swear the maintenance of the ancient laws, customs, and privileges of the country.

Page 1402

The deed was done. In vain had an emissary of the French court been exerting his utmost to prevent the consummation of this close alliance. For the wretched government of Henry *iii*., while abasing itself before Philip *ii*., and offering the fair cities and fertile plains of France as a sacrifice to that insatiable ambition which wore the mask of religious bigotry, was most anxious that Holland and England should not escape the meshes by which it was itself enveloped. The agent at the Hague came nominally upon some mercantile affairs, but in reality, according to Leicester, “to impeach the States from binding themselves to her Majesty.” But he was informed that there was then no leisure for his affairs; “for the States would attend to the service of the Queen of England, before all princes in the world.” The agent did not feel complimented by the coolness of this reception; yet it was reasonable enough, certainly, that the Hollanders should remember with bitterness the contumely, which they had experienced the previous year in France. The emissary was; however, much disgusted. “The fellow,” said Leicester, “took it in such snuff, that he came proudly to the States and offered his letters, saying; ’Now I trust you have done all your sacrifices to the Queen of England, and may yield me some leisure to read my masters letters.’”—“But they so shook him, up,” continued the Earl, “for naming her Majesty in scorn—as they took it—-that they hurled him his letters; and bid him content himself;” and so on, much to the agent’s discomfiture, who retired in greater “snuff” than ever.

So much for the French influence. And now Leicester had done exactly what the most imperious woman in the world, whose favour was the breath of his life, had expressly forbidden him to do. The step having been taken, the prize so tempting to his ambition having been snatched, and the policy which had governed the united action of the States and himself seeming so sound, what ought he to have done in order to avert the tempest which he must have foreseen? Surely a man who knew so much of woman’s nature and of Elizabeth’s nature as he did, ought to have attempted to conciliate her affections, after having so deeply wounded her pride. He knew his power. Besides the graces of his person and manner—which few women, once impressed by them, could ever forget—he possessed the most insidious and flattering eloquence, and, in absence, his pen was as wily as his tongue. For the Earl was imbued with the very genius of courtship. None was better skilled than he in the phrases of rapturous devotion, which were music to the ear both of the woman and the Queen; and he knew his royal mistress too well not to be aware that the language of passionate idolatry, however extravagant, had rarely fallen unheeded upon her soul. It was strange therefore, that in this emergency, he should not at once throw himself upon her compassion without any mediator. Yet, on the contrary, he committed

Page 1403

the monstrous error of entrusting his defence to envoy Davison, whom he determined to despatch at once with instructions to the Queen, and towards whom he committed the grave offence of concealing from him her previous prohibitions. But how could the Earl fail to perceive that it was the woman, not the Queen, whom he should have implored for pardon; that it was Robert Dudley, not William Davison, who ought to have sued upon his knees. This whole matter of the Netherland sovereignty and the Leicester stadholderate, forms a strange psychological study, which deserves and requires some minuteness of attention; for it was by the characteristics of these eminent personages that the current history was deeply stamped.

Certainly, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, the first letter conveying intelligence so likely to pique the pride of Elizabeth, should have been a letter from Leicester. On the contrary, it proved to be a dull formal epistle from the States.

And here again the assistance of the indispensable Davison was considered necessary. On the 3rd February the ambassador—having announced his intention of going to England, by command of his Excellency, so soon as the Earl should have been inaugurated, for the purpose of explaining all these important transactions to her Majesty—waited upon the States with the request that they should prepare as speedily as might be their letter to the Queen, with other necessary documents, to be entrusted to his care. He also suggested that the draft or minute of their proposed epistle should be submitted to him for advice—“because the humours of her Majesty were best known to him.”

Now the humours of her Majesty were best known to Leicester of all men in the whole world, and it is inconceivable that he should have allowed so many days and weeks to pass without taking these humours properly into account. But the Earl’s head was slightly turned by his sudden and unexpected success. The game that he had been pursuing had fallen into his grasp, almost at the very start, and it is not astonishing that he should have been somewhat absorbed in the enjoyment of his victory.

Three days later (6th February) the minute of a letter to Elizabeth, drawn up by Menin, was submitted to the ambassador; eight days after that (14th February) Mr. Davison took leave of the States, and set forth for the Brill on his way to England; and three or four days later yet, he was still in that sea-port, waiting for a favourable wind. Thus from the 11th January, N.S., upon which day the first offer of the absolute government had been made to Leicester, nearly forty days had elapsed, during which long period the disobedient Earl had not sent one line, private or official, to her Majesty on this most important subject. And when at last the Queen was to receive information of her favourite’s delinquency, it was not to be in his well-known handwriting and accompanied by his penitent tears and written caresses, but to be laid before her with all the formality of parchment and sealingwax, in the stilted diplomatic jargon of those “highly-mighty,

very learned, wise, and very foreseeing gentlemen, my lords the States-General." Nothing could have been managed with less adroitness.

Page 1404

Meantime, not heeding the storm gathering beyond the narrow seas, the new governor was enjoying the full sunshine of power. On the 4th February the ceremony of his inauguration took place, with great pomp and ceremony at the Hague.

The beautiful, placid, village-capital of Holland wore much the same aspect at that day as now. Clean, quiet, spacious streets, shaded with rows of whispering poplars and umbrageous limes, broad sleepy canals—those liquid highways alone; which glided in phantom silence the bustle, and traffic, and countless cares of a stirring population—-quaint toppling houses, with tower and gable; ancient brick churches, with slender spire and musical chimes; thatched cottages on the outskirts, with stork-nests on the roofs—-the whole without fortification save the watery defences which enclosed it with long-drawn lines on every side; such was the Count's park, or 's Graven Haage, in English called the Hague.

It was embowered and almost buried out of sight by vast groves of oaks and beeches. Ancient Badahuennan forests of sanguinary Druids, the "wild wood without mercy" of Saxon savages, where, at a later period, sovereign Dirks and Florences, in long succession of centuries, had ridden abroad with lance in rest, or hawk on fist; or under whose boughs, in still nearer days, the gentle Jacqueline had pondered and wept over her sorrows, stretched out in every direction between the city and the neighbouring sea. In the heart of the place stood the ancient palace of the counts, built in the thirteenth century by William *ii*. of Holland, King of the Romans, with massive brick walls, cylindrical turrets, pointed gable and rose-shaped windows, and with spacious coup-yard, enclosed by feudal moat, drawbridge, and portcullis.

In the great banqueting-hall of the ancient palace, whose cedarn-roof of magnificent timber-work, brought by crusading counts from the Holy Land, had rung with the echoes of many a gigantic revel in the days of chivalry—an apartment one hundred and fifty feet long and forty feet high—there had been arranged an elevated platform, with a splendid chair of state for the "absolute" governor, and with a great profusion of gilding and velvet tapestry, hangings, gilt emblems, complimentary devices, lions, unicorns, and other imposing appurtenances. Prince Maurice, and all the members of his house, the States-General in full costume, and all the great functionaries, civil and military, were assembled. There was an elaborate harangue by orator Menin, in which it was proved; by copious citations from Holy Writ and from ancient chronicle, that the Lord never forsakes His own; so that now, when the Provinces were at their last gasp by the death of Orange and the loss of Antwerp, the Queen of England and the Earl of Leicester had suddenly descended, as if from Heaven; to their rescue. Then the oaths of mutual fidelity were exchanged between the governor and the States, and, in conclusion, Dr. Bartholomew Clerk ventured to measure himself with the "big fellows," by pronouncing an oration which seemed to command universal approbation. And thus the Earl was duly installed Governor-General of the United States of the Netherlands.

Page 1405

But already the first mutterings of the storm were audible. A bird in the air had whispered to the Queen that her favourite was inclined to disobedience. "Some flying tale hath been told me here," wrote Leicester to Walsingham, "that her Majesty should mislike my name of Excellency. But if I had delighted, or would have received titles, I refused a title higher than Excellency, as Mr. Davison, if you ask him, will tell you; and that I, my own self, refused most earnestly that, and, if I might have done it, this also." Certainly, if the Queen objected to this common form of address, which had always been bestowed upon Leicester, as he himself observed, ever since she had made him an earl, it might be supposed that her wrath would mount high when she should hear of him as absolute governor-general. It is also difficult to say what higher title he had refused, for certainly the records show that he had refused nothing, in the way of power and dignity, that it was possible for him to obtain.

But very soon afterwards arrived authentic intelligence that the Queen had been informed of the proposition made on New Year's-Day (O.S.), and that, although she could not imagine the possibility of his accepting, she was indignant that he had not peremptorily rejected the offer.

"As to the proposal made to you," wrote Burghley, "by the mouth of Leoninus, her Majesty hath been informed that you had thanked them in her name, and alledged that there was no such thing in the contract, and that therefore you could not accept nor knew how to answer the same."

Now this information was obviously far from correct, although it had been furnished by the Earl himself to Burghley. We have seen that Leicester had by no means rejected, but very gratefully entertained, the proposition as soon as made. Nevertheless the Queen was dissatisfied, even without suspecting that she had been directly disobeyed. "Her Majesty," continued the Lord-Treasurer; "is much offended with this proceeding. She allows not that you should give them thanks, but findeth it very strange that you did not plainly declare to them that they did well know how often her Majesty had refused to have any one for her take any such government there, and that she had always so answered peremptorily. Therefore there might be some suspicion conceived that by offering on their part, and refusal on hers, some further mischief might be secretly hidden by some odd person's device to the hurt of the cause. But in that your Lordship did not flatly say to them that yourself did know her Majesty's mind therein, that she never meant, in this sort, to take the absolute government, she is offended considering, as she saith, that none knew her determination therein better than yourself. For at your going hence, she did peremptorily charge you not to accept any such title and office; and therefore her straight commandment now is that you shall not accept the same, for she will never assent thereto, nor avow you with any such title."

Page 1406

If Elizabeth was so wrathful, even while supposing that the offer had been gratefully declined, what were likely to be her emotions when she should be informed that it had been gratefully accepted. The Earl already began to tremble at the probable consequences of his mal-adroitness. Grave was the error he had committed in getting himself made governor-general against orders; graver still, perhaps fatal, the blunder of not being swift to confess his fault, and cry for pardon, before other tongues should have time to aggravate his offence. Yet even now he shrank from addressing the Queen in person, but hoped to conjure the rising storm by means of the magic wand of the Lord-Treasurer. He implored his friend's interposition to shield him in the emergency, and begged that at least her Majesty and the lords of council would suspend their judgment until Mr. Davison should deliver those messages and explanations with which, fully freighted, he was about to set sail from the Brill.

"If my reasons seem to your wisdoms," said he, "other than such as might well move a true and a faithful careful man to her Majesty to do as I have done, I do desire, for my mistaking offence, to bear the burden of it; to be disavowed with all displeasure and disgrace; a matter of as great reproach and grief as ever can happen to any man." He begged that another person might be sent as soon as possible in his place-protesting, however, by his faith in Christ, that he had done only what he was bound to do by his regard for her Majesty's service—and that when he set foot in the country he had no more expected to be made Governor of the Netherlands than to be made King of Spain. Certainly he had been paying dear for the honour, if honour it was, and he had not intended on setting forth for the Provinces to ruin himself, for the sake of an empty title. His motives—and he was honest, when he so avowed them—were motives of state at least as much as of self-advancement. "I have no cause," he said, "to have played the fool thus far for myself; first, to have her Majesty's displeasure, which no kingdom in the world could make me willingly deserve; next, to undo myself in my later days; to consume all that should have kept me all my life in one half year. But I must thank God for all, and am most heartily grieved at her Majesty's heavy displeasure. I neither desire to live, nor to see my country with it."

And at this bitter thought, he began to sigh like furnace, and to shed the big tears of penitence.

"For if I have not done her Majesty good service at this time," he said, "I shall never hope to do her any, but will withdraw me into some out-corner of the world, where I will languish out the rest of my few-too many-days, praying ever for her Majesty's long and prosperous life, and with this only comfort to live an exile, that this disgrace hath happened for no other cause but for my mere regard for her Majesty's estate."

Page 1407

Having painted this dismal picture of the probable termination to his career—not in the hope of melting Burghley but of touching the heart of Elizabeth—he proceeded to argue the point in question with much logic and sagacity. He had satisfied himself on his arrival in the Provinces, that, if he did not take the governor-generalship some other person would; and that it certainly was for the interest of her Majesty that her devoted servant, rather than an indifferent person, should be placed in that important position. He maintained that the Queen had intimated, to him, in private, her willingness that he should accept the office in question provided the proposition should come from the States and not from her; he reasoned that the double nature of his functions—being general and counsellor for her, as well as general and counsellor for the Provinces—made his acceptance of the authority conferred on him almost indispensable; that for him to be merely commander over five thousand English troops, when an abler soldier than himself, Sir John Norris, was at their head, was hardly worthy her Majesty's service or himself, and that in reality the Queen had lost nothing, by his appointment, but had gained much benefit and honour by thus having the whole command of the Provinces, of their forces by land and sea, of their towns and treasures, with knowledge of all their secrets of state.

Then, relapsing into a vein of tender but reproachful melancholy, he observed, that, if it had been any man but himself that had done as he had done, he would have been thanked, not censured. "But such is now my wretched case," he said, "as for my faithful, true, and loving heart to her Majesty and my country, I have utterly undone myself. For favour, I have disgrace; for reward, utter spoil and ruin. But if this taking upon me the name of governor is so evil taken as it hath deserved dishonour, discredit, disfavour, with all griefs that may be laid upon a man, I must receive it as deserved of God and not of my Queen, whom I have reverenced with all humility, and whom I have loved with all fidelity."

This was the true way, no doubt, to reach the heart of Elizabeth, and Leicester had always plenty of such shafts in his quiver. Unfortunately he had delayed too long, and even now he dared not take a direct aim. He feared to write to the Queen herself, thinking that his so doing, "while she had such conceipts of him, would only trouble her," and he therefore continued to employ the Lord-Treasurer and Mr. Secretary as his mediators. Thus he committed error upon error.

Meantime, as if there had not been procrastination enough, Davison was loitering at the Brill, detained by wind and weather. Two days after the letter, just cited, had been despatched to Walsingham, Leicester sent an impatient message to the envoy. "I am heartily sorry, with all my heart," he said, "to hear of your long stay at Brill, the wind serving so fair as it hath done these two days. I would have laid any wager that you had been in England ere this. I pray you make haste, lest our cause take too great a prejudice there ere you come, although I cannot fear it, because it is so good and honest. I pray you imagine in what care I dwell till I shall hear from you, albeit some way very resolute."

Page 1408

Thus it was obvious that he had no secret despair of his cause when it should be thoroughly laid before the Queen. The wonder was that he had added the offence of long silence to the sin of disobedience. Davison had sailed, however, before the receipt of the Earl's letter. He had been furnished with careful instructions upon the subject of his mission. He was to show how eager the States had been to have Leicester for their absolute governor—which was perfectly true—and how anxious the Earl had been to decline the proffered honour—which was certainly false, if contemporary record and the minutes of the States-General are to be believed. He was to sketch the general confusion which had descended upon the country, the quarrelling of politicians, and the discontent of officers and soldiers, from out of all which chaos one of two results was sure to arise: the erection of a single chieftain, or a reconciliation of the Provinces with Spain. That it would be impossible for the Earl to exercise the double functions with which he was charged—of general of her Majesty's forces, and general and chief counsellor of the States—if any other man than himself should be appointed governor; was obvious. It was equally plain that the Provinces could only be kept at her Majesty's disposition by choosing the course which, at their own suggestion, had been adopted. The offer of the government by the States, and its acceptance by the Earl, were the logical consequence of the step which the Queen had already taken. It was thus only that England could retain her hold upon the country, and even upon the cautionary towns. As to a reconciliation of the Provinces with Spain—which would have been the probable result of Leicester's rejection of the proposition made by the Stateait was unnecessary to do more than allude to such a catastrophe. No one but a madman could doubt that, in such an event, the subjugation of England was almost certain.

But before the arrival of the ambassador, the Queen had been thoroughly informed as to the whole extent of the Earl's delinquency. Dire was the result. The wintry gales which had been lashing the North Sea, and preventing the unfortunate Davison from setting forth on his disastrous mission, were nothing to the tempest of royal wrath which had been shaking the court-world to its centre. The Queen had been swearing most fearfully ever since she read the news, which Leicester had not dared to communicate directly, to herself. No one was allowed to speak a word in extenuation of the favourite's offence. Burghley, who lifted up his voice somewhat feebly to appease her wrath, was bid, with a curse, to hold his peace. So he took to his bed-partly from prudence, partly from gout—and thus sheltered himself for a season from the peltings of the storm. Walsingham, more manful, stood to his post, but could not gain a hearing. It was the culprit that should have spoken, and spoken in time. "Why, why did you not write yourself?" was the plaintive cry of all the Earl's friends, from highest to humblest. "But write to her now," they exclaimed, "at any rate; and, above all, send her a present, a love-gift." "Lay out two or three hundred crowns in some rare thing, for a token to her Majesty," said Christopher Hatton.

Page 1409

Strange that his colleagues and his rivals should have been obliged to advise Leicester upon the proper course to pursue; that they—not himself—should have been the first to perceive that it was the enraged woman, even more than the offended sovereign, who was to be propitiated and soothed. In truth, all the woman had been aroused in Elizabeth's bosom. She was displeased that her favourite should derive power and splendour from any source but her own bounty. She was furious that his wife, whom she hated, was about to share in his honours. For the mischievous tongues of court-ladies had been collecting or fabricating many unpleasant rumours. A swarm of idle but piquant stories had been buzzing about the Queen's ears, and stinging her into a frenzy of jealousy. The Countess—it was said—was on the point of setting forth for the Netherlands, to join the Earl, with a train of courtiers and ladies, coaches and side-saddles, such as were never seen before—where the two were about to establish themselves in conjugal felicity, as well as almost royal state. What a prospect for the jealous and imperious sovereign! "Coaches and side-saddles! She would show the upstarts that there was one Queen, and that her name was Elizabeth, and that there was no court but hers." And so she continued to storm and swear, and threaten unutterable vengeance, till all her courtiers quaked in their shoes.

Thomas Dudley, however, warmly contradicted the report, declaring, of his own knowledge, that the Countess had no wish to go to the Provinces, nor the Earl any intention of receiving her there. This information was at once conveyed to the Queen, "and," said Dudley, "it did greatly pacify her stomach." His friends did what they could to maintain the governor's cause; but Burghley, Walsingham, Hatton, and the rest of them, were all "at their wits end," and were nearly distraught at the delay in Davison's arrival. Meantime the Queen's stomach was not so much pacified but that she was determined to humiliate the Earl with the least possible delay. Having waited sufficiently long for his explanations, she now appointed Sir Thomas Heneage as special commissioner to the States, without waiting any longer. Her wrath vented itself at once in the preamble to the instructions for this agent.

"Whereas," she said, "we have been given to understand that the Earl of Leicester hath in a very contemptuous sort—contrary to our express commandment given unto him by ourself, accepted of an offer of a more absolute government made by the States unto him, than was agreed on between us and their commissioners—which kind of contemptible manner of proceeding giveth the world just cause to think that there is not that reverent respect carried towards us by our subjects as in duty appertaineth; especially seeing so notorious a contempt committed by one whom we have raised up and yielded in the eye of the world, even from the beginning of our reign, as great portion of our favour as ever subject

Page 1410

enjoyed at any prince's hands; we therefore, holding nothing dearer than our honour, and considering that no one thing could more touch our reputation than to induce so open and public a faction of a prince, and work a greater reproach than contempt at a subject's hand, without reparation of our honour, have found it necessary to send you unto him, as well to charge him with the said contempt, as also to execute such other things as we think meet to be done, for the justifying of ourselves to the world, as the repairing of the indignity cast upon us by his undutiful manner of proceeding towards us. . . . And for that we find ourselves also not well dealt withal by the States, in that they have pressed the said Earl, without our assent or privity, to accept of a more absolute government than was agreed on between us and their commissioners, we have also thought meet that you shall charge them therewith, according to the directions hereafter ensuing. And to the end there may be no delay used in the execution of that which we think meet to be presently done, you shall charge the said States, even as they tender the continuance of our good-will towards them, to proceed to the speedy execution of our request."

After this trumpet-like preamble it may be supposed that the blast which followed would be piercing and shrill. The instructions, in truth, consisted in wild, scornful flourishes upon one theme. The word contempt had occurred five times in the brief preamble. It was repeated in almost every line of the instructions.

"You shall let the Earl" (our cousin no longer) "understand," said the Queen, "how highly and justly we are offended with his acceptation of the government, which we do repute to be a very great and strange contempt, least looked for at our hands, being, as he is, a creature of our own." His omission to acquaint her by letter with the causes moving him "so contemptuously to break" her commandment, his delay in sending Davison "to answer the said contempt," had much "aggravated the fault," although the Queen protested herself unable to imagine any "excuse for so manifest a contempt." The States were to be informed that she "held it strange" that "this creature of her own" should have been pressed by them to "commit so notorious a contempt" against her, both on account of this very exhibition of contempt on Leicester's part, and because they thereby "shewed themselves to have a very slender and weak conceit of her judgment, by pressing a minister of hers to accept that which she had refused, as: though her long experience in government had not taught her to discover what was fit to do in matters of state." As the result of such a proceeding would be to disgrace her in the eyes of mankind, by inducing an opinion that her published solemn declaration on this great subject had been intended to abuse the, world, he was directed—in order to remove the hard conceit justly to be taken by the world, "in consideration of the said contempt,"—to make a public and open resignation of the government in the place where he had accepted the same.

Page 1411

Thus it had been made obvious to the unlucky “creature of her own,” that the Queen did not easily digest “contempt.” Nevertheless these instructions to Heneage were gentle, compared with the fierce billet which she addressed directly to the Earl: It was brief, too, as the posy of a ring; and thus it ran: “To my Lord of Leicester, from the Queen, by Sir Thomas Heneage. How contemptuously we conceive ourself to have been used by you, you shall by this bearer understand, whom we have expressly sent unto you to charge you withal. We could never have imagined, had we not seen it fall out in experience, that a man raised up by ourself, and extraordinarily favoured by us above any other subject of this land, would have, in so contemptible a sort, broken our commandment, in a cause that so greatly toucheth us in honour; whereof, although you have showed yourself to make but little account, in most undutiful a sort, you may not therefore think that we have so little care of the reparation thereof as we mind to pass so great a wrong in silence unredressed. And therefore our express pleasure and commandment is, that—all delays and excuses laid apart—you do presently, upon the duty of your allegiance, obey and fulfil whatsoever the bearer hereof shall direct you to do in our name. Whereof fail not, as you will answer the contrary at your uttermost peril.”

Here was no billing and cooing, certainly, but a terse, biting phraseology, about which there could be no misconception.

By the same messenger the Queen also sent a formal letter to the States-General; the epistle—’mutatis mutandis’—being also addressed to the state-council.

In this document her Majesty expressed her great surprise that Leicester should have accepted their offer of the absolute government, “both for police and war,” when she had so expressly rejected it herself. “To tell the truth,” she observed, “you seem to have treated us with very little respect, and put a too manifest insult upon us, in presenting anew to one of, our subjects the same proposition which we had already declined, without at least waiting for our answer whether we should like it or no; as if we had not sense enough to be able to decide upon what we ought to accept or refuse.” She proceeded to express her dissatisfaction with the course pursued, because so repugnant to her published declaration, in which she had stated to the world her intention of aiding the Provinces, without meddling in the least with the sovereignty of the country. “The contrary would now be believed,” she said, “at least by those who take the liberty of censuring, according to their pleasure, the actions of princes.” Thus her honour was at stake. She signified her will, therefore, that, in order to convince the world of her sincerity, the authority conferred should be revoked, and that “the Earl,” whom she had decided to recall very soon, should, during his brief residence there, only exercise the

Page 1412

power agreed upon by the original contract. She warmly reiterated her intention, however, of observing inviolably the promise of assistance which she had given to the States. “And if,” she said, “any malicious or turbulent spirits should endeavour, perchance, to persuade the people that this our refusal proceeds from lack of affection or honest disposition to assist you—instead of being founded only on respect for our honour, which is dearer to us than life—we beg you, by every possible means, to shut their mouths, and prevent their pernicious designs.”

Thus, heavily laden with the royal wrath, Heneage was on the point of leaving London for the Netherlands, on the very day upon which Davison arrived, charged with deprecatory missives from that country. After his long detention he had a short passage, crossing from the Brill to Margate in a single night. Coming immediately to London, he sent to Walsingham to inquire which way the wind was blowing at court, but received a somewhat discouraging reply. “Your long detention by his Lordship,” said the Secretary, “has wounded the whole cause;” adding, that he thought her Majesty would not speak with him. On the other hand, it seemed indispensable for him to go to the court, because if the Queen should hear of his arrival before he had presented himself, she was likely to be more angry than ever.

So, the same afternoon, Davison waited upon Walsingham, and found him in a state of despondency. “She takes his Lordship’s acceptance of the, government most haynously,” said Sir Francis, “and has resolved to send Sir Thomas Heneage at once, with orders for him to resign the office. She has been threatening you and Sir Philip Sidney, whom she considers the chief actors and persuaders in the matter, according to information received from some persons about my Lord of Leicester.”

Davison protested himself amazed at the Secretary’s discourse, and at once took great pains to show the reasons by which all parties had been influenced in the matter of the government. He declared roundly that if the Queen should carry out her present intentions, the Earl would be most unworthily disgraced, the cause utterly overthrown, the Queen’s honour perpetually stained, and that her kingdom would incur great disaster.

Directly after this brief conversation, Walsingham went up stairs to the Queen, while Davison proceeded to the apartments of Sir Christopher Hatton. Thence he was soon summoned to the royal presence, and found that he had not been misinformed as to the temper of her Majesty. The Queen was indeed in a passion, and began swearing at Davison so soon as he got into the chamber; abusing Leicester for having accepted the offer of the States, against her many times repeated commandment, and the ambassador for not having opposed his course. The thing had been done, she said, in contempt of her, as if her consent had been of no consequence, or as if the matter in no way concerned her.

Page 1413

So soon as she paused to take breath, the envoy modestly, but firmly, appealed to her reason, that she would at any rate lend him a patient and favourable ear, in which case he doubted not that she would form a more favourable opinion of the case than she had hitherto done: He then entered into a long discourse upon the state of the Netherlands before the arrival of Leicester, the inclination in many quarters for a peace, the “despair that any sound and good fruit would grow of her Majesty’s cold beginning,” the general unpopularity of the States’ government, the “corruption, partiality, and confusion,” which were visible everywhere, the perilous condition of the whole cause, and the absolute necessity of some immediate reform.

“It was necessary,” said Davison, “that some one person of wisdom and authority should take the helm. Among the Netherlanders none was qualified for such a charge. Lord Maurice is a child, poor, and of but little respect among them. Elector Truchsess, Count Hohenlo, Meurs, and the rest, strangers and incapable of the burden. These considerations influenced the States to the step which had been taken; without which all the rest of her benevolence was to little purpose.” Although the contract between the commissioners and the Queen had not literally provided for such an arrangement, yet it had always been contemplated by the States, who had left themselves without a head until the arrival of the Earl.

“Under one pretext or another,” continued the envoy, “my Lord of Leicester had long delayed to satisfy them,”—(and in so stating he went somewhat further in defence of his absent friend than the facts would warrant), “for he neither flatly refused it, nor was willing to accept, until your Majesty’s pleasure should be known.” Certainly the records show no reservation of his acceptance until the Queen had been consulted; but the defence by Davison of the offending Earl was so much the more courageous.

“At length, wearied by their importunity, moved with their reasons, and compelled by necessity, he thought it better to take the course he did,” proceeded the diplomatist, “for otherwise he must have been an eye-witness of the dismemberment of the whole country, which could not be kept together but by a reposed hope in her Majesty’s found favour, which had been utterly despaired of by his refusal. He thought it better by accepting to increase the honour, profit; and surety, of her Majesty, and the good of the cause, than, by refusing, to utterly hazard the one, and overthrow the other.”

To all this and more, well and warmly urged by Davison; the Queen listened by fits and starts, often interrupting his discourse by violent abuse of Leicester, accusing him of contempt for her, charging him with thinking more of his own particular greatness than of her honour and service, and then “digressing into old griefs,” said the envoy, “too long and tedious to write.” She vehemently denounced Davison also for dereliction

Page 1414

of duty in not opposing the measure; but he manfully declared that he never deemed so meanly of her Majesty or of his Lordship as to suppose that she would send him, or that he would go to the Provinces, merely, “to take command of the relics of Mr. Norris’s worn and decayed troops.” Such a change, protested Davison, was utterly unworthy a person of the Earl’s quality, and utterly unsuited to the necessity of the time and state.

But Davison went farther in defence of Leicester. He had been present at many of the conferences with the Netherland envoys during the preceding summer in England, and he now told the Queen stoutly to her face that she herself, or at any rate one of her chief counsellors, in her hearing and his, had expressed her royal determination not to prevent the acceptance of whatever authority the states might choose to confer, by any one whom she might choose to send. She had declined to accept it in person, but she had been willing that it should be wielded by her deputy; and this remembrance of his had been confirmed by that of one of the commissioners since their return. She had never—Davison maintained—sent him one single line having any bearing on the subject. Under such circumstances, “I might have been accused of madness,”, said he, “to have dissuaded an action in my poor opinion so necessary and expedient for your Majesty’s honour, surety, and greatness.” If it were to do over again, he avowed, and “were his opinion demanded, he could give no other advice than that which he had given, having received no contrary, commandment from her Highness.”

And so ended the first evening’s long and vehement debate, and Davison departed, “leaving her,” as he said, “much qualified, though in many points unsatisfied.” She had however, absolutely refused to receive a letter from Leicester, with which he had been charged, but which, in her opinion, had better have been written two months before.

The next day, it seemed, after all, that Heneage was to be despatched, “in great heat,” upon his mission. Davison accordingly requested an immediate audience. So soon as admitted to the presence he burst into tears, and implored the Queen to pause before she should inflict the contemplated disgrace on one whom she had hitherto so highly esteemed, and, by so doing, dishonour herself and imperil both countries. But the Queen was more furious than ever that morning, returning at every pause in the envoy’s discourse to harp upon the one string—“How dared he come to such a decision without at least imparting it to me?”—and so on, as so many times before. And again Davison, with all the eloquence and with every soothing art he had at command; essayed to pour oil upon the waves. Nor was he entirely unsuccessful; for presently the Queen became so calm again that he ventured once more to present the rejected letter of the Earl. She broke the seal, and at sight of the well-known handwriting she became still more gentle; and so soon as she had read the first of her favourite’s honied phrases she thrust the precious document into her pocket, in order to read it afterwards, as Davison observed, at her leisure.

Page 1415

The opening thus successfully made, and the envoy having thus, “by many insinuations,” prepared her to lend him a “more patient and willing ear than she had vouchsafed before,” he again entered into a skilful and impassioned argument to show the entire wisdom of the course pursued by the Earl.

It is unnecessary to repeat the conversation. Since to say that no man could have more eloquently and faithfully supported an absent friend under difficulties than Davison now defended the Earl. The line of argument is already familiar to the reader, and, in truth, the Queen had nothing to reply, save to insist upon the governor’s delinquency in maintaining so long and inexplicable a silence. And—at this thought, in spite of the envoy’s eloquence, she went off again in a paroxysm of anger, abusing the Earl, and deeply censuring Davison for his “peremptory and partial dealing.”

“I had conceived a better opinion of you,” she said, “and I had intended more good to you than I now find you worthy of.”

“I humbly thank your Highness,” replied the ambassador, “but I take yourself to witness that I have never affected or sought any such grace at your hands. And if your Majesty persists in the dangerous course on which you are now entering, I only pray your leave, in recompense for all my travails, to retire myself home, where I may spend the rest of my life in praying for you, whom Salvation itself is not able to save, if these purposes are continued. Henceforth, Madam, he is to be deemed happiest who is least interested in the public service.”

And so ended the second day’s debate. The next day the Lord-Treasurer, who, according to Davison, employed himself diligently—as did also Walsingham and Hatton—in dissuading the Queen from the violent measures which she had resolved upon, effected so much of a change as to procure the insertion of those qualifying clauses in Heneage’s instructions which had been previously disallowed. The open and public disgrace of the Earl, which was to have been peremptorily demanded, was now to be deferred, if such a measure seemed detrimental to the public service. Her Majesty, however, protested herself as deeply offended as ever, although she had consented to address a brief, somewhat mysterious, but benignant letter of compliment to the States.

Soon after this Davison retired for a few days from the court, having previously written to the Earl that “the heat of her Majesty’s offence to his Lordship was abating every day somewhat, and that she was disposed both to hear and to speak more temperately of him.”

He implored him accordingly to a “more diligent entertaining of her by wise letters and messages, wherein his slackness hitherto appeared to have bred a great part of this unkindness.” He observed also that the “traffic of peace was still going on underhand; but whether to use it as a second string to our bow, if the first should fail, or of any settled inclination thereunto, he could not affirm.”

Page 1416

Meantime Sir Thomas Heneage was despatched on his mission to the Staten, despite all the arguments and expostulations of Walsingham, Burghley, Hatton, and Davison. All the Queen's counsellors were unequivocally in favour of sustaining Leicester; and Heneage was not a little embarrassed as to the proper method of conducting the affair. Everything, in truth, was in a most confused condition. He hardly understood to what power he was accredited. "Heneage writes even now unto me," said Walsingham to Davison, "that he cannot yet receive any information who be the States, which he thinketh will be a great maimer unto him in his negotiation. I have told him that it is an assembly much like that of our burgesses that represent the State, and that my Lord of Leicester may cause some of them to meet together, unto whom he may deliver his letters and messages." Thus the new envoy was to request the culprit to summon the very assembly by which his downfall and disgrace were to be solemnized, as formally as had been so recently his elevation to the height of power. The prospect was not an agreeable one, and the less so because of his general want of familiarity with the constitutional forms of the country he was about to visit. Davison accordingly, at the request of Sir Francis, furnished Heneage with much valuable information and advice upon the subject.

Thus provided with information, forewarned of danger, furnished with a double set of letters from the Queen to the States—the first expressed in language of extreme exasperation, the others couched in almost affectionate terms—and laden with messages brimfull of wrathful denunciation from her Majesty to one who was notoriously her Majesty's dearly-beloved, Sir Thomas Heneage set forth on his mission. These were perilous times for the Davisons and the Heneages, when even Leicesters and Burghleys were scarcely secure.

Meantime the fair weather at court could not be depended upon from one day to another, and the clouds were perpetually returning after the rain.

"Since my second and third day's audience," said Davison, "the storms I met with at my arrival have overblown and abated daily. On Saturday again she fell into some new heat, which lasted not long. This day I was myself at the court, and found her in reasonable good terms, though she will not yet seem satisfied to me either with the matter or manner of your proceeding, notwithstanding all the labour I have taken in that behalf. Yet I find not her Majesty altogether so sharp as some men look, though her favour has outwardly cooled in respect both of this action and of our plain proceeding with her here in defence thereof."

The poor Countess—whose imaginary exodus, with the long procession of coaches and side-saddles, had excited so much ire—found herself in a most distressing position. "I have not seen my Lady these ten or twelve days," said Davison. "To-morrow I hope to do my duty towards her. I found her greatly troubled with tempestuous news she received from court, but somewhat comforted when she understood how I had

proceeded with her Majesty . . . . But these passions overblown, I hope her Majesty will have a gracious regard both towards myself and the cause."

Page 1417

But the passions seemed not likely to blow over so soon as was desirable. Leicester's brother the Earl of Warwick took a most gloomy view of the whole transaction, and hoarser than the raven's was his boding tone.

"Well, our mistress's extreme rage doth increase rather than diminish," he wrote, "and she giveth out great threatening words against you. Therefore make the best assurance you can for yourself, and trust not her oath, for that her malice is great and unquenchable in the wisest of their opinions here, and as for other friendships, as far as I can learn, it is as doubtful as the other. Wherefore, my good brother, repose your whole trust in God, and He will defend you in despite of all your enemies. And let this be a great comfort to you, and so it is likewise to myself and all your assured friends, and that is, that you were never so honoured and loved in your life amongst all good people as you are at this day, only for dealing so nobly and wisely in this action as you have done; so that, whatsoever cometh of it, you have done your part. I praise God from my heart for it. Once again, have great care of yourself, I mean for your safety, and if she will needs revoke you, to the overthrowing of the cause, if I were as you, if I could not be assured there, I would go to the farthest part of Christendom rather than ever come into England again. Take heed whom you trust, for that you have some false boys about you."

And the false boys were busy enough, and seemed likely to triumph in the result of their schemes. For a glance into the secret correspondence of Mary of Scotland has already revealed the Earl to us constantly surrounded by men in masks. Many of those nearest his person, and of highest credit out of England, were his deadly foes, sworn to compass his dishonour, his confusion, and eventually his death, and in correspondence with his most powerful adversaries at home and abroad. Certainly his path was slippery and perilous along those icy summits of power, and he had need to look well to his footsteps.

Before Heneage had arrived in the Netherlands, Sir Thomas Shirley, despatched by Leicester to England with a commission to procure supplies for the famishing soldiers, and, if possible, to mitigate the Queen's wrath, had, been admitted more than once to her Majesty's presence. He had fought the Earl's battle as manfully as Davison had done, and, like that envoy, had received nothing in exchange for his plausible arguments but bitter words and big oaths. Eight days after his arrival he was introduced by Hatton into the privy chamber, and at the moment of his entrance was received with a volley of execrations.

"I did expressly and peremptorily forbid his acceptance of the absolute government, in the hearing of divers of my council," said the Queen.

Page 1418

Shirley.—“The necessity of the case was imminent, your Highness. It was his Lordship’s intent to do all for your Majesty’s service. Those countries did expect him as a governor at his first landing, and the States durst do no other than satisfy the people also with that opinion. The people’s mislike of their present government is such and so great as that the name of States is grown odious amongst them. Therefore the States, doubting the furious rage of the people, conferred the authority upon his Lordship with incessant suit to him to receive it. Notwithstanding this, however, he did deny it until he saw plainly both confusion and ruin of that country if he should refuse. On the other hand, when he had seen into their estates, his lordship found great profit and commodity like to come unto your Majesty by your acceptance of it. Your Highness may now have garrisons of English in as many towns as pleaseth you, without any more charge than you are now at. Nor can any peace be made with Spain at any time hereafter, but through you: and by you. Your Majesty should remember, likewise, that if a man of another nation had been chosen governor it might have wrought great danger. Moreover it would have been an indignity that your lieutenant-general should of necessity be under him that so should have been elected. Finally, this is a stop to any other that may affect the place of government there.”

Queen (who has manifested many signs of impatience during this discourse).—“Your speech is all in vain. His Lordship’s proceeding is sufficient to make me infamous to all princes, having protested the contrary, as I have done, in a book which is translated into divers and sundry languages. His Lordship, being my servant, a creature of my own, ought not, in duty towards me, have entered into this course without my knowledge and good allowance.”

Shirley.—“But the world hath conceived a high judgment of your Majesty’s great wisdom and providence; shown by your assailing the King of Spain at one time both in the Low Countries and also by Sir Francis Drake. I do assure myself that the same judgment which did first cause you to take this in hand must continue a certain knowledge in your Majesty that one of these actions must needs stand much better by the other. If Sir Frances do prosper, then all is well. And though he should not prosper, yet this hold that his Lordship hath taken for you on the Low Countries must always assure an honourable peace at your Highness’s pleasure. I beseech your Majesty to remember that to the King of Spain the government of his Lordship is no greater matter than if he were but your lieutenant-general there; but the voyage of Sir Francis is of much greater offence than all.”

Queen (interrupting).—“I can very well answer for Sir Francis. Moreover, if need be, the gentleman careth not if I should disavow him.”

Page 1419

Shirley.—“Even so standeth my Lord, if your disavowing of him may also stand with your Highness’s favour towards him. Nevertheless; should this bruit of your mislike of his Lordship’s authority there come unto the ears of those people; being a nation both sudden and suspicious, and having been heretofore used to stratagem—I fear it may work some strange notion in them, considering that, at this time, there is an increase of taxation raised upon them, the bestowing whereof perchance they know not of. His Lordship’s giving; up of the government may leave them altogether without government, and in worse case than they were ever in before. For now the authority of the States is dissolved, and his Lordship’s government is the only thing that holdeth them together. I do beseech your Highness, then, to consider well of it, and if there be any private cause for which you take grief against his Lordship, nevertheless, to have regard unto the public cause, and to have a care of your own safety, which in many wise men’s opinions, standeth much upon the good maintenance and upholding of this matter.”

Queen.—“I believe nothing of, what you say concerning the dissolving of the authority of the States. I know well enough that the States do remain states still. I mean not to do harm to the cause, but only to reform that which his Lordship hath done beyond his warrant from me.”

And with this the Queen swept suddenly from the apartment. Sir Thomas, at different stages of the conversation, had in vain besought her to accept a letter from the Earl which had been entrusted to his care. She obstinately refused to touch it. Shirley had even had recourse to stratagem: affecting ignorance on many points concerning which the Queen desired information, and suggesting that doubtless she would find those matters fully explained in his Lordship’s letter. The artifice was in vain, and the discussion was, on the whole, unsatisfactory. Yet there is no doubt that the Queen had had the worst of the argument, and she was far too sagacious a politician not to feel the weight of that which had been urged so often in defence of the course pursued. But it was with her partly a matter of temper and offended pride, perhaps even of wounded affection.

On the following morning Shirley saw the Queen walking in the garden of the palace, and made bold to accost her. Thinking, as he said, “to test her affection to Lord Leicester by another means,” the artful Sir Thomas stepped up to her, and observed that his Lordship was seriously ill. “It is feared,” he said, “that the Earl is again attacked by the disease of which Dr. Goodrowse did once cure him. Wherefore his Lordship is now a humble suitor to your Highness that it would please you to spare Goodrowse, and give him leave to go thither for some time.”

The Queen was instantly touched.

“Certainly—with all my heart, with all my heart, he shall have him,” she replied, “and sorry I am that his Lordship hath that need of him.”

Page 1420

“And indeed,” returned sly Sir Thomas, “your Highness is a very gracious prince, who are pleased not to suffer his Lordship to perish in health, though otherwise you remain deeply offended with him.”

“You know my mind,” returned Elizabeth, now all the queen again, and perhaps suspecting the trick; “I may not endure that any man should alter my commission and the authority that I gave him, upon his own fancies and without me.”

With this she instantly summoned one of her gentlemen, in order to break off the interview, fearing that Shirley was about to enter again upon a discussion of the whole subject, and again to attempt the delivery of the Earl’s letter.

In all this there was much of superannuated coquetry, no doubt, and much of Tudor despotism, but there was also a strong infusion of artifice. For it will soon be necessary to direct attention to certain secret transactions of an important nature in which the Queen was engaged, and which were even hidden from the all-seeing eye of Walsingham—although shrewdly suspected both by that statesman and by Leicester—but which were most influential in modifying her policy at that moment towards the Netherlands.

There could be no doubt, however, of the stanch and strenuous manner in which the delinquent Earl was supported by his confidential messengers and by some of his fellow-councillors. His true friends were urgent that the great cause in which he was engaged should be forwarded sincerely and without delay. Shirley had been sent for money; but to draw money from Elizabeth was like coining her life-blood, drachma by drachma.

“Your Lordship is like to have but a poor supply of money at this time,” said Sir Thomas. “To be plain with you, I fear she groweth weary of the charge, and will hardly be brought to deal thoroughly in the action.”

He was also more explicit than he might have been—had he been better informed as to the disposition of the chief personages of the court, concerning whose temper the absent Earl was naturally anxious. Hatton was most in favour at the moment, and it was through Hatton that the communications upon Netherland matters passed; “for,” said Shirley, “she will hardly endure Mr. Secretary (Walsingham) to speak unto her therein.”

“And truly, my Lord,” he continued, “as Mr. Secretary is a noble, good, and true friend unto you, so doth Mr. Vice-Chamberlain show himself an honourable, true, and faithful gentleman, and doth carefully and most like a good friend for your Lordship.”

And thus very succinctly and graphically had the envoy painted the situation to his principal. “Your Lordship now sees things just as they stand,” he moralized. “Your

Lordship is exceeding wise. You know the Queen and her nature best of any man. You know all men here. Your Lordship can judge the sequel by this that you see: only this I must tell your Lordship, I perceive that fears and doubts from thence are like to work better effects here than comforts and assurance. I think it my part to send your Lordship this as it is, rather than to be silent."

Page 1421

And with these rather ominous insinuations the envoy concluded for the time his narrative.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Intolerable tendency to puns
New Years Day in England, 11th January by the New Style
Peace and quietness is brought into a most dangerous estate

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 45, 1586

CHAPTER VII., Part 2.

Leicester's Letters to his Friends—Paltry Conduct of the Earl to Davison—He excuses himself at Davison's Expense—His Letter to Burghley—Effect of the Queen's Letters to the States—Suspicion and Discontent in Holland—States excuse their Conduct to the Queen— Leicester discredited in Holland—Evil Consequences to Holland and England —Magic: Effect of a Letter from Leicester—The Queen appeased—Her Letters to the States and the Earl—She permits the granted Authority——Unhappy Results of the Queen's Course—Her variable Moods—She attempts to deceive Walsingham—Her Injustice to Heneage—His Perplexity and Distress—Humiliating Position of Leicester—-His melancholy Letters to the Queen—He receives a little Consolation—And writes more cheerfully—The Queen is more benignant—The States less contented than the Earl—His Quarrels with them begin.

While these storms were blowing and "overblowing" in England, Leicester remained greatly embarrassed and anxious in Holland. He had sown the wind more extensively than he had dreamed of when accepting the government, and he was now awaiting, with much trepidation, the usual harvest: And we have seen that it was rapidly ripening. Meantime, the good which he had really effected in the Provinces by the course he had taken was likely to be neutralized by the sinister rumours as to his impending disgrace, while the enemy was proportionally encouraged. "I understand credibly," he said, "that the Prince of Parma feels himself in great jollity that her Majesty doth rather mislike than allow of our doings here, which; if it be true, let her be sure her own sweet self shall first smart."

Moreover; the English troops were, as we have seen, mere shoeless, shivering, starving vagabonds. The Earl had generously advanced very large sums of money from his own pocket to relieve their necessity. The States, on the other hand, had voluntarily increased the monthly contribution of 200,000 florins, to which their contract with Elizabeth obliged them, and were more disposed than ever they had been since the death of Orange to proceed vigorously and harmoniously against the common enemy of Christendom. Under such circumstances it may well be imagined that there was cause on Leicester's part for deep mortification at the tragical turn which the Queen's temper seemed to be taking.

Page 1422

“I know not,” he said, “how her Majesty doth mean to dispose of me. It hath grieved me more than I can express that for faithful and good service she should so deeply conceive against me. God knows with what mind I have served her Highness, and perhaps some others might have failed. Yet she is neither tied one jot by covenant or promise by me in any way, nor at one groat the more charges, but myself two or three thousand pounds sterling more than now is like to be well spent. I will desire no partial speech in my favour. If my doings be ill for her Majesty and the realm, let me feel the smart of it. The cause is now well forward; let not her majesty suffer it to quail. If you will have it proceed to good effect, send away Sir William Pelham with all the haste you can. I mean not to complain, but with so weighty a cause as this is, few men have been so weakly assisted. Her Majesty hath far better choice for my place, and with any that may succeed me let Sir William Pelham be first that may come. I speak from my soul for her Majesty’s service. I am for myself upon an hour’s warning to obey her good pleasure.”

Thus far the Earl had maintained his dignity. He had yielded to the solicitations of the States, and had thereby exceeded his commission, and gratified his ambition, but he had in no wise forfeited his self-respect. But—so soon as the first unquestionable intelligence of the passion to which the Queen had given way at his misdoings reached him—he began to whimper, The straightforward tone which Davison had adopted in his interviews with Elizabeth, and the firmness with which he had defended the cause of his absent friend, at a moment when he had plunged himself into disgrace, was worthy of applause. He deserved at least a word of honest thanks.

Ignoble however was the demeanor of the Earl towards the man—for whom he had but recently been unable to invent eulogies sufficiently warm—so soon as he conceived the possibility of sacrificing his friend as the scape-goat for his own fault. An honest schoolboy would have scorned to leave thus in the lurch a comrade who had been fighting his battles so honestly.

“How earnest I was,” he wrote to the lords of the council, 9th March, 1586, “not only to acquaint her Majesty, but immediately upon the first motion made by the States, to send Mr. Davison over to her with letters, I doubt not but he will truly affirm for me; yea, and how far against my will it was, notwithstanding any reasons delivered me, that he and others persisted in, to have me accept first of this place. . . . The extremity of the case, and my being persuaded that Mr. Davison might have better satisfied her Majesty, than I perceive he can, caused, me-neither arrogantly nor contemptuously, but even merely and faithfully—to do her Majesty the best service.”

He acknowledged, certainly, that Davison had been influenced by honest motives, although his importunities had been the real cause of the Earl’s neglect of his own obligations. But he protested that he had himself, only erred through an excessive pliancy to the will of others. “My yielding was my own fault,” he admitted, “whatsoever

his persuasions; but far from a contemptuous heart, or else God pluck out both heart and bowels with utter shame.”

Page 1423

So soon as Sir Thomas Heneage had presented himself, and revealed the full extent of the Queen's wrath, the Earl's disposition to cast the whole crime on the shoulders of Davison became quite undisguised.

"I thank you for your letters," wrote Leicester to Walsingham, "though you can send me no comfort. Her Majesty doth deal hardly to believe so ill of me. It is true I faulted, but she doth not consider what commodities she hath withal, and herself no way engaged for it, as Mr. Davison might have better declared it, if it had pleased him. And I must thank him only for my blame, and so he will confess to you, for, I protest before God, no necessity here could have made me leave her Majesty unacquainted with the cause before I would have accepted of it, but only his so earnest pressing me with his faithfull assured promise to discharge me, however her Majesty should take it. For you all see there she had no other cause to be offended but this, and, by the Lord, he was the only cause; albeit it is no sufficient allegation, being as I am . . . . . He had, I think, saved all to have told her, as he promised me. But now it is laid upon me, God send the cause to take no harm, my grief must be the less.

"How far Mr. Heneage's commission shall deface me I know not. He is wary to observe his commission, and I consent withal. I know the time will be her Majesty will be sorry for it. In the meantime I am too, too weary of the high dignity. I would that any that could serve her Majesty were placed in it, and I to sit down with all my losses."

In more manful strain he then alluded to the sufferings of his army. "Whatsoever become of me," he said, "give me leave to speak for the poor soldiers. If they be not better maintained, being in this strange country, there will be neither good service done, nor be without great dishonour to her Majesty. . . . Well, you see the wants, and it is one cause that will glad me to be rid of this heavy high calling, and wish me at my poor cottage again, if any I shall find. But let her Majesty pay them well, and appoint such a man as Sir William Pelham to govern them, and she never wan more honour than these men here will do, I am persuaded."

That the Earl was warmly urged by all most conversant with Netherland politics to assume the government was a fact admitted by all. That he manifested rather eagerness than reluctance on the subject, and that his only hesitation arose from the proposed restraints upon the power, not from scruples about accepting the power, are facts upon record. There is nothing save his own assertion to show any backwardness on his part to snatch the coveted prize; and that assertion was flatly denied by Davison, and was indeed refuted by every circumstance in the case. It is certain that he had concealed from Davison the previous prohibitions of the Queen. He could anticipate much better than could Davison, therefore, the probable indignation

Page 1424

of the Queen. It is strange then that he should have shut his eyes to it so wilfully, and stranger still that he should have relied on the envoy's eloquence instead of his own to mitigate that emotion. Had he placed his defence simply upon its true basis, the necessity of the case, and the impossibility of carrying out the Queen's intentions in any other way, it would be difficult to censure him; but that he should seek to screen himself by laying the whole blame on a subordinate, was enough to make any honest man who heard him hang his head. "I meant not to do it, but Davison told me to do it, please your Majesty, and if there was naughtiness in it, he said he would make it all right with your Majesty." Such, reduced to its simplest expression, was the defence of the magnificent Earl of Leicester.

And as he had gone cringing and whining to his royal mistress, so it was natural that he should be brutal and blustering to his friend.

"By your means," said he, "I have fallen into her Majesty's deep displeasure . . . . If you had delivered to her the truth of my dealing, her Highness never could have conceived, as I perceive she doth . . . . Nor doth her Majesty know how hardly I was drawn to accept this place before I had acquainted her—as to which you promised you would not only give her full satisfaction, but would, procure me great thanks. . . . You did chiefly persuade me to take this charge upon me . . . . You can remember how many treaties you and others had with the States, before I agreed; for all yours and their persuasion to take it. . . . You gave me assurance to satisfy her Majesty, but I see not that you have done anything . . . . I did not hide from you the doubt I had of her Majesty's ill taking it . . . . You chiefly brought me into it . . . . and it could no way have been heavy to you, though you had told the uttermost of your own doing, as you faithfully promised you would . . . . I did very unwillingly come into the matter, doubting that to fall out which is come to pass . . . . and it doth so fall out by your negligent carelessness, whereof I many hundred times told you that you would both mar the goodness of the matter, and breed me her Majesty's displeasure. . . . Thus fare you well, and except your embassages have better success, I shall have no cause to commend them."

And so was the unfortunate Davison ground into finest dust between the upper and lower millstones of royal wrath and loyal subserviency.

Meantime the other special envoy had made his appearance in the Netherlands; the other go-between between the incensed Queen and the backsliding favourite. It has already been made sufficiently obvious, by the sketch given of his instructions, that his mission was a delicate one. In obedience to those instructions, Heneage accordingly made his appearance before the council, and, in Leicester's presence, delivered to them the severe and biting reprimand which Elizabeth

Page 1425

had chosen to inflict upon the States and upon the governor. The envoy performed his ungracious task as daintily, as he could, and after preliminary consultation with Leicester; but the proud Earl was deeply mortified." The fourteenth day of this month of March," said he, "Sir Thomas Heneage delivered a very sharp letter from her Majesty to the council of estate, besides his message—myself being, present, for so was her Majesty's pleasure, as he said, and I do think he did but as he was commanded. How great a grief it must be to an honest heart and a true, faithful servant, before his own face, to a company of very wise and grave counsellors, who had conceived a marvellous opinion before of my credit with her Majesty, to be charged now with a manifest and wilful contempt! Matter enough to have broken any man's heart, that looked rather for thanks, as God doth know I did when I first heard of Mr. Heneage's arrival—I must say to your Lordship, for discharge of my duty, I can be no fit man to serve here—my disgrace is too great—protesting to you that since that day I cannot find it in my heart to come into that place, where, by my own sufferings torn, I was made to be thought so lewd a person."

He then comforted himself—as he had a right to do—with the reflection that this disgrace inflicted was more than he deserved, and that such would be the opinion of those by whom he was surrounded.

"Albeit one thing," he said, "did greatly comfort me, that they all best knew the wrong was great I had, and that her Majesty was very wrongfully informed of the state of my cause. I doubt not but they can and will discharge me, howsoever they shall satisfy her Majesty. And as I would rather wish for death than justly to deserve her displeasure; so, good my Lord, this disgrace not coming for any ill service to her, pray procure me a speedy resolution, that I may go hide me and pray for her. My heart is broken, though thus far I can quiet myself, that I know I have done her Majesty as faithful and good service in these countries as ever she had done her since she was Queen of England . . . . Under correction, my good Lord, I have had Halifax law—to be condemned first and inquired upon after. I pray God that no man find this measure that I have done, and deserved no worse."

He defended himself—as Davison had already defended him—upon the necessities of the case.

"I, a poor gentleman," he said, "who have wholly depended upon herself alone—and now, being commanded to a service of the greatest importance that ever her Majesty employed any servant in, and finding the occasion so serving me, and the necessity of time such as would not permit such delays, flatly seeing that if that opportunity were lost, the like again for her service and the good of the realm was never, to be looked for, presuming upon the favour of my prince, as many servants have done, exceeding somewhat thereupon, rather than breaking any part of

Page 1426

my commission, taking upon me a place whereby I found these whole countries could be held at her best devotion, without binding her Majesty to any such matter as she had forbidden to the States before finding, I say, both the time and opportunity to serve, and no lack but to trust to her gracious acceptation, I now feel that how good, how honourable, how profitable soever it be, it is turned to a worse part than if I had broken all her commissions and commandments, to the greatest harm, and dishonour, and danger, that may be imagined against her person, state, and dignity."

He protested, not without a show of reason, that he was like to be worse punished "for well-doing than any man that had committed a most heinous or traitorous offence," and he maintained that if he had not accepted the government, as he had done, "the whole State had been gone and wholly lost." All this—as we have seen—had already been stoutly urged by Davison, in the very face of the tempest, but with no result, except to gain the, enmity of both parties to the quarrel. The ungrateful Leicester now expressed confidence that the second go-between would be more adroit than the first had proved. "The causes why," said he, "Mr. Davison could have told—no man better—but Mr. Heneage can now tell, who hath sought to the uttermost the bottom of all things. I will stand to his report, whether glory or vain desire of title caused me to step one foot forward in the matter. My place was great enough and high enough before, with much less trouble than by this, besides the great indignation of her Majesty . . . . If I had overslipt the good occasion then in danger, I had been worthy to be hanged, and to be taken for a most lewd servant to her Majesty, and a dishonest wretch to my country."

But diligently as Heneage had sought to the bottom of all things, he had not gained the approbation of Sidney. Sir Philip thought that the new man had only ill botched a piece of work that had been most awkwardly contrived from the beginning. "Sir Thomas Heneage," said he, "hath with as much honesty, in my opinion done as much hurt as any man this twelve-month hath done with naughtiness. But I hope in God, when her Majesty finds the truth of things, her graciousness will not utterly, overthrow a cause so behooveful and costly unto her."

He briefly warned the government that most disastrous effects were likely to ensue, if the Earl should be publicly disgraced, and the recent action of the States reversed. The penny-wise economy, too, of the Queen, was rapidly proving a most ruinous extravagance. "I only cry for Flushing;" said Sidney, "but, unless the monies be sent over, there will some terrible accident follow, particularly to the cautionary towns, if her Majesty mean to have them cautions."

Page 1427

The effect produced by the first explosion of the Queen's wrath was indeed one of universal suspicion and distrust. The greatest care had been taken, however, that the affair should be delicately handled, for Heneage, while, doing as much hurt by honesty as, others by naughtiness, had modified his course as much as he dared in deference to the opinions of the Earl himself, and that of his English counsellors. The great culprit himself, assisted by his two lawyers, Clerk and Killigrew—had himself drawn the bill of his own indictment. The letters of the Queen to the States, to the council, and to the Earl himself, were, of necessity, delivered, but the reprimand which Heneage had been instructed to fulminate was made as harmless as possible. It was arranged that he should make a speech before the council; but abstain from a protocol. The oration was duly pronounced, and it was, of necessity, stinging. Otherwise the disobedience to the Queen, would have been flagrant. But the pain inflicted was to disappear with the first castigation. The humiliation was to be public and solemn, but it was not to be placed on perpetual record.

"We thought best," said Leicester, Heneage, Clerk, and Killigrew—"In according to her Majesty's secret instructions—to take that course which might least endanger the weak estate of the Provinces—that is to say, to utter so much in words as we hoped might satisfy her excellent Majesty's expectation, and yet leave them nothing in writing to confirm that which was secretly spread in many places to the hindrance of the good course of settling these affairs. Which speech, after Sir Thomas Heneage had devised, and we both perused and allowed, he, by our consent and advice, pronounced to the council of state. This we did think needful—especially because every one of the council that was present at the reading of her Majesty's first letters, was of the full mind, that if her Majesty should again show the least mislike of the present government, or should not by her next letters confirm it, they, were all undone—for that every man would cast with himself which way to make his peace."

Thus adroitly had the "poor gentleman, who could not find it in his heart to come again into the place, where—by his own sufferings torn—he was made to appear so lewd a person"—provided that there should remain no trace of that lewdness and of his sovereign's displeasure, upon the record of the States. It was not long, too, before the Earl was enabled to surmount his mortification; but the end was not yet.

The universal suspicion, consequent on these proceedings, grew most painful. It pointed to one invariable quarter. It was believed by all that the Queen was privately treating for peace, and that the transaction was kept a secret not only from the States but from her own most trusted counsellors also. It would be difficult to exaggerate the pernicious effects of this suspicion. Whether it was a well-grounded

Page 1428

one or not, will be shown in a subsequent chapter, but there is no doubt that the vigour of the enterprise was thus sapped at a most critical moment. The Provinces had never been more heartily banded together since the fatal 10th of July, 1584, than they were in the early spring of 1586. They were rapidly organizing their own army, and, if the Queen had manifested more sympathy with her own starving troops, the united Englishmen and Hollanders would have been invincible even by Alexander Farnese.

Moreover, they had sent out nine war-vessels to cruise off the Cape Verd Islands for the homeward-bound Spanish treasure fleet from America, with orders, if they missed it, to proceed to the West Indies; so that, said Leicester, “the King of Spain will have enough to do between these men and Drake.” All parties had united in conferring a generous amount of power upon the Earl, who was, in truth, stadholder-general, under grant from the States—and both Leicester and the Provinces themselves were eager and earnest for the war. In war alone lay the salvation of England and Holland. Peace was an impossibility. It seemed to the most experienced statesmen of both countries even an absurdity. It may well be imagined, therefore, that the idea of an underhand negotiation by Elizabeth would cause a frenzy in the Netherlands. In Leicester’s opinion, nothing short of a general massacre of the English would be the probable consequence. “No doubt,” said he, “the very way it is to put us all to the sword here. For mine own part it would be happiest for me, though I wish and trust to lose my life in better sort.”

Champagny, however, was giving out mysterious hints that the King of Spain could have peace with England when he wished for it. Sir Thomas Cecil, son of Lord Burghley, on whose countenance the States especially relied, was returning on sick-leave from his government of the Brill, and this sudden departure of so eminent a personage, joined with the public disavowal of the recent transaction between Leicester and the Provinces, was producing a general and most sickening apprehension as to the Queen’s good faith. The Earl did not fail to urge these matters most warmly on the consideration of the English council, setting forth that the States were stanch for the war, but that they would be beforehand with her if she attempted by underhand means to compass a peace. “If these men once smell any such matter,” wrote Leicester to Burghley, “be you sure they will soon come before you, to the utter overthrow of her Majesty and state for ever.”

The Earl was suspecting the “false boys,” by whom he was surrounded, although it was impossible for him to perceive, as we have been enabled to do, the wide-spread and intricate meshes by which he was enveloped. “Your Papists in England,” said he, “have sent over word to some in this company, that all that they ever hoped for is come to pass; that my Lord of Leicester shall be called away in greatest indignation with her Majesty, and to confirm this of Champagny, I have myself seen a letter that her Majesty is in hand with a secret peace. God forbid! for if it be so, her Majesty, her realm, and we, are all undone.”

Page 1429

The feeling in the Provinces was still sincerely loyal towards England. "These men," said Leicester, "yet honour and most dearly love her Majesty, and hardly, I know, will be brought to believe ill of her any way." Nevertheless these rumours, to the discredit of her good faith, were doing infinite harm; while the Earl, although keeping his eyes and ears wide open, was anxious not to compromise himself any further with his sovereign, by appearing himself to suspect her of duplicity. "Good, my Lord," he besought Burghley, "do not let her Majesty know of this concerning Champagny as coming from me, for she will think it is done for my own cause, which, by the Lord God, it is not, but even on the necessity of the case for her own safety, and the realm, and us all. Good my Lord, as you will do any good in the matter, let not her Majesty understand any piece of it to come from me."

The States-General, on the 25th March, N.S., addressed a respectful letter to the Queen, in reply to her vehement chidings. They expressed their deep regret that her Majesty should be so offended with the election of the Earl of Leicester as absolute governor.

They confessed that she had just cause of displeasure, but hoped that when she should be informed of the whole matter she would rest better satisfied with their proceedings. They stated that the authority was the same which had been previously bestowed upon governors-general; observing that by the word "absolute," which had been used in designation of that authority, nothing more had been intended than to give to the Earl full power to execute his commission, while the sovereignty of the country was reserved to the people. This commission, they said, could not be without danger revoked. And therefore they most humbly besought her Majesty to approve what had been done, and to remember its conformity with her own advice to them, that a multitude of heads, whereby confusion in the government is bred, should be avoided.

Leicester, upon the same occasion, addressed a letter to Burghley and Walsingham, expressing himself as became a crushed and contrite man, never more to raise his drooping head again, but warmly and manfully urging upon the attention of the English government—for the honour and interest of the Queen herself—"the miserable state of the poor soldiers." The necessity of immediate remittances in order to keep them from starving, was most imperious. For himself, he was smothering his wretchedness until he should learn her Majesty's final decision, as to what was to become of him. "Meantime," said he, "I carry my grief inward, and will proceed till her Majesty's full pleasure come with as little discouragement to the cause as I can. I pray God her Majesty may do that may be best for herself. For my own part my, heart is broken, but not by the enemy."

There is no doubt that the public disgrace thus inflicted upon the broken-hearted governor, and the severe censure administered to the States by the Queen were both ill-timed and undeserved. Whatever his disingenuousness towards Davison, whatever

his disobedience to Elizabeth, however ambitious his own secret motives may, have been, there is no doubt at all that thus far he had borne himself well in his great office.

Page 1430

Richard Cavendish—than whom few had better opportunities of judging—spoke in strong language on the subject. “It is a thing almost incredible,” said he, “that the care and diligence of any, one man living could, in so small time; have so much repaired so disjointed and loose an estate as my Lord found this country, in. But lest he should swell in pride of that his good success, your Lordship knoweth that God hath so tempered the cause with the construction thereof, as may well hold him in good consideration of human things.” He alluded with bitterness—as did all men in the Netherlands who were not open or disguised Papists—to the fatal rumours concerning the peace-negotiation in connection with the recall of Leicester. “There be here advertisements of most fearful instance,” he said, “namely, that Champagny doth not spare most liberally to bruit abroad that he hath in his hands the conditions of peace offered by her Majesty unto the King his master, and that it is in his power to conclude at pleasure—which fearful and mischievous plot, if in time it be not met withal by some notable encounter, it cannot but prove the root of great ruin.”

The “false boys” about Leicester were indefatigable in spreading these rumours, and in taking advantage—with the assistance of the Papists in the obedient Provinces and in England—of the disgraced condition in which the Queen had placed the favourite. Most galling to the haughty Earl—most damaging to the cause of England, Holland, and, liberty—were the tales to his discredit, which circulated on the Bourse at Antwerp, Middelburg, Amsterdam, and in all the other commercial centres. The most influential bankers and merchants, were assured—by a thousand chattering—but as it were invisible—tongues, that the Queen had for a long time disliked Leicester; that he was a man of no account among the statesmen of England; that he was a beggar and a bankrupt; that, if he had waited two months longer, he would have made his appearance in the Provinces with one man and one boy for his followers; that the Queen had sent him thither to be rid of him; that she never intended him to have more authority than Sir John Norris had; that she could not abide the bestowing the title of Excellency upon him, and that she had not disguised her fury at his elevation to the post of governor-general.

All who attempted a refutation of these statements were asked, with a sneer, whether her Majesty had ever written a line to him, or in commendation of him, since his arrival. Minute inquiries were made by the Dutch merchants of their commercial correspondents, both in their own country and in England, as to Leicester’s real condition and character. at home. What was his rank, they asked, what his ability, what: his influence at court? Why, if he were really of so high quality as had been reported, was he thus neglected, and at last disgraced? Had he any landed property in England? Had he really ever held any

Page 1431

other office but that of master of the horse? “And then,” asked one particular busy body, who made himself very unpleasant on the Amsterdam Exchange, “why has her Majesty forbidden all noblemen and gentlemen from coming hither, as was the case at the beginning? Is it because she is hearkening to a peace? And if it be so, quoth he, we are well handled; for if her Majesty hath sent a disgraced man to amuse us, while she is secretly working a peace for herself, when we—on the contrary—had broken off all our negotiations, upon confidence of her Majesty’s goodness; such conduct will be remembered to the end of the world, and the Hollanders will never abide the name of England again.”

On such a bed of nettles there was small chance of repose for the governor. Some of the rumours were even more stinging. So incomprehensible did it seem that the proud sovereign of England should send over her subjects to starve or beg in the streets of Flushing and Ostend, that it was darkly intimated that Leicester had embezzled the funds, which, no doubt, had been remitted for the poor soldiers. This was the most cruel blow of all. The Earl had been put to enormous charges. His household at the Hague cost him a thousand pounds a month. He had been paying and furnishing five hundred and fifty men out of his own purse. He had also a choice regiment of cavalry, numbering seven hundred and fifty horse; three hundred and fifty of which number were over and above those allowed for by the Queen, and were entirely at his expense. He was most liberal in making presents of money to every gentleman in his employment. He had deeply mortgaged his estates in order to provide for these heavy demands upon him, and professed his willingness “to spend more, if he might have got any more money for his land that was left;” and in the face of such unquestionable facts—much to the credit certainly of his generosity—he was accused of swindling a Queen whom neither Jew nor Gentile had ever yet been sharp enough to swindle; while he was in reality plunging forward in a course of reckless extravagance in order to obviate the fatal effects of her penuriousness.

Yet these sinister reports were beginning to have a poisonous effect. Already an alteration of mien was perceptible in the States-General. “Some buzzing there is amongst them,” said Leicester, “whatsoever it be. They begin to deal very strangely within these few days.” Moreover the industry of the Poleys, Blunts, and Pagets, had turned these unfavourable circumstances to such good account that a mutiny had been near breaking out among the English troops. “And, before the Lord I speak it,” said the Earl, “I am sure some of these good towns had been gone ere this, but for my money. As for the States, I warrant you, they see day at a little hole. God doth know what a forward and a joyful country here was within a month. God send her Majesty to recover it so again, and to take care of it, on the condition she send me after Sir Francis Drake to the Indies, my service here being no more acceptable.”

Page 1432

Such was the aspect of affairs in the Provinces after the first explosion of the Queen's anger had become known. Meanwhile the court-weather was very changeable in England, being sometimes serene, sometimes cloudy,—always treacherous.

Mr. Vavasour, sent by the Earl with despatches to her Majesty and the council, had met with a sufficiently benignant reception. She accepted the letters, which, however, owing to a bad cold with a defluxion in the eyes, she was unable at once to read; but she talked ambiguously with the messenger. Yavasour took pains to show the immediate necessity of sending supplies, so that the armies in the Netherlands might take the field at the, earliest possible moment. "And what," said she, "if a peace should come in the mean time?"

"If your Majesty desireth a convenient peace," replied Vavasour, "to take the field is the readiest way to obtain it; for as yet the King of Spain hath had no reason to fear you. He is daily expecting that your own slackness may give your Majesty an overthrow. Moreover, the Spaniards are soldiers, and are not to be moved by-shadows."

But the Queen had no ears for these remonstrances, and no disposition to open her coffers. A warrant for twenty-four thousand pounds had been signed by her at the end of the month of March, and was about to be sent, when Vavasour arrived; but it was not possible for him, although assisted by the eloquence of Walsingham and Burghley, to obtain an enlargement of the pittance. "The storms are overblown," said Walsingham, "but I fear your Lordship shall receive very scarce measure from hence. You will not believe how the sparing humour doth increase upon us."

Nor were the storms so thoroughly overblown but that there were not daily indications of returning foul weather. Accordingly—after a conference with Vavasour—Burghley, and Walsingham had an interview with the Queen, in which the Lord Treasurer used bold and strong language. He protested to her that he was bound, both by his duty to himself and his oath as her councillor, to declare that the course she was holding to Lord Leicester was most dangerous to her own honour, interest and safety. If she intended to continue in this line of conduct, he begged to resign his office of Lord Treasurer; wishing; before God and man, to wash his bands of the shame and peril which he saw could not be avoided. The Queen, astonished at the audacity of Burghley's attitude and language, hardly knew whether to chide him for his presumption or to listen to his arguments. She did both. She taxed him with insolence in daring to address her so roundly, and then finding he was speaking even in 'amaritudine animae' and out of a clear conscience, she became calm again, and intimated a disposition to qualify her anger against the absent Earl.

Page 1433

Next day, to their sorrow, the two councillors found that the Queen had again changed her mind—“as one that had been by some adverse counsel seduced.” She expressed the opinion that affairs would do well enough in the Netherlands, even though Leicester were displaced. A conference followed between Walsingham, Hatton, and Burghley, and then the three went again to her Majesty. They assured her that if she did not take immediate steps to satisfy the States and the people of the Provinces, she would lose those countries and her own honour at the same time; and that then they would prove a source of danger to her instead of protection and glory. At this she was greatly troubled, and agreed to do anything they might advise consistently with her honour. It was then agreed that Leicester should be continued in the government which he had accepted until the matter should be further considered, and letters to that effect were at once written. Then came messenger from Sir Thomas Heneage, bringing despatches from that envoy, and a second and most secret one from the Earl himself. Burghley took the precious letter which the favourite had addressed to his royal mistress, and had occasion to observe its magical effect. Walsingham and the Lord Treasurer had been right in so earnestly remonstrating with him on his previous silence.

“She read your letter,” said Burghley, “and, in very truth, I found her princely heart touched with favourable interpretation of your actions; affirming them to be only offensive to her, in that she was not made privy to them; not now misliking that you had the authority.”

Such, at fifty-three, was Elizabeth Tudor. A gentle whisper of idolatry from the lips of the man she loved, and she was wax in his hands. Where now were the vehement protestations of horror that her public declaration of principles and motives had been set at nought? Where now were her vociferous denunciations of the States, her shrill invectives against Leicester, her big oaths, and all the ‘hysterica passio,’ which had sent poor Lord Burghley to bed with the gout, and inspired the soul of Walsingham with dismal forebodings? Her anger had dissolved into a shower of tenderness, and if her parsimony still remained it was because that could only vanish when she too should cease to be.

And thus, for a moment, the grave diplomatic difference between the crown of England and their high mightinesses the United States—upon the solution of which the fate of Christendom was hanging—seemed to shrink to the dimensions of a lovers’ quarrel. Was it not strange that the letter had been so long delayed?

Davison had exhausted argument in defence of the acceptance by the Earl of the authority conferred by the States and had gained nothing by his eloquence, save abuse from the Queen, and acrimonious censure from the Earl. He had deeply offended both by pleading the cause of the erring favourite, when the favourite should have spoken for himself. “Poor Mr. Davison,” said Walsingham, “doth take it very grievously that your Lordship should conceive so hardly of him as you do. I find the conceit of your Lordship’s disfavour hath greatly dejected him. But at such time as he arrived her

Majesty was so incensed, as all the arguments and orators in the world could not have wrought any satisfaction."

Page 1434

But now a little billet-doux had done what all the orators in the world could not do. The arguments remained the same, but the Queen no longer "misliked that Leicester should have the authority." It was natural that the Lord Treasurer should express his satisfaction at this auspicious result.

"I did commend her princely nature," he said, "in allowing your good intention, and excusing you of any spot of evil meaning; and I thought good to hasten her resolution, which you must now take to come from a favourable good mistress. You must strive with your nature to throw over your shoulder that which is past."

Sir Walter Raleigh, too, who had been "falsely and pestilently" represented to the Earl as an enemy, rather than what he really was, a most ardent favourer of the Netherland cause, wrote at once to congratulate him on the change in her Majesty's demeanour. "The Queen is in very good terms with you now," he said, "and, thanks be to God, well pacified, and you are again her 'sweet Robin.'"

Sir Walter wished to be himself the bearer of the comforting despatches to Leicester, on the ground that he had been represented as an "ill instrument against him," and in order that he might justify himself against the charge, with his own lips. The Queen, however, while professing to make use of Shirley as the messenger, bade Walsingham declare to the Earl, upon her honour, that Raleigh had done good offices for him, and that, in the time of her anger, he had been as earnest in his defence as the best friend could be. It would have been—singular, indeed, had it been otherwise. "Your Lordship," said Sir Walter, "doth well understand my affection toward Spain, and how I have consumed the best part of my fortune, hating the tyrannous prosperity of that state. It were strange and monstrous that I should now become an enemy to my country and conscience. All that I have desired at your Lordship's hands is that you will evermore deal directly with me in all matters—of suspect doubleness, and so ever esteem me as you shall find me deserving good or bad. In the mean time, let no poetical scribe work your Lordship by any device to doubt that I am a hollow or cold servant to the action."

It was now agreed that letters should be drawn, up authorizing Leicester to continue in the office which he held, until the state-council should devise some modification in his commission. As it seemed, however, very improbable that the board would devise anything of the kind, Burghley expressed the belief that the country was like to continue in the Earl's government without any change whatever. The Lord Treasurer was also of opinion that the Queen's letters to Leicester would convey as much comfort as he had received discomfort; although he admitted that there was a great difference: The former letters he knew had deeply wounded his heart, while the new ones could not suddenly sink so low as the wound.

The despatch to the States-General was benignant, elaborate, slightly diffuse. The Queen's letter to 'sweet Robin' was caressing, but argumentative.

Page 1435

“It is always thought,” said she, “in the opinion of the world, a hard bargain when both parties are losers, and so doth fall out in the case between us two. You, as we hear, are greatly grieved in respect of the great displeasure you find we have conceived against you. We are no less grieved that a subject of ours of that quality that you are, a creature of our own, and one that hath always received an extraordinary portion of our favour above all our subjects, even from the beginning of our reign, should deal so carelessly, not to say contemptuously, as to give the world just cause to think that we are had in contempt by him that ought most to respect and reverence us, which, we do assure you, hath wrought as great grief in us as anyone thing that ever happened unto us.

“We are persuaded that you, that have so long known us, cannot think that ever we could have been drawn to have taken so hard a course therein had we not been provoked by an extraordinary cause. But for that your grieved and wounded mind hath more need of comfort than reproof, who, we are persuaded, though the act of contempt can no ways be excused, had no other meaning and intent than to advance our service, we think meet to forbear to dwell upon a matter wherein we ourselves do find so little comfort, assuring you that whosoever professeth to love you best taketh not more comfort of your well doing, or discomfort of your evil doing than ourself.”

After this affectionate preface she proceeded to intimate her desire that the Earl should take the matter as nearly as possible into his own hands. It was her wish that he should retain the authority of absolute governor, but—if it could be so arranged—that he should dispense with the title, retaining only that of her lieutenant-general. It was not her intention however, to create any confusion or trouble in the Provinces, and she was therefore willing that the government should remain upon precisely the same footing as that on which it then stood, until circumstances should permit the change of title which she suggested. And the whole matter was referred to the wisdom of Leicester, who was to advise with Heneage and such others as he liked to consult, although it was expressly stated that the present arrangement was to be considered a provisional and not a final one.

Until this soothing intelligence could arrive in the Netherlands the suspicions concerning the underhand negotiations with Spain grew daily more rife, and the discredit cast upon the Earl more embarrassing. The private letters which passed between the Earl’s enemies in Holland and in England contained matter more damaging to himself and to the cause which he had at heart than the more public reports of modern days can disseminate, which, being patent to all, can be more easily contradicted. Leicester incessantly warned his colleagues of her Majesty’s council against the malignant manufacturers of intelligence. “I pray you, my Lords, as you are wise,” said he, “beware of them all. You shall find them here to be shrewd pick-thinks, and hardly worth the hearkening unto.”

Page 1436

He complained bitterly of the disgrace that was heaped upon him, both publicly and privately, and of the evil consequences which were sure to follow from the course pursued. "Never was man so villanously handled by letters out of England as I have been," said he, "not only advertising her Majesty's great dislike with me before this my coming over, but that I was an odious man in England, and so long as I tarried here that no help was to be looked for, that her Majesty would send no more men or money, and that I was used here but for a time till a peace were concluded between her Majesty and the Prince of Parma. What the continuance of a man's discredit thus will turn out is to be thought of, for better I were a thousand times displaced than that her Majesty's great advantage of so notable Provinces should be hindered."

As to the peace-negotiations—which, however cunningly managed, could not remain entirely concealed—the Earl declared them to be as idle as they were disingenuous. "I will boldly pronounce that all the peace you can make in the world, leaving these countries," said he to Burghley, "will never prove other than a fair spring for a few days, to be all over blasted with a hard storm after." Two days later her Majesty's comforting letters arrived, and the Earl began to raise his drooping head. Heneage, too, was much relieved, but he was, at the same time, not a little perplexed. It was not so easy to undo all the mischief created by the Queen's petulance. The "scorpion's sting"—as her Majesty expressed herself—might be balsamed, but the poison had spread far beyond the original wound.

"The letters just brought in," wrote Heneage to Burghley, "have well relieved a most noble and sufficient servant, but I fear they will not restore the much-repaired wrecks of these far-decayed noble countries into the same state I found them in. A loose, disordered, and unknit state needs no shaking, but propping. A subtle and fearful kind of people—should not be made more distrustful, but assured." He then expressed annoyance at the fault already found with him, and surely if ever man had cause to complain of reproof administered him, in quick succession; for not obeying contradictory directions following upon each other as quickly, that man was Sir Thomas Heneage. He had been, as he thought, over cautious in administering the rebuke to the Earl's arrogance, which he had been expressly sent over to administer but scarcely had he accomplished his task, with as much delicacy as he could devise, when he found himself censured;—not for dilatoriness, but for haste. "Fault I perceive," said he to Burghley, "is found in me, not by your Lordship, but by some other, that I did not stay proceeding if I found the public cause might take hurt. It is true I had good warrant for the manner, the, place, and the persons, but, for the matter none, for done it must be. Her Majesty's offence must be declared. Yet if I did not all I possibly could to uphold the cause, and to keep the tottering cause upon the wheels, I deserve no thanks, but reproof."

Page 1437

Certainly, when the blasts of royal rage are remembered, by which the envoy had been, as it were, blown out of England into Holland, it is astonishing to find his actions censured for undue precipitancy. But it was not the, first, nor was it likely to be the last time, for comparatively subordinate agents in Elizabeth's government to be, distressed by, contradictory commands, when the sovereign did not know or did not chose to make known, her own mind on important occasions. "Well, my Lord," said plaintive Sir Thomas, "wiser men may serve more pleasingly and happily, but never shall any serve her Majesty more, faithfully and heartily. And so I cannot be persuaded her Majesty thinketh; for from herself I find nothing but most sweet and—gracious, favour, though by others' censures I may gather otherwise of her judgment; which I confess, doth cumber me."

He was destined to be cumbered more than once before these negotiations should be concluded; but meantime; there was a brief gleam of sunshine. The English friends of Leicester in the Netherlands were enchanted with the sudden change in the Queen's humour; and to Lord Burghley, who was not, in reality, the most stanch of the absent Earl's defenders, they poured themselves out in profuse and somewhat superfluous gratitude.

Cavendish, in strains exultant, was sure that Burghley's children, grand-children, and remotest posterity, would rejoice that their great ancestor, in such a time of need had been "found and felt to be indeed a 'pater patria,' a good-father to a happy land." And, although unwilling to "stir up the old Adam" in his Lordship's soul, he yet took the liberty of comparing the Lord Treasurer, in his old and declining years with Mary Magdalen; assuring him, that for ever after; when the tale of the preservation of the Church of God, of her Majesty; and of the Netherland cause; which were all one, should be told; his name and well-doing would be held in memory also.

And truly there was much of honest and generous enthusiasm, even if couched in language somewhat startling to the ears of a colder and more material age; in the hearts of these noble volunteers. They were fighting the cause of England, of the Netherland republic, and of human liberty; with a valour worthy the best days of English' chivalry, against manifold obstacles, and they were certainly; not too often cheered by the beams of royal favour.

It was a pity that a dark cloud was so soon again to sweep over the scene: For the temper of Elizabeth at this important juncture seemed as capricious: as the: April weather in which the scenes were enacting. We have seen the genial warmth of her letters and messages to Leicester, to Heneage,—to the States-General; on the first of the month. Nevertheless it was hardly three weeks after they had been despatched when Walsingham and Burghley found, her Majesty one morning a towering passion, because, the Earl had not already laid down the government.

Page 1438

The Lord Treasurer ventured to remonstrate, but was bid to bold his tongue. Ever variable and mutable as woman, Elizabeth was perplexing and baffling to her counsellors, at this epoch, beyond all divination. The “sparing humour” was increasing fearfully, and she thought it would be easier for her to slip out of the whole expensive enterprise, provided Leicester were merely her lieutenant-general, and not stadholder for the Provinces. Moreover the secret negotiations for peace were producing a deleterious effect upon her mind. Upon this subject, the Queen and Burghley, notwithstanding his resemblance to Mary Magdalen, were better informed than the Secretary, whom, however, it had been impossible wholly to deceive. The man who could read secrets so far removed as the Vatican, was not to be blinded to intrigues going on before his face. The Queen, without revealing more than she could help, had been obliged to admit that informal transactions were pending, but had authorised the Secretary to assure the United States that no treaty would be made without their knowledge and full concurrence. “She doth think,” wrote Walsingham to Leicester, “that you should, if you shall see no cause to the contrary, acquaint the council of state there that certain overtures of peace are daily made unto her, but that she meaneth not to proceed therein without their good liking and privity, being persuaded that there can no peace be made profitable or sure for her that shall not also stand with their safety; and she doth acknowledge hers to be so linked with theirs as nothing can fall out to their prejudice, but she must be partaker of their harm.”

This communication was dated on the 21st April, exactly three weeks after the Queen’s letter to Heneage, in which she had spoken of the “malicious bruits” concerning the pretended peace-negotiations; and the Secretary was now confirming, by her order, what she had then stated under her own hand, that she would “do nothing that might concern them without their own knowledge and good liking.”

And surely nothing could be more reasonable. Even if the strict letter of the August treaty between the Queen and the States did not provide against any separate negotiations by the one party without the knowledge of the other, there could be no doubt at all that its spirit absolutely forbade the clandestine conclusion of a peace with Spain by England alone, or by the Netherlands alone, and that such an arrangement would be disingenuous, if not positively dishonourable.

Nevertheless it would almost seem that Elizabeth had been taking advantage of the day when she was writing her letter to Heneage on the 1st of April. Never was painstaking envoy more elaborately trifled with. On the 26th of the month—and only five days after the communication by Walsingham just noticed—the Queen was furious that any admission should have been made to the States of their right to participate with her in peace-negotiations.

Page 1439

“We find that Sir Thomas Heneage,” said she to Leicester, “hath gone further—in assuring the States that we would make no peace without their privity and assent—than he had commission; for that our direction was—if our meaning had been well set down, and not mistaken by our Secretary—that they should have been only let understand that in any treaty that might pass between us and Spain, they might be well assured we would have no less care of their safety than of our own.” Secretary Walsingham was not likely to mistake her Majesty’s directions in this or any other important affair of state. Moreover, it so happened that the Queen had, in her own letter to Heneage, made the same statement which she now chose to disavow. She had often a convenient way of making herself misunderstood, when she thought it desirable to shift responsibility from her own shoulders upon those of others; but upon this occasion she had been sufficiently explicit. Nevertheless, a scape-goat was necessary, and unhappy the subordinate who happened to be within her Majesty’s reach when a vicarious sacrifice was to be made. Sir Francis Walsingham was not a man to be brow-beaten or hood-winked, but Heneage was doomed to absorb a fearful amount of royal wrath.

“What phlegmatical reasons soever were made you,” wrote the Queen, who but three weeks before had been so gentle and affectionate to her, ambassador, “how happeneth it that you will not remember, that when a man hath faulted and committed by abettors thereto, neither the one nor the other will willingly make their own retreat. Jesus! what availeth wit, when it fails the owner at greatest need? Do that you are bidden, and leave your considerations for your own affairs. For in some things you had clear commandment, which you did not, and in others none, and did. We princes be wary enough of our bargains. Think you I will be bound by your own speech to make no peace for mine own matters without their consent? It is enough that I injure not their country nor themselves in making peace for them without their consent. I am assured of your dutiful thoughts, but I am utterly at squares with this childish dealing.”

Blasted by this thunderbolt falling upon his head out of serenest sky, the sad. Sir. Thomas remained, for a time, in a state of political annihilation. ‘Sweet Robin’ meanwhile, though stunned, was unscathed—thanks to the convenient conductor at his side. For, in Elizabeth’s court, mediocrity was not always golden, nor was it usually the loftiest mountains that the lightnings smote. The Earl was deceived by his royal mistress, kept in the dark as to important transactions, left to provide for his famishing’ soldiers as he best might; but the, Queen at that moment, though angry, was not disposed, to trample upon him. Now that his heart was known to be broken, and his sole object in life to be retirement to remote regions—India or elsewhere—there to languish out the brief remainder of his days in prayers for Elizabeth’s happiness, Elizabeth was not inclined very bitterly to upbraid him. She had too recently been employing herself in binding up his broken heart, and pouring balm into the “scorpion’s sting,” to be willing so soon to deprive him of those alleviations.

Page 1440

Her tone—was however no longer benignant, and her directions were extremely peremptory. On the 1st of April she had congratulated Leicester, Heneage, the States, and all the world, that her secret commands had been staid, and that the ruin which would have followed, had, those decrees been executed according to her first violent wish, was fortunately averted. Heneage was even censured, not by herself, but by courtiers in her confidence, and with her concurrence, for being over hasty in going before the state-council, as he had done, with her messages and commands. On the 26th of April she expressed astonishment that Heneage had dared to be so dilatory, and that the title of governor had not been laid down by Leicester "out of hand." She marvelled greatly, and found it very strange that "ministers in matters of moment should presume to do things of their own head without direction." She accordingly gave orders that there should be no more dallying, but that the Earl should immediately hold a conference with the state-council in order to arrange a modification in his commission. It was her pleasure that he should retain all the authority granted to him by the States, but as already intimated by her, that he should abandon the title of "absolute governor," and retain only that of her lieutenant-general.

Was it strange that Heneage, placed in so responsible a situation, and with the fate of England, of Holland, and perhaps of all Christendom, hanging in great measure upon this delicate negotiation, should be amazed at such contradictory orders, and grieved by such inconsistent censures?

"To tell you my griefs and my lacks," said he to Walsingham, "would little please you or help me. Therefore I will say nothing, but think there was never man in so great a service received so little comfort and so contrarious directions. But 'Dominus est adjutor in tribulationibus.' If it be possible, let me receive some certain direction, in following which I shall not offend her Majesty, what good or hurt soever I do besides."

This certainly seemed a loyal and reasonable request, yet it was not one likely to be granted. Sir Thomas, perplexed, puzzled, blindfolded, and brow-beaten, always endeavoring to obey orders, when he could comprehend them, and always hectored and lectured whether he obeyed them or not—ruined in purse by the expenses, of a mission on which he had been sent without adequate salary—appalled at the disaffection waging more formidable every hour in Provinces which were recently so loyal to her Majesty, but which were now pervaded by a suspicion that there was double-dealing upon her part became quite sick of his life. He fell seriously ill, and was disappointed, when, after a time, the physicians declared him convalescent. For when when he rose from his sick-bed, it was only to plunge once more, without a clue, into the labyrinth where he seemed to be losing his reason. "It is not long," said he to Walsingham, "since

Page 1441

I looked to have written you no more letters, my extremity was so great. . . But God's will is best, otherwise I could have liked better to have cumbered the earth no longer, where I find myself contemned, and which I find no reason to see will be the better in the wearing . . . It were better for her Majesty's service that the directions which come were not contrarious one to another, and that those you would have serve might know what is meant, else they cannot but much deceive you, as well as displease you."

Public opinion concerning the political morality of the English court was not gratifying, nor was it rendered more favourable by these recent transactions. "I fear," said Heneage, "that the world will judge what Champagny wrote in one of his letters out of England (which I have lately seen) to be over true. His words be these, 'Et de vray, c'est le plus fascheux et le plus incertain negocier de ceste court, que je pense soit au monde.'" And so "basting," as he said, "with a weak body and a willing mind; to do, he feared, no good work," he set forth from Middelburgh to rejoin Leicester at Arnheim, in order to obey, as well as he could, the Queen's latest directions.

But before he could set to work there came more "contrarious" orders. The last instructions, both to Leicester and himself, were that the Earl should resign the post of governor absolute "out of hand," and the Queen had been vehement in denouncing any delay on such an occasion. He was now informed, that, after consulting with Leicester and with the state-council, he was to return to England with the result of such deliberations. It could afterwards be decided how the Earl could retain all the authority of governor absolute, while bearing only the title of the Queen's lieutenant general. "For her meaning is not," said Walsingham, "that his Lord ship should presently give it over, for she foreseeth in her princely judgment that his giving over the government upon a sudden, and leaving those countries without a head or director, cannot but breed a most dangerous alteration there." The secretary therefore stated the royal wish at present to be that the "renunciation of the title" should be delayed till Heneage could visit England, and subsequently return to Holland with her Majesty's further directions. Even the astute Walsingham was himself puzzled, however, while conveying these ambiguous orders; and he confessed that he was doubtful whether he had rightly comprehended the Queen's intentions. Burghley, however, was better at guessing riddles than he was, and so Heneage was advised to rely chiefly upon Burghley.

But Heneage had now ceased to be interested in any enigmas that might be propounded by the English court, nor could he find comfort, as Walsingham had recommended he should do, in railing. "I wish I could follow your counsel," he said, "but sure the uttering of my choler doth little ease my grief or help my case."

Page 1442

He rebuked, however, the inconsistency and the tergiversations of the government with a good deal of dignity. “This certainly shall I tell her Majesty,” he said, “if I live to see her, that except a more constant course be taken with this inconstant people, it is not the blaming of her ministers will advance her Highness’s service, or better the state of things. And shall I tell you what they now say here of us—I fear not without some cause—even as Lipsius wrote of the French, ’De Gallis quidem enigmata veniunt, non veniunt, volunt, holunt, audent, timent, omnia, ancipiti metu, suspensa et suspecta.’ God grant better, and ever keep you and help me.”

He announced to Burghley that he was about to attend a meeting of the state-council the next day, for the purpose of a conference on these matters at Arnheim, and that he would then set forth for England to report proceedings to her Majesty. He supposed, on the whole, that this was what was expected of him, but acknowledged it hopeless to fathom the royal intentions. Yet if he went wrong, he was always, sure to make mischief, and though innocent, to be held accountable for others’ mistakes. “Every prick I make,” said he, “is made a gash; and to follow the words of my directions from England is not enough, except I likewise see into your minds. And surely mine eyesight is not so good. But I will pray to God for his help herein. With all the wit I have, I will use all the care I can—first, to satisfy her Majesty, as God knoweth I have ever most desired; then, not to hurt this cause, but that I despair of.” Leicester, as maybe supposed, had been much discomfited and perplexed during the course of these contradictory and perverse directions. There is no doubt whatever that his position bad been made discreditable and almost ridiculous, while he was really doing his best, and spending large sums out of his private fortune to advance the true interests of the Queen. He had become a suspected man in the Netherlands, having been, in the beginning of the year, almost adored as a Messiah. He had submitted to the humiliation which had been imposed upon him, of being himself the medium to convey to the council the severe expressions of the Queen’s displeasure at the joint action of the States-General and himself. He had been comforted by the affectionate expressions with which that explosion of feminine and royal wrath had been succeeded. He was now again distressed by the peremptory command to do what was a disgrace to him, and an irreparable detriment to the cause, yet he was humble and submissive, and only begged to be allowed, as a remedy for all his anguish, to return to the sunlight of Elizabeth’s presence. He felt that her course; if persisted in, would lead to the destruction of the Netherland commonwealth, and eventually to the downfall of England; and that the Provinces, believing themselves deceived by the Queen; were ready to revolt against an authority to which, but a short time before, they were so devotedly loyal Nevertheless, he only wished to know what his sovereign’s commands distinctly were, in order to set himself to their fulfilment. He had come from the camp before Nymegen in order to attend the conference with the state-council at Arnheim, and he would then be ready and anxious to, despatch Heneage to England, to learn her Majesty’s final determination.

Page 1443

He protested to the Queen that he had come upon this arduous and perilous service only, because he, considered her throne in danger, and that this was the only means of preserving it; that, in accepting the absolute government, he had been free from all ambitious motives, but deeply impressed with the idea that only by so doing could he conduct the enterprise entrusted to him to the desired consummation; and he declared with great fervour that no advancement to high office could compensate him for this enforced absence from her. To be sent back even in disgrace would still be a boon to him, for he should cease to be an exile from her sight. He knew that his enemies had been busy in defaming him, while he had been no longer there to defend himself, but his conscience acquitted him of any thought which was not for her happiness and glory. “Yet grievous it is to me,” said he in, a tone of tender reproach, “that having left all—yea, all that may be imagined—for you, you have left me for very little, even to the uttermost of all hard fortune. For what have I, unhappy man, to do here either with cause or country but for you?”

He stated boldly that his services had not been ineffective, that the enemy had never been in worse plight than now, that he had lost at least five thousand men in divers overthrows, and that, on the other hand, the people and towns of the Seven Provinces had been safely preserved. “Since my arrival,” he said, “God hath blessed the action which you have taken in hand, and committed to the charge of me your poor unhappy servant. I have good cause to say somewhat for myself, for that I think I have as few friends to speak for me as any man.”

Nevertheless—as he warmly protested—his only wish was to return; for the country in which he had lost her favour, which was more precious than life, had become odious to him.

The most lowly office in her presence was more to be coveted than the possession of unlimited power away from her. It was by these tender and soft insinuations, as the Earl knew full well, that he was sure to obtain what he really coveted—her sanction for retaining the absolute government in the Provinces. And most artfully did he strike the key.

“Most dear and gracious Lady,” he cried, “my care and service here do breed me nothing but grief and unhappiness. I have never had your Majesty’s good favour since I came into this charge—a matter that from my first beholding your eyes hath been most dear unto me above all earthly treasures. Never shall I love that place or like that soil which shall cause the lack of it. Most gracious Lady, consider my long, true, and faithful heart toward you. Let not this unfortunate place here bereave me of that which, above all the world, I esteem there, which is your favodr and your presence. I see my service is not acceptable, but rather more and more disliketh you. Here I can do your Majesty no service; there I can do you some, at the least

Page 1444

rub your horse's heels—a service which shall be much more welcome to me than this, with all that these men may give me. I do, humbly and from my heart, prostrate at your feet, beg this grace at your sacred hands, that you will be pleased to let me return to my home-service, with your favour, let the revocation be used in what sort shall please and like you. But if ever spark of favour was in your Majesty toward your old servant, let me obtain this my humble suit; protesting before the Majesty of all Majesties, that there was no cause under Heaven but his and yours, even for your own special and particular cause, I say, could have made me take this absent journey from you in hand. If your Majesty shall refuse me this, I shall think all grace clean gone from me, and I know: my days will not be long."

She must melt at this, thought 'sweet Robin' to himself; and meantime accompanied by Heneage; he proceeded with the conferences in the state-council-chamber touching the modification of the title and the confirmation of his authority. This, so far as Walsingham could divine, and Burghley fathom, was the present intention of the Queen. He averred that he had ever sought most painfully to conform his conduct to her instructions as fast as they were received, and that he should continue so to do. On the whole it was decided by the conference to let matters stand as, they were for a little longer, and until: after Heneage should have time once more to go and come. "The same manner of proceeding that was is now," said Leicester, "Your pleasure is declared to the council here as you have willed it. How it will fall out again in your Majesty's construction, the Lord knoweth."

Leicester might be forgiven for referring to higher powers, for any possible interpretation of her Majesty's changing humour; but meantime; while Sir. Thomas was getting ready, for his expedition to England, the Earl's heart was somewhat gladdened by more gracious messages from the Queen. The alternation of emotions would however prove too much for him, he feared, and he was reluctant to open his heart to so unwonted a tenant as joy.

"But that my fear is such, most dear and gracious Lady," he said, "as my unfortunate destiny will hardly permit; whilst I remain here; any good-acceptation of so simple a service as, mine, I should, greatly rejoice and comfort myself with the hope of your Majesty's most prayed-for favour. But of late, being by your own sacred hand lifted even up into Heaven with joy of your favour, I was bye and bye without any new desert or offence at all, cast down and down: again into the depth of all grief. God doth know, my dear and dread Sovereign, that after I first received your resolute pleasure by Sir Thomas Heneage, I made neither stop nor stay nor any excuse to be rid of this place, and to satisfy your command. . . . So much I mislike this place and fortune of mine; as I desire nothing in the world so much, as to be delivered,

Page 1445

with your favours from all charge here, fearing still some new cross of your displeasure to fall upon me, trembling continually with the fear thereof, in such sort as till I may be fully confirmed in my new regeneration of your wonted favour I cannot receive that true comfort which doth appertain to so great a hope. Yet I will not only acknowledge with all humbleness and dutiful thanks the exceeding joy these last blessed lines brought to my long-wearied heart, but will, with all true loyal affection, attend that further joy from your sweet self which may utterly, extinguish all consuming fear away."

Poor Heneage—who likewise received a kind word or two after having been so capriciously and petulantly dealt with was less extravagant in his expressions of gratitude. "The Queen hath sent me a paper-plaister which must please for a time," he said. "God Almighty bless her Majesty ever, and best direct her." He was on the point of starting for England, the bearer of the States' urgent entreaties that Leicester might retain the, government, and of despatches; announcing the recent success of the allies before Grave. "God prospereth the action in these countries beyond all expectation," he said, "which all amongst you will not be over glad of, for somewhat I know." The intrigues of Grafigni, Champagny, and Bodman, with Croft, Burghley, and the others were not so profound a secret as they could wish.

The tone adopted by Leicester has been made manifest in his letters to the Queen. He had held the same language of weariness and dissatisfaction in his communications to his friends. He would not keep the office, he avowed, if they should give him "all Holland and Zeeland, with all their appurtenances," and he was ready to resign at any moment. He was not "ceremonious for reputation," he said, but he gave warning that the Netherlanders would grow desperate if they found her Majesty dealing weakly or carelessly with them. As for himself he had already had enough of government. "I am weary, Mr. Secretary," he plaintively exclaimed, "indeed I am weary; but neither of pains nor travail. My ill hap that I can please her Majesty no better hath quite discouraged me."

He had recently, however—as we have seen—received some comfort, and he was still further encouraged, upon the eve of Heneage's departure, by receiving another affectionate epistle from the Queen. Amends seemed at last to be offered for her long and angry silence, and the Earl was deeply grateful.

"If it hath not been, my most dear and gracious Lady," said he in reply, "no small comfort to your poor old servant to receive but one line of your blessed hand-writing in many months, for the relief of a most grieved, wounded heart, how far more exceeding joy must it be, in the midst of all sorrow, to receive from the same sacred hand so many comfortable lines as my good friend Mr. George hath at once brought me. Pardon me, my sweet Lady, if they cause me to forget myself. Only this I do say, with most humble dutiful thanks, that the scope of all my service hath ever been to content and please

you; and if I may do that, then is all sacrifice, either of life or whatsoever, well offered for you.”

Page 1446

The matter of the government absolute having been so fully discussed during the preceding four months, and the last opinions of the state-council having been so lucidly expounded in the despatches to be carried by Heneage to England, the matter might be considered as exhausted. Leicester contented himself, therefore, with once more calling her Majesty's attention to the fact that if he had not himself accepted the office thus conferred upon him by the States, it would have been bestowed upon some other personage. It would hardly have comported with her dignity, if Count Maurice of Nassau, or Count William, or Count Moeurs, had been appointed governor absolute, for in that case the Earl, as general of the auxiliary English force, would have been subject to the authority of the chieftain thus selected. It was impossible, as the state-council had very plainly shown, for Leicester to exercise supreme authority, while merely holding the military office of her Majesty's lieutenant-general. The authority of governor or stadholder could only be derived from the supreme power of the country. If her Majesty had chosen to accept the sovereignty, as the States had ever desired, the requisite authority could then have been derived from her, as from the original fountain. As she had resolutely refused that offer however, his authority was necessarily to be drawn from the States-General, or else the Queen must content herself with seeing him serve as an English military officer, only subject to the orders of the supreme power, wherever that power might reside. In short, Elizabeth's wish that her general might be clothed with the privileges of her viceroy, while she declined herself to be the sovereign, was illogical, and could not be complied with.

Very soon after inditing these last epistles to the Provinces, the Queen became more reasonable on the subject; and an elaborate communication was soon received by the state-council, in which the royal acquiescence was signified to the latest propositions of the States. The various topics, suggested in previous despatches from Leicester and from the council, were reviewed, and the whole subject was suddenly placed in a somewhat different light from that in which it seemed to have been previously regarded by her Majesty. She alluded to the excuse, offered by the state-council, which had been drawn from the necessity of the case, and from their "great liking for her cousin of Leicester," although in violation of the original contract. "As you acknowledge, however," she said, "that therein you were justly to be blamed, and do crave pardon for the same, we cannot, upon this acknowledgment of your fault, but remove our former dislike."

Nevertheless it would now seem that her "mistake" had proceeded, not from the excess, but from the insufficiency of the powers conferred upon the Earl, and she complained, accordingly, that they had given him shadow rather than substance.

Page 1447

Simultaneously with this royal communication, came a joint letter to Leicester, from Burghley, Walsingham; and Hatton, depicting the long and strenuous conflict which they had maintained in his behalf with the rapidly varying inclinations of the Queen. They expressed a warm sympathy with the difficulties of his position, and spoke in strong terms of the necessity that the Netherlands and England should work heartily together. For otherwise, they said, “the cause will fall, the enemy will rise, and we must stagger.” Notwithstanding the secret negotiations with the enemy, which Leicester and Walsingham suspected, and which will be more fully examined in a subsequent chapter, they held a language on that subject, which in the Secretary’s mouth at least was sincere. “Whatsoever speeches be blown abroad of parleys of peace,” they said, “all will be but smoke, yea fire will follow.”

They excused themselves for their previous and enforced silence by the fact that they had been unable to communicate any tidings but messages of distress, but they now congratulated the Earl that her Majesty, as he would see by her letter to the council, was firmly resolved, not only to countenance his governorship, but to sustain him in the most thorough manner. It would be therefore quite out of the question for them to listen to his earnest propositions to be recalled.

Moreover, the Lord Treasurer had already apprized Leicester that Heneage had safely arrived in England, that he, had made his report to the Queen, and that her Majesty was “very well contented with him and his mission.” It may be easily believed that the Earl would feel a sensation of relief, if not of triumph, at this termination to the embarrassments under which he had been labouring ever since, he listened to the oration of the wise Leoninus upon New Years’ Day. At last the Queen had formally acquiesced in the action of the States, and in his acceptance of their offer. He now saw himself undisputed “governor absolute,” having been six months long a suspected, discredited, almost disgraced man. It was natural that he should express himself cheerfully.

“My great comfort received, oh my most gracious Lady,” he said, “by your most favourable lines written by your own sacred hand, I did most humbly acknowledge by my former letter; albeit I can no way make testimony of enough of the great joy I took thereby. And seeing my wounded heart is by this means almost made whole, I do pray unto God that either I may never feel the like again from you, or not be suffered to live, rather than I should fall again into those torments of your displeasure. Most gracious Queen, I beseech you, therefore, make perfect that which you have begun. Let not the common danger, nor any ill, incident to the place I serve you in, be accompanied with greater troubles and fears indeed than all the horrors of death can bring me. My strong hope doth now so assure me, as I have almost won the battle against despair, and I do arm myself with as many of those wonted comfortable conceits as may confirm my new revived spirits, reposing myself evermore under the shadow of those blessed beams that must yield the only nourishment to this disease.”

Page 1448

But however nourishing the shade of those blessed beams might prove to Leicester's disease, it was not so easy to bring about a very sunny condition in the Provinces. It was easier for Elizabeth to mend the broken heart of the governor than to repair the damage which had been caused to the commonwealth by her caprice and her deceit. The dispute concerning the government absolute had died away, but the authority of the Earl had got a "crack in it" which never could be handsomely made whole. The States, during the long period of Leicester's discredit—feeling more and more doubtful as to the secret intentions of Elizabeth—disappointed in the condition of the auxiliary troops and in the amount of supplies furnished from England, and, above all, having had time to regret their delegation of a power which they began to find agreeable to exercise with their own hands, became indisposed to entrust the Earl with the administration and full inspection of their resources. To the enthusiasm which had greeted the first arrival of Elizabeth's representative had succeeded a jealous, carping, suspicious sentiment. The two hundred thousand florins monthly were paid, according to the original agreement, but the four hundred thousand of extra service-money subsequently voted were withheld, and withheld expressly on account of Heneage's original mission to disgrace the governor."

"The late return of Sir Thomas Heneage," said Lord North, "hath put such busses in their heads, as they march forward with leaden heels and doubtful hearts."

In truth, through the discredit cast by the Queen upon the Earl in this important affair, the supreme authority was forced back into the hands of the States, at the very moment when they had most freely divested themselves of power. After the Queen had become more reasonable, it was too late to induce them to part, a second time, so freely with the immediate control of their own affairs. Leicester had become, to a certain extent, disgraced and disliked by the Estates. He thought himself, by the necessity of the case, forced to appeal to the people against their legal representatives, and thus the foundation of a nominally democratic party, in opposition to the municipal one, was already laid. Nothing could be more unfortunate at that juncture; for we shall, in future, find the Earl in perpetual opposition to the most distinguished statesmen in the Provinces; to the very men indeed who had been most influential in offering the sovereignty to England, and in placing him in the position which he had so much coveted. No sooner therefore had he been confirmed by Elizabeth in that high office than his arrogance broke forth, and the quarrels between himself and the representative body became incessant.

Page 1449

“I stand now in somewhat better terms than I did,” said he; “I was not in case till of late to deal roundly with them as I have now done. I have established a chamber of finances, against some of their wills, whereby I doubt not to procure great benefit to increase our ability for payments hereafter. The people I find still best devoted to her Majesty, though of late many lewd practices have been used to withdraw their good wills. But it will not be; they still pray God that her Majesty may be their sovereign. She should then see what a contribution they will all bring forth. But to the States they will never return, which will breed some great mischief, there is such mislike of the States universally. I would your Lordship had seen the case I had lived in among them these four months, especially after her Majesty’s mislike was found. You would then marvel to see how I have waded, as I have done, through no small obstacles, without help, counsel, or assistance.”

Thus the part which he felt at last called upon to enact was that of an aristocratic demagogue, in perpetual conflict with the burgher-representative body.

It is now necessary to lift a corner of the curtain, by which some international—or rather interpalatial—intrigues were concealed, as much as possible, even from the piercing eyes of Walsingham. The Secretary was, however, quite aware—despite the pains taken to deceive him—of the nature of the plots and of the somewhat ignoble character of the actors concerned in them.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

A hard bargain when both parties are losers
Condemned first and inquired upon after
Disordered, and unknit state needs no shaking, but propping
Upper and lower millstones of royal wrath and loyal subserviency
Uttering of my choler doth little ease my grief or help my case

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year’s Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History of the United Netherlands, Volume 46, 1586

CHAPTER VIII.

Forlorn Condition of Flanders—Parma’s secret Negotiations with the Queen—Grafigni and Bodman—Their Dealings with English Counsellors —Duplicity of Farnese—Secret Offers of the English Peace-Party— Letters and Intrigues of De Loo—Drake’s Victories

and their Effect —Parma’s Perplexity and Anxiety—He is relieved by the News from England—Queen’s secret Letters to Parma—His Letters and Instructions to Bodman—-Bodman’s secret Transactions at Greenwich— Walsingham detects and exposes the Plot—The Intriguers baffled— Queen’s Letter to Parma and his to the King—Unlucky Results of the Peace—Intrigues—Unhandsome Treatment of Leicester—Indignation of the Earl and Walsingham—Secret Letter of Parma

Page 1450

to Philip—Invasion of England recommended—Details of the Project.

Alexander Farnese and his heroic little army had been left by their sovereign in as destitute a condition as that in which Lord Leicester and his unfortunate “paddy persons” had found themselves since their arrival in the Netherlands. These mortal men were but the weapons to be used and broken in the hands of the two great sovereigns, already pitted against each other in mortal combat. That the distant invisible potentate, the work of whose life was to do his best to destroy all European nationality, all civil and religious freedom, should be careless of the instruments by which his purpose was to be effected, was but natural. It is painful to reflect that the great champion of liberty and of Protestantism was almost equally indifferent to the welfare of the human creatures enlisted in her cause. Spaniards and Italians, English and Irish, went half naked and half starving through the whole inclement winter, and perished of pestilence in droves, after confronting the less formidable dangers of battlefield and leaguer. Manfully and sympathetically did the Earl of Leicester—while whining in absurd hyperbole over the angry demeanour of his sovereign towards himself-represent the imperative duty of an English government to succour English troops.

Alexander Farnese was equally plain-spoken to a sovereign with whom plain-speaking was a crime. In bold, almost scornful language, the Prince represented to Philip the sufferings and destitution of the little band of heroes, by whom that magnificent military enterprise, the conquest of Antwerp, had just been effected. “God will be weary of working miracles for us,” he cried, “and nothing but miracles can save the troops from starving.” There was no question of paying them their wages, there was no pretence at keeping them reasonably provided with lodging and clothing, but he asserted the undeniable proposition that they “could not pass their lives without eating,” and he implored his sovereign to send at least money enough to buy the soldiers shoes. To go foodless and barefoot without complaining, on the frozen swamps of Flanders, in January, was more than was to be expected from Spaniards and Italians. The country itself was eaten bare. The obedient Provinces had reaped absolute ruin as the reward of their obedience. Bruges, Ghent, and the other cities of Brabant and Flanders, once so opulent and powerful, had become mere dens of thieves and paupers. Agriculture, commerce, manufactures—all were dead. The condition of Antwerp was most tragical. The city, which had been so recently the commercial centre of the earth, was reduced to absolute beggary. Its world-wide traffic was abruptly terminated, for the mouth of its great river was controlled by Flushing, and Flushing was in the firm grasp of Sir Philip Sidney, as governor for the English Queen. Merchants and bankers, who had lately been possessed

Page 1451

of enormous resources, were stripped of all. Such of the industrial classes as could leave the place had wandered away to Holland and England. There was no industry possible, for there was no market for the products of industry. Antwerp was hemmed in by the enemy on every side, surrounded by royal troops in a condition of open mutiny, cut off from the ocean, deprived of daily bread, and yet obliged to contribute out of its poverty to the maintenance of the Spanish soldiers, who were there for its destruction. Its burghers, compelled to furnish four hundred thousand florins, as the price of their capitulation, and at least six hundred thousand more for the repairs of the dykes, the destruction of which, too long deferred, had only spread desolation over the country without saving the city, and over and above all forced to rebuild, at their own expense, that fatal citadel, by which their liberty and lives were to be perpetually endangered, might now regret at leisure that they had not been as stedfast during their siege as had been the heroic inhabitants of Leyden in their time of trial, twelve years before. Obedient Antwerp was, in truth, most forlorn. But there was one consolation for her and for Philip, one bright spot in the else universal gloom. The ecclesiastics assured Parma, that, notwithstanding the frightful diminution in the population of the city, they had confessed and absolved more persons that Easter than they had ever done since the commencement of the revolt. Great was Philip's joy in consequence. "You cannot imagine my satisfaction," he wrote, "at the news you give me concerning last Easter."

With a ruined country, starving and mutinous troops, a bankrupt exchequer, and a desperate and pauper population, Alexander Farnese was not unwilling to gain time by simulated negotiations for peace. It was strange, however, that so sagacious a monarch as the Queen of England should suppose it for her interest to grant at that moment the very delay which was deemed most desirable by her antagonist.

Yet it was not wounded affection alone, nor insulted pride, nor startled parsimony, that had carried the fury of the Queen to such a height on the occasion of Leicester's elevation to absolute government. It was still more, because the step was thought likely to interfere with the progress of those negotiations into which the Queen had allowed herself to be drawn.

A certain Grafigni—a Genoese merchant residing much in London and in Antwerp, a meddling, intrusive, and irresponsible kind of individual, whose occupation was gone with the cessation of Flemish trade—had recently made his appearance as a volunteer diplomatist. The principal reason for accepting or rather for winking at his services, seemed to be the possibility of disavowing him, on both sides, whenever it should be thought advisable. He had a partner or colleague, too, named Bodman, who seemed a not much more creditable negotiator than himself. The chief director of the intrigue was, however, Champagny, brother of Cardinal Granvelle, restored to the King's favour and disposed to atone by his exuberant loyalty for his heroic patriotism on a former and

most memorable occasion. Andrea de Loo, another subordinate politician, was likewise employed at various stages of the negotiation.

Page 1452

It will soon be perceived that the part enacted by Burghley, Hatton, Croft, and other counsellors, and even by the Queen herself, was not a model of ingenuousness towards the absent Leicester and the States-General. The gentlemen sent at various times to and from the Earl and her Majesty's government; Davison, Shirley, Vavasor, Heneage, and the rest—had all expressed themselves in the strongest language concerning the good faith and the friendliness of the Lord-Treasurer and the Vice-Chamberlain, but they were not so well informed as they would have been, had they seen the private letters of Parma to Philip *ii*.

Walsingham, although kept in the dark as much as it was possible, discovered from time to time the mysterious practices of his political antagonists, and warned the Queen of the danger and dishonour she was bringing upon herself. Elizabeth, when thus boldly charged, equivocated and stormed alternately. She authorized Walsingham to communicate the secrets—which he had thus surprised—to the States-General, and then denied having given any such orders.

In truth, Walsingham was only entrusted with such portions of the negotiations as he had been able, by his own astuteness, to divine; and as he was very much a friend to the Provinces and to Leicester, he never failed to keep them instructed, to the best of his ability. It must be confessed, however, that the shuffling and paltering among great men and little men, at that period, forms a somewhat painful subject of contemplation at the present day.

Grafigni having some merchandise to convey from Antwerp to London, went early in the year to the Prince of Parma, at Brussels, in order to procure a passport. They entered into some conversation upon the misery of the country, and particularly concerning the troubles to which the unfortunate merchants had been exposed. Alexander expressed much sympathy with the commercial community, and a strong desire that the ancient friendship between his master and the Queen of England might be restored. Grafigni assured the Prince—as the result of his own observation in England—that the Queen participated in those pacific sentiments: "You are going to England," replied the Prince, "and you may say to the ministers of her Majesty, that, after my allegiance to my King, I am most favourably and affectionately inclined towards her. If it pleases them that I, as Alexander Farnese, should attempt to bring about an accord, and if our commissioners could be assured of a hearing in England, I would take care that everything should be conducted with due regard to the honour and reputation of her Majesty."

Grafigni then asked for a written letter of credence. "That cannot be," replied Alexander; "but if you return to me I shall believe your report, and then a proper person can be sent, with authority from the King to treat with her Majesty."

Page 1453

Grafigni proceeded to England, and had an interview with Lord Cobham. A few days later that nobleman gave the merchant a general assurance that the Queen had always felt a strong inclination to maintain firm friendship with the House of Burgundy. Nevertheless, as he proceeded to state, the bad policy of the King's ministers, and the enterprises against her Majesty, had compelled her to provide for her own security and that of her realm by remedies differing in spirit from that good inclination. Being however a Christian princess, willing to leave vengeance to the Lord and disposed to avoid bloodshed, she was ready to lend her ear to a negotiation for peace, if it were likely to be a sincere and secure one. Especially she was pleased that his Highness of Parma should act as mediator of such a treaty, as she considered him a most just and honourable prince in all his promises and actions. Her Majesty would accordingly hold herself in readiness to receive the honourable commissioners alluded to, feeling sure that every step taken by his Highness would comport with her honour and safety.

At about the same time the other partner in this diplomatic enterprise, William Bodman, communicated to Alexander, the result of his observations in England. He stated that Lords Burghley, Buckhurst, and Cobham, Sir Christopher Hatton, and Comptroller Croft, were secretly desirous of peace with Spain and that they had seized the recent opportunity of her pique against the Earl of Leicester to urge forward these underhand negotiations. Some progress had been made; but as no accredited commissioner arrived from the Prince of Parma, and as Leicester was continually writing earnest letters against peace, the efforts of these counsellors had slackened. Bodman found them all, on his arrival, anxious as he said, "to get their necks out of the matter;" declaring everything which had been done to be pure matter of accident, entirely without the concurrence of the Queen, and each seeking to outrival the other in the good graces of her Majesty. Grafigni informed Bodman, however, that Lord Cobham was quite to be depended upon in the affair, and would deal with him privately, while Lord Burghley would correspond with Andrea de Loo at Antwerp. Moreover, the servant of Comptroller Croft would direct Bodman as to his course, and would give him daily instructions.

Now it so happened that this servant of Croft, Norris by name, was a Papist, a man of bad character, and formerly a spy of the Duke of Anjou. "If your Lordship or myself should use such instruments as this," wrote Walsingham to Leicester, "I know we should bear no small reproach; but it is the good hap of hollow and doubtful men to be best thought of." Bodman thought the lords of the peace-faction and their adherents not sufficiently strong to oppose the other party with success. He assured Farnese that almost all the gentlemen and the common people of England stood ready to risk their fortunes and to go in person to the field to maintain the cause of the Queen and religious liberty; and that the chance of peace was desperate unless something should turn the tide, such as, for example, the defeat of Drake, or an invasion by Philip of Ireland or Scotland.

Page 1454

As it so happened that Drake was just then engaged in a magnificent career of victory, sweeping the Spanish Main and startling the nearest and the most remote possessions of the King with English prowess, his defeat was not one of the cards to be relied on by the peace-party in the somewhat deceptive game which they had commenced. Yet, strange to say, they used, or attempted to use, those splendid triumphs as if they had been disasters.

Meantime there was an active but very secret correspondence between Lord Cobham, Lord Burghley, Sir James Croft, and various subordinate personages in England, on the one side, and Champagny, President Richardot, La Motte, governor of Gravelines, Andrea de Loo, Grafigni, and other men in the obedient Provinces, more or less in Alexander's confidence, on the other side. Each party was desirous of forcing or wheedling the antagonist to show his hand. "You were employed to take soundings off the English coast in the Duke of Norfolk's time," said Cobham to La Motte: "you remember the Duke's fate. Nevertheless, her Majesty hates war, and it only depends on the King to have a firm and lasting peace."

"You must tell Lord Cobham," said Richardot to La Motte, "that you are not at liberty to go into a correspondence, until assured of the intentions of Queen Elizabeth. Her Majesty ought to speak first, in order to make her good-will manifest," and so on.

"The 'friend' can confer with you," said Richardot to Champagny; "but his Highness is not to appear to know anything at all about it. The Queen must signify her intentions."

"You answered Champagny correctly," said Burghley to De Loo, "as to what I said last winter concerning her Majesty's wishes in regard to a pacification. The Netherlands must be compelled to return to obedience to the King; but their ancient privileges are to be maintained. You omitted, however, to say a word about toleration, in the Provinces, of the reformed religion. But I said then, as I say now, that this is a condition indispensable to peace."

This was a somewhat important omission on the part of De Loo, and gives the measure of his conscientiousness or his capacity as a negotiator. Certainly for the Lord-Treasurer of England to offer, on the part of her Majesty, to bring about the reduction of her allies under the yoke which they had thrown off without her assistance, and this without leave asked of them, and with no provision for the great principle of religious liberty, which was the cause of the revolt, was a most flagitious trifling with the honour of Elizabeth and of England. Certainly the more this mysterious correspondence is examined, the more conclusive is the justification of the vague and instinctive jealousy felt by Leicester and the States-General as to English diplomacy during the winter and spring of 1586.

Burghley summoned De Loo, accordingly, to recall to his memory all that had been privately said to him on the necessity of protecting the reformed religion in the

Provinces. If a peace were to be perpetual, toleration was indispensable, he observed, and her Majesty was said to desire this condition most earnestly.

Page 1455

The Lord-Treasurer also made the not unreasonable suggestion, that, in case of a pacification, it would be necessary to provide that English subjects—peaceful traders, mariners, and the like—should no longer be shut up in the Inquisition prisons of Spain and Portugal, and there starved to death, as, with great multitudes, had already been the case.

Meantime Alexander, while encouraging and directing all these underhand measures, was carefully impressing upon his master that he was not, in the least degree; bound by any such negotiations. "Queen Elizabeth," he correctly observed to Philip, "is a woman: she is also by no means fond of expense. The kingdom, accustomed to repose, is already weary of war therefore, they are all pacifically inclined." "It has been intimated to me," he said, "that if I would send a properly qualified person, who should declare that your Majesty had not absolutely forbidden the coming of Lord Leicester, such an agent would be well received, and perhaps the Earl would be recalled." Alexander then proceeded, with the coolness befitting a trusted governor of Philip *ii*., to comment upon the course which he was pursuing. He could at any time denounce the negotiations which he was secretly prompting. Meantime immense advantages could be obtained by the deception practised upon an enemy whose own object was to deceive.

The deliberate treachery of the scheme was cynically enlarged upon, and its possible results mathematically calculated:

Philip was to proceed with the invasion while Alexander was going on with the negotiation. If, meanwhile, they could receive back Holland and Zeeland from the hands of England, that would be an immense success. The Prince intimated a doubt, however, as to so fortunate a result, because, in dealing with heretics and persons of similar quality, nothing but trickery was to be expected. The chief good to be hoped for was to "chill the Queen in her plots, leagues, and alliances," and during the chill, to carry forward their own great design. To slacken not a whit in their preparations, to "put the Queen to sleep," and, above all, not to leave the French for a moment unoccupied with internal dissensions and civil war; such was the game of the King and the governor, as expounded between themselves.

President Richardot, at the same time, stated to Cardinal Granvelle that the English desire for peace was considered certain at Brussels. Grafigni had informed the Prince of Parma and his counsellors that the Queen was most amicably disposed, and that there would be no trouble on the point of religion, her Majesty not wishing to obtain more than she would herself be willing to grant. "In this," said Richardot, "there is both hard and soft;" for knowing that the Spanish game was deception, pure and simple, the excellent President could not bring himself to suspect a possible grain of good faith in the English intentions. Much anxiety was perpetually felt

Page 1456

in the French quarter, her Majesty's government being supposed to be secretly preparing an invasion of the obedient Netherlands across the French frontier, in combination, not with the Bearnese, but with Henry *iii*. So much in the dark were even the most astute politicians. "I can't feel satisfied in this French matter," said the President: "we mustn't tickle ourselves to make ourselves laugh." Moreover, there was no self-deception nor self-tickling possible as to the unmitigated misery of the obedient Netherlands. Famine was a more formidable foe than Frenchmen, Hollanders, and Englishmen combined; so that Richardot avowed that the "negotiation would be indeed holy," if it would restore Holland and Zeeland to the King without fighting. The prospect seemed on the whole rather dismal to loyal Netherlanders like the old leaguing, intriguing, Hispamolized president of the privy council. "I confess," said he plaintively, "that England needs chastisement; but I don't see how we are to give it to her. Only let us secure Holland and Zeeland, and then we shall always find a stick whenever we like to beat the dog."

Meantime Andrea de Loo had been bustling and buzzing about the ears of the chief counsellors at the English court during all the early spring. Most busily he had been endeavouring to efface the prevalent suspicion that Philip and Alexander were only trifling by these informal negotiations. We have just seen whether or not there was ground for that suspicion. De Loo, being importunate, however—"as he usually was," according to his own statement—obtained in Burghley's hand a confirmation, by order of the Queen, of De Loo's—letter of the 26th December. The matter of religion gave the worthy merchant much difficulty, and he begged Lord Buckhurst, the Lord Treasurer, and many other counsellors, not to allow this point of toleration to ruin the whole affair; "for," said he, "his Majesty will never permit any exercise of the reformed religion."

At last Buckhurst sent for him, and in presence of Comptroller Croft, gave him information that he had brought the Queen to this conclusion: firstly, that she would be satisfied with as great a proportion of religious toleration for Holland, Zeeland, and the other United Provinces, as his Majesty could concede with safety to his conscience and his honour; secondly, that she required an act of amnesty; thirdly, that she claimed reimbursement by Philip for the money advanced by her to the States.

Certainly a more wonderful claim was never made than this—a demand upon an absolute monarch for indemnity for expenses incurred in fomenting a rebellion of his own subjects. The measure of toleration proposed for the Provinces—the conscience, namely, of the greatest bigot ever born into the world—was likely to prove as satisfactory as the claim for damages propounded by the most parsimonious sovereign in Christendom. It was, however, stipulated that the nonconformists of Holland and Zeeland, who should be forced into exile, were to have their property administered by papist trustees; and further, that the Spanish inquisition was not to be established in the Netherlands. Philip could hardly demand better terms than these last, after a career of

victory. That they should be offered now by Elizabeth was hardly compatible with good faith to the States.

Page 1457

On account of Lord Burghley's gout, it was suggested that the negotiators had better meet in England, as it would be necessary for him to take the lead in the matters and as he was but an indifferent traveller. Thus, according to De Loo, the Queen was willing to hand over the United Provinces to Philip, and to toss religious toleration to the winds, if she could only get back the seventy thousand pounds—more or less—which she had invested in an unpromising speculation. A few weeks later, and at almost the very moment when Elizabeth had so suddenly overturned her last vial of wrath upon the discomfited Heneage for having communicated—according to her express command—-the fact of the pending negotiations to the Netherland States; at that very instant Parma was writing secretly, and in cipher, to Philip. His communication—could Sir Thomas have read it—might have partly explained her Majesty's rage.

Parma had heard, he said, through Bodman, from Comptroller Croft, that the Queen would willingly receive a proper envoy. It was very easy to see, he observed, that the English counsellors were seeking every means of entering into communication with Spain, and that they were doing so with the participation of the Queen! Lord-Treasurer Burghley and Comptroller Croft had expressed surprise that the Prince had not yet sent a secret agent to her Majesty, under pretext of demanding explanations concerning Lord Leicester's presence in the Provinces, but in reality to treat for peace. Such an agent, it had been intimated, would be well received. The Lord-Treasurer and the Comptroller would do all in their power to advance the negotiation, so that, with their aid and with the pacific inclination of the Queen, the measures proposed in favour of Leicester would be suspended, and perhaps the Earl himself and all the English would be recalled.

The Queen was further represented as taking great pains to excuse both the expedition of Sir Francis Drake to the Indies, and the mission of Leicester to the Provinces. She was said to throw the whole blame of these enterprises upon Walsingham and other ill-intentioned personages, and to avow that she now understood matters better; so that, if Parma would at once send an envoy, peace would, without question, soon be made.

Parma had expressed his gratification at these hopeful dispositions on the part of Burghley and Croft, and held out hopes of sending an agent to treat with them, if not directly with her Majesty. For some time past—according to the Prince—the English government had not seemed to be honestly seconding the Earl of Leicester, nor to correspond with his desires. "This makes me think," he said, "that the counsellors before-mentioned, being his rivals, are trying to trip him up."

Page 1458

In such a caballing, prevaricating age, it is difficult to know which of all the plotters and counterplotters engaged in these intrigues could accomplish the greatest amount of what—for the sake of diluting in nine syllables that which could be more forcibly expressed in one—was then called diplomatic dissimulation. It is to be feared, notwithstanding her frequent and vociferous denials, that the robes of the “imperial votaress” were not so unsullied as could be wished. We know how loudly Leicester had complained—we have seen how clearly Walsingham could convict; but Elizabeth, though convicted, could always confute: for an absolute sovereign, even without resorting to Philip’s syllogisms of axe and faggot, was apt in the sixteenth century to have the best of an argument with private individuals.

The secret statements of Parma-made, not for public effect, but for the purpose of furnishing his master with the most accurate information he could gather as to English policy—are certainly entitled to consideration. They were doubtless founded upon the statements of individuals rejoicing in no very elevated character; but those individuals had no motive to deceive their patron. If they clashed with the vehement declarations of very eminent personages, it must be admitted, on the other hand, that they were singularly in accordance with the silent eloquence of important and mysterious events.

As to Alexander Farnese—without deciding the question whether Elizabeth and Burghley were deceiving Walsingham and Leicester, or only trying to delude Philip and himself—he had no hesitation, of course, on his part, in recommending to Philip the employment of unlimited dissimulation. Nothing could be more ingenuous than the intercourse between the King and his confidential advisers. It was perfectly understood among them that they were always to deceive every one, upon every occasion. Only let them be false, and it was impossible to be wholly wrong; but grave mistakes might occur from occasional deviations into sincerity. It was no question at all, therefore, that it was Parma’s duty to delude Elizabeth and Burghley. Alexander’s course was plain. He informed his master that he would keep these difficulties alive as much as it was possible. In order to “put them all to sleep with regard to the great enterprise of the invasion,” he would send back Bodman to Burghley and Croft, and thus keep this unofficial negotiation upon its legs. The King was quite uncommitted, and could always disavow what had been done. Meanwhile he was gaining, and his adversaries losing, much precious time. “If by this course,” said Parma, “we can induce the English to hand over to us the places which they hold in Holland and Zeeland, that will be a great triumph.” Accordingly he urged the King not to slacken, in the least, his preparations for invasion, and, above all, to have a care that the French were kept entangled and embarrassed among themselves, which was a most substantial point.

Page 1459

Meantime Europe was ringing with the American successes of the bold corsair Drake. San Domingo, Porto Rico, Santiago, Cartliagena, Florida, were sacked and destroyed, and the supplies drawn so steadily from the oppression of the Western World to maintain Spanish tyranny in Europe, were for a time extinguished. Parma was appalled at these triumphs of the Sea-King—"a fearful man to the King of Spain"—as Lord Burghley well observed. The Spanish troops were starving in Flanders, all Flanders itself was starving, and Philip, as usual, had sent but insignificant remittances to save his perishing soldiers. Parma had already exhausted his credit. Money was most difficult to obtain in such a forlorn country; and now the few rich merchants and bankers of Antwerp that were left looked very black at these crushing news from America. "They are drawing their purse-strings very tight," said Alexander, "and will make no accommodation. The most contemplative of them ponder much over this success of Drake, and think that your Majesty will forget our matters here altogether." For this reason he informed the King that it would be advisable to drop all further negotiation with England for the time, as it was hardly probable that, with such advantages gained by the Queen, she would be inclined to proceed in the path which had been just secretly opened. Moreover, the Prince was in a state of alarm as to the intentions of France. Mendoza and Tassis had given him to understand that a very good feeling prevailed between the court of Henry and of Elizabeth, and that the French were likely to come to a pacification among themselves. In this the Spanish envoys were hardly anticipating so great an effect as we have seen that they had the right to do from their own indefatigable exertions; for, thanks to their zeal, backed by the moderate subsidies furnished by their master, the civil war in France already seemed likely to be as enduring as that of the Netherlands. But Parma—still quite in the dark as to French politics—was haunted by the vision of seventy thousand foot and six thousand horses ready to be let slip upon him at any, moment, out of a pacified and harmonious France; while he had nothing but a few starving and crippled regiments to withstand such an invasion. When all these events should have taken place, and France, in alliance with England, should have formally declared war against Spain, Alexander protested that he should have learned nothing new.

The Prince was somewhat mistaken as to political affairs; but his doubts concerning his neighbours, blended with the forlorn condition of himself and army, about which there was no doubt at all, showed the exigencies of his situation. In the midst of such embarrassments it is impossible not to admire his heroism as a military chieftain, and his singular adroitness as a diplomatist. He had painted for his sovereign a most faithful and horrible portrait of the obedient Provinces. The soil was untilled; the manufactories had all stopped;

Page 1460

trade had ceased to exist. It was a pity only to look upon the raggedness of his soldiers. No language could describe the misery of the reconciled Provinces—Artois, Hainault, Flanders. The condition of Bruges would melt the hardest heart; other cities were no better; Antwerp was utterly ruined; its inhabitants were all starving. The famine throughout the obedient Netherlands was such as had not been known for a century. The whole country had been picked bare by the troops, and the plough was not put into the ground. Deputations were constantly with him from Bruges, Dendermonde, Bois-le-Duc, Brussels, Antwerp, Nymegen, proving to him by the most palpable evidence that the whole population of those cities had almost literally nothing to eat. He had nothing, however, but exhortations to patience to feed them withal. He was left without a groat even to save his soldiers from starving, and he wildly and bitterly, day after day, implored his sovereign for aid. These pictures are not the sketches of a historian striving for effect, but literal transcripts from the most secret revelations of the Prince himself to his sovereign. On the other hand, although Leicester's complaints of the destitution of the English troops in the republic were almost as bitter, yet the condition of the United Provinces was comparatively healthy. Trade, external and internal, was increasing daily. Distant commercial and military expeditions were fitted out, manufactures were prosperous, and the war of independence was gradually becoming —strange to say—a source of prosperity to the new commonwealth.

Philip—being now less alarmed than his nephew concerning French affairs, and not feeling so keenly the misery of the obedient Provinces, or the wants of the Spanish army—sent to Alexander six hundred thousand ducats, by way of Genoa. In the letter submitted by his secretary recording this remittance, the King made, however, a characteristic marginal note:—"See if it will not be as well to tell him something concerning the two hundred thousand ducats to be deducted for Mucio, for fear of more mischief, if the Prince should expect the whole six hundred thousand."

Accordingly Mucio got the two hundred thousand. One-third of the meagre supply destined for the relief of the King's starving and valiant little army in the Netherlands was cut off to go into the pockets of the intriguing Duke of Guise. "We must keep the French," said Philip, "in a state of confusion at home, and feed their civil war. We must not allow them to come to a general peace, which would be destruction for the Catholics. I know you will put a good face on the matter; and, after all, 'tis in the interest of the Netherlands. Moreover, the money shall be immediately refunded."

Page 1461

Alexander was more likely to make a wry face, notwithstanding his views of the necessity of fomenting the rebellion against the House of Valois. Certainly if a monarch intended to conquer such countries as France, England, and Holland, without stirring from his easy chair in the Escorial, it would have been at least as well—so Alexander thought—to invest a little more capital in the speculation. No monarch ever dreamed of arriving at universal empire with less personal fatigue or exposure, or at a cheaper rate, than did Philip *ii*. His only fatigue was at his writing-table. But even here his merit was of a subordinate description. He sat a great while at a time. He had a genius for sitting; but he now wrote few letters himself. A dozen words or so, scrawled in hieroglyphics at the top, bottom, or along the margin of the interminable despatches of his secretaries, contained the suggestions, more or less luminous, which arose in his mind concerning public affairs. But he held firmly to his purpose: He had devoted his life to the extermination of Protestantism, to the conquest of France and England, to the subjugation of Holland. These were vast schemes. A King who should succeed in such enterprises, by his personal courage and genius, at the head of his armies, or by consummate diplomacy, or by a masterly system of finance-husbanding and concentrating the resources of his almost boundless realms—might be in truth commended for capacity. Hitherto however Philip's triumph had seemed problematical; and perhaps something more would be necessary than letters to Parma, and paltry remittances to Mucio, notwithstanding Alexander's splendid but local victories in Flanders.

Parma, although in reality almost at bay, concealed his despair, and accomplished wonders in the field. The military events during the spring and summer of 1586 will be sketched in a subsequent chapter. For the present it is necessary to combine into a complete whole the subterranean negotiations between Brussels and England.

Much to his surprise and gratification, Parma found that the peace-party were not inclined to change their views in consequence of the triumphs of Drake. He soon informed the King that—according to Champagny and Bodman—the Lord Treasurer, the Comptroller, Lord Cobham, and Sir Christopher Hatton, were more pacific than they had ever been. These four were represented by Grafigni as secretly in league against Leicester and Walsingham, and very anxious to bring about a reconciliation between the crowns of England and Spain. The merchant-diplomatist, according to his own statement, was expressly sent by Queen Elizabeth to the prince of Parma, although without letter of credence or signed instructions, but with the full knowledge and approbation of the four counsellors just mentioned. He assured Alexander that the Queen and the majority of her council felt a strong desire for peace, and had manifested much repentance for what had been done. They had explained

Page 1462

their proceedings by the necessity of self-defence. They had avowed—in case they should be made sure of peace—that they should, not with reluctance and against their will, but, on the contrary, with the utmost alacrity and at once, surrender to the King of Spain the territory which they possessed in the Netherlands, and especially the fortified towns in Holland and Zeeland; for the English object had never been conquest. Parma had also been informed of the Queen's strong desire that he should be employed as negotiator, on account of her great confidence in his sincerity. They had expressed much satisfaction on hearing that he was about to send an agent to England, and had protested themselves rejoiced at Drake's triumphs, only because of their hope that a peace with Spain would thus be rendered the easier of accomplishment. They were much afraid, according to Grafigni, of Philip's power, and dreaded a Spanish invasion of their country, in conjunction with the Pope. They were now extremely anxious that Parma—as he himself informed the King—should send an agent of good capacity, in great secrecy, to England.

The Comptroller had said that he had pledged himself to such a result, and if it failed, that they would probably cut off his head. The four counsellors were excessively solicitous for the negotiation, and each of them was expecting to gain favour by advancing it to the best of his ability.

Parma hinted at the possibility that all these professions were false, and that the English were only intending to keep the King from the contemplated invasion. At the same time he drew Philip's attention to the fact that Burghley and his party had most evidently been doing everything in their power to obstruct Leicester's progress in the Netherlands and to keep back the reinforcements of troops and money which he so much required.

No doubt these communications of Parma to the King were made upon the faith of an agent not over-scrupulous, and of no elevated or recognised rank in diplomacy. It must be borne in mind, however, that he had been made use of by both parties; perhaps because it would be easy to throw off, and discredit, him whenever such a step should be convenient; and that, on the other hand, coming fresh from Burghley and the rest into the presence of the keen-eyed Farnese, he would hardly invent for his employer a budget of falsehoods. That man must have been a subtle negotiator who could outwit such a statesman as Burghley—and the other counsellors of Elizabeth, and a bold one who could dare to trifle on a momentous occasion with Alexander of Parma.

Leicester thought Burghley very much his friend, and so thought Davison and Heneage; and the Lord-Treasurer had, in truth, stood stoutly by the Earl in the affair of the absolute governorship;—"a matter more severe and cumbersome to him and others," said Burghley, "than any whatsoever since he was a counsellor." But there is no doubt that these negotiations were going forward all the

Page 1463

spring and summer, that they were most detrimental to Leicester's success, and that they were kept—so far as it was possible—a profound secret from him, from Walsingham, and from the States-General. Nothing was told them except what their own astuteness had discovered beforehand; and the game of the counsellors—so far as their attitude towards Leicester and Walsingham was concerned—seems both disingenuous and impolitic.

Parma, it was to be feared, was more than a match for the English governor-general in the field; and it was certainly hopeless for poor old Comptroller Croft, even though backed by the sagacious Burghley, to accomplish so great an amount of dissimulation in a year as the Spanish cabinet, without effort, could compass in a week. Nor were they attempting to do so. It is probable that England was acting towards Philip in much better faith than he deserved, or than Parma believed; but it is hardly to be wondered at that Leicester should think himself injured by being kept perpetually in the dark.

Elizabeth was very impatient at not receiving direct letters from Parma, and her anxiety on the subject explains much of her caprice during the quarrel about the governor-generalahip. Many persons in the Netherlands thought those violent scenes a farce, and a farce that had been arranged with Leicester beforehand. In this they were mistaken; for an examination of the secret correspondence of the period reveals the motives—which to contemporaries were hidden—of many strange transactions. The Queen was, no doubt, extremely anxious, and with cause, at the tempest slowly gathering over her head; but the more the dangers thickened, the more was her own official language to those in high places befitting the sovereign of England.

She expressed her surprise to Farnese that he had not written to her on the subject of the Grafigni and Bodman affair. The first, she said, was justified in all which he had narrated, save in his assertion that she had sent him. The other had not obtained audience, because he had not come provided with any credentials, direct or indirect. Having now understood from Andrea de Loo and the Seigneur de Champagny that Parma had the power to conclude a peace, which he seemed very much to desire, she observed that it was not necessary for him to be so chary in explaining the basis of the proposed negotiations. It was better to enter into a straightforward path, than by ambiguous words to spin out to great length matters which princes should at once conclude.

"Do not suppose," said the Queen, "that I am seeking what belongs to others. God forbid. I seek only that which is mine own. But be sure that I will take good heed of the sword which threatens me with destruction, nor think that I am so craven-spirited as to endure a wrong, or to place myself at the mercy of my enemy. Every week I see advertisements and letters from Spain that this year shall witness the downfall of England; for the Spaniards—like

Page 1464

the hunter who divided, with great liberality, among his friends the body and limbs of the wolf, before it had been killed—have partitioned this kingdom and that of Ireland before the conquest has been effected. But my royal heart is no whit appalled by such threats. I trust, with the help of the Divine hand—which has thus far miraculously preserved me—to smite all these braggart powers into the dust, and to preserve my honour, and the kingdoms which He has given me for my heritage.

"Nevertheless, if you have authority to enter upon and to conclude this negotiation, you will find my ears open to hear your propositions; and I tell you further, if a peace is to be made, that I wish you to be the mediator thereof. Such is the affection I bear you, notwithstanding that some letters, written by your own hand, might easily have effaced such sentiments from my mind."

Soon afterwards, Bodman was again despatched to England, Grafigni being already there. He was provided with unsigned instructions, according to which he was to say that the Prince, having heard of the Queen's good intentions, had despatched him and Grafigni to her court. They were to listen to any suggestions made by the Queen to her ministers; but they were to do nothing but listen. If the counsellors should enter into their grievances against his Majesty, and ask for explanations, the agents were to say that they had no authority or instructions to speak for so great and Christian a monarch. Thus they were to cut the thread of any such discourse, or any other observations not to the purpose.

Silence, in short, was recommended, first and last, as the one great business of their mission; and it was unlucky that men whose talent for taciturnity was thus signally relied upon should be somewhat remarkable for loquacity. Grafigni was also the bearer of a letter from Alexander to the Queen—of which Bodman received a copy—but it was strictly enjoined upon them to keep the letter, their instructions, and the objects of their journey, a secret from all the world.

The letter of the Prince consisted mainly of complimentary flourishes. He had heard, he said, all that Agostino Grafigni had communicated, and he now begged her Majesty to let him understand the course which it was proper to take; assuring her of his gratitude for her good opinion touching his sincerity, and his desire to save the effusion of blood, and so on; concluding of course with expressions of most profound consideration and devotion.

Early in July Bodman arrived in London. He found Grafigni in very low spirits. He had been with Lord Cobham, and was much disappointed with his reception, for Cobham—angry that Grafigni had brought no commission from the King—had refused to receive Parma's letter to the Queen, and had expressed annoyance that Bodman should be employed on this mission, having heard that lie was very ill-tempered and passionate.

The same evening, he had been sent for by Lord Burghley—who had accepted the letter for her Majesty without saying a word—and on the following morning, he had been taken to task, by several counsellors, on the ground that the Prince, in that communication, had stated that the Queen had expressed a desire for peace.

Page 1465

It has just been shown that there was no such intimation at all in the letter; but as neither Grafigni nor Bodman had read the epistle itself, but only the copy furnished them, they could merely say that such an assertion; if made by the Prince, had been founded on no statement of theirs. Bodman consoled his colleague, as well as he could, by assurances that when the letter was fairly produced, their vindication would be complete, and Grafigni, upon that point, was comforted. He was, however, very doleful in general, and complained bitterly of Burghley and the other English counsellors. He said that they had forced him, against his will, to make this journey to Brussels, that they had offered him presents, that they would leave him no rest in his own house, but had made him neglect all his private business, and caused him a great loss of time and money, in order that he might serve them. They had manifested the strongest desire that Parma should open this communication, and had led him to expect a very large recompense for his share in the transaction. "And now," said Grafigni to his colleague, with great bitterness, "I find no faith nor honour in them at all. They don't keep their word, and every one of them is trying to slide out of the very business, in which each was, but the other day, striving to outrival the other, in order that it might be brought to a satisfactory conclusion."

After exploding in this way to Bodman, he went back to Cobham, and protested, with angry vehemence, that Parma had never written such a word to the Queen, and that so it would prove, if the letter were produced.

Next day, Bodman was sent for to Greenwich, where her Majesty was, as usual, residing. A secret pavilion was indicated to him, where he was to stay until sunset. When that time arrived, Lord Cobham's secretary came with great mystery, and begged the emissary to follow him, but at a considerable distance, towards the apartments of Lord Burghley in the palace. Arriving there, they found the Lord Treasurer accompanied by Cobham and Croft. Burghley instantly opened the interview by a defence of the Queen's policy in sending troops to the Netherlands, and in espousing their cause, and then the conversation proceeded to the immediate matter in hand.

Bodman (after listening respectfully to the Lord-Treasurer's observations).—"His Highness has, however, been extremely surprised that my Lord Leicester should take an oath, as governor-general of the King's Provinces. He is shocked likewise by the great demonstrations of hostility on the part of her Majesty."

Burghley.—"The oath was indispensable. The Queen was obliged to tolerate the step on account of the great urgency of the States to have a head. But her Majesty has commanded us to meet you on this occasion, in order to hear what you have to communicate on the part of the Prince of Parma."

Bodman (after a profusion of complimentary phrases).—"I have no commission to say anything. I am only instructed to listen to anything that may be said to me, and that her Majesty may be pleased to command."

Page 1466

Burghley.—“’Tis very discreet to begin thus. But time is pressing, and it is necessary to be brief. We beg you therefore to communicate, without further preface, that which you have been charged to say.”

Bodman.—“I can only repeat to your Lordship, that I have been charged to say nothing.”

After this Barmecide feast of diplomacy, to partake of which it seemed hardly necessary that the guests should have previously attired themselves in such garments of mystery, the parties separated for the night.

In spite of their care, it would seem that the Argus-eyed Walsingham had been able to see after sunset; for, the next evening—after Bodman had been introduced with the same precautions to the same company, in the same place—Burghley, before a word had been spoken, sent for Sir Francis.

Bodman was profoundly astonished, for he had been expressly informed that Walsingham was to know nothing of the transaction. The Secretary of State could not so easily be outwitted, however, and he was soon seated at the table, surveying the scene, with his grave melancholy eyes, which had looked quite through the whole paltry intrigue.

Burghley.—“Her Majesty has commanded us to assemble together, in order that, in my presence, it may be made clear that she did not commence this negotiation. Let Grafigni be summoned.”

Grafigni immediately made his appearance.

Burghley.—“You will please to explain how you came to enter into this business.”

Grafigni.—“The first time I went to the States, it was on my private affairs; I had no order from any one to treat with the Prince of Parma. His Highness, having accidentally heard, however, that I resided in England, expressed a wish to see me. I had an interview with the Prince. I told him, out of my own head, that the Queen had a strong inclination to hear propositions of peace, and that—as some of her counsellors were of the same opinion—I believed that if his Highness should send a negotiator, some good would be effected. The Prince replied that he felt by no means sure of such a result; but that, if I should come back from England, sent by the Queen or her council, he would then despatch a person with a commission to treat of peace. This statement, together with other matters that had passed between us, was afterwards drawn up in writing by command of his Highness.”

Burghley.—“Who bade you say, after your second return to Brussels, that you came on the part of the Queen? For you well know that her Majesty did not send you.”

Grafigni.—“I never said so. I stated that my Lord Cobham had set down in writing what I was to say to the Prince of Parma. It will never appear that I represented the Queen as desiring peace. I said that her Majesty would lend her ears to peace. Bodman knows this too; and he has a copy of the letter of his Highness.”

Walsingham to Bodman.—“Have you the copy still?”

Page 1467

Bodman.—“Yes, Mr. Secretary.”

Walsingham.—“Please to produce it, in order that this matter may be sifted to the bottom.”

Bodman.—“I supplicate your Lorships to pardon me, but indeed that cannot be. My instructions forbid my showing the letter.”

Walsingham (rising).—“I will forthwith go to her Majesty, and fetch the original.” A pause. Mr. Secretary returns in a few minutes, having obtained the document, which the Queen, up to that time, had kept by her, without showing it to any one.

Walsingham (after reading the letter attentively, and aloud).—“There is not such a word, as that her Majesty is desirous of peace, in the whole paper.”

Burghley (taking the letter, and slowly construing it out of Italian into English).—“It would seem that his Highness hath written this, assuming that the Signor Grafigni came from the Queen, although he had received his instructions from my Lord Cobham. It is plain, however, that the negotiation was commenced accidentally.”

Comptroller Croft (nervously, and with the air of a man fearful of getting into trouble).—-“You know very well, Mr. Bodman, that my servant came to Dunkirk only to buy and truck away horses; and that you then, by chance, entered into talk with him, about the best means of procuring a peace between the two kingdoms. My servant told you of the good feeling that prevailed in England. You promised to write on the subject to the Prince, and I immediately informed the Lord-Treasurer of the whole transaction.”

Burghley.—“That is quite true.”

Croft.—“My servant subsequently returned to the Provinces in order to learn what the Prince might have said on the subject.”

Bodman (with immense politeness, but very decidedly).—“Pardon me, Mr. Comptroller; but, in this matter, I must speak the truth, even if the honour and life of my father were on the issue. I declare that your servant Norris came to me, directly commissioned for that purpose by yourself, and informed me from you, and upon your authority, that if I would solicit the Prince of Parma to send a secret agent to England, a peace would be at once negotiated. Your servant entreated me to go to his Highness at Brussels. I refused, but agreed to consider the proposition. After the lapse of several days, the servant returned to make further enquiries. I told him that the Prince had come to no decision. Norris continued to press the matter. I excused myself. He then solicited and obtained from me a letter of introduction to De Loo, the secretary of his Highness. Armed with this, he went to Brussels and had an interview—as I found, four days later—with the Prince. In consequence of the representations of Norris, those of Signor

Grafigni, and those by way of Antwerp, his Highness determined to send me to England."

Burghley to Croft.—"Did you order your servant to speak with Andrea de Loo?"

Croft.—"I cannot deny it."

Page 1468

Burghley.—“The fellow seems to have travelled a good way out of his commission. His master sends him to buy horses, and he commences a peace-negotiation between two kingdoms. It would be well he were chastised. As regards the Antwerp matter, too, we have had many letters, and I have, seen one from the Seigneur de Champagny, the same effect as that of all the rest.”

Walsingham.—“I see not to what end his Highness of Parma has sent Mr. Bodman hither. The Prince avows that he hath no commission from Spain.”

Bodman.—“His Highness was anxious to know what was her Majesty’s pleasure. So soon as that should be known, the Prince could obtain ample authority. He would never have proceeded so far without meaning a good end.”

Walsingham.—“Very like. I dare say that his Highness will obtain the commission. Meantime, as Prince of Parma, he writes these letters, and assists his sovereign perhaps more than he doth ourselves.”

Here the interview terminated. A few days later, Bodman had another conversation with Burghley and Cobham. Reluctantly, at their urgent request, he set down in writing all that he had said concerning his mission.

The Lord Treasurer said that the Queen and her counsellors were “ready to embrace peace when it was treated of sincerely.” Meantime the Queen had learned that the Prince had been sending letters to the cautionary towns in Holland and Zeeland, stating that her Majesty was about to surrender them to the King of Spain. These were tricks to make mischief, and were very detrimental to the Queen.

Bodman replied that these were merely the idle stories of quidnuncs; and that the Prince and all his counsellors were dealing with the utmost sincerity.

Burghley answered that he had intercepted the very letters, and had them in his possession.

A week afterwards, Bodman saw Walsingham alone, and was informed by him that the Queen had written an answer to Parma’s letter, and that negotiations for the future were to be carried on in the usual form, or not at all. Walsingham, having thus got the better of his rivals, and delved below their mines, dismissed the agent with brief courtesy. Afterwards the discomfited Mr. Comptroller wished a private interview with Bodman. Bodman refused to speak with him except in presence of Lord Cobham. This Croft refused. In the same way Bodman contrived to get rid, as he said, of Lord Burghley and Lord Cobham, declining to speak with either of them alone. Soon afterwards he returned to the Provinces!

The Queen's letter to Parma was somewhat caustic. It was obviously composed through the inspiration of Walsingham rather than that of Burghley. The letter, brought by a certain Grafigni and a certain Bodman, she said, was a very strange one, and written under a delusion. It was a very grave error, that, in her name, without her knowledge, contrary to her disposition, and to the prejudice of her honour,

Page 1469

such a person as this Grafigni, or any one like him, should have the audacity to commence such a business, as if she had, by messages to the Prince, sought a treaty with his King, who had so often returned evil for her good. Grafigni, after representing the contrary to his Highness, had now denied in presence of her counsellors having received any commission from the Queen. She also briefly gave the result of Bodman's interviews with Burghley and the others, just narrated. That agent had intimated that Parma would procure authority to treat for peace, if assured that the Queen would lend her ear to any propositions.

She replied by referring to her published declarations, as showing her powerful motives for interfering in these affairs. It was her purpose to save her own realm and to rescue her ancient neighbours from misery and from slavery. To this end she should still direct her actions, notwithstanding the sinister rumours which had been spread that she was inclined to peace before providing for the security and liberty of her allies. She was determined never to separate their cause from her own. Propositions tending to the security of herself and of her neighbours would always be favourably received.

Parma, on his part, informed his master that there could be no doubt that the Queen and the majority of her council abhorred the war, and that already much had been gained by the fictitious negotiation. Lord-Treasurer Burghley had been interposing endless delays and difficulties in the way of every measure proposed for the relief of Lord Leicester, and the assistance rendered him had been most lukewarm. Meantime the Prince had been able, he said, to achieve much success in the field, and the English had done nothing to prevent it. Since the return of Grafigni and Bodman, however, it was obvious that the English government had disowned these non-commissioned diplomatists. The whole negotiation and all the negotiators were now discredited, but there was no doubt that there had been a strong desire to treat, and great disappointment at the result. Grafigni and Andrea de Loo had been publishing everywhere in Antwerp that England would consider the peace as made, so soon as his Majesty should be willing to accept any propositions.

His Majesty, meanwhile, sat in his cabinet, without the slightest intention of making or accepting any propositions save those that were impossible. He smiled benignantly at his nephew's dissimulation and at the good results which it had already produced. He approved of gaining time, he said, by fictitious negotiations and by the use of a mercantile agent; for, no doubt, such a course would prevent the proper succours from being sent to the Earl of Leicester. If the English would hand over to him the cautionary towns held by them in Holland and Zeeland, promise no longer to infest the seas, the Indies, and the Isles, with their corsairs, and guarantee the complete obedience to their King and submission to the holy Catholic

Page 1470

Church of the rebellious Provinces, perhaps something might be done with them; but, on the whole, he was inclined to think that they had been influenced by knavish and deceitful motives from the beginning. He enjoined it upon Parma, therefore, to proceed with equal knavery—taking care, however, not to injure his reputation—and to enter into negotiations wherever occasion might serve, in order to put the English off their guard and to keep back the reinforcements so imperatively required by Leicester.

And the reinforcements were indeed kept back. Had Burghley and Croft been in the pay of Philip *ii*. they could hardly have served him better than they had been doing by the course pursued. Here then is the explanation of the shortcomings of the English government towards Leicester and the States during the memorable spring and summer of 1586. No money, no soldiers, when most important operations in the field were required. The first general of the age was to be opposed by a man who had certainly never gained many laurels as a military chieftain, but who was brave and confident, and who, had he been faithfully supported by the government which sent him to the Netherlands, would have had his antagonist at a great disadvantage. Alexander had scarcely eight thousand effective men. Famine, pestilence, poverty, mutiny, beset and almost paralyzed him. Language could not exaggerate the absolute destitution of the country. Only miracles could save the King's cause, as Farnese repeatedly observed. A sharp vigorous campaign, heartily carried on against him by Leicester and Hohenlo, with plenty of troops and money at command, would have brought the heroic champion of Catholicism to the ground. He was hemmed in upon all sides; he was cut off from the sea; he stood as it were in a narrowing circle, surrounded by increasing dangers. His own veterans, maddened by misery, stung by their King's ingratitude, naked, starving, ferocious, were turning against him. Mucio, like his evil genius, was spiriting away his supplies just as they were reaching his hands; a threatening tempest seemed rolling up from France; the whole population of the Provinces which he had "reconciled"—a million of paupers—were crying to him for bread; great commercial cities, suddenly blasted and converted into dens of thieves and beggars, were cursing the royal author of their ruin, and uttering wild threats against his vicegerent; there seemed, in truth, nothing left for Alexander but to plunge headlong into destruction, when, lo! Mr. Comptroller Croft, advancing out of the clouds, like a propitious divinity, disguised in the garb of a foe—-and the scene was changed.

The feeble old man, with his shufing, horse-trucking servant, ex-spy of Monsieur, had accomplished more work for Philip and Alexander than many regiments of Spaniards and Walloons could have done. The arm of Leicester was paralyzed upon the very threshold of success. The picture of these palace-intrigues has been presented with minute elaboration, because, however petty and barren in appearance, they were in reality prolific of grave results. A series of victories by Parma was substituted for the possible triumphs of Elizabeth and the States.

Page 1471

The dissimulation of the Spanish court was fathomless. The secret correspondence of the times reveals to us that its only purpose was to deceive the Queen and her counsellors, and to gain time to prepare the grand invasion of England and subjugation of Holland—that double purpose which Philip could only abandon with life. There was never a thought, on his part, of honest negotiation. On the other hand, the Queen was sincere; Burghley and Hatton and Cobham were sincere; Croft was sincere, so far as Spain was concerned. At least they had been sincere. In the private and doleful dialogues between Bodman and Grafigni which we have just been overhearing, these intriguers spoke the truth, for they could have no wish to deceive each other, and no fear of eaves-droppers not to be born till centuries afterwards. These conversations have revealed to us that the Lord Treasurer and three of his colleagues had been secretly doing their best to cripple Leicester, to stop the supplies for the Netherlands, and to patch up a hurried and unsatisfactory, if not a disgraceful peace; and this, with the concurrence of her Majesty. After their plots had been discovered by the vigilant Secretary of State, there was a disposition to discredit the humbler instruments in the cabal. Elizabeth was not desirous of peace. Far from it. She was qualmish at the very suggestion. Dire was her wrath against Bodman, De Loo, Graafigni, and the rest, at their misrepresentations on the subject. But she would “lend her ear.” And that royal ear was lent, and almost fatal was the distillment poured into its porches. The pith and marrow of the great Netherland enterprise was sapped by the slow poison of the ill-timed negotiation. The fruit of Drake’s splendid triumphs in America was blighted by it. The stout heart of the vainglorious but courageous Leicester was sickened by it, while, meantime, the maturing of the great armada-scheme, by which the destruction of England was to be accomplished, was furthered, through the unlimited procrastination so precious to the heart of Philip.

Fortunately the subtle Walsingham was there upon the watch to administer the remedy before it was quite too late; and to him England and the Netherlands were under lasting obligations. While Alexander and Philip suspected a purpose on the part of the English government to deceive them, they could not help observing that the Earl of Leicester was both deserted and deceived. Yet it had been impossible for the peace-party in the government wholly to conceal their designs, when such prating fellows as Grafigni and De Loo were employed in what was intended to be a secret negotiation. In vain did the friends of Leicester in the Netherlands endeavour to account for the neglect with which he was treated, and for the destitution of his army. Hopelessly did they attempt to counteract those “advertisements of most fearful instance,” as Richard Cavendish expressed himself, which were circulating everywhere.

Page 1472

Thanks to the babbling of the very men, whose chief instructions had been to hold their tongues, and to listen with all their ears, the secret negotiations between Parma and the English counsellors became the town-talk at Antwerp, the Hague, Amsterdam, Brussels, London. It is true that it was impossible to know what was actually said and done; but that there was something doing concerning which Leicester was not to be informed was certain. Grafigni, during one of his visits to the obedient provinces, brought a brace of greyhounds and a couple of horses from England, as a present to Alexander, and he perpetually went about, bragging to every one of important negotiations which he was conducting, and of his intimacy with great personages in both countries. Leicester, on the other hand, was kept in the dark. To him Grafigni made no communications, but he once sent him a dish of plums, “which,” said the Earl, with superfluous energy, “I will boldly say to you, by the living God, is all that I have ever had since I came into these countries.” When it is remembered that Leicester had spent many thousand pounds in the Netherland cause, that he had deeply mortgaged his property in order to provide more funds, that he had never received a penny of salary from the Queen, that his soldiers were “ragged and torn like rogues-pity to see them,” and were left without the means of supporting life; that he had been neglected, deceived, humiliated, until he was forced to describe himself as a “forlorn man set upon a forlorn hope,” it must be conceded that Grafigni’s present of a dish of plums could hardly be sufficient to make him very happy.

From time to time he was enlightened by Sir Francis, who occasionally forced his adversaries’ hands, and who always faithfully informed the Earl of everything he could discover. “We are so greedy of a peace, in respect of the charges of the wars,” he wrote in April, “as in the procuring thereof we weigh neither honour nor safety. Somewhat here is adealing underhand, wherein there is great care taken that I should not be made acquainted withal.” But with all their great care, the conspirators, as it has been seen, were sometimes outwitted by the Secretary, and, when put to the blush, were forced to take him into half-confidence. “Your Lordship may see,” he wrote, after getting possession of Parma’s letter to the Queen, and unravelling Croft’s intrigues, “what effects are wrought by such weak ministers. They that have been the employers of them are ashamed of the matter.”

Unutterable was the amazement, as we have seen, of Bodman and Grafigni when they had suddenly found themselves confronted in Burghley’s private apartments in Greenwich Palace, whither they had been conducted so mysteriously after dark from the secret pavilion—by the grave Secretary of State, whom they had been so anxious to deceive; and great was the embarrassment of Croft and Cobham, and even of the imperturbable Burghley.

Page 1473

And thus patiently did Walsingham pick his course, plummet in hand, through the mists and along the quicksands, and faithfully did he hold out signals to his comrade embarked on the same dangerous voyage. As for the Earl himself, he was shocked at the short-sighted policy of his mistress, mortified by the neglect to which he was exposed, disappointed in his ambitious schemes. Vehemently and judiciously he insisted upon the necessity of vigorous field operations throughout the spring and summer thus frittered away in frivolous negotiations. He was for peace, if a lasting and honourable peace could be procured; but he insisted that the only road to such a result was through a “good sharp war.” His troops were mutinous for want of pay, so that he had been obliged to have a few of them executed, although he protested that he would rather have “gone a thousand miles a-foot” than have done so; and he was crippled by his government at exactly the time when his great adversary’s condition was most forlorn. Was it strange that the proud Earl should be fretting his heart away when such golden chances were eluding his grasp? He would “creep upon the ground,” he said, as far as his hands and knees would carry him, to have a good peace for her Majesty, but his care was to have a peace indeed, and not a show of it. It was the cue of Holland and England to fight before they could expect to deal upon favourable terms with their enemy. He was quick enough to see that his false colleagues at home were playing into the enemy’s hands. Victory was what was wanted; victory the Earl pledged himself, if properly seconded, to obtain; and, braggart though he was, it is by no means impossible that he might have redeemed his pledge. “If her Majesty will use her advantage,” he said, “she shall bring the King, and especially this Prince of Parma, to seek peace in other sort than by way of merchants.” Of courage and confidence the governor had no lack. Whether he was capable of outgeneralling Alexander Farnese or no, will be better seen, perhaps, in subsequent chapters; but there is no doubt that he was reasonable enough in thinking, at that juncture, that a hard campaign rather than a “merchant’s brokerage” was required to obtain an honourable peace. Lofty, indeed, was the scorn of the aristocratic Leicester that “merchants and pedlars should be paltering in so weighty a cause,” and daring to send him a dish of plums when he was hoping half a dozen regiments from the Queen; and a sorry business, in truth, the pedlars had made of it.

Never had there been a more delusive diplomacy, and it was natural that the lieutenant-general abroad and the statesman at home should be sad and indignant, seeing England drifting to utter shipwreck while pursuing that phantom of a pacific haven. Had Walsingham and himself tampered with the enemy, as some counsellors he could name had done, Leicester asserted that the gallows would be thought too good for them; and yet he hoped he might be hanged if the whole Spanish faction in England could procure for the Queen a peace fit for her to accept.

Page 1474

Certainly it was quite impossible for the Spanish-faction to bring about a peace. No human power could bring it about. Even if England had been willing and able to surrender Holland, bound hand and foot, to Philip, even then she could only have obtained a hollow armistice. Philip had sworn in his inmost soul the conquest of England and the dethronement of Elizabeth. His heart was fixed. It was only by the subjugation of England that he hoped to recover the Netherlands. England was to be his stepping-stone to Holland. The invasion was slowly but steadily maturing, and nothing could have diverted the King from his great purpose. In the very midst of all these plots and counterplots, Bodmans and Grafignis, English geldings and Irish greyhounds, dishes of plums and autograph letters of her Majesty and his Highness, the Prince was deliberately discussing all the details of the invasion, which, as it was then hoped, would be ready by the autumn of the year 1586. Although he had sent a special agent to Philip, who was to state by word of mouth that which it was deemed unsafe to write, yet Alexander, perpetually urged by his master, went at last more fully into particulars than he had ever ventured to do before; and this too at the very moment when Elizabeth was most seriously “lending her ear” to negotiation, and most vehemently expressing her wrath at Sir Thomas Heneage for dealing candidly with the States-General.

The Prince observed that when, two or three years before, he had sent his master an account of the coasts, anchoring-places, and harbours of England, he had then expressed the opinion that the conquest of England was an enterprise worthy of the grandeur and Christianity of his Majesty, and not so difficult as to be considered altogether impossible. To make himself absolutely master of the business, however, he had then thought that the King should have no associates in the scheme, and should make no account of the inhabitants of England. Since that time the project had become more difficult of accomplishment, because it was now a stale and common topic of conversation everywhere—in Italy, Germany, and France—so that there could be little doubt that rumours on the subject were daily reaching the ears of Queen Elizabeth and of every one in her kingdom. Hence she had made a strict alliance with Sweden, Denmark, the Protestant princes of Germany, and even with the Turks and the French. Nevertheless, in spite of these obstacles, the King, placing his royal hand to the work, might well accomplish the task; for the favour of the Lord, whose cause it was, would be sure to give him success.

Being so Christian and Catholic a king, Philip naturally desired to extend the area of the holy church, and to come to the relief of so many poor innocent martyrs in England, crying aloud before the Lord for help. Moreover Elizabeth had fomented rebellion in the King’s Provinces for a long time secretly, and now, since the fall of Antwerp, and just as Holland and Zeeland were falling into his grasp, openly.

Page 1475

Thus, in secret and in public, she had done the very worst she could do; and it was very clear that the Lord, for her sins; had deprived her of understanding, in order that his Majesty might be the instrument of that chastisement which she so fully deserved. A monarch of such great prudence, valour, and talent as Philip, could now give all the world to understand that those who dared to lose a just and decorous respect for him, as this good lady had done, would receive such chastisement as royal power guided by prudent counsel could inflict. Parma assured his sovereign, that, if the conquest of England were effected, that of the Netherlands would be finished with much facility and brevity; but that otherwise, on account of the situation, strength and obstinacy of those people, it would be a very long, perilous, and at best doubtful business.

“Three points,” he said, “were most vital to the invasion of England—secrecy, maintenance of the civil war in France, and judicious arrangement of matters in the Provinces.”

The French, if unoccupied at home, would be sure to make the enterprise so dangerous as to become almost impossible; for it might be laid down as a general maxim that that nation, jealous of Philip’s power, had always done and would always do what it could to counteract his purposes.

With regard to the Netherlands, it would be desirable to leave a good number of troops in those countries—at least as many as were then stationed there—besides the garrisons, and also to hold many German and Swiss mercenaries in “wartgeld.” It would be further desirable that Alexander should take most of the personages of quality and sufficiency in the Provinces over with him to England, in order that they should not make mischief in his absence.

With regard to the point of secrecy, that was, in Parma’s opinion, the most important of all. All leagues must become more or less public, particularly those contrived at or with Rome. Such being the case, the Queen of England would be well aware of the Spanish projects, and, besides her militia at home, would levy German infantry and cavalry, and provide plenty of vessels, relying therein upon Holland and Zeeland, where ships and sailors were in such abundance. Moreover, the English and the Netherlanders knew the coasts, currents, tides, shallows, quicksands, ports, better than did the pilots of any fleets that the King could send thither. Thus, having his back assured, the enemy would meet them in front at a disadvantage. Although, notwithstanding this inequality, the enemy would be beaten, yet if the engagement should be warm, the Spaniards would receive an amount of damage which could not fail to be inconvenient, particularly as they would be obliged to land their troops, and to give battle to those who would be watching their landing. Moreover the English would be provided with cavalry, of which his Majesty’s forces would have very little, on account of the difficulty of its embarkation.

Page 1476

The obedient Netherlands would be the proper place in which to organize the whole expedition. There the regiments could be filled up, provisions collected, the best way of effecting the passage ascertained, and the force largely increased without exciting suspicion; but with regard to the fleet, there were no ports there capacious enough for large vessels. Antwerp had ceased to be a seaport; but a large number of flat-bottomed barges, hoys, and other barks, more suitable for transporting soldiers, could be assembled in Dunkirk, Gravelines, and Newport, which, with some five-and-twenty larger vessels, would be sufficient to accompany the fleet.

The Queen, knowing that there were no large ships, nor ports to hold them in the obedient Provinces, would be unauspicious, if no greater levies seemed to be making than the exigencies of the Netherlands might apparently require.

The flat-bottomed boats, drawing two or three feet of water, would be more appropriate than ships of war drawing twenty feet. The passage across, in favourable weather, might occupy from eight to twelve hours.

The number of troops for the invading force should be thirty thousand infantry, besides five hundred light troopers, with saddles, bridles, and lances, but without horses, because, in Alexander's opinion, it would be easier to mount them in England. Of these thirty thousand there should be six thousand Spaniards, six thousand Italians, six thousand Walloons, nine thousand Germans, and three thousand Burgundians.

Much money would be required; at least three hundred thousand dollars the month for the new force, besides the regular one hundred and fifty thousand for the ordinary provision in the Netherlands; and this ordinary provision would be more necessary than ever, because a mutiny breaking forth in the time of the invasion would be destruction to the Spaniards both in England and in the Provinces.

The most appropriate part of the coast for a landing would, in Alexander's opinion, be between Dover and Margate, because the Spaniards, having no footing in Holland and Zeeland, were obliged to make their starting-point in Flanders. The country about Dover was described by Parma as populous, well-wooded, and much divided by hedges; advantageous for infantry, and not requiring a larger amount of cavalry than the small force at his disposal, while the people there were domestic in their habits, rich, and therefore less warlike, less trained to arms, and more engrossed by their occupations and their comfortable ways of life. Therefore, although some encounters would take place, yet after the commanders of the invading troops had given distinct and clear orders, it would be necessary to leave the rest in the, "hands of God who governs all things, and from whose bounty and mercy it was to be hoped that He would favour a cause so eminently holy, just, and His own."

Page 1477

It would be necessary to make immediately for London, which city, not being fortified, would be very easily taken. This point gained, the whole framework of the business might be considered as well put together. If the Queen should fly—as, being a woman, she probably would do—everything would be left in such confusion, as, with the blessing of God, it might soon be considered that the holy and heroic work had been accomplished: Her Majesty, it was suggested, would probably make her escape in a boat before she could be captured; but the conquest would be nevertheless effected. Although, doubtless, some English troops might be got together to return and try their fortune, yet it would be quite useless; for the invaders would have already planted themselves upon the soil, and then, by means of frequent excursions and forays hither and thither about the island, all other places of importance would be gained, and the prosperous and fortunate termination of the adventure assured.

As, however, everything was to be provided for, so, in case the secret could not be preserved, it would be necessary for Philip, under pretext of defending himself against the English and French corsairs, to send a large armada to sea, as doubtless the Queen would take the same measure. If the King should prefer, however, notwithstanding Alexander's advice to the contrary, to have confederates in the enterprise,—then, the matter being public, it would be necessary to prepare a larger and stronger fleet than any which Elizabeth, with the assistance of her French and Netherland allies, could oppose to him. That fleet should be well provided with vast stores of provisions, sufficient to enable the invading force, independently of forage, to occupy three or four places in England at once, as the enemy would be able to come from various towns and strong places to attack them.

As for the proper season for the expedition, it would be advisable to select the month of October of the current year, because the English barns would then be full of wheat and other forage, and the earth would have been sown for the next year—points of such extreme importance, that if the plan could not be executed at that time, it would be as well to defer it until the following October.

The Prince recommended that the negotiations with the League should be kept spinning, without allowing them to come to a definite conclusion; because there would be no lack of difficulties perpetually offering themselves, and the more intricate and involved the policy of France, the better it would be for the interests of Spain. Alexander expressed the utmost confidence that his Majesty, with his powerful arm, would overcome all obstacles in the path of his great project, and would show the world that he "could do a little more than what was possible." He also assured his master, in adding in this most extravagant language, of his personal devotion, that it was unnecessary for him to offer his services in this particular enterprise, because, ever since his birth, he had dedicated and consecrated himself to execute his royal commands.

Page 1478

He further advised that old Peter Ernest Mansfeld should be left commander-in-chief of the forces in the Netherlands during his own absence in England. “Mansfeld was an honourable cavalier,” he said, “and a faithful servant of the King;” and although somewhat ill-conditioned at times, yet he had essential good qualities, and was the only general fit to be trusted alone.

The reader, having thus been permitted to read the inmost thoughts of Philip and Alexander, and to study their secret plans for conquering England in October, while their frivolous yet mischievous negotiations with the Queen had been going on from April to June, will be better able than before to judge whether Leicester were right or no in doubting if a good peace could be obtained by a “merchant’s brokerage.”

And now, after examining these pictures of inter-aulic politics and back-stairs diplomacy, which represent so large and characteristic a phasis of European history during the year 1586, we must throw a glance at the external, more stirring, but not more significant public events which were taking place during the same period.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

Could do a little more than what was possible
Elizabeth, though convicted, could always confute
He sat a great while at a time. He had a genius for sitting
Mistakes might occur from occasional deviations into sincerity
Nine syllables that which could be more forcibly expressed in on
They were always to deceive every one, upon every occasion
We mustn’t tickle ourselves to make ourselves laugh

Etext editor’s bookmarks of the history of the united Netherlands 1584-86

A hard bargain when both parties are losers
Able men should be by design and of purpose suppressed
Anarchy which was deemed inseparable from a non-regal form
College of “peace-makers,” who wrangled more than all
Condemned first and inquired upon after
Could do a little more than what was possible
Courage and semblance of cheerfulness, with despair in his heart
Demanding peace and bread at any price
Diplomatic adroitness consists mainly in the power to deceive
Dismay of our friends and the gratification of our enemies
Disordered, and unknit state needs no shaking, but propping
Elizabeth, though convicted, could always confute
Enmity between Lutherans and Calvinists
Find our destruction in our immoderate desire for peace
German-Lutheran sixteenth-century idea of religious freedom

He sat a great while at a time. He had a genius for sitting
He did his work, but he had not his reward
Her teeth black, her bosom white and liberally exposed (Eliz.)
Hibernian mode of expressing himself

Page 1479

His inordinate arrogance
His insolence intolerable
Holland was afraid to give a part, although offering the whole
Honor good patriots, and to support them in venial errors
Humility which was but the cloak to his pride
Intentions of a government which did not know its own intentions
Intolerable tendency to puns
Longer they delay it, the less easy will they find it
Lord was better pleased with adverbs than nouns
Make sheep of yourselves, and the wolf will eat you
Matter that men may rather pray for than hope for
Military virtue in the support of an infamous cause
Mistakes might occur from occasional deviations into sincerity
Necessity of kingship
Neighbour’s blazing roof was likely soon to fire their own
New Years Day in England, 11th January by the New Style
Nine syllables that which could be more forcibly expressed in on
Nor is the spirit of the age to be pleaded in defence
Not a friend of giving details larger than my ascertained facts
Not of the genus Reptilia, and could neither creep nor crouch
Not distinguished for their docility
Oration, fertile in rhetoric and barren in facts
Others that do nothing, do all, and have all the thanks
Pauper client who dreamed of justice at the hands of law
Peace and quietness is brought into a most dangerous estate
Peace-at-any-price party
Possible to do, only because we see that it has been done
Repentance, as usual, had come many hours too late
Repose in the other world, “Repos ailleurs”
Resolved thenceforth to adopt a system of ignorance
Round game of deception, in which nobody was deceived
Seeking protection for and against the people
Seem as if born to make the idea of royalty ridiculous
Shutting the stable-door when the steed is stolen
Soldiers enough to animate the good and terrify the bad
String of homely proverbs worthy of Sancho Panza
The very word toleration was to sound like an insult
The busy devil of petty economy
There was apathy where there should have been enthusiasm
They were always to deceive every one, upon every occasion

Thought that all was too little for him
Three hundred and upwards are hanged annually in London
Tis pity he is not an Englishman
To work, ever to work, was the primary law of his nature
Tranquillity rather of paralysis than of health
Twas pity, he said, that both should be heretics
Upper and lower millstones of royal wrath and loyal subserviency
Uttering of my choler doth little ease my grief or help my case
Wasting time fruitlessly is sharpening the knife for himself
We must all die once
We mustn’t tickle ourselves to make ourselves laugh

Page 1480

Weary of place without power
When persons of merit suffer without cause
With something of feline and feminine duplicity
Wrath of bigots on both sides
Write so illegibly or express himself so awkwardly

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

Volume *ii*.

By John Lothrop Motley

Motley's history of the Netherlands, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 60

History of the United Netherlands, 1586

CHAPTER IX.

Military Plans in the Netherlands—The Elector and Electorate of Cologne—Martin Schenk—His Career before serving the States— Franeker University founded—Parma attempts Grave—Battle on the Meuse—Success and Vainglory of Leicester—St. George's Day triumphantly kept at Utrecht—Parma not so much appalled as it was thought—He besieges and reduces Grave—And is Master of the Meuse— Leicester's Rage at the Surrender of Grave—His Revenge—Parma on the Rhine—He besieges aid assaults Neusz—Horrible Fate of the Garrison and City—Which Leicester was unable to relieve—Asel surprised by Maurice and Sidney—The Zeeland Regiment given to Sidney—Condition of the Irish and English Troops—Leicester takes the Field—He reduces Doesburg—He lays siege to Zutphen—Which Parma prepares to relieve—The English intercept the Convoy—Battle of Warnsfeld—Sir Philip Sidney wounded—-Results of the Encounter— Death of Sidney at Arnheim—Gallantry of Edward Stanley.

Five great rivers hold the Netherland territory in their coils. Three are but slightly separated—the Yssel, Waal, and ancient Rhine, while the Scheldt and, Meuse are spread more widely asunder. Along each of these streams were various fortified cities, the possession of which, in those days, when modern fortification was in its infancy, implied the control of the surrounding country. The lower part of all the rivers, where they mingled with the sea and became wide estuaries, belonged to the Republic, for the coasts and the ocean were in the hands of the Hollanders and English. Above, the

various strong places were alternately in the hands of the Spaniards and of the patriots. Thus Antwerp, with the other Scheldt cities, had fallen into Parma's power, but Flushing, which controlled them all, was held by Philip Sidney for the Queen and States. On the Meuse, Maastricht and Roermond were Spanish, but Yenloo, Grave, Meghem, and other towns, held for the commonwealth. On the Waal, the town of Nymegen had, through the dexterity of Martin Schenk, been recently transferred to the royalists, while the rest of that river's course was true to the republic. The Rhine, strictly so called, from its entrance into Netherland, belonged to the rebels. Upon its elder branch, the Yssel, Zutphen was in Parma's hands, while, a little below, Deventer had been recently and adroitly saved by Leicester and Count Meurs from falling into the same dangerous grasp.

Page 1481

Thus the triple Rhine, after it had crossed the German frontier, belonged mainly, although not exclusively, to the States. But on the edge of the Batavian territory, the ancient river, just before dividing itself into its three branches, flowed through a debatable country which was even more desolate and forlorn, if possible, than the land of the obedient Provinces.

This unfortunate district was the archi-episcopal electorate of Cologne. The city of Cologne itself, Neusz, and Rheinberg, on the river, Werll and other places in Westphalia and the whole country around, were endangered, invaded, ravaged, and the inhabitants plundered, murdered, and subjected to every imaginable outrage, by rival bands of highwaymen, enlisted in the support of the two rival bishops—beggars, outcasts, but high-born and learned churchmen both—who disputed the electorate.

At the commencement of the year a portion of the bishopric was still in the control of the deposed Protestant elector Gebhard Truchsess, assisted of course by the English and the States. The city of Cologne was held by the Catholic elector, Ernest of Bavaria, bishop of Liege; but Neusz and Rheinberg were in the hands of the Dutch republic.

The military operations of the year were, accordingly, along the Meuse, where the main object of Parma was to wrest Grave From the Netherlands; along the Waal, where, on the other hand, the patriots wished to recover Nymegen; on the Yssel, where they desired to obtain the possession of Zutphen; and in the Cologne electorate, where the Spaniards meant, if possible, to transfer Neusz and Rheinberg from Truchsess to Elector Ernest. To clear the course of these streams, and especially to set free that debatable portion of the river-territory which hemmed him in from neutral Germany, and cut off the supplies from his starving troops, was the immediate design of Alexander Farnese.

Nothing could be more desolate than the condition of the electorate. Ever since Gebhard Truchsess had renounced the communion of the Catholic Church for the love of Agnes Mansfeld, and so gained a wife and lost his principality, he had been a dependant upon the impoverished Nassaus, or a supplicant for alms to the thrifty Elizabeth. The Queen was frequently implored by Leicester, without much effect, to send the ex-elector a few hundred pounds to keep him from starving, as “he had not one groat to live upon,” and, a little later, he was employed as a go-between, and almost a spy, by the Earl, in his quarrels with the patrician party rapidly forming against him in the States.

At Godesberg—the romantic ruins of which stronghold the traveller still regards with interest, placed as it is in the midst of that enchanting region where Drachenfels looks down on the crumbling tower of Roland and the convent of Nonnenwerth—the unfortunate Gebhard had sustained a conclusive defeat. A small, melancholy man, accomplished, religious, learned, “very poor but very wise,” comely,

Page 1482

but of mean stature, altogether an unlucky and forlorn individual, he was not, after all, in very much inferior plight to that in which his rival, the Bavarian bishop, had found himself. Prince Ernest, archbishop of Liege and Cologne, a hangeron of his brother, who sought to shake him off, and a stipendiary of Philip, who was a worse paymaster than Elizabeth, had a sorry life of it, notwithstanding his nominal possession of the see. He was forced to go, disguised and in secret, to the Prince of Parma at Brussels, to ask for assistance, and to mention, with lacrymose vehemence, that both his brother and himself had determined to renounce the episcopate, unless the forces of the Spanish King could be employed to recover the cities on the Rhine. If Neusz and Rheinberg were not wrested from the rebels; Cologne itself would soon be gone. Ernest represented most eloquently to Alexander, that if the protestant archbishop were reinstated in the ancient see, it would be a most perilous result for the ancient church throughout all northern Europe. Parma kept the wandering prelate for a few days in his palace in Brussels, and then dismissed him, disguised and on foot, in the dusk of the evening, through the park-gate. He encouraged him with hopes of assistance, he represented to his sovereign the importance of preserving the Rhenish territory to Bishop Ernest and to Catholicism, but hinted that the declared intention of the Bavarian to resign the dignity, was probably a trick, because the archi-episcopate was no such very bad thing after all.

The archi-episcopate might be no very bad thing, but it was a most uncomfortable place of residence, at the moment, for prince or peasant. Overrun by hordes of brigands, and crushed almost out of existence by that most deadly of all systems of taxations, the ‘brandschatzung,’ it was fast becoming a mere den of thieves. The ‘brandschatzung’ had no name in English, but it was the well-known impost, levied by roving commanders, and even by respectable generals of all nations. A hamlet, cluster of farm-houses, country district, or wealthy city, in order to escape being burned and ravaged, as the penalty of having fallen into a conqueror’s hands, paid a heavy sum of ready money on the nail at command of the conqueror. The free companions of the sixteenth century drove a lucrative business in this particular branch of industry; and when to this was added the more direct profits derived from actual plunder, sack, and ransoming, it was natural that a large fortune was often the result to the thrifty and persevering commander of free lances.

Page 1483

Of all the professors of this comprehensive art, the terrible Martin Schenk was preeminent; and he was now ravaging the Cologne territory, having recently passed again to the service of the States. Immediately connected with the chief military events of the period which now occupies us, he was also the very archetype of the marauders whose existence was characteristic of the epoch. Born in 1549 of an ancient and noble family of Gelderland, Martin Schenk had inherited no property but a sword. Serving for a brief term as page to the Seigneur of Ysselstein, he joined, while yet a youth, the banner of William of Orange, at the head of two men-at-arms. The humble knight-errant, with his brace of squires, was received with courtesy by the Prince and the Estates, but he soon quarrelled with his patrons. There was a castle of Blyenbeek, belonging to his cousin, which he chose to consider his rightful property, because he was of the same race, and because it was a convenient and productive estate and residence, The courts had different views of public law, and supported the ousted cousin. Martin shut himself up in the castle, and having recently committed a rather discreditable homicide, which still further increased his unpopularity with the patriots, he made overtures to Parma. Alexander was glad to enlist so bold a soldier on his side, and assisted Schenk in his besieged stronghold. For years afterwards, his services under the King's banner were most brilliant, and he rose to the highest military command, while his coffers, meantime, were rapidly filling with the results of his robberies and 'brandschatzungs.' "'Tis a most courageous fellow," said Parma, "but rather a desperate highwayman than a valiant soldier." Martin's couple of lances had expanded into a corps of free companions, the most truculent, the most obedient, the most rapacious in Christendom. Never were freebooters more formidable to the world at large, or more docile to their chief, than were the followers of General Schenk. Never was a more finished captain of highwaymen. He was a man who was never sober, yet who never smiled. His habitual intoxication seemed only to increase both his audacity and his taciturnity, without disturbing his reason. He was incapable of fear, of fatigue, of remorse. He could remain for days and nights without dismounting-eating, drinking, and sleeping in the saddle; so that to this terrible centaur his horse seemed actually a part of himself. His soldiers followed him about like hounds, and were treated by him like hounds. He habitually scourged them, often took with his own hand the lives of such as displeased him, and had been known to cause individuals of them to jump from the top of church steeples at his command; yet the pack were ever stanch to his orders, for they knew that he always led them where the game was plenty. While serving under Parma he had twice most brilliantly defeated Hohenlo. At the battle of Hardenberg Heath he had completely outgeneralled

Page 1484

that distinguished chieftain, slaying fifteen hundred of his soldiers at the expense of only fifty or sixty of his own. By this triumph he had preserved the important city of Groningen for Philip, during an additional quarter of a century, and had been received in that city with rapture. Several startling years of victory and rapine he had thus run through as a royalist partisan. He became the terror and the scourge of his native Gelderland, and he was covered with wounds received in the King's service. He had been twice captured and held for ransom. Twice he had effected his escape. He had recently gained the city of Nymegen. He was the most formidable, the most unscrupulous, the most audacious Netherlander that wore Philip's colours; but he had received small public reward for his services, and the wealth which he earned on the high-road did not suffice for his ambition. He had been deeply disgusted, when, at the death of Count Renneberg, Verdugo, a former stable-boy of Mansfeld, a Spaniard who had risen from the humblest rank to be a colonel and general, had been made governor of Friesland. He had smothered his resentment for a time however, but had sworn within himself to desert at the most favourable opportunity. At last, after he had brilliantly saved the city of Breda from falling into the hands of the patriots, he was more enraged than he had ever been before, when Haultepenne, of the house of Berlapmont, was made governor of that place in his stead.

On the 25th of May, 1585, at an hour after midnight, he had a secret interview with Count Meurs, stadholder for the States of Gelderland, and agreed to transfer his mercenary allegiance to the republic. He made good terms. He was to be lieutenant-governor of Gelderland, and he was to have rank as marshal of the camp in the States' army, with a salary of twelve hundred and fifty guilders a month. He agreed to resign his famous castle of Blyenbeek, but was to be reimbursed with estates in Holland and Zeeland, of the annual value of four thousand florins.

After this treaty, Martin and his free lances served the States faithfully, and became sworn foes to Parma and the King. He gave and took no quarter, and his men, if captured, "paid their ransom with their heads." He ceased to be the scourge of Gelderland, but he became the terror of the electorate. Early in 1586, accompanied by Herman Kloet, the young and daring Dutch commandant of Neusz, he had swept down into the Westphalian country, at the head of five hundred foot and five hundred horse. On the 18th of March he captured the city of Werll by a neat stratagem. The citizens, hemmed in on all sides by marauders, were in want of many necessaries of life, among other things, of salt. Martin had, from time to time, sent some of his soldiers into the place, disguised as boors from the neighbourhood, and carrying bags of that article. A pacific trading intercourse had thus been established between the burghers within and the banditti without the gates.

Page 1485

Agreeable relations were formed within the walls, and a party of townsmen had agreed to cooperate with the followers of Schenk. One morning a train of waggons laden with soldiers neatly covered with salt, made their appearance at the gate. At the same time a fire broke out most opportunely within the town. The citizens busily employed themselves in extinguishing the flames. The salted soldiers, after passing through the gateway, sprang from the waggons, and mastered the watch. The town was. carried at a blow. Some of the inhabitants were massacred as a warning to the rest; others were taken prisoners and held for ransom; a few, more fortunate, made their escape to the citadel. That fortress was stormed in vain, but the city was thoroughly sacked. Every house was rifled of its contents. Meantime Haultepenne collected a force of nearly four thousand men, boors, citizens, and soldiers, and came to besiege Schenk in the town, while, at the same time, attacks were made upon him from the castle. It was impossible for him to hold the city, but he had completely robbed it of every thing valuable. Accordingly he loaded a train of waggons with his booty, took with him thirty of the magistrates as hostages, with other wealthy citizens, and marching in good order against Haultepenne, completely routed him, killing a number variously estimated at from five hundred to two thousand, and effected his retreat, desperately wounded in the thigh, but triumphant, and laden with the spoils to Venlo on the Meuse, of which city he was governor.

“Surely this is a noble fellow, a worthy fellow,” exclaimed Leicester, who was filled with admiration at the bold marauder’s progress, and vowed that he was “the only soldier in truth that they had, for he was never idle, and had succeeded hitherto very happily.”

And thus, at every point of the doomed territory of the little commonwealth, the natural atmosphere in which the inhabitants existed was one of blood and rapine. Yet during the very slight lull, which was interposed in the winter of 1585-6 to the eternal clang of arms in Friesland, the Estates of that Province, to their lasting honour, founded the university of Franeker. A dozen years before, the famous institution at Leyden had been established, as a reward to the burghers for their heroic defence of the city. And now this new proof was given of the love of Netherlanders, even in the midst of their misery and their warfare, for the more humane arts. The new college was well endowed from ancient churchlands, and not only was the education made nearly gratuitous, while handsome salaries were provided for the professors, but provision was made by which the, poorer scholars could be fed and boarded at a very moderate expense. There was a table provided at an annual cost to the student of but fifty florins, and a second and third table at the very low price of forty and thirty florins respectively. Thus the sum to be paid by the poorer class of scholars for a year’s maintenance was less than three pounds sterling a year [1855 exchange rate D.W.]. The voice with which this infant seminary of the Muses first made itself heard above the din of war was but feeble, but the institution was destined to thrive, and to endow the world, for many successive generations, with the golden fruits of science and genius.

Page 1486

Early in the spring, the war was seriously taken in hand by Farnese. It has already been seen that the republic had been almost entirely driven out of Flanders and Brabant. The Estates, however, still held Grave, Megem, Batenburg, and Venlo upon the Meuse. That river formed, as it were, a perfect circle of protection for the whole Province of Brabant, and Farnese determined to make himself master of this great natural moat. Afterwards, he meant to possess himself of the Rhine, flowing in a parallel course, about twenty-five miles further to the east. In order to gain and hold the Meuse, the first step was to reduce the city of Grave. That town, upon the left or Brabant bank, was strongly fortified on its land-side, where it was surrounded by low and fertile pastures, while, upon the other, it depended upon its natural Toss, the river. It was, according to Lord North and the Earl of Leicester, the “strongest town in all the Low Countries, though but a little one.”

Baron Hemart, a young Gueldrian noble, of small experience in military affairs, commanded in the city, his garrison being eight hundred soldiers, and about one thousand burgher guard. As early as January, Farnese had ordered Count Mansfeld to lay siege to the place. Five forts had accordingly been constructed, above and below the town, upon the left bank of the river, while a bridge of boats thrown across the stream led to a fortified camp on the opposite side. Mansfeld, Mondragon, Bobadil, Aquila, and other distinguished veterans in Philip’s service, were engaged in the enterprise. A few unimportant skirmishes between Schenk and the Spaniards had taken place, but the city was already hard pressed, and, by the series of forts which environed it, was cut off from its supplies. It was highly important, therefore, that Grave should be relieved, with the least possible delay.

Early in Easter week, a force of three thousand men, under Hohenlo and Sir John Norris, was accordingly despatched by Leicester, with orders, at every hazard, to throw reinforcements and provisions into the place. They took possession, at once, of a stone sconce, called the Mill-Fort, which was guarded by fifty men, mostly boors of the country. These were nearly all hanged for “using malicious words,” and for “railing against Queen Elizabeth,” and—a sufficient number of men being left to maintain the fort—the whole relieving force marched with great difficulty—for the river was rapidly rising, and flooding the country—along the right bank of the Meuse, taking possession of Batenburg and Ravenstein castles, as they went. A force of four or five hundred Englishmen was then pushed forward to a point almost exactly opposite Grave, and within an English mile of the head of the bridge constructed by the Spaniards. Here, in the night of Easter Tuesday, they rapidly formed an entrenched camp, upon the dyke along the river, and, although molested by some armed vessels, succeeded in establishing themselves in a most important position.

Page 1487

On the morning of Easter Wednesday, April 16, Mansfeld, perceiving that the enemy had thus stolen a march upon him, ordered one thousand picked troops, all Spaniards, under Aquila, Casco and other veterans, to assault this advanced post. A reserve of two thousand was placed in readiness to support the attack. The Spaniards slowly crossed the bridge, which was swaying very dangerously with the current, and then charged the entrenched camp at a run. A quarrel between the different regiments as to the right of precedence precipitated the attack, before the reserve, consisting of some picked companies of Mondragon's veterans, had been able to arrive. Coming in breathless and fatigued, the first assailants were readily repulsed in their first onset. Aquila then opportunely made his appearance, and the attack was renewed with great vigour: The defenders of the camp yielded at the third charge and fled in dismay, while the Spaniards, leaping the barriers, scattered hither and thither in the ardour of pursuit. The routed Englishmen fled swiftly along the oozy dyke, in hopes of joining the main body of the relieving party, who were expected to advance, with the dawn, from their position six miles farther down the river. Two miles long the chace lasted, and it seemed probable that the fugitives would be overtaken and destroyed, when, at last, from behind a line of mounds which stretched towards Batenburg and had masked their approach, appeared Count Hohenlo and Sir John Norris, at the head of twenty-five hundred Englishmen and Hollanders. This force, advanced as rapidly as the slippery ground and the fatigue of a two hours' march would permit to the rescue of their friends, while the retreating English rallied, turned upon their pursuers, and drove them back over the path along which they had just been charging in the full career of victory. The fortune of the day was changed, and in a few minutes Hohenlo and Norris would have crossed the river and entered Grave, when the Spanish companies of Bobadil and other commanders were seen marching along the quaking bridge.

Three thousand men on each side now met at push of pike on the bank of the Meuse. The rain-was pouring in torrents, the wind was blowing a gale, the stream was rapidly rising, and threatening to overwhelm its shores. By a tacit and mutual consent, both armies paused for a few moments in full view of each other. After this brief interval they closed again, breast to breast, in sharp and steady conflict. The ground, slippery with rain and with blood, which was soon flowing almost as fast as the rain, afforded an unsteady footing to the combatants. They staggered like drunken men, fell upon their knees, or upon their backs, and still, kneeling or rolling prostrate, maintained the deadly conflict. For the space of an hour and a half the fierce encounter of human passion outmastered the fury of the elements. Norris and Hohenlo fought at the head of their columns, like paladins of old.

Page 1488

The Englishman was wounded in the mouth and breast, the Count was seen to gallop past one thousand musketeers and caliver-men of the enemy, and to escape unscathed. But as the strength of the soldiers exhausted itself, the violence of the tempest increased. The floods of rain and the blasts of the hurricane at last terminated the affray. The Spaniards, fairly conquered, were compelled to a retreat, lest the rapidly rising river should sweep away the frail and trembling bridge, over which they had passed to their unsuccessful assault. The English and Netherlanders remained masters of the field. The rising flood, too, which was fast converting the meadows into a lake, was as useful to the conquerors as it was damaging to the Spaniards.

In the course of the few following days, a large number of boats was despatched before the very eyes of Parma, from Batenburg into Grave; Hohenlo, who had “most desperately adventured his person” throughout the whole affair, entering the town himself.

A force of five hundred men, together with provisions enough to last a year, was thrown into the city, and the course of the Meuse was, apparently, secured to the republic. In this important action about one hundred and fifty Dutch and English were killed, and probably four hundred Spaniards, including several distinguished officers.

The Earl of Leicester was incredibly elated so soon as the success of this enterprise was known. “Oh that her Majesty knew,” he cried, “how easy a match now she hath with the King of Spain, and what millions of aficted people she hath relieved in these, countries. This summer, this summer, I say, would make an end to her immortal glory.” He was no friend to his countryman, the gallant Sir John Norris—whom, however, he could not help applauding on this occasion,—but he was in raptures with Hohenlo. Next to God, he assured the Queen’s government that the victory was owing to the Count. “He is both a valiant man and a wise man, and the painfullest that ever I knew,” he said; adding—as a secret—that “five hundred Englishmen of the best Flemish training had flatly and shamefully run away,” when the fight had been renewed by Hohenlo and Norris. He recommended that her Majesty should, send her picture to the Count, worth two hundred pounds, which he would value at more than one thousand pounds in money, and he added that “for her sake the Count had greatly left his drinking.”

As for the Prince of Parma, Leicester looked upon him as conclusively beaten. He spoke of him as “marvellously appalled” by this overthrow of his forces; but he assured the government that if the Prince’s “choler should press him to seek revenge,” he should soon be driven out of the country. The Earl would follow him “at an inch,” and effectually frustrate all his undertakings. “If the Spaniard have such a May as he has had an April,” said Lord North, “it will put water in his wine.”

Page 1489

Meantime, as St. George's Day was approaching, and as the Earl was fond of banquets and ceremonies, it was thought desirable to hold a great triumphal feast at Utrecht. His journey to that city from the Hague was a triumphal procession. In all the towns through which he passed he was entertained with military display, pompous harangues, interludes, dumb shows, and allegories. At Amsterdam—a city which he compared to Venice for situation and splendour, and where one thousand ships were constantly lying—he was received with "sundry great whales and other fishes of hugeness," that gambolled about his vessel, and convoyed him to the shore. These monsters of the deep presented him to the burgomaster and magistrates who were awaiting him on the quay. The burgomaster made him a Latin oration, to which Dr. Bartholomew Clerk responded, and then the Earl was ushered to the grand square, upon which, in his honour, a magnificent living picture was exhibited, in which he figured as Moses, at the head of the Israelites, smiting the Philistines hip and thigh. After much mighty banqueting in Amsterdam, as in the other cities, the governor-general came to Utrecht. Through the streets of this antique and most picturesque city flows the palsied current of the Rhine, and every barge and bridge were decorated with the flowers of spring. Upon this spot, where, eight centuries before the Anglo-Saxon, Willebrod had first astonished the wild Frisians with the pacific doctrines of Jesus, and had been stoned to death as his reward, stood now a more arrogant representative of English piety. The balconies were crowded with fair women, and decorated with scarves and banners. From the Earl's residence—the ancient palace of the Knights of Rhodes—to the cathedral, the way was lined with a double row of burgher guards, wearing red roses on their arms, and apparelled in the splendid uniforms for which the Netherlanders were celebrated. Trumpeters in scarlet and silver, barons, knights, and great officers, in cloth of gold and silks of all colours; the young Earl of Essex, whose career was to be so romantic, and whose fate so tragic; those two ominous personages, the deposed little archbishop-elector of Cologne, with his melancholy face, and the unlucky Don Antonio, Pretender of Portugal, for whom, dead or alive, thirty thousand crowns and a dukedom were perpetually offered by Philip *ii*.; young Maurice of Nassau, the future controller of European destinies; great counsellors of state, gentlemen, guardsmen, and portcullis-herald, with the coat of arms of Elizabeth, rode in solemn procession along. Then great Leicester himself, "most princelike in the robes of his order," guarded by a troop of burghers, and by his own fifty halberd-men in scarlet cloaks trimmed with white and purple velvet, pranced gorgeously by.

The ancient cathedral, built on the spot where Saint Willebrod had once ministered, with its light, tapering, brick tower, three hundred and sixty feet in height, its exquisitely mullioned windows, and its elegantly foliaged columns, soon received the glittering throng. Hence, after due religious ceremonies, and an English sermon from Master Knewstubs, Leicester's chaplain, was a solemn march back again to the palace, where a stupendous banquet was already laid in the great hall.

Page 1490

On the dais at the upper end of the table, blazing with plate and crystal, stood the royal chair, with the Queen's plate and knife and fork before it, exactly as if she had been present, while Leicester's trencher and stool were set respectfully quite at the edge of the board. In the neighbourhood of this post of honour sat Count Maurice, the Elector, the Pretender, and many illustrious English personages, with the fair Agnes Mansfeld, Princess Chimay, the daughters of William the Silent, and other dames of high degree.

Before the covers were removed, came limping up to the dais grim-visaged Martin Schenk, freshly wounded, but triumphant, from the sack of Werll, and black John Norris, scarcely cured of the spearwounds in his face and breast received at the relief of Grave. The sword of knighthood was laid upon the shoulder of each hero, by the Earl of Leicester, as her Majesty's vicegerent; and then the ushers marshalled the mighty feast. Meats in the shape of lions, tigers, dragons, and leopards, flanked by peacocks, swans, pheasants, and turkeys "in their natural feathers as in their greatest pride," disappeared, course after course, sonorous metal blowing meanwhile the most triumphant airs. After the banquet came dancing, vaulting, tumbling; together with the "forces of Hercules, which gave great delight to the strangers," after which the company separated until evensong.

Then again, "great was the feast," says the chronicler,—a mighty supper following hard upon the gigantic dinner. After this there was tilting at the barriers, the young Earl of Essex and other knights bearing themselves more chivalrously than would seem to comport with so much eating and drinking. Then, horrible to relate, came another "most sumptuous banquet of sugar-meates for the men-at-arms and the ladies," after which, it being now midnight, the Lord of Leicester bade the whole company good rest, and the men-at-arms and ladies took their leave.

But while all this chivalrous banqueting and holiday-making was in hand, the Prince of Parma was in reality not quite so much "appalled" by the relief of Grave as his antagonist had imagined. The Earl, flushed with the success of Hohenlo, already believed himself master of the country, and assured his government, that, if he should be reasonably well supplied, he would have Antwerp back again and Bruges besides before mid June. Never, said he, was "the Prince of Parma so dejected nor so melancholy since he came into these countries, nor so far out of courage." And it is quite true that Alexander had reason to be discouraged. He had but eight or nine thousand men, and no money to pay even this little force. The soldiers were perishing daily, and nearly all the survivors were described by their chief, as sick or maimed. The famine in the obedient Provinces was universal, the whole population was desperate with hunger; and the merchants, frightened by Drake's successes, and appalled by the ruin all around them,

Page 1491

drew their purse-strings inexorably. “I know not to what saint to devote myself,” said Alexander. He had been compelled, by the movement before Grave, to withdraw Haultepenne from the projected enterprise against Neusz, and he was quite aware of the cheerful view which Leicester was inclined to take of their relative positions. “The English think they are going to do great things,” said he; “and consider themselves masters of the field.”

Nevertheless, on the 11th May, the dejected melancholy man had left Brussels, and joined his little army, consisting of three thousand Spaniards and five thousand of all other nations. His veterans, though unpaid; ragged, and half-starved were in raptures to, have their idolized commander among them again, and vowed that under his guidance there was nothing which they could not accomplish. The King’s honour, his own, that of the army, all were pledged to take the city. On the success of, that enterprise, he said, depended all his past conquests, and every hope for the future. Leicester and the, English, whom he called the head and body of the rebel forces, were equally pledged to relieve the place, and were bent upon meeting him in the field. The Earl had taken some forts in the Batavia—Betuwe; or “good meadow,” which he pronounced as fertile and about as large as Herefordshire,—and was now threatening Nymegen, a city which had been gained for Philip by the last effort of Schenk, on the royalist side. He was now observing Alexander’s demonstrations against Grave; but, after the recent success in victualling that place, he felt a just confidence in its security.

On the 31st May the trenches were commenced, and on the 5th June the batteries were opened. The work went rapidly forward when Farnese was in the field. “The Prince of Parma doth batter it like a Prince,” said Lord North, admiring the enemy with the enthusiasm of an honest soldier: On the 6th of June, as Alexander rode through the camp to reconnoitre, previous to an attack. A well-directed cannon ball carried away the hinder half, of his horse. The Prince fell to the ground, and, for a moment, dismay was in the Spanish ranks. At the next instant, though somewhat bruised, he was on his feet again, and, having found the breach sufficiently promising, he determined on the assault.

As a preliminary measure, he wished to occupy a tower which had been battered nearly to ruins, situate near the river. Captain de Solis was ordered, with sixty veterans, to take possession of this tower, and to “have a look at the countenance of the enemy, without amusing himself with anything else.” The tower was soon secured, but Solis, in disobedience to his written instructions led his men against the ravelin, which was still in a state of perfect defence. A musket-ball soon stretched him dead beneath the wall, and his followers, still attempting to enter the impracticable breach, were repelled by a shower of stones and blazing pitch-hoops. Hot sand;

Page 1492

too, poured from sieves and baskets, insinuated itself within the armour of the Spaniards, and occasioned such exquisite suffering, that many threw themselves into the river to allay the pain. Emerging refreshed, but confused, they attempted in vain to renew the onset. Several of the little band were slain, the assault was quite unsuccessful, and the trumpet sounded a recal. So completely discomfited were the Spaniards by this repulse, and so thoroughly at their ease were the besieged, that a soldier let himself down from the ramparts of the town for the sake of plundering the body of Captain Solis, who was richly dressed, and, having accomplished this feat, was quietly helped back again by his comrades from above.

To the surprise of the besiegers, however, on the very next morning came a request from the governor of the city, Baron Hemart, to negotiate for a surrender. Alexander was, naturally, but too glad to grant easy terms, and upon the 7th of June the garrison left the town with colours displayed and drums beating, and the Prince of Parma marched into it, at the head of his troops. He found a year's provision there for six thousand men, while, at the same time, the walls had suffered so little, that he must have been obliged to wait long for a practicable breach.

"There was no good reason even for women to have surrendered the place," exclaimed Leicester, when he heard the news. And the Earl had cause to be enraged at such a result. He had received a letter only the day before, signed by Hemart himself and by all the officers in Grave, asserting their determination and ability to hold the place for a good five months, or for an indefinite period, and until they should be relieved. And indeed all the officers, with three exceptions, had protested against the base surrender. But at the bottom of the catastrophe—of the disastrous loss of the city and the utter ruin of young Hemart—was a woman. The governor was governed by his mistress, a lady of good family in the place, but of Spanish inclinations, and she, for some mysterious reasons, had persuaded him thus voluntarily to capitulate.

Parma lost no time, however, in exulting over his success. Upon the same day the towns of Megen and Batenburg surrendered to him, and immediately afterwards siege was laid to Venlo, a town of importance, lying thirty miles farther up the Meuse. The wife and family of Martin Schenk were in the city, together with two hundred horses, and from forty to one hundred thousand crowns in money, plate; and furniture belonging to him.

That bold partisan, accompanied by the mad Welshman, Roger Williams, at the head of one hundred and thirty English lances and thirty of Schenk's men, made a wild nocturnal attempt to cut their way through the besieging force, and penetrate to the city. They passed through the enemy's lines, killed all the corps-de-garde, and many Spanish troopers—the terrible Martin's own hand being most effective

Page 1493

in this midnight slaughter—and reached the very door of Parma's tent, where they killed his secretary and many of his guards. It was even reported; and generally believed, that Farnese himself had been in imminent danger, that Schenk had fired his pistol at him unsuccessfully, and had then struck him on the head with its butt-end, and that the Prince had only saved his life by leaping from his horse, and scrambling through a ditch. But these seem to have been fables. The alarm at last became general, the dawn of a summer's day was fast approaching; the drums beat to arms, and the bold marauders were obliged to effect their retreat, as they best might, hotly pursued by near two thousand men. Having slain many of, the Spanish army, and lost nearly half their own number, they at last obtained shelter in Wachtendonk.

Soon afterwards the place capitulated without waiting for a battery, upon moderate terms. Schenk's wife was sent away (28 June 1586) courteously with her family, in a coach and four, and with as much "apparel" as might be carried with her. His property was confiscated, for "no fair wars could be made with him."

Thus, within a few weeks after taking the field, the "dejected, melancholy" man, who was so "out of courage," and the soldiers who were so "marvellously beginning to run away"—according to the Earl of Leicester—had swept their enemy from every town on the Meuse. That river was now, throughout its whole course, in the power of the Spaniards. The Province of Brabant became thoroughly guarded again by its foes, and the enemy's road was opened into the northern Provinces.

Leicester, meantime, had not distinguished himself. It must be confessed that he had been sadly out-generalled. The man who had talked of following the enemy inch by inch, and who had pledged himself not only to protect Grave, and any other place that might be attacked, but even to recover Antwerp and Bruges within a few weeks, had wasted the time in very desultory operations. After the St. George feasting, Knewstub sermons, and forces of Hercules, were all finished, the Earl had taken the field with five thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse. His intention was to clear the Yssel; by getting possession of Doesburg and Zutphen, but, hearing of Parma's demonstrations upon Grave, he abandoned the contemplated siege of those cities, and came to Arnheim. He then crossed the Rhine into the Isle of Batavia, and thence, after taking a few sconces of inferior importance—while Schenk, meanwhile, was building on the Island of Gravenweert, at the bifurcation of the Rhine and Waal, the sconce so celebrated a century later as 'Schenk's Fort' (Schenkenschans)——he was preparing to pass the Waal in order to attack Farnese, when he heard to his astonishment, of the surrender of Grave.

He could therefore—to his chagrin—no longer save that important city, but he could, at least, cut off the head of the culprit. Leicester was in Bommel when he heard of Baron Hemart's faint-heartedness or treachery, and his wrath was extravagant in proportion to

the exultation with which his previous success had inspired him. He breathed nothing but revenge against the coward and the traitor, who had delivered up the town in “such lewd and beastly sort.”

Page 1494

“I will never depart hence,” he said, “till by the goodness of God I be satisfied someway of this villain’s treachery.” There could be little doubt that Hemart deserved punishment. There could be as little that Leicester would mete it out to him in ample measure. “The lewd villain who gave up Grave,” said he, “and the captains as deep in fault as himself, shall all suffer together.”

Hemart came boldly to meet him. “The honest man came to me at Bommel,” said Leicester, and he assured the government that it was in the hope of persuading the magistrates of that and other towns to imitate his own treachery.

But the magistrates straightway delivered the culprit to the governor-general, who immediately placed him under arrest. A court-martial was summoned, 26th of June, at Utrecht, consisting of Hohenlo, Essex, and other distinguished officers. They found that the conduct of the prisoner merited death, but left it to the Earl to decide whether various extenuating circumstances did not justify a pardon. Hohenlo and Norris exerted themselves to procure a mitigation of the young man’s sentence, and they excited thereby the governor’s deep indignation. Norris, according to Leicester, was in love with the culprit’s aunt, and was therefore especially desirous of saving his life. Moreover, much use was made of the discredit which had been thrown by the Queen on the Earl’s authority, and it was openly maintained, that, being no longer governor-general, he had no authority to order execution upon a Netherland officer.

The favourable circumstances urged in the case, were, that Hemart was a young man, without experience in military matters, and that he had been overcome by the supplications and outcries of the women, panic-struck after the first assault. There were no direct proofs of treachery, or even of personal cowardice. He begged hard for a pardon, not on account of his life, but for the sake of his reputation. He earnestly implored permission to serve under the Queen of England, as a private soldier, without pay, on land or sea, for as many years as she should specify, and to be selected for the most dangerous employments, in order that, before he died, he might wipe out the disgrace, which, through his fault, in an hour of weakness, had come upon an ancient and honourable house. Much interest was made for him—his family connection being powerful—and a general impression prevailing that he had erred through folly rather than deep guilt. But Leicester beating himself upon the breast—as he was wont when excited—swore that there should be no pardon for such a traitor. The States of Holland and Zeeland, likewise, were decidedly in favour of a severe example.

Page 1495

Hemart was accordingly led to the scaffold on the 28th June. He spoke to the people with great calmness, and, in two languages, French and Flemish, declared that he was guiltless of treachery, but that the terror and tears of the women, in an hour of panic, had made a coward of him. He was beheaded, standing. The two captains, Du Ban and Koeboekum, who had also been condemned, suffered with him. A third captain, likewise convicted, was, “for very just cause,”, pardoned by Leicester. The Earl persisted in believing that Hemart had surrendered the city as part of a deliberate plan, and affirmed that in such a time, when men had come to think no more of giving up a town than of abandoning a house, it was highly necessary to afford an example to traitors and satisfaction to the people. And the people were thoroughly satisfied, according to the governor, and only expressed their regret that three or four members of the States-General could not have their heads cut off as well, being as arrant knaves as Henlart; “and so I think they be,” added Leicester.

Parma having thus made himself master of the Meuse, lost no time in making a demonstration upon the parallel course of the Rhine, thirty miles farther east. Schenk, Kloet; and other partisans, kept that portion of the archi-episcopate and of Westphalia in a state of perpetual commotion. Early in the, preceding year, Count de Meurs had, by a fortunate stratagem, captured the town of Neusz for the deposed elector, and Herman Kloet, a young and most determined Geldrian soldier, now commanded in the place.

The Elector Ernest had made a visit in disguise to the camp of Parma, and had represented the necessity of recovering the city. It had become the stronghold of heretics, rebels, and banditti. The Rhine was in their hands, and with it the perpetual power of disturbing the loyal Netherlands. It was as much the interest of his Catholic Majesty as that of the Archbishop that Neusz should be restored to its lawful owner. Parma had felt the force of this reasoning, and had early in the year sent Haultepenne to invest the city. He had been obliged to recal that commander during the siege of Grave. The place being reduced, Alexander, before the grass could grow beneath his feet advanced to the Rhine in person. Early in July he appeared before the walls of Neusz with eight thousand foot and two thousand horse. The garrison under Kloet numbered scarcely more than sixteen hundred effective soldiers, all Netherlanders and Germans, none being English.

The city is twenty-miles below Cologne. It was so well fortified that a century before it had stood a year’s siege from the famous Charles the Bold, who, after all, had been obliged to retire. It had also resisted the strenuous efforts of Charles the Fifth; and was now stronger than it ever had been. It was thoroughly well provisioned, so that it was safe enough “if those within it,” said Leicester, “be men.” The Earl expressed the opinion, however, that “those fellows were not good to defend towns, unless the besiegers were obliged to swim to the attack.” The issue was to show whether the sarcasm were just or not. Meantime the town was considered by the governor-general to be secure, “unless towns were to be had for the asking.”

Page 1496

Neusz is not immediately upon the Rhine, but that river, which sweeps away in a north-easterly direction from the walls, throws out an arm which completely encircles the town. A part of the place, cut into an island by the Erpt, was strengthened by two redoubts. This island was abandoned, as being too weak to hold, and the Spaniards took possession of it immediately. There were various preliminary and sanguinary sorties and skirmishes, during which the Spaniards after having been once driven from the island, again occupied that position. Archbishop Ernest came into the camp, and, before proceeding to a cannonade, Parma offered to the city certain terms of capitulation, which were approved by that prelate. Kloet replied to this proposal, that he was wedded to the town and to his honour, which were as one. These he was incapable of sacrificing, but his life he was ready to lay down. There was, through some misapprehension, a delay in reporting this answer to Farnese. Meantime that general became impatient, and advanced to the battery of the Italian regiment. Pretending to be a plenipotentiary from the commander-in-chief, he expostulated in a loud voice at the slowness of their counsels. Hardly had he begun to speak, when a shower of balls rattled about him. His own soldiers were terrified at his danger, and a cry arose in the town that “Holofernese”—as the Flemings and Germans were accustomed to nickname Farnese—was dead. Strange to relate, he was quite unharmed, and walked back to his tent with dignified slowness and a very frowning face. It was said that this breach of truce had been begun by the Spaniards, who had fired first, and had been immediately answered by the town. This was hotly denied, and Parma sent Colonel Tasais with a flag of truce to the commander, to rebuke and to desire an explanation of this dishonourable conduct.

The answer given, or imagined, was that Commander Kloet had been sound asleep, but that he now much regretted this untoward accident. The explanation was received with derision, for it seemed hardly probable that so young and energetic a soldier would take the opportunity to refresh himself with slumber at a moment when a treaty for the capitulation of a city under his charge was under discussion. This terminated the negotiation.

A few days afterwards, the feast of St James was celebrated in the Spanish camp, with bonfires and other demonstrations of hilarity. The townsmen are said to have desecrated the same holiday by roasting alive in the market-place two unfortunate soldiers, who had been captured in a sortie a few days before; besides burning the body of the holy Saint Quirinus, with other holy relics. The detestable deed was to be most horribly avenged.

A steady cannonade from forty-five great guns was kept up from 2 A.M. of July 15 until the dawn of the following day; the cannoneers—being all provided with milk and vinegar to cool the pieces. At daybreak the assault was ordered. Eight separate attacks were made with the usual impetuosity of Spaniards, and were steadily repulsed.

Page 1497

At the ninth, the outer wall was carried, and the Spaniards shouting “Santiago” poured over it, bearing back all resistance. An Italian Knight of the Sepulchre, Cesar Guidiccioni by name, and a Spanish ensign, one Alphonao de Mesa, with his colours in one hand and a ladder in the other, each claimed the honour of having first mounted the breach. Both being deemed equally worthy of reward, Parma, after the city had been won, took from his own cap a sprig of jewels and a golden wheat-ear ornamented with a gem, which he had himself worn in place of a plume, and thus presented each with a brilliant token of his regard. The wall was then strengthened against the inner line of fortification, and all night long a desperate conflict was maintained in the dark upon the narrow space between the two barriers. Before daylight Kloet, who then, as always, had led his men in the moat desperate adventures, was carried into the town, wounded in five places, and with his leg almost severed at the thigh. “’Tis the bravest man,” said the enthusiastic Lord North, “that was ever heard of in the world.”—“He is but a boy,” said Alexander Farnese, “but a commander of extraordinary capacity and valour.”

Early in the morning, when this mishap was known, an officer was sent to the camp of the besiegers to treat. The soldiers received him with furious laughter, and denied him access to the general. “Commander Kloet had waked from his nap at a wrong time,” they said, “and the Prince of Parma was now sound asleep, in his turn.” There was no possibility of commencing a negotiation. The Spaniards, heated by the conflict, maddened by opposition, and inspired by the desire to sack a wealthy city, overpowered all resistance. “My little soldiers were not to be restrained,” said Farnese, and so compelling a reluctant consent on the part of the commander-in-chief to an assault, the Italian and Spanish legions poured into the town at two opposite gates; which were no longer strong enough to withstand the enemy. The two streams met in the heart of the place, and swept every living thing in their, path out of existence. The garrison was butchered to a man, and subsequently many of the inhabitants—men, women, and children-also, although the women; to the honour of Alexander, had been at first secured from harm in some of the churches, where they had been ordered to take refuge. The first blast of indignation was against the commandant of the place. Alexander, who had admired, his courage, was not unfavourably disposed towards him, but Archbishop Ernest vehemently, demanded his immediate death, as a personal favour to himself. As the churchman was nominally sovereign of the city although in reality a beggarly dependant on Philip’s alms, Farnese felt bound to comply. The manner in which it was at first supposed that the Bishop’s Christian request had; been complied, with, sent a shudder through every-heart in the Netherlands. “They took Kloet, wounded as he was,” said Lord North, “and first strangled, him, then smeared him with pitch, and burnt him with gunpowder; thus, with their holiness, they, made a tragical end of an heroical service. It is wondered that the Prince would suffer so great an outrage to be done to so noble a soldier, who did but his duty.”

Page 1498

But this was an error. A Jesuit priest was sent to the house of the commandant, for a humane effort was thought necessary in order to save the soul of the man whose life was forfeited for the crime of defending his city. The culprit was found lying in bed. His wife, a woman of remarkable beauty, with her sister, was in attendance upon him. The spectacle of those two fair women, nursing a wounded soldier fallen upon the field of honour, might have softened devils with sympathy. But the Jesuit was closely followed by a band of soldiers, who, notwithstanding the supplications of the women, and the demand of Kloet to be indulged with a soldier's death, tied a rope round the commandant's necks dragged him from his bed, and hanged him from his own window. The Calvinist clergyman, Fosserus of Oppenheim, the deacons of the congregation, two military officers, and—said Parma—"forty other rascals," were murdered in the same way at the same time. The bodies remained at the window till they were devoured by the flames, which soon consumed the house. For a vast conflagration, caused none knew whether by accident, by the despair of the inhabitants; by the previous, arrangements of the commandant, by the latest-arrived bands of the besiegers enraged that the Italians and Spaniards had been beforehand with them in the spoils, or—as Farnese more maturely believed—by the special agency of the Almighty, offended with the burning of Saint Quirinus,—now came to complete the horror of the scene. Three-quarters of the town were at once in a blaze. The churches, where the affrighted women had been cowering during the sack and slaughter, were soon on fire, and now, amid the crash of falling houses and the uproar of the drunken soldiery, those unhappy victims were seen flitting along the flaming streets; seeking refuge against the fury of the elements in the more horrible cruelty of man. The fire lasted all day and night, and not one stone would have been left upon another, had not the body of a second saint, saved on a former occasion from the heretics by the piety of a citizen, been fortunately deposited in his house. At this point the conflagration was stayed—for the flames refused to consume these holy relics—but almost the whole of the town was destroyed, while at least four thousand people, citizens and soldiers, had perished by sword or fire.

Three hundred survivors of the garrison took refuge in a tower. Its base was surrounded, and, after brief parley, they descended as prisoners. The Prince and Haultepenne attempted in vain to protect them against the fury of the soldiers, and every man of them was instantly put to death.

The next day, Alexander gave orders that the wife and sister of the commandant should be protected—for they had escaped, as if by miracle, from all the horrors of that day and night—and sent, under escort, to their friends! Neusz had nearly ceased to exist, for according to contemporaneous accounts, but eight houses had escaped destruction.

Page 1499

And the reflection was most painful to Leicester and to every generous Englishman or Netherlander in the country, that this important city and its heroic defenders might have been preserved, but for want of harmony and want of money. Twice had the Earl got together a force of four thousand men for the relief of the place, and twice had he been obliged to disband them again for the lack of funds to set them in the field.

He had pawned his plate and other valuables, exhausted his credit, and had nothing for it but to wait for the Queen's tardy remittances, and to wrangle with the States; for the leaders of that body were unwilling to accord large supplies to a man who had become personally suspected by them, and was the representative of a deeply-suspected government. Meanwhile, one-third at least of the money which really found its way from time to time out of England, was filched from the "poor starved wretches," as Leicester called his soldiers, by the dishonesty of Norris, uncle of Sir John and army-treasurer. This man was growing so rich on his peculations, on his commissions, and on his profits from paying the troops in a depreciated coin, that Leicester declared the whole revenue of his own landed estates in England to be less than that functionary's annual income. Thus it was difficult to say whether the "ragged rogues" of Elizabeth or the maimed and neglected soldiers of Philip were in the more pitiable plight.

The only consolation in the recent reduction of Neusz was to be found in the fact that Parma had only gained a position, for the town had ceased to exist; and in the fiction that he had paid for his triumph by the loss of six thousand soldiers, killed and wounded. In reality not more than five hundred of Farnese's army lost their lives, and although the town, excepting some churches, had certainly been destroyed; yet the Prince was now master of the Rhine as far as Cologne, and of the Meuse as far as Grave. The famine which pressed so sorely upon him, might now be relieved, and his military communications with Germany be considered secure.

The conqueror now turned his attention to Rheinberg, twenty-five miles farther down the river.

Sir Philip Sidney had not been well satisfied by the comparative idleness in which, from these various circumstances; he had been compelled to remain. Early in the spring he had been desirous of making an attack upon Flanders by capturing the town of Steenberg. The faithful Roger Williams had strongly seconded the proposal. "We wish to show your Excellency," said he to Leicester, "that we are not sound asleep." The Welshman was not likely to be accused of somnolence, but on this occasion Sidney and himself had been overruled. At a later moment, and during the siege of Neusz, Sir Philip had the satisfaction of making a successful foray into Flanders.

The expedition had been planned by Prince Maurice of Nassau, and was his. earliest military achievement. He proposed carrying by surprise, the city of Axel, a well-built, strongly-fortified town on the south-western edge of the great Scheldt estuary, and very important from its position. Its acquisition would make the hold of the patriots and the

English upon Sluys and Ostend more secure, and give them many opportunities of annoying the enemy in Flanders.

Page 1500

Early in July, Maurice wrote to the Earl of Leicester, communicating the particulars of his scheme, but begging that the affair might be “very secretly handled,” and kept from every one but Sidney. Leicester accordingly sent his nephew to Maurice that they might consult together upon the enterprise, and make sure “that there was no ill intent, there being so much treachery in the world.” Sidney found no treachery in young Maurice, but only, a noble and intelligent love of adventure, and the two arranged their plans in harmony.

Leicester, then, in order to deceive the enemy, came to Bergen-op-Zoom, with five hundred men, where he remained two days, not sleeping a wink, as he averred, during the whole time. In the night of Tuesday, 16th of July, the five hundred English soldiers were despatched by water, under charge of Lord Willoughby, “who,” said the Earl, “would needs go with them.” Young Hatton, too, son of Sir Christopher, also volunteered on the service, “as his first nursling.” Sidney had, five hundred of his own Zeeland regiment in readiness, and the rendezvous was upon the broad waters of the Scheldt, opposite Flushing. The plan was neatly carried out, and the united flotilla, in a dark, calm, midsummer’s night, rowed across the smooth estuary and landed at Ter Neuse, about a league from Axel. Here they were joined by Maurice with some Netherland companies, and the united troops, between two and three thousand strong, marched at once to the place proposed. Before two in the morning they had reached Axel, but found the moat very deep. Forty soldiers immediately plunged in, however, carrying their ladders with them, swam across, scaled the rampart, killed, the guard, whom they found asleep in their beds, and opened the gates for their comrades. The whole force then marched in, the Dutch companies under Colonel Pyion being first, Lord Willoughby’s men being second, and Sir Philip with his Zeelanders bringing up the rear. The garrison, between five and six hundred in number, though surprised, resisted gallantly, and were all put to the sword. Of the invaders, not a single man lost his life. Sidney most generously rewarded from his own purse the adventurous soldiers who had swum the moat; and it was to his care and intelligence that the success of Prince Maurice’s scheme was generally attributed. The achievement was hailed with great satisfaction, and it somewhat raised the drooping spirits of the patriots after their severe losses at Grave and Venlo. “This victory hath happened in good time,” wrote Thomas Cecil to his father, “and hath made us somewhat to lift up our heads.” A garrison of eight hundred, under Colonel Pyron, was left in Axel, and the dykes around were then pierced. Upwards of two millions’ worth of property in grass, cattle, corn, was thus immediately destroyed in the territory of the obedient Netherlands.

After an unsuccessful attempt to surprise Gravelines, the governor of which place, the veteran La Motte, was not so easily taken napping; Sir Philip having gained much reputation by this conquest of Axel, then joined the main body of the army, under Leicester, at Arnheim.

Page 1501

Yet, after all, Sir Philip had not grown in favour with her Majesty during his service in the Low Countries. He had also been disappointed in the government of Zeeland, to which post his uncle had destined him. The cause of Leicester's ambition had been frustrated by the policy of Barneveld and Buys, in pursuance of which Count or Prince Maurice—as he was now purposely designated, in order that his rank might surpass that of the Earl—had become stadholder and captain general both of Holland and Zeeland. The Earl had given his nephew, however, the colonelcy of the Zeeland regiment, vacant by the death of Admiral Haultain on the Kowenstyn Dyke. This promotion had excited much anger among the high officers in the Netherlands who, at the instigation of Count Hohenlo, had presented a remonstrance upon the subject to the governor-general. It had always been the custom, they said, with the late Prince of Orange, to confer promotion according to seniority, without regard to social rank, and they were therefore unwilling that a young foreigner, who had just entered the service; should thus be advanced over the heads of veterans who had been campaigning there so many weary years. At the same time the gentlemen who signed the paper protested to Sir Philip, in another letter, "with all the same hands," that they had no personal feeling towards him, but, on the contrary, that they wished him all honour.

Young Maurice himself had always manifested the most friendly feelings toward Sidney, although influenced in his action by the statesmen who were already organizing a powerful opposition to Leicester. "Count Maurice showed himself constantly, kind in the matter of the regiment," said Sir Philip, "but Mr. Paul Buss has so many busses in his head, such as you shall find he will be to God and man about one pitch. Happy is the communication of them that join in the fear of God." Hohenlo, too, or Hollock, as he was called by the French and English, was much governed by Buys and Olden-Barneveld. Reckless and daring, but loose of life and uncertain of purpose, he was most dangerous, unless under safe guidance. Roger Williams—who vowed that but for the love he bore to Sidney and Leicester, he would not remain ten days in the Netherlands—was much disgusted by Hohenlo's conduct in regard to the Zeeland regiment. "'Tis a mutinous request of Hollock," said he, "that strangers should not command Netherlanders. He and his Alemaynes are farther born from Zeeland than Sir Philip is. Either you must make Hollock assured to you, or you must disgrace him. If he will not be yours, I will show you means to disinherit him of all his commands at small danger. What service doth he, Count Solms, Count Overatein, with their Almaynes, but spend treasure and consume great contributions?"

Page 1502

It was, very natural that the chivalrous Sidney, who had come to the Netherlands to win glory in the field, should be desirous of posts that would bring danger and distinction with them. He was not there merely that he might govern Flushing, important as it was, particularly as the garrison was, according to his statement, about as able to maintain the town, “as the Tower was to answer for London.” He disapproved of his wife’s inclination to join him in Holland, for he was likely—so he wrote to her father, Walsingham—“to run such a course as would not be fit for any of the feminine gender.” He had been, however; grieved to the heart, by the spectacle which was perpetually exhibited of the Queen’s parsimony, and of the consequent suffering of the soldiers. Twelve or fifteen thousand Englishmen were serving in the Netherlands—more than two thirds of them in her Majesty’s immediate employment. No troops had ever fought better, or more honourably maintained the ancient glory of England. But rarely had more ragged and wretched warriors been seen than they, after a few months’ campaigning.

The Irish Kernes—some fifteen hundred of whom were among the auxiliaries—were better off, for they habitually dispensed with clothing; an apron from waist to knee being the only protection of these wild Kelts, who fought with the valour, and nearly, in the costume of Homeric heroes. Fearing nothing, needing nothing, sparing nothing, they stalked about the fens of Zeeland upon their long stilts, or leaped across running rivers, scaling ramparts, robbing the highways, burning, butchering, and maltreating the villages and their inhabitants, with as little regard for the laws of Christian warfare as for those of civilized costume.

Other soldiers, more sophisticated as to apparel, were less at their ease. The generous Sidney spent all his means, and loaded himself with debt, in order to relieve the necessities of the poor soldiers. He protested that if the Queen would not pay her troops, she would lose her troops, but that no living man should say the fault was in him. “What relief I can do them I will,” he wrote to his father-in-law; “I will spare no danger, if occasion serves. I am sure that no creature shall lay injustice to my charge.”

Very soon it was discovered that the starving troops had to contend not only with the Queen’s niggardliness but with the dishonesty of her agents. Treasurer Norris was constantly accused by Leicester and Sidney of gross peculation. Five per cent., according to Sir Philip, was lost to the Zeeland soldiers in every payment, “and God knows,” he said, “they want no such hindrance, being scarce able to keep life with their entire pay. Truly it is but poor increase to her Majesty, considering what loss it is to the miserable soldier.” Discipline and endurance were sure to be sacrificed, in the end, to such short-sighted economy. “When soldiers,” said Sidney, “grow to despair, and give up towns, then it is too late to buy with hundred thousands what might have been saved with a trifle.”

Page 1503

This plain dealing, on the part of Sidney, was anything but agreeable to the Queen, who was far from feeling regret that his high-soaring expectations had been somewhat blighted in the Provinces. He often expressed his mortification that her Majesty was disposed to interpret everything to, his disadvantage. "I understand," said he, "that I am called ambitious, and very proud at home, but certainly, if they knew my heart, they would not altogether so judge me." Elizabeth had taken part with Hohenlo against Sir Philip in the matter of the Zeeland regiment, and in this perhaps she was not entirely to be blamed. But she inveighed needlessly against his ambitious seeking of the office, and—as Walsingham observed—"she was very apt, upon every light occasion, to find fault with him." It is probable that his complaints against the army treasurer, and his manful defence of the "miserable soldiers," more than counterbalanced, in the Queen's estimation, his chivalry in the field.

Nevertheless he had now the satisfaction of having gained an important city in Flanders; and on subsequently joining the army under his uncle, he indulged the hope of earning still greater distinction.

Martin Schenk had meanwhile been successfully defending Rheinberg, for several weeks, against Parma's forces. It was necessary, however, that Leicester, notwithstanding the impoverished condition of his troops, should make some diversion, while his formidable antagonist was thus carrying all before him.

He assembled, accordingly, in the month of August, all the troops that could be brought into the field, and reviewed them, with much ceremony, in the neighbourhood of Arnheim. His army—barely numbered seven thousand foot and two thousand horse, but he gave out, very extensively, that he had fourteen thousand under his command, and he was moreover expecting a force of three thousand reiters, and as many pikemen recently levied in Germany. Lord Essex was general of the cavalry, Sir William Pelham —a distinguished soldier, who had recently arrived out of England, after the most urgent solicitations to the Queen, for that end, by Leicester—was lord-marshal of the camp, and Sir John Norris was colonel-general of the infantry.

After the parade, two sermons were preached upon the hillside to the soldiers, and then there was a council of war: It was decided—notwithstanding the Earl's announcement of his intentions to attack Parma in person—that the condition of the army did not warrant such an enterprise. It was thought better to lay siege to Zutphen. This step, if successful, would place in the power of the republic and her ally a city of great importance and strength. In every event the attempt would probably compel Farnese to raise the siege of Berg.

Leicester, accordingly, with "his brave troop of able and likely men"—five thousand of the infantry being English—advanced as far as Doesburg. This city, seated at the confluence of the ancient canal of Drusus and the Yssel, five miles above Zutphen, it was necessary, as a preliminary measure, to secure. It was not a very strong place,

being rather slightly walled with brick, and with a foss drawing not more than three feet of water. By the 30th August it had been completely invested.

Page 1504

On the same night, at ten o'clock, Sir William Pelham, came to the Earl to tell him "what beastly pioneers the Dutchmen were." Leicester accordingly determined, notwithstanding the lord-marshal's entreaties, to proceed to the trenches in person. There being but faint light, the two lost their way, and soon found themselves nearly, at the gate of the town. Here, while groping about in the dark; and trying to effect their retreat, they were saluted with a shot, which struck Sir William in the stomach. For an instant; thinking himself mortally injured, he expressed his satisfaction that he had been, between the commander-in-chief and the blow, and made other "comfortable and resolute speeches." Very fortunately, however, it proved that the marshal was not seriously hurt, and, after a few days, he was about his work as usual, although obliged —as the Earl of Leicester expressed it—"to carry a bullet in his belly as long as he should live."

Roger Williams, too, that valiant adventurer—"but no, more valiant than wise, and worth his weight in gold," according to the appreciative Leicester—was shot through the arm. For the dare-devil Welshman, much to the Earl's regret, persisted in running up and down the trenches "with a great plume of feathers in his gilt morion," and in otherwise making a very conspicuous mark of himself "within pointblank of a caliver."

Notwithstanding these mishaps, however, the siege went successfully forward. Upon the 2nd September the Earl began to batter, and after a brisk cannonade, from dawn till two in the afternoon, he had considerably damaged the wall in two places. One of the breaches was eighty feet wide, the other half as large, but the besieged had stuffed them full of beds, tubs, logs of wood, boards, and "such like trash," by means whereof the ascent was not so easy as it seemed. The soldiers were excessively eager for the assault. Sir John Norris came to Leicester to receive his orders as to the command of the attacking party.

The Earl referred the matter to him. "There is no man," answered Sir John, "fitter for that purpose than myself; for I am colonel-general of the infantry."

But Leicester, not willing to indulge so unreasonable a proposal, replied that he would reserve him for service of less hazard and greater importance. Norris being, as usual, "satis prodigus magnae animae," was out of humour at the refusal, and ascribed it to the Earl's persistent hostility to him and his family. It was then arranged that the assault upon the principal breach should be led by younger officers, to be supported by Sir John and other veterans. The other breach was assigned to the Dutch and Scotch-black Norris scowling at them the while with jealous eyes; fearing that they might get the start of the English party, and be first to enter the town. A party of noble volunteers clustered about Sir John-Lord Burgh, Sir Thomas Cecil, Sir Philip Sidney, and his brother Robert among the rest—most

Page 1505

impatient for the signal. The race was obviously to be a sharp one. The governor-general forbade these violent demonstrations, but Lord Burgh, “in a most vehement passion, waived the countermand,” and his insubordination was very generally imitated. Before the signal was given, however, Leicester sent a trumpet to summon the town to surrender, and could with difficulty restrain his soldiers till the answer should be returned. To the universal disappointment, the garrison agreed to surrender. Norris himself then stepped forward to the breach, and cried aloud the terms, lest the returning herald, who had been sent back by Leicester, should offer too favourable a capitulation. It was arranged that the soldiers should retire without arms, with white wands in their hands—the officers remaining prisoners—and that the burghers, their lives, and property, should be at Leicester’s disposal. The Earl gave most peremptory orders that persons and goods should be respected, but his commands were dis obeyed. Sir William Stanley’s men committed frightful disorders, and thoroughly, rifled the town.”

“And because,” said Norris, “I found fault herewith, Sir William began to quarrel with me, hath braved me extremely, refuseth to take any direction from me, and although I have sought for redress, yet it is proceeded in so coldly, that he taketh encouragement rather to increase the quarrel than to leave it.”

Notwithstanding therefore the decree of Leicester, the expostulations and anger of Norris, and the energetic efforts of Lord Essex and other generals, who went about smiting the marauders on the head, the soldiers sacked the city, and committed various disorders, in spite of the capitulation.

Doesburg having been thus reduced, the Earl now proceeded toward the more important city which he had determined to besiege. Zutphen, or South-Fen, an antique town of wealth and elegance, was the capital of the old Landgraves of Zutphen. It is situate on the right bank of the Yssel, that branch of the Rhine which flows between Gelderland and Overyssel into the Zuyder-Zee.

The ancient river, broad, deep, and languid, glides through a plain of almost boundless extent, till it loses itself in the flat and misty horizon. On the other side of the stream, in the district called the Veluwe, or bad meadow, were three sconces, one of them of remarkable strength. An island between the city and the shore was likewise well fortified. On the landward side the town was protected by a wall and moat sufficiently strong in those infant days of artillery. Near the hospital-gate, on the east, was an external fortress guarding the road to Warnsfeld. This was a small village, with a solitary slender church-spire, shooting up above a cluster of neat one-storied houses. It was about an English mile from Zutphen, in the midst of a wide, low, somewhat fenny plain, which, in winter, became so completely a lake, that peasants were not unfrequently drowned

Page 1506

in attempting to pass from the city to the village. In summer, the vague expanse of country was fertile and cheerful of aspect. Long rows of poplars marking the straight highways, clumps of pollard willows scattered around the little meres, snug farm-houses, with kitchen-gardens and brilliant flower-patches dotting the level plain, verdant pastures sweeping off into seemingly infinite distance, where the innumerable cattle seemed to swarm like insects, wind-mills swinging their arms in all directions, like protective giants, to save the country from inundation, the lagging sail of market-boats shining through rows of orchard trees—all gave to the environs of Zutphen a tranquil and domestic charm.

Deventer and Kampen, the two other places on the river, were in the hands of the States. It was, therefore, desirable for the English and the patriots, by gaining possession of Zutphen, to obtain control of the Yssel; driven, as they had been, from the Meuse and Rhine.

Sir John Norris, by Leicester's direction, took possession of a small rising-ground, called 'Gibbet Dill' on the land-side; where he established a fortified camp, and proceeded to invest the city. With him were Count Lewis William of Nassau, and Sir Philip Sidney, while the Earl himself, crossing the Yssel on a bridge of boats which he had constructed, reserved for himself the reduction of the forts upon the Veluwe side.

Farnese, meantime, was not idle; and Leicester's calculations proved correct. So soon as the Prince was informed of this important demonstration of the enemy he broke up—after brief debate with his officers—his camp before Rheinberg, and came to Wesel. At this place he built a bridge over the Rhine, and fortified it with two block-houses. These he placed under command of Claude Berlot, who was ordered to watch strictly all communication up the river with the city of Rheinberg, which he thus kept in a partially beleaguered state. Alexander then advanced rapidly by way of Groll and Burik, both which places he took possession of, to the neighbourhood of Zutphen. He was determined, at every hazard, to relieve that important city; and although, after leaving necessary detachments on the, way; he had but five thousand men under his command, besides fifteen hundred under Verdugo—making sixty-five hundred in all—he had decided that the necessity of the case, and his own honour; required him to seek the enemy, and to leave, as he said, the issue with the God of battles, whose cause it was.

Tassis, lieutenant-governor of Gelderland, was ordered into the city with two cornets of horse and six hundred foot. As large a number, had already been stationed there. Verdugo, who had been awaiting the arrival of the Prince at Borkelo, a dozen miles from Zutphen, with four hundred foot and two hundred horse, now likewise entered the city.

Page 1507

On the night of 29th August Alexander himself entered Zutphen for the purpose of encouraging the garrison by promise of-relief, and of ascertaining the position of the enemy by personal observation. His presence as it always did, inspired the soldiers with enthusiasm, so that they could with difficulty be restrained from rushing forth to assault the besiegers. In regard to the enemy he found that Gibbet Hill was still occupied by Sir John Norris, “the best soldier, in his opinion, that they had,” who had entrenched himself very strongly, and was supposed to have thirty-five hundred men under his command. His position seemed quite impregnable. The rest of the English were on the other side of the river, and Alexander observed, with satisfaction, that they had abandoned a small redoubt, near the leper-house, outside the Loor-Gate, through which the reinforcements must enter the city. The Prince determined to profit by this mistake, and to seize the opportunity thus afforded of sending those much needed supplies. During the night the enemy were found to be throwing up works “most furiously,” and skirmishing parties were sent out of the town to annoy them. In the darkness nothing of consequence was effected, but a Scotch officer was captured, who informed the Spanish commander that the enemy was fifteen thousand strong—a number which was nearly double that of Leicester’s actual force. In the morning Alexander returned to his camp at Borkelo—leaving Tassis in command of the Veluwe Forts, and Verdugo in the city itself—and he at once made rapid work in collecting victuals. He had soon wheat and other supplies in readiness, sufficient to feed four thousand mouths for three months, and these he determined to send into the city immediately, and at every hazard.

The great convoy which was now to be despatched required great care and a powerful escort. Twenty-five hundred musketeers and pikemen, of whom one thousand were Spaniards, and six hundred cavalry, Epirotes; Spaniards, and Italians, under Hannibal Gonzaga, George Crescia, Bentivoglio, Sesa, and others, were accordingly detailed for this expedition. The Marquis del Vasto, to whom was entrusted the chief command, was ordered to march from Borkelo at midnight on Wednesday, October 1 (St. Nov.) [N.S.]. It was calculated that he would reach a certain hillock not far from Warnsfeld by dawn of day. Here he was to pause, and send forward an officer towards the town, communicating his arrival, and requesting the cooperation of Verdugo, who was to make a sortie with one thousand men, according to Alexander’s previous arrangements. The plan was successfully carried out. The Marquis arrived by daybreak at the spot indicated, and despatched Captain de Vega who contrived to send intelligence of the fact. A trooper, whom Parma had himself sent to Verdugo with earlier information of the movement, had been captured on the way. Leicester had therefore been apprized, at an early moment, of the Prince’s intentions, but he was not aware that the convoy would be accompanied by so strong a force as had really been detailed.

Page 1508

He had accordingly ordered Sir John Norris, who commanded on the outside of the town near the road which the Spaniards must traverse, to place an ambuscade in his way. Sir John, always ready for adventurous enterprises, took a body of two hundred cavalry, all picked men, and ordered Sir William Stanley, with three hundred pikemen, to follow. A much stronger force of infantry was held in reserve and readiness, but it was not thought that it would be required. The ambuscade was successfully placed, before the dawn of Thursday morning, in the neighbourhood of Warnsfeld church. On the other hand, the Earl of Leicester himself, anxious as to the result, came across the river just at daybreak. He was accompanied by the chief gentlemen in his camp, who could never be restrained when blows were passing current.

The business that morning was a commonplace and practical though an important, one —to “impeach” a convoy of wheat and barley, butter, cheese, and beef—but the names of those noble and knightly volunteers, familiar throughout Christendom, sound like the roll-call for some chivalrous tournament. There were Essex and Audley, Stanley, Pelham, Russell, both the Sidneys, all the Norrises, men whose valour had been. proved on many a hard-fought battle-field. There, too, was the famous hero of British ballad whose name was so often to ring on the plains of the Netherlands—

> “The brave Lord Willoughby,
> Of courage fierce and fell,
> Who would not give one inch of way
> For all the devils in hell.”

Twenty such volunteers as these sat on horseback that morning around the stately Earl of Leicester. It seemed an incredible extravagance to send a handful of such heroes against an army.

But the English commander-in-chief had been listening to the insidious tongue of Roland York—that bold, plausible, unscrupulous partisan, already twice a renegade, of whom more was ere long to be heard in the Netherlands and England. Of the man’s courage there could be no doubt, and he was about to fight that morning in the front rank at the head of his company. But he had, for some mysterious reason, been bent upon persuading the Earl that the Spaniards were no match for Englishmen at a hand-to-hand contest. When they could ride freely up and down, he said, and use their lances as they liked, they were formidable. But the English were stronger men, better riders, better mounted, and better armed. The Spaniards hated helmets and proof armour, while the English trooper, in casque, cuirass, and greaves, was a living fortress impregnable to Spanish or Italian light horsemen. And Leicester seemed almost convinced by his reasoning.

It was five o’clock of a chill autumn morning. It was time for day to break, but the fog was so thick that a man at the distance of five yards was quite invisible. The creaking of waggon-wheels and the measured tramp of soldiers soon became faintly audible

however to Sir John Norris and his five hundred as they sat there in the mist. Presently came galloping forward in hot haste those nobles and gentlemen, with their esquires, fifty men in all—Sidney, Willoughby, and the rest—whom Leicester had no longer been able to restrain from taking part in the adventure.

Page 1509

A force of infantry, the amount of which cannot be satisfactorily ascertained, had been ordered by the Earl to cross the bridge at a later moment. Sidney's cornet of horse was then in Deventer, to which place it had been sent in order to assist in quelling an anticipated revolt, so that he came, like most of his companions, as a private volunteer and knight-errant.

The arrival of the expected convoy was soon more distinctly heard, but no scouts or outposts had been stationed to give timely notice, of the enemy's movements. Suddenly the fog, which had shrouded the scene so closely, rolled away like a curtain, and in the full light of an October morning the Englishmen found themselves face to face with a compact body of more than three thousand men. The Marquis del Vasto rode at the head of the forces surrounded by a band of mounted arquebus men. The cavalry, under the famous Epirote chief George Crescia, Hannibal Gonzaga, Bentivoglio, Sesa, Conti, and other distinguished commanders, followed; the columns of pikemen and musketeers lined the, hedge-rows on both sides the causeway; while between them the long train of waggons came slowly along under their protection. The whole force had got in motion after having sent notice of their arrival to Verdugo, who, with one or two thousand men, was expected to sally forth almost immediately from the city-gate.

There was but brief time for deliberation. Notwithstanding the tremendous odds there was no thought of retreat. Black Norris called to Sir William Stanley, with whom he had been at variance so lately at Doesburg.

"There hath been ill-blood between us," he said. "Let us be friends together this day, and die side by side, if need be, in her Majesty's cause."

"If you see me not serve my prince with faithful courage now," replied Stanley, "account, me for ever a coward. Living or dying I will stand err lie by you in friendship."

As they were speaking these words the young Earl of Essex, general of the horse, cried to his, handful of troopers:

"Follow me, good fellows, for the honour of England and of England's Queen!"

As he spoke he dashed, lance in rest, upon the enemy's cavalry, overthrew the foremost man, horse and rider, shivered his own spear to splinters, and then, swinging his cartel-axe, rode merrily forward. His whole little troop, compact, as an arrow-head, flew with an irresistible shock against the opposing columns, pierced clean through them, and scattered them in all directions. At the very first charge one hundred English horsemen drove the Spanish and Albanian cavalry back upon the musketeers and pikemen. Wheeling with rapidity, they retired before a volley of musket-shot, by which many horses and a few riders were killed; and then formed again to renew the attack. Sir Philip Sidney, an coming to the field, having met Sir William Pelham, the veteran lord

marshal, lightly armed, had with chivalrous extravagance thrown off his own cuishes, and now rode to the battle with no armour but his cuirass. At the second charge his horse was shot under him, but, mounting another, he was seen everywhere, in the thick of the fight, behaving himself with a gallantry which extorted admiration even from the enemy.

Page 1510

For the battle was a series of personal encounters in which high officers were doing the work of private, soldiers. Lord North, who had been lying “bed-rid” with a musket-shot in the leg, had got himself put on horseback, and with “one boot on and one boot off,” bore himself, “most lustily” through the whole affair. “I desire that her Majesty may know;” he said, “that I live but to, serve her. A better barony than I have could not hire the Lord North to live, on meaner terms.” Sir William Russell laid about him with his curtel-axe to such purpose that the Spaniards pronounced him a devil and not a man. “Wherever,” said an eye-witness, “he saw five or six of the enemy together; thither would he, and with his hard knocks soon separated their friendship.” Lord Willoughby encountered George Crescia, general of the famed Albanian cavalry, unhorsed him at the first shock, and rolled him into the ditch. “I yield me thy prisoner,” called out the Epirote in French, “for thou art a ‘preux chevalier;’” while Willoughby, trusting to his captive’s word, galloped onward, and with him the rest of the little troop, till they seemed swallowed up by the superior numbers of the enemy. His horse was shot under him, his basses were torn from his legs, and he was nearly taken a prisoner, but fought his way back with incredible strength and good fortune. Sir William Stanley’s horse had seven bullets in him, but bore his rider unhurt to the end of the battle. Leicester declared Sir William and “old Reads” to be “worth their, weight in pearl.”

Hannibal Gonzaga, leader of the Spanish cavalry, fell mortally wounded a The Marquis del Vasto, commander of the expedition, nearly met the same fate. An Englishman was just cleaving his head with a battle-axe, when a Spaniard transfixed the soldier with his pike. The most obstinate struggle took place about the train of waggons. The teamsters had fled in the beginning of the action, but the English and Spanish soldiers, struggling with the horses, and pulling them forward and backward, tried in vain to get exclusive possession of the convoy which was the cause of the action. The carts at last forced their way slowly nearer and nearer to the town, while the combat still went on, warm as ever, between the hostile squadrons. The action, lasted an hour and a half, and again and again the Spanish horsemen wavered and broke before the handful of English, and fell back upon their musketeers. Sir Philip Sidney, in the last charge, rode quite through the enemy’s ranks till he came upon their entrenchments, when a musket-ball from the camp struck him upon the thigh, three inches above the knee. Although desperately wounded in a part which should have been protected by the cuishes which he had thrown aside, he was not inclined to leave the field; but his own horse had been shot under him at the-beginning of the action, and the one upon which he was now mounted became too restive for him, thus crippled, to control.

Page 1511

He turned reluctantly away, and rode a mile and a half back to the entrenchments, suffering extreme pain, for his leg was dreadfully shattered. As he past along the edge of the battle-field his attendants brought him a bottle of water to quench his raging thirst. At, that moment a wounded English soldier, “who had eaten his last at the same feast,” looked up wistfully, in his face, when Sidney instantly handed him the flask, exclaiming, “Thy necessity is even greater than mine.” He then pledged his dying comrade in a draught, and was soon afterwards met by his uncle. “Oh, Philip,” cried Leicester, in despair, “I am truly grieved to see thee in this plight.” But Sidney comforted him with manful words, and assured him that death was sweet in the cause of his Queen and country. Sir William Russell, too, all blood-stained from the fight, threw his arms around his friend, wept like a child, and kissing his hand, exclaimed, “Oh! noble Sir Philip, never did man attain hurt so honourably or serve so valiantly as you.” Sir William Pelham declared “that Sidney’s noble courage in the face of our enemies had won him a name of continuing honour.”

The wounded gentleman was borne back to the camp, and thence in a barge to Arnheim. The fight was over. Sir John Norris bade Lord Leicester “be merry, for,” said he, “you have had the honourablest day. A handful of men has driven the enemy three times to retreat.” But, in truth, it was now time for the English to retire in their turn. Their reserve never arrived. The whole force engaged against the thirty-five hundred Spaniards had never exceeded two hundred and fifty horse and three hundred foot, and of this number the chief work had beer done by the fifty or sixty volunteers and their followers. The heroism which had been displayed was fruitless, except as a proof—and so Leicester wrote to the Palatine John Casimir—“that Spaniards were not invincible.” Two thousand men now sallied from the Loor Gate under Verdugo and Tassis, to join the force under Vasto, and the English were forced to retreat. The whole convoy was then carried into the city, and the Spaniards remained masters of the field.

Thirteen troopers and twenty-two foot soldiers; upon the English side, were killed. The enemy lost perhaps two hundred men. They were thrice turned from their position, and thrice routed, but they succeeded at last in their attempt to carry their convoy into Zutphen. Upon that day, and the succeeding ones, the town was completely victualled. Very little, therefore, save honour, was gained by the display of English valour against overwhelming numbers; five hundred against, near, four thousand. Never in the whole course of the war had there been such fighting, for the troops upon both sides were picked men and veterans. For a long time afterwards it was the custom of Spaniards and Netherlanders, in characterising a hardly-contested action, to call it as warm as the fight at Zutphen.

Page 1512

“I think I may call it,” said Leicester, “the most notable encounter that hath been in our age, and it will remain to our posterity famous.”

Nevertheless it is probable that the encounter would have been forgotten by posterity but for the melancholy close upon that field to Sidney’s bright career. And perhaps the Queen of England had as much reason to blush for the incompetency of her general and favourite as to be proud. of the heroism displayed by her officers and soldiers.

“There were too many indeed at this skirmish of the better sort,” said Leicester; “only a two hundred and fifty horse, and most of them the best of this camp, and unawares to me. I was offended when I knew it, but could not fetch them back; but since they all so well escaped (save my dear nephew), I would not for ten thousand pounds but they had been there, since they have all won that honour they have. Your Lordship never heard of such desperate charges as they gave upon the enemies in the face of their muskets.”

He described Sidney’s wound as “very dangerous, the bone being broken in pieces;” but said that the surgeons were in good hope. “I pray God to save his life,” said the Earl, “and I care not how lame he be.” Sir Philip was carried to Arnheim, where the best surgeons were immediately in attendance upon him. He submitted to their examination and the pain which they inflicted, with great cheerfulness, although himself persuaded that his wound was mortal. For many days the result was doubtful, and messages were sent day by day to England that he was convalescent—intelligence which was hailed by the Queen and people as a matter not of private but of public rejoicing. He soon began to fail, however. Count Hohenlo was badly wounded a few days later before the great fort of Zutphen. A musket-ball entered his mouth; and passed through his cheek, carrying off a jewel which hung in his ear. Notwithstanding his own critical condition, however, Hohenlo sent his surgeon, Adrian van den Spiegel, a man of great skill, to wait upon Sir Philip, but Adrian soon felt that the case was hopeless. Meantime fever and gangrene attacked the Count himself; and those in attendance upon him, fearing for his life, sent for his surgeon. Leicester refused to allow Adrian to depart, and Hohenlo very generously acquiescing in the decree, but, also requiring the surgeon’s personal care, caused himself to be transported in a litter to Arnheim.

Sidney was first to recognise the symptoms of mortification, which made a fatal result inevitable. His demeanour during his sickness and upon his death-bed was as beautiful as his life. He discoursed with his friends concerning the immortality of the soul, comparing the doctrines of Plato and of other ancient philosophers, whose writings were so familiar to him, with the revelations of Scripture and with the dictates of natural religion. He made his will with minute and elaborate provisions, leaving bequests, remembrances, and rings, to all

Page 1513

his friends. Then he indulged himself with music, and listened particularly to a strange song which he had himself composed during his illness, and which he had entitled 'La Cuisse rompue.' He took leave of the friends around him with perfect calmness; saying to his brother Robert, "Love my memory. Cherish my friends. Above all, govern your will and affections by the will and word of your Creator; in me beholding the end of this world with all her vanities."

And thus this gentle and heroic spirit took its flight.

Parma, after thoroughly victualling Zutphen, turned his attention to the German levies which Leicester was expecting under the care of Count Meurs. "If the enemy is reinforced by these six thousand fresh troops," said Alexander; "it will make him master of the field." And well he might hold this opinion, for, in the meagre state of both the Spanish and the liberating armies, the addition of three thousand fresh reiters and as many infantry would be enough to turn the scale. The Duke of Parma—for, since the recent death of his father, Farnese had succeeded to his title—determined in person to seek the German troops, and to destroy them if possible. But they never gave him the chance. Their muster-place was Bremen, but when they heard that the terrible 'Holofernese' was in pursuit of them, and that the commencement of their service would be a pitched battle with his Spaniards and Italians, they broke up and scattered about the country. Soon afterwards the Duke tried another method of effectually dispersing them, in case they still retained a wish to fulfil their engagement with Leicester. He sent a messenger to treat with them, and in consequence two of their rittmeisters; paid him a visit. He offered to give them higher pay, and "ready money in place of tricks and promises." The mercenary heroes listened very favourably to his proposals, although they had already received—besides the tricks and promises—at least one hundred thousand florins out of the States' treasury.

After proceeding thus far in the negotiation, however, Parma concluded, as the season was so far advanced, that it was sufficient to have dispersed them, and to have deprived the English and patriots of their services. So he gave the two majors a gold chain a-piece, and they went their way thoroughly satisfied. "I have got them away from the enemy for this year," said Alexander; "and this I hold to be one of the best services that has been rendered for many a long day to your Majesty."

During the period which intervened between the action at Warnsfeld and the death of Sidney, the siege-operations before Zutphen had been continued. The city, strongly garrisoned and well supplied with provisions, as it had been by Parma's care, remained impregnable; but the sconces beyond the river and upon the island fell into Leicester's hands. The great fortress which commanded the Veluwe, and which was strong enough to have resisted Count Hohenlo on a

Page 1514

former, occasion for nearly a whole year, was the scene of much hard fighting. It was gained at last by the signal valour of Edward Stanley, lieutenant to Sir William. That officer, at the commencement of an assault upon a not very practicable breach, sprang at the long pike of a Spanish soldier, who was endeavoring to thrust him from the wall, and seized it with both hands. The Spaniard struggled to maintain his hold of the weapon, Stanley to wrest it from his grasp. A dozen other soldiers broke their pikes upon his cuirass or shot at him with their muskets. Conspicuous by his dress, being all in yellow but his corslet, he was in full sight of Leicester and of fire thousand men. The earth was so shifty and sandy that the soldiers who were to follow him were not able to climb the wall. Still Stanley grasped his adversary's pike, but, suddenly changing his plan, he allowed the Spaniard to lift him from the ground. Then, assisting himself with his feet against the wall, he, much to the astonishment of the spectators, scrambled quite over the parapet, and dashed sword in hand among the defenders of the fort. Had he been endowed with a hundred lives it seemed impossible for him to escape death. But his followers, stimulated by his example, made ladders for themselves of each others' shoulders, clambered at last with great exertion over the broken wall, overpowered the garrison, and made themselves masters of the sconce. Leicester, transported with enthusiasm for this noble deed of daring, knighted Edward Stanley upon the spot, besides presenting him next day with forty pounds in gold and an annuity of one hundred marks, sterling for life. "Since I was born, I did never see any man behave himself as he did," said the Earl. "I shall never forget it, if I live a thousand year, and he shall have a part of my living for it as long as I live."

The occupation of these forts terminated the military operations of the year, for the rainy season, precursor of the winter, had now set in. Leicester, leaving Sir William Stanley, with twelve hundred English and Irish horse, in command of Deventer; Sir John Burrowes, with one thousand men, in Doesburg; and Sir Robert Yorke, with one thousand more, in the great sconce before Zutphen; took his departure for the Hague. Zutphen seemed so surrounded as to authorize the governor to expect ere long its capitulation. Nevertheless, the results of the campaign had not been encouraging. The States had lost ground, having been driven from the Meuse and Rhine, while they had with difficulty maintained themselves on the Flemish coast and upon the Yssel.

It is now necessary to glance at the internal politics of the Republic during the period of Leicester's administration and to explain the position in which he found himself at the close of the year.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

And thus this gentle and heroic spirit took its flight
Five great rivers hold the Netherland territory in their coils
High officers were doing the work of private, soldiers

I did never see any man behave himself as he did
There is no man fitter for that purpose than myself

Page 1515

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History of the United Netherlands, Volume 49, 1586

CHAPTER X.

Should Elizabeth accept the Sovereignty?—The Effects of her Anger— Quarrels between the Earl and the Staten—The Earl's three Counsellors—Leicester's Finance—-Chamber—Discontent of the Mercantile Classes—Paul Buys and the Opposition—Been Insight of Paul Buys—Truchsess becomes a Spy upon him—Intrigues of Buys with Denmark—His Imprisonment—The Earl's Unpopularity—His Quarrels with the States—-And with the Norrises—His Counsellors Wilkes and Clerke—Letter from the Queen to Leicester—A Supper Party at Hohenlo's—A drunken Quarrel—Hohenlo's Assault upon Edward Norris— Ill Effects of the Riot.

The brief period of sunshine had been swiftly followed by storms. The Governor Absolute had, from the outset, been placed in a false position. Before he came to the Netherlands the Queen had refused the sovereignty. Perhaps it was wise in her to decline so magnificent an offer; yet certainly her acceptance would have been perfectly honourable. The constituted authorities of the Provinces formally made the proposition. There is no doubt whatever that the whole population ardently desired to become her subjects. So far as the Netherlands were concerned, then, she would have been fully justified in extending her sceptre over a free people, who, under no compulsion and without any, diplomatic chicane, had selected her for their hereditary chief. So far as regarded England, the annexation to that country of a continental cluster of states, inhabited by a race closely allied to it by blood, religion, and the instinct for political freedom, seemed, on the whole, desirable.

In a financial point of view, England would certainly lose nothing by the union. The resources of the Provinces were at leant equal to her own. We have seen the astonishment which the wealth and strength of the Netherlands excited in their English visitors. They were amazed by the evidences of commercial and manufacturing prosperity, by the spectacle of luxury and advanced culture, which met them on every side. Had the Queen—as it had been generally supposed—desired to learn whether the Provinces were able and willing to pay the expenses of their own defence before she should definitely decide on, their offer of sovereignty, she was soon thoroughly enlightened upon the subject. Her confidential agents all—held one language. If she would only, accept the sovereignty, the amount which the Provinces would pay was in a

manner boundless. She was assured that the revenue of her own hereditary realm was much inferior to that of the possessions thus offered to her sway.

Page 1516

In regard to constitutional polity, the condition of the Netherlands was at least, as satisfactory as that of England. The great amount of civil freedom enjoyed by those countries—although perhaps an objection—in the eyes of Elizabeth Tudor—should certainly have been a recommendation to her liberty-loving subjects. The question of defence had been satisfactorily answered. The Provinces, if an integral part of the English empire, could protect themselves, and would become an additional element of strength—not a troublesome encumbrance.

The difference of language was far, less than that which already existed between the English and their Irish fellow-subjects, while it was counterbalanced by sympathy, instead of being aggravated by mutual hostility in the matter of religion.

With regard to the great question of abstract sovereignty, it was certainly impolitic for an absolute monarch to recognize the right of a nation to repudiate its natural allegiance. But Elizabeth had already countenanced that step by assisting the rebellion against Philip. To allow the rebels to transfer their obedience from the King of Spain to herself was only another step in the same direction. The Queen, should she annex the Provinces, would certainly be accused by the world of ambition; but the ambition was a noble one, if, by thus consenting to the urgent solicitations of a free people, she extended the region of civil and religious liberty, and raised up a permanent bulwark against sacerdotal and royal absolutism.

A war between herself and Spain was inevitable if she accepted the sovereignty, but peace had been already rendered impossible by the treaty of alliance. It is true that the Queen imagined the possibility of combining her engagements towards the States with a conciliatory attitude towards their ancient master, but it was here that she committed the gravest error. The negotiations of Parma and his sovereign with the English court were a masterpiece of deceit on the part of Spain. We have shown, by the secret correspondence, and we shall in the sequel make it still clearer, that Philip only intended to amuse his antagonists; that he had already prepared his plan for the conquest of England, down to the minutest details; that the idea of tolerating religious liberty had never entered his mind; and that his fixed purpose was not only thoroughly to chastise the Dutch rebels, but to deprive the heretic Queen who had fostered their rebellion both of throne and life. So far as regarded the Spanish King, then, the quarrel between him and Elizabeth was already mortal; while in a religious, moral, political, and financial point of view, it would be difficult to show that it was wrong, or imprudent for England to accept the sovereignty over his ancient subjects. The cause of human, freedom seemed likely to gain by the step, for the States did not consider themselves strong enough to maintain the independent republic which had already risen.

Page 1517

It might be a question whether, on the whole, Elizabeth made a mistake in declining the sovereignty. She was certainly wrong, however, in wishing the lieutenant-general of her six thousand auxiliary troops to be clothed, as such, with vice-regal powers. The States-General, in a moment of enthusiasm, appointed him governor absolute, and placed in his hands, not only the command of the forces, but the entire control of their revenues, imposts, and customs, together with the appointment of civil and military officers. Such an amount of power could only be delegated by the sovereign. Elizabeth had refused the sovereignty: it then rested with the States. They only, therefore, were competent to confer the power which Elizabeth wished her favourite to exercise simply as her lieutenant-general.

Her wrathful and vituperative language damaged her cause and that of the Netherlands more severely than can now be accurately estimated. The Earl was placed at once in a false, a humiliating, almost a ridiculous position. The authority which the States had thus a second time offered to England was a second time and most scornfully thrust back upon them. Elizabeth was indignant that “her own man” should clothe himself in the supreme attributes which she had refused. The States were forced by the violence of the Queen to take the authority into their own hands again, and Leicester was looked upon as a disgraced man.

Then came the neglect with which the Earl was treated by her Majesty and her ill-timed parsimony towards the cause. No letters to him in four months, no remittances for the English troops, not a penny of salary for him. The whole expense of the war was thrown for the time upon their hands, and the English soldiers seemed only a few thousand starving, naked, dying vagrants, an incumbrance instead of an aid.

The States, in their turn, drew the purse-strings. The two hundred thousand florins monthly were paid. The four hundred thousand florins which had been voted as an additional supply were for a time held back, as Leicester expressly stated, because of the discredit which had been thrown upon him from home.

[Strangely enough, Elizabeth was under the impression that the extra grant of 400,000 florins (L40,000) for four months was four hundred thousand pounds sterling. “The rest that was granted by the States, as extraordinary to levy an army, which was 400,000 florins, not pounds, as I hear your Majesty taketh it. It is forty thousand pounds, and to be paid In March, April, May, and June last,” &c. Leicester to the Queen, 11 Oct. 1586. (S. P. Office *Ms*.)]

The military operations were crippled for want of funds, but more fatal than everything else were the secret negotiations for peace. Subordinate individuals, like Grafigni and De Loo, went up and down, bringing presents out of England for Alexander Farnese, and bragging that Parma and themselves could have peace

Page 1518

whenever they liked to make it, and affirming that Leicester's opinions were of no account whatever. Elizabeth's coldness to the Earl and to the Netherlands was affirmed to be the Prince of Parma's sheet-anchor; while meantime a house was ostentatiously prepared in Brussels by their direction for the reception of an English ambassador, who was every moment expected to arrive. Under such circumstances it was in, vain for the governor-general to protest that the accounts of secret negotiations were false, and quite natural that the States should lose their confidence in the Queen. An unfriendly and suspicious attitude towards her representative was a necessary result, and the demonstrations against the common enemy became still more languid. But for these underhand dealings, Grave, Venlo, and Neusz, might have been saved, and the current 'of the Meuse and Rhine have remained in the hands of the patriots.

The Earl was industrious, generous, and desirous of playing well his part. His personal courage was undoubted, and, in the opinion of his admirers—themselves, some of them, men of large military experience—his ability as a commander was of a high order. The valour displayed by the English nobles and gentlemen who accompanied him was magnificent, worthy the descendants of the victors at Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt; and the good behaviour of their followers—with a few rare exceptions—had been equally signal. But now the army was dwindling to a ghastly array of scarecrows, and the recruits, as they came from England, were appalled by the spectacle presented by their predecessors. "Our old ragged rogues here have so discouraged our new men," said Leicester; "as I protest to you they look like dead men." Out of eleven hundred freshly-arrived Englishmen, five hundred ran away in two days. Some were caught and hanged, and all seemed to prefer hanging to remaining in the service, while the Earl declared that he would be hanged as well rather than again undertake such a charge without being assured payment for his troops beforehand!

The valour of Sidney and Essex, Willoughby and Pelham, Roger Williams and Martin Schenk, was set at nought by such untoward circumstances. Had not Philip also left his army to starve and Alexander Farnese to work miracles, it would have fared still worse with Holland and England, and with the cause of civil and religious liberty in the year 1586.

The States having resumed, as much as possible; their former authority, were on very unsatisfactory terms with the governor-general. Before long, it was impossible for the, twenty or thirty individuals called the States to be in the same town with the man whom, at the commencement of the, year, they had greeted so warmly. The hatred between the Leicester faction and the municipalities became intense, for the foundation of the two great parties which were long to divide the Netherland commonwealth was already laid. The mercantile patrician interest, embodied in the

Page 1519

states of Holland and Zeeland and inclined to a large toleration in the matter of religion, which afterwards took the form of Arminianism, was opposed by a strict Calvinist party, which desired to subject the political commonwealth to the reformed church; which nevertheless indulged in very democratic views of the social compact; and which was controlled by a few refugees from Flanders and Brabant, who had succeeded in obtaining the confidence of Leicester.

Thus the Earl was the nominal head of the Calvinist democratic party; while young Maurice of Nassau; stadholder of Holland and Zeeland, and guided by Barneveld, Buys, and other leading statesmen of these Provinces; was in an attitude precisely the reverse of the one which he was destined at a later and equally memorable epoch to assume. The chiefs of the faction which had now succeeded in gaining the confidence of Leicester were Reingault, Burgrave, and Deventer, all refugees.

The laws of Holland and of the other United States were very strict on the subject of citizenship, and no one but a native was competent to hold office in each Province. Doubtless, such regulations were narrow-spirited; but to fly in the face of them was the act of a despot, and this is what Leicester did. Reingault was a Fleming. He was a bankrupt merchant, who had been taken into the protection of Lamoral Egmont, and by that nobleman recommended to Granvelle for an office under the Cardinal's government. The refusal of this favour was one of the original causes of Egmont's hostility to Granvelle. Reingault subsequently entered the service of the Cardinal, however, and rewarded the kindness of his former benefactor by great exertions in finding, or inventing, evidence to justify the execution of that unfortunate nobleman. He was afterwards much employed by the Duke of Alva and by the Grand Commander Requesens; but after the pacification of Ghent he had been completely thrown out of service. He had recently, in a subordinate capacity, accompanied the legations of the States to France and to England, and had now contrived to ingratiate himself with the Earl of Leicester. He affected great zeal for the Calvinistic religion—an exhibition which, in the old servant of Granvelle and Alva, was far from edifying—and would employ no man or maid-servant in his household until their religious principles had been thoroughly examined by one or two clergymen. In brief, he was one of those, who, according to a homely Flemish proverb, are wont to hang their piety on the bell-rope; but, with the exception of this brief interlude in his career, he lived and died a Papist.

Gerard Proninck, called Deventer, was a respectable inhabitant of Bois-le-Duc, who had left that city after it had again become subject to the authority of Spain. He was of decent life and conversation, but a restless and ambitious demagogue. As a Brabantine, he was unfit for office; and yet, through Leicester's influence and the intrigues of the democratic party, he obtained the appointment of burgomaster in the city of Utrecht. The States-General, however, always refused to allow him to appear at their sessions as representative of that city.

Page 1520

Daniel de Burgrave was a Flemish mechanic, who, by the exertion of much energy and talent, had risen to the poet of procureur-general of Flanders. After the conquest of the principal portion of that Province by Parma, he had made himself useful to the English governor-general in various ways, and particularly as a linguist. He spoke English—a tongue with which few Netherlanders of that day were familiar—and as the Earl knew no other, except (very imperfectly) Italian, he found his services in speaking and writing a variety of languages very convenient. He was the governor's private secretary, and, of course, had no entrance to the council of state, but he was accused of frequently thrusting himself into their hall of sessions, where, under pretence of arranging the Earl's table, or portfolio, or papers, he was much addicted to whispering into his master's ear, listening to conversation,—to eaves-dropping; in short, and general intrusiveness.

"A most faithful, honest servant is Burgrave," said Leicester; "a substantial, wise man. 'Tis as sufficient a man as ever I met withal of any nation; very well learned, exceeding wise, and sincere in religion. I cannot commend the man too much. He is the only comfort I have had of any of this nation."

These three personages were the leaders of the Leicester faction. They had much, influence with all the refugees from Flanders, Brabant, and the Walloon Provinces. In Utrecht, especially, where the Earl mainly resided, their intrigues were very successful. Deventer was appointed, as already stated, to the important post of burgomaster; many, of the influential citizens were banished, without cause or, trial; the upper branch of the municipal government, consisting of the clerical delegates of the colleges, was in an arbitrary manner abolished; and, finally, the absolute sovereignty of, the Province, without condition, was offered to the Queen, of England.

Leicester was now determined to carry out one of the great objects which the Queen had in view when she sent him to the Netherlands. She desired thoroughly to ascertain the financial resources of the Provinces, and their capacity to defend themselves. It was supposed by the States, and hoped by the Earl and by a majority of the Netherland people, that she would, in case the results were satisfactory, accept, after all, the sovereignty. She certainly was not to be blamed that she wished to make this most important investigation, but it was her own fault that any new machinery had been rendered necessary. The whole control of the finances had, in the beginning of the year, been placed in the Earl's hands, and it was only by her violently depriving him of his credit and of the confidence of the country that he had not retained it. He now established a finance-chamber, under the chief control of Reingault, who promised him mountains of money, and who was to be chief treasurer. Paul Buys was appointed by Leicester to fill a subordinate position in the new council. He spurned the offer with great indignation, saying that Reingault was not fit to be his clerk, and that he was not likely himself, therefore, to accept a humble post under the administration of such an individual. This scornful refusal filled to the full the hatred of Leicester against the ex-Advocate of Holland.

Page 1521

The mercantile interest at once took the alarm, because it was supposed that the finance-chamber, was intended to crush the merchants. Early in April an Act had been passed by the state-council, prohibiting commerce with the Spanish possessions. The embargo was intended to injure the obedient Provinces and their sovereign, but it was shown that its effect would be to blast the commerce of Holland. It forbade the exportation from the republic not only of all provisions and munitions of war, but of all goods and merchandize whatever, to Spain, Portugal, the Spanish Netherlands, or any other of Philip's territories, either in Dutch or neutral vessel. It would certainly seem, at first sight, that such an act was reasonable, although the result would really be, not to deprive the enemy of supplies, but to throw the whole Baltic trade into the hands of the Bremen, Hamburg, and "Osterling" merchants. Leicester expected to derive a considerable revenue by granting passports and licenses to such neutral traders, but the edict became so unpopular that it was never thoroughly enforced, and was before long rescinded.

The odium of the measure was thrown upon the governor-general, yet he had in truth opposed it in the state-council, and was influential in procuring its repeal.

Another important Act had been directed against the mercantile interest, and excited much general discontent. The Netherlands wished the staple of the English cloth manufacture to be removed from Emden—the petty, sovereign of which place was the humble servant of Spain—to Amsterdam or Delft. The desire was certainly, natural, and the Dutch merchants sent a committee to confer with Leicester. He was much impressed with their views, and with the sagacity of their chairman, one Mylward, "a wise fellow and well languaged, an ancient man and very, religious," as the Earl pronounced him to be.

Notwithstanding the wisdom however, of this well-languaged fellow, the Queen, for some strange reason, could not be induced to change the staple from Emden, although it was shown that the public revenue of the Netherlands would gain twenty thousand pounds a year by the measure. "All Holland will cry out for it," said Leicester; "but I had rather they cried than that England should weep."

Thus the mercantile community, and especially the patrician families of Holland and Zeeland, all engaged in trade, became more and more hostile to the governor-general and to his financial trio, who were soon almost as unpopular as the famous Consults of Cardinal Granvelle had been. It was the custom of the States to consider the men who surrounded the Earl as needy and unprincipled renegades and adventurers. It was the policy of his advisers to represent the merchants and the States—which mainly consisted of, or were controlled by merchants—as a body of corrupt, selfish, greedy money-getters.

Page 1522

The calumnies put in circulation against the States by Reingault and his associates grew at last so outrageous, and the prejudice created in the mind of Leicester and his immediate English adherents so intense, that it was rendered necessary for the States, of Holland and Zeeland to write to their agent Ortell in London, that he might forestall the effect of these perpetual misrepresentations on her Majesty's government. Leicester, on the other hand, under the inspiration; of his artful advisers, was vehement in his entreaties that Ortell should be sent away from England.

The ablest and busiest of the opposition-party, the "nimblest head" in the States-General was the ex-Advocate of Holland; Paul Buys. This man was then the foremost statesman in, the Netherlands. He had been the firmest friend to the English alliance; he had resigned his office when the States were-offering the sovereignty to France, and had been on the point of taking service in Denmark. He had afterwards been prominent in the legation which offered the sovereignty to Elizabeth, and, for a long time, had been the most firm, earnest, and eloquent advocate of the English policy. Leicester had originally courted him, caressed him, especially recommended him to the Queen's favour, given him money—as he said, "two hundred pounds sterling thick at a time"—-and openly pronounced him to be "in ability above all men." "No man hath ever sought a man," he said, "as I have sought P. B."

The period of their friendship was, however, very brief. Before many weeks had passed there was no vituperative epithet that Leicester was not in the daily habit of bestowing upon Paul. The Earl's vocabulary of abuse was not a limited one, but he exhausted it on the head of the Advocate. He lacked at last words and breath to utter what was like him. He pronounced his former friend "a very dangerous man, altogether hated of the people and the States;"—"a lewd sinner, nursled in revolutions; a most covetous, bribing fellow, caring for nothing but to bear the sway and grow rich;"—"a man who had played many parts, both lewd and audacious;"—"a very knave, a traitor to his country;"—"the most ungrateful wretch alive, a hater of the Queen and of all the English; a most unthankful man to her Majesty; a practiser to make himself rich and great, and nobody else;"—"among all villains the greatest;"—"a bolsterer of all papists and ill men, a dissembler, a devil, an atheist," a "most naughty man, and a most notorious drunkard in the worst degree."

Where the Earl hated, his hatred was apt to be deadly, and he was determined, if possible, to have the life of the detested Paul. "You shall see I will do well enough with him, and that shortly," he said. "I will course him as he was not so this twenty year. I will warrant him hanged and one or two of his fellows, but you must not tell your shirt of this yet;" and when he was congratulating the government on his having at length procured the execution of Captain Hemart, the surrenderer of Grave, he added, pithily, "and you shall hear that Mr. P. B. shall follow."

Page 1523

Yet the Earl's real griefs against Buys may be easily summed up. The lewd sinner, nursled in revolutions, had detected the secret policy of the Queen's government, and was therefore perpetually denouncing the intrigues going on with Spain. He complained that her Majesty was tired of having engaged in the Netherland enterprise; he declared that she would be glad to get fairly out of it; that her reluctance to spend a farthing more in the cause than she was obliged to do was hourly increasing upon her; that she was deceiving and misleading the States-General; and that she was hankering after a peace. He said that the Earl had a secret intention to possess himself of certain towns in Holland, in which case the whole question of peace and war would be in the hands of the Queen, who would also have it thus in her power to reimburse herself at once for all expenses that she had incurred.

It would be difficult to show that there was anything very calumnious in these charges, which, no doubt, Paul was in the habit of making. As to the economical tendencies of her Majesty, sufficient evidence has been given already from Leicester's private letters. "Rather than spend one hundred pounds," said Walsingham, "she can be content to be deceived of five thousand." That she had been concealing from the Staten, from Walsingham, from Leicester, during the whole summer, her secret negotiations with Spain, has also been made apparent. That she was disgusted with the enterprise in which she had embarked, Walsingham, Burghley, Hatton, and all the other statesmen of England, most abundantly testified. Whether Leicester had really an intention to possess himself of certain cities in Holland—a charge made by Paul Buys, and denounced as especially slanderous by the Earl—may better appear from his own private statements.

"This I will do," he wrote to the Queen, "and I hope not to fail of it, to get into my hands three or four most principal places in North Holland; which will be such a strength and assurance for your Majesty, as you shall see you shall both rule these men and make war or peace as you list, always provided—whatsoever you hear, or is—part not with the Brill; and having these places in your hands, whatsoever should chance to these countries, your Majesty, I will warrant sure enough to make what peace you will in an hour, and to have your debts and charges readily answered." At a somewhat later moment it will be seen what came of these secret designs. For the present, Leicester was very angry with Paul for daring to suspect him of such treachery.

The Earl complained, too, that the influence of Buys with Hohenlo and young Maurice of Nassau was most pernicious. Hohenlo had formerly stood high in Leicester's opinion. He was a "plain, faithful soldier, a most valiant gentleman," and he was still more important, because about to marry Mary of Nassau; eldest slaughter, of William the Silent, and coheiress with Philip William, to the Buren property. But he had been tampered with by the intriguing Paul Buys, and had then wished to resign his office under Leicester. Being pressed for reasons, he had "grown solemn," and withdrawn himself almost entirely.

Page 1524

Maurice; with his “solemn, sly wit,” also gave the Earl much trouble, saying little; but thinking much, and listening to the insidious Paul. He “stood much on making or marring,” so Leicester thought, “as he met with good counsel.” He had formerly been on intimate terms with the governor-general, who affected to call him his son; but he had subsequently kept aloof, and in three months had not come near him. The Earl thought that money might do much, and was anxious for Sir Francis Drake to come home from the Indies with millions of gold, that the Queen might make both Hohenlo and Maurice a handsome present before it should be too late.

Meantime he did what he could with Elector Truchsess to lure them back again. That forlorn little prelate was now poorer and more wretched than ever. He was becoming paralytic, though young, and his heart was broken through want. Leicester, always generous as the sun, gave him money, four thousand florins at a time, and was most earnest that the Queen should put him on her pension list. “His wisdom, his behaviour, his languages, his person,” said the Earl, “all would like her well. He is in great melancholy for his town of Neusz, and for his poverty, having a very noble mind. If, he be lost, her Majesty had better lose a hundred thousand pounds.”

The melancholy Truchsess now became a spy and a go-between. He insinuated himself into the confidence of Paul Buys, wormed his secrets from him, and then communicated them to Hohenlo and to Leicester; “but he did it very wisely,” said the Earl, “so that he was not mistrusted.” The governor always affected, in order to screen the elector from suspicion, to obtain his information from persons in Utrecht; and he had indeed many spies in that city; who diligently reported Paul’s table-talk. Nevertheless, that “noble gentleman, the elector,” said Leicester, “hath dealt most deeply with him, to seek out the bottom.” As the ex-Advocate of Holland was very communicative in his cups, and very bitter against the governor-general, there was soon such a fund of information collected on the subject by various eaves-droppers, that Leicester was in hopes of very soon hanging Mr. Paul Buys, as we have already seen.

The burthen of the charges against the culprit was his statement that the Provinces would be gone if her Majesty did not declare herself, vigorously and generously, in their favour; but, as this was the perpetual cry of Leicester himself, there seemed hardly hanging matter in that. That noble gentleman, the elector, however, had nearly saved the hangman his trouble, having so dealt with Hohenlo as to “bring him into as good a mind as ever he was;” and the first fruits of this good mind were, that the honest Count —a man of prompt dealings—walked straight to Paul’s house in order to kill him on the spot. Something fortunately prevented the execution of this plan; but for a time at least the energetic Count continued to be “governed greatly” by the ex-archbishop, and “did impart wholly unto him his most secret heart.”

Page 1525

Thus the “deep wise Truxy,” as Leicester called him, continued to earn golden opinions, and followed up his conversion of Hohenlo by undertaking to “bring Maurice into tune again also,” and the young Prince was soon on better terms with his “affectionate father” than he had ever been before. Paul Buys was not so easily put down, however, nor the two magnates so thoroughly gained over. Before the end of the season Maurice stood in his old position, the nominal head of the Holland or patrician party, chief of the opposition to Leicester, while Hohenlo had become more bitter than ever against the Earl. The quarrel between himself and Edward Norris, to which allusion will soon be made, tended to increase the dissatisfaction, although he singularly misunderstood Leicester’s sentiments throughout the whole affair. Hohenlo recovered of his wound before Zutphen; but, on his recovery, was more malcontent than ever. The Earl was obliged at last to confess that “he was a very dangerous man, inconstant, envious; and hateful to all our nation, and a very traitor to the cause. There is no dealing to win him,” he added, “I have sought it to my cost. His best friends tell me he is not to be trusted.”

Meantime that lewd sinner, the indefatigable Paul, was plotting desperately—so Leicester said and believed—to transfer the sovereignty of the Provinces to the King of Denmark. Buys, who was privately of opinion that the States required an absolute head, “though it were but an onion’s head,” and that they would thankfully continue under Leicester as governor absolute if Elizabeth would accept the sovereignty, had made up his mind that the Queen would never take that step. He was therefore disposed to offer the crown to the King of Denmark, and was believed to have brought Maurice—who was to espouse that King’s daughter—to the same way of thinking. Young Count Rantzan, son of a distinguished Danish statesman, made a visit to the Netherlands in order to confer with Buys. Paul was also anxious to be appointed envoy to Denmark, ostensibly to arrange for the two thousand cavalry, which the King had long before promised for the assistance of the Provinces, but in reality, to examine the details of this new project; and Leicester represented to the Queen very earnestly how powerful the Danish monarch would become, thus rendered master of the narrow seas, and how formidable to England.

In the midst of these plottings, real or supposed, a party of armed men, one fine summer’s morning, suddenly entered Paul’s bedroom as he lay asleep at the house of the burgomaster, seized his papers, and threw him: into prison in the wine-cellar of the town-house. “Oh my papers, oh my papers!” cried the unfortunate politician, according to Leicester’s statement, “the Queen of England will for ever hate me.” The Earl disavowed all, participation in the arrest; but he was not believed. He declared himself not sorry that the measure had been taken, and promised that

Page 1526

he would not “be hasty to release him,” not doubting that “he would be found faulty enough.” Leicester maintained that there was stuff enough discovered to cost Paul his head; but he never lost his head, nor was anything treasonable or criminal ever found against him. The intrigue with Denmark—never proved—and commenced, if undertaken at all, in utter despair of Elizabeth’s accepting the sovereignty, was the gravest charge. He remained, however, six months in prison, and at the beginning of 1587 was released, without trial or accusation, at the request of the English Queen.

The States could hardly be blamed for their opposition to the Earl’s administration, for he had thrown himself completely into the arms of a faction, whose object was to vilipend and traduce them, and it was now difficult for him to recover the functions of which the Queen had deprived him. “The government they had given from themselves to me stuck in their stomachs always,” he said. Thus on the one side, the States were, “growing more stately than ever,” and were-always “jumbling underhand,” while the aristocratic Earl, on, his part, was resolute not to be put down by “churls and tinkers.” He was sure that the people were with him, and that, “having always been governed by some prince, they, never did nor could consent to be ruled by bakers, brewers, and hired advocates. I know they hate them,” said this high-born tribune of the people. He was much disgusted with the many-headed chimaera, the monstrous republic, with which he found himself in such unceasing conflict, and was disposed to take a manful stand. “I have been fain of late,” he said, “to set the better leg foremost, to handle some of my masters somewhat plainly; for they thought I would droop; and whatsoever becomes of me, you shall hear I will keep my reputation, or die for it.”

But one great accusation, made against the churls and tinkers, and bakers and hired advocates, and Mr. Paul Buys at their head, was that they were liberal towards the Papists. They were willing that Catholics should remain in the country and exercise the rights of citizens, provided they, conducted themselves like good citizens. For this toleration—a lesson which statesmen like Buys and Barneveld had learned in the school of William the Silent—the opposition-party were denounced as bolsterers of Papists, and Papists themselves at heart, and “worshippers of idolatrous idols.”

From words, too, the government of Leicester passed to acts. Seventy papists were banished from the city of Utrecht at the time of the arrest of Buys. The Queen had constantly enforced upon Leicester the importance of dealing justly with the Catholics in the Netherlands, on the ground that they might be as good patriots and were as much interested in the welfare of their country as were the Protestants; and he was especially enjoined “not to meddle in matters of religion.” This wholesome advice it would have been quite impossible for the Earl,

Page 1527

under the guidance of Reingault, Burgrave, and Stephen Perret, to carry out. He protested that he should have liked to treat Papists and Calvinists “with indifference,” but that it had proved impossible; that the Catholics were perpetually plotting with the Spanish faction, and that no towns were safe except those in which Papists had been excluded from office. “They love the Pope above all,” he said, “and the Prince of Parma hath continual intelligence with them.” Nor was it Catholics alone who gave the governor trouble. He was likewise very busy in putting down other denominations that differed from the Calvinists. “Your Majesty will not believe,” he said, “the number of sects that are in most towns; especially Anabaptists, Families of Love, Georgians; and I know not what. The godly and good ministers were molested by them in many places, and ready to give over; and even such diversities grew among magistrates in towns, being caused by some sedition-sowers here.” It is however, satisfactory to reflect that the anabaptists and families of love, although discouraged and frowned upon, were not burned alive, buried alive, drowned in dungeons, and roasted at slow fires, as had been the case with them and with every other species of Protestants, by thousands and tens of thousands, so long as Charles V. and Philip *ii*. had ruled the territory of that commonwealth. Humanity had acquired something by the war which the Netherlanders had been waging for twenty years, and no man or woman was ever put to death for religious causes after the establishment of the republic.

With his hands thus full of business, it was difficult for the Earl to obey the Queen’s command not to meddle in religious matters; for he was not of the stature of William the Silent, and could not comprehend that the great lesson taught by the sixteenth century was that men were not to meddle with men in matters of religion.

But besides his especial nightmare—Mr. Paul Buys—the governor-general had a whole set of incubi in the Norris family. Probably no two persons ever detested each other more cordially than did Leicester and Sir John Norris. Sir John had been commander of the forces in the Netherlands before Leicester’s arrival, and was unquestionably a man of larger experience than the Earl. He had, however, as Walsingham complained, acquired by his services in “countries where neither discipline military nor religion carried any sway,” a very rude and licentious kind of government. “Would to God,” said the secretary, “that, with his value and courage, he carried the mind and reputation of a religious soldier.” But that was past praying for. Sir John was proud, untractable, turbulent, very difficult to manage. He hated Leicester, and was furious with Sir William Pelham, whom Leicester had made marshal of the camp. He complained, not unjustly, that from the first place in the army, which he had occupied in the Netherlands, he had been reduced to the fifth. The governor-general—who

Page 1528

chose to call Sir John the son of his ancient enemy, the Earl of Sussex—often denounced him in good set terms. “His brother Edward is as ill as he,” he said, “but John is right the late Earl of Sussex’ son; he will so dissemble and crouch, and so cunningly carry his doings, as no man living would imagine that there were half the malice or vindictive mind that plainly his words prove to be.” Leicester accused him of constant insubordination, insolence, and malice, complained of being traduced by him everywhere in the Netherlands and in England, and declared that he was followed about by “a pack of lewd audacious fellows,” whom the Earl vowed he would hang, one and all, before he had done with them. He swore openly, in presence of all his camp, that he would hang Sir John likewise; so that both the brothers, who had never been afraid of anything since they had been born into the world, affected to be in danger of their lives.

The Norrises were on bad terms with many officers—with Sir William Pelham of course, with “old Reade,” Lord North, Roger Williams, Hohenlo, Essex, and other nobles—but with Sir Philip Sidney, the gentle and chivalrous, they were friends. Sir John had quarrelled in former times—according to Leicester—with Hohenlo and even with the “good and brave” La None, of the iron arm; “for his pride,” said the Earl, “was the spirit of the devil.” The governor complained every day of his malignity, and vowed that he “neither regarded the cause of God, nor of his prince, nor country.”

He consorted chiefly with Sir Thomas Cecil, governor of Brill, son of Lord Burghley, and therefore no friend to Leicester; but the Earl protested that “Master Thomas should bear small rule,” so long as he was himself governor-general. “Now I have Pelham and Stanley, we shall do well enough,” he said, “though my young master would countenance him. I will be master while I remain here, will they, nill they.”

Edward Norris, brother of Sir John, gave the governor almost as much trouble as he; but the treasurer Norris, uncle to them both, was, if possible, more odious to him than all. He was—if half Leicester’s accusations are to be believed—a most infamous peculator. One-third of the money sent by the Queen for the soldiers stuck in his fingers. He paid them their wretched four-pence a-day in depreciated coin, so that for their “naughty money they could get but naughty ware.” Never was such “fleecing of poor soldiers,” said Leicester.

On the other hand, Sir John maintained that his uncle’s accounts were always ready for examination, and earnestly begged the home-government not to condemn that functionary without a hearing. For himself, he complained that he was uniformly kept in the background, left in ignorance of important enterprises, and sent on difficult duty with inadequate forces. It was believed that Leicester’s course was inspired by envy, lest any military triumph that might be gained should redound to the glory of Sir John, one of the first commanders of the age, rather than to that of the governor-general. He was

perpetually thwarted, crossed, calumniated, subjected to coarse and indecent insults, even from such brave men as Lord North and Roger Williams, and in the very presence of the commander-in-chief, so that his talents were of no avail, and he was most anxious to be gone from the country.

Page 1529

Thus with the tremendous opposition formed to his government in the States-General, the incessant bickerings with the Norrises, the peculations of the treasurer, the secret negotiations with Spain, and the impossibility of obtaining money from home for himself or for his starving little army, the Earl was in anything but a comfortable position. He was severely censured in England; but he doubted, with much reason, whether there were many who would take his office, and spend twenty thousand pounds sterling out of their own pockets, as he had done. The Earl was generous and brave as man could be, full of wit, quick of apprehension; but inordinately vain, arrogant, and withal easily led by designing persons. He stood up manfully for the cause in which he was embarked, and was most strenuous in his demands for money. "Personally he cared," he said, "not sixpence for his post; but would give five thousand sixpences, and six thousand shillings beside, to be rid of it;" but it was contrary to his dignity to "stand bucking with the States" for his salary. "Is it reason," he asked, "that I, being sent from so great a prince as our sovereign is, must come to strangers to beg my entertainment: If they are to pay me, why is there no remembrance made of it by her Majesty's letters, or some of the lords?"

The Earl and those around him perpetually and vehemently urged upon the Queen to reconsider her decision, and accept the sovereignty of the Provinces at once. There was no other remedy for the distracted state of the country—no other safeguard for England. The Netherland people anxiously, eagerly desired it. Her Majesty was adored by all the inhabitants, who would gladly hang the fellows called the States. Lord North was of this opinion—so was Cavendish. Leicester had always held it. "Sure I am," he said, "there is but one way for our safety, and that is, that her Majesty may take that upon her which I fear she will not." Thomas Wilkes, who now made his appearance on the scene, held the same language. This distinguished civilian had been sent by the Queen, early in August, to look into the state of Netherland affairs. Leicester having expressly urged the importance of selecting as wise a politician as could be found—-because the best man in England would hardly be found a match for the dullards and drunkards, as it was the fashion there to call the Dutch statesmen—had selected Wilkes. After fulfilling this important special mission, he was immediately afterwards to return to the Netherlands as English member of the state-council, at forty shillings a-day, in the place of "little Hal Killigrew," whom Leicester pronounced a "quicker and stouter fellow" than he had at first taken him for, although he had always thought well of him. The other English counsellor, Dr. Bartholomew Clerk, was to remain, and the Earl declared that he too, whom he had formerly undervalued, and thought to have "little stuff in him," was now "increasing greatly in understanding."

Page 1530

But notwithstanding this intellectual progress, poor Bartholomew, who was no beginner, was most anxious to retire. He was a man of peace, a professor, a doctor of laws, fonder of the learned leisure and the trim gardens of England than of the scenes which now surrounded him. "I beseech your good Lordship to consider," he dismally observed to Burghley, "what a hard case it is for a man that these fifteen years hath had vitam sedentariam, unworthily in a place judicial, always in his long robe, and who, twenty-four years since, was a public reader in the University (and therefore cannot be young), to come now among guns and drums, tumbling up and down, day and night, over waters and banks, dykes and ditches, upon every occasion that falleth out; hearing many insolences with silence, bearing many hard measures with patience—a course most different from my nature, and most unmeet for him that hath ever professed learning."

Wilkes was of sterner stuff. Always ready to follow the camp and to face the guns and drums with equanimity, and endowed beside with keen political insight, he was more competent than most men to unravel the confused skein of Netherland politics. He soon found that the Queen's secret negotiations with Spain, and the general distrust of her intentions in regard to the Provinces, were like to have fatal consequences. Both he and Leicester painted the anxiety of the Netherland people as to the intention of her Majesty in vivid colours.

The Queen could not make up her mind—in the very midst of the Greenwich secret conferences, already described—to accept the Netherland sovereignty. "She gathereth from your letter," wrote Walsingham, "that the only salve for this sore is to make herself proprietary of the country, and to put in such an army as may be able to make head to the enemy. These two things being so contrary to her Majesty's disposition—the one, for that it breedeth a doubt of a perpetual war, the other, for that it requireth an increase of charges—do marvellously distract her, and make her repent that ever she entered into the action."

Upon the great subject of the sovereignty, therefore, she was unable to adopt the resolution so much desired by Leicester and by the people of the Provinces; but she answered the Earl's communications concerning Maurice and Hohenlo, Sir John Norris and the treasurer, in characteristic but affectionate language. And thus she wrote:

"Rob, I am afraid you will suppose, by my wandering writings, that a midsummer's moon hath taken large possession of my brains this month; but you must needs take things as they come in my head, though order be left behind me. When I remember your request to have a discreet and honest man that may carry my mind, and see how all goes there, I have chosen this bearer (Thomas Wilkes), whom you know and have made good trial of. I have fraught him full of my conceipts of those country matters, and imparted what way I mind to take and what is fit for you to

Page 1531

use. I am sure you can credit him, and so I will be short with these few notes. First, that Count Maurice and Count Hollock (Hohenlo) find themselves trusted of you, esteemed of me, and to be carefully regarded, if ever peace should happen, and of that assure them on my word, that yet never deceived any. And for Norris and other captains that voluntarily, without commandment, have many years ventured their lives and won our nation honour and themselves fame, let them not be discouraged by any means, neither by new-come men nor by old trained soldiers elsewhere. If there be fault in using of soldiers, or making of profit by them, let them hear of it without open shame, and doubt not I will well chasten them therefore. It frets me not a little that the poor soldiers that hourly venture life should want their due, that well deserve rather reward; and look, in whom the fault may truly be proved, let them smart therefore. And if the treasurer be found untrue or negligent, according to desert he shall be used. But you know my old wont, that love not to discharge from office without desert. God forbid! I pray you let this bearer know what may be learned herein, and for the treasure I have joined Sir Thomas Shirley to see all this money discharged in due sort, where it needeth and behoveth.

"Now will I end, that do imagine I talk still with you, and therefore loathly say farewell one hundred thousand times; though ever I pray God bless you from all harm, and save you from all foes. With my million and legion of thanks for all your pains and cares,

"As you know ever the same,

"E. R.

"P. S. Let Wilkes see that he is acceptable to you. If anything there be that W. shall desire answer of be such as you would have but me to know, write it to myself. You know I can keep both others' counsel and mine own. Mistrust not that anything you would have kept shall be disclosed by me, for although this bearer ask many things, yet you may answer him such as you shall think meet, and write to me the rest."

Thus, not even her favourite Leicester's misrepresentations could make the Queen forget her ancient friendship for "her own crow;" but meantime the relations between that "bunch of brethren," black Norris and the rest, and Pelham, Hollock, and other high officers in Leicester's army, had grown worse than ever.

One August evening there was a supper-party at Count Hollock's quarters in Gertruydenberg. A military foray into Brabant had just taken place, under the lead of the Count, and of the Lord Marshal, Sir William Pelham. The marshal had requested Lord Willoughby, with his troop of horse and five hundred foot, to join in the enterprise, but, as usual, particular pains had been taken that Sir John Norris should know nothing of the affair. Pelham and Hollock—who was "greatly in love with Mr. Pelham"—had invited

several other gentlemen high in Leicester’s confidence to accompany the expedition; and, among the rest, Sir

Page 1532

Philip Sidney, telling him that he “should see some good service.” Sidney came accordingly, in great haste, from Flushing, bringing along with him Edward Norris—that hot-headed young man, who, according to Leicester, “greatly governed his elder brother”—but they arrived at Gertruydenberg too late. The foray was over, and the party—“having burned a village, and killed some boors”—were on their return. Sidney, not perhaps much regretting the loss of his share in this rather inglorious shooting party, went down to the water-side, accompanied by Captain Norris, to meet Hollock and the other commanders.

As the Count stepped on shore he scowled ominously, and looked very much out of temper.

“What has come to Hollock?” whispered Captain Patton, a Scotchman, to Sidney. “Has he a quarrel with any of the party? Look at his face! He means mischief to somebody.”

But Sidney was equally amazed at the sudden change in the German general’s countenance, and as unable to explain it.

Soon afterwards, the whole party, Hollock, Lewis William of Nassau, Lord Carew, Lord Essex, Lord Willoughby, both the Sidneys, Roger Williams, Pelham, Edward Norris, and the rest, went to the Count’s lodgings, where they supped, and afterwards set themselves seriously to drinking.

Norris soon perceived that he was no welcome guest; for he was not—like Sidney—a stranger to the deep animosity which had long existed between Sir John Norris and Sir William Pelham and his friends. The carouse was a tremendous one, as usually was the case where Hollock was the Amphitryon, and, as the potations grew deeper, an intention became evident on the part of some of the company to behave unhandsomely to Norris.

For a time the young Captain ostentatiously restrained himself, very much after the fashion of those meek individuals who lay their swords on the tavern-table, with “God grant I may have no need of thee!” The custom was then prevalent at banquets for the revellers to pledge each other in rotation, each draining a great cup, and exacting the same feat from his neighbour, who then emptied his goblet as a challenge to his next comrade.

The Lord Marshal took a beaker, and called out to Edward Norris. “I drink to the health of my Lord Norris, and of my lady; your mother.” So saying, he emptied his glass.

The young man did not accept the pledge.

“Your Lordship knows,” he said somewhat sullenly, “that I am not wont to drink deep. Mr. Sidney there can tell you that, for my health’s sake, I have drank no wine these eight days. If your Lordship desires the pleasure of seeing me drunk, I am not of the same mind. I pray you at least to take a smaller glass.”

Sir William insisted on the pledge. Norris then, in no very good humour, emptied his cup to the Earl of Essex.

Essex responded by draining a goblet to Count Hollock.

“A Norris’s father,” said the young Earl; as he pledged the Count, who was already very drunk, and looking blacker than ever.

Page 1533

“An ’orse’s father—an ‘orse’s father!” growled’ Hollock; “I never drink to horses, nor to their fathers either:” and with this wonderful witticism he declined the pledge.

Essex explained that the toast was Lord Norris, father of the Captain; but the Count refused to understand, and held fiercely, and with damnable iteration, to his jest.

The Earl repeated his explanation several times with no better success. Norris meanwhile sat swelling with wrath, but said nothing.

Again the Lord Marshal took the same great glass, and emptied it to the young Captain.

Norris, not knowing exactly what course to take, placed the glass at the side of his plate, and glared grimly at Sir William.

Pelham was furious. Reaching over the table, he shoved the glass towards Norris with an angry gesture.

“Take your glass, Captain Norris,” he cried; “and if you have a mind to jest, seek other companions. I am not to be trifled with; therefore, I say, pledge me at once.”

“Your Lordship shall not force me to drink more wine than I list,” returned the other. “It is your pleasure to take advantage of your military rank. Were we both at home, you would be glad to be my companion.”

Norris was hard beset, and although his language was studiously moderate, it was not surprising that his manner should be somewhat insolent. The veteran Lord Marshal, on the other hand, had distinguished himself on many battle-fields, but his deportment at this banqueting-table was not much to his credit. He paused a moment, and Norris, too, held his peace, thinking that his enemy would desist.

It was but for a moment.

“Captain Norris,” cried Pelham, “I bid you pledge me without more ado. Neither you nor your best friends shall use me as you list. I am better born than you and your brother, the colonel-general, and the whole of you.”

“I warn you to say nothing disrespectful against my brother,” replied the Captain. “As for yourself, I know how to respect your age and superior rank.”

“Drink, drink, drink!” roared the old Marshal. “I tell you I am better born than the best of you. I have advanced you all too, and you know it; therefore drink to me.”

Sir William was as logical as men in their cups are prone to be.

“Indeed, you have behaved well to my brother Thomas,” answered Norris, suddenly becoming very courteous, “and for this I have ever loved your Lordship, and would, do you any service.”

“Well, then,” said the Marshal, becoming tender in his turn, “forget what hath past this night, and do as you would have done before.”

“Very well said, indeed!” cried Sir Philip Sidney, trying to help the natter into the smoother channel towards which it was tending.

Norris, seeing that the eyes of the whole company were upon them; took the glass accordingly, and rose to his feet.

“My Lord Marshal,” he said, “you have done me more wrong this night than you can easily make satisfaction for. But I am unwilling that any trouble or offence should grow through me. Therefore once more I pledge you.”

Page 1534

He raised the cup to his lips. At that instant Hollock, to whom nothing had been said, and who had spoken no word since his happy remark about the horse's father, suddenly indulged in a more practical jest; and seizing the heavy gilt cover of a silver vase, hurled it at the head of Norris. It struck him full on the forehead, cutting him to the bone. The Captain, stunned for a moment, fell back in his chair, with the blood running down his eyes and face. The Count, always a man of few words, but prompt in action, now drew his dagger, and strode forward, with the intention of despatching him upon the spot. Sir Philip Sidney threw his arms around Hollock, however, and, with the assistance of others in the company, succeeded in dragging him from the room. The affair was over in a few seconds.

Norris, coming back to consciousness, sat for a moment as one amazed, rubbing the blood out of his eyes; then rose from the table to seek his adversary; but he was gone.

Soon afterwards he went to his lodgings. The next morning he was advised to leave the town as speedily as possible; for as it was under the government of Hollock, and filled with his soldiers, he was warned that his life would not be safe there an hour. Accordingly he went to his boat, accompanied only by his man and his page, and so departed with his broken head, breathing vengeance against Hollock, Pelham, Leicester, and the whole crew, by whom he had been thus abused.

The next evening there was another tremendous carouse at the Count's, and, says the reporter of the preceding scene, "they were all on such good terms, that not one of the company had falling band or ruff left about his neck. All were clean torn away, and yet there was no blood drawn."

Edward Norris—so soon as might be afterwards—sent a cartel to the Count, demanding mortal combat with sword and dagger. Sir Philip Sidney bore the message. Sir John Norris, of course warmly and violently espoused the cause of his brother, and was naturally more incensed against the Lord Marshal than ever, for Sir William Pelham was considered the cause of the whole affray. "Even if the quarrel is to be excused by drink," said an eye-witness, "'tis but a slender defence for my Lord to excuse himself by his cups; and often drink doth bewray men's humours and unmask their malice. Certainly the Count Hollock thought to have done a pleasure to the company in killing him."

Nothing could be more ill-timed than this quarrel, or more vexatious to Leicester. The Count—although considering himself excessively injured at being challenged by a simple captain and an untitled gentleman, whom he had attempted to murder—consented to waive his privilege, and grant the meeting.

Leicester interposed, however, to delay, and, if possible, to patch up the affair. They were on the eve of active military operations, and it was most vexatious for the commander-in-chief to see, as he said, "the quarrel with the enemy changed to private

revenge among ourselves." The intended duel did not take place; for various influential personages succeeded in deferring the meeting. Then came the battle of Zutphen.

Page 1535

Sidney fell, and Hollock was dangerously wounded in the attack which was soon afterwards made upon the fort. He was still pressed to afford the promised satisfaction, however, and agreed to do so whenever he should rise from his bed.

Strange to say, the Count considered Leicester, throughout the whole business, to have taken part against him.

Yet there is no doubt whatever that the Earl—who detested the Norrises, and was fonder of Pelham than of any man living—uniformly narrated the story most unjustly, to the discredit of the young Captain. He considered him extremely troublesome, represented him as always quarrelling with some one—with Colonel Morgan, Roger Williams, old Reade, and all the rest—while the Lord Marshal, on the contrary, was depicted as the mildest of men. "This I must say," he observed, "that all present, except my two nephews (the Sidneys), who are not here yet, declare the greatest fault to be in Edward Norris, and that he did most arrogantly use the Marshal."

It is plain, however, that the old Marshal, under the influence of wine, was at least quite as much to blame as the young Captain; and Sir Philip Sidney sufficiently showed his sense of the matter by being the bearer of Edward Norris's cartel. After Sidney's death, Sir John Norris, in his letter of condolence to Walsingham for the death of his illustrious son-in-law, expressed the deeper regret at his loss because Sir Philip's opinion had been that the Norrises were wronged. Hollock had conducted himself like a lunatic, but this he was apt to do whether in his cups or not. He was always for killing some one or another on the slightest provocation, and, while the dog-star of 1586 was raging, it was not his fault if he had not already despatched both Edward Norris and the objectionable "Mr. P. B."

For these energetic demonstrations against Leicester's enemies he considered himself entitled to the Earl's eternal gratitude, and was deeply disgusted at his apparent coldness. The governor was driven almost to despair by these quarrels.

His colonel-general, his lord marshal, his lieutenant-general, were all at daggers drawn. "Would God I were rid of this place!" he exclaimed. "What man living would go to the field and have his officers divided almost into mortal quarrel? One blow but by any of their lackeys brings us altogether by the ears."

It was clear that there was not room enough on the Netherland soil for the Earl of Leicester and the brothers Norris. The queen, while apparently siding with the Earl, intimated to Sir John that she did not disapprove his conduct, that she should probably recall him to England, and that she should send him back to the Provinces after the Earl had left that country.

Such had been the position of the governor-general towards the Queen, towards the States-General, and towards his own countrymen, during the year 1586.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Page 1536

Are wont to hang their piety on the bell-rope
Arminianism
As logical as men in their cups are prone to be
Tolerating religious liberty had never entered his mind

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 50, 1586

CHAPTER. XI

Drake in the Netherlands—Good Results of his Visit—The Babington Conspiracy—Leicester decides to visit England—Exchange of parting Compliments.

Late in the autumn of the same year an Englishman arrived in the Netherlands, bearer of despatches from the Queen. He had been entrusted by her Majesty with a special mission to the States-General, and he had soon an interview with that assembly at the Hague.

He was a small man, apparently forty-five years of age, of a fair but somewhat weather-stained complexion, with light-brown, closely-curling hair, an expansive forehead, a clear blue eye, rather commonplace features, a thin, brown, pointed beard, and a slight moustache. Though low of stature, he was broad-chested, with well-knit limbs. His hands, which were small and nervous, were brown and callous with the marks of toil. There was something in his brow and glance not to be mistaken, and which men willingly call master; yet he did not seem, to have sprung of the born magnates of the earth. He wore a heavy gold chain about his neck, and it might be observed that upon the light full sleeves of his slashed doublet the image of a small ship on a terrestrial globe was curiously and many times embroidered.

It was not the first time that he had visited the Netherlands. Thirty years before the man had been apprentice on board a small lugger, which traded between the English coast and the ports of Zeeland. Emerging in early boyhood from his parental mansion—an old boat, turned bottom upwards on a sandy down he had naturally taken to the sea, and his master, dying childless not long afterwards, bequeathed to him the lugger. But in time his spirit, too much confined by coasting in the narrow seas, had taken a bolder flight. He had risked his hard-earned savings in a voyage with the old slave-trader, John Hawkins—whose exertions, in what was then considered an honourable and

useful vocation, had been rewarded by Queen Elizabeth with her special favour, and with a coat of arms, the crest whereof was a negro's head, proper, chained—but the lad's first and last enterprise in this field was unfortunate. Captured by Spaniards, and only escaping with life, he determined to revenge himself on the whole Spanish nation; and this was considered a most legitimate proceeding according to the "sea divinity" in which he, had been schooled. His subsequent expeditions against

Page 1537

the Spanish possessions in the West Indies were eminently successful, and soon the name of Francis Drake rang through the world, and startled Philip in the depths of his Escorial. The first Englishman, and the second of any nation, he then ploughed his memorable “furrow round the earth,” carrying amazement and, destruction to the Spaniards as he sailed, and after three years brought to the Queen treasure enough, as it was asserted, to maintain a war with the Spanish King for seven years, and to pay himself and companions, and the merchant-adventurers who had participated in his enterprise, forty-seven pounds sterling for every pound invested in the voyage. The speculation had been a fortunate one both, for himself and for the kingdom.

The terrible Sea-King was one of the great types of the sixteenth century. The self-helping private adventurer, in his little vessel the ‘Golden Hind,’ one hundred tons burthen, had waged successful war against a mighty empire, and had shown England how to humble Philip. When he again set foot on his native soil he was followed by admiring crowds, and became the favourite hero of romance and ballad; for it was not the ignoble pursuit of gold alone, through toil and peril, which had endeared his name to the nation. The popular instinct recognized that the true means had been found at last for rescuing England and Protestantism from the overshadowing empire of Spain. The Queen visited him in his ’Golden Hind,’ and gave him the honour of knighthood.

The treaty between the United Netherlands and England had been followed by an embargo upon English vessels, persons, and property, in the ports of Spain; and after five years of unwonted repose, the privateersman again set forth with twenty-five small vessels—of which five or six only were armed—under his command, conjoined with that of General Carlisle. This time the voyage was undertaken with full permission and assistance of the Queen who, however, intended to disavow him, if she should find such a step convenient. This was the expedition in which Philip Sidney had desired to take part. The Queen watched its result with intense anxiety, for the fate of her Netherland adventure was thought to be hanging on the issue. “Upon Drake’s voyage, in very truth, dependeth the life and death of the cause, according to man’s judgment,” said Walsingham.

The issue was encouraging, even, if the voyage—as a mercantile speculation—proved not so brilliant as the previous enterprises of Sir Francis had been. He returned in the midsummer of 1586, having captured and brandschatzed St. Domingo and Carthagena; and burned St. Augustine. “A fearful man to the King of Spain is Sir Francis Drake,” said Lord Burghley. Nevertheless, the Queen and the Lord-Treasurer—as we have shown by the secret conferences at Greenwich—had, notwithstanding these successes, expressed a more earnest desire for peace than ever.

A simple, sea-faring Englishman, with half-a-dozen miserable little vessels, had carried terror, into the Spanish possessions all over the earth: but even then the great Queen

had not learned to rely on the valour of her volunteers against her most formidable enemy.

Page 1538

Drake was, however, bent on another enterprise. The preparations for Philip's great fleet had been going steadily forward in Lisbon, Cadiz, and other ports of Spain and Portugal, and, despite assurances to the contrary, there was a growing belief that England was to be invaded. To destroy those ships before the monarch's face, would be, indeed, to "singe his beard." But whose arm was daring enough for such a stroke? Whose but that of the Devonshire skipper who had already accomplished so much?

And so Sir Francis, "a man true to his word, merciful to those under him, and hating nothing so much as idleness," had come to the Netherlands to talk over his project with the States-General, and with the Dutch merchants and sea-captains. His visit was not unfruitful. As a body the assembly did nothing; but they recommended that in every maritime city of Holland and Zeeland one or two ships should be got ready, to participate in all the future enterprises of Sir Francis and his comrades.

The martial spirit of volunteer sailors, and the keen instinct of mercantile speculation, were relied upon—exactly as in England—to furnish men, ships, and money, for these daring and profitable adventures. The foundation of a still more intimate connection between England and Holland was laid, and thenceforth Dutchmen and Englishmen fought side by side, on land and sea, wherever a blow was to be struck in the cause of human freedom against despotic Spain.

The famous Babington conspiracy, discovered by Walsingham's "travail and cost," had come to convince the Queen and her counsellors—if further proof were not superfluous—that her throne and life were both incompatible with Philip's deep designs, and that to keep that monarch out of the Netherlands, was as vital to her as to keep him out of England. "She is forced by this discovery to countenance the cause by all outward means she may," said Walsingham, "for it appeareth unto her most plain, that unless she had entered into the action, she had been utterly undone, and that if she do not prosecute the same she cannot continue." The Secretary had sent Leicester information at an early day of the great secret, begging his friend to "make the letter a heretic after he had read the same," and expressing the opinion that "the matter, if well handled, would break the neck of all dangerous practices during her Majesty's reign."

The tragedy of Mary Stuart—a sad but inevitable portion of the vast drama in which the emancipation of England and Holland, and, through them, of half Christendom, was accomplished—approached its catastrophe; and Leicester could not restrain his anxiety for her immediate execution. He reminded Walsingham that the great seal had been put upon a warrant for her execution for a less crime seventeen years before, on the occasion of the Northumberland and Westmorland rebellion. "For who can warrant these villains from her," he said, "if that person live, or shall live any time? God

Page 1539

forbid! And be you all stout and resolute in this speedy execution, or be condemned of all the world for ever. It is most. certain, if you will have your Majesty safe, it must be done, for justice doth crave it beside policy." His own personal safety was deeply compromised. "Your Lordship and I," wrote Burghley, "were very great motes in the traitors' eyes; for your Lordship there and I here should first, about one time, have been killed. Of your Lordship they thought rather of poisoning than slaying. After us two gone, they purposed her Majesty's death."

But on this great affair of state the Earl was not swayed by such personal considerations. He honestly thought—as did all the statesmen who governed England—that English liberty, the very existence of the English commonwealth, was impossible so long as Mary Stuart lived. Under these circumstances he was not impatient, for a time at least, to leave the Netherlands. His administration had not been very successful. He had been led away by his own vanity, and by the flattery of artful demagogues, but the immense obstacles with which he had to contend in the Queen's wavering policy, and in the rivalry of both English and Dutch politicians have been amply exhibited. That he had been generous, courageous, and zealous, could not be denied; and, on the whole, he had accomplished as much in the field as could have been expected of him with such meagre forces, and so barren an exchequer.

It must be confessed, however, that his leaving the Netherlands at that moment was a most unfortunate step, both for his own reputation and for the security of the Provinces. Party-spirit was running high, and a political revolution was much to be dreaded in so grave a position of affairs, both in England and Holland. The arrangements—and particularly the secret arrangements which he made at his departure—were the most fatal measures of all; but these will be described in the following chapter.

On the 31st October; the Earl announced to the state-council his intention of returning to England, stating, as the cause of this sudden determination, that he had been summoned to attend the parliament then sitting in Westminster. Wilkes, who was of course present, having now succeeded Killigrew as one of the two English members, observed that "the States and council used but slender entreaty to his Excellency for his stay and countenance there among them, whereat his Excellency and we that were of the council for her Majesty did not a little marvel."

Some weeks later, however, upon the 21st November, Leicester summoned Barneveld, and five other of the States General, to discuss the necessary measures for his departure, when those gentlemen remonstrated very earnestly upon the step, pleading the danger and confusion of affairs which must necessarily ensue. The Earl declared that he was not retiring from the country because he was offended, although he had many causes for offence: and he then alluded to the,

Page 1540

Navigation Act, to the establishment council, and spoke of the finance of Burgrave and Reingault, for his employment of which individuals so much obloquy had been heaped upon his, head. Burgrave he pronounced, as usual, a substantial, wise, faithful, religious personage, entitled to fullest confidence; while Reingault—who had been thrown into prison by the States on charges of fraud, peculation, and sedition—he declared to be a great financier, who had promised, on penalty of his head, to bring "great sums into the treasury for carrying on the war, without any burthen to the community." Had he been able to do this, he had certainly claim to be considered the greatest of financiers; but the promised "mountains of gold" were never discovered, and Reingault was now awaiting his trial.

The deputies replied that the concessions upon the Navigation Act had satisfied the country, but that Reingault was a known instrument of the Spaniards, and Burgrave a mischief-making demagogue, who consorted with malignants, and sent slanderous reports concerning the States and the country to her Majesty. They had in consequence felt obliged to write private despatches to envoy Ortel in England, not because they suspected the Earl, but in order to counteract the calumnies of his chief advisers. They had urged the agent to bring the imprisonment of Paul Buys before her Majesty, but for that transaction Leicester boldly disclaimed all responsibility.

It was agreed between the Earl and the deputies that, during his absence, the whole government, civil and military, should devolve upon the state-council, and that Sir John Norris should remain in command of the English forces.

Two days afterwards Leicester, who knew very well that a legation was about to proceed to England, without any previous concurrence on his part, summoned a committee of the States-General, together with Barneveld, into the state-council. Counsellor Wilkes on his behalf then made a speech, in which he observed that more ample communications on the part of the States were to be expected. They had in previous colloquies touched upon comparatively unimportant matters, but he now begged to be informed why these commissioners were proceeding to England, and what was the nature of their instructions. Why did not they formally offer the sovereignty of the Provinces to the Queen without conditions? That step had already been taken by Utrecht.

The deputies conferred apart for a little while, and then replied that the proposition made by Utrecht was notoriously factious, illegal, and altogether futile. Without the sanction of all the United States, of what value was the declaration of Utrecht? Moreover the charter of that province had been recklessly violated, its government overthrown, and its leading citizens banished. The action of the Province under such circumstances was not deserving of comment; but should it appear that her Majesty

was desirous of assuming the sovereignty of the Provinces upon reasonable conditions, the States of Holland and of Zeeland would not be found backward in the business.

Page 1541

Leicester proposed that Prince Maurice of Nassau should go with him to England, as nominal chief of the embassy, and some of the deputies favoured the suggestion. It was however, vigorously and successfully opposed by Barneveld, who urged that to leave the country without a head in such a dangerous position of affairs, would be an act of madness. Leicester was much annoyed when informed of this decision. He was suspected of a design, during his absence, of converting Maurice entirely to his own way of thinking. If unsuccessful, it was believed by the Advocate and by many others that the Earl would cause the young Prince to be detained in England as long as Philip William, his brother, had been kept in Spain. He observed peevishly that he knew how it had all been brought about.

Words, of course, and handsome compliments were exchanged between the Governor and the States-General on his departure. He protested that he had never pursued any private ends during his administration, but had ever sought to promote the good of the country and the glory of the Queen, and that he had spent three hundred thousand florins of his own money in the brief period of his residence there.

The Advocate, on part of the States, assured him that they were all aware that in the friendship of England lay their only chance of salvation, but that united action was the sole means by which that salvation could be effected, and the one which had enabled the late Prince of Orange to maintain a contest unequalled by anything recorded in history. There was also much disquisition on the subject of finance—the Advocate observing that the States now raised as much in a month as the Provinces in the time of the Emperor used to levy in a year—and expressed the hope that the Queen would increase her contingent to ten thousand foot, and two thousand horse. He repudiated, in the name of the States-General and his own, the possibility of peace-negotiations; deprecated any allusion to the subject as fatal to their religion, their liberty, their very existence, and equally disastrous to England and to Protestantism, and implored the Earl, therefore, to use all his influence in opposition to any pacific overtures to or from Spain.

On the 24th November, acts were drawn up and signed by the Earl, according to which the supreme government of the United Netherlands was formally committed to the state-council during his absence. Decrees were to be pronounced in the name of his Excellency, and countersigned by Maurice of Nassau.

On the following day, Leicester, being somewhat indisposed, requested a deputation of the States-General to wait upon him in his own house. This was done, and a formal and affectionate farewell was then read to him by his secretary, Mr. Atye. It was responded to in complimentary fashion by Advocate Barneveld, who again took occasion at this parting interview to impress upon the governor the utter impossibility, in his own opinion and that of the other deputies, of reconciling the Provinces with Spain.

Page 1542

Leicester received from the States—as a magnificent parting present—a silver gilt vase "as tall as a man," and then departed for Flushing to take shipping for England.

CHAPTER XII.

Ill-timed Interregnum in the Provinces—Firmness of the English and Dutch People—Factions during Leicester's Government—Democratic Theories of the Leicestriana—Suspicions as to the Earl's Designs—Extreme Views of the Calvinists—Political Ambition of the Church—Antagonism of the Church and States—The States inclined to Tolerance—Desolation of the Obedient Provinces—Pauperism and Famine—Prosperity of the Republic—The Year of Expectation.

It was not unnatural that the Queen should desire the presence of her favourite at that momentous epoch, when the dread question, "aut fer aut feri," had at last demanded its definite solution. It was inevitable, too, that Leicester should feel great anxiety to be upon the spot where the great tragedy, so full of fate to all Christendom, and in which his own fortunes were so closely involved, was to be enacted. But it was most cruel to the Netherlands—whose well-being was nearly as important to Elizabeth as that of her own realm—to plunge them into anarchy at such a moment. Yet this was the necessary result of the sudden retirement of Leicester.

He did not resign his government. He did not bind himself to return. The question of sovereignty was still unsettled, for it was still hoped by a large and influential party, that the English Queen would accept the proposed annexation. It was yet doubtful, whether, during the period of abeyance, the States-General or the States-Provincial, each within their separate sphere, were entitled to supreme authority. Meantime, as if here were not already sufficient elements of dissension and doubt, came a sudden and indefinite interregnum, a provisional, an abnormal, and an impotent government. To the state-council was deputed the executive authority. But the state-council was a creature of the States-General, acting in concert with the governor-general, and having no actual life of its own. It was a board of consultation, not of decision, for it could neither enact its own decrees nor interpose a veto upon the decrees of the governor.

Certainly the selection of Leicester to fill so important a post had not been a very fortunate one; and the enthusiasm which had greeted him, "as if he had been a Messiah," on his arrival, had very rapidly dwindled away, as his personal character became known. The leading politicians of the country had already been aware of the error which they had committed in clothing with almost sovereign powers the delegate of one who had refused the sovereignty. They, were too adroit to neglect the opportunity, which her Majesty's anger offered them, of repairing what they considered their blunder. When at last the quarrel, which looked so much like a lovers' quarrel, between Elizabeth and 'Sweet Robin,' had been appeased to the satisfaction of Robin,

his royal mistress became more angry with the States for circumscribing than she had before been for their exaggeration of his authority. Hence the implacable hatred of Leicester to Paul Buys and Barneveld.

Page 1543

Those two statesmen, for eloquence, learning, readiness, administrative faculty, surpassed by few who have ever wielded the destinies of free commonwealths, were fully equal to the task thrown upon their hands by the progress of events. That task was no slight one, for it was to the leading statesmen of Holland and England, sustained by the indomitable resistance to despotism almost universal in the English and Dutch nations, that the liberty of Europe was entrusted at that, momentous epoch. Whether united under one crown, as the Netherlands ardently desired, or closely allied for aggression and defence, the two peoples were bound indissolubly together. The clouds were rolling up from the fatal south, blacker and more portentous than ever; the artificial equilibrium of forces, by which the fate of France was kept in suspense, was obviously growing every day more uncertain; but the prolonged and awful interval before the tempest should burst over the lands of freedom and Protestantism, gave at least time for the prudent to prepare. The Armada was growing every day in the ports of Spain and Portugal, and Walsingham doubted, as little as did Buys or Barneveld, toward what shores that invasion was to be directed. England was to be conquered in order that the rebellious Netherlands might be reduced; and ‘Mucio’ was to be let slip upon the unhappy Henry *iii*. so soon as it was thought probable that the Bearnese and the Valois had sufficiently exhausted each other. Philip was to reign in Paris, Amsterdam, London, and Edinburgh, without stirring from the Escorial. An excellent programme, had there not been some English gentlemen, some subtle secretaries of state, some Devonshire skippers, some Dutch advocates and merchants, some Zeeland fly-boatsmen, and six million men, women, and children, on the two sides of the North Sea, who had the power of expressing their thoughts rather bluntly than otherwise, in different dialects of old Anglo-Saxon speech.

Certainly it would be unjust and ungracious to disparage the heroism of the great Queen when the hour of danger really came, nor would it be legitimate for us, who can scan that momentous year of expectation, 1587, by the light of subsequent events and of secret contemporaneous record, to censure or even sharply to criticise the royal hankering for peace, when peace had really become impossible. But as we shall have occasion to examine rather closely the secrets of the Spanish, French, English, and Dutch councils, during this epoch, we are likely to find, perhaps, that at least as great a debt is due to the English and Dutch people, in mass, for the preservation of European liberty at that disastrous epoch as to any sovereign, general, or statesman.

Page 1544

For it was in the great waters of the sixteenth century that the nations whose eyes were open, discovered the fountain of perpetual youth, while others, who were blind, passed rapidly onward to decrepitude. England was, in many respects, a despotism so far as regarded governmental forms; and no doubt the Catholics were treated with greater rigour than could be justified even by the perpetual and most dangerous machinations of the seminary priests and their instigators against the throne and life of Elizabeth. The word liberty was never musical in Tudor ears, yet Englishmen had blunt tongues and sharp weapons which rarely rusted for want of use. In the presence of a parliament, and the absence of a standing army, a people accustomed to read the Bible in the vernacular, to handle great questions of religion and government freely, and to bear arms at will, was most formidable to despotism. There was an advance on the olden time. A Francis Drake, a John Hawkins, a Roger Williams, might have been sold, under the Plantagenets, like an ox or an ass. A 'female villain' in the reign of Henry *iii*. could have been purchased for eighteen shillings—hardly the price of a fatted pig, and not one-third the value of an ambling palfrey—and a male villain, such an one as could in Elizabeth's reign circumnavigate the globe in his own ship, or take imperial field-marshals by the beard, was worth but two or three pounds sterling in the market. Here was progress in three centuries, for the villains were now become admirals and generals in England and Holland, and constituted the main stay of these two little commonwealths, while the commanders who governed the 'invincible' fleets and armies of omnipotent Spain, were all cousins of emperors, or grandees of bluest blood. Perhaps the system of the reformation would not prove the least effective in the impending crisis.

It was most important, then, that these two nations should be united in council, and should stand shoulder to shoulder as their great enemy advanced. But this was precisely what had been rendered almost impossible by the course of events during Leicester's year of administration, and by his sudden but not final retirement at its close. The two great national parties which had gradually been forming, had remained in a fluid state during the presence of the governor-general. During his absence they gradually hardened into the forms which they were destined to retain for centuries. In the history of civil liberty, these incessant contests, these oral and written disquisitions, these sharp concussions of opinion, and the still harder blows, which, unfortunately, were dealt on a few occasions by the combatants upon each other, make the year 1587 a memorable one. The great questions of the origin of government, the balance of dynastic forces, the distribution of powers, were dealt with by the ablest heads, both Dutch and English, that could be employed in the service of the kingdom and republic. It was a war of protocols,

Page 1545

arguments, orations, rejoinders, apostilles, and pamphlets; very wholesome for the cause of free institutions and the intellectual progress of mankind. The reader may perhaps be surprised to see with how much vigour and boldness the grave questions which underlie all polity, were handled so many years before the days of Russell and Sidney, of Montesquieu and Locke, Franklin, Jefferson, Rousseau, and Voltaire; and he may be even more astonished to find exceedingly democratic doctrines propounded, if not believed in, by trained statesmen of the Elizabethan school. He will be also apt to wonder that a more fitting time could not be found for such philosophical debate than the epoch at which both the kingdom and the republic were called upon to strain every sinew against the most formidable and aggressive despotism that the world had known since the fall of the Roman Empire.

The great dividing-line between the two parties, that of Leicester and that of Holland, which controlled the action of the States-General, was the question of sovereignty. After the declaration of independence and the repudiation of Philip, to whom did the sovereignty belong? To the people, said the Leicestrians. To the States-General and the States-Provincial, as legitimate representatives of the people, said the Holland party. Without looking for the moment more closely into this question, which we shall soon find ably discussed by the most acute reasoners of the time, it is only important at present to make a preliminary reflection. The Earl of Leicester, of all men is the world, would seem to have been precluded by his own action, and by the action of his Queen, from taking ground against the States. It was the States who, by solemn embassy, had offered the sovereignty to Elizabeth. She had not accepted the offer, but she had deliberated on the subject, and certainly she had never expressed a doubt whether or not the offer had been legally made. By the States, too, that governor-generalship had been conferred upon the Earl, which had been so thankfully and eagerly accepted. It was strange, then, that he should deny the existence of the power whence his own authority was derived. If the States were not sovereigns of the Netherlands, he certainly was nothing. He was but general of a few thousand English troops.

The Leicester party, then, proclaimed extreme democratic principles as to the origin of government and the sovereignty of the people. They sought to strengthen and to make almost absolute the executive authority of their chief, on the ground that such was the popular will; and they denounced with great acrimony the insolence of the upstart members of the States, half a dozen traders, hired advocates, churls, tinkers, and the like—as Leicester was fond of designating the men who opposed him—in assuming these airs of sovereignty.

Page 1546

This might, perhaps, be philosophical doctrine, had its supporters not forgotten that there had never been any pretence at an expression of the national will, except through the mouths of the States. The States-General and the States-Provincial, without any usurpation, but as a matter of fact and of great political convenience, had, during fifteen years, exercised the authority which had fallen from Philip's hands. The people hitherto had acquiesced in their action, and certainly there had not yet been any call for a popular convention, or any other device to ascertain the popular will. It was also difficult to imagine what was the exact entity of this abstraction called the "people" by men who expressed such extreme contempt for "merchants, advocates, town-orators, churls, tinkers, and base mechanic men, born not to command but to obey." Who were the people when the educated classes and the working classes were thus carefully eliminated? Hardly the simple peasantry—the boors—who tilled the soil. At that day the agricultural labourers less than all others dreamed of popular sovereignty, and more than all others submitted to the mild authority of the States. According to the theory of the Netherland constitutions, they were supposed—and they had themselves not yet discovered the fallacies to which such doctrines could lead—to be represented by the nobles and country-squires who maintained in the States of each Province the general farming interests of the republic. Moreover, the number of agricultural peasants was comparatively small. The lower classes were rather accustomed to plough the sea than the land, and their harvests were reaped from that element, which to Hollanders and Zeelanders was less capricious than the solid earth. Almost every inhabitant of those sea-born territories was, in one sense or another, a mariner; for every highway was a canal; the soil was percolated by rivers and estuaries, pools and meres; the fisheries were the nurseries in which still more daring navigators rapidly learned their trade, and every child took naturally to the ocean as to its legitimate home.

The "people," therefore, thus enthroned by the Leicestrians over all the inhabitants of the country, appeared to many eyes rather a misty abstraction, and its claim of absolute sovereignty a doctrine almost as fantastic as that of the divine right of kings. The Netherlanders were, on the whole, a law-abiding people, preferring to conduct even a revolution according to precedent, very much attached to ancient usages and traditions, valuing the liberties, as they called them, which they had wrested from what had been superior force, with their own right hands, preferring facts to theories, and feeling competent to deal with tyrants in the concrete rather than to annihilate tyranny in the abstract by a bold and generalizing phraseology. Moreover the opponents of the Leicester party complained that the principal use to which this newly discovered "people" had been applied, was to confer its absolute sovereignty unconditionally upon one man. The people was to be sovereign in order that it might immediately abdicate in favour of the Earl.

Page 1547

Utrecht, the capital of the Leicestrians, had already been deprived of its constitution. The magistracy was, according to law, changed every year. A list of candidates was furnished by the retiring board, an equal number of names was added by the governor of the Province, and from the catalogue thus composed the governor with his council selected the new magistrates for the year. But De Villiers, the governor of the Province, had been made a prisoner by the enemy in the last campaign; Count Moeurs had been appointed provisional stadholder by the States; and, during his temporary absence on public affairs, the Leicestrians had seized upon the government, excluded all the ancient magistrates, banished many leading citizens from the town, and installed an entirely new board, with Gerard Proninck, called Deventer, for chief burgomaster, who was a Brabantine refugee just arrived in the Province, and not eligible to office until after ten years' residence.

It was not unnatural that the Netherlanders, who remembered the scenes of bloodshed and disorder produced by the memorable attempt of the Duke of Anjou to obtain possession of Antwerp and other cities, should be suspicious of Leicester. Anjou, too, had been called to the Provinces by the voluntary action of the States. He too had been hailed as a Messiah and a deliverer. In him too had unlimited confidence been reposed, and he had repaid their affection and their gratitude by a desperate attempt to obtain the control of their chief cities by the armed hand, and thus to constitute himself absolute sovereign of the Netherlands. The inhabitants had, after a bloody contest, averted the intended massacre and the impending tyranny; but it was not astonishing that—so very, few years having elapsed since those tragical events—they should be inclined to scan severely the actions of the man who had already obtained by unconstitutional means the mastery of a most important city, and was supposed to harbour designs upon all the cities.

No, doubt it was a most illiberal and unwise policy for the inhabitants of the independent States to exclude from office the wanderers, for conscience' sake, from the obedient Provinces. They should have been welcomed heart and hand by those who were their brethren in religion and in the love of freedom. Moreover, it was notorious that Hohenlo, lieutenant-general under Maurice of Nassau, was a German, and that by the treaty with England, two foreigners sat in the state council, while the army swarmed with English, Irish, end German officers in high command. Nevertheless, violently to subvert the constitution of a Province, and to place in posts of high responsibility men who were ineligible—some whose characters were suspicious, and some who were known to be dangerous, and to banish large numbers of respectable burghers—was the act of a despot.

Besides their democratic doctrines, the Leicestrians proclaimed and encouraged an exclusive and rigid Calvinism.

Page 1548

It would certainly be unjust and futile to detract from the vast debt which the republic owed to the Geneva Church. The reformation had entered the Netherlands by the Walloon gate. The earliest and most eloquent preachers, the most impassioned converts, the sublimest martyrs, had lived, preached, fought, suffered, and died with the precepts of Calvin in their hearts. The fire which had consumed the last vestige of royal and sacerdotal despotism throughout the independent republic, had been lighted by the hands of Calvinists.

Throughout the blood-stained soil of France, too, the men who were fighting the same great battle as were the Netherlanders against Philip *ii*. and the Inquisition, the valiant cavaliers of Dauphiny and Provence, knelt on the ground, before the battle, smote their iron breasts with their mailed hands, uttered a Calvinistic prayer, sang a psalm of Marot, and then charged upon Guise, or upon Joyeuse, under the white plume of the Bearnese. And it was on the Calvinist weavers and clothiers of Rochelle that the great Prince relied in the hour of danger as much as on his mountain chivalry. In England too, the seeds of liberty, wrapped up in Calvinism and hoarded through many trying years, were at last destined to float over land and sea, and to bear large harvests of temperate freedom for great commonwealths, which were still unborn. Nevertheless there was a growing aversion in many parts of the States for the rigid and intolerant spirit of the reformed religion. There were many men in Holland who had already imbibed the true lesson—the only, one worth learning of the reformation—liberty of thought; but toleration in the eyes of the extreme Calvinistic party was as great a vice as it could be in the estimation of Papists. To a favoured few of other habits of thought, it had come to be regarded as a virtue; but the day was still far distant when men were to scorn the very word toleration as an insult to the dignity of man; as if for any human being or set of human beings, in caste, class, synod, or church, the right could even in imagination be conceded of controlling the consciences of their fellow-creatures.

But it was progress for the sixteenth century that there were individuals, and prominent individuals, who dared to proclaim liberty of conscience for all. William of Orange was a Calvinist, sincere and rigid, but he denounced all oppression of religion, and opened wide the doors of the Commonwealth to Papists, Lutherans, and Anabaptists alike. The Earl of Leicester was a Calvinist, most rigid in tenet, most edifying of conversation, the acknowledged head of the Puritan party of England, but he was intolerant and was influenced only by the most intolerant of his sect. Certainly it would have required great magnanimity upon his part to assume a friendly demeanour towards the Papists. It is easier for us, in more favoured ages, to rise to the heights of philosophical abstraction, than

Page 1549

for a man, placed as was Leicester, in the front rank of a mighty battle, in which the triumph of either religion seemed to require the bodily annihilation of all its adversaries. He believed that the success of a Catholic conspiracy against the life of Elizabeth or of a Spanish invasion of England, would raise Mary to the throne and consign himself to the scaffold. He believed that the subjugation of the independent Netherlands would place the Spaniards instantly in England, and he frequently received information, true or false, of Popish plots that were ever hatching in various parts of the Provinces against the English Queen. It was not surprising, therefore, although it was unwise, that he should incline his ear most seriously to those who counselled severe measures not only against Papists, but against those who were not persecutors of Papists, and that he should allow himself to be guided by adventurers, who wore the mask of religion only that they might plunder the exchequer and rob upon the highway.

Under the administration of this extreme party, therefore, the Papists were maltreated, disfranchised, banished, and plundered. The distribution of the heavy war-taxes, more than two-thirds of which were raised in Holland only, was confided to foreigners, and regulated mainly at Utrecht, where not one-tenth part of the same revenue was collected. This naturally excited the wrath of the merchants and manufacturers of Holland and the other Provinces, who liked not that these hard-earned and lavishly-paid subsidies should be meddled with by any but the cleanest hands.

The clergy, too, arrogated a direct influence in political affairs. Their demonstrations were opposed by the anti-Leicestrians, who cared not to see a Geneva theocracy in the place of the vanished Papacy. They had as little reverence in secular affairs for Calvinistic deacons as for the college of cardinals, and would as soon accept the infallibility of Sixtus V. as that of Herman Modet. The reformed clergy who had dispossessed and confiscated the property of the ancient ecclesiastics who once held a constitutional place in the Estates of Utrecht—although many of those individuals were now married and had embraced the reformed religion who had demolished, and sold at public auction, for 12,300 florins, the time-honoured cathedral where the earliest Christians of the Netherlands had worshipped, and St. Willibrod had ministered, were roundly rebuked, on more than one occasion, by the blunt matters beyond their sphere.

The party of the States-General, as opposed to the Leicester party, was guided by the statesmen of Holland. At a somewhat later period was formed the States-right party, which claimed sovereignty for each Province, and by necessary consequence the hegemony throughout the confederacy, for Holland. At present the doctrine maintained was that the sovereignty forfeited by Philip had naturally devolved upon the States-General. The statesmen of this party repudiated the calumny that it had therefore lapsed into the hands of half a dozen mechanics and men of low degree. The States of each Province were, they maintained, composed of nobles and country-gentlemen, as

representing the agricultural interest, and of deputies from the ‘vroedschappen,’ or municipal governments, of every city and smallest town.

Page 1550

Such men as Adrian Van der Werff, the heroic burgomaster of Leyden during its famous siege, John Van der Does, statesman, orator, soldier, poet, Adolphus Meetkerke, judge, financier, politician, Carl Roorda, Noel de Carom diplomatist of most signal ability, Floris Thin, Paul Buys, and Olden-Barneveld, with many others, who would have done honour to the legislative assemblies and national councils in any country or any age, were constantly returned as members of the different vroedschaps in the commonwealth.

So far from its being true then that half a dozen ignorant mechanics had usurped the sovereignty of the Provinces, after the abjuration of the Spanish King, it may be asserted in general terms, that of the eight hundred thousand inhabitants of Holland at least eight hundred persons were always engaged in the administration of public affairs, that these individuals were perpetually exchanged for others, and that those whose names became most prominent in the politics of the day were remarkable for thorough education, high talents, and eloquence with tongue and pen. It was acknowledged by the leading statesmen of England and France, on repeated occasions throughout the sixteenth century, that the diplomatists and statesmen of the Netherlands were even more than a match for any politicians who were destined to encounter them, and the profound respect which Leicester expressed for these solid statesmen, these “substantial, wise, well-languaged” men, these “big fellows,” so soon as he came in contact with them, and before he began to hate them for outwitting him, has already appeared. They were generally men of the people, born without any of the accidents of fortune; but, the leaders had studied in the common schools, and later in the noble universities of a land where to be learned and eloquent was fast becoming almost as great an honour as to be wealthy or high born.

The executive, the legislative, and the judiciary departments were more carefully and scientifically separated than could perhaps have been expected in that age. The lesser municipal courts, in which city-senators presided, were subordinate to the supreme court of Holland, whose officers were appointed by the stadholders and council; the supplies were in the hands of the States-Provincial, and the supreme administrative authority was confided to a stadholder appointed by the states.

The States-General were constituted of similar materials to those of which the States-Provincial were constructed, and the same individuals were generally prominent in both. They were deputies appointed by the Provincial Estates, were in truth rather more like diplomatic envoys than senators, were generally bound very strictly by instructions, and were often obliged, by the jealousy springing from the States-right principle, to refer to their constituents, on questions when the times demanded a sudden decision, and when the necessary delay was inconvenient and dangerous.

Page 1551

In religious matters, the States-party, to their honour, already leaned to a wide toleration. Not only Catholics were not burned, but they were not banished, and very large numbers remained in the territory, and were quite undisturbed in religious matters, within their own doors. There were even men employed in public affairs who were suspected of papistical tendencies, although their hostility, to Spain and their attachment to their native land could not fairly be disputed. The leaders of the States-party had a rooted aversion to any political influence on the part of the clergy of any denomination whatever. Disposed to be lenient to all forms of worship, they were disinclined to an established church, but still more opposed to allowing church-influence in secular affairs. As a matter of course, political men with such bold views in religious matters were bitterly assailed by their rigid opponents. Barneveld, with his “nil scire tutissima fides,” was denounced as a disguised Catholic or an infidel, and as for Paul Buys, he was a “bolsterer of Papists, an atheist, a devil,” as it has long since been made manifest.

Nevertheless these men believed that they understood the spirit of their country and of the age. In encouragement to an expanding commerce, the elevation and education of the masses, the toleration of all creeds, and a wide distribution of political functions and rights, they looked for the salvation of their nascent republic from destruction, and the maintenance of the true interests of the people. They were still loyal to Queen Elizabeth, and desirous that she should accept the sovereignty of the Provinces. But they were determined that the sovereignty should be a constitutional one, founded upon and limited by the time-honoured laws and traditions of their commonwealth; for they recognised the value of a free republic with an hereditary chief, however anomalous it might in theory appear. They knew that in Utrecht the Leicestrian party were about to offer the Queen the sovereignty of their Province, without conditions, but they were determined that neither Queen Elizabeth nor any other monarch should ever reign in the Netherlands, except under conditions to be very accurately defined and well secured.

Thus, contrasted, then, were the two great parties in the Netherlands, at the conclusion of Leicester’s first year of administration. It may easily be understood that it was not an auspicious moment to leave the country without a chief.

The strength of the States-party lay in Holland, Zeeland, Friesland. The main stay of the democratic or Leicester faction was in the city of Utrecht, but the Earl had many partizans in Gelderland, Friesland, and in Overyssel, the capital of which Province, the wealthy and thriving Deventer, second only in the republic to Amsterdam for commercial and political importance, had been but recently secured for the Provinces by the vigorous measures of Sir William Pelham.

Page 1552

The condition of the republic and of the Spanish Provinces was, at that moment, most signally contrasted. If the effects of despotism and of liberty could ever be exhibited at a single glance, it was certainly only necessary to look for a moment at the picture of the obedient and of the rebel Netherlands.

Since the fall of Antwerp, the desolation of Brabant, Flanders, and of the Walloon territories had become complete. The King had recovered the great commercial capital, but its commerce was gone. The Scheldt, which, till recently, had been the chief mercantile river in the world, had become as barren as if its fountains had suddenly dried up. It was as if it no longer flowed to the ocean, for its mouth was controlled by Flushing. Thus Antwerp was imprisoned and paralyzed. Its docks and basins, where 2500 ships had once been counted, were empty, grass was growing in its streets, its industrious population had vanished, and the Jesuits had returned in swarms. And the same spectacle was presented by Ghent, Bruges, Valenciennes, Tournay, and those other fair cities, which had once been types of vigorous industry and tumultuous life. The sea-coast was in the hands of two rising commercial powers, the great and free commonwealths of the future. Those powers were acting in concert, and commanding the traffic of the world, while the obedient Provinces were excluded from all foreign intercourse and all markets, as the result of their obedience. Commerce, manufactures, agriculture; were dying lingering deaths. The thrifty farms, orchards, and gardens, which had been a proverb and wonder of industry were becoming wildernesses. The demand for their produce by the opulent and thriving cities, which had been the workshops of the world, was gone. Foraging bands of Spanish and Italian mercenaries had succeeded to the famous tramp of the artizans and mechanics, which had often been likened to an army, but these new customers were less profitable to the gardeners and farmers. The clothiers, the fullers, the tapestry-workers, the weavers, the cutlers, had all wandered away, and the cities of Holland, Friesland, and of England, were growing skilful and rich by the lessons and the industry of the exiles to whom they afforded a home. There were villages and small towns in the Spanish Netherlands that had been literally depopulated. Large districts of country had gone to waste, and cane-brakes and squalid morasses usurped the place of yellow harvest-fields. The fog, the wild boar, and the wolf, infested the abandoned homes of the peasantry; children could not walk in safety in the neighbourhood even of the larger cities; wolves littered their young in the deserted farm-houses; two hundred persons, in the winter of 1586-7, were devoured by wild beasts in the outskirts of Ghent. Such of the remaining labourers and artizans as had not been converted into soldiers, found their most profitable employment as brigands, so that the portion of the population spared by war

Page 1553

and emigration was assisting the enemy in preying upon their native country. Brandschatzung, burglary, highway-robbery, and murder, had become the chief branches of industry among the working classes. Nobles and wealthy burghers had been changed to paupers and mendicants. Many a family of ancient lineage, and once of large possessions, could be seen begging their bread, at the dusk of evening, in the streets of great cities, where they had once exercised luxurious hospitality; and they often begged in vain.

For while such was the forlorn aspect of the country—and the portrait, faithfully sketched from many contemporary pictures, has not been exaggerated in any of its dark details—a great famine smote the land with its additional scourge. The whole population, soldiers and brigands, Spaniards and Flemings, beggars and workmen, were in danger of perishing together. Where the want of employment had been so great as to cause a rapid depopulation, where the demand for labour had almost entirely ceased, it was a necessary result, that during the process, prices should be low, even in the presence of foreign soldiery, and despite the inflamed' profits, which such capitalists as remained required, by way not only of profit but insurance, in such troublous times. Accordingly, for the last year or two, the price of rye at Antwerp and Brussels had been one florin for the veertel (three bushels) of one hundred and twenty pounds; that of wheat, about one-third of a florin more. Five pounds of rye, therefore, were worth, one penny sterling, reckoning, as was then usual, two shillings to the florin. A pound weight of wheat was worth about one farthing. Yet this was forty-one years after the discovery of the mines of Potosi (A.D. 1545), and full sixteen years after the epoch; from which is dated that rapid fall in the value of silver, which in the course of seventy years, caused the average price of corn and of all other commodities, to be tripled or even quadrupled. At that very moment the average cost of wheat in England was sixty-four shillings the quarter, or about seven and sixpence sterling the bushel, and in the markets of Holland, which in truth regulated all others, the same prices prevailed. A bushel of wheat in England was equal therefore to eight bushels in Brussels.

Thus the silver mines, which were the Spanish King's property, had produced their effect everywhere more signally than within the obedient Provinces. The South American specie found its way to Philip's coffers, thence to the paymasters of his troops in Flanders, and thence to the commercial centres of Holland and England. Those countries, first to feel and obey the favourable expanding impulse of the age, were moving surely and steadily on before it to greatness. Prices were rising with unexampled rapidity, the precious metals were comparatively a drug, a world-wide commerce, such as had never been dreamed of, had become an every-day concern, the arts and sciences and a most generous culture in famous schools and universities, which had been founded in the midst of tumult and bloodshed, characterized the republic, and the golden age of English poetry, which was to make the Elizabethan era famous through all time, had already begun.

Page 1554

In the Spanish Netherlands the newly-found treasure served to pay the only labourers required in a subjugated and almost deserted country, the pikemen of Spain and Italy, and the reiters of Germany. Prices could not sustain themselves in the face of depopulation. Where there was no security for property, no home-market, no foreign intercourse, industrial pursuits had become almost impossible. The small demand for labour had caused it, as it were, to disappear, altogether. All men had become beggars, brigands, or soldiers. A temporary reaction followed. There were no producers. Suddenly it was discovered that no corn had been planted, and that there was no harvest. A famine was the inevitable result. Prices then rose with most frightful rapidity. The veertel of rye, which in the previous year had been worth one florin at Brussels and Antwerp, rose in the winter of 1586-7 to twenty, twenty-two, and even twenty-four florins; and wheat advanced from one and one-third florin to thirty-two florins the veertel. Other articles were proportionally increased in market-value; but it is worthy of remark that mutton was quoted in the midst of the famine at nine stuyvers (a little more than ninepence sterling) the pound, and beef at fivepence, while a single cod-fish sold for twenty-two florins. Thus wheat was worth sixpence sterling the pound weight (reckoning the veertel of one hundred and twenty pounds at thirty florins), which was a penny more than the price of a pound of beef; while an ordinary fish was equal in value to one hundred and six pounds of beef. No better evidence could be given that the obedient Provinces were relapsing into barbarism, than that the only agricultural industry then practised was to allow what flocks and herds were remaining to graze at will over the ruined farms and gardens, and that their fishermen were excluded from the sea.

The evil cured itself, however, and, before the expiration of another year, prices were again at their previous level. The land was sufficiently cultivated to furnish the necessaries of life for a diminishing population, and the supply of labour was more than enough, for the languishing demand. Wheat was again at tenpence the bushel, and other commodities valued in like proportion, and far below the market-prices in Holland and England.

On the other, hand, the prosperity of the republic was rapidly increasing. Notwithstanding the war, which had beer raging for a terrible quarter of a century without any interruption, population was increasing, property rapidly advancing in value, labour in active demand. Famine was impossible to a state which commanded the ocean. No corn grew in Holland and Zeeland, but their ports were the granary of the world. The fisheries were a mine of wealth almost equal to the famous Potosi, with which the commercial world was then ringing. Their commerce with the Baltic nations was enormous. In one month eight hundred vessels left their havens for the eastern

Page 1555

ports alone. There was also no doubt whatever—and the circumstance was a source of constant complaint and of frequent ineffective legislation—that the rebellious Provinces were driving a most profitable trade with Spain and the Spanish possessions, in spite of their revolutionary war. The mines of Peru and Mexico were as fertile for the Hollanders and Zeelanders as for the Spaniards themselves. The war paid for the war, one hundred large frigates were constantly cruising along the coasts to protect the fast-growing traffic, and an army of twenty thousand foot soldiers and two thousand cavalry were maintained on land. There were more ships and sailors at that moment in Holland and Zeeland than in the whole kingdom of England.

While the sea-ports were thus rapidly increasing in importance, the towns in the interior were advancing as steadily. The woollen manufacture, the tapestry, the embroideries of Gelderland, and Friesland, and Overyssel, were becoming as famous as had been those of Tournay, Ypres, Brussels, and Valenciennes. The emigration from the obedient Provinces and from other countries was very great. It was difficult to obtain lodgings in the principal cities; new houses, new streets, new towns, were rising every day. The single Province of Holland furnished regularly, for war-expenses alone, two millions of florins (two hundred thousand pounds) a year, besides frequent extraordinary grants for the same purpose, yet the burthen imposed upon the vigorous young commonwealth seemed only to make it the more elastic. “The coming generations may see,” says a contemporary historian, “the fortifications erected at that epoch in the cities, the costly and magnificent havens, the docks, the great extension of the cities; for truly the war had become a great benediction to the inhabitants.” Such a prosperous commonwealth as this was not a prize to be lightly thrown away. There is no doubt whatever that a large majority of the inhabitants, and of the States by whom the people were represented, ardently and affectionately desired to be annexed to the English crown. Leicester had become unpopular, but Elizabeth was adored, and there was nothing unreasonable in the desire entertained by the Provinces of retaining their ancient constitutions, and of transferring their allegiance to the English Queen.

But the English Queen could not resolve to take the step. Although the great tragedy which was swiftly approaching its inevitable catastrophe, the execution of the Scottish Queen, was to make peace with Philip impossible—even if it were imaginable before—-Elizabeth, during the year 1587, was earnestly bent on peace. This will be made manifest in subsequent pages, by an examination of the secret correspondence of the court. Her most sagacious statesmen disapproved her course, opposed it, and were often overruled, although never convinced; for her imperious will would have its way.

Page 1556

The States-General loathed the very name of peace with Spain. The people loathed it. All knew that peace with Spain meant the exchange of a thriving prosperous commonwealth, with freedom of religion, constitutional liberty, and self-government, for provincial subjection to the inquisition and to despotism: To dream of any concession from Philip on the religious point was ridiculous. There was a mirror ever held up before their eyes by the obedient Provinces, in which they might see their own image, should, they too return to obedience. And there was never a pretence, on the part of any honest adviser of Queen Elizabeth in the Netherlands, whether Englishman or Hollander, that the idea of peace-negotiation could be tolerated for a moment by States or people. Yet the sum of the Queen's policy, for the year 1587, may be summed up in one word—peace; peace for the Provinces, peace for herself, with their implacable enemy.

In France, during the same year of expectation, we shall see the long prologue to the tragic and memorable 1588 slowly enacting; the same triangular contest between the three Henrys and their partizans still proceeding. We shall see the misguided and wretched Valois lamenting over his victories, and rejoicing over his defeats; forced into hollow alliance with his deadly enemy; arrayed in arms against his only protector and the true champion of the realm; and struggling vainly in the toils of his own mother and his own secretary of state, leagued with his most powerful foes. We shall see 'Mucio,' with one 'hand extended in mock friendship toward the King, and with the other thrust backward to grasp the purse of 300,000 crowns held forth to aid his fellow-conspirator's dark designs against their common victim; and the Bearnese, ever with lance in rest, victorious over the wrong antagonist, foiled of the fruits of victory, proclaiming himself the English Queen's devoted knight, but railing at her parsimony; always in the saddle, always triumphant, always a beggar, always in love, always cheerful, and always confident to outwit the Guises and Philip, Parma and the Pope.

And in Spain we shall have occasion to look over the King's shoulder, as he sits at his study-table, in his most sacred retirement; and we shall find his policy for the year 1587 summed up in two words—invasion of England. Sincerely and ardently as Elizabeth meant peace with Philip, just so sincerely did Philip intend war with England, and the dethronement and destruction of the Queen. To this great design all others were now subservient, and it was mainly on account of this determination that there was sufficient leisure in the republic for the Leicestrians and the States-General to fight out so thoroughly their party-contests.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Page 1557

Acknowledged head of the Puritan party of England (Leicester)
Geneva theocracy in the place of the vanished Papacy
Hankering for peace, when peace had really become impossible
Hating nothing so much as idleness
Mirror ever held up before their eyes by the obedient Provinces
Rigid and intolerant spirit of the reformed religion
Scorn the very word toleration as an insult
The word liberty was never musical in Tudor ears

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 51, 1587

CHAPTER XIII.

Barneveld's Influence in the Provinces—Unpopularity of Leicester intrigues—of his Servants—Gossip of his Secretary— Its mischievous Effects—The Quarrel of Norris and Hollock— The Earl's Participation in the Affair—His increased Animosity to Norris —Seizure of Deventer—Stanley appointed its Governor—York and Stanley—Leicester's secret Instructions—Wilkes remonstrates with Stanley—Stanley's Insolence and Equivocation—Painful Rumours as to him and York—Duplicity of York—Stanley's Banquet at Deventer—He surrenders the City to Tassis—Terms of the Bargain— Feeble Defence of Stanley's Conduct—Subsequent Fate of Stanley and York—Betrayal of Gelder to Parma—These Treasons cast Odium on the English—Miserable Plight of the English Troops—Honesty and Energy of Wilkes—Indignant Discussion in the Assembly.

The government had not been laid down by Leicester on his departure. It had been provisionally delegated, as already mentioned to the state-council. In this body-consisting of eighteen persons—originally appointed by the Earl, on nomination by the States, several members were friendly to the governor, and others were violently opposed to him. The Staten of Holland, by whom the action of the States-General was mainly controlled, were influenced in their action by Buys and Barneveld. Young Maurice of Nassau, nineteen years of age, was stadholder of Holland and Zeeland. A florid complexioned, fair-haired young man, of sanguine-bilious temperament; reserved, quiet, reflective, singularly self-possessed; meriting at that time, more than his father had ever done, the appellation of the taciturn; discreet, sober, studious. "Count Maurice saith but little, but I cannot tell what he thinketh," wrote Leicester's eaves-dropper-in-chiefs. Mathematics, fortification, the science of war—these were his daily pursuits.

“The sapling was to become the tree,” and meantime the youth was preparing for the great destiny which he felt, lay before him. To ponder over the works and the daring conceptions of Stevinus, to build up and to batter the wooden blocks of mimic citadels; to arrange in countless combinations,

Page 1558

great armies of pewter soldiers; these were the occupations of his leisure-hours. Yet he was hardly suspected of bearing within him the germs of the great military commander. “Small desire hath Count Maurice to follow the wars,” said one who fancied himself an acute observer at exactly this epoch. “And whereas it might be supposed that in respect to his birth and place, he would affect the chief military command in these countries, it is found by experience had of his humour, that there is no chance of his entering into competition with the others.” A modest young man, who could bide his time—but who, meanwhile, under the guidance of his elders, was doing his best, both in field and cabinet, to learn the great lessons of the age—he had already enjoyed much solid practical instruction, under such a desperate fighter as Hohenlo, and under so profound a statesman as Barneveld. For at this epoch Olden-Barneveld was the preceptor, almost the political patron of Maurice, and Maurice, the official head of the Holland party, was the declared opponent of the democratic-Calvinist organization. It is not necessary, at this early moment, to foreshadow the changes which time was to bring. Meantime it would be seen, perhaps ere long, whether or no, it would be his humour to follow the wars. As to his prudent and dignified deportment there was little doubt. “Count Maurice behaveth himself very discreetly all this while,” wrote one, who did not love him, to Leicester, who loved him less: “He cometh every day to the council, keeping no company with Count Hollock, nor with any of them all, and never drinks himself full with any of them, as they do every day among themselves.”

Certainly the most profitable intercourse that Maurice could enjoy with Hohenlo was upon the battle-field. In winter-quarters, that hard-fighting, hard-drinking, and most turbulent chieftain, was not the best Mentor for a youth whose destiny pointed him out as the leader of a free commonwealth. After the campaigns were over—if they ever could be over—the Count and other nobles from the same country were too apt to indulge in those mighty potations, which were rather characteristic of their nation and the age.

“Since your Excellency’s departure,” wrote Leicester’s secretary, “there hath been among the Dutch Counts nothing but dancing and drinking, to the grief of all this people; which foresee that there can come no good of it. Specially Count Hollock, who hath been drunk almost a fortnight together.”

Leicester had rendered himself unpopular with the States-General, and with all the leading politicians and generals; yet, at that moment, he had deeply mortgaged his English estates in order to raise funds to expend in the Netherland cause. Thirty thousand pounds sterling—according to his own statement—he was already out of pocket, and, unless the Queen would advance him the means to redeem his property; his broad lands were to be brought to the hammer.

Page 1559

But it was the Queen, not the States-General, who owed the money; for the Earl had advanced these sums as a portion of the royal contingent. Five hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling had been the cost of one year's war during the English governor's administration; and of this sum one hundred and forty thousand had been paid by England. There was a portion of the sum, over and above their monthly levies; for which the States had contracted a debt, and they were extremely desirous to obtain, at that moment, an additional loan of fifty thousand pounds from Elizabeth; a favour which—Elizabeth was very firmly determined not to grant. It was this terror at the expense into which the Netherland war was plunging her, which made the English sovereign so desirous for peace, and filled the anxious mind of Walsingham with the most painful forebodings.

Leicester, in spite of his good qualities—such as they were—had not that most necessary gift for a man in his position, the art of making friends. No man made so many enemies. He was an excellent hater, and few men have been more cordially hated in return. He was imperious, insolent, hot-tempered. He could brook no equal. He had also the fatal defect of enjoying the flattery, of his inferiors in station. Adroit intriguers burned incense to him as a god, and employed him as their tool. And now he had mortally offended Hohenlo, and Buys, and Barneveld, while he hated Sir John Norris with a most passionate hatred. Wilkes, the English representative, was already a special object of his aversion. The unvarnished statements made by the stiff counsellor, of the expense of the past year's administration, and the various errors committed, had inspired Leicester with such ferocious resentment, that the friends of Wilkes trembled for his life.

["It is generally bruited here," wrote Henry Smith to his brother- in-law Wilkes, "of a most heavy displeasure conceived by my Lord of Leicester against you, and it is said to be so great as that he hath protested to be revenged of you; and to procure you the more enemies, it is said he hath revealed to my Lord Treasurer, and Secretary Davison some injurious speeches (which I cannot report) you should have used of them to him at your last being with him. Furthermore some of the said Lord's secretaries have reported here that it were good for you never to return hither, or, if their Lord be appointed to go over again, it will be too hot for you to tarry there. These things thus coming to the ears of your friends have stricken a great fear and grief into the minds of such as love you, lest the wonderful force and authority of this man being bent against you, should do you hurt, while there is none to answer for you." Smith to Wilkes, 26 Jan. 1587. (S. P. Office *Ms*.)]

Cordiality between the governor-general and Count Maurice had become impossible. As for Willoughby and Sir William Pelham, they were both friendly to him, but Willoughby was a magnificent cavalry officer, who detested politics, and cared little for the Netherlands, except as the best battle-field in Europe, and the old marshal of the

camp—the only man that Leicester ever loved—was growing feeble in health, was broken down by debt, and hardly possessed, or wished for, any general influence.

Page 1560

Besides Deventer of Utrecht, then, on whom, the Earl chiefly relied during his, absence, there were none to support him cordially, except two or three members of the state-council. “Madame de Brederode hath sent unto you a kind of rose,” said his intelligencer, “which you have asked for, and beseeches you to command anything she has in her garden, or whatsoever. M. Meetkerke, M. Brederode, and Mr. Dorius, wish your return with all, their hearts. For the rest I cannot tell, and will not swear. But Mr. Barneveld is not your very great friend, whereof I can write no more at this time.”

This certainly was a small proportion out of a council of eighteen, when all the leading politicians of the country were in avowed hostility to the governor. And thus the Earl was, at this most important crisis, to depend upon the subtle and dangerous Deventer, and upon two inferior personages, the “fellow Junius” and a non-descript, whom Hohenlo characterized as a “long lean Englishman, with a little black beard.” This meagre individual however seems to have been of somewhat doubtful nationality. He called himself Otheman, claimed to be a Frenchman, had lived much in England, wrote with great fluency and spirit, both in French and English, but was said, in reality, to be named Robert Dale.

It was not the best policy for the representative of the English Queen to trust to such counsellors at a moment when the elements of strife between Holland and England were actively at work; and when the safety, almost the existence, of the two commonwealths depended upon their acting cordially in concert. “Overyssel, Utrecht, Friesland, and Gelderland, have agreed to renew the offer of sovereignty to her Majesty,” said Leicester. “I shall be able to make a better report of their love and good inclination than I can of Holland.” It was thought very desirable by the English government that this great demonstration should be made once more, whatever might be the ultimate decision of her Majesty upon so momentous a measure. It seemed proper that a solemn embassy should once more proceed to England in order to confer with Elizabeth; but there was much delay in regard to the step, and much indignation, in consequence, on the part of the Earl. The opposition came, of course, from the Barneveld party. “They are in no great haste to offer the sovereignty,” said Wilkes. “First some towns of Holland made bones thereat, and now they say that Zeeland is not resolved.”

The nature and the causes of the opposition offered by Barneveld and the States of Holland have been sufficiently explained. Buys, maddened by his long and unjustifiable imprisonment, had just been released by the express desire of Hohenlo; and that unruly chieftain, who guided the German and Dutch magnates; such as Moeurs and Overstein, and who even much influenced Maurice and his cousin Count Lewis William, was himself governed by Barneveld. It would have been far from impossible

Page 1561

for Leicester, even then, to conciliate the whole party. It was highly desirable that he should do so, for not one of the Provinces where he boasted his strength was quite secure for England. Count Moeurs, a potent and wealthy noble, was governor of Utrecht and Gelderland, and he had already begun to favour the party in Holland which claimed for that Province a legal jurisdiction over the whole ancient episcopate. Under these circumstances common prudence would have suggested that as good an understanding as possible might be kept up with the Dutch and German counts, and that the breach might not be rendered quite irreparable.

Yet, as if there had not been administrative blunders enough committed in one year, the unlucky lean Englishman, with the black beard, who was the Earl's chief representative, contrived—almost before his master's back was turned—to draw upon himself the wrath of all the fine ladies in Holland. That this should be the direful spring of unutterable disasters, social and political, was easy to foretell.

Just before the governor's departure Otheman came to pay his farewell respects, and receive his last commands. He found Leicester seated at chess with Sir Francis Drake.

"I do leave you here, my poor Otheman," said the Earl, "but so soon as I leave you I know very well that nobody will give you a good look."

"Your Excellency was a true prophet," wrote the secretary a few weeks later, "for, my good Lord, I have been in as great danger of my life as ever man was. I have been hunted at Delft from house to house, and then besieged in my lodgings four or five hours, as though I had been the greatest thief, murderer, and traitor in the land."

And why was the unfortunate Otheman thus hunted to his lair? Because he had chosen to indulge in 'scandalum magnatum,' and had thereby excited the frenzy of all the great nobles whom it was most important for the English party to conciliate.

There had been gossip about the Princess of Chimay and one Calvaert, who lived in her house, much against the advice of all her best friends. One day she complained bitterly to Master Otheman of the spiteful ways of the world.

"I protest," said she, "that I am the unhappiest lady upon earth to have my name thus called in question."

So said Otheman, in order to comfort her: "Your Highness is aware that such things are said of all. I am sure I hear every day plenty of speeches about lords and ladies, queens and princesses. You have little cause to trouble yourself for such matters, being known to live honestly, and like a good Christian lady. Your Highness is not the only lady spoken of."

The Princess listened with attention.

“Think of the stories about the Queen of England and my Lord of Leicester!” said Otheman, with infinite tact. “No person is exempted from the tongues of evil, speakers; but virtuous and godly men do put all such foolish matter under their feet. Then there is the Countess of Hoeurs, how much evil talk does one hear about her!”

Page 1562

The Princess seemed still more interested and even excited; and the adroit Otheman having thus, as he imagined, very successfully smoothed away her anger, went off to have a little more harmless gossip about the Princess and the Countess, with Madame de Meetkerke, who had sent Leicester the rose from her garden.

But, no sooner, had he gone, than away went her Highness to Madame de Moeurs, “a marvellous wise and well-spoken gentlewoman and a grave,” and informed her and the Count, with some trifling exaggeration, that the vile Englishman, secretary to the odious Leicester, had just been there, abusing and calumniating the Countess in most lewd and abominable fashion. He had also, she protested, used “very evil speeches of all the ladies in the country.” For her own part the Princess avowed her determination to have him instantly murdered. Count Moeurs was quite of the same mind, and desired nothing better than to be one of his executioners. Accordingly, the next Sunday, when the babbling secretary had gone down to Delft to hear the French sermon, a select party, consisting of Moeurs, Lewis William of Nassau, Count Overstein, and others, set forth for that city, laid violent hands on the culprit, and brought him bodily before Princess Chimay. There, being called upon to explain his innuendos, he fell into much trepidation, and gave the names of several English captains, whom he supposed to be at that time in England. “For if I had denied the whole matter,” said he, “they would have given me the lie, and used me according to their evil mind.” Upon this they relented, and released their prisoner, but, the next day they made another attack upon him, hunted him from house to house, through the whole city of Delft, and at last drove him to earth in his own lodgings, where they kept him besieged several hours. Through the intercession of Wilkes and the authority of the council of state, to which body he succeeded in conveying information of his dangerous predicament, he was, in his own language, “miraculously preserved,” although remaining still in daily danger of his life. “I pray God keep me hereafter from the anger of a woman,” he exclaimed, “quia non est ira supra iram mulieris.”

He was immediately examined before the council, and succeeded in clearing and justifying himself to the satisfaction of his friends. His part was afterwards taken by the councillors, by all the preachers and godly men, and by the university of Leyden. But it was well understood that the blow and the affront had been levelled at the English governor and the English nation.

“All your friends do see,” said Otheman, “that this disgrace is not meant so much to me as to your Excellency; the Dutch Earls having used such speeches unto me, and against all law, custom, and reason, used such violence to me, that your Excellency shall wonder to hear of it.”

Page 1563

Now the Princess Chimay, besides being of honourable character, was a sincere and exemplary member of the Calvinist church, and well inclined to the Leicestrians. She was daughter of Count Meghem, one of the earliest victims of Philip *ii*., in the long tragedy of Netherland independence, and widow of Lancelot Berlaymont. Count Moeurs was governor of Utrecht, and by no means, up to that time, a thorough supporter of the Holland party; but thenceforward he went off most abruptly from the party of England, became hand and glove with Hohenlo, accepted the influence of Barneveld, and did his best to wrest the city of Utrecht from English authority. Such was the effect of the secretary's harmless gossip.

"I thought Count Moeurs and his wife better friends to your Excellency than I do see them to be," said Otheman afterwards. "But he doth now disgrace the English nation many ways in his speeches—saying that they are no soldiers, that they do no good to this country, and that these Englishmen that are at Arnheim have an intent to sell and betray the town to the enemy."

But the disgraceful squabble between Hohenlo and Edward Norris had been more unlucky for Leicester than any other incident during the year, for its result was to turn the hatred of both parties against himself. Yet the Earl of all men, was originally least to blame for the transaction. It has been seen that Sir Philip Sidney had borne Norris's cartel to Hohenlo, very soon after the outrage had been committed. The Count had promised satisfaction, but meantime was desperately wounded in the attack on Fort Zutphen. Leicester afterwards did his best to keep Edward Norris employed in distant places, for he was quite aware that Hohenlo, as lieutenant-general and count of the empire, would consider himself aggrieved at being called to the field by a simple English captain, however deeply he might have injured him. The governor accordingly induced the Queen to recall the young man to England, and invited him—much as he disliked his whole race—to accompany him on his departure for that country.

The Captain then consulted with his brother Sir John, regarding the pending dispute with Hohenlo. His brother advised that the Count should be summoned to keep his promise, but that Lord Leicester's permission should previously be requested.

A week before the governor's departure, accordingly, Edward Norris presented himself one morning in the dining-room, and, finding the Earl reclining on a window-seat, observed to him that "he desired his Lordship's favour towards the discharging of his reputation."

"The Count Hollock is now well," he proceeded, "and is fasting and banqueting in his lodgings, although he does not come abroad."

"And what way will you take?" inquired Leicester, "considering that he keeps his house."

“’Twill be best, I thought,” answered Norris, “to write unto him, to perform his promise he made me to answer me in the field.”

Page 1564

“To whom did he make that promise?” asked the Earl.

“To Sir Philip Sidney,” answered the Captain.

“To my nephew Sidney,” said Leicester, musingly; “very well; do as you think best, and I will do for you what I can.”

And the governor then added many kind expressions concerning the interest he felt in the young man’s reputation. Passing to other matters, Morris then spoke of the great charges he had recently been put to by reason of having exchanged out of the States’ service in order to accept a commission from his Lordship to levy a company of horse. This levy had cost him and his friends three hundred pounds, for which he had not been able to “get one groat.”

“I beseech your Lordship to stand good for me,” said he; “considering the meanest captain in all the country hath as good entertainment as I.”

“I can do but little for you before my departure,” said Leicester; “but at my return I will advise to do more.”

After this amicable conversation Morris thanked his Lordship, took his leave, and straightway wrote his letter to Count Hollock.

That personage, in his answer, expressed astonishment that Norris should summon him, in his “weakness and indisposition;” but agreed to give him the desired meeting; with sword and dagger, so soon as he should be sufficiently recovered. Morris, in reply, acknowledged his courteous promise, and hoped that he might be speedily restored to health.

The state-council, sitting at the Hague, took up the matter at once however, and requested immediate information of the Earl. He accordingly sent for Norris and his brother Sir John, who waited upon him in his bed-chamber, and were requested to set down in writing the reasons which had moved them in the matter. This statement was accordingly furnished, together with a copy of the correspondence. The Earl took the papers, and promised to allow most honourably of it in the Council.

Such is the exact narrative, word for word, as given by Sir John and Edward Norris, in a solemn memorial to the Lords of Her Majesty’s privy council, as well as to the state-council of the United Provinces. A very few days afterwards Leicester departed for England, taking Edward Norris with him.

Count Hohenlo was furious at the indignity, notwithstanding the polite language in which he had accepted the challenge. “’T was a matter punishable with death,” he said, “in all kingdoms and countries, for a simple captain to send such a summons to a man of his station, without consent of the supreme authority. It was plain,” he added, “that the

English governor-general had connived at the affront," for Norris had been living in his family and dining at his table. Nay, more, Lord Leicester had made him a knight at Flushing just before their voyage to England. There seems no good reason to doubt the general veracity of the brothers Norris, although, for the express purpose of screening Leicester, Sir

Page 1565

John represented at the time to Hohenlo and others that the Earl had not been privy to the transaction. It is very certain, however, that so soon as the general indignation of Hohenlo and his partizans began to be directed against Leicester, he at once denied, in passionate and abusive language, having had any knowledge whatever of Norris's intentions. He protested that he learned, for the first time, of the cartel from information furnished to the council of state.

The quarrel between Hohenlo and Norris was afterwards amicably arranged by Lord Buckhurst, during his embassy to the States, at the express desire of the Queen. Hohenlo and Sir John Norris became very good friends, while the enmity between them and Leicester grew more deadly every day. The Earl was frantic with rage whenever he spoke of the transaction, and denounced Sir John Norris as "a fool, liar, and coward" on all occasions, besides overwhelming his brother, Buckhurst, Wilkes, and every other person who took their part, with a torrent of abuse; and it is well known that the Earl was a master of Billingsgate.

"Hollock says that I did procure Edward Norris to send him his cartel," observed Leicester on one occasion, "wherein I protest before the Lord, I was as ignorant as any man in England. His brother John can tell whether I did not send for him to have committed him for it; but that, in very truth, upon the perusing of it" (after it had been sent), "it was very reasonably written, and I did consider also the great wrong offered him by the Count, and so forbore it. I was so careful for the Count's safety after the brawl between him and Norris, that I charged Sir John, if any harm came to the Count's person by any of his or under him, that he should answer it. Therefore, I take the story to be bred in the bosom of some much like a thief or villain, whatsoever he were."

And all this was doubtless true so far as regarded the Earl's original exertions to prevent the consequences of the quarrel, but did not touch the point of the second correspondence preceded by the conversation in the dining-room, eight days before the voyage to England. The affair, in itself of slight importance, would not merit so much comment at this late day had it not been for its endless consequences. The ferocity with which the Earl came to regard every prominent German, Hollander, and Englishman, engaged in the service of the States, sprang very much from the complications of this vulgar brawl. Norris, Hohenlo, Wilkes, Buckhurst, were all denounced to the Queen as calumniators, traitors, and villains; and it may easily be understood how grave and extensive must have been the effects of such vituperation upon the mind of Elizabeth, who, until the last day of his life, doubtless entertained for the Earl the deepest affection of which her nature was susceptible. Hohenlo, with Count Maurice, were the acknowledged chiefs of the anti-English party, and the possibility of cordial cooperation between the countries may be judged of by the entanglement which had thus occurred.

Page 1566

Leicester had always hated Sir John Norris, but he knew that the mother had still much favour with the Queen, and he was therefore the more vehement in his denunciations of the son the more difficulty he found in entirely destroying his character, and the keener jealousy he felt that any other tongue but his should influence her Majesty. “The story of John Norris about the cartel is, by the Lord God, most false,” he exclaimed; “I do beseech you not to see me so dealt withal, but that especially her Majesty may understand these untruths, who perhaps, by the mother’s fair speeches and the son’s smooth words, may take some other conceit of my doings than I deserve.”

He was most resolute to stamp the character of falsehood upon both the brothers, for he was more malignant towards Sir John than towards any man in the world, not even excepting Wilkes. To the Queen, to the Lords of the Privy Council, to Walsingham, to Burghley, he poured forth endless quantities of venom, enough to destroy the characters of a hundred honest men.

“The declaration of the two Norrises for the cartel is most false, as I am a Christian,” he said to Walsingham. “I have a dozen witnesses, as good and some better than they, who will testify that they were present when I misliked the writing of the letter before ever I saw it. And by the allegiance I owe to her Majesty, I never knew of the letter, nor gave consent to it, nor heard of it till it was complained of from Count Hollock. But, as they are false in this, so you will find J. N. as false in his other answers; so that he would be ashamed, but that his old conceit hath made him past shame, I fear. His companions in Ireland, as in these countries, report that Sir John Norris would often say that he was but an ass and a fool, who, if a lie would serve his turn, would spare it. I remember I have heard that the Earl of Sussex would say so; and indeed this gentleman doth imitate him in divers things.”

But a very grave disaster to Holland and England was soon the fruit of the hatred borne by Leicester to Sir John Norris. Immediately after the battle of Zutphen and the investment of that town by the English and Netherlanders, great pains were taken to secure the city of Deventer. This was, after Amsterdam and Antwerp, the most important mercantile place in all the Provinces. It was a large prosperous commercial and manufacturing capital, a member of the Hanseatic League, and the great centre of the internal trade of the Netherlands with the Baltic nations. There was a strong Catholic party in the town, and the magistracy were disposed to side with Parma. It was notorious that provisions and munitions were supplied from thence to the beleaguered Zutphen; and Leicester despatched Sir William Pelham, accordingly, to bring the inhabitants to reason. The stout Marshal made short work of it. Taking Sir William Stanley and the greater part of his regiment with him, he caused them, day

Page 1567

by day, to steal into the town, in small parties of ten and fifteen. No objection was made to this proceeding on the part of the city government. Then Stanley himself arrived in the morning, and the Marshal in the evening, of the 20th of October. Pelham ordered the magistrates to present themselves forthwith at his lodgings, and told them, with grim courtesy, that the Earl of Leicester excused himself from making them a visit, not being able, for grief at the death of Sir Philip Sidney, to come so soon near the scene of his disaster. His Excellency had therefore sent him to require the town to receive an English garrison. "So make up your minds, and delay not," said Pelham; "for I have many important affairs on my hands, and must send word to his Excellency at once. To-morrow morning, at eight o'clock, I shall expect your answer."

Next day, the magistrates were all assembled in the townhouse before six. Stanley had filled the great square with his troops, but he found that the burghers-five thousand of whom constituted the municipal militia—had chained the streets and locked the gates. At seven o'clock Pelham proceeded, to the town-house, and, followed by his train, made his appearance before the magisterial board. Then there was a knocking at the door, and Sir William Stanley entered, having left a strong guard of soldiers at the entrance to the hall.

"I am come for an answer," said the Lord Marshal; "tell me straight." The magistrates hesitated, whispered, and presently one of them slipped away.

"There's one of you gone," cried the Marshal. "Fetch him straight back; or, by the living God, before whom I stand, there is not one of you shall leave this place with life."

So the burgomasters sent for the culprit, who returned.

"Now, tell me," said Pelham, "why you have, this night, chained your streets and kept such strong watch while your friends and defenders were in the town? Do you think we came over here to spend our lives and our goods, and to leave all we have, to be thus used and thus betrayed by you? Nay, you shall find us trusty to our friends, but as politic as yourselves. Now, then; set your hands to this document," he proceeded, as he gave them a new list of magistrates, all selected from stanch Protestants.

"Give over your government to the men here nominated, Straight; dally not!" The burgomasters signed the paper.

"Now," said Pelham, "let one of you go to the watch, discharge the guard, bid them unarm, and go home to their lodgings."

A magistrate departed on the errand.

“Now fetch me the keys of the gate,” said Pelham, “and that straightway, or, before God, you shall die.”

The keys were brought, and handed to the peremptory old Marshal. The old board of magistrates were then clapped into prison, the new ones installed, and Deventer was gained for the English and Protestant party.

Page 1568

There could be no doubt that a city so important and thus fortunately secured was worthy to be well guarded. There could be no doubt either that it would be well to conciliate the rich and influential Papists in the place, who, although attached to the ancient religion, were not necessarily disloyal to the republic; but there could be as little that, under the circumstances of this sudden municipal revolution, it would be important to place a garrison of Protestant soldiers there, under the command of a Protestant officer of known fidelity.

To the astonishment of the whole commonwealth, the Earl appointed Sir William Stanley to be governor of the town, and stationed in it a garrison of twelve hundred wild Irishmen.

Sir William was a cadet of one of the noblest English houses. He was the bravest of the brave. His gallantry at the famous Zutphen fight had attracted admiration, where nearly all had performed wondrous exploits, but he was known to be an ardent Papist and a soldier of fortune, who had fought on various sides, and had even borne arms in the Netherlands under the ferocious Alva. Was it strange that there should be murmurs at the appointment of so dangerous a chief to guard a wavering city which had so recently been secured?

The Irish kernes—and they are described by all contemporaries, English and Flemish, in the same language—were accounted as the wildest and fiercest of barbarians. There was something grotesque, yet appalling, in the pictures painted of these rude, almost naked; brigands, who ate raw flesh, spoke no intelligible language, and ranged about the country, burning, slaying, plundering, a terror to the peasantry and a source of constant embarrassment to the more orderly troops in the service of the republic. “It seemed,” said one who had seen them, “that they belonged not to Christendom, but to Brazil.” Moreover, they were all Papists, and, however much one might be disposed to censure that great curse of the age, religious intolerance—which was almost as flagrant in the councils of Queen Elizabeth as in those of Philip—it was certainly a most fatal policy to place such a garrison, at that critical juncture, in the newly-acquired city. Yet Leicester, who had banished Papists from Utrecht without cause and without trial, now placed most notorious Catholics in Deventer.

Zutphen, which was still besieged by the English and the patriots, was much crippled by the loss of the great fort, the capture of which, mainly through the brilliant valour of Stanley’s brother Edward, has already been related. The possession of Deventer and of this fort gave the control of the whole north-eastern territory to the patriots; but, as if it were not enough to place Deventer in the hands of Sir William Stanley, Leicester thought proper to confide the government of the fort to Roland York. Not a worse choice could be made in the whole army.

Page 1569

York was an adventurer of the most audacious and dissolute character. He was a Londoner by birth, one of those “ruing blades” inveighed against by the governor-general on his first taking command of the forces. A man of desperate courage, a gambler, a professional duellist, a bravo, famous in his time among the “common hacksters and swaggerers” as the first to introduce the custom of foining, or thrusting with the rapier in single combats—whereas before his day it had been customary among the English to fight with sword and shield, and held unmanly to strike below the girdle—he had perpetually changed sides, in the Netherland wars, with the shameless disregard to principle which characterized all his actions. He had been lieutenant to the infamous John Van Imbyze, and had been concerned with him in the notorious attempt to surrender Dendermonde and Ghent to the enemy, which had cost that traitor his head. York had been thrown into prison at Brussels, but there had been some delay about his execution, and the conquest of the city by Parma saved him from the gibbet. He had then taken service under the Spanish commander-in-chief, and had distinguished himself, as usual, by deeds of extraordinary valour, having sprung on board the, burning volcano-ship at the siege of Antwerp. Subsequently returning to England, he had, on Leicester’s appointment, obtained the command of a company in the English contingent, and had been conspicuous on the field of Warnsveld; for the courage which he always displayed under any standard was only equalled by the audacity with which he was ever ready to desert from it. Did it seem credible that the fort of Zutphen should be placed in the hands of Roland York?

Remonstrances were made by the States-General at once. With regard to Stanley, Leicester maintained that he was, in his opinion, the fittest man to take charge of the whole English army, during his absence in England. In answer to a petition made by the States against the appointment of York, “in respect to his perfidious dealings before,” the Earl replied that he would answer for his fidelity as for his own brother; adding peremptorily—“Do you trust me? Then trust York.”

But, besides his other qualifications for high command, Stanley possessed an inestimable one in Leicester’s eyes. He was, or at least had been, an enemy of Sir John Norris. To be this made a Papist pardonable. It was even better than to be a Puritan.

But the Earl did more than to appoint the traitor York and the Papist Stanley to these important posts. On the very day of his departure, and immediately after his final quarrel with Sir John about the Hohenlo cartel, which had renewed all the ancient venom, he signed a secret paper, by which he especially forbade the council of state to interfere with or set aside any appointments to the government of towns or forts, or to revoke any military or naval commissions, without his consent.

Page 1570

Now supreme executive authority had been delegated to the state-council by the Governor-General during his absence. Command in chief over all the English forces, whether in the Queen's pay or the State's pay, had been conferred upon Norris, while command over the Dutch and German troops belonged to Hohenlo; but, by virtue of the Earl's secret paper, Stanley and York were now made independent of all authority. The evil consequences natural to such a step were not slow in displaying themselves.

Stanley at once manifested great insolence towards Norris. That distinguished general was placed in a most painful position. A post of immense responsibility was confided to him. The honour of England's Queen and of England's soldiers was entrusted to his keeping; at a moment full of danger, and in a country where every hour might bring forth some terrible change; yet he knew himself the mark at which the most powerful man in England was directing all his malice, and that the Queen, who was wax in her great favourite's hands, was even then receiving the most fatal impressions as to his character and conduct. "Well I know," said he to Burghley, "that the root of the former malice borne me is not withered, but that I must look for like fruits therefrom as before;" and he implored the Lord-Treasurer, that when his honour and reputation should be called in question, he might be allowed to return to England and clear himself. "For myself," said he, "I have not yet received any commission, although I have attended his Lordship of Leicester to his ship. It is promised to be sent me, and in the meantime I understand that my Lord hath granted separate commissions to Sir William Stanley and Roland York, exempting them from obeying of me. If this be true, 'tis only done to nourish factions, and to interrupt any better course in our doings than before hath been." He earnestly requested to be furnished with a commission directly from her Majesty. "The enemy is reinforcing," he added. "We are very weak, our troops are unpaid these three months, and we are grown odious, to our friends."

Honest Councillor Wilkes, who did his best to conciliate all parties, and to do his duty to England and Holland, to Leicester and to Norris, had the strongest sympathy with Sir John. "Truly, besides the value, wisdom, and many other good parts that are in him," he said, "I have noted wonderful patience and modesty in the man, in bearing many apparent injuries done unto him, which I have known to be countenanced and nourished, contrary to all reason, to disgrace him. Please therefore continue your honourable opinion of him in his absence, whatsoever may be maliciously reported to his disadvantage, for I dare avouch, of my own poor skill, that her Majesty hath not a second subject of his place and quality able to serve in those countries as he . . . . I doubt not God will move her Majesty, in despite of the devil, to respect him as he deserves."

Page 1571

Sir John disclaimed any personal jealousy in regard to Stanley's appointment, but, within a week or two of the Earl's departure, he already felt strong anxiety as to its probable results. "If it prove no hindrance to the service," he said, "it shall nothing trouble me. I desire that my doings may show what I am; neither will I seek, by indirect means to calumniate him or any other, but will let them show themselves."

Early in December he informed the Lord-Treasurer that Stanley's own men were boasting that their master acknowledged no superior authority to his own, and that he had said as much himself to the magistracy of Deventer. The burghers had already complained, through the constituted guardians of their liberties, of his insolence and rapacity, and of the turbulence of his troops, and had appealed to Sir John; but the colonel-general's remonstrances had been received by Sir William with contumely and abuse, and by daunt that he had even a greater commission than any he had yet shown.

"Three sheep, an ox, and a whole hog," were required weekly of the peasants for his table, in a time of great scarcity, and it was impossible to satisfy the rapacious appetites of the Irish kernes. The paymaster-general of the English forces was daily appealed to by Stanley for funds—an application which was certainly not unreasonable, as her Majesty's troops had not received any payment for three months—but there "was not a denier in the treasury," and he was therefore implored to wait. At last the States-General sent him a month's pay for himself and all his troops, although, as he was in the Queen's service, no claim could justly be made upon them.

Wilkes, also, as English member of the state council, faithfully conveyed to the governor-general in England the complaints which came up to all the authorities of the republic, against Sir William Stanley's conduct in Deventer. He had seized the keys of the gates, he kept possession of the towers and fortifications, he had meddled with the civil government, he had infringed all their privileges. Yet this was the board of magistrates, expressly set up by Leicester, with the armed hand, by the agency of Marshal Pelham and this very Colonel Stanley—a board of Calvinist magistrates placed but a few weeks before in power to control a city of Catholic tendencies. And here was a papist commander displaying Leicester's commission in their faces, and making it a warrant for dealing with the town as if it were under martial law, and as if he were an officer of the Duke of Parma. It might easily be judged whether such conduct were likely to win the hearts of Netherlanders to Leicester and to England.

Page 1572

“Albeit, for my own part,” said Wilkes, “I do hold Sir William Stanley to be a wise and a discreet gent., yet when I consider that the magistracy is such as was established by your Lordship, and of the religion, and well affected to her Majesty, and that I see how heavily the matter is conceived of here by the States and council, I do fear that all is not well. The very bruit of this doth begin to draw hatred upon our nation. Were it not that I doubt some dangerous issue of this matter, and that I might be justly charged with negligence, if I should not advertise you beforehand, I would, have forborne to mention this dissension, for the States are about to write to your Lordship and to her Majesty for reformation in this matter.” He added that he had already written earnestly to Sir William, “hoping to persuade him to carry a mild hand over the people.”

Thus wrote Councillor Wilkes, as in duty bound, to Lord Leicester, so early as the 9th December, and the warning voice of Norris had made itself heard in England quite as soon. Certainly the governor-general, having, upon his own responsibility; and prompted, it would seem, by passion more than reason, made this dangerous appointment, was fortunate in receiving timely and frequent notice of its probable results.

And the conscientious Wilkes wrote most earnestly, as he said he had done, to the turbulent Stanley.

“Good Sir William,” said he, “the magistrates and burgesses of Deventer complain to this council, that you have by violence wrested from them the keys of one of their gates, that you assemble your garrison in arms to terrify them, that you have seized one of their forts, that the Irish soldiers do commit many extortions and exactions upon the inhabitants, that you have imprisoned their burgesses, and do many things against their laws and privileges, so that it is feared the best affected, of the inhabitants towards her Majesty will forsake the town. Whether any of these things be true, yourself doth best know, but I do assure you that the apprehension thereof here doth make us and our government hateful. For mine own part, I have always known you for a gentleman of value, wisdom; and judgment, and therefore should hardly believe any such thing. . . . . I earnestly require you to take heed of consequences, and to be careful of the honour of her Majesty and the reputation of our nation. You will consider that the gaining possession of the town grew by them that are now in office, who being of the religion, and well affected to his Excellency’s government, wrought his entry into the same . . . . I know that Lord Leicester is sworn to maintain all the inhabitants of the Provinces in their ancient privileges and customs. I know further that your commission carreeth no authority to warrant you to intermeddle any further than with the government of the soldiers and guard of the town. Well, you may, in your own conceipt, confer some words to authorize you in some larger sort, but, believe me, Sir, they will not warrant you sufficiently to deal any further than I have said, for I have perused a copy of your commission for that purpose. I know the name itself of a governor of a town is odious to this people, and hath been ever since the remembrance of the Spanish government,

and if we, by any lack of foresight, should give the like occasion, we should make ourselves as odious as they are; which God forbid.

Page 1573

“You are to consider that we are not come into these countries for their defence only, but for the defence of her Majesty and our own native country, knowing that the preservation of both dependeth altogether upon the preserving of these. Wherefore I do eftsoons intreat and require you to forbear to intermeddle any further. If there shall follow any dangerous effect of your proceedings, after this my friendly advice, I shall be heartily sorry for your sake, but I shall be able to testify to her Majesty that I have done my duty in admonishing you.”

Thus spake the stiff councillor, earnestly and well, in behalf of England’s honour and the good name of England’s Queen.

But the brave soldier, whose feet were fast sliding into the paths of destruction, replied, in a tone of indignant innocence, more likely to aggravate than to allay suspicion. “Finding,” said Stanley, “that you already threaten, I have gone so far as to scan the terms of my commission, which I doubt not to execute, according to his Excellency’s meaning and mine honour. First, I assure you that I have maintained justice, and that severely; else hardly would the soldiers have been contented with bread and bare cheese.”

He acknowledged possessing himself of the keys of the town, but defended it on the ground of necessity; and of the character of the people, “who thrust out the Spaniards and Almaynes, and afterwards never would obey the Prince and States.” “I would be,” he said, “the sorriest man that lives, if by my negligence the place should be lost. Therefore I thought good to seize the great tower and ports. If I meant evil, I needed no keys, for here is force enough.”

With much effrontery, he then affected to rely for evidence of his courteous and equitable conduct towards the citizens, upon the very magistrates who had been petitioning the States-General, the state-council, and the English Queen, against his violence:

“For my courtesy and humanity,” he said, “I refer me unto the magistrates themselves. But I think they sent rhetoricians, who could, allege of little grief, and speak pitiful, and truly I find your ears have been as pitiful in so timorously condemning me. I assure you that her Majesty hath not a better servant than I nor a more faithful in these parts. This I will prove with my flesh and blood. Although I know there be divers flying reports spread by my enemies, which are come to my ears, I doubt not my virtue and truth will prove them calumniators and men of little. So, good Mr. Wilkes, I pray you, consider gravely, give ear discreetly, and advertise into England soundly. For me, I have been and am your friend, and glad to hear any admonition from one so wise as yourself.”

He then alluded ironically to the “good favour and money” with which he had been so contented of late, that if Mr. Wilkes would discharge him of his promise to Lord Leicester, he would take his leave with all his heart. Captain, officers, and soldiers, had

been living on half a pound of cheese a day. For himself, he had received but one hundred and twenty pounds in five months, and was living at three pounds by the day. “This my wealth will not long hold out,” he observed, “but yet I will never fail of my promise to his Excellency, whatsoever I endure. It is for her Majesty’s service and for the love I bear to him.”

Page 1574

He bitterly complained of the unwillingness of the country-people to furnish vivers, waggons, and other necessaries, for the fort before Zutphen. “Had it not been,” he said, “for the travail extraordinary of myself, and patience of my brother, Yorke, that fort would have been in danger. But, according to his desire and forethought, I furnished that place with cavalry and infantry; for I know the troops there be marvellous weak.”

In reply, Wilkes stated that the complaints had been made “by no rhetorician,” but by letter from the magistrates themselves (on whom he relied so confidently) to the state-council. The councillor added, rather tartly, that since his honest words of defence and of warning, had been “taken in so scoffing a manner,” Sir William might be sure of not being troubled with any more of his letters.

But, a day or two before thus addressing him, he had already enclosed to Leicester very important letters addressed by the council of Gelderland to Count Moeurs, stadholder of the Province, and by him forwarded to the state-council. For there were now very grave rumours concerning the fidelity of “that patient and foreseeing brother York,” whom Stanley had been so generously strengthening in Fort Zutphen. The lieutenant of York, a certain Mr. Zouch, had been seen within the city of Zutphen, in close conference with Colonel Tassis, Spanish governor of the place. Moreover there had been a very frequent exchange of courtesies—by which the horrors of war seemed to be much mitigated—between York on the outside and Tassis within. The English commander sent baskets of venison, wild fowl, and other game, which were rare in the market of a besieged town. The Spanish governor responded with baskets of excellent wine and barrels of beer. A very pleasant state of feeling, perhaps, to contemplate—as an advance in civilization over the not very distant days of the Haarlem and Leyden sieges, when barrels of prisoners’ heads, cut off, a dozen or two at a time, were the social amenities usually exchanged between Spaniards and Dutchmen—but somewhat suspicious to those who had grown grey in this horrible warfare.

The Irish kernes too, were allowed to come to mass within the city, and were received there with as much fraternity by, the Catholic soldiers of Tassis as the want of any common dialect would allow—a proceeding which seemed better perhaps for the salvation of their souls, than—for the advancement of the siege.

The state-council had written concerning these rumours to Roland York, but the patient man had replied in a manner which Wilkes characterized as “unfit to have been given to such as were the executors of the Earl of Leicester’s authority.” The councillor implored the governor-general accordingly to send some speedy direction in this matter, as well to Roland York as to Sir William Stanley; for he explicitly and earnestly warned him, that those personages would pay no heed to the remonstrances of the state-council.

Page 1575

Thus again and again was Leicester—on whose head rested, by his own deliberate act, the whole responsibility—forewarned that some great mischief was impending. There was time enough even then—for it was but the 16th December—to place full powers in the hands of the state-council, of Norris, or of Hohenlo, and secretly and swiftly to secure the suspected persons, and avert the danger. Leicester did nothing. How could he acknowledge his error? How could he manifest confidence in the detested Norris? How appeal to the violent and deeply incensed Hohenlo?

Three weeks more rolled by, and the much-enduring Roland York was still in confidential correspondence with Leicester and Walsingham, although his social intercourse with the Spanish governor of Zutphen continued to be upon the most liberal and agreeable footing. He was not quite satisfied with the general, aspect of the Queen's cause in the Netherlands, and wrote to the Secretary of State in a tone of despondency, and mild expostulation. Walsingham would have been less edified by these communications, had he been aware that York, upon first entering Leicester's service, had immediately opened a correspondence with the Duke of Parma, and had secretly given him to understand that his object was to serve the cause of Spain. This was indeed the fact, as the Duke informed the King, "but then he is such a scatter-brained, reckless dare-devil," said Parma, "that I hardly expected much of him." Thus the astute Sir Francis had been outwitted, by the adventurous Roland, who was perhaps destined also to surpass the anticipations of the Spanish commander-in-chief.

Meantime York informed his English patrons, on the 7th January, that matters were not proceeding so smoothly in the political world as he could wish. He had found "many cross and indirect proceedings," and so, according to Lord Leicester's desire, he sent him a "discourse" on the subject, which he begged Sir Francis to "peruse, add to, or take away from," and then to inclose to the Earl. He hoped he should be forgiven if the style of the production was not quite satisfactory; for, said he, "the place where I am doth too much torment my memory, to call every point to my remembrance."

It must, in truth, have been somewhat a hard task upon his memory, to keep freshly in mind every detail of the parallel correspondence which he was carrying on with the Spanish and with the English government. Even a cool head like Roland's might be forgiven for being occasionally puzzled. "So if there be anything hard to be understood," he observed to Walsingham, "advertise me, and I will make it plainer." Nothing could be more ingenuous. He confessed, however, to being out of pocket. "Please your honour," said he, "I have taken great pains to make a bad place something, and it has cost me all the money I had, and here I can receive nothing but discontentment. I dare not write you all lest you should think it impossible," he added—-and it is quite probable that even Walsingham would have been astonished, had Roland written all. The game playing by York and Stanley was not one to which English gentlemen were much addicted.

Page 1576

“I trust the bearer, Edward Stanley; a discreet, brave gentleman,” he said, “with details.” And the remark proves that the gallant youth who had captured this very Fort Zutphen in, so brilliant a manner was not privy to the designs of his brother and of York; for the object of the “discourse” was to deceive the English government.

“I humbly beseech that you will send for me home,” concluded Roland, “for true as I humbled my mind to please her Majesty, your honour, and the dead, now am I content to humble myself lower to please myself, for now, since his, Excellency’s departure, there is no form of proceeding neither honourably nor honestly.”

Three other weeks passed over, weeks of anxiety and dread throughout the republic. Suspicion grew darker than ever, not only as to York and Stanley, but as to all the English commanders, as to the whole English nation. An Anjou plot, a general massacre, was expected by many, yet there were no definite grounds for such dark anticipations. In vain had painstaking, truth-telling Wilkes summoned Stanley to his duty, and called on Leicester, time after time, to interfere. In vain did Sir John Norris, Sir John Conway, the members of the state-council, and all others who should have had authority, do their utmost to avert a catastrophe. Their hands were all tied by the fatal letter of the 24th November. Most anxiously did all implore the Earl of Leicester to return. Never was a more dangerous moment than this for a country to be left to its fate. Scarcely ever in history was there a more striking exemplification of the need of a man—of an individual—who should embody the powers and wishes, and concentrate in one brain and arm, the whole energy, of a commonwealth. But there was no such man, for the republic had lost its chief when Orange died. There was much wisdom and patriotism now. Olden-Barneveld was competent, and so was Buys, to direct the councils of the republic, and there were few better soldiers than Norris and Hohenlo to lead her armies against Spain. But the supreme authority had been confided to Leicester. He had not perhaps proved himself extraordinarily qualified for his post, but he was the governor-in-chief, and his departure, without resigning his powers, left the commonwealth headless, at a moment when singleness of action was vitally important.

At last, very late in January, one Hugh Overing, a haberdasher from Ludgate Hill, was caught at Rotterdam, on his way to Ireland, with a bundle of letters from Sir William Stanley, and was sent, as a suspicious character, to the state-council at the Hague. On the same day, another Englishman, a small youth, “well-favoured,” rejoicing in a “very little red beard, and in very ragged clothes,” unknown by name; but ascertained to be in the service of Roland York and to have been the bearer of letters to Brussels, also passed through Rotterdam. By connivance of the innkeeper, one Joyce, also an Englishman, he succeeded in making his escape. The information contained in the letters thus intercepted was important, but it came too late, even if then the state-council could have acted without giving mortal offence to Elizabeth and to Leicester.

Page 1577

On the evening of 28th January (N. S.), Sir William Stanley entertained the magistrates of Deventer at a splendid banquet. There was free conversation at table concerning the idle suspicions which had been rife in the Provinces as to his good intentions and the censures which had been cast upon him for the repressive measures which he had thought necessary to adopt for the security of the city. He took that occasion to assure his guests that the Queen of England had not a more loyal subject than himself, nor the Netherlands a more devoted friend. The company expressed themselves fully restored to confidence in his character and purposes, and the burgomasters, having exchanged pledges of faith and friendship with the commandant in flowing goblets, went home comfortably to bed, highly pleased with their noble entertainer and with themselves.

Very late that same night, Stanley placed three hundred of his wild Irish in the Noorenberg tower, a large white structure which commanded the Zutphen gate, and sent bodies of chosen troops to surprise all the burgher-guards at their respective stations. Strong pickets of cavalry were also placed in all the principal thoroughfares of the city. At three o'clock in the following morning he told his officers that he was about to leave Deventer for a few hours, in order to bring in some reinforcements for which he had sent, as he had felt much anxiety for some time past as to the disposition of the burghers. His officers, honest Englishmen, suspecting no evil and having confidence in their chief, saw nothing strange in this proceeding, and Sir William rode deliberately out of Zutphen. After he had been absent an hour or two, the clatter of hoofs and the tramp of infantry was heard without, and presently the commandant returned, followed by a thousand musketeers and three or four hundred troopers. It was still pitch dark; but, dimly lighted by torches, small detachments of the fresh troops picked their way through the black narrow streets, while the main body poured at once upon the Brink, or great square. Here, quietly and swiftly, they were marshalled into order, the cavalry, pikemen, and musketeers, lining all sides of the place, and a chosen band—among whom stood Sir William Stanley, on foot, and an officer of high rank on horseback—occupying the central space immediately in front of the town-house.

The drums then beat, and proclamation went forth through the city that all burghers, without any distinction—municipal guards and all—were to repair forthwith to the city-hall, and deposit their arms. As the inhabitants arose from their slumbers, and sallied forth into the streets to inquire the cause of the disturbance, they soon discovered that they had, in some mysterious manner, been entrapped. Wild Irishmen, with uncouth garb, threatening gesture, and unintelligible jargon, stood gibbering at every corner, instead of the comfortable Flemish faces of the familiar burgher-guard.

Page 1578

The chief burgomaster, sleeping heavily after Sir William's hospitable banquet, aroused himself at last, and sent a militia-captain to inquire the cause of the unseasonable drum-beat and monstrous proclamation. Day was breaking as the trusty captain made his way to the scene of action. The wan light of a cold, drizzly January morning showed him the wide, stately square—with its leafless lime-trees and its tall many storied, gable-ended houses rising dim and spectral through the mist-filled to overflowing with troops, whose uniforms and banners resembled nothing that he remembered in Dutch and English regiments. Fires were lighted at various corners, kettles were boiling, and camp-followers and sutlers were crouching over them, half perished with cold—for it had been raining dismally all night—while burghers, with wives and children, startled from their dreams by the sudden reveillee, stood gaping about, with perplexed faces and despairing gestures. As he approached the town-house—one of those magnificent, many-towered, highly-decorated, municipal palaces of the Netherlands—he found troops all around it; troops guarding the main entrance, troops on the great external staircase leading to the front balcony, and officers, in yellow jerkin and black bandoleer, grouped in the balcony itself.

The Flemish captain stood bewildered, when suddenly the familiar form of Stanley detached itself from the central group and advanced towards him. Taking him by the hand with much urbanity, Sir William led the militia-man through two or three ranks of soldiers, and presented him to the strange officer on horseback.

"Colonel Tassis," said he, "I recommend to you a very particular friend of mine. Let me bespeak your best offices in his behalf."

"Ah God!" cried the honest burgher, "Tassis! Tassis! Then are we indeed most miserably betrayed."

Even the Spanish colonel who was of Flemish origin, was affected by the despair of the Netherlander.

"Let those look to the matter of treachery whom it concerns," said he; "my business here is to serve the King, my master."

"Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's," said Stanley, with piety.

The burgher-captain was then assured that no harm was intended to the city, but that it now belonged to his most Catholic Majesty of Spain—Colonel Stanley, to whom its custody had been entrusted, having freely and deliberately restored it to its lawful owner. He was then bid to go and fetch the burgomasters and magistrates.

Presently they appeared—a dismal group, weeping and woe-begone—the same board of strict Calvinists forcibly placed in office but three months before by Leicester, through the agency of this very Stanley, who had so summarily ejected their popish predecessors, and who only the night before had so handsomely feasted themselves. They came forward, the tears running down their cheeks, crying indeed so piteously that even Stanley began to weep bitterly himself. "I have not done this," he sobbed, "for power or pelf. Not the hope of reward, but the love of God hath moved me."

Page 1579

Presently some of the ex-magistrates made their appearance, and a party of leading citizens went into a private house with Tassis and Stanley to hear statements and explanations—as if any satisfactory ones were possible.

Sir William, still in a melancholy tone, began to make a speech, through an interpreter, and again to protest that he had not been influenced by love of lucre. But as he stammered and grew incoherent as he approached the point, Tassis suddenly interrupted the conference. “Let us look after our soldiers,” said he, “for they have been marching in the foul weather half the night.” So the Spanish troops, who had been, standing patiently to be rained upon after their long march, until the burghers had all deposited their arms in the city-hall, were now billeted on the townspeople. Tassis gave peremptory orders that no injury should be offered to persons or property on pain of death; and, by way of wholesome example, hung several Hibernians the same day who had been detected in plundering the inhabitants.

The citizens were, as usual in such cases, offered the choice between embracing the Catholic religion or going into exile, a certain interval being allowed them to wind up their affairs. They were also required to furnish Stanley and his regiment full pay for the whole period of their service since coming to the Provinces, and to Tassis three months’ wages for his Spaniards in advance. Stanley offered his troops the privilege of remaining with him in the service of Spain, or of taking their departure unmolested. The Irish troops were quite willing to continue under their old chieftain, particularly as it was intimated to them that there was an immediate prospect of a brisk campaign in their native island against the tyrant Elizabeth, under the liberating banners of Philip. And certainly, in an age where religion constituted country, these fervent Catholics could scarcely be censured for taking arms against the sovereign who persecuted their religion and themselves. These honest barbarians had broken no oath, violated no trust, had never pretended sympathy with freedom; or affection for their Queen. They had fought fiercely under the chief who led them into battle—they had robbed and plundered voraciously as opportunity served, and had been occasionally hanged for their exploits; but Deventer and Fort Zutphen had not been confided to their keeping; and it was a pleasant thought to them, that approaching invasion of Ireland. “I will ruin the whole country from Holland to Friesland,” said Stanley to Captain Newton, “and then I will play such a game in Ireland as the Queen has never seen the like all the days of her life.”

Newton had already been solicited by Roland York to take service under Parma, and had indignantly declined. Sir Edmund Carey and his men, four hundred in all, refused, to a man, to take part in the monstrous treason, and were allowed to leave the city. This was the case with all the English officers. Stanley and York were the only gentlemen who on this occasion sullied the honour of England.

Page 1580

Captain Henchman, who had been taken prisoner in a skirmish a few days before the surrender of Deventer, was now brought to that city, and earnestly entreated by Tassis and by Stanley to seize this opportunity of entering the service of Spain.

“You shall have great advancement and preferment,” said Tassis. “His Catholic Majesty has got ready very many ships for Ireland, and Sir William Stanley is to be general of the expedition.”

“And you shall choose your own preferment,” said Stanley, “for I know you to be a brave man.”

“I would rather,” replied Henchman, “serve my prince in loyalty as a beggar, than to be known and reported a rich traitor, with breach of conscience.”

“Continue so,” replied Stanley, unabashed; “for this is the very principle of my own enlargement: for, before, I served the devil, and now I am serving God.”

The offers and the arguments of the Spaniard and the renegade were powerless with the blunt captain, and notwithstanding “divers other traitorous alledgements by Sir William for his most vile facts,” as Henchman expressed it, that officer remained in poverty and captivity until such time as he could be exchanged.

Stanley subsequently attempted in various ways to defend his character. He had a commission from Leicester, he said, to serve whom he chose—as if the governor-general had contemplated his serving Philip *ii*. with that commission; he had a passport to go whither he liked—as if his passport entitled him to take the city of Deventer along with him; he owed no allegiance to the States; he was discharged from his promise to the Earl; he was his own master; he wanted neither money nor preferment; he had been compelled by his conscience and his duty to God to restore the city to its lawful master, and so on, and so on.

But whether he owed the States allegiance or not, it is certain that he had accepted their money to relieve himself and his troops eight days before his treason. That Leicester had discharged him from his promises to such an extent as to justify his surrendering a town committed to his honour for safe keeping, certainly deserved no answer; that his duty to conscience required him to restore the city argued a somewhat tardy awakening of that monitor in the breast of the man who three months before had wrested the place with the armed hand from men suspected of Catholic inclinations; that his first motive however was not the mere love of money, was doubtless true. Attachment to his religion, a desire to atone for his sins against it, the insidious temptings of his evil spirit, York, who was the chief organizer of the conspiracy, and the prospect of gratifying a wild and wicked ambition—these were the springs that moved him. Sums—varying from L30,000 to a pension of 1500 pistolets a year—were mentioned, as the stipulated price of his treason, by Norris, Wilkes, Conway, and others; but the Duke of Parma, in

narrating the whole affair in a private letter to the King, explicitly stated that he had found Stanley “singularly disinterested.”

Page 1581

“The colonel was only actuated by religious motives,” he said, “asking for no reward, except that he might serve in his Majesty’s army thenceforth—and this is worthy to be noted.”

At the same time it appears from this correspondence, that the Duke, recommended, and that the King bestowed, a “merced,” which Stanley did not refuse; and it was very well known that to no persons in, the world was Philip apt to be so generous as to men of high rank, Flemish, Walloon, or English, who deserted the cause of his rebellious subjects to serve under his own banners. Yet, strange to relate, almost at the very moment that Stanley was communicating his fatal act of treason, in order that he might open a high career for his ambition, a most brilliant destiny was about to dawn upon him. The Queen had it in contemplation, in recompense for his distinguished services, and by advice of Leicester, to bestow great honors and titles upon him, and to appoint him Viceroy of Ireland—of that very country which he was now proposing, as an enemy to his sovereign and as the purchased tool of a foreign despot, to invade.

Stanley’s subsequent fate was obscure. A price of 3000 florins was put by the States upon his head and upon that of York. He went to Spain, and afterwards returned to the Provinces. He was even reported to have become, through the judgment of God, a lunatic, although the tale wanted confirmation; and it is certain that at the close of the year he had mustered his regiment under Farnese, prepared to join the Duke in the great invasion of England.

Roland York, who was used to such practices, cheerfully consummated his crime on the same day that witnessed the surrender of Deventer. He rode up to the gates of that city on the morning of the 29th January, inquired quietly whether Tassis was master of the place, and then galloped furiously back the ten miles to his fort. Entering, he called his soldiers together, bade them tear in pieces the colours of England, and follow him into the city of Zutphen. Two companies of States’ troops offered resistance, and attempted to hold the place; but they were overpowered by the English and Irish, assisted by a force of Spaniards, who, by a concerted movement, made their appearance from the town. He received a handsome reward, having far surpassed the Duke of Parma’s expectations, when he made his original offer of service. He died very suddenly, after a great banquet at Deventer, in the course of the sane year, not having succeeded in making his escape into Spain to live at ease on his stipend. It was supposed that he was poisoned; but the charge in those days was a common one, and nobody cared to investigate the subject. His body was subsequently exhumed when Deventer came into the hands of the patriots—and with impotent and contemptible malice hanged upon a gibbet. This was the end of Roland York.

Page 1582

Parma was highly gratified, as may be imagined, at such successful results. “Thus Fort Zutphen,” said he, “about which there have been so many fisticuffs, and Deventer—-which was the real object of the last campaign, and which has cost the English so much blood and money, and is the safety of Groningen and of all those Provinces—is now your Majesty’s. Moreover, the effect of this treason must be to sow great distrust between the English and the rebels, who will henceforth never know in whom they can confide.”

Parma was very right in this conjuncture. Moreover, there was just then a fearful run against the States. The castle of Wauw, within a league of Bergen-op-Zoom, which had been entrusted to one Le Marchand, a Frenchman in the service of the republic, was delivered by him to Parma for 16,000 florins. “’Tis a very important post,” said the Duke, “and the money was well laid out.”

The loss of the city of Gelder, capital of the Province of the same name, took place in the summer. This town belonged to the jurisdiction of Martin Schenk, and was, his chief place of deposit for the large and miscellaneous property acquired by him during his desultory, but most profitable, freebooting career. The Famous partisan was then absent, engaged in a lucrative job in the way of his profession. He had made a contract —in a very-business-like way—with the States, to defend the city of Rheinberg and all the country, round against the Duke of Parma, pledging himself to keep on foot for that purpose an army of 3300 foot and 700 horse. For this extensive and important operation, he was to receive 20,000 florins a month from the general exchequer; and in addition he was to be allowed the brandschatz—the black-mail, that is to say—of the whole country-side, and the taxation upon all vessels going up and down the river before Rheinberg; an ad valorem duty, in short, upon all river-merchandise, assessed and collected in summary fashion. A tariff thus enforced was not likely to be a mild one; and although the States considered that they had got a “good penny-worth” by the job, it was no easy thing to get the better, in a bargain, of the vigilant Martin, who was as thrifty a speculator as he was a desperate fighter. A more accomplished highwayman, artistically and enthusiastically devoted to his pursuit, never lived. Nobody did his work more thoroughly—nobody got himself better paid for his work—and Thomas Wilkes, that excellent man of business, thought the States not likely to make much by their contract. Nevertheless, it was a comfort to know that the work would not be neglected.

Page 1583

Schenk was accordingly absent, jobbing the Rheinberg siege, and in his place one Aristotle Patton, a Scotch colonel in the States' service, was commandant of Gelders. Now the thrifty Scot had an eye to business, too, and was no more troubled with qualms of conscience than Rowland York himself. Moreover, he knew himself to be in great danger of losing his place, for Leicester was no friend to him, and intended to supersede him. Patton had also a decided grudge against Schenk, for that truculent personage had recently administered to him a drubbing, which no doubt he had richly deserved. Accordingly, when; the Duke of Parma made a secret offer to him of 36,000 florins if he would quietly surrender the city entrusted to him, the colonel jumped at so excellent an opportunity of circumventing Leicester, feeding his grudge against Martin, and making a handsome fortune for himself. He knew his trade too well, however, to accept the offer too eagerly, and bargained awhile for better terms, and to such good purpose, that it was agreed he should have not only the 36,000 florins, but all the horses, arms, plate, furniture, and other moveables in the city belonging to Schenk, that he could lay his hands upon. Here were revenge and solid damages for the unforgotten assault and battery—for Schenk's property alone made no inconsiderable fortune—and accordingly the city, towards Midsummer, was surrendered to the Seigneur d'Haultepenne. Moreover, the excellent Patton had another and a loftier motive. He was in love. He had also a rival. The lady of his thoughts was the widow of Pontus de Noyelle, Seigneur de Bours, who had once saved the citadel of Antwerp, and afterwards sold that city and himself. His rival was no other than the great Seigneur de Champagny, brother of Cardinal Granvelle, eminent as soldier, diplomatist, and financier, but now growing old, not in affluent circumstances, and much troubled with the gout. Madame de Bours had, however, accepted his hand, and had fixed the day for the wedding, when the Scotchman, thus suddenly enriched, renewed a previously unsuccessful suit. The widow then, partially keeping her promise, actually celebrated her nuptials on the appointed evening; but, to the surprise of the Provinces, she became not the 'haulte et puissante dame de Champagny,' but Mrs. Aristotle Patton.

For this last treason neither Leicester nor the English were responsible. Patton was not only a Scot, but a follower of Hohenlo, as Leicester loudly protested. Le Merchant was a Frenchman. But Deventer and Zutphen were places of vital importance, and Stanley an Englishman of highest consideration, one who had been deemed worthy of the command in chief in Leicester's absence. Moreover, a cornet in the service of the Earl's nephew, Sir Robert Sidney, had been seen at Zutphen in conference with Tassis; and the horrible suspicion went abroad that even the illustrious name of Sidney was to be polluted also. This fear was fortunately false, although the cornet was unquestionably a traitor, with whom the enemy had been tampering; but the mere thought that Sir Robert Sidney could betray the trust reposed in him was almost enough to make the still unburied corpse of his brother arise from the dead.

Page 1584

Parma was right when he said that all confidence of the Netherlanders in the Englishmen would now be gone, and that the Provinces would begin to doubt their best friends. No fresh treasons followed, but they were expected every day. An organized plot to betray the country was believed in, and a howl of execration swept through the land. The noble deeds of Sidney and Willoughby, and Norris and Pelham, and Roger Williams, the honest and valuable services of Wilkes, the generosity and courage of Leicester, were for a season forgotten. The English were denounced in every city and village of the Netherlands as traitors and miscreants. Respectable English merchants went from hostelry to hostelry, and from town to town, and were refused a lodging for love or money. The nation was put under ban. A most melancholy change from the beginning of the year, when the very men who were now loudest in denunciation and fiercest in hate, had been the warmest friends of Elizabeth, of England, and of Leicester.

At Hohenlo's table the opinion was loudly expressed, even in the presence of Sir Roger Williams, that it was highly improbable, if a man like Stanley, of such high rank in the kingdom of England, of such great connections and large means, could commit such a treason, that he could do so without the knowledge and consent of her Majesty.

Barneveld, in council of state, declared that Leicester, by his restrictive letter of 24th November, had intended to carry the authority over the republic into England, in order to dispose of everything at his pleasure, in conjunction with the English cabinet-council, and that the country had never been so cheated by the French as it had now been by the English, and that their government had become insupportable.

Councillor Carl Roorda maintained at the table of Elector Truchsess that the country had fallen 'de tyrannide in tyrrannidem;' and—if they had spurned the oppression of the Spaniards and the French—that it was now time to, rebel against the English. Barneveld and Buys loudly declared that the Provinces were able to protect themselves without foreign assistance, and that it was very injurious to impress a contrary opinion upon the public mind.

The whole college of the States-General came before the state-council, and demanded the name of the man to whom the Earl's restrictive letter had been delivered—that document by which the governor had dared surreptitiously to annul the authority which publicly he had delegated to that body, and thus to deprive it of the power of preventing anticipated crimes. After much colloquy the name of Brackel was given, and, had not the culprit fortunately been absent, his life might have, been in danger, for rarely had grave statesmen been so thoroughly infuriated.

Page 1585

No language can exaggerate the consequences of this wretched treason. Unfortunately, too; the abject condition to which the English troops had been reduced by the niggardliness of their sovereign was an additional cause of danger. Leicester was gone, and since her favourite was no longer in the Netherlands, the Queen seemed to forget that there was a single Englishman upon that fatal soil. In five months not one penny had been sent to her troops. While the Earl had been there one hundred and forty thousand pounds had been sent in seven or eight months. After his departure not five thousand pounds were sent in one half year.

The English soldiers, who had fought so well in every Flemish battle-field of freedom, had become—such as were left of them—mere famishing half naked vagabonds and marauders. Brave soldiers had been changed by their sovereign into brigands, and now the universal odium which suddenly attached itself to the English name converted them into outcasts. Forlorn and crippled creatures swarmed about the Provinces, but were forbidden to come through the towns, and so wandered about, robbing hen-roosts and pillaging the peasantry. Many deserted to the enemy. Many begged their way to England, and even to the very gates of the palace, and exhibited their wounds and their misery before the eyes of that good Queen Bess who claimed to be the mother of her subjects,—and begged for bread in vain.

The English cavalry, dwindled now to a body of five hundred, starving and mutinous, made a foray into Holland, rather as highwaymen than soldiers. Count Maurice commanded their instant departure, and Hohenlo swore that if the order were not instantly obeyed, he would put himself at the head of his troops and cut every man of them to pieces. A most painful and humiliating condition for brave men who had been fighting the battles of their Queen and of the republic, to behold themselves—through the parsimony of the one and the infuriated sentiment of the other—compelled to starve, to rob, or to be massacred by those whom they had left their homes to defend.

At last, honest Wilkes, ever watchful of his duty, succeeded in borrowing eight hundred pounds sterling for two months, by “pawning his own carcase” as he expressed himself. This gave the troopers about thirty shillings a man, with which relief they became, for a time, contented and well disposed.

Is this picture exaggerated? Is it drawn by pencils hostile to the English nation or the English Queen? It is her own generals and confidential counsellors who have told a story in all its painful details, which has hardly found a place in other chronicles. The parsimony of the great Queen must ever remain a blemish on her character, and it was never more painfully exhibited than towards her brave soldiers in Flanders in the year 1587. Thomas Wilkes, a man of truth, and a man of accounts, had informed Elizabeth that the expenses of one year’s war,

Page 1586

since Leicester had been governor-general, had amounted to exactly five hundred and seventy-nine thousand three hundred and sixty pounds and nineteen shillings, of which sum one hundred and forty-six thousand three hundred and eighty-six pounds and eleven shillings had been spent by her Majesty, and the balance had been paid, or was partly owing by the States. These were not agreeable figures, but the figures of honest accountants rarely flatter, and Wilkes was not one of those financiers who have the wish or the gift to make things pleasant. He had transmitted the accounts just as they had been delivered, certified by the treasurers of the States and by the English paymasters, and the Queen was appalled at the sum-totals. She could never proceed with such a war as that, she said, and she declined a loan of sixty thousand pounds which the States requested, besides stoutly refusing to advance her darling Robin a penny to pay off the mortgages upon two-thirds of his estates, on which the equity of redemption was fast expiring, or to give him the slightest help in furnishing him forth anew for the wars.

Yet not one of her statesmen doubted that these Netherland battles were English battles, almost as much as if the fighting-ground had been the Isle of Wight or the coast of Kent, the charts of which the statesmen and generals of Spain were daily conning.

Wilkes, too, while defending Leicester stoutly behind his back, doing his best, to explain his short-comings, lauding his courage and generosity, and advocating his beloved theory of popular sovereignty with much ingenuity and eloquence, had told him the truth to his face. Although assuring him that if he came back soon, he might rule the States “as a schoolmaster doth his boys,” he did not fail to set before him the disastrous effects of his sudden departure and of his protracted absence; he had painted in darkest colours the results of the Deventer treason, he had unveiled the cabals against his authority, he had repeatedly and vehemently implored his return; he had, informed the Queen, that notwithstanding some errors of, administration, he was much the fittest man to represent her in the Netherlands, and, that he could accomplish, by reason of his experience, more in three months than any other man could do in a year. He bad done his best to reconcile the feuds which existed between him and important personages in the Netherlands, he had been the author of the complimentary letters sent to him in the name of the States-General—to the great satisfaction of the Queen—but he had not given up his friendship with Sir John Norris, because he said “the virtues of the man made him as worthy of love as any one living, and because the more he knew him, the more he had cause to affect and to admire him.”

Page 1587

This was the unpardonable offence, and for this, and for having told the truth about the accounts, Leicester denounced Wilkes to the Queen as a traitor and a hypocrite, and threatened repeatedly to take his life. He had even the meanness to prejudice Burghley against him—by insinuating to the Lord-Treasurer that he too had been maligned by Wilkes—and thus most effectually damaged the character of the plain-spoken councillor with the Queen and many of her advisers; notwithstanding that he plaintively besought her to "allow him to reiterate his sorry song, as doth the cuckoo, that she would please not condemn her poor servant unheard."

Immediate action was taken on the Deventer treason, and on the general relations between the States-General and the English government. Barneveld immediately drew up a severe letter to the Earl of Leicester. On the 2nd February Wilkes came by chance into the assembly of the States-General, with the rest of the councillors, and found Barneveld just demanding the public reading of that document. The letter was read. Wilkes then rose and made a few remarks.

"The letter seems rather sharp upon his Excellency," he observed. "There is not a word in it," answered Barneveld curtly, "that is not perfectly true;" and with this he cut the matter short, and made a long speech upon other matters which were then before the assembly.

Wilkes, very anxious as to the effect of the letter, both upon public feeling in England and upon his own position as English councillor, waited immediately upon Count Maurice, President van der Myle, and upon Villiers the clergyman, and implored their interposition to prevent the transmission of the epistle. They promised to make an effort to delay its despatch or to mitigate its tone. A fortnight afterwards, however, Wilkes learned with dismay, that the document (the leading passages of which will be given hereafter) had been sent to its destination.

Meantime, a consultation of civilians and of the family council of Count Maurice was held, and it was determined that the Count should assume the title of Prince more formally than he had hitherto done, in order that the actual head of the Nassaus might be superior in rank to Leicester or to any man who could be sent from England. Maurice was also appointed by the States, provisionally, governor-general, with Hohenlo for his lieutenant-general. That formidable personage, now fully restored to health, made himself very busy in securing towns and garrisons for the party of Holland, and in cashiering all functionaries suspected of English tendencies. Especially he became most intimate with Count Moeurs, stadholder of Utrecht—the hatred of which individual and his wife towards Leicester and the English nation; springing originally from the unfortunate babble of Otheman, had grown more intense than ever,—-"banquetting and feasting" with him all day long, and concocting a scheme; by which, for certain considerations, the province of Utrecht was to be annexed to Holland under the perpetual stadholderate of Prince Maurice.

Page 1588

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Defect of enjoying the flattery, of his inferiors in station
The sapling was to become the tree

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 52, 1587

CHAPTER XIV.

Leicester in England—Trial of the Queen of Scots—Fearful Perplexity at the English Court—Infatuation and Obstinacy of the Queen—Netherland Envoys in England—-Queen's bitter Invective against them—Amazement of the Envoys—They consult with her chief Councillors—Remarks of Burghley and Davison—Fourth of February Letter from the States—Its severe Language towards Leicester— Painful Position of the Envoys at Court—Queen's Parsimony towards Leicester.

The scene shifts, for a brief interval, to England. Leicester had reached the court late in November. Those "blessed beams," under whose shade he was wont to find so much "refreshment and nutrition," had again fallen with full radiance upon him. "Never since I was born," said he, "did I receive a more gracious welcome."—[Leicester to 'Wilkes, 4 Dec. 1587. (S. P. Office *Ms*)]—Alas, there was not so much benignity for the starving English soldiers, nor for the Provinces, which were fast growing desperate; but although their cause was so intimately connected with the "great cause," which then occupied Elizabeth, almost to the exclusion of other matter, it was, perhaps, not wonderful, although unfortunate, that for a time the Netherlands should be neglected.

The "daughter of debate" had at last brought herself, it was supposed, within the letter of the law, and now began those odious scenes of hypocrisy on the part of Elizabeth, that frightful comedy—more melancholy even than the solemn tragedy which it preceded and followed—which must ever remain the darkest passage in the history of the Queen.

It is unnecessary, in these pages, to make more than a passing allusion to the condemnation and death of the Queen of Scots. Who doubts her participation in the Babington conspiracy? Who doubts that she was the centre of one endless conspiracy by Spain and Rome against the throne and life of Elizabeth? Who doubts that her long imprisonment in England was a violation of all law, all justice, all humanity? Who doubts

that the fineing, whipping, torturing, hanging, embowelling of men, women, and children, guilty of no other crime than adhesion to the Catholic faith, had assisted the Pope and Philip, and their band of English, Scotch, and Irish conspirators, to shake Elizabeth's throne and endanger her life? Who doubts that; had the English sovereign been capable of conceiving the great thought of religious toleration, her reign would have been more glorious than, it was,

Page 1589

the cause of Protestantism and freedom more triumphant, the name of Elizabeth Tudor dearer to human hearts? Who doubts that there were many enlightened and noble spirits among her Protestant subjects who lifted up their voices, over and over again, in parliament and out of it, to denounce that wicked persecution exercised upon their innocent Catholic brethren, which was fast converting loyal Englishmen, against their will, into traitors and conspirators? Yet who doubts that it would have required, at exactly that moment, and in the midst of that crisis; more elevation of soul than could fairly be predicated of any individual, for Elizabeth in 1587 to pardon Mary, or to relax in the severity of her legislation towards English Papists?

Yet, although a display of sublime virtue, such as the world has rarely seen, was not to be expected, it was reasonable to look for honest and royal dealing, from a great sovereign, brought at last face to face with a great event. The “great cause” demanded, a great, straightforward blow. It was obvious, however, that it would be difficult, in the midst of the tragedy and the comedy, for the Netherland business to come fairly before her Majesty. “Touching the Low Country causes,” said Leicester; “very little is done yet, by reason of the continued business we have had about the Queen of Scots’ matters. All the speech I have had with her Majesty hitherto touching those causes hath been but private.”—[Leicester to Wilkes, 4 Des 1586. (S. P. Office *Ms*.)]—Walsingham, longing for retirement, not only on account of his infinite grief for the death of Sir Philip Sidney, “which hath been the cause;” he said, “that I have ever since betaken myself into solitariness, and withdrawn; from public affairs,” but also by reason of the perverseness an difficulty manifested in the gravest affairs by the sovereign he so faithfully served, sent information, that, notwithstanding the arrival of some of the States’ deputies, Leicester was persuading her Majesty to proceed first in the great cause. “Certain principal persons, chosen as committees,” he said, “of both Houses are sent as humble suitors, to her Majesty to desire that she would be pleased to give order for the execution of the Scottish Queen. Her Majesty made answer that she was loath to proceed in so violent a course against the said Queen; as the taking away of her life, and therefore prayed them to think of some other way which might be for her own and their safety. They replied, no other way but her execution. Her Majesty, though she yielded no answer to this their latter reply, is contented to give order that the proclamation be published, and so also it is hoped that she, will be moved by this, their earnest instance to proceed to the thorough ending of the cause.”

Page 1590

And so the cause went slowly on to its thorough ending. And when “no other way” could be thought of but to take Mary’s life, and when “no other way of taking that life could be devised,” at Elizabeth’s suggestion, except by public execution, when none of the gentlemen “of the association,” nor Paulet, nor Drury—how skilfully soever their “pulses had been felt” by Elizabeth’s command—would commit assassination to serve a Queen who was capable of punishing them afterwards for the murder, the great cause came to its inevitable conclusion, and Mary Stuart was executed by command of Elizabeth Tudor. The world may continue to differ as to the necessity of the execution but it has long since pronounced a unanimous verdict as to the respective display of royal dignity by the two Queens upon that great occasion.

During this interval the Netherland matter, almost as vital to England as the execution of Mary, was comparatively neglected. It was not absolutely in abeyance, but the condition of the Queen’s mind coloured every state-affair with its tragic hues. Elizabeth, harassed, anxious, dreaming dreams, and enacting a horrible masquerade, was in the worst possible temper to be approached by the envoys. She was furious with the Netherlanders for having maltreated her favourite. She was still more furious because their war was costing so much money. Her disposition became so uncertain, her temper so ungovernable, as to drive her counsellors to their wit’s ends. Burghley confessed himself “weary of his miserable life,” and protested “that the only desire he had in the world was to be delivered from the ungrateful burthen of service, which her Majesty laid upon him so very heavily.” Walsingham wished himself “well established in Basle.” The Queen set them all together by the ears. She wrangled spitefully over the sum-totals from the Netherlands; she worried Leicester, she scolded Burghley for defending Leicester, and Leicester abused Burghley for taking part against him.

The Lord-Treasurer, overcome with “grief which pierced both his body and his heart,” battled his way—as best he could—through the throng of dangers which beset the path of England in that great crisis. It was most obvious to every statesman in the realm that this was not the time—when the gauntlet had been thrown full in the face of Philip and Sixtus and all Catholicism, by the condemnation of Mary—to leave the Netherland cause “at random,” and these outer bulwarks of her own kingdom insufficiently protected.

“Your Majesty will hear,” wrote Parma to Philip, “of the disastrous, lamentable, and pitiful end of the, poor Queen of Scots. Although for her it will be immortal glory, and she will be placed among the number of the many martyrs whose blood has been shed in the kingdom of England, and be crowned in Heaven with a diadem more precious than the one she wore on earth, nevertheless one cannot repress one’s natural emotions. I believe

Page 1591

firmly that this cruel deed will be the concluding crime of the many which that Englishwoman has committed, and that our Lord will be pleased that she shall at last receive the chastisement which she has these many long years deserved, and which has been reserved till now, for her greater ruin and confusion."—[Parma to Philip *il*, 22 March. 1587. (Arch. de Simancas, *Ms*.)]—And with this, the Duke proceeded to discuss the all important and rapidly-preparing invasion of England. Farnese was not the man to be deceived by the affected reluctance of Elizabeth before Mary's scaffold, although he was soon to show that he was himself a master in the science of grimace. For Elizabeth—more than ever disposed to be friends with Spain and Rome, now that war to the knife was made inevitable—was wistfully regarding that trap of negotiation, against which all her best friends were endeavouring to warn her. She was more ill-natured than ever to the Provinces, she turned her back upon the Warnese, she affronted Henry *iii*. by affecting to believe in the fable of his envoy's complicity in the Stafford conspiracy against her life.

"I pray God to open her eyes," said Walsingham, "to see the evident peril of the course she now holdeth . . . . If it had pleased her to have followed the advice given her touching the French ambassador, our ships had been released . . . . but she has taken a very strange course by writing a very sharp letter unto the French King, which I fear will cause him to give ear to those of the League, and make himself a party with them, seeing so little regard had to him here. Your Lordship may see that our courage doth greatly increase, for that we make no difficulty to fall out with all the world . . . . I never saw her worse affected to the poor King of Navarre, and yet doth she seek in no sort to yield contentment to the French King. If to offend all the world;" repeated the Secretary bitterly, "be it good cause of government, then can we not do amiss . . . . I never found her less disposed to take a course of prevention of the approaching mischiefs toward this realm than at this present. And to be plain with you, there is none here that hath either credit or courage to deal effectually with her in any of her great causes."

Thus distracted by doubts and dangers, at war with her best friends, with herself, and with all-the world, was Elizabeth during the dark days and months which, preceded and followed the execution of the Scottish Queen. If the great fight was at last to be fought triumphantly through, it was obvious that England was to depend upon Englishmen of all ranks and classes, upon her prudent and far-seeing statesmen, upon her nobles and her adventurers, on her Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman blood ever mounting against, oppression, on Howard and Essex, Drake and Williams, Norris, and Willoughby, upon high-born magnates, plebeian captains, London merchants, upon yeomen whose limbs were made

Page 1592

in England, and upon Hollanders and Zeelanders whose fearless mariners were to swarm to the protection of her coasts, quite as much in that year of anxious expectation as upon the great Queen herself. Unquestionable as were her mental capacity and her more than woman's courage, when fairly, brought face, to face with the danger, it was fortunately not on one man or woman's brain and arm that England's salvation depended in that crisis of her fate.

As to the Provinces, no one ventured to speak very boldly in their defence. "When I lay before her the peril," said Walsingham, "she scorneth at it. The hope of a peace with Spain has put her into a most dangerous security." Nor would any man now assume responsibility. The fate of Davison—of the man who had already in so detestable a manner been made the scape-goat for Leicester's sins in the Netherlands, and who had now been so barbarously sacrificed by the Queen for faithfully obeying her orders in regard to the death-warrant, had sickened all courtiers and counsellors for the time. "The late severe, dealing used by her Highness towards Mr. Secretary Davison," said Walsingham to Wilkes, "maketh us very circumspect and careful not to proceed in anything but wherein we receive direction from herself, and therefore you must not find it strange if we now be more sparing than heretofore hath been accustomed."

Such being the portentous state of the political atmosphere, and such the stormy condition of the royal mind, it may be supposed that the interviews of the Netherland envoys with her Majesty during this period were not likely to be genial. Exactly at the most gloomy moment—thirteen days before the execution of Mary—they came first into Elizabeth's presence at Greenwich.

The envoys were five in number, all of them experienced and able statesmen—Zuylen van Nyvelt, Joos de Menyn, Nicasius de Silla, Jacob Valck, and Vitus van Kammings. The Queen was in the privy council-chamber, attended by the admiral of England, Lord Thomas Howard, Lord Hunsdon, great-chamberlain, Sir Christopher Hatton, vice-chamberlain, Secretary Davison, and many other persons of distinction.

The letters of credence were duly presented, but it was obvious from the beginning of the interview that the Queen was ill-disposed toward the deputies, and had not only been misinformed as to matters of fact, but as to the state of feeling of the Netherlanders and of the States-General towards herself.

Menyu, however, who was an orator by profession—being pensionary of Dort—made, in the name of his colleagues, a brief but pregnant speech, to which the Queen listened attentively, although, with frequent indications of anger and impatience. He commenced by observing that the United Provinces still entertained the hope that her Majesty would conclude, upon further thoughts, to accept the sovereignty over them, with reasonable

conditions; but the most important passages of his address were those relating to the cost of

Page 1593

the war. “Besides our stipulated contributions,” said the pensionary, “of 200,000 florins the month, we have furnished 500,000 as an extraordinary grant; making for the year 2,900,000 florins, and this over and above the particular and special expenditures of the Provinces, and other sums for military purposes. We confess, Madam, that the succour of your Majesty is a truly royal one, and that there have been few princes in history who have given such assistance to their neighbours unjustly oppressed. It is certain that by means of that help, joined with the forces of the United Provinces, the Earl of Leicester has been able to arrest the course of the Duke of Parma’s victories and to counteract his designs. Nevertheless, it appears, Madam, that these forces have not been sufficient to drive the enemy out of the country. We are obliged, for regular garrison work and defence of cities, to keep; up an army of at least 27,000 foot and 3500 horse. Of this number your Majesty pays 5000 foot and 1000 horse, and we are now commissioned, Madam, humbly to request an increase of your regular succour during the war to 10,000 foot and 2000 horse. We also implore the loan of L60,000 sterling, in order to assist us in maintaining for the coming season a sufficient force in the field.”

Such, in brief, was the oration of pensionary Menyn, delivered in the French language. He had scarcely concluded, when the Queen—evidently in a great passion—rose to her feet, and without any hesitation, replied in a strain of vehement eloquence in the same tongue.

“Now I am not deceived, gentlemen,” she said, “and that which I have been fearing has occurred. Our common adage, which we have in England, is a very good one. When one fears that an evil is coming, the sooner it arrives the better. Here is a quarter of a year that I have been expecting you, and certainly for the great benefit I have conferred on you, you have exhibited a great ingratitude, and I consider myself very ill treated by you. ’Tis very strange that you should begin by soliciting still greater succour without rendering me any satisfaction for your past actions, which have been so extraordinary, that I swear by the living God I think it impossible to find peoples or states more ungrateful or ill-advised than yourselves.

“I have sent you this year fifteen, sixteen, aye seventeen or eighteen thousand men. You have left them without payment, you have let some of them die of hunger, driven others to such desperation that they have deserted to the enemy. Is it not mortifying for the English nation and a great shame for you that Englishmen should say that they have found more courtesy from Spaniards than from Netherlanders? Truly, I tell you frankly that I will never endure such indignities. Rather will I act according to my will, and you may do exactly, as you think best.

Page 1594

“If I chose, I could do something very good without you, although some persons are so fond of saying that it was quite necessary for the Queen of England to do what she does for her own protection. No, no! Disabuse yourselves of that impression. These are but false persuasions. Believe boldly that I can play an excellent game without your assistance, and a better one than I ever did with it! Nevertheless, I do not choose to do that, nor do I wish you so much harm. But likewise do I not choose that you should hold such language to me. It is true that I should not wish the Spaniard so near me if he should be my enemy. But why should I not live in peace, if we were to be friends to each other? At the commencement of my reign we lived honourably together, the King of Spain and I, and he even asked me to, marry him, and, after that, we lived a long time very peacefully, without any attempt having been made against my life. If we both choose, we can continue so to do.

“On the other hand, I sent you the Earl of Leicester, as lieutenant of my forces, and my intention was that he should have exact knowledge of your finances and contributions. But, on the contrary, he has never known anything about them, and you have handled them in your own manner and amongst yourselves. You have given him the title of governor, in order, under this name, to cast all your evils on his head. That title he accepted against my will, by doing which he ran the risk of losing his life, and his estates, and the grace and favour of his Princess, which was more important to him than all. But he did it in order to maintain your tottering state. And what authority, I pray you, have you given him? A shadowy authority, a purely imaginary one. This is but mockery. He is, at any rate, a gentleman, a man of honour and of counsel. You had no right to treat him thus. If I had accepted the title which you wished to give me, by the living God, I would not have suffered you so to treat me.

“But you are so badly advised that when there is a man of worth who discovers your tricks you wish him ill, and make an outcry against him; and yet some of you, in order to save your money, and others in the hope of bribes, have been favouring the Spaniard, and doing very wicked work. No, believe me that God will punish those who for so great a benefit wish to return me so much evil. Believe, boldly too, that the King of Spain will never trust men who have abandoned the party to which they belonged, and from which they have received so many benefits, and will never believe a word of what they promise him. Yet, in order to cover up their filth, they spread the story that the Queen of England is thinking of treating for peace without their knowledge. No, I would rather be dead than that any one should have occasion to say that I had not kept my promise. But princes must listen to both sides, and that can be done without breach of faith. For they transact business in a certain way, and with a princely intelligence, such as private persons cannot imitate.

Page 1595

“You are States, to be sure, but private individuals in regard to princes. Certainly, I would never choose to do anything without your knowledge, and I would never allow the authority which you have among yourselves, nor your privileges, nor your statutes, to be infringed. Nor will I allow you to be perturbed in your consciences. What then would you more of me? You have issued a proclamation in your country that no one is to talk of peace. Very well, very good. But permit princes likewise to do as they shall think best for the security of their state, provided it does you no injury. Among us princes we are not wont to make such long orations as you do, but you ought to be content with the few words that we bestow upon you, and make yourself quiet thereby.

“If I ever do anything for you again, I choose to be treated more honourably. I shall therefore appoint some personages of my council to communicate with you. And in the first place I choose to hear and see for myself what has taken place already, and have satisfaction about that, before I make any reply to what you have said to me as to greater assistance. And so I will leave you to-day, without troubling you further.”

With this her Majesty swept from the apartment, leaving the deputies somewhat astounded at the fierce but adroit manner in which the tables had for a moment been turned upon them.

It was certainly a most unexpected blow, this charge of the States having left the English soldiers—whose numbers the Queen had so suddenly multiplied by three—-unpaid and unfed. Those Englishmen who, as individuals, had entered the States’ service, had been—like all the other troops regularly paid. This distinctly appeared from the statements of her own counsellors and generals. On the other hand, the Queen’s contingent, now dwindled to about half their original number, had been notoriously unpaid for nearly six months.

This has already been made sufficiently clear from the private letters of most responsible persons. That these soldiers were starving, deserting; and pillaging, was, alas! too true; but the envoys of the States hardly expected to be censured by her Majesty, because she had neglected to pay her own troops. It was one of the points concerning which they had been especially enjoined to complain, that the English cavalry, converted into highwaymen by want of pay, had been plundering the peasantry, and we have seen that Thomas Wilkes had “pawned his carcase” to provide for their temporary relief.

With regard to the insinuation that prominent personages in the country had been tampered with by the enemy, the envoys were equally astonished by such an attack. The great Deventer treason had not yet been heard of in England for it had occurred only a week before this first interview—but something of the kind was already feared; for the slippery dealings of York and Stanley with Tassis and Parma, had long been causing

Page 1596

painful anxiety, and had formed the subject of repeated remonstrances on the part of the ‘States’ to Leicester and to the Queen. The deputies were hardly, prepared therefore to defend their own people against dealing privately with the King of Spain. The only man suspected of such practices was Leicester’s own favourite and financier, Jacques Ringault, whom the Earl had persisted in employing against the angry remonstrances of the States, who believed him to be a Spanish spy; and the man was now in prison, and threatened with capital punishment.

To suppose that Buys or Barneveld, Roorda, Meetkerk, or any other leading statesman in the Netherlands, was contemplating a private arrangement with Philip *ii*., was as ludicrous a conception as to imagine Walsingham a pensioner of the Pope, or Cecil in league with the Duke of Guise. The end and aim of the States’ party was war. In war they not only saw the safety of the reformed religion, but the only means of maintaining the commercial prosperity of the commonwealth. The whole correspondence of the times shows that no politician in the country dreamed of peace, either by public or secret negotiation. On the other hand—as will be made still clearer than ever—the Queen was longing for peace, and was treating for peace at that moment through private agents, quite without the knowledge of the States, and in spite of her indignant disavowals in her speech to the envoys.

Yet if Elizabeth could have had the privilege of entering—as we are about to do—into the private cabinet of that excellent King of Spain, with whom, she had once been such good friends, who had even sought her hand in marriage, and with whom she saw no reason whatever why she should not live at peace, she might have modified her expressions an this subject. Certainly, if she could have looked through the piles of papers—as we intend to do—which lay upon that library-table, far beyond the seas and mountains, she would have perceived some objections to the scheme of living at peace with that diligent letter-writer.

Perhaps, had she known how the subtle Farnese was about to express himself concerning the fast-approaching execution of Mary, and the as inevitably impending destruction of “that Englishwoman” through the schemes of his master and himself, she would have paid less heed to the sentiments couched in most exquisite Italian which Alexander was at the same time whispering in her ear, and would have taken less offence at the blunt language of the States-General.

Nevertheless, for the present, Elizabeth would give no better answer than the hot-tempered one which had already somewhat discomfited the deputies.

Page 1597

Two days afterwards, the five envoys had an interview with several members of her Majesty's council, in the private apartment of the Lord-Treasurer in Greenwich Palace. Burghley, being indisposed, was lying upon his bed. Leicester, Admiral Lord Howard, Lord Hunsden, Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Buckhurst, and Secretary Davison, were present, and the Lord-Treasurer proposed that the conversation should be in Latin, that being the common language most familiar to them all. Then, turning over the leaves of the report, a copy of which lay on his bed, he asked the envoys, whether, in case her Majesty had not sent over the assistance which she had done under the Earl of Leicester, their country would not have been utterly ruined.

"To all appearance, yes," replied Menyn.

"But," continued Burghley, still running through the pages of the document, and here and there demanding an explanation of an obscure passage or two, "you are now proposing to her Majesty to send 10,000 foot and 2000 horse, and to lend L60,000. This is altogether monstrous and excessive. Nobody will ever dare even to speak to her Majesty on the subject. When you first came in 1585, you asked for 12,000 men, but you were fully authorized to accept 6000. No doubt that is the case now."

"On that occasion," answered Menyn, "our main purpose was to induce her Majesty to accept the sovereignty, or at least the perpetual protection of our country. Failing in that we broached the third point, and not being able to get 12,000 soldiers we compounded for 5000, the agreement being subject to ratification by our principals. We gave ample security in shape of the mortgaged cities. But experience has shown us that these forces and this succour are insufficient. We have therefore been sent to beg her Majesty to make up the contingent to the amount originally requested."

"But we are obliged to increase the garrisons in the cautionary towns," said one of the English councillors, "as 800 men in a city like Flushing are very little."

"Pardon me," replied Valck, "the burghers are not enemies but friends to her Majesty and to the English nation. They are her dutiful subjects like all the inhabitants of the Netherlands."

"It is quite true," said Burghley, after having made some critical remarks upon the military system of the Provinces, "and a very common adage, 'quod tunc tua res agitur, paries cum proximus ardet,' but, nevertheless, this war principally concerns you. Therefore you are bound to do your utmost to meet its expenses in your own country, quite as much as a man who means to build a house is expected to provide the stone and timber himself. But the States have not done their best. They have not at the appointed time come forward with their extraordinary contributions for the last campaign. How many men," he asked, "are required for garrisons in all the fortresses and cities, and for the field?"

“But,” interposed Lord Hunsden, “not half so many men are needed in the garrisons; for the burghers ought to be able to defend their own cities. Moreover it is probable that your ordinary contributions might be continued and doubled and even tripled.”

Page 1598

“And on the whole,” observed the Lord Admiral, “don’t you think that the putting an army in the field might be dispensed with for this year? Her Majesty at present must get together and equip a fleet of war vessels against the King of Spain, which will be an excessively large pennyworth, besides the assistance which she gives her neighbours.”

“Yes, indeed,” said Secretary Davison, “it would be difficult to exaggerate the enormous expense which her Majesty must encounter this year for defending and liberating her own kingdoms against the King of Spain. That monarch is making great naval preparations, and is treating all Englishmen in the most hostile manner. We are on the brink of declared war with Spain, with the French King, who is arresting all English persons and property within his kingdom, and with Scotland, all which countries are understood to have made a league together on account of the Queen of Scotland, whom it will be absolutely necessary to put to death in order to preserve the life of her Majesty, and are about to make war upon England. This matter then will cost us, the current year, at least eight hundred thousand pounds sterling. Nevertheless her Majesty is sure to assist you so far as her means allow; and I, for my part, will do my best to keep her Majesty well disposed to your cause, even as I have ever done, as you well know.”

Thus spoke poor Davison, but a few days before the fatal 8th of February, little dreaming that the day for his influencing the disposition of her Majesty would soon be gone, and that he was himself to be crushed for ever by the blow which was about to destroy the captive Queen. The political combinations resulting from the tragedy were not to be exactly as he foretold, but there is little doubt that in him the Netherlands, and Leicester, and the Queen of England, were to lose an honest, diligent, and faithful friend.

“Well, gentlemen,” said the Lord-Treasurer, after a few more questions concerning the financial abilities of the States had been asked and answered, “it is getting late into the evening, and time for you all to get back to London. Let me request you, as soon as may be, to draw up some articles in writing, to which we will respond immediately.”

Menyn then, in the name of the deputies, expressed thanks for the urbanity shown them in the conference, and spoke of the deep regret with which they had perceived, by her Majesty’s answer two days before, that she was so highly offended with them and with the States-General. He then, notwithstanding Burghley’s previous hint as to the lateness of the hour, took up the Queen’s answer, point by point, contradicted all its statements, appealing frequently to Lord Leicester for confirmation of what he advanced, and concluded by begging the councillors to defend the cause of the Netherlands to her Majesty, Burghley requested them to make an excuse or reply to the Queen in writing, and send it to him to present. Thus the conference terminated,

Page 1599

and the envoys returned to London. They were fully convinced by the result of, these interviews, as they told their constituents, that her Majesty, by false statements and reports of persons either grossly ignorant or not having the good of the commonwealth before their eyes, had been very incorrectly informed as to the condition of the Provinces, and of the great efforts made by the States-General to defend their country against the enemy: It was obvious, they said, that their measures had been exaggerated in order to deceive the Queen and her council.

And thus statements and counter-statements, protocols and apostilles, were glibly exchanged; the heap of diplomatic rubbish was rising higher and higher, and the councillors and envoys, pleased with their work, were growing more and more amicable, when the court was suddenly startled by the news of the Deventer and Zutphen treason. The intelligence was accompanied by the famous 4th of February letter, which descended, like a bombshell, in the midst of the, decorous council-chamber. Such language had rarely been addressed to the Earl of Leicester, and; through him; to the imperious sovereign herself, as the homely truths with which Barneveld, speaking with the voice of the States-General, now smote the delinquent governor.

“My Lord,” said he, “it is notorious; and needs no illustration whatever, with what true confidence and unfeigned affection we received your Excellency in our land; the States-General, the States-Provincial, the magistrates, and the communities of the chief cities in the United Provinces, all uniting to do honour to her serene Majesty of England and to yourself, and to confer upon you the government-general over us. And although we should willingly have placed some limitations upon the authority thus bestowed on you; in, order that by such a course your own honour and the good and constitutional condition of the country might be alike preserved, yet finding your Excellency not satisfied with those limitations, we postponed every objection, and conformed ourselves to your pleasure. Yet; before coming to that decision, we had well considered that by doing so we might be opening a door to many ambitious, avaricious, and pernicious persons, both of these countries and from other nations, who might seize the occasion to advance their own private profits, to the detriment of the country and the dishonour of your Excellency.

“And, in truth, such persons have done their work so efficiently as to inspire you with distrust against the most faithful and capable men in the Provinces, against the Estates General and Provincial, magistrates, and private persons, knowing very well that they could never arrive at their own ends so long as you were guided by the constitutional authorities of the country. And precisely upon the distrust; thus created as a foundation, they raised a back-stairs council, by means of which they were able to further their ambitious, avaricious, and seditious practices, notwithstanding the good advice and remonstrances of the council of state, and the States General and Provincial.”

Page 1600

He proceeded to handle the subjects of the English rose-noble; put in circulation by Leicester's finance or back-stairs council at two florins above its value, to the manifest detriment of the Provinces, to the detestable embargo which had prevented them from using the means bestowed upon them by God himself to defend their country, to the squandering and embezzlement of the large sums contributed by the Province; and entrusted to the Earl's administration; to the starving condition of the soldiers; maltreated by government, and thus compelled to prey upon the inhabitants—so that troops in the States' service had never been so abused during the whole war, although the States had never before voted such large contributions nor paid them so promptly—to the placing in posts of high honour and trust men of notoriously bad character and even Spanish spies; to the taking away the public authority from those to whom it legitimately belonged, and conferring it on incompetent and unqualified persons; to the illegal banishment of respectable citizens, to the violation of time-honoured laws and privileges, to the shameful attempts to repudiate the ancient authority of the States, and to usurp a control over the communities and nobles by them represented, and to the perpetual efforts to foster dissension, disunion, and rebellion among the inhabitants. Having thus drawn up a heavy bill of indictment, nominally against the Earl's illegal counsellors, but in reality against the Earl himself, he proceeded to deal with the most important matter of all.

"The principal cities and fortresses in the country have been placed in hands of men suspected by the States on legitimate grounds, men who had been convicted of treason against these Provinces, and who continued to be suspected, notwithstanding that your Excellency had pledged your own honour for their fidelity. Finally, by means of these scoundrels, it was brought to pass, that the council of state having been invested by your Excellency with supreme authority during your absence—a secret document, was brought to light after your departure, by which the most substantial matters, and those most vital to the defence of the country, were withdrawn from the disposition of that council. And now, alas, we see the effects of these practices!

"Sir William Stanley, by you appointed governor of Deventer, and Rowland York, governor of Fort Zutphen, have refused, by virtue of that secret document, to acknowledge any authority in this country. And notwithstanding that since your departure they and their soldiers have been supported at our expense, and had just received a full month's pay from the States, they have traitorously and villainously delivered the city and the fortress to the enemy, with a declaration made by Stanley that he did the deed to ease his conscience, and to render to the King of Spain the city which of right was belonging to him. And this is a crime so dishonourable, scandalous, ruinous, and treasonable, as that, during this, whole war, we have never seen the like. And we are now, in daily fear lest the English commanders in Bergen-op-Zoom, Ostend, and other cities, should commit the same crime. And although we fully suspected the designs of Stanley and York, yet your Excellency's secret document had deprived us of the power to act.

Page 1601

“We doubt not that her Majesty and your Excellency will think this strange language. But we can assure you, that we too think it strange and grievous that those places should have been confided to such men, against our repeated remonstrances, and that, moreover, this very Stanley should have been recommended by your Excellency for general of all the forces. And although we had many just and grave reasons for opposing your administration—even as our ancestors were often wont to rise against the sovereigns of the country—we have, nevertheless, patiently suffered for a long time, in order not to diminish your authority, which we deemed so important to our welfare, and in the hope that you would at last be moved by the perilous condition of the commonwealth, and awake to the artifices of your advisers.

“But at last-feeling that the existence of the state can no longer be preserved without proper authority, and that the whole community is full of emotion and distrust, on account of these great treasons—we, the States-General, as well as the States-Provincial, have felt constrained to establish such a government as we deem meet for the emergency. And of this we think proper to apprize your Excellency.”

He then expressed the conviction that all these evil deeds had been accomplished against the intentions of the Earl and the English government, and requested his Excellency so to deal with her Majesty that the contingent of horse and foot hitherto accorded by her “might be maintained in good order, and in better pay.”

Here, then, was substantial choleric phraseology, as good plain speaking as her Majesty had just been employing, and with quite as sufficient cause. Here was no pleasant diplomatic fencing, but straightforward vigorous thrusts. It was no wonder that poor Wilkes should have thought the letter “too sharp,” when he heard it read in the assembly, and that he should have done his best to prevent it from being despatched. He would have thought it sharper could he have seen how the pride of her Majesty and of Leicester was wounded by it to the quick. Her list of grievances against the States seem to vanish into air. Who had been tampering with the Spaniards now? Had that “shadowy and imaginary authority” granted to Leicester not proved substantial enough? Was it the States-General, the state-council, or was it the “absolute governor”—who had carried off the supreme control of the commonwealth in his pocket—that was responsible for the ruin effected by Englishmen who had scorned all “authority” but his own?

The States, in another blunt letter to the Queen herself, declared the loss of Deventer to be more disastrous to them than even the fall of Antwerp had been; for the republic had now been split asunder, and its most ancient and vital portions almost cut away. Nevertheless they were not “dazzled nor despairing,” they said, but more determined than ever to maintain their liberties, and bid defiance to the Spanish tyrant. And again they demanded of, rather than implored; her Majesty to be true to her engagements with them.

Page 1602

The interviews which followed were more tempestuous than ever. “I had intended that my Lord of Leicester should return to you,” she said to the envoys. “But that shall never be. He has been treated with gross ingratitude, he has served the Provinces with ability, he has consumed his own property there, he has risked his life, he has lost his near kinsman, Sir Philip Sidney, whose life I should be glad to purchase with many millions, and, in place of all reward, he receives these venomous letters, of which a copy has been sent to his sovereign to blacken him with her.” She had been advising him to return, she added, but she was now resolved that he should “never set foot in the Provinces again.”

Here the Earl, who, was present, exclaimed—beating himself on the breast—“a tali officio libera nos, Domine!”

But the States, undaunted by these explosions of wrath, replied that it had ever been their custom, when their laws and liberties were invaded, to speak their mind boldly to kings and governors, and to procure redress of their grievances, as became free men.

During that whole spring the Queen was at daggers drawn with all her leading counsellors, mainly in regard to that great question of questions—the relations of England with the Netherlands and Spain. Walsingham—who felt it madness to dream of peace, and who believed it the soundest policy to deal with Parma and his veterans upon the soil of Flanders, with the forces of the republic for allies, rather than to await his arrival in London—was driven almost to frenzy by what he deemed the Queen’s perverseness.

“Our sharp words continue,” said the Secretary, “which doth greatly disquiet her Majesty, and discomfort her poor servants that attend her. The Lord-Treasurer remaineth still in disgrace, and, behind my back, her Majesty giveth out very hard speeches of myself, which I the rather credit, for that I find, in dealing with her, I am nothing gracious; and if her Majesty could be otherwise served, I know I should not be used . . . . . Her Majesty doth wholly lend herself to devise some further means to disgrace her poor council, in respect whereof she neglecteth all other causes . . . . The discord between her Majesty and her council hindereth the necessary consultations that were to be destined for the preventing of the manifold perils that hang over this realm. . . . Sir Christopher Hatton hath dealt very plainly and dutifully with her, which hath been accepted in so evil part as he is resolved to retire for a time. I assure you I find every man weary of attendance here. . . . I would to God I could find as good resolution in her Majesty to proceed in a princely course in relieving the United Provinces, as I find an honorable disposition in your Lordship to employ yourself in their service.”

The Lord-Treasurer was much puzzled, very wretched, but philosophically resigned. “Why her Majesty useth me thus strangely, I know not,” he observed. “To some she saith that she meant not I should have gone from the court; to some she saith, she may not admit me, nor give me contentment. I shall dispose myself to enjoy God’s favour,

and shall do nothing to deserve her disfavour. And if I be suffered to be a stranger to her affairs, I shall have a quieter life."

Page 1603

Leicester, after the first burst of his anger was over, was willing to return to the Provinces. He protested that he had a greater affection for the Netherland people—not for the governing powers—even than he felt for the people of England.—"There is nothing sticks in my stomach," he said, "but the good-will of that poor afflicted people, for whom, I take God to record, I could be content to lose any limb I have to do them good." But he was crippled with debt, and the Queen resolutely refused to lend him a few thousand pounds, without which he could not stir. Walsingham in vain did battle with her parsimony, representing how urgently and vividly the necessity of his return had been depicted by all her ministers in both countries, and how much it imported to her own safety and service. But she was obdurate. "She would rather," he said bitterly to Leicester, "hazard the increase of confusion there—which may put the whole country in peril—than supply your want. The like course she holdeth in the rest of her causes, which maketh me to wish myself from the helm." At last she agreed to advance him ten thousand pounds, but on so severe conditions, that the Earl declared himself heart-broken again, and protested that he would neither accept the money, nor ever set foot in the Netherlands. "Let Norris stay there," he said in a fury; "he will do admirably, no doubt. Only let it not be supposed that I can be there also. Not for one hundred thousand pounds would I be in that country with him."

Meantime it was agreed that Lord Buckhurst should be sent forth on what Wilkes termed a mission of expostulation, and a very ill-timed one. This new envoy was to inquire into the causes of the discontent, and to do his best to remove them: as if any man in England or in Holland doubted as to the causes, or as to the best means of removing them; or as if it were not absolutely certain that delay was the very worst specific that could be adopted—delay—which the Netherland statesmen, as well as the Queen's wisest counsellors, most deprecated, which Alexander and Philip most desired, and by indulging in which her Majesty was most directly playing into her adversary's hand. Elizabeth was preparing to put cards upon the table against an antagonist whose game was close, whose honesty was always to be suspected, and who was a consummate master in what was then considered diplomatic sleight of hand. So Lord Buckhurst was to go forth to expostulate at the Hague, while transports were loading in Cadiz and Lisbon, reiters levying in Germany, pikemen and musketeers in Spain and Italy, for a purpose concerning which Walsingham and Barneveld had for a long time felt little doubt.

Meantime Lord Leicester went to Bath to drink the waters, and after he had drunk the waters, the Queen, ever anxious for his health, was resolved that he should not lose the benefit of those salubrious draughts by travelling too soon, or by plunging anew into the fountains of bitterness which flowed perennially in the Netherlands.

Page 1604

CHAPTER XV.

Buckhurst sent to the Netherlands—Alarming State of Affairs on his Arrival—His Efforts to conciliate—Democratic Theories of Wilkes— Sophistry of the Argument—Dispute between Wilkes and Barneveld— Religious Tolerance by the States—Their Constitutional Theory— Deventer's bad Counsels to Leicester—Their pernicious Effect —Real and supposed Plots against Hohenlo—Mutual Suspicion and Distrust—Buckhurst seeks to restore good Feeling—The Queen angry and vindictive—She censures Buckhurst's Course—Leicester's wrath at Hohenlo's Charges of a Plot by the Earl to murder him—Buckhurst's eloquent Appeals to the Queen—Her perplexing and contradictory Orders—Despair of Wilkes—Leicester announces his Return—His Instructions—Letter to Junius—Barneveld denounces him in the States.

We return to the Netherlands. If ever proof were afforded of the influence of individual character on the destiny of nations and of the world, it certainly was seen in the year 1587. We have lifted the curtain of the secret council-chamber at Greenwich. We have seen all Elizabeth's advisers anxious to arouse her from her fatal credulity, from her almost as fatal parsimony. We have seen Leicester anxious to return, despite all fancied indignities, Walsingham eager to expedite the enterprise, and the Queen remaining obdurate, while month after month of precious time was melting away.

In the Netherlands, meantime, discord and confusion had been increasing every day; and the first great cause of such a dangerous condition of affairs was the absence of the governor. To this all parties agreed. The Leicestrians, the anti-Leicestriana, the Holland party, the Utrecht party, the English counsellors, the English generals, in private letter, in solemn act, all warned the Queen against the lamentable effects resulting from Leicester's inopportune departure and prolonged absence.

On the first outbreak of indignation after the Deventer Affair, Prince Maurice was placed at the head of the general government, with the violent Hohenlo as his lieutenant. The greatest exertions were made by these two nobles and by Barneveld, who guided the whole policy of the party, to secure as many cities as possible to their cause. Magistrates and commandants of garrisons in many towns willingly gave in their adhesion to the new government; others refused; especially Diedrich Sonoy, an officer of distinction, who was governor of Enkhuyzen, and influential throughout North Holland, and who remained a stanch partisan of Leicester. Utrecht, the stronghold of the Leicestrians, was wavering and much torn by faction; Hohenlo and Moeurs had "banquetted and feasted" to such good purpose that they had gained over half the captains of the burgher-guard, and, aided by the branch of nobles, were making a good fight against the Leicester magistracy and the clerical force, enriched by the plunder of the old Catholic livings, who denounced as Papistical and Hispaniolized all who favoured the party of Maurice and Barneveld.

Page 1605

By the end of March the envoys returned from London, and in their company came Lord Buckhurst, as special ambassador from the Queen.

Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst—afterwards Earl of Dorset and lord-treasurer—was then fifty-one years of age. A man of large culture-poet, dramatist, diplomatist-bred to the bar; afterwards elevated to the peerage; endowed with high character and strong intellect; ready with tongue and pen; handsome of person, and with a fascinating address, he was as fit a person to send on a mission of expostulation as any man to be found in England. But the author of the 'Induction to the Mirror for Magistrates' and of 'Gorboduc,' had come to the Netherlands on a forlorn hope. To expostulate in favour of peace with a people who knew that their existence depended on war, to reconcile those to delay who felt that delay was death, and to, heal animosities between men who were enemies from their cradles to their graves, was a difficult mission. But the chief ostensible object of Buckhurst was to smooth the way for Leicester, and, if possible, to persuade the Netherlanders as to the good inclinations of the English government. This was no easy task, for they knew that their envoys had been dismissed, without even a promise of subsidy. They had asked for twelve thousand soldiers and sixty thousand pounds, and had received a volley of abuse. Over and over again, through many months, the Queen fell into a paroxysm of rage when even an allusion was made to the loan of fifty or sixty thousand pounds; and even had she promised the money, it would have given but little satisfaction. As Count Moeurs observed, he would rather see one English rose-noble than a hundred royal promises. So the Hollanders and Zeelanders —not fearing Leicester's influence within their little morsel of a territory—were concentrating their means of resistance upon their own soil, intending to resist Spain, and, if necessary, England, in their last ditch, and with the last drop of their blood.

While such was the condition of affairs, Lord Buckhurst landed at Flushing—four months after the departure of Leicester—on the 24th March, having been tossing three days and nights at sea in a great storm, "miserably sick and in great danger of drowning." Sir William Russell, governor of Flushing, informed him of the progress making by Prince Maurice in virtue of his new authority. He told him that the Zeeland regiment, vacant by Sidney's death, and which the Queen wished bestowed upon Russell himself, had been given to Count Solms; a circumstance which was very sure to exite her Majesty's ire; but that the greater number, and those of the better sort; disliked the alteration of government, and relied entirely upon the Queen. Sainte Aldegonde visited him at Middelburgh, and in a "long discourse" expressed the most friendly sentiments towards England, with free offers of personal service. "Nevertheless," said Buckhurst, cautiously, "I mean to trust the effect, not his words, and so I hope he will not much deceive me. His opinion is that the Earl of Leicester's absence hath chiefly caused this change, and that without his return it will hardly be restored again, but that upon his arrival all these clouds will prove but a summershower."

Page 1606

As a matter of course the new ambassador lifted up his voice, immediately after setting foot on shore, in favour of the starving soldiers of his Queen. "'Tis a most lamentable thing," said he, "to hear the complaints of soldiers and captains for want of pay." . . . . Whole companies made their way into his presence, literally crying aloud for bread. "For Jesus' sake," wrote Buckhurst, "hasten to send relief with all speed, and let such victuallers be appointed as have a conscience not to make themselves rich with the famine of poor soldiers. If her Majesty send not money, and that with speed, for their payment, I am afraid to think what mischief and miseries are like to follow."

Then the ambassador proceeded to the Hague, holding interviews with influential personages in private, and with the States-General in public. Such was the charm of his manner, and so firm the conviction of sincerity and good-will which he inspired, that in the course of a fortnight there was already a sensible change in the aspect of affairs. The enemy, who, at the time of their arrival, had been making bonfires and holding triumphal processions for joy of the great breach between Holland and England, and had been "hoping to swallow them all up, while there were so few left who knew how to act," were already manifesting disappointment.

In a solemn meeting of the States-General with the State-council, Buckhurst addressed the assembly upon the general subject of her Majesty's goodness to the Netherlands. He spoke of the gracious assistance rendered by her, notwithstanding her many special charges for the common cause, and of the mighty enmities which she had incurred for their sake. He sharply censured the Hollanders for their cruelty to men who had shed their blood in their cause, but who were now driven forth from their towns; and left to starve on the highways, and hated for their nation's sake; as if the whole English name deserved to be soiled "for the treachery of two miscreants." He spoke strongly of their demeanour towards the Earl of Leicester, and of the wrongs they had done him, and told them, that, if they were not ready to atone to her Majesty for such injuries, they were not to wonder if their deputies received no better answer at her hands. "She who embraced your cause," he said, "when other mighty princes forsook you, will still stand fast unto you, yea, and increase her goodness, if her present state may suffer it."

After being addressed in this manner the council of state made what Counsellor Clerk called a "very honest, modest, and wise answer;" but the States-General, not being able "so easily to discharge that which had so long boiled within them," deferred their reply until the following day. They then brought forward a deliberate rejoinder, in which they expressed themselves devoted to her Majesty, and, on the whole, well disposed to the Earl. As to the 4th February letter, it had been written "in amaritudine cordis," upon hearing the treasons of York and Stanley, and in accordance with "their custom and liberty used towards all princes, whereby they had long preserved their estate," and in the conviction that the real culprits for all the sins of his Excellency's government were certain "lewd persons who sought to seduce his Lordship, and to cause him to hate the States."

Page 1607

Buckhurst did not think it well to reply, at that moment, on the ground that there had been already crimination and recrimination more than enough, and that “a little bitterness more had rather caused them to determine dangerously than solve for the best.”

They then held council together—the envoys and the State-General, as to the amount of troops absolutely necessary—casting up the matter “as pinchingly as possibly might be.” And the result was, that 20,000 foot and 2000 horse for garrison work, and an army of 13,000 foot, 5000 horse, and pioneers, for a campaign of five or six months, were pronounced indispensable. This would require all their L240,000 sterling a-year, regular contribution, her Majesty’s contingent of L140,000, and an extra sum of L150,000 sterling. Of this sum the States requested her Majesty should furnish two-thirds, while they agreed to furnish the other third, which would make in all L240,000 for the Queen, and L290,000 for the States. As it was understood that the English subsidies were only a loan, secured by mortgage of the cautionary towns, this did not seem very unreasonable, when the intimate blending of England’s welfare with that of the Provinces was considered.

Thus it will be observed that Lord Buckhurst—while doing his best to conciliate personal feuds and heart-burnings—had done full justice to the merits of Leicester, and had placed in strongest light the favours conferred by her Majesty.

He then proceeded to Utrecht, where he was received with many demonstrations of respect, “with solemn speeches” from magistrates and burgher-captains, with military processions, and with great banquets, which were, however, conducted with decorum, and at which even Count Moeurs excited universal astonishment by his sobriety. It was difficult, however, for matters to go very smoothly, except upon the surface. What could be more disastrous than for a little commonwealth—a mere handful of people, like these Netherlanders, engaged in mortal combat with the most powerful monarch in the world, and with the first general of the age, within a league of their borders—thus to be deprived of all organized government at a most critical moment, and to be left to wrangle with their allies and among themselves, as to the form of polity to be adopted, while waiting the pleasure of a capricious and despotic woman?

And the very foundation of the authority by which the Spanish yoke had been abjured, the sovereignty offered to Elizabeth, and the government-general conferred on Leicester, was fiercely assailed by the confidential agents of Elizabeth herself. The dispute went into the very depths of the social contract. Already Wilkes, standing up stoutly for the democratic views of the governor, who was so foully to requite him, had assured the English government that the “people were ready to cut the throats” of the Staten-General at any convenient moment. The sovereign people, not the deputies, were alone to be heeded, he said, and although he never informed the world by what process he had learned the deliberate opinion of that sovereign, as there had been no assembly excepting those of the States-General and States-Provincial—he was none

the less fully satisfied that the people were all with Leicester, and bitterly opposed to the States.

Page 1608

“For the sovereignty, or supreme authority,” said he, through failure of a legitimate prince, belongs to the people, and not to you, gentlemen, who are only servants, ministers, and deputies of the people. You have your commissions or instructions surrounded by limitations—which conditions are so widely different from the power of sovereignty, as the might of the subject is in regard to his prince, or of a servant in, respect to his master. For sovereignty is not limited either as to power or as to time. Still less do you represent the sovereignty; for the people, in giving the general and absolute government to the Earl of Leicester, have conferred upon him at once the exercise of justice, the administration of polity, of naval affairs, of war, and of all the other points of sovereignty. Of these a governor-general is however only the depositary or guardian, until such time as it may please the prince or people to revoke the trust; there being no other in this state who can do this; seeing that it was the people, through the instrumentality of your offices—through you as its servants—conferred on his Excellency, this power, authority, and government. According to the common rule law, therefore, ‘quo jure quid statuitur, eodem jure tolli debet.’ You having been fully empowered by the provinces and cities, or, to speak more correctly, by your masters and superiors, to confer the government on his Excellency, it follows that you require a like power in order to take it away either in whole or in part. If then you had no commission to curtail his authority, or even that of the state-council, and thus to tread upon and usurp his power as governor general and absolute, there follows of two things one: either you did not well understand what you were doing, nor duly consider how far that power reached, or—much more probably—you have fallen into the sin of disobedience, considering how solemnly you swore allegiance to him.

Thus subtly and ably did Wilkes defend the authority of the man who had deserted his post at a most critical moment, and had compelled the States, by his dereliction, to take the government into their own hands.

For, after all, the whole argument of the English counsellor rested upon a quibble. The people were absolutely sovereign, he said, and had lent that sovereignty to Leicester. How had they made that loan? Through the machinery of the States-General. So long then as the Earl retained the absolute sovereignty, the States were not even representatives of the sovereign people. The sovereign people was merged into one English Earl. The English Earl had retired—indefinitely—to England. Was the sovereign people to wait for months, or years, before it regained its existence? And if not, how was it to reassert its vitality? How but through the agency of the States-General, who—according to Wilkes himself—had been fully empowered by the Provinces and Cities to confer the government on the Earl? The people

Page 1609

then, after all, were the provinces and cities. And the States-General were at that moment as much qualified to represent those provinces and cities as they ever had been, and they claimed no more. Wilkes, nor any other of the Leicester party, ever hinted at a general assembly of the people. Universal suffrage was not dreamed of at that day. By the people, he meant, if he meant anything, only that very small fraction of the inhabitants of a country, who, according to the English system, in the reign of Elizabeth, constituted its Commons. He chose, rather from personal and political motives than philosophical ones, to draw a distinction between the people and the States, but it is quite obvious, from the tone of his private communications, that by the 'States' he meant the individuals who happened, for the time-being, to be the deputies of the States of each Province. But it was almost an affectation to accuse those individuals of calling or considering themselves 'sovereigns;' for it was very well known that they sat as envoys, rather than as members of a congress, and were perpetually obliged to recur to their constituents, the States of each Province, for instructions. It was idle, because Buys and Barneveld, and Roorda, and other leaders, exercised the influence due to their talents, patriotism, and experience, to stigmatize them as usurpers of sovereignty, and to hound the rabble upon them as tyrants and mischief-makers. Yet to take this course pleased the Earl of Leicester, who saw no hope for the liberty of the people, unless absolute and unconditional authority over the people, in war, naval affairs, justice, and policy, were placed in his hands. This was the view sustained by the clergy of the Reformed Church, because they found it convenient, through such a theory, and by Leicester's power, to banish Papists, exercise intolerance in matters of religion, sequestrate for their own private uses the property of the Catholic Church, and obtain for their own a political power which was repugnant to the more liberal ideas of the Barneveld party.

The States of Holland—inspired as it were by the memory of that great martyr to religious and political liberty, William the Silent—maintained freedom of conscience.

The Leicester party advocated a different theory on the religious question. They were also determined to omit no effort to make the States odious.

"Seeing their violent courses," said Wilkes to Leicester, "I have not been negligent, as well by solicitations to the ministers, as by my letters to such as have continued constant in affection to your Lordship, to have the people informed of the ungrateful and dangerous proceedings of the States. They have therein travailed with so good effect, as the people are now wonderfully well disposed, and have delivered everywhere in speeches, that if, by the overthwart dealings of the States, her Majesty shall be drawn to stay her succours and goodness to them, and that thereby your Lordship be also discouraged to return, they will cut their throats."

Page 1610

Who the “people” exactly were, that had been so wonderfully well disposed to throat-cutting by the ministers of the Gospel, did not distinctly appear. It was certain, however, that they were the special friends of Leicester, great orators, very pious, and the sovereigns of the country. So much could not be gainsaid.

“Your Lordship would wonder,” continued the councillor, “to see the people—who so lately, by the practice of the said States and the accident of Deventer, were notably alienated—so returned to their former devotion towards her Majesty, your Lordship, and our nation.”

Wilkes was able moreover to gratify the absent governor-general with the intelligence—-of somewhat questionable authenticity however—that the States were very “much terrified with these threats of the people.” But Barneveld came down to the council to inquire what member of that body it was who had accused the States of violating the Earl’s authority. “Whoever he is,” said the Advocate, “let him deliver his mind frankly, and he shall be answered.” The man did not seem much terrified by the throat-cutting orations. “It is true,” replied Wilkes, perceiving himself to be the person intended, “that you have very injuriously, in many of your proceedings, derogated from and trodden the authority of his Lordship and of this council under your feet.”

And then he went into particulars, and discussed, ‘more suo,’ the constitutional question, in which various Leicestrian counsellors seconded him.

But Barneveld grimly maintained that the States were the sovereigns, and that it was therefore unfit that the governor, who drew his authority from them, should call them to account for their doings. “It was as if the governors in the time of Charles V.,” said the Advocate, “should have taxed that Emperor for any action of his done in the government.”

In brief, the rugged Barneveld, with threatening voice, and lion port, seemed to impersonate the Staten, and to hold reclaimed sovereignty in his grasp. It seemed difficult to tear it from him again.

“I did what I could,” said Wilkes, “to beat them from this humour of their sovereignty, showing that upon that error they had grounded the rest of their wilful absurdities.”

Next night, he drew up sixteen articles, showing the disorders of the States, their breach of oaths, and violations of the Earl’s authority; and with that commenced a series of papers interchanged by the two parties, in which the topics of the origin of government and the principles of religious freedom were handled with much ability on both sides, but at unmerciful length.

On the religious question, the States-General, led by Barneveld and by Francis Franck, expressed themselves manfully, on various occasions, during the mission of Buckhurst.

Page 1611

“The nobles and cities constituting the States,” they said, “have been denounced to Lord Leicester as enemies of religion, by the self-seeking mischief-makers who surround him. Why? Because they had refused the demand of certain preachers to call a general synod, in defiance of the States-General, and to introduce a set of ordinances, with a system of discipline, according to their arbitrary will. This the late Prince of Orange and the States-General had always thought detrimental both to religion and polity. They respected the difference in religious opinions, and leaving all churches in their freedom, they chose to compel no man’s conscience—a course which all statesmen, knowing the diversity of human opinions, had considered necessary in order to maintain fraternal harmony.”

Such words shine through the prevailing darkness of the religious atmosphere at that epoch, like characters of light. They are beacons in the upward path of mankind. Never before, had so bold and wise a tribute to the genius of the reformation been paid by an organized community. Individuals walking in advance of their age had enunciated such truths, and their voices had seemed to die away, but, at last, a little, struggling, half-developed commonwealth had proclaimed the rights of conscience for all mankind—for Papists and Calvinists, Jews and Anabaptists—because “having a respect for differences in religious opinions, and leaving all churches in their freedom, they chose to compel no man’s conscience.”

On the constitutional question, the States commenced by an astounding absurdity. “These mischief-makers, moreover,” said they, “have not been ashamed to dispute, and to cause the Earl of Leicester to dispute, the lawful constitution of the Provinces; a matter which has not been disputed for eight hundred years.”

This was indeed to claim a respectable age for their republic. Eight hundred years took them back to the days of Charlemagne, in whose time it would have been somewhat difficult to detect a germ of their States-General and States-Provincial. That the constitutional government—consisting of nobles and of the vroedschaps of chartered cities—should have been in existence four hundred and seventeen years before the first charter had ever been granted to a city, was a very loose style of argument. Thomas Wilkes, in reply; might as well have traced the English parliament to Hengist and Horsa. “For eight hundred years;” they said, “Holland had been governed by Counts and Countesses, on whom the nobles and cities, as representing the States, had legally conferred sovereignty.”

Now the first incorporated city of Holland and Zeeland that ever existed was Middelburg, which received its charter from Count William I. of Holland and Countess Joan of Flanders; in the year 1217. The first Count that had any legal recognized authority was Dirk the First to whom Charles the Simple presented the territory of Holland, by letters-patent, in 922. Yet the States-General, in a solemn and eloquent document, gravely dated their own existence from the year 787, and claimed the regular possession and habitual delegation of sovereignty from that epoch down!

Page 1612

After this fabulous preamble, they proceeded to handle the matter of fact with logical precision. It was absurd, they said, that Mr. Wilkes and Lord Leicester should affect to confound the persons who appeared in the assembly with the States themselves; as if those individuals claimed or exercised sovereignty. Any man who had observed what had been passing during the last fifteen years, knew very well that the supreme authority did not belong to the thirty or forty individuals who came to the meetings . . . . The nobles, by reason of their ancient dignity and splendid possessions, took counsel together over state matters, and then, appearing at the assembly, deliberated with the deputies of the cities. The cities had mainly one form of government—a college of counsellors; or wise men, 40, 32, 28, or 24 in number, of the most respectable out of the whole community. They were chosen for life, and vacancies were supplied by the colleges themselves out of the mass of citizens. These colleges alone governed the city, and that which had been ordained by them was to be obeyed by all the inhabitants —a system against which there had never been any rebellion. The colleges again, united with those of the nobles, represented the whole state, the whole body of the population; and no form of government could be imagined, they said, that could resolve, with a more thorough knowledge of the necessities of the country, or that could execute its resolves with more unity of purpose and decisive authority. To bring the colleges into an assembly could only be done by means of deputies. These deputies, chosen by their colleges, and properly instructed, were sent to the place of meeting. During the war they had always been commissioned to resolve in common on matters regarding the liberty of the land. These deputies, thus assembled, represented, by commission, the States; but they are not, in their own persons, the States; and no one of them had any such pretension. “The people of this country,” said the States, “have an aversion to all ambition; and in these disastrous times, wherein nothing but trouble and odium is to be gathered by public employment, these commissions are accounted ‘munera necessaria’. . . . This form of government has, by God’s favour, protected Holland and Zeeland, during this war, against a powerful foe, without lose of territory, without any popular outbreak, without military mutiny, because all business has been transacted with open doors; and because the very smallest towns are all represented, and vote in the assembly.”

In brief, the constitution of the United Provinces was a matter of fact. It was there in good working order, and had, for a generation of mankind, and throughout a tremendous war, done good service. Judged by the principles of reason and justice, it was in the main a wholesome constitution, securing the independence and welfare of the state, and the liberty and property of the individual, as well certainly as did any polity then existing in the world. It seemed more hopeful to abide by it yet a little longer than to adopt the throat-cutting system by the people, recommended by Wilkes and Leicester as an improvement on the old constitution. This was the view of Lord Buckhurst. He felt that threats of throat-cutting were not the best means of smoothing and conciliating, and he had come over to smooth and conciliate.

Page 1613

“To spend the time,” said he, “in private brabbles and piques between the States and Lord Leicester, when we ought to prepare an army against the enemy, and to repair the shaken and torn state, is not a good course for her Majesty’s service.” Letters were continually circulating from hand to hand among the antagonists of the Holland party, written out of England by Leicester, exciting the ill-will of the populace against the organized government. “By such means to bring the States into hatred,” said Buckhurst, “and to stir up the people against them; tends to great damage and miserable end. This his Lordship doth full little consider, being the very way to dissolve all government, and so to bring all into confusion, and open the door for the enemy. But oh, how lamentable a thing it is, and how doth my Lord of Leicester abuse her Majesty, making her authority the means to uphold and justify, and under her name to defend and maintain, all his intolerable errors. I thank God that neither his might nor his malice shall deter me from laying open all those things which my conscience knoweth, and which appertaineth to be done for the good of this cause and of her Majesty’s service. Herein, though I were sure to lose my life, yet will I not offend neither the one nor the other, knowing very well that I must die; and to die in her Majesty’s faithful service, and with a good conscience, is far more happy than the miserable life that I am in. If Leicester do in this sort stir up the people against the States to follow his revenge against them, and if the Queen do yield no better aid, and the minds of Count Maurice and Hohenlo remain thus in fear and hatred of him, what good end or service can be hoped for here?”—[Buckhurst to Walsingham, 13th June, 1587. (Brit. Mus. Galba, D. I. p. 95, *Ms*.)]

Buckhurst was a man of unimpeached integrity and gentle manners. He had come over with the best intentions towards the governor-general, and it has been seen that he boldly defended him in, his first interviews with the States. But as the intrigues and underhand plottings of the Earl’s agents were revealed to him, he felt more and more convinced that there was a deep laid scheme to destroy the government, and to constitute a virtual and absolute sovereignty for Leicester. It was not wonderful that the States were standing vigorously on the defensive.

The subtle Deventer, Leicester’s evil genius, did not cease to poison the mind of the governor, during his protracted absence, against all persons who offered impediments to the cherished schemes of his master and himself. “Your Excellency knows very well,” he said, “that the state of this country is democratic, since, by failure of a prince, the sovereign disposition of affairs has returned to the people. That same people is everywhere so incredibly affectionate towards you that the delay in your return drives them to extreme despair. Any one who would know the real truth has but to remember the fine fear the States-General were in when the news of your displeasure about the 4th February letter became known.”

Page 1614

Had it not been for the efforts of Lord Buckhurst in calming the popular rage, Deventer assured the Earl that the writers of the letter would “have scarcely saved their skins;” and that they had always continued in great danger.

He vehemently urged upon Leicester, the necessity of his immediate return—not so much for reasons drawn from the distracted state of the country, thus left to a provisional government and torn by faction—but because of the facility with which he might at once seize upon arbitrary power. He gratified his master by depicting in lively colours the abject condition into which Barneveld, Maurice, Hohenlo, and similar cowards, would be thrown by his sudden return.

“If,” said he, “the States’ members and the counts, every one of them, are so desperately afraid of the people, even while your Excellency is afar off, in what trepidation will they be when you are here! God, reason, the affection of the sovereign people, are on your side. There needs, in a little commonwealth like ours, but a wink of the eye, the slightest indication of dissatisfaction on your part, to take away all their valour from men who are only brave where swords are too short. A magnanimous prince like yourself should seek at once the place where such plots are hatching, and you would see the fury of the rebels change at once to cowardice. There is more than one man here in the Netherlands that brags of what he will do against the greatest and most highly endowed prince in England, because he thinks he shall never see him again, who, at the very first news of your return, my Lord, would think only of packing his portmanteau, greasing his boots, or, at the very least, of sneaking back into his hole.”

But the sturdy democrat was quite sure that his Excellency, that most magnanimous prince of England would not desert his faithful followers—thereby giving those “filthy rascals,” his opponents, a triumph, and “doing so great an injury to the sovereign people, who were ready to get rid of them all at a single blow, if his Excellency would but say the word.”

He then implored the magnanimous prince to imitate the example of Moses, Joshua, David, and that of all great emperors and captains, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman, to come at once to the scene of action, and to smite his enemies hip and thigh. He also informed his Excellency, that if the delay should last much longer, he would lose all chance of regaining power, because the sovereign people had quite made up their mind to return to the dominion of Spain within three months, if they could not induce his Excellency to rule over them. In that way at least, if in no other, they could circumvent those filthy rascals whom they so much abhorred, and frustrate the designs of Maurice, Hohenlo, and Sir John Norris, who were represented as occupying the position of the triumvirs after the death of Julius Caesar.

Page 1615

To place its neck under the yoke of Philip *ii*. and the Inquisition, after having so handsomely got rid of both, did not seem a sublime manifestation of sovereignty on the part of the people, and even Deventer had some misgivings as to the propriety of such a result. "What then will become of our beautiful churches?" he cried, "What will princes say, what will the world in general say, what will historians say, about the honour of the English nation?"

As to the first question, it is probable that the prospect of the reformed churches would not have been cheerful, had the inquisition been re-established in Holland and Utrecht, three months after that date. As to the second, the world and history were likely to reply, that the honour of the English nation was fortunately not entirely, entrusted at that epoch to the "magnanimous prince" of Leicester, and his democratic, counsellor-in-chief, burgomaster Deventer.

These are but samples of the ravings which sounded incessantly in the ears of the governor-general. Was it strange that a man, so thirsty for power, so gluttonous of flattery, should be influenced by such passionate appeals? Addressed in strains of fulsome adulation, convinced that arbitrary power was within his reach, and assured that he had but to wink his eye to see his enemies scattered before him, he became impatient of all restraint; and determined, on his return, to crush the States into insignificance.

Thus, while Buckhurst had been doing his best as a mediator to prepare the path for his return, Leicester himself end his partisans had been secretly exerting themselves to make his arrival the signal for discord; perhaps of civil war. The calm, then, immediately succeeding the mission of Buckhurst was a deceitful one, but it seemed very promising. The best feelings were avowed and perhaps entertained. The States professed great devotion to her Majesty and friendly regard for the governor. They distinctly declared that the arrangements by which Maurice and Hohenlo had been placed in their new positions were purely provisional ones, subject to modifications on the arrival of the Earl. "All things are reduced to a quiet calm," said Buckhurst, "ready to receive my Lord of Leicester and his authority, whenever he cometh."

The quarrel of Hohenlo with Sir Edward Norris had been, by the exertions of Buckhurst, amicably arranged: the Count became an intimate friend of Sir John, "to the gladding of all such as wished well to, the country;" but he nourished a deadly hatred to the Earl. He ran up and down like a madman whenever his return was mentioned. "If the Queen be willing to take the sovereignty," he cried out at his own dinner-table to a large company, "and is ready to proceed roundly in this action, I will serve her to the last drop of my blood; but if she embrace it in no other sort than hitherto she hath done, and if Leicester is to return, then am I as good a man as Leicester, and will never be commanded by him. I mean to continue on my frontier, where all who love me can come and find me."

Page 1616

He declared to several persons that he had detected a plot on the part of Leicester to have him assassinated; and the assertion seemed so important, that Villiers came to Councillor Clerk to confer with him on the subject. The worthy Bartholomew, who had again, most reluctantly, left his quiet chambers in the Temple to come again among the guns and drums, which his soul abhorred, was appalled by such a charge. It was best to keep it a secret, he said, at least till the matter could be thoroughly investigated. Villiers was of the same opinion, and accordingly the councillor, in the excess of his caution, confided the secret only—to whom? To Mr. Atye, Leicester's private secretary. Atye, of course, instantly told his master—his master in a frenzy of rage, told the Queen, and her Majesty, in a paroxysm of royal indignation at this new insult to her favourite, sent furious letters to her envoys, to the States-General, to everybody in the Netherlands—so that the assertion of Hohenlo became the subject of endless recrimination. Leicester became very violent, and denounced the statement as an impudent falsehood, devised wilfully in order to cast odium upon him and to prevent his return. Unquestionably there was nothing in the story but table-talk; but the Count would have been still more ferocious towards Leicester than he was, had he known what was actually happening at that very moment.

While Buckhurst was at Utrecht, listening to the "solemn-speeches" of the militia-captains and exchanging friendly expressions at stately banquets with Moeurs, he suddenly received a letter in cipher from her Majesty. Not having the key, he sent to Wilkes at the Hague. Wilkes was very ill; but the despatch was marked pressing and immediate, so he got out of bed and made the journey to Utrecht. The letter, on being deciphered, proved to be an order from the Queen to decoy Hohenlo into some safe town, on pretence of consultation and then to throw him into prison, on the ground that he had been tampering with the enemy, and was about to betray the republic to Philip.

The commotion which would have been excited by any attempt to enforce this order, could be easily imagined by those familiar with Hohenlo and with the powerful party in the Netherlands of which he was one of the chiefs. Wilkes stood aghast as he deciphered the letter. Buckhurst felt the impossibility of obeying the royal will. Both knew the cause, and both foresaw the consequences of the proposed step. Wilkes had heard some rumours of intrigues between Parma's agents at Deventer and Hohenlo, and had confided them to Walsingham, hoping that the Secretary would keep the matter in his own breast, at least till further advice. He was appalled at the sudden action proposed on a mere rumour, which both Buckhurst and himself had begun to consider an idle one. He protested, therefore, to Walsingham that to comply with her Majesty's command would not only be nearly impossible, but would, if successful, hazard

Page 1617

the ruin of the republic. Wilkes was also very anxious lest the Earl of Leicester should hear of the matter. He was already the object of hatred to that powerful personage, and thought him capable of accomplishing his destruction in any mode. But if Leicester could wreak his vengeance upon his enemy Wilkes by the hand of his other deadly enemy Hohenlo, the councillor felt that this kind of revenge would have a double sweetness for him. The Queen knows what I have been saying, thought Wilkes, and therefore Leicester knows it; and if Leicester knows it, he will take care that Hohenlo shall hear of it too, and then wo be unto me. "Your honour knoweth," he said to Walsingham, "that her Majesty can hold no secrets, and if she do impart it to Leicester, then am I sped."

Nothing came of it however, and the relations of Wilkes and Buckhurst with Hohenlo continued to be friendly. It was a lesson to Wilkes to be more cautious even with the cautious Walsingham. "We had but bare suspicions," said Buckhurst, "nothing fit, God knoweth, to come to such a reckoning. Wilkes saith he meant it but for a premonition to you there; but I think it will henceforth be a premonition to himself—there being but bare presumptions, and yet shrewd presumptions."

Here then were Deventer and Leicester plotting to overthrow the government of the States; the States and Hohenlo arming against Leicester; the extreme democratic party threatening to go over to the Spaniards within three months; the Earl accused of attempting the life of Hohenlo; Hohenlo offering to shed the last drop of his blood for Queen Elizabeth; Queen Elizabeth giving orders to throw Hohenlo into prison as a traitor; Councillor Wilkes trembling for his life at the hands both of Leicester and Hohenlo; and Buckhurst doing his best to conciliate all parties, and imploring her Majesty in vain to send over money to help on the war, and to save her soldiers from starving.

For the Queen continued to refuse the loan of fifty thousand pounds which the provinces solicited, and in hope of which the States had just agreed to an extra contribution of a million florins (L100,000), a larger sum than had been levied by a single vote since the commencement of the war. It must be remembered, too, that the whole expense of the war fell upon Holland and Zeeland. The Province of Utrecht, where there was so strong a disposition to confer absolute authority upon Leicester, and to destroy the power of the States-General contributed absolutely nothing. Since the Loss of Deventer, nothing could be raised in the Provinces of Utrecht, Gelderland or Overyssel; the Spaniards levying black mail upon the whole territory, and impoverishing the inhabitants till they became almost a nullity. Was it strange then that the States of Holland and Zeeland, thus bearing nearly the whole; burden of the war, should be dissatisfied with the hatred felt toward them by their sister Provinces so generously protected by them? Was it unnatural that Barneveld, and Maurice, and Hohenlo, should

be disposed to bridle the despotic inclinations of Leicester, thus fostered by those who existed, as it were, at their expense?

Page 1618

But the Queen refused the L50,000, although Holland and Zeeland had voted the L100,000. “No reason that breedeth charges,” sighed Walsingham, “can in any sort be digested.”

It was not for want of vehement entreaty on the part of the Secretary of State and of Buckhurst that the loan was denied. At least she was entreated to send over money for her troops, who for six months past were unpaid. “Keeping the money in your coffers,” said Buckhurst, “doth yield no interest to you, and—which is above all earthly, respects—it shall be the means of preserving the lives of many of your faithful subjects which otherwise must needs, daily perish. Their miseries, through want of meat and money, I do protest to God so much moves, my soul with commiseration of that which is past, and makes my heart tremble to think of the like to come again, that I humbly beseech your Majesty, for Jesus Christ sake, to have compassion on their lamentable estate past, and send some money to prevent the like hereafter.”

These were moving words,—but the money did not come—charges could not be digested.

“The eternal God,” cried Buckhurst, “incline your heart to grant the petition of the States for the loan of the L50,000, and that speedily, for the dangerous terms of the State here and the mighty and forward preparation of the enemy admit no minute of delay; so that even to grant it slowly is to deny it utterly.”

He then drew a vivid picture of the capacity of the Netherlands to assist the endangered realm of England, if delay were not suffered to destroy both commonwealths, by placing the Provinces in an enemy’s hand.

“Their many and notable good havens,” he said, “the great number of ships and mariners, their impregnable towns, if they were in the hands of a potent prince that would defend them, and, lastly, the state of this shore; so near and opposite unto the land and coast of England—lo, the sight of all this, daily in mine eye, conjoined with the deep, enrooted malice of that your so mighty enemy who seeketh to regain them; these things entering continually into the, meditations of my heart—so much do they import the safety of yourself and your estate—do enforce me, in the abundance of my love and duty to your Majesty, most earnestly to speak, write, and weep unto you, lest when the occasion yet offered shall be gone by, this blessed means of your defence, by God’s provident goodness thus put into your hand, will then be utterly lost, lo; never, never more to be recovered again.”

It was a noble, wise, and eloquent appeal, but it was muttered in vain. Was not Leicester—his soul filled with petty schemes of reigning in Utrecht, and destroying the constitutional government of the Provinces—in full possession of the royal ear? And was not the same ear lent, at most critical moment, to the insidious Alexander Farnese,

with his whispers of peace, which were potent enough to drown all the preparations for the invincible Armada?

Page 1619

Six months had rolled away since Leicester had left the Netherlands; six months long, the Provinces, left in a condition which might have become anarchy, had been saved by the wise government of the States-General; six months long the English soldiers had remained unpaid by their sovereign; and now for six weeks the honest, eloquent, intrepid, but gentle Buckhurst had done his best to conciliate all parties, and to mould the Netherlanders into an impregnable bulwark for the realm of England. But his efforts were treated with scorn by the Queen. She was still maddened by a sense of the injuries done by the States to Leicester. She was indignant that her envoy should have accepted such lame apologies for the 4th of February letter; that he should have received no better atonement for their insolent infringements of the Earl's orders during his absence; that he should have excused their contemptuous proceedings and that, in short, he should have been willing to conciliate and forgive when he should have stormed and railed. "You conceived, it seemeth," said her Majesty, "that a more sharper manner of proceeding would have exasperated matters to the prejudice of the service, and therefore you did think it more fit to wash the wounds rather with water than vinegar, wherein we would rather have wished, on the other side, that you had better considered that festering wounds had more need of corrosives than lenitives. Your own judgment ought to have taught that such a alight and mild kind of dealing with a people so ingrate and void of consideration as the said Estates have showed themselves toward us, is the ready way to increase their contempt."

The envoy might be forgiven for believing that at any rate there would be no lack of corrosives or vinegar, so long as the royal tongue or pen could do their office, as the unfortunate deputies had found to their cost in their late interviews at Greenwich, and as her own envoys in the Netherlands were perpetually finding now. The Queen was especially indignant that the Estates should defend the tone of their letters to the Earl on the ground that he had written a piquant epistle to them. "But you can manifestly see their untruths in naming it a piquant letter," said Elizabeth, "for it has no sour or sharp word therein, nor any clause or reprehension, but is full of gravity and gentle admonition. It deserved a thankful answer, and so you may maintain it to them to their reproof."

The States doubtless thought that the loss of Deventer and, with it, the almost ruinous condition of three out of the seven Provinces, might excuse on their part a little piquancy of phraseology, nor was it easy for them to express gratitude to the governor for his grave and gentle admonitions, after he had, by his secret document of 24th November, rendered himself fully responsible for the disaster they deplored.

Page 1620

She expressed unbounded indignation with Hohenlo, who, as she was well aware, continued to cherish a deadly hatred for Leicester. Especially she was exasperated, and with reason, by the assertion the Count had made concerning the governor's murderous designs upon him. "'Tis a matter," said the Queen, "so foul and dishonourable that doth not only touch greatly the credit of the Earl, but also our own honour, to have one who hath been nourished and brought up by us, and of whom we have made show to the world to have extraordinarily favoured above any other of our own subjects, and used his service in those countries in a place of that reputation he held there, stand charged with so horrible and unworthy a crime. And therefore our pleasure is, even as you tender the continuance of our favour towards you, that you seek, by all the means you may, examining the Count Hollock, or any other party in this matter, to discover and to sift out how this malicious imputation hath been wrought; for we have reason to think that it hath grown out of some cunning device to stay the Earl's coming, and to discourage him from the continuance of his service in those countries."

And there the Queen was undoubtedly in the right. Hohenlo was resolved, if possible, to make the Earl's government of the Netherlands impossible. There was nothing in the story however; and all that by the most diligent "sifting" could ever be discovered, and all that the Count could be prevailed upon to confess, was an opinion expressed by him that if he had gone with Leicester to England, it might perhaps have fared ill with him. But men were given to loose talk in those countries. There was great freedom of tongue and pen; and as the Earl, whether with justice or not, had always been suspected of strong tendencies to assassination, it was not very wonderful that so reckless an individual as Hohenlo should promulgate opinions on such subjects, without much reserve. "The number of crimes that have been imputed to me," said Leicester, "would be incomplete, had this calumny not been added to all preceding ones." It is possible that assassination, especially poisoning, may have been a more common-place affair in those days than our own. At any rate, it is certain that accusations of such crimes were of ordinary occurrence. Men were apt to die suddenly if they had mortal enemies, and people would gossip. At the very same moment, Leicester was deliberately accused not only of murderous intentions towards Hohenlo, but towards Thomas Wilkes and Count Lewis William of Nassau likewise. A trumpeter, arrested in Friesland, had just confessed that he had been employed by the Spanish governor of that Province, Colonel Verdugo, to murder Count Lewis, and that four other persons had been entrusted with the same commission. The Count wrote to Verdugo, and received in reply an indignant denial of the charge. "Had I heard of such a project," said the Spaniard, "I would, on the contrary,

Page 1621

have given you warning. And I give you one now." He then stated, as a fact known to him on unquestionable authority, that the Earl of Leicester had assassins at that moment in his employ to take the life of Count Lewis, adding that as for the trumpeter, who had just been hanged for the crime suborned by the writer, he was a most notorious lunatic. In reply, Lewis, while he ridiculed this plea of insanity set up for a culprit who had confessed his crime succinctly and voluntarily, expressed great contempt for the counter-charge against Leicester. "His Excellency," said the sturdy little Count, "is a virtuous gentleman, the most pious and God-fearing I have ever known. I am very sure that he could never treat his enemies in the manner stated, much less his friends. As for yourself, may God give me grace, in requital of your knavish trick, to make such a war upon you as becomes an upright soldier and a man of honour."

Thus there was at least one man—and a most important, one—in the opposition—party who thoroughly believed in the honour of the governor-general.

The Queen then proceeded to lecture Lord Buckhurst very severely for having tolerated an instant the States' proposition to her for a loan of L50,000. "The enemy," she observed, "is quite unable to attempt the siege of any town."

Buckhurst was, however, instructed, in case the States' million should prove insufficient to enable the army to make head against the enemy, and in the event of "any alteration of the good-will of the people towards her, caused by her not yielding, in this their necessity, some convenient support," to let them then understand, "as of himself, that if they would be satisfied with a loan of ten or fifteen thousand pounds, he, would do his best endeavour to draw her Majesty to yield unto the furnishing of such a sum, with assured hope to obtaining the same at her hands."

Truly Walsingham was right in saying that charges of any kind were difficult of digestion: Yet, even at that moment, Elizabeth had no more attached subjects in England than sere the burghers of the Netherlands; who were as anxious ever to annex their territory to her realms.

'Thus, having expressed an affection for Leicester which no one doubted, having once more thoroughly brow-beaten the states, and having soundly lectured Buckhurst—as a requital for his successful efforts to bring about a more wholesome condition of affairs—she gave the envoy a parting stab, with this postscript;—"There is small disproportion," she said "twist a fool who useth not wit because he hath it not, and him that useth it not when it should avail him." Leicester, too, was very violent in his attacks upon Buckhurst. The envoy had succeeded in reconciling Hohenlo with the brothers Norris, and had persuaded Sir John to offer the hand of friendship to Leicester, provided it were sure of being accepted. Yet in this desire to conciliate, the Earl found renewed

Page 1622

cause for violence. “I would have had more regard of my Lord of Buckhurst,” he said, “if the case had been between him and Norris, but I must regard my own reputation the more that I see others would impair it. You have deserved little thanks of me, if I must deal plainly, who do equal me after this sort with him, whose best place is colonel under me, and once my servant, and preferred by me to all honourable place he had.” And thus were enterprises of great moment, intimately affecting the, safety of Holland, of England, of all Protestantism, to be suspended between triumph and ruin, in order that the spleen of one individual—one Queen’s favourite—might be indulged. The contempt of an insolent grandee for a distinguished commander—himself the son, of a Baron, with a mother the dear friend of her sovereign—was to endanger the existence of great commonwealths. Can the influence of the individual, for good or bad, upon the destinies of the race be doubted, when the characters and conduct of Elizabeth and Leicester, Burghley and Walsingham, Philip and Parma, are closely scrutinized and broadly traced throughout the wide range of their effects?

“And I must now, in your Lordship’s sight,” continued Leicester, “be made a counsellor with this companion, who never yet to this day hath done so much as take knowledge of my mislike of him; no, not to say this much, which I think would well become his better, that he was sorry, to hear I had mislike to him, that he desired my suspension till he might either speak with me, or be charged from me, and if then he were not able to satisfy me, he would acknowledge his fault, and make me any honest satisfaction. This manner of dealing would have been no disparagement to his better. And even so I must think that your Lordship doth me wrong, knowing what you do, to make so little difference between John Norris, my man not long since, and now but my colonel under me, as though we were equals. And I cannot but more than marvel at this your proceeding, when I remember your promises of friendship, and your opinions resolutely set down . . . . You were so determined before you went hence, but must have become wonderfully enamoured of those men’s unknown virtues in a few days of acquaintance, from the alteration that is grown by their own commendations of themselves. You know very well that all the world should not make me serve with John Norris. Your sudden change from mislike to liking has, by consequence, presently cast disgrace upon me. But all is not gold that glitters, nor every shadow a perfect representation . . . . You knew he should not serve with me, but either you thought me a very inconstant man, or else a very simple soul, resolving with you as I did, for you to take the course you have done.” He felt, however, quite strong in her Majesty’s favour. He knew himself her favourite, beyond all chance or change, and was sure, so long as either lived, to thrust his enemies, by her aid, into outer

Page 1623

darkness. Woe to Buckhurst, and Norris, and Wilkes, and all others who consorted with his enemies. Let them flee from the wrath to come! And truly they were only too anxious to do so, for they knew that Leicester's hatred was poisonous. "He is not so facile to forget as ready to revenge," said poor Wilkes, with neat alliteration. "My very heavy and mighty adversary will disgrace and undo me.

"It sufficeth," continued Leicester, "that her Majesty both find my dealings well enough, and so, I trust will graciously use me. As for the reconciliations and love-days you have made there, truly I have liked well of it; for you did sow me your disposition therein before, and I allowed of it, and I had received letters both from Count Maurice and Hohenlo of their humility and kindness, but now in your last letters you say they have uttered the cause of their mislike towards me, which you forbear to write of, looking so speedily for my return."

But the Earl knew well enough what the secret was, for had it not been specially confided by the judicious Bartholomew to Atye, who had incontinently told his master? "This pretense that I should kill Hohenlo," cried Leicester, "is a matter properly foisted in to bring me to choler. I will not suffer it to rest, thus. Its authors shall be duly and severely punished. And albeit I see well enough the plot of this wicked device, yet shall it not work the effect the devisers have done it for. No, my Lord, he is a villain and a false lying knave whosoever he be, and of what, nation soever that hath forged this device. Count Hohenlo doth know I never gave him cause to fear me so much. There were ways and means offered me to have quitted him of the country if I had so liked. This new monstrous villany which is now found out I do hate and detest, as I would look for the right judgment of God to fall upon myself, if I had but once imagined it. All this makes good proof of Wilkes's good dealing with me, that hath heard of so vile and villainous a reproach of me, and never gave me knowledge. But I trust your Lordship shall receive her Majesty's order for this, as for a matter that toucheth herself in honour, and me her poor servant and minister, as dearly as any matter can do; and I will so take it and use it to the uttermost."

We have seen how anxiously Buckhurst had striven to do his duty upon a most difficult mission. Was it unnatural that so fine a nature as his should be disheartened, at reaping nothing but sneers and contumely from the haughty sovereign he served, and from the insolent favourite who controlled her councils? "I beseech your Lordship," he said to Burghley, "keep one ear for me, and do not hastily condemn me before you hear mine answer. For if I ever did or shall do any acceptable service to her Majesty, it was in, the stay and appeasing of these countries, ever ready at my coming to have cast off all good respect towards us, and to have entered even into some desperate cause. In the meantime I am hardly thought of by her Majesty, and in her opinion condemned before mine answer be understood. Therefore I beseech you to help me to return, and not thus to lose her Majesty's favour for my good desert, wasting here my mind, body,

my wits, wealth, and all; with continual toils, taxes, and troubles, more than I am able to endure.”

Page 1624

But besides his instructions to smooth and expostulate, in which he had succeeded so well, and had been requited so ill; Buckhurst had received a still more difficult commission. He had been ordered to broach the subject of peace, as delicately as possible, but without delay; first sounding the leading politicians, inducing them to listen to the Queen's suggestions on the subject, persuading them that they ought to be satisfied with the principles of the pacification of Ghent, and that it was hopeless for the Provinces to continue the war with their mighty adversary any longer.

Most reluctantly had Buckhurst fulfilled his sovereign's commands in this disastrous course. To talk to the Hollanders of the Ghent pacification seemed puerile. That memorable treaty, ten years before, had been one of the great landmarks of progress, one of the great achievements of William the Silent. By its provisions, public exercise of the reformed religion had been secured for the two Provinces of Holland and Zeeland, and it had been agreed that the secret practice of those rites should be elsewhere winked at, until such time as the States-General, under the auspices of Philip *ii*., should otherwise ordain. But was it conceivable that now, after Philip's authority had been solemnly abjured, and the reformed worship had become the, public, dominant religion, throughout all the Provinces,—the whole republic should return to the Spanish dominion, and to such toleration as might be sanctioned by an assembly professing loyalty to the most Catholic King?

Buckhurst had repeatedly warned the Queen, in fervid and eloquent language, as to the intentions of Spain. "There was never peace well made," he observed, "without a mighty war preceding, and always, the sword in hand is the best pen to write the conditions of peace."

"If ever prince had cause," he continued, "to think himself beset with doubt and danger, you, sacred Queen, have most just cause not only to think it, but even certainly to believe it. The Pope doth daily plot nothing else but how he may bring to pass your utter overthrow; the French King hath already sent you threatenings of revenge, and though for that pretended cause I think little will ensue, yet he is blind that seeth not the mortal dislike that boileth deep in his heart for other respects against you. The Scottish King, not only in regard of his future hope, but also by reason of some over conceit in his heart, may be thought a dangerous neighbour to you. The King of Spain armeth and extendeth all his power to ruin both you and your estate. And if the Indian gold have corrupted also the King of Denmark, and made him likewise Spanish, as I marvellously fear; why will not your Majesty, beholding the flames of your enemies on every side kindling around, unlock all your coffers and convert your treasure for the advancing of worthy men, and for the arming of ships and men-of-war that may defend you, since princes' treasures serve only to that end, and, lie they never so fast or so full in their chests, can no ways so defend them?

Page 1625

“The eternal God, in whose hands the hearts of kings do rest, dispose and guide your sacred Majesty to do that which may be most according to His blessed will, and best for you, as I trust He will, even for His mercy’s sake, both toward your Majesty and the whole realm of England, whose desolation is thus sought and compassed.”

Was this the language of a mischievous intriguer, who was sacrificing the true interest of his country, and whose proceedings were justly earning for him rebuke and disgrace at the hands of his sovereign? Or was it rather the noble advice of an upright statesman, a lover of his country, a faithful servant of his Queen, who had looked through the atmosphere of falsehood in which he was doing his work, and who had detected, with rare sagacity, the secret purposes of those who were then misruling the world?

Buckhurst had no choice, however, but to obey. His private efforts were of course fruitless, but he announced to her Majesty that it was his intention very shortly to bring the matter—according to her wish—before the assembly.

But Elizabeth, seeing that her counsel had been unwise and her action premature, turned upon her envoy, as she was apt to do, and rebuked him for his obedience, so soon as obedience had proved inconvenient to herself.

“Having perused your letters,” she said, “by which you at large debate unto us what you have done in the matter of peace . . . . we find it strange that you should proceed further. And although we had given you full and ample direction to proceed to a public dealing in that cause, yet our own discretion, seeing the difficulties and dangers that you yourself saw in the propounding of the matter, ought to have led you to delay till further command from us.”

Her Majesty then instructed her envoy, in case he had not yet “propounded the matter in the state-house to the general assembly,” to pause entirely until he heard her further pleasure. She concluded, as usual, with a characteristic postcript in her own hand.

“Oh weigh deeplier this matter,” she said, “than, with so shallow a judgment, to spill the cause, impair my honour, and shame yourself, with all your wit, that once was supposed better than to lose a bargain for the handling.”

Certainly the sphinx could have propounded no more puzzling riddles than those which Elizabeth thus suggested to Buckhurst. To make war without an army, to support an army without pay, to frame the hearts of a whole people to peace who were unanimous for war, and this without saying a word either in private or public; to dispose the Netherlanders favourably to herself and to Leicester, by refusing them men and money, brow-beating them for asking for it, and subjecting them to a course of perpetual insults, which she called “corrosives,” to do all this and more seemed difficult. If not to do it, were to spill the cause and to lose the bargain, it was more than probable that they would be spilt and lost.

Page 1626

But the ambassador was no OEdipus—although a man of delicate perceptions and brilliant intellect—and he turned imploringly to a wise counsellor for aid against the tormentor who chose to be so stony-faced and enigmatical.

“Touching the matter of peace,” said he to Walsingham, “I have written somewhat to her Majesty in cipher, so as I am sure you will be called for to decipher it. If you did know how infinitely her Majesty did at my departure and before—for in this matter of peace she hath specially used me this good while—command me, pray me, and persuade me to further and hasten the same with all the speed possible that might be, and how, on the other side, I have continually been the man and the mean that have most plainly dehorted her from such post-haste, and that she should never make good peace without a puissant army in the field, you would then say that I had now cause to fear her displeasure for being too slow, and not too forward. And as for all the reasons which in my last letters are set down, her Majesty hath debated them with me many times.”

And thus midsummer was fast approaching, the commonwealth was without a regular government, Leicester remained in England nursing his wrath and preparing his schemes, the Queen was at Greenwich, corresponding with Alexander Farnese, and sending riddles to Buckhurst, when the enemy—who, according to her Majesty, was “quite unable to attempt the, siege of any town” suddenly appeared in force in Flanders, and invested Sluy’s. This most important seaport, both for the destiny of the republic and of England at that critical moment, was insufficiently defended. It was quite time to put an army in the field, with a governor-general to command it.

On the 5th June there was a meeting of the state-council at the Hague. Count Maurice, Hohenlo, and Moeurs were present, besides several members of the States-General. Two propositions were before the council. The first was that it was absolutely necessary to the safety of the republic, now that the enemy had taken the field, and the important city of Sluy’s was besieged, for Prince Maurice to be appointed captain-general, until such time as the Earl of Leicester or some other should be sent by her Majesty. The second was to confer upon the state-council the supreme government in civil affairs, for the same period, and to repeal all limitations and restrictions upon the powers of the council made secretly by the Earl.

Chancellor Leoninus, “that grave, wise old man,” moved the propositions. The deputies of the States were requested to withdraw. The vote of each councillor was demanded. Buckhurst, who, as the Queen’s representative—together with Wilkes and John Norris—had a seat in the council, refused to vote. “It was a matter,” he discreetly observed with which “he had not been instructed by her Majesty to intermeddle.” Norris and Wilkes also begged to be excused from voting, and, although earnestly urged to do so by the whole council, persisted in their refusal. Both measures were then carried.

Page 1627

No sooner was the vote taken, than an English courier entered the council-chamber, with pressing despatches from Lord Leicester. The letters were at once read. The Earl announced his speedy arrival, and summoned both the States-General and the council to meet him at Dort, where his lodgings were already taken. All were surprised, but none more than Buckhurst, Wilkes, and Norris; for no intimation of this sudden resolution had been received by them, nor any answer given to various propositions, considered by her Majesty as indispensable preliminaries to the governor's visit.

The council adjourned till after dinner, and Buckhurst held conference meantime with various counsellors and deputies. On the reassembling of the board, it was urged by Barneveld, in the name of the States, that the election of Prince Maurice should still hold good. "Although by these letters," said he, "it would seem that her Majesty had resolved upon the speedy return of his Excellency, yet, inasmuch as the counsels and resolutions of princes are often subject to change upon new occasion, it does not seem fit that our late purpose concerning Prince Maurice should receive any interruption."

Accordingly, after brief debate, both resolutions, voted in the morning, were confirmed in the afternoon.

"So now," said Wilkes, "Maurice is general of all the forces, 'et quid sequetur nescimus.'"

But whatever else was to follow, it was very certain that Wilkes would not stay. His great enemy had sworn his destruction, and would now take his choice, whether to do him to death himself, or to throw him into the clutch of the ferocious Hohenlo. "As for my own particular," said the counsellor, "the word is go, whosoever cometh or cometh not," and he announced to Walsingham his intention of departing without permission, should he not immediately receive it from England. "I shall stay to be dandled with no love-days nor leave-takings," he observed.

But Leicester had delayed his coming too long. The country felt that it-had been trifled with by his: absence—at so critical a period—of seven months. It was known too that the Queen was secretly treating with the enemy, and that Buckhurst had been privately sounding leading personages upon that subject, by her orders. This had caused a deep, suppressed indignation. Over and over again had the English government been warned as to the danger of delay. "Your length in resolving;" Wilkes had said, "whatsoever your secret purposes may be—will put us to new plunges before long." The mission of Buckhurst was believed to be "but a stale, having some other intent than was expressed." And at last, the new plunge had been fairly taken. It seemed now impossible for Leicester to regain the absolute authority, which he coveted; and which he had for a brief season possessed. The States-General, under able leaders, had become used to a government which had been forced upon them, and which they had wielded with success. Holland

Page 1628

and Zeeland, paying the whole expense of the war, were not likely to endure again the absolute sovereignty of a foreigner, guided by a back stairs council of reckless politicians—most of whom were unprincipled, and some of whom had been proved to be felons—and established, at Utrecht, which contributed nothing to the general purse. If Leicester were really-coming, it seemed certain that he would be held to acknowledge the ancient constitution, and to respect the sovereignty of the States-General. It was resolved that he should be well bridled. The sensations of Barneveld and his party may therefore be imagined, when a private letter of Leicester, to his secretary "the fellow named Junius," as Hohenlo called him—having been intercepted at this moment, gave them an opportunity of studying the Earl's secret thoughts.

The Earl informed his correspondent that he was on the point of starting for the Netherlands. He ordered him therefore to proceed at once to reassure those whom he knew well disposed as to the good intentions of her Majesty and of the governor-general. And if, on the part of Lord Buckhurst or others, it should be intimated that the Queen was resolved to treat for peace with the King of Spain; and wished to have the opinion of the Netherlanders on that subject, he was to say boldly that Lord Buckhurst never had any such charge, and that her Majesty had not been treating at all. She had only been attempting to sound the King's intentions towards the Netherlands, in case of any accord. Having received no satisfactory assurance on the subject, her Majesty was determined to proceed with the defence of these countries. This appeared by the expedition of Drake against Spain, and by the return of the Earl, with a good cumber of soldiers paid by her Majesty, over and above her ordinary subsidy.

"You are also;" said the Earl, "to tell those who have the care of the people" (the ministers of the reformed church and others), "that I am returning, in the confidence that they will, in future, cause all past difficulties to cease, and that they will yield to me a legitimate authority, such as befits for administering the sovereignty of the Provinces, without my being obliged to endure all the oppositions and counter-minings of the States, as in times past. The States must content themselves with retaining the power which they claim to have exercised under the governors of the Emperor and the King—-without attempting anything farther during my government—since I desire to do nothing of importance without the advice of the council, which will be composed legitimately of persons of the country. You will also tell them that her Majesty commands me to return unless I can obtain from the States the authority which is necessary, in order not to be governor in appearance only and on paper. And I wish that those who are good may be apprized of all this, in order that nothing may happen to their prejudice and ruin, and contrary to their wishes."

Page 1629

There were two very obvious comments to be made upon this document. Firstly, the States—de jure, as they claimed, and de facto most unquestionably—were in the position of the Emperor and King. They were the sovereigns. The Earl wished them to content themselves with the power which they exercised under the Emperor's governors. This was like requesting the Emperor, when in the Netherlands, to consider himself subject to his own governor. The second obvious reflection was that the Earl, in limiting his authority by a state-council, expected, no doubt, to appoint that body himself—as he had done before—and to allow the members only the right of talking, and of voting,—without the power of enforcing their decisions. In short, it was very plain that Leicester meant to be more absolute than ever.

As to the flat contradiction given to Buckhurst's proceedings in the matter of peace, that statement could scarcely deceive any one who had seen her Majesty's letters and instructions to her envoy.

It was also a singularly deceitful course to be adopted by Leicester towards Buckhurst and towards the Netherlands, because his own private instructions, drawn up at the same moment, expressly enjoined him to do exactly what Buckhurst had been doing. He was most strictly and earnestly commanded to deal privately with all such persons as bad influence with the "common sort of people," in order that they should use their influence with those common people in favour of peace, bringing vividly before them the excessive burthens of the war, their inability to cope with so potent a prince as Philip, and the necessity the Queen was under of discontinuing her contributions to their support. He was to make the same representations to the States, and he was further most explicitly to inform all concerned, that, in case they were unmoved by these suggestions, her Majesty had quite made up her mind to accept the handsome offers of peace held out by the King of Spain, and to leave them to their fate.

It seemed scarcely possible that the letter to Junius and the instructions for the Earl should have been dated the same week, and should have emanated from the same mind; but such was the fact.

He was likewise privately to assure Maurice and Hohenlo—in order to remove their anticipated opposition to the peace—that such care should be taken in providing for them, as that "they should have no just cause to dislike thereof, but to rest satisfied withal."

With regard to the nature of his authority, he was instructed to claim a kind of dictatorship in everything regarding the command of the forces, and the distribution of the public treasure. All offices were to be at his disposal. Every florin contributed by the States was to be placed in his hands, and spent according to his single will. He was also to have plenary power to prevent the trade in victuals with the enemy by death and confiscation.

Page 1630

If opposition to any of these proposals were made by the States-General, he was to appeal to the States of each Province; to the towns and communities, and in case it should prove impossible for him “to be furnished with the desired authority,” he was then instructed to say that it was “her Majesty’s meaning to leave them to their own counsel and defence, and to withdraw the support that she had yielded to them: seeing plainly that the continuance of the confused government now reigning among them could not but work their ruin.”

Both these papers came into Barneveld’s hands, through the agency of Ortel, the States’ envoy in England, before the arrival of the Earl in the Netherlands.

Of course they soon became the topics of excited conversation and of alarm in every part of the country. Buckhurst, touched to the quick by the reflection upon those—-proceedings of his which had been so explicitly enjoined upon him, and so reluctantly undertaken—appealed earnestly to her Majesty. He reminded her, as delicately as possible, that her honour, as well as his own, was at stake by Leicester’s insolent disavowals of her authorized ambassador. He besought her to remember “what even her own royal hand had written to the Duke of Parma;” and how much his honour was interested “by the disavowing of his dealings about the peace begun by her Majesty’s commandment.” He adjured her with much eloquence to think upon the consequences of stirring up the common and unstable multitude against their rulers; upon the pernicious effects of allowing the clergy to inflame the passions of the people against the government. “Under the name of such as have charge over the people,” said Buckhurst, “are understood the ministers and chaplains of the churches in every town, by the means of whom it, seems that his Lordship tendeth his whole purpose to attain to his desire of the administration of the sovereignty.” He assured the Queen that this scheme of Leicester to seize virtually upon that sovereignty, would be a disastrous one. “The States are resolved,” said he, “since your Majesty doth refuse the sovereignty, to lay it upon no creature else, as a thing contrary to their oath and allegiance to their country.” He reminded her also that the States had been dissatisfied with the Earl’s former administration, believing that he had exceeded his commission, and that they were determined therefore to limit his authority at his return. “Your sacred Majesty may consider,” he said, “what effect all this may work among the common and ignorant people, by intimating that, unless they shall procure him the administration of such a sovereignty as he requireth, their ruin may ensue.” Buckhurst also informed her that he had despatched Councillor Wilkes to England, in order that he might give more ample information on all these affairs by word of mouth than could well be written.

Page 1631

It need hardly be stated that Barneveld came down to the states'-house with these papers in his hand, and thundered against the delinquent and intriguing governor till the general indignation rose to an alarming height. False statements of course were made to Leicester as to the substance of the Advocate's discourse. He was said to have charged upon the English government an intention to seize forcibly upon their cities, and to transfer them to Spain on payment of the sums due to the Queen from the States, and to have declared that he had found all this treason in the secret instructions of the Earl. But Barneveld had read the instructions, to which the attention of the reader has just been called, and had strictly stated the truth which was damaging enough, without need of exaggeration.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

All business has been transacted with open doors
Beacons in the upward path of mankind
Been already crimination and recrimination more than enough
Casting up the matter "as pinchingly as possibly might be"
Disposed to throat-cutting by the ministers of the Gospel
During this, whole war, we have never seen the like
Even to grant it slowly is to deny it utterly
Evil is coming, the sooner it arrives the better
Fool who useth not wit because he hath it not
Guilty of no other crime than adhesion to the Catholic faith
Individuals walking in advance of their age
Never peace well made, he observed, without a mighty war
Rebuked him for his obedience
Respect for differences in religious opinions
Sacrificed by the Queen for faithfully obeying her orders
Succeeded so well, and had been requited so ill
Sword in hand is the best pen to write the conditions of peace
Their existence depended on war
They chose to compel no man's conscience
Torturing, hanging, embowelling of men, women, and children
Universal suffrage was not dreamed of at that day
Waiting the pleasure of a capricious and despotic woman
Who the "people" exactly were

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

CHAPTER XVI.

Situation of Sluys—Its Dutch and English Garrison—Williams writes from Sluys to the Queen—Jealousy between the Earl and States— Schemes to relieve Sluys—Which are feeble and unsuccessful—The Town Capitulates—Parma enters—Leicester enraged—-The Queen angry with the Anti-Leicestrians—Norris, Wilkes, and Buckhurst punished—Drake sails for Spain—His Exploits at Cadiz and Lisbon—He is rebuked by Elizabeth.

Page 1632

When Dante had passed through the third circle of the Inferno—a desert of red-hot sand, in which lay a multitude of victims of divine wrath, additionally tortured by an ever-descending storm of fiery flakes—he was led by Virgil out of this burning wilderness along a narrow causeway. This path was protected, he said, against the showers of flame, by the lines of vapour which rose eternally from a boiling brook. Even by such shadowy bulwarks, added the poet, do the Flemings between Kadzand and Bruges protect their land against the ever-threatening sea.

It was precisely among these slender dykes between Kadzand and Bruges that Alexander Farnese had now planted all the troops that he could muster in the field. It was his determination to conquer the city of Sluys; for the possession of that important sea-port was necessary for him as a basis for the invasion of England, which now occupied all the thoughts of his sovereign and himself.

Exactly opposite the city was the island of Kadzand, once a fair and fertile territory, with a city and many flourishing villages upon its surface, but at that epoch diminished to a small dreary sand-bank by the encroachments of the ocean.

A stream of inland water, rising a few leagues to the south of Sluys, divided itself into many branches just before reaching the city, converted the surrounding territory into a miniature archipelago—the islands of which were shifting treacherous sand-banks at low water, and submerged ones at flood—and then widening and deepening into a considerable estuary, opened for the city a capacious harbour, and an excellent although intricate passage to the sea. The city, which was well built and thriving, was so hidden in its labyrinth of canals and streamlets, that it seemed almost as difficult a matter to find Sluys as to conquer it. It afforded safe harbour for five hundred large vessels; and its possession, therefore, was extremely important for Parma. Besides these natural defences, the place was also protected by fortifications; which were as well constructed as the best of that period. There was a strong rampire and many towers. There was also a detached citadel of great strength, looking towards the sea, and there was a ravelin, called St. Anne’s, looking in the direction of Bruges. A mere riband of dry land in that quarter was all of solid earth to be found in the environs of Sluys.

The city itself stood upon firm soil, but that soil had been hollowed into a vast system of subterranean magazines, not for warlike purposes, but for cellars, as Sluys had been from a remote period the great entrepot of foreign wines in the Netherlands.

Page 1633

While the eternal disputes between Leicester and the States were going on both in Holland and in England, while the secret negotiations between Alexander Farnese and Queen slowly proceeding at Brussels and Greenwich, the Duke, notwithstanding the destitute condition of his troops, and the famine which prevailed throughout the obedient Provinces, had succeeded in bringing a little army of five thousand foot, and something less than one thousand horse, into the field. A portion of this force he placed under the command of the veteran La Motte. That distinguished campaigner had assured the commander-in-chief that the reduction of the city would be an easy achievement. Alexander soon declared that the enterprise was the most difficult one that he had ever undertaken. Yet, two years before, he had carried to its triumphant conclusion the famous siege of Antwerp. He stationed his own division upon the isle of Kadzand, and strengthened his camp by additionally fortifying those shadowy bulwarks, by which the island, since the age of Dante, had entrenched itself against the assaults of ocean.

On the other hand, La Motte, by the orders of his chief, had succeeded, after a sharp struggle, in carrying the fort of St. Anne. A still more important step was the surprising of Blankenburg, a small fortified place on the coast, about midway between Ostend and Sluys, by which the sea-communications with the former city for the relief of the beleaguered town were interrupted.

Parma's demonstrations against Sluys had commenced in the early days of June. The commandant of the place was Arnold de Groenevelt, a Dutch noble of ancient lineage and approved valour. His force was, however, very meagre, hardly numbering more than eight hundred, all Netherlanders, but counting among its officers several most distinguished personages-Nicholas de Maulde, Adolphus de Meetkerke and his younger brother, Captain Heraugiere, and other well-known partisans.

On the threatening of danger the commandant had made application to Sir William Russell, the worthy successor of Sir Philip Sidney in the government of Flushing. He had received from him, in consequence, a reinforcement of eight hundred English soldiers, under several eminent chieftains, foremost among whom were the famous Welshman Roger Williams, Captain Huntley, Baskerville, Sir Francis Vere, Ferdinando Gorges, and Captain Hart. This combined force, however, was but a slender one; there being but sixteen hundred men to protect two miles and a half of rampart, besides the forts and ravelins.

But, such as it was, no time was lost in vain regrets. The sorties against the besiegers were incessant and brilliant. On one occasion Sir Francis Vere—conspicuous in the throng, in his red mantilla, and supported only by one hundred Englishmen and Dutchmen, under Captain Baskerville—held at bay eight companies of the famous Spanish legion called the Terzo Veijo, at push of pike, took many prisoners, and forced the

Page 1634

Spaniards from the position in which they were entrenching themselves. On the other hand, Farnese declared that he had never in his life witnessed anything so unflinching as the courage of his troops; employed as they were in digging trenches where the soil was neither land nor water, exposed to inundation by the suddenly-opened sluices, to a plunging fire from the forts, and to perpetual hand-to-hand combats with an active and fearless foe, and yet pumping away in the coffer-dams-which they had invented by way of obtaining a standing-ground for their operations—as steadily and sedately as if engaged in purely pacific employments. The besieged here inspired by a courage equally remarkable. The regular garrison was small enough, but the burghers were courageous, and even the women organized themselves into a band of pioneers. This corps of Amazons, led by two female captains, rejoicing in the names of 'May in the Heart' and 'Catherine the Rose,' actually constructed an important redoubt between the citadel and the rampart, which received, in compliment to its builders, the appellation of 'Fort Venus.'

The demands of the beleaguered garrison, however, upon the States and upon Leicester were most pressing. Captain Hart swam thrice out of the city with letters to the States, to the governor-general, and to Queen Elizabeth; and the same perilous feat was performed several times by a Netherland officer. The besieged meant to sell their lives dearly, but it was obviously impossible for them, with so slender a force, to resist a very long time.

"Our ground is great and our men not so many," wrote Roger Williams to his sovereign, "but we trust in God and our valour to defend it. . . . We mean, with God's help, to make their downs red and black, and to let out every acre of our ground for a thousand of their lives, besides our own."

The Welshman was no braggart, and had proved often enough that he was more given to performances than promises. "We doubt not your Majesty will succour us," he said, "for our honest mind and plain dealing toward your royal person and dear country;" adding, as a bit of timely advice, "Royal Majesty, believe not over much your peacemakers. Had they their mind, they will not only undo your friend's abroad, but, in the end, your royal estate."

Certainly it was from no want of wholesome warning from wise statesmen and blunt soldiers that the Queen was venturing into that labyrinth of negotiation which might prove so treacherous. Never had been so inopportune a moment for that princess to listen to the voice of him who was charming her so wisely, while he was at the same moment battering the place, which was to be the basis of his operations against her realm. Her delay in sending forth Leicester, with at least a moderate contingent, to the rescue, was most pernicious. The States—ignorant of the Queen's exact relations with Spain, and exaggerating her disingenuousness into absolute perfidy became on their

own part exceedingly to blame. There is no doubt whatever that both Hollanders and English men were playing into the hands of Parma as adroitly as if he had actually directed their movements. Deep were the denunciations of Leicester and his partisans by the States' party, and incessant the complaints of the English and Dutch troops shut up in Sluys against the inactivity or treachery of Maurice and Hohenlo.

Page 1635

“If Count Maurice and his base brother, the Admiral (Justinus de Nassau), be too young to govern, must Holland and Zeeland lose their countries and towns to make them expert men of war?” asked Roger Williams.’ A pregnant question certainly, but the answer was, that by suspicion and jealousy, rather than by youth and inexperience, the arms were paralyzed which should have saved the garrison. “If these base fellows (the States) will make Count Hollock their instrument,” continued the Welshman; “to cover and maintain their folly and lewd dealing, is it necessary for her royal Majesty to suffer it? These are too great matters to be rehearsed by me; but because I am in the town, and do resolve to, sign with my blood my duty in serving my sovereign and country, I trust her Majesty will pardon me.” Certainly the gallant adventurer on whom devolved at least half the work of directing the defence of the city, had a right to express his opinions. Had he known the whole truth, however, those opinions would have been modified. And he wrote amid the smoke and turmoil of daily and nightly battle.

“Yesterday was the fifth sally we made,” he observed: “Since I followed the wars I never saw valianter captains, nor willinger soldiers. At eleven o’clock the enemy entered the ditch of our fort, with trenches upon wheels, artillery-proof. We sallied out, recovered their trenches, slew the governor of Dam, two Spanish captains, with a number of others, repulsed them into their artillery, kept the ditch until yesternight, and will recover it, with God’s help, this night, or else pay dearly for it. . . . I care not what may become of me in this world, so that her Majesty’s honour,—with the rest of honourable good friends, will think me an honest man.”

No one ever doubted the simple-hearted Welshman’s honesty, any more than his valour; but he confided in the candour of others who were somewhat more sophisticated than himself. When he warned her, royal Majesty against the peace-makers, it was impossible for him to know that the great peace-maker was Elizabeth herself.

After the expiration of a month the work had become most fatiguing. The enemy’s trenches had been advanced close to the ramparts, and desperate conflicts were of daily occurrence. The Spanish mines, too, had been pushed forward towards the extensive wine-caverns below the city, and the danger of a vast explosion or of a general assault from beneath their very feet, seemed to the inhabitants imminent. Eight days long, with scarcely an intermission, amid those sepulchral vaults, dimly-lighted with torches, Dutchmen, Englishmen, Spaniards, Italians, fought hand to hand, with pike, pistol, and dagger, within the bowels of the earth.

Page 1636

Meantime the operations of the States were not commendable. The ineradicable jealousy between the Leicestrians and the Barneveldians had done its work. There was no hearty effort for the relief of Sluys. There were suspicions that, if saved, the town would only be taken possession of by the Earl of Leicester, as an additional vantage-point for coercing the country into subjection to his arbitrary authority. Perhaps it would be transferred to Philip by Elizabeth as part of the price for peace. There was a growing feeling in Holland and Zeeland that as those Provinces bore all the expense of the war, it was an imperative necessity that they should limit their operations to the defence of their own soil. The suspicions as to the policy of the English government were sapping the very foundations of the alliance, and there was small disposition on the part of the Hollanders, therefore, to protect what remained of Flanders, and thus to strengthen the hands of her whom they were beginning to look upon as an enemy.

Maurice and Hohenlo made, however, a foray into Brabant, by way of diversion to the siege of Sluys, and thus compelled Farnese to detach a considerable force under Haultepenne into that country, and thereby to weaken himself. The expedition of Maurice was not unsuccessful. There was some sharp skirmishing between Hohenlo and Haultepenne, in which the latter, one of the most valuable and distinguished generals on the royal side, was defeated and slain; the fort of Engel, near Bois-le-Duc, was taken, and that important city itself endangered; but, on the other hand, the contingent on which Leicester relied from the States to assist in relieving Sluys was not forthcoming.

For, meantime, the governor-general had at last been sent back by his sovereign to the post which he had so long abandoned. Leaving Leicester House on the 4th July (N. S.), he had come on board the fleet two days afterwards at Margate. He was bringing with him to the Netherlands three thousand fresh infantry, and thirty thousand pounds, of which sum fifteen thousand pounds had been at last wrung from Elizabeth as an extra loan, in place of the sixty thousand pounds which the States had requested. As he sailed past Ostend and towards Flushing, the Earl was witness to the constant cannonading between the besieged city and the camp of Farnese, and saw that the work could hardly be more serious; for in one short day more shots were fired than had ever been known before in a single day in all Parma’s experience.

Arriving at Flushing, the governor-general was well received by the inhabitants; but the mischief, which had been set a-foot six months before, had done its work. The political intrigues, disputes, and the conflicting party-organizations, have already been set in great detail before the reader, in order that their effect might now be thoroughly understood without—explanation. The governor-general came to Flushing at a most critical moment. The fate of all the Spanish Netherlands, of Sluys, and with it the whole of Philip and Parma’s great project, were, in Farnese’s own language, hanging by a thread.

Page 1637

It would have been possible—had the transactions of the past six months, so far as regarded Holland and England, been the reverse of what they had been—to save the city; and, by a cordial and united effort, for the two countries to deal the Spanish power such a blow, that summer, as would have paralyzed it for a long time to come, and have placed both commonwealths in comparative security.

Instead of all this, general distrust and mutual jealousy prevailed. Leicester had, previously to his departure from England, summoned the States to meet him at Dort upon his arrival. Not a soul appeared. Such of the state-councillors as were his creatures came to him, and Count Maurice made a visit of ceremony. Discussions about a plan for relieving the siege became mere scenes of bickering and confusion. The officers within Sluys were desirous that a fleet should force its way into the harbour, while, at the same time, the English army, strengthened by the contingent which Leicester had demanded from the States, should advance against the Duke of Parma by land. It was, in truth, the only way to succour the place. The scheme was quite practicable. Leicester recommended it, the Hollanders seemed to favour it, Commandant Groenevelt and Roger Williams urged it.

“I do assure you,” wrote the honest Welshman to Leicester, “if you will come afore this town, with as many galliots and as many flat-bottomed boats as can cause two men-of-war to enter, they cannot stop their passage, if, your mariners will do a quarter of their duty, as I saw them do divers times. Before, they make their entrance, we will come with our boats, and fight with the greatest part, and show them there is no such great danger. Were it not for my wounded arm, I would be, in your first boat to enter. Notwithstanding, I and other Englishmen will approach their boats in such sort, that we will force them to give their saker of artillery upon us. If, your Excellency will give ear unto those false lewd fellows (the Captain meant the States-General), you shall lose great opportunity. Within ten or twelve days the enemy will make his bridge from Kadzand unto St. Anne, and force you to hazard battle before you succour this town. Let my Lord Willoughby and Sir William Russell land at Terhoven, right against Kadzand, with 4000, and entrench hard by the waterside, where their boats can carry them victual and munition. They may approach by trenches without engaging any dangerous fight . . . . We dare not show the estate of this town more than we have done by Captain Herte. We must fight this night within our rampart in the fort. You may sure the world here are no Hamerts, but valiant captains and valiant soldiers, such as, with God’s help, had rather be buried in the place than be disgraced in any point that belongs to such a number of men-of-war.”

Page 1638

But in vain did the governor of the place, stout Arnold Froenevelt, assisted by the rough and direct eloquence of Roger Williams, urge upon the Earl of Leicester and the States-General the necessity and the practicability of the plan proposed. The fleet never entered the harbour. There was no William of Orange to save Antwerp and Sluys, as Leyden had once been saved, and his son was not old enough to unravel the web of intrigue by which he was surrounded, or to direct the whole energies of the commonwealth towards an all-important end. Leicester had lost all influence, all authority, nor were his military abilities equal to the occasion, even if he had been cordially obeyed.

Ten days longer the perpetual battles on the ramparts and within the mines continued, the plans conveyed by the bold swimmer, Captain Hart, for saving the place were still unattempted, and the city was tottering to its fall. “Had Captain Hart’s words taken place,” wrote Williams, bitterly, “we had been succoured, or, if my letters had prevailed, our pain had been, no peril: All wars are best executed in sight of the enemy . . . . The last night of June (10th July, N. S.) the enemy entered the ditches of our fort in three several places, continuing in fight in mine and on rampart for the space of eight nights. The ninth; he battered us furiously, made a breach of five score paces suitable for horse and man. That day be attempted us in all, places with a general, assault for the space of almost five hours.”

The citadel was now lost. It had been gallantly defended; and it was thenceforth necessary to hold the town itself, in the very teeth of an overwhelming force. “We were forced to quit the fort,” said-Sir Roger, “leaving nothing behind us but bare earth. But here we do remain resolutely to be buried, rather than to be dishonoured in the least point.”

It was still possible for the fleet to succour the city. “I do assure you,” said-Williams, “that your captains and mariners do not their duty unless they enter with no great loss; but you must consider that no wars may be made without danger. What you mean to do, we beseech you to do with expedition, and persuade yourself that we will die valiant, honest-men. Your Excellency will do well to thank the old President de Meetkerk far the honesty and valour of his son.”

Count Maurice and his natural brother, the Admiral, now undertook the succour by sea; but, according to the Leicestrians, they continued dilatory and incompetent. At any rate, it is certain that they did nothing. At last, Parma had completed the bridge; whose construction, was so much dreaded: The haven was now enclosed by a strong wooden structure, resting an boats, on a plan similar to that of the famous bridge with which he had two years before bridled the Scheldt, and Sluys was thus completely shut in from the sea. Fire-ships were now constructed, by order of Leicester—feeble imitations: of the floating volcanoes of Gianihelli—and

Page 1639

it was agreed that they should be sent against the bridge with the first flood-tide. The propitious moment never seemed to arrive, however, and, meantime, the citizens of Flushing, of their own accord, declared that they would themselves equip and conduct a fleet into the harbour of Sluys. But the Nassaus are said to have expressed great disgust that low-born burghers should presume to meddle with so important an enterprise, which of right belonged to their family. Thus, in the midst of these altercations and contradictory schemes; the month of July wore away, and the city was reduced to its last gasp.

For the cannonading had thoroughly done its work. Eighteen days long the burghers and what remained of the garrison had lived upon the ramparts, never leaving their posts, but eating, sleeping, and fighting day and night. Of the sixteen hundred Dutch and English but seven hundred remained. At last a swimming messenger was sent out by the besieged with despatches for the States, to the purport that the city could hold out no longer. A breach in the wall had been effected wide enough to admit a hundred men abreast. Sluys had, in truth, already fallen, and it was hopeless any longer to conceal the fact. If not relieved within a day or two, the garrison would be obliged to surrender; but they distinctly stated, that they had all pledged themselves, soldiers and burghers, men, women, and all, unless the most honourable terms were granted, to set fire to the city in a hundred places, and then sally, in mass, from the gates, determined to fight their way through, or be slain in the attempt. The messenger who carried these despatches was drowned, but the letters were saved, and fell into Parma's hands.

At the same moment, Leicester was making, at last, an effort to raise the siege. He brought three or four thousand men from Flushing, and landed them at Ostend; thence he marched to Blanckenburg. He supposed that if he could secure that little port, and thus cut the Duke completely off from the sea, he should force the Spanish commander to raise (or at least suspend) the siege in order to give him battle. Meantime, an opportunity would be afforded for Maurice and Hohenlo to force an entrance into the harbour of Sluys, In this conjecture he was quite correct; but unfortunately he did not thoroughly carry out his own scheme. If the Earl had established himself at Blanckenburg, it would have been necessary for Parma—as he himself subsequently declared-to raise the siege. Leicester carried the outposts of the place successfully; but, so soon as Farnese was aware of this demonstration, he detached a few companies with orders to skirmish with the enemy until the commander-in-chief, with as large a force as he could spare, should come in person to his support. To the unexpected gratification of Farnese, however, no sooner did the advancing Spaniards come in sight, than the Earl, supposing himself invaded by the whole of the Duke's army, under their famous general, and not feeling himself strong enough for such an encounter, retired, with great precipitation, to his boats, re-embarked his troops with the utmost celerity, and set sail for Ostend.

Page 1640

The next night had been fixed for sending forth the fireships against the bridge, and for the entrance of the fleet into the harbour. One fire-ship floated a little way towards the bridge and exploded ingloriously. Leicester rowed in his barge about the fleet, superintending the soundings and markings of the channel, and hastening the preparations; but, as the decisive moment approached, the pilots who had promised to conduct the expedition came aboard his pinnace and positively refused to have aught to do with the enterprise, which they now declared an impossibility. The Earl was furious with the pilots, with Maurice, with Hohenlo, with Admiral de Nassau, with the States, with all the world. He stormed and raged and beat his breast, but all in vain. His ferocity would have been more useful the day before, in face of the Spaniards, than now, against the Zeeland mariners: but the invasion by the fleet alone, unsupported by a successful land-operation, was pronounced impracticable, and very soon the relieving fleet was seen by the distressed garrison sailing away from the neighbourhood, and it soon disappeared beneath the horizon. Their fate was sealed. They entered into treaty with Parma, who, secretly instructed, as has been seen, of their desperate intentions, in case any but the most honourable conditions were offered, granted those conditions. The garrison were allowed to go out with colours displayed, lighted matches, bullet in mouth, and with bag and baggage. Such burghers as chose to conform to the government of Spain and the church of Rome; were permitted to remain. Those who preferred to depart were allowed reasonable time to make their necessary arrangements.

“We have hurt and slain very near eight hundred,” said Sir Roger Williams. “We had not powder to fight two hours. There was a breach of almost four hundred paces, another of three score, another of fifty, saltable for horse and men. We had lain continually eighteen nights all on the breaches. He gave us honourable composition. Had the state of England lain on it, our lives could not defend the place, three hours, for half the rampires were his, neither had we any pioneers but ourselves. We were sold by their negligence who are now angry with us.”

On the 5th August Parma entered the city. Roger Williams with his gilt morion rather battered, and his great plume of feathers much bedraggled-was a witness to the victor’s entrance. Alexander saluted respectfully an officer so well known to him by reputation, and with some complimentary remarks urged him to enter the Spanish service, and to take the field against the Turks.

“My sword,” replied the doughty Welshman, “belongs to her royal Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, above and before all the world. When her Highness has no farther use for it, it is at the service of the King of Navarre.” Considering himself sufficiently answered, the Duke then requested Sir Roger to point out Captain Baskerville—very conspicuous by a greater plume of feathers than even that of the Welshman himself—and embraced that officer; when presented to him, before all his staff. “There serves no prince in Europe a braver man than this Englishman,” cried Alexander, who well knew how to appreciate high military qualities, whether in his own army or in that of his foes.

Page 1641

The garrison then retired, Sluy's became Spanish, and a capacious harbour, just opposite the English coast, was in Parma's hands. Sir Roger Williams was despatched by Leicester to bear the melancholy tidings to his government, and the Queen was requested to cherish the honest Welshman, and at least to set him on horseback; for he was of himself not rich enough to buy even a saddle. It is painful to say that the captain did not succeed in getting the horse.

The Earl was furious in his invectives against Hohenlo, against Maurice, against the States, uniformly ascribing the loss of Sluy's to negligence and faction. As for Sir John Norris, he protested that his misdeeds in regard to this business would, in King Henry *viii*.'s time, have "cost him his pate."

The loss of Sluys was the beginning and foreshadowed the inevitable end of Leicester's second administration. The inaction of the States was one of the causes of its loss. Distrust of Leicester was the cause of the inaction. Sir William Russell, Lord Willoughby, Sir William Pelham, and other English officers, united in statements exonerating the Earl from all blame for the great failure to relieve the place. At the same time, it could hardly be maintained that his expedition to Blanckenburg and his precipitate retreat on the first appearance of the enemy were proofs of consummate generalship. He took no blame to himself for the disaster; but he and his partisans were very liberal in their denunciations of the Hollanders, and Leicester was even ungrateful enough to censure Roger Williams, whose life had been passed, as it were, at push of pike with the Spaniards, and who was one of his own most devoted adherents.

The Queen was much exasperated when informed of the fall of the city. She severely denounced the Netherlanders, and even went so far as to express dissatisfaction with the great Leicester himself. Meantime, Farnese was well satisfied with his triumph, for he had been informed that "all England was about to charge upon him," in order to relieve the place. All England, however, had been but feebly represented by three thousand raw recruits with a paltry sum of L15,000 to help pay a long bill of arrears.

Wilkes and Norris had taken their departure from the Netherlands before the termination of the siege, and immediately after the return of Leicester. They did not think it expedient to wait upon the governor before leaving the country, for they had very good reason to believe that such an opportunity of personal vengeance would be turned to account by the Earl. Wilkes had already avowed his intention of making his escape without being dandled with leave-takings, and no doubt he was right. The Earl was indignant when he found that they had given him the slip, and denounced them with fresh acrimony to the Queen, imploring her to wreak full measure of wrath upon their heads; and he well knew that his entreaties would meet with the royal attention.

Page 1642

Buckhurst had a parting interview with the governor-general, at which Killigrew and Beale, the new English counsellors who had replaced Wilkes and Clerk, were present. The conversation was marked by insolence on the part of Leicester, and by much bitterness on that of Buckhurst. The parting envoy refused to lay before the Earl a full statement of the grievances between the States-General and the governor, on the ground that Leicester had no right to be judge in his own cause. The matter, he said, should be laid before the Queen in council, and by her august decision he was willing to abide. On every other subject he was ready to give any information in his power. The interview lasted a whole forenoon and afternoon. Buckhurst, according to his own statement, answered, freely all questions put to him by Leicester and his counsellors; while, if the report of those personages is to be trusted, he passionately refused to make any satisfactory communication. Under the circumstances, however, it may well be believed that no satisfactory communication was possible.

On arriving in England, Sir John Norris was forbidden to come into her Majesty's presence, Wilkes was thrown into the Fleet Prison, and Buckhurst was confined in his own country house.

Norris had done absolutely nothing, which, even by implication, could be construed into a dereliction of duty; but it was sufficient that he was hated by Leicester, who had not scrupled, over and over again, to denounce this first general of England as a fool, a coward, a knave, and a liar.

As for Wilkes, his only crime was a most conscientious discharge of his duty, in the course of which he had found cause to modify his abstract opinions in regard to the origin of sovereignty, and had come reluctantly to the conviction that Leicester's unpopularity had made perhaps another governor-general desirable. But this admission had only been made privately and with extreme caution; while, on the other hand, he had constantly defended the absent Earl, with all the eloquence at his command. But the hatred cf Leicester was sufficient to consign this able and painstaking public servant to a prison; and thus was a man of worth, honour, and talent, who had been placed in a position of grave responsibility and immense fatigue, and who had done his duty like an upright, straight-forward Englishman, sacrificed to the wrath of a favourite. "Surely, Mr. Secretary," said the Earl, "there was never a falser creature, a more seditious wretch, than Wilkes. He is a villain, a devil, without faith or religion."

As for Buckhurst himself, it is unnecessary to say a word in his defence. The story of his mission has been completely detailed from the most authentic and secret documents, and there is not a single line written to the Queen, to her ministers, to the States, to any public body or to any private friend, in England or elsewhere, that does not reflect honour on his name. With sagacity, without passion, with unaffected

Page 1643

sincerity, he had unravelled the complicated web of Netherland politics, and, with clear vision, had penetrated the designs of the mighty enemy whom England and Holland had to encounter in mortal combat. He had pointed out the errors of the Earl's administration—he had fearlessly, earnestly, but respectfully deplored the misplaced parsimony of the Queen—he had warned her against the delusions which had taken possession of her keen intellect—he had done—his best to place the governor-general upon good terms with the States and with his sovereign; but it had been impossible for him to further his schemes for the acquisition of a virtual sovereignty over the Netherlands, or to extinguish the suspicions of the States that the Queen was secretly negotiating with the Spaniard, when he knew those suspicions to be just.

For deeds, such as these, the able and high-minded ambassador, the accomplished statesman and poet, was forbidden to approach his sovereign's presence, and was ignominiously imprisoned in his own house until the death of Leicester. After that event, Buckhurst emerged from confinement, received the order of the garter and the Earldom of Dorset, and on the death of Burghley succeeded that statesman in the office of Lord-Treasurer. Such was the substantial recognition of the merits of a man who was now disgraced for the conscientious discharge of the most important functions that had yet been confided to him.

It would be a thankless and superfluous task to give the details of the renewed attempt, during a few months, made by Leicester to govern the Provinces. His second administration consisted mainly of the same altercations with the States, on the subject of sovereignty, the same mutual recriminations and wranglings, that had characterized the period of his former rule. He rarely met the States in person, and almost never resided at the Hague, holding his court at Middleburg, Dort, or Utrecht, as his humour led him.

The one great feature of the autumn of 1587 was the private negotiation between Elizabeth and the Duke of Parma.

Before taking a glance at the nature of those secrets, however, it is necessary to make a passing allusion to an event which might have seemed likely to render all pacific communications with Spain, whether secret or open, superfluous.

For while so much time had been lost in England and Holland, by misunderstandings and jealousies, there was one Englishman who had not been losing time. In the winter and early spring of 1587, the Devonshire skipper had organized that expedition which he had come to the Netherlands, the preceding autumn, to discuss. He meant to aim a blow at the very heart of that project which Philip was shrouding with so much mystery, and which Elizabeth was attempting to counteract by so much diplomacy.

Page 1644

On the 2nd April, Francis Drake sailed from Plymouth with four ships belonging to the Queen, and with twenty-four furnished by the merchants of London, and other private individuals. It was a bold buccaneering expedition—combining chivalrous enterprise with the chance of enormous profit—which was most suited to the character of English adventurers at that expanding epoch. For it was by England, not by Elizabeth, that the quarrel with Spain was felt to be a mortal one. It was England, not its sovereign, that was instinctively arming, at all points, to grapple with the great enemy of European liberty. It was the spirit of self-help, of self-reliance, which was prompting the English nation to take the great work of the age into its own hands. The mercantile instinct of the nation was flattered with the prospect of gain, the martial quality of its patrician and of its plebeian blood was eager to confront danger, the great Protestant mutiny. Against a decrepit superstition in combination with an aggressive tyranny, all impelled the best energies of the English people against Spain, as the embodiment of all which was odious and menacing to them, and with which they felt that the life and death struggle could not long be deferred.

And of these various tendencies, there were no more fitting representatives than Drake and Frobisher, Hawkins and Essex, Cavendish and Grenfell, and the other privateersmen of the sixteenth century. The same greed for danger, for gold, and for power, which, seven centuries before, had sent the Norman race forth to conquer all Christendom, was now sending its Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman kindred to take possession of the old world and the new.

“The wind commands me away,” said Drake on the 2nd April, 1587; “our ship is under sail. God grant that we may so live in His fear, that the enemy may have cause to say that God doth fight for her Majesty abroad as well as at home.”

But he felt that he was not without enemies behind him, for the strong influence brought to bear against the bold policy which Walsingham favoured, was no secret to Drake. “If we deserve ill,” said he, “let us be punished. If we discharge our duty, in doing our best, it is a hard measure to be reported ill by those who will either keep their fingers out of the fire; or who too well affect that alteration in our government which I hope in God they shall never live to see.” In latitude 40 deg. he spoke two Zeeland ships, homeward bound, and obtained information of great warlike stores accumulating in Cadiz and Lisbon. His mind was instantly made up. Fortunately, the pinnace which the Queen despatched with orders to stay his hand in the very act of smiting her great adversary, did not sail fast enough to overtake the swift corsair and his fleet. Sir Francis had too promptly obeyed the wind, when it “commanded him away,” to receive the royal countermand. On the 19th April, the English ships entered the harbour

Page 1645

of Cadiz, and destroyed ten thousand tons of shipping, with their contents, in the very face of a dozen great galleys, which the nimble English vessels soon drove under their forts for shelter. Two nights and a day, Sir Francis, that “hater of idleness,” was steadily doing his work; unloading, rifling, scuttling, sinking, and burning those transportships which contained a portion of the preparations painfully made by Philip for his great enterprise. Pipe-staves and spikes, horse-shoes and saddles, timber and cutlasses, wine, oil, figs, raisins, biscuits, and flour, a miscellaneous mass of ingredients long brewing for the trouble of England, were emptied into the harbour, and before the second night, the blaze of a hundred and fifty burning vessels played merrily upon the grim walls of Philip’s fortresses. Some of these ships were of the largest size then known. There was one belonging to Marquis Santa Cruz of 1500 tons, there was a Biscayan of 1200, there were several others of 1000, 800, and of nearly equal dimensions.

Thence sailing for Lisbon, Sir Francis, captured and destroyed a hundred vessels more, appropriating what was portable of the cargoes, and annihilating the rest. At Lisbon, Marquis Santa Cruz, lord high admiral of Spain and generalissimo of the invasion, looked on, mortified and amazed, but offering no combat, while the Plymouth privateersman swept the harbour of the great monarch of the world. After thoroughly accomplishing his work, Drake sent a message to Santa Cruz, proposing to exchange his prisoners for such Englishmen as might then be confined in Spain. But the marquis denied all prisoners. Thereupon Sir Francis decided to sell his captives to the Moors, and to appropriate the proceeds of the sale towards the purchase of English slaves put of the same bondage. Such was the fortune of war in the sixteenth century.

Having dealt these great blows, Drake set sail again from Lisbon, and, twenty leagues from St. Michaels, fell in with one of those famous Spanish East Indiamen, called carracks, then the great wonder of the seas. This vessel, San Felipe by name, with a cargo of extraordinary value, was easily captured, and Sir Francis now determined to return. He had done a good piece of work in a few weeks, but he was by no means of opinion that he had materially crippled the enemy. On the contrary, he gave the government warning as to the enormous power and vast preparations of Spain. “There would be forty thousand men under way ere long,” he said, “well equipped and provisioned;” and he stated, as the result of personal observation, that England could not be too energetic in, its measures of resistance. He had done something with his little fleet, but he was no braggart, and had no disposition to underrate the enemy’s power. “God make us all thankful again and again,” he observed, “that we have, although it be little, made a beginning upon the coast of Spain.” And modestly as he spoke of what he had accomplished, so

Page 1646

with quiet self-reliance did he allude to the probable consequences. It was certain, he intimated, that the enemy would soon seek revenge with all his strength, and “with all the devices and traps he could devise.” This was a matter which could not be doubted. “But,” said Sir Francis, “I thank them much that they have staid so long, and when they come they shall be but the sons of mortal men.”

Perhaps the most precious result of the expedition, was the lesson which the Englishmen had thus learned in handling the great galleys of Spain. It might soon stand them in stead. The little war-vessels which had come from Plymouth, had sailed round and round these vast unwieldy hulks, and had fairly driven them off the field, with very slight damage to themselves. Sir Francis had already taught the mariners of England, even if he had done nothing else by this famous Cadiz expedition, that an armada, of Spain might not be so invincible as men imagined.

Yet when the conqueror returned from his great foray, he received no laurels. His sovereign met him, not with smiles, but with frowns and cold rebukes. He had done his duty, and helped to save her endangered throne, but Elizabeth was now the dear friend of Alexander Farnese, and in amicable correspondence with his royal master. This “little” beginning on the coast of Spain might not seem to his Catholic Majesty a matter to be thankful for, nor be likely to further a pacification, and so Elizabeth hastened to disavow her Plymouth captain.’

["True it is, and I avow it on my faith, her Majesty did send a ship expressly before he went to Cadiz with a message by letters charging Sir Francis Drake not to show any act of hostility, which messenger by contrary winds could never come to the place where he was, but was constrained to come home, and hearing of Sir F. Drake’s actions, her Majesty commanded the party that returned to have been punished, but that he acquitted himself by the oaths of himself and all his company. And so unwitting yea unwilling to her Majesty those actions were committed by Sir F. Drake, for the which her Majesty is as yet greatly offended with him.” Burghley to Andreas de Loo, 18 July, 1587. Flanders Correspondence.’ (S. P. Office *Ms*.)]

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

The blaze of a hundred and fifty burning vessels
We were sold by their negligence who are now angry with us

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year’s Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 54, 1587

CHAPTER XVII.

Page 1647

Secret Treaty between Queen and Parma—Excitement and Alarm in the States—-Religious Persecution in England—Queen's Sincerity toward Spain—Language and Letters of Parma—Negotiations of De Loo— English Commissioners appointed—-Parma's affectionate Letter to the Queen—Philip at his Writing-Table—His Plots with Parma against England—Parma's secret Letters to the King—Philip's Letters to Parma Wonderful Duplicity of Philip—His sanguine Views as to England—He is reluctant to hear of the Obstacles—and imagines Parma in England—But Alexander's Difficulties are great—He denounces Philip's wild Schemes—Walsingham aware of the Spanish Plot—which the States well understand—Leicester's great Unpopularity—The Queen warned against Treating—Leicester's Schemes against Barneveld—Leicestrian Conspiracy at Leyden—The Plot to seize the City discovered—Three Ringleaders sentenced to Death— Civil War in France—Victory gained by Navarre, and one by Guise— Queen recalls Leicester—Who retires on ill Terms with the States— Queen warned as to Spanish Designs—Result's of Leicester's Administration.

The course of Elizabeth towards the Provinces, in the matter of the peace, was certainly not ingenuous, but it was not absolutely deceitful. She concealed and denied the negotiations, when the Netherland statesmen were perfectly aware of their existence, if not of their tenour; but she was not prepared, as they suspected, to sacrifice their liberties and their religion, as the price of her own reconciliation with Spain. Her attitude towards the States was imperious, over-bearing, and abusive. She had allowed the Earl of Leicester to return, she said, because of her love for the poor and oppressed people, but in many of her official and in all her private communications, she denounced the men who governed that people as ungrateful wretches and impudent liars!

These were the corrosives and vinegar which she thought suitable for the case; and the Earl was never weary in depicting the same statesmen as seditious, pestilent, self-seeking, mischief-making traitors. These secret, informal negotiations, had been carried on during most of the year 1587. It was the "comptroller's peace;", as Walsingham contemptuously designated the attempted treaty; for it will be recollected that Sir James Croft, a personage of very mediocre abilities, had always been more busy than any other English politician in these transactions. He acted; however, on the inspiration of Burghley, who drew his own from the fountainhead.

But it was in vain for the Queen to affect concealment. The States knew everything which was passing, before Leicester knew. His own secret instructions reached the Netherlands before he did. His secretary, Junius, was thrown into prison, and his master's letter taken from him, before there had been any time to act upon its treacherous suggestions. When the Earl wrote letters with, his own hand to his sovereign,

Page 1648

of so secret a nature that he did not even retain a single copy for himself, for fear of discovery, he found, to his infinite disgust, that the States were at once provided with an authentic transcript of every line that he had written. It was therefore useless, almost puerile, to deny facts which were quite as much within the knowledge of the Netherlanders as of himself. The worst consequence of the concealment was, that a deeper treachery was thought possible than actually existed. "The fellow they call Barneveld," as Leicester was in the habit of designating one of the first statesmen in Europe, was perhaps justified, knowing what he did, in suspecting more. Being furnished with a list of commissioners, already secretly agreed upon between the English and Spanish governments, to treat for peace, while at the same time the Earl was beating his breast, and flatly denying that there was any intention of treating with Parma at all, it was not unnatural that he should imagine a still wider and deeper scheme than really existed, against the best interests of his country. He may have expressed, in private conversation, some suspicions of this nature, but there is direct evidence that he never stated in public anything which was not afterwards proved to be matter of fact, or of legitimate inference from the secret document which had come into his hands. The Queen exhausted herself in opprobious language against those who dared to impute to her a design to obtain possession of the cities and strong places of the Netherlands, in order to secure a position in which to compel the Provinces into obedience to her policy. She urged, with much logic, that as she had refused the sovereignty of the whole country when offered to her, she was not likely to form surreptitious schemes to make herself mistress of a portion of it. On the other hand, it was very obvious, that to accept the sovereignty of Philip's rebellious Provinces, was to declare war upon Philip; whereas, had she been pacifically inclined towards that sovereign, and treacherously disposed towards the Netherlands, it would be a decided advantage to her to have those strong places in her power. But the suspicions as to her good faith were exaggerated. As to the intentions of Leicester, the States were justified in their almost unlimited distrust. It is very certain that both in 1586, and again, at this very moment, when Elizabeth was most vehement in denouncing such aspersions on her government, he had unequivocally declared to her his intention of getting possession, if possible, of several cities, and of the whole Island of Walcheren, which, together with the cautionary towns already in his power, would enable the Queen to make good terms for herself with Spain, "if the worst came to the, worst." It will also soon be shown that he did his best to carry these schemes into execution. There is no evidence, however, and no probability, that he had received the royal commands to perpetrate such a crime.

Page 1649

The States believed also, that in those secret negotiations with Parma the Queen was disposed to sacrifice the religious interests of the Netherlands. In this they were mistaken. But they had reason for their mistake, because the negotiator De Loo, had expressly said, that, in her overtures to Farnese, she had abandoned that point altogether. If this had been so, it would have simply been a consent on the part of Elizabeth, that the Catholic religion and the inquisition should be re-established in the Provinces, to the exclusion of every other form of worship or polity. In truth, however, the position taken by her Majesty on the subject was as fair as could be reasonably expected. Certainly she was no advocate for religious liberty. She chose that her own subjects should be Protestants, because she had chosen to be a Protestant herself, and because it was an incident of her supremacy, to dictate uniformity of creed to all beneath her sceptre. No more than her father, who sent to the stake or gallows heretics to transubstantiation as well as believers in the Pope, had Elizabeth the faintest idea of religious freedom. Heretics to the English Church were persecuted, fined, imprisoned, mutilated, and murdered, by sword, rope, and fire. In some respects, the practice towards those who dissented from Elizabeth was more immoral and illogical, even if less cruel, than that to which those were subjected who rebelled against Sixtus. The Act of Uniformity required Papists to assist at the Protestant worship, but wealthy Papists could obtain immunity by an enormous fine. The Roman excuse to destroy bodies in order to save souls, could scarcely be alleged by a Church which might be bribed into connivance at heresy, and which derived a revenue from the very nonconformity for which humbler victims were sent to the gallows. It would, however, be unjust in the extreme to overlook the enormous difference in the amount of persecution, exercised respectively by the Protestant and the Roman Church. It is probable that not many more than two hundred Catholics were executed as such, in Elizabeth’s reign, and this was ten score too many. But what was this against eight hundred heretics burned, hanged, and drowned, in one Easter week by Alva, against the eighteen thousand two hundred went to stake and scaffold, as he boasted during his administration, against the vast numbers of Protestants, whether they be counted by tens or by hundreds of thousands, who perished by the edicts of Charles V., in the Netherlands, or in the single Saint Bartholomew Massacre in France? Moreover, it should never be forgotten—from undue anxiety for impartiality—that most of the Catholics who were executed in England, suffered as conspirators rather than as heretics. No foreign potentate, claiming to be vicegerent of Christ, had denounced Philip as a bastard and, usurper, or had, by means of a blasphemous fiction, which then was a terrible reality, severed the bonds of allegiance

Page 1650

by which his subjects were held, cut him off from all communion with his fellow-creatures, and promised temporal rewards and a crown of glory in heaven to those who should succeed in depriving him of throne and life. Yet this was the position of Elizabeth. It was war to the knife between her and Rome, declared by Rome itself; nor was there any doubt whatever that the Seminary Priests—seedlings transplanted from foreign nurseries, which were as watered gardens for the growth of treason—were a perpetually organized band of conspirators and assassins, with whom it was hardly an act of excessive barbarity to deal in somewhat summary fashion. Doubtless it would have been a more lofty policy, and a far more intelligent one, to extend towards the Catholics of England, who as a body were loyal to their country, an ample toleration. But it could scarcely be expected that Elizabeth Tudor, as imperious and absolute by temperament as her father had ever been, would be capable of embodying that great principle.

When, in the preliminaries to the negotiations of 1587, therefore, it was urged on the part of Spain, that the Queen was demanding a concession of religious liberty from Philip to the Netherlanders which she refused to English heretics, and that he only claimed the same right of dictating a creed to his subjects which she exercised in regard to her own, Lord Burghley replied that the statement was correct. The Queen permitted—it was true—no man to profess any religion but the one which she professed. At the same time it was declared to be unjust, that those persons in the Netherlands who had been for years in the habit of practising Protestant rites, should be suddenly compelled, without instruction, to abandon that form of worship. It was well known that many would rather die than submit to such oppression, and it was affirmed that the exercise of this cruelty would be resisted by her to the uttermost. There was no hint of the propriety—-on any logical basis—of leaving the question of creed as a matter between man and his Maker, with which any dictation on the part of crown or state was an act of odious tyranny. There was not even a suggestion that the Protestant doctrines were true, and the Catholic doctrines false. The matter was merely taken up on the ‘uti possidetis’ principle, that they who had acquired the fact of Protestant worship had a right to retain it, and could not justly be deprived of it, except by instruction and persuasion. It was also affirmed that it was not the English practice to inquire into men’s consciences. It would have been difficult, however, to make that very clear to Philip’s comprehension, because, if men, women, and children, were scourged with rods, imprisoned and hanged, if they refused to conform publicly to a ceremony at which their consciences revolted-unless they had money enough to purchase non-conformity—it seemed to be the practice to inquire very effectively into their consciences.

Page 1651

But if there was a certain degree of disingenuousness on the part of Elizabeth towards the States, her attitude towards Parma was one of perfect sincerity. A perusal of the secret correspondence leaves no doubt whatever on that point. She was seriously and fervently desirous of peace with Spain. On the part of Farnese and his master, there was the most unscrupulous mendacity, while the confiding simplicity and truthfulness of the Queen in these negotiations was almost pathetic. Especially she declared her trust in the loyal and upright character of Parma, in which she was sure of never being disappointed. It is only doing justice to Alexander to say that he was as much deceived by her frankness as she by his falsehood. It never entered his head that a royal personage and the trusted counsellors of a great kingdom could be telling the truth in a secret international transaction, and he justified the industry with which his master and himself piled fiction upon fiction, by their utter disbelief in every word which came to them from England.

The private negotiations had been commenced, or rather had been renewed, very early in February of this year. During the whole critical period which preceded and followed the execution of Mary, in the course of which the language of Elizabeth towards the States had been so shrewish, there had been the gentlest diplomatic cooing between Farnese and herself. It was—Dear Cousin, you know how truly I confide in your sincerity, how anxious I am that this most desirable peace should be arranged; and it was—Sacred Majesty, you know how much joy I feel in your desire for the repose of the world, and for a solid peace between your Highness and the King my master; how much I delight in concord—how incapable I am by ambiguous words of spinning out these transactions, or of deceiving your Majesty, and what a hatred I feel for steel, fire, and blood.'

Four or five months rolled on, during which Leicester had been wasting time in England, Farnese wasting none before Sluys, and the States doing their best to counteract the schemes both of their enemy and of their ally. De Loo made a visit, in July, to the camp of the Duke of Parma, and received the warmest assurances of his pacific dispositions. "I am much pained," said Alexander, "with this procrastination. I am so full of sincerity myself, that it seems to me a very strange matter, this hostile descent by Drake upon the coasts of Spain. The result of such courses will be, that the King will end by being exasperated, and I shall be touched in my honour—so great is the hopes I have held out of being able to secure a peace. I have ever been and I still am most anxious for concord, from the affection I bear to her sacred Majesty. I have been obliged, much against my will, to take the field again. I could wish now that our negotiations might terminate before the arrival of my fresh troops, namely, 9000 Spaniards and 9000 Italians, which, with

Page 1652

Walloons, Germans, and Lorrainers, will give me an effective total of 30,000 soldiers. Of this I give you my word as a gentleman. Go, then, Andrew de Loo," continued the Duke, "write to her sacred Majesty, that I desire to make peace; and to serve her faithfully; and that I shall not change my mind, even in case of any great success, for I like to proceed rather by the ways of love than of rigour and effusion of bleed."

"I can assure you, oh, most serene Duke," replied Andrew, "that the most serene Queen is in the very same dispositions with yourself."

"Excellent well then," said the Duke, "we shall come to an agreement at once, and the sooner the deputies on both sides are appointed the better."

A feeble proposition was then made, on the part of the peace-loving Andrew, that the hostile operations against Sluy's should be at once terminated. But this did not seem so clear to the most serene Duke. He had gone to great expense in that business; and he had not built bridges, erected forts, and dug mines, only to abandon them for a few fine words, Fine words were plenty, but they raised no sieges. Meantime these pacific and gentle murmurings from Farnese's camp had lulled the Queen into forgetfulness of Roger Williams and Arnold Groenevelt and their men, fighting day and night in trench and mine during that critical midsummer. The wily tongue of the Duke had been more effective than his batteries in obtaining the much-coveted city. The Queen obstinately held back her men and money, confident of effecting a treaty, whether Sluys fell or not. Was it strange that the States should be distrustful of her intentions, and, in their turn, become neglectful of their duty?

And thus summer wore into autumn, Sluys fell, the States and their governor-general were at daggers-drawn, the Netherlanders were full of distrust with regard to England, Alexander hinted doubts as to the Queen's sincerity; the secret negotiations, though fertile in suspicions, jealousies, delays, and such foul weeds, had produced no wholesome fruit, and the excellent De Loo became very much depressed. At last a letter from Burghley relieved his drooping spirits. From the most disturbed and melancholy man in the world, he protested, he had now become merry and quiet. He straightway went off to the Duke of Parma, with the letter in his pocket, and translated it to him by candlelight, as he was careful to state, as an important point in his narrative. And Farnese was fuller of fine phrases than ever.

"There is no cause whatever," said he, in a most loving manner, "to doubt my sincerity. Yet the Lord-Treasurer intimates that the most serene Queen is disposed so to do. But if I had not the very best intentions, and desires for peace, I should never have made the first overtures. If I did not wish a pacific solution, what in the world forced me to do what I have done? On the contrary, it is I that have reason to suspect the other parties with their long delays, by which they have made me lose the best part of the summer."

Page 1653

He then commented on the strong expressions in the English letters, as to the continuance of her Majesty in her pious resolutions; observed that he was thoroughly advised of the disputes between the Earl of Leicester and the States; and added that it was very important for the time indicated by the Queen.

“Whatever is to be done,” said he, in conclusion, “let it be done quickly;” and with that he said he would go and eat a bit of supper.

“And may I communicate Lord Burghley’s letter to any one else?” asked De Loo.

“Yes, yes, to the Seigneur de Champagny, and to my secretary Cosimo,” answered his Highness.

So the merchant negotiator proceeded at once to the mansion of Champagny, in company with the secretary Cosimo. There was a long conference, in which De Loo was informed of many things which he thoroughly believed, and faithfully transmitted to the court of Elizabeth. Alexander had done his best, they said, to delay the arrival of his fresh troops. He had withdrawn from the field, on various pretexts, hoping, day after day, that the English commissioners would arrive, and that a firm and perpetual peace would succeed to the miseries of war. But as time wore away, and there came no commissioners, the Duke had come to the painful conclusion that he had been trifled with. His forces would now be sent into Holland to find something to eat; and this would ensure the total destruction of all that territory. He had also written to command all the officers of the coming troops to hasten their march, in order that he might avoid incurring still deeper censure. He was much ashamed, in truth, to have been wheedled into passing the whole fine season in idleness. He had been sacrificing himself for her sacred Majesty, and to, serve her best interests; and now he found himself the object of her mirth. Those who ought to be well informed had assured him that the Queen was only waiting to see how the King of Navarre was getting on with the auxiliary force just, going to him from Germany, that she had no intention whatever to make peace, and that, before long, he might expect all these German mercenaries upon his shoulders in the Netherlands. Nevertheless he was prepared to receive them with 40,000 good infantry, a splendid cavalry force, and plenty of money.’

All this and more did the credulous Andrew greedily devour; and he lost no time in communicating the important intelligence to her Majesty and the Lord-Treasurer. He implored her, he said, upon his bare knees, prostrate on the ground, and from the most profound and veritable centre of his heart and with all his soul and all his strength, to believe in the truth of the matters thus confided to him. He would pledge his immortal soul, which was of more value to him—as he correctly observed—than even the crown of Spain, that the King, the Duke, and his counsellors, were most sincerely desirous of peace, and actuated by the most loving and benevolent motives. Alexander Farnese was “the antidote to the Duke of Alva,” kindly sent by heaven, ’ut contraria contrariis curenter,’ and if the entire security of the sacred Queen were not now obtained, together

with a perfect reintegration of love between her Majesty and the King of Spain, and with the assured tranquillity and perpetual prosperity of the Netherlands, it would be the fault of England; not of Spain.

Page 1654

And no doubt the merchant believed all that was told him, and—what was worse—that he fully impressed his own convictions upon her Majesty and Lord Burghley, to say nothing of the comptroller, who, poor man, had great facility in believing anything that came from the court of the most Catholic King: yet it is painful to reflect, that in all these communications of Alexander and his agents, there was not one single word of truth.—It was all false from beginning to end, as to the countermanding of the troops,—as to the pacific intentions of the King and Duke, and as to the proposed campaign in Friesland, in case of rupture; and all the rest. But this will be conclusively proved a little later.

Meantime the conference had been most amicable and satisfactory. And when business was over, Champagny—not a whit the worse for the severe jilting which he had so recently sustained from the widow De Bours, now Mrs. Aristotle Patton—invited De Loo and Secretary Cosimo to supper. And the three made a night of it, sitting up late, and draining such huge bumpers to the health of the Queen of England, that—as the excellent Andrew subsequently informed Lord Burghley—his head ached most bravely next morning.

And so, amid the din of hostile preparation not only in Cadiz and Lisbon, but in Ghent and Sluys and Antwerp, the import of which it seemed difficult to mistake, the comedy of, negotiation was still rehearsing, and the principal actors were already familiar with their respective parts. There were the Earl of Derby, knight of the garter, and my Lord Cobham; and puzzling James Croft, and other Englishmen, actually believing that the farce was a solemn reality. There was Alexander of Parma thoroughly aware of the contrary. There was Andrew de Loo, more talkative, more credulous, more busy than ever, and more fully impressed with the importance of his mission, and there was the white-bearded Lord-Treasurer turning complicated paragraphs; shaking his head and waving his wand across the water, as if, by such expedients, the storm about to burst over England could, be dispersed.

The commissioners should come, if only the Duke of Parma would declare on his word of honour, that these hostile preparations with which all Christendom was ringing; were not intended against England; or if that really were the case—if he would request his master to abandon all such schemes, and if Philip in consequence would promise on the honour of a prince, to make no hostile attempts against that country.

There would really seem an almost Arcadian simplicity in such demands, coming from so practised a statesman as the Lord-Treasurer, and from a woman of such brilliant intellect as Elizabeth unquestionably possessed. But we read the history of 1587, not only by the light of subsequent events, but by the almost microscopic revelations of sentiments and motives, which a full perusal of the secret documents in those ancient cabinets

Page 1655

afford. At that moment it was not ignorance nor dulness which was leading England towards the pitfall so artfully dug by Spain. There was trust in the plighted word of a chivalrous soldier like Alexander Farnese, of a most religious and anointed monarch like Philip *ii*. English frankness, playing cards upon the table, was no match for Italian and Spanish legerdemain, a system according to which, to defraud the antagonist by every kind of falsehood and trickery was the legitimate end of diplomacy and statesmanship. It was well known that there were great preparations in Spain, Portugal, and the obedient Netherlands, by land and sea. But Sir Robert Sidney was persuaded that the expedition was intended for Africa; even the Pope was completely mystified—to the intense delight of Philip—and Burghley, enlightened by the sagacious De Loo, was convinced, that even in case of a rupture, the whole strength of the Spanish arms was to be exerted in reducing Friesland and Overyssel. But Walsingham was never deceived; for he had learned from Demosthenes a lesson with which William the Silent, in his famous Apology, had made the world familiar, that the only citadel against a tyrant and a conqueror was distrust.

Alexander, much grieved that doubts should still be felt as to his sincerity, renewed the most exuberant expressions of that sentiment, together with gentle complaints against the dilatoriness which had proceeded from the doubt. Her Majesty had long been aware, he said, of his anxiety to bring about a perfect reconciliation; but he had waited, month after month, for her commissioners, and had waited in vain. His hopes had been dashed to the ground. The affair had been indefinitely spun out, and he could not resist the conviction that her Majesty had changed her mind. Nevertheless, as Andrew de Loo was again proceeding to England, the Duke seized the opportunity once more to kiss her hand, and—although he had well nigh resolved to think no more on the subject—to renew his declarations, that, if the much-coveted peace were not concluded, the blame could not be imputed to him, and that he should stand guiltless before God and the world. He had done, and was still ready to do, all which became a Christian and a man desirous of the public welfare and tranquillity.

When Burghley read these fine phrases, he was much impressed; and they were pronounced at the English court to be “very princely and Christianly.” An elaborate comment too was drawn up by the comptroller on every line of the letter. “These be very good words,” said the comptroller.

But the Queen was even more pleased with the last proof of the Duke’s sincerity, than even Burghley and Croft had been. Disregarding all the warnings of Walsingham, she renewed her expressions of boundless confidence in the wily Italian. “We do assure you,” wrote the Lords, “and so you shall do well to avow it to the Duke upon our honours, that her Majesty saith she thinketh both their minds to accord upon one good and Christian meaning, though their ministers may perchance sound upon a discord.”

And she repeated her resolution to send over her commissioners, so soon as the Duke had satisfied her as to the hostile preparations.

Page 1656

We have now seen the good faith of the English Queen towards the Spanish government. We have seen her boundless trust in the sincerity of Farnese and his master. We have heard the exuberant professions of an honest intention to bring about a firm and lasting peace, which fell from the lips of Farnese and of his confidential agents. It is now necessary to glide for a moment into the secret cabinet of Philip, in order to satisfy ourselves as to the value of all those professions. The attention of the reader is solicited to these investigations, because the year 1587 was a most critical period in the history of English, Dutch, and European liberty. The coming year 1588 had been long spoken of in prophecy, as the year of doom, perhaps of the destruction of the world, but it was in 1587, the year of expectation and preparation, that the materials were slowly combining out of which that year's history was to be formed.

And there sat the patient letter-writer in his cabinet, busy with his schemes. His grey head was whitening fast. He was sixty years of age. His frame was slight, his figure stooping, his digestion very weak, his manner more glacial and sepulchral than ever; but if there were a hard-working man in Europe, that man was Philip *ii*. And there he sat at his table, scrawling his apostilles. The fine innumerable threads which stretched across the surface of Christendom, and covered it as with a net, all converged in that silent cheerless cell. France was kept in a state of perpetual civil war; the Netherlands had been converted into a shambles; Ireland was maintained in a state of chronic rebellion; Scotland was torn with internal feuds, regularly organized and paid for by Philip; and its young monarch—"that lying King of Scots," as Leicester called him—was kept in a leash ready to be slipped upon England, when his master should give the word; and England herself was palpitating with the daily expectation of seeing a disciplined horde of brigands let loose upon her shores; and all this misery, past, present, and future, was almost wholly due to the exertions of that grey-haired letter-writer at his peaceful library-table.

At the very beginning of the year the King of Denmark had made an offer to Philip of mediation. The letter, entrusted to a young Count de Rantzan, had been intercepted by the States—the envoy not having availed himself, in time, of his diplomatic capacity, and having in consequence been treated, for a moment, like a prisoner of war. The States had immediately addressed earnest letters of protest to Queen Elizabeth, declaring that nothing which the enemy could do in war was half so horrible to them as the mere mention of peace. Life, honour, religion, liberty, their all, were at stake, they said, and would go down in one universal shipwreck, if peace should be concluded; and they implored her Majesty to avert the proposed intercession of the Danish King. Wilkes wrote to Walsingham denouncing that monarch

Page 1657

and his ministers as stipendiaries of Spain, while, on the other hand, the Duke of Parma, after courteously thanking the King for his offer of mediation, described him to Philip as such a dogged heretic, that no good was to be derived from him, except by meeting his fraudulent offers with an equally fraudulent response. There will be nothing lost, said Alexander, by affecting to listen to his proposals, and meantime your Majesty must proceed with the preparations against England. This was in the first week of the year 1587.

In February, and almost on the very day when Parma was writing those affectionate letters to Elizabeth, breathing nothing but peace, he was carefully conning Philip's directions in regard to the all-important business of the invasion. He was informed by his master, that one hundred vessels, forty of them of largest size, were quite ready, together with 12,000 Spanish infantry, including 3000 of the old legion, and that there were volunteers more than enough. Philip had also taken note, he said, of Alexander's advice as to choosing the season when the crops in England had just been got in, as the harvest of so fertile a country would easily support an invading force; but he advised nevertheless that the army should be thoroughly victualled at starting. Finding that Alexander did not quite approve of the Irish part of the plan, he would reconsider the point, and think more of the Isle of Wight; but perhaps still some other place might be discovered, a descent upon which might inspire that enemy with still greater terror and confusion. It would be difficult for him, he said, to grant the 6000 men asked for by the Scotch malcontents, without seriously weakening his armada; but there must be no positive refusal, for a concerted action with the Scotch lords and their adherents was indispensable. The secret, said the King, had been profoundly kept, and neither in Spain nor in Rome had anything been allowed to transpire. Alexander was warned therefore to do his best to maintain the mystery, for the enemy was trying very hard to penetrate their actions and their thoughts.

And certainly Alexander did his best. He replied to his master, by transmitting copies of the letters he had been writing with his own hand to the Queen, and of the, pacific messages he had sent her through Champagny. and De Loo. She is just now somewhat confused, said he, and those of her counsellors who desire peace, are more eager, than ever for negotiation. She is very much afflicted with the loss of Deventer, and is quarrelling with the French ambassador about the new conspiracy for her assassination. The opportunity is a good one, and if she writes an answer to my letter, said Alexander, we can keep the negotiation, alive, while, if she does not, 'twill be a proof that she has contracted leagues with other parties. But, in any event, the Duke fervently implored Philip not to pause in his preparations for the great enterprise which he had conceived in his royal breast. So urgent for the invasion was the peace-loving general.

Page 1658

He alluded also to the supposition that the quarrel between her Majesty and the French envoy was a mere fetch, and only one of the results of Bellievre's mission. Whether that diplomatist had been sent to censure, or in reality to approve, in the name of his master, of the Scottish Queen's execution, Alexander would leave to be discussed by Don Bernardino de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador in Paris; but he was of opinion that the anger of the Queen with France was a fiction, and her supposed league with France and Germany against Spain a fact. Upon this point, as it appears from Secretary Walsingham's lamentations, the astute Farnese was mistaken.

In truth he was frequently, led into error to the English policy the same serpentine movement and venomous purpose which characterized his own; and we have already seen; that Elizabeth was ready, on the contrary, to quarrel with the States, with France, with all the world, if she could only secure the good-will of Philip.

The French-matter, indissolubly connected in that monarch's schemes, with his designs upon England and Holland, was causing Alexander much anxiety. He foresaw great difficulty in maintaining that, indispensable civil war in France, and thought that a peace might, some fine day, be declared between Henry *iii*. and the Huguenots, when least expected. In consequence, the Duke of Guise was becoming very importunate for Philip's subsidies. "Mucio comes begging to me," said Parma, "with the very greatest earnestness, and utters nothing but lamentations and cries of misery. He asked for 25,000 of the 150,000 ducats promised him. I gave them. Soon afterwards he writes, with just as much anxiety, for 25,000 more. These I did not give; firstly, because I had them not," (which would seem a sufficient reason) "and secondly, because I wished to protract matters as much as possible. He is constantly reminding me of your Majesty's promise of 300,000 ducats, in case he comes to a rupture with the King of France, and I always assure him that your Majesty will keep all promises."

Philip, on his part, through the months of spring, continued to assure his generalissimo of his steady preparations—by sea and land. He had ordered Mendoza to pay the Scotch lords the sum demanded by them, but not till after they had done the deed as agreed upon; and as to the 6000 men, he felt obliged, he said, to defer that matter for the moment; and to leave the decision upon it to the Duke. Farnese kept his sovereign minutely informed of the negociations carried on through Champagny and De Loo, and expressed his constant opinion that the Queen was influenced by motives as hypocritical as his own. She was only seeking, he said, to deceive, to defraud, to put him to sleep, by those feigned negotiations, while, she was making her combinations with France and Germany, for the ruin of Spain. There was no virtue to be expected from her, except she was compelled thereto by pure necessity. The English, he said, were

Page 1659

hated and abhorred by the natives of Holland and Zeeland, and it behoved Philip to seize so favourable an opportunity for urging on his great plan with all the speed in the world. It might be that the Queen, seeing these mighty preparations, even although not suspecting that she herself was to be invaded, would tremble for her safety, if the Netherlands should be crushed. But if she succeeded in deceiving Spain, and putting Philip and Parma to sleep, she might well boast of having made fools of them all. The negotiations for peace and the preparations for the invasion should go simultaneously forward therefore, and the money would, in consequence, come more sparingly to the Provinces from the English coffers, and the disputes between England and the States would be multiplied. The Duke also begged to be informed whether any terms could be laid down, upon which the King really would conclude peace; in order that he might make no mistake for want of instructions or requisite powers. The condition of France was becoming more alarming every day, he said. In other words, there was an ever-growing chance of peace for that distracted country. The Queen of England was cementing a strong league between herself, the French King, and the Huguenots; and matters were looking very serious. The impending peace in France would never do, and Philip should prevent it in time, by giving Mucio his money. Unless the French are entangled and at war among themselves, it is quite clear, said Alexander, that we can never think of carrying out our great scheme of invading England.

The King thoroughly concurred in all that was said and done by his faithful governor and general. He had no intention of concluding a peace on any terms whatever, and therefore could name no conditions; but he quite approved of a continuance of the negotiations. The English, he was convinced, were utterly false on their part, and the King of Denmark's proposition to-mediate was part and parcel of the same general fiction. He was quite sensible of the necessity of giving Mucio the money to prevent a pacification in France, and would send letters of exchange on Agostino Spinola for the 300,000 ducats. Meantime Farnese was to go on steadily with his preparations for the invasion.

The secretary-of-state, Don Juan de Idiaquez, also wrote most earnestly on the great subject to the Duke. "It is not to be exaggerated", he said, "how set his Majesty is in the all-important business. If you wish to manifest towards him the most flattering obedience on earth, and to oblige him as much as you could wish, give him this great satisfaction this year. Since you have money, prepare everything out there, conquer all difficulties, and do the deed so soon as the forces of Spain and Italy arrive, according to the plan laid down by your Excellency last year. Make use of the negotiations for peace for this one purpose, and no more, and do the business like the man you are. Attribute the liberty of this advice to my desire to serve you more than any other, to my knowledge of how much you will thereby gratify his Majesty, and to my fear of his resentment towards you, in the contrary case."

Page 1660

And, on the same day, in order that there might be no doubt of the royal sentiments, Philip expressed himself at length on the whole subject. The dealings of Farnese with the English, and his feeding them with hopes of peace, would have given him more satisfaction, he observed, if it had caused their preparations to slacken; but, on the contrary, their boldness had increased. They had perpetrated the inhuman murder of the Queen of Scots, and moreover, not content with their piracies at sea and in the Indies, they had dared to invade the ports of Spain, as would appear in the narrative transmitted to Farnese of the late events at Cadiz. And although that damage was small, said Philip; there resulted a very great obligation to take them 'seriously in hand.' He declined sending fill powers for treating; but in order to make use of the same arts employed by the English, he preferred that Alexander should not undeceive them, but desired him to express, as out of his own head; to the negotiators, his astonishment that while they were holding such language they should commit such actions. Even their want of prudence in thus provoking the King; when their strength was compared to his, should be spoken of by Farnese as—wonderful, and he was to express the opinion that his Majesty would think him much wanting in circumspection, should he go on negotiating while they were playing such tricks. "You must show yourself very sensitive, about this event," continued Philip, "and you must give them to understand that I am quite as angry as you. You must try to draw from them some offer of satisfaction—-however false it will be in reality—such as a proposal to recall the fleet, or an, assertion that the deeds of Drake in Cadiz were without the knowledge and contrary to the will of the Queen, and that she very much regrets them, or something of that sort."

It has already been shown that Farnese was very successful in eliciting from the Queen, through the mouth of Lord' Burghley, as ample a disavowal and repudiation of Sir Francis Drake as the King could possibly desire. Whether it would have the desired effect—of allaying the wrath of Philip; might have been better foretold, could the letter, with which we are now occupied, have been laid upon the Greenwich council-board.

"When you have got, such a disavowal," continued his Majesty, "you are to act as if entirely taken in and imposed upon by them, and, pretending to believe everything they tell you, you must renew the negotiations, proceed to name commissioners, and propose a meeting upon neutral territory. As for powers; say that you, as my governor-general, will entrust them to your deputies, in regard to the Netherlands. For all other matters, say that you have had full powers for many months, but that you cannot exhibit them until conditions worthy of my acceptance have been offered.—Say this only for the sake of appearance. This is the true way to take them in, and so the peace-commissioners may meet. But

Page 1661

to you only do I declare that my intention is that this shall never lead to any result, whatever conditions maybe offered by them. On the contrary, all this is done—just as they do—to deceive them, and to cool them in their preparations for defence, by inducing them to believe that such preparations will be unnecessary. You are well aware that the reverse of all this is the truth, and that on our part there is to be no slackness, but the greatest diligence in our efforts for the invasion of England, for which we have already made the most abundant provision in men, ships, and money, of which you are well aware."

Is it strange that the Queen of England was deceived? Is it matter of surprise, censure, or shame, that no English statesman was astute enough or base enough to contend with such diplomacy, which seemed inspired only by the very father of lies?

"Although we thus enter into negotiations," continued the King—unveiling himself, with a solemn indecency, not agreeable to contemplate—"without any intention of concluding them, you can always get out of them with great honour, by taking umbrage about the point of religion and about some other of the outrageous propositions which they are like to propose, and of which there are plenty, in the letters of Andrew de Loo. Your commissioners must be instructed; to refer all important matters to your personal decision. The English will be asking for damages for money, spent in assisting my rebels; your commissioners will contend that damages are rather due to me. Thus, and in other ways, time will be agent. Your own envoys are not to know the secret any more than the English themselves. I tell it to you only. Thus you will proceed with the negotiations, now, yielding on one point, and now insisting on another, but directing all to the same object—to gain time while proceeding with the preparation for the invasion, according to the plan already agreed upon."

Certainly the most Catholic King seemed, in this remarkable letter to have outdone himself; and Farnese—that sincere Farnese, in whose loyal, truth-telling, chivalrous character, the Queen and her counsellors placed such implicit reliance—could thenceforward no longer be embarrassed as to the course he was to adopt. To lie daily, through, thick, and thin, and with every variety of circumstance and detail which; a genius fertile in fiction could suggest, such was the simple rule prescribed by his sovereign. And the rule was implicitly obeyed, and the English sovereign thoroughly deceived. The secret confided only, to the faithful breast of Alexander was religiously kept. Even the Pope was outwitted. His Holiness proposed to, Philip the invasion of England, and offered a million to further the plan. He was most desirous to be informed if the project was, resolved upon, and, if so, when it was to be accomplished. The King took the Pope's million, but refused the desired information. He answered evasively. He had

Page 1662

a very good will to invade the country, he said, but there were great difficulties in the way. After a time, the Pope again tried to pry into the matter, and again offered the million which Philip had only accepted for the time when it might be wanted; giving him at the same time, to understand that it was not necessary at that time, because there were then great impediments. “Thus he is pledged to give me the subsidy, and I am not pledged for the time,” said Philip, “and I keep my secret, which is the most important of all.”

Yet after all, Farnese did not see his way clear towards the consummation of the plan. His army had wofully dwindled, and before he could seriously set about ulterior matters, it would be necessary to take the city of Sluys. This was to prove—as already seen—a most arduous enterprise. He complained to Philip’ of his inadequate supplies both in men and money. The project conceived in the royal breast was worth spending millions for, he said, and although by zeal and devotion he could accomplish something, yet after all he was no more than a man, and without the necessary means the scheme could not succeed. But Philip, on the contrary, was in the highest possible spirits. He had collected more money, he declared than had ever been seen before in the world. He had two million ducats in reserve, besides the Pope’s million; the French were in a most excellent state of division, and the invasion should be made this year without fail. The fleet would arrive in the English channel by the end of the summer; which would be exactly in conformity with Alexander’s ideas. The invasion was to be threefold: from Scotland, under the Scotch earls and their followers, with the money and troops furnished by Philip; from the Netherlands, under Parma; and by the great Spanish armada itself, upon the Isle of Wight. Alexander must recommend himself to God, in whose cause he was acting, and then do his duty; which lay very plain before him. If he ever wished to give his sovereign satisfaction in his life; he was to do the deed that year, whatever might betide. Never could there be so fortunate a conjunction of circumstances again. France was in a state of revolution, the German levies were weak, the Turk was fully occupied in Persia, an enormous mass of money, over and above the Pope’s million, had been got together, and although the season was somewhat advanced, it was certain that the Duke would conquer all impediments, and be the instrument by which his royal master might render to God that service which he was so anxious to perform. Enthusiastic, though gouty, Philip grasped the pen in order to scrawl a few words with his own royal hand. “This business is of such importance,” he said, “and it is so necessary that it should not be delayed, that I cannot refrain from urging it upon you as much as I can. I should do it even more amply; if this hand would allow me, which has been crippled with gout these several days, and my feet as well, and although it is unattended with pain, yet it is an impediment to writing.”

Page 1663

Struggling thus against his own difficulties, and triumphantly, accomplishing a whole paragraph with disabled hand, it was natural that the King should expect Alexander, then deep in the siege of Sluy's, to vanquish all his obstacles as successfully; and to effect the conquest of England so soon as the harvests of that kingdom should be garnered.

Sluy's was surrendered at last, and the great enterprise seemed opening from hour to hour. During the months of autumn; upon the very days when those loving messages, mixed with gentle reproaches, were sent by Alexander to Elizabeth, and almost at the self-same hours in which honest Andrew de Loo was getting such head-aches by drinking the Queen's health with Cosimo, and Champagny, the Duke and Philip were interchanging detailed information as to the progress of the invasion. The King calculated that by the middle of September Alexander would have 30,000 men in the Netherlands ready for embarcation.—Marquis Santa Cruz was announced as nearly ready to, sail for the English channel with 22,000 more, among whom were to be 16,000 seasoned Spanish infantry. The Marquis was then to extend the hand to Parma, and protect that passage to England which the Duke was at once to effect. The danger might be great for so large a fleet to navigate the seas at so late a season of the year; but Philip was sure that God, whose cause it was, would be pleased to give good weather. The Duke was to send, with infinite precautions of secrecy, information which the Marquis would expect off Ushant, and be quite ready to act so soon as Santa Cruz should arrive. Most earnestly and anxiously did the King deprecate any, thought of deferring the expedition to another year. If delayed, the obstacles of the following summer—a peace in France, a peace between the Turk and Persia, and other contingencies—would cause the whole project to fail, and Philip declared, with much iteration, that money; reputation, honour, his own character and that of Farnese, and God's service, were all at stake. He was impatient at suggestions of difficulties occasionally, ventured by the Duke, who was reminded that he had been appointed chief of the great enterprise by the spontaneous choice of his master, and that all his plans had been minutely followed. "You are the author of the whole scheme," said Philip, "and if it, is all to vanish into space, what kind of a figure shall we cut the coming year?" Again and again he referred to the immense sum collected—such as never before had been seen since the world was made—4,800,000 ducats with 2,000,000 in reserve, of which he was authorized to draw for 500,000 in advance, to say nothing of the Pope's million.

Page 1664

But Alexander, while straining every nerve to obey his master's wishes about the invasion, and to blind the English by the fictitious negotiations, was not so sanguine as his sovereign. In truth, there was something puerile in the eagerness which Philip manifested. He had made up his mind that England was to be conquered that autumn, and had endeavoured—as well as he could—to comprehend, the plans which his illustrious general had laid down for accomplishing that purpose. Of, course; to any man of average intellect, or, in truth, to any man outside a madhouse; it would seem an essential part of the conquest that the Armada should arrive. Yet—wonderful to relate- Philip, in his impatience, absolutely suggested that the Duke might take possession of England without waiting for Santa Cruz and his Armada. As the autumn had been wearing away, and there had been unavoidable delays about the shipping in Spanish ports, the King thought it best not to defer matters till, the winter. "You are, doubtless, ready," he said to Farnese. "If you think you can make the passage to England before the fleet from Spain arrives, go at once. You maybe sure that it will come ere long to support, you. But if, you prefer, to wait, wait. The dangers of winter, to the fleet and to your own person are to be regretted; but God, whose cause it is; will protect you."

It was, easy to sit quite out of harm's way, and to make such excellent, arrangements for smooth weather in the wintry channel, and for the. conquest of a maritime and martial kingdom by a few flat bottoms. Philip had little difficulty on that score, but the affairs of France were not quite to his mind. The battle of Coutras, and the entrance of the German and Swiss mercenaries into that country, were somewhat perplexing. Either those auxiliaries of the Huguenots would be defeated, or they would be victorious, or both parties would come to an agreement. In the first event, the Duke, after sending a little assistance to Mucio, was to effect his passage to England at once. In the second case, those troops, even though successful, would doubtless be so much disorganized that it might be still safe for Farnese to go on. In the third contingency—that of an accord—it would be necessary for him to wait till the foreign troops had disbanded and left France. He was to maintain all his forces in perfect readiness, on pretext of the threatening aspect of French matters and, so soon as the Swiss and Germane were dispersed, he was to proceed to business without delay. The fleet would be ready in Spain in all November, but as sea-affairs were so doubtful, particularly in winter, and as the Armada could not reach the channel till mid-winter; the Duke was not to wait for its arrival. "Whenever you see a favourable opportunity," said Philip, "you must take care not to lose it, even if the fleet has not made its appearance. For you may be sure that it will soon come to give you assistance, in one way or another."

Page 1665

Farnese had also been strictly enjoined to deal gently with the English, after the conquest, so that they would have cause to love their new master. His troops were not to forget discipline after victory. There was to be no pillage or rapine. The Catholics were to be handsomely rewarded and all the inhabitants were to be treated with so much indulgence that, instead of abhorring Parma and his soldiers, they would conceive a strong affection for them all, as the source of so many benefits. Again the Duke was warmly commended for the skill with which he had handled the peace negotiation. It was quite right to appoint commissioners, but it was never for an instant to be forgotten that the sole object of treating was to take the English unawares. "And therefore do you guide them to this end," said the King with pious unction, "which is what you owe to God, in whose service I have engaged in this enterprise, and to whom I have dedicated the whole." The King of France, too—that unfortunate Henry *iii*., against whose throne and life Philip maintained in constant pay an organized band of conspirators—was affectionately adjured, through the Spanish envoy in Paris, Mendoza,—to reflect upon the advantages to France of a Catholic king and kingdom of England, in place of the heretics now in power.

But Philip, growing more and more sanguine, as those visions of fresh crowns and conquered kingdoms rose before him in his solitary cell, had even persuaded himself that the deed was already done. In the early days of December, he expressed a doubt whether his 14th November letter had reached the Duke, who by that time was probably in England. One would have thought the King addressing a tourist just starting on a little pleasure-excursion. And this was precisely the moment when Alexander had been writing those affectionate phrases to the Queen which had been considered by the counsellors at Greenwich so "princely and Christianly," and which Croft had pronounced such "very good words."

If there had been no hostile, fleet to prevent, it was to be hoped, said Philip, that, in the name of God, the passage had been made. "Once landed there," continued the King, "I am persuaded that you will give me a good account of yourself, and, with the help of our Lord, that you will do that service which I desire to render to Him, and that He will guide our cause, which is His own, and of such great importance to His Church." A part of the fleet would soon after arrive and bring six thousand Spaniards, the Pope's million, and other good things, which might prove useful to Parma, presupposing that they would find him established on the enemy's territory.

Page 1666

This conviction that the enterprise had been already accomplished grew stronger in the King's breast every day. He was only a little disturbed lest Farnese should have misunderstood that 14th November letter. Philip—as his wont was—had gone into so many petty and puzzling details, and had laid down rules of action suitable for various contingencies, so easy to put comfortably upon paper, but which might become perplexing in action, that it was no wonder he should be a little anxious. The third contingency suggested by him had really occurred. There had been a composition between the foreign mercenaries and the French King. Nevertheless they had also been once or twice defeated, and this was contingency number two. Now which of the events would the Duke consider as having really occurred. It was to be hoped that he would have not seen cause for delay, for in truth number three was not exactly the contingency which existed. France was still in a very satisfactory state of discord and rebellion. The civil war was by no means over. There was small fear of peace that winter. Give Mucio his pittance with frugal hand, and that dangerous personage would ensure tranquillity for Philip's project, and misery for Henry *iii*. and his subjects for an indefinite period longer. The King thought it improbable that Farnese could have made any mistake. He expressed therefore a little anxiety at having received no intelligence from him, but had great confidence that, with the aid of the Lord and of with his own courage he had accomplished the great exploit. Philip had only, recommended delay in event of a general peace in France—Huguenots, Royalists, Leaguers, and all. This had not happened. "Therefore, I trust," said the King; "that you—perceiving that this is not contingency number three which was to justify a pause—will have already executed the enterprise, and fulfilled my desire. I am confident that the deed is done, and that God has blessed it, and I am now expecting the news from hour to hour."

But Alexander had not yet arrived in England. The preliminaries for the conquest caused him more perplexity than the whole enterprise occasioned to Philip. He was very short of funds. The five millions were not to be touched, except for the expenses of the invasion. But as England was to be subjugated, in order that rebellious Holland might be recovered, it was hardly reasonable to go away leaving such inadequate forces in the Netherlands as to ensure not only independence to the new republic, but to hold out temptation for revolt to the obedient Provinces. Yet this was the dilemma in which the Duke was placed. So much money had been set aside for the grand project that there was scarcely anything for the regular military business. The customary supplies had not been sent. Parma had leave to draw for six hundred thousand ducats, and he was able to get that draft discounted on the Antwerp Exchange by consenting to receive five hundred thousand, or sacrificing sixteen

Page 1667

per cent. of the sum. A good number of transports, and scows had been collected, but there had been a deficiency of money for their proper equipment, as the five millions had been very slow in coming, and were still upon the road. The whole enterprise was on the point of being sacrificed, according to Farnese, for want of funds. The time for doing the deed had arrived, and he declared himself incapacitated by poverty. He expressed his disgust and resentment in language more energetic than courtly; and protested that he was not to blame. “I always thought,” said he bitterly, “that your Majesty would provide all that was necessary even in superfluity, and not limit me beneath the ordinary. I did not suppose, when it was most important to have ready money, that I should be kept short, and not allowed to draw certain sums by anticipation, which I should have done had you not forbidden.”

This was, through life, a striking characteristic of Philip. Enormous schemes were laid out with utterly inadequate provision for their accomplishment, and a confident expectation entertained that wild, visions were; in some indefinite way, to be converted into substantial realities, without fatigue or personal exertion on his part, and with a very trifling outlay of ready money.

Meantime the faithful Farnese did his best. He was indefatigable night and day in getting his boats together and providing his munitions of war. He dug a canal from Sas de Gand—which was one of his principal depots—all the way to Sluys, because the water-communication between those two points was entirely in the hands of the Hollanders and Zeelanders. The rebel cruisers swarmed in the Scheldt, from, Flushing almost to Antwerp, so that it was quite impossible for Parma’s forces to venture forth at all; and it also seemed hopeless to hazard putting to sea from Sluys. At the same, time he had appointed his, commissioners to treat with the English envoys already named by the Queen. There had been much delay in the arrival of those deputies, on account of the noise raised by Barneveld and his followers; but Burghley was now sanguine that the exposure of what he called the Advocate’s seditious, false, and perverse proceedings, would enable Leicester to procure the consent of the States to a universal peace.

And thus, with these parallel schemes of invasion and negotiation, spring; summer, and autumn, had worn away. Santa Cruz was still with his fleet in Lisbon, Cadiz, and the Azores; and Parma was in Brussels, when Philip fondly imagined him established in Greenwich Palace. When made aware of his master’s preposterous expectations, Alexander would have been perhaps amused, had he not been half beside himself with indignation. Such folly seemed incredible. There was not the slightest appearance of a possibility of making a passage without the protection of the Spanish fleet, he observed. His vessels were mere transport-boats, without the least power of resisting

Page 1668

an enemy. The Hollanders and Zeelanders, with one hundred and forty cruisers, had shut him up in all directions. He could neither get out from Antwerp nor from Sluys. There were large English ships, too, cruising in the channel, and they were getting ready in the Netherlands and in England “most furiously.” The delays had been so great, that their secret had been poorly kept, and the enemy was on his guard. If Santa Cruz had come, Alexander declared that he should have already been in England. When he did come he should still be prepared to make the passage; but to talk of such an attempt without the Armada was senseless, and he denounced the madness of that proposition to his Majesty in vehement and unmeasured terms. His army, by sickness and other causes, had been reduced to one-half the number considered necessary for the invasion, and the rebels had established regular squadrons in the Scheldt, in the very teeth of the forts, at Lillo, Liefkenshoek, Saftingen, and other points close to Antwerp. There were so many of these war-vessels, and all in such excellent order, that they were a most notable embarrassment to him, he observed, and his own flotilla would run great risk of being utterly destroyed. Alexander had been personally superintending matters at Sluys, Ghent, and Antwerp, and had strengthened with artillery the canal which he had constructed between Sas and Sluys. Meantime his fresh troops had been slowly arriving, but much sickness prevailed among them. The Italians were dying fast, almost all the Spaniards were in hospital, and the others were so crippled and worn out that it was most pitiable to behold them; yet it was absolutely necessary that those who were in health should accompany him to England, since otherwise his Spanish force would be altogether too weak to do the service expected. He had got together a good number of transports. Not counting his Antwerp fleet—-which could not stir from port, as he bitterly complained, nor be of any use, on account of the rebel blockade—he had between Dunkerk and Newport seventy-four vessels of various kinds fit for sea-service, one hundred and fifty flat-bottoms (pleytas), and seventy riverhoys, all which were to be assembled at Sluys, whence they would—so soon as Santa Cruz should make his appearance—set forth for England. This force of transports he pronounced sufficient, when properly protected by the Spanish Armada, to carry himself and his troops across the channel. If, therefore, the matter did not become publicly known, and if the weather proved favourable, it was probable that his Majesty’s desire would soon be fulfilled according to the plan proposed. The companies of light horse and of arquebusmen, with which he meant to make his entrance into London, had been clothed, armed, and mounted, he said, in a manner delightful to contemplate, and those soldiers at least might be trusted—if they could only effect their passage—to do good service, and make matters quite secure.

Page 1669

But craftily as the King and Duke had been dealing, it had been found impossible to keep such vast preparations entirely secret. Walsingham was in full possession of their plans down to the most minute details. The misfortune was that he was unable to persuade his sovereign, Lord Burghley, and others of the peace-party, as to the accuracy of his information. Not only was he thoroughly instructed in regard to the number of men, vessels, horses, mules, saddles, spurs, lances, barrels of beer and tons of biscuit, and other particulars of the contemplated invasion, but he had even received curious intelligence as to the gorgeous equipment of those very troops, with which the Duke was just secretly announcing to the King his intention of making his triumphal entrance into the English capital. Sir Francis knew how many thousand yards of cramoisy velvet, how many hundredweight of gold and silver embroidery, how much satin and feathers, and what quantity of pearls and diamonds; Farnese had been providing himself withal. He knew the tailors, jewellers, silversmiths, and haberdashers, with whom the great Alexander—as he now began to be called—had been dealing;

["There is provided for lights a great number of torches, and so tempered that no water can put them out. A great number of little mills for grinding corn, great store of biscuit baked and oxen salted, great number of saddles and boots also there is made 500 pair of velvet shoes-red, crimson velvet, and in every cloister throughout the country great quantity of roses made of silk, white and red, which are to be badges for divers of his gentlemen. By reason of these roses it is expected he is going for England. There is sold to the Prince by John Angel, pergaman, ten hundred-weight of velvet, gold and silver to embroider his apparel withal. The covering to his mules is most gorgeously embroidered with gold and silver, which carry his baggage. There is also sold to him by the Italian merchants at least 670 pieces of velvet to apparel him and his train. Every captain has received a gift from the Prince to make himself brave, and for Captain Corralini, an Italian, who hath one cornet of horse, I have seen with my eyes a saddle with the trappings of his horse, his coat and rapier and dagger, which cost 3,500 French crowns. (!!) All their lances are painted of divers colours, blue and white, green and White, and most part blood-red— so there is as great preparation for a triumph as for war. A great number of English priests come to Antwerp from all places. The commandment is given to all the churches to read the Litany daily for the prosperity of the Prince in his enterprise." John Giles to Walsingham, 4 Dec. 1587.(S. P. Office *Ms*.)

The same letter conveyed also very detailed information concerning the naval preparations by the Duke, besides accurate intelligence in regard to the progress of the armada in Cadiz and Lisbon.

Page 1670

Sir William Russet wrote also from Flushing concerning these preparations in much the same strain; but it is worthy of note that he considered Farnese to be rather intending a movement against France.“The Prince of Parma,” he said, “is making great preparations for war, and with all expedition means to march a great army, and for a triumph, the coats and costly, apparel for his own body doth exceed for embroidery, and beset with jewels; for all the embroiderers and diamond-cutters work both night and day, such haste is made. Five hundred velvet coats of one sort for lances, and a great number of brave new coats made for horsemen; 30,000 men are ready, and gather in Brabant and Flanders. It is said that there shall be in two days 10,000 to do some great exploit in these parts, and 20,000 to march with the Prince into France, and for certain it is not known what way or how they shall march, but all are ready at an hour’s warning —4,000 saddles, 4000 lances. 6,000 pairs of boots, 2,000 barrels of beer, biscuit sufficient for a camp of 20,000 men, &c. The Prince hath received a marvellous costly garland or crown from the Pope, and is chosen chief of the holy league...”]

but when he spoke at the council-board, it was to ears wilfully deaf. Nor was much concealed from the Argus-eyed politicians in the republic. The States were more and more intractable. They knew nearly all the truth with regard to the intercourse between the Queen’s government and Farnese, and they suspected more than the truth. The list of English commissioners privately agreed upon between Burghley and De Loo was known to Barneveld, Maurice, and Hohenlo, before it came to the ears of Leicester. In June, Buckhurst had been censured by Elizabeth for opening the peace matter to members of the States, according to her bidding, and in July Leicester was rebuked for exactly the opposite delinquency. She was very angry that he had delayed the communication of her policy so long, but she expressed her anger only when that policy had proved so transparent as to make concealment hopeless. Leicester, as well as Buckhurst, knew that it was idle to talk to the Netherlanders of peace, because of their profound distrust in every word that came from Spanish or Italian lips; but Leicester, less frank than Buckhurst, preferred to flatter his sovereign, rather than to tell her unwelcome truths. More fortunate than Buckhurst, he was rewarded for his flattery by boundless affection, and promotion to the very highest post in England when the hour of England’s greatest peril had arrived, while the truth-telling counsellor was consigned to imprisonment and disgrace. When the Queen complained sharply that the States were mocking her, and that she was touched in honour at the prospect of not keeping her plighted word to Farnese, the Earl assured her that the Netherlanders were fast changing their views; that although the very name of peace had till then been odious and loathsome, yet now, as coming from her Majesty, they would accept it with thankful hearts.

Page 1671

The States, or the leading members of that assembly, factious fellows, pestilent and seditious knaves, were doing their utmost, and were singing sirens' songs' to enchant and delude the people, but they were fast losing their influence—so warmly did the country desire to conform to her Majesty's pleasure. He expatiated, however, upon the difficulties in his path. The knowledge possessed by the pestilent fellows as to the actual position of affairs, was very mischievous. It was honey to Maurice and Hohenlo, he said, that the Queen's secret practices with Farnese had thus been discovered. Nothing could be more marked than the jollity with which the ringleaders hailed these preparations for peace-making, for they now felt certain that the government of their country had been fixed securely in their own hands. They were canonized, said the Earl, for their hostility to peace.

Should not this conviction, on the part of men who had so many means of feeling the popular pulse, have given the Queen's government pause? To serve his sovereign in truth, Leicester might have admitted a possibility at least of honesty on the part of men who were so ready to offer up their lives for their country. For in a very few weeks he was obliged to confess that the people were no longer so well disposed to acquiesce in her Majesty's policy. The great majority, both of the States and the people, were in favour, he agreed, of continuing the war. The inhabitants of the little Province of Holland alone, he said, had avowed their determination to maintain their rights—even if obliged to fight single-handed—and to shed the last drop in their veins, rather than to submit again to Spanish tyranny. This seemed a heroic resolution, worthy the sympathy of a brave Englishman, but the Earl's only comment upon it was, that it proved the ringleaders "either to be traitors or else the most blindest asses in the world." He never scrupled, on repeated occasions, to insinuate that Barneveld, Hohenlo, Buys, Roorda, Sainte Aldegonde, and the Nassaus, had organized a plot to sell their country to Spain. Of this there was not the faintest evidence, but it was the only way in which he chose to account for their persistent opposition to the peace-negotiations, and to their reluctance to confer absolute power on himself. "'Tis a crabbed, sullen, proud kind of people," said he, "and bent on establishing a popular government,"—a purpose which seemed somewhat inconsistent with the plot for selling their country to Spain, which he charged in the same breath on the same persons.

Early in August, by the Queen's command, he had sent a formal communication respecting the private negotiations to the States, but he could tell them no secret. The names of the commissioners, and even the supposed articles of a treaty already concluded, were flying from town to town, from mouth to mouth, so that the Earl pronounced it impossible for one, not on the spot, to imagine the excitement which existed.

Page 1672

He had sent a state-counsellor, one Bardesius, to the Hague, to open the matter; but that personage had only ventured to whisper a word to one or two members of the States, and was assured that the proposition, if made, would raise such a tumult of fury, that he might fear for his life. So poor Bardesius came back to Leicester, fell on his knees, and implored him; at least to pause in these fatal proceedings. After an interval, he sent two eminent statesmen, Valk and Menin, to lay the subject before the assembly. They did so, and it was met by fierce denunciation. On their return, the Earl, finding that so much violence had been excited, pretended that they had misunderstood his meaning, and that he had never meant to propose peace-negotiations. But Valk and Menin were too old politicians to be caught in such a trap, and they produced a brief, drawn up in Italian—the foreign language best understood by the Earl—with his own corrections and interlineations, so that he was forced to admit that there had been no misconception.

Leicester at last could no longer doubt that he was universally odious in the Provinces. Hohenlo, Barneveld, and the rest, who had “championed the country against the peace,” were carrying all before them. They had persuaded the people, that the “Queen was but a tickle stay for them,” and had inflated young Maurice with vast ideas of his importance, telling him that he was “a natural patriot, the image of his noble father, whose memory was yet great among them, as good reason, dying in their cause, as he had done.” The country was bent on a popular government, and on maintaining the war. There was no possibility, he confessed, that they would ever confer the authority on him which they had formerly bestowed. The Queen had promised, when he left England the second time, that his absence should be for but three months, and he now most anxiously claimed permission to depart. Above all things, he deprecated being employed as a peace-commissioner. He was, of all men, the most unfit for such a post. At the same time he implored the statesmen at home to be wary in selecting the wisest persons for that arduous duty, in order that the peace might be made for Queen Elizabeth, as well as for King Philip. He strongly recommended, for that duty, Beale, the councillor, who with Killigrew had replaced the hated Wilkes and the pacific Bartholomew Clerk. “Mr. Beale, brother-in-law to Walsingham, is in my books a prince,” said the Earl. “He was drowned in England, but most useful in the Netherlands. Without him I am naked.”

And at last the governor told the Queen what Buckhurst and Walsingham had been perpetually telling her, that the Duke of Parma meant mischief; and he sent the same information as to hundreds of boats preparing, with six thousand shirts for camisados, 7000 pairs of wading boots, and saddles, stirrups, and spurs, enough for a choice band of 3000 men. A shrewd troop, said the Earl, of the first soldiers in Christendom, to be landed some fine morning in England. And he too had heard of the jewelled suits of cramoisy velvet, and all the rest of the finery with which the triumphant Alexander was intending to astonish London. “Get horses enough, and muskets enough in England,” exclaimed Leicester, “and then our people will not be beaten, I warrant you, if well led.”

Page 1673

And now, the governor—who, in order to soothe his sovereign and comply with her vehement wishes, had so long misrepresented the state of public feeling—not only confessed that Papists and Protestants, gentle and simple, the States and the people, throughout the republic, were all opposed to any negotiation with the enemy, but lifted up his own voice, and in earnest language expressed his opinion of the Queen's infatuation.

"Oh, my Lord, what a treaty is this for peace," said he to Burghley, "that we must treat, altogether disarmed and weakened, and the King having made his forces stronger than ever he had known in these parts, besides what is coming out, of Spain, and yet we will presume of good conditions. It grieveth me to the heart. But I fear you will all smart for it, and I pray God her Majesty feel it not, if it be His blessed will. She meaneth well and sincerely to have peace, but God knows that this is not the way. Well, God Almighty defend us and the realm, and especially her Majesty. But look for a sharp war, or a miserable peace, to undo others and ourselves after."

Walsingham, too, was determined not to act as a commissioner. If his failing health did not serve as an excuse, he should be obliged to refuse, he said, and so forfeit her Majesty's favour, rather than be instrumental in bringing about her ruin, and that of his country. Never for an instant had the Secretary of State faltered in his opposition to the timid policy of Burghley. Again and again he had detected the intrigues of the Lord-Treasurer and Sir James Croft, and ridiculed the "comptroller's peace."

And especially did Walsingham bewail the implicit confidence which the Queen placed in the sugary words of Alexander, and the fatal parsimony which caused her to neglect defending herself against Scotland; for he was as well informed as was Farnese himself of Philip's arrangements with the Scotch lords, and of the subsidies in men and money by which their invasion of England was to be made part of the great scheme. "No one thing," sighed Walsingham, "doth more prognosticate an alteration of this estate, than that a prince of her Majesty's judgment should neglect, in respect of a little charges, the stopping of so dangerous a gap. . . . The manner of our cold and careless proceeding here, in this time of peril, maketh me to take no comfort of my recovery of health, for that I see, unless it shall please God in mercy and miraculously to preserve us, we cannot long stand."

Leicester, finding himself unable to counteract the policy of Barneveld and his party, by expostulation or argument, conceived a very dangerous and criminal project before he left the country. The facts are somewhat veiled in mystery; but he was suspected, on weighty evidence, of a design to kidnap both Maurice and Barneveld, and carry them off to England. Of this intention, which was foiled at any rate, before it could be carried into execution, there is perhaps

Page 1674

not conclusive proof, but it has already been shown, from a deciphered letter, that the Queen had once given Buckhurst and Wilkes peremptory orders to seize the person of Hohenlo, and it is quite possible that similar orders may have been received at a later moment with regard to the young Count and the Advocate. At any rate, it is certain that late in the autumn, some friends of Barneveld entered his bedroom, at the Hague, in the dead of night, and informed him that a plot was on foot to lay violent hands upon him, and that an armed force was already on its way to execute this purpose of Leicester, before the dawn of day. The Advocate, without loss of time, took his departure for Delft, a step which was followed, shortly afterwards, by Maurice.

Nor was this the only daring—stroke which the Earl had meditated. During the progress of the secret negotiations with Parma, he had not neglected those still more secret schemes to which he had occasionally made allusion. He had determined, if possible, to obtain possession of the most important cities in Holland and Zeeland. It was very plain to him, that he could no longer hope, by fair means, for the great authority once conferred upon him by the free will of the States. It was his purpose, therefore, by force and stratagem to recover his lost power. We have heard the violent terms in which both the Queen and the Earl denounced the men who accused the English government of any such intention. It had been formally denied by the States-General that Barneveld had ever used the language in that assembly with which he had been charged. He had only revealed to them the exact purport of the letter to Junius, and of the Queen's secret instructions to Leicester. Whatever he may have said in private conversation, and whatever deductions he may have made among his intimate friends, from the admitted facts in the case, could hardly be made matters of record. It does not appear that he, or the statesmen who acted with him, considered the Earl capable of a deliberate design to sell the cities, thus to be acquired, to Spain, as the price of peace for England. Certainly Elizabeth would have scorned such a crime, and was justly indignant at rumours prevalent to that effect; but the wrath of the Queen and of her favourite were, perhaps, somewhat simulated, in order to cover their real mortification at the discovery of designs on the part of the Earl which could not be denied. Not only had they been at last compelled to confess these negotiations, which for several months had been concealed and stubbornly denied, but the still graver plots of the Earl to regain his much-coveted authority had been, in a startling manner, revealed. The leaders of the States-General had a right to suspect the English Earl of a design to reenact the part of the Duke of Anjou, and were justified in taking stringent measures to prevent a calamity, which, as they believed, was impending over their little commonwealth.

Page 1675

The high-handed dealings of Leicester in the city of Utrecht have been already described. The most respectable and influential burghers of the place had been imprisoned and banished, the municipal government wrested from the hands to which it legitimately belonged, and confided to adventurers, who wore the cloak of Calvinism to conceal their designs, and a successful effort had been made, in the name of democracy, to eradicate from one ancient province the liberty on which it prided itself.

In the course of the autumn, an attempt was made to play the same game at Amsterdam. A plot was discovered, before it was fairly matured, to seize the magistrates of that important city, to gain possession of the arsenals, and to place the government in the hands of well-known Leicestrians. A list of fourteen influential citizens, drawn up in the writing of Burgrave, the Earl's confidential secretary, was found, all of whom, it was asserted, had been doomed to the scaffold.

The plot to secure Amsterdam had failed, but, in North Holland, Medenblik was held firmly for Leicester, by Diedrich Sonoy, in the very teeth of the States. The important city of Enkhuyzen, too, was very near being secured for the Earl, but a still more significant movement was made at Leyden. That heroic city, ever since the famous siege of 1574, in which the Spaniard had been so signally foiled, had distinguished itself by great liberality of sentiment in religious matters. The burghers were inspired by a love of country, and a hatred of oppression, both civil and, ecclesiastical; and Papists and Protestants, who had fought side by side against the common foe, were not disposed to tear each other to pieces, now that he had been excluded from their gates. Meanwhile, however, refugee Flemings and Brabantines had sought an asylum in the city, and being, as usual, of the strictest sect of the Calvinists were shocked at the latitudinarianism which prevailed. To the honour of the city—as it seems to us now—but, to their horror, it was even found that one or two Papists had seats in the magistracy. More than all this, there was a school in the town kept by a Catholic, and Adrian van der Werff himself—the renowned burgomaster, who had sustained the city during the dreadful leaguer of 1574, and who had told the famishing burghers that they might eat him if they liked, but that they should never surrender to the Spaniards while he remained alive—even Adrian van der Werff had sent his son to this very school? To the clamour made by the refugees against this spirit of toleration, one of the favourite preachers in the town, of Arminian tendencies, had declared in the pulpit, that he would as lieve see the Spanish as the Calvinistic inquisition established over his country; using an expression, in regard to the church of Geneva, more energetic than decorous.

Page 1676

It was from Leyden that the chief opposition came to a synod, by which a great attempt was to be made towards subjecting the new commonwealth to a masked theocracy; a scheme which the States of Holland had resisted with might and main. The Calvinistic party, waxing stronger in Leyden, although still in a minority, at last resolved upon a strong effort to place the city in the hands of that great representative of Calvinism, the Earl of Leicester. Jacques Volmar, a deacon of the church, Cosmo de Pescarengis, a Genoese captain of much experience in the service of the republic, Adolphus de Meetkerke, former president of Flanders, who had been, by the States, deprived of the seat in the great council to which the Earl had appointed him; Doctor Saravia, professor of theology in the university, with other deacons, preachers, and captains, went at different times from Leyden to Utrecht, and had secret interviews with Leicester.

A plan was at last agreed upon, according to which, about the middle of October, a revolution should be effected in Leyden. Captain Nicholas de Maulde, who had recently so much distinguished himself in the defence of Sluys, was stationed with two companies of States' troops in the city. He had been much disgusted—not without reason—at the culpable negligence through which the courageous efforts of the Sluys garrison had been set at nought, and the place sacrificed, when it might so easily have been relieved; and he ascribed the whole of the guilt to Maurice, Hohenlo, and the States, although it could hardly be denied that at least an equal portion belonged to Leicester and his party. The young captain listened, therefore, to a scheme propounded to him by Colonel Cosine, and Deacon Volmar, in the name of Leicester. He agreed, on a certain day, to muster his company, to leave the city by the Delft gate—as if by command of superior authority—to effect a junction with Captain Heraugiere, another of the distinguished malcontent defenders of Sluys, who was stationed, with his command, at Delft, and then to re-enter Leyden, take possession of the town-hall, arrest all the magistrates, together with Adrian van der Werff, ex-burgomaster, and proclaim Lord Leicester, in the name of Queen Elizabeth, legitimate master of the city. A list of burghers, who were to be executed, was likewise agreed upon, at a final meeting of the conspirators in a hostelry, which bore the ominous name of 'The Thunderbolt.' A desire had been signified by Leicester, in the preliminary interviews at Utrecht, that all bloodshed, if possible, should be spared, but it was certainly an extravagant expectation, considering the, temper, the political convictions, and the known courage of the Leyden burghers, that the city would submit, without a struggle, to this invasion of all their rights. It could hardly be doubted that the streets would run red with blood, as those of Antwerp had done, when a similar attempt, on the part of Anjou, had been foiled.

Page 1677

Unfortunately for the scheme, a day or two before the great stroke was to be hazarded, Cosmo de Pescarengis had been accidentally arrested for debt. A subordinate accomplice, taking alarm, had then gone before the magistrate and revealed the plot. Volmar and de Maulde fled at once, but were soon arrested in the neighbourhood. President de Meetkerke, Professor Saravia, the preacher Van der Wauw, and others most compromised, effected their escape. The matter was instantly laid before the States of Holland by the magistracy of Leyden, and seemed of the gravest moment. In the beginning of the year, the fatal treason of York and Stanley had implanted a deep suspicion of Leicester in the hearts of almost all the Netherlanders, which could not be eradicated. The painful rumours concerning the secret negotiations with Spain, and the design falsely attributed to the English Queen, of selling the chief cities of the republic to Philip as the price of peace, and of reimbursement for expenses incurred by her, increased the general excitement to fever. It was felt by the leaders of the States that as mortal a combat lay before them with the Earl of Leicester, as with the King of Spain, and that it was necessary to strike a severe blow, in order to vindicate their imperilled authority.

A commission was appointed by the high court of Holland, acting in conjunction with the States of the Provinces, to try the offenders. Among the commissioners were Adrian van der Werff, John van der Does, who had been military commandant of Leyden during the siege, Barneveld, and other distinguished personages, over whom Count Maurice presided. The accused were subjected to an impartial trial. Without torture, they confessed their guilt. It is true, however, that Cosmo was placed within sight of the rack. He avowed that his object had been to place the city under the authority of Leicester, and to effect this purpose, if possible, without bloodshed. He declared that the attempt was to be made with the full knowledge and approbation of the Earl, who had promised him the command of a regiment of twelve companies, as a recompense for his services, if they proved successful. Leicester, said Cosmo, had also pledged himself, in case the men, thus executing his plans, should be discovered and endangered, to protect and rescue them, even at the sacrifice of all his fortune, and of the office he held. When asked if he had any written statement from his Excellency to that effect, Cosmo replied, no, nothing but his princely word which he had voluntarily given.

Volmar made a similar confession. He, too, declared that he had acted throughout the affair by express command of the Earl of Leicester. Being asked if he had any written evidence of the fact, he, likewise, replied in the negative. “Then his Excellency will unquestionably deny your assertion,” said the judges. “Alas, then am I a dead man,” replied Volmar, and the unfortunate deacon never spoke truer words. Captain de Maulde also confessed his crime. He did not pretend, however, to have had any personal communication with Leicester, but said that the affair had been confided to him by Colonel Cosmo, on the express authority of the Earl, and that he had believed himself to be acting in obedience to his Excellency’s commands.

Page 1678

On the 26th October, after a thorough investigation, followed by a full confession on the part of the culprits, the three were sentenced to death. The decree was surely a most severe one. They had been guilty of no actual crime, and only in case of high treason could an intention to commit a crime be considered, by the laws of the state, an offence punishable with death. But it was exactly because it was important to make the crime high treason that the prisoners were condemned. The offence was considered as a crime not against Leyden, but as an attempt to levy war upon a city which was a member of the States of Holland and of the United States. If the States were sovereign, then this was a lesion of their sovereignty. Moreover, the offence had been aggravated by the employment of United States' troops against the commonwealth of the United States itself. To cut off the heads of these prisoners was a sharp practical answer to the claims of sovereignty by Leicester, as representing the people, and a terrible warning to all who might, in future; be disposed to revive the theories of Deventer and Burgrave.

In the case of De Maulde the punishment seemed especially severe. His fate excited universal sympathy, and great efforts were made to obtain his pardon. He was a universal favourite; he was young; he was very handsome; his manners were attractive; he belonged to an ancient and honourable race. His father, the Seigneur de Mansart, had done great services in the war of independence, had been an intimate friend of the great Prince of Orange, and had even advanced large sums of money to assist his noble efforts to liberate the country. Two brothers of the young captain had fallen in the service of the republic. He, too, had distinguished himself at Ostend, and his gallantry during the recent siege of Sluys had been in every mouth, and had excited the warm applause of so good a judge of soldiership as the veteran Roger Williams. The scars of the wounds received in the desperate conflicts of that siege were fresh upon his breast. He had not intended to commit treason, but, convinced by the sophistry of older soldiers than himself, as well as by learned deacons and theologians, he had imagined himself doing his duty, while obeying the Earl of Leicester. If there were ever a time for mercy, this seemed one, and young Maurice of Nassau might have remembered, that even in the case of the assassins who had attempted the life of his father, that great-hearted man had lifted up his voice—which seemed his dying one—in favour of those who had sought his life.

But they authorities were inexorable. There was no hope of a mitigation of punishment, but a last effort was made, under favour of a singular ancient custom, to save the life of De Maulde. A young lady of noble family in Leyden—Uytenbroek by name—claimed the right of rescuing the condemned malefactor, from the axe, by appearing upon the scaffold, and offering to take him for her husband.

Page 1679

Intelligence was brought to the prisoner in his dungeon, that the young, lady had made the proposition, and he was told to be of good cheer: But he refused to be comforted. He was slightly acquainted with the gentle-woman, he observed; and doubted much whether her request would be granted. Moreover if contemporary chronicle can be trusted he even expressed a preference for the scaffold, as the milder fate of the two. The lady, however, not being aware of those uncomplimentary sentiments, made her proposal to the magistrates, but was dismissed with harsh rebukes. She had need be ashamed, they said; of her willingness to take a condemned traitor for her husband. It was urged, in her behalf, that even in the cruel Alva's time, the ancient custom had been respected, and that victims had been saved from the executioners, on a demand in marriage made even by women of abandoned character. But all was of no avail. The prisoners were executed on the 26th October, the same day on which the sentence had been pronounced. The heads of Volmar and Cosmo were exposed on one of the turrets of the city. That of Maulde was interred with his body.

The Earl was indignant when he heard of the event. As there had been no written proof of his complicity in the conspiracy, the judges had thought it improper to mention his name in the sentences. He, of course, denied any knowledge of the plot, and its proof rested therefore only on the assertion of the prisoners themselves, which, however, was circumstantial, voluntary, and generally believed!

France, during the whole of this year of expectation, was ploughed throughout its whole surface by perpetual civil war. The fatal edict of June, 1585, had drowned the unhappy land in blood. Foreign armies, called in by the various contending factions, ravaged its-fair territory, butchered its peasantry, and changed its fertile plains to a wilderness. The unhappy creature who wore the crown of Charlemagne and of Hugh Capet, was but the tool in the hands of the most profligate and designing of his own subjects, and of foreigners. Slowly and surely the net, spread by the hands of his own mother, of his own prime minister, of the Duke of Guise, all obeying the command and receiving the stipend of Philip, seemed closing over him. He was without friends, without power to know his friends, if he had them. In his hatred to the Reformation, he had allowed himself to be made the enemy of the only man who could be his friend, or the friend of France. Allied with his mortal foe, whose armies were strengthened by contingents from Parma's forces, and paid for by Spanish gold, he was forced to a mock triumph over the foreign mercenaries who came to save his crown, and to submit to the defeat of the flower of his chivalry, by the only man who could rescue France from ruin, and whom France could look up to with respect.

Page 1680

For, on the 20th October, Henry of Navarre had at last gained a victory. After twenty-seven years of perpetual defeat, during which they had been growing stronger and stronger, the Protestants had met the picked troops of Henry *iii*., under the Due de Joyeuse, near the burgh of Contras. His cousins Conde and Soissons each commanded a wing in the army of the Warnese. "You are both of my family," said Henry, before the engagement, "and the Lord so help me, but I will show you that I am the eldest born." And during that bloody day the white plume was ever tossing where the battle, was fiercest. "I choose to show myself. They shall see the Bearnese," was his reply to those who implored him to have a care for his personal safety. And at last, when the day was done, the victory gained, and more French nobles lay dead on the field, as Catharine de' Medici bitterly declared, than had fallen in a battle for twenty years; when two thousand of the King's best troops had been slain, and when the bodies of Joyeuse and his brother had been laid out in the very room where the conqueror's supper, after the battle, was served, but where he refused, with a shudder, to eat, he was still as eager as before—had the wretched Valois been possessed of a spark of manhood, or of intelligence—to shield him and his kingdom from the common enemy.'

For it could hardly be doubtful, even to Henry *iii*., at that moment, that Philip *ii*. and his jackal, the Duke of Guise, were pursuing him to the death, and that, in his breathless doublings to escape, he had been forced to turn upon his natural protector. And now Joyeuse was defeated and slain. "Had it been my brother's son," exclaimed Cardinal de Bourbon, weeping and wailing, "how much better it would have been." It was not easy to slay the champion of French Protestantism; yet, to one less buoyant, the game, even after the brilliant but fruitless victory of Contras, might have seemed desperate. Beggared and outcast, with literally scarce a shirt to his back, without money to pay a corporal's guard, how was he to maintain an army?

But 'Mucio' was more successful than Joyeuse had been, and the German and Swiss mercenaries who had come across the border to assist the Bearnese, were adroitly handled by Philip's great stipendiary. Henry of Valois, whose troops had just been defeated at Contras, was now compelled to participate in a more fatal series of triumphs. For alas, the victim had tied himself to the apron-string of "Madam League," and was paraded by her, in triumph, before the eyes of his own subjects and of the world. The passage of the Loire by the auxiliaries was resisted; a series of petty victories was gained by Guise, and, at last, after it was obvious that the leaders of the legions had been corrupted with Spanish ducats, Henry allowed them to depart, rather than give the Balafre opportunity for still farther successes.

Page 1681

Then came the triumph in Paris—hosannahs in the churches, huzzas in the public places—not for the King, but for Guise. Paris, more madly in love with her champion than ever, prostrated herself at his feet. For him paeans as to a deliverer. Without him the ark would have fallen into the hands of the Philistines. For the Valois, shouts of scorn from the populace, thunders from the pulpit, anathemas from monk and priest, elaborate invectives from all the pedants of the Sorbonne, distant mutterings of excommunication from Rome—not the toothless beldame of modern days, but the avenging divinity of priest-rid monarchs. Such were the results of the edicts of June. Spain and the Pope had trampled upon France, and the populace in her capital clapped their hands and jumped for joy. "Miserable country miserable King," sighed an illustrious patriot, "whom his own countrymen wish rather to survive, than to die to defend him! Let the name of Huguenot and of Papist be never heard of more. Let us think only of the counter-league. Is France to be saved by opening all its gates to Spain? Is France to be turned out of France, to make a lodging for the Lorrainer and the Spaniard?" Pregnant questions, which could not yet be answered, for the end was not yet. France was to become still more and more a wilderness. And well did that same brave and thoughtful lover, of his: country declare, that he who should suddenly awake from a sleep of twenty-five years, and revisit that once beautiful land, would deem himself transplanted to a barbarous island of cannibals.—[Duplessis Mornay, 'Mem.' iv. 1-34.]

It had now become quite obvious that the game of Leicester was played out. His career—as it has now been fully exhibited—could have but one termination. He had made himself thoroughly odious to the nation whom he came to govern. He had lost for ever the authority once spontaneously bestowed; and he had attempted in vain, both by fair means and foul, to recover that power. There was nothing left him but retreat. Of this he was thoroughly convinced. He was anxious to be gone, the republic most desirous to be rid of him, her Majesty impatient to have her favourite back again. The indulgent Queen, seeing nothing to blame in his conduct, while her indignation, at the attitude maintained by the Provinces was boundless, permitted him, accordingly, to return; and in her letter to the States, announcing this decision, she took a fresh opportunity of emptying her wrath upon their heads.

She told them, that, notwithstanding her frequent messages to them, signifying her evil contentment with their unthankfulness for her exceeding great benefits, and with their gross violations of their contract with herself and with Leicester, whom they had, of their own accord, made absolute governor without her instigation; she had never received any good answer to move, her to commit their sins to oblivion, nor had she remarked, any amendment in their conduct.

Page 1682

On the contrary, she complained: that they daily increased their offences, most notoriously in the sight of—the world and in so many points that she lacked words to express them in one letter. She however thought it worth while to allude to some of their transgressions. She, declared that their sinister, or rather barbarous interpretation of her conduct had been notorious in perverting and falsifying her princely and Christian intentions; when she imparted to them the overtures that had been made to her for a treaty of peace for herself and for them with the King of Spain. Yet although she had required their allowance, before she would give her assent, she had been grieved that the world should see what impudent untruths had been forged upon her, not only by their. sufferance; but by their special permission for her Christian good meaning towards them. She denounced the statements as to her having concluded a treaty, not only without their knowledge; but with the sacrifice of their liberty and religion, as utterly false, either for anything done in act, or intended in thought, by her. She complained that upon this most false ground had been heaped a number of like untruths and malicious slanders against her cousin Leicester, who had hazarded his life, spend his substance, left his native country, absented himself from her, and lost his time, only for their service. It had been falsely stated among them, she said, that the Earl had come over the last time, knowing that peace had been secretly concluded. It was false that he had intended to surprise divers of their towns, and deliver them to the King of Spain. All such untruths contained matter so improbable, that it was most, strange that any person; having any sense, could imagine them correct. Having thus slightly animadverted upon their wilfulness, unthankfulness, and bad government, and having, in very plain English, given them the lie, eight distinct and separate times upon a single page, she proceeded to inform them that she had recalled her cousin Leicester, having great cause to use his services in England, and not seeing how, by his tarrying there, he could either profit them or herself. Nevertheless she protested herself not void of compassion for their estate, and for the pitiful condition of the great multitude of kind and godly people, subject to the miseries which, by the States government, were like to fall upon them, unless God should specially interpose; and she had therefore determined, for the time, to continue her subsidies, according to the covenant between them. If, meantime, she should conclude a peace with Spain, she promised to them the same care for their country as for her own.

Page 1683

Accordingly the Earl, after despatching an equally ill-tempered letter to the States, in which he alluded, at unmerciful length, to all the old grievances, blamed them for the loss of Sluys, for which place he protested that they had manifested no more interest than if it had been San Domingo in Hispaniola, took his departure for Flushing. After remaining there, in a very moody frame of mind, for several days, expecting that the States would, at least, send a committee to wait upon him and receive his farewells, he took leave of them by letter. "God send me shortly a wind to blow me from them all," he exclaimed—a prayer which was soon granted—and before the end of the year he was safely landed in England. "These legs of mine," said he, clapping his hands upon them as he sat in his chamber at Margate, "shall never go again into Holland. Let the States get others to serve their mercenary turn, for me they shall not have." Upon giving up the government, he caused a medal to be struck in his own honour. The device was a flock of sheep watched by an English mastiff. Two mottoes—"non gregem aed ingratos," and "invitus desero"—expressed his opinion of Dutch ingratitude and his own fidelity. The Hollanders, on their part, struck several medals to commemorate the same event, some of which were not destitute of invention. Upon one of them, for instance, was represented an ape smothering her young ones to death in her embrace, with the device, "Libertas ne its chara ut simiae catuli;" while upon the reverse was a man avoiding smoke and falling into the fire, with the inscription, "Fugiens fumum, incidit in ignem."

Leicester found the usual sunshine at Greenwich. All the efforts of Norris, Wilkes, and Buckhurst, had been insufficient to raise even a doubt in Elizabeth's mind as to the wisdom and integrity by which his administration of the Provinces had been characterised from beginning to end. Those who had appealed from his hatred to the justice of their sovereign, had met with disgrace and chastisement. But for the great Earl; the Queen's favour was a rock of adamant. At a private interview he threw himself at her feet, and with tears and sobs implored her not to receive him in disgrace whom she had sent forth in honour. His blandishments prevailed, as they had always done. Instead, therefore, of appearing before the council, kneeling, to answer such inquiries as ought surely to have been instituted, he took his seat boldly among his colleagues, replying haughtily to all murmurs by a reference to her Majesty's secret instructions.

The unhappy English soldiers, who had gone forth under his banner in midsummer, had been returning, as they best might, in winter, starving, half-naked wretches, to beg a morsel of bread at the gates of Greenwich palace, and to be driven away as vagabonds, with threats of the stock. This was not the fault of the Earl, for he had fed them with his own generous hand in the Netherlands, week after week, when no money for their necessities could be obtained from the paymasters. Two thousand pounds had been sent by Elizabeth to her soldiers when sixty-four thousand pounds arrearage were due, and no language could exaggerate the misery to which these outcasts, according to eye-witnesses of their own nation, were reduced.

Page 1684

Lord Willoughby was appointed to the command, of what remained of these unfortunate troops, upon—the Earl's departure. The sovereignty of the Netherlands remained undisputed with the States. Leicester resigned his, commission by an instrument dated 17/27 December, which, however, never reached the Netherlands till April of the following year. From that time forth the government of the republic maintained the same forms which the assembly had claimed for it in the long controversy with the governor-general, and which have been sufficiently described.

Meantime the negotiations for a treaty, no longer secret, continued. The Queen; infatuated as ever, still believed in the sincerity of Farnese, while that astute personage and his master were steadily maturing their schemes. A matrimonial alliance was secretly projected between the King of Scots and Philip's daughter, the Infants Isabella, with the consent of the Pope and the whole college of cardinals; and James, by the whole force of the Holy League, was to be placed upon the throne of Elizabeth. In the case of his death, without issue, Philip was to succeed quietly to the crowns of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Nothing could be simpler or more rational, and accordingly these arrangements were the table-talk at Rome, and met with general approbation.

Communications to this effect; coming straight from the Colonna palace, were thought sufficiently circumstantial to be transmitted to the English government. Maurice of Nassau wrote with his own hand to Walsingham, professing a warm attachment to the cause in which Holland and England were united, and perfect personal devotion to the English Queen.

His language, was not that of a youth, who, according to Leicester's repeated insinuations, was leagued with the most distinguished soldiers and statesmen of the Netherlands to sell their country to Spain.

But Elizabeth was not to be convinced. She thought it extremely probable that the Provinces would be invaded, and doubtless felt some anxiety for England. It was unfortunate that the possession of Sluys had given Alexander such a point of vantage; and there was moreover, a fear that he might take possession of Ostend. She had, therefore, already recommended that her own troops should be removed from that city, that its walls should be razed; its marine bulwarks destroyed, and that the ocean. should be let in to swallow the devoted city forever—the inhabitants having been previously allowed to take their departure. For it was assumed by her Majesty that to attempt resistance would be idle, and that Ostend could never stand a siege.

The advice was not taken; and before the end of her reign Elizabeth was destined to see this indefensible city—only fit, in her judgment, to be abandoned to the waves—-become memorable; throughout all time, for the longest; and, in many respects, the most remarkable siege which modern history has recorded, the famous leaguer, in which the first European captains of the coming age were to take their lessons, year

after year, in the school of the great Dutch soldier, who was now but a “solemn, sly youth,” just turned of twenty.

Page 1685

The only military achievement which characterized the close of the year, to the great satisfaction of the Provinces and the annoyance of Parma, was the surprise of the city of Bonn. The indefatigable Martin Schenk—in fulfilment of his great contract with the States-General, by which the war on the Rhine had been farmed out to him on such profitable terms:—had led his mercenaries against this important town. He had found one of its gates somewhat insecurely guarded, placed a mortar under it at night, and occupied a neighbouring pig-stye with a number of his men, who by chasing, maltreating, and slaughtering the swine, had raised an unearthly din, sufficient to drown the martial operations at the gate. In brief, the place was easily mastered, and taken possession of by Martin, in the name of the deposed elector, Gebhard Truchsess—the first stroke of good fortune which had for a long time befallen that melancholy prelate.

The administration of Leicester has been so minutely pictured, that it would be superfluous to indulge in many concluding reflections. His acts and words have been made to speak for themselves. His career in the country has been described with much detail, because the period was a great epoch of transition. The republic of the Netherlands, during those years, acquired consistency and permanent form. It seemed possible, on the Earl's first advent, that the Provinces might become part and parcel of the English realm. Whether such a consummation would have been desirable or not, is a fruitless enquiry. But it is certain that the selection of such a man as Leicester made that result impossible. Doubtless there were many errors committed by all parties. The Queen was supposed by the Netherlands to be secretly desirous of accepting the sovereignty of the Provinces, provided she were made sure, by the Earl's experience, that they were competent to protect themselves. But this suspicion was unfounded. The result of every investigation showed the country so full of resources, of wealth, and of military and naval capabilities, that, united with England, it would have been a source of great revenue and power, not a burthen and an expense. Yet, when convinced of such facts, by the statistics which were liberally laid before her by her confidential agents, she never manifested, either in public or private, any intention of accepting the sovereignty. This being her avowed determination, it was an error on the part of the States, before becoming thoroughly acquainted with the man's character, to confer upon Leicester the almost boundless authority which they granted on, his first arrival. It was a still graver mistake, on the part of Elizabeth, to give way to such explosions of fury, both against the governor and the States, when informed of the offer and acceptance of that authority. The Earl, elevated by the adulation of others, and by his own vanity, into an almost sovereign attitude, saw himself chastised before the world, like an aspiring lackey, by her

Page 1686

in whose favour he had felt most secure. He found, himself, in an instant, humbled and ridiculous. Between himself and the Queen it was, something of a lovers' quarrel, and he soon found balsam in the hand that smote him. But though reinstated in authority, he was never again the object of reverence in the land he was attempting to rule. As he came to know the Netherlanders better, he recognized the great capacity which their statesmen concealed under a plain and sometimes a plebeian exterior, and the splendid grandee hated, where at first he had only despised. The Netherlanders, too, who had been used to look up almost with worship to a plain man of kindly manners, in felt hat and bargeman's woollen jacket, whom they called "Father William," did not appreciate, as they ought, the magnificence of the stranger who had been sent to govern them. The Earl was handsome, quick-witted, brave; but he was, neither wise in council nor capable in the field. He was intolerably arrogant, passionate, and revengeful. He hated easily, and he hated for life. It was soon obvious that no cordiality of feeling or of action could exist between him and the plain, stubborn Hollanders. He had the fatal characteristic of loving only the persons who flattered him. With much perception of character, sense of humour, and appreciation of intellect, he recognized the power of the leading men in the nation, and sought to gain them. So long as he hoped success, he was loud in their praises. They were all wise, substantial, well-languaged, big fellows, such as were not to be found in England or anywhere else. When they refused to be made his tools, they became tinkers, boors, devils, and atheists. He covered them with curses and devoted them to the gibbet. He began by warmly commending Buys and Barneveld, Hohenlo and Maurice, and endowing them with every virtue. Before he left the country he had accused them of every crime, and would cheerfully, if he could, have taken the life of every one of them. And it was quite the same with nearly every Englishman who served with or under him. Wilkes and Buckhurst, however much the objects of his previous esteem; so soon as they ventured to censure or even to criticise his proceedings, were at once devoted to perdition. Yet, after minute examination of the record, public and private, neither Wilkes nor Buckhurst can be found guilty of treachery or animosity towards him, but are proved to have been governed, in all their conduct, by a strong sense of duty to their sovereign, the Netherlands, and Leicester himself.

To Sir John Norris, it must be allowed, that he was never fickle, for he had always entertained for that distinguished general an honest, unswerving, and infinite hatred, which was not susceptible of increase or diminution by any act or word. Pelham, too, whose days were numbered, and who was dying bankrupt and broken-hearted, at the close of the, Earl's administration, had always been regarded by him with tenderness and

Page 1687

affection. But Pelham had never thwarted him, had exposed his life for him, and was always proud of being his faithful, unquestioning, humble adherent. With perhaps this single exception, Leicester found himself at the end of his second term in the Provinces, without a single friend and with few respectable partisans. Subordinate mischievous intriguers like Deventer, Junius, and Otheman, were his chief advisers and the instruments of his schemes.

With such qualifications it was hardly possible—even if the current of affairs had been flowing smoothly—that he should prove a successful governor of the new republic. But when the numerous errors and adventitious circumstances are considered—for some of which he was responsible, while of others he was the victim—it must be esteemed fortunate that no great catastrophe occurred. His immoderate elevation; his sudden degradation, his controversy in regard to the sovereignty, his abrupt departure for England, his protracted absence, his mistimed return, the secret instructions for his second administration, the obstinate parsimony and persistent ill-temper of the Queen —who, from the beginning to the end of the Earl's government, never addressed a kindly word to the Netherlanders, but was ever censuring and brow beating them in public state-papers and private epistles—the treason of York and Stanley, above all, the disastrous and concealed negotiations with Parma, and the desperate attempts upon Amsterdam and Leyden—all placed him in a most unfortunate position from first to last. But he was not competent for his post under any circumstances. He was not the statesman to deal in policy with Buys, Barneveld, Ortel, Sainte Aldegonde; nor the soldier to measure himself against Alexander Farnese. His administration was a failure; and although he repeatedly hazarded his life, and poured out his wealth in their behalf with an almost unequalled liberality, he could never gain the hearts of the Netherlanders. English valour, English intelligence, English truthfulness, English generosity, were endearing England more and more to Holland. The statesmen of both countries were brought into closest union, and learned to appreciate and to respect each other, while they recognized that the fate of their respective commonwealths was indissolubly united. But it was to the efforts of Walsingham, Drake, Raleigh, Wilkes, Buckburst, Norris, Willoughby, Williams, Vere, Russell, and the brave men who fought under their banners or their counsels, on every battle-field, and in every beleaguered town in the Netherlands, and to the universal spirit and sagacity of the English nation, in this grand crisis of its fate, that these fortunate results were owing; not to the Earl of Leicester, nor—during the term of his administration—to Queen Elizabeth herself.

In brief, the proper sphere of this remarkable personage, and the one in which he passed the greater portion of his existence, was that of a magnificent court favourite, the spoiled darling, from youth to his death-bed, of the great English Queen; whether to the advantage or not of his country and the true interests of his sovereign, there can hardly be at this day any difference of opinion.

Page 1688

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Act of Uniformity required Papists to assist
As lieve see the Spanish as the Calvinistic inquisition
Elizabeth (had not) the faintest idea of religious freedom
God, whose cause it was, would be pleased to give good weather
Heretics to the English Church were persecuted
Look for a sharp war, or a miserable peace
Loving only the persons who flattered him
Not many more than two hundred Catholics were executed
Only citadel against a tyrant and a conqueror was distrust
Stake or gallows (for) heretics to transubstantiation
States were justified in their almost unlimited distrust
Undue anxiety for impartiality
Wealthy Papists could obtain immunity by an enormous fine

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 55, 1588

CHAPTER XVIII. Part 1.

Prophecies as to the Year 1588—Distracted Condition of the Dutch Republic—-Willoughby reluctantly takes Command—English Commissioners come to Ostend—-Secretary Gamier and Robert Cecil— Cecil accompanies Dale to Ghent—And finds the Desolation complete— Interview of Dale and Cecil with Parma—His fervent Expressions in favour of Peace—Cecil makes a Tour in Flanders—And sees much that is remarkable—Interviews of Dr. Rogers with Parma—Wonderful Harangues of the Envoy—Extraordinary Amenity of Alexander—With which Rogers is much touched—-The Queen not pleased with her Envoy— Credulity of the English Commissioners—-Ceremonious Meeting of all the Envoys—Consummate Art in wasting Time—Long Disputes about Commissions—The Spanish Commissions meant to deceive—Disputes about Cessation of Arms—Spanish Duplicity and Procrastination— Pedantry and Credulity of Dr. Dale—The Papal Bull and Dr. Allen's Pamphlet—Dale sent to ask Explanations—Parma denies all Knowledge of either—Croft believes to the last in Alexander.

The year 1588 had at last arrived—that fatal year concerning which the German astrologers—more than a century before had prognosticated such dire events. As the epoch approached it was firmly believed by many that the end of the world was at hand, while the least superstitious could not doubt that great calamities were impending over the nations. Portents observed during the winter and in various parts of Europe came to increase the prevailing panic. It rained blood in Sweden, monstrous births occurred in France, and at Weimar it was gravely reported by eminent chroniclers that the sun had appeared at mid-day holding a drawn sword in his mouth—a warlike portent whose meaning could not be mistaken.

Page 1689

But, in truth, it needed no miracles nor prophecies to enforce the conviction that a long procession of disasters was steadily advancing. With France rent asunder by internal convulsions, with its imbecile king not even capable of commanding a petty faction among his own subjects, with Spain the dark cause of unnumbered evils, holding Italy in its grasp, firmly allied with the Pope, already having reduced and nearly absorbed France, and now, after long and patient preparation, about to hurl the concentrated vengeance and hatred of long years upon the little kingdom of England, and its only ally —the just organized commonwealth of the Netherlands—it would have been strange indeed if the dullest intellect had not dreamed of tragical events. It was not encouraging that there should be distraction in the counsels of the two States so immediately threatened; that the Queen of England should be at variance with her wisest and most faithful statesmen as to their course of action, and that deadly quarrels should exist between the leading men of the Dutch republic and the English governor, who had assumed the responsibility of directing its energies against the common enemy.

The blackest night that ever descended upon the Netherlands—more disappointing because succeeding a period of comparative prosperity and triumph—was the winter of 1587-8, when Leicester had terminated his career by his abrupt departure for England, after his second brief attempt at administration. For it was exactly at this moment of anxious expectation, when dangers were rolling up from the south till not a ray of light or hope could pierce the universal darkness, that the little commonwealth was left without a chief. The English Earl departed, shaking the dust from his feet; but he did not resign. The supreme authority—so far as he could claim it—was again transferred,—- with his person, to England.

The consequences were immediate and disastrous. All the Leicestrians refused to obey the States-General. Utrecht, the stronghold of that party, announced its unequivocal intention to annex itself, without any conditions whatever, to the English crown, while, in Holland, young Maurice was solemnly installed stadholder, and captain-general of the Provinces, under the guidance of Hohenlo and Barneveld. But his authority was openly defied in many important cities within his jurisdiction by military chieftains who had taken the oaths of allegiance to Leicester as governor, and who refused to renounce fidelity to the man who had deserted their country, but who had not resigned his authority. Of these mutineers the most eminent was Diedrich Sonoy, governor of North Holland, a soldier of much experience, sagacity, and courage, who had rendered great services to the cause of liberty and Protestantism, and had defaced it by acts of barbarity which had made his name infamous. Against this refractory chieftain it was necessary for Hohenlo and Maurice to lead an

Page 1690

armed force, and to besiege him in his stronghold—the important city of Medenblik—-which he resolutely held for Leicester, although Leicester had definitely departed, and which he closed against Maurice, although Maurice was the only representative of order and authority within the distracted commonwealth. And thus civil war had broken out in the little scarcely-organized republic, as if there were not dangers and bloodshed enough impending over it from abroad. And the civil war was the necessary consequence of the Earl's departure.

The English forces—reduced as they were by sickness, famine, and abject poverty—-were but a remnant of the brave and well-seasoned bands which had faced the Spaniards with success on so many battle-fields.

The general who now assumed chief command over them—by direction of Leicester, subsequently confirmed by the Queen—was Lord Willoughby. A daring, splendid dragoon, an honest, chivalrous, and devoted servant of his Queen, a conscientious adherent of Leicester, and a firm believer in his capacity and character, he was, however, not a man of sufficient experience or subtlety to perform the various tasks imposed upon him by the necessities of such a situation. Quick-witted, even brilliant in intellect, and the bravest of the brave on the battle-field, he was neither a sagacious administrator nor a successful commander. And he honestly confessed his deficiencies, and disliked the post to which he had been elevated. He scorned baseness, intrigue, and petty quarrels, and he was impatient of control. Testy, choleric, and quarrelsome, with a high sense of honour, and a keen perception of insult, very modest and very proud, he was not likely to feed with wholesome appetite upon the unsavoury annoyances which were the daily bread of a chief commander in the Netherlands. "I ambitiously affect not high titles, but round dealing," he said; "desiring rather to be a private lance with indifferent reputation, than a colonel-general spotted or defamed with wants." He was not the politician to be matched against the unscrupulous and all-accomplished Farnese; and indeed no man better than Willoughby could illustrate the enormous disadvantage under which Englishmen laboured at that epoch in their dealings with Italians and Spaniards. The profuse indulgence in falsehood which characterized southern statesmanship, was more than a match for English love of truth. English soldiers and negotiators went naked into a contest with enemies armed in a panoply of lies. It was an unequal match, as we have already seen, and as we are soon more clearly to see. How was an English soldier who valued his knightly word—how were English diplomatists—among whom one of the most famous—then a lad of twenty, secretary to Lord Essex in the Netherlands—had poetically avowed that "simple truth was highest skill,"—to deal with the thronging Spanish deceits sent northward by the great father of lies who sat in the Escorial?

Page 1691

“It were an ill lesson,” said Willoughby, “to teach soldiers the, dissimulations of such as follow princes’ courts, in Italy. For my own part, it is my only end to be loyal and dutiful to my sovereign, and plain to all others that I honour. I see the finest reynard loses his best coat as well as the poorest sheep.” He was also a strong Leicestrian, and had imbibed much of the Earl’s resentment against the leading politicians of the States. Willoughby was sorely in need of council. That shrewd and honest Welshman—Roger Williams—was, for the moment, absent. Another of the same race and character commanded in Bergen-op-Zoom, but was not more gifted with administrative talent than the general himself.

“Sir Thomas Morgan is a very sufficient, gallant gentleman,” said Willoughby, “and in truth a very old soldier; but we both have need of one that can both give and keep counsel better than ourselves. For action he is undoubtedly very able, if there were no other means to conquer but only to give blows.”

In brief, the new commander of the English forces in the Netherlands was little satisfied with the States, with the enemy, or with himself; and was inclined to take but a dismal view of the disjointed commonwealth, which required so incompetent a person as he professed himself to be to set it right.

“’Tis a shame to show my wants,” he said, “but too great a fault of duty that the Queen’s reputation be frustrate. What is my slender experience! What an honourable person do I succeed! What an encumbered popular state is left! What withered sinews, which it passes my cunning to restore! What an enemy in head greater than heretofore! And wherewithal should I sustain this burthen? For the wars I am fitter to obey than to command. For the state, I am a man prejudicated in their opinion, and not the better liked of them that have earnestly followed the general, and, being one that wants both opinion and experience with them I have to deal, and means to win more or to maintain that which is left, what good may be looked for?”

The supreme authority—by the retirement of Leicester—was once more the subject of dispute. As on his first departure, so also on this his second and final one, he had left a commission to the state-council to act as an executive body during his absence. But, although he—nominally still retained his office, in reality no man believed in his return; and the States-General were ill inclined to brook a species of guardianship over them, with which they believed themselves mature enough to dispense. Moreover the state-council, composed mainly of Leicestrians, would expire, by limitation of its commission, early in February of that year. The dispute for power would necessarily terminate, therefore, in favour of the States-General.

Page 1692

Meantime—while this internal revolution was taking place in the polity of the commonwealth-the gravest disturbances were its natural consequence. There were mutinies in the garrisons of Heusden, of Gertruydenberg, of Medenblik, as alarming, and threatening to become as chronic in their character, as those extensive military rebellions which often rendered the Spanish troops powerless at the most critical epochs. The cause of these mutinies was uniformly, want of pay, the pretext, the oath to the Earl of Leicester, which was declared incompatible with the allegiance claimed by Maurice in the name of the States-General. The mutiny of Gertruydenberg was destined to be protracted; that of Medenblik, dividing, as it did, the little territory of Holland in its very heart, it was most important at once to suppress. Sonoy, however—-who was so stanch a Leicestrian, that his Spanish contemporaries uniformly believed him to be an Englishman—held out for a long time, as will be seen, against the threats and even the armed demonstrations of Maurice and the States.

Meantime the English sovereign, persisting in her delusion, and despite the solemn warnings of her own wisest counsellors; and the passionate remonstrances of the States-General of the Netherlands, sent her peace-commissioners to the Duke of Parma.

The Earl of Derby, Lord Cobham, Sir James Croft, Valentine Dale, doctor of laws, and former ambassador at Vienna, and Dr. Rogers, envoys on the part of the Queen, arrived in the Netherlands in February. The commissioners appointed on the part of Farnese were Count Aremberg, Champagny, Richardot, Jacob Maas, and Secretary Garnier.

If history has ever furnished a lesson, how an unscrupulous tyrant, who has determined upon enlarging his own territories at the expense of his neighbours, upon oppressing human freedom wherever it dared to manifest itself, with fine phrases of religion and order for ever in his mouth, on deceiving his friends and enemies alike, as to his nefarious and almost incredible designs, by means of perpetual and colossal falsehoods; and if such lessons deserve to be pondered, as a source of instruction and guidance for every age, then certainly the secret story of the negotiations by which the wise Queen of England was beguiled, and her kingdom brought to the verge of ruin, in the spring of 1588, is worthy of serious attention.

The English commissioners arrived at Ostend. With them came Robert Cecil, youngest son of Lord-Treasurer Burghley, then twenty-five years of age.—He had no official capacity, but was sent by his father, that he might improve his diplomatic talents, and obtain some information as to the condition of the Netherlands. A slight, crooked, hump-backed young gentleman, dwarfish in stature, but with a face not irregular in feature, and thoughtful and subtle in expression, with reddish hair, a thin tawny beard, and large, pathetic, greenish-coloured eyes, with a

Page 1693

mind and manners already trained to courts and cabinets, and with a disposition almost ingenuous, as compared to the massive dissimulation with which it was to be contrasted, and with what was, in aftertimes, to constitute a portion of his own character, Cecil, young as he was, could not be considered the least important of the envoys. The Queen, who loved proper men, called him “her pigmy;” and “although,” he observed with whimsical courtliness, “I may not find fault with the sporting name she gives me, yet seem I only not to mislike it, because she gives it.” The strongest man among them was Valentine Dale, who had much shrewdness, experience, and legal learning, but who valued himself, above all things, upon his Latinity. It was a consolation to him, while his adversaries were breaking Priscian’s head as fast as the Duke, their master, was breaking his oaths, that his own syntax was as clear as his conscience. The feeblest commissioner was James-a-Croft, who had already exhibited himself with very anile characteristics, and whose subsequent manifestations were to seem like dotage. Doctor Rogers, learned in the law, as he unquestionably was, had less skill in reading human character, or in deciphering the physiognomy of a Farnese, while Lord Derby, every inch a grandee, with Lord Cobham to assist him, was not the man to cope with the astute Richardot, the profound and experienced Champagny, or that most voluble and most rhetorical of doctors of law, Jacob Maas of Antwerp.

The commissioners, on their arrival, were welcomed by Secretary Garnier, who had been sent to Ostend to greet them. An adroit, pleasing, courteous gentleman, thirty-six years of age, small, handsome, and attired not quite as a soldier, nor exactly as one of the long robe, wearing a cloak furred to the knee, a cassock of black velvet, with plain gold buttons, and a gold chain about his neck, the secretary delivered handsomely the Duke of Parma’s congratulations, recommended great expedition in the negotiations, and was then invited by the Earl of Derby to dine with the commissioners. He was accompanied by a servant in plain livery, who—so soon as his master had made his bow to the English envoys—had set forth for a stroll through the town. The modest-looking valet, however, was a distinguished engineer in disguise, who had been sent by Alexander for the especial purpose of examining the fortifications of Ostend—that town being a point much coveted, and liable to immediate attack by the Spanish commander.

Meanwhile Secretary Gamier made himself very agreeable, showing wit, experience, and good education; and, after dinner, was accompanied to his lodgings by Dr. Rogers and other gentlemen, with whom—especially with Cecil—he held much conversation.

Knowing that this young gentleman “wanted not an honourable father,” the Secretary was very desirous that he should take this opportunity to make a tour through the Provinces, examine the cities, and especially “note the miserable ruins of the poor country and people.” He would then feelingly perceive how much they had to answer for, whose mad rebellion against their sovereign lord and master had caused so great an effusion of blood, and the wide desolation of such goodly towns and territories.

Page 1694

Cecil probably entertained a suspicion that the sovereign lord and master, who had been employed, twenty years long, in butchering his subjects and in ravaging their territory to feed his executioners and soldiers, might almost be justified in treating human beings as beasts and reptiles, if they had not at last rebelled. He simply and diplomatically answered, however, that he could not but concur with the Secretary in lamenting the misery of the Provinces and people so utterly despoiled and ruined, but, as it might be matter of dispute; “from what head this fountain of calamity was both fed and derived, he would not enter further therein, it being a matter much too high for his capacity.” He expressed also the hope that the King’s heart might sympathize with that of her Majesty, in earnest compassion for all this suffering, and in determination to compound their differences.

On the following day there was some conversation with Gamier, on preliminary and formal matters, followed in the evening by a dinner at Lord Cobham’s lodgings—a banquet which the forlorn condition of the country scarcely permitted to be luxurious. “We rather pray here for satiety,” said Cecil, “than ever think of variety.”

It was hoped by the Englishmen that the Secretary would take his departure after dinner; for the governor of Ostend, Sir John Conway, had an uneasy sensation, during his visit, that the unsatisfactory condition of the defences would attract his attention, and that a sudden attack by Farnese might be the result. Sir John was not aware however, of the minute and scientific observations then making at the very moment when Mr. Garnier was entertaining the commissioners with his witty and instructive conversation —by the unobtrusive menial who had accompanied the Secretary to Ostend. In order that those observations might be as thorough as possible, rather than with any view to ostensible business, the envoy of Parma now declared that—on account of the unfavourable state of the tide—he had resolved to pass another night at Ostend. “We could have spared his company,” said Cecil, “but their Lordships considered it convenient that he should be used well.” So Mr. Comptroller Croft gave the affable Secretary a dinner-invitation for the following day.

Here certainly was a masterly commencement on the part of the Spanish diplomatists. There was not one stroke of business during the visit of the Secretary. He had been sent simply to convey a formal greeting, and to take the names of the English commissioners—a matter which could have been done in an hour as well as in a week. But it must be remembered, that, at that very moment, the Duke was daily expecting intelligence of the sailing of the Armada, and that Philip, on his part, supposed the Duke already in England, at the head of his army. Under these circumstances, therefore—-when the whole object of the negotiation, so far as Parma and his master were, concerned, was to amuse and to gain time—it was already ingenious in Garnier to have consumed several days in doing nothing; and to have obtained plans and descriptions of Ostend into the bargain.

Page 1695

Garnier—when his departure could no longer, on any pretext, be deferred—took his leave, once more warmly urging Robert Cecil to make a little tour in the obedient Netherlands, and to satisfy himself, by personal observation, of their miserable condition. As Dr. Dale purposed making a preliminary visit to the Duke of Parma at Ghent, it was determined accordingly that he should be accompanied by Cecil.

That young gentleman had already been much impressed by the forlorn aspect of the country about Ostend—for, although the town was itself in possession of the English, it was in the midst of the enemy's territory. Since the fall of Sluys the Spaniards were masters of all Flanders, save this one much-coveted point. And although the Queen had been disposed to abandon that city, and to suffer the ocean to overwhelm it, rather than that she should be at charges to defend it, yet its possession was of vital consequence to the English-Dutch cause, as time was ultimately to show. Meanwhile the position was already a very important one, for—according to the predatory system of warfare of the day—it was an excellent starting-point for those marauding expeditions against persons and property, in which neither the Dutch nor English were less skilled than the Flemings or Spaniards. "The land all about here," said Cecil, "is so devastated, that where the open country was wont to be covered with kine and sheep, it is now fuller of wild boars and wolves; whereof many come so nigh the town that the sentinels—-three of whom watch every night upon a sand-hill outside the gates—have had them in a dark night upon them ere they were aware."

But the garrison of Ostend was quite as dangerous to the peasants and the country squires of Flanders, as were the wolves or wild boars; and many a pacific individual of retired habits, and with a remnant of property worth a ransom, was doomed to see himself whisked from his seclusion by Conway's troopers, and made a compulsory guest at the city. Prisoners were brought in from a distance of sixty miles; and there was one old gentlemen, "well-languaged," who "confessed merrily to Cecil, that when the soldiers fetched him out of his own mansion-house, sitting safe in his study, he was as little in fear of the garrison of Ostend as he was of the Turk or the devil."

[And Doctor Rogers held very similar language: "The most dolorous and heavy sights in this voyage to Ghent, by me weighed," he said; "seeing the countries which, heretofore; by traffic of merchants, as much as any other I have seen flourish, now partly drowned, and, except certain great cities, wholly burned, ruined, and desolate, possessed I say, with wolves, wild boars, and foxes—a great, testimony of the wrath of God," &c. &c. Dr. Rogers to the Queen,- April, 1588. (S. P. Office *Ms*.)]

Three days after the departure of Garnier, Dr. Dale and his attendants started upon their expedition from

Page 1696

Ostend to Ghent—an hour's journey or so in these modern times.—The English envoys, in the sixteenth century, found it a more formidable undertaking. They were many hours traversing the four miles to Oudenburg, their first halting-place; for the waters were out, there having been a great breach of the sea-dyke of Ostend, a disaster threatening destruction to town and country. At Oudenburg, a "small and wretched hole," as Garnier had described it to be, there was, however, a garrison of three thousand Spanish soldiers, under the Marquis de Renti. From these a convoy of fifty troopers was appointed to protect the English travellers to Bruges. Here they arrived at three o'clock, were met outside the gates by the famous General La Motte, and by him escorted to their lodgings in the "English house," and afterwards handsomely entertained at supper in his own quarters.

The General's wife; Madame de la Motte, was, according to Cecil, "a fair gentlewoman of discreet and modest behaviour, and yet not unwilling sometimes to hear herself speak;" so that in her society, and in that of her sister—"a nun of the order of the Mounts, but who, like the rest of the sisterhood, wore an ordinary dress in the evening, and might leave the convent if asked in marriage"—the supper passed off very agreeably.

In the evening Cecil found that his father had formerly occupied the same bedroom of the English hotel in which he was then lodged; for he found that Lord Burghley had scrawled his name in the chimney-corner—a fact which was highly gratifying to the son.

The next morning, at seven o'clock, the travellers set forth for Ghent. The journey was a miserable one. It was as cold and gloomy weather as even a Flemish month of March could furnish. A drizzling rain was falling all day long, the lanes were foul and miry, the frequent thickets which overhung their path were swarming with the freebooters of Zeeland, who were "ever at hand," says Cecil, "to have picked our purses, but that they descried our convoy, and so saved themselves in the woods." Sitting on horseback ten hours without alighting, under such circumstances as these, was not luxurious for a fragile little gentleman like Queen Elizabeth's "pigmy;" especially as Dr. Dale and himself had only half a red herring between them for luncheon, and supped afterwards upon an orange. The envoy protested that when they could get a couple of eggs a piece, while travelling in Flanders, "they thought they fared like princes."

Nevertheless Cecil and himself fought it out manfully, and when they reached Ghent, at five in the evening, they were met by their acquaintance Garnier, and escorted to their lodgings. Here they were waited upon by President Richardot, "a tall gentleman," on behalf of the Duke of Parma, and then left to their much-needed repose.

Nothing could be more forlorn than the country of the obedient Netherlands, through which their day's journey had led them. Desolation had been the reward of obedience.

“The misery of the inhabitants,” said Cecil, “is incredible, both without the town, where all things are wasted, houses spoiled, and grounds unlaboured, and also, even in these great cities, where they are for the most part poor beggars even in the fairest houses.”

Page 1697

And all this human wretchedness was the elaborate work of one man—one dull, heartless bigot, living, far away, a life of laborious ease and solemn sensuality; and, in reality, almost as much removed from these fellow-creatures of his, whom he called his subjects, as if he had been the inhabitant of another planet. Has history many more instructive warnings against the horrors of arbitrary government—against the folly of mankind in ever tolerating the rule of a single irresponsible individual, than the lesson furnished by the life-work of that crowned criminal, Philip the Second?

The longing for peace on the part of these unfortunate obedient Flemings was intense. Incessant cries for peace reached the ears of the envoys on every side. Alas, it would have been better for these peace-wishers, had they stood side by side with their brethren, the noble Hollanders and Zeelanders, when they had been wresting, if not peace, yet independence and liberty, from Philip, with their own right hands. Now the obedient Flemings were but fuel for the vast flame which the monarch was kindling for the destruction of Christendom—if all Christendom were not willing to accept his absolute dominion.

The burgomasters of Ghent—of Ghent, once the powerful, the industrious, the opulent, the free, of all cities in the world now the most abject and forlorn—came in the morning to wait upon Elizabeth's envoy, and to present him, according to ancient custom, with some flasks of wine. They came with tears streaming down their cheeks, earnestly expressing the desire of their hearts for peace, and their joy that at least it had now "begun to be thought on."

"It is quite true," replied Dr. Dale, "that her excellent Majesty the Queen—filled with compassion for your condition, and having been informed that the Duke of Parma is desirous of peace—has vouchsafed to make this overture. If it take not the desired effect, let not the blame rest upon her, but upon her adversaries." To these words the magistrates all said Amen, and invoked blessings on her Majesty. And most certainly, Elizabeth was sincerely desirous of peace; even at greater sacrifices than the Duke could well have imagined; but there was something almost diabolic in the cold dissimulation by which her honest compassion was mocked, and the tears of a whole people in its agony made the laughingstock of a despot and his tools.

On Saturday morning, Richardot and Garnier waited upon the envoy to escort him to the presence of the Duke. Cecil, who accompanied him, was not much impressed with the grandeur of Alexander's lodgings; and made unfavourable and rather unreasonable comparisons between them and the splendour of Elizabeth's court. They passed through an ante-chamber into a dining-room, thence into an inner chamber, and next into the Duke's room. In the ante-chamber stood Sir William Stanley, the Deventer traitor, conversing with one Mockett, an Englishman, long resident in

Page 1698

Flanders. Stanley was meanly dressed, in the Spanish fashion, and as young Cecil, passing through the chamber, looked him in the face, he abruptly turned from him, and pulled his hat over his eyes. "'Twas well he did so," said that young gentleman, "for his taking it off would hardly have cost me mine." Cecil was informed that Stanley was to have a commandery of Malta, and was in good favour with the Duke, who was, however, quite weary of his mutinous and disorderly Irish regiment.

In the bed-chamber, Farnese—accompanied by the Marquis del Guasto, the Marquis of Renty, the Prince of Aremberg, President Richardot, and Secretary Cosimo—received the envoy and his companion. "Small and mean was the furniture of the chamber," said Cecil; "and although they attribute this to his love of privacy, yet it is a sign that peace is the mother of all honour and state, as may best be perceived by the court of England, which her Majesty's royal presence doth so adorn, as that it exceedeth this as far as the sun surpasseth in light the other stars of the firmament."

Here was a compliment to the Queen and her upholsterers drawn in by the ears. Certainly, if the first and best fruit of the much-longed-for peace were only to improve the furniture of royal and ducal apartments, it might be as well perhaps for the war to go on, while the Queen continued to outshine all the stars in the firmament. But the budding courtier and statesman knew that a personal compliment to Elizabeth could never be amiss or ill-timed.

The envoy delivered the greetings of her Majesty to the Duke, and was heard with great attention. Alexander attempted a reply in French, which was very imperfect, and, apologizing, exchanged that tongue for Italian. He alluded with great fervour to the "honourable opinion concerning his sincerity and word," expressed to him by her Majesty, through the mouth of her envoy. "And indeed," said he, "I have always had especial care of keeping my word. My body and service are at the commandment of the King, my lord and master, but my honour is my own, and her Majesty may be assured that I shall always have especial regard of my word to so great and famous a Queen as her Majesty."

The visit was one of preliminaries and of ceremony. Nevertheless Farnese found opportunity to impress the envoy and his companions with his sincerity of heart. He conversed much with Cecil, making particular and personal inquiries, and with appearance of deep interest, in regard to Queen Elizabeth.

"There is not a prince in the world—" he said, "reserving all question between her Majesty and my royal master—to whom I desire more to do service. So much have I heard of her perfections, that I wish earnestly that things might so fall out, as that it might be my fortune to look upon her face before my return to my own country. Yet I

desire to behold her, not as a servant to him who is not able still to maintain war, or as one that

Page 1699

feared any harm that might befall him; for in such matters my account was made long ago, to endure all which God may send. But, in truth, I am weary to behold the miserable estate of this people, fallen upon them through their own folly, and methinks that he who should do the best offices of peace would perform a 'pium et sanctissimum opus.' Right glad am I that the Queen is not behind me in zeal for peace." He then complimented Cecil in regard to his father, whom he understood to be the principal mover in these negotiations.

The young man expressed his thanks, and especially for the good affection which the Duke had manifested to the Queen and in the blessed cause of peace. He was well aware that her Majesty esteemed him a prince of great honour and virtue, and that for this good work, thus auspiciously begun, no man could possibly doubt that her Majesty, like himself, was most zealously affected to bring all things to a perfect peace.

The matters discussed in this first interview were only in regard to the place to be appointed for the coming conferences, and the exchange of powers. The Queen's commissioners had expected to treat at Ostend. Alexander, on the contrary, was unable to listen to such a suggestion, as it would be utter dereliction of his master's dignity to send envoys to a city of his own, now in hostile occupation by her Majesty's forces. The place of conference, therefore, would be matter of future consideration. In respect to the exchange of powers, Alexander expressed the hope that no man would doubt as to the production on his commissioners' part of ample authority both from himself and from the King.

Yet it will be remembered, that, at this moment, the Duke had not only no powers from the King, but that Philip had most expressly refused to send a commission, and that he fully expected the negotiation to be superseded by the invasion, before the production of the powers should become indispensable.

And when Farnese was speaking thus fervently in favour of peace, and parading his word and his honour, the letters lay in his cabinet in that very room, in which Philip expressed his conviction that his general was already in London, that the whole realm of England was already at the mercy of a Spanish soldiery, and that the Queen, upon whose perfection Alexander had so long yearned to gaze, was a discrowned captive, entirely in her great enemy's power.

Thus ended the preliminary interview. On the following Monday, 11th March, Dr. Dale and his attendants made the best of their way back to Ostend, while young Cecil, with a safe conduct from Champagny, set forth on a little tour in Flanders.

The journey from Ghent to Antwerp was easy, and he was agreeably surprised by the apparent prosperity of the country. At intervals of every few miles; he was refreshed

with the spectacle of a gibbet well garnished with dangling freebooters; and rejoiced, therefore, in comparative security. For it seemed that the energetic bailiff of Waasland had levied a contribution upon the proprietors of the country, to be expended mainly in hanging brigands; and so well had the funds been applied, that no predatory bands could make their appearance but they were instantly pursued by soldiers, and hanged forthwith, without judge or trial. Cecil counted twelve such places of execution on his road between Ghent and Antwerp.

Page 1700

On his journey he fell in with an Italian merchant,—Lanfranchi by name, of a great commercial house in Antwerp, in the days when Antwerp had commerce, and by him, on his arrival the same evening in that town, he was made an honoured guest, both for his father's sake and his Queen's. "'Tis the pleasantest city that ever I saw," said Cecil, "for situation and building; but utterly left and abandoned now by those rich merchants that were wont to frequent the place."

His host was much interested in the peace-negotiations, and indeed, through his relations with Champagny and Andreas de Loo, had been one of the instruments by which it had been commenced. He inveighed bitterly against the Spanish captains and soldiers, to whose rapacity and ferocity he mainly ascribed the continuance of the war; —and he was especially incensed with Stanley and other—English renegades, who were thought fiercer haters of England than were the Spaniards themselves: Even in the desolate and abject condition of Antwerp and its neighbourhood, at that moment, the quick eye of Cecil detected the latent signs of a possible splendour. Should peace be restored, the territory once more be tilled, and the foreign merchants attracted thither again, he believed that the governor of the obedient Netherlands might live there in more magnificence than the King of Spain himself, exhausted as were his revenues by the enormous expense of this protracted war: Eight hundred thousand dollars monthly; so Lanfranchi informed Cecil, were the costs of the forces on the footing then established. This, however, was probably an exaggeration, for the royal account books showed a less formidable sum, although a sufficiently large one to appal a less obstinate bigot than Philip. But what to him were the, ruin of the Netherlands; the impoverishment of Spain, and the downfall of her ancient grandeur compared to the glory of establishing the Inquisition in England and Holland?

While at dinner in Lanfranchi's house; Cecil was witness to another characteristic of the times, and one which afforded proof of even more formidable freebooters abroad than those for whom the bailiff of Waasland had erected his gibbets. A canal-boat had left Antwerp for Brussels that morning, and in the vicinity of the latter city had been set upon by a detachment from the English garrison of Bergen-op-Zoom, and captured, with twelve prisoners and a freight of 60,000 florins in money. "This struck the company at the dinner-table all in a dump;" said Cecil. And well it might; for the property mainly belonged to themselves, and they forthwith did their best to have the marauders waylaid on their return. But Cecil, notwithstanding his gratitude for the hospitality of Lanfranchi, sent word next day to the garrison of Bergen of the designs against them, and on his arrival at the place had the satisfaction of being informed by Lord Willoughby that the party had got safe home with their plunder.

Page 1701

“And, well worthy they are of it,” said young Robert, “considering how far they go for it.”

The traveller, on, leaving Antwerp, proceeded down the river to Bergen-op-Zoom, where he was hospitably entertained by that doughty old soldier Sir William Reade, and met Lord Willoughby, whom he accompanied to Brielle on a visit to the deposed elector Truchsess, then living in that neighbourhood. Cecil—who was not passion’s slave—had small sympathy with the man who could lose a sovereignty for the sake of Agnes Mansfeld. “’Tis a very goodly gentleman,” said he, “well fashioned, and of good speech, for which I must rather praise him than for loving a wife better than so great a fortune as he lost by her occasion.” At Brielle he was handsomely entertained by the magistrates, who had agreeable recollections of his brother Thomas, late governor of that city. Thence he proceeded by way of Delft—which, like all English travellers, he described as “the finest built town that ever he saw”—to the Hague, and thence to Fushing, and so back by sea to Ostend.—He had made the most of his three weeks’ tour, had seen many important towns both in the republic and in the obedient Netherlands, and had conversed with many “tall gentlemen,” as he expressed himself, among the English commanders, having been especially impressed by the heroes of Sluys, Baskerville and that “proper gentleman Francis Vere.”

He was also presented by Lord Willoughby to Maurice of Nassau, and was perhaps not very benignantly received by the young prince. At that particular moment, when Leicester’s deferred resignation, the rebellion of Sonoy in North Holland, founded on a fictitious allegiance to the late governor-general, the perverse determination of the Queen to treat for peace against the advice of all the leading statesmen of the Netherlands, and the sharp rebukes perpetually administered by her, in consequence, to the young stadholder and all his supporters, had not tended to produce the most tender feelings upon their part towards the English government, it was not surprising that the handsome soldier should look askance at the crooked little courtier, whom even the great Queen smiled at while she petted him. Cecil was very angry with Maurice.

“In my life I never saw worse behaviour,” he said, “except it were in one lately come from school. There is neither outward appearance in him of any noble mind nor inward virtue.”

Although Cecil had consumed nearly the whole month of March in his tour, he had been more profitably employed than were the royal commissioners during the same period at Ostend.

Page 1702

Never did statesmen know better how not to do that which they were ostensibly occupied in doing than Alexander Farnese and his agents, Champagny, Richardot, Jacob Maas, and Gamier. The first pretext by which much time was cleverly consumed was the dispute as to the place of meeting. Doctor Dale had already expressed his desire for Ostend as the place of colloquy. "'Tis a very slow old gentleman, this Doctor Dale," said Alexander; "he was here in the time of Madam my mother, and has also been ambassador at Vienna. I have received him and his attendants with great courtesy, and held out great hopes of peace. We had conversations about the place of meeting. He wishes Ostend: I object. The first conference will probably be at some point between that place and Newport."

The next opportunity for discussion and delay was afforded by the question of powers. And it must be ever borne in mind that Alexander was daily expecting the arrival of the invading fleets and armies of Spain, and was holding himself in readiness to place himself at their head for the conquest of England. This was, of course, so strenuously denied by himself and those under his influence, that Queen Elizabeth implicitly. believed him, Burghley was lost in doubt, and even the astute Walsingham began to distrust his own senses. So much strength does a falsehood acquire in determined and skilful hands.

"As to the commissions, it will be absolutely necessary for, your Majesty to send them," wrote Alexander at the moment when he was receiving the English envoy at Ghent, "for unless the Armada arrive soon—it will be indispensable for me, to have them, in order to keep the negotiation alive. Of course they will never broach the principal matters without exhibition of powers. Richardot is aware of the secret which your Majesty confided to me, namely, that the negotiations are only intended to deceive the Queen and to gain time for the fleet; but the powers must be sent in order that we may be able to produce them; although your secret intentions will be obeyed."

The Duke commented, however, on the extreme difficulty of carrying out the plan, as originally proposed. "The conquest of England would have been difficult," he said, "even although the country had been taken by surprise. Now they are strong and armed; we are comparatively weak. The danger and the doubt are great; and the English deputies, I think, are really desirous of peace. Nevertheless I am at your Majesty's disposition—life and all—and probably, before the answer arrives to this letter, the fleet will have arrived, and I shall have undertaken the passage to England."

Page 1703

After three weeks had thus adroitly been frittered away, the English commissioners became somewhat impatient, and despatched Doctor Rogers to the Duke at Ghent. This was extremely obliging upon their part, for if Valentine Dale were a “slow old gentleman,” he was keen, caustic, and rapid, as compared to John Rogers. A formalist and a pedant, a man of red tape and routine, full of precedents and declamatory commonplaces which he mistook for eloquence, honest as daylight and tedious as a king, he was just the time-consumer for Alexander’s purpose. The wily Italian listened with profound attention to the wise saws in which the excellent diplomatist revelled, and his fine eyes often filled with tears at the Doctor’s rhetoric.

Three interviews—each three mortal hours long—did the two indulge in at Ghent, and never, was high-commissioner better satisfied with himself than was John Rogers upon those occasions. He carried every point; he convinced, he softened, he captivated the great Duke; he turned the great Duke round his finger. The great Duke smiled, or wept, or fell into his arms, by turns. Alexander’s military exploits had rung through the world, his genius for diplomacy and statesmanship had never been disputed; but his talents as a light comedian were, in these interviews, for the first time fully revealed.

On the 26th March the learned Doctor made his first bow and performed his first flourish of compliments at Ghent. “I assure your Majesty,” said he, “his Highness followed my compliments of entertainment with so much honour, as that—his Highness or I, speaking of the Queen of England—he never did less than uncover his head; not covering the same, unless I was covered also.” And after these salutations had at last been got through with, thus spake the Doctor of Laws to the Duke of Parma:—

“Almighty God, the light of lights, be pleased to enlighten the understanding of your Alteza, and to direct the same to his glory, to the uniting of both their Majesties and the finishing of these most bloody wars, whereby these countries, being in the highest degree of misery desolate, lie as it were prostrate before the wrathful presence of the most mighty God, most lamentably beseeching his Divine Majesty to withdraw his scourge of war from them, and to move the hearts of princes to restore them unto peace, whereby they might attain unto their ancient flower and dignity. Into the hands of your Alteza are now the lives of many thousands, the destruction of cities, towns, and countries, which to put to the fortune of war how perilous it were, I pray consider. Think ye, ye see the mothers left alive tendering their offspring in your presence, ‘nam matribus detestata bells,’” continued the orator. “Think also of others of all sexes, ages, and conditions, on their knees before your Alteza, most humbly praying and crying most dolorously to spare their lives, and save their property from the ensanguined scourge of the insane soldiers,” and so on, and so on.

Page 1704

Now Philip *ii*. was slow in resolving, slower in action. The ponderous three-deckers of Biscay were notoriously the dullest sailers ever known, nor were the fettered slaves who rowed the great galleys of Portugal or of Andalusia very brisk in their movements; and yet the King might have found time to marshal his ideas and his squadrons, and the Armada had leisure to circumnavigate the globe and invade England afterwards, if a succession of John Rogerses could have entertained his Highness with compliments while the preparations were making.

But Alexander—at the very outset of the Doctor's eloquence—found it difficult to suppress his feelings. "I can assure your Majesty," said Rogers, "that his eyes—he has a very large eye—were moistened. Sometimes they were thrown upward to heaven, sometimes they were fixed full upon me, sometimes they were cast downward, well declaring how his heart was affected."

Honest John even thought it necessary to mitigate the effect of his rhetoric, and to assure his Highness that it was, after all, only he Doctor Rogers, and not the minister plenipotentiary of the Queen's most serene Majesty, who was exciting all this emotion.

"At this part of my speech," said he, "I prayed his Highness not to be troubled, for that the same only proceeded from Doctor Rogers, who, it might please him to know, was so much moved with the pitiful case of these countries, as also that which of war was sure to ensue, that I wished, if my body were full of rivers of blood, the same to be poured forth to satisfy any that were blood-thirsty, so there might an assured peace follow."

His Highness, at any rate, manifesting no wish to drink of such sanguinary streams—-even had the Doctor's body contained them—Rogers became calmer. He then descended from rhetoric to jurisprudence and casuistry, and argued at intolerable length the propriety of commencing the conferences at Ostend, and of exhibiting mutually the commissions.

It is quite unnecessary to follow him as closely as did Farnese. When he had finished the first part of his oration, however, and was "addressing himself to the second point," Alexander at last interrupted the torrent of his eloquence.

"He said that my divisions and subdivisions," wrote the Doctor, "were perfectly in his remembrance, and that he would first answer the first point, and afterwards give audience to the second, and answer the same accordingly."

Accordingly Alexander put on his hat, and begged the envoy also to be covered. Then, "with great gravity, as one inwardly much moved," the Duke took up his part in the dialogue.

"Signor Ruggieri," said he, "you have propounded unto me speeches of two sorts: the one proceeds from Doctor Ruggieri, the other from the lord ambassador of the most

serene Queen of England. Touching the first, I do give you my hearty thanks for your godly speeches, assuring you that though, by reason I have always followed the wars, I cannot be ignorant of the calamities by you alleged, yet you have so truly represented the same before mine eyes as to effectuate in me at this instant, not only the confirmation of mine own disposition to have peace, but also an assurance that this treaty shall take good and speedy end, seeing that it hath pleased God to raise up such a good instrument as you are."

Page 1705

“Many are the causes,” continued the Duke, “which, besides my disposition, move me to peace. My father and mother are dead; my son is a young prince; my house has truly need of my presence. I am not ignorant how ticklish a thing is the fortune of war, which —how victorious soever I have been—may in one moment not only deface the same, but also deprive me of my life. The King, my master, is now, stricken in years, his children are young, his dominions in trouble. His desire is to live, and to leave his posterity in quietness. The glory of God, the honor of both their Majesties, and the good of these countries, with the stay of the effusion of Christian blood, and divers other like reasons, force him to peace.”

Thus spoke Alexander, like an honest Christian gentleman, avowing the most equitable and pacific dispositions on the part of his master and himself. Yet at that moment he knew that the Armada was about to sail, that his own nights and days were passed in active preparations for war, and that no earthly power could move Philip by one hair’s-breadth from his purpose to conquer England that summer.

It would be superfluous to follow the Duke or the Doctor through their long dialogue on the place of conference, and the commissions. Alexander considered it “infamy” on his name if he should send envoys to a place of his master’s held by the enemy. He was also of opinion that it was unheard of to exhibit commissions previous to a preliminary colloquy.

Both propositions were strenuously contested by Rogers. In regard to the second point in particular, he showed triumphantly, by citations from the “Polonians, Prussians, and Lithuanians,” that commissions ought to be previously exhibited. But it was not probable that even the Doctor’s learning and logic would persuade Alexander to produce his commission; because, unfortunately, he had no commission to produce. A comfortable argument on the subject, however, would, none the less, consume time.

Three hours of this work brought them, exhausted and hungry; to the hour of noon and of dinner Alexander, with profuse and smiling thanks for the envoy’s plain dealing and eloquence, assured him that there would have been peace long ago “had Doctor Rogers always been the instrument,” and regretted that he was himself not learned enough to deal creditably with him. He would, however, send Richardot to bear him company at table, and chop logic with him afterwards.

Next day, at the same, hour, the Duke and Doctor had another encounter. So soon as the envoy made his appearance, he found himself “embraced most cheerfully and familiarly by his Alteza,” who, then entering at once into business, asked as to the Doctor’s second point.

The Doctor answered with great alacrity.

“Certain expressions have been reported to her Majesty,” said he, “as coming both from your Highness and from Richardot, hinting at a possible attempt by the King of Spain’s forces against the Queen. Her Majesty, gathering that you are going about belike to terrify her, commands me to inform you very clearly and very expressly that she does not deal so weakly in her government, nor so improvidently, but that she is provided for anything that might be attempted against her by the King, and as able to offend him as he her Majesty.”

Page 1706

Alexander—with a sad countenance, as much offended, his eyes declaring miscontentment—asked who had made such a report.

“Upon the honour of a gentleman,” said he, “whoever has said this has much abused me, and evil acquitted himself. They who know me best are aware that it is not my manner to let any word pass my lips that might offend any prince.” Then, speaking most solemnly, he added, “I declare really and truly (which two words he said in Spanish), that I know not of any intention of the King of Spain against her Majesty or her realm.”

At that moment the earth did not open—year of portents though it was—and the Doctor, “singularly rejoicing” at this authentic information from the highest source, proceeded cheerfully with the conversation.

“I hold myself,” he exclaimed, “the man most satisfied in the world, because I may now write to her Majesty that I have heard your Highness upon your honour use these words.”

“Upon my honour, it is true,” repeated the Duke; “for so honourably do I think of her Majesty, as that, after the King, my master, I would honour and serve her before any prince in Christendom.” He added many earnest asseverations of similar import.

“I do not deny, however,” continued Alexander, “that I have heard of certain ships having been armed by the King against that Draak”—he pronounced the “a” in Drake’s name very broadly, or “Doric” who has committed so many outrages; but I repeat that I have never heard of any design against her Majesty or against England.”

The Duke then manifested much anxiety to know by whom he had been so misrepresented. “There has been no one with me but Dr. Dale,” said, he, “and I marvel that he should thus wantonly have injured me.”

“Dr. Dale,” replied Ropers, “is a man of honour, of good years, learned, and well experienced; but perhaps he unfortunately misapprehended some of your Alteza’s words, and thought himself bound by his allegiance strictly to report them to her Majesty.”

“I grieve that I should be misrepresented and injured,” answered Farnese, “in a manner so important to my honour. Nevertheless, knowing the virtues with which her Majesty is endued, I assure myself that the protestations I am now making will entirely satisfy her.”

He then expressed the fervent hope that the holy work of negotiation now commencing would result in a renewal of the ancient friendship between the Houses of Burgundy and of England, asserting that “there had never been so favourable a time as the present.”

Under former governments of the Netherlands there had been many mistakes and misunderstandings.

“The Duke of Alva,” said he, “has learned by this time, before the judgment-seat of God, how he discharged his functions, succeeding as he did my mother, the Duchess of Parma who left the Provinces in so flourishing a condition. Of this, however, I will say no more, because of a feud between the Houses of Farnese and of Alva. As for Requesens, he was a good fellow, but didn’t understand his business. Don John of Austria again, whose soul I doubt not is in heaven, was young and poor, and disappointed in all his designs; but God has never offered so great a hope of assured peace as might now be accomplished by her Majesty.”

Page 1707

Finding the Duke in so fervent and favourable a state of mind, the envoy renewed his demand that at least the first meeting of the commissioners might be held at Ostend.

“Her Majesty finds herself so touched in honour upon this point, that if it be not conceded—as I doubt not it will be, seeing the singular forwardness of your Highness”—said the artful Doctor with a smile, “we are no less than commanded to return to her Majesty’s presence.”

“I sent Richardot to you yesterday,” said Alexander; “did he not content you?”

“Your Highness, no,” replied Ropers. “Moreover her Majesty sent me to your Alteza, and not to Richardot. And the matter is of such importance that I pray you to add to all your graces and favours heaped upon me, this one of sending your commissioners to Ostend.”

His Highness could hold out no longer; but suddenly catching the Doctor in his arms, and hugging him “in most honourable and amiable manner,” he cried—

“Be contented, be cheerful; my lord ambassador. You shall be satisfied upon this point also.”

“And never did envoy depart;” cried the lord ambassador, when he could get his breath, “more bound to you; and more resolute to speak honour of your Highness than I do.”

“To-morrow we will ride together towards Bruges;” said the Duke, in conclusion. “Till then farewell.”

Upon, this he again heartily embraced the envoy, and the friends parted for the day.

Next morning; 28th March, the Duke, who was on his way to Bruges and Sluys to look after his gun-boats, and, other naval, and military preparations, set forth on horseback, accompanied by the Marquis del Vasto, and, for part of the way, by Rogers.

They conversed on the general topics of the approaching negotiations; the Duke, expressing the opinion that the treaty of peace would be made short work with; for it only needed to renew the old ones between the Houses of England and Burgundy. As for the Hollanders and Zeelanders, and their accomplices, he thought there would be no cause of stay on their account; and in regard to the cautionary towns he felt sure that her Majesty had never had any intention of appropriating them to herself, and would willingly surrender them to the King.

Rogers thought it a good opportunity to put in a word for the Dutchmen; who certainly, would not have thanked him for his assistance at that moment.

“Not, to give offence to your Highness,” he said, “if the Hollanders and Zeelanders, with their confederates, like to come into this treaty, surely your Highness would not object?”

Alexander, who had been riding along quietly during this conversation; with his right, hand, on, his hip, now threw out his arm energetically:

“Let them come into it; let them treat, let them conclude,” he exclaimed, “in the name of Almighty God! I have always been well disposed to peace, and am now more so than ever. I could even, with the loss of my life, be content to have peace made at this time.”

Page 1708

Nothing more, worthy of commemoration, occurred during this concluding interview; and the envoy took his leave at Bruges, and returned to Ostend.

I have furnished the reader with a minute account of these conversations, drawn entirely, from the original records; not so much because the interviews were in themselves of vital importance; but because they afford a living and breathing example —better than a thousand homilies—of the easy victory which diplomatic or royal mendacity may always obtain over innocence and credulity.

Certainly never was envoy more thoroughly beguiled than the excellent John upon this occasion. Wiser than a serpent, as he imagined himself to be, more harmless than a dove; as Alexander found him, he could not, sufficiently congratulate himself upon the triumphs of his eloquence and his adroitness; and despatched most glowing accounts of his proceedings to the Queen.

His ardour was somewhat damped, however, at receiving a message from her Majesty in reply, which was anything but benignant. His eloquence was not commended; and even his preamble, with its touching allusion to the live mothers tendering their offspring —the passage: which had brought the tears into the large eyes of Alexander—was coldly and cruelly censured.

“Her Majesty can in no sort like such speeches”—so ran the return-despatch—“in which she is made to beg for peace. The King of Spain standeth in as great need of peace as her self; and she doth greatly mislike the preamble of Dr. Rogers in his address to the Duke at Ghent, finding it, in very truth quite fond and vain. I am commanded by a particular letter to let him understand how much her Majesty is offended with him.”

Alexander, on his part, informed his royal master of these interviews, in which there had been so much effusion of sentiment, in very brief fashion.

“Dr. Rogers, one of the Queen’s commissioners, has been here,” he said, “urging me with all his might to let all your Majesty’s deputies go, if only for one hour, to Ostend. I refused, saying, I would rather they should go to England than into a city of your Majesty held by English troops. I told him it ought to be satisfactory that I had offered the Queen, as a lady, her choice of any place in the Provinces, or on neutral ground. Rogers expressed regret for all the, bloodshed and other consequences if the negotiations should fall through for so trifling a cause; the more so as in return for this little compliment to the Queen she would not only restore to your Majesty everything that she holds in the Netherlands, but would assist you to recover the part which remains obstinate. To quiet him and to consume time, I have promised that President Richardot shall go and try to satisfy them. Thus two or three weeks more will be wasted. But at last the time will come for exhibiting the powers. They are very anxious to see mine; and when at last they find I have none, I fear that they will break off the negotiations.”

Page 1709

Could the Queen have been informed of this voluntary offer on the part of her envoy to give up the cautionary towns, and to assist in reducing the rebellion, she might have used stronger language of rebuke. It is quite possible, however, that Farnese—not so attentively following the Doctor's eloquence as he had appeared to do-had somewhat inaccurately reported the conversations, which, after all, he knew to be of no consequence whatever, except as time-consumers. For Elizabeth, desirous of peace as she was, and trusting to Farnese's sincerity as she was disposed to do, was more sensitive than ever as to her dignity.

"We charge you all," she wrote with her own hand to the commissioners, "that no word he overslipt by them, that may, touch our honour and greatness, that be not answered with good sharp words. I am a king that will be ever known not to fear any but God."

It would have been better, however, had the Queen more thoroughly understood that the day for scolding had quite gone by, and that something sharper than the sharpest words would soon be wanted to protect England and herself from impending doom. For there was something almost gigantic in the frivolities with which weeks and months of such precious time were now squandered. Plenary powers—"commission bastantissima"—from his sovereign had been announced by Alexander as in his possession; although the reader has seen that he had no such powers at all. The mission of Rogers had quieted the envoys at Ostend for a time, and they waited quietly for the visit of Richardot to Ostend, into which the promised meeting of all the Spanish commissioners in that city had dwindled. Meantime there was an exchange of the most friendly amenities between the English and their mortal enemies. Hardly a day passed that La Motte, or Renty, or Aremberg, did not send Lord Derby, or Cobham, or Robert Cecil, a hare, or a pheasant, or a cast of hawks, and they in return sent barrel upon barrel of Ostend oysters, five or six hundred at a time. The Englishmen, too; had it in their power to gratify Alexander himself with English greyhounds, for which he had a special liking. "You would wonder," wrote Cecil to his father, "how fond he is of English dogs." There was also much good preaching among other occupations, at Ostend. "My Lord of Derby's two chaplains," said Cecil, "have seasoned this town better with sermons than it had been before for a year's apace." But all this did not expedite the negotiations, nor did the Duke manifest so much anxiety for colloquies as for greyhounds. So, in an unlucky hour for himself, another "fond and vain" old gentleman —James Croft, the comptroller who had already figured, not much to his credit, in the secret negotiations between the Brussels and English courts—betook himself, unauthorized and alone; to the Duke at Bruges. Here he had an interview very similar in character to that in which John Rogers had been indulged, declared to Farnese that the Queen was most anxious for peace,

Page 1710

and invited him to send a secret envoy to England, who would instantly have ocular demonstration of the fact. Croft returned as triumphantly as the excellent Doctor had done; averring that there was no doubt as to the immediate conclusion of a treaty. His grounds of belief were very similar to those upon which Rogers had founded his faith. “Tis a weak old man of seventy,” said Parma, “with very little sagacity. I am inclined to think that his colleagues are taking him in, that they may the better deceive us. I will see that they do nothing of the kind.” But the movement was purely one of the comptroller’s own inspiration; for Sir James had a singular facility for getting himself into trouble, and for making confusion. Already, when he had been scarcely a day in Ostend, he had insulted the governor of the place, Sir John Conway, had given him the lie in the hearing of many of his own soldiers, had gone about telling all the world that he had express authority from her Majesty to send him home in disgrace, and that the Queen had called him a fool, and quite unfit for his post. And as if this had not been mischief-making enough, in addition to the absurd De Loo and Bodman negotiations of the previous year, in which he had been the principal actor, he had crowned his absurdities by this secret and officious visit to Ghent. The Queen, naturally very indignant at this conduct, reprehended him severely, and ordered him back to England. The comptroller was wretched. He expressed his readiness to obey her commands, but nevertheless implored his dread sovereign to take merciful consideration of the manifold misfortunes, ruin, and utter undoing, which thereby should fall upon him and his unfortunate family. All this he protested he would “nothing esteem if it tended to her Majesty’s pleasure or service,” but seeing it should effectuate nothing but to bring the aged carcase of her poor vassal to present decay, he implored compassion upon his hoary hairs, and promised to repair the error of his former proceedings. He avowed that he would not have ventured to disobey for a moment her orders to return, but “that his aged and feeble limbs did not retain sufficient force, without present death, to comply with her commandment.” And with that he took to his bed, and remained there until the Queen was graciously pleased to grant him her pardon.

At last, early in May—instead of the visit of Richardot—there was a preliminary meeting of all the commissioners in tents on the sands; within a cannon-shot of Ostend, and between that place and Newport. It was a showy and ceremonious interview, in which no business was transacted. The commissioners of Philip were attended by a body of one hundred and fifty light horse, and by three hundred private gentlemen in magnificent costume. La Motte also came from Newport with one thousand Walloon cavalry while the English Commissioners, on their part were escorted from Ostend by an imposing array of English and Dutch

Page 1711

troops.’ As the territory was Spanish; the dignity of the King was supposed to be preserved, and Alexander, who had promised Dr. Rogers that the first interview should take place within Ostend itself, thought it necessary to apologize to his sovereign for so nearly keeping his word as to send the envoys within cannon-shot of the town. “The English commissioners,” said he, “begged with so much submission for this concession, that I thought it as well to grant it.”

The Spanish envoys were despatched by the Duke of Parma, well provided with full powers for himself, which were not desired by the English government, but unfurnished with a commission from Philip, which had been pronounced indispensable. There was, therefore, much prancing of cavalry, flourishing of trumpets, and eating of oysters; at the first conference, but not one stroke of business. As the English envoys had now been three whole months in Ostend, and as this was the first occasion on which they had been brought face to face with the Spanish commissioners, it must be confessed that the tactics of Farnese had been masterly. Had the haste in the dock-yards of Lisbon and Cadiz been at all equal to the magnificent procrastination in the council-chambers of Bruges and Ghent, Medina Sidonia might already have been in the Thames.

But although little ostensible business was performed, there was one man who had always an eye to his work. The same servant in plain livery, who had accompanied Secretary Garnier, on his first visit to the English commissioners at Ostend, had now come thither again, accompanied by a fellow-lackey. While the complimentary dinner, offered in the name of the absent Farnese to the Queen’s representatives, was going forward, the two menials strayed off together to the downs, for the purpose of rabbit-shooting. The one of them was the same engineer who had already, on the former occasion, taken a complete survey of the fortifications of Ostend; the other was no less a personage than the Duke of Parma himself. The pair now made a thorough examination of the town and its neighbourhood, and, having finished their reconnoitring, made the best of their way back to Bruges. As it was then one of Alexander’s favourite objects to reduce the city of Ostend, at the earliest possible moment, it must be allowed that this preliminary conference was not so barren to himself as it was to the commissioners. Philip, when informed of this manoeuvre, was naturally gratified at such masterly duplicity, while he gently rebuked his nephew for exposing his valuable life; and certainly it would have been an inglorious termination to the Duke’s splendid career; had he been hanged as a spy within the trenches of Ostend. With the other details of this first diplomatic colloquy Philip was delighted. “I see you understand me thoroughly,” he said. “Keep the negotiation alive till my Armada appears, and then carry out my determination, and replant the Catholic religion on the soil of England.”

Page 1712

The Queen was not in such high spirits. She was losing her temper very fast, as she became more and more convinced that she had been trifled with. No powers had been yet exhibited, no permanent place of conference fixed upon, and the cessation of arms demanded by her commissioners for England, Spain, and all the Netherlands, was absolutely refused. She desired her commissioners to inform the Duke of Parma that it greatly touched his honour—as both before their coming and afterwards, he had assured her that he had 'comision bastantissima' from his sovereign—to clear himself at once from the imputation of insincerity. "Let not the Duke think," she wrote with her own hand, "that we would so long time endure these many frivolous and unkindly dealings, but that we desire all the world to know our desire of a kingly peace, and that we will endure no more the like, nor any, but will return you from your charge."

Accordingly—by her Majesty's special command—Dr. Dale made another visit to Bruges, to discover, once for all, whether there was a commission from Philip or not; and, if so, to see it with his own eyes. On the 7th May he had an interview with the Duke. After thanking his Highness for the honourable and stately manner in which the conferences had been, inaugurated near Ostend, Dale laid very plainly before him her Majesty's complaints of the tergiversations and equivocations concerning the commission, which had now lasted three months long.

In answer, Alexander made a complimentary harangue; confining himself entirely to the first part of the envoy's address, and assuring him in redundant phraseology, that he should hold himself very guilty before the world, if he had not surrounded the first colloquy between the plenipotentiaries of two such mighty princes, with as much pomp as the circumstances of time and place would allow. After this superfluous rhetoric had been poured forth, he calmly dismissed the topic which Dr. Dale had come all the way from. Ostend to discuss, by carelessly observing that President Richardot would confer with him on the subject of the commission.

"But," said the envoy, "tis no matter of conference or dispute. I desire simply to see the commission."

"Richardot and Champagny shall deal with you in the afternoon," repeated Alexander; and with this reply, the Doctor was fair to be contented.

Dale then alluded to the point of cessation of arms.

"Although," said he, "the Queen might justly require that the cessation should be general for all the King's dominion, yet in order not to stand on precise points, she is content that it should extend no further than to the towns of Flushing; Brief, Ostend, and Bergen-op-Zoom."

"To this he said nothing," wrote the envoy, "and so I went no further."

In the afternoon Dale had conference with Champagny and Richardot. As usual, Champagny was bound hand and foot by the gout, but was as quick-witted and disputatious as ever. Again Dale made an earnest harangue, proving satisfactorily—as if any proof were necessary on such a point—that a commission from Philip ought to be produced, and that a commission had been promised, over and over again.

Page 1713

After a pause, both the representatives of Parma began to wrangle with the envoy in very insolent fashion. “Richardot is always their mouth-piece,” said Dale, “only Champagny choppeth in at every word, and would do so likewise in ours if we would suffer it.”

“We shall never have done with these impertinent demands,” said the President. “You ought to be satisfied with the Duke’s promise of ratification contained in his commission. We confess what you say concerning the former requisitions and promises to be true, but when will you have done? Have we not showed it to Mr. Croft, one of your own colleagues? And if we show it you now, another may come to-morrow, and so we shall never have an end.”

“The delays come from yourselves,” roundly replied the Englishman, “for you refuse to do what in reason and law you are bound to do. And the more demands the more ‘mora aut potius culpa’ in you. You, of all men, have least cause to hold such language, who so confidently and even disdainfully answered our demand for the commission, in Mr. Cecil’s presence, and promised to show a perfect one at the very first meeting. As for Mr. Comptroller Croft, he came hither without the command of her Majesty and without the knowledge of his colleagues.”

Richardot then began to insinuate that, as Croft had come without authority, so—for aught they could tell—might Dale also. But Champagny here interrupted, protested that the president was going too far, and begged him to show the commission without further argument.

Upon this Richardot pulled out the commission from under his gown, and placed it in Dr. Dale’s hands!

It was dated 17th April, 1588, signed and sealed by the King, and written in French, and was to the effect, that as there had been differences between her Majesty and himself; as her Majesty had sent ambassadors into the Netherlands, as the Duke of Parma had entered into treaty with her Majesty, therefore the King authorised the Duke to appoint commissioners to treat, conclude, and determine all controversies and misunderstandings, confirmed any such appointments already made, and promised to ratify all that might be done by them in the premises.’

Dr. Dale expressed his satisfaction with the tenor of this document, and begged to be furnished with a copy of it, but his was peremptorily refused. There was then a long conversation—ending, as usual, in nothing—on the two other points, the place for the conferences, namely, and the cessation of arms.

Nest morning Dale, in taking leave of the Duke of Parma, expressed the gratification which he felt, and which her Majesty was sure to feel at the production of the

commission. It was now proved, said the envoy, that the King was as earnestly in favour of peace as the Duke was himself.

Dale then returned, well satisfied, to Ostend.

In truth the commission had arrived just in time. “Had I not received it soon enough to produce it then,” said Alexander, “the Queen would have broken off the negotiations. So I ordered Richardot, who is quite aware of your Majesty’s secret intentions, from which we shall not swerve one jot, to show it privately to Croft, and afterwards to Dr. Dale, but without allowing a copy of it to be taken.”

Page 1714

“You have done very well,” replied Philip, “but that commission is, on no account, to be used, except for show. You know my mind thoroughly.”

Thus three months had been consumed, and at last one indispensable preliminary to any negotiation had, in appearance, been performed. Full powers on both sides had been exhibited. When the Queen of England gave the Earl of Derby and his colleagues commission to treat with the King’s envoys, and pledged herself beforehand to, ratify all their proceedings, she meant to perform the promise to which she had affixed her royal name and seal. She could not know that the Spanish monarch was deliberately putting his name to a lie, and chuckling in secret over the credulity of his English sister, who was willing to take his word and his bond. Of a certainty the English were no match for southern diplomacy.

But Elizabeth was now more impatient than ever that the other two preliminaries should be settled, the place of conferences, and the armistice.

“Be plain with the Duke,” she wrote to her envoys, “that we have tolerated so many weeks in tarrying a commission, that I will never endure more delays. Let him know he deals with a prince who prizes her honour more than her life: Make yourselves such as stand of your reputations.”

Sharp words, but not sharp enough to prevent a further delay of a month; for it was not till the 6th June that the commissioners at last came together at Bourbourg, that “miserable little hole,” on the coast between Ostend and Newport, against which Gamier had warned them. And now there was ample opportunity to wrangle at full length on the next preliminary, the cessation of arms. It would be superfluous to follow the altercations step by step—for negotiations there were none—and it is only for the sake of exhibiting at full length the infamy of diplomacy, when diplomacy is unaccompanied by honesty, that we are hanging up this series of pictures at all. Those bloodless encounters between credulity and vanity upon one side, and gigantic fraud on the other, near those very sands of Newport, and in sight of the Northern Ocean, where, before long, the most terrible battles, both by land and sea, which the age had yet witnessed, were to occur, are quite as full of instruction and moral as the most sanguinary combats ever waged.

At last the commissioners exchanged copies of their respective powers. After four months of waiting and wrangling, so much had been achieved—a show of commissions and a selection of the place for conference. And now began the long debate about the cessation of arms. The English claimed an armistice for the whole dominion of Philip and Elizabeth respectively, during the term of negotiation, and for twenty days after. The Spanish would grant only a temporary truce, terminable at six days’ notice, and that only for the four cautionary towns of Holland held by the Queen. Thus Philip would be free to invade England at his leisure out of the

Page 1715

obedient Netherlands or Spain. This was inadmissible, of course, but a week was spent at the outset in reducing the terms to writing; and when the Duke's propositions were at last produced in the French tongue, they were refused by the Queen's commissioners, who required that the documents should be in Latin. Great was the triumph of Dr. Dale, when, after another interval, he found their Latin full of barbarisms and blunders, at which a school-boy would have blushed. The King's commissioners, however, while halting in their syntax, had kept steadily to their point.

"You promised a general cessation of aims at our coming," said Dale, at a conference on the 2/12 June, "and now ye have lingered five times twenty days, and nothing done at all. The world may see the delays come of you and not of us, and that ye are not so desirous of peace as ye pretend."

"But as far your invasion of England," stoutly observed the Earl of Derby, "ye shall find it hot coming thither. England was never so ready in any former age,—neither by sea nor by land; but we would show your unreasonableness in proposing a cessation of arms by which ye would bind her Majesty to forbear touching all the Low Countries, and yet leave yourselves at liberty to invade England."

While they were thus disputing, Secretary Gamier rushed into the room, looking very much frightened, and announced that Lord Henry Seymour's fleet of thirty-two ships of war was riding off Gravelines, and that he had sent two men on shore who were now waiting in the ante-chamber.

The men being accordingly admitted, handed letters to the English commissioners from Lord Henry, in which he begged to be informed in what terms they were standing, and whether they needed his assistance or countenance in the cause in which they were engaged. The envoys found his presence very "comfortable," as it showed the Spanish commissioners that her Majesty was so well provided as to make a cessation of arms less necessary to her than it was to the King. They therefore sent their thanks to the Lord Admiral, begging him to cruise for a time off Dunkirk and its neighbourhood, that both their enemies and their friends might have a sight of the English ships.

Great was the panic all along the coast at this unexpected demonstration. The King's commissioners got into their coaches, and drove down to the coast to look at the fleet, and—so soon as they appeared—were received with such a thundering cannonade an hour long, by way of salute, as to convince them, in the opinion of the English envoys, that the Queen had no cause to be afraid of any enemies afloat or ashore.

Page 1716

But these noisy arguments were not much more effective than the interchange of diplomatic broadsides which they had for a moment superseded. The day had gone by for blank cartridges and empty protocols. Nevertheless Lord Henry's harmless thunder was answered, the next day, by a "Quintuplication" in worse Latin than ever, presented to Dr. Dale and his colleagues by Richardot and Champagny, on the subject of the armistice. And then there was a return quintuplication, in choice Latin, by the classic Dale, and then there was a colloquy on the quintuplication, and everything that had been charged, and truly charged, by the English; was now denied by the King's commissioners; and Champagny—more gouty and more irascible than ever—"chopped in" at every word spoken by King's envoys or Queen's, contradicted everybody, repudiated everything said or done by Andrew de Loo, or any of the other secret negotiators during the past year, declared that there never had been a general cessation of arms promised, and that, at any rate, times were now changed, and such an armistice was inadmissible! Then the English answered with equal impatience, and reproached the King's representatives with duplicity and want of faith, and censured them for their unseemly language, and begged to inform Champagny and Richardot that they had not then to deal with such persons as they might formerly have been in the habit of treating withal, but with a "great prince who did justify the honour of her actions," and they confuted the positions now assumed by their opponents with official documents and former statements from those very opponents' lips. And then, after all this diplomatic and rhetorical splutter, the high commissioners recovered their temper and grew more polite, and the King's "envoys excused themselves in a mild, merry manner," for the rudeness of their speeches, and the Queen's envoys accepted their apologies with majestic urbanity, and so they separated for the day in a more friendly manner than they had done the day before.'

"You see to what a scholar's shift we have been driven for want of resolution," said Valentine Dale. "If we should linger here until there should be broken heads, in what case we should be God knoweth. For I can trust Champagny and Richardot no farther than I can see them."

And so the whole month of June passed by; the English commissioners "leaving no stone unturned to get a quiet cessation of arms in general terms," and being constantly foiled; yet perpetually kept in hope that the point would soon be carried. At the same time the signs of the approaching invasion seemed to thicken. "In my opinion," said Dale, "as Phormio spake in matters of wars, it were very requisite that my Lord Harry should be always on this coast, for they will steal out from hence as closely as they can, either to join with the Spanish navy or to land, and they may be very easily scattered, by God's grace." And, with the honest pride of a protocol-maker, he added, "our postulates do trouble the King's commissioners very much, and do bring them to despair."

Page 1717

The excellent Doctor had not even yet discovered that the King's commissioners were delighted with his postulates; and that to have kept them postulating thus five months in succession, while naval and military preparations were slowly bringing forth a great event—which was soon to strike them with as much amazement as if the moon had fallen out of heaven—was one of the most decisive triumphs ever achieved by Spanish diplomacy. But the Doctor thought that his logic had driven the King of Spain to despair.

At the same time he was not insensible to the merits of another and more peremptory style of rhetoric,—"I pray you," said he to Walsingham, "let us hear some arguments from my Lord Harry out of her Majesty's navy now and then. I think they will do more good than any bolt that we can shoot here. If they be met with at their going out, there is no possibility for them to make any resistance, having so few men that can abide the sea; for the rest, as you know, must be sea-sick at first."

But the envoys were completely puzzled. Even at the beginning of July, Sir James Croft was quite convinced of the innocence of the King and the Duke; but Croft was in his dotage. As for Dale, he occasionally opened his eyes, and his ears, but more commonly kept them well closed to the significance of passing events; and consoled himself with his protocols and his classics, and the purity of his own Latin.

"'Tis a very wise saying of Terence," said he, "omnibus nobis ut res dant sese; ita magni aut humiles sumus.' When the King's commissioners hear of the King's navy from Spain, they are in such jollity that they talk loud. . . . In the mean time—as the wife of Bath sath in Chaucer by her husband, we owe them not a word. If we should die tomorrow; I hope her Majesty will find by our writings that the honour of the cause, in the opinion of the world, must be with her Majesty; and that her commissioners are, neither of such imperfection in their reasons, or so barbarous in language, as they who fail not, almost in every line, of some barbarism not to be borne in a grammar-school, although in subtleness and impudent affirming of untruths and denying of truths, her commissioners are not in any respect to match with Champagny and Richardot, who are doctors in that faculty."

It might perhaps prove a matter of indifference to Elizabeth and to England, when the Queen should be a state-prisoner in Spain and the Inquisition quietly established in her kingdom, whether the world should admit or not, in case of his decease, the superiority of Dr. Dale's logic and latin to those of his antagonists. And even if mankind conceded the best of the argument to the English diplomatists, that diplomacy might seem worthless which could be blind to the colossal falsehoods growing daily before its eyes. Had the commissioners been able to read the secret correspondence between Parma and his master—as we have had the opportunity of doing—they

Page 1718

would certainly not have left their homes in February, to be made fools of until July; but would, on their knees, have implored their royal mistress to awake from her fatal delusion before it should be too late. Even without that advantage, it seems incredible that they should have been unable to pierce through the atmosphere of duplicity which surrounded them, and to obtain one clear glimpse of the destruction so, steadily advancing upon England.

For the famous bull of Sixtus V. had now been fulminated. Elizabeth had bean again denounced as a bastard and usurper, and her kingdom had been solemnly conferred upon Philip, with title of defender of the Christian, faith, to have and to hold as tributary and feudatory of Rome. The so-called Queen had usurped the crown contrary to the ancient treaties between the apostolic stool and the kingdom of England, which country, on its reconciliation with the head of the church after the death of St. Thomas of Canterbury, had recognised the necessity of the Pope's. consent in the succession to its throne; she had deserved chastisement for the terrible tortures inflicted by her upon English Catholics and God's own saints; and it was declared an act of virtue, to be repaid with plenary indulgence and forgiveness of all sins, to lay violent hands on the usurper, and deliver her into the hands of the Catholic party. And of the holy league against the usurper, Philip was appointed the head, and Alexander of Parma chief commander. This document was published in large numbers in Antwerp in the English tongue.

The pamphlet of Dr. Allen, just named Cardinal, was also translated in the same city, under the direction of the Duke of Parma, in-order to be distributed throughout England, on the arrival in that kingdom of the Catholic troops. The well-known 'Admonition to the Nobility and People of England and Ireland' accused the Queen of every crime and vice which can pollute humanity; and was filled with foul details unfit for the public eye in these more decent days.

So soon as the intelligence of these publications reached England, the Queen ordered her commissioners at Bourbourg to take instant cognizance of them, and to obtain a categorical explanation on the subject from Alexander himself: as if an explanation were possible, as if the designs of Sixtus, Philip, and Alexander, could any longer be doubted, and as if the Duke were more likely now than before to make a succinct statement of them for the benefit of her Majesty.

"Having discovered," wrote Elizabeth on the 9th July (N.S.), "that this treaty of peace is entertained only to abuse us, and being many ways given to understand that the preparations which have so long been making, and which now are consummated, both in Spain and the Low Countries, are purposely to be employed against us and our country; finding that, for the furtherance of these exploits, there is ready to be published a vile, slanderous, and blasphemous

Page 1719

book, containing as many lies as lines, entitled, ‘An Admonition,’ &c., and contrived by a lewd born-subject of ours, now become an arrant traitor, named Dr. Allen, lately made, a cardinal at Rome; as also a bull of the Pope, whereof we send you a copy, both very lately brought into those Low Countries, the one whereof is already printed at Antwerp, in a great multitude; in the English tongue, and the other ordered to be printed, only to stir up our subjects, contrary to the laws of God and their allegiance, to join with such foreign purposes as are prepared against us and our realm, to come out of those Low Countries and out of Spain; and as it appears by the said bull that the Duke of Parma is expressly named and chosen by the Pope and the King of Spain to be principal executioner of these intended enterprises, we cannot think it honourable for us to continue longer the treaty of peace with them that, under colour of treaty, arm themselves with all the power they can to a bloody war.”

Accordingly the Queen commanded Dr. Dale, as one of the commissioners, to proceed forthwith to the Duke, in order to obtain explanations as to his contemplated conquest of her realm, and as to his share in the publication of the bull and pamphlet, and to “require him, as he would be accounted a prince of honour, to let her plainly understand what she might think thereof.” The envoy was to assure him that the Queen would trust implicitly to his statement, to adjure him to declare the truth, and, in case he avowed the publications and the belligerent intentions suspected, to demand instant safe-conduct to England for her commissioners, who would, of course, instantly leave the Netherlands. On the other hand, if the Duke disavowed those infamous documents, he was to be requested to punish the printers, and have the books burned by the hangman?

Dr. Dale, although suffering from cholic, was obliged to set forth, at once upon what he felt would be a bootless journey. At his return—which was upon the 22nd of July (N.S.)the shrewd old gentleman had nearly arrived at the opinion that her Majesty might as well break off the negotiations. He had a “comfortless voyage and a ticklish message;” found all along the road signs of an approaching enterprise, difficult to be mistaken; reported 10,000 veteran Spaniards, to which force Stanley’s regiment was united; 6000 Italians, 3000 Germans, all with pikes, corselets, and slash swords complete; besides 10,000 Walloons. The transports for the cavalry at Gravelingen he did not see, nor was he much impressed with what he heard as to the magnitude of the naval preparations at Newport. He was informed that the Duke was about making a foot-pilgrimage from Brussels to Our Lady of Halle, to implore victory for his banners, and had daily evidence of the soldier’s expectation to invade and to “devour England.” All this had not tended to cure him of the low spirits with which he began the journey. Nevertheless, although he was unable—as will be seen—to report an entirely satisfactory answer from Farnese to the Queen upon the momentous questions entrusted to him, he, at least, thought of a choice passage in ‘The AEneid,’ so very apt to the circumstances, as almost to console him for the “pangs of his cholic” and the terrors of the approaching invasion.

Page 1720

“I have written two or three verses out of Virgil for the Queen to read,” said he, “which I pray your Lordship to present unto her. God grant her to weigh them. If your Lordship do read the whole discourse of Virgil in that place, it will make your heart melt. Observe the report of the ambassadors that were sent to Diomedes to make war against the Trojans, for the old hatred that he, being a Grecian, did bear unto them; and note the answer of Diomedes dissuading them from entering into war with the Trojans, the perplexity of the King, the miseries of the country, the reasons of Drances that spake against them which would have war, the violent persuasions of Turnus to war; and note, I pray you; one word, ‘nec te ullius violentia frangat.’ What a lecture could I make with Mr. Cecil upon that passage in Virgil!”

The most important point for the reader to remark is the date of this letter. It was received in the very last days of the month of July. Let him observe—as he will soon have occasion to do—the events which were occurring on land and sea, exactly at the moment when this classic despatch reached its destination, and judge whether the hearts of the Queen and Lord Burghley would be then quite at leisure to melt at the sorrows of the Trojan War. Perhaps the doings of Drake and Howard, Medina Sidonia, and Ricalde, would be pressing as much on their attention as the eloquence of Diomede or the wrath of Turnus. Yet it may be doubted whether the reports of these Grecian envoys might not in truth, be almost as much to the purpose as the despatches of the diplomatic pedant, with his Virgil and his cholic, into whose hands grave matters of peace and war were entrusted in what seemed the day of England’s doom.

“What a lecture I could make with Mr. Cecil on the subject!—” An English ambassador, at the court of Philip *ii*.’s viceroy, could indulge himself in imaginary prelections on the AEneid, in the last days of July, of the year of our Lord 1588!

The Doctor, however—to do him justice—had put the questions categorically, to his Highness as he had been instructed to do. He went to Bruges so mysteriously; that no living man, that side the sea, save Lord Derby and Lord Cobham, knew the cause of his journey. Poor-puzzling James Croft, in particular, was moved almost to tears, by being kept out of the secret. On the 8/18 July Dale had audience of the Duke at Bruges. After a few commonplaces, he was invited by the Duke to state what special purpose had brought him to Bruges.

“There is a book printed at Antwerp,” said Dale, “and set forth by a fugitive from England, who calleth himself a cardinal.”

Upon this the Duke began diligently to listen.

Page 1721

“This book,” resumed Dale, “is an admonition to the nobility and people of England and Ireland touching the execution of the sentence of the Pope against the Queen which the King Catholic hath entrusted to your Highness as chief of the enterprise. There is also a bull of the Pope declaring my sovereign mistress illegitimate and an usurper, with other matters too odious for any prince or gentleman to name or hear. In this bull the Pope saith that he hath dealt with the most Catholic King to employ all the means in his power to the deprivation and deposition of my sovereign, and doth charge her subjects to assist the army appointed by the King Catholic for that purpose, under the conduct of your Highness. Therefore her Majesty would be satisfied from your Highness in that point, and will take satisfaction of none other; not doubting but that as you are a prince of word and credit; you will deal plainly with her Majesty. Whatsoever it may be, her Majesty will not take it amiss against your Highness, so she may only be informed by you of the truth. Wherefore I do require you to satisfy the Queen.”

“I am glad,” replied the Duke, “that her Majesty and her commissioners do take in good part my good-will towards them. I am especially touched by the good opinion her Majesty hath of my sincerity, which I should be glad always to maintain. As to the book to which you refer, I have never read it, nor seen it, nor do I take heed of it. It may well be that her Majesty, whom it concerneth, should take notice of it; but, for my part, I have nought to do with it, nor can I prevent men from writing or printing at their pleasure. I am at the commandment of my master only.”

As Alexander made no reference to the Pope’s bull, Dr. Dale observed, that if a war had been, of purpose, undertaken at the instance of the Pope, all this negotiation had been in vain, and her Majesty would be obliged to withdraw her commissioners, not doubting that they would receive safe-conduct as occasion should require.

“Yea, God forbid else,” replied Alexander; “and further, I know nothing of any bull of the Pope, nor do I care for any, nor do I undertake anything for him. But as for any misunderstanding (mal entendu) between my master and her Majesty, I must, as a soldier, act at the command of my sovereign. For my part, I have always had such respect for her Majesty, being so noble a Queen, as that I would never hearken to anything that might be reproachful to her. After my master, I would do most to serve your Queen, and I hope she will take my word for her satisfaction on that point. And for avoiding of bloodshed and the burning of houses and such other calamities as do follow the wars, I have been a petitioner to my sovereign that all things might be ended quietly by a peace. That is a thing, however,” added the Duke; “which you have more cause to desire than we; for if the King my master, should lose a battle, he would be able to recover it well enough, without harm to himself, being far enough off in Spain, while, if the battle be lost on your side, you may lose kingdom and all.”

Page 1722

“By God’s sufferance,” rejoined the Doctor, “her Majesty is not without means to defend her crown, that hath descended to her from so long a succession of ancestors. Moreover your Highness knows very well that one battle cannot conquer a kingdom in another country.”

“Well,” said the Duke, “that is in God’s hand.”

“So it is,” said the Doctor.

“But make an end of it,” continued Alexander quietly, “and if you have anything to put into writing; you will do me a pleasure by sending it to me.”

Dr. Valentine Dale was not the man to resist the temptation to make a protocol, and promised one for the next day.

“I am charged only to give your Highness satisfaction,” he said, “as to her Majesty’s sincere intentions, which have already been published to the world in English, French, and Italian, in the hope that you may also satisfy the Queen upon this other point. I am but one of her commissioners, and could not deal without my colleagues. I crave leave to depart to-morrow morning, and with safe-convoy, as I had in coming.”

After the envoy had taken leave, the Duke summoned Andrea de Loo, and related to him the conversation which had taken place. He then, in the presence of that personage, again declared—upon his honour and with very constant affirmations, that he had never seen nor heard of the book—the ‘Admonition’ by Cardinal Allen—and that he knew nothing of any bull, and had no regard to it.’

The plausible Andrew accompanied the Doctor to his lodgings, protesting all the way of his own and his master’s sincerity, and of their unequivocal intentions to conclude a peace. The next day the Doctor, by agreement, brought a most able protocol of demands in the name of all the commissioners of her Majesty; which able protocol the Duke did not at that moment read, which he assuredly never read subsequently, and which no human soul ever read afterwards. Let the dust lie upon it, and upon all the vast heaps of protocols raised mountains high during the spring and summer of 1588.

“Dr. Dale has been with me two or three, times,” said Parma, in giving his account of these interviews to Philip. “I don’t know why he came, but I think he wished to make it appear, by coming to Bruges, that the rupture, when it occurs, was caused by us, not by the English. He has been complaining of Cardinal Allen’s book, and I told him that I didn’t understand a word of English, and knew nothing whatever of the matter.”

It has been already seen that the Duke had declared, on his word of honour, that he had never heard of the famous pamphlet. Yet at that very moment letters were lying in his cabinet, received more than a fortnight before from Philip, in which that monarch

thanked Alexander for having had the Cardinal's book translated at Antwerp! Certainly few English diplomatists could be a match for a Highness so liberal of his word of honour.

Page 1723

But even Dr. Dale had at last convinced himself—even although the Duke knew nothing of bull or pamphlet—that mischief was brewing against England. The sagacious man, having seen large bodies of Spaniards and Walloons making such demonstrations of eagerness to be led against his country, and "professing it as openly as if they were going to a fair or market," while even Alexander himself could "no more hide it than did Henry *viii*. when he went to Boulogne," could not help suspecting something amiss.

His colleague, however, Comptroller Croft, was more judicious, for he valued himself on taking a sound, temperate, and conciliatory view of affairs. He was not the man to offend a magnanimous neighbour—who meant nothing unfriendly by regarding his manoeuvres with superfluous suspicion. So this envoy wrote to Lord Burghley on the 2nd August (N.S.)—let the reader mark the date—that, "although a great doubt had been conceived as to the King's sincerity, ... yet that discretion and experience induced him—the envoy—to think, that besides the reverent opinion to be had of princes' oaths, and the general incommodity which will come by the contrary, God had so balanced princes' powers in that age, as they rather desire to assure themselves at home, than with danger to invade their neighbours."

Perhaps the mariners of England—at that very instant exchanging broadsides off the coast of Devon and Dorset with the Spanish Armada, and doing their best to protect their native land from the most horrible calamity which had ever impended over it—had arrived at a less reverent opinion of princes' oaths; and it was well for England in that supreme hour that there were such men as Howard and Drake, and Winter and Frobisher, and a whole people with hearts of oak to defend her, while bungling diplomatists and credulous dotards were doing their best to imperil her existence.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Bungling diplomatists and credulous dotards
Fitter to obey than to command
Full of precedents and declamatory commonplaces
I am a king that will be ever known not to fear any but God
Infamy of diplomacy, when diplomacy is unaccompanied by honesty
Mendacity may always obtain over innocence and credulity
Never did statesmen know better how not to do
Pray here for satiety, (said Cecil) than ever think of variety
Simple truth was highest skill
Strength does a falsehood acquire in determined and skilful hand
That crowned criminal, Philip the Second

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 56, 1588

CHAPTER XVIII. Part 2.

Page 1724

Dangerous Discord in North Holland—Leicester's Resignation arrives —Enmity of Willoughby and Maurice—Willoughby's dark Picture of Affairs—Hatred between States and Leicestrians—Maurice's Answer to the Queen's Charges—End of Sonoy's Rebellion—Philip foments the Civil War in France—League's Threats and Plots against Henry—Mucio arrives in Paris—He is received with Enthusiasm—The King flies, and Spain triumphs in Paris—States expostulate with the Queen— English Statesmen still deceived—Deputies from Netherland Churches —Hold Conference with the Queen—-And present long Memorials—More Conversations with the Queen—National Spirit of England and Holland—Dissatisfaction with Queen's Course—Bitter Complaints of Lord Howard—Want of Preparation in Army and Navy—Sanguine Statements of Leicester—-Activity of Parma—The painful Suspense continues.

But it is necessary-in order to obtain a complete picture of that famous year 1588, and to understand the cause from which such great events were springing—to cast a glance at the internal politics of the States most involved in Philip's meshes.

Certainly, if there had ever been a time when the new commonwealth of the Netherlands should be both united in itself and on thoroughly friendly terms with England, it was exactly that epoch of which we are treating. There could be no reasonable doubt that the designs of Spain against England were hostile, and against Holland revengeful. It was at least possible that Philip meant to undertake the conquest of England, and to undertake it as a stepping-stone to the conquest of Holland. Both the kingdom and the republic should have been alert, armed, full of suspicion towards the common foe, full of confidence in each other. What decisive blows might have been struck against Parma in the Netherlands, when his troops were starving, sickly, and mutinous, if the Hollanders and Englishmen had been united under one chieftain, and thoroughly convinced of the impossibility of peace! Could the English and Dutch statesmen of that day have read all the secrets of their great enemy's heart, as it is our privilege at this hour to do, they would have known that in sudden and deadly strokes lay their best chance of salvation. But, without that advantage, there were men whose sagacity told them that it was the hour for deeds and not for dreams. For to Leicester and Walsingham, as well as to Paul Buys and Barneveld, peace with Spain seemed an idle vision. It was unfortunate that they were overruled by Queen Elizabeth and Burghley, who still clung to that delusion; it was still more disastrous that the intrigues of Leicester had done so much to paralyze the republic; it was almost fatal that his departure, without laying down his authority, had given the signal for civil war.

Page 1725

During the winter, spring, and summer of 1588, while the Duke—in the face of mighty obstacles—was slowly proceeding with his preparations in Flanders, to co-operate with the armaments from Spain, it would have been possible by a combined movement to destroy his whole plan, to liberate all the Netherlands, and to avert, by one great effort, the ruin impending over England. Instead of such vigorous action, it was thought wiser to send commissioners, to make protocols, to ask for armistices, to give profusely to the enemy that which he was most in need of—time. Meanwhile the Hollanders and English could quarrel comfortably among themselves, and the little republic, for want of a legal head, could come as near as possible to its dissolution.

Young Maurice—deep thinker for his years and peremptory in action—was not the man to see his great father's life-work annihilated before his eyes, so long as he had an arm and brain of his own. He accepted his position at the head of the government of Holland and Zeeland, and as chief of the war-party. The council of state, mainly composed of Leicester's creatures, whose commissions would soon expire by their own limitation, could offer but a feeble resistance to such determined individuals as Maurice, Buys, and Barneveld. The party made rapid progress. On the other hand, the English Leicestrians did their best to foment discord in the Provinces. Sonoy was sustained in his rebellion in North Holland, not only by the Earl's partizans, but by Elizabeth herself. Her rebukes to Maurice, when Maurice was pursuing the only course which seemed to him consistent with honour and sound policy, were sharper than a sword. Well might Duplessis Mornay observe, that the commonwealth had been rather strangled than embraced by the English Queen. Sonoy, in the name of Leicester, took arms against Maurice and the States; Maurice marched against him; and Lord Willoughby, commander-in-chief of the English forces, was anxious to march against Maurice. It was a spectacle to make angels weep, that of Englishmen and Hollanders preparing to cut each other's throats, at the moment when Philip and Parma were bending all their energies to crush England and Holland at once.

Indeed, the interregnum between the departure of Leicester and his abdication was diligently employed by his more reckless partizans to defeat and destroy the authority of the States. By prolonging the interval, it was hoped that no government would be possible except the arbitrary rule of the Earl, or of a successor with similar views: for a republic—a free commonwealth—was thought an absurdity. To entrust supreme power to advocates; merchants, and mechanics, seemed as hopeless as it was vulgar. Willoughby; much devoted to Leicester and much detesting Barneveld, had small scruple in fanning the flames of discord.

Page 1726

There was open mutiny against the States by the garrison of Gertruydenberg, and Willoughby's brother-in-law, Captain Wingfield, commanded in Gertruydenberg. There were rebellious demonstrations in Naarden, and Willoughby went to Naarden. The garrison was troublesome, but most of the magistrates were firm. So Willoughby supped with the burgomasters, and found that Paul Buys had been setting the people against Queen Elizabeth, Leicester, and the whole English nation, making them all odious. Colonel Dorp said openly that it was a shame for the country to refuse their own natural-born Count for strangers. He swore that he would sing his song whose bread he had eaten. A "fat militia captain" of the place, one Soyssons, on the other hand, privately informed Willoughby that Maurice and Barneveld were treating underhand with Spain. Willoughby was inclined to believe the calumny, but feared that his corpulent friend would lose his head for reporting it. Meantime the English commander did his best to strengthen the English party in their rebellion against the States.

"But how if they make war upon us?" asked the Leicestrians.

"It is very likely," replied Willoughby, "that if they use violence you will have her Majesty's assistance, and then you who continue constant to the end will be rewarded accordingly. Moreover, who would not rather be a horse-keeper to her Majesty, than a captain to Barneveld or Buys?"

When at last the resignation of Leicester—presented to the States by Killegrew on the 31st March—seemed to promise comparative repose to the republic, the vexation of the Leicestrians was intense. Their efforts to effect a dissolution of the government had been rendered unsuccessful, when success seemed within their grasp. "Albeit what is once executed cannot be prevented," said Captain Champernoun; "yet 'tis thought certain that if the resignation of Lord Leicester's commission had been deferred yet some little time; the whole country and towns would have so revolted and mutinied against the government and authority of the States, as that they should have had no more credit given them by the people than pleased her Majesty. Most part of the people could see—in consequence of the troubles, discontent, mutiny of garrisons, and the like, that it was most necessary for the good success of their affairs that the power of the States should be abolished, and the whole government of his Excellency erected. As these matters were busily working into the likelihood of some good effect, came the resignation of his Excellency's commission and authority, which so dashed the proceedings of it, as that all people and commanders well affected unto her Majesty and my Lord of Leicester are utterly discouraged. The States, with their adherents, before they had any Lord's resignations were much perplexed what course to take, but now begin to hoist their heads." The excellent Leicestrian entertained hopes, however; that mutiny and intrigue

Page 1727

might still carry the day. He had seen the fat militiaman of Naarden and other captains, and, hoped much mischief from their schemes. “The chief mutineers of Gertruydenberg,” he said, “maybe wrought to send unto ’the States, that if they do not procure them some English governor, they will compound with the enemy, whereon the States shall be driven to request her Majesty to accept the place, themselves entertaining the garrison. I know certain captains discontented with the States for arrears of pay, who will contrive to get into Naarden with their companies, with the States consent, who, once entered, will keep the place for their satisfaction, pay their soldiers out of the contributions of the country; and yet secretly hold the place at her Majesty’s command.”

This is not an agreeable picture; yet it is but one out of many examples of the intrigues by which Leicester and his party were doing their best to destroy the commonwealth of the Netherlands at a moment when its existence was most important to that of England.

To foment mutiny in order to subvert the authority of Maurice, was not a friendly or honourable course of action either towards Holland or England; and it was to play into the hands of Philip as adroitly as his own stipendiaries could have done.

With mischief-makers like Champernoun in every city, and with such diplomatists at Ostend as Croft and Ropers and Valentine Dale, was it wonderful that the King and the Duke of Parma found time to mature their plans for the destruction of both countries?

Lord Willoughby, too, was extremely dissatisfied with his own position. He received no commission from the Queen for several months. When it at last reached him, it seemed inadequate, and he became more sullen than ever. He declared that he would rather serve the Queen as a private soldier, at his own expense—“lean as his purse was”—-than accept the limited authority conferred on him. He preferred to show his devotion “in a beggarly state, than in a formal show.” He considered it beneath her Majesty’s dignity that he should act in the field under the States, but his instructions forbade his acceptance of any office from that body but that of general in their service. He was very discontented, and more anxious than ever to be rid of his functions. Without being extremely ambitious, he was impatient of control. He desired not “a larger-shaped coat,” but one that fitted him better. “I wish to shape my garment homely, after my cloth,” he said, “that the better of my parish may not be misled by my sumptuousness. I would live quietly, without great noise, my poor roof low and near the ground, not subject to be overblown with unlooked-for storms, while the sun seems most shining.”

Page 1728

Being the deadly enemy of the States and their leaders, it was a matter of course that he should be bitter against Maurice. That young Prince, bold, enterprising, and determined, as he was, did not ostensibly meddle with political affairs more than became his years; but he accepted the counsels of the able statesmen in whom his father had trusted. Riding, hunting, and hawking, seemed to be his chief delight at the Hague, in the intervals of military occupations. He rarely made his appearance in the state-council during the winter, and referred public matters to the States-General, to the States of Holland, to Barneveld, Buys, and Hohenlo. Superficial observers like George Gilpin regarded him as a cipher; others, like Robert Cecil, thought him an unmannerly schoolboy; but Willoughby, although considering him insolent and conceited, could not deny his ability. The peace partisans among the burghers—a very small faction—were furious against him, for they knew that Maurice of Nassau represented war. They accused of deep designs against the liberties of their country the youth who was ever ready to risk his life in their defence. A burgomaster from Friesland, who had come across the Zuyder Zee to intrigue against the States' party, was full of spleen at being obliged to dance attendance for a long time at the Hague. He complained that Count Maurice, green of years, and seconded by greener counsellors, was meditating the dissolution of the state-council, the appointment of a new board from his own creatures, the overthrow of all other authority, and the assumption of the, sovereignty of Holland and Zeeland, with absolute power. "And when this is done;" said the rueful burgomaster, "he and his turbulent fellows may make what terms they like with Spain, to the disadvantage of the Queen and of us poor wretches."

But there was nothing farther from the thoughts of the turbulent fellows than any negotiations with Spain. Maurice was ambitious enough, perhaps, but his ambition ran in no such direction. Willoughby knew better; and thought that by humouring the petulant young man it might be possible to manage him.

"Maurice is young," he said, "hot-headed; coveting honour. If we do but look at him through our fingers, without much words, but with providence enough, baiting his hook a little to his appetite, there is no doubt but he might be caught and kept in a fish-pool; while in his imagination he may judge it a sea. If not, 'tis likely he will make us fish in troubled waters."

Maurice was hardly the fish for a mill-pond even at that epoch, and it might one day be seen whether or not he could float in the great ocean of events. Meanwhile, he swam his course without superfluous gambols or spoutings.

The commander of her Majesty's forces was not satisfied with the States, nor their generals, nor their politicians. "Affairs are going 'a malo in pejus,'" he said. "They embrace their liberty as apes their young. To this end are Counts Hollock and Maurice set upon the stage to entertain the popular sort. Her Majesty and my Lord of Leicester are not forgotten. The Counts are in Holland, especially Hollock, for the other is but the cipher. And yet I can assure you Maurice hath wit and spirit too much for his time."

Page 1729

As the troubles of the interregnum increased Willoughby was more dissatisfied than ever with the miserable condition of the Provinces, but chose to ascribe it to the machinations of the States' party, rather than to the ambiguous conduct of Leicester. "These evils," he said, "are especially, derived from the childish ambition of the young Count Maurice, from the covetous and furious counsels of the proud Hollanders, now chief of the States-General, and, if with pardon it may be said, from our slackness and coldness to entertain our friends. The provident and wiser sort—weighing what a slender ground the appetite of a young man is, unfurnished with the sinews of war to manage so great a cause—for a good space after my Lord of Leicester's departure, gave him far looking on, to see him play has part on the stage."

Willoughby's spleen caused him to mix his metaphors more recklessly than strict taste would warrant, but his violent expressions painted the relative situation of parties more vividly than could be done by a calm disquisition. Maurice thus playing his part upon the stage—as the general proceeded to observe—"was a skittish horse, becoming by little and little assured of what he had feared, and perceiving the harmlessness thereof; while his companions, finding no safety of neutrality in so great practices, and no overturning nor barricado to stop his rash wilded chariot, followed without fear; and when some of the first had passed the bog; the rest, as the fashion is, never started after. The variable democracy; embracing novelty, began to applaud their prosperity; the base and lewdest sorts of men, to whom there is nothing more agreeable than change of estates, is a better monture to degrees than their merit, took present hold thereof. Hereby Paul Buys, Barneveld, and divers others, who were before mantled with a tolerable affection, though seasoned with a poisoned intention, caught the occasion, and made themselves the Beelzebubs of all these mischiefs, and, for want of better angels, spared not to let fly our golden-winged ones in the name of guilders, to prepare the hearts and hands that hold money more dearer than honesty, of which sort, the country troubles and the Spanish practices having suckled up many, they found enough to serve their purpose. As the breach is safely saltable where no defence is made, so they, finding no head, but those scattered arms that were disavowed, drew the sword with Peter, and gave pardon with the Pope, as you shall plainly perceive by the proceedings at Horn. Thus their force; fair words, or corruption, prevailing everywhere, it grew to this conclusion—that the worst were encouraged with their good success, and the best sort assured of no fortune or favour."

Page 1730

Out of all this hubbub of stage-actors, skittish horses, rash wilded chariots, bogs, Beelzebubs, and golden-winged angels, one truth was distinctly audible; that Beelzebub, in the shape of Barneveld, had been getting the upper hand in the Netherlands, and that the Lecestrians were at a disadvantage. In truth those partisans were becoming extremely impatient. Finding themselves deserted by their great protector, they naturally turned their eyes towards Spain, and were now threatening to sell themselves to Philip. The Earl, at his departure, had given them privately much encouragement. But month after month had passed by while they were waiting in vain for comfort. At last the "best"—that is to say, the unhappy Leicestrians—came to Willoughby, asking his advice in their "declining and desperate cause."

"Well nigh a month longer," said that general, "I nourished them with compliments, and assured them that my Lord of Leicester would take care of them." The diet was not fattening. So they began to grumble more loudly than ever, and complained with great bitterness of the miserable condition in which they had been left by the Earl, and expressed their fears lest the Queen likewise meant to abandon them. They protested that their poverty, their powerful foes, and their slow friends, would compel them either to make their peace with the States' party, or "compound with the enemy."

It would have seemed that real patriots, under such circumstances, would hardly hesitate in their choice, and would sooner accept the dominion of "Beelzebub," or even Paul Buys, than that of Philip *ii*. But the Leicestrians of Utrecht and Friesland—patriots as they were—hated Holland worse than they hated the Inquisition. Willoughby encouraged them in that hatred. He assured him of her Majesty's affection for them, complained of the factious proceedings of the States, and alluded to the unfavourable state of the weather, as a reason why—near four months long—they had not received the comfort out of England which they had a right to expect. He assured them that neither the Queen nor Leicester would conclude this honourable action, wherein much had been hazarded, "so rawly and tragically" as they seemed to fear, and warned them, that "if they did join with Holland, it would neither ease nor help them, but draw them into a more dishonourable loss of their liberties; and that, after having wound them in, the Hollanders would make their own peace with the enemy."

It seemed somewhat unfair-while the Queen's government was straining every nerve to obtain a peace from Philip, and while the Hollanders were obstinately deaf to any propositions for treating—that Willoughby should accuse them of secret intentions to negotiate. But it must be confessed that faction has rarely worn a more mischievous aspect than was presented by the politics of Holland and England in the winter and spring of 1588.

Page 1731

Young Maurice was placed in a very painful position. He liked not to be “strangled in the great Queen’s embrace;” but he felt most keenly the necessity of her friendship, and the importance to both countries of a close alliance. It was impossible for him, however, to tolerate the rebellion of Sonoy, although Sonoy was encouraged by Elizabeth, or to fly in the face of Barneveld, although Barneveld was detested by Leicester. So with much firmness and courtesy, notwithstanding the extravagant pictures painted by Willoughby, he suppressed mutiny in Holland, while avowing the most chivalrous attachment to the sovereign of England.

Her Majesty expressed her surprise and her discontent, that, notwithstanding his expressions of devotion to herself, he should thus deal with Sonoy, whose only crime was an equal devotion. “If you do not behave with more moderation in future,” she said, “you may believe that we are not a princess of so little courage as not to know how to lend a helping hand to those who are unjustly oppressed. We should be sorry if we had cause to be disgusted with your actions, and if we were compelled to make you a stranger to the ancient good affection which we bore to your late father, and have continued towards yourself.”

But Maurice maintained a dignified attitude, worthy of his great father’s name. He was not the man to crouch like Leicester, when he could no longer refresh himself in the “shadow of the Queen’s golden beams,” important as he knew her friendship to be to himself and his country. So he defended himself in a manly letter to the privy council against the censures of Elizabeth. He avowed his displeasure, that, within his own jurisdiction, Sonoy should give a special oath of obedience to Leicester; a thing never done before in the country, and entirely illegal. It would not even be tolerated in England, he said, if a private gentleman should receive a military appointment in Warwickshire or Norfolk without the knowledge of the lord-lieutenant of the shire. He had treated the contumacious Sonoy with mildness during a long period, but without effect. He had abstained from violence towards him, out of reverence to the Queen, under whose sacred name he sheltered himself. Sonoy had not desisted, but had established himself in organized rebellion at Medenblik, declaring that he would drown the whole country, and levy black-mail upon its whole property, if he were not paid one hundred thousand crowns. He had declared that he would crush Holland like a glass beneath his feet. Having nothing but religion in his mouth, and protecting himself with the Queen’s name, he had been exciting all the cities of North Holland to rebellion, and bringing the poor people to destruction. He had been offered money enough to satisfy the most avaricious soldier in the world, but he stood out for six years’ full pay for his soldiers, a demand with which it was impossible to comply. It was necessary to prevent him from inundating the land and destroying

Page 1732

the estates of the country gentlemen and the peasants. “This gentlemen,” said Maurice, “is the plain truth; nor do I believe that you will sustain against me a man who was under such vast obligations to my late father, and who requites his debt by daring to speak of myself as a rascal; or that you will countenance his rebellion against a country to which he brought only, his cloak and sword, and, whence he has filched one hundred thousand crowns. You will not, I am sure, permit a simple captain, by his insubordination to cause such mischief, and to set on fire this and other Provinces.

“If, by your advice,” continued the Count; “the Queen should appoint fitting’ personages to office here—men who know what honour is; born of illustrious and noble-race, or who by their great virtue have been elevated to the honours of the kingdom—to them I will render an account of my actions. And it shall appear that I have more ability and more desire to do my duty, to her Majesty than those who render her lip-service only, and only make use of her sacred name to fill their purses, while I and, mine have been ever ready to employ our lives, and what remains of our fortunes, in the cause of God, her Majesty, and our country.”

Certainly no man had a better right: to speak with consciousness of the worth of race than the son of William the Silent, the nephew of Lewis, Adolphus, and Henry of Nassau, who had all laid down their lives for the liberty of their country. But Elizabeth continued to threaten the States-General, through the mouth of Willoughby, with the loss of her protection, if they should continue thus to requite her favours with ingratitude and insubordination: and Maurice once more respectfully but firmly replied that Sonoy’s rebellion could not and would not be tolerated; appealing boldly to her sense of justice, which was the noblest attribute of kings.

At last the Queen informed Willoughby, that—as the cause of Sonoy’s course seemed to be his oath of obedience to Leicester, whose resignation of office had not yet been received in the Netherlands—she had now ordered Councillor Killigrew to communicate the fact of that resignation. She also wrote to Sonoy, requiring him to obey the States and Count Maurice, and to accept a fresh commission from them, or at least to surrender Medenblik, and to fulfil all their orders with zeal and docility.

This act of abdication by Leicester, which had been received on the 22nd of January by the English envoy, Herbert, at the moment of his departure from the Netherlands, had been carried back by him to England, on the ground that its communication to the States at that moment would cause him inconveniently to postpone his journey. It never officially reached the States-General until the 31st of March, so that this most dangerous crisis was protracted nearly five months long—certainly without necessity or excuse—and whether through design, malice, wantonness, or incomprehensible carelessness, it is difficult to say.

Page 1733

So soon as the news reached Sonoy, that contumacious chieftain found his position untenable, and he allowed the States' troops to take possession of Medenblik, and with it the important territory of North Holland.

Maurice now saw himself undisputed governor. Sonoy was in the course of the summer deprived of all office, and betook himself to England. Here he was kindly received by the Queen, who bestowed upon him a ruined tower, and a swamp among the fens of Lincolnshire. He brought over some of his countrymen, well-skilled in such operations, set himself to draining and dyking, and hoped to find himself at home and comfortable in his ruined tower. But unfortunately, as neither he nor his wife, notwithstanding their English proclivities, could speak a word of the language; they found their social enjoyments very limited. Moreover, as his work-people were equally without the power of making their wants understood, the dyking operations made but little progress. So the unlucky colonel soon abandoned his swamp, and retired to East Friesland, where he lived a morose and melancholy life on a pension of one thousand florins, granted him by the States of Holland, until the year 1597, when he lost his mind, fell into the fire, and thus perished.

And thus; in the Netherlands, through hollow negotiations between enemies and ill-timed bickerings among friends, the path of Philip and Parma had been made comparatively smooth during the spring and early summer of 1588. What was the aspect of affairs in Germany and France?

The adroit capture of Bonn by Martin Schenk had given much trouble. Parma was obliged to detach a strong force; under Prince Chimay, to attempt the recovery of that important place, which—so long as it remained in the power of the States—rendered the whole electorate insecure and a source of danger to the Spanish party. Farnese endeavoured in vain to win back the famous partizan by most liberal offers, for he felt bitterly the mistake he had made in alienating so formidable a freebooter. But the truculent Martin remained obdurate and irascible. Philip, much offended that the news of his decease had proved false, ordered rather than requested the Emperor Rudolph to have a care that nothing was done in Germany to interfere with the great design upon England. The King gave warning that he would suffer no disturbance from that quarter, but certainly the lethargic condition of Germany rendered such threats superfluous. There were riders enough, and musketeers enough, to be sold to the highest bidder. German food for powder was offered largely in the market to any foreign consumer, for the trade in their subjects', lives was ever a prolific source of revenue to the petty sovereigns—numerous as the days of the year—who owned Germany and the Germans.

Page 1734

The mercenaries who had so recently been, making their inglorious campaign in France had been excluded from that country at the close of 1587, and furious were the denunciations of the pulpits and the populace of Paris that the foreign brigands who had been devastating the soil of France, and attempting to oppose the decrees of the Holy Father of Rome, should; have made their escape so easily. Rabid Lincestre and other priests and monks foamed with rage, as they execrated and anathematized the devil-worshipper Henry of Valois, in all the churches of that monarch's capital. The Spanish ducats were flying about, more profusely than ever, among the butchers and porters, and fishwomen, of the great city; and Madam League paraded herself in the day-light with still increasing insolence. There was scarcely a pretence at recognition of any authority, save that of Philip and Sixtus. France had become a wilderness—an uncultivated, barbarous province of Spain. Mucio—Guise had been secretly to Rome, had held interviews with the Pope and cardinals, and had come back with a sword presented by his Holiness, its hilt adorned with jewels, and its blade engraved with tongues of fire. And with this flaming sword the avenging messenger of the holy father was to smite the wicked, and to drive them into outer darkness.

And there had been fresh conferences among the chiefs of the sacred League within the Lorraine territory, and it was resolved to require of the Valois an immediate extermination of heresy and heretics throughout the kingdom, the publication of the Council of Trent, and the formal establishment of the Holy Inquisition in every province of France. Thus, while doing his Spanish master's bidding, the great Lieutenant of the league might, if he was adroit enough, to outwit Philip, ultimately carve out a throne for himself.

Yet Philip felt occasional pangs of uneasiness lest there should, after all, be peace in France, and lest his schemes against Holland and England might be interfered with from that quarter. Even Farnese, nearer the scene, could, not feel completely secure that a sudden reconciliation among contending factions might not give rise to a dangerous inroad across the Flemish border. So Guise was plied more vigourously than ever by the Duke with advice and encouragement, and assisted with such Walloon carabineers as could be spared, while large subsidies and larger promises came from Philip, whose prudent policy was never to pay excessive sums, until the work contracted for was done. "Mucio must do the job long since agreed upon," said Philip to Farnese, "and you and Mendoza must see that he prevents the King of France from troubling me in my enterprize against England." If the unlucky Henry *iii*. had retained one spark of intelligence, he would have seen that his only chance of rescue lay in the arm of the Bearnese, and in an honest alliance with England. Yet so strong was his love for the monks, who were

Page 1735

daily raving against him, that he was willing to commit any baseness, in order to win back their affection. He was ready to exterminate heresy and to establish the inquisition, but he was incapable of taking energetic measures of any kind, even when throne and life were in imminent peril. Moreover, he clung to Epernon and the 'politiques,' in whose swords he alone found protection, and he knew that Epernon and the 'politiques' were the objects of horror to Paris and to the League. At the same time he looked imploringly towards England and towards the great Huguenot chieftain, Elizabeth's knight-errant. He had a secret interview with Sir Edward Stafford, in the garden of the Bernardino convent, and importuned that envoy to implore the Queen to break off her negotiations with Philip, and even dared to offer the English ambassador a large reward, if such a result could be obtained. Stafford was also earnestly, requested to beseech the Queen's influence with Henry of Navarre, that he should convert himself to Catholicism, and thus destroy the League.

On the other hand, the magniloquent Mendoza, who was fond of describing himself as "so violent and terrible to the French that they wished to be rid of him," had—as usual—been frightening the poor King, who, after a futile attempt at dignity, had shrunk before the blusterings of the ambassador. "This King," said Don Bernardino, "thought that he could impose, upon me and silence me, by talking loud, but as I didn't talk softly to him, he has undeceived himself . . . . I have had another interview with him, and found him softer than silk, and he made me many caresses, and after I went out, he said that I was a very skilful minister."

It was the purpose of the League to obtain possession of the King's person, and, if necessary, to dispose of the 'politiques' by a general massacre, such as sixteen years before had been so successful in the case of Coligny and the Huguenots. So the populace—more rabid than ever—were impatient that their adored Balafre should come to Paris and begin the holy work.

He came as far as Gonesse to do the job he had promised to Philip, but having heard that Henry had reinforced himself with four thousand Swiss from the garrison of Lagny, he fell back to Soissons. The King sent him a most abject message, imploring him not to expose his sovereign to so much danger, by setting his foot at that moment in the capital. The Balafre hesitated, but the populace raved and roared for its darling. The Queen-Mother urged her unhappy son to yield his consent, and the Montpensier—fatal sister of Guise, with the famous scissors ever at her girdle—insisted that her brother had as good a right as any man to come to the city. Meantime the great chief of the 'politiques,' the hated and insolent Epernon, had been appointed governor of Normandy, and Henry had accompanied his beloved minion a part of the way towards Rouen. A plot contrived by the Montpensier to waylay the monarch on his return, and

Page 1736

to take him into the safe-keeping of the League, miscarried, for the King reentered the city before the scheme was ripe. On the other hand, Nicholas Poulain, bought for twenty thousand crowns by the 'politiques,' gave the King and his advisers-full information of all these intrigues, and, standing in Henry's cabinet, offered, at peril of his life, if he might be confronted with the conspirators—the leaders of the League within the city—to prove the truth of the charges which he had made.

For the whole city was now thoroughly organized. The number of its districts had been reduced from sixteen to five, the better to bring it under the control of the League; and, while it could not be denied that Mucio, had, been doing his master's work very thoroughly, yet it was still in the power of the King—through the treachery of Poulain—to strike a blow for life and freedom, before he was quite, taken in the trap. But he stood helpless, paralyzed, gazing in dreamy stupor—like one fascinated at the destruction awaiting him.

At last, one memorable May morning, a traveller alighted outside the gate of Saint Martin, and proceeded on foot through the streets of Paris. He was wrapped in a large cloak, which he held carefully over his face. When he had got as far as the street of Saint Denis, a young gentleman among the passers by, a good Leaguer, accosted the stranger, and with coarse pleasantry, plucked the cloak from his face, and the hat from his head. Looking at the handsome, swarthy features, marked with a deep scar, and the dark, dangerous eyes which were then revealed, the practical jester at once recognized in the simple traveller the terrible Balafre, and kissed the hem of his garments with submissive rapture. Shouts of "Vive Guise" rent the air from all the bystanders, as the Duke, no longer affecting concealment, proceeded with a slow and stately step toward the residence of Catharine de' Medici.' That queen of compromises and of magic had been holding many a conference with the leaders of both parties; had been increasing her son's stupefaction by her enigmatical counsels; had been anxiously consulting her talisman of goat's and human blood, mixed with metals melted under the influence of the star of her nativity, and had been daily visiting the wizard Ruggieri, in whose magic circle—peopled with a thousand fantastic heads—she had held high converse with the world of spirits, and derived much sound advice as to the true course of action to be pursued between her son and Philip, and between the politicians and the League. But, in spite of these various sources of instruction, Catharine—was somewhat perplexed, now that decisive action seemed necessary—a dethronement and a new massacre impending, and judicious compromise difficult. So after a hurried conversation with Mucio, who insisted on an interview with the King, she set forth for the Louvre, the Duke lounging calmly by the aide of her, sedan chair, on foot, receiving the homage of the populace,

Page 1737

as men, women, and children together, they swarmed around him as he walked, kissing his garments, and rending the air with their shouts. For that wolfish mob of Paris, which had once lapped the blood of ten thousand Huguenots in a single night, and was again rabid with thirst, was most docile and fawning to the great Balafre. It grovelled before him, it hung upon his look, it licked his hand, and, at the lifting of his finger, or the glance of his eye, would have sprung at the throat of King or Queen-Mother, minister, or minion, and devoured them all before his eyes. It was longing for the sign, for, much as Paris adored and was besotted with Guise and the League, even more, if possible, did it hate those godless politicians, who had grown fat on extortions from the poor, and who had converted their substance into the daily bread of luxury.

Nevertheless the city was full of armed men, Swiss and German mercenaries, and burgher guards, sworn to fidelity to the throne. The place might have been swept clean, at that moment, of rebels who were not yet armed or fortified in their positions. The Lord had delivered Guise into Henry's hands. "Oh, the madman!"—cried Sixtus V., when he heard that the Duke had gone to Paris, "thus to put himself into the clutches of the King whom he had so deeply offended!" And, "Oh, the wretched coward, the imbecile?" he added, when he heard how the King had dealt with his great enemy.

For the monarch was in his cabinet that May morning, irresolutely awaiting the announced visit of the Duke. By his aide stood Alphonse Corse, attached as a mastiff to his master, and fearing not Guise nor Leaguer, man nor devil.

"Sire, is the Duke of Guise your friend or enemy?" said Alphonse. The King answered by an expressive shrug.

"Say the word, Sire," continued Alphonse, "and I pledge myself to bring his head this instant, and lay it at your feet."

And he would have done it. Even at the side of Catharine's sedan chair, and in the very teeth of the worshipping mob, the Corsican would have had the Balafre's life, even though he laid down his own.

But Henry—irresolute and fascinated—said it was not yet time for such a blow.

Soon afterward; the Duke was announced. The chief of the League and the last of the Valois met, face to face; but not for the last time. The interview—was coldly respectful on the part of Mucio, anxious and embarrassed on that of the King. When the visit, which was merely one of ceremony, was over, the Duke departed as he came, receiving the renewed homage of the populace as he walked to his hotel.

Page 1738

That night precautions were taken. All the guards were doubled around the palace and through the streets. The Hotel de Ville and the Place de la Greve were made secure, and the whole city was filled with troops. But the Place Maubert was left unguarded, and a rabble rout—all night long—was collecting in that distant spot. Four companies of burgher-guards went over to the League at three o'clock in the morning. The rest stood firm in the cemetery of the Innocents, awaiting the orders of the King. At day-break on the 11th the town was still quiet. There was an awful pause of expectation. The shops remained closed all the morning, the royal troops were drawn up in battle-array, upon the Greve and around the Hotel de Ville, but they stood motionless as statues, until the populace began taunting them with cowardice, and then laughing them to scorn. For their sovereign lord and master still sat paralyzed in his palace.

The mob had been surging through all the streets and lanes, until, as by a single impulse, chains were stretched across the streets, and barricades thrown up in all the principal thoroughfares. About noon the Duke of Guise, who had been sitting quietly in his hotel, with a very few armed followers, came out into the street of the Hotel Montmorency, and walked calmly up and down, arm-in-aim with the Archbishop of Lyons, between a double hedge-row of spectators and admirers, three or four ranks thick. He was dressed in a white slashed doublet and hose, and wore a very large hat. Shouts of triumph resounded from a thousand brazen throats, as he moved calmly about, receiving, at every instant, expresses from the great gathering in the Place Maubert.

"Enough, too much, my good friends," he said, taking off the great hat—("I don't know whether he was laughing in it," observed one who was looking on that day)—"Enough of 'Long live Guise!' Cry 'Long live the King!'"

There was no response, as might be expected, and the people shouted more hoarsely than ever for Madam League and the Balafre. The Duke's face was full of gaiety; there was not a shadow of anxiety upon it in that perilous and eventful moment. He saw that the day was his own.

For now, the people, ripe, ready; mustered, armed, barricaded; awaited but a signal to assault the King's mercenaries, before rushing to the palace: On every house-top missiles were provided to hurl upon their heads. There seemed no escape for Henry or his Germans from impending doom, when Guise, thoroughly triumphant, vouchsafed them their lives.

"You must give me these soldiers as a present, my friends," said he to the populace.

And so the armed Swiss, French, and German troopers and infantry, submitted to be led out of Paris, following with docility the aide-de-camp of Guise, Captain St. Paul, who walked quietly before them, with his sword in its scabbard, and directing their movements with a cane. Sixty of them were slain by the mob, who could not, even at

the command of their beloved chieftain, quite forego their expected banquet. But this was all the blood shed on the memorable day of Barricades, when another Bartholomew massacre had been, expected.

Page 1739

Meantime; while Guise was making his promenade through the city, exchanging embraces with the rabble; and listening to the coarse congratulations and obscene jests of the porters and fishwomen, the poor King sat crying all day long in the Louvre. The Queen-Mother was with him, reproaching him bitterly with his irresolution and want of confidences in her, and scolding him for his tears. But the unlucky Henry only wept the more as he cowered in a corner.

“These are idle tears,” said Catherine. “This is no time for crying. And for myself, though women weep so easily; I feel my heart too deeply wrung for tears. If they came to my eyes they would be tears of blood.”

Next day the last Valois walked-out, of the Louvre; as if for a promenade in, the Tuileries, and proceeded straightway to the stalls, where his horse stood saddled. Du Halde, his equerry, buckled his master’s spurs on upside down. “No; matter;” said Henry; “I am not riding to see my mistress. I have a longer journey before me.”

And so, followed by a rabble rout of courtiers, without boots or cloaks; and mounted on, sorry hacks—the King-of France rode forth from his capital post-haste, and turning as he left the gates, hurled back impotent imprecations upon Paris and its mob. Thenceforth, for a long interval, there: was no king in that country. Mucio had done his work, and earned his wages, and Philip *ii*. reigned in Paris. The commands of the League were now complied with. Heretics were doomed to extermination. The edict of 19th July, 1588, was published with the most exclusive and stringent provisions that the most bitter Romanist could imagine, and, as a fair beginning; two young girls, daughters of Jacques Forcade, once ‘procureur au parlement,’ were burned in Paris, for the crime, of Protestantism. The Duke of Guise was named Generalissimo of the Kingdom (26th August, 1588). Henry gave in his submission to the Council of Trent, the edicts, the Inquisition, and the rest of the League’s infernal machinery, and was formally reconciled to Guise, with how much sincerity time was soon to show.

[The King bound himself by oath to extirpate heresy, to remove all persons suspected of that crime from office, and never to lay down arms so long as a single, heretic remained. By secret articles,’two armies against the Huguenots were agreed upon, one under the Duke of Mayenne, the other under some general to be appointed by the grog. The Council of Trent was forthwith to be proclaimed, and by a refinement of malice the League stipulated that all officers appointed in Paris by the Duke of Guise on the day after the barricades should resign their powers, and be immediately re-appointed by the King himself (DeThou, x.1. 86, pp. 324-325.)]

Meantime Philip, for whom and at whose expense all this work had been done by he hands of the faithful Mucio, was constantly assuring his royal brother of France, through envoy Longlee, at Madrid, of his most

Page 1740

affectionate friendship, and utterly repudiating all knowledge of these troublesome and dangerous plots. Yet they had been especially organized—as we have seen—by himself and the Balafre, in order that France might be kept a prey to civil war, and thus rendered incapable of offering any obstruction to his great enterprise against England. Any complicity of Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador in Paris, or, of the Duke of Parma, who were important agents in all these proceedings, with the Duke of Guise, was strenuously—and circumstantially—denied; and the Balafre, on the day of the barricades, sent Brissac to Elizabeth's envoy, Sir Edward Stafford, to assure him as to his personal safety; and as to the deep affection with which England and its Queen were regarded by himself and all his friends. Stafford had also been advised to accept a guard for his house of embassy. His reply was noble.

"I represent the majesty of England," he said, "and can take no safeguard from a subject of the sovereign to whom I am accredited."

To the threat of being invaded, and to the advice to close his gates, he answered, "Do you see these two doors? now, then, if I am attacked, I am determined to defend myself to the last drop of my blood, to serve as an example to the universe of the law of nations, violated in my person. Do not imagine that I shall follow your advice. The gates of an ambassador shall be open to all the world."

Brissac returned with this answer to Guise, who saw that it was hopeless to attempt making a display in the eyes of Queen Elizabeth, but gave private orders that the ambassador should not be molested.

Such were the consequences of the day of the barricades—and thus the path of Philip was cleared of all obstructions on, the part of France. His Mucio was now, generalissimo. Henry was virtually deposed. Henry of Navarre, poor and good-humoured as ever, was scarcely so formidable at that moment as he might one day become. When the news of the day of barricades was brought at night to that cheerful monarch, he started from his couch. "Ha," he exclaimed with a laugh, "but they havn't yet caught the Bearnese!"

And it might be long before the League would catch the Bearnese; but, meantime, he could render slight assistance to Queen Elizabeth.

In England there had been much fruitless negotiation between the government of that country and the commissioners from the States-General. There was perpetual altercation on the subject of Utrecht, Leyden, Sonoy, and the other causes of contention; the Queen—as usual—being imperious and choleric, and the envoys, in her opinion, very insolent. But the principal topic of discussion was the peace-negotiations, which the States-General, both at home and through their delegation in England, had

been doing their best to prevent; steadily refusing her Majesty's demand that commissioners, on their part, should be appointed to participate in the conferences at Ostend.

Page 1741

Elizabeth promised that there should be as strict regard paid to the interests of Holland as to those of England, in case of a pacification, and that she would never forget her duty to them, to herself, and to the world, as the protectress of the reformed religion. The deputies, on the other hand, warned her that peace with Spain was impossible; that the intention of the Spanish court was to deceive her, while preparing her destruction and theirs; that it was hopeless to attempt the concession of any freedom of conscience from Philip *ii*.; and that any stipulations which might be made upon that, or any other subject, by the Spanish commissioners, would be tossed to the wind. In reply to the Queen's loud complaints that the States had been trifling with her, and undutiful to her, and that they had kept her waiting seven months long for an answer to her summons to participate in the negotiations, they replied, that up to the 15th October of the previous year, although there had been flying rumours of an intention on the part of her Majesty's government to open those communications with the enemy, it had, "nevertheless been earnestly and expressly, and with high words and oaths, denied that there was any truth in those rumours." Since that time the States had not once only, but many times, in private letters, in public documents, and in conversations with Lord Leicester and other eminent personages, deprecated any communications whatever with Spain, asserting uniformly their conviction that such proceedings would bring ruin on their country, and imploring her Majesty not to give ear to any propositions whatever.

And not only were the envoys, regularly appointed by the States-General, most active in England, in their, attempts to prevent the negotiations, but delegates from the Netherland churches were also sent to the Queen, to reason with her on the subject, and to utter solemn warnings that the cause of the reformed religion would be lost for ever, in case of a treaty on her part with Spain. When these clerical envoys reached England the Queen was already beginning to wake from her delusion; although her commissioners were still—as we have seen—hard at work, pouring sand through their sieves at Ostend, and although the steady protestations, of the Duke of Parma, and the industrious circulation of falsehoods by Spanish emissaries, had even caused her wisest statesmen, for a time, to participate in that delusion.

For it is not so great an impeachment on the sagacity of the great Queen of England, as it would now appear to those who judge by the light of subsequent facts, that she still doubted whether the armaments, notoriously preparing in Spain and Flanders, were intended against herself; and that even if such were the case—she still believed in the possibility of averting the danger by negotiation.

Page 1742

So late as the beginning of May, even the far-seeing and anxious Walsingham could say, that in England “they were doing nothing but honouring St. George, of whom the Spanish Armada seemed to be afraid. We hear,” he added, “that they will not be ready to set forward before the midst of May, but I trust that it will be May come twelve months. The King of Spain is too old and too sickly to fall to conquer kingdoms. If he be well counselled, his best course will be to settle his own kingdoms in his own hands.”

And even much later, in the middle of July—when the mask was hardly, maintained—-even then there was no certainty as to the movements of the Armada; and Walsingham believed, just ten days before the famous fleet was to appear off Plymouth, that it had dispersed and returned to Spain, never to re-appear. As to Parma’s intentions, they were thought to lie rather in the direction: of Ostend than of England; and Elizabeth; on the 20th July, was more anxious for that city than for her own kingdom. “Mr. Ned, I am persuaded,” she wrote to Morris, “that if a Spanish fleet break, the Prince of Parma’s enterprise for England will fall to the ground, and then are you to look to Ostend. Haste your works.”

All through the spring and early summer, Stafford, in Paris, was kept in a state of much perplexity as to the designs of Spain—so contradictory were the stories circulated—and so bewildering the actions of men known to be hostile to England. In, the last days of April he intimated it as a common opinion in Paris, that these naval preparations of Philip were an elaborate farce; “that the great elephant would bring forth but a mouse—-that the great processions, prayers, and pardons, at Rome, for the prosperous success of the Armada against England; would be of no effect; that the King of Spain was laughing in his sleeve at the Pope, that he could make such a fool of him; and that such an enterprise was a thing the King never durst think of in deed, but only in show to feed the world.”

Thus, although furnished with minute details as to these, armaments, and as to the exact designs of Spain against his country, by the ostentatious statements of the; Spanish ambassador in Paris himself, the English, envoy was still inclined to believe that these statements were a figment, expressly intended to deceive. Yet he was aware that Lord Westmoreland, Lord Paget, Sir Charles Paget, Morgan, and other English refugees, were constantly meeting with Mendoza, that they were told to get themselves in readiness, and to go down—as well appointed as might be—to the Duke of Parma; that they had been “sending for their tailor to make them apparel, and to put themselves in equipage;” that, in particular, Westmoreland had been assured of being restored by Philip to his native country in better condition than before. The Catholic and Spanish party in Paris were however much dissatisfied with the news from Scotland, and were getting more and more afraid that King James would object to the Spaniards getting a foot-hold in his country, and that “the Scots would soon be playing them a Scottish trick.”

Page 1743

Stafford was plunged still more inextricably into doubt by the accounts from Longlee in Madrid. The diplomatist, who had been completely convinced by Philip as to his innocence of any participation in the criminal enterprise of Guise against Henry *iii*., was now almost staggered by the unscrupulous mendacity of that monarch with regard to any supposed designs against England. Although the Armada was to be ready by the 15th May, Longlee was of opinion—notwithstanding many bold announcements of an attack upon Elizabeth—that the real object of the expedition was America. There had recently been discovered, it was said, “a new country, more rich in gold and silver than any yet found, but so full of stout people that they could not master them.” To reduce these stout people beyond the Atlantic, therefore, and to get possession of new gold mines, was the real object at which Philip was driving, and Longlee and Stafford were both very doubtful whether it were worth the Queen’s while to exhaust her finances in order to protect herself against an imaginary invasion. Even so late as the middle of July, six to one was offered on the Paris exchange that the Spanish fleet would never be seen in the English seas, and those that offered the bets were known to be well-wishers to the Spanish party.

Thus sharp diplomatists and statesmen like Longlee, Stafford, and Walsingham, were beginning to lose their fear of the great bugbear by which England had so long been haunted. It was, therefore no deep stain on the Queen’s sagacity that she, too, was willing to place credence in the plighted honour of Alexander Farnese, the great prince who prided himself on his sincerity, and who, next to the King his master, adored the virgin Queen of England.

The deputies of the Netherland churches had come, with the permission of Count Maurice and of the States General; but they represented more strongly than any other envoys could do, the English and the monarchical party. They were instructed especially to implore the Queen to accept the sovereignty of their country; to assure her that the restoration of Philip—who had been a wolf instead of a shepherd to his flock—-was an impossibility, that he had been solemnly and for ever deposed, that under her sceptre only could the Provinces ever recover their ancient prosperity; that ancient and modern history alike made it manifest that a free republic could never maintain itself, but that it must, of necessity, run its course through sedition, bloodshed, and anarchy, until liberty was at last crushed by an absolute despotism; that equality of condition, the basis of democratic institutions, could never be made firm; and that a fortunate exception, like that of Switzerland, whose historical and political circumstances were peculiar, could never serve as a model to the Netherlands, accustomed as those Provinces had ever been to a monarchical form of government; and that the antagonism of aristocratic and democratic

Page 1744

elements in the States had already produced discord, and was threatening destruction to the whole country. To avert such dangers the splendour of royal authority was necessary, according to the venerable commands of Holy Writ; and therefore the Netherland churches acknowledged themselves the foster-children of England, and begged that in political matters also the inhabitants of the Provinces might be accepted as the subjects of her Majesty. They also implored the Queen to break off these accursed negotiations with Spain, and to provide that henceforth in the Netherlands the reformed religion might be freely exercised, to the exclusion of any other.

Thus it was very evident that these clerical envoys, although they were sent by permission of the States, did not come as the representatives of the dominant party. For that 'Beelzebub,' Barneveld, had different notions from theirs as to the possibility of a republic, and as to the propriety of tolerating other forms of worship than his own. But it was for such pernicious doctrines, on religious matters in particular, that he was called Beelzebub, Pope John, a papist in disguise, and an atheist; and denounced, as leading young Maurice and the whole country to destruction.

On the basis of these instructions, the deputies drew up a memorial of pitiless length, filled with astounding parallels between their own position and that of the Hebrews, Assyrians, and other distinguished nations of antiquity. They brought it to Walsingham on the 12th July, 1588, and the much enduring man heard it read from beginning to end. He expressed his approbation of its sentiments, but said it was too long. It must be put on one sheet of paper, he said, if her Majesty was expected to read it.

"Moreover," said the Secretary of State, "although your arguments are full of piety, and your examples from Holy Writ very apt, I must tell you the plain truth. Great princes are not always so zealous in religious matters as they might be. Political transactions move them more deeply, and they depend too much on worldly things. However there is no longer much danger, for our envoys will return from Flanders in a few days."

"But," asked a deputy, "if the Spanish fleet does not succeed in its enterprise, will the peace-negotiations be renewed?"

"By no means," said Walsingham; "the Queen can never do that, consistently with her honour. They have scattered infamous libels against her—so scandalous, that you would be astounded should you read them. Arguments drawn from honour are more valid with princes than any other."

He alluded to the point in their memorial touching the free exercise of the reformed religion in the Provinces.

"'Tis well and piously said," he observed; "but princes and great lords are not always very earnest in such matters. I think that her Majesty's envoys will not press for the free exercise of the religion so very much; not more than for two or three years. By that time —should our negotiations succeed—the foreign troops will have evacuated the Netherlands on condition that the States-General shall settle the religious question."

Page 1745

“But,” said Daniel de Dieu, one of the deputies, “the majority of the States is Popish.”

“Be it so,” replied Sir Francis; “nevertheless they will sooner permit the exercise of the reformed religion than take up arms and begin the war anew.”

He then alluded to the proposition of the deputies to exclude all religious worship but that of the reformed church—all false religion—as they expressed themselves.

“Her Majesty,” said he, “is well disposed to permit some exercise of their religion to the Papists. So far as regards my own feelings, if we were now in the beginning, of the reformation, and the papacy were still entire, I should willingly concede such exercise; but now that the Papacy has been overthrown, I think it would not be safe to give such permission. When we were disputing, at the time of the pacification of Ghent, whether the Popish religion should be partially permitted, the Prince of Orange was of the affirmative opinion; but I, who was then at Antwerp, entertained the contrary conviction.”

“But,” said one of the deputies—pleased to find that Walsingham was more of their way of thinking on religious toleration than the great Prince of Orange had been, or than Maurice and Barneveld then were—“but her Majesty will, we hope, follow the advice of her good and faithful counsellors.”

“To tell you the truth,” answered Sir Francis, “great princes are not always inspired with a sincere and upright zeal;”—it was the third time he had made this observation”—-although, so far as regards the maintenance of the religion in the Netherlands, that is a matter of necessity. Of that there is no fear, since otherwise all the pious would depart, and none would remain but Papists, and, what is more, enemies of England. Therefore the Queen is aware that the religion must be maintained.”

He then advised the deputies to hand in the memorial to her Majesty, without any long speeches, for which there was then no time or opportunity; and it was subsequently arranged that they should be presented to the Queen as she would be mounting her horse at St. James’s to ride to Richmond.

Accordingly on the 15th July, as her Majesty came forth at the gate, with a throng of nobles and ladies—some about to accompany her and some bidding her adieu—the deputies fell on their knees before her. Notwithstanding the advice of Walsingham, Daniel de Dieu was bent upon an oration.

“Oh illustrious Queen!” he began, “the churches of the United Netherlands——”

He had got no further, when the Queen, interrupting, exclaimed, “Oh! I beg you—at another time—I cannot now listen to a speech. Let me see the memorial.”

Daniel de Dieu then humbly presented that document, which her Majesty graciously received, and then, getting on horseback, rode off to Richmond.’

Page 1746

The memorial was in the nature of an exhortation to sustain the religion, and to keep clear of all negotiations with idolaters and unbelievers; and the memorialists supported themselves by copious references to Deuteronomy, Proverbs, Isaiah, Timothy, and Psalms, relying mainly on the case of Jehosaphat, who came to disgrace and disaster through his treaty with the idolatrous King Ahab. With regard to any composition with Spain, they observed, in homely language, that a burnt cat fears the fire; and they assured the Queen that, by following their advice, she would gain a glorious and immortal name, like those of David, Ezekiel, Josiah, and others, whose fragrant memory, even as precious incense from the apothecary's, endureth to the end of the world.

It was not surprising that Elizabeth, getting on horseback on the 15th July, 1588, with her head full of Tilbury Fort and Medina Sidonia, should have as little relish for the affairs of Ahab and Jehosophat, as for those melting speeches of Diomede and of Turnus, to which Dr. Valentine Dale on his part was at that moment invoking her attention.

On the 20th July, the deputies were informed by Leicester that her Majesty would grant them an interview, July 20, and that they must come into his quarter of the palace and await her arrival.

Between six and seven in the evening she came into the throne-room, and the deputies again fell on their knees before her.

She then seated herself—the deputies remaining on their knees on her right side and the Earl of Leicester standing at her left—and proceeded to make many remarks touching her earnestness in the pending negotiations to provide for their religious freedom. It seemed that she must have received a hint from Walsingham on the subject.

"I shall provide," she said, "for the maintenance of the reformed worship."

De Dieu—"The enemy will never concede it."

The Queen.—"I think differently."

De Dieu.—"There is no place within his dominions where he has permitted the exercise of the pure religion. He has never done so."

The Queen.—"He conceded it in the pacification of Ghent."

De Dieu.—"But he did not keep his agreement. Don John had concluded with the States, but said he was not held to his promise, in case he should repent; and the King wrote afterwards to our States, and said that he was no longer bound to his pledge."

The Queen.—“That is quite another thing.”

De Dieu.—“He has very often broken his faith.”

The Queen.—“He shall no longer be allowed to do so. If he does not keep his word, that is my affair, not yours. It is my business to find the remedy. Men would say, see in what a desolation the Queen of England has brought this poor people. As to the freedom of worship, I should have proposed three or four years’ interval—leaving it afterwards to the decision of the States.”

De Dieu.—“But the majority of the States is Popish.”

Page 1747

The Queen.—“I mean the States-General, not the States of any particular Province.”

De Dieu.—“The greater part of the States-General is Popish.”

The Queen.—“I mean the three estates—the clergy, the nobles, and the cities.” The Queen—as the deputies observed—here fell into an error. She thought that prelates of the reformed Church, as in England, had seats in the States-General. Daniel de Dieu explained that they had no such position.

The Queen.—“Then how were you sent hither?”

De Dieu.—“We came with the consent of Count Maurice of Nassau.”

The Queen.—“And of the States?”

De Dieu.—“We came with their knowledge.”

The Queen.—“Are you sent only from Holland and Zeeland? Is there no envoy from Utrecht and the other Provinces?”

Helmichius.—“We two,” pointing to his colleague Sossingius, “are from Utrecht.”

The Queen.—“What? Is this young man also a minister?” She meant Helmichius, who had a very little beard, and looked young.

Sossingius.—“He is not so young as he looks.”

The Queen.—“Youths are sometimes as able as old men.”

De Dieu.—“I have heard our brother preach in France more than fourteen years ago.”

The Queen.—“He must have begun young. How old were you when you first became a preacher?”

Helmichius.—“Twenty-three or twenty-four years of age.”

The Queen.—“It was with us, at first, considered a scandal that a man so young as that should be admitted to the pulpit. Our antagonists reproached us with it in a book called ‘Scandale de l’Angleterre,’ saying that we had none but school-boys for ministers. I understand that you pray for me as warmly as if I were your sovereign princess. I think I have done as much for the religion as if I were your Queen.”

Helmichius.—“We are far from thinking otherwise. We acknowledge willingly your Majesty’s benefits to our churches.”

The Queen.—“It would else be ingratitude on your part.”

Helmichius.—“But the King of Spain will never keep any promise about the religion.”

The Queen.—“He will never come so far: he does nothing but make a noise on all sides. Item, I don’t think he has much confidence in himself.”

De Dieu.—“Your Majesty has many enemies. The Lord hath hitherto supported you, and we pray that he may continue to uphold your Majesty.”

The Queen.—“I have indeed many enemies; but I make no great account of them. Is there anything else you seek?”

De Dieu.—“There is a special point: it concerns our, or rather your Majesty’s, city of Flushing. We hope that Russelius—(so he called Sir William Russell)—may be continued in its government, although he wishes his discharge.”

“Aha!” said the Queen, laughing and rising from her seat, “I shall not answer you; I shall call some one else to answer you.”

Page 1748

She then summoned Russell's sister, Lady Warwick.

"If you could speak French," said the Queen to that gentlewoman, "I should bid you reply to these gentlemen, who beg that your brother may remain in Flushing, so very agreeable has he made himself to them."

The Queen was pleased to hear this good opinion of Sir William, and this request that he might continue to be governor of Flushing, because he had uniformly supported the Leicester party, and was at that moment in high quarrel with Count Maurice and the leading members of the States.

As the deputies took their leave, they requested an answer to their memorial, which was graciously promised.

Three days afterwards, Walsingham gave them a written answer to their memorial—-conceived in the same sense as had been the expressions of her Majesty and her counsellors. Support to the Netherlands and stipulations for the free exercise of their religion were promised; but it was impossible for these deputies of the churches to obtain a guarantee from England that the Popish religion should be excluded from the Provinces, in case of a successful issue to the Queen's negotiation with Spain.

And thus during all those eventful days-the last weeks of July and the first weeks of August—the clerical deputation remained in England, indulging in voluminous protocols and lengthened conversations with the Queen and the principal members of her government. It is astonishing, in that breathless interval of history, that so much time could be found for quill-driving and oratory.

Nevertheless, both in Holland and England, there had been other work than protocolling. One throb of patriotism moved the breast of both nations. A longing to grapple, once for all, with the great enemy of civil and religious liberty inspired both. In Holland, the States-General and all the men to whom the people looked for guidance, had been long deprecating the peace-negotiations. Extraordinary supplies—more than had ever been granted before—were voted for the expenses of the campaign; and Maurice of Nassau, fitly embodying the warlike tendencies of his country and race, had been most importunate with Queen Elizabeth that she would accept his services and his advice. Armed vessels of every size, from the gun-boat to the galleon of 1200 tons—-then the most imposing ship in those waters—swarmed in all the estuaries and rivers, and along the Dutch and Flemish coast, bidding defiance to Parma and his armaments; and offers of a large contingent from the fleets of Jooat de Moor and Justinua de Nassau, to serve under Seymour and Howard, were freely made to the States-General.

Page 1749

It was decided early in July, by the board of admiralty, presided over by Prince Maurice, that the largest square-rigged vessels of Holland and Zeeland should cruise between England and the Flemish coast, outside the banks; that a squadron of lesser ships should be stationed within the banks; and that a fleet of sloops and fly-boats should hover close in shore, about Flushing and Rammekens. All the war-vessels of the little republic were thus fully employed. But, besides this arrangement, Maurice was empowered to lay an embargo—under what penalty he chose and during his pleasure—on all square-rigged vessels over 300 tons, in order that there might be an additional supply in case of need. Ninety ships of war under Warmond, admiral, and Van der Does, vice-admiral of Holland; and Justinus de Nassau, admiral, and Joost de Moor, vice-admiral of Zeeland; together with fifty merchant-vessels of the best and strongest, equipped and armed for active service, composed a formidable fleet.

The States-General, a month before, had sent twenty-five or thirty good ships, under Admiral Rosendael, to join Lord Henry Seymour, then cruising between Dover and Calais. A tempest, drove them back, and their absence from Lord Henry's fleet being misinterpreted by the English, the States were censured for ingratitude and want of good faith. But the injustice of the accusation was soon made manifest, for these vessels, reinforcing the great Dutch fleet outside the banks, did better service than they could have done; in the straits. A squadron of strong well-armed vessels, having on board, in addition to their regular equipment, a picked force of twelve hundred musketeers, long accustomed to this peculiar kind of naval warfare, with crews of, grim Zeelanders, who had faced Alva, and Valdez in their day, now kept close watch over Farnese, determined that he should never thrust his face out of any haven or nook on the coast so long as they should be in existence to prevent him.

And in England the protracted diplomacy at Ostend, ill-timed though it was, had not paralyzed the arm or chilled the heart of the nation. When the great Queen, arousing herself from the delusion in which the falsehoods of Farnese and of Philip had lulled her, should once more. represent—as no man or woman better than Elizabeth Tudor could represent—the defiance of England to foreign insolence; the resolve of a whole people to die rather than yield; there was a thrill of joy through the national heart. When the enforced restraint was at last taken off, there was one bound towards the enemy. Few more magnificent spectacles have been seen in history than the enthusiasm which pervaded the country as the great danger, so long deferred, was felt at last to be closely approaching. The little nation of four millions, the merry England of the sixteenth century, went forward to the death-grapple with its gigantic antagonist as cheerfully as to a long-expected holiday. Spain was a vast empire, overshadowing the world; England, in comparison, but a province; yet nothing could surpass the steadiness with which the conflict was awaited.

Page 1750

For, during all the months of suspense; the soldiers and sailors, and many statesman of England, had deprecated, even as the Hollanders had been doing, the dangerous delays of Ostend. Elizabeth was not embodying the national instinct, when she talked of peace; and shrank penuriously from the expenses of war. There was much disappointment, even indignation, at the slothfulness with which the preparations for defence went on, during the period when there was yet time to make them. It was feared with justice that England, utterly unfortified as were its cities, and defended only by its little navy without, and by untaught enthusiasm within, might; after all, prove an easier conquest than Holland and Zeeland, every town, in whose territory bristled with fortifications. If the English ships—well-trained and swift sailors as they were—were unprovided with spare and cordage, beef and biscuit, powder and shot, and the militia-men, however enthusiastic, were neither drilled nor armed, was it so very certain, after all, that successful resistance would be made to the great Armada, and to the veteran pikemen and musketeers of Farnese, seasoned on a hundred, battlefields, and equipped as for a tournament? There was generous confidence and chivalrous loyalty on the part of Elizabeth's naval and military commanders; but there had been deep regret and disappointment at her course.

Hawkins was anxious, all through the winter and spring, to cruise with a small squadron off the coast of Spain. With a dozen vessels he undertook to "distress anything that went through the seas." The cost of such a squadron, with eighteen hundred men, to be relieved every four months, he estimated at two thousand seven hundred pounds sterling the month, or a shilling a day for each man; and it would be a very unlucky month, he said, in which they did not make captures to three times that amount; for they would see nothing that would not be presently their own. "We might have peace, but not with God," said the pious old slave-trader; "but rather than serve Baal, let us die a thousand deaths. Let us have open war with these Jesuits, and every man will contribute, fight, devise, or do, for the liberty of our country."

And it was open war with the Jesuits for which those stouthearted sailors longed. All were afraid of secret mischief. The diplomatists—who were known to be flitting about France, Flanders, Scotland, and England—were birds of ill omen. King James was beset by a thousand bribes and expostulations to avenge his mother's death; and although that mother had murdered his father, and done her best to disinherit himself, yet it was feared that Spanish ducats might induce him to be true to his mother's revenge, and false to the reformed religion. Nothing of good was hoped for from France. "For my part," said Lord Admiral Howard, "I have made of the French King, the Scottish King, and the King of Spain, a trinity that I mean never to trust to be saved by, and I would that others were of my opinion."

Page 1751

The noble sailor, on whom so much responsibility rested, yet who was so trammelled and thwarted by the timid and parsimonious policy of Elizabeth and of Burghley, chafed and shook his chains like a captive. "Since England was England," he exclaimed, "there was never such a stratagem and mask to deceive her as this treaty of peace. I pray God that we do not curse for this a long grey beard with a white head witless, that will make all the world think us heartless. You know whom I mean." And it certainly was not difficult to understand the allusion to the pondering Lord-Treasurer. "'Opus est aliquo Daedalo,' to direct us out of the maze," said that much puzzled statesman; but he hardly seemed to be making himself wings with which to lift England and himself out of the labyrinth. The ships were good ships, but there was intolerable delay in getting a sufficient number of them as ready for action as was the spirit of their commanders.

"Our ships do show like gallants here," said Winter; "it would do a man's heart good to behold them. Would to God the Prince of Parma were on the seas with all his forces, and we in sight of them. You should hear that we would make his enterprise very unpleasant to him."

And Howard, too, was delighted not only with his own little flag-ship the Ark-Royal—"the odd ship of the world for all conditions,"—but with all of his fleet that could be mustered. Although wonders were reported, by every arrival from the south, of the coming Armada, the Lord-Admiral was not appalled. He was perhaps rather imprudent in the defiance he flung to the enemy. "Let me have the four great ships and twenty hoys, with but twenty men a-piece, and each with but two iron pieces, and her Majesty shall have a good account of the Spanish forces; and I will make the King wish his galleys home again. Few as we are, if his forces be not hundreds, we will make good sport with them."

But those four great ships of her Majesty, so much longed for by Howard, were not forthcoming. He complained that the Queen was "keeping them to protect Chatham Church withal, when they should be serving their turn abroad." The Spanish fleet was already reported as numbering from 210 sail, with 36,000 men,' to 400 or 500 ships, and 80,000 soldiers and mariners; and yet Drake was not ready with his squadron. "The fault is not in him," said Howard, "but I pray God her Majesty do not repent her slack dealing. We must all lie together, for we shall be stirred very shortly with heave ho! I fear ere long her Majesty will be sorry she hath believed some so much as she hath done."

Howard had got to sea, and was cruising all the stormy month of March in the Channel with his little unprepared squadron; expecting at any moment—such was the profound darkness which, enveloped the world at that day—that the sails of the Armada might appear in the offing. He made a visit to the Dutch coast, and was delighted with the enthusiasm with which he was received. Five thousand people a day came on board his ships, full of congratulation and delight; and he informed the Queen that she was not more assured of the Isle of Sheppey than of Walcheren.

Page 1752

Nevertheless time wore on, and both the army and navy of England were quite unprepared, and the Queen was more reluctant than ever to incur the expense necessary to the defence of her kingdom. At least one of those galleys, which, as Howard bitterly complained, seemed destined to defend Chatham Church, was importunately demanded; but it was already Easter-Day (17th April), and she was demanded in vain. "Lord! when should she serve," said the Admiral, "if not at such a time as this? Either she is fit now to serve, or fit for the fire. I hope never in my time to see so great a cause for her to be used. I dare say her Majesty will look that men should fight for her, and I know they will at this time. The King of Spain doth not keep any ship at home, either of his own or any other, that he can get for money. Well, well, I must pray heartily for peace," said Howard with increasing spleen, "for I see the support of an honourable, war will never appear. Sparing and war have no affinity together."

In truth Elizabeth's most faithful subjects were appalled at the ruin which she seemed by her mistaken policy to be rendering inevitable. "I am sorry," said the Admiral, "that her Majesty is so careless of this most dangerous time. I fear me much, and with grief I think it, that she relieth on a hope that will deceive her, and greatly endanger her, and then it will not be her money nor her jewels that will help; for as they will do good in time, so they will help nothing for the redeeming of time."

The preparations on shore were even more dilatory than those on the sea. We have seen that the Duke of Parma, once landed, expected to march directly upon London; and it was notorious that there were no fortresses to oppose a march of the first general in Europe and his veterans upon that unprotected and wealthy metropolis. An army had been enrolled—a force of 86,016 foot, and 13,831 cavalry; but it was an army on paper merely. Even of the 86,000, only 48,000 were set down as trained; and it is certain that the training had been of the most meagre and unsatisfactory description. Leicester was to be commander-in-chief; but we have already seen that nobleman measuring himself, not much to his advantage, with Alexander Farnese, in the Isle of Bommel, on the sands of Blankenburg, and at the gates of Sluys. His army was to consist of 27,000 infantry, and 2000 horse; yet at midsummer it had not reached half that number. Lord Chamberlain Hunsdon was to protect the Queen's person with another army of 36,000; but this force, was purely an imaginary one; and the lord-lieutenant of each county was to do his best with the militia. But men were perpetually escaping out of the general service, in order to make themselves retainers for private noblemen, and be kept at their expense. "You shall hardly believe," said Leicester, "how many new liveries be gotten within these six weeks, and no man fears the penalty. It would be better that every nobleman did as Lord Dacres, than to take away from the principal service such as are set down to serve."

Page 1753

Of enthusiasm and courage, then, there was enough, while of drill and discipline, of powder and shot, there was a deficiency. No braver or more competent soldier could be found than Sir Edward Stanley—the man whom we have seen in his yellow jerkin, helping himself into Fort Zutphen with the Spanish soldier's pike—and yet Sir Edward Stanley gave but a sorry account of the choicest soldiers of Chester and Lancashire, whom he had been sent to inspect. "I find them not," he said, "according to your expectation, nor mine own liking. They were appointed two years past to have been trained six days by the year or more, at the discretion of the muster-master, but, as yet, they have not been trained one day, so that they have benefited nothing, nor yet know their leaders. There is now promise of amendment, which, I doubt, will be very slow, in respect to my Lord Derby's absence."

My Lord Derby was at that moment, and for many months afterwards, assisting Valentine Dale in his classical prolusions on the sands of Bourbourg. He had better have been mustering the trainbands of Lancashire. There was a general indisposition in the rural districts to expend money and time in military business, until the necessity should become imperative. Professional soldiers complained bitterly of the canker of a long peace. "For our long quietness, which it hath pleased God to send us," said Stanley, "they think their money very ill bestowed which they expend on armour or weapon, for that they be in hope they shall never have occasion to use it, so they may pass muster, as they have done heretofore. I want greatly powder, for there is little or none at all."

The day was fast approaching when all the power in England would be too little for the demand. But matters had not very much mended even at midsummer. It is true that Leicester, who was apt to be sanguine-particularly in matters under his immediate control—spoke of the handful of recruits assembled at his camp in Essex, as "soldiers of a year's experience, rather than a month's camping;" but in this opinion he differed from many competent authorities, and was somewhat in contradiction to himself. Nevertheless he was glad that the Queen had determined to visit him, and encourage his soldiers.

"I have received in secret," he said, "those news that please me, that your Majesty doth intend to behold the poor and bare company that lie here in the field, most willingly to serve you, yea, most ready to die for you. You shall, dear Lady, behold as goodly, loyal, and as able men as any prince Christian can show you, and yet but a handful of your own, in comparison of the rest you have. What comfort not only these shall receive who shall be the happiest to behold yourself I cannot express; but assuredly it will give no small comfort to the rest, that shall be overshined with the beams of so gracious and princely a party, for what your royal Majesty shall do to these will be accepted as done

Page 1754

to all. Good sweet Queen, alter not your purpose, if God give you health. It will be your pain for the time, but your pleasure to behold such people. And surely the place must content you, being as fair a soil and as goodly a prospect as may be seen or found, as this extreme weather hath made trial, which doth us little annoyance, it is so firm and dry a ground. Your usher also liketh your lodging—a proper, secret, cleanly house. Your camp is a little mile off, and your person will be as sure as at St. James's, for my life."

But notwithstanding this cheerful view of the position expressed by the commander-in-chief, the month of July had passed, and the early days of August had already arrived; and yet the camp was not formed, nor anything more than that mere handful of troops mustered about Tilbury, to defend the road from Dover to London. The army at Tilbury never, exceeded sixteen or seventeen thousand men.

The whole royal navy-numbering about thirty-four vessels in all—of different sizes, ranging from 1100 and 1000 tons to 30, had at last been got ready for sea. Its aggregate tonnage was 11,820; not half so much as at the present moment—in the case of one marvellous merchant-steamer—floats upon a single keel.

These vessels carried. 837 guns and 6279 men. But the navy was reinforced by the patriotism and liberality of English merchants and private gentlemen. The city of London having been requested to furnish 15 ships of war and 5000 men, asked two days for deliberation, and then gave 30 ships and 10,000 men of which number 2710 were seamen. Other cities, particularly Plymouth, came forward with proportionate liberality, and private individuals, nobles, merchants, and men of humblest rank, were enthusiastic in volunteering into the naval service, to risk property and life in defence of the country. By midsummer there had been a total force of 197 vessels manned, and partially equipped, with an aggregate of 29,744 tons, and 15,785 seamen. Of this fleet a very large number were mere coasters of less than 100 tons each; scarcely ten ships were above 500, and but one above 1000 tons—the Triumph, Captain Frobisher, of 1100 tons, 42 guns, and 500 sailors.

Lord Howard of Effingham, Lord High-Admiral of England, distinguished for his martial character, public spirit, and admirable temper, rather than for experience or skill as a seaman, took command of the whole fleet, in his "little odd ship for all conditions," the Ark-Royal, of 800 tons, 425 sailors, and 55 guns.

Next in rank was Vice-Admiral Drake, in the Revenge, of 500 tons, 250 men and 40 guns. Lord Henry Seymour, in the Rainbow, of precisely the same size and strength, commanded the inner squadron, which cruised in the neighbourhood of the French and Flemish coast.

The Hollanders and Zeelanders had undertaken to blockade the Duke of Parma still more closely, and pledged themselves that he should never venture to show himself upon the open sea at all. The mouth of the Scheldt, and the dangerous shallows off the coast of Newport and Dunkirk, swarmed with their determined and well-seasoned craft, from the flybooter or filibuster of the rivers, to the larger armed vessels, built to confront every danger, and to deal with any adversary.

Page 1755

Farnese, on his part, within that well-guarded territory, had, for months long, scarcely slackened in his preparations, day or night. Whole forests had been felled in the land of Waas to furnish him with transports and gun-boats, and with such rapidity, that—according to his enthusiastic historiographer—each tree seemed by magic to metamorphose itself into a vessel at the word of command. Shipbuilders, pilots, and seamen, were brought from the Baltic, from Hamburgh, from Genoa. The whole surface of the obedient Netherlands, whence wholesome industry had long been banished, was now the scene of a prodigious baleful activity. Portable bridges for fording the rivers of England, stockades for entrenchments, rafts and oars, were provided in vast numbers, and Alexander dug canals and widened natural streams to facilitate his operations. These wretched Provinces, crippled, impoverished, languishing for peace, were forced to contribute out of their poverty, and to find strength even in their exhaustion, to furnish the machinery for destroying their own countrymen, and for hurling to perdition their most healthful neighbour.

And this approaching destruction of England—now generally believed in—was like the sound of a trumpet throughout Catholic Europe. Scions of royal houses, grandees of azure blood, the bastard of Philip *ii*., the bastard of Savoy, the bastard of Medici, the Margrave of Burghaut, the Archduke Charles, nephew of the Emperor, the Princes of Ascoli and of Melfi, the Prince of Morocco, and others of illustrious name, with many a noble English traitor, like Paget, and Westmoreland, and Stanley, all hurried to the camp of Farnese, as to some famous tournament, in which it was a disgrace to chivalry if their names were not enrolled. The roads were trampled with levies of fresh troops from Spain, Naples, Corsica, the States of the Church, the Milanese, Germany, Burgundy.

Blas Capizucca was sent in person to conduct reinforcements from the north of Italy. The famous Terzio of Naples, under Carlos Pinelo, arrived 3500 strong—the most splendid regiment ever known in the history of war. Every man had an engraved corslet and musket-barrel, and there were many who wore gilded armour, while their waving plumes and festive caparisons made them look like holiday-makers, rather than real campaigners, in the eyes of the inhabitants of the various cities through which their road led them to Flanders. By the end of April the Duke of Parma saw himself at the head of 60,000 men, at a monthly expense of 454,315 crowns or dollars. Yet so rapid was the progress of disease—incident to northern climates—among those southern soldiers, that we shall find the number woefully diminished before they were likely to set foot upon the English shore.

Thus great preparations, simultaneously with pompous negotiations, had been going forward month after month, in England, Holland, Flanders. Nevertheless, winter, spring, two-thirds of summer, had passed away, and on the 29th July, 1588, there remained the same sickening uncertainty, which was the atmosphere in which the nations had existed for a twelvemonth.

Page 1756

Howard had cruised for a few weeks between England and Spain, without any results, and, on his return, had found it necessary to implore her Majesty, as late as July, to “trust no more to Judas’ kisses, but to her sword, not her enemy’s word.”

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

A burnt cat fears the fire
A free commonwealth—was thought an absurdity
Baiting his hook a little to his appetite
Canker of a long peace
Englishmen and Hollanders preparing to cut each other’s throats
Faction has rarely worn a more mischievous aspect
Hard at work, pouring sand through their sieves
She relieth on a hope that will deceive her
Sparing and war have no affinity together
The worst were encouraged with their good success
Trust her sword, not her enemy’s word

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year’s Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 57, 1588

CHAPTER XIX. Part 1.

Philip Second in his Cabinet—His System of Work and Deception—His vast but vague Schemes of Conquest—The Armada sails—Description of the Fleet—The Junction with Parma unprovided for—The Gale off Finisterre—Exploits of David Gwynn—First Engagements in the English Channel—Considerable Losses of the Spaniards—General Engagement near Portland—Superior Seamanship of the English

It is now time to look in upon the elderly letter-writer in the Escorial, and see how he was playing his part in the drama.

His counsellors were very few. His chief advisers were rather like private secretaries than cabinet ministers; for Philip had been withdrawing more and more into seclusion and mystery as the webwork of his schemes multiplied and widened. He liked to do his work, assisted by a very few confidential servants. The Prince of Eboli, the famous Ruy Gomez, was dead. So was Cardinal Granvelle. So were Erasso and Delgado. His midnight council—junta de noche—for thus, from its original hour of assembling, and

the all of secrecy in which it was enwrapped, it was habitually called—was a triumvirate. Don Juan de Idiaquez was chief secretary of state and of war; the Count de Chinchon was minister for the household, for Italian affairs, and for the kingdom of Aragon; Don Cristoval de Moura, the monarch's chief favourite, was at the head of the finance department, and administered the affairs of Portugal and Castile!

The president of the council of Italy, after Granvelle's death, was Quiroga, cardinal of Toledo, and inquisitor-general. Enormously long letters, in the King's: name, were prepared chiefly by the two secretaries, Idiaquez and Moura. In their hands was the vast correspondence with Mendoza and Parma, and Olivarez at Rome, and with Mucio; in which all the stratagems for the subjugation of Protestant Europe were slowly and artistically contrived. Of the great conspiracy against human liberty, of which the Pope and Philip were the double head, this midnight triumvirate was the chief executive committee.

Page 1757

These innumerable despatches, signed by Philip, were not the emanations of his own mind. The King had a fixed purpose to subdue Protestantism and to conquer the world; but the plans for carrying the purpose into effect were developed by subtler and more comprehensive minds than his own. It was enough for him to ponder wearily over schemes which he was supposed to dictate, and to give himself the appearance of supervising what he scarcely comprehended. And his work of supervision was often confined to pettiest details. The handwriting of Spain and Italy at that day was beautiful, and in our modern eyes seems neither antiquated nor ungraceful. But Philip's scrawl was like that of 'a' clown just admitted to a writing-school, and the whole margin of a fairly penned despatch perhaps fifty pages long; laid before him for comment and signature by Idiaquez or Moura, would be sometimes covered with a few awkward sentences, which it was almost impossible to read, and which, when deciphered, were apt to reveal suggestions of astounding triviality.

Thus a most important despatch—in which the King, with his own hand, was supposed to be conveying secret intelligence to Mendoza concerning the Armada, together with minute directions for the regulation of Guise's conduct at the memorable epoch of the barricades—contained but a single comment from the monarch's own pen. "The Armada has been in Lisbon about a month—quassi un mes"—wrote the secretary. "There is but one s in quasi," said Philip.

Again, a despatch of Mendoza to the King contained the intelligence that Queen Elizabeth was, at the date of the letter, residing at St. James's. Philip, who had no objection to display his knowledge of English affairs—as became the man who had already been almost sovereign of England, and meant to be entirely so—supplied a piece of information in an apostille to this despatch. "St. James is a house of recreation," he said, "which was once a monastery. There is a park between it, and the palace which is called Huytal; but why it is called Huytal, I am sure I don't know." His researches in the English language had not enabled him to recognize the adjective and substantive out of which the abstruse compound White-Hall (Huyt-al), was formed.

On another occasion, a letter from England containing important intelligence concerning the number of soldiers enrolled in that country to resist the Spanish invasion, the quantity of gunpowder and various munitions collected, with other details of like nature, furnished besides a bit of information of less vital interest. "In the windows of the Queen's presence-chamber they have discovered a great quantity of lice, all clustered together," said the writer.

Such a minute piece of statistics could not escape the microscopic eye of Philip. So, disregarding the soldiers and the gunpowder, he commented only on this last-mentioned clause of the letter; and he did it cautiously too, as a King surnamed the Prudent should:—

Page 1758

“But perhaps they were fleas,” wrote Philip.

Such examples—and many more might be given—sufficiently indicate the nature of the man on whom such enormous responsibilities rested, and who had been, by the adulation of his fellow-creatures, elevated into a god. And we may cast a glance upon him as he sits in his cabinet-buried among those piles of despatches—and receiving methodically, at stated hours, Idiaquez, or Moura, or Chincon, to settle the affairs of so many millions of the human race; and we may watch exactly the progress of that scheme, concerning which so many contradictory rumours were circulating in Europe. In the month of April a Walsingham could doubt, even in August an ingenuous comptroller could disbelieve, the reality of the great project, and the Pope himself, even while pledging himself to assistance, had been systematically deceived. He had supposed the whole scheme rendered futile by the exploit of Drake at Cadiz, and had declared that “the Queen of England’s distaff was worth more than Philip’s sword, that the King was a poor creature, that he would never be able to come to a resolution, and that even if he should do so, it would be too late;” and he had subsequently been doing his best, through his nuncio in France, to persuade the Queen to embrace the Catholic religion, and thus save herself from the impending danger. Henry *iii*. had even been urged by the Pope to send a special ambassador to her for this purpose—as if the persuasions of the wretched Valois were likely to be effective with Elizabeth Tudor—and Burghley had, by means of spies in Rome, who pretended to be Catholics, given out intimations that the Queen was seriously contemplating such a step. Thus the Pope, notwithstanding Cardinal Allan, the famous million, and the bull, was thought by Mendoza to be growing lukewarm in the Spanish cause, and to be urging upon the “Englishwoman” the propriety of converting herself, even at the late hour of May, 1588.

But Philip, for years, had been maturing his scheme, while reposing entire confidence—beyond his own cabinet doors—upon none but Alexander Farnese; and the Duke—alone of all men—was perfectly certain that the invasion would, this year, be attempted.

The captain-general of the expedition was the Marquis of Santa Cruz, a man of considerable naval experience, and of constant good fortune, who, in thirty years, had never sustained a defeat. He had however shown no desire to risk one when Drake had offered him the memorable challenge in the year 1587, and perhaps his reputation of the invincible captain had been obtained by the same adroitness on previous occasions. He was no friend to Alexander Farnese, and was much disgusted when informed of the share allotted to the Duke in the great undertaking. A course of reproach and perpetual reprimand was the treatment to which he was, in consequence, subjected, which was not more conducive to the advancement of the expedition than

Page 1759

it was to the health of the captain-general. Early in January the Cardinal Archduke was sent to Lisbon to lecture him, with instructions to turn a deaf ear to all his remonstrances, to deal with him peremptorily, to forbid his writing letters on the subject to his Majesty, and to order him to accept his post or to decline it without conditions, in which latter contingency he was to be informed that his successor was already decided upon.

This was not the most eligible way perhaps for bringing the captain-general into a cheerful mood; particularly as he was expected to be ready in January to sail to the Flemish coast. Nevertheless the Marquis expressed a hope to accomplish his sovereign's wishes; and great had been the bustle in all the dockyards of Naples, Sicily, and Spain; particularly in the provinces of Guipuzcoa, Biscay, and Andalusia, and in the four great cities of the coast. War-ships of all dimensions, tenders, transports, soldiers, sailors, sutlers, munitions of war, provisions, were all rapidly concentrating in Lisbon as the great place of rendezvous; and Philip confidently believed, and as confidently informed the Duke of Parma, that he, might be expecting the Armada at any time after the end of January.

Perhaps in the history of mankind there has never been a vast project of conquest conceived and matured in so protracted and yet so desultory a manner, as was this famous Spanish invasion. There was something almost puerile in the whims rather than schemes of Philip for carrying out his purpose. It was probable that some resistance would be offered, at least by the navy of England, to the subjugation of that country, and the King had enjoyed an opportunity, the preceding summer, of seeing the way in which English sailors did their work. He had also appeared to understand the necessity of covering the passage of Farnese from the Flemish ports into the Thames, by means of the great Spanish fleet from Lisbon. Nevertheless he never seemed to be aware that Farnese could not invade England quite by himself, and was perpetually expecting to hear that he had done so.

"Holland and Zeeland," wrote Alexander to Philip, "have been arming with their accustomed promptness; England has made great preparations. I have done my best to make the impossible possible; but your letter told me to wait for Santa Cruz, and to expect him very shortly. If, on the contrary, you had told me to make the passage without him, I would have made the attempt, although we had every one of us perished. Four ships of war could sink every one of my boats. Nevertheless I beg to be informed of your Majesty's final order. If I am seriously expected to make the passage without Santa Cruz, I am ready to do it, although I should go all alone in a cock-boat."

Page 1760

But Santa Cruz at least was not destined to assist in the conquest of England; for, worn out with fatigue and vexation, goaded by the reproaches and insults of Philip, Santa Cruz was dead. He was replaced in the chief command of the fleet by the Duke of Medina Sidonia, a grandee of vast wealth, but with little capacity and less experience. To the iron marquis it was said that a golden duke had succeeded; but the duke of gold did not find it easier to accomplish impossibilities than his predecessor had done. Day after day, throughout the months of winter and spring, the King had been writing that the fleet was just on the point of sailing, and as frequently he had been renewing to Alexander Farnese the intimation that perhaps, after all, he might find an opportunity of crossing to England, without waiting for its arrival. And Alexander, with the same regularity, had been informing his master that the troops in the Netherlands had been daily dwindling from sickness and other causes, till at last, instead of the 30,000 effective infantry, with which it had been originally intended to make the enterprise, he had not more than 17,000 in the month of April. The 6000 Spaniards, whom he was to receive from the fleet of Medina Sidonia, would therefore be the very mainspring of his army. After leaving no more soldiers in the Netherlands than were absolutely necessary for the defence of the obedient Provinces against the rebels, he could only take with him to England 23,000 men, even after the reinforcements from Medina. “When we talked of taking England by surprise,” said Alexander, “we never thought of less than 30,000. Now that she is alert and ready for us, and that it is certain we must fight by sea and by land, 50,000 would be few.” He almost ridiculed the King’s suggestion that a feint might be made by way of besieging some few places in Holland or Zeeland. The whole matter in hand, he said, had become as public as possible, and the only efficient blind was the peace-negotiation; for many believed, as the English deputies were now treating at Ostend, that peace would follow.

At last, on the 28th, 29th, and 30th May, 1588, the fleet, which had been waiting at Lisbon more than a month for favourable weather, set sail from that port, after having been duly blessed by the Cardinal Archduke Albert, viceroy of Portugal.

There were rather more than one hundred and thirty ships in all, divided into ten squadrons. There was the squadron of Portugal, consisting of ten galleons, and commanded by the captain-general, Medina Sidonia. In the squadron of Castile were fourteen ships of various sizes, under General Diego Flores de Valdez. This officer was one of the most experienced naval officers in the Spanish service, and was subsequently ordered, in consequence, to sail with the generalissimo in his flag-ship. In the squadron of Andalusia were ten galleons and other vessels, under General Pedro de Valdez. In the squadron of Biscay were

Page 1761

ten galleons and lesser ships, under General Juan Martinet de Recalde, upper admiral of the fleet. In the squadron of Guipuzcoa were ten galleons, under General Miguel de Oquendo. In the squadron of Italy were ten ships, under General Martin de Bertendona. In the squadron of Urcas, or store-ships, were twenty-three sail, under General Juan Gomez de Medina. The squadron of tenders, caravels, and other vessels, numbered twenty-two sail, under General Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza. The squadron of four galeasses was commanded by Don Hugo de Moncada. The squadron of four galeras, or galleys, was in charge of Captain Diego de Medrado.

Next in command to Medina Sidonia was Don Alonzo de Leyva, captain-general of the light horse of Milan. Don Francisco de Bobadilla was marshal-general of the camp. Don Diego de Pimentel was marshal of the camp to the famous Terzio or legion of Sicily.

The total tonnage of the fleet was 59,120: the number of guns was 3165. Of Spanish troops there were 19,295 on board: there were 8252 sailors and 2088 galley-slaves. Besides these, there was a force of noble volunteers, belonging to the most illustrious houses of Spain, with their attendants amounting to nearly 2000 in all. There was also Don Martin Alaccon, administrator and vicar-general of the Holy Inquisition, at the head of some 290 monks of the mendicant orders, priests and familiars. The grand total of those embarked was about 30,000. The daily expense of the fleet was estimated by Don Diego de Pimentel at 12,000 ducats a-day, and the daily cost of the combined naval and military force under Farnese and Medina Sidonia was stated at 30,000 ducats.

The size of the ships ranged from 1200 tons to 300. The galleons, of which there were about sixty, were huge round-stemmed clumsy vessels, with bulwarks three or four feet thick, and built up at stem and stern, like castles. The galeasses of which there were four—were a third larger than the ordinary galley, and were rowed each by three hundred galley-slaves. They consisted of an enormous towering fortress at the stern; a castellated structure almost equally massive in front, with seats for the rowers amidships. At stem and stern and between each of the slaves' benches were heavy cannon. These galeasses were floating edifices, very wonderful to contemplate. They were gorgeously decorated. There were splendid state-apartments, cabins, chapels, and pulpits in each, and they were amply provided with awnings, cushions, streamers, standards, gilded saints, and bands of music. To take part in an ostentatious pageant, nothing could be better devised. To fulfil the great objects of a war-vessel—to sail and to fight—they were the worst machines ever launched upon the ocean. The four galleys were similar to the galeasses in every respect except that of size, in which they were by one-third inferior.

Page 1762

All the ships of the fleet—galeasses, galleys, galleons, and hulks—were so encumbered with top-hamper, so overweighted in proportion to their draught of water, that they could bear but little canvas, even with smooth seas and light and favourable winds. In violent tempests, therefore, they seemed likely to suffer. To the eyes of the 16th century these vessels seemed enormous. A ship of 1300 tons was then a monster rarely seen, and a fleet, numbering from 130 to 150 sail, with an aggregate tonnage of 60,000, seemed sufficient to conquer the world, and to justify the arrogant title, by which it had baptized itself, of the Invincible.

Such was the machinery which Philip had at last set afloat, for the purpose of dethroning Elizabeth and establishing the inquisition in England. One hundred and forty ships, eleven thousand Spanish veterans, as many more recruits, partly Spanish, partly Portuguese, 2000 grandees, as many galley-slaves, and three hundred barefooted friars and inquisitors.

The plan was simple. Medina Sidonia was to proceed straight from Lisbon to Calais roads: there he was to wait: for the Duke of Parma, who was to come forth from Newport, Sluys, and Dunkerk, bringing with him his 17,000 veterans, and to assume the chief command of the whole expedition. They were then to cross the channel to Dover, land the army of Parma, reinforced with 6000 Spaniards from the fleet, and with these 23,000 men Alexander was to march at once upon London. Medina Sidonia was to seize and fortify the Isle of Wight, guard the entrance of the harbours against any interference from the Dutch and English fleets, and—so soon as the conquest of England had been effected—he was to proceed to Ireland. It had been the wish of Sir William Stanley that Ireland should be subjugated first, as a basis of operations against England; but this had been overruled. The intrigues of Mendoza and Farnese, too, with the Catholic nobles of Scotland, had proved, after all, unsuccessful. King James had yielded to superior offers of money and advancement held out to him by Elizabeth, and was now, in Alexander's words, a confirmed heretic.

There was no course left, therefore, but to conquer England at once. A strange omission had however been made in the plan from first to last. The commander of the whole expedition was the Duke of Parma: on his head was the whole responsibility. Not a gun was to be fired—if it could be avoided—until he had come forth with his veterans to make his junction with the Invincible Armada off Calais. Yet there was no arrangement whatever to enable him to come forth—not the slightest provision to effect that junction. It would almost seem that the letter-writer of the Escorial had been quite ignorant of the existence of the Dutch fleets off Dunkerk, Newport, and Flushing, although he had certainly received information enough of this formidable obstacle to his plan.

Page 1763

“Most joyful I shall be,” said Farnese—writing on one of the days when he had seemed most convinced by Valentine Dale’s arguments, and driven to despair by his postulates—“to see myself with these soldiers on English ground, where, with God’s help, I hope to accomplish your Majesty’s demands.” He was much troubled however to find doubts entertained at the last moment as to his 6000 Spaniards; and certainly it hardly needed an argument to prove that the invasion of England with but 17,000 soldiers was a somewhat hazardous scheme. Yet the pilot Moresini had brought him letters from Medina Sidonia, in which the Duke expressed hesitation about parting with these 6000 veterans; unless the English fleet should have been previously destroyed, and had also again expressed his hope that Parma would be punctual to the rendezvous. Alexander immediately combated these views in letters to Medina and to the King. He avowed that he would not depart one tittle from the plan originally laid down. The 6000 men, and more if possible, were to be furnished him, and the Spanish Armada was to protect his own flotilla, and to keep the channel clear of enemies. No other scheme was possible, he said, for it was clear that his collection of small flat-bottomed river-boats and hoys could not even make the passage, except in smooth weather. They could not contend with a storm, much less with the enemy’s ships, which would destroy them utterly in case of a meeting, without his being able to avail himself of his soldiers—who would be so closely packed as to be hardly moveable—or of any human help. The preposterous notion that he should come out with his flotilla to make a junction with Medina off Calais, was over and over again denounced by Alexander with vehemence and bitterness, and most boding expressions were used by him as to the probable result, were such a delusion persisted in.

Every possible precaution therefore but one had been taken. The King of France—-almost at the same instant in which Guise had been receiving his latest instructions from the Escorial for dethroning and destroying that monarch—had been assured by Philip of his inalienable affection; had been informed of the object of this great naval expedition—which was not by any means, as Mendoza had stated to Henry, an enterprise against France or England, but only a determined attempt to clear the sea, once for all, of these English pirates who had done so much damage for years past on the high seas—and had been requested, in case any Spanish ship should be driven by stress of weather into French ports, to afford them that comfort and protection to which the vessels of so close and friendly an ally were entitled.

Thus there was bread, beef, and powder enough—there were monks and priests enough—standards, galley-slaves, and inquisitors enough; but there were no light vessels in the Armada, and no heavy vessels in Parma’s fleet. Medina could not go to Farnese, nor could Farnese come to Medina. The junction was likely to be difficult, and yet it had never once entered the heads of Philip or his counsellors to provide for that difficulty. The King never seemed to imagine that Farnese, with 40,000 or 50,000 soldiers in the Netherlands, a fleet of 300 transports, and power to dispose of very large funds for one great purpose, could be kept in prison by a fleet of Dutch skippers and corsairs.

Page 1764

With as much sluggishness as might have been expected from their clumsy architecture, the ships of the Armada consumed nearly three weeks in sailing from Lisbon to the neighbourhood of Cape Finisterre. Here they were overtaken by a tempest, and were scattered hither and thither, almost at the mercy of the winds and waves; for those unwieldy hulks were ill adapted to a tempest in the Bay of Biscay. There were those in the Armada, however, to whom the storm was a blessing. David Gwynn, a Welsh mariner, had sat in the Spanish hulks a wretched galley-slave—as prisoner of war for more than eleven years, hoping, year after year, for a chance of escape from bondage. He sat now among the rowers of the great galley, the Trasana, one of the humblest instruments by which the subjugation of his native land to Spain and Rome was to be effected.

Very naturally, among the ships which suffered most in the gale were the four huge unwieldy galleys—a squadron of four under Don Diego de Medrado—with their enormous turrets at stem and stern, and their low and open waists. The chapels, pulpits, and gilded Madonnas proved of little avail in a hurricane. The Diana, largest of the four, went down with all hands; the Princess was labouring severely in the trough of the sea, and the Trasana was likewise in imminent danger. So the master of this galley asked the Welsh slave, who had far more experience and seamanship than he possessed himself, if it were possible to save the vessel. Gwynn saw an opportunity for which he had been waiting eleven years. He was ready to improve it. He pointed out to the captain the hopelessness of attempting to overtake the Armada. They should go down, he said, as the Diana had already done, and as the Princess was like at any moment to do, unless they took in every rag of sail, and did their best with their oars to gain the nearest port. But in order that the rowers might exert themselves to the utmost, it was necessary that the soldiers, who were a useless incumbrance on deck, should go below. Thus only could the ship be properly handled. The captain, anxious to save his ship and his life, consented. Most of the soldiers were sent beneath the hatches: a few were ordered to sit on the benches among the slaves. Now there had been a secret understanding for many days among these unfortunate men, nor were they wholly without weapons. They had been accustomed to make toothpicks and other trifling articles for sale out of broken sword-blades and other refuse bits of steel. There was not a man among them who had not thus provided himself with a secret stiletto.

At first Gwynn occupied himself with arrangements for weathering the gale. So soon however as the ship had been made comparatively easy, he looked around him, suddenly threw down his cap, and raised his hand to the rigging. It was a preconcerted signal. The next instant he stabbed the captain to the heart, while each one of the galley-slaves killed the soldier nearest him; then, rushing below, they surprised and overpowered the rest of the troops, and put them all to death.

Page 1765

Coming again upon deck, David Gwynn descried the fourth galley of the squadron, called the Royal, commanded by Commodore Medrado in person, bearing down upon them, before the wind. It was obvious that the Vasana was already an object of suspicion.

“Comrades,” said Gwynn, “God has given us liberty, and by our courage we must prove ourselves worthy of the boon.”

As he spoke there came a broadside from the galley Royal which killed nine of his crew. David, nothing daunted; laid his ship close alongside of the Royal, with such a shock that the timbers quivered again. Then at the head of his liberated slaves, now thoroughly armed, he dashed on board the galley, and, after a furious conflict, in which he was assisted by the slaves of the Royal, succeeded in mastering the vessel, and putting all the Spanish soldiers to death. This done, the combined rowers, welcoming Gwynn as their deliverer from an abject slavery which seemed their lot for life, willingly accepted his orders. The gale had meantime abated, and the two galleys, well conducted by the experienced and intrepid Welshman, made their way to the coast of France, and landed at Bayonne on the 31st, dividing among them the property found on board the two galleys. Thence, by land, the fugitives, four hundred and sixty-six in number—Frenchmen, Spaniards, Englishmen, Turks, and Moors, made their way to Rochelle. Gwynn had an interview with Henry of Navarre, and received from that chivalrous king a handsome present. Afterwards he found his way to England, and was well commended by the Queen. The rest of the liberated slaves dispersed in various directions.

This was the first adventure of the invincible Armada. Of the squadron of galleys, one was already sunk in the sea, and two of the others had been conquered by their own slaves. The fourth rode out the gale with difficulty, and joined the rest of the fleet, which ultimately re-assembled at Coruna; the ships having, in distress, put in at first at Vivera, Ribadeo, Gijon, and other northern ports of Spain. At the Groyne—as the English of that day were accustomed to call Coruna—they remained a month, repairing damages and recruiting; and on the 22nd of July 3 (N.S.) the Armada set sail: Six days later, the Spaniards took soundings, thirty leagues from the Scilly Islands, and on—Friday, the 29th of July, off the Lizard, they had the first glimpse of the land of promise presented them by Sixtus V., of which they had at last come to take possession.

[The dates in the narrative will be always given according to the New Style, then already adopted by Spain, Holland, and France, although not by England. The dates thus given are, of course, ten days later than they appear in contemporary English records.]

On the same day and night the blaze and smoke of ten thousand beacon-fires from the Land’s End to Margate, and from the Isle of Wight to Cumberland, gave warning to every Englishman that the enemy was at last upon them. Almost at that very instant intelligence had been brought from the court to the Lord-Admiral at Plymouth, that the

Armada, dispersed and shattered by the gales of June, was not likely to make its appearance that year; and orders had consequently been given to disarm the four largest ships, and send them into dock. Even Walsingham, as already stated, had participated in this strange delusion.

Page 1766

Before Howard had time to act upon this ill-timed suggestion—even had he been disposed to do so—he received authentic intelligence that the great fleet was off the Lizard. Neither he nor Francis Drake were the men to lose time in such an emergency, and before that Friday, night was spent, sixty of the best English ships had been warped out of Plymouth harbour.

On Saturday, 30th July, the wind was very light at southwest, with a mist and drizzling rain, but by three in the afternoon the two fleets could descry and count each other through the haze.

By nine o'clock, 31st July, about two miles from Looe, on the Cornish coast, the fleets had their first meeting. There were 136 sail of the Spaniards, of which ninety were large ships, and sixty-seven of the English. It was a solemn moment. The long-expected Armada presented a pompous, almost a theatrical appearance. The ships seemed arranged for a pageant, in honour of a victory already won. Disposed in form of a crescent, the horns of which were seven miles asunder, those gilded, towered, floating castles, with their gaudy standards and their martial music, moved slowly along the channel, with an air of indolent pomp. Their captain-general, the golden Duke, stood in his private shot-proof fortress, on the—deck of his great galleon the Saint Martin, surrounded by generals of infantry, and colonels of cavalry, who knew as little as he did himself of naval matters. The English vessels, on the other hand—with a few exceptions, light, swift, and easily handled—could sail round and round those unwieldy galleons, hulks, and galleys rowed by fettered slave-gangs. The superior seamanship of free Englishmen, commanded by such experienced captains as Drake, Frobisher, and Hawkins—from infancy at home on blue water—was manifest in the very, first encounter. They obtained the weather-gage at once, and cannonaded the enemy at intervals with considerable effect, easily escaping at will out of range of the sluggish Armada, which was incapable of bearing sail in pursuit, although provided with an armament which could sink all its enemies at close quarters. "We had some small fight with them that Sunday afternoon," said Hawkins.

Medina Sidonia hoisted the royal standard at the fore, and the whole fleet did its utmost, which was little, to offer general battle. It was in vain. The English, following at the heels of the enemy, refused all such invitations, and attacked only the rear-guard of the Armada, where Recalde commanded. That admiral, steadily maintaining his post, faced his nimble antagonists, who continued to teaze, to maltreat, and to elude him, while the rest of the fleet proceeded slowly up the Channel closely, followed by the enemy. And thus the running fight continued along the coast, in full view of Plymouth, whence boats with reinforcements and volunteers were perpetually arriving to the English ships, until the battle had drifted quite out of reach of the town.

Page 1767

Already in this first “small fight” the Spaniards had learned a lesson, and might even entertain a doubt of their invincibility. But before the sun set there were more serious disasters. Much powder and shot had been expended by the Spaniards to very little purpose, and so a master-gunner on board Admiral Oquendo’s flag-ship was reprimanded for careless ball-practice. The gunner, who was a Fleming, enraged with his captain, laid a train to the powder-magazine, fired it, and threw himself into the sea. Two decks blew up. The into the clouds, carrying with it the paymaster-general of the fleet, a large portion of treasure, and nearly two hundred men.’ The ship was a wreck, but it was possible to save the rest of the crew. So Medina Sidonia sent light vessels to remove them, and wore with his flag-ship, to defend Oquendo, who had already been fastened upon by his English pursuers. But the Spaniards, not being so light in hand as their enemies, involved themselves in much embarrassment by this manoeuvre; and there was much falling foul of each other, entanglement of rigging, and carrying away of yards. Oquendo’s men, however, were ultimately saved, and taken to other ships.

Meantime Don Pedro de Valdez, commander of the Andalusian squadron, having got his galleon into collision with two or three Spanish ships successively, had at last carried away his fore-mast close to the deck, and the wreck had fallen against his main-mast. He lay crippled and helpless, the Armada was slowly deserting him, night was coming on, the sea was running high, and the English, ever hovering near, were ready to grapple with him. In vain did Don Pedro fire signals of distress. The captain-general, even as though the unlucky galleon had not been connected with the Catholic fleet—-calmly fired a gun to collect his scattered ships, and abandoned Valdez to his fate. “He left me comfortless in sight of the whole fleet,” said poor Pedro, “and greater inhumanity and unthankfulness I think was never heard of among men.”

Yet the Spaniard comported himself most gallantly. Frobisher, in the largest ship of the English fleet, the Triumph, of 1100 tons, and Hawkins in the Victory, of 800, cannonaded him at a distance, but, night coming on, he was able to resist; and it was not till the following morning that he surrendered to the Revenge.

Drake then received the gallant prisoner on board his flagship—much to the disgust and indignation of Frobisher and Hawkins, thus disappointed of their prize and ransom-money—treated him with much courtesy, and gave his word of honour that he and his men should be treated fairly like good prisoners of war. This pledge was redeemed, for it was not the English, as it was the Spanish custom, to convert captives into slaves, but only to hold them for ransom. Valdez responded to Drake’s politeness by kissing his hand, embracing him, and overpowering him with magnificent compliments. He was then sent on

Page 1768

board the Lord-Admiral, who received him with similar urbanity, and expressed his regret that so distinguished a personage should have been so coolly deserted by the Duke of Medina. Don Pedro then returned to the Revenge, where, as the guest of Drake, he was a witness to all subsequent events up to the 10th of August, on which day he was sent to London with some other officers, Sir Francis claiming his ransom as his lawful due.

Here certainly was no very triumphant beginning for the Invincible Armada. On the very first day of their being in presence of the English fleet—then but sixty-seven in number, and vastly their inferior in size and weight of metal—they had lost the flag ships of the Guipuzcoan and of the Andalusian squadrons, with a general-admiral, 450 officers and, men, and some 100,000 ducats of treasure. They had been out-manoeuvred, out-sailed, and thoroughly maltreated by their antagonists, and they had been unable to inflict a single blow in return. Thus the “small fight” had been a cheerful one for the opponents of the Inquisition, and the English were proportionably encouraged.

On Monday, 1st of August, Medina Sidonia placed the rear-guard-consisting of the galeasses, the galleons St. Matthew, St. Luke, St. James, and the Florence and other ships, forty-three in all—under command of Don Antonio de Leyva. He was instructed to entertain the enemy—so constantly hanging on the rear—to accept every chance of battle, and to come to close quarters whenever it should be possible. The Spaniards felt confident of sinking every ship in the English navy, if they could but once come to grappling; but it was growing more obvious every hour that the giving or withholding battle was entirely in the hands of their foes. Meantime—while the rear was thus protected by Leyva’s division—the vanguard and main body of the Armada, led by the captain-general, would steadily pursue its way, according to the royal instructions, until it arrived at its appointed meeting-place with the Duke of Parma. Moreover, the Duke of Medina—dissatisfied with the want of discipline and of good seamanship hitherto displayed in his fleet—now took occasion to send a serjeant-major, with written sailing directions, on board each ship in the Armada, with express orders to hang every captain, without appeal or consultation, who should leave the position assigned him; and the hangmen were sent with the sergeant-majors to ensure immediate attention to these arrangements. Juan Gil was at the name time sent off in a sloop to the Duke of Parma, to carry the news of the movements of the Armada, to request information as to the exact spot and moment of the junction, and to beg for pilots acquainted with the French and Flemish coasts. “In case of the slightest gale in the world,” said Medina, “I don’t know how or where to shelter such large ships as ours.”

Disposed in this manner; the Spaniards sailed leisurely along the English coast with light westerly breezes, watched closely by the Queen’s fleet, which hovered at a moderate distance to windward, without offering, that day, any obstruction to their course.

Page 1769

By five o'clock on Tuesday morning, 2nd of August, the Armada lay between Portland Bill and St. Albans' Head, when the wind shifted to the north-east, and gave the Spaniards the weather-gage. The English did their beat to get to windward, but the Duke, standing close into the land with the whole Armada, maintained his advantage. The English then went about, making a tack seaward, and were soon afterwards assaulted by the Spaniards. A long and spirited action ensued. Howard in his little Ark-Royal—"the odd ship of the world for all conditions"—was engaged at different times with Bertendona, of the Italian squadron, with Alonzo de Leyva in the Batta, and with other large vessels. He was hard pressed for a time, but was gallantly supported by the Nonpareil, Captain Tanner; and after a long and confused combat, in which the St. Mark, the St. Luke, the St. Matthew, the St. Philip, the St. John, the St. James, the St. John Baptist, the St. Martin, and many other great galleons, with saintly and apostolic names, fought pellmell with the Lion, the Bear, the Bull, the Tiger, the Dreadnought, the Revenge, the Victory, the Triumph, and other of the more profanely-baptized English ships, the Spaniards were again baffled in all their attempts to close with, and to board, their ever-attacking, ever-flying adversaries. The cannonading was incessant. "We had a sharp and a long fight," said Hawkins. Boat-loads of men and munitions were perpetually arriving to the English, and many, high-born volunteers—like Cumberland, Oxford, Northumberland, Raleigh, Brooke, Dudley, Willoughby, Noel, William Hatton, Thomas Cecil, and others—could no longer restrain their impatience, as the roar of battle sounded along the coasts of Dorset, but flocked merrily on board the ships of Drake,—Hawkins, Howard, and Frobisher, or came in small vessels which they had chartered for themselves, in order to have their share in the delights of the long-expected struggle.

The action, irregular, desultory, but lively, continued nearly all day, and until the English had fired away most of their powder and shot. The Spaniards, too, notwithstanding their years of preparation, were already sort of light metal, and Medina Sidonia had been daily sending to Parma for a Supply of four, six, and ten pound balls. So much lead and gunpowder had never before been wasted in a single day; for there was no great damage inflicted on either side. The artillery-practice was certainly not much to the credit of either nation.

"If her Majesty's ships had been manned with a full supply of good gunners," said honest William Thomas, an old artilleryman, "it would have been the woefullest time ever the Spaniard took in hand, and the most noble victory ever heard of would have been her Majesty's. But our sins were the cause that so much powder and shot were spent, so long time in fight, and in comparison so little harm done. It were greatly to be wished that her Majesty were no longer deceived in this way."

Page 1770

Yet the English, at any rate, had succeeded in displaying their seamanship, if not their gunnery, to advantage. In vain the unwieldly hulks and galleons had attempted to grapple with their light-winged foes, who pelted them, braved them, damaged their sails and gearing; and then danced lightly off into the distance; until at last, as night fell, the wind came out from the west again, and the English regained and kept the weather-gage.

The Queen's fleet, now divided into four squadrons, under Howard, Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher, amounted to near one hundred sail, exclusive of Lord Henry Seymour's division, which was cruising in the Straits of Dover. But few of all this number were ships of war however, and the merchant vessels; although zealous and active enough, were not thought very effective. "If you had seen the simple service done by the merchants and coast ships," said Winter, "you would have said we had been little holpen by them, otherwise than that they did make a show."

All night the Spaniards, holding their course towards Calais, after the long but indecisive conflict had terminated, were closely pursued by their wary antagonists. On Wednesday, 3rd of August, there was some slight cannonading, with but slender results; and on Thursday, the 4th, both fleets were off Dunnose, on the Isle of Wight. The great hulk Santana and a galleon of Portugal having been somewhat damaged the previous day, were lagging behind the rest of the Armada, and were vigorously attacked by the Triumph, and a few other vessels. Don Antonio de Leyva, with some of the galeasses and large galleons, came to the rescue, and Frobisher, although in much peril, maintained an unequal conflict, within close range, with great spirit.

Seeing his danger, the Lord Admiral in the Ark-Royal, accompanied by the Golden Lion; the White Bear, the Elizabeth, the Victory, and the Leicester, bore boldly down into the very midst of the Spanish fleet, and laid himself within three or four hundred yards of Medina's flag ship, the St. Martin, while his comrades were at equally close quarters with Vice-Admiral Recalde and the galleons of Oquendo, Mexia, and Almanza. It was the hottest conflict which had yet taken place. Here at last was thorough English work. The two, great fleets, which were there to subjugate and to defend the realm of Elizabeth, were nearly yard-arm and yard-arm together—all England on the lee. Broadside after broadside of great guns, volley after volley of arquebusry from maintop and rigging, were warmly exchanged, and much damage was inflicted on the Spaniards, whose gigantic ships, were so easy a mark to aim at, while from their turreted heights they themselves fired for the most part harmlessly over the heads of their adversaries. The leaders of the Armada, however, were encouraged, for they expected at last to come to even closer quarters, and there were some among the English who were mad enough to wish to board.

Page 1771

But so soon as Frobisher, who was the hero of the day, had extricated himself from his difficulty, the Lord-Admiral—having no intention of risking the existence of his fleet, and with it perhaps of the English crown, upon the hazard of a single battle, and having been himself somewhat damaged in the fight—gave the signal for retreat, and caused the Ark-Royal to be towed out of action. Thus the Spaniards were frustrated of their hopes, and the English; having inflicted much. punishment at comparatively small loss to themselves, again stood off to windward; and the Armada continued its indolent course along the cliffs of Freshwater and Blackgang.

On Friday; 5th August, the English, having received men and munitions from shore, pursued their antagonists at a moderate distance; and the Lord-Admiral; profiting by the pause—for, it was almost a flat calm—sent for Martin Frobisher, John Hawkins, Roger Townsend, Lord Thomas Howard, son of the Duke of Norfolk, and Lord Edmund Sheffield; and on the deck of the Royal Ark conferred the honour of knighthood on each for his gallantry in the action of the previous day. Medina Sidonia, on his part, was again despatching messenger after messenger to the Duke of Parma, asking for small shot, pilots, and forty fly-boats, with which to pursue the teasing English clippers. The Catholic Armada, he said, being so large and heavy, was quite in the power of its adversaries, who could assault, retreat, fight, or leave off fighting, while he had nothing for it but to proceed, as expeditiously as might be; to his rendezvous in Calais roads.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Inquisitors enough; but there were no light vessels in The Armada

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 58, 1588

Both Fleets off Calais—A Night of Anxiety—Project of Howard and Winter—Impatience of the Spaniards—Fire-Ships sent against the Armada—A great Galeasse disabled—-Attacked and captured by English Boats—General Engagement of both Fleets—Loss of several Spanish Ships—Armada flies, followed by the English—English insufficiently provided—Are obliged to relinquish the Chase—A great Storm disperses the Armada—-Great Energy of Parma Made fruitless by Philip's Dulness—England readier at Sea than on Shore—The Lieutenant—General's Complaints—His Quarrels with Norris and Williams—Harsh Statements as to the English Troops—Want of Organization in England—Royal Parsimony and Delay—Quarrels of English Admirals—England's

narrow Escape from great Peril—Various Rumours as to the Armada’s Fate—Philip for a long Time in Doubt—He believes himself victorious—Is tranquil when undeceived.

CHAPTER XIX. Part 2.

Page 1772

And in Calais roads the great fleet—sailing slowly all next day in company with the English, without a shot being fired on either side—at last dropped anchor on Saturday afternoon, August 6th.

Here then the Invincible Armada had arrived at its appointed resting-place. Here the great junction—of Medina Sidonia with the Duke of Parma was to be effected; and now at last the curtain was to rise upon the last act of the great drama so slowly and elaborately prepared.

That Saturday afternoon, Lord Henry Seymour and his squadron of sixteen lay between Dungeness and Folkestone; waiting the approach of the two fleets. He spoke several-coasting vessels coming from the west; but they could give him no information—strange to say—either of the Spaniards or, of his own countrymen,—Seymour; having hardly three days' provision in his fleet, thought that there might be time to take in supplies; and so bore into the Downs. Hardly had he been there half an hour; when a pinnace arrived from the Lord-Admiral; with orders for Lord Henry's squadron to hold itself in readiness. There was no longer time for victualling, and very soon afterwards the order was given to make sail and bear for the French coast. The wind was however so light; that the whole day was spent before Seymour with his ships could cross the channel. At last, towards seven in the evening; he saw the great Spanish Armada, drawn up in a half-moon, and riding at anchor—the ships very near each other—a little to the eastward of Calais, and very near the shore. The English, under Howard Drake, Frobisher, and Hawkins, were slowly following, and—so soon as Lord Henry, arriving from the opposite shore; had made his junction with them—the whole combined fleet dropped anchor likewise very near Calais, and within one mile and a half of the Spaniards. That invincible force had at last almost reached its destination. It was now to receive the cooperation of the great Farnese, at the head of an army of veterans, disciplined on a hundred battle-fields, confident from countless victories, and arrayed, as they had been with ostentatious splendour, to follow the most brilliant general in Christendom on his triumphal march into the capital of England. The long-threatened invasion was no longer an idle figment of politicians, maliciously spread abroad to poison men's minds as to the intentions of a long-enduring but magnanimous, and on the whole friendly sovereign. The mask had been at last thrown down, and the mild accents of Philip's diplomatists and their English dupes, interchanging protocols so decorously month after month on the sands of Bourbourg, had been drowned by the peremptory voice of English and Spanish artillery, suddenly breaking in upon their placid conferences. It had now become supererogatory to ask for Alexander's word of honour whether he had, ever heard of Cardinal Allan's pamphlet, or whether his master contemplated hostilities against Queen Elizabeth.

Page 1773

Never, since England was England, had such a sight been seen as now revealed itself in those narrow straits between Dover and Calais. Along that long, low, sandy shore, and quite within the range of the Calais fortifications, one hundred and thirty Spanish ships—the greater number of them the largest and most heavily armed in the world lay face to face, and scarcely out of cannon-shot, with one hundred and fifty English sloops and frigates, the strongest and swiftest that the island could furnish, and commanded by men whose exploits had rung through the world.

Farther along the coast, invisible, but known to be performing a post perilous and vital service, was a squadron of Dutch vessels of all sizes, lining both the inner and outer edges of the sandbanks off the Flemish coasts, and swarming in all the estuaries and inlets of that intricate and dangerous cruising-ground between Dunkerk and Walcheren. Those fleets of Holland and Zeeland, numbering some one hundred and fifty galleons, sloops, and fly-boats, under Warmond, Nassau, Van der Does, de Moor, and Rosendael, lay patiently blockading every possible egress from Newport, or Gravelines; or Sluys, or Flushing, or Dunkerk, and longing to grapple with the Duke of Parma, so soon as his fleet of gunboats and hoys, packed with his Spanish and Italian veterans, should venture to set forth upon the sea for their long-prepared exploit.

It was a pompous spectacle, that midsummer night, upon those narrow seas. The moon, which was at the full, was rising calmly upon a scene of anxious expectation. Would she not be looking, by the morrow's night, upon a subjugated England, a re-enslaved Holland—upon the downfall of civil and religious liberty? Those ships of Spain, which lay there with their banners waving in the moonlight, discharging salvoes of anticipated triumph and filling the air with strains of insolent music; would they not, by daybreak, be moving straight to their purpose, bearing the conquerors of the world to the scene of their cherished hopes?

That English fleet, too, which rode there at anchor, so anxiously on the watch—would that swarm of, nimble, lightly-handled, but slender vessels,—which had held their own hitherto in hurried and desultory skirmishes—be able to cope with their great antagonist now that the moment had arrived for the death grapple? Would not Howard, Drake, Frobisher, Seymour, Winter, and Hawkins, be swept out of the straits at last, yielding an open passage to Medina, Oquendo, Recalde, and Farnese? Would those Hollanders and Zeelanders, cruising so vigilantly among their treacherous shallows, dare to maintain their post, now that the terrible 'Holofernese,' with his invincible legions, was resolved to come forth?

Page 1774

So soon as he had cast anchor, Howard despatched a pinnace to the Vanguard, with a message to Winter to come on board the flag-ship. When Sir William reached the Ark, it was already nine in the evening. He was anxiously consulted by the Lord-Admiral as to the course now to be taken. Hitherto the English had been teasing and perplexing an enemy, on the retreat, as it were, by the nature of his instructions. Although anxious to give battle, the Spaniard was forbidden to descend upon the coast until after his junction with Parma. So the English had played a comparatively easy game, hanging upon their enemy's skirts, maltreating him as they doubled about him, cannonading him from a distance, and slipping out of his reach at their pleasure. But he was now to be met face to face, and the fate of the two free commonwealths of the world was upon the issue of the struggle, which could no longer be deferred.

Winter, standing side by aide with the Lord-Admiral on the deck of the little Ark-Royal, gazed for the first time on those enormous galleons and galleys with which his companion, was already sufficiently familiar.

"Considering their hugeness," said he, "twill not be possible to remove them but by a device."

Then remembering, in a lucky moment, something that he had heard four years before of the fire ships sent by the Antwerpers against Parma's bridge—the inventor of which, the Italian Gianibelli, was at that very moment constructing fortifications on the Thames to assist the English against his old enemy Farnese—Winter suggested that some stratagem of the same kind should be attempted against the Invincible Armada. There was no time nor opportunity to prepare such submarine volcanoes as had been employed on that memorable occasion; but burning ships at least might be sent among the fleet. Some damage would doubtless be thus inflicted by the fire, and perhaps a panic, suggested by the memories of Antwerp and by the knowledge that the famous Mantuan wizard was then a resident of England, would be still more effective. In Winter's opinion, the Armada might at least be compelled to slip its cables, and be thrown into some confusion if the project were fairly carried out.

Howard approved of the device, and determined to hold, next morning, a council of war for arranging the details of its execution.

While the two sat in the cabin, conversing thus earnestly, there had well nigh been a serious misfortune. The ship, White Bear, of 1000 tons burthen, and three others of the English fleet, all tangled together, came drifting with the tide against the Ark. There were many yards carried away; much tackle spoiled, and for a time there was great danger; in the opinion of Winter, that some of the very best ships in the fleet would be crippled and quite destroyed on the eve of a general engagement. By alacrity and good handling, however, the ships were separated, and the ill-consequences of an accident —such as had already proved fatal to several Spanish vessels—were fortunately averted.

Page 1775

Next day, Sunday, 7th August, the two great fleets were still lying but a mile and a half apart, calmly gazing at each other, and rising and falling at their anchors as idly as if some vast summer regatta were the only purpose of that great assemblage of shipping. Nothing as yet was heard of Farnese. Thus far, at least, the Hollanders had held him at bay, and there was still breathing-time before the catastrophe. So Howard hung out his signal for council early in the morning, and very soon after Drake and Hawkins, Seymour, Winter, and the rest, were gravely consulting in his cabin.

It was decided that Winter's suggestion should be acted upon, and Sir Henry Palmer was immediately despatched in a pinnace to Dover, to bring off a number of old vessels fit to be fired, together with a supply of light wood, tar, rosin, sulphur, and other combustibles, most adapted to the purpose.' But as time wore away, it became obviously impossible for Palmer to return that night, and it was determined to make the most of what could be collected in the fleet itself. Otherwise it was to be feared that the opportunity might be for ever lost. Parma, crushing all opposition, might suddenly appear at any moment upon the channel; and the whole Spanish Armada, placing itself between him and his enemies, would engage the English and Dutch fleets, and cover his passage to Dover. It would then be too late to think of the burning ships.

On the other hand, upon the decks of the Armada, there was an impatience that night which increased every hour. The governor of Calais; M. de Gourdon, had sent his nephew on board the flag-ship of Medina Sidonia, with courteous salutations, professions of friendship, and bountiful refreshments. There was no fear—now that Mucio was for the time in the ascendency—that the schemes of Philip would be interfered with by France. The governor, had, however, sent serious warning of—the dangerous position in which the Armada had placed itself. He was quite right. Calais roads were no safe anchorage for huge vessels like those of Spain and Portugal; for the tides and cross-currents to which they were exposed were most treacherous. It was calm enough at the moment, but a westerly gale might, in a few hours, drive the whole fleet hopelessly among the sand-banks of the dangerous Flemish coast. Moreover, the Duke, although tolerably well furnished with charts and pilots for the English coast, was comparatively unprovided against the dangers which might beset him off Dunkerk, Newport, and Flushing. He had sent messengers, day after day, to Farnese, begging for assistance of various kinds, but, above all, imploring his instant presence on the field of action. It was the time and, place for Alexander to assume the chief command. The Armada was ready to make front against the English fleet on the left, while on the right, the Duke, thus protected, might proceed across the channel and take possession of England.

Page 1776

And the impatience of the soldiers and sailors on board the fleet was equal to that of their commanders. There was London almost before their eyes—a huge mass of treasure, richer and more accessible than those mines beyond the Atlantic which had so often rewarded Spanish chivalry with fabulous wealth. And there were men in those galleons who remembered the sack of Antwerp, eleven years before—men who could tell, from personal experience, how helpless was a great commercial city, when once in the clutch of disciplined brigands—men who, in that dread 'fury of Antwerp,' had enriched themselves in an hour with the accumulations of a merchant's life-time, and who had slain fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brides and bridegrooms, before each others' eyes, until the number of inhabitants butchered in the blazing streets rose to many thousands; and the plunder from palaces and warehouses was counted by millions; before the sun had set on the 'great fury.' Those Spaniards, and Italians, and Walloons, were now thirsting for more gold, for more blood; and as the capital of England was even more wealthy and far more defenceless than the commercial metropolis of the Netherlands had been, so it was resolved that the London 'fury' should be more thorough and more productive than the 'fury' of Antwerp, at the memory—of which the world still shuddered. And these professional soldiers had been taught to consider the English as a pacific, delicate, effeminate race, dependent on good living, without experience of war, quickly fatigued and discouraged, and even more easily to be plundered and butchered than were the excellent burghers of Antwerp.

And so these southern conquerors looked down from their great galleons and galeasses upon the English vessels. More than three quarters of them were merchantmen. There was no comparison whatever between the relative strength of the fleets. In number they were about equal being each from one hundred and thirty to one hundred and fifty strong—but the Spaniards had twice the tonnage of the English, four times the artillery, and nearly three times the number of men.

Where was Farnese? Most impatiently the Golden Duke paced the deck of the Saint Martin. Most eagerly were thousands of eyes strained towards the eastern horizon to catch the first glimpse of Parma's flotilla. But the day wore on to its close, and still the same inexplicable and mysterious silence prevailed. There was utter solitude on the waters in the direction of Gravelines and Dunkerk—not a sail upon the sea in the quarter where bustle and activity had been most expected. The mystery was profound, for it had never entered the head of any man in the Armada that Alexander could not come out when he chose.

Page 1777

And now to impatience succeeded suspicion and indignation; and there were curses upon sluggishness and upon treachery. For in the horrible atmosphere of duplicity, in which all Spaniards and Italians of that epoch lived, every man: suspected his brother, and already Medina Sidonia suspected Farnese of playing him false. There were whispers of collusion between the Duke and the English commissioners at Bourbourg. There were hints that Alexander was playing his own game, that he meant to divide the sovereignty of the Netherlands with the heretic Elizabeth, to desert his great trust, and to effect, if possible, the destruction of his master's Armada, and the downfall of his master's sovereignty in the north. Men told each other, too, of a vague rumour, concerning which Alexander might have received information, and in which many believed, that Medina Sidonia was the bearer of secret orders to throw Farnese into bondage, so soon as he should appear, to send him a disgraced captive back to Spain for punishment, and to place the baton of command in the hand of the Duke of Pastrana, Philip's bastard by the Eboli. Thus, in the absence of Alexander, all was suspense and suspicion. It seemed possible that disaster instead of triumph was in store for them through the treachery of the commander-in-chief. Four and twenty hours and more, they had been lying in that dangerous roadstead, and although the weather had been calm and the sea tranquil, there seemed something brooding in the atmosphere.

As the twilight deepened, the moon became totally obscured, dark cloud-masses spread over the heavens, the sea grew black, distant thunder rolled, and the sob of an approaching tempest became distinctly audible. Such indications of a westerly gale, were not encouraging to those cumbrous vessels, with the treacherous quicksands of Flanders under their lee.

At an hour past midnight, it was so dark that it was difficult for the most practiced eye to pierce far into the gloom. But a faint drip of oars now struck the ears of the Spaniards as they watched from the decks. A few moments afterwards the sea became, suddenly luminous, and six flaming vessels appeared at a slight distance, bearing steadily down upon them before the wind and tide.

There were men in the Armada who had been at the siege of Antwerp only three years before. They remembered with horror the devil-ships of Gianibelli, those floating volcanoes, which had seemed to rend earth and ocean, whose explosion had laid so many thousands of soldiers dead at a blow, and which had shattered the bridge and floating forts of Farnese, as though they had been toys of glass. They knew, too, that the famous engineer was at that moment in England.

Page 1778

In a moment one of those horrible panics, which spread with such contagious rapidity among large bodies of men, seized upon the Spaniards. There was a yell throughout the fleet—“the fire-ships of Antwerp, the fire-ships of Antwerp!” and in an instant every cable was cut, and frantic attempts were made by each galleon and galeasse to escape what seemed imminent destruction. The confusion was beyond description. Four or five of the largest ships became entangled with each other. Two others were set on fire by the flaming—vessels, and were consumed. Medina Sidonia, who had been warned, even, before his departure from Spain, that some such artifice would probably be attempted, and who had even, early that morning, sent out a party of sailors in a pinnace to search for indications of the scheme, was not surprised or dismayed. He gave orders—as well as might be that every ship, after the danger should be passed, was to return to its post, and, await his further orders. But it was useless, in that moment of unreasonable panic to issue commands. The despised Mantuan, who had met with so many rebuffs at Philip’s court, and who—owing to official incredulity had been but partially successful in his magnificent enterprise at Antwerp, had now; by the mere terror of his name, inflicted more damage on Philip’s Armada than had hitherto been accomplished by Howard and Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher, combined.

So long as night and darkness lasted, the confusion and uproar continued. When the Monday morning dawned, several of the Spanish vessels lay disabled, while the rest of the fleet was seen at a distance of two leagues from Calais, driving towards the Flemish coast. The threatened gale had not yet begun to blow, but there were fresh squalls from the W.S.W., which, to such awkward sailers as the Spanish vessels; were difficult to contend with. On the other hand, the English fleet were all astir; and ready to pursue the Spaniards, now rapidly drifting into the North Sea. In the immediate neighbourhood of Calais, the flagship of the squadron of galeasses, commanded by Don Hugo de Moncada, was discovered using her foresail and oars, and endeavouring to enter the harbour. She had been damaged by collision with the St. John of Sicily and other ships, during the night’s panic, and had her rudder quite torn away. She was the largest and most splendid vessel in the Armada—the show-ship of the fleet,—“the very glory and stay of the Spanish navy,” and during the previous two days she had been visited and admired by great numbers of Frenchmen from the shore.

Lord Admiral Howard bore dawn upon her at once, but as she was already in shallow water, and was rowing steadily towards the town, he saw that the Ark could not follow with safety. So he sent his long-boat to cut her out, manned with fifty or sixty volunteers, most of them “as valiant in courage as gentle in birth”—as a partaker in the adventure declared. The Margaret and Joan of London, also following in pursuit, ran herself aground, but the master despatched his pinnace with a body of musketeers, to aid in the capture of the galeasse.

Page 1779

That huge vessel failed to enter the harbour, and stuck fast upon the bar. There was much dismay on board, but Don Hugo prepared resolutely to defend himself. The quays of Calais and the line of the French shore were lined with thousands of eager spectators, as the two boats-rowing steadily toward a galeasse, which carried forty brass pieces of artillery, and was manned with three hundred soldiers and four hundred and fifty slaves—seemed rushing upon their own destruction. Of these daring Englishmen, patricians and plebeians together, in two open pinnaces, there were not more than one hundred in number, all told. They soon laid themselves close to the Capitana, far below her lofty sides, and called on Don Hugo to surrender. The answer was, a smile of derision from the haughty Spaniard, as he looked down upon them from what seemed an inaccessible height. Then one Wilton, coxswain of the Delight; of Winter's squadron, clambered up to the enemy's deck and fell dead the same instant. Then the English volunteers opened a volley upon the Spaniards; "They seemed safely ensconced in their ships," said bold Dick Tomson, of the Margaret and Joan, "while we in our open pinnaces, and far under them, had nothing to shroud and cover us." Moreover the numbers were, seven hundred and fifty to one hundred. But, the Spaniards, still quite disconcerted by the events of the preceding night, seemed under a spell. Otherwise it would have been an easy matter for the great galeasse to annihilate such puny antagonists in a very short space of time.

The English pelted the Spaniards quite cheerfully, however, with arquebus shot, whenever they showed themselves above the bulwarks, picked off a considerable number, and sustained a rather severe loss themselves, Lieutenant Preston of the Ark-Royal, among others, being dangerously wounded. "We had a pretty skirmish for half-an-hour," said Tomson. At last Don Hugo de Moncada, furious at the inefficiency of his men, and leading them forward in person, fell back on his deck with a bullet through both eyes. The panic was instantaneous, for, meantime, several other English boats—-some with eight, ten; or twelve men on board—were seen pulling—towards the galeasse; while the dismayed soldiers at once leaped overboard on the land side, and attempted to escape by swimming and wading to the shore. Some of them succeeded, but the greater number were drowned. The few who remained—not more, than twenty in all—hoisted two handkerchiefs upon two rapiers as a signal of truce. The English, accepting it as a signal of defeat; scrambled with great difficulty up the lofty sides of the Capitana, and, for an hour and a half, occupied themselves most agreeably in plundering the ship and in liberating the slaves.

It was their intention, with the flood-tide, to get the vessel off, as she was but slightly damaged, and of very great value. But a serious obstacle arose to this arrangement. For presently a boat came along-side, with young M. de Gourdon and another French captain, and hailed the galeasse. There was nobody on board who could speak French but Richard Tomson. So Richard returned the hail, and asked their business. They said they came from the governor.

Page 1780

“And what is the—governor’s pleasure?” asked Tomson, when they had come up the side.

“The governor has stood and beheld your fight, and rejoiced in your victory,” was the reply; “and he says that for your prowess and manhood you well deserve the pillage of the galeasse. He requires and commands you, however, not to attempt carrying off either the ship or its ordnance; for she lies a-ground under the battery of his castle, and within his jurisdiction, and does of right appertain to him.”

This seemed hard upon the hundred volunteers, who, in their two open boats, had so manfully carried a ship of 1200 tons, 40 guns, and 750 men; but Richard answered diplomatically.

“We thank M. de Gourdon,” said he, “for granting the pillage to mariners and soldiers who had fought for it, and we acknowledge that without his good-will we cannot carry away anything we have got, for the ship lies on ground directly under his batteries and bulwarks. Concerning the ship and ordnance, we pray that he would send a pinnace to my Lord Admiral Howard, who is here in person hard by, from whom he will have an honourable and friendly answer, which we shall all-obey.”

With this—the French officers, being apparently content, were about to depart, and it is not impossible that the soft answer might have obtained the galeasse and the ordnance, notwithstanding the arrangement which Philip *ii*. had made with his excellent friend Henry *iii*. for aid and comfort to Spanish vessels in French ports. Unluckily, however, the inclination for plunder being rife that morning, some of the Englishmen hustled their French visitors, plundered them of their rings and jewels, as if they had been enemies, and then permitted them to depart. They rowed off to the shore, vowing vengeance, and within a few minutes after their return the battery of the fort was opened upon the English, and they were compelled to make their escape as they could with the plunder already secured, leaving the galeasse in the possession of M. de Gourdon.

This adventure being terminated, and the pinnaces having returned to the fleet, the Lord-Admiral, who had been lying off and on, now bore away with all his force in pursuit of the Spaniards. The Invincible Armada, already sorely crippled, was standing N.N.E. directly before a fresh topsail-breeze from the S.S.W. The English came up with them soon after nine o’clock A.M. off Gravelines, and found them sailing in a half-moon, the admiral and vice-admiral in the centre, and the flanks protected by the three remaining galeasses and by the great galleons of Portugal.

Seeing the enemy approaching, Medina Sidonia ordered his whole fleet to luff to the wind, and prepare for action. The wind shifting a few points, was now at W.N.W., so that the English had both the weather-gage and the tide in their favour. A general combat began at about ten, and it was soon obvious to the Spaniards that their adversaries were intending warm work. Sir Francis Drake in the Revenge, followed by,

Frobisher in the Triumph, Hawkins in the Victory, and some smaller vessels, made the first attack upon the Spanish flagships. Lord Henry in the Rainbow, Sir Henry Palmer in the Antelope, and others, engaged with three of the largest galleons of the Armada, while Sir William Winter in the Vanguard, supported by most of his squadron, charged the starboard wing.

Page 1781

The portion of the fleet thus assaulted fell back into the main body. Four of the ships ran foul of each other, and Winter, driving into their centre, found himself within musket-shot of many of their most formidable' ships.

"I tell you, on the credit of a poor gentleman," he said, "that there were five hundred discharges of demi-cannon, culverin, and demi-culverin, from the Vanguard; and when I was farthest off in firing my pieces, I was not out of shot of their harquebus, and most time within speech, one of another."

The battle lasted six hours long, hot and furious; for now there was no excuse for retreat on the part of the Spaniards, but, on the contrary, it was the intention of the Captain-General to return to his station off Calais, if it were within his power. Nevertheless the English still partially maintained the tactics which had proved so successful, and resolutely refused the fierce attempts of the Spaniards to lay themselves along-side. Keeping within musket-range, the well-disciplined English mariners poured broadside after broadside against the towering ships of the Armada, which afforded so easy a mark; while the Spaniards, on their part, found it impossible, while wasting incredible quantities of powder and shot, to inflict any severe damage on their enemies. Throughout the action, not an English ship was destroyed, and not a hundred men were killed. On the other hand, all the best ships of the Spaniards were riddled through and through, and with masts and yards shattered, sails and rigging torn to shreds, and a north-went wind still drifting them towards the fatal sand-batiks of Holland, they, laboured heavily in a chopping sea, firing wildly, and receiving tremendous punishment at the hands of Howard Drake, Seymour, Winter, and their followers. Not even master-gunner Thomas could complain that day of "blind exercise" on the part of the English, with "little harm done" to the enemy. There was scarcely a ship in the Armada that did not suffer severely; for nearly all were engaged in that memorable action off the sands of Gravelines. The Captain-General himself, Admiral Recalde, Alonzo de Leyva, Oquendo, Diego Flores de Valdez, Bertendona, Don Francisco de Toledo, Don Diego de Pimentel, Telles Enriquez, Alonzo de Luzon, Garibay, with most of the great galleons and galeasses, were in the thickest of the fight, and one after the other each of those huge ships was disabled. Three sank before the fight was over, many others were soon drifting helpless wrecks towards a hostile shore, and, before five o'clock, in the afternoon, at least sixteen of their best ships had been sacrificed, and from four to five thousand soldiers killed.

Page 1782

["God hath mightily preserved her Majesty's forces with the least losses that ever hath been heard of, being within the compass of so great volleys of shot, both small and great. I verily believe there is not threescore men lost of her Majesty's forces." Captain J. Fenner to Walsingham, 4/14 Aug. 1588. (S. P. Office *Ms*.)]

Nearly all the largest vessels of the Armada, therefore, having, been disabled or damaged—according to a Spanish eye-witness—and all their small shot exhausted, Medina Sidonia reluctantly gave orders to retreat. The Captain-General was a bad sailor; but he was, a chivalrous Spaniard of ancient Gothic blood, and he felt deep mortification at the plight of his invincible fleet, together with undisguised: resentment against Alexander Farnese, through whose treachery and incapacity, he considered. the great Catholic cause to have been, so foully sacrificed. Crippled, maltreated, and diminished in number, as were his ships; he would have still faced, the enemy, but the winds and currents were fast driving him on, a lee-shore, and the pilots, one and all, assured him that it would be inevitable destruction to remain. After a slight and very ineffectual attempt to rescue Don Diego de Pimentel in the St. Matthew—who refused to leave his disabled ship—and Don Francisco de Toledo; whose great galleon, the St. Philip, was fast driving, a helpless wreck, towards Zeeland, the Armada bore away N.N.E. into the open sea, leaving those, who could not follow, to their fate.

The St. Matthew, in a sinking condition, hailed a Dutch fisherman, who was offered a gold chain to pilot her into Newport. But the fisherman, being a patriot; steered her close to the Holland fleet, where she was immediately assaulted by Admiral Van der Does, to whom, after a two hours' bloody fight, she struck her flag. Don Diego, marshal of the camp to the famous legion of Sicily, brother, of the Marquis of Tavera, nephew of the Viceroy of Sicily, uncle to the Viceroy of Naples, and numbering as many titles, dignities; and high affinities as could be expected of a grandee of the first class, was taken, with his officers, to the Hague. "I was the means," said Captain Borlase, "that the best sort were saved, and the rest were cast overboard and slain at our entry. He, fought with us two hours; and hurt divers of our men, but at, last yielded."

John Van der Does, his captor; presented the banner; of the Saint Matthew to the great church of Leyden, where—such was its prodigious length—it hung; from floor to ceiling without being entirely unrolled; and there hung, from generation to generation; a worthy companion to the Spanish flags which had been left behind when Valdez abandoned the siege of that heroic city fifteen years before.

Page 1783

The galleon St. Philip, one of the four largest ships in the Armada, dismasted and foundering; drifted towards Newport, where camp-marshal Don Francisco de Toledo hoped in, vain for succour. La Motte made a feeble attempt at rescue, but some vessels from the Holland fleet, being much more active, seized the unfortunate galleon, and carried her into Flushing. The captors found forty-eight brass cannon and other things of value on board, but there were some casks of Ribadavia wine which was more fatal to her enemies than those pieces of artillery had proved. For while the rebels were refreshing themselves, after the fatigues of the capture, with large draughts of that famous vintage, the St. Philip, which had been bored through and through with English shot, and had been rapidly filling with water, gave a sudden lurch, and went down in a moment, carrying with her to the bottom three hundred of those convivial Hollanders.

A large Biscay galleon, too, of Recalde's squadron, much disabled in action, and now, like many others, unable to follow the Armada, was summoned by Captain Cross of the Hope, 48 guns, to surrender. Although foundering, she resisted, and refused to strike her flag. One of her officers attempted to haul down her colours, and was run through the body by the captain, who, in his turn, was struck dead by a brother of the officer thus slain. In the midst of this quarrel the ship went down with all her crew.

Six hours and more, from ten till nearly five, the fight had lasted—a most cruel battle, as the Spaniard declared. There were men in the Armada who had served in the action of Lepanto, and who declared that famous encounter to have been far surpassed in severity and spirit by this fight off Gravelines. "Surely every man in our fleet did well," said Winter, "and the slaughter the enemy received was great." Nor would the Spaniards have escaped even worse punishment, had not, most unfortunately, the penurious policy of the Queen's government rendered her ships useless at last, even in this supreme moment. They never ceased cannonading the discomfited enemy until the ammunition was exhausted. "When the cartridges were all spent," said Winter, "and the munitions in some vessels gone altogether, we ceased fighting, but followed the enemy, who still kept away." And the enemy—although still numerous, and seeming strong enough, if properly handled, to destroy the whole English fleet—fled before them. There remained more than fifty Spanish vessels, above six hundred tons in size, besides sixty hulks and other vessels of less account; while in the whole English navy were but thirteen ships of or above that burthen. "Their force is wonderful great and strong," said Howard, "but we pluck their feathers by little and little."

For Medina Sidonia had now satisfied himself that he should never succeed in boarding those hard-fighting and swift-sailing craft, while, meantime, the horrible panic of Sunday night and the succession of fights throughout the following day, had completely disorganized his followers. Crippled, riddled, shorn, but still numerous, and by no means entirely vanquished, the Armada was flying with a gentle breeze before an enemy who, to save his existence; could not have fired a broadside.

Page 1784

“Though our powder and shot was well nigh spent,” said the Lord-Admiral, “we put on a brag countenance and gave them chase, as though we had wanted nothing.” And the brag countenance was successful, for that “one day’s service had much appalled the enemy” as Drake observed; and still the Spaniards fled with a freshening gale all through the Monday night. “A thing greatly to be regarded,” said Fenner, of the Nonpariel, “is that that the Almighty had stricken them with a wonderful fear. I have hardly, seen any of their companies succoured of the extremities which befell them after their fights, but they have been left, at utter ruin, while they bear as much sail as ever they possibly can.”

On Tuesday morning, 9th August, the English ships were off the isle of Walcheren, at a safe distance from the shore. “The wind is hanging westerly,” said Richard Tomson, of the Margaret and Joan, “and we drive our enemies apace, much marvelling in what port they will direct themselves. Those that are left alive are so weak and heartless that they could be well content to lose all charges and to be at home, both rich and poor.”

“In my, conscience,” said Sir William Winter, “I think the Duke would give his dukedom to be in Spain again.”

The English ships, one-hundred and four in number, being that morning half-a-league to windward, the Duke gave orders for the whole Armada to lay to and, await their approach. But the English had no disposition to engage, for at, that moment the instantaneous destruction of their enemies seemed inevitable. Ill-managed, panic-struck, staggering before their foes, the Spanish fleet was now close upon the fatal sands of Zeeland. Already there were but six and a-half fathoms of water, rapidly shoaling under their keels, and the pilots told Medina that all were irretrievably lost, for the freshening north-welter was driving them steadily upon the banks. The English, easily escaping the danger, hauled their wind, and paused to see the ruin of the proud Armada accomplished before their eyes. Nothing but a change of wind at the instant could save them from perdition. There was a breathless shudder of suspense, and then there came the change. Just as the foremost ships were about to ground on the Ooster Zand, the wind suddenly veered to the south-west, and the Spanish ships quickly squaring their sails to the new impulse, stood out once more into the open sea.

All that day the galleons and galeasses, under all the canvas which they dared to spread, continued their flight before the south-westerly breeze, and still the Lord-Admiral, maintaining the brag countenance, followed, at an easy distance, the retreating foe. At 4 p. m., Howard fired a signal gun, and ran up a flag of council. Winter could not go, for he had been wounded in action, but Seymour and Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, and the rest were present, and it was decided that Lord Henry should return, accompanied by Winter and the rest of the inner, squadron, to guard the Thames mouth against any attempt of the Duke of Parma, while the Lord Admiral and the rest of the navy should continue the pursuit of the Armada.

Page 1785

Very wroth was Lord Henry at being deprived of his share in the chase. "The Lord-Admiral was altogether desirous to have me strengthen him," said he, "and having done so to the utmost of my good-will and the venture of my life, and to the distressing of the Spaniards, which was thoroughly done on the Monday last, I now find his Lordship jealous and loath to take part of the honour which is to come. So he has used his authority to command me to look to our English coast, threatened by the Duke of Parma. I pray God my Lord Admiral do not find the lack of the Rainbow and her companions, for I protest before God I vowed I would be as near or nearer with my little ship to encounter our enemies as any of the greatest ships in both armies."

There was no insubordination, however, and Seymour's squadron; at twilight of Tuesday evening, August 9th—according to orders, so that the enemy might not see their departure—bore away for Margate. But although Winter and Seymour were much disappointed at their enforced return, there was less enthusiasm among the sailors of the fleet. Pursuing the Spaniards without powder or fire, and without beef and bread to eat, was not thought amusing by the English crews. Howard had not three days' supply of food in his lockers, and Seymour and his squadron had not food for one day. Accordingly, when Seymour and Winter took their departure, "they had much ado," so Winter said; "with the staying of many ships that would have returned with them, besides their own company." Had the Spaniards; instead of being panic-struck, but turned on their pursuers, what might have been the result of a conflict with starving and unarmed men?

Howard, Drake, and Frobisher, with the rest of the fleet, followed the Armada through the North Sea from Tuesday night (9th August) till Friday (the 12th), and still, the strong southwester swept the Spaniards before them, uncertain whether to seek refuge, food, water, and room to repair damages, in the realms of the treacherous King of Scots, or on the iron-bound coasts of Norway. Medina Sidonia had however quite abandoned his intention of returning to England, and was only anxious for a safe return: to Spain. So much did he dread that northern passage; unpiloted, around the grim Hebrides, that he would probably have surrendered, had the English overtaken him and once more offered battle. He was on the point of hanging out a white flag as they approached him for the last time—but yielded to the expostulations of the ecclesiastics on board the Saint Martin, who thought, no doubt, that they had more to fear from England than from the sea, should they be carried captive to that country, and who persuaded him that it would be a sin and a disgrace to surrender before they had been once more attacked.

On the other hand, the Devonshire skipper, Vice-Admiral Drake, now thoroughly in his element, could not restrain his hilarity, as he saw the Invincible Armada of the man whose beard he had so often singed, rolling through the German Ocean, in full flight from the country which was to have been made, that week, a Spanish province. Unprovided as were his ships, he was for risking another battle, and it is quite possible that the brag countenance might have proved even more successful than Howard thought.

Page 1786

“We have the army of Spain before us,” wrote Drake, from the Revenge, “and hope with the grace of God to wrestle a pull with him. There never was any thing pleased me better than seeing the enemy flying with a southerly wind to the northward. God grant you have a good eye to the Duke of Parma, for with the grace of God, if we live, I doubt not so to handle the matter with the Duke of Sidonia as he shall wish himself at St. Mary’s Port among his orange trees.”

But Howard decided to wrestle no further pull. Having followed the Spaniards till Friday, 12th of August, as far as the latitude of 56d. 17’ the Lord Admiral called a council. It was then decided, in order to save English lives and ships, to put into the Firth of Forth for water and provisions, leaving two “pinnaces to dog, the fleet until it should be past the Isles of Scotland.” But the next day, as the wind shifted to the north-west, another council decided to take advantage of the change, and bear away for the North Foreland, in order to obtain a supply of powder, shot, and provisions.

Up to this period, the weather, though occasionally threatening, had been moderate. During the week which succeeded the eventful night off. Calais, neither the ’Armada nor the English ships had been much impeded in their manoeuvres by storms of heavy seas. But on the following Sunday, 14th of August, there was a change. The wind shifted again to the south-west, and, during the whole of that day and the Monday, blew a tremendous gale. “’Twas a more violent storm,” said Howard, “than was ever seen before at this time of the year.” The retreating English fleet was, scattered, many ships were in peril, “among the ill-favoured sands off Norfolk,” but within four or five days all arrived safely in Margate roads.

Far different was the fate of the Spaniards. Over their Invincible Armada, last seen by the departing English midway between the coasts of Scotland and Denmark, the blackness of night seemed suddenly to descend. A mystery hung for a long time over their fate. Damaged, leaking, without pilots, without a competent commander, the great fleet entered that furious storm, and was whirled along the iron crags of Norway and between the savage rocks of Faroe and the Hebrides. In those regions of tempest the insulted North wreaked its full vengeance on the insolent Spaniards. Disaster after disaster marked their perilous track; gale after gale swept them hither and thither, tossing them on sandbanks or shattering them against granite cliffs. The coasts of Norway, Scotland, Ireland, were strewn with the wrecks of that pompous fleet, which claimed the dominion of the seas with the bones of those invincible legions which were to have sacked London and made England a Spanish vice-royalty.

Page 1787

Through the remainder of the month of August there, was a succession of storms. On the 2nd September a fierce southwester drove Admiral Oquendo in his galleon, together with one of the great galeasses, two large Venetian ships, the Ratty and the Balauzara, and thirty-six other vessels, upon the Irish coast, where nearly every soul on board perished, while the few who escaped to the shore—notwithstanding their religious affinity with the inhabitants—were either butchered in cold blood, or sent coupled in halters from village to village, in order to be shipped to England. A few ships were driven on the English coast; others went ashore near Rochelle.

Of the four galeasses and four galleys, one of each returned to Spain. Of the ninety-one great galleons and hulks, fifty-eight were lost and thirty-three returned. Of the tenders and zabras, seventeen were lost. and eighteen returned. Of one hundred and, thirty-four vessels, which sailed from Corona in July, but fifty-three, great and small, made their escape to Spain, and these were so damaged as to be, utterly worthless. The invincible Armada had not only been vanquished but annihilated.

Of the 30,000 men who sailed in the fleet; it is probable that not more than 10,000 ever saw their native land again. Most of the leaders of the expedition lost their lives. Medina Sidonia reached Santander in October, and, as Philip for a moment believed, “with the greater part of the Armada,” although the King soon discovered his mistake. Recalde, Diego Flores de Valdez, Oquendo, Maldonado, Bobadilla, Manriquez, either perished at sea, or died of exhaustion immediately after their return. Pedro de Valdez, Vasco de Silva, Alonzo de Sayas, Piemontel, Toledo, with many other nobles, were prisoners in England and Holland. There was hardly a distinguished family in Spain not placed in mourning, so that, to relieve the universal gloom, an edict was published, forbidding the wearing of mourning at all. On the other hand, a merchant of Lisbon, not yet reconciled to the Spanish conquest of his country, permitted himself some tokens of hilarity at the defeat of the Armada, and was immediately hanged by express command of Philip. Thus—as men said—one could neither cry nor laugh within the Spanish dominions.

This was the result of the invasion, so many years preparing, and at an expense almost incalculable. In the year 1588 alone, the cost of Philip’s armaments for the subjugation of England could not have been less than six millions of ducats, and there was at least as large a sum on board the Armada itself, although the Pope refused to pay his promised million. And with all this outlay, and with the sacrifice of so many thousand lives, nothing had been accomplished, and Spain, in a moment, instead of seeming terrible to all the world, had become ridiculous.

“Beaten and shuffled together from the Lizard to Calais, from Calais driven with squibs from their anchors, and chased out of sight of England about Scotland and Ireland,” as the Devonshire skipper expressed himself, it must be confessed that the Spaniards presented a sorry sight. “Their invincible and dreadful navy,” said Drake, “with all its great and terrible ostentation, did not in all their sailing about England so much as sink

or take one ship, bark, pinnace, or cock-boat of ours, or even burn so much as one sheep-tote on this land."

Page 1788

Meanwhile Farnese sat chafing under the unjust reproaches heaped upon him, as if he, and not his master, had been responsible for the gigantic blunders of the invasion.

“As for the Prince of Parma,” said Drake, “I take him to be as a bear robbed of her whelps.” The Admiral was quite right. Alexander was beside himself with rage. Day after day, he had been repeating to Medina Sidonia and to Philip that his flotilla and transports could scarcely live in any but the smoothest sea, while the supposition that they could serve a warlike purpose he pronounced absolutely ludicrous. He had always counselled the seizing of a place like Flushing, as a basis of operations against England, but had been overruled; and he had at least reckoned upon the Invincible Armada to clear the way for him, before he should be expected to take the sea.

With prodigious energy and at great expense he had constructed or improved internal water-communications from Ghent to Sluy’s, Newport, and Dunkerk. He had, thus transported all his hoys, barges, and munitions for the invasion, from all points of the obedient Netherlands to the sea-coast, without coming within reach of the Hollanders and Zeelanders, who were keeping close watch on the outside. But those Hollanders and Zeelanders, guarding every outlet to the ocean, occupying every hole and cranny of the coast, laughed the invaders of England to scorn, braving them, jeering them, daring them to come forth, while the Walloons and Spaniards shrank before such amphibious assailants, to whom a combat on the water was as natural as upon dry land. Alexander, upon one occasion, transported with rage, selected a band of one thousand musketeers, partly Spanish, partly Irish, and ordered an assault upon those insolent boatmen. With his own hand—so it was related—he struck dead more than one of his own officers who remonstrated against these commands; and then the attack was made by his thousand musketeers upon the Hollanders, and every man of the thousand was slain.

He had been reproached for not being ready, for not having embarked his men; but he had been ready for a month, and his men could be embarked in a single day. “But it was impossible,” he said, “to keep them long packed up on board vessels, so small that there was no room to turn about in the people would sicken, would rot, would die.” So soon as he had received information of the arrival of the fleet before Calais—which was on the 8th August—he had proceeded the same night to Newport and embarked 16,000 men, and before dawn he was at Dunkerk, where the troops stationed in that port were as rapidly placed on board the transports. Sir William Stanley, with his 700 Irish kernes, were among the first shipped for the enterprise. Two-days long these regiments lay heaped together, like sacks of corn, in the boats—as one of their officers described it—-and they lay cheerfully hoping that the Dutch fleet would be swept out of the sea by the Invincible Armada, and patiently expecting the signal for setting sail to England. Then came the Prince of Ascoli, who had gone ashore from the Spanish fleet at Calais, accompanied by serjeant-major Gallinato and other messengers from Medina Sidonia, bringing the news of the fire-ships and the dispersion and flight of the Armada.

Page 1789

“God knows,” said Alexander, “the distress in which this event has plunged me, at the very moment when I expected to be sending your Majesty my congratulations on the success of the great undertaking. But these are the works of the Lord, who can recompense your Majesty by giving you many victories, and the fulfilment of your Majesty’s desires, when He thinks the proper time arrived. Meantime let Him be praised for all, and let your Majesty take great care of your health, which is the most important thing of all.”

Evidently the Lord did not think the proper time yet arrived for fulfilling his Majesty’s desires for the subjugation of England, and meanwhile the King might find what comfort he could in pious commonplaces and in attention to his health.

But it is very certain that, of all the high parties concerned, Alexander Farnese was the least reprehensible for the over-throw of Philips hopes. No man could have been more judicious—as it has been sufficiently made evident in the course of this narrative—in arranging all the details of the great enterprise, in pointing out all the obstacles, in providing for all emergencies. No man could have been more minutely faithful to his master, more treacherous to all the world beside. Energetic, inventive, patient, courageous; and stupendously false, he had covered Flanders with canals and bridges, had constructed flotillas, and equipped a splendid army, as thoroughly as he had puzzled Comptroller Croft. And not only had that diplomatist and his wiser colleagues been hoodwinked, but Elizabeth and Burghley, and, for a moment, even Walsingham, were in the, dark, while Henry *iii*. had been his passive victim, and the magnificent Balafre a blind instrument in his hands. Nothing could equal Alexander’s fidelity, but his perfidy. Nothing could surpass his ability to command but his obedience. And it is very possible that had Philip followed his nephew’s large designs, instead of imposing upon him his own most puerile schemes; the result far England, Holland, and, all Christendom might have been very different from the actual one. The blunder against which Farnese had in vain warned his master, was the stolid ignorance in which the King and all his counsellors chose to remain of the Holland and Zeeland fleet. For them Warmond and Nassau, and Van der Does and Joost de Moor; did not exist, and it was precisely these gallant sailors, with their intrepid crews, who held the key to the whole situation.

To the Queen’s glorious naval-commanders, to the dauntless mariners of England, with their well-handled vessels; their admirable seamanship, their tact and their courage, belonged the joys of the contest, the triumph, and the glorious pursuit; but to the patient Hollanders and Zeelanders, who, with their hundred vessels held Farneae, the chief of the great enterprise, at bay, a close prisoner with his whole army in his own ports, daring him to the issue, and ready—to the last plank of their fleet and to the last drop of their blood—to confront both him and the Duke of Medina Sidona, an equal share of honour is due. The safety of the two free commonwealths of the world in that terrible contest was achieved by the people and the mariners of the two states combined.

Page 1790

Great was the enthusiasm certainly of the English people as the volunteers marched through London to the place of rendezvous, and tremendous were the cheers when the brave Queen rode on horseback along the lines of Tilbury. Glowing pictures are revealed to us of merry little England, arising in its strength, and dancing forth to encounter the Spaniards, as if to a great holiday. "It was a pleasant sight," says that enthusiastic merchant-tailor John Stowe, "to behold the cheerful countenances, courageous words, and gestures, of the soldiers, as they marched to Tilbury, dancing, leaping wherever they came, as joyful at the news of the foe's approach as if lusty giants were to run a race. And Bellona-like did the Queen infuse a second spirit of loyalty, love, and resolution, into every soldier of her army, who, ravished with their sovereign's sight, prayed heartily that the Spaniards might land quickly, and when they heard they were fled, began to lament."

But if the Spaniards had not fled, if there had been no English navy in the Channel, no squibs at Calais, no Dutchmen off Dunkerk, there might have been a different picture to paint. No man who has, studied the history of those times, can doubt the universal and enthusiastic determination of the English nation to repel the invaders. Catholics and Protestants felt alike on the great subject. Philip did not flatter, himself with assistance from any English Papists, save exiles and renegades like Westmoreland, Paget, Throgmorton, Morgan, Stanley, and the rest. The bulk of the Catholics, who may have constituted half the population of England, although malcontent, were not rebellious; and notwithstanding the precautionary measures taken by government against them, Elizabeth proudly acknowledged their loyalty.

But loyalty, courage, and enthusiasm, might not have sufficed to supply the want of numbers and discipline. According to the generally accepted statement of contemporary chroniclers, there were some 75,000 men under arms: 20,000 along the southern coast, 23,000 under Leicester, and 33,000 under Lord Chamberlain Hunsdon, for the special defence of the Queen's person.

But it would have been very difficult, in the moment of danger, to bring anything like these numbers into the field. A drilled and disciplined army—whether of regulars or of militia-men—had no existence whatever. If the merchant vessels, which had been joined to the royal fleet, were thought by old naval commanders to be only good to make a show, the volunteers on land were likely to be even less effective than the marine militia, so much more accustomed than they to hard work. Magnificent was the spirit of the great feudal lords as they rallied round their Queen. The Earl of Pembroke offered to serve at the head of three hundred horse and five hundred footmen, armed at his own cost, and all ready to "hazard the blood of their hearts" in defence of her person. "Accept hereof most excellent sovereign," said the Earl, "from a person desirous to live no longer than he may see your Highness enjoy your blessed estate, maugre the beards of all confederated leaguers."

Page 1791

The Earl of Shrewsbury, too, was ready to serve at the head of his retainers, to the last drop of his blood. “Though I be old,” he said, “yet shall your quarrel make me young again. Though lame in body, yet lusty in heart to lend your greatest enemy one blow, and to stand near your defence, every way wherein your Highness shall employ me.”

But there was perhaps too much of this feudal spirit. The lieutenant-general complained bitterly that there was a most mischievous tendency among all the militia-men to escape from the Queen’s colours, in order to enrol themselves as retainers to the great lords. This spirit was not favourable to efficient organization of a national army. Even, had the commander-in-chief been a man, of genius and experience it would have been difficult for him, under such circumstances, to resist a splendid army, once landed, and led by Alexander Farnese, but even Leicester’s most determined flatterers hardly ventured to compare him in-military ability with that first general of his age. The best soldier in England was un-questionably Sir John Norris, and Sir John was now marshal of the camp to Leicester. The ancient quarrel between the two had been smoothed over, and —as might be expected—the Earl hated Norris more bitterly than before, and was perpetually vituperating him, as he had often done in the Netherlands. Roger William, too, was entrusted with the important duties of master of the horse, under the lieutenant-general, and Leicester continued to bear the grudge towards that honest Welshman, which had begun in Holland. These were not promising conditions in a camp, when an invading army was every day expected; nor was the completeness or readiness of the forces sufficient to render harmless the quarrels of the commanders.

The Armada had arrived in Calais roads on Saturday afternoon; the 6th August. If it had been joined on that day, or the next—as Philip and Medina Sidonia fully expected—by the Duke of Parma’s flotilla, the invasion would have been made at once. If a Spanish army had ever landed in England at all, that event would have occurred on the 7th August. The weather was not unfavourable; the sea was smooth, and the circumstances under which the catastrophe of the great drama was that night accomplished, were a profound mystery to every soul in England. For aught that Leicester, or Burghley, or Queen Elizabeth, knew at the time, the army of Farnese might, on Monday, have been marching upon London. Now, on that Monday morning, the army of Lord Hunsdon was not assembled at all, and Leicester with but four thousand men, under his command, was just commencing his camp at Tilbury. The. “Bellona-like” appearance of the Queen on her white palfrey,—with truncheon in hand, addressing her troops, in that magnificent burst of eloquence which has so often been repeated, was not till eleven days afterwards; not till the great Armada, shattered and tempest-tossed, had been, a week long, dashing itself against the cliffs of Norway and the Faroes, on, its forlorn retreat to Spain.

Page 1792

Leicester, courageous, self-confident, and sanguine as ever; could not restrain his indignation at the parsimony with which his own impatient spirit had to contend. “Be you assured,” said he, on the 3rd August, when the Armada was off the Isle of Wight, “if the Spanish fleet arrive safely in the narrow seas, the Duke of Parma will join presently with all his forces, and lose no time in invading this realm. Therefore I beseech you, my good Lords, let no man, by hope or other abuse; prevent your speedy providing defence against, this mighty enemy now knocking at our gate.”

For even at this supreme moment doubts were entertained at court as to the intentions of the Spaniards:

Next day he informed Walsingham that his four thousand men had arrived. “They be as forward men and willing to meet the enemy as I ever saw,” said he. He could not say as much in, praise of the commissariat: “Some want the captains showed,” he observed, “for these men arrived without one meal of victuals so that on their-arrival, they had not one barrel of beer nor loaf of bread—enough after twenty miles’ march to have discouraged them, and brought them to mutiny. I see many causes to increase my former opinion of the dilatory wants you shall find upon all sudden hurley burleys. In no former time was ever so great a cause, and albeit her Majesty hath appointed an army to resist her enemies if they land, yet how hard a matter it will be to gather men together, I find it now. If it will be five days to gather these countrymen, judge what it will be to look in short space for those that dwell forty, fifty, sixty miles off.”

He had immense difficulty in feeding even this slender force. “I made proclamation,” said he, “two days ago, in all market towns, that victuallers should come to the camp and receive money for their provisions, but there is not one victualler come in to this hour. I have sent to all the justices of peace about it from place to place. I speak it that timely consideration be had of these things, and that they be not deferred till the worst come. Let her Majesty not defer the time, upon any supposed hope, to assemble a convenient force of horse and foot about her. Her Majesty cannot be strong enough too soon, and if her navy had not been strong and abroad as it is, what care had herself and her whole realm been in by this time! And what care she will be in if her forces be not only assembled, but an army presently dressed to withstand the mighty enemy that is to approach her gates.”

“God doth know, I speak it not to bring her to charges. I would she had less cause to spend than ever she had, and her coffers fuller than ever they were; but I will prefer her life and safety, and the defence of the realm, before all sparing of charges in the present danger.”

Thus, on the 5th August, no army had been assembled—not even the body-guard of the Queen—and Leicester, with four thousand men, unprovided with a barrel of beer or a loaf of bread, was about commencing his entrenched camp at Tilbury. On the 6th

August the Armada was in Calais roads, expecting Alexander Farnese to lead his troops upon London!

Page 1793

Norris and Williams, on the news of Medina Sidonia's approach, had rushed to Dover, much to the indignation of Leicester, just as the Earl was beginning his entrenchments at Tilbury. "I assure you I am angry with Sir John Norris and Sir Roger Williams," he said. "I am here cook, caterer, and huntsman. I am left with no one to supply Sir John's place as marshal, but, for a day or two, am willing to work the harder myself. I ordered them both to return this day early, which they faithfully promised. Yet, on arriving this morning, I hear nothing of either, and have nobody to marshal the camp either for horse or foot. This manner of dealing doth much mislike me in them both. I am ill-used. 'Tis now four o'clock, but here's not one of them. If they come not this night, I assure you I will not receive them into office, nor bear such loose careless dealing at their hands. If you saw how weakly I am assisted you would be sorry to think that we here, should be the front against the enemy that is so mighty, if he should land here. And seeing her Majesty hath appointed me her lieutenant-general, I look that respect be used towards me, such as is due to my place."

Thus the ancient grudge—between Leicester and the Earl of Sussex's son was ever breaking forth, and was not likely to prove beneficial at this eventful season.

Next day the Welshman arrived, and Sir John promised to come back in the evening. Sir Roger brought word from the coast that Lord Henry Seymour's fleet was in want both of men and powder. "Good Lord!" exclaimed Leicester, "how is this come to pass, that both he and, my Lord-Admiral are so weakened of men. I hear they be running away. I beseech you, assemble your forces, and play not away this kingdom by delays. Hasten our horsemen hither and footmen: . . . . If the Spanish fleet come to the narrow seas the, Prince of Parma will play another part than is looked for."

As the Armada approached Calais, Leicester was informed that the soldiers at Dover began to leave the coast. It seemed that they were dissatisfied with the penuriousness of the government. "Our soldiers do break away at Dover, or are not pleased. I assure you, without wages, the people will not tarry, and contributions go hard with them. Surely I find that her Majesty must needs deal liberally, and be at charges to entertain her subjects that have chargeably, and liberally used, themselves to serve her." The lieutenant-general even thought it might be necessary for him to proceed to Dover in person, in order to remonstrate with these discontented troops; for it was possible that those ill-paid, undisciplined, and very meagre forces, would find much difficulty in opposing Alexander's march, to London, if he should once succeed in landing. Leicester had a very indifferent opinion too of the train-bands of the metropolis. "For your Londoners," he said, "I see their service will be little, except they have their own captains,

Page 1794

and having them, I look for none at all by them, when we shall meet the enemy." This was not complimentary, certainly, to the training of the famous Artillery Garden, and furnished a still stronger motive for defending the road over which the capital was to be approached. But there was much jealousy, both among citizens and nobles, of any authority entrusted to professional soldiers. "I know what burghers be, well enough," said the Earl, "as brave and well-entertained as ever the Londoners were. If they should go forth from the city they should have good leaders. You know the imperfections of the time, how few-leaders you have, and the gentlemen of the counties are very loth to have any captains placed with them. So that the beating out of our best captains is like to be cause of great danger."

Sir John Smith, a soldier of experience, employed to drill and organize some of the levies, expressed still more disparaging opinions than those of Leicester concerning the probable efficiency in the field of these English armies. The Earl was very angry with the knight, however, and considered, him incompetent, insolent, and ridiculous. Sir John seemed, indeed, more disposed to keep himself out of harm's way, than to render service to the Queen by leading awkward recruits against Alexander Farnese. He thought it better to nurse himself.

"You would laugh to see how Sir John Smith has dealt since my coming," said Leicester. "He came to me, and told me that his disease so grew upon him as he must needs go to the baths. I told him I would not be against his health, but he saw what the time was, and what pains he had taken with his countrymen, and that I had provided a good place for him. Next day he came again, saying little to my offer then, and seemed desirous, for his health, to be gone. I told him what place I did appoint, which was a regiment of a great part of his countrymen. He said his health was dear to him, and he desired to take leave of me, which I yielded unto. Yesterday, being our muster-day, he came again to me to dinner; but such foolish and vain-glorious paradoxes he burst withal, without any cause offered, as made all that knew anything smile and answer little, but in sort rather to satisfy men present than to argue with him."

And the knight went that day to review Leicester's choice troops—the four thousand men of Essex—but was not much more deeply impressed with their proficiency than he had been with that of his own regiment. He became very censorious.

"After the muster," said the lieutenant-general, "he entered again into such strange cries for ordering of men, and for the fight with the weapon, as made me think he was not well. God forbid he should have charge of men that knoweth so little, as I dare pronounce that he doth."

Yet the critical knight was a professional—campaigner, whose opinions were entitled to respect; and the more so, it would seem, because they did not materially vary from

those which Leicester himself was in the habit of expressing. And these interior scenes of discord, tumult, parsimony, want of organization, and unsatisfactory mustering of troops, were occurring on the very Saturday and Sunday when the Armada lay in sight of Dover cliffs, and when the approach of the Spaniards on the Dover road might at any moment be expected.

Page 1795

Leicester's jealous and overbearing temper itself was also proving a formidable obstacle to a wholesome system of defence. He was already displeased with the amount of authority entrusted to Lord Hunsdon, disposed to think his own rights invaded; and desirous that the Lord Chamberlain should accept office under himself. He wished saving clauses as to his own authority inserted in Hunsdon's patent. "Either it must be so, or I shall have wrong," said he, "if he absolutely command where my patent doth give me power. You may easily conceive what absurd dealings are likely to fall out, if you allow two absolute commanders."

Looking at these pictures of commander-in-chief, officers, and rank and file—as painted by themselves—we feel an inexpressible satisfaction that in this great crisis of England's destiny, there were such men as Howard, Drake, Frobisher, Hawkins, Seymour, Winter, Fenner, and their gallant brethren, cruising that week in the Channel, and that Nassau and Warmond; De Moor and Van der Does, were blockading the Flemish coast.

There was but little preparation to resist the enemy once landed. There were no fortresses, no regular army, no population trained to any weapon. There were patriotism, loyalty, courage, and enthusiasm, in abundance; but the commander-in-chief was a queen's favourite, odious to the people, with very moderate abilities, and eternally quarrelling with officers more competent than himself; and all the arrangements were so hopelessly behind-hand, that although great disasters might have been avenged, they could scarcely have been avoided.

Remembering that the Invincible Armada was lying in Calais roads on the 6th of August, hoping to cross to Dover the next morning, let us ponder the words addressed on that very day to Queen Elizabeth by the Lieutenant-General of England.

"My most dear and gracious Lady," said the Earl, "it is most true that those enemies that approach your kingdom and person are your undeserved foes, and being so, and hating you for a righteous cause, there is the less fear to be had of their malice or their forces; for there is a most just God that beholdeth the innocence of that heart. The cause you are assailed for is His and His Church's, and He never failed any that faithfully do put their chief trust in His goodness. He hath, to comfort you withal, given you great and mighty means to defend yourself, which means I doubt not but your Majesty will timely and princely use them, and your good God that ruleth all will assist you and bless you with victory."

He then proceeded to give his opinion on two points concerning which the Queen had just consulted him—the propriety of assembling her army, and her desire to place herself at the head of it in person.

Page 1796

On the first point one would have thought discussion superfluous on the 6th of August. “For your army, it is more than time it were gathered and about you,” said Leicester, “or so near you as you may have the use of it at a few hours’ warning. The reason is that your mighty enemies are at hand, and if God suffers them to pass by your fleet, you are sure they will attempt their purpose of landing with all expedition. And albeit your navy be very strong, but, as we have always heard, the other is not only far greater, but their forces of men much beyond yours. No doubt if the Prince of Parma come forth, their forces by sea shall not only be greatly, augmented, but his power to land shall the easier take effect whensoever he shall attempt it. Therefore it is most requisite that your Majesty at all events have as great a force every way as you can devise; for there is no dalliance at such a time, nor with such an enemy. You shall otherwise hazard your own honour, besides your person and country, and must offend your gracious God that gave you these forces and power, though you will not use them when you should.”

It seems strange enough that such phrases should be necessary when the enemy was knocking at the gate; but it is only too, true that the land-forces were never organized until the hour, of danger had, most fortunately and unexpectedly, passed by. Suggestions at this late moment were now given for the defence of the throne, the capital, the kingdom, and the life of the great Queen, which would not have seemed premature had they been made six months before, but which, when offered in August, excite unbounded amazement. Alexander would have had time to, march from Dover to Duxham before these directions, now leisurely stated with all the air of novelty, could be carried into effect.

“Now for the placing of your army,” says the lieutenant-general on the memorable Saturday, 6th of August, “no doubt but I think about London the, meetest, and I suppose that others will be of the same mind. And your Majesty should forthwith give the charge thereof to some special nobleman about you, and likewise place all your chief officers that every man may know what he shall do, and gather as many good horse above all things as you can, and the oldest, best, and assuredest captains to lead; for therein will consist the greatest hope of good success under God. And so soon as your army is assembled, let them by and by be exercised, every man to know his weapon, and that there be all other things prepared in readiness, for your army, as if they should march upon a day’s warning, especially carriages, and a commissary of victuals, and a master of ordnance.”

Certainly, with Alexander of Parma on his way to London, at the head of his Italian pikemen, his Spanish musketeers, his famous veteran legion—“that nursing mother of great soldiers”—it was indeed more than time that every man should know what he should do, that an army of Englishmen should be-assembled, and that every man should know his weapon. “By and by” was easily said, and yet, on the 6th of August it was by and by that an army, not yet mustered, not yet officered, not yet provided with a general, a commissary of victuals, or a master of ordinance, was to be exercised, “every man to know his weapon.”

Page 1797

English courage might ultimately triumph over, the mistakes of those who governed the country, and over those disciplined brigands by whom it was to be invaded. But meantime every man of those invaders had already learned on a hundred battle-fields to know his weapon.

It was a magnificent determination on the part of Elizabeth to place herself at the head of her troops; and the enthusiasm which her attitude inspired, when she had at last emancipated herself from the delusions of diplomacy and the seductions of thrift, was some recompense at least for the perils caused by her procrastination. But Leicester could not approve of this hazardous though heroic resolution.

The danger passed away. The Invincible Armada was driven out of the Channel by the courage; the splendid seamanship, and the enthusiasm of English sailors and volunteers. The Duke of Parma was kept a close prisoner by the fleets of Holland and Zeeland; and the great storm of the 14th and 15th of August at last completed the overthrow of the Spaniards.

It was, however, supposed for a long time that they would come back, for the disasters which had befallen them in the north were but tardily known in England. The sailors, by whom England had been thus defended in her utmost need, were dying by hundreds, and even thousands, of ship-fever, in the latter days of August. Men sickened one day, and died the next, so that it seemed probable that the ten thousand sailors by whom the English ships of war were manned, would have almost wholly disappeared, at a moment when their services might be imperatively required. Nor had there been the least precaution taken for cherishing and saving these brave defenders of their country. They rotted in their ships, or died in the streets of the naval ports, because there were no hospitals to receive them.

“’Tis a most pitiful sight,” said the Lord-Admiral, “to see here at Margate how the men, having no place where they can be received, die in, the streets. I am driven of force myself to come on land to see them bestowed in some lodgings; and the best I can get is barns and such outhouses, and the relief is small that I can provide for them here. It would grieve any man’s heart to see men that have served so valiantly die so miserably.”

The survivors, too, were greatly discontented; for, after having been eight months at sea, and enduring great privations, they could not get their wages. “Finding it to come thus scantily,” said Howard, “it breeds a marvellous alteration among them.”

But more dangerous than the pestilence or the discontent was the misunderstanding which existed at the moment between the leading admirals of the English fleet. Not only was Seymour angry with Howard, but Hawkins and Frobisher were at daggers drawn with Drake; and Sir Martin—if contemporary, affidavits can be trusted—did not scruple to heap the most virulent abuse upon Sir Francis, calling him, in language better fitted

for the forecastle than the quarter-deck, a thief and a coward, for appropriating the ransom for Don Pedro Valdez in which both Frobisher and Hawkins claimed at least an equal share with himself.

Page 1798

And anxious enough was the Lord-Admiral with his sailors perishing by pestilence, with many of his ships so weakly manned that as Lord Henry Seymour declared there were not mariners enough to weigh the anchors, and with the great naval heroes, on whose efforts the safety of the realm depended, wrangling like fisherwomen among themselves, when rumours came, as they did almost daily, of the return of the Spanish Armada, and of new demonstrations on the part of Farnese. He was naturally unwilling that the fruits of English valour on the seas should now be sacrificed by the false economy of the government. He felt that, after all that had been endured and accomplished, the Queen and her counsellors were still capable of leaving England at the mercy of a renewed attempt, “I know not what you think at the court,” said he; “but I think, and so do all here, that there cannot be too great forces maintained for the next five or six weeks. God knoweth whether the Spanish fleet will not, after refreshing themselves in Norway; Denmark, and the Orkneys, return. I think they dare not go back to Sprain with this, dishonour, to their King and overthrow of the Pope’s credit. Sir, sure bind, sure find. A kingdom is a grand wager. Security is dangerous; and, if God had not been our best friend; we should have found it so.”

[Howard to Walsingham, Aug.8/18 1588. (S. P. Office *Ms*.)]

["Some haply may say that winter cometh on apace,” said Drake, “but my poor opinion is that I dare not advise her Majesty to hazard a kingdom with the saving of a little charge.” (Drake to Walsingham, Aug. 8/18 1588.)]

Nothing could be more replete, with sound common sense than this simple advice, given as it was in utter ignorance of the fate of the Armada; after it had been lost sight of by the English vessels off the Firth of Forth, and of the cold refreshment which: it had found in Norway and the Orkneys. But, Burghley had a store of pithy apophthegms, for which—he knew he could always find sympathy in the Queen’s breast, and with which he could answer these demands of admirals and generals. “To spend in time convenient is wisdom;” he observed—“to continue charges without needful cause bringeth, repentance;”—“to hold on charges without knowledge of the certainty thereof and of means how to support them, is lack of wisdom;” and so on.

Yet the Spanish fleet might have returned into the Channel for ought the Lord-Treasurer on the 22nd August knew—or the Dutch fleet might have relaxed, in its vigilant watching of Farnese’s movements. It might have then seemed a most plentiful lack of wisdom to allow English sailors to die of plague in the streets for want of hospitals; and to grow mutinous for default of pay. To have saved under such circumstances would, perhaps have brought repentance.

Page 1799

The invasion of England by Spain had been most portentous. That the danger was at last averted is to be ascribed to the enthusiasm of the English, nation—both patricians and plebeians—to the heroism of the little English fleet, to the spirit of the naval commanders and volunteers, to the stanch, and effective support of the Hollanders; and to the hand of God shattering the Armada at last; but very little credit can be conscientiously awarded to the diplomatic or the military efforts of the Queen's government. Miracles alone, in the opinion of Roger Williams, had saved England on this occasion from perdition.

Towards the end of August, Admiral de Nassau paid a visit to Dover with forty ships, "well appointed and furnished." He dined and conferred with Seymour, Palmer, and other officers—Winter being still laid up with his wound—and expressed the opinion that Medina Sidonia would hardly return to the Channel, after the banquet he had received from her Majesty's navy between Calais and Gravelines. He also gave the information that the States had sent fifty Dutch vessels in pursuit of the Spaniards, and had compelled all the herring-fishermen for the time to serve in the ships of war, although the prosperity of the country depended on that industry. "I find the man very wise, subtle, and cunning," said Seymour of the Dutch Admiral, "and therefore do I trust him."

Nassau represented the Duke of Parma as evidently discouraged, as having already disembarked his troops, and as very little disposed to hazard any further enterprise against England. "I have left twenty-five Kromstevens," said he, "to prevent his egress from Sluys, and I am immediately returning thither myself. The tide will not allow his vessels at present to leave Dunkerk, and I shall not fail—before the next full moon—to place myself before that place, to prevent their coming out, or to have a brush with them if they venture to put to sea."

But after the scenes on which the last full moon had looked down in those waters, there could be no further pretence on the part of Farnese to issue from Sluys and Dunkerk, and England and Holland were thenceforth saved from all naval enterprises on the part of Spain.

Meantime, the same uncertainty which prevailed in England as to the condition and the intentions of the Armada was still more remarkable elsewhere. There was a systematic deception practised not only upon other governments; but upon the King of Spain as well. Philip, as he sat at his writing-desk, was regarding himself as the monarch of England, long after his Armada had been hopelessly dispersed.

Page 1800

In Paris, rumours were circulated during the first ten days of August that England was vanquished, and that the Queen was already on her way to Rome as a prisoner, where she was to make expiation, barefoot, before his Holiness. Mendoza, now more magnificent than ever—stalked into Notre Dame with his drawn sword in his hand, crying out with a loud voice, “Victory, victory!” and on the 10th of August ordered bonfires to be made before his house; but afterwards thought better of that scheme. He had been deceived by a variety of reports sent to him day after day by agents on the coast; and the King of France—better informed by Stafford, but not unwilling thus to feed his spite against the insolent ambassador—affected to believe his fables. He even confirmed them by intelligence, which he pretended to have himself received from other sources, of the landing of the Spaniards in England without opposition, and of the entire subjugation of that country without the striking of a blow.

Hereupon, on the night of August 10th, the envoy—“like a wise man,” as Stafford observed—sent off four couriers, one after another, with the great news to Spain, that his master’s heart might be rejoiced, and caused a pamphlet on the subject to be printed and distributed over Paris! “I will not waste a large sheet of paper to express the joy which we must all feel,” he wrote to Idiaquez, “at this good news. God be praised for all, who gives us small chastisements to make us better, and then, like a merciful Father, sends us infinite rewards.” And in the same strain he wrote; day after day, to Moura and Idiaquez, and to Philip himself.

Stafford, on his side, was anxious to be informed by his government of the exact truth, whatever it were, in order that these figments of Mendoza might be contradicted. “That which cometh from me,” he said, “Will be believed; for I have not been used to tell lies, and in very truth I have not the face to do it.”

And the news of the Calais squibs, of the fight off Gravelines, and the retreat of the Armada towards the north; could not be very long concealed. So soon, therefore, as authentic intelligence reached, the English envoy of those events—which was not however for nearly ten days after their—occurrence—Stafford in his turn wrote a pamphlet, in answer to that of Mendoza, and decidedly the more successful one of the two. It cost him but five crowns, he said, to print ’four hundred copies of it; but those in whose name it was published got one hundred crowns by its sale. The English ambassador was unwilling to be known as the author—although “desirous of touching up the impudence of the Spaniard”—but the King had no doubt of its origin. Poor Henry, still smarting under the insults of Mendoza and ’Mucio,—was delighted with this blow to Philip’s presumption; was loud in his praises of Queen Elizabeth’s valour, prudence, and marvellous fortune, and declared that what she had just done could be compared to the greatest: exploits of the most illustrious men in history.

Page 1801

“So soon as ever he saw the pamphlet,” said Stafford; “he offered to lay a wager it was my doing; and laughed at it heartily.” And there were malicious pages about the French; court; who also found much amusement in writing to the ambassador, begging his interest with the Duke of Parma that they might obtain from that conqueror some odd-refuse town or so in: England, such as York, Canterbury, London, or the like—till the luckless Don Bernardino was ashamed to show his face.

A letter, from Farnese, however, of 10th August, apprized Philip before the end of August of the Calais disasters and caused him great uneasiness, without driving him to despair. “At the very moment,” wrote the King to Medina Sidonia; “when I was expecting news of the effect hoped for from my Armada, I have learned the retreat from before Calais, to which it was compelled by the weather; [!] and I have received a very great shock which keeps, me in anxiety not to be exaggerated. Nevertheless I hope in our Lord that he will have provided a remedy; and that if it was possible for you to return upon the enemy to come back to the appointed posts and to watch an opportunity for the great stroke; you will have done as the case required; and so I am expecting with solicitude, to hear what has happened, and please God it may be that which is so suitable for his service.”

His Spanish children the sacking of London, and the butchering of the English nation-rewards and befits similar to those which they bad formerly enjoyed in the Netherlands.

And in the same strain, melancholy yet hopeful, were other letters despatched on that day to the Duke of Parma. “The satisfaction caused by your advices on the 8th August of the arrival of the Armada near Calais, and of your preparations to embark your troops, was changed into a sentiment which you can imagine, by your letter of the 10th. The anxiety thus occasioned it would be impossible to exaggerate, although the cause being such as it is—there is no ground for distrust. Perhaps the Armada, keeping together, has returned upon the enemy, and given a good account of itself, with the help of the Lord. So I still promise myself that you will have performed your part in the enterprise in such wise as that the service intended to the Lord may have been executed, and repairs made to the reputation of all; which has been so much compromised.”

And the King’s drooping spirits were revived by fresh accounts which reached him in September, by way of France. He now learned that the Armada had taken captive four Dutch men-of-war and many English ships; that, after the Spaniards had been followed from Calais roads by the enemy’s fleet, there had been an action, which the English had attempted in vain to avoid; off Newcastle; that Medina Sidonia had charged upon them so vigorously, as to sink twenty of their ships, and to capture twenty-six others, good and sound; that the others, to escape perdition,

Page 1802

had fled, after suffering great damage, and had then gone to pieces, all hands perishing; that the Armada had taken a port in Scotland, where it was very comfortably established; that the flag-ship of Lord-admiral Howard, of Drake; and of that "distinguished mariner Hawkins," had all been sunk in action, and that no soul had been saved except Drake, who had escaped in a cock-boat. "This is good news," added the writer; "and it is most certain."

The King pondered seriously over these conflicting accounts, and remained very much in the dark. Half, the month of September went by, and he had heard nothing—official since the news of the Calais catastrophe. It may be easily understood that Medina Sidonia, while flying round the Orkneys had not much opportunity for despatching couriers to Spain, and as Farnese had not written since the 10th August, Philip was quite at a loss whether to consider himself triumphant or defeated. From the reports by way of Calais, Dunkerk, and Rouen, he supposed that the Armada, had inflicted much damage on the enemy. He suggested accordingly, on the 3rd September, to the Duke of Parma, that he might now make the passage to England, while the English fleet, if anything was left of it was repairing its damages. "'Twill be easy enough to conquer the country," said Philip, "so soon as you set foot on the soil. Then perhaps our Armada can come back and station itself in the Thames to support you."

Nothing could be simpler. Nevertheless the King felt a pang of doubt lest affairs, after all, might not be going on so swimmingly; so he dipped his pen in the inkstand again, and observed with much pathos, "But if this hope must be given up, you must take the Isle of Walcheren: something must be done to console me."

And on the 15th September he was still no wiser. "This business of the Armada leaves me no repose," he said; "I can think of nothing else. I don't content myself with what I have written, but write again and again, although in great want of light. I hear that the Armada has sunk and captured many English ships, and is refitting in a Scotch pert. If this is in the territory, of Lord Huntley, I hope he will stir up the Catholics of that country."

And so, in letter after letter, Philip clung to the delusion that Alexander could yet, cross to England, and that the Armada might sail up the Thames. The Duke was directed to make immediate arrangements to that effect with Medina Sidonia, at the very moment when that tempest-tossed grandee was painfully-creeping back towards the Bay of Biscay, with what remained of his invincible fleet.

Sanguine and pertinacious, the King refused to believe in, the downfall of his long-cherished scheme; and even when the light was at last dawning upon him, he was like a child, crying for a fresh toy, when the one which had long amused him had been broken. If the Armada were really very much damaged, it was easy enough, he thought, for the Duke of Parma to make him a new one, while the old, one was repairing. "In

case the Armada is too much shattered to come out," said Philip, "and winter compels it to stay in that port, you must cause another Armada to be constructed at Emden and the adjacent towns, at my expense, and, with the two together, you will certainly be able to conquer England."

Page 1803

And he wrote to Medina Sidonia in similar terms. That naval commander was instructed to enter the Thames at once, if strong enough. If not, he was to winter in the Scotch port which he was supposed to have captured. Meantime Farnese would build a new fleet at Emden, and in the spring the two dukes would proceed to accomplish the great purpose.

But at last the arrival of Medina Sidonia at Santander dispelled these visions, and now the King appeared in another attitude. A messenger, coming post-haste from the captain-general, arrived in the early days of October at the Escorial. Entering the palace he found Idiaquez and Moura pacing up and down the corridor, before the door of Philip's cabinet, and was immediately interrogated by those counsellors, most anxious, of course, to receive authentic intelligence at last as to the fate, of the Armada. The entire overthrow of the great project was now, for the first time, fully revealed in Spain; the fabulous victories over the English, and the annihilation of Howard and all his ships, were dispersed in air. Broken, ruined, forlorn, the invincible Armada—so far as it still existed—had reached a Spanish port. Great was the consternation of Idiaquez and Moura, as they listened to the tale, and very desirous was each of the two secretaries that the other should, discharge the unwelcome duty of communicating the fatal intelligence to the King.

At last Moura consented to undertake the task, and entering the cabinet, he found Philip seated at his desk. Of course he was writing letters. Being informed of the arrival of a messenger from the north, he laid down his pen, and inquired the news. The secretary replied that the accounts, concerning the Armada were by no means so favourable as, could be wished. The courier was then introduced, and made his dismal report. The King did not change countenance. "Great thanks," he observed, "do I render to Almighty God, by whose generous hand I am gifted with such power, that I could easily, if I chose, place another fleet upon the seas. Nor is it of very great importance that a running stream should be sometimes intercepted, so long as the fountain from which it flows remains inexhaustible."

So saying he resumed his pen, and serenely proceeded with his letters. Christopher Moura stared with unaffected amazement at his sovereign, thus tranquil while a shattered world was falling on his head, and then retired to confer with his colleague.

"And how did his Majesty receive the blow?" asked Idiaquez.

"His Majesty thinks nothing of the blow," answered Moura, "nor do I, consequently, make more of this great calamity than does his Majesty."

Page 1804

So the King—as fortune flew away from him, wrapped himself in his virtue; and his counsellors, imitating their sovereign, arrayed themselves in the same garment. Thus draped, they were all prepared to bide the pelting of the storm which was only beating figuratively on their heads, while it had been dashing the King's mighty galleons on the rocks, and drowning by thousands the wretched victims of his ambition. Soon afterwards, when the particulars of the great disaster were thoroughly known, Philip ordered a letter to be addressed in his name to all the bishops of Spain, ordering a solemn thanksgiving to the Almighty for the safety of that portion of the invincible Armada which it had pleased Him to preserve.

And thus, with the sound of mourning throughout Spain—for there was scarce a household of which some beloved member had not perished in the great catastrophe—-and with the peals of merry bells over all England and Holland, and with a solemn 'Te Deum' resounding in every church, the curtain fell upon the great tragedy of the Armada.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Forbidding the wearing of mourning at all
Hardly a distinguished family in Spain not placed in mourning
Invincible Armada had not only been vanquished but annihilated
Nothing could equal Alexander's fidelity, but his perfidy
One could neither cry nor laugh within the Spanish dominions
Security is dangerous
Sixteen of their best ships had been sacrificed
Sure bind, sure find

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 59, 1588-1589

CHAPTER XX.

Alexander besieges Bergen-op-Zoom—Pallavicini's Attempt to seduce Parma—-Alexander's Fury—He is forced to raise the Siege, of Bergen —Gertruydenberg betrayed to Parma—Indignation of the States— Exploits, of Schenk—His Attack on Nymegen—He is defeated and drowned—English-Dutch Expedition to Spain—Its meagre Results— Death of Guise and of the Queen—Mother—Combinations after the Murder of Henry *iii*.—Tandem fit Surculus Arbor.

The fever of the past two years was followed by comparative languor. The deadly crisis was past, the freedom of Europe was saved, Holland and England breathed again; but tension now gave place to exhaustion. The events in the remainder of the year 1588, with those of 1589—although important in themselves—were the immediate results of that history which has been so minutely detailed in these volumes, and can be indicated in a very few pages.

The Duke of Parma, melancholy, disappointed, angry stung to the soul by calumnies as stupid as they were venomous, and already afflicted with a painful and lingering disease, which his friends attributed to poison administered by command of the master whom he had so faithfully served—determined, if possible, to afford the consolation which that master was so plaintively demanding at his hands.

Page 1805

So Alexander led the splendid army which had been packed in, and unpacked from, the flat boats of Newport and Dunkerk, against Bergen-op-Zoom, and besieged that city in form. Once of great commercial importance, although somewhat fallen away from its original prosperity, Bergen was well situate on a little stream which connected it with the tide-waters of the Scheldt, and was the only place in Brabant, except Willemstad, still remaining to the States. Opposite lay the Isle of Tholen from which it was easily to be supplied and reinforced. The Vosmeer, a branch of the Scheldt, separated the island from the main, and there was a path along the bed of that estuary, which, at dead low-water, was practicable for wading. Alexander, accordingly, sent a party of eight hundred pikemen, under Montigny, Marquis of Renty, and Ottavio Mansfeld, supported on the dyke by three thousand musketeers, across; the dangerous ford, at ebb-tide, in order to seize this important island. It was an adventure similar to those, which, in the days of the grand commander, and under the guidance of Mondragon; had been on two occasions so brilliantly successful. But the Isle of Tholen was now defended by Count Solms and a garrison of fierce amphibious Zeelanders—of those determined bands which had just been holding Farnese and his fleet in prison, and daring him to the issue—and the invading party, after fortunately accomplishing their night journey along the bottom of the Vosmeer, were unable to effect a landing, were driven with considerable loss into the waves again, and compelled to find their way back as best they could, along their dangerous path, and with a rapidly rising tide. It was a blind and desperate venture, and the Vosmeer soon swallowed four hundred of the Spaniards. The rest, half-drowned or smothered, succeeded in reaching the shore—the chiefs of the expedition, Renty and Mansfeld, having been with difficulty rescued by their followers, when nearly sinking in the tide.

The Duke continued the siege, but the place was well defended by an English and Dutch garrison, to the number of five thousand, and commanded by Colonel Morgan, that bold and much experienced Welshman, so well known in the Netherland wars. Willoughby and Maurice of Nassau, and Olden-Barneveld were, at different times, within the walls; for the Duke had been unable to invest the place so closely as to prevent all communications from without; and, while Maurice was present, there were almost daily sorties from the town, with many a spirited skirmish, to give pleasure to the martial young Prince. The English, officers, Vere and Baskerville, and two Netherland colonels, the brothers Bax, most distinguished themselves on these occasions. The siege was not going on with the good fortune which had usually attended the Spanish leaguer of Dutch cities, while, on the 29th September, a personal incident came to increase Alexander’s dissatisfaction and melancholy.

Page 1806

On that day the Duke was sitting in his tent, brooding, as he was apt to do, over the unjust accusations which had been heaped upon him in regard to the failure of the Armada, when a stranger was announced. His name, he said, was Giacomo Morone, and he was the bearer of a letter from Sir Horace Pallavicini, a Genoese gentleman long established in London; and known to be on confidential terms with the English government. Alexander took the letter, and glancing at the bottom of the last page, saw that it was not signed.

“How dare you bring me a dispatch without a signature?” he exclaimed. The messenger, who was himself a Genoese, assured the Duke that the letter was most certainly written by Pallavicini—who had himself placed it, sealed, in his hands—and that he had supposed it signed, although he had of course, not seen the inside.

Alexander began to read the note, which was not a very long one, and his brow instantly darkened. He read a line or two more, when, with an exclamation of fury, he drew his dagger, and, seizing the astonished Genoese by the throat, was about to strike him dead. Suddenly mastering his rage, however, by a strong effort, and remembering that the man might be a useful witness; he flung Morone from him.

“If I had Pallavicini here,” he said, “I would treat, him as I have just refrained from using you. And if I had any suspicion that you were aware of the contents of this letter, I would send you this instant to be hanged.”

The unlucky despatch-bearer protested his innocence of all complicity with Pallavicini, and his ignorance of the tenor of the communication by which the Duke’s wrath had been so much excited. He was then searched and cross-examined most carefully by Richardot and other counsellors, and his innocence being made apparent-he was ultimately discharged.

The letter of Pallavicini was simply an attempt to sound Farnese as to his sentiments in regard to a secret scheme, which could afterwards be arranged in form, and according, to which he was to assume the sovereignty of the Netherlands himself, to the exclusion of his King, to guarantee to England the possession of the cautionary towns, until her advances to the States should be refunded, and to receive the support and perpetual alliance of the Queen in his new and rebellious position.

Here was additional evidence, if any were wanting, of the universal belief in his disloyalty; and Alexander, faithful, if man ever were to his master—was cut to the heart, and irritated almost to madness, by such insolent propositions. There is neither proof nor probability that the Queen’s government was implicated in this intrigue of Pallavicini, who appears to have been inspired by the ambition of achieving a bit of Machiavellian policy, quite on his own account. Nothing came of the proposition, and the Duke; having transmitted to the King a minute narrative of, the affair, together with indignant protestations of the fidelity, which all the world seemed determined to dispute, received

most affectionate replies from that monarch, breathing nothing but unbounded confidence in his nephew’s innocence and devotion.

Page 1807

Such assurances from any other man in the world might have disarmed suspicion, but Alexander knew his master too well to repose upon his word, and remembered too bitterly the last hours of Don John of Austria —whose dying pillow he had soothed, and whose death had been hastened, as he knew, either by actual poison or by the hardly less fatal venom of slander—to regain tranquillity as to his own position.

The King was desirous that Pallavicini should be invited over to Flanders, in order that Alexander, under pretence of listening to his propositions, might draw from the Genoese all the particulars of his scheme, and then, at leisure, inflict the punishment which he had deserved. But insuperable obstacles presented themselves, nor was Alexander desirous of affording still further pretexts for his slanderers.

Very soon after this incident—most important as showing the real situation of various parties, although without any immediate result—Alexander received a visit in his tent from another stranger. This time the visitor was an Englishman, one Lieutenant Grimstone, and the object of his interview with the Duke was not political, but had, a direct reference to the siege of Bergen. He was accompanied by a countryman of his own, Redhead by name, a camp-suttler by profession. The two represented themselves as deserters from the besieged city, and offered, for a handsome reward, to conduct a force of Spaniards, by a secret path, into one of the gates. The Duke questioned them narrowly, and being satisfied with their intelligence and coolness, caused them to take an oath on the Evangelists, that they were not playing him false. He then selected a band of one hundred musketeers, partly Spaniards, partly Walloons —to be followed at a distance by a much, more considerable force; two thousand in number, under Sancho de Leyva: and the Marquis of Renti—and appointed the following night for an enterprise against the city, under the guidance of Grimstone.

It was a wild autumnal night, moonless, pitch-dark, with a storm of wind and rain. The waters were out—for the dykes had been cut in all 'directions by the defenders of the city—and, with exception of some elevated points occupied by Parma's forces, the whole country was overflowed. Before the party set forth on their daring expedition, the two Englishmen were tightly bound with cords, and led, each by two soldiers, instructed to put them to instant death if their conduct should give cause for suspicion. But both Grimstone and Redhead preserved a cheerful countenance, and inspired a strong confidence in their honest intention to betray their countrymen. And thus the band of bold adventurers plunged at once into the darkness, and soon found themselves contending with the tempest, and wading breast high in the black waters of the Scheldt.

Page 1808

After a long and perilous struggle, they at length reached the appointed gate, The external portcullis was raised and the fifteen foremost of the band rushed into the town. At the next moment, Lord Willoughby, who had been privy to the whole scheme, cut with his own hand the cords which, held the portcullis, and entrapped the leaders of the expedition, who were all, at once put to the sword, while their followers were thundering at the gate. The lieutenant and suttler who had thus overreached that great master of dissimulation; Alexander Farnese; were at the same time unbound by their comrades, and rescued from the fate intended for them.

Notwithstanding the probability—when the portcullis fell—that the whole party, had been deceived by an artifice of war the adventurers, who had come so far, refused to abandon the enterprise, and continued an impatient battery upon the gate. At last it was swung wide open, and a furious onslaught was made by the garrison upon the Spaniards. There was—a fierce brief struggle, and then the assailants were utterly routed. Some were killed under the walls, while the rest were hunted into the waves. Nearly every one of the, expedition (a thousand in number) perished.

It had now become obvious to the Duke that his siege must be raised. The days were gone when the walls of Dutch towns seemed to melt before the first scornful glance of the Spanish invader; and when a summons meant a surrender, and a surrender a massacre. Now, strong in the feeling of independence, and supported by the courage and endurance of their English allies, the Hollanders had learned to humble the pride of Spain as it had never been humbled before. The hero of a hundred battle-fields, the inventive and brilliant conqueror of Antwerp, seemed in the deplorable issue of the English invasion to have lost all his genius, all his fortune. A cloud had fallen upon his fame, and he now saw himself; at the head of the best army in Europe, compelled to retire, defeated and humiliated, from the walls of Bergen. Winter was coming on apace; the country was flooded; the storms in that-bleak region and inclement season were incessant; and he was obliged to retreat before his army should be drowned.

On the night of 12-13 November he set fire to his camp; and took his departure. By daybreak he was descried in full retreat, and was hotly pursued by the English and Dutch from the city, who drove the great Alexander and his legions before them in ignominious flight. Lord Willoughby, in full view of the retiring enemy, indulged the allied forces with a chivalrous spectacle. Calling a halt, after it had become obviously useless, with their small force of cavalry; to follow any longer, through a flooded country, an enemy who had abandoned his design, he solemnly conferred the honour of knighthood, in the name of Queen Elizabeth, on the officers who had most distinguished themselves during the siege, Francis Vere, Baskerville, Powell, Parker, Knowles, and on the two Netherland brothers, Paul and Marcellus Bax.

Page 1809

The Duke of Parma then went into winter quarters in Brabant, and, before the spring, that obedient Province had been eaten as bare as Flanders had already been by the friendly Spaniards.

An excellent understanding between England and Holland had been the result of their united and splendid exertions against the Invincible Armada. Late in the year 1588 Sir John Norris had been sent by the Queen to offer her congratulations and earnest thanks to the States for their valuable assistance in preserving her throne, and to solicit their cooperation in some new designs against the common foe. Unfortunately, however, the epoch of good feeling was but of brief duration. Bitterness and dissension seemed the inevitable conditions of the English-Dutch alliance. It will be, remembered, that, on the departure of Leicester, several cities had refused to acknowledge the authority of Count Maurice and the States; and that civil war in the scarcely-born commonwealth had been the result. Medenblik, Naarden, and the other contumacious cities, had however been reduced to obedience after the reception of the Earl's resignation, but the important city of Gertruydenberg had remained in a chronic state of mutiny. This rebellion had been partially appeased during the year 1588 by the efforts of Willoughby, who had strengthened, the garrison by reinforcements of English troops under command of his brother-in-law, Sir John Wingfield. Early in 1589 however, the whole garrison became rebellious, disarmed and maltreated the burghers, and demanded immediate payment of the heavy arrearages still due to the troops. Willoughby, who—much disgusted with his career in the Netherlands—was about leaving for England, complaining that the States had not only left him without remuneration for his services, but had not repaid his own advances, nor even given him a complimentary dinner, tried in vain to pacify them. A rumour became very current, moreover, that the garrison had opened negotiations with Alexander Farnese, and accordingly Maurice of Nassau—of whose patrimonial property the city of Gertruydenberg made a considerable proportion, to the amount of eight thousand pounds sterling a years—after summoning the garrison, in his own name and that of the States, to surrender, laid siege to the place in form. It would have been cheaper, no doubt, to pay the demands of the garrison in full, and allow them to depart. But Maurice considered his honour at stake. His letters of summons, in which he spoke of the rebellious commandant and his garrison as self-seeking foreigners and mercenaries, were taken in very ill part. Wingfield resented the statement in very insolent language, and offered to prove its falsehood with his sword against any man and in any place whatever. Willoughby wrote to his brother-in-law, from Flushing, when about to embark, disapproving of his conduct and of his language; and to Maurice, deprecating hostile measures against a city under the protection of Queen Elizabeth.

Page 1810

At any rate, he claimed that Sir John Wingfield and his wife, the Countess of Kent, with their newly-born child, should be allowed to depart from the place. But Wingfield expressed great scorn at any suggestion of retreat, and vowed that he would rather surrender the city to the Spaniards than tolerate the presumption of Maurice and the States. The young Prince accordingly, opened his batteries, but before an entrance could be effected into the town, was obliged to retire at the approach of Count Mansfield with a much superior force. Gertruydenberg was now surrendered to the Spaniards in accordance with a secret negotiation which had been proceeding all the spring, and had been brought to a conclusion at last. The garrison received twelve months' pay in full and a gratuity of five months in addition, and the city was then reduced into obedience to Spain and Rome on the terms which had been usual during the government of Farnese.

The loss of this city was most severe to the republic, for the enemy had thus gained an entrance into the very heart of Holland. It was a more important acquisition to Alexander than even Bergen-op-Zoom would have been, and it was a bitter reflection that to the treachery of Netherlanders and of their English allies this great disaster was owing. All the wrath aroused a year before by the famous treason of York and Stanley, and which had been successfully extinguished, now flamed forth afresh. The States published a placard denouncing the men who had thus betrayed the cause of freedom, and surrendered the city of Gertruydenberg to the Spaniards, as perjured traitors whom it was made lawful to hang, whenever or wherever caught, without trial or sentence, and offering fifty florins a-head for every private soldier and one hundred florins for any officer of the garrison. A list of these Englishmen and Netherlanders, so far as known, was appended to the placard, and the catalogue was headed by the name of Sir John Wingfield.

Thus the consequences of the fatal event were even more deplorable than the loss of the city itself. The fury of Olden-Barneveld at the treason was excessive, and the great Advocate governed the policy of the republic, at this period, almost like a dictator. The States, easily acknowledging the sway of the imperious orator, became bitter—and wrathful with the English, side by side with whom they had lately been so cordially standing.

Willoughby, on his part, now at the English court, was furious with the States, and persuaded the leading counsellors of the Queen as well as her Majesty herself, to adopt his view of the transaction. Wingfield, it was asserted, was quite innocent in the matter; he was entirely ignorant of the French language, and therefore was unable to read a word of the letters addressed to him by Maurice and the replies which had been signed by himself. Whether this strange excuse ought to be accepted or not, it is quite certain that he was no traitor like York and Stanley, and no

Page 1811

friend to Spain; for he had stipulated for himself the right to return to England, and had neither received nor desired any reward. He hated Maurice and he hated the States, but he asserted that he had been held in durance, that the garrison was mutinous, and that he was no more responsible for the loss of the city than Sir Francis Vere had been, who had also been present, and whose name had been subsequently withdrawn, in honourable fashion from the list of traitors, by authority of the States. His position—so far as he was personally concerned—seemed defensible, and the Queen was thoroughly convinced of his innocence. Willoughby complained that the republic was utterly in the hands of Barneveld, that no man ventured to lift his voice or his eyes in presence of the terrible Advocate who ruled every Netherlander with a rod of iron, and that his violent and threatening language to Wingfield and himself at the dinner-table in Bergen-op-Zoom on the subject of the mutiny (when one hundred of the Gertruydenberg garrison were within sound of his voice) had been the chief cause of the rebellion. Inspired by these remonstrances, the Queen once more emptied the vials of her wrath upon the United Netherlands. The criminations and recriminations seemed endless, and it was most fortunate that Spain had been weakened, that Alexander, a prey to melancholy and to lingering disease, had gone to the baths of Spa to recruit his shattered health, and that his attention and the schemes of Philip for the year 1589 and the following period were to be directed towards France. Otherwise the commonwealth could hardly have escaped still more severe disasters than those already experienced in this unfortunate condition of its affairs, and this almost hopeless misunderstanding with its most important and vigorous friend.

While these events had been occurring in the heart of the republic, Martin Schenk, that restless freebooter, had been pursuing a bustling and most lucrative career on its outskirts. All the episcopate of Cologne—that debatable land of the two rival paupers, Bavarian Ernest and Gebhard Truchsess—trembled before him. Mothers scared their children into quiet with the terrible name of Schenk, and farmers and land-younkers throughout the electorate and the land of Berg, Cleves, and Juliers, paid their black-mail, as if it were a constitutional impost, to escape the levying process of the redoubtable partisan.

But Martin was no longer seconded, as he should have been, by the States, to whom he had been ever faithful since he forsook the banner of Spain for their own; and he had even gone to England and complained to the Queen of the short-comings of those who owed him so much. His ingenious and daring exploit—the capture of Bonn—has already been narrated, but the States had neglected the proper precautions to secure that important city. It had consequently, after a six months' siege, been surrendered to the Spaniards under Prince Chimay, on the 19th of September;

Page 1812

while, in December following, the city of Wachtendonk, between the Rhine and Meuse, had fallen into Mansfeld's hands. Rheinberg, the only city of the episcopate which remained to the deposed Truchsess, was soon afterwards invested by the troops of Parma, and Schenk in vain summoned the States-General to take proper measures for its defence. But with the enemy now eating his way towards the heart of Holland, and with so many dangers threatening them on every side, it was thought imprudent to go so far away to seek the enemy. So Gebhard retired in despair into Germany, and Martin did what he could to protect Rheinberg, and to fill his own coffers at the expense of the whole country side.

He had built a fort, which then and long afterwards bore his name-Schenken Schans, or Schenk's Sconce—at that important point where the Rhine, opening its two arms to enclose the "good meadow" island of Batavia, becomes on the left the Waal, while on the right it retains its ancient name; and here, on the outermost edge of the republic, and looking straight from his fastness into the fruitful fields of Munster, Westphalia, and the electorate, the industrious Martin devoted himself with advantage to his favourite pursuits.

On the 7th of August, on the heath of Lippe, he had attacked a body of Spanish musketeers, more than a thousand strong, who were protecting a convoy of provisions, treasure, and furniture, sent by Farnese to Verdugo, royal governor of Friesland. Schenk, without the loss of a single man, had put the greater part of these Spaniards and Walloons to the sword, and routed the rest. The leader of the expedition, Colonel Aristotle Patton, who had once played him so foul a trick in the surrender of Gelder, had soon taken to flight, when he found his ancient enemy upon him, and, dashing into the Lippe, had succeeded, by the strength and speed of his horse, in gaining the opposite bank, and effecting his escape. Had he waited many minutes longer it is probable that the treacherous Aristotle would have passed a comfortless half-hour with his former comrade. Treasure to the amount of seven thousand crowns in gold, five hundred horses, with jewels, plate, and other articles of value, were the fruit of this adventure, and Schenk returned with his followers, highly delighted, to Schenkenschans, and sent the captured Spanish colours to her Majesty of England as a token.

A few miles below his fortress was Nymegen, and towards that ancient and wealthy city Schenk had often cast longing eyes. It still held for the King, although on the very confines of Batavia; but while acknowledging the supremacy of Philip, it claimed the privileges of the empire. From earliest times it had held its head very high among imperial towns, had been one of the three chief residences of the Emperor. Charlemagne, and still paid the annual tribute of a glove full of pepper to the German empire.

Page 1813

On the evening of the 10th of August, 1589, there was a wedding feast in one of the splendid mansions of the stately city. The festivities were prolonged until deep in the midsummer's night, and harp and viol were still inspiring the feet of the dancers, when on a sudden, in the midst of the holiday-groups, appeared the grim visage of Martin Schenk, the man who never smiled. Clad in no wedding-garment, but in armour of proof, with morion on head, and sword in hand, the great freebooter strode heavily through the ball-room, followed by a party of those terrible musketeers who never gave or asked for quarter, while the affrighted revellers fluttered away before them.

Taking advantage of a dark night, he had just dropped down the river from his castle, with five-and-twenty barges, had landed with his most trusted soldiers in the foremost vessels, had battered down the gate of St. Anthony, and surprised and slain the guard. Without waiting for the rest of his boats, he had then stolen with his comrades through the silent streets, and torn away the lattice-work, and other slight defences on the rear of the house which they had now entered, and through which they intended to possess themselves of the market-place. Martin had long since selected this mansion as a proper position for his enterprise, but he had not been bidden to the wedding, and was somewhat disconcerted when he found himself on the festive scene which he had so grimly interrupted. Some of the merry-makers escaped from the house, and proceeded to alarm the town; while Schenk hastily fortified his position; and took possession of the square. But the burghers and garrison were soon on foot, and he was driven back into the house. Three times he recovered the square by main strength of his own arm, seconded by the handful of men whom he had brought with him, and three times he was beaten back by overwhelming numbers into the wedding mansion. The arrival of the greater part of his followers, with whose assistance he could easily have mastered the city in the first moments of surprise, was mysteriously delayed. He could not account for their prolonged, absence, and was meanwhile supported only by those who had arrived with him in the foremost barges.

The truth—of which he was ignorant—was, that the remainder of the flotilla, borne along by the strong and deep current of the Waal, then in a state of freshet, had shot past the landing-place, and had ever since been vainly struggling against wind and tide to force their way back to the necessary point. Meantime Schenk and his followers fought desperately in the market-place, and desperately in the house which he had seized. But a whole garrison, and a town full of citizens in arms proved too much for him, and he was now hotly besieged in the mansion, and at last driven forth into the streets.

Page 1814

By this time day was dawning, the whole population, soldiers and burghers, men, women, and children, were thronging about the little band of marauders, and assailing them with every weapon and every missile to be found. Schenk fought with his usual ferocity, but at last the musketeers, in spite of his indignant commands, began rapidly to retreat towards the quay. In vain Martin stormed and cursed, in vain with his own hand he struck more than one of his soldiers dead. He was swept along with the panic-stricken band, and when, shouting and gnashing his teeth with frenzy, he reached the quay at last, he saw at a glance why his great enterprise had failed. The few empty barges of his own party were moored at the steps; the rest were half a mile off, contending hopelessly against the swollen and rapid Waal. Schenk, desperately wounded, was left almost alone upon the wharf, for his routed followers had plunged helter skelter into the boats, several of which, overladen in the panic, sank at once, leaving the soldiers to drown or struggle with the waves. The game was lost. Nothing was left the freebooter but retreat. Reluctantly turning his back on his enemies, now in full cry close behind him, Schenk sprang into the last remaining boat just pushing from the quay. Already overladen, it foundered with his additional weight, and Martin Schenk, encumbered with his heavy armour, sank at once to the bottom of the Waal.

Some of the fugitives succeeded in swimming down the stream, and were picked up by their comrades in the barges below the town, and so made their escape. Many were drowned with their captain. A few days afterwards, the inhabitants of Nymegen fished up the body of the famous partisan. He was easily recognized by his armour, and by his truculent face, still wearing the scowl with which he had last rebuked his followers. His head was taken off at once, and placed on one of the turrets of the town, and his body, divided in four, was made to adorn other portions of the battlements; so that the burghers were enabled to feast their eyes on the remnants of the man at whose name the whole country had so often trembled.

This was the end of Sir Martin Schenk of Niddegem, knight, colonel, and brigand; save that ultimately his dissevered limbs were packed in a chest, and kept in a church tower, until Maurice of Nassau, in course of time becoming master of Nymegen, honoured the valiant and on the whole faithful freebooter with a Christian and military burial.

A few months later (October, 1589) another man who had been playing an important part in the Netherlands' drama lost his life. Count Moeurs and Niewenaar, stadholder of Utrecht, Gelderland, and Overysael, while inspecting some newly-invented fireworks, was suddenly killed by their accidental ignition and explosion. His death left vacant three great stadholderates, which before long were to be conferred upon a youth whose power henceforth was rapidly to grow greater.

Page 1815

The misunderstanding between Holland and England continuing, Olden-Barneveld, Aerssens, and Buys, refusing to see that they had done wrong in denouncing the Dutch and English traitors who had sold Gertruydenberg to the enemy, and the Queen and her counsellors persisting in their anger at so insolent a proceeding, it may easily be supposed that there was no great heartiness in the joint expedition against Spain, which had been projected in the autumn of 1588, and was accomplished in the spring and summer of 1589.

Nor was this well-known enterprise fruitful of any remarkable result. It had been decided to carry the war into Spain itself, and Don Antonio, prior of Crato, bastard of Portugal, and pretender to its crown, had persuaded himself and the English government that his name would be potent to conjure with in that kingdom, hardly yet content with the Spanish yoke. Supported by a determined force of English and Dutch adventurers, he boasted that he should excite a revolution by the magic of his presence, and cause Philip's throne to tremble, in return for the audacious enterprise of that monarch against England.

If a foray were to be made into Spain, no general and no admiral could be found in the world so competent to the adventure as Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake. They were accompanied, too, by Sir Edward Norris, and another of those 'chickens of Mars,' Henry Norris; by the indomitable and ubiquitous Welshman, Roger Williams, and by the young Earl of Essex, whom the Queen in vain commanded to remain at home, and who, somewhat to the annoyance of the leaders of the expedition, concealed himself from her Majesty's pursuit, and at last embarked in a vessel which he had equipped, in order not to be cheated of his share in the hazard and the booty. "If I speed well," said the spendthrift but valiant youth; "I will adventure to be rich; if not, I will never live, to see the end of my poverty."

But no great riches were to be gathered in the expedition. With some fourteen thousand men, and one hundred and sixty vessels—of which six were the Queen's ships of war, including the famous Revenge and the Dreadnought, and the rest armed merchantmen, English, and forty Hollanders—and with a contingent of fifteen hundred Dutchmen under Nicolas van Meetkerke and Van Laen, the adventurers set sail from Plymouth on the 18th of April, 1589.

They landed at Coruna—at which place they certainly could not expect to create a Portuguese revolution, which was the first object of the expedition—destroyed some shipping in the harbour, captured and sacked the lower town, and were repulsed in the upper; marched with six thousand men to Burgos, crossed the bridge at push of pike, and routed ten thousand Spaniards under Andrada and Altamira—Edward Norris receiving a desperate blow on the head at the passage' of the bridge, and being rescued from death by his brother John—took sail for the south after this action, in which they had killed a thousand Spaniards, and had lost but two men of their own; were joined off Cape Finisterre by Essex; landed a force at Peniche, the castle of which

place surrendered to them, and acknowledged the authority of Don Antonio; and thence marched with the main body of the troops, under Sir John Norris, forty-eight miles to Lisbon, while Drake, with the fleet, was to sail up the Tagus.

Page 1816

Nothing like a revolution had been effected in Portugal. No one seemed to care for the Pretender, or even to be aware that he had ever existed, except the governor of Peniche Castle, a few ragged and bare-footed peasants, who, once upon the road, shouted “Viva Don Antonio,” and one old gentleman by the way side, who brought him a plate of plums. His hopes of a crown faded rapidly, and when the army reached Lisbon it had dwindled to not much more than four thousand effective men—the rest being dead of dysentery, or on the sick-list from imprudence in eating and drinking—while they found that they had made an unfortunate omission in their machinery for assailing the capital, having not a single fieldpiece in the whole army. Moreover, as Drake was prevented by bad weather and head-winds from sailing up the Tagus, it seemed a difficult matter to carry the city. A few cannon, and the co-operation of the fleet, were hardly to be dispensed with on such an occasion. Nevertheless it would perhaps have proved an easier task than it appeared—for so great was the panic within the place that a large number of the inhabitants had fled, the Cardinal Viceroy Archduke Albert had but a very insufficient guard, and there were many gentlemen of high station who were anxious to further the entrance of the English, and who were afterwards hanged or garotted for their hostile sentiments to the Spanish government.

While the leaders were deliberating what course to take, they were informed that Count Fuentes and Henriquez de Guzman, with six thousand men, lay at a distance of two miles from Lisbon, and that they had been proclaiming by sound of trumpet that the English had been signally defeated before Lisbon, and that they were in full retreat.

Fired at this bravado, Norris sent a trumpet to Fuentes and Guzman, with a letter signed and sealed, giving them the lie in plainest terms, appointing the next day for a meeting of the two forces, and assuring them that when the next encounter should take place, it should be seen whether a Spaniard or an Englishman would be first to fly; while Essex, on his part, sent a note, defying either or both those boastful generals to single combat. Next day the English army took the field, but the Spaniards retired before them; and nothing came of this exchange of cartels, save a threat on the part of Fuentes to hang the trumpeter who had brought the messages. From the execution of this menace he refrained, however, on being assured that the deed would be avenged by the death of the Spanish prisoner of highest rank then in English hands, and thus the trumpeter escaped.

Soon afterwards the fleet set sail from the Tagus, landed, and burned Vigo on their way homeward, and returned to Plymouth about the middle of July.

Page 1817

Of the thirteen thousand came home six thousand, the rest having perished of dysentery and other disorders. They had braved and insulted Spain, humbled her generals, defied her power, burned some defenceless villages, frightened the peasantry, set fire to some shipping, destroyed wine, oil, and other merchandize, and had divided among the survivors of the expedition, after landing in England, five shillings a head prize-money; but they had not effected a revolution in Portugal. Don Antonio had been offered nothing by his faithful subjects but a dish of plums—so that he retired into obscurity from that time forward—and all this was scarcely a magnificent result for the death of six or seven thousand good English and Dutch soldiers, and the outlay of considerable treasure.

As a free-booting foray—and it was nothing else—it could hardly be thought successful; although it was a splendid triumph compared with the result of the long and loudly heralded Invincible Armada.

In France, great events during the remainder of 1588 and the following year, and which are well known even to the most superficial student of history, had much changed the aspect of European affairs. It was fortunate for the two commonwealths of Holland and England, engaged in the great struggle for civil and religious liberty, and national independence, that the attention of Philip became more and more absorbed-as time wore on—with the affairs of France. It seemed necessary for him firmly to establish his dominion in that country before attempting once more the conquest of England, or the recovery of the Netherlands. For France had been brought more nearly to anarchy and utter decomposition than ever. Henry *iii*., after his fatal forgiveness of the deadly offence of Guise, felt day by day more keenly that he had transferred his sceptre—such as it was—to that dangerous intriguer. Bitterly did the King regret having refused the prompt offer of Alphonse Corse on the day of the barricades; for now, so long as the new generalissimo should live, the luckless Henry felt himself a superfluity in his own realm. The halcyon days were for ever past, when, protected by the swords of Joyeuse and of Epernon, the monarch of France could pass his life playing at cup and ball, or snipping images out of pasteboard, or teaching his parrots-to talk, or his lap-dogs to dance. His royal occupations were gone, and murder now became a necessary preliminary to any future tranquillity or enjoyment. Discrowned as he felt himself already, he knew that life or liberty was only held by him now at the will of Guise. The assassination of the Duke in December was the necessary result of the barricades in May; and accordingly that assassination was arranged with an artistic precision of which the world had hardly suspected the Valois to be capable, and which Philip himself might have envied.

The story of the murders of Blois—the destruction of Guise and his brother the Cardinal, and the subsequent imprisonment of the Archbishop of Lyons, the Cardinal Bourbon, and the Prince de Joinville, now, through the death of his father, become the young Duke of Guise—all these events are too familiar in the realms of history, song, romance, and painting, to require more than this slight allusion here.

Page 1818

Never had an assassination been more technically successful; yet its results were not commensurate with the monarch's hopes. The deed which he had thought premature in May was already too late in December. His mother denounced his cruelty now, as she had, six months before, execrated his cowardice. And the old Queen, seeing that her game was played out—that the cards had all gone against her—that her son was doomed, and her own influence dissolved in air, felt that there was nothing left for her but to die. In a week she was dead, and men spoke no more of Catharine de' Medici, and thought no more of her than if—in the words of a splenetic contemporary—"she had been a dead she-goat." Paris howled with rage when it learned the murders of Blois, and the sixteen quarters became more furious than ever against the Valois. Some wild talk there was of democracy and republicanism after the manner of Switzerland, and of dividing France into cantons—and there was an earnest desire on the part of every grandee, every general, every soldier of fortune, to carve out a portion of French territory with his sword, and to appropriate it for himself and his heirs. Disintegration was making rapid progress, and the epoch of the last Valois seemed mare dark and barbarous than the times of the degenerate Carlovingians had been. The letter-writer of the Escorial, who had earnestly warned his faithful Mucio, week after week, that dangers were impending over him, and that "some trick would be played upon him," should he venture into the royal presence, now acquiesced in his assassination, and placidly busied himself with fresh combinations and newer tools.

Baked, hunted, scorned by all beside, the luckless Henry now threw himself into the arms of the Bearnese—the man who could and would have protected him long before, had the King been capable of understanding their relative positions and his own true interests. Could the Valois have conceived the thought of religious toleration, his throne even then might have been safe. But he preferred playing the game of the priests and bigots, who execrated his name and were bent upon his destruction. At last, at Plessis les Tours, the Bearnese, in his shabby old chamois jacket and his well-dinted cuirass took the silken Henry in his arms, and the two—the hero and the fribble—swearing eternal friendship, proceeded to besiege Paris. A few weeks later, the dagger of Jacques Clement put an end for ever to, the line of Valois. Luckless Henry *iii*. slept with his forefathers, and Henry of Bourbon and Navarre proclaimed himself King of France. Catharine and her four sons had all past away at last, and it would be a daring and a dexterous schemer who should now tear the crown, for which he had so long and so patiently waited, from the iron grasp of the Bearnese. Philip had a more difficult game than ever to play in France. It would be hard for him to make valid the claims of the Infanta and any husband he might select for her to the crown of her grandfather Henry *ii*. It seemed simple enough for him, while waiting the course of events, to set up a royal effigy before the world in the shape of an effete old Cardinal Bourbon, to pour oil upon its head and to baptize it Charles X.; but meantime the other Bourbon was no effigy, and he called himself Henry *iv*.

Page 1819

It was easy enough for Paris, and Madam League, and Philip the Prudent, to cry wo upon the heretic; but the cheerful leader of the Huguenots was a philosopher, who in the days of St. Bartholomew had become orthodox to save his life, and who was already "instructing himself" anew in order to secure his crown. Philip was used to deal with fanatics, and had often been opposed by a religious bigotry as fierce as his own; but he might perhaps be baffled by a good-humoured free-thinker, who was to teach him a lesson in political theology of which he had never dreamed.

The Leaguers were not long in doubt as to the meaning of "instruction," and they were thoroughly persuaded that—so soon as Henry *iv*. should reconcile himself with Rome—-their game was likely to become desperate.

Nevertheless prudent Philip sat in his elbow-chairs writing his apostilles, improving himself and his secretaries in orthography, but chiefly confining his attention to the affairs of France. The departed Mucio's brother Mayenne was installed as chief stipendiary of Spain and lieutenant-general for the League in France, until Philip should determine within himself in what form to assume the sovereignty of that kingdom. It might be questionable however whether that corpulent Duke, who spent more time in eating than Henry *iv*. did in sleeping, and was longer in reading a letter than Henry in winning a battle, were likely to prove a very dangerous rival even with all Spain at his back—to the lively Bearnese. But time would necessarily be consumed before the end was reached, and time and Philip were two. Henry of Navarre and France was ready to open his ears to instruction; but even he had declared, several years before, that "a religion was not to be changed like a shirt." So while the fresh garment was airing for him at Rome, and while he was leisurely stripping off the old, he might perhaps be taken at a disadvantage. Fanaticism on both sides, during this process of instruction, might be roused. The Huguenots on their part might denounce the treason of their great chief, and the Papists, on theirs, howl at the hypocrisy of the pretended conversion. But Henry *iv*. had philosophically prepared himself for the denunciations of the Protestants, while determined to protect them against the persecutions of the Romanism to which he meant to give his adhesion. While accepting the title of renegade, together with an undisputed crown, he was not the man to rekindle those fires of religious bigotry which it was his task to quench, now that they had lighted his way to the throne. The demands of his Catholic supporters for the exclusion from the kingdom of all religions but their own, were steadily refused.

Page 1820

And thus the events of 1588 and 1589 indicated that the great game of despotism against freedom would be played, in the coming years, upon the soil of France. Already Elizabeth had furnished the new King with L22,000 in gold—a larger sum; as he observed, than he had ever seen before in his life, and the States of the Netherlands had provided him with as much more. Willoughby too, and tough Roger Williams, and Baskerville, and Umpton, and Vere, with 4000 English pikemen at their back, had already made a brief but spirited campaign in France; and the Duke of Parma, after recruiting his health; so, far as it was possible; at Spa, was preparing himself to measure swords with that great captain of Huguenots; who now assumed the crown of his ancestors, upon the same ground. It seemed probable that for the coming years England would be safe from Spanish invasion, and that Holland would have a better opportunity than it had ever enjoyed before of securing its liberty and perfecting its political organization. While Parma, Philip; and Mayenne were fighting the Bearnese for the crown of France, there might be a fairer field for the new commonwealth of the United Netherlands.

And thus many of the personages who have figured in these volumes have already passed away. Leicester had died just after the defeat of the Armada, and the thrifty Queen, while dropping a tear upon the grave of ‘sweet Robin,’ had sold his goods at auction to defray his debts to herself; and Moeurs, and Martin Schenk, and ‘Mucio,’ and Henry *iii*., and Catharine de’ Medici, were all dead. But Philip the Prudent remained, and Elizabeth of England, and Henry of France and Navarre, and John of Olden-Barneveld; and there was still another personage, a very young man still, but a deep-thinking, hard-working student, fagging steadily at mathematics and deep in the works of Stevinus, who, before long, might play a conspicuous part in the world’s great drama. But, previously to 1590, Maurice of Nassau seemed comparatively insignificant, and he could be spoken of by courtiers as a cipher, and as an unmannerly boy just let loose from school.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

I will never live, to see the end of my poverty
Religion was not to be changed like a shirt
Tension now gave place to exhaustion

Etext editor’s bookmarks, *entire* 1586-89 *united Netherlands*:

A burnt cat fears the fire
A free commonwealth—was thought an absurdity
Act of Uniformity required Papists to assist
All business has been transacted with open doors
And thus this gentle and heroic spirit took its flight
Are wont to hang their piety on the bell-rope
Arminianism

As lieve see the Spanish as the Calvinistic inquisition
As logical as men in their cups are prone to be
Baiting his hook a little

Page 1821

to his appetite
Beacons in the upward path of mankind
Been already crimination and recrimination more than enough
Bungling diplomatists and credulous dotards
Canker of a long peace
Casting up the matter “as pinchingly as possibly might be”
Defect of enjoying the flattery, of his inferiors in station
Disposed to throat-cutting by the ministers of the Gospel
During this, whole war, we have never seen the like
Elizabeth (had not) the faintest idea of religious freedom
Englishmen and Hollanders preparing to cut each other’s throats
Even to grant it slowly is to deny it utterly
Evil is coming, the sooner it arrives the better
Faction has rarely worn a more mischievous aspect
Fitter to obey than to command
Five great rivers hold the Netherland territory in their coils
Fool who useth not wit because he hath it not
Forbidding the wearing of mourning at all
Full of precedents and declamatory commonplaces
God, whose cause it was, would be pleased to give good weather
Guilty of no other crime than adhesion to the Catholic faith
Hard at work, pouring sand through their sieves
Hardly a distinguished family in Spain not placed in mourning
Heretics to the English Church were persecuted
High officers were doing the work of private, soldiers
I did never see any man behave himself as he did
I am a king that will be ever known not to fear any but God
I will never live, to see the end of my poverty
Individuals walking in advance of their age
Infamy of diplomacy, when diplomacy is unaccompanied by honesty
Inquisitors enough; but there were no light vessels in The Armada
Invincible Armada had not only been vanquished but annihilated
Look for a sharp war, or a miserable peace
Loving only the persons who flattered him
Mendacity may always obtain over innocence and credulity
Never peace well made, he observed, without a mighty war
Never did statesmen know better how not to do
Not many more than two hundred Catholics were executed
Nothing could equal Alexander’s fidelity, but his perfidy
One could neither cry nor laugh within the Spanish dominions
Only citadel against a tyrant and a conqueror was distrust
Pray here for satiety, (said Cecil) than ever think of variety

Rebuked him for his obedience
Religion was not to be changed like a shirt
Respect for differences in religious opinions
Sacrificed by the Queen for faithfully obeying her orders
Security is dangerous
She relieth on a hope that will deceive her
Simple truth was highest skill
Sixteen of their best ships had been sacrificed
Sparing and war have no affinity together
Stake or gallows (for)

Page 1822

heretics to transubstantiation
States were justified in their almost unlimited distrust
Strength does a falsehood acquire in determined and skilful hand
Succeeded so well, and had been requited so ill
Sure bind, sure find
Sword in hand is the best pen to write the conditions of peace
Tension now gave place to exhaustion
That crowned criminal, Philip the Second
The worst were encouraged with their good success
The blaze of a hundred and fifty burning vessels
The sapling was to become the tree
Their existence depended on war
There is no man fitter for that purpose than myself
They chose to compel no man's conscience
Tolerating religious liberty had never entered his mind
Torturing, hanging, embowelling of men, women, and children
Trust her sword, not her enemy's word
Undue anxiety for impartiality
Universal suffrage was not dreamed of at that day
Waiting the pleasure of a capricious and despotic woman
We were sold by their negligence who are now angry with us
Wealthy Papists could obtain immunity by an enormous fine
Who the "people" exactly were

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

Volume *iii*.

Motley's history of the Netherlands, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 72

History of the United Netherlands, 1590-1599, Complete

CHAPTER XXI.

Effect of the Assassination of Henry *iii*.—Concentration of forces for the invasion of France—The Netherlands determine on striking a blow for freedom—Organization of a Dutch army—Stratagem to surprise the castle of Breda—Intrepidity and success of the enterprise.

The dagger of Jacques Clement had done much, and was likely to do more, to change the face of Europe. Another proof was afforded that assassination had become a regular and recognised factor in the political problems of the sixteenth century. Another illustration was exhibited of the importance of the individual—even although that individual was in himself utterly despicable—to the working out of great historical results. It seemed that the murder of Henry *iii*.—that forlorn caricature of kingship and of manhood—was likely to prove eminently beneficial to the cause of the Netherland commonwealth. Five years earlier, the murder of William the Silent had seemed to threaten its very existence.

For Philip the Prudent, now that France was deprived of a head, conceived that the time had arrived when he might himself assume the sovereignty of that kingdom. While a thing of straw, under the name of Charles X. and shape of a Cardinal Bourbon, was set up to do battle with that living sovereign and soldier, the heretic Bearnese, the Duke of Parma was privately ordered to bend all his energies towards the conquest of the realm in dispute, under pretence of assisting the Holy League.

Page 1823

Accordingly, early in the year 1590, Alexander concentrated a considerable force on the French frontier in Artois and Hainault, apparently threatening Bergen-op-Zoom and other cities in South Holland, but in reality preparing to invade France. The Duke of Mayenne, who had assumed the title of lieutenant-general of that kingdom, had already visited him at Brussels in order to arrange the plan of the campaign.

While these measures were in preparation, an opportunity was likely to be afforded to the Netherlanders of striking a blow or two for liberty and independence; now that all the force that possibly could be spared was to be withdrawn by their oppressors and to be used for the subjugation of their neighbours. The question was whether there would be a statesman and a soldier ready to make use of this golden opportunity.

There was a statesman ripe and able who, since the death of the Taciturn, had been growing steadily in the estimation of his countrymen and who already was paramount in the councils of the States-General. There was a soldier, still very young, who was possessed of the strongest hereditary claims to the confidence and affection of the United Provinces and who had been passing a studious youth in making himself worthy of his father and his country. Fortunately, too, the statesman and the soldier were working most harmoniously together. John of Olden-Barneveld, with his great experience and vast and steady intellect, stood side by side with young Maurice of Nassau at this important crisis in the history of the new commonwealth.

At length the twig was becoming the tree—'tandem fit surculus arbor'—according to the device assumed by the son of William the Silent after his father's death.

The Netherlands had sore need of a practical soldier to contend with the scientific and professional tyrants against whom they had so long been struggling, and Maurice, although so young, was pre-eminently a practical man. He was no enthusiast; he was no poet. He was at that period certainly no politician. Not often at the age of twenty has a man devoted himself for years to pure mathematics for the purpose of saving his country. Yet this was Maurice's scheme. Four years long and more, when most other youths in his position and at that epoch would have been alternating between frivolous pleasures and brilliant exploits in the field, the young prince had spent laborious days and nights with the learned Simon Stevinus of Bruges. The scientific work which they composed in common, the credit of which the master assigned to the pupil, might have been more justly attributed perhaps to the professor than to the prince, but it is certain that Maurice was an apt scholar.

In that country, ever held in existence by main human force against the elements, the arts of engineering, hydrostatics and kindred branches were of necessity much cultivated. It was reserved for the young mathematician to make them as potent against a human foe.

Page 1824

Moreover, there were symptoms that the military discipline, learning and practical skill, which had almost made Spain the mistress of the world, were sinking into decay. Farnese, although still in the prime of life, was broken in health, and there seemed no one fit to take the place of himself and his lieutenants when they should be removed from the scene where they had played their parts so consummately. The army of the Netherlands was still to be created. Thus far the contest had been mainly carried on by domestic militia and foreign volunteers or hirelings. The train-bands of the cities were aided in their struggles against Spanish pikemen and artillerists, Italian and Albanian cavalry by the German riders, whom every little potentate was anxious to sell to either combatant according to the highest bid, and by English mercenaries, whom the love of adventure or the hope of plunder sent forth under such well-seasoned captains as Williams and Morgan, Vere and the Norrises, Baskerville and Willoughby.

But a Dutch army there was none and Maurice had determined that at last a national force should be created. In this enterprise he was aided and guided by his cousin Lewis William, Stadtholder of Friesland—the quaint, rugged little hero, young in years but almost a veteran in the wars of freedom, who was as genial and intellectual in council as he was reckless and impulsive in the field.

Lewis William had felt that the old military art was dying out and that—there was nothing to take its place. He was a diligent student of antiquity. He had revived in the swamps of Friesland the old manoeuvres, the quickness of wheeling, the strengthening, without breaking ranks or columns, by which the ancient Romans had performed so much excellent work in their day, and which seemed to have passed entirely into oblivion. Old colonels and rittmasters, who had never heard of Leo the Thracian nor the Macedonian phalanx, smiled and shrugged their shoulders, as they listened to the questions of the young count, or gazed with profound astonishment at the eccentric evolutions to which he was accustoming his troops. From the heights of superior wisdom they looked down with pity upon these innovations on the good old battle order. They were accustomed to great solid squares of troops wheeling in one way, steadily, deliberately, all together, by one impulse and as one man. It was true that in narrow fields, and when the enemy was pressing, such stately evolutions often became impossible or ensured defeat; but when the little Stadtholder drilled his soldiers in small bodies of various shapes, teaching them to turn, advance; retreat; wheel in a variety of ways, sometimes in considerable masses, sometimes man by man, sending the foremost suddenly to the rear, or bringing the hindmost ranks to the front, and began to attempt all this in narrow fields as well as in wide ones, and when the enemy was in sight, men stood aghast at his want of reverence, or laughed at him as a pedant. But there came a day when they did not laugh, neither friends nor enemies. Meantime the two cousins, who directed all the military operations in the provinces, understood each other thoroughly and proceeded to perfect their new system, to be adopted at a later period by all civilized nations.

Page 1825

The regular army of the Netherlands was small in number at that moment—not more than twenty thousand foot with two thousand horse—but it was well disciplined, well equipped, and, what was of great importance, regularly paid. Old campaigners complained that in the halcyon days of paper enrolments, a captain could earn more out of his company than a colonel now received for his whole regiment. The days when a thousand men were paid for, with a couple of hundred in the field, were passing away for the United Provinces and existed only for Italians and Spaniards. While, therefore, mutiny on an organised and extensive scale seemed almost the normal condition of the unpaid legions of Philip, the little army of Maurice was becoming the model for Europe to imitate.

The United Provinces were as yet very far from being masters of their own territory. Many of their most important cities still held for the king. In Brabant, such towns as Breda with its many dependencies and Gertruydenberg; on the Waal, the strong and wealthy Nymegen which Martin Schenk had perished in attempting to surprise; on the Yssel, the thriving city of Zutphen, whose fort had been surrendered by the traitor York, and the stately Deventer, which had been placed in Philip's possession by the treachery of Sir William Stanley; on the borders of Drenthe, the almost impregnable Koevorden, key to the whole Zwollian country; and in the very heart of ancient Netherland, Groningen, capital of the province of the same name, which the treason of Renneberg had sold to the Spanish tyrant; all these flourishing cities and indispensable strongholds were garrisoned by foreign troops, making the idea of Dutch independence a delusion.

While Alexander of Parma, sorely against his will and in obedience to what, he deemed the insane suggestions of his master, was turning his back on the Netherlands in order to relieve Paris, now hard pressed by the Bearnese, an opportunity offered itself of making at least a beginning in the great enterprise of recovering these most valuable possessions.

The fair and pleasant city of Breda lies on the Merk, a slender stream, navigable for small vessels, which finds its way to the sea through the great canal of the Dintel. It had been the property of the Princes of Orange, Barons of Breda, and had passed with the other possessions of the family to the house of Chalons-Nassau. Henry of Nassau had, half a century before, adorned and strengthened it by a splendid palace-fortress which, surrounded by a deep and double moat, thoroughly commanded the town. A garrison of five companies of Italian infantry and one of cavalry lay in this castle, which was under the command of Edward Lanzavecchia, governor both of Breda and of the neighbouring Gertruydenberg.

Breda was an important strategical position. It was moreover the feudal superior of a large number of adjacent villages as well as of the cities Osterhout, Steenberg and Rosendaal. It was obviously not more desirable for Maurice of Nassau to recover his patrimonial city than it was for the States-General to drive the Spaniards from so important a position!

Page 1826

In the month of February, 1590, Maurice, being then at the castle of Voorn in Zeeland, received a secret visit from a boatman, Adrian van der Berg by name, who lived at the village of Leur, eight or ten miles from Breda, and who had long been in the habit of supplying the castle with turf. In the absence of woods and coal mines, the habitual fuel of the country was furnished by those vast relics of the antediluvian forests which abounded in the still partially submerged soil. The skipper represented that his vessel had passed so often into and out of the castle as to be hardly liable to search by the guard on its entrance. He suggested a stratagem by which it might be possible to surprise the stronghold.

The prince approved of the scheme and immediately consulted with Barneveld. That statesman at once proposed, as a suitable man to carry out the daring venture, Captain Charles de Heraugiere, a nobleman of Cambray, who had been long in the service of the States, had distinguished himself at Sluys and on other occasions, but who had been implicated in Leicester's nefarious plot to gain possession of the city of Leyden a few years before. The Advocate expressed confidence that he would be grateful for so signal an opportunity of retrieving a somewhat damaged reputation. Heraugiere, who was with his company in Voorn at the moment, eagerly signified his desire to attempt the enterprise as soon as the matter was communicated to him; avowing the deepest devotion to the house of William the Silent and perfect willingness to sacrifice his life, if necessary, in its cause and that of the country. Philip Nassau, cousin of Prince Maurice and brother of Lewis William, governor of Gorcum, Dorcum, and Lowenstein Castle and colonel of a regiment of cavalry, was also taken into the secret, as well as Count Hohenlo, President Van der Myle and a few others; but a mystery was carefully spread and maintained over the undertaking.

Heraugiere selected sixty-eight men, on whose personal daring and patience he knew that he could rely, from the regiments of Philip Nassau and of Famars, governor of the neighbouring city of Heusden, and from his own company. Besides himself, the officers to command the party were captains Logier and Fervet, and lieutenant Matthew Held. The names of such devoted soldiers deserve to be commemorated and are still freshly remembered by their countrymen.

On the 25th of February, Maurice and his staff went to Willemstad on the Isle of Klundert, it having been given out on his departure from the Hague that his destination was Dort. On the same night at about eleven o'clock, by the feeble light of a waning moon, Heraugiere and his band came to the Swertsenburg ferry, as agreed upon, to meet the boatman. They found neither him nor his vessel, and they wandered about half the night, very cold, very indignant, much perplexed. At last, on their way back, they came upon the skipper at the village of Terheyde, who made

Page 1827

the extraordinary excuse that he had overslept himself and that he feared the plot had been discovered. It being too late to make any attempt that night, a meeting was arranged for the following evening. No suspicion of treachery occurred to any of the party, although it became obvious that the skipper had grown faint-hearted. He did not come on the next night to the appointed place but he sent two nephews, boatmen like himself, whom he described as dare-devils.

On Monday night, the 26th of February, the seventy went on board the vessel, which was apparently filled with blocks of turf, and packed themselves closely in the hold. They moved slowly during a little time on their perilous voyage; for the winter wind, thick with fog and sleet, blew directly down the river, bringing along with it huge blocks of ice and scooping the water out of the dangerous shallows, so as to render the vessel at any moment liable to be stranded. At last the navigation became impossible and they came to a standstill. From Monday night till Thursday morning those seventy Hollanders lay packed like herrings in the hold of their little vessel, suffering from hunger, thirst, and deadly cold; yet not one of them attempted to escape or murmured a wish to abandon the enterprise. Even when the third morning dawned there was no better prospect of proceeding; for the remorseless east wind still blew a gale against them, and the shoals which beset their path had become more dangerous than ever. It was, however, absolutely necessary to recruit exhausted nature, unless the adventurers were to drop powerless on the threshold when they should at last arrive at their destination. In all secrecy they went ashore at a lonely castle called Nordam, where they remained to refresh themselves until about eleven at night, when one of the boatmen came to them with the intelligence that the wind had changed and was now blowing freshly in from the sea. Yet the voyage of a few leagues, on which they were embarked, lasted nearly two whole days longer. On Saturday afternoon they passed through the last sluice, and at about three o’clock the last boom was shut behind them. There was no retreat possible for them now. The seventy were to take the strong castle and city of Breda or to lay down their lives, every man of them. No quarter and short shrift—such was their certain destiny, should that half-crippled, half-frozen little band not succeed in their task before another sunrise.

They were now in the outer harbour and not far from the Watergate which led into the inner castle-haven. Presently an officer of the guard put off in a skiff and came on board the vessel. He held a little conversation with the two boatmen, observed that the castle was—much in want of full, took a survey of the turf with which the ship was apparently laden, and then lounged into the little cabin. Here he was only separated by a sliding trap-door from the interior of the vessel. Those inside could hear and see his every movement. Had there been a single cough or sneeze from within, the true character of the cargo, then making its way into the castle, would have been discovered and every man would within ten minutes have been butchered. But the officer,

unsuspecting, soon took his departure, saying that he would send some men to warp the vessel into the castle dock.

Page 1828

Meantime, as the adventurers were making their way slowly towards the Watergate, they struck upon a hidden obstruction in the river and the deeply laden vessel sprang a leak. In a few minutes those inside were sitting up to their knees in water—a circumstance which scarcely improved their already sufficiently dismal condition. The boatmen vigorously plied the pumps to save the vessel from sinking outright; a party of Italian soldiers soon arrived on the shore, and in the course of a couple of hours they had laboriously dragged the concealed Hollanders into the inner harbour and made their vessel fast, close to the guard-house of the castle.

And now a crowd of all sorts came on board. The winter nights had been long and fearfully cold, and there was almost a dearth of fuel both in town and fortress. A gang of labourers set to work discharging the turf from the vessel with such rapidity that the departing daylight began to shine in upon the prisoners much sooner than they wished. Moreover, the thorough wetting, to which after all their other inconveniences they had just been exposed in their narrow escape from foundering, had set the whole party sneezing and coughing. Never was a catarrh so sudden, so universal, or so ill-timed. Lieutenant Held, unable to control the violence of his cough, drew his dagger and eagerly implored his next neighbour to stab him to the heart, lest his infirmity should lead to the discovery of the whole party. But the calm and wary skipper who stood on the deck instantly commanded his companion to work at the pump with as much clatter as possible, assuring the persons present that the hold was nearly full of water. By this means the noise of the coughing was effectually drowned. Most thoroughly did the bold boatman deserve the title of dare-devil, bestowed by his more fainthearted uncle. Calmly looking death in the face, he stood there quite at his ease, exchanging jokes with his old acquaintances, chaffering with the eager purchasers of peat shouting most noisy and superfluous orders to the one man who composed his crew, doing his utmost, in short, to get rid of his customers and to keep enough of the turf on board to conceal the conspirators.

At last, when the case seemed almost desperate, he loudly declared that sufficient had been unladen for that evening and that it was too dark and he too tired for further work. So, giving a handful of stivers among the workmen, he bade them go ashore at once and have some beer and come next morning for the rest of the cargo. Fortunately, they accepted his hospitable proposition and took their departure. Only the servant of the captain of the guard lingered behind, complaining that the turf was not as good as usual and that his master would never be satisfied with it.

“Ah!” returned the cool skipper, “the best part of the cargo is underneath. This is expressly reserved for the captain. He is sure to get enough of it to-morrow.”

Page 1829

Thus admonished, the servant departed and the boatman was left to himself. His companion had gone on shore with secret orders to make the best of his way to Prince Maurice, to inform him of the arrival of the ship within the fortress, and of the important fact which they had just learned, that Governor Lanzavecchia, who had heard rumours of some projected enterprise and who suspected that the object aimed at was Gertruydenberg, had suddenly taken his departure for that city, leaving as his lieutenant his nephew Paolo, a raw lad quite incompetent to provide for the safety of Breda.

A little before midnight, Captain Heraugiere made a brief address to his comrades in the vessel, telling them that the hour for carrying out their undertaking had at length arrived. Retreat was impossible, defeat was certain death, only in complete victory lay their own safety and a great advantage for the commonwealth. It was an honor to them to be selected for such an enterprise. To show cowardice now would be an eternal shame for them, and he would be the man to strike dead with his own hand any traitor or poltroon. But if, as he doubted not, every one was prepared to do his duty, their success was assured, and he was himself ready to take the lead in confronting every danger.

He then divided the little band into two companies, one under himself to attack the main guard-house, the other under Fervet to seize the arsenal of the fortress.

Noiselessly they stole out of the ship where they had so long been confined, and stood at last on the ground within the precincts of the castle. Heraugiere marched straight to the guard-house.

“Who goes there?” cried a sentinel, hearing some movement in the darkness.

“A friend,” replied the captain, seizing him, by the throat, and commanding him, if he valued his life, to keep silence except when addressed and then to speak in a whisper.

“How many are there in the garrison?” muttered Heraugiere.

“Three hundred and fifty,” whispered the sentinel.

“How many?” eagerly demanded the nearest followers, not hearing the reply.

“He says there are but fifty of them,” said Heraugiere, prudently suppressing the three hundred, in order to encourage his comrades.

Quietly as they had made their approach, there was nevertheless a stir in the guard-house. The captain of the watch sprang into the courtyard.

“Who goes there?” he demanded in his turn.

“A friend,” again replied Heraugiere, striking him dead with a single blow as he spoke.

Others emerged with torches. Heraugiere was slightly wounded, but succeeded, after a brief struggle, in killing a second assailant. His followers set upon the watch who retreated into the guard-house. Heraugiere commanded his men to fire through the doors and windows, and in a few minutes every one of the enemy lay dead.

It was not a moment for making prisoners or speaking of quarter. Meantime Fervet and his band had not been idle. The magazine-house of the castle was seized, its defenders slain. Young Lanzavecchia made a sally from the palace, was wounded and driven back together with a few of his adherents.

Page 1830

The rest of the garrison fled helter-skelter into the town. Never had the musketeers of Italy—for they all belonged to Spinola's famous Sicilian Legion—behaved so badly. They did not even take the precaution to destroy the bridge between the castle and the town as they fled panic-stricken before seventy Hollanders. Instead of encouraging the burghers to their support they spread dismay, as they ran, through every street.

Young Lanzavecchia, penned into a corner of the castle; began to parley; hoping for a rally before a surrender should be necessary. In the midst of the negotiation and a couple of hours before dawn, Hohenlo; duly apprised by the boatman, arrived with the vanguard of Maurice's troops before the field-gate of the fort. A vain attempt was made to force this portal open, but the winter's ice had fixed it fast. Hohenlo was obliged to batter down the palisade near the water-gate and enter by the same road through which the fatal turf-boat had passed.

Soon after he had marched into the town at the head of a strong detachment, Prince Maurice himself arrived in great haste, attended by Philip Nassau, the Admiral Justinus Nassau, Count Solms, Peter van der Does, and Sir Francis Vere, and followed by another body of picked troops; the musicians playing merrily that national air, then as now so dear to Netherlanders—

> "Wilhelmus van Nassouwen
> Ben ick van Duytaem bloed."

The fight was over. Some forty of the garrison had been killed, but not a man of the attacking party. The burgomaster sent a trumpet to the prince asking permission to come to the castle to arrange a capitulation; and before sunrise, the city and fortress of Breda had surrendered to the authority of the States-General and of his Excellency.

The terms were moderate. The plundering was commuted for the payment of two months' wages to every soldier engaged in the affair. Burghers who might prefer to leave the city were allowed to do so with protection to life, and property. Those who were willing to remain loyal citizens were not to be molested, in their consciences or their households, in regard to religion. The public exercise of Catholic rites was however suspended until the States-General should make some universal provision on this subject.

Subsequently, it must be allowed, the bargain of commutation proved a bad one for the burghers. Seventy men had in reality done the whole work, but so many soldiers, belonging to the detachments who marched in after the fortress had been taken, came forward to claim their months' wages as to bring the whole amount required above one hundred thousand florins. The Spaniards accordingly reproached Prince Maurice with having fined his own patrimonial city more heavily than Alexander Farnese had mulcted Antwerp, which had been made to pay but four hundred thousand florins, a far less sum in proportion to the wealth and importance of the place.

Page 1831

Already the Prince of Parma, in the taking of Breda, saw verified his predictions of the disasters about to fall on the Spanish interests in the Netherlands, by reason of Philip's obstinate determination to concentrate all his energies on the invasion of France. Alexander had been unable, in the midst of preparations for his French campaign, to arrest this sudden capture, but his Italian blood was on fire at the ignominy which had come upon the soldiership of his countrymen. Five companies of foot and one of horse-picked troops of Spain and Italy—had surrendered a wealthy, populous town and a well-fortified castle to a mud-scow, and had fled shrieking in dismay from the onset of seventy frost-bitten Hollanders.

It was too late to save the town, but he could punish, as it deserved, the pusillanimity of the garrison.

Three captains—one of them rejoicing in the martial name of Cesar Guerra—were publicly beheaded in Brussels. A fourth, Ventimiglia, was degraded but allowed to escape with life, on account of his near relationship to the Duke of Terranova, while Governor Lanzavecchia was obliged to resign the command of Gertruydenberg. The great commander knew better than to encourage the yielding up of cities and fortresses by a mistaken lenity to their unlucky defenders.

Prince Maurice sent off letters the same night announcing his success to the States-General. Hohenlo wrote pithily to Olden-Barneveld—"The castle and town of Breda are ours, without a single man dead on our side. The garrison made no resistance but ran distracted out of the town."

The church bells rang and bonfires blazed and cannon thundered in every city in the United Provinces to commemorate this auspicious event. Olden-Barneveld, too, whose part in arranging the scheme was known to have been so valuable, received from the States-General a magnificent gilded vase with sculptured representations of the various scenes in the drama, and it is probable that not more unmingled satisfaction had been caused by any one event of the war than by this surprise of Breda.

The capture of a single town, not of first-rate importance either, would hardly seem too merit so minute a description as has been given in the preceding pages. But the event, with all its details, has been preserved with singular vividness in Netherland story. As an example of daring, patience, and complete success, it has served to encourage the bold spirits of every generation and will always inspire emulation in patriotic hearts of every age and clime, while, as the first of a series of audacious enterprises by which Dutch victories were to take the place of a long procession of Spanish triumphs on the blood-stained soil of the provinces, it merits, from its chronological position, a more than ordinary attention.

In the course of the summer Prince Maurice, carrying out into practice the lessons which he had so steadily been pondering, reduced the towns and strong places of Heyl,

Flemert, Elshout, Crevecoeur, Hayden, Steenberg, Rosendaal, and Osterhout. But his time, during the remainder of the year 1590, was occupied with preparations for a campaign on an extended scale and with certain foreign negotiations to which it will soon be necessary to direct the reader's attention.

Page 1832

CHAPTER XXII.

Struggle of the United Provinces against Philip of Spain—Progress of the Republic—-Influence of Geographical position on the fate of the Netherlands—Contrast offered by America—Miserable state of the so—called “obedient” provinces—Prosperity of the Commonwealth—Its internal government—Tendency to provincialism—Quibbles of the English Members of the Council, Wilkes and Bodley—Exclusion of Olden-Barneveld from the State Council—Proposals of Philip for mediation with the United Provinces—-The Provinces resolutely decline all proffers of intervention.

The United Provinces had now been engaged in unbroken civil war for a quarter of a century. It is, however, inaccurate to designate this great struggle with tyranny as a civil war. It was a war for independence, maintained by almost the whole population of the United Provinces against a foreigner, a despot, alien to their blood, ignorant of their language, a hater of their race, a scorner of their religion, a trampler upon their liberties, their laws, and institutions—a man who had publicly declared that he would rather the whole nation were exterminated than permitted to escape from subjection to the Church of Rome. Liberty of speech, liberty of the press, liberty of thought on political, religious, and social questions existed within those Dutch pastures and Frisian swamps to a far greater degree than in any other part of the world at that day; than in very many regions of Christendom in our own time. Personal slavery was unknown. In a large portion of their territory it had never existed. The free Frisians, nearest blood-relations of, in this respect, the less favoured Anglo-Saxons, had never bowed the knee to the feudal system, nor worn nor caused to be worn the collar of the serf. In the battles for human liberty no nation has stood with cleaner hands before the great tribunal, nor offered more spotless examples of patriotism to be emulated in all succeeding ages, than the Netherlanders in their gigantic struggle with Philip of Spain. It was not a class struggling for their own privileges, but trampling on their fellow-men in a lower scale of humanity. Kings and aristocrats sneered at the vulgar republic where Hans Miller, Hans Baker, and Hans Brewer enjoyed political rights end prated of a sovereignty other than that of long-descended races and of anointed heads. Yet the pikemen of Spain and the splendid cavalry and musketeers of Italy and Burgundy, who were now beginning to show their backs both behind entrenchments and in the open field to their republican foes, could not deny the valour with which the battles of liberty were fought; while Elizabeth of England, maintainer, if such ever were, of hereditary sovereignty and hater of popular freedom, acknowledged that for wisdom in council, dignity and adroitness in diplomatic debate, there were none to surpass the plain burgher statesmen of the new republic.

Page 1833

And at least these Netherlanders were consistent with themselves. They had come to disbelieve in the mystery of kingcraft, in the divine speciality of a few transitory mortals to direct the world's events and to dictate laws to their fellow-creatures. What they achieved was for the common good of all. They chose to live in an atmosphere of blood and fire for generation after generation rather than flinch from their struggle with despotism, for they knew that, cruel as the sea, it would swallow them all at last in one common destruction if they faltered or paused. They fought for the liberty of all. And it is for this reason that the history of this great conflict deserved to be deeply pondered by those who have the instinct of human freedom. Had the Hollanders basely sunk before the power of Spain, the proud history of England, France, and Germany would have been written in far different terms. The blood and tears which the Netherlanders caused to flow in their own stormy days have turned to blessings for remotest climes and ages. A pusillanimous peace, always possible at any period of their war, would have been hailed with rapture by contemporary statesmen, whose names have vanished from the world's memory; but would have sown with curses and misery the soil of Europe for succeeding ages. The territory of the Netherlands is narrow and meagre. It is but a slender kingdom now among the powers of the earth. The political grandeur of nations is determined by physical causes almost as much as by moral ones. Had the cataclysm which separated the fortunate British islands from the mainland happened to occur, instead, at a neighbouring point of the earth's crust; had the Belgian, Dutch, German and Danish Netherland floated off as one island into the sea, while that famous channel between two great rival nations remained dry land, there would have been a different history of the world.

But in the 16th century the history of one country was not an isolated chapter of personages and events. The history of the Netherlands is history of liberty. It was now combined with the English, now with French, with German struggles for political and religious freedom, but it is impossible to separate it from the one great complex which makes up the last half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries.

At that day the Netherland republic was already becoming a power of importance in the political family of Christendom. If, in spite of her geographical disadvantages, she achieved so much, how much vaster might her power have grown, how much stronger through her example might popular institutions throughout the world have become, and how much more pacific the relations of European tribes, had nature been less niggard in her gifts to the young commonwealth. On the sea she was strong, for the ocean is the best of frontiers; but on land her natural boundaries faded vaguely away, without strong physical demarcations and with no sharply

Page 1834

defined limits of tongue, history or race. Accident or human caprice seemed to have divided German Highland from German Netherland; Belgic Gaul from the rest of the Gallic realm. And even from the slender body, which an arbitrary destiny had set off for centuries into a separate organism, tyranny and religious bigotry had just hewn another portion away. But the commonwealth was already too highly vitalized to permit peaceful dismemberment. Only the low organisms can live in all their parts after violent separations. The trunk remained, bleeding but alive and vigorous, while the amputated portion lay for centuries in fossilized impotence.

Never more plainly than in the history of this commonwealth was the geographical law manifested by which the fate of nations is so deeply influenced. Courage, enterprise amounting almost to audacity, and a determined will confronted for a long lapse of time the inexorable, and permitted a great empire to germinate out of a few sand-banks held in defiance of the ocean, and protected from human encroachments on the interior only by the artificial barrier of custom-house and fort.

Thus foredoomed at birth, it must increase our admiration of human energy and of the sustaining influence of municipal liberty that the republic, even if transitory, should yet have girdled the earth with its possessions and held for a considerable period so vast a portion of the world in fee.

What a lesson to our transatlantic commonwealth, whom bountiful nature had blessed at her birth beyond all the nations of history and seemed to speed upon an unlimited career of freedom and peaceful prosperity, should she be capable at the first alarm on her track to throw away her inestimable advantages! If all history is not a mockery and a fable, she may be sure that the nation which deliberately carves itself in pieces and, substitutes artificial boundaries for the natural and historic ones, condemns itself either to extinction or to the lower life of political insignificance and petty warfare, with the certain loss of liberty and national independence at last. Better a terrible struggle, better the sacrifice of prosperity and happiness for years, than the eternal setting of that great popular hope, the United American Republic.

I speak in this digression only of the relations of physical nature to liberty and nationality, making no allusion to the equally stringent moral laws which no people can violate and yet remain in health and vigour.

Despite a quarter of a century of what is commonly termed civil war, the United Netherlands were prosperous and full of life. It was in the provinces which had seceded from the union of Utrecht that there was silence as of the grave, destitution, slavery, abject submission to a foreign foe. The leaders in the movement which had brought about the scission of 1579—commonly called the ’Reconciliation’—enjoyed military and civil posts under a foreign tyrant, but

Page 1835

were poorly rewarded for subserviency in fighting against their own brethren by contumely on the part of their masters. As for the mass of the people it would be difficult to find a desolation more complete than that recorded of the “obedient” provinces. Even as six years before, wolves littered their whelps in deserted farmhouses, cane-brake and thicket usurped the place of cornfield and, orchard, robbers swarmed on the highways once thronged by a most thriving population, nobles begged their bread in the streets of cities whose merchants once entertained emperors and whose wealth and traffic were the wonder of the world, while the Spanish viceroy formally permitted the land in the agricultural districts to be occupied and farmed by the first comer for his own benefit, until the vanished proprietors of the soil should make their re-appearance.

“Administered without justice or policy,” said a Netherlander who was intensely loyal to the king and a most uncompromising Catholic, “eaten up and abandoned for that purpose to the arbitrary will of foreigners who suck the substance and marrow of the land without benefit to the king, gnaw the obedient cities to the bones, and plunder the open defenceless country at their pleasure, it may be imagined how much satisfaction these provinces take in their condition. Commerce and trade have ceased in a country which traffic alone has peopled, for without it no human habitation could be more miserable and poor than our land.”—[Discours du Seigneur de Champagny sur les affaires des Pays Bas, 21 Dec. 1589. Bibl. de Bourgogne, *Ms*. No. 12,962.]

Nothing could be more gloomy than the evils thus described by the Netherland statesman and soldier, except the remedy which he suggested. The obedient provinces, thus scourged and blasted for their obedience, were not advised to improve their condition by joining hands with their sister States, who had just constituted themselves by their noble resistance to royal and ecclesiastical tyranny into a free and powerful commonwealth. On the contrary, two great sources of regeneration and prosperity were indicated, but very different ones from those in which the republic had sought and found her strength. In the first place, it was suggested as indispensable that the obedient provinces should have more Jesuits and more Friars. The mendicant orders should be summoned to renewed exertions, and the king should be requested to send seminary priests to every village in numbers proportionate to the population, who should go about from house to house, counting the children, and seeing that they learned their catechism if their parents did not teach them, and, even in case they did, examining whether it was done thoroughly and without deception.

Page 1836

In the second place it was laid down as important that the bishops should confirm no one who had not been sufficiently catechized. “And if the mendicant orders,” said Champagny, “are not numerous enough for these catechizations, the Jesuits might charge themselves therewith, not more and not less than the said mendicants, some of each being deputed to each parish. To this end it would be well if his Majesty should obtain from the Pope a command to the Jesuits to this effect, since otherwise they might not be willing to comply. It should also be ordered that all Jesuits, natives of these provinces, should return hither, instead of wandering about in other regions as if their help were not so necessary here.”—[Ibid.]

It was also recommended that the mendicant friars should turn their particular attention to Antwerp, and that one of them should preach in French, another in German, another in English, every day at the opening of the Exchange.

With these appliances it was thought that Antwerp would revive out of its ruins and, despite the blockade of its river, renew its ancient commercial glories. Founded on the substantial rocks of mendicancy and jesuitism, it might again triumph over its rapidly rising rival, the heretic Amsterdam, which had no better basis for its grandeur than religious and political liberty, and uncontrolled access to the ocean.

Such were the aspirations of a distinguished and loyal Netherlander for the regeneration of his country. Such were his opinions as to the true sources of the wealth and greatness of nations. Can we wonder that the country fell to decay, or that this experienced, statesman and brave soldier should himself, after not many years, seek to hide his dishonoured head under the cowl of a monk?

The coast of the obedient provinces was thoroughly blockaded. The United Provinces commanded the sea, their cruisers, large and small, keeping diligent watch off every port and estuary of the Flemish coast, so that not a herringboat could enter without their permission. Antwerp, when it fell into the hands of the Spaniard, sank for ever from its proud position. The city which Venetians but lately had confessed with a sigh to be superior in commercial grandeur to their own magnificent capital, had ceased to be a seaport. Shut in from the ocean by Flushing—firmly held by an English garrison as one of the cautionary towns for the Queen’s loan—her world-wide commerce withered before men’s eyes. Her population was dwindling to not much more than half its former numbers, while Ghent, Bruges, and other cities were diminished by two-thirds.

Page 1837

On the other hand, the commerce and manufactures of the United Republic had enormously augmented. Its bitterest enemies bore witness to the sagacity and success by which its political affairs were administered, and to its vast superiority in this respect over the obedient provinces. “The rebels are not ignorant of our condition,” said Champagny, “they are themselves governed with consummate wisdom, and they mock at those who submit themselves to the Duke of Parma. They are the more confirmed in their rebellion, when they see how many are thronging from us to them, complaining of such bad government, and that all take refuge in flight who can from the misery and famine which it has caused throughout these provinces!” The industrial population had flowed from the southern provinces into the north, in obedience to an irresistible law. The workers in iron, paper, silk, linen, lace, the makers of brocade, tapestry, and satin, as well as of all the coarser fabrics, had fled from the land of oppression to the land of liberty. Never in the history of civilisation had there been a more rapid development of human industry than in Holland during these years of bloodiest warfare. The towns were filled to overflowing. Amsterdam multiplied in wealth and population as fast as Antwerp shrank. Almost as much might be said of Middelburg, Enkhuyzen, Horn, and many other cities. It is the epoch to which the greatest expansion of municipal architecture is traced. Warehouses, palaces, docks, arsenals, fortifications, dykes, splendid streets and suburbs, were constructed on every side, and still there was not room for the constantly increasing population, large numbers of which habitually dwelt in the shipping. For even of that narrow span of earth called the province of Holland, one-third was then interior water, divided into five considerable lakes, those of Harlem, Schermer, Beemster, Waert, and Purmer. The sea was kept out by a magnificent system of dykes under the daily superintendence of a board of officers, called dyke-graves, while the rain-water, which might otherwise have drowned the soil thus painfully reclaimed, was pumped up by windmills and drained off through sluices opening and closing with the movement of the tides.

The province of Zeeland was one vast “polder.” It was encircled by an outer dyke of forty Dutch equal to one hundred and fifty English, miles in extent, and traversed by many interior barriers. The average cost of dyke-building was sixty florins the rod of twelve feet, or 84,000 florins the Dutch mile. The total cost of the Zeeland dykes was estimated at 3,360,000 florins, besides the annual repairs.

Page 1838

But it was on the sea that the Netherlanders were really at home, and they always felt it in their power—as their last resource against foreign tyranny—to bury their land for ever in the ocean, and to seek a new country at the ends of the earth. It has always been difficult to doom to political or personal slavery a nation accustomed to maritime pursuits. Familiarity with the boundless expanse of ocean, and the habit of victoriously contending with the elements in their stormy strength, would seem to inspire a consciousness in mankind of human dignity and worth. With the exception of Spain, the chief seafaring nations of the world were already protestant. The counter-league, which was to do battle so strenuously with the Holy Confederacy, was essentially a maritime league. “All the maritime heretics of the world, since heresy is best suited to navigators, will be banded together,” said Champagny, “and then woe to the Spanish Indies, which England and Holland are already threatening.”

The Netherlanders had been noted from earliest times for a free-spoken and independent personal demeanour. At this epoch they were taking the lead of the whole world in marine adventure. At least three thousand vessels of between one hundred and four hundred tons, besides innumerable doggers, busses, cromstevens, and similar craft used on the rivers and in fisheries, were to be found in the United Provinces, and one thousand, it was estimated, were annually built.

They traded to the Baltic regions for honey, wax, tallow, lumber, iron, turpentine, hemp. They brought from farthest Indies and from America all the fabrics of ancient civilisation, all the newly discovered products of a virgin soil, and dispensed them among the less industrious nations of the earth. Enterprise, led on and accompanied by science, was already planning the boldest flights into the unknown yet made by mankind, and it will soon be necessary to direct attention to those famous arctic voyages, made by Hollanders in pursuit of the north-west passage to Cathay, in which as much heroism, audacity, and scientific intelligence were displayed as in later times have made so many men belonging to both branches of the Anglo-Saxon race illustrious. A people, engaged in perennial conflict with a martial and sacerdotal despotism the most powerful in the world, could yet spare enough from its superfluous energies to confront the dangers of the polar oceans, and to bring back treasures of science to enrich the world.

Such was the spirit of freedom. Inspired by its blessed influence this vigorous and inventive little commonwealth triumphed over all human, all physical obstacles in its path. It organised armies on new principles to drive the most famous legions of history from its soil. It built navies to help rescue, at critical moments, the cause of England, of Protestantism, of civil liberty, and even of French nationality. More than all, by its trade with its arch-enemy, the republic constantly multiplied its resources for destroying his power and aggrandizing its own.

Page 1839

The war navy of the United Provinces was a regular force of one hundred ships—large at a period when a vessel of thirteen hundred tons was a monster—together with an indefinite number of smaller craft, which could be put into the public service on short notice? In those days of close quarters and light artillery a merchant ship was converted into a cruiser by a very simple, process. The navy was a self-supporting one, for it was paid by the produce of convoy fees and licenses to trade. It must be confessed that a portion of these revenues savoured much of black-mail to be levied on friend and foe; for the distinctions between, freebooter, privateer, pirate, and legitimate sea-robber were not very closely drawn in those early days of seafaring.

Prince Maurice of Nassau was lord high admiral, but he was obliged to listen to the counsels of various provincial boards of admiralty, which often impeded his action and interfered with his schemes.

It cannot be denied that the inherent vice of the Netherland polity was already a tendency to decentralisation and provincialism. The civil institutions of the country, in their main characteristics, have been frequently sketched in these pages. At this period they had entered almost completely into the forms which were destined to endure until the commonwealth fell in the great crash of the French Revolution. Their beneficial effects were more visible now—sustained and bound together as the nation was by the sense of a common danger, and by the consciousness of its daily developing strength—than at a later day when prosperity and luxury had blunted the fine instincts of patriotism.

The supreme power, after the deposition of Philip, and the refusal by France and by England to accept the sovereignty of the provinces, was definitely lodged in the States-General. But the States-General did not technically represent the, people. Its members were not elected by the people. It was a body composed of, delegates from each provincial assembly, of which there were now five: Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, Utrecht, and Gelderland. Each provincial assembly consisted again of delegates, not from the inhabitants of the provinces, but from the magistracies of the cities. Those, magistracies, again, were not elected by the citizens. They elected themselves by renewing their own vacancies, and were, in short, immortal corporations. Thus, in final analysis, the supreme power was distributed and localised among the mayors and aldermen of a large number of cities, all independent alike of the people below and of any central power above.

Page 1840

It is true that the nobles, as, a class, had a voice in the provincial and, in the general assembly, both for themselves and as technical representatives of the smaller towns and of the rural population. But, as a matter of fact, the influence of this caste had of late years very rapidly diminished, through its decrease in numbers, and the far more rapid increase in wealth and power of the commercial and manufacturing classes. Individual nobles were constantly employed in the military, civil, and diplomatic service of the republic, but their body had ceased to be a power. It had been the policy of William the Silent to increase the number of cities entitled to send deputies to the States; for it was among the cities that his resistance to the tyranny of Spain, and his efforts to obtain complete independence for his country, had been mainly supported. Many of the great nobles, as has been seen in these pages, denounced the liberator and took sides with the tyrant. Lamoral Egmont had walked to the scaffold to which Philip had condemned him, chanting a prayer for Philip's welfare. Egmont's eldest son was now foremost in the Spanish army, doing battle against his own country in behalf of the tyrant who had taken his father's life. Aremberg and Ligny, Arachot, Chimay, Croy, Caprea, Montigny, and most of the great patrician families of the Netherlands fought on the royal side.

The revolution which had saved the country from perdition and created the great Netherland republic was a burgher revolution, and burgher statesmen now controlled the State. The burgher class of Europe is not the one that has been foremost in the revolutionary movements of history, or that has distinguished itself—especially in more modern times—by a passionate love of liberty. It is always easy to sneer at Hans Miller and Hans Baker, and at the country where such plebeians are powerful. Yet the burghers played a prominent part in the great drama which forms my theme, and there has rarely been seen a more solid or powerful type of their class than the burgher statesman, John of Olden-Barneveld, who, since the death of William the Silent and the departure of Lord Leicester, had mainly guided the destinies of Holland. Certainly no soldier nor statesman who ever measured intellects with that potent personage was apt to treat his genius otherwise than with profound respect.

But it is difficult to form a logical theory of government except on the fiction of divine right as a basis, unless the fact of popular sovereignty, as expressed by a majority, be frankly accepted in spite of philosophical objections.

Page 1841

In the Netherlands there was no king, and strictly speaking no people. But this latter and fatal defect was not visible in the period of danger and of contest. The native magistrates of that age were singularly pure, upright, and patriotic. Of this there is no question whatever. And the people acquiesced cheerfully in their authority, not claiming a larger representation than such as they virtually possessed in the multiple power exercised over them, by men moving daily among them, often of modest fortunes and of simple lives. Two generations later, and in the wilderness of Massachusetts, the early American colonists voluntarily placed in the hands of their magistrates, few in number, unlimited control of all the functions of government, and there was hardly an instance known of an impure exercise of authority. Yet out of that simple kernel grew the least limited and most powerful democracy ever known.

In the later days of Netherland history a different result became visible, and with it came the ruin of the State. The governing class, of burgher origin, gradually separated itself from the rest of the citizens, withdrew from commercial pursuits, lived on hereditary fortunes in the exercise of functions which were likewise virtually hereditary, and so became an oligarchy. This result, together with the physical causes already indicated, made the downfall of the commonwealth probable whenever it should be attacked by an overwhelming force from without.

The States-General, however, at this epoch—although they had in a manner usurped the sovereignty, which in the absence of a feudal lord really belonged to the whole people, and had silently repossessed themselves of those executive functions which they had themselves conferred upon the state council—were at any rate without self-seeking ambition. The Hollanders, as a race, were not office seekers, but were singularly docile to constituted authority, while their regents—as the municipal magistrates were commonly called—were not very far removed above the mass by birth or habitual occupation. The republic was a social and political fact, against which there was no violent antagonism either of laws or manners, and the people, although not technically existing, in reality was all in all. In Netherland story the People is ever the true hero. It was an almost unnoticed but significant revolution—that by which the state council was now virtually deprived of its authority. During Leicester's rule it had been a most important college of administration. Since his resignation it had been entrusted by the States-General with high executive functions, especially in war matters. It was an assembly of learned counsellors appointed from the various provinces for wisdom and experience, usually about eighteen in number, and sworn in all things to be faithful to the whole republic. The allegiance of all was rendered to the nation. Each individual member was required to "forswear his native province in order to be true to the generality." They deliberated in common for the general good, and were not hampered by instructions from the provincial diets, nor compelled to refer to those diets for decision when important questions were at issue. It was an independent executive committee for the whole republic.

Page 1842

But Leicester had made it unpopular. His intrigues, in the name of democracy, to obtain possession of sovereign power, to inflame the lower classes against the municipal magistracies, and to excite the clergy to claim a political influence to which they were not entitled and which was most mischievous in its effects, had exposed the state council, with which he had been in the habit of consulting, to suspicion.

The Queen of England, by virtue of her treaty had the right to appoint two of her subjects to be members of the council. The governor of her auxiliary forces was also entitled to a seat there. Since the malpractices of Leicester and the danger to which the country had been, subjected in consequence had been discovered, it was impossible that there should be very kindly feeling toward England in the public mind, however necessary a sincere alliance between the two countries was known to be for the welfare of both.

The bickering of the two English councillors, Wilkes and Bodley, and of the governor of the English contingent with the Hollanders, was incessant. The Englishmen went so far as to claim the right of veto upon all measures passed by the council, but the States-General indignantly replied that the matters deliberated and decided upon by that board were their own affairs, not the state affairs of England. The two members and the military officer who together represented her Majesty were entitled to participate in the deliberations and to vote with their brother members. For them to claim the right, however, at will to annul the proceedings was an intolerable assumption, and could not be listened to for a moment. Certainly it would have been strange had two Dutchmen undertaken to veto every measure passed by the Queen's council at Richmond or Windsor, and it was difficult to say on what article of the contract this extraordinary privilege was claimed by Englishmen at the Hague.

Another cause of quarrel was the inability of the Englishmen to understand the language in which the debates of the state council were held.

According to a custom not entirely unexampled in parliamentary history the members of assembly and council made use of their native tongue in discussing the state affairs of their native land. It was however considered a grievance by the two English members that the Dutchmen should speak Dutch, and it was demanded in the Queen's name that they should employ some other language which a foreigner could more easily understand.

The Hollanders however refused this request, not believing that in a reversed case her Majesty's Council or Houses of Parliament would be likely or competent to carry on their discussions habitually in Italian or Latin for the benefit of a couple of strangers who might not be familiar with English. The more natural remedy would have been for the foreigners to take lessons in the tongue of the country, or to seek for an interpreter among their colleagues; especially as the States, when all the Netherlands were but

provinces, had steadily refused to adopt any language but their mother tongue, even at the demand of their sovereign prince.

Page 1843

At this moment, Sir Thomas Bodley was mainly entrusted with her Majesty's affairs at the Hague, but his overbearing demeanour, intemperate language, and passionate style of correspondence with the States and with the royal government, did much injury to both countries. The illustrious Walsingham—whose death in the spring of this year England had so much reason to deplore—had bitterly lamented, just before his death, having recommended so unquiet a spirit for so important a place. Ortel, envoy of the States to London, expressed his hopes that affairs would now be handled more to the satisfaction of the States; as Bodley would be obliged, since the death of Sir Francis, to address his letters to the Lord High Treasurer, with whom it would be impossible for him to obtain so much influence as he had enjoyed with the late Secretary of State.

Moreover it was exactly at this season that the Advocate of Holland, Olden-Barneveld, was excluded from the state council. Already the important province of Holland was dissatisfied with its influence in that body. Bearing one-half of the whole burthen of the war it was not content with one-quarter of the council vote, and very soon it became the custom for the States-General to conduct all the most important affairs of the republic. The state council complained that even in war matters it was not consulted, and that most important enterprises were undertaken by Prince Maurice without its knowledge, and on advice of the Advocate alone. Doubtless this was true, and thus, most unfortunately, the commonwealth was degraded to a confederacy instead of becoming an incorporate federal State. The members of the States-General—as it has been seen were responsible only to their constituents, the separate provinces. They avowed allegiance, each to his own province, none to the central government. Moreover they were not representatives, but envoys, appointed by petty provinces, bound by written orders, and obliged to consult at every step with their sovereigns at home. The Netherland polity was thus stamped almost at its birth with a narrow provincialism: Delay and hesitation thus necessarily engendered were overcome in the days of danger by patriotic fervour. The instinct of union for the sake of the national existence was sufficiently strong, and the robust, practical common sense of the people sufficiently enlightened to prevent this weakness from degenerating into impotence so long as the war pressure remained to mould them into a whole. But a day was to come for bitterly rueing this paralysis of the imperial instincts of the people, this indefinite decentralisation of the national strength.

For the present, the legislative and executive body was the States-General. But the States-General were in reality the States provincial, and the States provincial were the city municipalities, among which the magistracies of Holland were preponderant.

Ere long it became impossible for an individual to resist the decrees of the civic authorities. In 1591, the States-General passed a resolution by which these arrogant corporations virtually procured their exemption from any process at the suit of a private person to be placed on record. So far could the principle of sovereignty be pulverized. City council boards had become supreme.

Page 1844

It was naturally impossible during the long continuance of this great struggle, that neutral nations should not be injuriously affected by it in a variety of ways. And as a matter of course neutral nations were disposed to counsel peace. Peace, peace; peace was the sigh of the bystanders whose commerce was impeded, whose international relations. were complicated, and whose own security was endangered in the course of the bloody conflict. It was however not very much the fashion of that day for governments to obtrude advice upon each other; or to read to each other moral lectures. It was assumed that when the expense and sacrifice of war had been incurred, it was for cause, and the discovery had not yet been made that those not immediately interested in the fray were better acquainted with its merits than, the combatants themselves, and were moreover endued with, superhuman wisdom to see with perfect clearness that future issue which to the parties themselves was concealed.

Cheap apothegms upon the blessings of peace and upon the expediency of curbing the angry passions, uttered by the belligerents of yesterday to the belligerents of to-day, did not then pass current for profound wisdom.

Still the emperor Rudolph, abstaining for a time from his star-gazing, had again thought proper to make a feeble attempt at intervention in those sublunary matters which were supposed to be within his sphere.

It was perfectly well known that Philip was incapable of abating one jot of his pretensions, and that to propose mediation to the United Provinces was simply to request them, for the convenience of other powers, to return to the slavery out of which, by the persistent efforts of a quarter of a century, they had struggled. Nevertheless it was formally proposed to re-open those lukewarm fountains of diplomatic commonplace in which healing had been sought during the peace negotiations of Cologne in the year 1579. But the States-General resolutely kept them sealed. They simply answered his imperial Majesty by a communication of certain intercepted correspondence between—-the King of Spain and his ambassador at Vienna, San Clemente, through which it was satisfactorily established that any negotiation would prove as gigantic a comedy on the part of Spain as had been the memorable conferences at Ostend, by which the invasion of England had been masked.

There never was a possibility of mediation or of compromise except by complete submission on the part of the Netherlanders to Crown and Church. Both in this, as well as in previous and subsequent attempts at negotiations, the secret instructions of Philip forbade any real concessions on his side. He was always ready to negotiate, he was especially anxious to obtain a suspension of arms from the rebels during negotiation; but his agents were instructed to use great dexterity and dissimulation in order that the proposal for such armistice, as well as for negotiation at all, should appear to

Page 1845

proceed, not from himself as was the fact, but from the emperor as a neutral potentate. The king uniformly proposed three points; firstly, that the rebels should reconvert themselves to the Catholic religion; secondly, that they should return to their obedience to himself; thirdly, that they should pay the expenses of the war. Number three was, however, usually inserted in order that, by conceding it subsequently, after much contestation, he might appear conciliatory. It was a vehicle of magnanimity towards men grown insolent with temporary success. Numbers one and two were immutable.

Especially upon number one was concession impossible. "The Catholic religion is the first thing," said Philip, "and although the rebels do not cease to insist that liberty of conscience should be granted them, in order that they may preserve that which they have had during these past years, this is never to be thought of in any event." The king always made free use of the terrible weapon which the Protestant princes of Germany had placed in his hands. For indeed if it were right that one man, because possessed of hereditary power over millions of his fellow creatures, should compel them all to accept the dogmas of Luther or of Calvin because agreeable to himself, it was difficult to say why another man, in a similarly elevated position, might not compel his subjects to accept the creed of Trent, or the doctrines of Mahomet or Confucius. The Netherlanders were fighting—even more than they knew-for liberty of conscience, for equality of all religions; not for Moses, nor for Melancthon; for Henry, Philip, or Pius; while Philip justly urged that no prince in Christendom permitted license. "Let them well understand," said his Majesty, "that since others who live in error, hold the opinion that vassals are to conform to the religion of their master, it is insufferable that it should be proposed to me that my vassals should have a different religion from mine—and that too being the true religion, proved by so many testimonies and miracles, while all others are deception. This must be arranged with the authority of the commissioners of the emperor, since it is well understood by them that the vassal is never to differ from the opinion of his master." Certainly it was worth an eighty years' war to drive such blasphemous madness as this out of human heads, whether crowned or shaven.

There was likewise a diet held during the summer of this year, of the circles of the empire nearest to the Netherlands—Westphalia, Cleves, Juliers, and Saxony—from which commissioners were deputed both to Brussels and to the Hague, to complain of the misfortunes suffered by neutral and neighbouring nations in consequence of the civil war.

They took nothing by their mission to the Duke of Parma. At the Hague the deputies were heard on the 22nd August, 1590. They complained to the States-General of "brandschatting" on the border, of the holding of forts beyond the lines, and of other invasions of neutral territory, of the cruising of the war-vessels of the States off the shores and on the rivers, and of their interference with lawful traders. Threats were made of forcible intervention and reprisals.

Page 1846

The united States replied on the 13th September. Expressing deep regret that neutral nations should suffer, they pronounced it to be impossible but that some sparks from the great fire, now desolating their land, should fly over into their neighbours' ground. The States were fighting the battle of liberty against slavery, in which the future generations of Germany, as well as of the Netherlands were interested. They were combating that horrible institution, the Holy Inquisition. They were doing their best to strike down the universal monarchy of Spain, which they described as a bloodthirsty, insatiable, insolent, absolute dominion of Saracenic, Moorish Christians. They warred with a system which placed inquisitors on the seats of judges, which made it unlawful to read the Scriptures, which violated all oaths, suppressed all civic freedom, trampled, on all laws and customs, raised inordinate taxes by arbitrary decree, and subjected high and low to indiscriminate murder. Spain had sworn the destruction of the provinces and their subjugation to her absolute dominion, in order to carry out her scheme of universal empire.

These were the deeds and designs against which the States were waging that war, concerning some inconvenient results of which their neighbours, now happily neutral, were complaining. But the cause of the States was the cause of humanity itself. This Saracenic, Moorish, universal monarchy had been seen by Germany to murder, despoil, and trample upon the Netherlands. It had murdered millions of innocent Indians and Granadians. It had kept Naples and Milan in abject slavery. It had seized Portugal. It had deliberately planned and attempted an accursed invasion of England and Ireland. It had overrun and plundered many cities of the empire. It had spread a web of secret intrigue about Scotland. At last it was sending great armies to conquer France and snatch its crown. Poor France now saw the plans of this Spanish tyranny and bewailed her misery. The subjects of her lawful king were ordered to rise against him, on account of religion and conscience. Such holy pretexts were used by these Saracenic Christians in order to gain possession of that kingdom.

For all these reasons, men should not reproach the inhabitants of the Netherlands, because seeing the aims of this accursed tyranny, they had set themselves to resist it. It was contrary to reason to consider them as disturbers of the general peace, or to hold them guilty of violating their oaths or their duty to the laws of the holy empire. The States-General were sure that they had been hitherto faithful and loyal, and they were resolved to continue in that path.

As members of the holy empire, in part—as of old they were considered to be—they had rather the right to expect, instead of reproaches, assistance against the enormous power and inhuman oppression of their enemies. They had demanded it heretofore by their ambassadors, and they still continued to claim it. They urged that, according to the laws of the empire, all foreign soldiers, Spaniards, Saracens, and the like should be driven out of the limits of the empire. Through these means the German Highland and the German Netherland might be restored once more to their old friendship and unity, and might deal with each other again in amity and commerce.

Page 1847

If, however, such requests could not be granted they at least begged his electoral highness and the other dukes, lords, and states to put on the deeds of Netherlanders in this laborious and heavy war the best interpretation, in order that they might, with the better courage and resolution, bear those inevitable burthens which were becoming daily heavier in this task of resistance and self-protection; in order that the provinces might not be utterly conquered, and serve, with their natural resources and advantageous situation, as ‘sedes et media belli’ for the destruction of neighbouring States and the building up of the contemplated universal, absolute monarchy.

The United Provinces had been compelled by overpowering necessity to take up arms. That which had resulted was and remained in ’terminis defensionis.’ Their object was to protect what belonged to them, to recover that which by force or fraud had been taken from them.

In regard to excesses committed by their troops against neutral inhabitants on the border, they expressed a strong regret, together with a disposition to make all proper retribution and to cause all crimes to be punished.

They alluded to the enormous sins of this nature practised by the enemy against neutral soil. They recalled to mind that the Spaniards paid their troops ill or not at all, and that they allowed them to plunder the innocent and the neutral, while the United States had paid their troops better wages, and more punctually, than had ever been done by the greatest potentates of Europe. It was true that the States kept many cruisers off the coasts and upon the rivers, but these were to protect their own citizens and friendly traders against pirates and against the common foe. Germany derived as much benefit from this system as did the Provinces themselves.

Thus did the States-General, respectfully but resolutely, decline all proffers of intervention, which, as they were well aware, could only enure to the benefit of the enemy. Thus did they avoid being entrapped into negotiations which could only prove the most lamentable of comedies.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

A pusillanimous peace, always possible at any period
At length the twig was becoming the tree
Being the true religion, proved by so many testimonies
Certainly it was worth an eighty years’ war
Chief seafaring nations of the world were already protestant
Conceding it subsequently, after much contestation
Fled from the land of oppression to the land of liberty
German Highland and the German Netherland
Little army of Maurice was becoming the model for Europe
Luxury had blunted the fine instincts of patriotism

Maritime heretics
Portion of these revenues savoured much of black-mail
The divine speciality of a few transitory mortals
The history of the Netherlands is history of liberty
The nation which deliberately carves itself in pieces
They had come to disbelieve in the mystery of kingcraft
Worn nor caused to be worn the collar of the serf

Page 1848

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 62, 1590

CHAPTER XXIII.

Philip's scheme of aggrandizement—Projected invasion of France— Internal condition of France—Character of Henry of Navarre— Preparation for action—Battle of Ivry—-Victory of the French king over the League—Reluctance of the King to attack the French capital—Siege of Paris—The pope indisposed towards the League—Extraordinary demonstration of ecclesiastics—Influence of the priests—Extremities of the siege—Attempted negotiation—State of Philip's army—Difficult position of Farnese—March of the allies to the relief of Paris—Lagny taken and the city relieved—Desertion of the king's army—Siege of Corbeil—Death of Pope Sixtus V.— Re-capture of Lagny and Corbeil—Return of Parma to the Netherlands —Result of the expedition.

The scene of the narrative shifts to France. The history of the United Netherlands at this epoch is a world-history. Were it not so, it would have far less of moral and instruction for all time than it is really capable of affording. The battle of liberty against despotism was now fought in the hop-fields of Brabant or the polders of Friesland, now in the: narrow seas which encircle England, and now on the sunny plains of Dauphiny, among the craggy inlets of Brittany, or along the high roads and rivers which lead to the gates of Paris. But everywhere a noiseless, secret, but ubiquitous negotiation was speeding with never an instant's pause to accomplish the work which lansquenettes and riders, pikemen and carabineers were contending for on a hundred battle-fields and amid a din of arms which for a quarter of a century had been the regular hum of human industry. For nearly a generation of mankind, Germans and Hollanders, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen, Spaniards and Italians seemed to be born into the world mainly to fight for or against a system of universal monarchy, conceived for his own benefit by a quiet old man who passed his days at a writing desk in a remote corner of Europe. It must be confessed that Philip *ii*. gave the world work enough. Whether—had the peoples governed themselves—their energies might not have been exerted in a different direction, and on the whole have produced more of good to the human race than came of all this blood and awoke, may be questioned.

But the divine right of kings, associating itself with the power supreme of the Church, was struggling to maintain that old mastery of mankind which awakening reason was inclined to dispute. Countries and nations being regarded as private property to be inherited or bequeathed by a few favoured individuals—provided always that those

individuals were obedient to the chief-priest—it had now become right and proper for the Spanish monarch to annex Scotland, England, and France to the very considerable possessions which were already his own. Scotland he claimed by virtue of the expressed wish of Mary to the exclusion of her heretic son.

Page 1849

France, which had been unjustly usurped by another family in times past to his detriment, and which only a mere human invention—a “pleasantry” as Alva had happily termed it, called the “Salic law”—prevented from passing quietly to his daughter, as heiress to her mother, daughter of Henry *ii*., he was now fully bent upon making his own without further loss of time. England, in consequence of the mishap of the year eighty-eight, he was inclined to defer appropriating until the possession of the French coasts, together with those of the Netherlands, should enable him to risk the adventure with assured chances of success.

The Netherlands were fast slipping beyond his control, to be sure, as he engaged in these endless schemes; and ill-disposed people of the day said that the king was like Aesop’s dog, lapping the river dry in order to get at the skins floating on the surface. The Duke of Parma was driven to his wits’ ends for expedients, and beside himself with vexation, when commanded to withdraw his ill-paid and mutinous army from the Provinces for the purpose of invading France. Most importunate were the appeals and potent the arguments by which he attempted to turn Philip from his purpose. It was in vain. Spain was the great, aggressive, overshadowing power at that day, before whose plots and whose violence the nations alternately trembled, and it was France that now stood in danger of being conquered or dismembered by the common enemy of all. That unhappy kingdom, torn by intestine conflict, naturally invited the ambition and the greediness of foreign powers. Civil war had been its condition, with brief intervals, for a whole generation of mankind. During the last few years, the sword had been never sheathed, while “the holy Confederacy” and the Bearnese struggled together for the mastery. Religion was the mantle under which the chiefs on both sides concealed their real designs as they led on their followers year after year to the desperate conflict. And their followers, the masses, were doubtless in earnest. A great principle—the relation of man to his Maker and his condition in a future world as laid down by rival priesthoods—-has in almost every stage of history had power to influence the multitude to fury and to deluge the world in blood. And so long as the superstitious element of human nature enables individuals or combinations of them to dictate to their fellow-creatures those relations, or to dogmatize concerning those conditions—to take possession of their consciences in short, and to interpose their mummeries between man and his Creator—it is, probable that such scenes as caused the nations to shudder, throughout so large a portion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries will continue to repeat themselves at intervals in various parts of the earth. Nothing can be more sublime than the self-sacrifice, nothing more demoniac than the crimes, which human creatures have seemed always ready to exhibit under the name of religion.

Page 1850

It was and had been really civil war in France. In the Netherlands it had become essentially a struggle for independence against a foreign monarch; although the germ out of which both conflicts had grown to their enormous proportions was an effort of the multitude to check the growth of papacy. In France, accordingly, civil war, attended by that gaunt sisterhood, murder, pestilence, and famine, had swept from the soil almost everything that makes life valuable. It had not brought in its train that extraordinary material prosperity and intellectual development at which men wondered in the Netherlands, and to which allusion has just been made. But a fortunate conjunction of circumstances had now placed Henry of Navarre in a position of vantage. He represented the principle of nationality, of French unity. It was impossible to deny that he was in the regular line of succession, now that luckless Henry of Valois slept with his fathers, and the principle of nationality might perhaps prove as vital a force as attachment to the Roman Church. Moreover, the adroit and unscrupulous Bearnese knew well how to shift the mantle of religion from one shoulder to the other, to serve his purposes or the humours of those whom he addressed.

“The King of Spain would exclude me from the kingdom and heritage of my father because of my religion,” he said to the Duke of Saxony; “but in that religion I am determined to persist so long as I shall live.” The hand was the hand of Henry, but it was the voice of Duplessis Mornay.

“Were there thirty crowns to win,” said he, at about the same time to the States of France, “I would not change my religion on compulsion, the dagger at my throat. Instruct me, instruct me, I am not obstinate.” There spoke the wily freethinker, determined not to be juggled out of what he considered his property by fanatics or priests of either church. Had Henry been a real devotee, the fate of Christendom might have been different. The world has long known how much misery it is in the power of crowned bigots to inflict.

On the other hand, the Holy League, the sacred Confederacy, was catholic or nothing. Already it was more papist than the pope, and loudly denounced Sixtus V. as a Huguenot because he was thought to entertain a weak admiration both for Henry the heretic and for the Jezebel of England.

But the holy confederacy was bent on destroying the national government of France, and dismembering the national domain. To do this the pretext of trampling out heresy and indefinitely extending the power of Rome, was most influential with the multitude, and entitled the leaders to enjoy immense power for the time being, while maturing their schemes for acquiring permanent possession of large fragments of the national territory. Mayenne, Nemours, Aumale, Mercoeur longed to convert temporary governments into independent principalities. The Duke of Lorraine looked with longing eyes on Verdun, Sedan, and, the other fair cities within the territories contiguous—to his own domains. The reckless house of Savoy; with whom freebooting and landrobbery seemed geographical, and hereditary necessities, was busy on the southern borders,

while it seemed easy enough for Philip, *ii*., in right of his daughter, to secure at least the duchy of Brittany before entering on the sovereignty of the whole kingdom.

Page 1851

To the eyes of the world at large: France might well seem in a condition of hopeless disintegration; the restoration of its unity and former position among the nations, under the government of a single chief, a weak and wicked dream. Furious and incessant were the anathemas hurled on the head of the Bearnese for his persistence in drowning the land in blood in the hope of recovering a national capital which never could be his, and of wresting from the control of the confederacy that power. which, whether usurped or rightful, was considered, at least by the peaceably inclined, to have become a solid fact.

The poor puppet locked in the tower of Fontenay, and entitled Charles X.; deceived and scared no one. Such money as there was might be coined, in its name, but Madam League reigned supreme in Paris. The confederates, inspired by the eloquence of a cardinal legate, and supplied with funds by the faithful, were ready to dare a thousand deaths rather than submit to the rule of a tyrant and heretic.

What was an authority derived from the laws of the land and the history of the race compared with the dogmas of Rome and the trained veterans of Spain? It remained to be seen whether nationality or bigotry would triumph. But in the early days of 1590 the prospects of nationality were not encouraging.

Francois de Luxembourg, due de Pincey, was in Rome at that moment, deputed by such catholic nobles of France as were friendly to Henry of Navarre. Sixtus might perhaps be influenced as to the degree of respect to be accorded to the envoy's representations by the events of the campaign about to open. Meantime the legate Gaetano, young, rich, eloquent, unscrupulous, distinguished alike for the splendour of his house and the brilliancy of his intellect, had arrived in Paris.

Followed by a great train of adherents he had gone down to the House of Parliament, and was about to seat himself under the dais reserved for the king, when Brisson, first President of Parliament, plucked him back by the arm, and caused him to take a seat immediately below his own.

Deeply was the bold president to expiate this defence of king and law against the Holy League. For the moment however the legate contented himself with a long harangue, setting forth the power of Rome, while Brisson replied by an oration magnifying the grandeur of France.

Soon afterwards the cardinal addressed himself to the counteraction of Henry's projects of conversion. For, well did the subtle priest understand that in purging himself of heresy, the Bearnese was about to cut the ground from beneath his enemies' feet. In a letter to the archbishops and bishops of France, he argued the matter at length. Especially he denied the necessity or the legality of an assembly of all the prelates of France, such as Henry desired to afford him the requisite "instruction" as to the respective merits of the Roman and the reformed Church. Certainly, he urged, the

Prince of Bearne could hardly require instruction as to the tenets of either, seeing that at different times he had faithfully professed both.

Page 1852

But while benches of bishops and doctors of the Sorbonne were burnishing all the arms in ecclesiastical and legal arsenals for the approaching fray, the sound of louder if not more potent artillery began to be heard in the vicinity of Paris. The candid Henry, while seeking ghostly instruction with eagerness from his papistical patrons, was equally persevering in applying for the assistance of heretic musketeers and riders from his protestant friends in England, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland.

Queen Elizabeth and the States-General vied with each other in generosity to the great champion of protestantism, who was combating the holy league so valiantly, and rarely has a great historical figure presented itself to the world so bizarre of aspect, and under such shifting perplexity of light and shade, as did the Bearnese in the early spring of 1590.

The hope of a considerable portion of the catholic nobility of his realm, although himself an excommunicated heretic; the mainstay of Calvinism while secretly bending all his energies to effect his reconciliation with the pope; the idol of the austere and grimly puritanical, while himself a model of profligacy; the leader of the earnest and the true, although false as water himself in every relation in which human beings can stand to each other; a standardbearer of both great branches of the Christian Church in an age when religion was the atmosphere of men's daily lives, yet finding his sincerest admirer, and one of his most faithful allies, in the Grand Turk,

> [A portion of the magnificently protective letter of Sultan Amurath, in which he complimented Henry on his religious stedfastness, might almost have made the king's cheek tingle.]

the representative of national liberty and human rights against regal and sacerdotal absolutism, while himself a remorseless despot by nature and education, and a believer in no rights of the people save in their privilege to be ruled by himself; it seems strange at first view that Henry of Navarre should have been for centuries so heroic and popular an image. But he was a soldier, a wit, a consummate politician; above all, he was a man, at a period when to be a king was often to be something much less or much worse.

To those accustomed to weigh and analyse popular forces it might well seem that he was now playing an utterly hopeless game. His capital garrisoned by the Pope and the King of Spain, with its grandees and its populace scoffing at his pretence of authority and loathing his name; with an exchequer consisting of what he could beg or borrow from Queen Elizabeth—most parsimonious of sovereigns reigning over the half of a small island—and from the States-General governing a half-born, half-drowned little republic, engaged in a quarter of a century's warfare with the greatest monarch in the world; with a wardrobe consisting of a dozen shirts and five pocket-handkerchiefs, most of them ragged, and with a commissariat made

Page 1853

up of what could be brought in the saddle-bags of his Huguenot cavaliers who came to the charge with him to-day, and to-morrow were dispersed again to their mountain fastnesses; it did not seem likely on any reasonable theory of dynamics that the power of the Bearnese was capable of outweighing Pope and Spain, and the meaner but massive populace of France, and the Sorbonne, and the great chiefs of the confederacy, wealthy, long descended, allied to all the sovereigns of Christendom, potent in territorial possessions and skilful in wielding political influences.

“The Bearnese is poor but a gentleman of good family,” said the cheerful Henry, and it remained to-be seen whether nationality, unity, legitimate authority, history, and law would be able to neutralise the powerful combination of opposing elements.

The king had been besieging Dreux and had made good progress in reducing the outposts of the city. As it was known that he was expecting considerable reinforcements of English ships, Netherlanders, and Germans, the chiefs of the league issued orders from Paris for an attack before he should thus be strengthened.

For Parma, unwillingly obeying the stringent commands of his master, had sent from Flanders eighteen hundred picked cavalry under Count Philip Egmont to join the army of Mayenne. This force comprised five hundred Belgian heavy dragoons under the chief nobles of the land, together with a selection, in even proportions, of Walloon, German, Spanish, and Italian troopers.

Mayenne accordingly crossed the Seine at Mantes with an army of ten thousand foot, and, including Egmont’s contingent, about four thousand horse. A force under Marshal d’Aumont, which lay in Ivry at the passage of the Eure, fell back on his approach and joined the remainder of the king’s army. The siege of Dreux was abandoned; and Henry withdrew to the neighbourhood of Nonancourt. It was obvious that the duke meant to offer battle, and it was rare that the king under any circumstances could be induced to decline a combat.

On the night of the 12th-13th March, Henry occupied Saint Andre, a village situated on an elevated and extensive plain four leagues from Nonancourt, in the direction of Ivry, fringed on three sides by villages and by a wood, and commanding a view of all the approaches from the country between the Seine and Eure. It would have been better had Mayenne been beforehand with him, as the sequel proved; but the duke was not famed for the rapidity of his movements. During the greater part of the night, Henry was employed in distributing his orders for that conflict which was inevitable on the following day. His army was drawn up according to a plan prepared by himself, and submitted to the most experienced of his generals for their approval. He then personally visited every portion of the encampment, speaking words of encouragement to his soldiers, and perfecting his arrangements for the coming conflict. Attended

Page 1854

by Marshals d'Aumont and Biron he remained on horseback during a portion of the night, having ordered his officers to their tents and reconnoitred as well as he could the position of the enemy. Towards morning he retired to his headquarters at Fourainville, where he threw himself half-dressed on his truckle bed, and although the night was bitterly cold, with no covering but his cloak. He was startled from his slumber before the dawn by a movement of lights in the enemy's camp, and he sprang to his feet supposing that the duke was stealing a march upon him despite all his precautions. The alarm proved to be a false one, but Henry lost no time in ordering his battle. His cavalry he divided in seven troops or squadrons. The first, forming the left wing, was a body of three hundred under Marshal d'Aumont, supported by two regiments of French infantry. Next, separated by a short interval, was another troop of three hundred under the Duke of Montpensier, supported by two other regiments of foot, one Swiss and one German. In front of Montpensier was Baron Biron the younger, at the head of still another body of three hundred. Two troops of cuirassiers, each four hundred strong, were on Biron's left, the one commanded by the Grand Prior of France, Charles d'Angouleme, the other by Monsieur de Givry. Between the Prior and Givry were six pieces of heavy artillery, while the battalia, formed of eight hundred horse in six squadrons, was commanded by the king in person, and covered on both sides by English and Swiss infantry, amounting to some four thousand in all. The right wing was under the charge of old Marshal Biron, and comprised three troops of horse, numbering one hundred and fifty each, two companies of German riders, and four regiments of French infantry. These numbers, which are probably given with as much accuracy as can be obtained, show a force of about three thousand horse and twelve thousand foot.

The Duke of Mayenne, seeing too late the advantage of position which he might have easily secured the day before, led his army forth with the early light, and arranged it in an order not very different from that adopted by the king, and within cannon-shot of his lines. The right wing under Marshal de la Chatre consisted of three regiments of French and one of Germans, supporting three regiments of Spanish lancers, two cornets of German riders under the Bastard of Brunswick, and four hundred cuirassiers. The battalia, which was composed of six hundred splendid cavalry, all noblemen of France, guarding the white banner of the Holy League, and supported by a column of three thousand Swiss and two thousand French infantry, was commanded by Mayenne in person, assisted by his half-brother, the Duke of Nemours. In front of the infantry was a battery of six cannon and three culverines. The left wing was commanded by Marshal de Rene, with six regiments of French and Lorrainers, two thousand Germans, six hundred French cuirassiers, and the mounted troopers of Count Egmont. It is probable that Mayenne's whole force, therefore, amounted to nearly four thousand cavalry and at least thirteen thousand foot.

Page 1855

Very different was the respective appearance of the two armies, so far, especially, as regarded the horsemen on both sides. Gay in their gilded armour and waving plumes, with silken scarves across their shoulders, and the fluttering favours of fair ladies on their arms or in their helmets, the brilliant champions of the Holy Catholic Confederacy clustered around the chieftains of the great house of Guise, impatient for the conflict. It was like a muster for a brilliant and chivalrous tournament. The Walloon and Flemish nobles, outrivalling even the self-confidence of their companions in arms, taunted them with their slowness. The, impetuous Egmont, burning to eclipse the fame of his ill-fated father at Gravelines and St. Quintin in the same holy cause, urged on the battle with unseemly haste, loudly proclaiming that if the French were faint-hearted he would himself give a good account of the Navarrese prince without any assistance from them.

A cannon-shot away, the grim puritan nobles who had come forth from their mountain fastnesses to do battle for king and law and for the rights of conscience against the Holy League—men seasoned in a hundred battle-fields, clad all in iron, with no dainty ornaments nor holiday luxury of warfare—knelt on the ground, smiting their mailed breasts with iron hands, invoking blessings on themselves and curses and confusion on their enemies in the coming conflict, and chanting a stern psalm of homage to the God of battles and of wrath. And Henry of France and Navarre, descendant of Lewis the Holy and of Hugh the Great, beloved chief of the Calvinist cavaliers, knelt among his heretic brethren, and prayed and chanted with them. But not the staunchest Huguenot of them all, not Duplessis, nor D’Aubigne, nor De la Noue with the iron arm, was more devoted on that day to crown and country than were such papist supporters of the rightful heir as had sworn to conquer the insolent foreigner on the soil of France or die.

When this brief prelude was over, Henry made an address to his soldiers, but its language has not been preserved. It is known, however, that he wore that day his famous snow-white plume, and that he ordered his soldiers, should his banner go down in the conflict, to follow wherever and as long as that plume should be seen waving on any part of the field. He had taken a position by which his troops had the sun and wind in their backs, so that the smoke rolled toward the enemy and the light shone in their eyes. The combat began with the play of artillery, which soon became so warm that Egmont, whose cavalry—suffering and galled—soon became impatient, ordered a charge. It was a most brilliant one. The heavy troopers of Flanders and Hainault, following their spirited chieftain, dashed upon old Marshal Biron, routing his cavalry, charging clean up to the Huguenot guns and sabring the cannoneers. The shock was square, solid, irresistible, and was followed up by the German riders under Eric of Brunswick, who charged upon the battalia of the royal army, where the king commanded in person.

Page 1856

There was a panic. The whole royal cavalry wavered, the supporting infantry recoiled, the day seemed lost before the battle was well begun. Yells of “Victory! Victory! up with the Holy League, down with the heretic Bearnese,” resounded through the Catholic squadrons. The king and Marshal Biron, who were near each other, were furious with rage, but already doubtful of the result. They exerted themselves to rally the troops under their immediate command, and to reform the shattered ranks.

The German riders and French lancers under Brunswick and Bassompierre had, however, not done their work as thoroughly as Egmont had done. The ground was so miry and soft that in the brief space which separated the hostile lines they had not power to urge their horses to full speed. Throwing away their useless lances, they came on at a feeble canter, sword in hand, and were unable to make a very vigorous impression on the more heavily armed troopers opposed to them. Meeting with a firm resistance to their career, they wheeled, faltered a little and fell a short distance back. Many of the riders being of the reformed religion, refused moreover to fire upon the Huguenots, and discharged their carbines in the air.

The king, whose glance on the battle-field was like inspiration, saw the blot and charged upon them in person with his whole battalia of cavalry. The veteran Biron followed hard upon the snow-white plume. The scene was changed, victory succeeded to impending defeat, and the enemy was routed. The riders and cuirassiers, broken into a struggling heap of confusion, strewed the ground with their dead bodies, or carried dismay into the ranks of the infantry as they strove to escape. Brunswick went down in the melee, mortally wounded as it was believed. Egmont renewing the charge at the head of his victorious Belgian troopers, fell dead with a musket-ball through his heart. The shattered German and Walloon cavalry, now pricked forward by the lances of their companions, under the passionate commands of Mayenne and Aumale, now fading back before the furious charges of the Huguenots, were completely overthrown and cut to pieces.

Seven times did Henry of Navarre in person lead his troopers to the charge; but suddenly, in the midst of the din of battle and the cheers of victory, a message of despair went from lip to lip throughout the royal lines. The king had disappeared. He was killed, and the hopes of Protestantism and of France were fallen for ever with him. The white standard of his battalia had been seen floating wildly and purposelessly over the field; for his bannerman, Pot de Rhodes, a young noble of Dauphiny, wounded mortally in the head, with blood streaming over his face and blinding his sight, was utterly unable to control his horse, who galloped hither and thither at his own caprice, misleading many troopers who followed in his erratic career. A cavalier, armed in proof, and wearing the famous snow-white plume, after a hand-to-hand

Page 1857

struggle with a veteran of Count Bossu's regiment, was seen to fall dead by the side of the bannerman: The Fleming, not used to boast, loudly asserted that he had slain the Bearnese, and the news spread rapidly over the battle-field. The defeated Confederates gained new courage, the victorious Royalists were beginning to waver, when suddenly, between the hostile lines, in the very midst of the battle, the king galloped forward, bareheaded, covered with blood and dust, but entirely unhurt. A wild shout of "Vive le Roi!" rang through the air. Cheerful as ever, he addressed a few encouraging words to his soldiers, with a smiling face, and again led a charge. It was all that was necessary to complete the victory. The enemy broke and ran away on every side in wildest confusion, followed by the royalist cavalry, who sabred them as they fled. The panic gained the foot-soldiers, who should have supported the cavalry, but had not been at all engaged in the action. The French infantry threw away their arms as they rushed from the field and sought refuge in the woods. The Walloons were so expeditious in the race, that they never stopped till they gained their own frontier. The day was hopelessly lost, and although Mayenne had conducted himself well in the early part of the day, it was certain that he was excelled by none in the celerity of his flight when the rout had fairly begun. Pausing to draw breath as he gained the wood, he was seen to deal blows with his own sword among the mob of fugitives, not that he might rally them to their flag and drive them back to another encounter, but because they encumbered his own retreat.

The Walloon carbineers, the German riders, and the French lancers, disputing as to the relative blame to be attached to each corps, began shooting and sabring each other, almost before they were out of the enemy's sight. Many were thus killed. The lansquenets were all put to the sword. The Swiss infantry were allowed to depart for their own country on pledging themselves not again to bear arms against Henry *iv*.

It is probable that eight hundred of the leaguers were either killed on the battle-field or drowned in the swollen river in their retreat. About one-fourth of that number fell in the army of the king. It is certain that of the contingent from the obedient Netherlands, two hundred and seventy, including their distinguished general, lost their lives. The Bastard of Brunswick, crawling from beneath a heap of slain, escaped with life. Mayenne lost all his standards and all the baggage of his army, while the army itself was for a time hopelessly dissolved.

Page 1858

Few cavalry actions have attained a wider celebrity in history than the fight of Ivry. Yet there have been many hard-fought battles, where the struggle was fiercer and closer, where the issue was for a longer time doubtful, where far more lives on either side were lost, where the final victory was immediately productive of very much greater results, and which, nevertheless, have sunk into hopeless oblivion. The, personal details which remain concerning the part enacted by the adventurous king at this most critical period of his career, the romantic interest which must always gather about that ready-witted, ready-sworded Gascon, at the moment when, to contemporaries, the result of all his struggles seemed so hopeless or at best so doubtful; above all, the numerous royal and princely names which embellished the roll-call of that famous passage of arms, and which were supposed, in those days at least, to add such lustre to a battle-field, as humbler names, however illustrious by valour or virtue, could never bestow, have made this combat for ever famous.

Yet it is certain that the most healthy moral, in military affairs, to be derived from the event, is that the importance of a victory depends less upon itself than on the use to be made of it. Mayenne fled to Mantes, the Duke of Nemours to Chartres, other leaders of the League in various directions, Mayenne told every body he met that the Bearnese was killed, and that although his own army was defeated, he should soon have another one on foot. The same intelligence was communicated to the Duke of Parma, and by him to Philip. Mendoza and the other Spanish agents went about Paris spreading the news of Henry's death, but the fact seemed woefully to lack confirmation, while the proofs of the utter overthrow and shameful defeat of the Leaguers were visible on every, side. The Parisians—many of whom the year before had in vain hired windows in the principal streets, in order to witness the promised entrance of the Bearnese, bound hand and foot, and with a gag in his mouth, to swell the triumph of Madam League—-were incredulous as to the death now reported to them of this very lively heretic, by those who had fled so ignominiously from his troopers.

De la None and the other Huguenot chieftains, earnestly urged upon Henry the importance of advancing upon Paris without an instant's delay, and it seems at least extremely probable that, had he done so, the capital would have fallen at once into his hands. It is the concurrent testimony of contemporaries that the panic, the destitution, the confusion would have made resistance impossible had a determined onslaught been made. And Henry had a couple of thousand horsemen flushed with victory, and a dozen thousand foot who had been compelled to look upon a triumph in which they had no opportunity of sharing: Success and emulation would have easily triumphed over dissension and despair.

Page 1859

But the king, yielding to the councils of Biron and other Catholics, declined attacking the capital, and preferred waiting the slow, and in his circumstances eminently hazardous, operations of a regular siege. Was it the fear of giving a signal triumph to the cause of Protestantism that caused the Huguenot leader—so soon to become a renegade—to pause in his career? Was it anxiety lest his victorious entrance into Paris might undo the diplomacy of his catholic envoys at Rome? or was it simply the mutinous condition of his army, especially of the Swiss mercenaries, who refused to advance a step unless their arrears of pay were at once furnished them out of the utterly empty exchequer of the king? Whatever may have been the cause of the delay, it is certain that the golden fruit of victory was not plucked, and that although the confederate army had rapidly dissolved, in consequence of their defeat, the king's own forces manifested as little cohesion.

And now began that slow and painful siege, the details of which are as terrible, but as universally known, as those of any chapters in the blood-stained history of the century. Henry seized upon the towns guarding the rivers Seine and Marne, twin nurses of Paris. By controlling the course of those streams as well as that of the Yonne and Oise —especially by taking firm possession of Lagny on the Marne, whence a bridge led from the Isle of France to the Brie country—great thoroughfare of wine and corn—and of Corbeil at the junction of the little river Essonne with the Seine-it was easy in that age to stop the vital circulation of the imperial city.

By midsummer, Paris, unquestionably the first city of Europe at that day, was in extremities, and there are few events in history in which our admiration is more excited by the power of mankind to endure almost preternatural misery, or our indignation more deeply aroused by the cruelty with which the sublimest principles of human nature may be made to serve the purposes of selfish ambition and grovelling superstition, than this famous leaguer.

Rarely have men at any epoch defended their fatherland against foreign oppression with more heroism than that which was manifested by the Parisians of 1590 in resisting religious toleration, and in obeying a foreign and priestly despotism. Men, women, and children cheerfully laid down their lives by thousands in order that the papal legate and the king of Spain might trample upon that legitimate sovereign of France who was one day to become the idol of Paris and of the whole kingdom.

A census taken at the beginning of the siege had showed a populace of two hundred thousand souls, with a sufficiency of provisions, it was thought, to last one month. But before the terrible summer was over—so completely had the city been invested—the bushel of wheat was worth three hundred and sixty crowns, rye and oats being but little cheaper. Indeed, grain might as well have cost three thousand

Page 1860

crowns the bushel, for the prices recorded placed it beyond the reach of all but the extremely wealthy. The flesh of horses, asses, dogs, cats, rats had become rare luxuries. There was nothing cheap, said a citizen bitterly, but sermons. And the priests and monks of every order went daily about the streets, preaching fortitude in that great resistance to heresy, by which Paris was earning for itself a crown of glory, and promising the most direct passage to paradise for the souls of the wretched victims who fell daily, starved to death, upon the pavements. And the monks and priests did their work nobly, aiding the general resolution by the example of their own courage. Better fed than their fellow citizens, they did military work in trench, guard-house and rampart, as the population became rapidly unfit, from physical exhaustion, for the defence of the city.

The young Duke of Nemours, governor of the place, manifested as much resolution and conduct in bringing his countrymen to perdition as if the work in which he was engaged had been the highest and holiest that ever tasked human energies. He was sustained in his task by that proud princess, his own and Mayenne's mother, by Madame Montpensier, by the resident triumvirate of Spain, Mendoza, Commander Moreo, and John Baptist Tasais, by the cardinal legate Gaetano, and, more than all, by the sixteen chiefs of the wards, those municipal tyrants of the unhappy populace.

Pope Sixtus himself was by no means eager for the success of the League. After the battle of Ivry, he had most seriously inclined his ear to the representations of Henry's envoy, and showed much willingness to admit the victorious heretic once more into the bosom of the Church. Sixtus was not desirous of contributing to the advancement of Philip's power. He feared his designs on Italy, being himself most anxious at that time to annex Naples to the holy see. He had amassed a large treasure, but he liked best to spend it in splendid architecture, in noble fountains, in magnificent collections of art, science, and literature, and, above all, in building up fortunes for the children of his sister the washerwoman, and in allying them all to the most princely houses of Italy, while never allowing them even to mention the name of their father, so base was his degree; but he cared not to disburse from his hoarded dollars to supply the necessities of the League.

But Gaetano, although he could wring but fifty thousand crowns from his Holiness after the fatal fight of Ivry, to further the good cause, was lavish in expenditures from his own purse and from other sources, and this too at a time when thirty-three per cent. interest was paid to the usurers of Antwerp for one month's loan of ready money. He was indefatigable, too, and most successful in his exhortations and ghostly consolations to the people. Those proud priests and great nobles were playing a reckless game, and the hopes of mankind beyond the grave were the counters

Page 1861

on their table. For themselves there were rich prizes for the winning. Should they succeed in dismembering the fair land where they were enacting their fantastic parts, there were temporal principalities, great provinces, petty sovereignties, to be carved out of the heritage which the Bearnese claimed for his own. Obviously then, their consciences could never permit this shameless heretic, by a simulated conversion at the critical moment, to block their game and restore the national unity and laws. And even should it be necessary to give the whole kingdom, instead of the mere duchy of Brittany, to Philip of Spain, still there were mighty guerdons to be bestowed on his supporters before the foreign monarch could seat himself on the throne of Henry's ancestors.

As to the people who were fighting, starving, dying by thousands in this great cause, there were eternal rewards in another world profusely promised for their heroism instead of the more substantial bread and beef, for lack of which they were laying down their lives.

It was estimated that before July twelve thousand human beings in Paris had died, for want of food, within three months. But as there were no signs of the promised relief by the army of Parma and Mayenne, and as the starving people at times appeared faint-hearted, their courage was strengthened one day by a stirring exhibition.

An astonishing procession marched through the streets of the city, led by the Bishop of Senlis and the Prior of Chartreux, each holding a halberd in one hand and a crucifix in the other, and graced by the presence of the cardinal-legate, and of many prelates from Italy. A lame monk, adroitly manipulating the staff of a drum major, went hopping and limping before them, much to the amazement of the crowd. Then came a long file of monks-Capuchins, Bernardists, Minimes, Franciscans, Jacobins, Carmelites, and other orders—each with his cowl thrown back, his long robes trussed up, a helmet on his head, a cuirass on his breast, and a halberd in his hand. The elder ones marched first, grinding their teeth, rolling their eyes, and making other ferocious demonstrations. Then came the younger friars, similarly attired, all armed with arquebusses, which they occasionally and accidentally discharged to the disadvantage of the spectators, several of whom were killed or wounded on the spot. Among others a servant of Cardinal Gaetano was thus slain, and the even caused much commotion, until the cardinal proclaimed that a man thus killed in so holy a cause had gone straight to heaven and had taken his place among the just. It was impossible, thus argued the people in their simplicity, that so wise and virtuous a man as the cardinal should not know what was best.

The procession marched to the church of our Lady of Loretto, where they solemnly promised to the blessed Virgin a lamp and ship of gold—should she be willing to use

her influence in behalf of the suffering city—to be placed on her shrine as soon as the siege should be raised.

Page 1862

But these demonstrations, however cheering to the souls, had comparatively little effect upon the bodies of the sufferers. It was impossible to walk through the streets of Paris without stumbling over the dead bodies of the citizens. Trustworthy eye-witnesses of those dreadful days have placed the number of the dead during the summer at thirty thousand. A tumultuous assemblage of the starving and the forlorn rushed at last to the municipal palace, demanding peace or bread. The rebels were soon dispersed however by a charge, headed by the Chevalier d'Aumale, and assisted by the chiefs of the wards, and so soon as the riot was quelled, its ringleader, a leading advocate, Renaud by name, was hanged.

Still, but for the energy of the priests, it is doubtful whether the city could have been held by the Confederacy. The Duke of Nemours confessed that there were occasions when they never would have been able to sustain a determined onslaught, and they were daily expecting to see the Prince of Bearne battering triumphantly at their gates.

But the eloquence of the preachers, especially of the one-eyed father Boucher, sustained the fainting spirits of the people, and consoled the sufferers in their dying agonies by glimpses of paradise. Sublime was that devotion, superhuman that craft; but it is only by weapons from the armoury of the Unseen that human creatures can long confront such horrors in a wicked cause. Superstition, in those days at least, was a political force absolutely without limitation, and most adroitly did the agents of Spain and Rome handle its tremendous enginery against unhappy France. For the hideous details of the most dreadful sieges recorded in ancient or modern times were now reproduced in Paris. Not a revolutionary circumstance, at which the world had shuddered in the accounts of the siege of Jerusalem, was spared. Men devoured such dead vermin as could be found lying in the streets. They crowded greedily around stalls in the public squares where the skin, bones, and offal of such dogs, cats and unclean beasts as still remained for the consumption of the wealthier classes were sold to the populace. Over the doorways of these flesh markets might be read "Haec runt munera pro iis qui vitam pro Philippo profuderunt." Men stood in archways and narrow passages lying in wait for whatever stray dogs still remained at large, noosed them, strangled them, and like savage beasts of prey tore them to pieces and devoured them alive. And it sometimes happened, too, that the equally hungry dog proved the more successful in the foul encounter, and fed upon the man. A lady visiting the Duchess of Nemours—called for the high pretensions of her sons by her two marriages the queen-mother—complained bitterly that mothers in Paris had been compelled to kill their own children outright to save them from starving to death in lingering agony. "And if you are brought to that extremity," replied the duchess, "as for the sake of our holy religion

Page 1863

to be forced to kill your own children, do you think that so great a matter after all? What are your children made of more than other people's children? What are we all but dirt and dust?" Such was the consolation administered by the mother of the man who governed Paris, and defended its gates against its lawful sovereign at the command of a foreigner; while the priests in their turn persuaded the populace that it was far more righteous to kill their own children, if they had no food to give them, than to obtain food by recognising a heretic king.

It was related too, and believed, that in some instances mothers had salted the bodies of their dead children and fed upon them, day by day, until the hideous repast would no longer support their own life. They died, and the secret was revealed by servants who had partaken of the food. The Spanish ambassador, Mendoza, advised recourse to an article of diet which had been used in some of the oriental sieges. The counsel at first was rejected as coming from the agent of Spain, who wished at all hazards to save the capital of France from falling out of the hands of his master into those of the heretic. But dire necessity prevailed, and the bones of the dead were taken in considerable quantities from the cemeteries, ground into flour, baked into bread, and consumed. It was called Madame Montpensier's cake, because the duchess earnestly proclaimed its merits to the poor Parisians. "She was never known to taste it herself, however," bitterly observed one who lived in Paris through that horrible summer. She was right to abstain, for all who ate of it died, and the Montpensier flour fell into disuse.

Lansquenets and other soldiers, mad with hunger and rage, when they could no longer find dogs to feed on, chased children through the streets, and were known in several instances to kill and devour them on the spot. To those expressing horror at the perpetration of such a crime, a leading personage, member of the Council of Nine, maintained that there was less danger to one's soul in satisfying one's hunger with a dead child, in case of necessity, than in recognizing the heretic Bearnese, and he added that all the best theologians and doctors of Paris were of his opinion.

As the summer wore on to its close, through all these horrors, and as there were still no signs of Mayenne and Parma leading their armies to the relief of the city, it became necessary to deceive the people by a show of negotiation with the beleaguering army. Accordingly, the Spanish ambassador, the legate, and the other chiefs of the Holy League appointed a deputation, consisting of the Cardinal Gondy, the Archbishop of Lyons, and the Abbe d'Elbene, to Henry. It soon became evident to the king, however, that these commissioners were but trifling with him in order to amuse the populace. His attitude was dignified and determined throughout the interview. The place appointed was St. Anthony's Abbey, before

Page 1864

the gates of Paris. Henry wore a cloak and the order of the Holy Ghost, and was surrounded by his council, the princes of the blood, and by more than four hundred of the chief gentlemen of his army. After passing the barricade, the deputies were received by old Marshal Biron, and conducted by him to the king's chamber of state. When they had made their salutations, the king led the way to an inner cabinet, but his progress was much impeded by the crowding of the nobles about him. Wishing to excuse this apparent rudeness, he said to the envoys: "Gentlemen, these men thrust me on as fast to the battle against the foreigner as they now do to my cabinet. Therefore bear with them." Then turning to the crowd, he said: "Room, gentlemen, for the love of me," upon which they all retired.

The deputies then stated that they had been sent by the authorities of Paris to consult as to the means of obtaining a general peace in France. They expressed the hope that the king's disposition was favourable to this end, and that he would likewise permit them to confer with the Duke of Mayenne. This manner of addressing him excited his choler. He told Cardinal Gondy, who was spokesman of the deputation, that he had long since answered such propositions. He alone could deal with his subjects. He was like the woman before Solomon; he would have all the child or none of it. Rather than dismember his kingdom he would lose the whole. He asked them what they considered him to be. They answered that they knew his rights, but that the Parisians had different opinions. If Paris would only acknowledge him to be king there could be no more question of war. He asked them if they desired the King of Spain or the Duke of Mayenne for their king, and bade them look well to themselves. The King of Spain could not help them, for he had too much business on hand; while Mayenne had neither means nor courage, having been within three leagues of them for three weeks doing nothing. Neither king nor duke should have that which belonged to him, of that they might be assured. He told them he loved Paris as his capital, as his eldest daughter. If the Parisians wished to see the end of their miseries it was to him they should appeal, not to the Spaniard nor to the Duke of Mayenne. By the grace of God and the swords of his brave gentlemen he would prevent the King of Spain from making a colony of France as he had done of Brazil. He told the commissioners that they ought to die of shame that they, born Frenchmen, should have so forgotten their love of country and of liberty as thus to bow the head to the Spaniard, and—while famine was carrying off thousands of their countrymen before their eyes—to be so cowardly as not to utter one word for the public welfare from fear of offending Cardinal. Gaetano, Mendoza, and Moreo. He said that he longed for a combat to decide the issue, and that he had charged Count de Brissac to tell Mayenne that he would give a finger

Page 1865

of his right hand for a battle, and two for a general peace. He knew and pitied the sufferings of Paris, but the horrors now raging there were to please the King of Spain. That monarch had told the Duke of Parma to trouble himself but little about the Netherlands so long as he could preserve for him his city of Paris. But it was to lean on a broken reed to expect support from this old, decrepit king, whose object was to dismember the flourishing kingdom of France, and to divide it among as many tyrants as he had sent viceroys to the Indies. The crown was his own birthright. Were it elective he should receive the suffrages of the great mass of the electors. He hoped soon to drive those red-crossed foreigners out of his kingdom. Should he fail, they would end by expelling the Duke of Mayenne and all the rest who had called them in, and Paris would become the theatre of the bloodiest tragedy ever yet enacted. The king then ordered Sir Roger Williams to see that a collation was prepared for the deputies, and the veteran Welshman took occasion to indulge in much blunt conversation with the guests. He informed them that he, Mr. Sackville, and many other strangers were serving the king from the hatred they bore the Spaniards and Mother League, and that his royal mistress had always 8000 Englishmen ready to maintain the cause.

While the conferences were going on, the officers and soldiers of the besieging army thronged to the gate, and had much talk with the townsmen. Among others, time-honoured La None with the iron arm stood near the gate and harangued the Parisians. “We are here,” said he, “five thousand gentlemen; we desire your good, not your ruin. We will make you rich: let us participate in your labour and industry. Undo not yourselves to serve the ambition of a few men.” The townspeople hearing the old warrior discoursing thus earnestly, asked who he was. When informed that it was La Noue they cheered him vociferously, and applauded his speech with the greatest vehemence. Yet La Noue was the foremost Huguenot that the sun shone upon, and the Parisians were starving themselves to death out of hatred to heresy. After the collation the commissioners were permitted to go from the camp in order to consult Mayenne.

Such then was the condition of Paris during that memorable summer of tortures. What now were its hopes of deliverance out of this Gehenna? The trust of Frenchmen was in Philip of Spain, whose legions, under command of the great Italian chieftain, were daily longed for to save them from rendering obedience to their lawful prince.

For even the king of straw—the imprisoned cardinal—was now dead, and there was not even the effigy of any other sovereign than Henry of Bourbon to claim authority in France. Mayenne, in the course of long interviews with the Duke of Parma at Conde and Brussels, had expressed his desire to see Philip king of France, and had promised his best efforts to bring about such a result. In

Page 1866

that case he stipulated for the second place in the kingdom for himself, together with a good rich province in perpetual sovereignty, and a large sum of money in hand. Should this course not run smoothly, he would be willing to take the crown himself, in which event he would cheerfully cede to Philip the sovereignty of Brittany and Burgundy, besides a selection of cities to be arranged for at a later day. Although he spoke of himself with modesty, said Alexander, it was very plain that he meant to arrive at the crown himself: Well had the Bearnese alluded to the judgment of Solomon. Were not children, thus ready to dismember their mother, as foul and unnatural as the mother who would divide her child?

And what was this dependence on a foreign tyrant really worth? As we look back upon those dark days with the light of what was then the almost immediate future turned full and glaring upon them, we find it difficult to exaggerate the folly of the chief actors in those scenes of crime. Did not the penniless adventurer, whose keen eyesight and wise recklessness were passing for hallucination and foolhardiness in the eyes of his contemporaries, understand the game he was playing better than did that profound thinker, that mysterious but infallible politician, who sat in the Escorial and made the world tremble at every hint of his lips, every stroke of his pen?

The Netherlands—that most advanced portion of Philip's domain, without the possession of which his conquest of England and his incorporation of France were but childish visions, even if they were not monstrous chimeras at best—were to be in a manner left to themselves, while their consummate governor and general was to go forth and conquer France at the head of a force with which he had been in vain attempting to hold those provinces to their obedience. At that very moment the rising young chieftain of the Netherlands was most successfully inaugurating his career of military success. His armies well drilled, well disciplined, well paid, full of heart and of hope, were threatening their ancient enemy in every quarter, while the veteran legions of Spain and Italy, heroes of a hundred Flemish and Frisian battle-fields, were disorganised, starving, and mutinous. The famous ancient legion, the terzo viejo, had been disbanded for its obstinate and confirmed unruliness. The legion of Manrique, sixteen hundred strong, was in open mutiny at Courtray. Farnese had sent the Prince of Ascoli to negotiate with them, but his attempts were all in vain. Two years' arrearages —to be paid, not in cloth at four times what the contractors had paid for it, but in solid gold—were their not unreasonable demands after years of as hard fighting and severe suffering as the world has often seen. But Philip, instead of ducats or cloth, had only sent orders to go forth and conquer a new kingdom for him. Verdugo, too, from Friesland was howling for money, garrotting and hanging his mutinous veterans every day, and sending complaints and most dismal forebodings as often as a courier could make his way through the enemy's lines to Farnese's headquarters. And Farnese, on his part, was garrotting and hanging the veterans.

Page 1867

Alexander did not of course inform his master that he was a mischievous lunatic, who upon any healthy principle of human government ought long ago to have been shut up from all communion with his species. It was very plain, however, from his letters, that such was his innermost, thought, had it been safe, loyal, or courteous to express it in plain language.

He was himself stung almost to madness moreover by the presence of Commander Moreo, who hated him, who was perpetually coming over from France to visit him, who was a spy upon all his actions, and who was regularly distilling his calumnies into the ears of Secretary Idiaquez and of Philip himself. The king was informed that Farnese was working for his own ends, and was disgusted with his sovereign; that there never had been a petty prince of Italy that did not wish to become a greater one, or that was not jealous of Philip's power, and that there was not a villain in all Christendom but wished for Philip's death. Moreo followed the prince about to Antwerp, to Brussels, to Spa, whither he had gone to drink the waters for his failing health, pestered him, lectured him, pried upon him, counselled him, enraged him. Alexander told him at last that he cared not if the whole world came to an end so long as Flanders remained, which alone had been entrusted to him, and that if he was expected to conquer France it would be as well to give him the means of performing that exploit. So Moreo told the king that Alexander was wasting time and wasting money, that he was the cause of Egmont's overthrow, and that he would be the cause of the loss of Paris and of the downfall of the whole French scheme; for that he was determined to do nothing to assist Mayenne, or that did not conduce to his private advantage.

Yet Farnese had been not long before informed in sufficiently plain language, and by personages of great influence, that in case he wished to convert his vice-royalty of the Netherlands into a permanent sovereignty, he might rely on the assistance of Henry of Navarre, and perhaps of Queen Elizabeth. The scheme would not have been impracticable, but the duke never listened to it for a moment.

If he were slow in advancing to the relief of starving, agonising Paris, there were sufficient reasons for his delay. Most decidedly and bitterly, but loyally, did he denounce the madness of his master's course in all his communications to that master's private ear.

He told him that the situation in which he found himself was horrible. He had no money for his troops, he had not even garrison bread to put in their mouths. He had not a single stiver to advance them on account. From Friesland, from the Rhine country, from every quarter, cries of distress were rising to heaven, and the lamentations were just. He was in absolute penury. He could not negotiate a bill on the royal account, but had borrowed on his own private security a few thousand crowns which he had given to his soldiers.

Page 1868

He was pledging his jewels and furniture like a bankrupt, but all was now in vain to stop the mutiny at Courtray. If that went on it would be of most pernicious example, for the whole army was disorganised, malcontent, and of portentous aspect. “These things,” said he, “ought not to surprise people of common understanding, for without money, without credit, without provisions, and in an exhausted country, it is impossible to satisfy the claims, or even to support the life of the army.” When he sent the Flemish cavalry to Mayenne in March, it was under the impression that with it that prince would have maintained his reputation and checked the progress of the Bearnese until greater reinforcements could be forwarded. He was now glad that no larger number had been sent, for all would have been sacrificed on the fatal field of Ivry.

The country around him was desperate, believed itself abandoned, and was expecting fresh horrors everyday. He had been obliged to remove portions of the garrisons at Deventer and Zutphen purely to save them from starving and desperation. Every day he was informed by his garrisons that they could feed no longer on fine words or hopes, for in them they found no sustenance.

But Philip told him that he must proceed forthwith to France, where he was to raise the siege of Paris, and occupy Calais and Boulogne in order to prevent the English from sending succour to the Bearnese, and in order to facilitate his own designs on England. Every effort was to be made before the Bearnese climbed into the seat. The Duke of Parma was to talk no more of difficulties, but to conquer them; a noble phrase on the battle field, but comparatively easy of utterance at the writing-desk!

At last, Philip having made some remittances, miserably inadequate for the necessities of the case, but sufficient to repress in part the mutinous demonstrations throughout the army, Farnese addressed himself with a heavy heart to the work required of him. He confessed the deepest apprehensions of the result both in the Netherlands and in France. He intimated a profound distrust of the French, who had, ever been Philip’s enemies, and dwelt on the danger of leaving the provinces, unable to protect themselves, badly garrisoned, and starving. “It grieves me to the soul, it cuts me to the heart,” he said, “to see that your Majesty commands things which are impossible, for it is our Lord alone that can work miracles. Your Majesty supposes that with the little money you have sent me, I can satisfy all the soldiers serving in these provinces, settle with the Spanish and the German mutineers—because, if they are to be used in the expedition, they must at least be quieted—give money to Mayenne and the Parisians, pay retaining wages (wartgeld) to the German Riders for the protection of these provinces, and make sure of the maritime places where the same mutinous language is held as at Courtray. The poverty, the discontent, and

Page 1869

the desperation of this unhappy country," he added, "have, been so often described to your Majesty that I have nothing to add. I am hanging and garrotting my veterans everywhere, only because they have rebelled for want of pay without committing any excess. Yet under these circumstances I am to march into France with twenty thousand troops—the least number to effect anything withal. I am confused and perplexed because the whole world is exclaiming against me, and protesting that through my desertion the country entrusted to my care will come to utter perdition. On the other hand, the French cry out upon me that I am the cause that Paris is going to destruction, and with it the Catholic cause in France. Every one is pursuing his private ends. It is impossible to collect a force strong enough for the necessary work. Paris has reached its extreme unction, and neither Mayenne nor any one of the confederates has given this invalid the slightest morsel to support her till your Majesty's forces should arrive."

He reminded his sovereign that the country around Paris was eaten bare of food and forage, and yet that it was quite out of the question for him to undertake the transportation of supplies for his army all the way—supplies from the starving Netherlands to starving France. Since the king was so peremptory, he had nothing for it but to obey, but he vehemently disclaimed all responsibility for the expedition, and, in case of his death, he called on his Majesty to vindicate his honour, which his enemies were sure to assail.

The messages from Mayenne becoming daily more pressing, Farnese hastened as much as possible those preparations which at best were so woefully inadequate, and avowed his determination not to fight the Bearnese if it were possible to avoid an action. He feared, however, that with totally insufficient forces he should be obliged to accept the chances of an engagement.

With twelve thousand foot and three thousand horse Farnese left the Netherlands in the beginning of August, and arrived on the 3rd of that month at Valenciennes. His little army, notwithstanding his bitter complaints, was of imposing appearance. The archers and halberdiers of his bodyguard were magnificent in taffety and feathers and surcoats of cramoisy velvet. Four hundred nobles served in the cavalry. Arenberg and Barlaymont and Chimay, and other grandees of the Netherlands, in company with Ascoli and the sons of Terranova and Pastrana, and many more great lords of Italy and Spain were in immediate attendance on the illustrious captain. The son of Philip's Secretary of State, Idiaquez, and the nephew of the cardinal-legate, Gaetano, were among the marshals of the camp.

Page 1870

Alexander's own natural authority and consummate powers of organisation had for the time triumphed over the disintegrating tendencies which, it had been seen, were everywhere so rapidly destroying the foremost military establishment of the world. Nearly half his forces, both cavalry and infantry, were Netherlanders; for—as if there were not graves enough in their own little territory—those Flemings, Walloons, and Hollanders were destined to leave their bones on both sides of every well-stricken field of that age between liberty and despotism. And thus thousands of them had now gone forth under the banner of Spain to assist their own tyrant in carrying out his designs upon the capital of France, and to struggle to the death with thousands of their own countrymen who were following the fortunes of the Bearnese. Truly in that age it was religion that drew the boundary line between nations.

The army was divided into three portions. The vanguard was under the charge of the Netherland General, Marquis of Renty. The battalia was commanded by Farnese in person, and the rearguard was entrusted to that veteran Netherlander, La Motte, now called the Count of Everbeck. Twenty pieces of artillery followed the last division. At Valenciennes Farnese remained eight days, and from this place Count Charles Mansfeld took his departure in a great rage—resigning his post as chief of artillery because La Motte had received the appointment of general-marshal of the camp—and returned to his father, old Peter Ernest Mansfeld, who was lieutenant-governor of the Netherlands in Parma's absence.

Leaving Valenciennes on the 11th, the army proceeded by way of Quesney, Guise, Soissons, Fritemilon to Meaux. At this place, which is ten leagues from Paris, Farnese made his junction, on the 22nd of August, with Mayenne, who was at the head of six thousand infantry—one half of them Germans under Cobalto, and the other half French—and of two thousand horse.

On arriving at Meaux, Alexander proceeded straightway to the cathedral, and there, in presence of all, he solemnly swore that he had not come to France in order to conquer that kingdom or any portion of it, in the interests of his master, but only to render succour to the Catholic cause and to free the friends and confederates of his Majesty from violence and heretic oppression. Time was to show the value of that oath.

Here the deputation from Paris—the Archbishop of Lyons and his colleagues, whose interview with Henry has just been narrated—were received by the two dukes. They departed, taking with them promises of immediate relief for the starving city. The allies remained five days at Meaux, and leaving that place on the 27th, arrived in the neighbourhood of Chelles, on the last day but one of the summer. They had a united force of five thousand cavalry and eighteen thousand foot.

The summer of horrors was over, and thus with the first days of autumn there had come a ray of hope for the proud city which was lying at its last gasp. When the allies, came

in sight of the monastery of Chellea they found themselves in the immediate neighbourhood of the Bearnese.

Page 1871

The two great captains of the age had at last met face to face. They were not only the two first commanders of their time, but there was not a man in Europe at that day to be at all compared with either of them. The youth, concerning whose earliest campaign an account will be given in the following chapter, had hardly yet struck his first blow. Whether that blow was to reveal the novice or the master was soon to be seen. Meantime in 1590 it would have been considered a foolish adulation to mention the name of Maurice of Nassau in the same breath with that of Navarre or of Farnese.

The scientific duel which was now to take place was likely to task the genius and to bring into full display the peculiar powers and defects of the two chieftains of Europe. Each might be considered to be still in the prime of life, but Alexander, who was turned of forty-five, was already broken in health, while the vigorous Henry was eight years younger, and of an iron constitution. Both had passed then lives in the field, but the king, from nature, education, and the force of circumstances, preferred pitched battles to scientific combinations, while the duke, having studied and practised his art in the great Spanish and Italian schools of warfare, was rather a profound strategist than a professional fighter, although capable of great promptness and intense personal energy when his judgment dictated a battle. Both were born with that invaluable gift which no human being can acquire, authority, and both were adored and willingly obeyed by their soldiers, so long as those soldiers were paid and fed.

The prize now to be contended for was a high one. Alexander's complete success would tear from Henry's grasp the first city of Christendom, now sinking exhausted into his hands, and would place France in the power of the Holy League and at the feet of Philip. Another Ivry would shatter the confederacy, and carry the king in triumph to his capital and his ancestral throne. On the approach of the combined armies under Parma and Mayenne, the king had found himself most reluctantly compelled to suspend the siege of Paris. His army, which consisted of sixteen thousand foot and five thousand horse, was not sufficiently numerous to confront at the same time the relieving force and to continue the operations before the city. So long, however, as he held the towns and bridges on the great rivers, and especially those keys to the Seine and Marne, Corbeil and Lagny, he still controlled the life-blood of the capital, which indeed had almost ceased to flow.

On the 31st August he advanced towards the enemy. Sir Edward Stafford, Queen Elizabeth's ambassador, arrived at St. Denis in the night of the 30th August. At a very early hour next morning he heard a shout under his window, and looking down beheld King Henry at the head of his troops, cheerfully calling out to his English friend as he passed his door. "Welcoming us after his familiar manner," said Stafford, "he desired us, in respect of the battle every hour expected, to come as his friends to see and help him, and not to treat of anything which afore, we meant, seeing the present state to require it, and the enemy so near that we might well have been interrupted in half-an-hour's talk, and necessity constrained the king to be in every corner, where for the most part we follow him."

Page 1872

That day Henry took up his headquarters at the monastery of Chelles, a fortified place within six leagues of Paris, on the right bank of the Marne. His army was drawn up in a wide valley somewhat encumbered with wood and water, extending through a series of beautiful pastures towards two hills of moderate elevation. Lagny, on the left bank of the river, was within less than a league of him on his right hand. On the other side of the hills, hardly out of cannon-shot, was the camp of the allies. Henry, whose natural disposition in this respect needed no prompting, was most eager for a decisive engagement. The circumstances imperatively required it of him. His infantry consisted of Frenchmen, Netherlanders, English, Germans, Scotch; but of his cavalry four thousand were French nobles, serving at their own expense, who came to a battle as to a banquet, but who were capable of riding off almost as rapidly, should the feast be denied them. They were volunteers, bringing with them rations for but a few days, and it could hardly be expected that they would remain as patiently as did Parma's veterans, who, now that their mutiny had been appeased by payment of a portion of their arrearages, had become docile again. All the great chieftains who surrounded Henry, whether Catholic or Protestant—Montpensier, Nevers, Soissons, Conti, the Birons, Lavradin, d'Aumont, Tremouille, Turenne, Chatillon, La Noue—were urgent for the conflict, concerning the expediency of which there could indeed be no doubt, while the king was in raptures at the opportunity of dealing a decisive blow at the confederacy of foreigners and rebels who had so long defied his authority and deprived him of his rights.

Stafford came up with the king, according to his cordial invitation, on the same day, and saw the army all drawn up in battle array. While Henry was "eating a morsel in an old house," Turenne joined him with six or seven hundred horsemen and between four and five thousand infantry. "They were the likeliest footmen," said Stafford, "the best countenanced, the best furnished that ever I saw in my life; the best part of them old soldiers that had served under the king for the Religion all this while."

The envoy was especially enthusiastic, however, in regard to the French cavalry. "There are near six thousand horse," said he, "whereof gentlemen above four thousand, about twelve hundred other French, and eight hundred reiters. I never saw, nor I think never any man saw, in prance such a company of gentlemen together so well horsed and so well armed."

Henry sent a herald to the camp of the allies, formally challenging them to a general engagement, and expressing a hope that all differences might now be settled by the ordeal of battle, rather than that the sufferings of the innocent people should be longer protracted.

Page 1873

Farnese, on arriving at Meaux, had resolved to seek the enemy and take the hazards of a stricken field. He had misgivings as to the possible result, but he expressly announced this intention in his letters to Philip, and Mayenne confirmed him in his determination. Nevertheless, finding the enemy so eager and having reflected more maturely, he saw no reason for accepting the chivalrous cartel. As commanderin-chief—for Mayenne willingly conceded the supremacy which it would have been absurd in him to dispute—he accordingly replied that it was his custom to refuse a combat when a refusal seemed advantageous to himself, and to offer battle whenever it suited his purposes to fight. When that moment should arrive the king would find him in the field. And, having sent this courteous, but unsatisfactory answer to the impatient Bearnese, he gave orders to fortify his camp, which was already sufficiently strong. Seven days long the two armies lay face to face—Henry and his chivalry chafing in vain for the longed-for engagement—and nothing occurred between those forty or fifty thousand mortal enemies, encamped within a mile or two of each other, save trifling skirmishes leading to no result.

At last Farnese gave orders for an advance. Renty, commander of the vanguard, consisting of nearly all the cavalry, was instructed to move slowly forward over the two hills, and descending on the opposite side, to deploy his forces in two great wings to the right and left. He was secretly directed in this movement to magnify as much as possible the apparent dimensions of his force. Slowly the columns moved over the hills. Squadron after squadron, nearly all of them lancers, with their pennons flaunting gaily in the summer wind, displayed themselves deliberately and ostentatiously in the face of the Royalists. The splendid light-horse of Basti, the ponderous troopers of the Flemish bands of ordnance under Chimay and Berlaymont, and the famous Albanian and Italian cavalry, were mingled with the veteran Leaguers of France who had fought under the Balafre, and who now followed the fortunes of his brother Mayenne. It was an imposing demonstration.

Henry could hardly believe his eyes as the much-coveted opportunity, of which he had been so many days disappointed, at last presented itself, and he waited with more than his usual caution until the plan of attack should be developed by his great antagonist. Parma, on his side, pressed the hand of Mayenne as he watched the movement, saying quietly, “We have already fought our battle and gained the victory.” He then issued orders for the whole battalia—which, since the junction, had been under command of Mayenne, Farnese reserving for himself the superintendence of the entire army—to countermarch rapidly towards the Marne and take up a position opposite Lagny. La Motte, with the rearguard, was directed immediately to follow. The battalia had thus become the van, the rearguard the battalia, while the whole cavalry corps by this movement had been transformed from the vanguard into the rear. Renty was instructed to protect his manoeuvres, to restrain the skirmishing as much as possible, and to keep the commander-in-chief constantly informed of every occurrence. In the night he was to entrench and fortify himself rapidly and thoroughly, without changing his position.

Page 1874

Under cover of this feigned attack, Farnese arrived at the river side on the 15th September, seized an open village directly opposite Lagny, which was connected with it by a stone bridge, and planted a battery of nine pieces of heavy artillery directly opposite the town. Lagny was fortified in the old-fashioned manner, with not very thick walls, and without a terreplain. Its position, however, and its command of the bridge, seemed to render an assault impossible, and De la Fin, who lay there with a garrison of twelve hundred French, had no fear for the security of the place. But Farnese, with the precision and celerity which characterized his movements on special occasions, had thrown pontoon bridges across the river three miles above, and sent a considerable force of Spanish and Walloon infantry to the other side. These troops were ordered to hold themselves ready for an assault, so soon as the batteries opposite should effect a practicable breach. The next day Henry, reconnoitering the scene, saw, with intense indignation, that he had been completely out-generalled. Lagny, the key to the Marne, by holding which he had closed the door on nearly all the food supplies for Paris, was about to be wrested from him. What should he do? Should he throw himself across the river and rescue the place before it fell? This was not to be thought of even by the audacious Bearnese. In the attempt to cross the river, under the enemy's fire, he was likely to lose a large portion of his army. Should he fling himself upon Renty's division which had so ostentatiously offered battle the day before? This at least might be attempted, although not so advantageously as would have been the case on the previous afternoon. To undertake this was the result of a rapid council of generals. It was too late. Renty held the hills so firmly entrenched and fortified that it was an idle hope to carry them by assault. He might hurl column after column against those heights, and pass the day in seeing his men mowed to the earth without result.

His soldiers, magnificent in the open field, could not be relied upon to carry so strong a position by sudden storm; and there was no time to be lost. He felt the enemy a little. There was some small skirmishing, and while it was going on, Farnese opened a tremendous fire across the river upon Lagny. The weak walls soon crumbled; a breach was effected, the signal for assault was given, and the troops posted on the other side, after a brief but sanguinary straggle, overcame all, resistance, and were masters of the town. The whole garrison, twelve hundred strong, was butchered, and the city thoroughly sacked; for Farnese had been brought up in the old-fashioned school of Alva; and Julian Romero and Com-. wander Requesens.

Page 1875

Thus Lagny was seized before the eyes of Henry, who was forced to look helplessly on his great antagonist's triumph. He had come forth in full panoply and abounding confidence to offer battle. He was foiled of his combat; and he had lost the prize. Never was blow more successfully parried, a counter-stroke more ingeniously planted. The bridges of Charenton and St. Maur now fell into Farnese's hands without a contest. In an incredibly short space of time provisions and munitions were poured into the starving city; two thousand boat-loads arriving in a single day. Paris was relieved. Alexander had made his demonstration, and solved the problem. He had left the Netherlands against his judgment, but he had at least accomplished his French work as none but he could have done it. The king was now in worse plight than ever. His army fell to pieces. His cavaliers, cheated of their battle; and having neither food nor forage, rode off by hundreds every day. "Our state is such," said Stafford; on the 16th September, "and so far unexpected and wonderful, that I am almost ashamed to write, because methinks everybody should think I dream. Myself seeing of it methinketh that I dream. For, my lord, to see an army such a one I think as I shall never see again—-especially for horsemen and gentlemen to take a mind to disband upon the taking of such a paltry thing as Lagny, a town no better indeed than Rochester, it is a thing so strange to me that seeing of it I can scarce believe it. They make their excuses of their want, which I know indeed is great—for there were few left with one penny in their purses—but yet that extremity could not be such but that they might have tarried ten days or fifteen at the most that the king desired of them. . . . From six thousand horse that we were and above, we are come to two thousand and I do not see an end of our leave-takers, for those be hourly.

"The most I can see we can make account of to tarry are the Viscount Turenne's troops, and Monsieur de Chatillon's, and our Switzers, and Lanaquenettes, which make very near five thousand. The first that went away, though he sent word to the king an hour before he would tarry, was the Count Soissons, by whose parting on a sudden and without leave-taking we judge a discontentment."

The king's army seemed fading into air. Making virtue of necessity he withdrew to St. Denis, and decided to disband his forces, reserving to himself only a flying camp with which to harass the enemy as often as opportunity should offer.

It must be confessed that the Bearnese had been thoroughly out-generalled. "It was not God's will," said Stafford, who had been in constant attendance upon Henry through the whole business; "we deserved it not; for the king might as easily have had Paris as drunk, four or five times. And at the last, if he had not committed those faults that children would not have done, only with the desire to fight and give the battle (which the other never

Page 1876

meant), he had had it in the Duke of Parma's eight as he took Lagny in ours." He had been foiled of the battle on which he had set his heart, and, in which he felt confident of overthrowing the great captain of the age, and trampling the League under his feet. His capital just ready to sink exhausted into his hands had been wrested from his grasp, and was alive with new hope and new defiance. The League was triumphant, his own army scattering to the four winds. Even a man of high courage and sagacity might have been in despair. Yet never were the magnificent hopefulness, the wise audacity of Henry more signally manifested than now when he seemed most blundering and most forlorn. His hardy nature ever met disaster with so cheerful a smile as almost to perplex disaster herself.

Unwilling to relinquish his grip without a last effort, he resolved on a midnight assault upon Paris. Hoping that the joy at being relieved, the unwonted feasting which had succeeded the long fasting, and the conciousness of security from the presence of the combined armies of the victorious League, would throw garrison and citizens off their guard, he came into the neighbourhood of the Faubourgs St. Jacques, St. Germain, St. Marcel, and St. Michel on the night of 9th September. A desperate effort was made to escalade the walls between St. Jacques and St. Germain. It was foiled, not by the soldiers nor the citizens, but by the sleepless Jesuits, who, as often before during this memorable siege, had kept guard on the ramparts, and who now gave the alarm. The first assailants were hurled from their ladders, the city was roused, and the Duke of Nemours was soon on the spot, ordering burning pitch hoops, atones, and other missiles to be thrown down upon the invaders. The escalade was baffled; yet once more that night, just before dawn, the king in person renewed the attack on the Faubourg St. Germain. The faithful Stafford stood by his side in the trenches, and was witness to his cool determination, his indomitable hope. La None too was there, and was wounded in the leg—an accident the results of which were soon to cause much weeping through Christendom. Had one of those garlands of blazing tar which all night had been fluttering from the walls of Paris alighted by chance on the king's head there might have been another history of France. The ladders, too, proved several feet too short, and there were too few, of them. Had they been more numerous and longer, the tale might have been a different one. As it was, the king was forced to retire with the approaching daylight.

The characteristics of the great commander of the Huguenots and of the Leaguers' chieftain respectively were well illustrated in several incidents of this memorable campaign. Farnese had been informed by scouts and spies of this intended assault by Henry on the walls of Paris. With his habitual caution he discredited the story. Had he believed it, he might have followed the king in overwhelming force and taken him captive. The penalty of Henry's unparalleled boldness was thus remitted by Alexander's exuberant discretion.

Page 1877

Soon afterwards Farnese laid siege to Corbeil. This little place—owing to the extraordinary skill and determination of its commandant, Rigaut, an old Huguenot officer, who had fought with La Noue in Flanders—resisted for nearly four weeks. It was assaulted at last, Rigaut killed, the garrison of one thousand French soldiers put to the sword, and the town sacked. With the fall of Corbeil both the Seine and Marne were re-opened.

Alexander then made a visit to Paris, where he was received with great enthusiasm. The legate, whose efforts and whose money had so much contributed to the successful defence of the capital had returned to Italy to participate in the election of a new pope. For the “Huguenot pope,” Sixtus V., had died at the end of August, having never bestowed on the League any of his vast accumulated treasures to help it in its utmost need. It was not surprising that Philip was indignant, and had resorted to menace of various kinds against the holy father, when he found him swaying so perceptibly in the direction of the hated Bearnese. Of course when he died his complaint was believed to be Spanish poison. In those days, none but the very obscure were thought capable of dying natural deaths, and Philip was esteemed too consummate an artist to allow so formidable an adversary as Sixtus to pass away in God’s time only. Certainly his death was hailed as matter of great rejoicing by the Spanish party in Rome, and as much ignominy bestowed upon his memory as if he had been a heretic; while in Paris his decease was celebrated with bonfires and other marks of popular hilarity.

To circumvent the great Huguenot’s reconciliation with the Roman Church was of course an indispensable portion of Philip’s plan; for none could be so dull as not to perceive that the resistance of Paris to its heretic sovereign would cease to be very effective, so soon as the sovereign had ceased to be heretic. It was most important therefore that the successor of Sixtus should be the tool of Spain. The leading confederates were well aware of Henry’s intentions to renounce the reformed faith, and to return to the communion of Rome whenever he could formally accomplish that measure. The crafty Bearnese knew full well that the road to Paris lay through the gates of Rome. Yet it is proof either of the privacy with which great public matters were then transacted, or of the extraordinary powers of deceit with which Henry was gifted, that the leaders of protestantism were still hoodwinked in regard to his attitude. Notwithstanding the embassy of Luxembourg, and the many other indications of the king’s intentions, Queen Elizabeth continued to regard him as the great champion of the reformed faith. She had just sent him an emerald, which she had herself worn, accompanied by the expression of her wish that the king in wearing it might never strike a blow without demolishing an enemy, and that in his farther progress he might put all his enemies to rout and confusion. “You will remind the king, too,” she added, “that the emerald has this virtue, never to break so long as faith remains entire and firm.”

Page 1878

And the shrewd Stafford, who was in daily attendance upon him, informed his sovereign that there were no symptoms of wavering on Henry's part. "The Catholics here," said he, "cry hard upon the king to be a Catholic or else that he is lost, and they would persuade him that for all their calling in the Spaniards, both Paris and all other towns will yield to him, if he will but assure them that he will become a Catholic. For my part, I think they would laugh at him when he had done so, and so I find he believeth the same, if he had mind to it, which I find no disposition in him unto it." The not very distant future was to show what the disposition of the bold Gascon really was in this great matter, and whether he was likely to reap nothing but ridicule from his apostasy, should it indeed become a fact. Meantime it was the opinion of the wisest sovereign in Europe, and of one of the most adroit among her diplomatists, that there was really nothing in the rumours as to the king's contemplated conversion.

It was, of course, unfortunate for Henry that his staunch friend and admirer Sixtus was no more. But English diplomacy could do but little in Rome, and men were trembling with apprehension lest that arch-enemy of Elizabeth, that devoted friend of Philip, the English Cardinal Allen, should be elected to the papal throne. "Great ado is made in Rome," said Stafford, "by the Spanish ambassador, by all corruptions and ways that may be, to make a pope that must needs depend and be altogether at the King of Spain's devotion. If the princes of Italy put not their hands unto it, no doubt they will have their wills, and I fear greatly our villainous Allen, for, in my judgment, I can comprehend no man more with reason to be tied altogether to the King of Spain's will than he. I pray God send him either to God or the Devil first. An evil-minded Englishman, tied to the King of Spain by necessity, finding almost four millions of money, is a dangerous beast for a pope in this time."

Cardinal Allen was doomed to disappointment. His candidacy was not successful, and, after the brief reign—thirteen days long—of Urban *vii*, Sfondrato wore the triple tiara with the title of Gregory *xiv*. Before the year closed, that pontiff had issued a brief urging the necessity of extirpating heresy in France, and of electing a Catholic king, and asserting his determination to send to Paris—that bulwark of the Catholic faith—not empty words alone but troops, to be paid fifteen thousand crowns of gold each month, so long as the city should need assistance. It was therefore probable that the great leader of the Huguenots, now that he had been defeated by Farnese, and that his capital was still loyal to the League, would obtain less favour—however conscientiously he might instruct himself—from Gregory *xiv*. than he had begun to find in the eyes of Sixtus after the triumph of Ivry.

Page 1879

Parma refreshed his army by a fortnight's repose, and early in November determined on his return to the Netherlands. The Leaguers were aghast at his decision, and earnestly besought him to remain. But the duke had given them back their capital, and although this had been accomplished without much bloodshed in their army or his own, sickness was now making sad ravages among his troops, and there was small supply of food or forage for such large forces as had now been accumulated, in the neighbourhood of Paris. Moreover, dissensions were breaking out between the Spaniards, Italians, and Netherlanders of the relieving army with their French allies. The soldiers and peasants hated the foreigners who came there as victors, even although to assist the Leaguers in overthrowing the laws, government, and nationality of France. The stragglers and wounded on Farnese's march were killed by the country people in considerable numbers, and it was a pure impossibility for him longer to delay his return to the provinces which so much against his will he had deserted.

He marched back by way of Champagne rather than by that of Picardy, in order to deceive the king. Scarcely had he arrived in Champagne when he heard of the retaking of Lagny and Corbeil. So soon as his back was turned, the League thus showed its impotence to retain the advantage which his genius had won. Corbeil, which had cost him a month of hard work, was recaptured in two days. Lagny fell almost as quickly. Earnestly did the confederates implore him to return to their rescue, but he declined almost contemptuously to retrace his steps. His march was conducted in the same order and with the same precision which—had marked his advance. Henry, with his flying camp, hung upon his track, harassing him now in front, now in rear, now in flank. None of the skirmishes were of much military importance. A single cavalry combat, however, in which old Marshal Biron was nearly surrounded and was in imminent danger of death or capture, until chivalrously rescued by the king in person at the head of a squadron of lancers, will always possess romantic interest. In a subsequent encounter, near Baroges on the Yesle, Henry had sent Biron forward with a few companies of horse to engage some five hundred carabineers of Farnese on their march towards the frontier, and had himself followed close upon the track with his usual eagerness to witness or participate in every battle. Suddenly Alphonse Corse, who rode at Henry's aide, pointed out to him, not more than a hundred paces off, an officer wearing a felt hat, a great ruff, and a little furred cassock, mounted on a horse without armour or caparisons, galloping up and down and brandishing his sword at the carabineers to compel them to fall back.

This was the Duke of Parma, and thus the two great champions of the Huguenots and of the Leaguers—the two foremost captains of the age—had met face to face. At that moment La Noue, riding up, informed the king that he had seen the whole of the enemy's horse and foot in battle array, and Henry, suspecting the retreat of Farnese to be a feint for the purpose of luring him on with his small force to an attack, gave orders to retire as soon as possible.

Page 1880

At Guise, on the frontier, the duke parted with Mayenne, leaving with him an auxiliary force of four thousand foot and five hundred horse, which he could ill spare. He then returned to Brussels, which city he reached on the 4th December, filling every hotel and hospital with his sick soldiers, and having left one-third of his numbers behind him. He had manifested his own military skill in the adroit and successful manner in which he had accomplished the relief of Paris, while the barrenness of the result from the whole expedition vindicated the political sagacity with which he had remonstrated against his sovereign's infatuation.

Paris, with the renewed pressure on its two great arteries at Lagny and Corbeil, soon fell into as great danger as before; the obedient Netherlands during the absence of Farnese had been sinking rapidly to ruin, while; on the other hand, great progress and still greater preparations in aggressive warfare had been made by the youthful general and stadtholder of the Republic.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Alexander's exuberant discretion
Divine right of kings
Ever met disaster with so cheerful a smile
Future world as laid down by rival priesthoods
Invaluable gift which no human being can acquire, authority
King was often to be something much less or much worse
Magnificent hopefulness
Myself seeing of it methinketh that I dream
Nothing cheap, said a citizen bitterly, but sermons
Obscure were thought capable of dying natural deaths
Philip *ii*. gave the world work enough
Righteous to kill their own children
Road to Paris lay through the gates of Rome
Shift the mantle of religion from one shoulder to the other
Thirty-three per cent. interest was paid (per month)
Under the name of religion (so many crimes)

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 63, 1590-1592

CHAPTER XXIV.

Prince Maurice—State of the Republican army—Martial science of the period—-Reformation of the military system by Prince Maurice—His military genius—Campaign in the Netherlands—The fort and town of Zutphen taken by the States' forces—Attack upon Deventer—Its capitulation—Advance on Groningen, Delfzyl, Opslag, Yementil, Steenwyk, and other places—Farnese besieges Fort Knodsenburg— Prince Maurice hastens to its relief—A skirmish ensues resulting in the discomfiture of the Spanish and Italian troops—Surrender of Hulat and Nymegen—Close of military, operations of the year.

While the events revealed in the last chapter had been occupying the energies of Farnese and the resources

Page 1881

of his sovereign, there had been ample room for Prince Maurice to mature his projects, and to make a satisfactory beginning in the field. Although Alexander had returned to the Netherlands before the end of the year 1590, and did not set forth on his second French campaign until late in the following year, yet the condition of his health, the exhaustion of his funds, and the dwindling of his army, made it impossible for him to render any effectual opposition to the projects of the youthful general.

For the first time Maurice was ready to put his theories and studies into practice on an extensive scale. Compared with modern armaments, the warlike machinery to be used for liberating the republic from its foreign oppressors would seem almost diminutive. But the science and skill of a commander are to be judged by the results he can work out with the materials within reach. His progress is to be measured by a comparison with the progress of his contemporaries—coheirs with him of what Time had thus far bequeathed.

The regular army of the republic, as reconstructed, was but ten thousand foot and two thousand horse, but it was capable of being largely expanded by the trainbands of the cities, well disciplined and enured to hardship, and by the levies of German reiters and other, foreign auxiliaries in such numbers as could be paid for by the hard-pressed exchequer of the provinces.

To the state-council, according to its original constitution, belonged the levying and disbanding of troops, the conferring of military offices, and the supervision of military operations by sea and land. It was its duty to see that all officers made oath of allegiance to the United Provinces.

The course of Leicester’s administration, and especially the fatal treason of Stanley and of York, made it seem important for the true lovers of their country to wrest from the state-council, where the English had two seats, all political and military power. And this, as has been seen, was practically but illegally accomplished. The silent revolution by which at this epoch all the main attributes of government passed into the hands of the States-General-acting as a league of sovereignties—has already been indicated. The period during which the council exercised functions conferred on it by the States-General themselves was brief and evanescent. The jealousy of the separate provinces soon prevented the state-council—a supreme executive body entrusted with the general defence of the commonwealth—from causing troops to pass into or out of one province or another without a patent from his Excellency the Prince, not as chief of the whole army, but as governor and captain-general of Holland, or Gelderland, or Utrecht, as the case might be.

Page 1882

The highest military office in the Netherlands was that of captain-general or supreme commander. This quality was from earliest times united to that of stadholder, who stood, as his title implied, in the place of the reigning sovereign, whether count, duke, king, or emperor. After the foundation of the Republic this dynastic form, like many others, remained, and thus Prince Maurice was at first only captain-general of Holland and Zeeland, and subsequently of Gelderland, Utrecht, and Overyssel, after he had been appointed stadholder of those three provinces in 1590 on the death of Count Nieuwenaar. However much in reality he was general-in-chief of the army, he never in all his life held the appointment of captain-general of the Union.

To obtain a captain's commission in the army, it was necessary to have served four years, while three years' service was the necessary preliminary to the post of lieutenant or ensign. Three candidates were presented by the province for each office, from whom the stadholder appointed one.—The commissions, except those of the highest commanders, were made out in the name of the States-General, by advice and consent of the council of state. The oath of allegiance, exacted from soldiers as well as officers; mentioned the name of the particular province to which they belonged, as well as that of the States-Generals. It thus appears that, especially after Maurice's first and successful campaigns; the supreme authority over the army really belonged to the States-General, and that the powers of the state-council in this regard fell, in the course of four years, more and more into the back-ground, and at last disappeared almost entirely. During the active period of the war, however; the effect of this revolution was in fact rather a greater concentration of military power than its dispersion, for the States-General meant simply the province of Holland. Holland was the republic.

The organisation of the infantry was very simple. The tactical unit was the company. A temporary combination of several companies—made a regiment, commanded by a colonel or lieutenant-colonel, but for such regiments there was no regular organisation. Sometimes six or seven companies were thus combined, sometimes three times that number, but the strength of a force, however large, was always estimated by the number of companies, not of regiments.

The normal strength of an infantry company, at the beginning of Maurice's career, may be stated at one hundred and thirteen, commanded by one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign, and by the usual non-commissioned officers. Each company was composed of musketeers, harquebusseers, pikemen, halberdeers, and buckler-men. Long after, portable firearms had come into use, the greater portion of foot soldiers continued to be armed with pikes, until the introduction of the fixed bayonet enabled the musketeer to do likewise the duty of pikeman. Maurice was among the first to appreciate the advantage of portable firearms, and he accordingly increased the proportion of soldiers armed with the musket in his companies. In a company of a hundred and thirteen, including officers, he had sixty-four armed with firelocks to thirty carrying pikes and halberds. As before his time the proportion between the arms had been nearly even; he thus more than doubled the number of firearms.

Page 1883

Of these weapons there were two sorts, the musket and the harquebus. The musket was a long, heavy, unmanageable instrument. When fired it was-placed upon an iron gaffle or fork, which: the soldier carried with him, and stuck before him into the ground. The bullets of the musket were twelve to the pound.

The harquebus—or hak-bus, hook-gun, so called because of the hook in the front part of the barrel to give steadiness in firing—was much lighter, was discharged from the hand; and carried bullets of twenty-four to the pound. Both weapons had matchlocks.

The pike was eighteen feet long at least, and pikemen as well as halberdsmen carried rapiers.

There were three buckler-men to each company, introduced by Maurice for the personal protection of the leader of the company. The prince was often attended by one himself, and, on at least one memorable occasion, was indebted to this shield for the preservation of his life.

The cavalry was divided into lancers and carabineers. The unit was the squadron, varying in number from sixty to one hundred and fifty, until the year 1591, when the regular complement of the squadron was fixed at one hundred and twenty.

As the use of cavalry on the battle-field at that day, or at least in the Netherlands, was not in rapidity of motion, nor in severity of shock—the attack usually taking place on a trot—Maurice gradually displaced the lance in favour of the carbine. His troopers thus became rather mounted infantry than regular cavalry.

The carbine was at least three feet long, with wheel-locks, and carried bullets of thirty to the pound.

The artillery was a peculiar Organisation. It was a guild of citizens, rather than a strictly military force like the cavalry and infantry. The arm had but just begun to develop itself, and it was cultivated as a special trade by the guild of the holy Barbara existing in all the principal cities. Thus a municipal artillery gradually organised itself, under the direction of the gun-masters (bus-meesters), who in secret laboured at the perfection of their art, and who taught it to their apprentices and journeymen; as the principles of other crafts were conveyed by master to pupil. This system furnished a powerful element of defence at a period when every city had in great measure to provide for its own safety.

In the earlier campaigns of Maurice three kinds of artillery were used; the whole cannon (kartow) of forty-eight pounds; the half-cannon, or twenty-four pounder, and the field-piece carrying a ball of twelve pounds. The two first were called battering pieces or siege-guns. All the guns were of bronze.

The length of the whole cannon was about twelve feet; its weight one hundred and fifty times that of the ball, or about seven thousand pounds. It was reckoned that the whole kartow could fire from eighty to one hundred shots in an hour. Wet hair cloths were used to cool the piece after every, ten or twelve discharges. The usual charge was twenty pounds of powder.

Page 1884

The whole gun was drawn by thirty-one horses, the half-cannon by twenty-three.

The field-piece required eleven horses, but a regular field-artillery, as an integral part of the army, did not exist, and was introduced in much later times. In the greatest pitched battle ever fought by Maurice, that of Nieuport, he had but six field-pieces.

The prince also employed mortars in his sieges, from which were thrown grenades, hot shot, and stones; but no greater distance was reached than six hundred yards. Bomb-shells were not often used although they had been known for a century.

Before the days of Maurice a special education for engineers had never been contemplated. Persons who had privately acquired a knowledge of fortification and similar branches of the science were employed, upon occasion, but regular corps of engineers there were none. The prince established a course of instruction in this profession at the University of Leyden, according to a system drawn up by the celebrated Stevinus.

Doubtless the most important innovation of the prince, and the one which required the most energy to enforce, was the use of the spade. His soldiers were jeered at by the enemy as mere boors and day labourers who were dishonouring themselves and their profession by the use of that implement instead of the sword. Such a novelty was a shock to all the military ideas of the age, and it was only the determination and vigour of the prince and of his cousin Lewis William that ultimately triumphed over the universal prejudice.

The pay of the common soldier varied from ten to twenty florins the month, but every miner had eighteen florins, and, when actually working in the mines, thirty florins monthly. Soldiers used in digging trenches received, over and above their regular pay, a daily wage of from ten to fifteen styvers, or nearly a shilling sterling.

Another most wholesome improvement made by the prince was in the payment of his troops. The system prevailing in every European country at that day, by which Governments were defrauded and soldiers starved, was most infamous. The soldiers were paid through the captain, who received the wages of a full company, when perhaps not one-third of the names on the master-roll were living human beings. Accordingly two-thirds of all the money stuck to the officer’s fingers, and it was not thought a disgrace to cheat the Government by dressing and equipping for the day a set of ragamuffins, caught up in the streets for the purpose, and made to pass muster as regular soldiers.

These parse-volants, or scarecrows, were passed freely about from one company to another, and the indecency of the fraud was never thought a disgrace to the colours of the company.

Thus, in the Armada year, the queen had demanded that a portion of her auxiliary force in the Netherlands should be sent to England. The States agreed that three thousand of these English troops, together with a few cavalry companies, should go, but stipulated that two thousand should remain in the provinces. The queen accepted the proposal, but when the two thousand had been counted out, it appeared that there was scarcely a man left for the voyage to England. Yet every one of the English captains had claimed full pay for his company from her Majesty's exchequer.

Page 1885

Against this tide of peculation and corruption the strenuous Maurice set himself with heart and soul, and there is no doubt that to his reformation in this vital matter much of his military success was owing. It was impossible that roguery and venality should ever furnish a solid foundation for the martial science.

To the student of military history the campaigns and sieges of Maurice, and especially the earlier: ones, are of great importance. There is no doubt whatever, that the youth who now, after deep study and careful preparation, was measuring himself against the first captains of the age, was founding the great modern school of military science. It was in this Netherland academy, and under the tuition of its consummate professor, that the commanders of the seventeenth century not only acquired the rudiments, but perfected themselves in the higher walks of their art. Therefore the siege operations, in which all that had been invented by modern genius, or rescued from the oblivion which had gathered over ancient lore during the more vulgar and commonplace practice of the mercenary commanders of the day was brought into successful application, must always engage the special attention of the military student.

To the general reader, more interested in marking the progress of civilisation and the advance of the people in the path of development and true liberty, the spectacle of the young stadholder's triumphs has an interest of another kind. At the moment when a thorough practical soldier was most needed by the struggling little commonwealth, to enable it to preserve liberties partially secured by its unparalleled sacrifices of blood and treasure during a quarter of a century, and to expel the foreign invader from the soil which he had so long profaned, it was destined that a soldier should appear.

Spade in hand, with his head full of Roman castrametation and geometrical problems, a prince, scarce emerged from boyhood, presents himself on that stage where grizzled Mansfelds, drunken Hohenlos, and truculent Verdugos have been so long enacting, that artless military drama which consists of hard knocks and wholesale massacres. The novice is received with universal hilarity. But although the machinery of war varies so steadily from age to age that a commonplace commander of to-day, rich in the spoils of preceding time, might vanquish the Alexanders, and Caesars, and Frederics, with their antiquated enginery, yet the moral stuff out of which great captains, great armies, great victories are created, is the simple material it was in the days of Sesostris or Cyrus. The moral and physiological elements remain essentially the same as when man first began to walk up and down the earth and destroy his fellow-creatures.

Page 1886

To make an army a thorough mowing-machine, it then seemed necessary that it should be disciplined into complete mechanical obedience. To secure this, prompt payment of wages and inexorable punishment of delinquencies were indispensable. Long arrearages were now converting Farnese's veterans into systematic marauders; for unpaid soldiers in every age and country have usually degenerated into highwaymen, and it is an impossibility for a sovereign, with the strictest intentions, to persist in starving his soldiers and in killing them for feeding themselves. In Maurice's little army, on the contrary, there were no back-wages and no thieving. At the siege of Delfzyl Maurice hung two of his soldiers for stealing, the one a hat and the other a poniard, from the townsfolk, after the place had capitulated. At the siege of Hulst he ordered another to be shot, before the whole camp, for robbing a woman.

This seems sufficiently harsh, but war is not a pastime nor a very humane occupation. The result was, that robbery disappeared, and it is better for all that enlisted men should be soldiers rather than thieves. To secure the ends which alone can justify war—and if the Netherlanders engaged in defending national existence and human freedom against foreign tyranny were not justifiable then a just war has never been waged—a disciplined army is vastly more humane in its operations than a band of brigands. Swift and condign punishments by the law-martial, for even trifling offences, is the best means of discipline yet devised.

To bring to utmost perfection the machinery already in existence, to encourage invention, to ponder the past with a practical application to the present, to court fatigue, to scorn pleasure, to concentrate the energies on the work in hand, to cultivate quickness of eye and calmness of nerve in the midst of danger, to accelerate movements, to economise blood even at the expense of time, to strive after ubiquity and omniscience in the details of person and place, these were the characteristics of Maurice, and they have been the prominent traits of all commanders who have stamped themselves upon their age. Although his method of war-making differed as far as possible from that quality in common, of the Bearnese, yet the two had one personal insensibility to fear. But in the case of Henry, to confront danger for its own sake was in itself a pleasure, while the calmer spirit of Maurice did not so much seek the joys of the combat as refuse to desist from scientific combinations in the interests of his personal safety. Very frequently, in the course of his early campaigns, the prince was formally and urgently requested by the States-General not to expose his life so recklessly, and before he had passed his twenty-fifth year he had received wounds which, but for fortunate circumstances, would have proved mortal, because he was unwilling to leave special operations on which much was depending to other eyes than his own. The details of his campaigns are,

Page 1887

of necessity, the less interesting to a general reader from their very completeness. Desultory or semi-civilised warfare, where the play of the human passions is distinctly visible, where individual man, whether in buff jerkin or Milan coat of proof, meets his fellow man in close mortal combat, where men starve by thousands or are massacred by town-fulls, where hamlets or villages blaze throughout whole districts or are sunk beneath the ocean—scenes of rage, hatred, vengeance, self-sacrifice, patriotism, where all the virtues and vices of which humanity is capable stride to and fro in their most violent colours and most colossal shape where man in a moment rises almost to divinity, or sinks beneath the beasts of the field—such tragical records of which the sanguinary story of mankind is full—and no portion of them more so than the Netherland chronicles appeal more vividly to the imagination than the neatest solution of mathematical problems. Yet, if it be the legitimate end of military science to accomplish its largest purposes at the least expense of human suffering; if it be progress in civilisation to acquire by scientific combination what might be otherwise attempted, and perhaps vainly attempted, by infinite carnage, then is the professor with his diagrams, standing unmoved amid danger, a more truly heroic image than Coeur-de-Lion with his battle-axe or Alva with his truncheon.

The system—then a new one—which Maurice introduced to sustain that little commonwealth from sinking of which he had become at the age of seventeen the predestined chief, was the best under the circumstances that could have been devised. Patriotism the most passionate, the most sublime, had created the republic. To maintain its existence against perpetual menace required the exertion of perpetual skill.

Passionless as algebra, the genius of Maurice was ready for the task. Strategic points of immense value, important cities and fortresses, vital river-courses and communications—which foreign tyranny had acquired during the tragic past with a patient iniquity almost without a parallel, and which patriotism had for years vainly struggled to recover—were the earliest trophies and prizes of his art. But the details of his victories may be briefly indicated, for they have none of the picturesqueness of crime. The sieges of Naarden, Harlem, Leyden, were tragedies of maddening interest, but the recovery of Zutphen, Deventer, Nymegen, Groningen, and many other places—-all important though they were—was accomplished with the calmness of a consummate player, who throws down on the table the best half dozen invincible cards which it thus becomes superfluous to play.

There were several courses open to the prince before taking the field. It was desirable to obtain control of the line of the Waal, by which that heart of the republic—Holland—-would be made entirely secure. To this end, Gertruydenberg—lately surrendered to the enemy by the perfidy of the Englishman Wingfield, to whom it had been entrusted—Bois le Duc, and Nymegen were to be wrested from Spain.

Page 1888

It was also important to hold the Yssel, the course of which river led directly through the United Netherlands, quite to the Zuyder Zee, cutting off Friesland, Groningen, and Gelderland from their sister provinces of Holland and Zeeland. And here again the keys to this river had been lost by English treason. The fort of Zutphen and the city of Deventer had been transferred to the Spaniard by Roland York and Sir William Stanley, in whose honour the republic had so blindly confided, and those cities it was now necessary to reduce by regular siege before the communications between the eastern and western portions of the little commonwealth could ever be established.

Still farther in the ancient Frisian depths, the memorable treason of that native Netherlander, the high-born Renneberg, had opened the way for the Spaniard's foot into the city of Groningen. Thus this whole important province—with its capital—long subject to the foreign oppressor, was garrisoned with his troops.

Verdugo, a veteran officer of Portuguese birth, who had risen from the position of hostler to that of colonel and royal stadholder, commanded in Friesland. He had in vain demanded reinforcements and supplies from Farnese, who most reluctantly was obliged to refuse them in order that he might obey his master's commands to neglect everything for the sake of the campaign in France.

And Verdugo, stripped of all adequate forces to protect his important province, was equally destitute of means for feeding the troops that were left to him. "I hope to God that I may do my duty to the king and your Highness," he cried, "but I find myself sold up and pledged to such an extent that I am poorer than when I was a soldier at four crowns a month. And everybody in the town is as desperate as myself."

Maurice, after making a feint of attacking Gertruydenberg and Bois le Duc, so that Farnese felt compelled, with considerable difficulty, to strengthen the garrison of those places, came unexpectedly to Arnhem with a force of nine thousand foot and sixteen hundred horse. He had previously and with great secrecy sent some companies of infantry under Sir Francis Vere to Doesburg.

On the 23rd May (1591) five peasants and six peasant women made their appearance at dawn of day before the chief guard-house of the great fort in the Badmeadow (Velluwe), opposite Zutphen, on the west side of the Yssel. It was not an unusual occurrence. These boors and their wives had brought baskets of eggs, butter, and cheese, for the garrison, and they now set themselves quietly down on the ground before the gate, waiting for the soldiers of the garrison to come out and traffic with them for their supplies. Very soon several of the guard made their appearance, and began to chaffer with the peasants, when suddenly one of the women plucked a pistol from under her petticoats and shot dead the soldier who was cheapening her eggs. The rest of the party, transformed in an instant from boors to soldiers, then sprang upon the rest of the guard, overpowered and bound them, and took possession of the gate. A considerable force, which had been placed in ambush by Prince Maurice near the spot, now rushed

forward, and in a few minutes the great fort of Zutphen was mastered by the States' forces without loss of a man. It was a neat and perfectly successful stratagem.

Page 1889

Next day Maurice began the regular investment of the city. On the 26th, Count Lewis William arrived with some Frisian companies. On the 27th, Maurice threw a bridge of boats from the Badmeadow side, across the river to the Weert before the city. On the 28th he had got batteries, mounting thirty-two guns, into position, commanding the place at three points. On the 30th the town capitulated. Thus within exactly one week from the firing of the pistol shot by the supposed butterwoman, this fort and town, which had so long resisted the efforts of the States, and were such important possessions of the Spaniards, fell into the hands of Maurice. The terms of surrender were easy. The city being more important than its garrison, the soldiers were permitted to depart with bag and baggage. The citizens were allowed three days to decide whether to stay under loyal obedience to the States-General, or to take their departure. Those who chose to remain were to enjoy all the privileges of citizens of the United Provinces.

But very few substantial citizens were left, for such had been the tyranny, the misery, and the misrule during the long occupation by a foreign soldiery of what was once a thriving Dutch town, that scarcely anybody but paupers and vagabonds were left. One thousand houses were ruined and desolate. It is superfluous to add that the day of its restoration to the authority of the Union was the beginning of its renewed prosperity.

Maurice, having placed a national garrison in the place, marched the same evening straight upon Deventer, seven miles farther down the river, without pausing to sleep upon his victory. His artillery and munitions were sent rapidly down the Yssel.

Within five days he had thoroughly invested the city, and brought twenty-eight guns to bear upon the weakest part of its defences.

It was a large, populous, well-built town, once a wealthy member of the Hanseatic League, full of fine buildings, both public and private, the capital of the rich and fertile province of Overyssel, and protected by a strong wall and moat—as well-fortified a place as could be found in the Netherlands. The garrison consisted of fourteen hundred Spaniards and Walloons, under the command of Count Herman van den Berg, first cousin of Prince Maurice.

No sooner had the States army come before the city than a Spanish captain observed —“We shall now have a droll siege—cousins on the outside, cousins on the inside. There will be a sham fight or two, and then the cousins will make it up, and arrange matters to suit themselves.”

Such hints had deeply wounded Van den Berg, who was a fervent Catholic, and as loyal a servant to Philip *ii*. as he could have been, had that monarch deserved, by the laws of nature and by his personal services and virtues, to govern all the swamps of Friesland. He slept on the gibe, having ordered all the colonels and captains of the garrison to attend at solemn mass in the great church the next morning. He there declared to them all publicly that he felt outraged at the suspicions concerning his fidelity, and after mass

he took the sacrament, solemnly swearing never to give up the city or even to speak of it until he had made such resistance that he must be carried from the breach. So long as he could stand or sit he would defend the city entrusted to his care.

Page 1890

The whole council who had come from Zutphen to Maurice's camp were allowed to deliberate concerning the siege. The, enemy had been seen hovering about the neighbourhood in considerable numbers, but had not ventured an attempt to throw reinforcements into the place. Many of the counsellors argued against the siege. It was urged that the resistance would be determined and protracted, and that the Duke of Parma was sure to take the field in person to relieve so important a city, before its reduction could be effected.

But Maurice had thrown a bridge across the Yssel above, and another below the town, had carefully and rapidly taken measures in the success of which he felt confident, and now declared that it would be cowardly and shameful to abandon an enterprise so well begun.

The city had been formally summoned to surrender, and a calm but most decided refusal had been returned.

On the 9th June the batteries began playing, and after four thousand six hundred shots a good breach had been effected in the defences along the Kaye—an earthen work lying between two strong walls of masonry.

The breach being deemed practicable, a storm was ordered. To reach the Kaye it was necessary to cross a piece of water called the Haven, over which a pontoon bridge was hastily thrown. There was now a dispute among the English, Scotch, and Netherlanders for precedence in the assault. It was ultimately given to the English, in order that the bravery of that nation might now on the same spot wipe out the disgrace inflicted upon its name by the treason of Sir William Stanley. The English did their duty well and rushed forward merrily, but the bridge proved too short. Some sprang over and pushed boldly for the breach. Some fell into the moat and were drowned. Others, sustained by the Netherlanders under Solms, Meetkerke, and Brederode, effected their passage by swimming, leaping, or wading, so that a resolute attack was made. Herman van den Berg met them in the breach at the head of seven companies. The defenders were most ferocious in their resistance. They were also very drunk. The count had placed many casks of Rhenish and of strong beer within reach, and ordered his soldiers to drink their fill as they fought. He was himself as vigorous in his potations as he was chivalrous with sword and buckler. Two pages and two lieutenants fell at his side, but still he fought at the head of his men with a desperation worthy of his vow, until he fell wounded in the eye and was carried from the place. Notwithstanding this disaster to the commander of the town, the assailants were repulsed, losing two hundred-and twenty-five in killed and wounded—Colonel Meetkerke and his brother, two most valuable Dutch officers, among them.

During the whole of the assault, a vigorous cannonade had been kept up upon other parts of the town, and houses and church-towers were toppling down in all directions. Meanwhile the inhabitants—for it was Sunday—instead of going to service were driven

towards the breach by the serjeant-major, a truculent Spaniard, next in command to Van den Berg, who ran about the place with a great stick, summoning the Dutch burghers to assist the Spanish garrison on the wall. It was thought afterwards that this warrior would have been better occupied among the soldiers, at the side of his commander.

Page 1891

A chivalrous incident in the open field occurred during the assault. A gigantic Albanian cavalry officer came prancing out of Deventer into the spaces between the trenches, defying any officer in the States' army to break a lance with him. Prince Maurice forbade any acceptance of the challenge, but Lewis van der Cathulle, son of the famous Ryhove of Ghent, unable to endure the taunts and bravado of this champion, at last obtained permission to encounter him in single combat. They met accordingly with much ceremony, tilted against each other, and shivered their lances in good style, but without much effect. The Albanian then drew a pistol. Cathulle had no weapon save a cutlass, but with this weapon he succeeded in nearly cutting off the hand which held the pistol. He then took his enemy prisoner, the vain-glorious challenger throwing his gold chain around his conqueror's neck in token of his victory. Prince Maurice caused his wound to be bound up and then liberated him, sending him into the city with a message to the governor.

During the following night the bridge, over which the assailants had nearly forced their way into the town, was vigorously attacked by the garrison, but Count Lewis William, in person, with a chosen band defended it stoutly till morning, beating back the Spaniards with heavy loss in a sanguinary midnight contest.

Next morning there was a unanimous outcry on the part of the besieged for a capitulation. It was obvious that, with the walls shot to ruins as they had been, the place was no longer tenable against Maurice's superior forces. A trumpet was sent to the prince before the dawn of day, and on the 10th of June, accordingly, the place capitulated.

It was arranged that the garrison should retire with arms and baggage whithersoever they chose. Van den Berg stipulated nothing in favour of the citizens, whether through forgetfulness or spite does not distinctly appear. But the burghers were received like brothers. No plunder was permitted, no ransom demanded, and the city took its place among its sisterhood of the United Provinces.

Van den Berg himself was received at the prince's head, quarters with much cordiality. He was quite blind; but his wound seemed to be the effect of exterior contusions, and he ultimately recovered the sight of one eye. There was mach free conversation between himself and his cousins during the brief interval in which he was their guest.

"I've often told Verdugo," said he, "that the States had no power to make a regular siege, nor to come with proper artillery into the field, and he agreed with me. But we were both wrong, for I now see the contrary."

To which Count Lewis William replied with a laugh: "My dear cousin, I've observed that in all your actions you were in the habit of despising us Beggars, and I have said that you would one day draw the shortest straw in consequence. I'm glad to hear this

avowal from your own lips." Herman attempted no reply but let the subject drop, seeming to regret having said so much.

Page 1892

Soon afterwards he was forwarded by Maurice in his own coach to Ulff, where he was attended by the prince's body physician till he was re-established in health.

Thus within ten days of his first appearance before its walls, the city of Deventer, and with it a whole province, had fallen into the hands of Maurice. It began to be understood that the young pedant knew something about his profession, and that he had not been fagging so hard at the science of war for nothing.

The city was in a sorry plight when the States took possession of it. As at Zutphen, the substantial burghers had wandered away, and the foreign soldiers bivouacking there so long had turned the stately old Hanseatic city into a brick and mortar wilderness. Hundreds of houses had been demolished by the garrison, that the iron might be sold and the woodwork burned for fuel; for the enemy had conducted himself as if feeling in his heart that the occupation could not be a permanent one, and as if desirous to make the place as desolate as possible for the Beggars when they should return.

The dead body of the traitor York, who had died and been buried in Deventer, was taken from the tomb, after the capture of the city, and with the vulgar ferocity so characteristic of the times, was hung, coffin and all, on the gibbet for the delectation of the States' soldiery.

Maurice, having thus in less than three weeks recovered two most important cities, paused not an instant in his career but moved at once on Groningen. There was a strong pressure put upon him to attempt the capture of Nymegen, but the understanding with the Frisian stadholders and his troops had been that the enterprise upon Groningen should follow the reduction of Deventer.

On the 26th June Maurice appeared before Groningen. Next day, as a precautionary step, he moved to the right and attacked the strong city of Delfzyl. This place capitulated to him on the 2nd July. The fort of Opslag surrendered on the 7th July. He then moved to the west of Groningen, and attacked the forts of Yementil and Lettebaest, which fell into his hands on the 11th July. He then moved along the Nyenoort through the Seven Wolds and Drenthe to Steenwyk, before which strongly fortified city he arrived on the 15th July.

Meantime, he received intercepted letters from Verdugo to the Duke of Parma, dated 19th June from Groningen. In these, the Spanish stadholder informed Farnese that the enemy was hovering about his neighbourhood, and that it would be necessary for the duke to take the field in person in considerable force, or that Groningen would be lost, and with it the Spanish forces in the province. He enclosed a memorial of the course proper to be adopted by the duke for his relief.

Page 1893

Notwithstanding the strictness by which Philip had tied his great general's hands, Farnese felt the urgency of the situation. By the end of June, accordingly, although full of his measures for marching to the relief of the Leaguers in Normandy, he moved into Gelderland, coming by way of Xanten, Rees, and neighbouring places. Here he paused for a moment perplexed, doubting whether to take the aggressive in Gelderland or to march straight to the relief of Groningen. He decided that it was better for the moment to protect the line of the Waal. Shipping his army accordingly into the Batavian Island or Good-meadow (Bet-uwe), which lies between the two great horns of the Rhine, he laid siege to Fort Knodsenburg, which Maurice had built the year before, on the right bank of the Waal for the purpose of attacking Nymegen. Farnese, knowing that the general of the States was occupied with his whole army far away to the north, and separated from him by two great rivers, wide and deep, and by the whole breadth of that dangerous district called the Foul-meadow (Vel-uwe), and by the vast quagmire known as the Rouvenian morass, which no artillery nor even any organised forces had ever traversed since the beginning of the world, had felt no hesitation in throwing his army in boats across the Waal. He had no doubt of reducing a not very powerful fortress long before relief could be brought to it, and at the same time of disturbing by his presence in Batavia the combinations of his young antagonist in Friesland and Groningen.

So with six thousand foot and one thousand horse, Alexander came before Knodsenburg. The news reached Maurice at Steenwyk on the 15th July. Instantly changing his plans, the prince decided that Farnese must be faced at once, and, if possible, driven from the ground, thinking it more important to maintain, by concentration, that which had already been gained, than to weaken and diffuse his forces in insufficient attempts to acquire more. Before two days had passed, he was on the march southward, having left Lewis William with a sufficient force to threaten Groningen. Coming by way of Hasselt Zwol to Deventer, he crossed the Yssel on a bridge of boats on the 18th of July, 1591 and proceeded to Arnhem. His army, although excessively fatigued by forced marches in very hot weather, over nearly impassable roads, was full of courage and cheerfulness, having learned implicit confidence in their commander. On the 20th he was at Arnhem. On the 22nd his bridge of boats was made, and he had thrown his little army across the Rhine into Batavia, and entrenched himself with his six thousand foot and fourteen hundred horse in the immediate neighbourhood of Farnese—Foul-meadow and Good-meadow, dyke, bog, wold, and quagmire, had been successfully traversed, and within one week of his learning that the great viceroy of Philip had reached the Batavian island, Maurice stood confronting that famous chieftain in battle-array.

On the 22nd July, Farnese, after firing two hundred and eighty-five shots at Fort Knodsenburg, ordered an assault, expecting that so trifling a work could hardly withstand a determined onslaught by his veterans. To his surprise they were so warmly received that two hundred of the assailants fell at the first onset, and the attack was most conclusively repulsed.

Page 1894

And now Maurice had appeared upon the scene, determined to relieve a place so important for his ulterior designs. On the 24th July he sent out a small but picked force of cavalry to reconnoitre the enemy. They were attacked by a considerable body of Italian and Spanish horse from the camp before Knodsenburg, including Alexander's own company of lancers under Nicelli. The States troops fled before them in apparent dismay for a little distance, hotly pursued by the royalists, until, making a sudden halt, they turned to the attack, accompanied by five fresh companies of cavalry and a thousand musketeers, who fell upon the foe from all directions. It was an ambush, which had been neatly prepared by Maurice in person, assisted by Sir Francis Vere. Sixty of the Spaniards and Italians were killed and one hundred and fifty prisoners, including Captain Nicelli, taken, while the rest of the party sought safety in ignominious flight. This little skirmish, in which ten companies of the picked veterans of Alexander Farnese had thus been utterly routed before his eyes, did much to inspire the States troops with confidence in themselves and their leader.

Parma was too experienced a campaigner, and had too quick an eye, not to recognise the error which he had committed in placing the dangerous river Waal, without a bridge; between himself and his supplies. He had not dreamed that his antagonist would be capable of such celerity of movement as he had thus displayed, and his first business now was to extricate himself from a position which might soon become fatal. Without hesitation, he did his best to amuse the enemy in front of the fort, and then passed the night in planting batteries upon the banks of the river, under cover of which he succeeded next day in transporting in ferry-boats his whole force, artillery and: baggage, to the opposite shore, without loss, and with his usual skill.

He remained but a short time in Nymegen, but he was hampered by the express commands of the king. Moreover, his broken health imperatively required that he should once more seek the healing influence of the waters of Spa, before setting forth on his new French expedition. Meanwhile, although he had for a time protected the Spanish possessions in the north by his demonstration in Gelderland, it must be confessed that the diversion thus given to the plans of Maurice was but a feeble one.

Having assured the inhabitants of Nymegen that he would watch over the city like the apple of, his eye, he took his departure on the 4th of August for Spa. He was accompanied on his journey by his son, Prince Ranuccio, just arrived from Italy.

After the retreat of Farnese, Maurice mustered his forces at Arnhem, and found himself at the head of seven thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse. It was expected by all the world that, being thus on the very spot, he would forthwith proceed to reduce the ancient, wealthy, imperial city of Nynegen. The garrison and burghers accordingly made every preparation to resist the attack, disconcerted as they were, however, by the departure of Parma, and by the apparent incapacity of Verdugo to bring them effectual relief.

Page 1895

But to the surprise of all men, the States forces suddenly disappeared from the scene, having been, as it were, spirited away by night-time, along those silent watery highways and crossways of canal, river, and estuary—the military advantages of which to the Netherlands, Maurice was the first thoroughly to demonstrate. Having previously made great preparations of munitions and provisions in Zeeland, the young general, who was thought hard at work in Gelderland, suddenly presented himself on the 19th September, before the gates of Hulst, on the border of Zeeland and Brabant.

It was a place of importance from its situation, its possession by the enemy being a perpetual thorn in the side of the States, and a constant obstacle to the plans of Maurice. His arrangements having been made with the customary, neatness, celerity, and completeness, he received the surrender of the city on the fifth day after his arrival.

Its commander, Castillo, could offer no resistance; and was subsequently, it is said, beheaded by order of the Duke of Parma for his negligence. The place is but a dozen miles from Antwerp, which city was at the very, moment keeping great holiday and outdoing itself in magnificent festivals in honour of young Ranuccio. The capture of Hulst before his eyes was a demonstration quite unexpected by the prince, and great was the wrath of old Mondragon, governor of Antwerp, thus bearded in his den. The veteran made immediate preparations for chastising the audacious Beggars of Zeeland and their, pedantic young commander, but no sooner had the Spaniards taken the field than the wily foe had disappeared as magically as he had come.

The Flemish earth seemed to have bubbles as the water hath, and while Mondragon was beating the air in vain on the margin of the Scheld, Maurice was back again upon the Waal, horse, foot, and artillery, bag, baggage, and munition, and had fairly set himself down in earnest to besiege Nymegen, before the honest burghers and the garrison had finished drawing long breaths at their recent escape. Between the 14th and 16th October he had bridged the deep, wide, and rapid river, had transported eight thousand five hundred infantry and, sixteen companies of cavalry to the southern side, had entrenched his camp and made his approaches, and had got sixty-eight pieces of artillery into three positions commanding the weakest part of the defences of the city between the Falcon Tower and the Hoender gate. The fort of Knodsenburg was also ready to throw hot shot across the river into the town. Not a detail in all these preparations escaped the vigilant eye of the Commander-in-Chief, and again and again was he implored not so recklessly to expose a life already become precious to his country. On the 20th October, Maurice sent to demand the surrender of the city. The reply was facetious but decisive.

The prince was but a young suitor, it was said, and the city a spinster not so lightly to be won. A longer courtship and more trouble would be necessary.

Page 1896

Whereupon the suitor opened all his batteries without further delay, and the spinster gave a fresh example of the inevitable fate of talking castles and listening ladies.

Nymegen, despite her saucy answer on the 20th, surrendered on the 21st. Relief was impossible. Neither Parma, now on his way to France, nor Verdugo, shut up in Friesland, could come to the rescue of the place, and the combinations of Maurice were an inexorable demonstration.

The terms of the surrender were similar to those accorded to Zutphen and Deventer. In regard to the religious point it was expressly laid down by Maurice that the demand for permission to exercise publicly the Roman Catholic religion should be left to the decision of the States-General.

And thus another most important city had been added to the domains of the republic. Another triumph was inscribed on the record of the young commander. The exultation was very great throughout the United Netherlands, and heartfelt was the homage rendered by all classes of his countrymen to the son of William the Silent.

Queen Elizabeth wrote to congratulate him in warmest terms on his great successes, and even the Spaniards began to recognise the merits of the new chieftain. An intercepted letter from Verdugo, who had been foiled in his efforts to arrest the career of Maurice, indicated great respect for his prowess. “I have been informed,” said the veteran, “that Count Maurice of Nassau wishes to fight me. Had I the opportunity I assure you that I should not fail him, for even if ill luck were my portion, I should at least not escape the honour of being beaten by such a personage. I beg you to tell him so with my affectionate compliments. Yours, *Francis Verdugo*.”

These chivalrous sentiments towards Prince Maurice had not however prevented Verdugo from doing his best to assassinate Count Lewis William. Two Spaniards had been arrested in the States camp this summer, who came in as deserters, but who confessed “with little, or mostly without torture,” that they had been sent by their governor and colonel with instructions to seize a favourable opportunity to shoot Lewis William and set fire to his camp. But such practices were so common on the part of the Spanish commanders as to occasion no surprise whatever.

It will be remembered that two years before, the famous Martin Schenk had come to a tragic end at Nymegen. He had been drowned, fished up, hanged, drawn, and quartered; after which his scattered fragments, having been exposed on all the principal towers of the city, had been put in pickle and deposited in a chest. They were now collected and buried triumphantly in the tomb of the Dukes of Gelderland. Thus the shade of the grim freebooter was at last appeased.

Page 1897

The government of the city was conferred upon Count Lewis William, with Gerard de Jonge as his lieutenant. A substantial garrison was placed in the city, and, the season now far advanced Maurice brought the military operations of the year, saving a slight preliminary demonstration against Gertruydenberg, to a close. He had deserved and attained—considerable renown. He had astonished the leisurely war-makers and phlegmatic veterans of the time, both among friends and foes, by the unexampled rapidity of his movements and the concentration of his attacks. He had carried great waggon trains and whole parks of siege artillery—the heaviest then known—over roads and swamps which had been deemed impassable even for infantry. He had traversed the length and breadth of the republic in a single campaign, taken two great cities in Overyssel, picked up cities and fortresses in the province of Groningen, and threatened its capital, menaced Steenwyk, relieved Knodsenburg though besieged in person by the greatest commander of the age, beaten the most famous cavalry of Spain and Italy under the eyes of their chieftain, swooped as it were through the air upon Brabant, and carried off an important city almost in the sight of Antwerp, and sped back again in the freezing weather of early autumn, with his splendidly served and invincible artillery, to the imperial city of Nymegen, which Farnese had sworn to guard like the apple of his eye, and which, with consummate skill, was forced out of his grasp in five days.

“Some might attribute these things to blind fortune,” says an honest chronicler who had occupied important posts in the service of the prince and of his cousin Lewis William, “but they who knew the prince’s constant study and laborious attention to detail, who were aware that he never committed to another what he could do himself, who saw his sobriety, vigilance, his perpetual study and holding of council with Count Lewis William (himself possessed of all these good gifts, perhaps even in greater degree), and who never found him seeking, like so many other commanders, his own ease and comfort, would think differently.”

CHAPTER XXV.

War in Brittany and Normandy—Death of La Noue—Religious and political persecution in Paris—Murder of President Brisson, Larcher, and Tardif—The sceptre of France offered to Philip—The Duke of Mayenne punishes the murderers of the magistrates—-Speech of Henry’s envoy to the States-General—Letter of Queen Elizabeth to Henry—-Siege of Rouen—Farnese leads an army to its relief—The king is wounded in a skirmish—Siege of Rue by Farnese—Henry raises the siege of Rouen—Siege of Caudebec—-Critical position of Farnese and his army—Victory of the Duke of Mercoeur in Brittany.

Again the central point towards which the complicated events to be described in this history gravitate is found on the soil of France. Movements apparently

Page 1898

desultory and disconnected—as they may have seemed to the contemporaneous observer, necessarily occupied with the local and daily details which make up individual human life—are found to be necessary parts of a whole, when regarded with that breadth and clearness of vision which is permitted to human beings only when they can look backward upon that long sequence of events which make up the life of nations and which we call the Past. It is only by the anatomical study of what has ceased to exist that we can come thoroughly to comprehend the framework and the vital conditions of that which lives. It is only by patiently lifting the shroud from the Past that we can enable ourselves to make even wide guesses at the meaning of the dim Present and the veiled Future. It is only thus that the continuity of human history reveals itself to us as the most important of scientific facts.

If ever commonwealth was apparently doomed to lose that national existence which it had maintained for a brief period at the expense of infinite sacrifice of blood and treasure, it was the republic of the United Netherlands in the period immediately succeeding the death of William the Silent. Domestic treason, secession of important provinces, religious-hatred, foreign intrigue, and foreign invasion—in such a sea of troubles was the republic destined generations long to struggle. Who but the fanatical, the shallow-minded, or the corrupt could doubt the inevitable issue of the conflict? Did not great sages and statesmen whose teachings seemed so much wiser in their generation than the untaught impulses of the great popular heart, condemn over and over again the hopeless struggles and the atrocious bloodshed which were thought to disgrace the age, and by which it was held impossible that the cause of human liberty should ever be advanced?

To us who look back from the vantage summit which humanity has reached—thanks to the toil and sacrifices of those who have preceded us—it may seem doubtful whether premature peace in the Netherlands, France, and England would have been an unmitigated blessing, however easily it might have been purchased by the establishment all over Europe of that holy institution called the Inquisition, and by the tranquil acceptance of the foreign domination of Spain.

If, too; ever country seemed destined to the painful process of national vivisection and final dismemberment, it was France: Its natural guardians and masters, save one, were in secret negotiation with foreign powers to obtain with their assistance a portion of the national territory under acknowledgment of foreign supremacy. There was hardly an inch of French soil that had not two possessors. In Burgundy Baron Biron was battling against the Viscount Tavannes; in the Lyonese and Dauphiny Marshal des Digiueres was fighting with the Dukes of Savoy and Nemours; in Provence, Epernon was resisting Savoy; in Languedoc, Constable Montmorency contended with the Duke of Joyeuse; in Brittany, the Prince of Dombes was struggling with the Duke of Mercoeur.

Page 1899

But there was one adventurer who thought he could show a better legal title to the throne of France than all the doctors of the Sorbonne could furnish to Philip *ii*. and his daughter, and who still trusted, through all the disasters which pursued him, and despite the machinations of venal warriors and mendicant princes, to his good right and his good sword, and to something more potent than both, the cause of national unity. His rebuke to the intriguing priests at the interview of St. Denis, and his reference to the judgment of Solomon, formed the text to his whole career.

The brunt of the war now fell upon Brittany and Normandy. Three thousand Spaniards under Don John de Aquila had landed in the port of Blavet which they had fortified, as a stronghold on the coast. And thither, to defend the integrity of that portion of France, which, in Spanish hands, was a perpetual menace to her realm, her crown, even to her life, Queen Elizabeth had sent some three thousand Englishmen, under commanders well known to France and the Netherlands. There was black Norris again dealing death among the Spaniards and renewing his perpetual squabbles with Sir Roger Williams. There was that doughty Welshman himself, truculent and caustic as ever—and as ready with sword or pen, foremost in every mad adventure or every forlorn hope, criticising with sharpest tongue the blunders and shortcomings of friend and foe, and devoting the last drop in his veins with chivalrous devotion to his Queen. “The world cannot deny,” said he, “that any carcase living ventured himself freer and oftener for his prince, state, and friends than I did mine. There is no more to be had of a poor beast than his skin, and for want of other means I never respected mine in the least respect towards my sovereign’s service, or country.” And so passing his life in the saddle and under fire, yet finding leisure to collect the materials for, and to complete the execution of, one of the most valuable and attractive histories of the age, the bold Welshman again and again appears, wearing the same humorous but truculent aspect that belonged to him when he was wont to run up and down in a great morion and feathers on Flemish battlefields, a mark for the Spanish sharpshooters.

There, too, under the banner of the Bearnese, that other historian of those sanguinary times, who had fought on almost every battle-field where tyranny and liberty had sought to smite each other dead, on French or Flemish soil, and who had prepared his famous political and military discourses in a foul dungeon swarming with toads and rats and other villainous reptiles to which the worse than infernal tyranny of Philip *ii*. had consigned him for seven years long as a prisoner of war—the brave and good La Noue, with the iron arm, hero of a hundred combats, was fighting his last fight. At the siege of Lamballe in Brittany, he had taken off his calque and climbed a ladder to examine the breach effected

Page 1900

by the batteries. An arquebus shot from the town grazed his forehead, and, without inflicting a severe wound, stunned him so much that he lost his balance and fell head foremost towards the ground; his leg, which had been wounded at the midnight assault upon Paris, where he stood at the side of King Henry, caught in the ladder and held him suspended. His head was severely bruised, and the contusions and shock to his war-worn frame were so great that he died after lingering eighteen days.

His son de Teligny; who in his turn had just been exchanged and released from the prison where he had lain since his capture before Antwerp, had hastened with joy to join his father in the camp, but came to close his eyes. The veteran caused the chapter in Job on the resurrection of the body to be read to him on his death-bed, and died expressing his firm faith in a hereafter. Thus passed away, at the age of sixty, on the 4th August, 1591, one of the most heroic spirits of France. Prudence, courage, experience, military knowledge both theoretic and practical, made him one of the first captains of the age, and he was not more distinguished for his valour than for the purity of his life, and the moderation, temperance, and justice of his character. The Prince of Dombes, in despair at his death, raised the siege of Lamballe.

There was yet another chronicler, fighting among the Spaniards, now in Brittany, now in Normandy, and now in Flanders, and doing his work as thoroughly with his sword as afterwards with his pen, Don Carlos Coloma, captain of cavalry, afterwards financier, envoy, and historian. For it was thus that those writers prepared themselves for their work. They were all actors in the great epic, the episodes of which they have preserved. They lived and fought, and wrought and suffered and wrote. Rude in tongue; aflame with passion, twisted all awry by prejudice, violent in love and hate, they have left us narratives which are at least full of colour and thrilling with life.

Thus Netherlanders, Englishmen, and Frenchmen were again mingling their blood and exhausting their energies on a hundred petty battle-fields of Brittany and Normandy; but perhaps to few of those hard fighters was it given to discern the great work which they were slowly and painfully achieving.

In Paris the League still maintained its ascendancy. Henry, having again withdrawn from his attempts to reduce the capital, had left the sixteen tyrants who governed it more leisure to occupy themselves with internal politics. A network of intrigue was spread through the whole atmosphere of the place. The Sixteen, sustained by the power of Spain and Rome, and fearing nothing so much as the return of peace, by which their system of plunder would come to an end, proceeded with their persecution of all heretics, real or supposed, who were rich enough to offer a reasonable chance of spoil. The soul of all these intrigues was the new legate, Sego, bishop of Piacenza.

Page 1901

Letters from him to Alexander Farnese, intercepted by Henry, showed a determination to ruin the Duke of Mayenne and Count Belin governor of Paris, whom he designated as Colossus and Renard, to extirpate the magistrates, and to put Spanish partizans in their places, and in general to perfect the machinery by which the authority of Philip was to be established in France. He was perpetually urging upon that monarch the necessity of spending more money among his creatures in order to carry out these projects.

Accordingly the attention of the Sixteen had been directed to President Brisson, who had already made himself so dangerously conspicuous by his resistance to the insolent assumption of the cardinal-legate. This eminent juris-consult had succeeded Pomponne de Bellievre as first president of the Parliament of Paris. He had been distinguished for talent, learning, and eloquence as an advocate; and was the author of several important legal works. His ambition to fill the place of first president had caused him to remain in Paris after its revolt against Henry *iii*. He was no Leaguer; and, since his open defiance of the ultra-Catholic party, he had been a marked man—doomed secretly by the confederates who ruled the capital. He had fondly imagined that he could govern the Parisian populace as easily as he had been in the habit of influencing the Parliament or directing his clients. He expected to restore the city to its obedience to the constituted authorities. He hoped to be himself the means of bringing Henry *iv*. in triumph to the throne of his ancestors. He found, however, that a revolution was more difficult to manage than a law case; and that the confederates of the Holy League were less tractable than his clients had usually been found.

On the night of the 14th November; 1591; he was seized on the bridge St. Michel, while on his way to parliament, and was told that he was expected at the Hotel de Ville. He was then brought to the prison of the little Chatelet.

Hardly had he been made secure in the dimly-lighted dungeon, when Crome, a leader among the Parisian populacey made his appearance, accompanied by some of his confederates, and dressed in a complete suit of mail. He ordered the magistrate to take off his hat and to kneel. He then read a sentence condemning him to death. Profoundly astonished, Brisson demanded to know of what crime he was accused; and under what authority. The answer was a laugh; and an assurance that he had no time to lose. He then begged that at least he might be imprisoned long enough to enable him to complete a legal work on which he was engaged, and which, by his premature death, would be lost to the commonwealth. This request produced no doubt more merriment than his previous demands. His judges were inflexible; and allowed him hardly time to confess himself. He was then hanged in his dungeon.

Two other magistrates, Larcher and Tardif, were executed in the same way, in the same place, and on the same night. The crime charged against them was having spoken in a public assembly somewhat freely against the Sixteen, and having aided in the

circulation in Paris of a paper drawn up by the Duke of Nevers, filled with bitterness against the Lorraine princes and the League, and addressed to the late Pope Sixtus.

Page 1902

The three bodies were afterwards gibbeted on the Greve in front of the Hotel de Ville, and exposed for two days to the insults and fury of the populace.

This was the culminating point of the reign of terror in Paris. Never had the sixteen tyrants; lords of the market halls, who governed the capital by favour of and in the name of the populace, seemed more omnipotent. As representatives or plenipotentiaries of Madam League they had laid the crown at the feet of the King of Spain, hoping by still further drafts on his exchequer and his credulity to prolong indefinitely their own ignoble reign. The extreme democratic party, which had hitherto supported the House of Lorraine and had seemed to idolize that family in the person of the great Balafre, now believed themselves possessed of sufficient power to control the Duke of Mayenne and all his adherents. They sent the Jesuit Claude Mathieu with a special memorial to Philip *ii*. That monarch was implored to take, the sceptre of France, and to reign over them, inasmuch as they most willingly threw themselves into his arms? They assured him that all reasonable people, and especially the Holy League, wished him to take the reins of Government, on condition of exterminating heresy throughout the kingdom by force of arms, of publishing the Council of Trent, and of establishing everywhere the Holy inquisition—an institution formidable only to the wicked and desirable for the good. It was suggested that Philip should not call himself any longer King of Spain nor adopt the title of King of France, but that he should proclaim himself the Great King, or make use of some similar designation, not indicating any specialty but importing universal dominion.

Should Philip, however, be disinclined himself to accept the monarchy, it was suggested that the young Duke of Guise, son of the first martyr of France, would be the most appropriate personage to be honoured with the hand of the legitimate Queen of France, the Infanta Clara Isabella.

But the Sixteen were reckoning without the Duke of Mayenne. That great personage, although an indifferent warrior and an utterly unprincipled and venal statesman, was by no means despicable as a fisherman in the troubled waters of revolution. He knew how to manage intrigues with both sides for his own benefit. Had he been a bachelor he might have obtained the Infanta and shared her prospective throne. Being encumbered with a wife he had no hope of becoming the son-in-law of Philip, and was determined that his nephew Guise should not enjoy a piece of good fortune denied to himself. The escape of the young duke from prison had been the signal for the outbreak of jealousies between uncle and nephew, which Parma and other agents had been instructed by their master to foster to the utmost. “They must be maintained in such disposition in regard to me,” he said, “that the one being ignorant of my relations to the other, both may without knowing it do my will.”

Page 1903

But Mayenne, in this grovelling career of self-seeking, in this perpetual loading of dice and marking of cards, which formed the main occupation of so many kings and princes of the period, and which passed for Machiavellian politics, was a fair match for the Spanish king and his Italian viceroy. He sent President Jeannin on special mission to Philip, asking for two armies, one to be under his command, the other under that of Farnese, and assured him that he should be king himself, or appoint any man he liked to the vacant throne. Thus he had secured one hundred thousand crowns a month to carry on his own game withal. "The maintenance of these two armies costs me 261,000 crowns a month," said Philip to his envoy Ybarra.

And what was the result of all this expenditure of money, of all this lying and counter-lying, of all this frantic effort on the part of the most powerful monarch of the age to obtain property which did not belong to him—the sovereignty of a great kingdom, stocked with a dozen millions of human beings—of all this endless bloodshed of the people in the interests of a high-born family or two, of all this infamous brokerage charged by great nobles for their attempts to transfer kingdoms like private farms from one owner to another? Time was to show. Meanwhile men trembled at the name of Philip *ii*., and grovelled before him as the incarnation of sagacity, high policy, and king-craft.

But Mayenne, while taking the brokerage, was less anxious about the transfer. He had fine instinct enough to suspect that the Bearnese, outcast though he seemed, might after all not be playing so desperate a game against the League as it was the fashion to suppose. He knew whether or not Henry was likely to prove a more fanatical Huguenot in 1592 than he bad shown himself twenty years before at the Bartholomew festival. And he had wit enough to foresee that the "instruction" which the gay free-thinker held so cautiously in his fingers might perhaps turn out the trump card. A bold, valorous Frenchman with a flawless title, and washed whiter than snow by the freshet of holy water, might prove a more formidable claimant to the allegiance of Frenchmen than a foreign potentate, even though backed by all the doctors of the Sorbonne.

The murder of President Brisson and his colleagues by the confederates of the sixteen quarters, was in truth the beginning of the end. What seemed a proof of supreme power was the precursor of a counter-revolution, destined ere long to lead farther than men dreamed. The Sixteen believed themselves omnipotent. Mayenne being in their power, it was for them to bestow the crown at their will, or to hold it suspended in air as long as seemed best to them. They felt no doubt that all the other great cities in the kingdom would follow the example of Paris.

Page 1904

But the lieutenant-general of the realm felt it time for him to show that his authority was not a shadow—that he was not a pasteboard functionary like the deceased cardinal-king, Charles X. The letters entrusted by the Sixteen to Claude Mathieu were intercepted by Henry, and, very probably, an intimation of their contents was furnished to Mayenne. At any rate, the duke, who lacked not courage nor promptness when his own interests were concerned, who felt his authority slipping away from him, now that it seemed the object of the Spaniards to bind the democratic party to themselves by a complicity in crime, hastened at once to Paris, determined to crush these intrigues and to punish the murderers of the judges. The Spanish envoy Ybarra, proud, excitable, violent, who had been privy to the assassinations, and was astonished that the deeds had excited indignation and fury instead of the terror counted upon, remonstrated with Mayenne, intimating that in times of civil commotion it was often necessary to be blind and deaf.

In vain. The duke carried it with a high and firm hand. He arrested the ringleaders, and hanged four of them in the basement of the Louvre within twenty days after the commission of their crime. The energy was well-timed and perfectly successful. The power of the Sixteen was struck to the earth at a blow. The ignoble tyrants became in a moment as despicable as they had been formidable and insolent. Crome, more fortunate than many of his fellows, contrived to make his escape out of the kingdom.

Thus Mayenne had formally broken with the democratic party, so called-with the market-halls oligarchy. In thus doing, his ultimate rupture with the Spaniards was foreshadowed. The next combination for him to strive for would be one to unite the moderate Catholics and the Bearnese. Ah! if Henry would but “instruct” himself out of hand, what a game the duke might play!

The burgess-party, the mild royalists, the disgusted portion of the Leaguers, coalescing with those of the Huguenots whose fidelity might prove stanch even against the religious apostasy contemplated by their chief—this combination might prove an over-match for the ultra-leaguers, the democrats, and the Spaniards. The king’s name would be a tower of strength for that “third party,” which began to rear its head very boldly and to call itself “Politica.” Madam League might succumb to this new rival in the fickle hearts of the French.

At the beginning of the year 1591; Buzanval had presented his credentials to the States-General at the Hague as envoy of Henry *iv*. In the speech which he made on this occasion he expressed the hope that the mission of the Viscount Turenne, his Majesty’s envoy to England and to the Netherlands, had made known the royal sentiments towards the States and the great satisfaction of the king with their energetic sympathy and assistance. It was notorious, said Buzanval, that the King of Spain for many years had

Page 1905

been governed by no other motive than to bring all the rest of Christendom under his dominion, while at the same time he forced upon those already placed under his sceptre a violent tyranny, passing beyond all the bounds that God, nature, and reason had set to lawful forms of government. In regard to nations born under other laws than his, he had used the pretext of religion for reducing them to servitude. The wars stirred up by his family in Germany, and his recent invasion of England, were proofs of this intention, still fresh in the memory of all men. Still more flagrant were his machinations in the present troubles of France. Of his dealings with his hereditary realms, the condition of the noble provinces of the Netherlands, once so blooming under reasonable laws, furnished, a sufficient illustration. You see, my masters, continued the envoy, the subtle plans of the Spanish king and his counsellors to reach with certainty the object of their ambition. They have reflected that Spain, which is the outermost corner of Europe, cannot conveniently make war upon other Christian realms. They have seen that a central position is necessary to enable them to stretch their arms to every side. They have remembered that princes who in earlier days were able to spread their wings over all Christendom had their throne in France, like Charles the Great and his descendants. Therefore the king is now earnestly bent on seizing this occasion to make himself master of France. The death of the late king (Henry *iii*.) had no sooner occurred, than —as the blood through great terror rushes from the extremities and overflows the heart —they here also, fearing to lose their opportunity and astonished at the valour of our present king, abandoned all their other enterprises in order to pour themselves upon France.

Buzanval further reminded the States that Henry had received the most encouraging promises from the protestant princes of Germany, and that so great a personage as the Viscount Turenne, who had now gone thither to reap the fruit of those promises, would not have been sent on such a mission except that its result was certain. The Queen of England, too, had promised his Majesty most liberal assistance.

It was not necessary to argue as to the close connection between the cause of the Netherlands and that of France. The king had beaten down the mutiny of his own subjects, and repulsed the invasion of the Dukes of Savoy and of Lorraine. In consideration of the assistance promised by Germany and England—for a powerful army would be at the command of Henry in the spring—it might be said that the Netherlands might repose for a time and recruit their exhausted energies, under the shadow of these mighty preparations.

“I do not believe, however,” said the minister, “that you will all answer me thus. The faint-hearted and the inexperienced might flatter themselves with such thoughts, and seek thus to cover their cowardice, but the zealous and the courageous will see that it is time to set sail on the ship, now that the wind is rising so freshly and favourably.

Page 1906

“For there are many occasions when an army might be ruined for want of twenty thousand crowns. What a pity if a noble edifice, furnished to the roof-tree, should fall to decay for want of a few tiles. No doubt your own interests are deeply connected with our own. Men may say that our proposals should be rejected on the principle that the shirt is nearer to the skin than the coat, but it can be easily proved that our cause is one. The mere rumour of this army will prevent the Duke of Parma from attacking you. His forces will be drawn to France. He will be obliged to intercept the crash of this thunderbolt. The assistance of this army is worth millions to you, and has cost you nothing. To bring France into hostility with Spain is the very policy that you have always pursued and always should pursue in order to protect your freedom. You have always desired a war between France and Spain, and here is a fierce and cruel one in which you have hazarded nothing. It cannot come to an end without bringing signal advantages to yourselves.

“You have always desired an alliance with a French sovereign, and here is a firm friendship offered you by our king, a natural alliance.

“You know how unstable are most treaties that are founded on shifting interests, and do not concern the freedom of bodies and souls. The first are written with pen upon paper, and are generally as light as paper. They have no roots in the heart. Those founded on mutual assistance on trying occasions have the perpetual strength of nature. They bring always good and enduring fruit in a rich soil like the heart of our king; that heart which is as beautiful and as pure from all untruth as the lily upon his shield.

“You will derive the first profits from the army thus raised. From the moment of its mustering under a chief of such experience as Turenne, it will absorb the whole attention of Spain, and will draw her thoughts from the Netherlands to France.”

All this and more in the same earnest manner did the envoy urge upon the consideration of the States-General, concluding with a demand of 100,000 florins as their contribution towards the French campaign.

His eloquence did not fall upon unwilling ears; for the States-General, after taking time to deliberate, replied to the propositions by an expression of the strongest sympathy with, and admiration for, the heroic efforts of the King of France. Accordingly, notwithstanding their own enormous expenses, past and present, and their strenuous exertions at that very moment to form an army of foot and horse for the campaign, the brilliant results of which have already been narrated, they agreed to furnish the required loan of 100,000 florins to be repaid in a year, besides six or seven good ships of war to co-operate with the fleets of England and France upon the coasts of Normandy. And the States were even better than their word.

Page 1907

Before the end of autumn of the year 1591, Henry had laid siege to Rouen, then the second city of the kingdom. To leave much longer so important a place—dominating, as it did, not only Normandy but a principal portion of the maritime borders of France—-under the control of the League and of Spain was likely to be fatal to Henry's success. It was perfectly sound in Queen Elizabeth to insist as she did, with more than her usual imperiousness towards her excellent brother, that he should lose no more time before reducing that city. It was obvious that Rouen in the hands of her arch-enemy was a perpetual menace to the safety of her own kingdom. It was therefore with correct judgment, as well as with that high-flown gallantry so dear to the heart of Elizabeth, that her royal champion and devoted slave assured her of his determination no longer to defer obeying her commands in this respect.

The queen had repeatedly warned him of the necessity of defending the maritime frontier of his kingdom, and she was not sparing of her reproaches that the large sums which she expended in his cause had been often ill bestowed. Her criticisms on what she considered his military mistakes were not few, her threats to withdraw her subsidies frequent. "Owning neither the East nor the West Indies," she said, "we are unable to supply the constant demands upon us; and although we have the reputation of being a good housewife, it does not follow that we can be a housewife for all the world." She was persistently warning the king of an attack upon Dieppe, and rebuking him for occupying himself with petty enterprises to the neglect of vital points. She expressed her surprise that after the departure of Parma, he had not driven the Spaniards out of Brittany, without allowing them to fortify themselves in that country. "I am astonished," she said to him, "that your eyes are so blinded as not to see this danger. Remember, my dear brother," she frankly added, "that it is not only France that I am aiding, nor are my own natural realms of little consequence to me. Believe me, if I see that you have no more regard to the ports and maritime places nearest to us, it will be necessary that my prayers should serve you in place of any other assistance, because it does not please me to send my people to the shambles where they may perish before having rendered you any assistance. I am sure the Spaniards will soon besiege Dieppe. Beware of it, and excuse my bluntness, for if in the beginning you had taken the maritime forts, which are the very gates of your kingdom, Paris would not have been so well furnished, and other places nearer the heart of the kingdom would not have received so much foreign assistance, without which the others would have soon been vanquished. Pardon my simplicity as belonging to my own sex wishing to give a lesson to one who knows better, but my experience in government makes me a little obstinate in believing that I am not ignorant of that which belongs to a king, and I persuade myself that in following my advice you will not fail to conquer your assailants."

Page 1908

Before the end of the year Henry had obtained control of the, Seine, both above and below the city, holding Pont de l'Arche on the north—where was the last bridge across the river; that of Rouen, built by the English when they governed Normandy, being now in ruins—and Caudebec on the south in an iron grasp. Several war-vessels sent by the Hollanders, according to the agreement with Buzanval, cruised in the north of the river below Caudebec, and rendered much service to the king in cutting off supplies from the beleaguered place, while the investing army of Henry, numbering twenty-five thousand foot—inclusive of the English contingent, and three thousand Netherlanders—and ten thousand cavalry, nearly all French, was fast reducing the place to extremities.

Parma, as usual, in obedience to his master's orders, but entirely against his own judgment, had again left the rising young general of the Netherlands to proceed from one triumph to another, while he transferred beyond the borders of that land which it was his first business to protect, the whole weight of his military genius and the better portion of his well disciplined forces.

Most bitterly and indignantly did he express himself, both at the outset and during the whole progress of the expedition, concerning the utter disproportions between the king's means and aims. The want of money was the cause of wholesale disease, desertion, mutiny, and death in his slender army.

Such great schemes as his master's required, as he perpetually urged, liberality of expenditure and measures of breadth. He protested that he was not to blame for the ruin likely to come upon the whole enterprise. He had besought, remonstrated, reasoned with the king in vain. He had seen his beard first grow, he said, in the king's service, and he had grown gray in that service, but rather than be kept longer in such a position, without money, men, or means to accomplish the great purposes on which he was sent, he protested that he would "abandon his office and retire into the woods to feed on roots." Repeatedly did he implore his master for a large and powerful army; for money and again money. The royal plans should be enforced adequately or abandoned entirely. To spend money in small sums, as heretofore, was only throwing it into the sea.

It was deep in the winter however before he could fairly come to the rescue of the besieged city. Towards the end of January, 1592, he moved out of Hainault, and once more made his junction at Guise with the Duke of Mayenne. At a review of his forces on 16th January, 1592, Alexander found himself at the head of thirteen thousand five hundred and sixteen infantry and four thousand and sixty-one cavalry. The Duke of Mayenne's army, for payment of which that personage received from Philip 100,000 dollars a month, besides 10,000 dollars a month for his own pocket, ought to have numbered ten thousand foot and three thousand horse, according to contract, but was in reality much less.

Page 1909

The Duke of Montemarciano, nephew of Gregory *xiv*., had brought two thousand Swiss, furnished by the pontiff to the cause of the League, and the Duke of Lorraine had sent his kinsmen, the Counts Chaligny and Vaudemont, with a force of seven hundred lancers and cuirassiers.

The town of Fere was assigned in pledge to Farnese to hold as a convenient: mustering-place and station in proximity to his own borders, and, as usual, the chief command over the united armies was placed in his hands. These arrangements concluded, the allies moved slowly forward much in the same order as in the previous year. The young Duke of Guise, who had just made his escape from the prison of Tours, where he had been held in durance since the famous assassination of his father and uncle, and had now come to join his uncle Mayenne, led the vanguard. Ranuccio, son of the duke, rode also in the advance, while two experienced commanders, Vitry and De la Chatre, as well as the famous Marquis del Vasto, formerly general of cavalry in the Netherlands, who had been transferred to Italy but was now serving in the League's army as a volunteer, were associated with the young princes. Parma, Mayenne, and Montemarciano rode in the battalia, the rear being under command of the Duke of Aumale and the Count Chaligny. Wings of cavalry protected the long trains of wagons which were arranged on each flank of the invading army. The march was very slow, a Farnese's uniform practice to guard himself scrupulously against any possibility of surprise and to entrench himself thoroughly at nightfall.

By the middle of February they reached the vicinity of Aumale in Picardy. Meantime Henry, on the news of the advance of the relieving army, had again the same problem to solve that had been presented to him before Paris in the summer of 1590. Should he continue in the trenches, pressing more and more closely the city already reduced to great straits? Should he take the open field against the invaders and once more attempt to crush the League and its most redoubtable commander in a general engagement? Biron strenuously advised the continuance of the siege. Turenne, now, through his recent marriage with the heiress, called Duc de Bouillon, great head of the Huguenot party in France, counselled as warmly the open attack. Henry, hesitating more than was customary with him, at last decided on a middle course. The resolution did not seem a very wise one, but the king, who had been so signally out-generalled in the preceding campaign by the great Italian, was anxious to avoid his former errors, and might perhaps fall into as great ones by attempting two inconsistent lines of action. Leaving Biron in command of the infantry and a portion of the horse to continue the siege, he took the field himself with the greater part of the cavalry, intending to intercept and harass the enemy and to prevent his manifest purpose of throwing reinforcements and supplies into the invested city.

Page 1910

Proceeding to Neufchatel and Aumale, he soon found himself in the neighbourhood of the Leaguers, and it was not long before skirmishing began. At this time, on a memorable occasion, Henry, forgetting as usual, in his eagerness for the joys of the combat that he was not a young captain of cavalry with his spurs to win by dashing into every mad adventure that might present itself, but a king fighting for his crown, with the welfare of a whole people depending on his fortunes, thought proper to place himself at the head of a handful of troopers to reconnoitre in person the camp of the Leaguers. Starting with five hundred horse, and ordering Lavardin and Givry to follow with a larger body, while the Dukes of Nevers and Longueville were to move out, should it prove necessary, in force, the king rode forth as merrily as to a hunting party, drove in the scouts and pickets of the confederated armies, and, advancing still farther in his investigations, soon found himself attacked by a cavalry force of the enemy much superior to his own. A skirmish began, and it was necessary for the little troop to beat a hasty retreat, fighting as it ran. It was not long before Henry was recognised by the enemy, and the chase became all the more lively; George Basti, the famous Albanian trooper, commanding the force which pressed most closely upon the king. The news spread to the camp of the League that the Bearnese was the leader of the skirmishers. Mayenne believed it, and urged the instant advance of the flying squadron and of the whole vanguard. Farnese refused. It was impossible that the king should be there, he said, doing picket duty at the head of a company. It was a clumsy ambush to bring on a general engagement in the open field, and he was not to be drawn out of his trenches into a trap by such a shallow device. A French captain, who by command of Henry had purposely allowed himself to be taken, informed his captors that the skirmishers were in reality supported by a heavy force of infantry. This suggestion of the ready Bearnese confirmed the doubts of Alexander. Meantime the skirmishing steeplechase went on before his eyes. The king dashing down a hill received an arquebus shot in his side, but still rode for his life. Lavardin and Givry came to the rescue, but a panic seized their followers as the rumour flew that the king was mortally wounded—was already dead—so that they hardly brought a sufficient force to beat back the Leaguers. Givry's horse was soon killed under him, and his own thigh crushed; Lavardin was himself dangerously wounded. The king was more hard pressed than ever, men were falling on every side of him, when four hundred French dragoons—as a kind of musketeers who rode on hacks to the scene of action but did their work on foot, were called at that day—now dismounted and threw themselves between Henry and his pursuers. Nearly every man of them laid down his life, but they saved the king's. Their vigorous hand to hand fighting kept off the assailants until Nevers and Longueville received the king at the gates of Aumale with a force before which the Leaguers were fain to retreat as rapidly as they had come.

Page 1911

In this remarkable skirmish of Aumale the opposite qualities of Alexander and of Henry were signally illustrated. The king, by his constitutional temerity, by his almost puerile love of confronting danger for the danger's sake, was on the verge of sacrificing himself with all the hopes of his house and of the nobler portion of his people for an absolute nothing; while the duke, out of his superabundant caution, peremptorily refused to stretch out his hand and seize the person of his great enemy when directly within his, grasp. Dead or alive, the Bearnese was unquestionably on that day in the power of Farnese, and with him the whole issue of the campaign and of the war. Never were the narrow limits that separate valour on the one side and discretion on the other from unpardonable lunacy more nearly effaced than on that occasion.'

When would such an opportunity occur again?

The king's wound proved not very dangerous, although for many days troublesome, and it required, on account of his general state of health, a thorough cure. Meantime the royalists fell back from Aumale and Neufchatel, both of which places were at once occupied by the Leaguers: In pursuance of his original plan, the Duke of Parma advanced with his customary steadiness and deliberation towards Rouen. It was his intention to assault the king's army in its entrenchments in combination with a determined sortie to be made by the besieged garrison. His preparations for the attack were ready on the 26th February, when he suddenly received a communication from De Villars, who had thus far most ably and gallantly conducted the defence of the place, informing him that it was no longer necessary to make a general attack. On the day before he had made a sally from the four gates of the city, had fallen upon the besiegers in great force, had wounded Biron and killed six hundred of his soldiers, had spiked several pieces of artillery and captured others which he had successfully brought into the town, and had in short so damaged the enemy's works and disconcerted him in all his plans, that he was confident of holding the place longer than the king could afford to stay in front of him. All he wished was a moderate reinforcement of men and munitions. Farnese by no means sympathized with the confident tone of Villars nor approved of his proposition. He had come to relieve Rouen and to raise the siege, and he preferred to do his work thoroughly. Mayenne was however most heartily in favour of taking the advice of Villars. He urged that it was difficult for the Bearnese to keep an army long in the field, still more so in the trenches. Let them provide for the immediate wants of the city; then the usual process of decomposition would soon be witnessed in the ill-paid, ill-fed, desultory forces of the heretic pretender.

Alexander deferred to the wishes of Mayenne, although against his better judgment. Eight hundred infantry, were successfully sent into Rouen. The army of the League then countermarched into Picardy near the confines of Artois.

Page 1912

They were closely followed by Henry at the head of his cavalry, and lively skirmishes were of frequent occurrence. In a military point of view none of these affairs were of consequence, but there was one which partook at once of the comic and the pathetic. For it chanced that in a cavalry action of more than common vivacity the Count Chaligny found himself engaged in a hand to hand conflict with a very dashing swordsman, who, after dealing and receiving many severe blows, at last succeeded in disarming the count and taking him prisoner. It was the fortune of war, and, but a few days before, might have been the fate of the great Henry himself. But Chaligny's mortification at his captivity became intense when he discovered that the knight to whom he had surrendered was no other than the king's jester. That he, a chieftain of the Holy League, the long-descended scion of the illustrious house of Lorraine, brother of the great Duke of Mercoeur, should become the captive of a Huguenot buffoon seemed the most stinging jest yet perpetrated since fools had come in fashion. The famous Chicot—who was as fond of a battle as of a gibe, and who was almost as reckless a rider as his master—proved on this occasion that the cap and bells could cover as much magnanimity as did the most chivalrous crest. Although desperately wounded in the struggle which had resulted in his triumph, he generously granted to the Count his freedom without ransom. The proud Lorrainer returned to his Leaguers and the poor fool died afterwards of his wounds.

The army of the allies moved through Picardy towards the confines of Artois, and sat down leisurely to beleaguer Rue, a low-lying place on the banks and near the mouth of the Somme, the only town in the province which still held for the king. It was sufficiently fortified to withstand a good deal of battering, and it certainly seemed mere trifling for the great Duke of Parma to leave the Netherlands in such confusion, with young Maurice of Nassau carrying everything before him, and to come all the way into Normandy in order, with the united armies of Spain and the League, to besiege the insignificant town of Rue.

And this was the opinion of Farnese, but he had chosen throughout the campaign to show great deference to the judgment of Mayenne. Meantime the month of March wore away, and what had been predicted came to pass. Henry's forces dwindled away as usual. His cavaliers rode off to forage for themselves, when their battles were denied them, and the king was now at the head of not more than sixteen thousand foot and five thousand horse. On the other hand the Leaguers' army had been melting quite as rapidly. With the death of Pope Sfondrato, his nephew Montemarciano had disappeared with his two thousand Swiss; while the French cavalry and infantry, ill-fed and uncomfortable, were diminishing daily. Especially the Walloons, Flemings, and other Netherlanders of Parma's army, took advantage of their proximity to the borders

Page 1913

and escaped in large numbers to their own homes. It was but meagre and profitless campaigning on both sides during those wretched months of winter and early spring, although there was again an opportunity for Sir Roger Williams, at the head of two hundred musketeers and one hundred and fifty pikemen, to make one of his brilliant skirmishes under the eye of the Bearnese. Surprised and without armour, he jumped, in doublet and hose, on horseback, and led his men merrily against five squadrons of Spanish and Italian horse, and six companies of Spanish infantry; singled out and unhorsed the leader of the Spanish troopers, and nearly cut off the head, of the famous Albanian chief George Basti with one swinging blow of his sword. Then, being reinforced by some other English companies, he succeeded in driving the whole body of Italians and Spaniards, with great loss, quite into their entrenchments. "The king doth commend him very highly," said Umton, "and doth more than wonder at the valour of our nation. I never heard him give more honour to any service nor to any man than he doth to Sir Roger Williams and the rest, whom he held as lost men, and for which he has caused public thanks to be given to God."

At last Villars, who had so peremptorily rejected assistance at the end of February, sent to say that if he were not relieved by the middle of April he should be obliged to surrender the city. If the siege were not raised by the twentieth of the month he informed Parma, to his profound astonishment, that Rouen would be in Henry's hands.

In effecting this result the strict blockade maintained by the Dutch squadron at the mouth of the river, and the resolute manner in which those cruisers dashed at every vessel attempting to bring relief to Rouen, were mainly instrumental. As usual with the stern Hollanders and Zeelanders when engaged at sea with the Spaniards, it was war to the knife. Early in April twelve large vessels, well armed and manned, attempted to break the blockade. A combat ensued, at the end of which eight of the Spanish ships were captured, two were sunk, and two were set on fire in token of victory, every man on board of all being killed and thrown into the sea. Queen Elizabeth herself gave the first news of this achievement to the Dutch envoy in London. "And in truth," said he, "her Majesty expressed herself, in communicating these tidings, with such affection and extravagant joy to the glory and honour of our nation and men-of-war's-men, that it wonderfully delighted me, and did me good into my very heart to hear it from her."

Instantly Farnese set himself to the work which, had he followed his own judgment, would already have been accomplished. Henry with his cavalry had established himself at Dieppe and Arques, within a distance of five or six leagues from the infantry engaged in the siege of Rouen. Alexander saw the profit to be derived from the separation between the different portions of the enemy's forces, and marched straight upon the enemy's entrenchments. He knew the disadvantage of assailing a strongly fortified camp, but believed that by a well-concerted, simultaneous assault by Villars from within

and the Leaguers from without, the king’s forces would be compelled to raise the siege or be cut up in their trenches.

Page 1914

But Henry did not wait for the attack. He had changed his plan, and, for once in his life, substituted extreme caution for his constitutional temerity. Neither awaiting the assault upon his entrenchments nor seeking his enemy in the open field, he ordered the whole camp to be broken up, and on the 20th of April raised the siege.

Farnese marched into Rouen, where the Leaguers were received with tumultuous joy, and this city, most important for the purposes of the League and for Philip's ulterior designs, was thus wrested from the grasp just closing upon it. Henry's main army now concentrated itself in the neighbourhood of Dieppe, but the cavalry under his immediate superintendence continued to harass the Leaguers. It was now determined to lay siege to Caudebec, on the right bank of the Seine, three leagues below Rouen; the possession of this place by the enemy being a constant. danger and difficulty to Rouen, whose supplies by the Seine were thus cut off.

Alexander, as usual, superintended the planting of the batteries against the place. He had been suffering during the whole campaign with those dropsical ailments which were making life a torture to him; yet his indomitable spirit rose superior to his physical disorders, and he wrought all day long on foot or on horseback, when he seemed only fit to be placed on his bed as a rapid passage to his grave. On this occasion, in company with the Italian engineer Properzio, he had been for some time examining with critical nicety the preliminaries, for the siege, when it was suddenly observed by those around him that he was growing pale. It then appeared that he had received a musket-ball between the wrist and the elbow, and had been bleeding profusely; but had not indicated by a word or the movement of a muscle that he had been wounded, so intent was he upon carrying out the immediate task to which he had set himself. It was indispensable, however, that he should now take to his couch. The wound was not trifling, and to one in his damaged and dropsical condition it was dangerous. Fever set in, with symptoms of gangrene, and it became necessary to entrust the command of the League to Mayenne. But it was hardly concealed from Parma that the duke was playing a double game. Prince Ranuccio, according to his father's express wish, was placed provisionally at the head of the Flemish forces. This was conceded; however, with much heart-burning, and with consequences easily to be imagined.

Meantime Caudebec fell at once. Henry did nothing to relieve it, and the place could offer but slight resistance to the force arrayed against it. The bulk of the king's army was in the neighbourhood of Dieppe, where they had been recently strengthened by twenty companies of Netherlanders and Scotchmen brought by Count Philip Nassau. The League's headquarters were in the village of Yvetot, capital of the realm of the whimsical little potentate so long renowned under that name.

Page 1915

The king, in pursuance of the plan he had marked out for himself, restrained his skirmishing more than was his wont. Nevertheless he lay close to Yvetot. His cavalry, swelling and falling as usual like an Alpine torrent, had now filled up its old channels again, for once more the mountain chivalry had poured themselves around their king. With ten thousand horsemen he was now pressing the Leaguers, from time to time, very hard, and on one occasion the skirmishing became so close and so lively that a general engagement seemed imminent. Young Ranuccio had a horse shot under him, and his father—suffering as he was—had himself dragged out of bed and brought on a litter into the field, where he was set on horseback, trampling on wounds and disease, and, as it were, on death itself, that he might by his own unsurpassed keenness of eye and quickness of resource protect the army which had been entrusted to his care. The action continued all day; young Bentivoglio, nephew of the famous cardinal, historian and diplomatist, receiving a bad wound in the leg, as he fought gallantly at the side of Ranuccio. Carlo Coloma also distinguished himself in the engagement. Night separated the combatants before either side had gained a manifest advantage, and on the morrow it seemed for the interest of neither to resume the struggle.

The field where this campaign was to be fought was a narrow peninsula enclosed between the sea and the rivers Seine and Dieppe. In this peninsula, called the Land of Caux, it was Henry's intention to shut up his enemy. Farnese had finished the work that he had been sent to do, and was anxious, as Henry was aware, to return to the Netherlands. Rouen was relieved, Caudebec had fallen. There was not food or forage enough in the little peninsula to feed both the city and the whole army of the League. Shut up in this narrow area, Alexander must starve or surrender. His only egress was into Picardy and so home to Artois, through the base of the isosceles triangle between the two rivers and on the borders of Picardy. On this base Henry had posted his whole army. Should Farnese assail him, thus provided with a strong position and superiority of force, defeat was certain. Should he remain where he was, he must inevitably starve. He had no communications with the outside. The Hollanders lay with their ships below Caudebec, blockading the river's mouth and the coast. His only chance of extrication lay across the Seine. But Alexander was neither a bird nor a fish, and it was necessary, so Henry thought, to be either the one or the other to cross that broad, deep, and rapid river, where there were no bridges, and where the constant ebb and flow of the tide made transportation almost impossible in face of a powerful army in rear and flank. Farnese's situation seemed, desperate; while the shrewd Bearnese sat smiling serenely, carefully watching at the mouth of the trap into which he had at last inveigled his mighty adversary. Secure of his triumph, he seemed to have changed his nature, and to have become as sedate and wary as, by habit, he was impetuous and hot.

Page 1916

And in truth Farnese found himself in very narrow quarters. There was no hay for his horses, no bread for his men. A penny loaf was sold for two shillings. A jug of water was worth a crown. As for meat or wine, they were hardly to be dreamed of. His men were becoming furious at their position. They had enlisted to fight, not to starve, and they murmured that it was better for an army to fall with weapons in its hands than to drop to pieces hourly with the enemy looking on and enjoying their agony.

It was obvious to Farnese that there were but two ways out of his dilemma. He might throw himself upon Henry—strongly entrenched as he was, and with much superior forces to his own, upon ground deliberately chosen for himself—defeat him utterly, and march over him back to the Netherlands. This would be an agreeable result; but the undertaking seemed difficult, to say the least. Or he might throw his army across the Seine and make his escape through the isle of France and Southern Picardy back to the so-called obedient provinces. But it seemed, hopeless without bridges or pontoons to attempt the passage of the Seine.

There was; however, no time left, for hesitation. Secretly he took his resolution and communicated it in strict confidence to Mayenne, to Ranuccio, and to one or two other chiefs. He came to Caudebec, and there, close to the margin of the river, he threw up a redoubt. On the opposite bank, he constructed another. On both he planted artillery, placing a force of eight hundred Netherlanders under Count Bossu in the one, and an equal number of the same nation, Walloons chiefly, under Barlotte in the other. He collected all the vessels, flatboats,—wherries,—and rafts that could be found or put together at Rouen, and then under cover of his forts he transported all the Flemish infantry, and the Spanish, French, and Italian cavalry, during the night of 22nd May to the 22 May, opposite bank of the Seine. Next morning he sent up all the artillery together with the Flemish cavalry to Rouen, where, making what use he could by temporary contrivances of the broken arches of the broken bridge, in order to shorten the distance from shore to shore, he managed to convey his whole army with all its trains across the river.

A force was left behind, up to the last moment, to engage in the customary skirmishes, and to display themselves as largely as possible for the purpose of imposing upon the enemy. The young Prince of Parma had command of this rearguard. The device was perfectly successful. The news of the movement was not brought to the ears of Henry until after it had been accomplished. When the king reached the shore of the Seine, he saw to his infinite chagrin and indignation that the last stragglers of the army, including the garrison of the fort on the right bank, were just ferrying themselves across under command of Ranuccio.

Furious with disappointment, he brought some pieces of artillery to bear upon the triumphant fugitives. Not a shot told, and the Leaguers had the satisfaction of making a bonfire in the king’s face of the boats which had brought them over. Then, taking up

their line of march rapidly inland, they placed themselves completely out of the reach of the Huguenot guns.

Page 1917

Henry had a bridge at Pont de l'Arche, and his first impulse was to pursue with his cavalry, but it was obvious that his infantry could never march by so circuitous a route fast enough to come up with the enemy, who had already so prodigious a stride in advance.

There was no need to disguise it to himself. Henry saw himself for the second time out-generalled by the consummate Farnese. The trap was broken, the game had given him the slip. The manner in which the duke had thus extricated himself from a profound dilemma; in which his fortunes seemed hopelessly sunk, has usually been considered one of the most extraordinary exploits of his life.

Precisely at this time, too, ill news reached Henry from Brittany and the neighbouring country. The Princes Conti and Dombes had been obliged, on the 13th May, 1592, to raise the siege of Craon, in consequence of the advance of the Duke of Mercoeur, with a force of seven thousand men.

They numbered, including lanzknechts and the English contingent, about half as many, and before they could effect their retreat, were attacked by Mercoeur, and utterly routed. The English, who alone stood to their colours, were nearly all cut to pieces. The rest made a disorderly retreat, but were ultimately, with few exceptions, captured or slain. The duke, following up his victory, seized Chateau Gontier and La Val, important crossing places on the river Mayenne, and laid siege to Mayenne, capital city of that region. The panic, spreading through Brittany and Maine, threatened the king's cause there with complete overthrow, hampered his operations in Normandy, and vastly encouraged the Leaguers. It became necessary for Henry to renounce his designs upon Rouen, and the pursuit of Parma, and to retire to Vernon, there to occupy himself with plans for the relief of Brittany. In vain had the Earl of Essex, whose brother had already been killed in the campaign, manifested such headlong gallantry in that country as to call forth the sharpest rebukes from the admiring but anxious Elizabeth. The handful of brave Englishmen who had been withdrawn from the Netherlands, much to the dissatisfaction of the States-General, in order to defend the coasts of Brittany, would have been better employed under Maurice of Nassau. So soon as the heavy news reached the king, the faithful Umton was sent for. "He imparted the same unto me," said the envoy, "with extraordinary passion and discontent. He discoursed at large of his miserable estate, of the factions of his servants, and of their ill-dispositions, and then required my opinion touching his course for Brittan, as also what further aid he might expect from her Majesty; alleging that unless he were presently strengthened by England it was impossible for him, longer to resist the greatness of the King of Spain, who assailed his country by Brittany, Languedoc, the Low Countries by the Duke of Saxony and the Duke of Lorraine, and so ended his speech passionately." Thus adjured, Sir

Page 1918

Henry spoke to the king firmly but courteously, reminding him how, contrary to English advice, he had followed other counsellors to the neglect of Brittany, and had broken his promises to the queen. He concluded by urging him to advance into that country in person, but did not pledge himself on behalf of her Majesty to any further assistance. "To this," said Umton, "the king gave a willing ear, and replied, with many thanks, and without disallowing of anything that I alleged, yielding many excuses of his want of means, not of disposition, to provide a remedy, not forgetting to acknowledge her Majesty's care of him and his country, and especially of Brittany, excusing much the bad disposition of his counsellors, and inclining much to my motion to go in person thither, especially because he might thereby give her Majesty better satisfaction; . . . . and protesting that he would either immediately himself make war there in those parts or send an army thither. I do not doubt," added the ambassador, "but with good handling her Majesty may now obtain any reasonable matter for the conservation of Brittany, as also for a place of retreat for the English, and I urge continually the yielding of Brest into her Majesty's hands, whereunto I find the king well inclined, if he might bring it to pass."

Alexander passed a few days in Paris, where he was welcomed with much cordiality, recruiting his army for a brief period in the land of Brie, and then—broken in health but entirely successful—he dragged himself once more to Spa to drink the waters. He left an auxiliary force with Mayenne, and promised—infinitely against his own wishes—to obey his master's commands and return again before the winter to do the League's work.

And thus Alexander had again solved a difficult problem. He had saved for his master and for the League the second city of France and the whole coast of Normandy. Rouen had been relieved in masterly manner even as Paris had been succoured the year before. He had done this, although opposed by the sleepless energy and the exuberant valour of the quick-witted Navarre, and although encumbered by the assistance of the ponderous Duke of Mayenne. His military reputation, through these two famous reliefs and retreats, grew greater than ever.

No commander of the age was thought capable of doing what he had thus done. Yet, after all, what had he accomplished? Did he not feel in his heart of hearts that he was but a strong and most skilful swimmer struggling for a little while against an ocean-tide which was steadily sweeping him and his master and all their fortunes far out into the infinite depths?

Something of this breathed ever in his most secret utterances. But, so long as life was in him, his sword and his genius were at the disposal of his sovereign, to carry out a series of schemes as futile as they were nefarious.

Page 1919

For us, looking back upon the Past, which was then the Future, it is easy to see how remorselessly the great current of events was washing away the system and the personages seeking to resist its power and to oppose the great moral principles by which human affairs in the long run are invariably governed. Spain and Rome were endeavouring to obliterate the landmarks of race, nationality, historical institutions, and the tendencies of awakened popular conscience, throughout Christendom, and to substitute for them a dead level of conformity to one regal and sacerdotal despotism.

England, Holland, the Navarre party in France, and a considerable part of Germany were contending for national unity and independence, for vested and recorded rights. Much farther than they themselves or their chieftains dreamed those millions of men were fighting for a system of temperate human freedom; for that emancipation under just laws from arbitrary human control, which is the right—however frequently trampled upon—of all classes, conditions, and races of men; and for which it is the instinct of the human race to continue to struggle under every disadvantage, and often against all hope, throughout the ages, so long as the very principle of humanity shall not be extinguished in those who have been created after their Maker's image.

It may safely be doubted whether the great Queen, the Bearnese, Alexander Farnese, or his master, with many of their respective adherents, differed very essentially from each other in their notions of the right divine and the right of the people. But history has shown us which of them best understood the spirit of the age, and had the keenest instinct to keep themselves in the advance by moving fastest in the direction whither it was marshalling all men. There were many, earnest, hard-toiling men in those days, men who believed in the work to which they devoted their lives. Perhaps, too, the devil-worshippers did their master's work as strenuously and heartily as any, and got fame and pelf for their pains. Fortunately, a good portion of what they so laboriously wrought for has vanished into air; while humanity has at least gained something from those who deliberately or instinctively conformed themselves to her eternal laws.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Anatomical study of what has ceased to exist
Artillery
Bomb-shells were not often used although known for a century
Court fatigue, to scorn pleasure
For us, looking back upon the Past, which was then the Future
Hardly an inch of French soil that had not two possessors
Holy institution called the Inquisition
Inevitable fate of talking castles and listening ladies
Life of nations and which we call the Past
Often necessary to be blind and deaf
Picturesqueness of crime
Royal plans should be enforced adequately or abandoned entirely

Page 1920

Toil and sacrifices of those who have preceded us
Use of the spade
Utter disproportions between the king's means and aims
Valour on the one side and discretion on the other
Walk up and down the earth and destroy his fellow-creatures
We have the reputation of being a good housewife
Weapons

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 64, 1592

CHAPTER XXVI.

Return of Prince Maurice to the siege of Steenwyck—Capitulation of the besieged—-Effects of the introduction of mining operations— Maurice besieges Coeworden—-Verdugo attempts to relieve the city, but fails—The city capitulates, and Prince Maurice retreats into winter quarters.

While Farnese had thus been strengthening the bulwarks of Philip's universal monarchy in that portion of his proposed French dominions which looked towards England, there had been opportunity for Prince Maurice to make an assault upon the Frisian defences of this vast realm. It was difficult to make half Europe into one great Spanish fortification, guarding its every bastion and every point of the curtain, without far more extensive armaments than the "Great King," as the Leaguers proposed that Philip should entitle himself, had ever had at his disposal. It might be a colossal scheme to stretch the rod of empire over so large a portion of the earth, but the dwarfish attempts to carry the design into execution hardly reveal the hand of genius. It is astonishing to contemplate the meagre numbers and the slender funds with which this world-empire was to be asserted and maintained. The armies arrayed at any important point hardly exceeded a modern division or two; while the resources furnished for a year would hardly pay in later days for a few weeks' campaign.

When Alexander, the first commander of his time, moved out of Flanders into France with less than twenty thousand men, he left most vital portions of his master's hereditary

dominions so utterly unprotected that it was possible to attack them with a handful of troops. The young disciple of Simon Stevinus now resumed that practical demonstration of his principles which had been in the previous year so well begun.

On the 28th May, 1592, Maurice, taking the field with six thousand foot and two thousand horse, came once more before Steenwyck. It will be remembered that he had been obliged to relinquish the siege of this place in order to confront the Duke of Parma in July, 1591, at Nymegen.

Page 1921

The city—very important from its position, being the key to the province of Drenthe as well as one of the safeguards of Friesland—had been besieged in vain by Count Renneberg after his treasonable surrender of Groningen, of which he was governor, to the Spaniards, but had been subsequently surprised by Tassis. Since that time it had held for the king. Its fortifications were strong, and of the best description known at that day. Its regular garrison was sixteen companies of foot and some cavalry under Antoine de Quocqueville, military governor. Besides these troops were twelve hundred Walloon infantry, commanded by Lewis, youngest Count van den Berg, a brave lad of eighteen years, with whom were the lord of Waterdyck and other Netherland nobles.

To the military student the siege may possess importance as marking a transitional epoch in the history of the beleaguering science. To the general reader, as in most of the exploits of the young Poliorcetes, its details have but slender interest. Perhaps it was here that the spade first vindicated its dignity, and entitled itself to be classed as a military weapon of value along with pike and arquebus. It was here that the soldiers of Maurice, burrowing in the ground at ten stuyvers a day, were jeered at by the enemy from the battlements as boors and ditchers, who had forfeited their right to be considered soldiers—but jeered at for the last time.

From 30th May to 9th June the prince was occupied in throwing up earthworks on the low grounds in order to bring his guns into position. On the 13th June he began to batter with forty-five pieces, but effected little more than to demolish some of the breast-works. He threw hot shot into the town very diligently, too, but did small damage. The cannonading went on for nearly a week, but the practice was so very indifferent—-notwithstanding the protection of the blessed Barbara and the tuition of the busmasters—that the besieged began to amuse themselves with these empty and monotonous salvos of the honourable Artillery Guild. When all this blazing and thundering had led to no better result than to convert a hundred thousand good Flemish florins into noise and smoke, the thrifty Netherlanders on both sides of the walls began to disparage the young general’s reputation. After all, they said, the Spaniards were right when they called artillery mere ‘espanta-vellacos’ or scare-cowards. This burrowing and bellowing must at last give place to the old-fashioned push of pike, and then it would be seen who the soldiers were. Observations like these were freely made under a flag of truce; for on the 19th June—notwithstanding their contempt for the ’espanta-vellacos’—the besieged had sent out a deputation to treat for an honourable surrender. Maurice entertained the negotiators hospitably in his own tent, but the terms suggested to him were inadmissible. Nothing came of the conference therefore but mutual criticisms, friendly enough, although sufficiently caustic.

Page 1922

Maurice now ceased cannonading, and burrowed again for ten days without interruption. Four mines, leading to different points of the defences, were patiently constructed, and two large chambers at the terminations, neatly finished off and filled respectively with five thousand and twenty-five hundred pounds of powder, were at last established under two of the principal bastions.

During all this digging there had been a couple of sorties in which the besieged had inflicted great damage on their enemy, and got back into the town with a few prisoners, having lost but six of their own men. Sir Francis Vere had been severely wounded in the leg, so that he was obliged to keep his bed during the rest of the siege. Verdugo, too, had made a feeble attempt to reinforce the place with three hundred men, sixty or seventy of whom had entered, while the rest had been killed or captured. On such a small scale was Philip's world-empire contended for by his stadholder in Friesland; yet it was certainly not the fault of the stout old Portuguese. Verdugo would rather have sent thirty thousand men to save the front door of his great province than three hundred. But every available man—and few enough of them they were—had been sent out of the Netherlands, to defend the world-empire in its outposts of Normandy and Brittany.

This was Philip the Prudent's system for conquering the world, and men looked upon him as the consummation of kingcraft.

On the 3rd July Maurice ordered his whole force to be in readiness for the assault. The mines were then sprung.

The bastion of the east gate was blown to ruins. The mine under the Gast-Huys bulwark, burst outwardly, and buried alive many Hollanders standing ready for the assault. At this untoward accident Maurice hesitated to give the signal for storming the breach, but the panic within the town was so evident that Lewis William lost no time in seizing the overthrown eastern bulwark, from the ruins of which he looked over the whole city. The other broken bastion was likewise easily mastered, and the besieged, seeing the storm about to burst upon them with irresistible fury, sent a trumpet. Meantime Maurice, inspecting the effects of the explosion and preparing for the assault, had been shot through the left cheek. The wound was not dangerous, and the prince extracted the bullet with his own hand, but the change of half an inch would have made it fatal. He was not incapacitated—after his wound had been dressed, amidst the remonstrances of his friends for his temerity-from listening to the propositions of the city. They were refused, for the prince was sure of having his town on his own terms.

Page 1923

Next day he permitted the garrison to depart; the officers and soldiers promising not to serve the King of Spain on the Netherland side of the Rhine for six months. They were to take their baggage, but to leave arms, flags, munitions, and provisions. Both Maurice and Lewis William were for insisting on sterner conditions, but the States' deputies and members of the council who were present, as usual, in camp urged the building of the golden bridge. After all, a fortified city, the second in importance after Groningen of all those regions, was the real prize contended for. The garrison was meagre and much reduced during the siege. The fortifications, of masonry and earthwork combined, were nearly as strong as ever. Saint Barbara had done them but little damage, but the town itself was in a sorry plight. Churches and houses were nearly all shot to pieces, and the inhabitants had long been dwelling in the cellars. Two hundred of the garrison remained, severely wounded, in the town; three hundred and fifty had been killed, among others the young cousin of the Nassaus, Count Lewis van den Berg. The remainder of the royalists marched out, and were treated with courtesy by Maurice, who gave them an escort, permitting the soldiers to retain their side-arms, and furnishing horses to the governor.

In the besieging army five or six hundred had been killed and many wounded, but not in numbers bearing the same proportion to the slain as in modern battles.

The siege had lasted forty-four days. When it was over, and men came out from the town to examine at leisure the prince's camp and his field of operations, they were astounded at the amount of labor performed in so short a time. The oldest campaigners confessed that they never before had understood what a siege really was, and they began to conceive a higher respect for the art of the engineer than they had ever done before. "Even those who were wont to rail at science and labour," said one who was present in the camp of Maurice, "declared that the siege would have been a far more arduous undertaking had it not been for those two engineers, Joost Matthes of Alost, and Jacob Kemp of Gorcum. It is high time to take from soldiers the false notion that it is shameful to work with the spade; an error which was long prevalent among the Netherlanders, and still prevails among the French, to the great detriment of the king's affairs, as may be seen in his sieges."

Certainly the result of Henry's recent campaign before Rouen had proved sufficiently how much better it would have been for him had there been some Dutch Joosts and Jacobs with their picks and shovels in his army at that critical period. They might perhaps have baffled Parma as they had done Verdugo.

Without letting the grass grow under his feet, Maurice now led his army from Steenwyck to Zwol and arrived on the 26th July before Coeworden.

Page 1924

This place, very strong by art and still stronger by-nature, was the other key to all north Netherland—Friesland, Groningen, and Drenthe. Should it fall into the hands of the republic it would be impossible for the Spaniards to retain much longer the rich and important capital of all that country, the city of Groningen. Coeworden lay between two vast morasses, one of which—the Bourtange swamp—extended some thirty miles to the bay of the Dollart; while the other spread nearly as far in a westerly direction to the Zuyder Zee. Thus these two great marshes were a frame—an almost impassable barrier—by which the northern third of the whole territory of the republic was encircled and defended. Throughout this great morass there was not a hand-breadth of solid ground—not a resting-place for a human foot, save the road which led through Coeworden. This passage lay upon a natural deposit of hard, dry sand, interposed as if by a caprice of nature between the two swamps; and was about half a mile in width.

The town itself was well fortified, and Verdugo had been recently strengthening the position with additional earthworks. A thousand veterans formed the garrison under command of another Van den Berg, the Count Frederic. It was the fate of these sister's-children of the great founder of the republic to serve the cause of foreign despotism with remarkable tenacity against their own countrymen, and against their nearest blood relations. On many conspicuous occasions they were almost as useful to Spain and the Inquisition as the son and nearly all the other kinsmen of William the Silent had rendered themselves to the cause of Holland and of freedom.

Having thoroughly entrenched his camp before Coeworden and begun the regular approaches, Maurice left his cousin Lewis William to superintend the siege operations for the moment, and advanced towards Ootmarsum, a frontier town which might give him trouble if in the hands of a relieving force. The place fell at once, with the loss of but one life to the States army, but that a very valuable one; General de Famars, one of the original signers of the famous Compromise; and a most distinguished soldier of the republic, having been killed before the gates.

On the 31st July, Maurice returned to his entrenchments. The enemy professed unbounded confidence; Van den Berg not doubting that he should be relieved by Verdugo, and Verdugo being sure that Van den Berg would need no relief. The Portuguese veteran indeed was inclined to wonder at Maurice's presumption in attacking so impregnable a fortress. "If Coeworden does not hold," said he, "there is no place in the world that can hold."

Count Peter Ernest, was still acting as governor-general for Alexander Farnese, on returning from his second French campaign, had again betaken himself, shattered and melancholy, to the waters of Spa, leaving the responsibility for Netherland affairs upon the German octogenarian. To him; and to the nonagenarian Mondragon at Antwerp, the veteran Verdugo now called loudly for aides against the youthful pedant, whom all men had been laughing at a twelvemonth or so before. The Macedonian phalanx, Simon

Stevinus and delving Dutch boors—unworthy of the name of soldiers—seemed to be steadily digging the ground from under Philip’s feet in his hereditary domains.

Page 1925

What would become of the world-empire, where was the great king—not of Spain alone, nor of France alone—but the great monarch of all Christendom, to plant his throne securely, if his Frisian strongholds, his most important northern outposts, were to fall before an almost beardless youth at the head of a handful of republican militia?

Verdugo did his best, but the best was little. The Spanish and Italian legions had been sent out of the Netherlands into France. Many had died there, many were in hospital after their return, nearly all the rest were mutinous for want of pay.

On the 16th August, Maurice formally summoned Coeworden to surrender. After the trumpeter had blown thrice; Count Van den Berg, forbidding all others, came alone upon the walls and demanded his message. "To claim this city in the name of Prince Maurice of Nassau and of the States-General," was the reply.

"Tell him first to beat down my walls as flat as the ditch," said Van den Berg, "and then to bring five or six storms. Six months after that I will think whether I will send a trumpet."

The prince proceeded steadily with his approaches, but he was infinitely chagrined by the departure out of his camp of Sir Francis Vere with his English contingent of three regiments, whom Queen Elizabeth had peremptorily ordered to the relief of King Henry in Brittany.

Nothing amazes the modern mind so much as the exquisite paucity of forces and of funds by which the world-empire was fought for and resisted in France, Holland, Spain, and England. The scenes of war were rapidly shifted—almost like the slides of a magic-lantern—from one country to another; the same conspicuous personages, almost the same individual armies, perpetually re-appearing in different places, as if a wild phantasmagoria were capriciously repeating itself to bewilder the imagination. Essex, and Vere, and Roger Williams, and Black Norris-Van der Does, and Admiral Nassau, the Meetkerks and Count Philip-Farnese and Mansfeld, George Basti, Arenberg, Berlaymont, La None and Teligny, Aquila and Coloma—were seen alternately fighting, retreating, triumphant, beleaguering, campaigning all along the great territory which extends from the Bay of Biscay to the crags of Brittany, and across the narrow seas to the bogs of Ireland, and thence through the plains of Picardy and Flanders to the swamps of Groningen and the frontiers of the Rhine.

This was the arena in which the great struggle was ever going on, but the champions were so few in number that their individual shapes become familiar to us like the figures of an oft-repeated pageant. And now the withdrawal of certain companies of infantry and squadrons of cavalry from the Spanish armies into France, had left obedient Netherland too weak to resist rebellious Netherland, while, on the other hand, the withdrawal of some twenty or thirty companies of English auxiliaries—most hard-fighting

veterans it is true, but very few in number—was likely to imperil the enterprise of Maurice in Friesland.

Page 1926

The removal of these companies from the Low Countries to strengthen the Bearnese in the north of France, formed the subject of much bitter diplomatic conference between the States and England; the order having been communicated by the great queen herself in many a vehement epistle and caustic speech, enforced by big, manly oaths.

Verdugo, although confident in the strength of the place, had represented to Parma and to Mansfeld the immense importance of relieving Coeworden. The city, he said, was more valuable than all the towns taken the year before. All Friesland hung upon it, and it would be impossible to save Groningen should Coeworden fall.

Meantime Count Philip Nassau arrived from the campaign in France with his three regiments which he threw into garrison, and thus set free an equal number of fresh troops, which were forthwith sent to the camp of Maurice. The prince at the same time was made aware that Verdugo was about to receive important succour, and he was advised by the deputies of the States-General present at his headquarters to send out his German Reiters to intercept them. Maurice refused. Should his cavalry be defeated, he said, his whole army would be endangered. He determined to await within his fortified camp the attack of the relieving force.

During the whole month of August he proceeded steadily with his sapping and mining. By the middle of the month his lines had come through the ditch, which he drained of water into the counterscarp. By the beginning of September he had got beneath the principal fort, which, in the course of three or four days, he expected to blow into the air. The rainy weather had impeded his operations and the march of the relieving army. Nevertheless that army was at last approaching. The regiments of Mondragon, Charles Mansfeld, Gonzaga, Berlaymont, and Arenberg had been despatched to reinforce Verdugo. On the 23rd August, having crossed the Rhine at Rheinberg, they reached Olfen in the country of Benthem, ten miles from Coeworden. Here they threw up rockets and made other signals that relief was approaching the town. On the 3rd of September Verdugo, with the whole force at his disposal, amounting to four thousand foot and eighteen hundred horse, was at the village of Emblichen, within a league of the besieged city. That night a peasant was captured with letters from Verdugo to the Governor of Coeworden, giving information that he intended to make an assault on the besiegers on the night of 6th-7th September.

Thus forewarned, Maurice took the best precautions and calmly within his entrenchments awaited the onslaught. Punctual to his appointment, Verdugo with his whole force, yelling “Victoria! Victoria!” made a shirt-attack, or camiciata—the men wearing their shirts outside their armour to distinguish each other in the darkness—upon that portion of the camp which was under command of Hohenlo. They were met with determination and repulsed, after

Page 1927

fighting all night, with a loss of three hundred killed and a proportionate number of wounded. The Netherlanders had but three killed and six wounded. Among the latter, however, was Lewis William, who received a musket-ball in the belly, but remained on the ground until the enemy had retreated. It was then discovered that his wound was not mortal—the intestines not having been injured—and he was soon about his work again. Prince Maurice, too, as usual, incurred the remonstrances of the deputies and others for the reckless manner in which he exposed himself wherever the fire was hottest He resolutely refused, however, to permit his cavalry to follow the retreating enemy. His object was Coeworden—a prize more important than a new victory over the already defeated Spaniards would prove—and this object he kept ever before his eyes.

This was Verdugo's first and last attempt to relieve the city. He had seen enough of the young prince's tactics and had no further wish to break his teeth against those scientific entrenchments. The Spaniards at last, whether they wore their shirts inside or outside their doublets, could no longer handle the Dutchmen at pleasure. That people of butter, as the iron duke of Alva was fond of calling the Netherlanders, were grown harder with the pressure of a twenty-five years' war.

Five days after the sanguinary 'camiciata' the besieged offered to capitulate. The trumpet at which the proud Van den Berg had hinted for six months later arrived on the 12th September. Maurice was glad to get his town. His "little soldiers" did not insist, as the Spaniards and Italians were used to do in the good old days, on unlimited murder, rape, and fire, as the natural solace and reward of their labours in the trenches. Civilization had made some progress, at least in the Netherlands. Maurice granted good terms, such as he had been in the habit of conceding to all captured towns. Van den Berg was courteously received by his cousins, as he rode forth from the place at the head of what remained of his garrison, five hundred in number, with colours flying, matches burning, bullet in mouth, and with all their arms and baggage except artillery and ammunition, and the heroic little Lewis, notwithstanding the wound in his belly, got on horseback and greeted him with a cousinly welcome in the camp.

The city was a most important acquisition, as already sufficiently set forth, but Queen Elizabeth, much misinformed on this occasion, was inclined to undervalue it. She wrote accordingly to the States, reproaching them for using all that artillery and that royal force against a mere castle and earthheap, instead of attempting some considerable capital, or going in force to the relief of Brittany. The day was to come when she would acknowledge the advantage of not leaving this earth-heap in the hands of the Spaniard. Meantime, Prince Maurice—the season being so far advanced—gave the world no further practical lessons in the engineering science, and sent his troops into winter quarters.

Page 1928

These were the chief military phenomena in France and Flanders during three years of the great struggle to establish Philip's universal dominion.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Negotiations between Queen Elizabeth and the States—Aspect of affair between England and the Netherlands—Complaints of the Hollanders on the piratical acts of the English—The Dutch Envoy and the English Government—Caron's interview with Elizabeth—The Queen promises redress of grievances.

It is now necessary to cast a glance at certain negotiations on delicate topics which had meantime been occurring between Queen Elizabeth and the States.

England and the republic were bound together by ties so close that it was impossible for either to injure the other without inflicting a corresponding damage on itself. Nevertheless this very community of interest, combined with a close national relationship—for in the European family the Netherlanders and English were but cousins twice removed—with similarity of pursuits, with commercial jealousy, with an intense and ever growing rivalry for that supremacy on the ocean towards which the monarchy and the republic were so earnestly struggling, with a common passion for civil and religious freedom, and with that inveterate habit of self-assertion—the healthful but not engaging attribute of all vigorous nations—which strongly marked them both, was rapidly producing an antipathy between the two countries which time was likely rather to deepen than efface. And the national divergences were as potent as the traits of resemblance in creating this antagonism.

The democratic element was expanding itself in the republic so rapidly as to stifle for a time the oligarchical principle which might one day be developed out of the same matrix; while, despite the hardy and adventurous spirit which characterised the English nation throughout all its grades, there was never a more intensely aristocratic influence in the world than the governing and directing spirit of the England of that age.

It was impossible that the courtiers of Elizabeth and the burgher-statesmen of Holland and Friesland should sympathize with each other in sentiment or in manner. The republicans in their exuberant consciousness of having at last got rid of kings and kingly paraphernalia in their own, land—for since the rejection of the sovereignty offered to France and England in 1585 this feeling had become so predominant as to make it difficult to believe that those offers had been in reality so recent—were insensibly adopting a frankness, perhaps a roughness, of political and social demeanour which was far from palatable to the euphuistic formalists of other, countries.

Especially the English statesmen, trained to approach their sovereign with almost Oriental humility, and accustomed to exact for themselves a large amount of deference,

could ill brook the free and easy tone occasionally adopted in diplomatic and official intercourse by these upstart republicans.

Page 1929

[The Venetian ambassador Contarin relates that in the reign of James I. the great nobles of England were served at table by lackeys on they knees.]

A queen, who to loose morals, imperious disposition, and violent temper united as inordinate a personal vanity as was ever vouchsafed to woman, and who up to the verge of decrepitude was addressed by her courtiers in the language of love-torn swain to blooming shepherdess, could naturally find but little to her taste in the hierarchy of Hans Brewer and Hans Baker. Thus her Majesty and her courtiers, accustomed to the faded gallantries with which the serious affairs of State were so grotesquely intermingled, took it ill when they were bluntly informed, for instance, that the State council of the Netherlands, negotiating on Netherland affairs, could not permit a veto to the representatives of the queen, and that this same body of Dutchmen discussing their own business insisted upon talking Dutch and not Latin.

It was impossible to deny that the young Stadholder was a gentleman of a good house, but how could the insolence of a common citizen like John of Olden-Barneveld be digested? It was certain that behind those shaggy, overhanging brows there was a powerful brain stored with legal and historic lore, which supplied eloquence to an ever-ready tongue and pen. Yet these facts, difficult to gainsay, did not make the demands so frequently urged by the States-General upon the English Government for the enforcement of Dutch rights and the redress of English wrongs the more acceptable.

Bodley, Gilpin, and the rest were in a chronic state of exasperation with the Hollanders, not only because of their perpetual complaints, but because their complaints were perpetually just.

The States-General were dissatisfied, all the Netherlanders were dissatisfied—and not entirely without reason—that the English, with whom the republic was on terms not only of friendship but of alliance, should burn their ships on the high seas, plunder their merchants, and torture their sea-captains in order to extort information as to the most precious portions of their cargoes. Sharp language against such malpractices was considered but proof of democratic vulgarity. Yet it would be hard to maintain that Martin Frobisher, Mansfield, Grenfell, and the rest of the sea-kings, with all their dash and daring and patriotism, were not as unscrupulous pirates as ever sailed blue water, or that they were not apt to commit their depredations upon friend and foe alike.

On the other hand; by a liberality of commerce in extraordinary contrast with the practice of modern times, the Netherlanders were in the habit of trading directly with the arch-enemy of both Holland and England, even in the midst of their conflict with him, and it was complained of that even the munitions of war and the implements of navigation by which Spain had been enabled to effect its foot-hold in Brittany, and thus to threaten the English coast, were derived from this very traffic.

Page 1930

The Hollanders replied, that, according to their contract with England, they were at liberty to send as many as forty or fifty vessels at a time to Spain and Portugal, that they had never exceeded the stipulated number, that England freely engaged in the same traffic herself with the common enemy, that it was not reasonable to consider cordage or dried fish or shooks and staves, butter, eggs, and corn as contraband of war, that if they were illegitimate the English trade was vitiated to the same degree, and that it would be utterly hopeless for the provinces to attempt to carry on the war, except by enabling themselves, through the widest and most unrestricted foreign commerce, even including the enemy's realms, to provide their nation with the necessary wealth to sustain so gigantic a conflict.

Here were ever flowing fountains of bitterest discussion and recrimination. It must be admitted however that there was occasionally an advantage in the despotic and summary manner in which the queen took matters into her own hands. It was refreshing to see this great sovereign—who was so well able to grapple with questions of State, and whose very imperiousness of temper impelled her to trample on shallow sophistries and specious technicalities—dealing directly with cases of piracy and turning a deaf ear to the counsellors, who in that, as in every age, were too prone to shove by international justice in order to fulfil municipal forms.

It was, however, with much difficulty that the envoy of the republic was able to obtain a direct hearing from her Majesty in order to press the long list of complaints on account of the English piratical proceedings upon her attention. He intimated that there seemed to be special reasons why the great ones about her throne were disposed to deny him access to the queen, knowing as they did in what intent he asked for interviews. They described in strong language the royal wrath at the opposition recently made by the States to detaching the English auxiliaries in the Netherlands for the service of the French king in Normandy, hoping thereby to deter him from venturing into her presence with a list of grievances on the part of his government. "I did my best to indicate the danger incurred by such transferring of troops at so critical a moment," said Noel de Canon, "showing that it was directly in opposition to the contract made with her Majesty. But I got no answer save very high words from the Lord Treasurer, to the effect that the States-General were never willing to agree to any of her Majesty's prepositions, and that this matter was as necessary to the States' service as to that of the French king. In effect, he said peremptorily that her Majesty willed it and would not recede from her resolution."

The envoy then requested an interview with the queen before her departure into the country.

Next day, at noon, Lord Burghley sent word that she was to leave between five and six o'clock that evening, and that the minister would be welcome meantime at any hour.

Page 1931

“But notwithstanding that I presented myself,” said Caron, “at two o’clock in the afternoon, I was unable to speak to her Majesty until a moment before she was about to mount her horse. Her language was then very curt. She persisted in demanding her troops, and strongly expressed her dissatisfaction that we should have refused them on what she called so good an occasion for using them. I was obliged to cut my replies very short, as it was already between six and seven o’clock, and she was to ride nine English miles to the place where she was to pass the night. I was quite sensible, however; that the audience was arranged to be thus brief, in order that I should not be able to stop long enough to give trouble, and perhaps to find occasion to renew our complaints touching the plunderings and robberies committed upon us at sea. This is what some of the great personages here, without doubt, are afraid of, for they were wonderfully well overhauled in my last audience. I shall attempt to speak to her again before she goes very deep into the country.”

It was not however before the end of the year, after Caron had made a voyage to Holland and had returned, that he 14 Nov. was able to bring the subject thoroughly before her Majesty. On the 14th November he had preliminary interviews with the Lord High Admiral and the Lord Treasurer at Hampton Court, where the queen was then residing. The plundering business was warmly discussed between himself and the Admiral, and there was much quibbling and special pleading in defence of the practices which had created so much irritation and pecuniary loss in Holland. There was a good deal of talk about want of evidence and conflict of evidence, which, to a man who felt as sure of the facts and of the law as the Dutch envoy did—unless it were according to public law for one friend and, ally to plunder and burn the vessels of another friend and ally—was not encouraging as to the probable issue of his interview with her Majesty. It would be tedious to report the conversation as fully as it was laid by Noel de Caron before the States-General; but at last the admiral expressed a hope that the injured parties would be able to make good their, case. At any rate he assured the envoy that he would take care of Captain Mansfield for the present, who was in prison with two other captains, so that proceedings might be had against them if it was thought worth while.

Caron answered with Dutch bluntness. “I recommended him very earnestly to do this,” he said, “and told him roundly that this was by all means necessary for the sake of his own honour. Otherwise no man could ever be made to believe that his Excellency was not seeking to get his own profit out of the affair. But he vehemently swore and protested that this was not the case.”

Page 1932

He then went to the Lord Treasurer's apartment, where a long and stormy interview followed on the subject of the withdrawal of the English troops. Caron warmly insisted that the measure had been full of danger, for the States; that they had been ordered out of Prince Maurice's camp at a most critical moment; that; had it not, been for the Stallholder's promptness and military skill; very great disasters to the common cause must have ensued; and that, after all, nothing had been done by the contingent in any other field, for they had been for six months idle and sick, without ever reaching Brittany at all.

"The Lord Treasurer, who, contrary to his custom," said the envoy, "had been listening thus long to what I had to say, now observed that the States had treated her Majesty very ill, that they had kept her running after her own troops nearly half a year, and had offered no excuse for their proceedings."

It would be superfluous to repeat the arguments by which Caron endeavoured to set forth that the English troops, sent to the Netherlands according to a special compact, for a special service, and for a special consideration and equivalent, could not honestly be employed, contrary to the wishes of the States-General, upon a totally different service and in another country. The queen willed it, he was informed, and it was ill-treatment of her Majesty on the part of the Hollanders to oppose her will. This argument was unanswerable.

Soon afterwards, Caron was admitted to the presence of Elizabeth. He delivered, at first, a letter from the States-General, touching the withdrawal of the troops. The queen, instantly broke the seal and read the letter to the end. Coming to the concluding passage, in which the States observed that they had great and just cause highly to complain on that subject, she paused, reading the sentences over twice or thrice, and then remarked:

"Truly these are comical people. I have so often been complaining that they refused to send my troops, and now the States complain that they are obliged to let them go. Yet my intention is only to borrow them for a little while, because I can give my brother of France no better succour than by sending him these soldiers, and this I consider better than if I should send him four thousand men. I say again, I am only borrowing them, and surely the States ought never to make such complaints, when the occasion was such a favourable one, and they had received already sufficient aid from these troops, and had liberated their whole country. I don't comprehend these grievances. They complain that I withdraw my people, and meantime they are still holding them and have brought them ashore again. They send me frivolous excuses that the skippers don't know the road to my islands, which is, after all, as easy to find as the way to Caen, for it is all one. I have also sent my own pilots; and I complain bitterly that by making this difficulty they will cause the loss of all Brittany. They run with their people far away from me, and meantime they allow the enemy to become master of all the coasts lying opposite me. But if it goes badly with me they will rue it deeply themselves."

Page 1933

There was considerable reason, even if there were but little justice, in this strain of remarks. Her Majesty continued it for some little time longer, and it is interesting to see the direct and personal manner in which this great princess handled the weightiest affairs of state. The transfer of a dozen companies of English infantry from Friesland to Brittany was supposed to be big with the fate of France, England, and the Dutch republic, and was the subject of long and angry controversy, not as a contested point of principle, in regard to which numbers, of course, are nothing, but as a matter of practical and pressing importance.

“Her Majesty made many more observations of this nature,” said Caron, “but without getting at all into a passion, and, in my opinion, her discourse was sensible, and she spoke with more moderation than she is wont at other times.”

The envoy then presented the second letter from the States-General in regard to the outrages inflicted on the Dutch merchantmen. The queen read it at once, and expressed herself as very much displeased with her people. She said that she had received similar information from Counsellor Bodley, who had openly given her to understand that the enormous outrages which her people were committing at sea upon the Netherlanders were a public scandal. It had made her so angry, she said, that she knew not which way to turn. She would take it in hand at once, for she would rather make oath never more to permit a single ship of war to leave her ports than consent to such thieveries and villanies. She told Caron that he would do well to have his case in regard to these matters verified, and then to give it into her own hands, since otherwise it would all be denied her and she would find herself unable to get at the truth.”

“I have all the proofs and documents of the merchants by me,” replied the envoy, “and, moreover, several of the sea-captains who have been robbed and outraged have come over with me, as likewise some merchants who were tortured by burning of the thumbs and other kinds of torments.”

This disturbed the queen very much, and she expressed her wish that Caron should not allow himself to be put off with, delays by the council, but should insist upon all due criminal punishment, the infliction of which she promised in the strongest terms to order; for she could never enjoy peace of mind, she said; so long as such scoundrels were tolerated in her kingdom.

The envoy had brought with him a summary of the cases, with the names of all the merchants interested, and a list of all the marks on the sacks of money which had been stolen. The queen looked over it very carefully, declaring it to be her intention that there should be no delays interposed in the conduct of this affair by forms of special pleading, but that speedy cognizance should be taken of the whole, and that the property should forthwith be restored.

Page 1934

She then sent for Sir Robert Cecil, whom she directed to go at once and tell his father, the Lord Treasurer, that he was to assist Caron in this affair exactly as if it were her own. It was her intention, she said, that her people were in no wise to trouble the Hollanders in legitimate mercantile pursuits. She added that it was not enough for her people to say that they had only been seizing Spaniards' goods and money, but she meant that they should prove it, too, or else they should swing for it.

Caron assured her Majesty that he had no other commission from his masters than to ask for justice, and that he had no instructions to claim Spanish property or enemy's goods. He had brought sufficient evidence with him, he said, to give her Majesty entire satisfaction.

It is not necessary to pursue the subject any farther. The great nobles still endeavoured to interpose delays, and urged the propriety of taking the case before the common courts of law. Carom strong in the support of the queen, insisted that it should be settled, as her Majesty had commanded, by the council, and it was finally arranged that the judge of admiralty should examine the evidence on both sides, and then communicate the documents at once to the Lord Treasurer. Meantime the money was to be deposited with certain aldermen of London, and the accused parties kept in prison. The ultimate decision was then to be made by the council, "not by form of process but by commission thereto ordained." In the course of the many interviews which followed between the Dutch envoy and the privy counsellors, the Lord Admiral stated that an English merchant residing in the Netherlands had sent to offer him a present of two thousand pounds sterling, in case the affair should be decided against the Hollanders. He communicated the name of the individual to Caron, under seal of secrecy, and reminded the Lord Treasurer that he too had seen the letter of the Englishman. Lord Burghley observed that he remembered the fact that certain letters had been communicated to him by the Lord Admiral, but that he did not know from whence they came, nor anything about the person of the writer.

The case of the plundered merchants was destined to drag almost as slowly before the council as it might have done in the ordinary tribunals, and Caron was "kept running," as he expressed it, "from the court to London, and from London to the court," and it was long before justice was done to the sufferers. Yet the energetic manner in which the queen took the case into her own hands, and the intense indignation with which she denounced the robberies and outrages which had been committed by her subjects upon her friends and allies, were effective in restraining such wholesale piracy in the future.

On the whole, however, if the internal machinery is examined by which the masses of mankind were moved at epoch in various parts of Christendom, we shall not find much reason to applaud the conformity of Governments to the principles of justice, reason, or wisdom.

Page 1935

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Accustomed to the faded gallantries
Conformity of Governments to the principles of justice
Considerable reason, even if there were but little justice
Disciple of Simon Stevinus
Self-assertion—the healthful but not engaging attribute

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 65, 1592-1594

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Influence of the rule and character of Philip *ii*.—Heroism of the sixteenth century—-Contest for the French throne—Character and policy of the Duke of Mayenne—Escape of the Duke of Guise from Castle Tours—Propositions for the marriage of the Infanta—-Plotting of the Catholic party—Grounds of Philip's pretensions to the crown of France—-Motives of the Duke of Parma maligned by Commander Moreo —He justifies himself to the king—View of the private relations between Philip and the Duke of Mayenne and their sentiments towards each other—Disposition of the French politicians and soldiers towards Philip—Peculiar commercial pursuits of Philip—Confused state of affairs in France—Treachery of Philip towards the Duke of Parma—Recall of the duke to Spain —His sufferings and death.

The People—which has been generally regarded as something naturally below its rulers, and as born to be protected and governed, paternally or otherwise, by an accidental selection from its own species, which by some mysterious process has shot up much nearer to heaven than itself—is often described as brutal, depraved, self-seeking, ignorant, passionate, licentious, and greedy.

It is fitting, therefore, that its protectors should be distinguished, at great epochs of the world's history, by an absence of such objectionable qualities.

It must be confessed, however, that if the world had waited for heroes—during the dreary period which followed the expulsion of something that was called Henry *iii*. of France from the gates of his capital, and especially during the time that followed hard upon the decease of that embodiment of royalty—its axis must have ceased to turn for a long succession of years. The Bearnese was at least alive, and a man. He played his

part with consummate audacity and skill; but alas for an epoch or a country in which such a shape—notwithstanding all its engaging and even commanding qualities—-looked upon as an incarnation of human greatness!

Page 1936

But the chief mover of all things—so far as one man can be prime mover—was still the diligent scribe who lived in the Escorial. It was he whose high mission it was to blow the bellows of civil war, and to scatter curses over what had once been the smiling abodes of human creatures, throughout the leading countries of Christendom. The throne of France was vacant, nominally as well as actually, since—the year 1589. During two-and-twenty years preceding that epoch he had scourged the provinces, once constituting the richest and most enlightened portions of his hereditary domains, upon the theory that without the Spanish Inquisition no material prosperity was possible on earth, nor any entrance permitted to the realms of bliss beyond the grave. Had every Netherlander consented to burn his Bible, and to be burned himself should he be found listening to its holy precepts if read to him in shop, cottage, farm-house, or castle; and had he furthermore consented to renounce all the liberal institutions which his ancestors had earned, in the struggle of centuries, by the sweat of their brows and the blood of, their hearts; his benignant proprietor and master, who lived at the ends of the earth, would have consented at almost any moment to peace. His arms were ever open. Let it not be supposed that this is the language of sarcasm or epigram. Stripped of the decorous sophistication by which human beings are so fond of concealing their naked thoughts from each other, this was the one simple dogma always propounded by Philip. Grimace had done its worst, however, and it was long since it had exercised any power in the Netherlands. The king and the Dutchmen understood each other; and the plain truths with which those republicans answered the imperial proffers of mediation, so frequently renewed, were something new, and perhaps not entirely unwholesome in diplomacy.

It is not an inviting task to abandon the comparatively healthy atmosphere of the battle-field, the blood-stained swamp, the murderous trench—where human beings, even if communing only by bullets and push of pike, were at least dealing truthfully with each other—and to descend into those subterranean regions where the effluvia of falsehood becomes almost too foul for ordinary human organisation.

Heroes in those days, in any country, there were few. William the Silent was dead. De la Noue was dead. Duplessis-Mornay was living, but his influence over his royal master was rapidly diminishing. Cecil, Hatton, Essex, Howard, Raleigh, James Croft, Valentine Dale, John Norris, Roger Williams, the “Virgin Queen” herself—does one of these chief agents in public affairs, or do all of them together, furnish a thousandth part of that heroic whole which the England of the sixteenth century presents to every imagination? Maurice of Nassau-excellent soldier and engineer as he had already proved himself—-had certainly not developed much of the heroic element, although thus far he was walking straightforward like

Page 1937

a man, in the path of duty, with the pithy and substantial Lewis William ever at his side. Olden-Barneveld—tough burgher-statesman, hard-headed, indomitable man of granite—was doing more work, and doing it more thoroughly, than any living politician, but he was certainly not of the mythological brotherhood who inhabit the serene regions of space beyond the moon. He was not the son of god or goddess, destined, after removal from this sphere, to shine with planetary lustre, among other constellations, upon the scenes of mortal action. Those of us who are willing to rise-or to descend if the phrase seems wiser—to the idea of a self-governing people must content ourselves, for this epoch, with the fancy of a hero-people and a people-king.

A plain little republic, thrusting itself uninvited into the great political family-party of heaven-anointed sovereigns and long-descended nobles, seemed a somewhat repulsive phenomenon. It became odious and dangerous when by the blows it could deal in battle, the logic it could chop in council, it indicated a remote future for the world, in which right divine and regal paraphernalia might cease to be as effective stage-properties as they had always been considered.

Yet it will be difficult for us to find the heroic individualised very perceptibly at this period, look where we may. Already there seemed ground for questioning the comfortable fiction that the accidentally dominant families and castes were by nature wiser, better, braver than that much-contemned entity, the People. What if the fearful heresy should gain ground that the People was at least as wise, honest, and brave as its masters? What if it should become a recognised fact that the great individuals and castes, whose wealth and station furnished them with ample time and means for perfecting themselves in the science of government, were rather devoting their leisure to the systematic filling of their own pockets than to the hiving up of knowledge for the good of their fellow creatures? What if the whole theory of hereditary superiority should suddenly exhale? What if it were found out that we were all fellow-worms together, and that those which had crawled highest were not necessarily the least slimy?

Meantime it will be well for us, in order to understand what is called the Past, to scrutinise somewhat closely that which was never meant to be revealed. To know the springs which once controlled the world's movements, one must ponder the secret thoughts, purposes, aspirations, and baffled attempts of the few dozen individuals who once claimed that world in fee-simple. Such researches are not in a cheerful field; for the sources of history are rarely fountains of crystal, bubbling through meadows of asphodel. Vast and noisome are the many sewers which have ever run beneath decorous Christendom.

Some of the leading military events in France and Flanders, patent to all the world, which grouped themselves about the contest for the French throne, as the central point in the history of Philip's proposed world-empire, have already been indicated.

Page 1938

It was a species of triangular contest—so far as the chief actors were concerned—for that vacant throne. Philip, Mayenne, Henry of Navarre, with all the adroitness which each possessed, were playing for the splendid prize.

Of Philip it is not necessary to speak. The preceding volumes of this work have been written in vain, if the reader has not obtained from irrefragable testimony—the monarch's own especially—a sufficient knowledge of that human fetish before which so much of contemporary humanity grovelled.

The figure of Navarre is also one of the most familiar shapes in history.

As for the Duke of Mayenne, he had been, since the death of his brother the Balafre, ostensible leader of the League, and was playing, not without skill, a triple game.

Firstly, he hoped for the throne for himself.

Secondly, he was assisting the King of Spain to obtain that dignity.

Thirdly, he was manoeuvring in dull, dumb, but not ineffective manner, in favour of Navarre.

So comprehensive and self-contradictory a scheme would seem to indicate an elasticity of principle and a fertility of resource not often vouchsafed to man.

Certainly one of the most pregnant lessons of history is furnished in the development of these cabals, nor is it, in this regard, of great importance whether the issue was to prove them futile or judicious. It is sufficient for us now, that when those vanished days constituted the Present—the vital atmosphere of Christendom—the world's affairs were controlled by those plotters and their subordinates, and it is therefore desirable for us to know what manner of men they were, and how they played their parts.

Nor should it ever be forgotten that the leading motive with all was supposed to be religion. It was to maintain the supremacy of the Roman Church, or to vindicate, to a certain extent, liberty of conscience, through the establishment of a heterodox organisation, that all these human beings of various lineage and language throughout Christendom had been cutting each other's throats for a quarter of a century.

Mayenne was not without courage in the field when he found himself there, but it was observed of him that he spent more time at table than the Bearnese in sleep, and that he was so fat as to require the assistance of twelve men to put him in the saddle again whenever he fell from his horse. Yet slow fighter as he was, he was a most nimble intriguer. As for his private character, it was notoriously stained with every vice, nor was there enough of natural intelligence or superior acquirement to atone for his, crapulous; licentious, shameless life. His military efficiency at important emergencies was impaired and his life endangered by vile diseases. He was covetous and greedy beyond what

was considered decent even in that cynical age. He received subsidies and alms with both hands from those who distrusted and despised him, but who could not eject him from his advantageous position.

Page 1939

He wished to arrive at the throne of France. As son of Francis of Guise, as brother of the great Balafre, he considered himself entitled to the homage of the fishwomen and the butchers' halls. The constitution of the country in that age making a People impossible, the subtle connection between a high-born intriguer and the dregs of a populace, which can only exist in societies of deep chasms and precipitous contrasts, was easily established.

The duke's summary dealing with the sixteen tyrants of Paris in the matter of the president's murder had, however, loosened his hold on what was considered the democracy; but this was at the time when his schemes were silently swinging towards the Protestant aristocracy; at the moment when Politica was taking the place of Madam League in his secret affections. Nevertheless, so long as there seemed a chance, he was disposed to work the mines for his own benefit. His position as lieutenant-general gave him an immense advantage for intriguing with both sides, and—in case his aspirations for royalty were baffled—for obtaining the highest possible price for himself in that auction in which Philip and the Bearnese were likely to strain all their resources in outbidding each other.

On one thing his heart was fixed. His brother's son should at least not secure the golden prize if he could prevent it. The young Duke of Guise, who had been immured in Castle Tours since the famous murder of his father and uncle, had made his escape by a rather neat stratagem. Having been allowed some liberty for amusing himself in the corridors in the neighbourhood of his apartment, he had invented a game of hop, skip, and jump up stairs and down, which he was wont to play with the soldiers of the guard, as a solace to the tediousness of confinement. One day he hopped and skipped up the staircase with a rapidity which excited the admiration of the companions of his sport, slipped into his room, slammed and bolted the doors, and when the guard, after in vain waiting a considerable tine for him to return and resume the game, at last forced an entrance, they found the bird flown out of window. Rope-ladders, confederates, fast-galloping post-horses did the rest, and at last the young duke joined his affectionate uncle in camp, much to that eminent relative's discomfiture. Philip gave alternately conflicting instructions to Farnese—sometimes that he should encourage the natural jealousy between the pair; sometimes that he should cause them to work harmoniously together for the common good—that common good being the attainment by the King of Spain of the sovereignty of France.

But it was impossible, as already intimated, for Mayenne to work harmoniously with his nephew. The Duke of Guise might marry with the infanta and thus become King of France by the grace of God and Philip. To such a consummation in the case of his uncle there stood, as we know, an insuperable obstacle in the shape of the Duchess of Mayenne. Should it come to this at last, it was certain that the Duke would make any and every combination to frustrate such a scheme. Meantime he kept his own counsel, worked amiably with Philip, Parma, and the young duke, and received money in

overflowing measure, and poured into his bosom from that Spanish monarch whose veterans in the Netherlands were maddened by starvation into mutiny.

Page 1940

Philip's plans were a series of alternatives. France he regarded as the property of his family. Of that there could be no doubt at all. He meant to put the crown upon his own head, unless the difficulties in the way should prove absolutely insuperable. In that case he claimed France and all its inhabitants as the property of his daughter. The Salic law was simply a pleasantry, a bit of foolish pedantry, an absurdity. If Clara Isabella, as daughter of Isabella of France, as grandchild of Henry *ii*., were not manifestly the owner of France—queen-proprietary, as the Spanish doctors called it—-then there was no such thing, so he thought, as inheritance of castle, farm-house, or hovel—no such thing as property anywhere in the world. If the heiress of the Valois could not take that kingdom as her private estate, what security could there ever be for any possessions public or private?

This was logical reasoning enough for kings and their counsellors. There was much that might be said, however, in regard to special laws. There was no doubt that great countries, with all their livestock—human or otherwise—belonged to an individual, but it was not always so clear who that individual was. This doubt gave much work and comfortable fees to the lawyers. There was much learned lore concerning statutes of descent, cutting off of entails, actions for ejectment, difficulties of enforcing processes, and the like, to occupy the attention of diplomatists, politicians and other sages. It would have caused general hilarity, however, could it have been suggested that the live-stock had art or part in the matter; that sheep, swine, or men could claim a choice of their shepherds and butchers.

Philip—humbly satisfied, as he always expressed himself, so long as the purity of the Roman dogmas and the supremacy of the Romish Church over the whole earth were maintained—affected a comparative indifference as to whether he should put the crown of St. Louis and of Hugh Capet upon his own grey head or whether he should govern France through his daughter and her husband. Happy the man who might exchange the symbols of mutual affection with Philip's daughter.

The king had various plans in regard to the bestowal of the hand thus richly endowed. First and foremost it was suggested—and the idea was not held too monstrous to be even believed in by some conspicuous individuals—that he proposed espousing his daughter himself. The pope was to be relied on, in this case, to give a special dispensation. Such a marriage, between parties too closely related to be usually united in wedlock, might otherwise shock the prejudices of the orthodox. His late niece and wife was dead, so that there was no inconvenience on that score, should the interests of his dynasty, his family, and, above all, of the Church, impel him, on mature reflection, to take for his fourth marriage one step farther within the forbidden degrees than he had done in his third. Here is the statement, which, if it have no other value, serves to show the hideous designs of which the enemies of Philip sincerely believed that monarch capable.

Page 1941

“But God is a just God,” wrote Sir Edward Stafford, “and if with all things past, that be true that the king (’videlicet’ Henry *iv*.) yesterday assured me to be true, and that both his ambassador from Venice writ to him and Monsieur de Luxembourg from Rome, that the Count Olivarez had made a great instance to the pope (Sixtus V.) a little afore his death, to permit his master to marry his daughter, no doubt God will not leave it long unpunished.”

Such was the horrible tale which was circulated and believed in by Henry the Great of France and by eminent nobles and ambassadors, and at least thought possible by the English envoy. By such a family arrangement it was obvious that the conflicting claims of father and daughter to the proprietorship of France would be ingeniously adjusted, and the children of so well assorted a marriage might reign in undisputed legitimacy over France and Spain, and the rest of the world-monarchy. Should the king decide on the whole against this matrimonial project, should Innocent or Clement prove as intractable as Sixtus, then it would be necessary to decide among various candidates for the Infanta’s hand.

In Mayenne’s Opinion the Duke of Guise was likely to be the man; but there is little doubt that Philip, in case these more cherished schemes should fail, had made up his mind—so far as he ever did make up his mind upon anything—to select his nephew the Archduke Ernest, brother of the Emperor Rudolph, for his son-in-law. But it was not necessary to make an immediate choice. His quiver was full of archdukes, any one of whom would be an eligible candidate, while not one of them would be likely to reject the Infanta with France on her wedding-finger. Meantime there was a lion in the path in the shape of Henry of Navarre.

Those who disbelieve in the influence of the individual on the fate of mankind may ponder the possible results to history and humanity, had the dagger of Jacques Clement entered the stomach of Henry *iv*. rather than of Henry *iii*. in the summer of 1589, or the perturbations in the world’s movements that might have puzzled philosophers had there been an unsuspected mass of religious conviction revolving unseen in the mental depths of the Bearnese. Conscience, as it has from time to time exhibited itself on this planet of ours, is a powerful agent in controlling political combinations; but the instances are unfortunately not rare, so far as sublunary progress is concerned, in which the absence of this dominant influence permits a prosperous rapidity to individual careers. Eternal honour to the noble beings, true chieftains among men, who have forfeited worldly power or sacrificed life itself at the dictate of religious or moral conviction—even should the basis of such conviction appear to some of us unsafe or unreal. Shame on the tongue which would malign or ridicule the martyr or the honest convert to any form of Christian faith! But who can discover aught that is inspiring to the sons of men in conversions—whether of princes or of peasants—wrought, not at risk of life and pelf, but for the sake of securing and increasing the one and the other?

Page 1942

Certainly the Bearnese was the most candid of men. It was this very candour, this freedom from bigotry, this want of conviction, and this openness to conviction, that made him so dangerous and caused so much anxiety to Philip. The Roman Church might or might not be strengthened by the re-conversion of the legitimate heir of France, but it was certain that the claims of Philip and the Infanta to the proprietorship of that kingdom would be weakened by the process. While the Spanish king knew himself to be inspired in all his actions by a single motive, the maintenance of the supremacy of the Roman Church, he was perfectly aware that the Prince of Bearne was not so single-hearted nor so conscientious as himself.

The Prince of Bearne—heretic, son of heretics, great chieftain of heretics—was supposed capable of becoming orthodox whenever the Pope would accept his conversion. Against this possibility Philip struggled with all his strength.

Since Pope Sixtus V., who had a weakness for Henry, there had been several popes. Urban *vii*., his immediate successor, had reigned but thirteen days. Gregory *xiv*. (Sfondrato) had died 15th October, 1591, ten months after his election. Fachinetti, with the title of Innocent *ix*., had reigned two months, from 29th October to 29th December, 1591. He died of “Spanish poison,” said Envoy Umton, as coolly as if speaking of gout, or typhus, or any other recognised disorder. Clement *viii*. (Aldobrandini) was elected 30th January, 1592. He was no lover of Henry, and lived in mortal fear of Philip, while it must be conceded that the Spanish ambassador at Rome was much given to brow-beating his Holiness. Should he dare to grant that absolution which was the secret object of the Bearnese, there was no vengeance, hinted the envoy, that Philip would not wreak on the holy father. He would cut off his supplies from Naples and Sicily, and starve him and all-his subjects; he would frustrate all his family schemes, he would renounce him, he would unpope him, he would do anything that man and despot could do, should the great shepherd dare to re-admit this lost sheep, and this very black sheep, into the fold of the faithful.

As for Henry himself, his game—for in his eyes it was nothing but a game—lay every day plainer and plainer before him. He was indispensable to the heretics. Neither England, nor Holland, nor Protestant Germany, could renounce him, even should he renounce “the religion.” Nor could the French Huguenots exist without that protection which, even although Catholic, he could still extend to them when he should be accepted as king by the Catholics.

Hereditary monarch by French law and history, released from his heresy by the authority that could bind and loose, purged as with hyssop and washed whiter than snow, it should go hard with him if Philip, and Farnese, and Mayenne, and all the pikemen and reiters they might muster, could keep him very long from the throne of his ancestors.

Page 1943

Nothing could match the ingenuousness with which he demanded the instruction whenever the fitting time for it should arrive; as if, instead of having been a professor both of the Calvinist and Catholic persuasion, and having relapsed from both, he had been some innocent Peruvian or Hindoo, who was invited to listen to preachings and to examine dogmas for the very first time in his life.

Yet Philip had good grounds for hoping a favourable result from his political and military manoeuvre. He entertained little doubt that France belonged to him or to his daughter; that the most powerful party in the country was in favour of his claims, provided he would pay the voters liberally enough for their support, and that if the worst came to the worst it would always be in his power to dismember the kingdom, and to reserve the lion's share for himself, while distributing some of the provinces to the most prominent of his confederates.

The sixteen tyrants of Paris had already, as we have seen, urged the crown upon him, provided he would establish in France the Inquisition, the council of Trent, and other acceptable institutions, besides distributing judiciously a good many lucrative offices among various classes of his adherents.

The Duke of Mayenne, in his own name and that of all the Catholics of France, formally demanded of him to maintain two armies, forty thousand men in all, to be respectively under command of the duke himself and of Alexander Farnese, and regularly to pay for them. These propositions, as has been seen, were carried into effect as nearly as possible, at enormous expense to Philip's exchequer, and he naturally expected as good faith on the part of Mayenne.

In the same paper in which the demand was made Philip was urged to declare himself king of France. He was assured that the measure could be accomplished "by freely bestowing marquisates, baronies, and peerages, in order to content the avarice and ambition of many persons, without at the same time dissipating the greatness from which all these members depended. Pepin and Charlemagne," said the memorialists, "who were foreigners and Saxons by nation, did as much in order to get possession of a kingdom to which they had no other right except that which they acquired there by their prudence and force, and after them Hugh Capet, much inferior to them in force and authority, following their example, had the same good fortune for himself and his posterity, and one which still endures.

"If the authority of the holy see could support the scheme at the same time," continued Mayenne and friends, "it would be a great help. But it being perilous to ask for that assistance before striking the blow, it would be better to obtain it after the execution."

That these wholesome opinions were not entirely original on the part of Mayenne, nor produced spontaneously, was plain from the secret instructions given by Philip to his envoys, Don Bernardino de Mendoza, John Baptist de Tassis, and the commander

Moreo, whom he had sent soon after the death of Henry *iii*. to confer with Cardinal Gaetano in Paris.

Page 1944

They were told, of course, to do everything in their power to prevent the election of the Prince of Bearne, “being as he was a heretic, obstinate and confirmed, who had sucked heresy with his mother’s milk.” The legate was warned that “if the Bearnese should make a show of converting himself, it would be frigid and fabricated.”

If they were asked whom Philip desired for king—a question which certainly seemed probable under the circumstances—they were to reply that his foremost wish was to establish the Catholic religion in the kingdom, and that whatever was most conducive to that end would be most agreeable to him. “As it is however desirable, in order to arrange matters, that you should be informed of everything,” said his Majesty, “it is proper that you should know that I have two kinds of right to all that there is over there. Firstly, because the crown of France has been usurped from me, my ancestors having been unjustly excluded by foreign occupation of it; and secondly, because I claim the same crown as first male of the house of Valois.”

Here certainly were comprehensive pretensions, and it was obvious that the king’s desire for the establishment of the Catholic religion must have been very lively to enable him to invent or accept such astonishing fictions.

But his own claims were but a portion of the case. His daughter and possible spouse had rights of her own, hard, in his opinion, to be gainsaid. “Over and above all this,” said Philip, “my eldest daughter, the Infanta, has two other rights; one to all the states which as dower-property are joined by matrimony and through females to this crown, which now come to her in direct line, and the other to the crown itself, which belongs directly to the said Infanta, the matter of the Salic law being a mere invention.”

Thus it would appear that Philip was the legitimate representative, not only of the ancient races of French monarchs—whether Merovingians, Carlovingians, or otherwise was not stated but also of the usurping houses themselves, by whose intrusion those earlier dynasties had been ejected, being the eldest male heir of the extinct line of Valois, while his daughter was, if possible, even more legitimately the sovereign and proprietor of France than he was himself.

Nevertheless in his magnanimous desire for the peace of the world and the advancement of the interests of the Church, he was, if reduced to extremities, willing to forego his own individual rights—when it should appear that they could by no possibility be enforced—in favour of his daughter and of the husband whom he should select for her.

“Thus it may be seen,” said the self-denying man, “that I know how, for the sake of the public repose, to strip myself of my private property.”

Page 1945

Afterwards, when secretly instructing the Duke of Feria, about to proceed to Paris for the sake of settling the sovereignty of the kingdom, he reviewed the whole subject, setting forth substantially the same intentions. That the Prince of Bearne could ever possibly succeed to the throne of his ancestors was an idea to be treated only with sublime scorn by all right-minded and sensible men. "The members of the House of Bourbon," said he, "pretend that by right of blood the crown belongs to them, and hence is derived the pretension made by the Prince of Bearne; but if there were wanting other very sufficient causes to prevent this claim—which however are not wanting—it is quite enough that he is a relapsed heretic, declared to be such by the Apostolic See, and pronounced incompetent, as well as the other members of his house, all of them, to say the least, encouragers of heresy; so that not one of them can ever be king of France, where there have been such religious princes in time past, who have justly merited the name of Most Christian; and so there is no possibility of permitting him or any of his house to aspire to the throne, or to have the subject even treated of in the estates. It should on the contrary be entirely excluded as prejudicial to the realm and unworthy to be even mentioned among persons so Catholic as those about to meet in that assembly."

The claims of the man whom his supporters already called Henry the Fourth of France being thus disposed of, Philip then again alluded with his usual minuteness to the various combinations which he had formed for the tranquillity and good government of that kingdom and of the other provinces of his world-empire.

It must moreover be never forgotten that what he said passed with his contemporaries almost for oracular dispensations. What he did or ordered to be done was like the achievements or behests of a superhuman being. Time, as it rolls by, leaves the wrecks of many a stranded reputation to bleach in the sunshine of after-ages. It is sometimes as profitable to learn what was not done by the great ones of the earth, in spite of all their efforts, as to ponder those actual deeds which are patent to mankind. The Past was once the Present, and once the Future, bright with rainbows or black with impending storm; for history is a continuous whole of which we see only fragments.

He who at the epoch with which we are now occupied was deemed greatest and wisest among the sons of earth, at whose threats men quailed, at whose vast and intricate schemes men gasped in palefaced awe, has left behind him the record of his interior being. Let us consider whether he was so potent as his fellow mortals believed, or whether his greatness was merely their littleness; whether it was carved out, of the inexhaustible but artificial quarry of human degradation. Let us see whether the execution was consonant with the inordinate plotting; whether the price in money and blood—and certainly few human beings have squandered so much of either as did Philip the Prudent in his long career—was high or low for the work achieved.

Page 1946

Were after generations to learn, only after curious research, of a pretender who once called himself, to the amusement of his contemporaries, Henry the Fourth of France; or was the world-empire for which so many armies were marshalled, so many ducats expended, so many falsehoods told, to prove a bubble after all? Time was to show. Meantime wise men of the day who, like the sages of every generation, read the future like a printed scroll, were pitying the delusion and rebuking the wickedness of Henry the Bearnese; persisting as he did in his cruel, sanguinary, hopeless attempt to establish a vanished and impossible authority over a land distracted by civil war.

Nothing could be calmer or more reasonable than the language of the great champion of the Inquisition.

“And as President Jeannin informs me,” he said, “that the Catholics have the intention of electing me king, that appearing to them the gentlest and safest method to smooth all rivalries likely to arise among the princes aspiring to the crown, I reply, as you will see by the copy herewith sent. You will observe that after not refusing myself to that which may be the will of our Lord, should there be no other mode of serving Him, above all I desire that which concerns my daughter, since to her belongs the kingdom. I desire nothing else nor anything for myself, nor for anybody else, except as a means for her to arrive at her right.”

He had taken particular pains to secure his daughter’s right in Brittany, while the Duchess of Mercoeur, by the secret orders of her husband, had sent a certain ecclesiastic to Spain to make over the sovereignty of this province to the Infanta. Philip directed that the utmost secrecy should be observed in regard to this transaction with the duke and duchess, and promised the duke, as his reward for these proposed services in dismembering his country, the government of the province for himself and his heirs.

For the king was quite determined—in case his efforts to obtain the crown for himself or for his daughter were unsuccessful—to dismember France, with the assistance of those eminent Frenchmen who were now so industriously aiding him in his projects.

“And in the third place,” said he, in his secret instructions to Feria, “if for the sins of all, we don’t manage to make any election, and if therefore the kingdom (of France) has to come to separation and to be divided into many hands; in this case we must propose to the Duke of Mayenne to assist him in getting possession of Normandy for himself, and as to the rest of the kingdom, I shall take for myself that which seems good to me—all of us assisting each other.”

But unfortunately it was difficult for any of these fellow-labourers to assist each other very thoroughly, while they detested each other so cordially and suspected each other with such good reason.

Moreo, Ybarra, Feria, Parma, all assured their master that Mayenne was taking Spanish money as fast as he could get it, but with the sole purpose of making himself king. As to any of the House of Lorraine obtaining the hand of the Infanta and the throne with it, Feria assured Philip that Mayenne “would sooner give the crown to the Grand Turk.”

Page 1947

Nevertheless Philip thought it necessary to continue making use of the duke. Both were indefatigable therefore in expressing feelings of boundless confidence each in the other.

It has been seen too how entirely the king relied on the genius and devotion of Alexander Farnese to carry out his great schemes; and certainly never had monarch a more faithful, unscrupulous, and dexterous servant. Remonstrating, advising, but still obeying—entirely without conscience, unless it were conscience to carry out his master's commands, even when most puerile or most diabolical—he was nevertheless the object of Philip's constant suspicion, and felt himself placed under perpetual though secret supervision.

Commander Moreo was unwearied in blackening the duke's character, and in maligning his every motive and action, and greedily did the king incline his ear to the calumnies steadily instilled by the chivalrous spy.

"He has caused all the evil we are suffering," said Moreo. "When he sent Egmont to France 'twas without infantry, although Egmont begged hard for it, as did likewise the Legate, Don Bernardino, and Tassis. Had he done this there is no doubt at all that the Catholic cause in France would have been safe, and your Majesty would now have the control over that kingdom which you desire. This is the opinion of friends and foes. I went to the Duke of Parma and made free to tell him that the whole world would blame him for the damage done to Christianity, since your Majesty had exonerated yourself by ordering him to go to the assistance of the French Catholics with all the zeal possible. Upon this he was so disgusted that he has never shown me a civil face since. I doubt whether he will send or go to France at all, and although the Duke of Mayenne despatches couriers every day with protestations and words that would soften rocks, I see no indications of a movement."

Thus, while the duke was making great military preparations far invading France without means; pawning his own property to get bread for his starving veterans, and hanging those veterans whom starving had made. mutinous, he was depicted, to the most suspicious and unforgiving mortal that ever wore a crown, as a traitor and a rebel, and this while he was renouncing his own judicious and well-considered policy in obedience to the wild schemes of his master.

"I must make bold to remind your Majesty," again whispered the spy, "that there never was an Italian prince who failed to pursue his own ends, and that there are few in the world that are not wishing to become greater than they are. This man here could strike a greater blow than all the rest of them put together. Remember that there is not a villain anywhere that does not desire the death of your Majesty. Believe me, and send to cut off my head if it shall be found that I am speaking from passion, or from other motive than pure zeal for your royal service."

The reader will remember into what a paroxysm of rage Alexander was thrown on, a former occasion, when secretly invited to listen to propositions by which the sovereignty over the Netherlands was to be secured to himself, and how near he was to inflicting mortal punishment with his own hand on the man who had ventured to broach that treasonable matter.

Page 1948

Such projects and propositions were ever floating, as it were, in the atmosphere, and it was impossible for the most just men to escape suspicion in the mind of a king who fed upon suspicion as his daily bread. Yet nothing could be fouler or falser than the calumny which described Alexander as unfaithful to Philip. Had he served his God as he served his master perhaps his record before the highest tribunal would have been a clearer one.

And in the same vein in which he wrote to the monarch in person did the crafty Moreo write to the principal secretary of state, Idiaquez, whose mind, as well as his master's, it was useful to poison, and who was in daily communication with Philip.

"Let us make sure of Flanders," said he, "otherwise we shall all of us be well cheated. I will tell you something of that which I have already told his Majesty, only not all, referring you to Tassis, who, as a personal witness to many things, will have it in his power to undeceive his Majesty, I have seen very clearly that the duke is disgusted with his Majesty, and one day he told me that he cared not if the whole world went to destruction, only not Flanders."

"Another day he told me that there was a report abroad that his Majesty was sending to arrest him, by means of the Duke of Pastrana, and looking at me he said: 'See here, seignior commander, no threats, as if it were in the power of mortal man to arrest me, much less of such fellows as these.'"

"But this is but a small part of what I could say," continued the detective knight-commander, "for I don't like to trust these ciphers. But be certain that nobody in Flanders wishes well to these estates or to the Catholic cause, and the associates of the Duke of Parma go about saying that it does not suit the Italian potentates to have his Majesty as great a monarch as he is trying to be."

This is but a sample of the dangerous stuff with which the royal mind was steadily drugged, day after day, by those to whom Farnese was especially enjoined to give his confidence.

Later on it will be seen how-much effect was thus produced both upon the king and upon the duke. Moreo, Mendoza, and Tasais were placed about the governor-general, nominally as his counsellors, in reality as police-officers.

"You are to confer regularly with Mendoza, Tassis, and Moreo," said Philip to Farnese.

"You are to assist, correspond, and harmonize in every way with the Duke of Parma," wrote Philip to Mendoza, Tassis, and Moreo. And thus cordially and harmoniously were the trio assisting and corresponding with the duke.

But Moreo was right in not wishing to trust the ciphers, and indeed he had trusted them too much, for Farnese was very well aware of his intrigues, and complained bitterly of them to the king and to Idiaquez.

Most eloquently and indignantly did he complain of the calumnies, ever renewing themselves, of which he was the subject. “’Tis this good Moreo who is the author of the last falsehoods,” said he to the secretary; “and this is but poor payment for my having neglected my family, my parents and children for so many years in the king’s service, and put my life ever on the hazard, that these fellows should be allowed to revile me and make game of me now, instead of assisting me.”

Page 1949

He was at that time, after almost superhuman exertions, engaged in the famous relief of Paris. He had gone there, he said, against his judgment and remonstrating with his Majesty on the insufficiency of men and money for such an enterprise. His army was half-mutinous and unprovided with food, artillery, or munitions; and then he found himself slandered, ridiculed, his life's life lied away. 'Twas poor payment for his services, he exclaimed, if his Majesty should give ear to these calumniators, and should give him no chance of confronting his accusers and clearing his reputation. Moreo detested him, as he knew, and Prince Doria said that the commander once spoke so ill of Farnese in Genoa that he was on the point of beating him; while Moreo afterwards told the story as if he had been maltreated because of defending Farnese against Doria's slanders.

And still more vehemently did he inveigh against Moreo in his direct appeals to Philip. He had intended to pass over his calumnies, of which he was well aware, because he did not care to trouble the dead—for Moreo meantime had suddenly died, and the gossips, of course, said it was of Farnese poison—but he had just discovered by documents that the commander had been steadily and constantly pouring these his calumnies into the monarch's ears. He denounced every charge as lies, and demanded proof. Moreo had further been endeavouring to prejudice the Duke of Mayenne against the King of Spain and himself, saying that he, Farnese, had been commissioned to take Mayenne into custody, with plenty of similar lies.

"But what I most feel," said Alexander, with honest wrath, "is to see that your Majesty gives ear to them without making the demonstration which my services merit, and has not sent to inform me of them, seeing that they may involve my reputation and honour. People have made more account of these calumnies than of my actions performed upon the theatre of the world. I complain, after all my toils and dangers in your Majesty's service, just when I stood with my soul in my mouth and death in my teeth, forgetting children, house, and friends, to be treated thus, instead of receiving rewards and honour, and being enabled to leave to my children, what was better than all the riches the royal hand could bestow, an unsullied and honourable name."

He protested that his reputation had so much suffered that he would prefer to retire to some remote corner as a humble servant of the king, and leave a post which had made him so odious to all. Above all, he entreated his Majesty to look upon this whole affair "not only like a king but like a gentleman."

Philip answered these complaints and reproaches benignantly, expressed unbounded confidence in the duke, assured him that the calumnies of his supposed enemies could produce no effect upon the royal mind, and coolly professed to have entirely forgotten having received any such letter as that of which his nephew complained. "At any rate I have mislaid it," he said, "so that you see how much account it was with me."

Page 1950

As the king was in the habit of receiving such letters every week, not only from the commander, since deceased, but from Ybarra and others, his memory, to say the least, seemed to have grown remarkably feeble. But the sequel will very soon show that he had kept the letters by him and pondered them to much purpose. To expect frankness and sincerity from him, however, even in his most intimate communications to his most trusted servants, would have been to "swim with fins of lead."

Such being the private relations between the conspirators, it is instructive to observe how they dealt with each other in the great game they were playing for the first throne in Christendom. The military events have been sufficiently sketched in the preceding pages, but the meaning and motives of public affairs can be best understood by occasional glances behind the scenes. It is well for those who would maintain their faith in popular Governments to study the workings of the secret, irresponsible, arbitrary system; for every Government, as every individual, must be judged at last by those moral laws which no man born of woman can evade.

During the first French expedition-in the course of which Farnese had saved Paris from falling into, the hands of Henry, and had been doing his best to convert it prospectively into the capital of his master's empire—it was his duty, of course, to represent as accurately as possible the true state of France. He submitted his actions to his master's will, but he never withheld from him the advantage that he might have derived, had he so chosen, from his nephew's luminous intelligence and patient observation.

With the chief personage he had to deal with he professed himself, at first, well satisfied. "The Duke of Mayenne," said he to Philip, "persists in desiring your Majesty only as King of France, and will hear of no other candidate, which gives me satisfaction such as can't be exaggerated." Although there were difficulties in the way, Farnese thought that the two together with God's help might conquer them. "Certainly it is not impossible that your Majesty may succeed," he said, "although very problematical; and in case your Majesty does succeed in that which we all desire and are struggling for, Mayenne not only demands the second place in the kingdom for himself, but the fief of some great province for his family."

Should it not be possible for Philip to obtain the crown, Farnese was, on the whole, of opinion that Mayenne had better be elected. In that event he would make over Brittany and Burgundy to Philip, together with the cities opposite the English coast. If they were obliged to make the duke king, as was to be feared, they should at any rate exclude the Prince of Bearne, and secure, what was the chief point, the Catholic religion. "This," said Alexander, "is about what I can gather of Mayenne's views, and perhaps he will put them down in a despatch to your Majesty."

Page 1951

After all, the duke was explicit enough. He was for taking all he could get—the whole kingdom if possible—but if foiled, then as large a slice of it as Philip would give him as the price of his services. And Philip's ideas were not materially different from those of the other conspirator.

Both were agreed on one thing. The true heir must be kept out of his rights, and the Catholic religion be maintained in its purity. As to the inclination of the majority of the inhabitants, they could hardly be in the dark. They knew that the Bearnese was instinctively demanded by the nation; for his accession to the throne would furnish the only possible solution to the entanglements which had so long existed.

As to the true sentiments of the other politicians and soldiers of the League with whom Bearnese came in contact in France, he did not disguise from his master that they were anything but favourable.

"That you may know, the, humour of this kingdom," said he, "and the difficulties in which I am placed, I must tell you that I am by large experience much confirmed in that which I have always suspected. Men don't love nor esteem the royal name of your Majesty, and whatever the benefits and assistance they get from you they have no idea of anything redounding to your benefit and royal service, except so far as implied in maintaining the Catholic religion and keeping out the Bearne. These two things, however, they hold to be so entirely to your Majesty's profit, that all you are doing appears the fulfilment of a simple obligation. They are filled with fear, jealousy, and suspicion of your Majesty. They dread your acquiring power here. Whatever negotiations they pretend in regard to putting the kingdom or any of their cities under your protection, they have never had any real intention of doing it, but their only object is to keep up our vain hopes while they are carrying out their own ends. If to-day they seem to have agreed upon any measure, tomorrow they are sure to get out of it again. This has always been the case, and all your Majesty's ministers that have had dealings here would say so, if they chose to tell the truth. Men are disgusted with the entrance of the army, and if they were not expecting a more advantageous peace in the kingdom with my assistance than without it, I don't know what they would do; for I have heard what I have heard and seen what I have seen. They are afraid of our army, but they want its assistance and our money."

Certainly if Philip desired enlightenment as to the real condition of the country he had determined to, appropriate; and the true sentiments of its most influential inhabitants, here, was the man most competent of all the world to advise him; describing the situation for him, day by day, in the most faithful manner. And at every, step the absolutely puerile inadequacy of the means, employed by the king to accomplish his gigantic purposes became apparent. If the crime

Page 1952

of subjugating or at least dismembering the great kingdom of France were to, be attempted with any hope of success, at least it might have been expected that the man employed to consummate the deed would be furnished with more troops and money than would be required to appropriate a savage island off the Caribbean, or a German. principality. But Philip expected miracles to be accomplished by the mere private assertion of his will. It was so easy to conquer realms the writing table.

“I don’t say,” continued Farnese, “if I could have entered France with a competent army, well paid and disciplined, with plenty of artillery, and munitions, and with funds enough to enable Mayenne to buy up the nobles of his party, and to conciliate the leaders generally with presents and promises, that perhaps they might not have softened. Perhaps interest and fear would have made that name agreeable which pleases them so little, now that the very reverse of all this has occurred. My want of means is causing a thousand disgusts among the natives of the country, and it is this penury that will be the chief cause of the disasters which may occur.”

Here was sufficiently plain speaking. To conquer a war-like nation without an army; to purchase a rapacious nobility with an empty purse, were tasks which might break the stoutest heart. They were breaking Alexander’s.

Yet Philip had funds enough, if he had possessed financial ability himself, or any talent for selecting good financiers. The richest countries of the old world and the new were under his sceptre; the mines of Peru and Mexico; the wealth of farthest Ind, were at his disposition; and moreover he drove a lucrative traffic in the sale of papal bulls and massbooks, which were furnished to him at a very low figure, and which he compelled the wild Indians of America and the savages of the Pacific to purchase of him at an enormous advance. That very year, a Spanish carrack had been captured by the English off the Barbary coast, with an assorted cargo, the miscellaneous nature of which gives an idea of royal commercial pursuits at that period. Besides wine in large quantities there were fourteen hundred chests of quicksilver, an article indispensable to the working of the silver mines, and which no one but the king could, upon pain of death, send to America. He received, according to contract; for every pound of quicksilver thus delivered a pound of pure silver, weight for weight. The ship likewise contained ten cases of gilded mass-books and papal bulls. The bulls, two million and seventy thousand in number, for the dead and the living, were intended for the provinces of New Spain, Yucatan, Guatemala, Honduras, and the Philippines. The quicksilver and the bulls cost the king three hundred thousand florins, but he sold them for five million. The .price at, which the bulls were to be sold varied-according to the letters of advice found in the ships—from two to four reals a piece, and the inhabitants of those conquered regions were obliged to buy them. “From all this,” says a contemporary chronicler; “is to be seen what a thrifty trader was the king.”

Page 1953

The affairs of France were in such confusion that it was impossible for them, according to Farnese, to remain in such condition much longer without bringing about entire decomposition. Every man was doing as he chose—whether governor of a city, commander of a district, or gentleman in his castle. Many important nobles and prelates followed the Bearnese party, and Mayenne was entitled to credit for doing as well as he did. There was no pretence, however, that his creditable conduct was due to anything but the hope of being well paid. "If your Majesty should decide to keep Mayenne," said Alexander, "you can only do it with large: sums of money. He is a good Catholic and very firm in his purpose, but is so much opposed by his own party, that if I had not so stimulated him by hopes of his own grandeur, he would have grown desperate—such small means has he of maintaining his party—and, it is to be feared, he would have made arrangements with Bearne, who offers him carte-blanche."

The disinterested man had expressed his assent to the views of Philip in regard to the assembly of the estates and the election of king, but had claimed the sum of six hundred thousand dollars as absolutely necessary to the support of himself and followers until those events should occur. Alexander not having that sum at his disposal was inclined to defer matters, but was more and more confirmed in his opinion that the Duke was a "man of truth, faith, and his word." He had distinctly agreed that no king should be elected, not satisfactory to Philip, and had "stipulated in return that he should have in this case, not only the second place in the kingdom, but some very great and special reward in full property."

Thus the man of truth, faith, and his word had no idea of selling himself cheap, but manifested as much commercial genius as the Fuggers themselves could have displayed, had they been employed as brokers in these mercantile transactions.

Above all things, Alexander implored the king to be expeditious, resolute, and liberal; for, after all, the Bearnese might prove a more formidable competitor than he was deemed. "These matters must be arranged while the iron is hot," he said, "in order that the name and memory of the Bearne and of all his family may be excluded at once and forever; for your Majesty must not doubt that the whole kingdom inclines to him, both because he is natural successor, to the crowns and because in this way the civil war would cease. The only thing that gives trouble is the religions defect, so that if this should be remedied in appearance, even if falsely, men would spare no pains nor expense in his cause."

Page 1954

No human being at that moment, assuredly, could look into the immediate future accurately enough to see whether the name and memory of the man, whom his adherents called Henry the Fourth of France, and whom Spaniards, legitimists and enthusiastic papists, called the Prince of Bearne, were to be for ever excluded from the archives of France; whether Henry, after spending the whole of his life as a pretender, was destined to bequeath the same empty part to his descendants, should they think it worth their while to play it. Meantime the sages smiled superior at his delusion; while Alexander Farnese, on the contrary, better understanding the chances of the great game which they were all playing, made bold to tell his master that all hearts in France were inclining to their natural lord. “Differing from your Majesty,” said he, “I am of opinion that there is no better means of excluding him than to make choice of the Duke of Mayenne, as a person agreeable to the people, and who could only reign by your permission and support.”

Thus, after much hesitation and circumlocution, the nephew made up his mind to chill his uncle’s hopes of the crown, and to speak a decided opinion in behalf of the man of his word, faith and truth.

And thus through the whole of the two memorable campaigns made by Alexander in France, he never failed to give his master the most accurate pictures of the country, and an interior view of its politics; urging above all the absolute necessity of providing much more liberal supplies for the colossal adventure in which he was engaged. “Money and again money is what is required,” he said. “The principal matter is to be accomplished with money, and the particular individuals must be bought with money. The good will of every French city must be bought with money. Mayenne must be humoured. He is getting dissatisfied. Very probably he is intriguing with Bearne. Everybody is pursuing his private ends. Mayenne has never abandoned his own wish to be king, although he sees the difficulties in the way; and while he has not the power to do us as much good as is thought, it is certainly in his hands to do us a great deal of injury.”

When his army was rapidly diminishing by disease, desertion, mutiny, and death, he vehemently and perpetually denounced the utter inadequacy of the king’s means to his vast projects. He protested that he was not to blame for the ruin likely to come upon the whole enterprise. He had besought, remonstrated, reasoned with Philip—in vain. He assured his master that in the condition of weakness in which they found themselves, not very triumphant negotiations could be expected, but that he would do his best. “The Frenchmen,” he said, “are getting tired of our disorders, and scandalized by our weakness, misery, and poverty. They disbelieve the possibility of being liberated through us.”

Page 1955

He was also most diligent in setting before the king's eyes the dangerous condition of the obedient Netherlands, the poverty of the finances, the mutinous degeneration of the once magnificent Spanish army, the misery of the country, the ruin of the people, the discontent of the nobles, the rapid strides made by the republic, the vast improvement in its military organization, the rising fame of its young stadholder, the thrift of its exchequer, the rapid development of its commerce, the menacing aspect which it assumed towards all that was left of Spanish power in those regions.

Moreover, in the midst of the toils and anxieties of war-making and negotiation, he had found time to discover and to send to his master the left leg of the glorious apostle St. Philip, and the head of the glorious martyr St. Lawrence, to enrich his collection of relics; and it may be doubted whether these treasures were not as welcome to the king as would have been the news of a decisive victory.

During the absence of Farnese in his expeditions against the Bearnese, the government of his provinces was temporarily in the hands of Peter Ernest Mansfeld.

This grizzled old fighter—testy, choleric, superannuated—was utterly incompetent for his post. He was a mere tool in the hands of his son. Count Charles hated Parma very cordially, and old Count Peter was made to believe himself in danger of being poisoned or poniarded by the duke. He was perpetually wrangling with, importuning and insulting him in consequence, and writing malicious letters to the king in regard to him. The great nobles, Arschot, Chimay, Berlaymont, Champagny, Arenberg, and the rest, were all bickering among themselves, and agreeing in nothing save in hatred to Farnese.

A tight rein, a full exchequer, a well-ordered and well-paid army, and his own constant patience, were necessary, as Alexander too well knew, to make head against the republic, and to hold what was left of the Netherlands. But with a monthly allowance, and a military force not equal to his own estimates for the Netherland work, he was ordered to go forth from the Netherlands to conquer France—and with it the dominion of the world—for the recluse of the Escorial.

Very soon it was his duty to lay bare to his master, still more unequivocally than ever, the real heart of Mayenne. No one could surpass Alexander in this skilful vivisection of political characters; and he soon sent the information that the Duke was in reality very near closing his bargain with the Bearnese, while amusing Philip and drawing largely from his funds.

Page 1956

Thus, while faithfully doing his master's work with sword and pen, with an adroitness such as no other man could have matched, it was a necessary consequence that Philip should suspect, should detest, should resolve to sacrifice him. While assuring his nephew, as we have seen, that elaborate, slanderous reports and protocols concerning him, sent with such regularity by the chivalrous Moreo and the other spies, had been totally disregarded, even if they had ever met his eye, he was quietly preparing—in the midst of all these most strenuous efforts of Alexander, in the field at peril of his life, in the cabinet at the risk of his soul—to deprive him of his office, and to bring him, by stratagem if possible, but otherwise by main force, from the Netherlands to Spain.

This project, once-resolved upon, the king proceeded to execute with that elaborate attention to detail, with that feline stealth which distinguished him above all kings or chiefs of police that have ever existed. Had there been a murder at the end of the plot, as perhaps there was to be—Philip could not have enjoyed himself more. Nothing surpassed the industry for mischief of this royal invalid.

The first thing to be done was of course the inditing of a most affectionate epistle to his nephew.

"Nephew," said he, "you know the confidence which I have always placed in you and all that I have put in your hands, and I know how much you are to me, and how earnestly you work in my service, and so, if I could have you at the same time in several places, it would be a great relief to me. Since this cannot be however, I wish to make use of your assistance, according to the times and occasions, in order that I may have some certainty as to the manner in which all this business is to be managed, may see why the settlement of affairs in France is thus delayed, and what the state of things in Christendom generally is, and may consult with, you about an army which I am getting levied here, and about certain schemes now on foot in regard to the remedy for all this; all which makes me desire your presence here for some time, even if a short time, in order to resolve upon and arrange with the aid of your advice and opinion, many affairs concerning the public good and facilitate their execution by means of your encouragement and presence, and to obtain the repose which I hope for in putting them into your hands. And so I charge and command you that, if you desire to content me, you use all possible diligence to let me see you here as soon as possible, and that you start at once for Genoa."

He was further directed to leave Count Mansfeld at the head of affairs during this temporary absence, as had been the case so often before, instructing him to make use of the Marquis of Cerralbo, who was already there, to lighten labours that might prove too much for a man of Mansfeld's advanced age.

"I am writing to the marquis," continued the king, "telling him that he is to obey all your orders. As to the reasons of your going away, you will give out that it is a decision of

your own, founded on good cause, or that it is a summons of mine, but full of confidence and good will towards you, as you see that it is."

Page 1957

The date of this letter was 20th February, 1592.

The secret instructions to the man who was thus to obey all the duke's orders were explicit enough upon that point, although they were wrapped in the usual closely-twisted phraseology which distinguished Philip's style when his purpose was most direct.

Cerralbo was entrusted with general directions as to the French matter, and as to peace negotiations with "the Islands;" but the main purport of his mission was to remove Alexander Farnese. This was to be done by fair means, if possible; if not, he was to be deposed and sent home by force.

This was to be the reward of all the toil and danger through which he had grown grey and broken in the king's service.

"When you get to the Netherlands" (for the instructions were older than the letter to Alexander just cited), "you are," said the king, "to treat of the other two matters until the exact time arrives for the third, taking good care not to, cut the thread of good progress in the affairs of France if by chance they are going on well there.

"When the time arrives to treat of commission number three," continued his Majesty, "you will take occasion of the arrival of the courier of 20th February, and will give with much secrecy the letter of that date to the duke; showing him at the same time the first of the two which you will have received."

If the duke showed the letter addressed to him by his uncle—which the reader has already seen—then the marquis was to discuss with him the details of the journey, and comment upon the benefits and increased reputation which would be the result of his return to Spain.

"But if the duke should not show you the letter," proceeded Philip, "and you suspect that he means to conceal and equivocate about the particulars of it, you can show him your letter number two, in which it is stated that you have received a copy of the letter to the duke. This will make the step easier."

Should the duke declare himself ready to proceed to Spain on the ground indicated—-that the king had need of his services—the marquis was then to hasten his departure as earnestly as possible. Every pains were to be taken to overcome any objections that might be made by the duke on the score of ill health, while the great credit which attached to this summons to consult with the king in such arduous affairs was to be duly enlarged upon. Should Count Mansfeld meantime die of old age, and should Farnese insist the more vehemently, on that account, upon leaving his son the Prince Ranuccio in his post as governor, the marquis was authorised to accept the proposition for the moment—although secretly instructed that such an appointment was really quite out of the question—if by so doing the father could be torn from the place immediately.

But if all would not do, and if it should become certain that the duke would definitively refuse to take his departure, it would then become necessary to tell him clearly, but secretly, that no excuse would be accepted, but that go he must; and that if he did not depart voluntarily within a fixed time, he would be publicly deprived of office and conducted to Spain by force.

Page 1958

But all these things were to be managed with the secrecy and mystery so dear to the heart of Philip. The marquis was instructed to go first to the castle of Antwerp, as if upon financial business, and there begin his operations. Should he find at last all his private negotiations and coaxings of no avail, he was then to make use of his secret letters from the king to the army commanders, the leading nobles of the country, and of the neighbouring princes, all of whom were to be undeceived in regard to the duke, and to be informed of the will of his majesty.

The real successor of Farnese was to be the Archduke Albert, Cardinal of Austria, son of Archduke Ferdinand, and the letters on this subject were to be sent by a “decent and confidential person” so soon as it should become obvious that force would be necessary in order to compel the departure of Alexander. For if it came to open rupture, it would be necessary to have the cardinal ready to take the place. If the affair were arranged amicably, then the new governor might proceed more at leisure. The marquis was especially enjoined, in case the duke should be in France, and even if it should be necessary for him to follow him there on account of commissions number one and two, not to say a word to him then of his recall, for fear of damaging matters in that kingdom. He was to do his best to induce him to return to Flanders, and when they were both there, he was to begin his operations.

Thus, with minute and artistic treachery, did Philip provide for the disgrace and ruin of the man who was his near blood relation, and who had served him most faithfully from earliest youth. It was not possible to carry out the project immediately, for, as it has already been narrated, Farnese, after achieving, in spite of great obstacles due to the dulness of the king alone, an extraordinary triumph, had been dangerously wounded, and was unable for a brief interval to attend to public affairs.

On the conclusion of his Rouen campaign he had returned to the Netherlands, almost immediately betaking himself to the waters of Spa. The Marquis de Cerralbo meanwhile had been superseded in his important secret mission by the Count of Fuentes, who received the same instructions as had been provided for the marquis.

But ere long it seemed to become unnecessary to push matters to extremities. Farnese, although nominally the governor, felt himself unequal to take the field against the vigorous young commander who was carrying everything before him in the north and east. Upon the Mansfelds was the responsibility for saving Steenwyk and Coeworden, and to the Mansfelds did Verdugo send piteously, but in vain, for efficient help. For the Mansfelds and other leading personages in the obedient Netherlands were mainly occupied at that time in annoying Farnese, calumniating his actions, laying obstacles in the way of his administration, military and civil, and bringing him into contempt with the populace.

Page 1959

When the weary soldier—broken in health, wounded and harassed with obtaining triumphs for his master such as no other living man could have gained with the means placed at his disposal—returned to drink the waters, previously to setting forth anew upon the task of achieving the impossible, he was made the mark of petty insults on the part of both the Mansfelds. Neither of them paid their respects to him; ill as he was, until four days after his arrival. When the duke subsequently called a council; Count Peter refused to attend it on account of having slept ill the night before. Champagny; who was one of, the chief mischief-makers, had been banished by Parma to his house in Burgundy. He became very much alarmed, and was afraid of losing his head. He tried to conciliate the duke, but finding it difficult he resolved to turn monk, and so went to the convent of Capuchins, and begged hard to be admitted a member. They refused him on account of his age and infirmities. He tried a Franciscan monastery with not much better success, and then obeyed orders and went to his Burgundy mansion; having been assured by Farnese that he was not to lose his head. Alexander was satisfied with that arrangement, feeling sure, he said, that so soon as his back was turned Champagny would come out of his convent before the term of probation had expired, and begin to make mischief again. A once valiant soldier, like Champagny, whose conduct in the famous “fury of Antwerp” was so memorable; and whose services both in field and-cabinet had, been so distinguished, fallen so low as to, be used as a tool by the Mansfelds against a man like Farnese; and to be rejected as unfit company by Flemish friars, is not a cheerful spectacle to contemplate.

The walls of the Mansfeld house and gardens, too, were decorated by Count Charles with caricatures, intending to illustrate the indignities put upon his father: and himself.

Among others, one picture represented Count Peter lying tied hand and foot, while people were throwing filth upon him; Count Charles being pourtrayed as meantime being kicked away from the command of a battery of cannon by, De la Motte. It seemed strange that the Mansfelds should, make themselves thus elaborately ridiculous, in order to irritate Farnese; but thus it was. There was so much stir, about these works of art that Alexander transmitted copies of them to the king, whereupon Charles Mansfeld, being somewhat alarmed, endeavoured to prove that they had been entirely misunderstood. The venerable personage lying on the ground, he explained, was not his father, but Socrates. He found it difficult however to account for the appearance of La Motte, with his one arm wanting and with artillery by his side, because, as Farnese justly remarked, artillery had not been invented in the time of Socrates, nor was it recorded that the sage had lost an arm.

Page 1960

Thus passed the autumn of 1592, and Alexander, having as he supposed somewhat recruited his failing strength, prepared, according to his master's orders for a new campaign in France. For with almost preterhuman malice Philip was employing the man whom he had doomed to disgrace, perhaps to death, and whom he kept under constant secret supervision, in those laborious efforts to conquer without an army and to purchase a kingdom with an empty purse, in which, as it was destined, the very last sands of Parma's life were to run away.

Suffering from a badly healed wound, from water on the chest, degeneration of the heart, and gout in the limbs, dropsical, enfeebled, broken down into an old man before his time, Alexander still confronted disease and death with as heroic a front as he had ever manifested in the field to embattled Hollanders and Englishmen, or to the still more formidable array of learned pedants and diplomatists in the hall of negotiation. This wreck of a man was still fitter to lead armies and guide councils than any soldier or statesman that Philip could call into his service, yet the king's cruel hand was ready to stab the dying man in the dark.

Nothing could surpass the spirit with which the soldier was ready to do battle with his best friend, coming in the guise of an enemy. To the last moment, lifted into the saddle, he attended personally as usual to the details of his new campaign, and was dead before he would confess himself mortal. On the 3rd of December, 1592, in the city of Arran, he fainted after retiring at his usual hour to bed, and thus breathed his last.

According to the instructions in his last will, he was laid out barefoot in the robe and cowl of a Capuchin monk. Subsequently his remains were taken to Parma, and buried under the pavement of the little Franciscan church. A pompous funeral, in which the Italians and Spaniards quarrelled and came to blows for precedence, was celebrated in Brussels, and a statue of the hero was erected in the capitol at Rome.

The first soldier and most unscrupulous diplomatist of his age, he died when scarcely past his prime, a wearied; broken-hearted old man. His triumphs, military and civil, have been recorded in these pages, and his character has been elaborately pourtrayed. Were it possible to conceive of an Italian or Spaniard of illustrious birth in the sixteenth century, educated in the school of Machiavelli, at the feet of Philip, as anything but the supple slave of a master and the blind instrument of a Church, one might for a moment regret that so many gifts of genius and valour had been thrown away or at least lost to mankind. Could the light of truth ever pierce the atmosphere in which such men have their being; could the sad music of humanity ever penetrate to their ears; could visions of a world—on this earth or beyond it—not exclusively the property of kings and high-priests be revealed to them, one might lament that one so eminent among the sons of women had not been a great man. But it is a weakness to hanker for any possible connection between truth and Italian or Spanish statecraft of that day. The truth was not in it nor in him, and high above his heroic achievements, his

fortitude, his sagacity, his chivalrous self-sacrifice, shines forth the baleful light of his perpetual falsehood.

Page 1961

[I pass over, as beneath the level of history, a great variety of censorious and probably calumnious reports as to the private character of Farnese, with which the secret archives of the times are filled. Especially Champagny, the man by whom the duke was most hated and feared, made himself busy in compiling the slanderous chronicle in which the enemies of Farnese, both in Spain and the Netherlands, took so much delight. According to the secret history thus prepared for the enlightenment of the king and his ministers, the whole administration of the Netherlands—especially the financial department, with the distribution of offices—was in the hands of two favourites, a beardless secretary named Cosmo e Massi, and a lady of easy virtue called Franceline, who seems to have had a numerous host of relatives and friends to provide for at the public expense. Towards the latter end of the duke's life, it was even said that the seal of the finance department was in the hands of his valet-de-chambre, who, in his master's frequent absences, was in the habit of issuing drafts upon the receiver-general. As the valet- dechambre was described as an idiot who did not know how to read, it may be believed that the finances fell into confusion. Certainly, if such statements were to be accepted, it would be natural enough that for every million dollars expended by the king in the provinces, not more than one hundred thousand were laid out for the public service; and this is the estimate made by Champagny, who, as a distinguished financier and once chief of the treasury in the provinces, might certainly be thought to know something of the subject. But Champagny was beside himself with rage, hatred.]

CHAPTER XXIX.

Effect of the death of Farnese upon Philip's schemes—Priestly flattery and counsel—-Assembly of the States-General of France— Meeting of the Leaguers at the Louvre—-Conference at Surene between the chiefs of the League and the "political" leaders—-Henry convokes an assembly of bishops, theologians, and others—Strong feeling on all sides on the subject of the succession—Philip commands that the Infanta and the Duke of Guise be elected King and Queen of France— Manifesto of the Duke of Mayenne—-Formal re-admission of Henry to the Roman faith—The pope refuses to consent to his reconciliation with the Church—His consecration with the sacred oil—Entry of the king into Paris—Departure of the Spanish garrison from the capital —Dissimulation of the Duke of Mayenne—He makes terms with Henry— Grief of Queen Elizabeth on receipt of the communications from France.

During the past quarter of a century there had been tragic scenes enough in France, but now the only man who could have conducted Philip's schemes to a tragic if not a successful issue was gone. Friendly death had been swifter than Philip, and had removed Alexander from the scene before his master had found

Page 1962

fitting opportunity to inflict the disgrace on which he was resolved. Meantime, Charles Mansfeld made a feeble attempt to lead an army from the Netherlands into France, to support the sinking fortunes of the League; but it was not for that general-of-artillery to attempt the well-graced part of the all-accomplished Farnese with much hope of success. A considerable force of Spanish infantry, too, had been sent to Paris, where they had been received with much enthusiasm; a very violent and determined churchman, Sega, archbishop of Piacenza, and cardinal-legate, having arrived to check on the part of the holy father any attempt by the great wavering heretic to get himself readmitted into the fold of the faithful.

The King of Spain considered it his duty, as well as his unquestionable right, to interfere in the affairs of France, and to save the cause of religion, civilization and humanity, in the manner so dear to the civilization-savers, by reducing that distracted country—-utterly unable to govern itself—under his sceptre. To achieve this noble end no bribery was too wholesale, no violence too brutal, no intrigue too paltry. It was his sacred and special mission to save France from herself. If he should fail, he could at least carve her in pieces, and distribute her among himself and friends. Frenchmen might assist him in either of these arrangements, but it was absurd to doubt that on him devolved the work and the responsibility. Yet among his advisers were some who doubted whether the purchase of the grandees of France was really the most judicious course to pursue. There was a general and uneasy feeling that the grandees were making sport of the Spanish monarch, and that they would be inclined to remain his stipendiaries for an indefinite period, without doing their share of the work. A keen Jesuit, who had been much in France, often whispered to Philip that he was going astray. “Those who best understand the fit remedy for this unfortunate kingdom, and know the tastes and temper of the nation,” said he, “doubt giving these vast presents and rewards in order that the nobles of France may affect your cause and further your schemes. It is the greatest delusion, because they love nothing but their own interest, and for this reason wish for no king at all, but prefer that the kingdom should remain topsy-turvy in order that they may enjoy the Spanish doubloons, as they say themselves almost publicly, dancing and feasting; that they may take a castle to-day, and to-morrow a city, and the day, after a province, and so on indefinitely. What matters it to them that blood flows, and that the miserable people are destroyed, who alone are good for anything?”

Page 1963

“The immediate cause of the ruin of France,” continued the Jesuit, “comes from two roots which must be torn up; the one is the extreme ignorance and scandalous life of the ecclesiastics, the other is the tyranny and the abominable life of the nobility, who with sacrilege and insatiable avarice have entered upon the property of the Church. This nobility is divided into three factions. The first, and not the least, is heretic; the second and the most pernicious is politic or atheist; the third and last is catholic. All these, although they differ in opinion, are the same thing in corruption of life and manners, so that there is no choice among them.” He then proceeded to set forth how entirely, the salvation of France depended on the King of Spain. “Morally speaking,” he said, “it is impossible for any Frenchman to apply the remedy. For this two things are wanting; intense zeal for the honour of God, and power. I ask now what Frenchman: has both these, or either of them. No one certainly that we know. It is the King of Spain who alone in the world has the zeal and the power. No man who knows the insolence and arrogance of the French nature will believe that even if a king should be elected out of France he would be obeyed by the others. The first to oppose him would be Mayenne; even if a king were chosen from his family, unless everything should be given him that he asked; which would be impossible.”

Thus did the wily Priest instil into the ready ears of Philip additional reasons for believing himself the incarnate providence of God. When were priestly flatterers ever wanting to pour this poison into the souls of tyrants? It is in vain for us to ask why it is permitted that so much power for evil should be within the grasp of one wretched human creature, but it is at least always instructive to ponder the career of these crowned conspirators, and sometimes consoling to find its conclusion different from the goal intended. So the Jesuit advised the king not to be throwing away his money upon particular individuals, but with the funds which they were so unprofitably consuming to form a jolly army (’gallardo egercito’) of fifteen thousand foot, and five thousand-horse, all Spaniards, under a Spanish general—not a Frenchman being admitted into it—and then to march forward, occupy all the chief towns, putting Spanish garrisons into them, but sparing the people, who now considered the war eternal, and who were eaten up by both armies. In a short time the king might accomplish all he wished, for it was not in the power of the Bearnese to make considerable resistance for any length of time.

This was the plan of Father Odo for putting Philip on the throne of France, and at the same time lifting up the downtrodden Church, whose priests, according to his statement, were so profligate, and whose tenets were rejected by all but a small minority of the governing classes of the country. Certainly it did not lack precision, but it remained to be seen whether the Bearnese was to prove so very insignificant an antagonist as the sanguine priest supposed.

Page 1964

For the third party—the moderate Catholics—had been making immense progress in France, while the diplomacy of Philip had thus far steadily counteracted their efforts at Rome. In vain had the Marquis Pisani, envoy of the politicians' party, endeavoured to soften the heart of Clement towards Henry. The pope lived in mortal fear of Spain, and the Duke of Sessa, Philip's ambassador to the holy see, denouncing all these attempts on the part of the heretic, and his friends, and urging that it was much better for Rome that the pernicious kingdom of France should be dismembered and subdivided, assured his holiness that Rome should be starved, occupied, annihilated, if such abominable schemes should be for an instant favoured.

Clement took to his bed with sickness brought on by all this violence, but had nothing for it but to meet Pisani and other agents of the same cause with a peremptory denial, and send most, stringent messages to his legate in Paris, who needed no prompting.

There had already been much issuing of bulls by the pope, and much burning of bulls by the hangman, according to decrees of the parliament of Chalons and other friendly tribunals, and burning of Chalons decrees by Paris hangmen, and edicts in favour of Protestants at Nantz and other places—measures the enactment, repeal, and reenactment of which were to mark the ebb and flow of the great tide of human opinion on the most important of subjects, and the traces of which were to be for a long time visible on the shores of time.

Early in 1593 Mayenne, yielding to the pressure of the Spanish party, reluctantly consented to assemble the States-General of France, in order that a king might be chosen. The duke, who came to be thoroughly known to Alexander Farnese before the death of that subtle Italian, relied on his capacity to outwit all the other champions of the League and agents of Philip now that the master-spirit had been removed. As firmly opposed as ever to the election of any other candidate but himself, or possibly his son, according to a secret proposition which he had lately made to the pope, he felt himself obliged to confront the army of Spanish diplomatists, Roman prelates, and learned doctors, by whom it was proposed to exclude the Prince of Bearne from his pretended rights. But he did not, after all, deceive them as thoroughly as he imagined. The Spaniards shrewdly suspected the French tactics, and the whole business was but a round game of deception, in which no one was much deceived, who ever might be destined ultimately, to pocket the stakes: "I know from a very good source," said Fuentes, "that Mayenne, Guise, and the rest of them are struggling hard in order not to submit to Bearne, and will suffer everything your Majesty may do to them, even if you kick them in the mouth, but still there is no conclusion on the road we are travelling, at least not the one which your Majesty desires. They will go on procrastinating and gaining time, making authority for themselves out of your Majesty's grandeur, until the condition of things comes which they are desiring. Feria tells me that they are still taking your Majesty's money, but I warn your Majesty that it is only to fight off Bearne, and that they are only pursuing their own ends at your Majesty's expense."

Page 1965

Perhaps Mayenne had already a sufficiently clear insight into the not far-distant future, but he still presented himself in Spanish cloak and most ultramontane physiognomy. His pockets were indeed full of Spanish coin at that moment, for he had just claimed and received eighty-eight thousand-nine hundred dollars for back debts, together with one hundred and eighty, thousand dollars more to distribute among the deputies of the estates. “All I can say about France,” said Fuentes, “is that it is one great thirst for money. The Duke of Feria believes in a good result, but I think that Mayenne is only trying to pocket as much money as he can.”

Thus fortified, the Duke of Mayenne issued the address to the States-General of the kingdom, to meet at an early day in order to make arrangements to secure religion and peace, and to throw off the possible yoke of the heretic pretender. The great seal affixed to the document represented an empty throne, instead of the usual effigy of a king.

The cardinal-legate issued a thundering manifesto at the same time sustaining Mayenne and virulently denouncing the Bearnese.

The politicians’ party now seized the opportunity to impress upon Henry that the decisive moment was come.

The Spaniard, the priest; and the League, had heated the furnace. The iron was at a white heat. Now was the time to strike. Secretary of State Revol Gaspar de Schomberg, Jacques Auguste de Thou, the eminent historian, and other influential personages urged the king to give to the great question the only possible solution.

Said the king with much meekness, “If I am in error, let those who attack me with so much fury instruct me, and show me the way of salvation. I hate those who act against their conscience. I pardon all those who are inspired by truly religious motives, and I am ready to receive all into favour whom the love of peace, not the chagrin of ill-will, has disgusted with the war.”

There was a great meeting of Leaguers at the Louvre, to listen to Mayenne, the cardinal-legate, Cardinal Pelleve, the Duke of Guise, and other chieftains. The Duke of Feria made a long speech in Latin, setting forth the Spanish policy, veiled as usual, but already sufficiently well known, and assuring the assembly that the King of Spain desired nothing so much as the peace of France and of all the world, together with the supremacy of the Roman Church. Whether these objects could best be attained by the election of Philip or of his daughter, as sovereign, with the Archduke Ernest as king-consort, or with perhaps the Duke of Guise or some other eligible husband, were fair subjects for discussion. No selfish motive influenced the king, and he placed all his wealth and all his armies at the disposal of the League to carry out these great projects.

Then there was a conference at Surene between the chiefs the League and the “political” leaders; the Archbishop of Lyons, the cardinal-legate, Villars, Admiral of France and defender of Rouen, Belin, Governor of Paris, President Jeannin, and others upon one side; upon the other, the Archbishop of Bourges, Bellievre, Schomberg, Revol, and De Thou.

Page 1966

The Archbishop of Lyons said that their party would do nothing either to frustrate or to support the mission of Pisani, and that the pope would, as ever, do all that could be done to maintain the interests of the true religion.

The Archbishop of Bourges, knowing well the meaning of such fine phrases, replied that he had much respect for the holy father, but that popes had now, become the slaves and tools of the King of Spain, who, because he was powerful, held them subject to his caprice.

At an adjourned meeting at the same place, the Archbishop of Lyons said that all questions had been asked and answered. All now depended on the pope, whom the League would always obey. If the pope would accept the reconciliation of the Prince of Bearne it was well. He, hoped that his conversion would be sincere.

The political archbishop (of Bourges) replied to the League's archbishop, that there was no time for delays, and for journeys by land and sea to Rome. The least obstruction might prove fatal to both parties. Let the Leaguers now show that the serenity of their faces was but the mirror of their minds.

But the Leaguers' archbishop said that he could make no further advances. So ended the conference.'

The chiefs of the politicians now went to the king and informed him that the decisive moment had arrived.

Henry had preserved: his coolness throughout. Amid all the hubbub of learned doctors of law, archbishops-Leaguer and political-Sorbonne pedants, solemn grandees from Spain with Latin orations in their pockets, intriguing Guises, huckstering Mayennes, wrathful Huguenots, sanguinary cardinal-legates, threatening world-monarchs—-heralded by Spanish musketeers, Italian lancers, and German reiters—shrill screams of warning from the English queen, grim denunciations from Dutch Calvinists, scornful repulses from the holy father; he kept his temper and his eye-sight, as perfectly as he had ever done through the smoke and din of the wildest battle-field. None knew better than he how to detect the weakness of the adversary, and to sound the charge upon his wavering line.

He blew the blast—sure that loyal Catholics and Protestants alike would now follow him pell-mell.

On the 16th, May, 1593, he gave notice that he consented to get himself instructed, and that he summoned an assembly at Mantes on the 15th July, of bishops, theologians, princes, lords, and courts of parliament to hold council, and to advise him what was best to do for religion and the State.

Meantime he returned to the siege of Dreux, made an assault on the place, was repulsed, and then hung nine prisoners of war in full sight of the garrison as a punishment for their temerity in resisting him. The place soon after capitulated (8th July, 1593).

The interval between the summons and the assembling of the clerical and lay notables at Mantes was employed by the Leaguers in frantic and contradictory efforts to retrieve a game which the most sagacious knew to be lost. But the politicians were equal to the occasion, and baffled them at every point.

Page 1967

The Leaguers' archbishop inveighed bitterly against the abominable edicts recently issued in favour of the Protestants.

The political archbishop (of Bourges) replied not by defending; but by warmly disapproving, those decrees of toleration, by excusing the king for having granted them for a temporary purpose, and by asserting positively that, so soon as the king should be converted, he would no longer countenance such measures.

It is superfluous to observe that very different language was held on the part of Henry to the English and Dutch Protestants, and to the Huguenots of his own kingdom.

And there were many meetings of the Leaguers in Paris, many belligerent speeches by the cardinal legate, proclaiming war to the knife rather than that the name of Henry the heretic should ever be heard of again as candidate for the throne, various propositions spasmodically made in full assembly by Feria, Ybarra, Tassis, the jurisconsult Mendoza, and other Spanish agents in favour of the Infanta as queen of France, with Archduke Ernest or the Duke of Guise, or any other eligible prince, for her husband.

The League issued a formal and furious invective in answer to Henry's announcement; proving by copious citations from Jeremiah, St. Epiphany; St. Jerome, St. Cyprian, and St. Bernard, that it was easier for a leopard to change his spots or for a blackamoor to be washed white; than for a heretic to be converted, and that the king was thinking rather of the crown of France than of a heavenly crown, in his approaching conversion —an opinion which there were few to gainsay.

And the Duke of Nemours wrote to his half-brother, the Duke of Mayenne; offering to use all his influence to bring about Mayenne's election as king on condition that if these efforts failed, Mayenne should do his best to procure the election of Nemours.

And the Parliament of Paris formally and prospectively proclaimed any election of a foreigner null and void, and sent deputies to Mayenne urging him never to consent to the election of the Infanta.

What help, said they, can the League expect from the old and broken Philip; from a king who in thirty years has not been able, with all the resources of his kingdoms, to subdue the revolted provinces of the Netherlands? How can he hope to conquer France? Pay no further heed to the legate, they said, who is laughing in his sleeve at the miseries and distractions of our country. So spake the deputies of the League-Parliament to the great captain of the League, the Duke of Mayenne. It was obvious that the "great and holy confederacy" was becoming less confident of its invincibility. Madame League was suddenly grown decrepit in the eyes of her adorers.

Mayenne was angry at the action of the Parliament, and vehemently swore that he would annul their decree. Parliament met his threats with dignity, and resolved to stand by the decree, even if they all died in their places.

Page 1968

At the same time the Duke of Feria suddenly produced in full assembly of Leaguers a written order from Philip that the Duke of Guise and the Infanta should at once be elected king and queen. Taken by surprise, Mayenne dissembled his rage in masterly-fashion, promised Feria to support the election, and at once began to higgle for conditions. He stipulated that he should have for himself the governments of Champagne, Burgundy, and La Brie, and that they should be hereditary in his family: He furthermore demanded that Guise should cede to him the principality of Joinville, and that they should pay him on the spot in hard money two hundred thousand crowns in gold, six hundred thousand more in different payments, together with an annual payment of fifty thousand crowns.

It was obvious that the duke did not undervalue himself; but he had after all no intention of falling into the trap set for him. "He has made these promises (as above given) in writing," said the Duke of Savoy's envoy to his master, "but he will never keep them. The Duchess of Mayenne could not help telling me that her husband will never consent that the Duke of Guise should have the throne." From this resolve he had never wavered, and was not likely to do so now. Accordingly the man "of his word, of faith, and truth," whom even the astute Farnese had at times half believed in, and who had received millions of Philip's money, now thought it time to break with Philip. He issued a manifesto, in which he observed that the States-General of France had desired that Philip should be elected King of France, and carry out his design of a universal monarchy, as the only-means of ensuring the safety of the Catholic religion and the pacification of the world. It was feared, however, said Mayenne; that the king might come to the same misfortunes which befell his father, who, when it was supposed that he was inspired only by private ambition; and by the hope of placing a hereditary universal crown in his family, had excited the animosity of the princes of the empire. "If a mere suspicion had caused so great a misfortune in the empire," continued the man of his word, "what will the princes of all Europe do when they find his Majesty elected king of France, and grown by increase of power so formidable to the world? Can it be doubted that they will fly to arms at once, and give all their support to the King of Navarre, heretic though he be? What motive had so many princes to traverse Philip's designs in the Netherlands, but desire to destroy the enormous power which they feared? Therefore had the Queen, of England, although refusing the sovereignty, defended the independence of the Netherlands these fifteen years.

Page 1969

“However desirable,” continued Mayenne, “that this universal monarchy, for which the house of Austria has so long been working, should be established, yet the king is too prudent not to see the difficulties in his way. Although he has conquered Portugal, he is prevented by the fleets of Holland and England from taking possession of the richest of the Portuguese possessions, the islands and the Indies. He will find in France insuperable objections to his election as king, for he could in this case well reproach the Leaguers with having been changed from Frenchmen into Spaniards. He must see that his case is hopeless in France, he who for thirty years has been in vain endeavouring to re-establish his authority in the Netherlands. It would be impossible in the present position of affairs to become either the king or the protector of France. The dignity of France allows it not.”

Mayenne then insisted on the necessity of a truce with the royalists or politicians, and, assembling the estates at the Louvre on the 4th July, he read a written paper declining for the moment to hold an election for king.

John Baptist Tassis, next day, replied by declaring that in this case Philip would send no more succours of men or money; for that the only effectual counter-poison to the pretended conversion of the Prince of Bearne was the immediate election of a king.

Thus did Mayenne escape from the snare in which the Spaniards thought to catch the man who, as they now knew, was changing every day, and was true to nothing save his own interests.

And now the great day had come. The conversion of Henry to the Roman faith, fixed long before for—the 23rd July,—1593, formally took place at the time appointed.

From six in the morning till the stroke of noon did Henry listen to the exhortations and expoundings of the learned prelates and doctors whom he had convoked, the politic Archbishop of Bourges taking the lead in this long-expected instruction. After six mortal hours had come to an end, the king rose from his knees, somewhat wearied, but entirely instructed and convinced. He thanked the bishops for having taught him that of which he was before quite ignorant, and assured them that; after having invoked the light, of the Holy Ghost upon his musings, he should think seriously over what they had just taught him, in order to come to a resolution salutary to himself and to the State.

Nothing could be more candid. Next day, at eight in the morning, there was a great show in the cathedral of Saint Denis, and the population of Paris, notwithstanding the prohibition of the League authorities, rushed thither in immense crowds to witness the ceremony of the reconciliation of the king. Henry went to the church, clothed as became a freshly purified heretic, in white satin doublet and hose, white silk stockings, and white silk shoes with white roses in them; but with a black hat and a black mantle. There was a great procession with blare of trumpet and beat of drum. The streets were strewn with flowers.

Page 1970

As Henry entered the great portal of the church, he found the Archbishop of Bourges, seated in state, effulgent in mitre and chasuble, and surrounded by other magnificent prelates in gorgeous attire.

“Who are you, and what do you want?” said the arch-bishop.

“I am the king,” meekly replied Henry, “and I demand to be received into the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church.”

“Do you wish it sincerely?” asked the prelate.

“I wish it with all my heart,” said the king.

Then throwing himself on his knees, the Bearne—great champion of the Huguenots—-protested before God that he would live and die in the Catholic faith, and that he renounced all heresy. A passage was with difficulty opened through the crowd, and he was then led to the high altar, amid the acclamations of the people. Here he knelt devoutly and repeated his protestations. His unction and contrition were most impressive, and the people, of course, wept piteously. The king, during the progress of the ceremony, with hands clasped together and adoring the Eucharist with his eyes, or, as the Host was elevated, smiting himself thrice upon the breast, was a model of passionate devotion.

Afterwards he retired to a pavilion behind the altar, where the archbishop confessed and absolved him. Then the Te Deum sounded, and high mass was celebrated by the Bishop of Nantes. Then, amid acclamations and blessings, and with largess to the crowd, the king returned to the monastery of Saint Denis, where he dined amid a multitude of spectators, who thronged so thickly around him that his dinner-table was nearly overset. These were the very Parisians, who, but three years before, had been feeding on rats and dogs and dead men’s bones, and the bodies of their own children, rather than open their gates to this same Prince of Bearne.

Now, although Mayenne had set strong guards at those gates, and had most strictly prohibited all egress, the city was emptied of its populace, which pressed in transports of adoration around the man so lately the object of their hate. Yet few could seriously believe that much change had been effected in the inner soul of him, whom the legate, and the Spaniard, and the holy father at Rome still continued to denounce as the vilest of heretics and the most infamous of impostors.

The comedy was admirably played out and was entirely successful. It may be supposed that the chief actor was, however, somewhat wearied. In private, he mocked at all this ecclesiastical mummery, and described himself as heartily sick of the business. “I arrived here last evening,” he wrote to the beautiful Gabrielle, “and was importuned with ’God save you’ till bed-time. In regard to the Leaguers I am of the order

of St. Thomas. I am beginning to-morrow morning to talk to the bishops, besides those I told you about yesterday. At this moment of writing I have a hundred of these importunates on my shoulders, who will make me hate Saint Denis as much as you hate Mantes. 'Tis to-morrow that I take the perilous leap. I kiss a million times the beautiful hands of my angel and the mouth of my dear mistress."

Page 1971

A truce—renewed at intervals—with the Leaguers lasted till the end of the year. The Duke of Nevers was sent on special mission to Rome to procure the holy father's consent to the great heretic's reconciliation to the Church, and he was instructed to make the king's submission in terms so wholesale and so abject that even some of the life-long papists of France were disgusted, while every honest Protestant in Europe shrank into himself for shame. But Clement, overawed by Philip and his ambassador, was deaf to all the representations of the French envoy. He protested that he would not believe in the sincerity of the Bearne's conversion unless an angel from Heaven should reveal it to him. So Nevers left Rome, highly exasperated, and professing that he would rather have lost a leg, that he would rather have been sewn in a sack and tossed into the Tiber, than bear back such a message. The pope ordered the prelates who had accompanied Nevers to remain in Rome and be tried by the Inquisition for misprision of heresy, but the duke placed them by his side and marched out of the Porta del Popolo with them, threatening to kill any man who should attempt to enforce the command.

Meantime it became necessary to follow up the St. Denis comedy with a still more exhilarating popular spectacle. The heretic had been purified, confessed, absolved. It was time for a consecration. But there was a difficulty. Although the fever of loyalty to the ancient house of Bourbon, now redeemed from its worship of the false gods, was spreading contagiously through the provinces; although all the white silk in Lyons had been cut into scarves and banners to celebrate the reconciliation of the candid king with mother Church; although that ancient city was ablaze with bonfires and illuminations, while its streets ran red, with blood no longer, but with wine; and although Madam League, so lately the object of fondest adoration, was now publicly burned in the effigy of a grizzly hag; yet Paris still held for that decrepit beldame, and closed its gates to the Bearnese.

The city of Rheims, too, had not acknowledged the former Huguenot, and it was at Rheims, in the church of St. Remy, that the Holy Bottle was preserved. With what chrism, by what prelate, should the consecration of Henry be performed? Five years before, the League had proposed in the estates of Blois to place among the fundamental laws of the kingdom that no king should be considered a legitimate sovereign whose head had not been anointed by the bishop at Rheims with oil from that holy bottle. But it was now decided that to ascribe a monopoly of sanctity to that prelate and to that bottle would be to make a schism in the Church.

Page 1972

Moreover it was discovered that there was a chrism in existence still more efficacious than the famous oil of St. Remy. One hundred and twelve years before the baptism of Clovis, St. Martin had accidentally tumbled down stairs, and lay desperately bruised and at the point of death. But, according to Sulpicius Severus, an angel had straightway descended from heaven, and with a miraculous balsam had anointed the contusions of the saint, who next day felt no farther inconveniences from his fall. The balsam had ever since been preserved in the church of Marmoutier near Tours. Here, then, was the most potent of unguents brought directly from heaven. To mix a portion thereof with the chrism of consecration was clearly more judicious than to make use of the holy bottle, especially as the holy bottle was not within reach. The monks of Marmoutier consented to lend the sacred phial containing the famous oil of St. Martin for the grand occasion of the royal consecration.

Accompanied by a strong military escort provided by Giles de Souvri, governor of Touraine, a deputation of friars brought the phial to Chartres, where the consecration was to take place. Prayers were offered up, without ceasing, in the monastery during their absence that no mishap should befal the sacred treasure. When the monks arrived at Chartres, four young barons of the first nobility were assigned to them as hostages for the safe restoration of the phial, which was then borne in triumph to the cathedral, the streets through which it was carried being covered with tapestry. There was a great ceremony, a splendid consecration; six bishops, with mitres on their heads and in gala robes, officiating; after which the king knelt before the altar and took the customary oath.

Thus the champion of the fierce Huguenots, the well-beloved of the dead La Noue and the living Duplessis Mornay, the devoted knight of the heretic Queen Elizabeth, the sworn ally of the stout Dutch Calvinists, was pompously reconciled to that Rome which was the object of their hatred and their fear.

The admirably arranged spectacles of the instruction at St. Denis and the consecration at Chartres were followed on the day of the vernal equinox by a third and most conclusive ceremony:

A secret arrangement had been made with De Cosse-Brissac, governor of Paris, by the king, according to which the gates of Paris were at last to be opened to him. The governor obtained a high price for his services—three hundred thousand livres in hard cash, thirty thousand a year for his life, and the truncheon of marshal of France. Thus purchased, Brissac made his preparations with remarkable secrecy and skill. Envoy Ybarra, who had scented something suspicious in the air, had gone straight to the governor for information, but the keen Spaniard was thrown out by the governor’s ingenuous protestations of ignorance. The next morning, March 22nd, was stormy and rainy, and long before daylight Ybarra, still uneasy despite the statements of Brissac, was wandering about the streets of Paris when he became the involuntary witness of an extraordinary spectacle.

Page 1973

Through the wind and the rain came trampling along the dark streets of the capital a body of four thousand troopers and lansquenettes. Many torch-bearers attended on the procession, whose flambeaux threw a lurid light upon the scene.

There, surrounded by the swart and grizzly bearded visages of these strange men-at-arms, who were discharging their arquebuses, as they advanced upon any bystanders likely to oppose their progress; in the very midst of this sea of helmed heads, the envoy was enabled to recognise the martial figure of the Prince of Bearne. Armed to the teeth, with sword in hand and dagger at side, the hero of Ivry rode at last through the barriers which had so long kept him from his capital. "'Twas like enchantment," said Ybarra. The first Bourbon entered the city through the same gate out of which the last Valois had, five years before, so ignominiously fled. It was a midnight surprise, although not fully accomplished until near the dawn of day. It was not a triumphal entrance; nor did Henry come as the victorious standard-bearer of a great principle. He had defeated the League in many battle-fields, but the League still hissed defiance at him from the very hearthstone of his ancestral palace. He had now crept, in order to conquer, even lower than the League itself; and casting off his Huguenot skin at last, he had soared over the heads of all men, the presiding genius of the holy Catholic Church.

Twenty-one years before, he had entered the same city on the conclusion of one of the truces which had varied the long monotony of the religious wars of France. The youthful son of Antony Bourbon and Joan of Albret had then appeared as the champion and the idol of the Huguenots. In the same year had come the fatal nuptials with the bride of St. Bartholomew, the first Catholic conversion of Henry and the massacre at which the world still shudders.

Now he was chief of the "Politicians," and sworn supporter of the Council of Trent. Earnest Huguenots were hanging their heads in despair.

He represented the principle of national unity against national dismemberment by domestic treason and foreign violence. Had that principle been his real inspiration, as it was in truth his sole support, history might judge him more leniently. Had he relied upon it entirely it might have been strong enough to restore him to the throne of his ancestors, without the famous religious apostacy with which his name is for ever associated. It is by no means certain that permanent religious toleration might not have been the result of his mounting the throne, only when he could do so without renouncing the faith of his fathers. A day of civilization may come perhaps, sooner or later, when it will be of no earthly cousequence to their fellow creatures to what creed, what Christian church, what religious dogma kings or humbler individuals may be partial; when the relations between man and his Maker shall be undefiled by political or social intrusion. But the day will never come when it will be otherwise than damaging to public morality and humiliating to human dignity to forswear principle for a price, and to make the most awful of mysteries the subject of political legerdemain and theatrical buffoonery.

Page 1974

The so-called conversion of the king marks an epoch in human history. It strengthened the Roman Church and gave it an indefinite renewal of life; but it sapped the foundations of religious faith. The appearance of Henry the Huguenot as the champion of the Council of Trent was of itself too biting an epigram not to be extensively destructive. Whether for good or ill, religion was fast ceasing to be the mainspring of political combinations, the motive of great wars and national convulsions. The age of religion was to be succeeded by the age of commerce.

But the king was now on his throne. All Paris was in rapture. There was Te Deum with high mass in Notre Dame, and the populace was howling itself hoarse with rapture in honour of him so lately the object of the general curse. Even the Sorbonne declared in favour of the reclaimed heretic, and the decision of those sages had vast influence with less enlightened mortals. There was nothing left for the Duke of Feria but to take himself off and make Latin orations in favour of the Infanta elsewhere, if fit audience elsewhere could be found. A week after the entrance of Henry, the Spanish garrison accordingly was allowed to leave Paris with the honours of war.

“We marched out at 2 P.M.,” wrote the duke to his master, “with closed ranks, colours displayed, and drums beating. First came the Italians and then the Spaniards, in the midst of whom was myself on horseback, with the Walloons marching near me. The Prince of Bearne”—it was a solace to the duke’s heart, of which he never could be deprived, to call the king by that title—“was at a window over the gate of St. Denis through which we took our departure. He was dressed in light grey, with a black hat surmounted by a great white feather. Our displayed standards rendered him no courteous salute as we passed.”

Here was another solace!

Thus had the game been lost and won, but Philip as usual did not acknowledge himself beaten. Mayenne, too, continued to make the most fervent promises to all that was left of the confederates. He betook himself to Brussels, and by the king’s orders was courteously received by the Spanish authorities in the Netherlands. In the midst of the tempest now rapidly destroying all rational hopes, Philip still clung to Mayenne as to a spar in the shipwreck. For the king ever possessed the virtue, if it be one, of continuing to believe himself invincible and infallible, when he had been defeated in every quarter, and when his calculations had all proved ridiculous mistakes.

When his famous Armada had been shattered and sunk, have we not seen him peevishly requiring Alexander Farnese to construct a new one immediately and to proceed therewith to conquer England out of hand? Was it to be expected that he would renounce his conquest of France, although the legitimate king had entered his capital, had reconciled himself to the Church, and was on the point of obtaining forgiveness of the pope? If the Prince of Bearne had already destroyed the Holy

League, why should not the Duke of Mayenne and Archduke Ernest make another for him, and so conquer France without further delay?

Page 1975

But although it was still possible to deceive the king, who in the universality of his deceptive powers was so prone to delude himself, it was difficult even for so accomplished an intriguer as Mayenne to hoodwink much longer the shrewd Spaniards who were playing so losing a game against him.

“Our affairs in France,” said Ybarra, “are in such condition that we are losing money and character there, and are likely to lose all the provinces here, if things are not soon taken up in a large and energetic manner. Money and troops are what is wanted on a great scale for France. The king’s agents are mightily discontented with Mayenne, and with reason; but they are obliged to dissimulate and to hold their tongues. We can send them no assistance from these regions, unless from down yonder you send us the cloth and the scissors to cut it with.”

And the Archduke Ernest, although he invited Mayenne to confer with him at Brussels, under the impression that he could still keep him and the Duke of Guise from coming to an arrangement with Bearne, hardly felt more confidence in the man than did Feria or Ybarra. “Since the loss of Paris,” said Ernest, “I have had a letter from Mayenne, in which, deeply affected by that event, he makes me great offers, even to the last drop of his blood, vowing never to abandon the cause of the League. But of the intentions and inner mind of this man I find such vague information, that I don’t dare to expect more stability from him than may be founded upon his own interest.”

And so Mayenne came to Brussels and passed three days with the archduke. “He avows himself ready to die in our cause,” said Ernest. “If your Majesty will give men and money enough, he will undertake so to deal with Bearne that he shall not think himself safe in his own house.” The archduke expressed his dissatisfaction to Mayenne that with the money he had already received, so little had been accomplished, but he still affected a confidence which he was far from feeling, “because,” said he, “it is known that Mayenne is already treating with Bearne. If he has not concluded those arrangements, it is because Bearne now offers him less money than before.” The amount of dissimulation, politely so-called, practised by the grandees of that age, to say nothing of their infinite capacity for pecuniary absorption, makes the brain reel and enlarges one’s ideas of the human faculties as exerted in certain directions. It is doubtful whether plain Hans Miller or Hans Baker could have risen to such level.

Feria wrote a despatch to the king, denouncing Mayenne as false, pernicious to the cause of Spain and of catholicism, thoroughly self-seeking and vile, and as now most traitorous to the cause of the confederacy, engaged in surrendering its strong places to the enemy, and preparing to go over to the Prince of Bearne.

“If,” said he, “I were to recount all his base tricks, I should go on till midnight, and perhaps till to-morrow morning.”

Page 1976

This letter, being intercepted, was sent with great glee by Henry *iv*., not to the royal hands for which it was destined, but to the Duke of Mayenne. Great was the wrath of that injured personage as he read such libellous truths. He forthwith fulminated a scathing reply, addressed to Philip *ii*., in which he denounced the Duke of Feria as "a dirty ignoramus, an impudent coward, an impostor, and a blind thief;" adding, after many other unsavoury epithets, "but I will do him an honour which he has not merited, proving him a liar with my sword; and I humbly pray your Majesty to grant me this favour and to pardon my just grief, which causes me to depart from the respect due to your Majesty, when I speak of this impostor who has thus wickedly torn my reputation."

His invectives were, however, much stronger than his arguments in defence of that tattered reputation. The defiance to mortal combat went for nothing; and, in the course of the next year, the injured Mayenne turned his back on Philip and his Spaniards, and concluded his bargain with the Prince of Bearne. He obtained good terms: the government of Burgundy, payment of his debts, and a hundred and twenty thousand crowns in hard cash. It is not on record that the man of his word, of credit, and of truth, ever restored a penny of the vast sums which he had received from Philip to carry on the business of the League.

Subsequently the duke came one very hot summer's-day to Monceaux to thank the king, as he expressed it, for "delivering him from Spanish arrogance and Italian wiles;" and having got with much difficulty upon his knees, was allowed to kiss the royal hand. Henry then insisted upon walking about with him through the park at a prodigious rate, to show him all the improvements, while the duke panted, groaned, and perspired in his vain efforts to keep pace with his new sovereign.

"If I keep this fat fellow walking about in the sun much longer," whispered the king to De Bethune, who was third in the party, "I shall be sufficiently avenged for all the mischief he has done us."

At last, when the duke was forced to admit himself to be on the point of expiring with fatigue, he was dismissed to the palace with orders to solace himself with a couple of bottles of excellent wine of Arbois, expressly provided for him by the king's direction. And this was all the punishment ever inflicted by the good-humoured monarch on the corpulent conspirator.

The Duke of Guise made his arrangements with the ex-Huguenot on even better terms and at a still earlier day; while Joyeuse and Mercoeur stood out a good while and higgled hard for conditions. "These people put such a high price on themselves," said one of Henry's diplomatists, "that one loses almost more than one gains in buying them. They strip and plunder us even in our nakedness, and we are obliged, in order to conciliate such harpies, to employ all that we can scrape out of our substance and our blood. I think, however, that we ought to gain them by whatever means and at whatever price."

Page 1977

Thus Henry *iv*., the man whom so many contemporary sages had for years been rebuking or ridiculing for his persistency in a hopeless attempt to save his country from dismemberment, to restore legitimate authority, and to resist the “holy confederacy” of domestic traitors, aided by foreign despots and sympathizers, was at last successful, and the fratricidal war in France was approaching its only possible conclusion.

But, alas! the hopes of those who loved the reformed Church as well as they loved their country were sadly blasted by the apostasy of their leader. From the most eminent leaders of the Huguenots there came a wail, which must have penetrated even to the well-steeled heart of the cheerful Gascon. “It will be difficult,” they said, “to efface very soon from your memory the names of the men whom the sentiment of a common religion, association in the same perils and persecutions, a common joy in the same deliverance, and the long experience of so many faithful services, have engraved there with a pencil of diamond. The remembrance of these things pursues you and accompanies you everywhere; it interrupts your most important affairs, your most ardent pleasures, your most profound slumber, to represent to you, as in a picture, yourself to yourself: yourself not as you are to-day, but such as you were when, pursued to the death by the greatest princes of Europe, you went on conducting to the harbour of safety the little vessel against which so many tempests were beating.”

The States of the Dutch republic, where the affair of Henry’s conversion was as much a matter of domestic personal interest as it could be in France—for religion up to that epoch was the true frontier between nation and nation—debated the question most earnestly while it was yet doubtful. It was proposed to send a formal deputation to the king, in order to divert him, if possible, from the fatal step which he was about to take. After ripe deliberation however, it was decided to leave the matter “in the hands of God Almighty, and to pray Him earnestly to guide the issue to His glory and the welfare of the Churches.”

The Queen of England was, as might be supposed, beside herself with indignation, and, in consequence of the great apostasy, and of her chronic dissatisfaction with the manner in which her contingent of troops had been handled in France, she determined to withdraw every English soldier from the support of Henry’s cause. The unfortunate French ambassador in London was at his wits’ ends. He vowed that he could not sleep of nights, and that the gout and the cholic, to which he was always a martyr, were nothing to the anguish which had now come upon his soul and brain, such as he had never suffered since the bloody day of St. Bartholomew.

Page 1978

“Ah, my God!” said he to Burghley, “is it possible that her just choler has so suddenly passed over the great glory which she has acquired by so many benefits and liberalities?” But he persuaded himself that her majesty would after all not persist in her fell resolution. To do so, he vowed, would only be boiling milk for the French papists, who would be sure to make the most of the occasion in order to precipitate the king into the, abyss, to the border of which they had already brought him. He so dreaded the ire of the queen that he protested he was trembling all over merely to see the pen of his secretary wagging as he dictated his despatches. Nevertheless it was his terrible duty to face her in her wrath, and he implored the lord treasurer to accompany him and to shield him at the approaching interview. “Protect me,” he cried, “by your wisdom from the ire of this great princess; for by the living God, when I see her enraged against any person whatever I wish myself in Calcutta, fearing her anger like death itself.”

When all was over, Henry sent De Morlans as special envoy to communicate the issue to the Governments of England and of Holland. But the queen, although no longer so violent, was less phlegmatic than the States-General, and refused to be comforted. She subsequently receded, however, from her determination to withdraw her troops from France.

“Ah! what grief; ah! what regrets; ah! what groans, have I felt in my soul,” she wrote, “at the sound of the news brought to me by Morlans! My God! Is it possible that any wordly respect can efface the terror of Divine wrath? Can we by reason even expect a good sequel to such iniquitous acts? He who has maintained and preserved you by His mercy, can you imagine that he permits you to walk alone in your utmost need? ’Tis bad to do evil that good may come of it. Meantime I shall not cease to put you in the first rank of my devotions, in order that the hands of Esau may not spoil the blessings of Jacob. As to your promises to me of friendship and fidelity, I confess to have dearly deserved them, nor do I repent, provided you do not change your Father—otherwise I shall be your bastard sister by the father’s side—for I shall ever love a natural better than an adopted one. I desire that God may guide you in a straight road and a better path. Your most sincere sister in the old fashion. As to the new, I have nothing to do with it. *Elizabeth* R.”

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

All fellow-worms together
Continuing to believe himself invincible and infallible
He spent more time at table than the Bearnese in sleep
Henry the Huguenot as the champion of the Council of Trent
Highest were not necessarily the least slimy
His invectives were, however, much stronger than his arguments
History is a continuous whole of which we see only fragments
Infinite capacity for

Page 1979

pecuniary absorption
Leading motive with all was supposed to be religion
Past was once the Present, and once the Future
Sages of every generation, read the future like a printed scroll
Sewers which have ever run beneath decorous Christendom
Wrath of that injured personage as he read such libellous truths

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 66, 1594

CHAPTER XXX.

Prince Maurice lays siege to Gertruydenberg—Advantages of the new system of warfare—Progress of the besieging operations—Superiority of Maurice's manoeuvres —Adventure of Count Philip of Nassau— Capitulation of Gertruydenberg—Mutiny among the Spanish troops— Attempt of Verdugo to retake Coeworden—Suspicions of treason in the English garrison at Ostend—Letter of Queen Elizabeth to Sir Edward Norris on the subject—Second attempt on Coeworden—Assault on Groningen by Maurice—Second adventure of Philip of Nassau—Narrow escape of Prince Maurice—-Surrender of Groningen—Particulars of the siege—Question of religious toleration—-Progress of the United Netherlands—Condition of the "obedient" Netherlands—-Incompetency of Peter Mansfeld as Governor—Archduke Ernest, the successor of Farnese—Difficulties of his position—His unpopularity—Great achievements of the republicans—Triumphal entry of Ernest into Brussels and Antwerp—Magnificence of the spectacle—Disaffection of the Spanish troops—Great military rebellion—Philip's proposal to destroy the English fleet—His assassination plans—Plot to poison Queen Elizabeth—Conspiracies against Prince Maurice—Futile attempts at negotiation—-Proposal of a marriage between Henry and the Infanta—Secret mission from Henry to the King of Spain—Special dispatch to England and the Staten—Henry obtains further aid from Queen Elizabeth and the States—Council—Anxiety of the Protestant countries to bring about a war with Spain—Aspect of affairs at the close of the year 1594.

While Philip's world-empire seemed in one direction to be so rapidly fading into cloudland there were substantial possessions of the Spanish crown which had been neglected in Brabant and Friesland.

Two very important cities still held for the King of Spain within the territories of what could now be fairly considered the United Dutch Republic—St. Gertruydenberg and Groningen.

Early in the spring of 1593, Maurice had completed his preparations for a siege, and on the 24th March appeared before Gertruydenberg.

It was a stately, ancient city, important for its wealth, its strength, and especially for its position. For without its possession even the province of Holland could hardly consider itself mistress of its own little domains. It was seated on the ancient Meuse, swollen as it approached the sea almost to the dimension of a gulf, while from the south another stream, called the Donge, very brief in its course, but with considerable depth of water, came to mingle itself with the Meuse, exactly under the walls of the city.

Page 1980

The site of the place was so low that it was almost hidden and protected by its surrounding dykes. These afforded means of fortification, which had been well improved. Both by nature and art the city was one of the strongholds of the Netherlands.

Maurice had given the world a lesson in the beleaguering science at the siege of Steenwyk, such as had never before been dreamt of; but he was resolved that the operations before Gertruydenberg should constitute a masterpiece.

Nothing could be more beautiful as a production of military art, nothing, to the general reader, more insipid than its details.

On the land side, Hohenlo's headquarters were at Ramsdonck, a village about a German mile to the east of Gertruydenberg. Maurice himself was established on the west side of the city. Two bridges constructed across the Donge facilitated the communications between the two camps, while great quantities of planks and brush were laid down across the swampy roads to make them passable for waggon-trains and artillery. The first care of the young general, whose force was not more than twenty thousand men, was to protect himself rather than to assail the town.

His lines extended many miles in a circuit around the place, and his forts, breastworks, and trenches were very numerous.

The river was made use of as a natural and almost impassable ditch of defence, and windmills were freely employed to pump water into the shallows in one direction, while in others the outer fields, in quarters whence a relieving force might be expected, were turned into lakes by the same machinery. Farther outside, a system of palisade work of caltrops and man-traps—sometimes in the slang of the day called Turkish ambassadors—made the country for miles around impenetrable or very disagreeable to cavally. In a shorter interval than would have seemed possible, the battlements and fortifications of the besieging army had risen like an exhalation out of the morass. The city of Gertruydenberg was encompassed by another city as extensive and apparently as impregnable as itself. Then, for the first time in that age, men thoroughly learned the meaning of that potent implement the spade.

Three thousand pioneers worked night and day with pickaxe and shovel. The soldiers liked the business; for every man so employed received his ten stivers a day additional wages, punctually paid, and felt moreover that every stioke was bringing the work nearer to its conclusion.

The Spaniards no longer railed at Maurice as a hedger and ditcher. When he had succeeded in bringing a hundred great guns to bear upon the beleaguered city they likewise ceased to sneer at heavy artillery.

The Kartowen and half Kartowen were no longer considered “espanta vellacos.”

Page 1981

Meantime, from all the country round, the peasants flocked within the lines. Nowhere in Europe were provisions so plentiful and cheap as in the Dutch camp. Nowhere was a readier market for agricultural products, prompter payment, or more perfect security for the life and property of non-combatants. Not so much as a hen's egg was taken unlawfully. The country people found themselves more at ease within Maurice's lines than within any other part of the provinces, obedient or revolted. They ploughed and sowed and reaped at their pleasure, and no more striking example was ever afforded of the humanizing effect of science upon the barbarism of war, than in this siege of Gertruydenberg.

Certainly it was the intention of the prince to take his city, and when he fought the enemy it was his object to kill; but, as compared with the bloody work which Alva, and Romero, and Requesens, and so many others had done in those doomed provinces, such war-making as this seemed almost like an institution for beneficent and charitable purposes.

Visitors from the neighbourhood, from other provinces, from foreign countries, came to witness the extraordinary spectacle, and foreign generals repaired to the camp of Maurice to take practical lessons in the new art of war.

Old Peter Ernest Mansfeld, who was nominal governor of the Spanish Netherlands since the death of Farnese, rubbed his eyes and stared aghast when the completeness of the preparations for reducing the city at last broke in upon his mind. Count Fuentes was the true and confidential regent however until the destined successor to Parma should arrive; but Fuentes, although he had considerable genius for assassination, as will hereafter appear, and was an experienced and able commander of the old-fashioned school, was no match for Maurice in the scientific combinations on which the new system was founded.

In vain did the superannuated Peter call aloud upon his sofa and governor, Count Charles, to assist him in this dire dilemma. That artillery general had gone with a handful of Germans, Walloons; and other obedient Netherlanders—too few to accomplish anything abroad, too many to be spared from the provinces—to besiege Noyon in France. But what signified the winning or losing of such a place as Noyon at exactly the moment when the Prince of Bearne, assisted by the able generalship of the Archbishop of Bourges, had just executed those famous flanking movements in the churches of St. Denis and Chartres, by which the world-empire had been effectually shattered, and Philip and the Pope completely out-manoeuvred.

Page 1982

Better that the five thousand fighters under Charles Mansfeld had been around Gertruydenberg. His aged father did what he could. As many men as could be spared from the garrison of Antwerp and its neighbourhood were collected; but the Spaniards were reluctant to march, except under old Mondragon. That hero, who had done much of the hardest work, and had fought in most of the battles of the century, was nearly as old as the century. Being now turned of ninety, he thought best to keep house in Antwerp Castle: Accordingly twelve thousand foot and three thousand horse took the field under the more youthful Peter Ernest? But Peter Ernest, when his son was not there to superintend his operations, was nothing but a testy octogenarian, while the two together were not equal to the little finger of Farnese, whom Philip would have displaced, had he not fortunately died.

“Nothing is to be expected out of this place but toads and poison,” wrote Ybarra in infinite disgust to the two secretaries of state at Madrid. “I have done my best to induce Fuentes to accept that which the patent secured him, and Count Peter is complaining that Fuentes showed him the patent so late only to play him a trick. There is a rascally pack of meddlers here, and the worst of them all are the women, whom I particularly give to the devil. There is no end to the squabbles as to who shall take the lead in relieving Gertruydenberg.”

Mansfeld at last came ponderously up in the neighbourhood of Turnhout. There was a brilliant little skirmish, in the, neighbourhood of this place, in which a hundred and fifty Dutch cavalry under the famous brothers Bax defeated four hundred picked lancers of Spain and Italy. But Mansfeld could get nothing but skirmishes. In vain he plunged about among the caltrops and man-traps. In vain he knocked at the fortifications of Hohenlo on the east and of Maurice on the west. He found them impracticable, impregnable, obdurate. It was Maurice’s intention to take his town at as small sacrifice of life as possible. A trumpet was sent on some trifling business to Mansfeld, in reply to a communication made by the general to Maurice.

“Why does your master,” said the choleric veteran to the trumpeter, “why does Prince Maurice, being a lusty young commander as he is, not come out of his trenches into the open field and fight me like a man, where honour and fame await him?”

“Because my master,” answered the trumpeter, “means to live to be a lusty old commander like your excellency, and sees no reason to-day to give you an advantage.”

At this the bystanders laughed, rather at the expense of the veteran.

Meantime there were not many incidents within the lines or within the city to vary the monotony of the scientific siege.

On the land side, as has been seen, the city was enclosed and built out of human sight by another Gertruydenberg. On the wide estuary of the Meuse, a chain of war ships

encircled the sea-front, in shape of a half moon, lying so close to each other that it was scarcely possible even for a messenger to swim out of a dark night.

Page 1983

The hardy adventurers who attempted that feat with tidings of despair were almost invariably captured.

This blockading fleet took regular part in the daily cannonade; while, on the other hand, the artillery practice from the landbatteries of Maurice and Hohenlo was more perfect than anything ever known before in the Netherlands or France.

And the result was that in the course of the cannonade which lasted nearly ninety days, not more than four houses in the city escaped injury. The approaches were brought, every hour, nearer and nearer to the walls. With subterranean lines converging in the form of the letter Y, the prince had gradually burrowed his way beneath the principal bastion.

Hohenlo, representative of the older school of strategy, had on one occasion ventured to resist the authority of the commander-in-chief. He had constructed a fort at Ramsdonck. Maurice then commanded the erection of another, fifteen hundred yards farther back. It was as much a part of his purpose to defend himself against the attempts of Mansfeld's relieving force, as to go forward against the city. Hohenlo objected that it would be impossible to sustain himself against a sudden attack in so isolated a position. Maurice insisted. In the midst of the altercation Hohenlo called to the men engaged in throwing up the new fortifications: "Here, you captains and soldiers," he cried, "you are delivered up here to be butchered. You may drop work and follow me to the old fort."

"And I swear to you," said Maurice quietly, "that the first man who moves from this spot shall be hanged."

No one moved. The fort was completed and held to the and; Hohenlo sulkily acquiescing in the superiority which this stripling—his former pupil—had at last vindicated over all old-fashioned men-at-arms.

From the same cause which was apt to render Hohenlo's services inefficient, the prince was apt to suffer inconvenience in the persons placed in still nearer relation to himself. Count Philip of Nassau, brother of the wise and valiant Lewis William, had already done much brilliant campaigning against the Spaniards both in France and the provinces. Unluckily, he was not only a desperate fighter but a mighty drinker, and one day, after a dinner-party and potent carouse at Colonel Brederode's quarters, he thought proper, in doublet and hose, without armour of any kind, to mount his horse, in order to take a solitary survey of the enemy's works. Not satisfied with this piece of reconnoitering—-which he effected with much tipsy gravity, but probably without deriving any information likely to be of value to the commanding general—he then proceeded to charge in person a distant battery. The deed was not commendable in a military point of view. A fire was opened upon him at long range so soon as he was discovered, and at the same time the sergeant-major of his regiment and an equerry of Prince Maurice started in

pursuit, determined to bring him off if possible, before his life had been thus absurdly sacrificed. Fortunately for him they came to the rescue in time, pulled him from his horse, and succeeded in bringing him away unharmed. The sergeant-major, however, Sinisky by name, while thus occupied in preserving the count's life, was badly wounded in the leg by a musket-shot from the fort; which casualty was the only result of this after-dinner assault.

Page 1984

As the siege proceeded, and as the hopes of relief died away, great confusion began to reign within the city. The garrison, originally of a thousand veterans, besides burgher militia, had been much diminished. Two commandants of the place, one after another, had lost their lives. On the 1st of June, Governor De Masieres, Captain Mongyn, the father-confessor of the garrison, and two soldiers, being on the top of the great church tower taking observations, were all brought down with one cannon-shot. Thus the uses of artillery were again proved to be something more than to scare cowards.

The final result seemed to have been brought about almost by accident, if accident could be admitted as a factor in such accurate calculations as those of Maurice. On the 24th June Captains Haen and Bievry were relieving watch in the trenches near the great north ravelin of the town—a bulwark which had already been much undermined from below and weakened above. Being adventurous officers, it occurred to them suddenly to scale the wall of the fort and reconnoitre what was going on in the town. It was hardly probable that they would come back alive from the expedition, but they nevertheless threw some planks across the ditch, and taking a few soldiers with them, climbed cautiously up. Somewhat to his own surprise, still more to that of the Spanish sentinels, Bievry in a few minutes found himself within the ravelin. He was closely followed by Captain Haen, Captain Kalf, and by half a company of soldiers. The alarm was given. There was a fierce hand-to-hand struggle. Sixteen of the bold stormers fell, and nine of the garrison of the fort. The rest fled into the city. The governor of the place, Captain Gysant, rushing to the rescue without staying to put on his armour, was killed. Count Solms, on the other hand, came from the besieging camp into the ravelin to investigate the sudden uproar. To his profound astonishment he was met there, after a brief interval, by a deputation from the city, asking for terms of surrender. The envoys had already been for some little time looking in vain for a responsible person with whom to treat. When Maurice was informed of the propositions he thought it at first a trick; for he had known nothing of the little adventure of the three captains. Soon afterwards he came into a battery whither the deputies had been brought, and the terms of capitulation were soon agreed upon.

Next day the garrison were allowed to go out with sidearms and personal baggage, and fifty waggons were lent them by the victor to bring their wounded men to Antwerp.

Thus was Gertruydenberg surrendered in the very face of Peter Mansfeld, who only became aware of the fact by the salvos of artillery fired in honour of the triumph, and by the blaze of illumination which broke forth over camp and city.

Page 1985

The sudden result was an illustration of the prince's perfect arrangements. When Maurice rode into the town, he found it strong enough and sufficiently well provisioned to have held out many a long day. But it had been demonstrated to the besieged that relief was impossible, and that the surrender on one day or another, after the siege operations should be brought to their close, was certain. The inexorable genius of the commander—skilled in a science which to the coarser war-makers of that age seemed almost superhuman—hovered above them like a fate. It was as well to succumb on the 24th June as to wait till the 24th July.

Moreover the great sustaining principle—resistance to the foreigner—which had inspired the deeds of daring, the wonders of endurance, in the Dutch cities beleaguered so remorselessly by the Spaniard twenty years earlier in the century, was wanting.

In surrendering to the born Netherlander—the heroic chieftain of the illustrious house of Nassau—these Netherlanders were neither sullying their flag nor injuring their country. Enough had been done for military honour in the gallant resistance, in which a large portion of the garrison had fallen. Nor was that religious superstition so active within the city, which three years before had made miracles possible in Paris when a heretic sovereign was to be defied by his own subjects. It was known that even if the public ceremonies of the Catholic Church were likely to be suspended for a time after the surrender, at least the rights of individual conscience and private worship within individual households would be tolerated, and there was no papal legate with fiery eloquence persuading a city full of heroic dupes that it was more virtuous for men or women to eat their own children than to forego one high mass, or to wink at a single conventicle.

After all, it was no such bitter hardship for the citizens of Gertruydenberg to participate in the prosperity of the rising and thriving young republic, and to enjoy those municipal and national liberties which her sister cities had found so sweet.

Nothing could be calmer or more reasonable than such a triumph, nothing less humiliating or less disastrous than such a surrender.

The problem was solved, the demonstration was made. To open their gates to the soldiers of the Union was not to admit the hordes of a Spanish commander with the avenging furies of murder, pillage, rape, which ever followed in their train over the breach of a captured city.

To an enemy bated or dreaded to the uttermost mortal capacity, that well-fortified and opulent city might have held out for months, and only when the arms and the fraud of the foe without, and of famine within, had done their work, could it have bowed its head to the conqueror, and submitted to the ineffable tortures which would be the necessary punishment of its courage.

Four thousand shots had been fired from the siege-guns upon the city, and three hundred upon the relieving force.

Page 1986

The besieging army numbered in all nine thousand one hundred and fifty men of all arms, and they lost during the eighty-five days' siege three hundred killed and four hundred wounded.

After the conclusion of these operations, and the thorough remodelling of the municipal government of the important city thus regained to the republic, Maurice occupied himself with recruiting and refreshing his somewhat exhausted little army. On the other hand, old Count Mansfeld, dissatisfied with the impotent conclusion to his attempts, retired to Brussels to be much taunted by the insolent Fuentes. He at least escaped very violent censure on the part of his son Charles, for that general, after his superfluous conquest of Noyon, while returning towards the Netherlands, far too tardily to succour Gertruydenberg, had been paralyzed in all his movements by a very extensive mutiny which broke out among the Spanish troops in the province of Artois. The disorder went through all its regular forms. A town was taken, an Eletto was appointed. The country-side was black-mailed or plundered, and the rebellion lasted some thirteen months. Before it was concluded there was another similar outbreak among the Italians, together with the Walloons and other obedient Netherlanders in Hainault, who obliged the city of Mons to collect nine hundred florins a day for them. The consequence of these military rebellions was to render the Spanish crown almost powerless during the whole year, within the provinces nominally subject to its sway. The cause—as always—was the non-payment of these veterans' wages, year after year. It was impossible for Philip, with all the wealth of the Indies and Mexico pouring through the Danaid sieve of the Holy League in France, to find the necessary funds to save the bronzed and war-worn instruments of his crimes in the Netherlands from starving and from revolt.

Meantime there was much desultory campaigning in Friesland. Verdugo and Frederic van den Berg picked up a few cities, and strong places which had thrown off their allegiance September, to the king—Auerzyl, Schlochteren, Winschoten, Wedde, Ootmarzum—and invested the much more important town of Coeworden, which Maurice had so recently reduced to the authority of the Union. Verdugo's force was insufficient, however, and he had neither munitions nor provisions for a long siege. Winter was coming on; and the States, aware that he would soon be obliged to retire from before the well-garrisoned and fortified place, thought it unnecessary to interfere with him. After a very brief demonstration the Portuguese veteran was obliged to raise the siege.

Page 1987

There were also certain vague attempts made by the enemy to re-possess himself of those most important seaports which had been pledged to the English queen. On a previous page the anxiety has been indicated with which Sir Robert Sydney regarded the withdrawal of the English troops in the Netherlands for the sake of assisting the French king. This palpable breach of the treaty had necessarily weakened England's hold on the affections of the Netherlanders, and awakened dark suspicions that treason might be impending at Flushing or Ostend. The suspicions were unjust—so far as the governors of those places were concerned—for Sydney and Norris were as loyal as they were intelligent and brave; but the trust in their characters was not more implicit than it had been in that of Sir William Stanley before the commission of his crime. It was now believed that the enemy was preparing for a sudden assault upon Ostend, with the connivance, it was feared, of a certain portion of the English garrison. The intelligence was at once conveyed to her Majesty's Government by Sir Edward Norris, and they determined to take a lesson from past experience. Norris was at once informed that in view of the attack which he apprehended, his garrison should be strengthened by five hundred men under Sir Conyers Clifford from certain companies in Flushing, and that other reinforcements should be sent from the English troops in Normandy. The governor was ordered to look well after his captains and soldiers, to remind them, in the queen's name, of their duty to herself and to the States, to bid all beware of sullying the English name, to make close investigations into any possible intrigues of the garrison with the enemy, and, should any culprits be found, to bring them at once to condign punishment.

The queen, too, determined that there should be no blighting of English honour, if she could prevent it by her warnings, indited with her own hand a characteristic letter to Sir Edward Norris, to accompany the more formal despatch of Lord Burghley. Thus it ran "Ned!—

"Though you have some tainted sheep among your flock, let not that serve for excuse for the rest. We trust you are so carefully regarded as nought shall be left for your excuses, but either ye lack heart or want will; for of fear we will not make mention, as that our soul abhors, and we assure ourselves you will never discern suspicion of it. Now or never let for the honour of us and our nation, each man be so much of bolder heart as their cause is good, and their honour must be according, remembering the old goodness of our God, who never yet made us fail His needful help, who ever bless you as I with my prince's hand beseech Him."

The warnings and preparations proved sufficiently effective, and the great schemes with which the new royal governor of the Netherlands was supposed to be full—a mere episode in which was the conquest of Ostend—seemed not so formidable as their shadows had indicated. There was, in the not very distant future, to be a siege of Ostend, which the world would not soon forget, but perhaps the place would not yield to a sudden assault. Its resistance, on the contrary, might prove more protracted than was

then thought possible. But the chronicle of events must not be anticipated. For the present, Ostend was safe.

Page 1988

Early in the following spring, Verdugo again appeared before Coeworden in force. It was obvious that the great city of Groningen, the mistress of all the north-eastern provinces, would soon be attacked, and Coeworden was the necessary base of any operations against the place. Fortunately for the States, William Lewis had in the preceding autumn occupied and fortified the only avenue through the Bourtange morass, so that when Verdugo sat down before Coeworden, it was possible for Maurice, by moving rapidly, to take the royal governor at a disadvantage.

Verdugo had eight thousand picked troops, including two thousand Walloon cavalry, troopers who must have been very formidable, if they were to be judged by the prowess of one of their captains, Gaucier by name. This obedient Netherlander was in the habit of boasting that he had slain four hundred and ten men with his own hand, including several prisoners and three preachers; but the rest of those warriors were not so famed for their martial achievements.

The peril, however, was great, and Prince Maurice, trifling not a moment, threw himself with twelve thousand infantry, Germans, Frisians, Scotch, English, and Hollanders, and nearly two thousand horse, at once upon the road between the Vecht and the Bourtange morass. On the 6th of May, Verdugo found the States' commander-in-chief trenched and impregnable, squarely established upon his line of communications. He reconnoitred, called a council of war, and decided that to assail him were madness; to remain, destruction. On the night of the 6th of May, he broke up his camp and stole away in the darkness, without sound of drum or trumpet, leaving all his fortifications and burning all his huts.

Thus had Maurice, after showing the world how strong places were to be reduced, given a striking exhibition of the manner in which they were to be saved.

Coeworden, after thirty-one weeks' investment, was relieved.

The stadholder now marched upon Groningen. This city was one of the most splendid and opulent of all the Netherland towns. Certainly it should have been one of the most ancient in Europe, since it derived its name—according to that pains-taking banker, Francis Guicciardini—"from Grun, a Trojan gentleman," who, nevertheless, according to Munster, was "a Frenchman by birth."—"Both theories, however, might be true," added the conscientious Florentine, "as the French have always claimed to be descended from the relics of Troy." A simpler-minded antiquary might have babbled of green fields, since 'groenighe,' or greenness, was a sufficiently natural appellation for a town surrounded as was Groningen on the east and west by the greenest and fattest of pastures. In population it was only exceeded by Antwerp and Amsterdam. Situate on the line where upper and nether Germany blend into one, the capital of a great province whose very name was synonymous with liberty, and whose hardy sons had clone fierce battle with

Page 1989

despotism in every age, so long as there had been human record of despotism and of battles, Groningen had fallen into the hands of the foreign foe, not through the prowess of the Spaniard but the treason of the Netherlander. The baseness of the brilliant, trusted, valiant, treacherous young Renneberg has been recorded on a previous page of these volumes. For thirteen years long the republic had chafed at this acquisition of the hated enemy within its very heart. And now the day had come when a blow should be struck for its deliverance by the ablest soldier that had ever shown himself in those regions, one whom the commonwealth had watched over from his cradle.

For in Groningen there was still a considerable party in favour of the Union, although the treason of Renneberg had hitherto prevented both city and province from incorporating themselves in the body politic of the United Netherlands. Within the precincts were five hundred of Verdugo's veterans under George Lanckema, stationed at a faubourg called Schuytendiess. In the city there was, properly speaking, no garrison, for the citizens in the last few years had come to value themselves on their fidelity to church and king, and to take a sorry pride in being false to all that was noble in their past. Their ancestors had wrested privilege after privilege at the sword's point from the mailed hands of dukes and emperors, until they were almost a self-governing republic; their courts of justice recognizing no appeal to higher powers, even under the despotic sway of Charles V. And now, under the reign of his son, and in the feebler days of that reign, the capital of the free Frisians—the men whom their ancient pagan statutes had once declared to be "free so long as the wind blew out of the clouds"—relied upon the trained bands of her burghers enured to arms and well-provided with all munitions of war to protect her, not against foreign tyranny nor domestic sedition, but against liberty and against law.

For the representative of the most ancient of the princely houses of Europe, a youth whose ancestors had been emperors when the forefathers of Philip, long-descended as he was, were but country squires, was now knocking at their gates. Not as a conqueror and a despot, but as the elected first magistrate and commander-in-chief of the freest commonwealth in the world, Maurice of Nassau, at the head of fifteen thousand Netherlanders, countrymen of their own, now summoned the inhabitants of the town and province to participate with their fellow citizens in all the privileges and duties of the prosperous republic.

It seemed impossible that such an appeal could be resisted by force of arms. Rather it would seem that the very walls should have fallen at his feet at the first blast of the trumpet; but there was military honour, there was religious hatred, there was the obstinacy of party. More than all, there were half a dozen Jesuits within the town, and to those ablest of generals in times of civil war it was mainly owing that the siege of Groningen was protracted longer than under other circumstances would have been possible.

Page 1990

It is not my purpose to describe in detail the scientific operations during the sixty-five days between the 20th May and the 24th July. Again the commander-in-chief enlightened the world by an exhibition of a more artistic and humane style of warfare than previously to his appearance on the military stage had been known. But the daily phenomena of the Leaguer—although they have been minutely preserved by most competent eyewitnesses—are hardly entitled to a place except in special military histories where, however, they should claim the foremost rank.

The fortifications of the city were of the most splendid and substantial character known to the age. The ditches, the ravelins, the curtains, the towers were as thoroughly constructed as the defences of any place in Europe. It was therefore necessary that Maurice and his cousin Lewis should employ all their learning, all their skill, and their best artillery to reduce this great capital of the Eastern Netherlands. Again the scientific coil of approaches wound itself around and around the doomed stronghold; again were constructed the galleries, the covered ways, the hidden mines, where soldiers, transformed to gnomes, burrowed and fought within the bowels of the earth; again that fatal letter Y advanced slowly under ground, stretching its deadly prongs nearer and nearer up to the walls; and again the system of defences against a relieving force was so perfectly established that Verdugo or Mansfield, with what troops they could muster, seemed as powerless as the pewter soldiers with which Maurice in his boyhood—not yet so long passed away—was wont to puzzle over the problems which now practically engaged his early manhood. Again, too, strangely enough, it is recorded that Philip Nassau, at almost the same period of the siege as in that of Gertruydenberg, signalized himself by a deed of drunken and superfluous daring. This time the dinner party was at the quarters of Count Solms, in honour of the Prince of Anhalt, where, after potations pottle deep, Count Philip rushed from the dinner-table to the breach, not yet thoroughly practicable, of the north ravelin, and, entirely without armour, mounted pike in hand to the assault, proposing to carry the fort by his own unaided exertions. Another officer, one Captain Vaillant, still more beside himself than was the count, inspired him to these deeds of valour by assuring him that the mine was to be sprung under the ravelin that afternoon, and that it was a plot on the part of the Holland boatmen to prevent the soldiers who had been working so hard and so long in the mines from taking part in the honours of the assault. The count was with difficulty brought off with a whole skin and put to bed. Yet despite these disgraceful pranks there is no doubt that a better and braver officer than he was hardly to be found even among the ten noble Nassaus who at that moment were fighting for the cause of Dutch liberty—fortunately with more sobriety than he at all times displayed.

Page 1991

On the following day, Prince Maurice, making a reconnoissance of the works with his usual calmness, yet with the habitual contempt of personal danger which made so singular a contrast with the cautious and painstaking characteristics of his strategy, very narrowly escaped death. A shot from the fort struck so hard upon the buckler under cover of which he was taking his observations as to fell him to the ground. Sir Francis Vere, who was with the prince under the same buckler, likewise measured his length in the trench, but both escaped serious injury.

Pauli, one of the States commissioners present in the camp, wrote to Barneveld that it was to be hoped that the accident might prove a warning to his Excellency. He had repeatedly remonstrated with him, he said, against his reckless exposure of himself to unnecessary danger, but he was so energetic and so full of courage that it was impossible to restrain him from being everywhere every day.

Three days later, the letter Y did its work. At ten o'clock 15 July, of the night of the 15th July, Prince Maurice ordered the mines to be sprung, when the north ravelin was blown into the air, and some forty of the garrison with it. Two of them came flying into the besiegers' camp, and, strange to say, one was alive and sound. The catastrophe finished the sixty-five days' siege, the breach was no longer defensible, the obstinacy of the burghers was exhausted, and capitulation followed. In truth, there had been a subterranean intrigue going on for many weeks, which was almost as effective as the mine. A certain Jan to Boer had been going back and forth between camp and city, under various pretexts and safe-conducts, and it had at last appeared that the Jesuits and the five hundred of Verdugo's veterans were all that prevented Groningen from returning to the Union. There had been severe fighting within the city itself, for the Jesuits had procured the transfer of the veterans from the faubourg to the town itself, and the result of all these operations, political, military, and jesuitical, was that on 22nd July articles of surrender were finally agreed upon between Maurice and a deputation from the magistrates, the guilds, and commander Lanckema.

The city was to take its place thenceforth as a member of the Union. William Lewis, already stadholder of Friesland for the united States, was to be recognised as chief magistrate of the whole province, which was thus to retain all its ancient privileges, laws, and rights of self-government, while it exchanged its dependence on a distant, foreign, and decaying despotism for incorporation with a young and vigorous commonwealth.

It was arranged that no religion but the reformed religion, as then practised in the united republic, should be publicly exercised in the province, but that no man should be questioned as to his faith, or troubled in his conscience: Cloisters and ecclesiastical property were to remain 'in statu quo,' until the States-General should come to a definite conclusion on these subjects.

Page 1992

Universal amnesty was proclaimed for all offences and quarrels. Every citizen or resident foreigner was free to remain in or to retire from the town or province, with full protection to his person and property, and it was expressly provided in the articles granted to Lanckema that his soldiers should depart with arms and baggage, leaving to Prince Maurice their colours only, while the prince furnished sufficient transportation for their women and their wounded. The property of Verdugo, royal stadholder of the province, was to be respected, and to remain in the city, or to be taken thence under safe conduct, as might be preferred.

Ten thousand cannon-shot had been fired against the city. The cost of powder and shot consumed was estimated at a hundred thousand florins. Four hundred of the besiegers had been killed, and a much larger number wounded. The army had been further weakened by sickness and numerous desertions. Of the besieged, three hundred soldiers in all were killed, and a few citizens.

Thirty-six cannon were taken, besides mortars, and it was said that eight hundred tons of powder, and plenty of other ammunition and provisions were found in the place.

On the 23rd July Maurice and William Lewis entered the city. Some of the soldiers were disappointed at the inexorable prohibition of pillage; but it was the purpose of Maurice, as of the States-General, to place the sister province at once in the unsullied possession of the liberty and the order for which the struggle with Spain had, been carried on so long. If the limitation of public religious worship seemed harsh, it should be remembered that Romanism in a city occupied by Spanish troops had come to mean unmitigated hostility to the republic. In the midst of civil war, the hour for that religious liberty which was the necessary issue of the great conflict had not yet struck. It was surely something gained for humanity that no man should be questioned at all as to his creed in countries where it was so recently the time-honoured practice to question him on the rack, and to burn him if the answer was objectionable to the inquirer.

It was something that the holy Inquisition had been for ever suppressed in the land. It must be admitted, likewise, that the terms of surrender and the spectacle of re-established law and order which succeeded the capture of Groningen furnished a wholesome contrast to the scenes of ineffable horror that had been displayed whenever a Dutch town had fallen into the hands of Philip.

And thus the commonwealth of the United Netherlands, through the practical military genius and perseverance of Maurice and Lewis William, and the substantial statesmanship of Barneveld and his colleagues, had at last rounded itself into definite shape; while in all directions toward which men turned their eyes, world-empire, imposing and gorgeous as it had seemed for an interval, was vanishing before its votaries like a mirage. The republic, placed on the solid foundations of civil liberty, self-government, and reasonable law, was steadily consolidating itself.

Page 1993

No very prominent movements were undertaken by the forces of the Union during the remainder of the year. According to the agreements with Henry *iv*. it had been necessary to provide that monarch with considerable assistance to carry on his new campaigns, and it was therefore difficult for Maurice to begin for the moment upon the larger schemes which he had contemplated.

Meantime the condition of the obedient Netherlands demands a hasty glance.

On the death of brother Alexander the Capuchin, Fuentes produced a patent by which Peter Ernest Mansfeld was provisionally appointed governor, in case the post should become vacant. During the year which followed, that testy old campaigner had indulged himself in many petty feuds with all around him, but had effected, as we have seen, very little to maintain the king's authority either in the obedient or disobedient provinces.

His utter incompetency soon became most painfully apparent. His more than puerile dependence upon his son, and the more than paternal severity exercised over him by Count Charles, were made manifest to all the world. The son ruled the trembling but peevish old warrior with an iron rod, and endless was their wrangling with Fuentes and all the other Spaniards. Between the querulousness of the one and the ferocity of the other, poor Fuentes became sick of his life.

"'Tis a diabolical genius, this count Charles," said Ybarra, "and so full of ambition that he insists on governing everybody just as he rules his father. As for me, until the archduke comes I am a fish out of water."

The true successor to Farnese was to be, the Archduke Ernest, one of the many candidates for the hand of the Infanta, and for the throne of that department of the Spanish dominions which was commonly called France. Should Philip not appropriate the throne without further scruple, in person, it was on the, whole decided that his favorite nephew should be the satrap of that outlying district of the Spanish empire. In such case obedient France might be annexed to obedient Netherlands, and united under the sway of Archduke Ernest.

But these dreams had proved in the cold air of reality but midsummer madness. When the name of the archduke was presented to the estates as King Ernest I. of France, even the most unscrupulous and impassioned Leaguers of that country fairly hung their heads. That a foreign prince, whose very name had never been before heard of by the vast bulk of the French population, should be deliberately placed upon the throne of St. Louis and Hugh Capet, was a humiliation hard to defend, profusely as Philip had scattered the Peruvian and Mexican dollars among the great ones of the nation, in order to accomplish his purpose.

So Archduke Ernest, early in the year 1594, came to Brussels, but he came as a gloomy, disappointed man. To be a bachelor-governor of the impoverished, exhausted,

half-rebellious, and utterly forlorn little remnant of the Spanish Netherlands, was a different position from that of husband of Clara Isabella and king of France, on which his imagination had been feeding so long.

Page 1994

For nearly the whole twelvemonth subsequent to the death of Farnese, the Spanish envoy to the Imperial court had been endeavouring to arrange for the departure of the archduke to his seat of government in the Netherlands. The prince himself was willing enough, but there were many obstacles on the part of the emperor and his advisers. “Especially there is one very great impossibility,” said San Clemente, “and that is the poverty of his Highness, which is so great that my own is not greater in my estate. So I don’t see how he can stir a step without money. Here they’ll not furnish him with a penny, and for himself he possesses nothing but debts.” The emperor was so little pleased with the adventure that in truth, according to the same authority, he looked upon the new viceroy’s embarrassments with considerable satisfaction, so that it was necessary for Philip to provide for his travelling expenses.

Ernest was next brother of the Emperor Rudolph, and as intensely devoted to the interests of the Roman Church as was that potentate himself, or even his uncle Philip.

He was gentle, weak, melancholy, addicted to pleasure, a martyr to the gout. He brought no soldiers to the provinces, for the emperor, threatened with another world-empire on his pagan flank, had no funds nor troops to send to the assistance of his Christian brother-in-law and uncle. Moreover, it may be imagined that Rudolph, despite the bonds of religion and consanguinity, was disposed to look coldly on the colossal projects of Philip.

So Ernest brought no troops, but he brought six hundred and seventy gentlemen, pages, and cooks, and five hundred and thirty-four horses, not to charge upon the rebellious Dutchmen withal, but to draw coaches and six.

There was trouble enough prepared for the new governor at his arrival. The great Flemish and Walloon nobles were quarrelling fiercely with the Spaniards and among themselves for office and for precedence. Arschot and his brother Havre both desired the government of Flanders; so did Arenberg. All three, as well as other gentlemen, were scrambling for the majordomo’s office in Ernest’s palace. Havre wanted the finance department as well, but Ybarra, who was a financier, thought the public funds in his hands would be in a perilous condition, inasmuch as he was provinces was accounted the most covetous man in all the provinces.

So soon as the archduke was known to be approaching the capital there was a most ludicrous race run by all these grandees, in order to be the first to greet his Highness. While Mansfeld and Fuentes were squabbling, as usual, Arschot got the start of both, and arrived at Treves. Then the decrepit Peter Ernest struggled as far as Luxembourg, while Fuentes posted on to Namur. The archduke was much perplexed as to the arranging of all these personages on the day of his entrance into Brussels. In the council of state it was still worse. Arschot claimed the

Page 1995

first place as duke and as senior member, Peter Ernest demanded it as late governor-general and because of his grey hairs. Never was imperial highness more disturbed, never was clamour for loaves and fishes more deafening. The caustic financier—whose mind was just then occupied with the graver matter of assassination on a considerable scale—looked with profound contempt at the spectacle thus presented to him. "There has been the devil's own row," said he, "between these counts about offices, and also about going out to receive the most serene archduke. I have had such work with them that by the salvation of my soul I swear if it were to last a fortnight longer I would go off afoot to Spain, even if I were sure of dying in jail after I got there. I have reconciled the two counts (Fuentes and Mansfeld) with each other a hundred times, and another hundred times they have fallen out again, and behaved themselves with such vulgarity that I blushed for them. They are both to blame, but at any rate we have now got the archduke housed, and he will get us out of this embarrassment."

The archduke came with rather a prejudice against the Spaniards—the result doubtless of his disappointment in regard to France—and he manifested at first an extreme haughtiness to those of that nation with whom he came in contact. A Castilian noble of high rank, having audience with him on one occasion, replaced his hat after salutation, as he had been accustomed to do—according to the manner of grandees of Spain—during the government of Farnese. The hat was rudely struck from his head by the archduke's chamberlain, and he was himself ignominiously thrust out of the presence. At another time an interview was granted to two Spanish gentlemen who had business to transact. They made their appearance in magnificent national costume, splendidly embroidered in gold. After a brief hearing they were dismissed, with appointment of another audience for a few days later. When they again presented themselves they found the archduke with his court jester standing at his side, the buffoon being attired in a suit precisely similar to their own, which in the interval had been prepared by the court tailor.

Such amenities as these did not increase the popularity of Ernest with the high-spirited Spaniards, nor was it palatable to them that it should be proposed to supersede the old fighting Portuguese, Verdugo, as governor and commander-in-chief for the king in Friesland, by Frederic van den Berg, a renegade Netherlander, unworthy cousin of the Nassaus, who had never shown either military or administrative genius.

Nor did he succeed in conciliating the Flemings or the Germans by these measures. In truth he was, almost without his own knowledge, under the controlling influence of Fuentes, the most unscrupulous and dangerous Spaniard of them all, while his every proceeding was closely watched not only by Diego and Stephen Ybarra, but even by Christoval de Moura, one of Philip's two secretaries of state who at this crisis made a visit to Brussels.

Page 1996

These men were indignant at the imbecility of the course pursued in the obedient provinces. They knew that the incapacity of the Government to relieve the sieges of Gertruydenberg and Groningen had excited the contempt of Europe, and was producing a most damaging effect an Spanish authority throughout Christendom. They were especially irritated by the presence of the arch-intrigues, Mayenne, in Brussels, even after all his double dealings had been so completely exposed that a blind man could have read them. Yet there was Mayenne, consorting with the archduke, and running up a great bill of sixteen thousand florins at the hotel, which the royal paymaster declined to settle for want of funds, notwithstanding Ernest's order to that effect, and there was no possibility of inducing the viceroy to arrest him, much as he had injured and defrauded the king.

How severely Ybarra and Feria denounced Mayenne has been seen; but remonstrances about this and other grave mistakes of administration were lost upon Ernest, or made almost impossible by his peculiar temper. "If I speak of these things to his Highness," said Ybarra, "he will begin to cry, as he always does."

Ybarra, however, thought it his duty secretly to give the king frequent information as to the blasted and forlorn condition of the provinces. "This sick man will die in our arms," he said, "without our wishing to kill him." He also left no doubt in the royal mind as to the utter incompetency of the archduke for his office. Although he had much Christianity, amiability, and good intentions, he was so unused to business, so slow and so lazy, so easily persuaded by those around him, as to be always falling into errors. He was the servant of his own servants, particularly of those least disposed to the king's service and most attentive to their own interests. He had endeavoured to make himself beloved by the natives of the country, while the very reverse of this had been the result.

"As to his agility and the strength of his body," said the Spaniard, as if he were thinking of certain allegories which were to mark the archduke's triumphal entry, "they are so deficient as to leave him unfit for arms. I consider him incapable of accompanying an army to the field, and we find him so new to all such affairs as constitute government and the conduct of warlike business, that he could not steer his way without some one to enlighten and direct him."

It was sometimes complained of in those days—and the thought has even prolonged itself until later times—that those republicans of the United Netherlands had done and could do great things; but that, after all, there was no grandeur about them. Certainly they had done great things. It was something to fight the Ocean for ages, and patiently and firmly to shut him out from his own domain. It was something to extinguish the Spanish Inquisition—a still more cruel and devouring enemy than the sea. It was something that the fugitive spirit of civil and religious liberty had found at last its most substantial and steadfast home upon those storm-washed shoals and shifting sandbanks.

Page 1997

It was something to come to the rescue of England in her great agony, and help to save her from invasion. It was something to do more than any nation but England, and as much as she, to assist Henry the Huguenot to the throne of his ancestors and to preserve the national unity of France which its own great ones had imperilled. It was something to found two magnificent universities, cherished abodes of science and of antique lore, in the midst of civil commotions and of resistance to foreign oppression. It was something, at the same period, to lay the foundation of a systew of common schools—so cheap as to be nearly free—for rich and poor alike, which, in the words of one of the greatest benefactors to the young republic, “would be worth all the soldiers, arsenals, armouries, munitions, and alliances in the world.” It was something to make a revolution, as humane as it was effective, in military affairs, and to create an army whose camps were European academies. It was something to organize, at the same critical period, on the most skilful and liberal scale, to carry out with unexampled daring, sagacity, and fortitude, great voyages of discovery to the polar regions, and to open new highways for commerce, new treasures for science. Many things of this nature had been done by the new commonwealth; but, alas! she did not drape herself melodramatically, nor stalk about with heroic wreath and cothurn. She was altogether without grandeur.

When Alva had gained his signal victories, and followed them up by those prodigious massacres which, but for his own and other irrefragable testimony, would seem too monstrous for belief, he had erected a colossal statue to himself, attired in the most classical of costumes, and surrounded with the most mythological of attributes. Here was grandeur. But William the Silent, after he had saved the republic, for which he had laboured during his whole lifetime and was destined to pour out his heart’s blood, went about among the brewers and burghers with unbuttoned doublet and woollen bargeman’s waistcoat. It was justly objected to his clothes, by the euphuistic Fulke Greville, that a meanborn student of the Inns of Court would have been ashamed to walk about London streets in them.

And now the engineering son of that shabbily-dressed personage had been giving the whole world lessons in the science of war, and was fairly perfecting the work which William and his great contemporaries had so well begun. But if all this had been merely doing great things without greatness, there was one man in the Netherlands who knew what grandeur was. He was not a citizen of the disobedient republic, however, but a loyal subject of the obedient provinces, and his name was John Baptist Houwaerts, an eminent schoolmaster of Brussels. He was still more eminent as a votary of what was called “Rhetoric” and as an arranger of triumphal processions and living pictures.

Page 1998

The arrival of Archduke Ernest at the seat of the provincial Government offered an opportunity, which had long been wanting, for a display of John Baptist's genius. The new viceroy was in so shattered a condition of health, so crippled with the gout, as to be quite unable to stand, and it required the services of several lackeys to lift him into and out of his carriage. A few days of repose therefore were indispensable to him before he could make his "joyous entrance" into the capital. But the day came at last, and the exhibition was a masterpiece.

It might have seemed that the abject condition of the Spanish provinces—desolate, mendicant, despairing—would render holiday making impossible. But although almost every vestige of the ancient institutions had vanished from the obedient Netherlands as a reward for their obedience; although to civil and religious liberty, law, order, and a thriving commercial and manufacturing existence, such as had been rarely witnessed in the world, had succeeded the absolute tyranny of Jesuits, universal beggary, and a perennial military mutiny—setting Government at defiance and plundering the people—-there was one faithful never deserted Belgica, and that was Rhetoric.

Neither the magnificence nor the pedantry of the spectacles by which the entry of the mild and inefficient Ernest into Brussels and Antwerp was now solemnized had ever been surpassed. The town councils, stimulated by hopes absolutely without foundation as to great results to follow the advent of the emperor's brother, had voted large sums and consumed many days in anxious deliberation upon the manner in which they should be expended so as most to redound to the honour of Ernest and the reputation of the country.

In place of the "bloody tragedies of burning, murdering, and ravishing," of which the provinces had so long been the theatre, it was resolved that, "Rhetoric's sweet comedies, amorous jests, and farces," should gladden all eyes and hearts. A stately procession of knights and burghers in historical and mythological costumes, followed by ships, dromedaries, elephants, whales, giants, dragons, and other wonders of the sea and shore, escorted the archduke into the city. Every street and square was filled with triumphal arches, statues and platforms, on which the most ingenious and thoroughly classical living pictures were exhibited. There was hardly an eminent deity of Olympus, or hero of ancient history, that was not revived and made visible to mortal eyes in the person of Ernestus of Austria.

On a framework fifty-five feet high and thirty-three feet in breadth he was represented as Apollo hurling his darts at an enormous Python, under one of whose fore-paws struggled an unfortunate burgher, while the other clutched a whole city; Tellus, meantime, with her tower on her head, kneeling anxious and imploring at the feet of her deliverer. On another stage Ernest assumed the shape of Perseus; Belgica that of

Page 1999

the bound and despairing Andromeda. On a third, the interior of Etna was revealed, when Vulcan was seen urging his Cyclops to forge for Ernest their most tremendous thunderbolts with which to smite the foes of the provinces, those enemies being of course the English and the Hollanders. Venus, the while, timidly presented an arrow to her husband, which he was requested to sharpen, in order that when the wars were over Cupid, therewith might pierce the heart of some beautiful virgin, whose charms should reward Ernest—fortunately for the female world, still a bachelor—for his victories and his toils.

The walls of every house were hung with classic emblems and inscribed with Latin verses. All the pedagogues of Brussels and Antwerp had been at work for months, determined to amaze the world with their dithyrambics and acrostics, and they had outdone themselves.

Moreover, in addition to all these theatrical spectacles and pompous processions—-accompanied as they were by blazing tar-barrels, flying dragons, and leagues of flaring torches—John Baptist, who had been director-in-chief of all the shows successively arranged to welcome Don John of Austria, Archduke Matthias, Francis of Alengon, and even William of Orange, into the capital, had prepared a feast of a specially intellectual character for the new governor-general.

The pedant, according to his own account, so soon as the approach of Ernest had been announced, fell straightway into a trance. While he was in that condition, a beautiful female apparition floated before his eyes, and, on being questioned, announced her name to be Moralization. John Baptist begged her to inform him whether it were true, as had been stated, that Jupiter had just sent Mercury to the Netherlands. The phantom, correcting his mistake, observed that the king of gods and men had not sent Hermes but the Archduke Ernestus, beloved of the three Graces, favourite of the nine Muses, and, in addition to these advantages, nephew and brother-in-law of the King of Spain, to the relief of the suffering provinces. The Netherlands, it was true, for their religious infidelity, had justly incurred great disasters and misery; but benignant Jove, who, to the imagination of this excited Fleming, seemed to have been converted to Catholicism while still governing the universe, had now sent them in mercy a deliverer. The archduke would speedily relieve “bleeding Belgica” from her sufferings, bind up her wounds, and annihilate her enemies. The spirit further informed the poet that the forests of the Low Countries—so long infested by brigands, wood-beggars, and malefactors of all kinds—would thenceforth swarm with “nymphs, rabbits, hares, and animals of that nature.”

Page 2000

A vision of the conquering Ernest, attended by “eight-and-twenty noble and pleasant females, marching two and two, half naked, each holding a torch in one hand and a laurel-wreath in the other,” now swept before the dreamer’s eyes. He naturally requested the “discreet spirit” to mention the names of this bevy of imperfectly attired ladies thronging so lovingly around the fortunate archduke, and was told that “they were the eight-and-twenty virtues which chiefly characterized his serene Highness.” Prominent in this long list, and they were all faithfully enumerated, were “Philosophy, Audacity, Acrimony, Virility, Equity, Piety, Velocity, and Alacrity.” The two last-mentioned qualities could hardly be attributed to the archduke in his decrepit condition, except in an intensely mythological sense. Certainly, they would have been highly useful virtues to him at that moment. The prince who had just taken Gertruydenberg, and was then besieging Groningen, was manifesting his share of audacity, velocity, and other good gifts on even a wider platform than that erected for Ernest by John Baptist Houwaerts; and there was an admirable opportunity for both to develope their respective characteristics for the world’s judgment.

Meantime the impersonation of the gentle and very gouty invalid as Apollo, as Perseus, as the feather-heeled Mercury, was highly applauded by the burghers of Brussels.

And so the dreamer dreamed on, and the discreet nymph continued to discourse, until John Baptist, starting suddenly from his trance beheld that it was all a truth and no vision. Ernest was really about to enter the Netherlands, and with him the millennium. The pedant therefore proceeded to his desk, and straightway composed the very worst poem that had ever been written in any language, even Flemish.

There were thousands of lines in it, and not a line without a god or a goddess.

Mars, Nemesis, and Ate, Pluto, Rhadamanthus, and Minos, the Fates and the Furies, together with Charon, Calumnia, Bellona, and all such objectionable divinities, were requested to disappear for ever from the Low Countries; while in their stead were confidently invoked Jupiter, Apollo, Triptolemus, and last, though not least, Rhetorica.

Enough has been said of this raree-show to weary the reader’s patience, but not more than enough to show the docile and enervated nature of this portion of a people who had lost everything for which men cherish their fatherland, but who could still find relief —after thirty years of horrible civil war in painted pageantry, Latin versification, and the classical dictionary.

Yet there was nothing much more important achieved by the archduke in the brief period for which his administration was destined to endure. Three phenomena chiefly marked his reign, but his own part in the three was rather a passive than an active one—mutiny, assassination, and negotiation—the two last attempted on a considerable scale but ending abortively.

Page 2001

It is impossible to exaggerate the misery of the obedient provinces at this epoch. The insane attempt of the King of Spain, with such utterly inadequate machinery, to conquer the world has been sufficiently dilated upon. The Spanish and Italian and Walloon soldiers were starving in Brabant and Flanders in order that Spanish gold might be poured into the bottomless pit of the Holy League in France.

The mutiny that had broken forth the preceding year in Artois and Hamault was now continued on a vast scale in Brabant. Never had that national institution—a Spanish mutiny—been more thoroughly organized, more completely carried out in all its details. All that was left of the famous Spanish discipline and military science in this their period of rapid decay, seemed monopolized by the mutineers. Some two thousand choice troops (horse and foot), Italians and Spanish, took possession of two considerable cities, Sichem and Arschot, and ultimately concentrated themselves at Sichem, which they thoroughly fortified. Having chosen their Eletto and other officers they proceeded regularly to business. To the rallying point came disaffected troops of all nations from far and near. Never since the beginning of the great war had there been so extensive a military rebellion, nor one in which so many veteran officers, colonels, captains, and subalterns took part. The army of Philip had at last grown more dangerous to himself than to the Hollanders.

The council at Brussels deliberated anxiously upon the course to be pursued, and it was decided at last to negotiate with instead of attacking them. But it was soon found that the mutineers were as hard to deal with as were the republicans on the other side the border. They refused to hear of anything short of complete payment of the enormous arrears due to them, with thorough guarantees and hostages that any agreement made between themselves and the archduke should be punctually carried out. Meanwhile they ravaged the country far and near, and levied their contributions on towns and villages, up to the very walls of Brussels, and before the very eyes of the viceroy.

Moreover they entered into negotiation with Prince Maurice of Nassau, not offering to enlist under his flag, but asking for protection against the king in exchange for a pledge meanwhile not to serve his cause. At last the archduke plucked up a heart and sent some troops against the rebels, who had constructed two forts on the river Demer near the city of Sichem. In vain Velasco, commander of the expedition, endeavoured to cut off the supplies for these redoubts. The vigour and audacity of the rebel cavalry made the process impossible. Velasco then attempted to storm the lesser stronghold of the two, but was repulsed with the loss of two hundred killed. Among these were many officers, one of whom, Captain Porto Carrero, was a near relative of Fuentes. After a siege, Velasco, who was a marshal of the camp of considerable distinction, succeeded in driving the mutineers out of the forts; who, finding their position thus weakened, renewed their negotiations with Maurice. They at last obtained permission from the prince to remain under the protection of Gertruydenberg and Breda until they could ascertain what decision the archduke would take. More they did not ask of Maurice, nor did he require more of them.

Page 2002

The mutiny, thus described in a few lines, had occupied nearly a year, and had done much to paralyze for that period all the royal operations in the Netherlands. In December the rebellious troops marched out of Sichem in perfect order, and came to Langstraet within the territory of the republic.

The archduke now finding himself fairly obliged to treat with them sent an offer of the same terms which had been proposed to mutineers on previous occasions. At first they flatly refused to negotiate at all, but at last, with the permission of Maurice, who conducted himself throughout with scrupulous delicacy, and made no attempts to induce them to violate their allegiance to the king, they received Count Belgioso, the envoy of the archduke. They held out for payment of all their arrears up to the last farthing, and insisted on a hostage of rank until the debt should be discharged. Full forgiveness of their rebellious proceedings was added as a matter of course. Their terms were accepted, and Francisco Padiglia was assigned as a hostage. They then established themselves, according to agreement, at Tirlemont, which they were allowed to fortify at the expense of the province and to hold until the money for their back wages could be scraped together. Meantime they received daily wages and rations from the Government at Brussels, including thirty stivers a day for each horseman, thirteen crowns a day for the Eletto, and ten crowns a day for each counsellor, making in all five hundred crowns a day. And here they remained, living exceedingly at their ease and enjoying a life of leisure for eighteen months, and until long after the death of the archduke, for it was not until the administration of Cardinal Albert that the funds, amounting to three hundred and sixty thousand crowns, could be collected.

These were the chief military exploits of the podagric Perseus in behalf of the Flemish Andromeda.

A very daring adventure was however proposed to the archduke. Philip calmly suggested that an expedition should be rapidly fitted out in Dunkirk, which should cross the channel, ascend the Thames as far as Rochester, and burn the English fleet. “I am informed by persons well acquainted with the English coast,” said the king, “that it would be an easy matter for a few quick-sailing vessels to accomplish this. Two or three thousand soldiers might be landed at Rochester who might burn or sink all the unarmed vessels they could find there, and the expedition could return and sail off again before the people of the country could collect in sufficient numbers to do them any damage.” The archduke was instructed to consult with Fuentes and Ybarra as to whether this little matter, thus parenthetically indicated, could be accomplished without too much risk and trouble.

Page 2003

Certainly it would seem as if the king believed in the audacity, virility, velocity, alacrity, and the rest of the twenty-eight virtues of his governor-general, even more seriously than did John Baptist Houwaerts. The unfortunate archduke would have needed to be, in all earnestness, a mythological demigod to do the work required of him. With the best part of his army formally maintained by him in recognised mutiny, with the great cities of the Netherlands yielding themselves to the republic with hardly an attempt on the part of the royal forces to relieve them, and with the country which he was supposed to govern, the very centre of the obedient provinces, ruined, sacked, eaten up by the soldiers of Spain; villages, farmhouses, gentlemen's castles, churches plundered; the male population exposed to daily butchery, and the women to outrages worse than death; it seemed like the bitterest irony to propose that he should seize that moment to outwit the English and Dutch sea-kings who were perpetually cruising in the channel, and to undertake a "beard-singeing" expedition such as even the dare-devil Drake would hardly have attempted.

Such madcap experiments might perhaps one day, in the distant future, be tried with reasonable success, but hardly at the beck of a Spanish king sitting in his easy chair a thousand miles off, nor indeed by the servants of any king whatever.

The plots of murder arranged in Brussels during this administration were on a far more extensive scale than were the military plans.

The Count of Fuentes, general superintendant of foreign affairs, was especially charged with the department of assassination. This office was no sinecure; for it involved much correspondence, and required great personal attention to minute details. Philip, a consummate artist in this branch of industry, had laid out a good deal of such work which he thought could best be carried out in and from the Netherlands. Especially it was desirable to take off, by poison or otherwise, Henry *iv*., Queen Elizabeth, Maurice of Nassau, Olden-Barneveld, St. Aldegonde, and other less conspicuous personages.

Henry's physician-in-chief, De la Riviere, was at that time mainly occupied with devising antidotes to poison, which he well knew was offered to his master on frequent occasions, and in the most insidious ways. Andrada, the famous Portuguese poisoner, amongst others is said, under direction of Fuentes and Ybarra, to have attempted his life by a nosegay of roses impregnated with so subtle a powder that its smell alone was relied upon to cause death, and De la Riviere was doing his best to search for a famous Saxon drug, called fable-powder, as a counter-poison. "The Turk alarms us, and well he may," said a diplomatic agent of Henry, "but the Spaniard allows us not to think of the Turk. And what a strange manner is this to exercise one's enmities and vengeance by having recourse to such damnable artifices, after force and arms have not succeeded, and to attack the person of princes by poisonings and assassinations."

Page 2004

A most elaborate attempt upon the life of Queen Elizabeth early in this year came near being successful. A certain Portuguese Jew, Dr. Lopez, had for some time been her physician-in-ordinary. He had first been received into her service on the recommendation of Don Antonio, the pretender, and had the reputation of great learning and skill. With this man Count Fuentes and Stephen Ybarra, chief of the financial department at Brussels, had a secret understanding. Their chief agent was Emanuel Andrada, who was also in close communication with Bernardino de Mendoza and other leading personages of the Spanish court. Two years previously, Philip, by the hands of Andrada, had sent a very valuable ring of rubies and diamonds as a present to Lopez, and the doctor had bound himself to do any service for the king of Spain that might be required of him. Andrada accordingly wrote to Mendoza that he had gained over this eminent physician, but that as Lopez was poor and laden with debt, a high price would be required for his work. Hereupon Fuentes received orders from the King of Spain to give the Jew all that he could in reason demand, if he would undertake to poison the queen.

It now became necessary to handle the matter with great delicacy, and Fuentes and Ybarra entered accordingly into a correspondence, not with Lopez, but with a certain Ferrara de Gama. These letters were entrusted to one Emanuel Lewis de Tinoco, secretly informed of the plot, for delivery to Ferrara. Fuentes charged Tinoco to cause Ferrara to encourage Lopez to poison her Majesty of England, that they might all have "a merry Easter." Lopez was likewise requested to inform the King of Spain when he thought he could accomplish the task. The doctor ultimately agreed to do the deed for fifty thousand crowns, but as he had daughters and was an affectionate parent, he stipulated for a handsome provision in marriage for those young ladies. The terms were accepted, but Lopez wished to be assured of the money first.

"Having once undertaken the work," said Lord Burghley, if he it were, "he was so greedy to perform it that he would ask Ferrara every day, 'When will the money come? I am ready to do the service if the answer were come out of Spain.'"

But Philip, as has been often seen, was on principle averse to paying for work before it had been done. Some delay occurring, and the secret, thus confided to so many, having floated as it were imperceptibly into the air, Tinoco was arrested on suspicion before he had been able to deliver the letters of Fuentes and Ybarra to Ferrara, for Ferrara, too, had been imprisoned before the arrival of Tinoco. The whole correspondence was discovered, and both Ferrara and Tinoco confessed the plot. Lopez, when first arrested, denied his guilt very stoutly, but being confronted with Ferrara, who told the whole story to his face in presence of the judges, he at last avowed the crime.

Page 2005

They were all condemned, executed, and quartered at London in the spring of 1594. The queen wished to send a special envoy to the archduke at Brussels, to complain that Secretary of State Cristoval de Moura, Count Fuentes, and Finance Minister Ybarra—all three then immediately about his person—were thus implicated in the plot against her life, to demand their punishment, or else, in case of refusals to convict the king and the archduke as accomplices in the crime. Safe conduct was requested for such an envoy, which was refused by Ernest as an insulting proposition both to his uncle and himself. The queen accordingly sent word to President Richardot by one of her council, that the whole story would be published, and this was accordingly done.

Early in the spring of this same year, a certain Renichon, priest and schoolmaster of Namur, was summoned from his school to a private interview with Count Berlaymont. That nobleman very secretly informed the priest that the King of, Spain wished to make use of him in an affair of great importance, and one which would be very profitable to himself. The pair then went together to Brussels, and proceeded straightway to the palace. They were secretly admitted to the apartments of the archduke, but the priest, meaning to follow his conductor into the private chamber, where he pretended to recognize the person of Ernest, was refused admittance. The door was, however, not entirely closed, and he heard, as he declared, the conversation between his Highness and Berlaymont, which was carried on partly in Latin and partly in Spanish. He heard them discussing the question—so he stated—of the recompense to be awarded for the business about to be undertaken, and after a brief conversation, distinctly understood the archduke to say, as the count was approaching the door, “I will satisfy him abundantly and with interest.”

Berlaymont then invited his clerical guest to supper—so ran his statement—and, after that repast was finished, informed him that he was requested by the archduke to kill Prince Maurice of Nassau. For this piece of work he was to receive one hundred Philip-dollars in hand, and fifteen thousand more, which were lying ready for him, so soon as the deed should be done.

The schoolmaster at first objected to the enterprise, but ultimately yielded to the persuasions of the count. He was informed that Maurice was a friendly, familiar gentleman, and that there would be opportunities enough for carrying out the project if he took his time. He was to buy a good pair of pistols and remove to the Hague, where he was to set up a school, and wait for the arrival of his accomplices, of whom there were six. Berlaymont then caused to be summoned and introduced to the pedagogue a man whom he described as one of the six. The new comer, hearing that Renichon had agreed to the propositions made to him, hailed him cordially as comrade and promised to follow him very soon into Holland. Berlaymont then observed that there were several personages to be made away with, besides Prince Maurice—especially Barneveld, and St. Aldegonde and that the six assassins had, since the time of the Duke of Parma, been kept in the pay of the King of Spain as nobles, to be employed as occasion should serve.

Page 2006

His new comrade accompanied Renichon to the canal boat, conversing by the way, and informed him that they were both to be sent to Leyden in order to entice away and murder the young brother of Maurice, Frederic Henry, then at school at that place, even as Philip William, eldest of all the brothers, had been kidnapped five-and-twenty years before from the same town.

Renichon then disguised himself as a soldier, proceeded to Antwerp, where he called himself Michael de Triviere, and thence made his way to Breda, provided with letters from Berlaymont. He was, however, arrested on suspicion not long after his arrival there, and upon trial the whole plot was discovered. Having unsuccessfully attempted to hang himself, he subsequently, without torture, made a full and minute confession, and was executed on the 3rd June, 1594.

Later in the year, one Pierre du Four, who had been a soldier both in the States and the French service, was engaged by General La Motte and Counsellor Assonleville to attempt the assassination of Prince Maurice. La Motte took the man to the palace, and pretended at least to introduce him to the chamber of the archduke, who was said to be lying ill in bed. Du Four was advised to enrol himself in the body-guard at the Hague, and to seek an opportunity when the prince went hunting, or was mounting his horse, or was coming from church, or at some such unguarded moment, to take a shot at him. "Will you do what I ask," demanded from the bed the voice of him who was said to be Ernest, "will you kill this tyrant?"—"I will," replied the soldier. "Then my son," was the parting benediction of the supposed archduke, "you will go straight to paradise."

Afterwards he received good advice from Assonleville, and was assured that if he would come and hear a mass in the royal chapel next morning, that religious ceremony would make him invisible when he should make his attempt on the life of Maurice, and while he should be effecting his escape. The poor wretch accordingly came next morning to chapel, where this miraculous mass was duly performed, and he then received a certain portion of his promised reward in ready money. He was also especially charged, in case he should be arrested, not to make a confession—as had been done by those previously employed in such work—as all complicity with him on part of his employers would certainly be denied.

The miserable dupe was arrested, convicted, executed; and of course the denial was duly made on the part of the archduke, La Motte, and Assonleville. It was also announced, on behalf of Ernest, that some one else, fraudulently impersonating his Highness, had lain in the bed to which the culprit had been taken, and every one must hope that the statement was a true one.

Enough has been given to show the peculiar school of statesmanship according to the precepts of which the internal concerns and foreign affairs of the obedient Netherlands were now administered. Poison and pistols in the hands of obscure priests and deserters were relied on to bring about great political triumphs, while the mutinous royal

armies, entrenched and defiant, were extorting capitulations from their own generals and their own sovereign upon his own soil.

Page 2007

Such a record as this seems rather like the exaggeration of a diseased fancy, seeking to pander to a corrupt public taste which feeds greedily upon horrors; but, unfortunately, it is derived from the register of high courts of justice, from diplomatic correspondence, and from the confessions, without torture or hope of free pardon, of criminals. For a crowned king and his high functionaries and generals to devote so much of their time, their energies, and their money to the murder of brother and sister sovereigns, and other illustrious personages, was not to make after ages in love with the monarchic and aristocratic system, at least as thus administered. Popular governments may be deficient in polish, but a system resting for its chief support upon bribery and murder cannot be considered lovely by any healthy mind. And this is one of the lessons to be derived from the history of Philip *ii*. and of the Holy League.

But besides mutiny and assassination there were also some feeble attempts at negotiation to characterize the Ernestian epoch at Brussels. The subject hardly needs more than a passing allusion.

Two Flemish juris-consults, Otto Hertius and Jerome Comans, offered their services to the archduke in the peacemaking department. Ernest accepted the proposition,—-although it was strongly opposed by Fuentes, who relied upon the more practical agency of Dr. Lopez, Andrada, Renichon, and the rest—and the peace-makers accordingly made their appearance at the Hague, under safe conduct, and provided with very conciliatory letters from his Highness to the States-General. In all ages and under all circumstances it is safe to enlarge, with whatever eloquence may be at command, upon the blessings of peace and upon the horrors of war; for the appeal is not difficult to make, and a response is certain in almost every human breast. But it is another matter to descend from the general to the particular, and to demonstrate how the desirable may be attained and the horrible averted. The letters of Ernest were full of benignity and affection, breathing a most ardent desire that the miserable war, now a quarter of a century old, should be then and there terminated. But not one atom of concession was offered, no whisper breathed that the republic, if it should choose to lay down its victorious arms, and renounce its dearly gained independence, should share any different fate from that under which it saw the obedient provinces gasping before its eyes. To renounce religious and political liberty and self-government, and to submit unconditionally to the authority of Philip *ii*. as administered by Ernest and Fuentes, was hardly to be expected as the result of the three years' campaigns of Maurice of Nassau.

The two doctors of law laid the affectionate common-places of the archduke before the States-General, each of them making, moreover, a long and flowery oration in which the same protestations of good will and hopes of future good-fellowship were distended to formidable dimensions by much windy rhetoric. The accusations which had been made against the Government of Brussels of complicity in certain projects of assassination were repelled with virtuous indignation.

Page 2008

The answer of the States-General was wrathful and decided. They informed the commissioners that they had taken up arms for a good cause and meant to retain them in their hands. They expressed their thanks for the expressions of good will which had been offered, but avowed their right to complain before God and the world of those who under pretext of peace were attempting to shed the innocent blood of Christians, and to procure the ruin and destruction of the Netherlands. To this end the state-council of Spain was more than ever devoted, being guilty of the most cruel and infamous proceedings and projects. They threw out a rapid and stinging summary of their wrongs; and denounced with scorn the various hollow attempts at negotiation during the preceding twenty-five years. Coming down to the famous years 1587 and 1588, they alluded in vehement terms to the fraudulent peace propositions which had been thrown as a veil over the Spanish invasion of England and the Armada; and they glanced at the mediation-projects of the emperor in 1591 at the desire of Spain, while armies were moving in force from Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands to crush the King of France, in order that Philip might establish his tyranny over all kings, princes, provinces, and republics. That the Spanish Government was secretly dealing with the emperor and other German potentates for the extension of his universal empire appeared from intercepted letters of the king—copies of which were communicated—from which it was sufficiently plain that the purpose of his Majesty was not to bestow peace and tranquillity upon the Netherlands. The names of Fuentes, Clemente, Ybarra, were sufficient in themselves to destroy any such illusion. They spoke in blunt terms of the attempt of Dr. Lopez to poison Queen Elizabeth, at the instigation of Count Fuentes for fifty thousand crowns to be paid by the King of Spain: they charged upon the same Fuentes and upon Ybarra that they had employed the same Andrada to murder the King of France with a nosegay of roses; and they alluded further to the revelations of Michael Renichon, who was to murder Maurice of Nassau and kidnap Frederic William, even as their father and brother had been already murdered and kidnapped.

For such reasons the archduke might understand by what persons and what means the good people of the Netherlands were deceived, and how difficult it was for the States to forget such lessons, or to imagine anything honest in the present propositions.

The States declared themselves, on the contrary, more called upon than ever before to be upon the watch against the stealthy proceedings of the Spanish council of state—-bearing in mind the late execrable attempts at assassination, and the open war which was still carried on against the King of France.

And although it was said that his Highness was displeased with such murderous and hostile proceedings, still it was necessary for the States to beware of the nefarious projects of the King of Spain and his council.

Page 2009

After the conversion of Henry *iv*. to the Roman Church had been duly accomplished that monarch had sent a secret envoy to Spain. The mission of this agent—De Varenne by name—excited intense anxiety and suspicion in England and Holland and among the Protestants of France and Germany. It was believed that Henry had not only made a proposition of a separate peace with Philip, but that he had formally but mysteriously demanded the hand of the Infanta in marriage. Such a catastrophe as this seemed to the heated imaginations of the great body of Calvinists throughout Europe, who had so faithfully supported the King of Navarre up to the moment of his great apostasy, the most cruel and deadly treachery of all. That the princess with the many suitors should come to reign over France after all—not as the bride of her own father, not as the queen-consort of Ernest the Habsburger or of Guise the Lorrainer, but as the lawful wife of Henry the Huguenot—seemed almost too astounding for belief, even amid the chances and changes of that astonishing epoch. Yet Duplessis Mornay avowed that the project was entertained, and that he had it from the very lips of the secret envoy who was to negotiate the marriage. "La Varenne is on his way to Spain," wrote Duplessis to the Duke of Bouillon, "in company with a gentleman of Don Bernardino de Mendoza, who brought the first overtures. He is to bring back the portrait of the Infanta. 'Tis said that the marriage is to be on condition that the Queen and the Netherlands are comprised in the peace, but you know that this cannot be satisfactorily arranged for those two parties. All this was once guess-work, but is now history."

That eminent diplomatist and soldier Mendoza had already on his return from France given the King of Spain to understand that there were no hopes of his obtaining the French crown either for himself or for his daughter, that all the money lavished on the chiefs of the League was thrown away, and that all their promises were idle wind. Mendoza in consequence had fallen into contempt at court, but Philip, observing apparently that there might have been something correct in his statements, had recently recalled him, and, notwithstanding his blindness and other infirmities, was disposed to make use of him in secret negotiations. Mendoza had accordingly sent a confidential agent to Henry *iv*. offering his good offices, now that the king had returned to the bosom of the Church.

This individual, whose name was Nunez, was admitted by De Bethune (afterwards the famous Due de Sully) to the presence of the king, but De Bethune, believing it probable that the Spaniard had been sent to assassinate Henry, held both the hands of the emissary during the whole interview, besides subjecting him to a strict personal visitation beforehand. Nunez stated that he was authorized to propose to his Majesty a marriage with the Infanta Clara Isabella, and Henry, much to the discontent of De Bethune, listened eagerly to the suggestion, and promised to send a secret agent to Spain to confer on the subject with Mendoza.

Page 2010

The choice he made of La Varenne, whose real name was Guillaume Fouquet, for this mission was still more offensive to De Bethune. Fouquet had originally been a cook in the service of Madame Catherine, and was famous for his talent for larding poultry, but he had subsequently entered the household of Henry, where he had been employed in the most degrading service which one man can render to another.

["La Varenne," said Madame Catherine on one occasion "tu as plus gagne ti porter les poulets de men frere, qu'a piquer les miens." Memoires de Sully, Liv. vi. p. 296, note 6. He accumulated a large fortune in these dignified pursuits—having, according to Winwood, landed estates to the annual amount of sixty thousand francs a-year —and gave large dowries to his daughters, whom he married into noblest families; "which is the more remarkable," adds Winwood, "considering the services wherein he is employed about the king, which is to be the Mezzano for his loves; the place from whence he came, which is out of the kitchen of Madame the king's sister."— Memorials, i. 380.]

On his appointment to this office of secret diplomacy he assumed all the airs of an ambassador, while Henry took great pains to contradict the reports which were spread as to the true nature of this mission to Spain.

Duplessis was, in truth, not very far wrong in his conjectures, but, as might be supposed, Henry was most anxious to conceal these secret negotiations with his Catholic Majesty from the Huguenot chiefs whom he had so recently deserted. "This is all done without the knowledge of the Duke of Bouillon," said Calvaert, "or at least under a very close disguise, as he, himself keenly feels and confesses to me." The envoy of the republic, as well as the leaders of the Protestant party in France, were resolved if possible to break off these dark and dangerous intrigues, the nature of which they so shrewdly suspected, and to substitute for them an open rupture of Henry with the King of Spain, and a formal declaration of war against him. None of the diplomatists or political personages engaged in these great affairs, in which the whole world was so deeply interested, manifested more sagacity and insight on this occasion than did the Dutch statesmen. We have seen that even Sir Edward Stafford was deceived up to a very late moment, as to the rumoured intentions of Henry to enter the Catholic Church. Envoy Edmonds was now equally and completely in the dark as to the mission of Varenne, and informed his Government that the only result of it was that the secret agent to Spain was favoured, through the kindness of Mendoza, with a distant view of Philip *ii*. with his son and daughter at their devotions in the chapel of the Escorial. This was the tale generally recounted and believed after the agent's return from Spain, so that Varenne was somewhat laughed at as having gone to Spain on a fool's errand, and as having got nothing from Mendoza but a disavowal of his former

Page 2011

propositions. But the shrewd Calvaert, who had entertained familiar relations with La Varenne, received from that personage after his return a very different account of his excursion to the Escorial from the one generally circulated. “Coming from Monceaus to Paris in his company,” wrote Calvaert in a secret despatch to the States, “I had the whole story from him. The chief part of his negotiations with Don Bernardino de Mendoza was that if his Majesty (the French king) would abandon the Queen of England and your Highnesses (the States of the Netherlands), there were no conditions that would be refused the king, including the hand of the Infanta, together with a good recompense for the kingdom of Navarre. La Varenne maintained that the King of Spain had caused these negotiations to be entered upon at this time with him in the certain hope and intention of a definite conclusion, alleging to me many pertinent reasons, and among others that he, having been lodged at Madrid, through the adroitness of Don Bernardino, among all the agents of the League, and hearing all their secrets and negotiations, had never been discovered, but had always been supposed to be one of the League himself. He said also that he was well assured that the Infanta in her heart had an affection for the French king, and notwithstanding any resolutions that might be taken (to which I referred, meaning the projects for bestowing her on the house of Austria) that she with her father’s consent or in case of his death would not fail to carry out this marriage. You may from all this, even out of the proposal for compensation for the kingdom of Navarre (of which his Majesty also let out something to me inadvertently); collect the reasons why such feeble progress is made in so great an occasion as now presents itself for a declaration of war and an open alliance with your Highnesses. I shall not fail to watch these events, even in case of the progress of the said resolutions, notwithstanding the effects of which it is my opinion that this secret intrigue is not to be abandoned. To this end, besides the good intelligence which one gets by means of good friends, a continual and agreeable presentation of oneself to his Majesty, in order to see and hear everything, is necessary.”

Certainly, here were reasons more than sufficient why Henry should be making but feeble preparations for open war in alliance with England and the republic against Philip, as such a step was hardly compatible with the abandonment of England and the republic and the espousal of Philip’s daughter—projects which Henry’s commissioner had just been discussing with Philip’s agent at Madrid and the Escorial.

Truly it was well for the republican envoy to watch events as closely as possible, to make the most of intelligence from his good friends, and to present himself as frequently and as agreeably as possible to his Majesty, that he might hear and see everything. There was much to see and to hear, and it needed adroitness and courage, not to slip or stumble in such dark ways where the very ground seemed often to be sliding from beneath the feet.

Page 2012

To avoid the catastrophe of an alliance between Henry, Philip, and the Pope against Holland and England, it was a pressing necessity for Holland and England to force Henry into open war against Philip. To this end the Dutch statesmen were bending all their energies. Meantime Elizabeth regarded the campaign in Artois and Hainault with little favour.

As he took leave on departing for France, La Varenne had requested Mendoza to write to King Henry, but the Spaniard excused himself—although professing the warmest friendship for his Majesty—on the ground of the impossibility of addressing him correctly. "If I call him here King of Navarre, I might as well put my head on the block at once," he observed; "if I call him King of France, my master has not yet recognized him as such; if I call him anything else, he will himself be offended."

And the vision of Philip in black on his knees, with his children about him, and a rapier at his side, passed with the contemporary world as the only phenomenon of this famous secret mission.

But Henry, besides this demonstration towards Spain, lost no time in despatching a special minister to the republic and to England, who was instructed to make the most profuse, elaborate, and conciliatory explanations as to his recent conversion and as to his future intentions. Never would he make peace, he said, with Spain without the full consent of the States and of England; the dearest object of his heart in making his peace with Rome having been to restore peace to his own distracted realm, to bring all Christians into one brotherhood, and to make a united attack upon the grand Turk—a vision which the cheerful monarch hardly intended should ever go beyond the ivory gate of dreams, but which furnished substance enough for several well-rounded periods in the orations of De Morlans.

That diplomatist, after making the strongest representations to Queen Elizabeth as to the faithful friendship of his master, and the necessity he was under of pecuniary and military assistance, had received generous promises of aid both in men and money—-three thousand men besides the troops actually serving in Brittany—from that sagacious sovereign, notwithstanding the vehement language in which she had rebuked her royal brother's apostasy. He now came for the same purpose to the Hague, where he made very eloquent harangues to the States-General, acknowledging that the republic had ever been the most upright, perfect, and undisguised friend to his master and to France in their darkest days and deepest affliction; that she had loved the king and kingdom for themselves, not merely hanging on to their prosperity, but, on the contrary, doing her best to produce that prosperity by her contributions in soldiers, ships, and subsidies. "The king," said De Morlans, "is deeply grieved that he can prove his gratitude only in words for so many benefits conferred, which are absolutely without example, but he has commissioned me to declare that if God should ever give him the occasion, he will prove how highly he places your friendship."

Page 2013

The envoy assured the States that all fears entertained by those of the reformed religion on account of the conversion of his Majesty were groundless. Nothing was farther from the king's thoughts than to injure those noble spirits with whom his soul had lived so long, and whom he so much loved and honoured. No man knew better than the king did, the character of those who professed the Religion, their virtue, valour, resolution, and patience in adversity. Their numbers had increased in war, their virtues had been purified by affliction, they had never changed their position, whether battles had been won or lost. Should ever an attempt be made to take up arms against them within his realms, and should there be but five hundred of them against ten thousand, the king, remembering their faithful and ancient services, would leave the greater number in order to die at the head of his old friends. He was determined that they should participate in all the honours of the kingdom, and with regard to a peace with Spain, he would have as much care for the interests of the United Provinces as for his own. But a peace was impossible with that monarch, whose object was to maintain his own realms in peace while he kept France in perpetual revolt against the king whom God had given her. The King of Spain had trembled at Henry's cradle, at his youth, at the bloom of his manhood, and knew that he had inflicted too much injury upon him ever to be on friendly terms with him. The envoy was instructed to say that his master never expected to be in amity with one who had ruined his house confiscated his property, and caused so much misery to France; and he earnestly hoped—without presuming to dictate—that the States-General would in this critical emergency manifest their generosity. If the king were not assisted now, both king and kingdom would perish. If he were assisted, the succour would bear double fruit.

The sentiments expressed on the part of Henry towards his faithful subjects of the Religion, the heretic Queen of England, and the stout Dutch Calvinists who had so long stood by him, were most noble. It was pity that, at the same moment, he was proposing to espouse the Infanta, and to publish the Council of Trent.

The reply of the States-General to these propositions of the French envoy was favourable, and it was agreed that a force of three thousand foot and five hundred horse should be sent to the assistance of the king. Moreover, the state-paper drawn up on this occasion was conceived with so much sagacity and expressed with so much eloquence, as particularly to charm the English queen when it was communicated to her Majesty. She protested very loudly and vehemently to Noel de Caron, envoy from the provinces at London, that this response on the part of his Government to De Morlans was one of the wisest documents that she had ever seen. "In all their actions," said she, "the States-General show their sagacity, and indeed, it is the wisest Government ever known among republics. I would show you," she added to the gentlemen around her, "the whole of the paper if it were this moment at hand."

Page 2014

After some delays, it was agreed between the French Government and that of the United Provinces, that the king should divide his army into three parts, and renew the military operations against Spain with the expiration of the truce at the end of the year (1593).

One body, composed of the English contingent, together with three thousand French horse, three thousand Swiss, and four thousand French harquebus-men, were to be under his own immediate command, and were to act against the enemy wherever it should appear to his Majesty most advantageous. A second, army was to expel the rebels and their foreign allies from Normandy and reduce Rouen to obedience. A third was to make a campaign in the provinces of Artois and Hainault, under the Duke of Bouillon (more commonly called the Viscount Turenne), in conjunction with the forces to be supplied by the republic. “Any treaty of peace on our part with the King of Spain,” said the States-General, “is our certain ruin. This is an axiom. That monarch’s object is to incorporate into his own realms not only all the states and possessions of neighbouring kings, principalities, and powers, but also all Christendom, aye, the whole world, were it possible. We joyfully concur then in your Majesty’s resolution to carry on the war in Artois and Hainault, and agree to your suggestion of diversions on our part by sieges and succour by contingents.”

Balagny, meantime, who had so long led an independent existence at Cambray, now agreed to recognise Henry’s authority, in consideration of sixty-seven thousand crowns yearly pension and the dignity of Marshal of France.

Towards the end of the year 1594, Buzanval, the regular French envoy at the Hague, began to insist more warmly than seemed becoming that the campaign in Artois and Hainault—so often the base of military operations on the part of Spain against France—should begin. Further achievements on the part of Maurice after the fall of Groningen were therefore renounced for that year, and his troops went into garrison and winter-quarters. The States-General, who had also been sending supplies, troops, and ships to Brittany to assist the king, now, after soundly rebuking Buzanval for his intemperate language, entrusted their contingent for the proposed frontier campaign to Count Philip Nassau, who accordingly took the field toward the end of the year at the head of twenty-eight companies of foot and five squadrons of cavalry. He made his junction with Turenne-Bouillon, but the duke, although provided with a tremendous proclamation, was but indifferently supplied with troops. The German levies, long-expected, were slow in moving, and on the whole it seemed that the operations might have been continued by Maurice with more effect, according to his original plan, than in this rather desultory fashion. The late winter campaign on the border was feeble and a failure.

Page 2015

The bonds of alliance, however, were becoming very close between Henry and the republic. Despite the change in religion on the part of the king, and the pangs which it had occasioned in the hearts of leading Netherlanders, there was still the traditional attraction between France and the States, which had been so remarkably manifested during the administration of William the Silent. The republic was more restive than ever under the imperious and exacting friendship of Elizabeth, and, feeling more and more its own strength, was making itself more and more liable to the charge of ingratitude; so constantly hurled in its face by the queen. And Henry, now that he felt himself really king of France, was not slow to manifest a similar ingratitude or an equal love of independence. Both monarch and republic, chafing under the protection of Elizabeth, were drawn into so close a union as to excite her anger and jealousy—sentiments which in succeeding years were to become yet more apparent. And now; while Henry still retained the chivalrous and flowery phraseology, so sweet to her ears, in his personal communications to the queen, his ministers were in the habit of using much plainer language. "Mr. de Sancy said to me," wrote the Netherland minister in France, Calvaert, "that his Majesty and your Highnesses (the States-General) must without long delay conclude an alliance offensive and defensive. In regard to England, which perhaps might look askance at this matter, he told me it would be invited also by his Majesty into the same alliance; but if, according to custom, it shilly-shallied, and without coming to deeds or to succour should put him off with words, he should in that case proceed with our alliance without England, not doubting that many other potentates in Italy and Germany would join in it likewise. He said too, that he, the day before the departure of the English ambassador, had said these words to him in the presence of his Majesty; namely, that England had entertained his Majesty sixteen months long with far-fetched and often-repeated questions and discontents, that one had submitted to this sort of thing so long as his Majesty was only king of Mantes, Dieppe, and Louviers, but that his Majesty being now king of Paris would be no longer a servant of those who should advise him to suffer it any longer or accept it as good payment; that England must treat his Majesty according to his quality, and with deeds, not words. He added that the ambassador had very anxiously made answer to these words, and had promised that when he got back to England he would so arrange that his Majesty should be fully satisfied, insisting to the last on the alliance then proposed."

In Germany, meanwhile, there was much protocolling, and more hard drinking, at the Diet of Ratisbon. The Protestant princes did little for their cause against the new designs of Spain and the moribund League, while the Catholics did less to assist Philip. In truth, the holy Roman Empire, threatened with a Turkish invasion, had neither power nor inclination to help the new universal empire of the west into existence. So the princes and grandees of Germany, while Amurath was knocking at the imperial gates, busied themselves with banquetting and other diplomatic work, but sent few reiters either to the east or west.

Page 2016

Philip's envoys were indignant at the apathy displayed towards the great Catholic cause, and felt humbled at the imbecility exhibited by Spain in its efforts against the Netherlands and France. San Clemente, who was attending the Diet at Ratisbon, was shocked at the scenes he witnessed. "In less than three months," said that temperate Spaniard, "they have drunk more than five million florins' worth of wine, at a time when the Turk has invaded the frontiers of Germany; and among those who have done the most of this consumption of wine, there is not one who is going to give any assistance on the frontier. In consequence of these disorders my purse is drained so low, that unless the king helps me I am ruined. You must tell our master that the reputation of his grandeur and strength has never been so low as it is now in Germany. The events in France and those which followed in the Netherlands have thrown such impediments in the negotiations here, that not only our enemies make sport of Marquis Havre and myself, but even our friends—who are very few—dare not go to public feasts, weddings, and dinners, because they are obliged to apologize for us."

Truly the world-empire was beginning to crumble. "The emperor has been desiring twenty times," continued the envoy, "to get back to Prague from the Diet, but the people hold him fast like a steer. As I think over all that passes, I lose all judgment, for I have no money, nor influence, nor reputation. Meantime, I see this rump of an empire keeping itself with difficulty upon its legs. 'Tis full of wrangling and discord about religion, and yet there is the Turk with two hundred thousand men besieging a place forty miles from Vienna, which is the last outpost. God grant it may last!"

Such was the aspect of the Christian world at the close of the year 1594

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Beneficent and charitable purposes (War)
Chronicle of events must not be anticipated
Eat their own children than to forego one high mass
Humanizing effect of science upon the barbarism of war
Slain four hundred and ten men with his own hand

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 67, 1595

CHAPTER XXXI.

Formal declaration of war against Spain—Marriage festivities—Death of Archduke Ernest—His year of government—Fuentes declared governor-general—Disaffection of the Duke of Arschot and Count Arenberg—Death of the Duke of Arschot——Fuentes besieges Le Catelet—The fortress of Ham, sold to the Spanish by De Gomeron, besieged and taken by the Duke of Bouillon—Execution of De Gomeron—Death of Colonel Verdugo—Siege

Page 2017

of Dourlens by Fuentes— Death of La Motte—Death of Charles Mansfeld—Total defeat of the French—Murder of Admiral De Pillars—Dourlens captured, and the garrison and citizens put to the sword—Military operations in eastern Netherlands and on the Rhine —Maurice lays siege to Groento —Mondragon hastening to its relief, Prince Maurice raises the siege—Skirmish between Maurice and Mondragon—Death of Philip of Nassau—Death of Mondragon—Bombardment and surrender of Weerd Castle—-Maurice retires into winter quarters—Campaign of Henry *iv*. —He besieges Dijon—-Surrender of Dijon—Absolution granted to Henry by the pope—Career of Balagny at Cambray—Progress of the siege— Capitulation of the town—Suicide of the Princess of Cambray, wife of Balagny

The year 1595 Opened with a formal declaration of war by the King of France against the King of Spain. It would be difficult to say for exactly how many years the war now declared had already been waged, but it was a considerable advantage to the United Netherlands that the manifesto had been at last regularly issued. And the manifesto was certainly not deficient in bitterness. Not often in Christian history has a monarch been solemnly and officially accused by a brother sovereign of suborning assassins against his life. Bribery, stratagem, and murder, were, however, so entirely the commonplace machinery of Philip's administration as to make an allusion to the late attempt of Chastel appear quite natural in Henry's declaration of war. The king further stigmatized in energetic language the long succession of intrigues by which the monarch of Spain, as chief of the Holy League, had been making war upon him by means of his own subjects, for the last half dozcn years. Certainly there was hardly need of an elaborate statement of grievances. The deeds of Philip required no herald, unless Henry was prepared to abdicate his hardly-earned title to the throne of France.

Nevertheless the politic Gascon subsequently regretted the fierce style in which he had fulminated his challenge. He was accustomed to observe that no state paper required so much careful pondering as a declaration of war, and that it was scarcely possible to draw up such a document without committing many errors in the phraseology. The man who never knew fear, despondency, nor resentment, was already instinctively acting on the principle that a king should deal with his enemy as if sure to become his friend, and with his friends as if they might easily change to foes.

The answer to the declaration was delayed for two months. When the reply came it of course breathed nothing but the most benignant sentiments in regard to France, while it expressed regret that it was necessary to carry fire and sword through that country in order to avert the unutterable woe which the crimes of the heretic Prince of Bearne were bringing upon all mankind.

It was a solace for Philip to call the legitimate king by the title borne by him when heir-presumptive, and to persist in denying to him that absolution which, as the whole world

was aware, the Vicar of Christ was at that very moment in the most solemn manner about to bestow upon him.

Page 2018

More devoted to the welfare of France than were the French themselves, he was determined that a foreign prince himself, his daughter, or one of his nephews—should supplant the descendant of St. Louis on the French throne. More catholic than the pope he could not permit the heretic, whom his Holiness was just washing whiter than snow, to intrude himself into the society of Christian sovereigns.

The winter movements by Bouillon in Luxembourg, sustained by Philip Nassau campaigning with a meagre force on the French frontier, were not very brilliant. The Netherland regiments quartered at Yssoire, La Ferte, and in the neighbourhood accomplished very little, and their numbers were sadly thinned by dysentery. A sudden and successful stroke, too, by which that daring soldier Heraugiere, who had been the chief captor of Breda, obtained possession of the town, and castle of Huy, produced no permanent advantage. This place, belonging to the Bishop of Liege, with its stone bridge over the Meuse, was an advantageous position from which to aid the operations of Bouillon in Luxembourg. Heraugiere was, however, not sufficiently reinforced, and Huy was a month later recaptured by La Motte. The campaigning was languid during that winter in the United Netherlands, but the merry-making was energetic. The nuptials of Hohenlo with Mary, eldest daughter of William the Silent and own sister of the captive Philip William; of the Duke of Bouillon with Elizabeth, one of the daughters of the same illustrious prince by his third wife, Charlotte of Bourbon; and of Count Everard Solms, the famous general of the Zeeland troops, with Sabina, daughter of the unfortunate Lamoral Egmont, were celebrated with much pomp during the months of February and March. The States of Holland and of Zeeland made magnificent presents of diamonds to the brides; the Countess Hohenlo receiving besides a yearly income of three thousand florins for the lives of herself and her husband.

In the midst of these merry marriage bells at the Hague a funeral knell was sounding in Brussels. On the 20th February, the governor-general of the obedient Netherlands, Archduke Ernest, breathed his last. His career had not been so illustrious as the promises of the Spanish king and the allegories of schoolmaster Houwaerts had led him to expect. He had not espoused the Infanta nor been crowned King of France. He had not blasted the rebellious Netherlands with Cyclopean thunderbolts, nor unbound the Belgic Andromeda from the rock of doom. His brief year of government had really been as dismal as, according to the announcement of his sycophants, it should have been amazing. He had accomplished nothing, and all that was left him was to die at the age of forty-two, over head and ears in debt, a disappointed, melancholy man. He was very indolent, enormously fat, very chaste, very expensive, fond of fine liveries and fine clothes, so solemn and stately as never to be known to laugh, but utterly without capacity either

Page 2019

as a statesman or a soldier. He would have shone as a portly abbot ruling over peaceful friars, but he was not born to ride a revolutionary whirlwind, nor to evoke order out of chaos. Past and Present were contending with each other in fierce elemental strife within his domain. A world was in dying agony, another world was coming, full-armed, into existence within the hand-breadth of time and of space where he played his little part, but he dreamed not of it. He passed away like a shadow, and was soon forgotten.

An effort was made, during the last illness of Ernest, to procure from him the appointment of the elector of Cologne as temporary successor to the government, but Count Fuentes was on the spot and was a man of action. He produced a power in the French language from Philip, with a blank for the name. This had been intended for the case of Peter Ernest Mansfeld's possible death during his provisional administration, and Fuentes now claimed the right of inserting his own name.

The dying Ernest consented, and upon his death Fuentes was declared governor-general until the king's further pleasure should be known.

Pedro de Guzman, Count of Fuentes, a Spaniard of the hard and antique type, was now in his sixty-fourth year. The pupil and near relative of the Duke of Alva, he was already as odious to the Netherlanders as might have been inferred from such education and such kin. A dark, grizzled, baldish man, with high steep forehead, long, haggard, leathern visage, sweeping beard, and large, stern, commanding, menacing eyes, with his Brussels ruff of point lace and his Milan coat of proof, he was in personal appearance not unlike the terrible duke whom men never named without a shudder, although a quarter of a century had passed since he had ceased to curse the Netherlands with his presence. Elizabeth of England was accustomed to sneer at Fuentes because he had retreated before Essex in that daring commander's famous foray into Portugal. The queen called the Spanish general a timid old woman. If her gibe were true, it was fortunate for her, for Henry of France, and for the republic, that there were not many more such old women to come from Spain to take the place of the veteran chieftains who were destined to disappear so rapidly during this year in Flanders. He was a soldier of fortune, loved fighting, not only for the fighting's sake, but for the prize-money which was to be accumulated by campaigning, and he was wont to say that he meant to enter Paradise sword in hand.

Meantime his appointment excited the wrath of the provincial magnates. The Duke of Arschot was beside himself with frenzy, and swore that he would never serve under Fuentes nor sit at his council-board. The duke's brother, Marquis Havre, and his son-in-law, Count Arenberg, shared in the hatred, although they tried to mitigate the vehemence of its expression. But Arschot swore that no man had the right to take precedence of him in the council of state, and that

Page 2020

the appointment of this or any Spaniard was a violation of the charters of the provinces and of the promises of his Majesty. As if it were for the nobles of the obedient provinces to prate of charters and of oaths! Their brethren under the banner of the republic had been teaching Philip for a whole generation how they could deal with the privileges of freemen and with the perjury of tyrants. It was late in the day for the obedient Netherlanders to remember their rights. Havre and Arenberg, dissembling their own wrath, were abused and insulted by the duke when they tried to pacify him. They proposed a compromise, according to which Arschot should be allowed to preside in the council of state while Fuentes should content himself with the absolute control of the army. This would be putting a bit of fat in the duke's mouth, they said. Fuentes would hear of no such arrangement. After much talk and daily attempts to pacify this great Netherlander, his relatives at last persuaded him to go home to his country place. He even promised Arenberg and his wife that he would go to Italy, in pursuance of a vow made to our lady of Loretto. Arenberg privately intimated to Stephen Ybarra that there was a certain oil, very apt to be efficacious in similar cases of irritation, which might be applied with prospect of success. If his father-in-law could only receive some ten thousand florins which he claimed as due to him from Government, this would do more to quiet him than a regiment of soldiers could. He also suggested that Fuentes should call upon the duke, while Secretary Ybarra should excuse himself by sickness for not having already paid his respects. This was done. Fuentes called. The duke returned the call, and the two conversed amicably about the death of the archduke, but entered into no political discussion.

Arschot then invited the whole council of state, except John Baptist Tassis, to a great dinner. He had prepared a paper to read to them in which he represented the great dangers likely to ensue from such an appointment as this of Fuentes, but declared that he washed his hands of the consequences, and that he had determined to leave a country where he was of so little account. He would then close his eyes and ears to everything that might occur, and thus escape the infamy of remaining in a country where so little account was made of him. He was urged to refrain from reading this paper and to invite Tassis. After a time he consented to suppress the document, but he manfully refused to bid the objectionable diplomatist to his banquet.

The dinner took place and passed off pleasantly enough. Arschot did not read his manifesto, but, as he warmed with wine, he talked a great deal of nonsense which, according to Stephen Ybarra, much resembled it, and he vowed that thenceforth he would be blind and dumb to all that might occur. A few days later, he paid a visit to the new governor-general, and took a peaceful farewell of him. "Your Majesty knows very well what he is," wrote Fuentes: "he is nothing but talk." Before leaving the country he sent a bitter complaint to Ybarra, to the effect that the king had entirely forgotten him, and imploring that financier's influence to procure for him some gratuity from his

Majesty. He was in such necessity, he said, that it was no longer possible for him to maintain his household.

Page 2021

And with this petition the grandee of the obedient provinces shook the dust from his shoes, and left his natal soil for ever. He died on the 11th December of the same year in Venice.

His son the Prince of Chimay, his brother, and son-inlaw, and the other obedient nobles, soon accommodated themselves to the new administration, much as they had been inclined to bluster at first about their privileges. The governor soon reported that matters were proceeding very, smoothly. There was a general return to the former docility now that such a disciplinarian as Fuentes held the reins.

The opening scenes of the campaign between the Spanish governor and France were, as usual, in Picardy. The Marquis of Varambon made a demonstration in the neighbourhood of Dourlens—a fortified town on the river Authie, lying in an open plain, very deep in that province—while Fuentes took the field with eight thousand men, and laid siege to Le Catelet. He had his eye, however, upon Ham. That important stronghold was in the hands of a certain nobleman called De Gomeron, who had been an energetic Leaguer, and was now disposed, for a handsome consideration, to sell himself to the King of Spain. In the auction of governors and generals then going on in every part of France it had been generally found that Henry's money was more to be depended upon in the long run, although Philip's bids were often very high, and, for a considerable period, the payments regular. Gomeron's upset price for himself was twenty-five thousand crowns in cash, and a pension of eight thousand a year. Upon these terms he agreed to receive a Spanish garrison into the town, and to cause the French in the citadel to be sworn into the service of the Spanish king. Fuentes agreed to the bargain and paid the adroit tradesman, who knew so well how to turn a penny for himself, a large portion of the twenty-five thousand crowns upon the nail.

De Gomeron was to proceed to Brussels to receive the residue. His brother-in-law, M. d'Orville, commanded in the citadel, and so soon as the Spanish troops had taken possession of the town its governor claimed full payment of his services.

But difficulties awaited him in Brussels. He was informed that a French garrison could not be depended upon for securing the fortress, but that town and citadel must both be placed in Spanish hands. De Gomeron loudly protesting that this was not according to contract, was calmly assured, by command of Fuentes, that unless the citadel were at once evacuated and surrendered, he would not receive the balance of his twenty-five thousand crowns, and that he should instantly lose his head. Here was more than De Gomeron had bargained for; but this particular branch of commerce in revolutionary times, although lucrative, has always its risks. De Gomeron, thus driven to the wall, sent a letter by a Spanish messenger to his brother-in-law, ordering him to surrender the fortress. D'Orville—who meantime had been making his little arrangements with the other party—protested that the note had been written under duress, and refused to comply with its directions.

Page 2022

Time was pressing, for the Duke of Bouillon and the Count of St. Pol lay with a considerable force in the neighbourhood, obviously menacing Ham.

Fuentes accordingly sent that distinguished soldier and historian, Don Carlos Coloma, with a detachment of soldiers to Brussels, with orders to bring Gomeron into camp. He was found seated at supper with his two young brothers, aged respectively sixteen and eighteen years, and was just putting a cherry into his mouth as Coloma entered the room. He remained absorbed in thought, trifling with the cherry without eating it, which Don Carlos set down as a proof of guilt: The three brothers were at once put in a coach, together with their sister, a nun of the age of twenty, and conveyed to the head-quarters of Fuentes, who lay before Le Catelet, but six leagues from Ham.

Meantime D'Orville had completed his negotiations with Bouillon, and had agreed to surrender the fortress so soon as the Spanish troops should be driven from the town. The duke knowing that there was no time to lose, came with three thousand men before the place. His summons to surrender was answered by a volley of cannon-shot from the town defences. An assault was made and repulsed, D'Humieres, a most gallant officer and a favourite of King Henry, being killed, besides at least two hundred soldiers. The next attack was successful, the town was carried, and the Spanish garrison put to the sword.

D'Orville then, before giving up the citadel, demanded three hostages for the lives of his three brothers-in-law.

The hostages availed him little. Fuentes had already sent word to Gomeron's mother, that if the bargain were not fulfilled he would send her the heads of her three sons on three separate dishes. The distracted woman made her way, to D'Orville, and fell at his feet with tears and entreaties. It was too late, and D'Orville, unable to bear her lamentations, suddenly rushed from the castle, and nearly fell into the hands of the Spaniards as he fled from the scene. Two of the four cuirassiers, who alone of the whole garrison accompanied him, were taken prisoners. The governor escaped to unknown regions. Madame de Gomeron then appeared before Fuentes, and tried in vain to soften him. De Gomeron was at once beheaded in the sight of the whole camp. The two younger sons were retained in prison, but ultimately set at liberty. The town and citadel were thus permanently acquired by their lawful king, who was said to be more afflicted at the death of D'Humieres than rejoiced at the capture of Ham.

Meantime Colonel Verdugo, royal governor of Friesland, whose occupation in those provinces, now so nearly recovered by the republic, was gone, had led a force of six thousand foot, and twelve hundred horse across the French border, and was besieging La Ferte on the Cher. The siege was relieved by Bouillon on the 26th May, and the Spanish veteran was then ordered to take command in Burgundy. But his days were

Page 2023

numbered. He had been sick of dysentery at Luxembourg during the summer, but after apparent recovery died suddenly on the 2nd September, and of course was supposed to have been poisoned. He was identified with the whole history of the Netherland wars. Born at Talavera de la Reyna, of noble parentage, as he asserted—although his mother was said to have sold dogs' meat, and he himself when a youth was a private soldier—he rose by steady conduct and hard fighting to considerable eminence in his profession. He was governor of Harlem after the famous siege, and exerted himself with some success to mitigate the ferocity of the Spaniards towards the Netherlanders at that epoch. He was marshal-general of the camp under Don John of Austria, and distinguished himself at the battle of Gemblours. He succeeded Count Renneberg as governor of Friesland and Groningen, and bore a manful part in most of the rough business that had been going on for a generation of mankind among those blood-stained wolds and morasses. He was often victorious, and quite as often soundly defeated; but he enjoyed campaigning, and was a glutton of work. He cared little for parade and ceremony, but was fond of recalling with pleasure the days when he was a soldier at four crowns a month, with an undivided fourth of one cloak, which he and three companions wore by turns on holidays. Although accused of having attempted to procure the assassination of William Lewis Nassau, he was not considered ill-natured, and he possessed much admiration for Prince Maurice. An iron-clad man, who had scarcely taken harness from his back all his life, he was a type of the Spanish commanders who had implanted international hatred deeply in the Netherland soul, and who, now that this result and no other had been accomplished, were rapidly passing away. He had been baptised Franco, and his family appellation of Verdugo meant executioner. Punning on these names he was wont to say, that he was frank for all good people, but a hangman for heretics; and he acted up to his gibe.

Foiled at Ham, Fuentes had returned to the siege of Catelet, and had soon reduced the place. He then turned his attention again to Dourlens, and invested that city. During the preliminary operations, another veteran commander in these wars, Valentin Pardieu de la Motte, recently created Count of Everbecque by Philip, who had been for a long time general-in-chief of the artillery, and was one of the most famous and experienced officers in the Spanish service, went out one fine moonlight night to reconnoitre the enemy, and to superintend the erection of batteries. As he was usually rather careless of his personal safety, and rarely known to put on his armour when going for such purposes into the trenches, it was remarked with some surprise, on this occasion, that he ordered his page to bring his, accoutrements, and that he armed himself cap-a pie before leaving his quarters. Nevertheless, before he had reached the redoubt, a bullet from the town struck him between the fold of his morion and the edge of his buckler and he fell dead without uttering a sound.

Page 2024

Here again was a great loss to the king's service. La Motte, of a noble family in Burgundy, had been educated in the old fierce traditions of the Spanish system of warfare in the Netherlands, and had been one of the very hardest instruments that the despot could use for his bloody work. He had commanded a company of horse at the famous battle of St. Quintin, and since that opening event in Philip's reign he had been unceasingly—engaged in the Flemish wars. Alva made him a colonel of a Walloon regiment; the grand commander Requesena appointed him governor of Gravelines. On the whole he had been tolerably faithful to his colours; having changed sides but twice. After the pacification of Ghent he swore allegiance to the States-General, and assisted in the bombardment of the citadel of that place. Soon afterwards he went over to Don John of Austria, and surrendered to him the town and fortress of Gravelines, of which he then continued governor in the name of the king. He was fortunate in the accumulation of office and of money; rather unlucky in his campaigning. He was often wounded in action, and usually defeated when commanding in chief. He lost an arm at the siege of Sluy's, and had now lost his life almost by an accident. Although twice married he left no children to inherit his great estates, while the civil and military offices left vacant by his death were sufficient to satisfy the claims of five aspiring individuals. The Count of Varax succeeded him as general of artillery; but it was difficult to find a man to replace La Motte, possessing exactly the qualities which had made that warrior so valuable to his king. The type was rapidly disappearing, and most fortunately for humanity, if half the stories told of him by grave chroniclers, accustomed to discriminate between history and gossip, are to be believed. He had committed more than one cool homicide. Although not rejoicing in the same patronymic as his Spanish colleague of Friesland, he too was ready on occasion to perform hangman's work. When sergeant-major in Flanders, he had himself volunteered—so ran the chronicle—to do execution on a poor wretch found guilty of professing the faith of Calvin; and, with his own hands, had prepared a fire of straw, tied his victim to the stake, and burned him to cinders. Another Netherlander for the name crime of heresy had been condemned to be torn to death by horses. No one could be found to carry out the sentence. The soldiers under La Motte's command broke into mutiny rather than permit themselves to be used for such foul purposes; but the ardent young sergeant-major came forward, tied the culprit by the arms and legs to two horses, and himself whipped them to their work till it was duly accomplished. Was it strange that in Philip's reign such energy should be rewarded by wealth, rank, and honour? Was not such a labourer in the vineyard worthy of his hire?

Page 2025

Still another eminent chieftain in the king's service disappeared at this time—one who, although unscrupulous and mischievous enough in his day, was however not stained by any suspicion of crimes like these. Count Charles Mansfeld, tired of governing his decrepit parent Peter Ernest, who, since the appointment of Fuentes, had lost all further chance of governing the Netherlands, had now left Philip's service and gone to the Turkish wars. For Amurath *iii*., who had died in the early days of the year, had been succeeded by a sultan as warlike as himself. Mahomet *iii*., having strangled his nineteen brothers on his accession, handsomely buried them in cypress coffins by the side of their father, and having subsequently sacked and drowned ten infant princes posthumously born to Amurath, was at leisure to carry the war through Transylvania and Hungary, up to the gates of Vienna, with renewed energy. The Turk, who could enforce the strenuous rules of despotism by which all secundogenitures and collateral claimants in the Ottoman family were thus provided for, was a foe to be dealt with seriously. The power of the Moslems at that day was a full match for the holy Roman Empire. The days were far distant when the grim Turk's head was to become a mockery and a show; and when a pagan empire, born of carnage and barbarism, was to be kept alive in Europe when it was ready to die, by the collective efforts of Christian princes. Charles Mansfeld had been received with great enthusiasm at the court of Rudolph, where he was created a prince of the Empire, and appointed to the chief command of the Imperial armies under the Archduke Matthias. But his warfare was over. At the siege of Gran he was stricken with sickness and removed to Comorn, where he lingered some weeks. There, on the 24th August, as he lay half-dozing on his couch, he was told that the siege was at last successful; upon which he called for a goblet of wine, drained it eagerly, and then lay resting his head on his hand, like one absorbed in thought. When they came to arouse him from his reverie they found that he was dead. His father still remained superfluous in the Netherlands, hating and hated by Fuentes; but no longer able to give that governor so much annoyance as during his son's life-time the two had been able to create for Alexander Farnese. The octogenarian was past work and past mischief now; but there was one older soldier than he still left upon the stage, the grandest veteran in Philip's service, and now the last survivor, except the decrepit Peter Ernest, of the grim commanders of Alva's school. Christopher Mondragon—that miracle of human endurance, who had been an old man when the great duke arrived in the Netherlands—was still governor of Antwerp citadel, and men were to speak of him yet once more before he passed from the stage.

Page 2026

I return from this digression to the siege of Dourlens. The death of La Motte made no difference in the plans of Fuentes. He was determined to reduce the place preparatively to more important operations. Bouillon was disposed to relieve it, and to that end had assembled a force of eight thousand men within the city of Amiens. By midsummer the Spaniards had advanced with their mines and galleries close to the walls of the city. Meantime Admiral Villars, who had gained so much renown by defending Rouen against Henry *iv*., and who had subsequently made such an excellent bargain with that monarch before entering his service, arrived at Amiens. On the 24th July an expedition was sent from that city towards Dourlens. Bouillon and St. Pol commanded in person a force of six hundred picked cavalry. Pillars and Sanseval each led half as many, and there was a supporting body of twelve hundred musketeers. This little army convoyed a train of wagons, containing ammunition and other supplies for the beleaguered town. But Fuentes, having sufficiently strengthened his works, sallied forth with two thousand infantry, and a flying squadron of Spanish horse, to intercept them. It was the eve of St. James, the patron saint of Spain, at the sound, of whose name as a war-cry so many battle-fields had been won in the Netherlands, so many cities sacked, so many wholesale massacres perpetrated. Fuentes rode in the midst of his troops with the royal standard of Spain floating above him. On the other hand Yillars, glittering in magnificent armour and mounted on a superbly caparisoned charger came on, with his three hundred troopers, as if about to ride a course in a tournament. The battle which ensued was one of the most bloody for the numbers engaged, and the victory one of the most decisive recorded in this war. Villars charged prematurely, furiously, foolishly. He seemed jealous of Bouillon, and disposed to show the sovereign to whom he had so recently given his allegiance that an ancient Leaguer and Papist was a better soldier for his purpose than the most grizzled Huguenot in his army. On the other hand the friends of Villars accused the duke of faintheartedness, or at least of an excessive desire to save himself and his own command. The first impetuous onset of the admiral was successful, and he drove half-a-dozen companies of Spaniards before him. But he had ventured too far from his supports. Bouillon had only intended a feint, instead of a desperate charge; the Spaniards were rallied, and the day was saved by that cool and ready soldier, Carlos Coloma. In less than an hour the French were utterly defeated and cut to pieces. Bouillon escaped to Amiens with five hundred men; this was all that was left of the expedition. The horse of Villars was shot under him and the admiral’s leg was broken as he fell. He was then taken prisoner by two lieutenants of Carlos Coloma; but while these warriors were enjoying, by anticipation, the enormous ransom they should derive

Page 2027

from so illustrious a captive, two other lieutenants in the service of Marshal de Rosnes came up and claimed their share in the prize. While the four were wrangling, the admiral called out to them in excellent Spanish not to dispute, for he had money enough to satisfy them all. Meantime the Spanish commissary—general of cavalry, Contreras, came up, rebuked this unseemly dispute before the enemy had been fairly routed, and, in order to arrange the quarrel impartially, ordered his page to despatch De Villars on the spot. The page, without a word, placed his arquebus to the admiral's forehead and shot him dead.

So perished a bold and brilliant soldier, and a most unscrupulous politician. Whether the cause of his murder was mere envy on the part of the commissary at having lost a splendid opportunity for prize-money, or hatred to an ancient Leaguer thus turned renegade, it is fruitless now to enquire.

Villars would have paid two hundred thousand crowns for his ransom, so that the assassination was bad as a mercantile speculation; but it was pretended by the friends of Contreras that rescue was at hand. It is certain, however, that nothing was attempted by the French to redeem their total overthrow. Count Belin was wounded and fell into the hands of Coloma. Sanseval was killed; and a long list of some of the most brilliant nobles in France was published by the Spaniards as having perished on that bloody field. This did not prevent a large number of these victims, however, from enjoying excellent health for many long years afterwards, although their deaths have been duly recorded in chronicle from that day to our own times.

But Villars and Sanseval were certainly slain, and Fuentes sent their bodies, with a courteous letter, to the Duke of Nevers, at Amiens, who honoured them with a stately funeral.

There was much censure cast on both Bouillon and Villars respectively by the antagonists of each chieftain; and the contest as to the cause of the defeat was almost as animated as the skirmish itself. Bouillon was censured for grudging a victory to the Catholics, and thus leaving the admiral to his fate. Yet it is certain that the Huguenot duke himself commanded a squadron composed almost entirely of papists. Villars, on the other hand, was censured for rashness, obstinacy, and greediness for distinction; yet it is probable that Fuentes might have been defeated had the charges of Bouillon been as determined and frequent as were those of his colleague. Savigny de Rosnes, too, the ancient Leaguer, who commanded under Fuentes, was accused of not having sufficiently followed up the victory, because unwilling that his Spanish friends should entirely trample upon his own countrymen. Yet there is no doubt whatever that De Rosnes was as bitter an enemy to his own country as the most ferocious Spaniard of them all. It has rarely been found in civil war that the man who draws his sword against his fatherland, under the banner of the foreigner, is actuated by any lingering

tenderness for the nation he betrays; and the renegade Frenchman was in truth the animating spirit of Fuentes during the whole of his brilliant campaign. The Spaniard's victories were, indeed, mainly attributable to the experience, the genius, and the rancour of De Rosnes.

Page 2028

But debates over a lost battle are apt to be barren. Meantime Fuentes, losing no time in controversy, advanced upon the city of Dourlens, was repulsed twice, and carried it on the third assault, exactly one week after the action just recounted. The Spaniards and Leaguers, howling “Remember Ham!” butchered without mercy the garrison and all the citizens, save a small number of prisoners likely to be lucrative. Six hundred of the townspeople and two thousand five hundred French soldiers were killed within a few hours. Well had Fuentes profited by the relationship and tuition of Alva!

The Count of Dinant and his brother De Ronsoy were both slain, and two or three hundred thousand florins were paid in ransom by those who escaped with life. The victims were all buried outside of the town in one vast trench, and the effluvia bred a fever which carried off most of the surviving inhabitants. Dourlens became for the time a desert.

Fuentes now received deputies with congratulations from the obedient provinces, especially from Hainault, Artois, and Lille. He was also strongly urged to attempt the immediate reduction of Cambray, to which end those envoys were empowered to offer contributions of four hundred and fifty thousand florins and a contingent of seven thousand infantry. Berlaymont, too, bishop of Tournay and archbishop of Cambray, was ready to advance forty thousand florins in the same cause.

Fuentes, in the highest possible spirits at his success, and having just been reinforced by Count Bucquoy with a fresh Walloon regiment of fifteen hundred foot and with eight hundred and fifty of the mutineers from Tirlemont and Chapelle, who were among the choicest of Spanish veterans, was not disposed to let the grass grow under his feet. Within four days after the sack of Dourlens he broke up his camp, and came before Cambray with an army of twelve thousand foot and nearly four thousand horse. But before narrating the further movements of the vigorous new governor-general, it is necessary to glance at the military operations in the eastern part of the Netherlands and upon the Rhine.

The States-General had reclaimed to their authority nearly all that important region lying beyond the Yssel—the solid Frisian bulwark of the republic—but there were certain points nearer the line where Upper and Nether Germany almost blend into one, which yet acknowledged the name of the king. The city of Groenlo, or Grol, not a place of much interest or importance in itself, but close to the frontier, and to that destined land of debate, the duchies of Cleves, Juliers, and Berg, still retained its Spanish garrison. On the 14th July Prince Maurice of Nassau came before the city with six thousand infantry, some companies of cavalry, and sixteen pieces of artillery. He made his approaches in form, and after a week’s operations he fired three volleys, according to his custom, and summoned the place to capitulate. Governor Jan van Stirum replied stoutly that he would hold the place for God and the king to the last drop of his blood. Meantime there was hope of help from the outside.

Page 2029

Maurice was a vigorous young commander, but there was a man to be dealt with who had been called the “good old Mondragon” when the prince was in his cradle; and who still governed the citadel of Antwerp, and was still ready for an active campaign.

Christopher Mondragon was now ninety-two years old. Not often in the world’s history has a man of that age been capable of personal, participation in the joys of the battlefield, whatever natural reluctance veterans are apt to manifest at relinquishing high military control.

But Mondragon looked not with envy but with admiration on the growing fame of the Nassau chieftain, and was disposed, before he himself left the stage, to match himself with the young champion.

So soon as he heard of the intended demonstration of Maurice against Grol, the ancient governor of Antwerp collected a little army by throwing together all the troops that could be spared from the various garrisons within his command. With two Spanish regiments, two thousand Swiss, the Walloon troops of De Grisons, and the Irish regiment of Stanley—in all seven thousand foot and thirteen hundred horse—Mondragon marched straight across Brabant and Gelderland to the Rhine. At Kaiserworth he reviewed his forces, and announced his intention of immediately crossing the river. There was a murmur of disapprobation among officers and men at what they considered the foolhardy scheme of mad old Mondragon. But the general had not campaigned a generation before, at the age of sixty-nine, in the bottom of the sea, and waded chin-deep for six hours long of an October night, in the face of a rising tide from the German Ocean and of an army of Zeelanders, to be frightened now at the summer aspect of the peaceful Rhine.

The wizened little old man, walking with difficulty by the aid of a staff, but armed in proof, with plumes waving gallantly from his iron headpiece, and with his rapier at his side, ordered a chair to be brought to the river’s edge. Then calmly seating himself in the presence of his host, he stated that he should not rise from that chair until the last man had crossed the river. Furthermore, he observed that it was not only his purpose to relieve the city of Grol, but to bring Maurice to an action, and to defeat him, unless he retired. The soldiers ceased to murmur, the pontoons were laid, the, river was passed, and on the 25th July, Maurice, hearing of the veteran’s approach, and not feeling safe in his position, raised the siege of the city. Burning his camp and everything that could not be taken with him on his march, the prince came in perfect order to Borkelo, two Dutch miles from Grol. Here he occupied himself for some time in clearing the country of brigands who in the guise of soldiers infested that region and made the little cities of Deutecom, Anholt, and Heerenberg unsafe. He ordered the inhabitants of these places to send out detachments to beat the bushes for his cavalry, while Hohenlo was ordered to hunt the heaths and wolds thoroughly with packs of bloodhounds until every man and beast to be found lurking in those wild regions should be extirpated. By these vigorous

and cruel, but perhaps necessary, measures the brigands were at last extirpated, and honest people began to sleep in their beds.

Page 2030

On the 18th August Maurice took up a strong position at Bislich, not far from Wesel, where the River Lippe empties itself into the Rhine. Mondragon, with his army strengthened by reinforcements from garrisons in Gelderland, and by four hundred men brought by Frederic, van den Berg from Grol, had advanced to a place called Walston in den Ham, in the neighbourhood of Wesel. The Lippe flowed between the two hostile forces. Although he had broken up his siege, the prince was not disposed to renounce his whole campaign before trying conclusions with his veteran antagonist. He accordingly arranged an ambush with much skill, by means of which he hoped to bring on a general engagement and destroy Mondragon and his little army.

His cousin and favourite lieutenant, Philip Nassau, was entrusted with the preliminaries. That adventurous commander, with a picked force of seven hundred cavalry, moved quietly from the camp on the evening of the 1st September. He took with him his two younger brothers, Ernest and Lewis Gunther, who, as has been seen, had received the promise of the eldest brother of the family, William Lewis, that they should be employed from time to time in any practical work that might be going, forward. Besides these young gentlemen, several of the most famous English and Dutch commanders were on, the expedition; the brothers Paul and Marcellus Bax, Captains Parker, Cutler, and Robert Vere, brother of Sir Francis, among the number.

Early in the morning of the 2nd September the force crossed the Lippe, according to orders, keeping a pontoon across the stream to secure their retreat.

They had instructions thus to feel the enemy at early dawn, and, as he was known to have foraging parties out every morning along the margin of the river, to make a sudden descent upon their pickets, and to capture those companies before they could effect their escape or be reinforced. Afterwards they were to retreat across the Lippe, followed, as it was hoped would be the case, by the troops: of Mondragon, anxious to punish this piece of audacity. Meantime Maurice with five thousand infantry, the rest of his cavalry, and several pieces of artillery, awaited their coming, posted behind some hills in the neighbourhood of Wesel.

The plot of the young commander was an excellent one, but the ancient campaigner on the other side of the river had not come all the way from his comfortable quarters in Antwerp to be caught napping on that September morning. Mondragon had received accurate information from his scouts as to what was going on in the enemy's camp; and as to the exact position of Maurice. He was up long before daybreak—"the good old Christopher"—and himself personally arranged a counter-ambush. In the fields lying a little back from the immediate neighbourhood of, the Lippe he posted the mass of his cavalry, supported by a well-concealed force of infantry. The pickets on the stream and the foraging companies were left to do their usual work as if nothing were likely to happen.

Page 2031

Philip Nassau galloped cheerfully forward; according to the well-concerted plan, sending Cutler and Marcellus Bax with a handful of troopers to pounce upon the enemy's pickets. When those officers got to the usual foraging ground they, came upon a much larger cavalry force than they had looked for; and, suspecting something wrong; dashed back—again to give information to Count Philip. That impatient commander, feeling sure of his game unless this foolish delay should give the foraging companies time to, escape; ordered an immediate advance with his whole cavalry force: The sheriff of Zallant was ordered to lead the way. He objected that the pass, leading through a narrow lane and opening by a gate into an open field, was impassable for more than two troopers abreast; and that the enemy was in force beyond. Philips scorning these words of caution, and exclaiming that seventy-five lancers were enough to put fifty carabineers to rout; put on his casque, drew his sword; and sending his brother Lewis to summon Kinski and Donck; dashed into the pass, accompanied by the two counts and, a couple of other nobles. The sheriff, seeing this, followed him at full gallop; and after him came the troopers of Barchon, of Du Bois, and of Paul Bax; riding single file but in much disorder. When they had all entered inextricably into the lane, with the foremost of the lancers already passing through the gate, they discovered the enemy's cavalry and infantry drawn up in force upon the watery, heathery pastures beyond. There was at once a scene of confusion. To use lances was impossible, while they were all struggling together through the narrow passage offering themselves an easy prey to the enemy as they slowly emerged into the gelds. The foremost defended themselves with sabre and pistol as well as they could. The hindmost did their best to escape, and rode for their lives to the other side of the river. All trampled upon each other and impeded each other's movements. There was a brief engagement, bloody, desperate, hand to hand, and many Spaniards fell before the entrapped Netherlanders. But there could not be a moment's doubt as to the issue. Count Philip went down in the beginning of the action, shot through the body by an arquebus, discharged so close to him that his clothes were set on fire. As there was no water within reach the flames could be extinguished at last only by rolling him over, and over, wounded as he was, among the sand and heather. Count Ernest Solms was desperately wounded at the same time. For a moment both gentlemen attempted to effect their escape by mounting on one horse, but both fell to the ground exhausted and were taken prisoners. Ernest Nassau was also captured. His young brother, Lewis Gunther, saved himself by swimming the river. Count Kinski was mortally wounded. Robert Vere, too, fell into the enemy's hands, and was afterwards murdered in cold blood. Marcellus Bax, who had returned to the field by a circuitous

Page 2032

path, still under the delusion that he was about handsomely to cut off the retreat of the foraging companies, saved himself and a handful of cavalry by a rapid flight, so soon as he discovered the enemy drawn up in line of battle. Cutler and Parker were equally fortunate. There was less than a hundred of the States' troops killed, and it is probable that a larger number of the Spaniards fell. But the loss of Philip Nassau, despite the debauched life and somewhat reckless valour of that soldier, was a very severe one to the army and to his family. He was conveyed to Rheinberg, where his wounds were dressed. As he lay dying he was courteously visited by Mondragon, and by many other Spanish officers, anxious to pay their respects to so distinguished and warlike a member of an illustrious house. He received them with dignity, and concealed his physical agony so as to respond to their conversation as became a Nassau. His cousin, Frederic van den Berg, who was among the visitors, indecently taunted him with his position; asking him what he had expected by serving the cause of the Beggars. Philip turned from him with impatience and bade him hold his peace. At midnight he died.

William of Orange and his three brethren had already laid down their lives for the republic, and now his eldest brother's son had died in the same cause. "He has carried the name of Nassau with honour into the grave," said his brother Lewis William, to their father. Ten others of the house, besides many collateral relations, were still in arms for their adopted country. Rarely in history has a single noble race so entirely identified itself with a nation's record in its most heroic epoch as did that of Orange-Nassau with the liberation of Holland.

Young Ernest Solms, brother of Count Everard, lay in the same chamber with Philip Nassau, and died on the following day. Their bodies were sent by Mondragon with a courteous letter to Maurice at Bisslich. Ernest Nassau was subsequently ransomed for ten thousand florins.

This skirmish on the Lippe has no special significance in a military point of view, but it derives more than a passing interest, not only from the death of many a brave and distinguished soldier, but for the illustration of human vigour triumphing, both physically and mentally, over the infirmities of old age, given by the achievement of Christopher Mondragon. Alone he had planned his expedition across the country from Antwerp, alone he had insisted on crossing the Rhine, while younger soldiers hesitated; alone, with his own active brain and busy hands, he had outwitted the famous young chieftain of the Netherlands, counteracted his subtle policy, and set the counter-ambush by which his choicest cavalry were cut to pieces, and one of his bravest generals slain. So far could the icy blood of ninety-two prevail against the vigour of twenty-eight.

Page 2033

The two armies lay over against each other, with the river between them, for some days longer, but it was obvious that nothing further would be attempted on either side. Mondragon had accomplished the object for which he had marched from Brabant. He had, spoiled the autumn campaign of Maurice, and, was, now disposed to return before winter to, his own quarters. He sent a trumpet accordingly to his antagonist, begging him, half in jest, to have more consideration for his infirmities than to keep him out in his old age in such foul weather, but to allow him the military honour of being last to break up camp. Should Maurice consent to move away, Mondragon was ready to pledge himself not to pursue him, and within three days to leave his own entrenchments.

The proposition was not granted, and very soon afterwards the Spaniard, deciding to retire, crossed the Rhine on the 11th October. Maurice made a slight attempt at pursuit, sending Count William Lewis with some cavalry, who succeeded in cutting off a few wagons. The army, however, returned safely, to be dispersed into various garrisons.

This was Mondragon's last feat of, arms. Less than three months afterwards, in Antwerp citadel, as the veteran was washing his hands previously to going to the dinner-table, he sat down and died. Strange to say, this man—who had spent almost a century on the battlefield, who had been a soldier in nearly every war that had been waged in any part of Europe during that most belligerent age, who had come an old man to the Netherlands before Alva's arrival, and had ever since been constantly and personally engaged in the vast Flemish tragedy which had now lasted well nigh thirty years—had never himself lost a drop of blood. His battle-fields had been on land and water, on ice, in fire, and at the bottom of the sea, but he had never received a wound. Nay, more; he had been blown up in a fortress—the castle of Danvilliers in Luxembourg, of which he was governor—where all perished save his wife and himself, and, when they came to dig among the ruins, they excavated at last the ancient couple, protected by the framework of a window in the embrasure of which they had been seated, without a scratch or a bruise. He was a Biscayan by descent, but born in Medina del Campo. A strict disciplinarian, very resolute and pertinacious, he had the good fortune to be beloved by his inferiors, his equals, and his superiors. He was called the father of his soldiers, the good Mondragon, and his name was unstained by any of those deeds of ferocity which make the chronicles of the time resemble rather the history of wolves than of men. To a married daughter, mother of several children, he left a considerable fortune.

Page 2034

Maurice broke up his camp soon after the departure of his antagonist, and paused for a few days at Arnheim to give honourable burial to his cousin Philip and Count Solms. Meantime Sir Francis Vere was detached, with three regiments, which were to winter in Overyssel, towards Weerd castle, situate at a league's distance from Ysselsburg, and defended by a garrison of twenty-six men under Captain Pruys. That doughty commandant, on being summoned to surrender, obstinately refused. Vere, according to Maurice's orders, then opened with his artillery against the place, which soon capitulated in great panic and confusion. The captain demanded the honours of war. Vere told him in reply that the honours of war were halters for the garrison who had dared to defend such a hovel against artillery. The twenty-six were accordingly ordered to draw black and white straws. This was done, and the twelve drawing white straws were immediately hanged; the thirteenth receiving his life on consenting to act as executioner for his comrades. The commandant was despatched first of all. The rope broke, but the English soldiers held him under the water of the ditch until he was drowned. The castle was then thoroughly sacked, the women being sent unharmed to Ysselsburg.

Maurice then shipped the remainder of his troops along the Rhine and Waal to their winter quarters and returned to the Hague. It was the feeblest year's work yet done by the stadholder.

Meantime his great ally, the Huguenot-Catholic Prince of Bearne, was making a dashing, and, on the whole, successful campaign in the heart of his own kingdom. The constable of Castile, Don Ferdinando de Velasco, one of Spain's richest grandees and poorest generals, had been sent with an army of ten thousand men to take the field in Burgundy against the man with whom the great Farnese had been measuring swords so lately, and with not unmingled success, in Picardy. Biron, with a sudden sweep, took possession of Aussone, Autun, and Beaune, but on one adventurous day found himself so deeply engaged with a superior force of the enemy in the neighbourhood of Fontaine Francaise, or St. Seine, where France's great river takes its rise, as to be nearly cut off and captured. But Henry himself was already in the field, and by one of those mad, reckless impulses which made him so adorable as a soldier and yet so profoundly censurable as a commander-in-chief, he flung himself, like a young lieutenant, with a mere handful of cavalry, into the midst of the fight, and at the imminent peril of his own life succeeded in rescuing the marshal and getting off again unscathed. On other occasions Henry said he had fought for victory, but on that for dear life; and, even as in the famous and foolish skirmish at Aumale three years before, it was absence of enterprise or lack of cordiality on the part of his antagonists, that alone prevented a captive king from being exhibited as a trophy of triumph for the expiring League.

Page 2035

But the constable of Castile was not born to cheer the heart of his prudent master with such a magnificent spectacle. Velasco fell back to Gray and obstinately refused to stir from his entrenchments, while Henry before his eyes laid siege to Dijon. On the 28th June the capital of Burgundy surrendered to its sovereign, but no temptations could induce the constable to try the chance of a battle. Henry's movements in the interior were more successful than were the operations nearer the frontier, but while the monarch was thus cheerfully fighting for his crown in France, his envoys were winning a still more decisive campaign for him in Rome.

D'Ossat and Perron had accomplished their diplomatic task with consummate ability, and, notwithstanding the efforts and the threats of the Spanish ambassador and the intrigues of his master, the absolution was granted. The pope arose early on the morning of the 5th August, and walked barefoot from his palace of Mount Cavallo to the church of Maria Maggiore, with his eyes fixed on the ground, weeping loudly and praying fervently. He celebrated mass in the church, and then returned as he went, saluting no one on the road and shutting himself up in his palace afterwards. The same ceremony was performed ten days later on the festival of our Lady's Ascension. In vain, however, had been the struggle on the part of his Holiness to procure from the ambassador the deposition of the crown of France in his hands, in order that the king might receive it back again as a free gift and concession from the chief pontiff. Such a triumph was not for Rome, nor could even the publication of the Council of Trent in France be conceded except with a saving clause "as to matters which could not be put into operation without troubling the repose of the kingdom." And to obtain this clause the envoys declared "that they had been obliged to sweat blood and water."

On the 17th day of September the absolution was proclaimed with great pomp and circumstance from the gallery of St. Peter's, the holy father seated on the highest throne of majesty, with his triple crown on has head, and all his cardinals and bishops about him in their most effulgent robes.

The silver trumpets were blown, while artillery roared from the castle of St. Angelo, and for two successive nights Rome was in a blaze of bonfires and illumination, in a whirl of bell-ringing, feasting, and singing of hosannaha. There had not been such a merry-making in the eternal city since the pope had celebrated solemn thanksgiving for the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The king was almost beside himself with rapture when the great news reached him, and he straightway wrote letters, overflowing with gratitude and religious enthusiasm, to the pontiff and expressed his regret that military operations did not allow him to proceed at once to Rome in person to kiss the holy father's feet.

The narrative returns to Fuentes, who was left before the walls of Cambray.

Page 2036

That venerable ecclesiastical city; pleasantly seated amid gardens, orchards, and green pastures, watered, by the winding Scheld, was well fortified after the old manner, but it was especially defended and dominated by a splendid pentagonal citadel built by Charles V. It was filled with fine churches, among which the magnificent cathedral was pre-eminent, and with many other stately edifices. The population was thrifty, active, and turbulent, like that of all those Flemish and Walloon cities which the spirit of mediaeval industry had warmed for a time into vehement little republics.

But, as has already been depicted in these pages, the Celtic element had been more apt to receive than consistent to retain the generous impress which had once been stamped on all the Netherlands. The Walloon provinces had fallen away from their Flemish sisters and seemed likely to accept a permanent yoke, while in the territory of the united States, as John Baptist Tassis was at that very moment pathetically observing in a private letter to Philip, “with the coming up of a new generation educated as heretics from childhood, who had never heard what the word king means, it was likely to happen at last that the king’s memory, being wholly forgotten nothing would remain in the land but heresy alone.” From this sad fate Cambray had been saved. Gavre d’Inchy had seventeen years before surrendered the city to the Duke of Alencon during that unlucky personage’s brief and base career in the Netherlands, all, that was left of his visit being the semi-sovereignty which the notorious Balagny had since that time enjoyed, in the archiepiscopal city. This personage, a natural son of Monluc, Bishop of Valence, and nephew of the, distinguished Marshal Monluci was one of the most fortunate and the most ignoble of all the soldiers of fortune who had played their part at this epoch in the Netherlands. A poor creature himself, he had a heroine for a wife. Renee, the sister of Bussy d’Amboise, had vowed to unite herself to a man who would avenge the assassination of her brother by the Count Montsoreau? Balagny readily agreed to perform the deed, and accordingly espoused the high-born dame, but it does not appear that he ever wreaked her vengeance on the murderer. He had now governed Cambray until the citizens and the whole countryside were galled and exhausted by his grinding tyranny, his inordinate pride, and his infamous extortions. His latest achievement had been to force upon his subjects a copper currency bearing the nominal value of silver, with the same blasting effects which such experiments in political economy are apt to produce on princes and peoples. He had been a Royalist, a Guisist, a Leaguer, a Dutch republican, by turns, and had betrayed all the parties, at whose expense he had alternately filled his coffers. During the past year he had made up his mind—like most of the conspicuous politicians and campaigners of France—that the moribund League was only fit to be trampled upon by its recent worshippers, and he had made accordingly one of the very best bargains with Henry *iv*. that had yet been made, even at that epoch of self-vending grandees.

Page 2037

Henry, by treaty ratified in August, 1594, had created him Prince of Cambray and Marshal of France, so that the man who had been receiving up to that very moment a monthly subsidy of seven thousand two hundred dollars from the King of Spain was now gratified with a pension to about the same yearly amount by the King of France. During the autumn Henry had visited Cambray, and the new prince had made wondrous exhibitions of loyalty to the sovereign whom he had done his best all his life to exclude from his kingdom. There had been a ceaseless round of tournaments, festivals, and masquerades in the city in honour of the Huguenot chieftain, now changed into the most orthodox and most legitimate of monarchs, but it was not until midsummer of the present year that Balagny was called on to defend his old possessions and his new principality against a well-seasoned army and a vigorous commander. Meanwhile his new patron was so warmly occupied in other directions that it might be difficult for him to send assistance to the beleaguered city.

On the 14th August Fuentes began his siege operations. Before the investment had been completed the young Prince of Rhetelois, only fifteen years of age, son of the Duke of Nevers, made his entrance into the city attended by thirty of his father's archers. De Vich, too, an experienced and faithful commander, succeeded in bringing four or five hundred dragoons through the enemy's lines. These meagre reinforcements were all that reached the place; for, although the States-General sent two or three thousand Scotchmen and Zeelanders, under Justinus of Nassau, to Henry, that he might be the better enabled to relieve this important frontier city, the king's movements were not sufficiently prompt to turn the force to good account Balagny was left with a garrison of three thousand French and Walloons in the city, besides five hundred French in the fortress.

After six weeks steady drawing of parallels and digging of mines Fuentes was ready to open his batteries. On the 26th September, the news, very much exaggerated, of Mondragon's brilliant victory near Wessel, and of the deaths of Philip Nassau and Ernest Solms, reached the Spanish camp. Immense was the rejoicing. Triumphant salutes from eighty-seven cannon and many thousand muskets shook the earth and excited bewilderment and anxiety within the walls of the city. Almost immediately afterwards a tremendous cannonade was begun and so vigorously sustained that the burghers, and part of the garrison, already half rebellious with hatred to Balagny, began loudly to murmur as the balls came flying into their streets. A few days later an insurrection broke out. Three thousand citizens, with red flags flying, and armed to the teeth were discovered at daylight drawn up in the market place. Balagny came down from the citadel and endeavoured to calm the tumult, but was received with execrations. They had been promised, shouted the insurgents, that

Page 2038

every road about Cambray was to swarm with French soldiers under their formidable king, kicking the heads of the Spaniards in all directions. And what had they got? a child with thirty archers, sent by his father, and half a man at the head of four hundred dragoons. To stand a siege under such circumstances against an army of fifteen thousand Spaniards, and to take Balagny's copper as if it were gold, was more than could be asked of respectable burghers.

The allusion to the young prince Rhetelois and to De Vich, who had lost a leg in the wars, was received with much enthusiasm. Balagny, appalled at the fury of the people, whom he had so long been trampling upon while their docility lasted, shrank back before their scornful denunciations into the citadel.

But his wife was not appalled. This princess had from the beginning of the siege showed a courage and an energy worthy of her race. Night and day she had gone the rounds of the ramparts, encouraging and directing the efforts of the garrison. She had pointed batteries against the enemy's works, and, with her own hands, had fired the cannon. She now made her appearance in the market-place, after her husband had fled, and did her best to assuage the tumult, and to arouse the mutineers to a sense of duty or of shame. She plucked from her bosom whole handfuls of gold which she threw among the bystanders, and she was followed by a number of carts filled with sacks of coin ready to be exchanged for the debased currency.

Expressing contempt for the progress made by the besieging army, and for the, slight impression so far produced upon the defences of the city, she snatched a pike from a soldier and offered in person to lead the garrison to the breach. Her audience knew full well that this was no theatrical display, but that the princess was ready as the boldest warrior to lead a forlorn hope or to repel the bloodiest assault. Nor, from a military point of view, was their situation desperate. But their hatred and scorn for Balagny could not be overcome by any passing sentiment of admiration for his valiant though imperious wife. No one followed her to the breach. Exclaiming that she at least would never surrender, and that she would die a sovereign princess rather than live a subject, Renee de Balagny retained to the citadel.

The town soon afterwards capitulated, and as the Spanish soldiers, on entering, observed the slight damage that had been caused by their batteries, they were most grateful to the faint-hearted or mutinous condition by which they had been spared the expense of an assault.

The citadel was now summoned to surrender; and Balagny agreed, in case he should not be relieved within six days, to accept what was considered honourable terms. It proved too late to expect succour from Henry, and Balagny, but lately a reigning prince, was fain to go forth on the appointed day and salute his conqueror. But the princess

kept her vow. She had done her best to defend her dominions and to live a sovereign, and now there was nothing left her but to die. With bitter reproaches on her husband's pusillanimity, with tears and sobs of rage and shame, she refused food, spurned the idea of capitulation, and expired before the 9th of October.

Page 2039

On that day a procession moved out of the citadel gates. Balagny, with a son of eleven years of age, the Prince of Rhetelois, the Commander De Vich; and many other distinguished personages, all magnificently attired, came forth at the head of what remained of the garrison. The soldiers, numbering thirteen hundred foot and two hundred and forty horse, marched with colours flying, drums beating, bullet in mouth, and all the other recognised palliatives of military disaster. Last of all came a hearse, bearing the coffin of the Princess of Cambray. Fuentes saluted the living leaders of the procession, and the dead heroine; with stately courtesy, and ordered an escort as far as Peronne.

Balagny met with a cool reception from Henry at St. Quintin, but subsequently made his peace, and espoused the sister of the king's mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrees. The body of Gavre d'Inchy, which had been buried for years, was dug up and thrown into a gutter.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Deal with his enemy as if sure to become his friend
Mondragon was now ninety-two years old
More catholic than the pope
Octogenarian was past work and past mischief
Sacked and drowned ten infant princes
Strangled his nineteen brothers on his accession

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 68, 1595-1596

CHAPTER XXXII.

Archduke Cardinal Albert appointed governor of the Netherlands— Return of Philip William from captivity—His adherence to the King of Spain—Notice of the Marquis of Varambon, Count Varax, and other new officers—Henry's communications with Queen Elizabeth—Madame de Monceaux—Conversation of Henry with the English ambassador— Marseilles secured by the Duke of Guise—The fort of Rysbank taken by De Roane Calais in the hands of the Spanish—Assistance from England solicited by Henry—Unhandsome conditions proposed by Elizabeth—Annexation of Calais to the obedient provinces—Pirates of Dunkirk—Uneasiness of the Netherlanders with regard to the designs of Elizabeth—Her protestations of sincerity—Expedition of Dutch and English forces to Spain—Attack on the Spanish war-ships— Victory of the allies—Flag

of the Republic planted on the fortress of Cadiz—Capitulation of the city—Letter of Elizabeth to the Dutch Admirals—State of affairs in France—Proposition of the Duke of Montpensier for the division of the kingdom—Successes of the Cardinal Archduke in Normandy—He proceeds to Flanders—Siege and capture of Hulat—Projected alliance against Spain—Interview of De Sancy with Lord Burghley—Diplomatic conference at Greenwich— Formation of a league against Spain—Duplicity of the treaty—

Page 2040

Affairs in Germany—Battle between the Emperor and the Grand Turk— Endeavours of Philip to counteract the influence of the league—His interference in the affairs of Germany—Secret intrigue of Henry with Spain—Philip's second attempt at the conquest of England.

Another governor-general arrived in the early days of the year 1596, to take charge of the obedient provinces. It had been rumoured for many months that Philip's choice was at last fixed upon the Archduke Cardinal Albert, Archbishop of Toledo, youngest of the three surviving brothers, of the Emperor Rudolph, as the candidate for many honours. He was to espouse the Infanta, he was to govern the Netherlands, and, as it was supposed, there were wider and wilder schemes for the aggrandizement of this fortunate ecclesiastic brooding in the mind of Philip than yet had seen the light.

Meantime the cardinal's first care was to unfrock himself. He had also been obliged to lay down the most lucrative episcopate in Christendom, that of Toledo, the revenues of which amounted to the enormous sum of three hundred thousand dollars a year. Of this annual income, however, he prudently reserved to himself fifty thousand dollars, by contract with his destined successor.

The cardinal reached the Netherlands before the end of January. He brought with him three thousand Spanish infantry, and some companies of cavalry, while his personal baggage was transported on three hundred and fifty mules. Of course there was a triumphal procession when, on the 11th February, the new satrap entered the obedient Netherlands, and there was the usual amount of bell-ringing, cannon-firing, trumpet-blowing, with torch-light processions, blazing tar-barrels, and bedizened platforms, where Allegory, in an advanced state of lunacy, performed its wonderful antics. It was scarcely possible for human creatures to bestow more adulation, or to abase themselves more thoroughly, than the honest citizens of Brussels had so recently done in honour of the gentle, gouty Ernest, but they did their best. That mythological conqueror and demigod had sunk into an unhonoured grave, despite the loud hosannaha sung to him on his arrival in Belgica, and the same nobles, pedants, and burghers were now ready and happy to grovel at the feet of Albert. But as it proved as impossible to surpass the glories of the holiday which had been culled out for his brother, so it would be superfluous now to recall the pageant which thus again delighted the capital.

But there was one personage who graced this joyous entrance whose presence excited perhaps more interest than did that of the archduke himself. The procession was headed by three grandees riding abreast. There was the Duke of Aumale, pensionary of Philip, and one of the last of the Leaguers, who had just been condemned to death and executed in effigy at Paris, as a traitor to his king and country; there was the Prince of Chimay, now since the recent death of his father at Venice become Duke of Arschot; and between the two rode a gentleman forty-two years of age, whose grave;

melancholy features—although wearing a painful expression of habitual restraint and distrust suggested, more than did those of the rest of his family, the physiognomy of William the Silent to all who remembered that illustrious rebel.

Page 2041

It was the eldest son of the great founder of the Dutch republic. Philip William, Prince of Orange, had at last, after twenty-eight years of captivity in Spain, returned to the Netherlands, whence he had been kidnapped while a school boy at Louvain, by order of the Duke of Alva. Rarely has there been a more dreary fate, a more broken existence than his. His almost life-long confinement, not close nor cruel, but strict and inexorable, together with the devilish arts of the Jesuits, had produced nearly as blighting an effect upon his moral nature as a closer dungeon might have done on his physical constitution. Although under perpetual arrest in Madrid, he had been allowed to ride and to hunt, to go to mass, and to enjoy many of the pleasures of youth. But he had been always a prisoner, and his soul—a hopeless captive—could no longer be liberated now that the tyrant, in order to further his own secret purposes; had at last released his body from gaol. Although the eldest-born of his father, and the inheritor of the great estates of Orange and of Buren, he was no longer a Nassau except in name. The change wrought by the pressure of the Spanish atmosphere was complete. All that was left of his youthful self was a passionate reverence for his father's memory, strangely combined with a total indifference to all that his father held dear, all for which his father had laboured his whole lifetime, and for which his heart's blood had been shed. On being at last set free from bondage he had been taken to the Escorial, and permitted to kiss the hand of the king—that hand still reeking with his father's murder. He had been well received by the Infante and the Infanta, and by the empress-mother, daughter of Charles V., while the artistic treasures of the palace and cloister were benignantly pointed out to him. It was also signified to him that he was to receive the order of the Golden Fleece, and to enter into possession of his paternal and maternal estates. And Philip William had accepted these conditions as if a born loyal subject of his Most Catholic Majesty.

Could better proof be wanting that in that age religion was the only fatherland, and that a true papist could sustain no injury at the hands of his Most Catholic Majesty. If to be kidnapped in boyhood, to be imprisoned during a whole generation of mankind, to be deprived of vast estates, and to be made orphan by the foulest of assassinations, could not engender resentment against, the royal, perpetrator of these crimes in the bosom of his victim, was it strange that Philip should deem himself, something far, more than man, and should placidly accept the worship rendered to him by inferior beings, as to the holy impersonation of Almighty Wrath?

Page 2042

Yet there is no doubt that the prince had a sincere respect for his father, and had bitterly sorrowed at his death. When a Spanish officer, playing chess with him, in prison, had ventured to speak lightly of that father, Philip William had seized him bodily, thrown him from the window, and thus killed him on the spot. And when on his arrival in Brussels it was suggested to him by President Riehardat that it was the king's intention to reinstate him in the possession of his estates, but that a rent-charge of eighteen thousand florins a year was still to be paid from them; to the heirs of Balthazar Gerard, his father's assassin, he flamed into a violent rage, drew his poniard, and would have stabbed the president; had not the bystanders forcibly inteferred. In consequence of this refusal—-called magnanimous by contemporary writers—to accept his property under such conditions, the estates were detained from him for a considerable time longer. During the period of his captivity he had been allowed an income of fifteen thousand livres; but after his restoration his household, gentlemen, and servants alone cost him eighty thousand livres annually. It was supposed that the name of Orange-Nassau might now be of service to the king's designs in the Netherlands. Philip William had come by way of Rome, where he had been allowed to kiss the pope's feet and had received many demonstrations of favour, and it was fondly thought that he would now prove an instrument with which king and pontiff might pipe back the rebellious republic to its ancient allegiance. But the Dutchmen and Frisians were deaf. They had tasted liberty too long, they had dealt too many hard blows on the head of regal and sacerdotal despotism, to be deceived by coarse artifices. Especially the king thought that something might be done with Count Hohenlo. That turbulent personage having recently married the full sister of Philip William, and being already at variance with Count Maurice, both for military and political causes, and on account of family and pecuniary disputes, might, it was thought, be purchased by the king, and perhaps a few towns and castles in the united Netherlands might be thrown into the bargain. In that huckstering age, when the loftiest and most valiant nobles of Europe were the most shameless sellers of themselves, the most cynical mendicants for alms and the most infinite absorbers of bribes in exchange for their temporary fealty; when Mayenne, Mercoeur, Guise, Pillars, Egmont, and innumerable other possessors of ancient and illustrious names alternately and even simultaneously drew pensions from both sides in the great European conflict, it was not wonderful that Philip should think that the boisterous Hohenlo might be bought as well as another. The prudent king, however, gave his usual order that nothing was to be paid beforehand, but that the service was to be rendered first; and the price received afterwards.

The cardinal applied himself to the task on his first arrival, but was soon obliged to report that he could make but little progress in the negotiation.

Page 2043

The king thought, too, that Heraugiere, who had commanded the memorable expedition against Breda, and who was now governor of that stronghold, might be purchased, and he accordingly instructed the cardinal to make use of the Prince of Orange in the negotiations to be made for that purpose. The cardinal, in effect, received an offer from Heraugiere in the course of a few months not only to surrender Breda, without previous recompense, but likewise to place Gertruydenberg, the governor of which city was his relative, in the king's possession. But the cardinal was afraid of a trick, for Heraugiere was known to be as artful as he was brave, and there can be little doubt that the Netherlander was only disposed to lay an ambush for the governor-general.

And thus the son of William the Silent made his reappearance in the streets of Brussels, after twenty-eight years of imprisonment, riding in the procession of the new viceroy. The cardinal-archduke came next, with Fuentes riding at his left hand. That vigorous soldier and politician soon afterwards left the Netherlands to assume the government of Milan.

There was a correspondence between the Prince of Orange and the States-General, in which the republican authorities after expressing themselves towards him with great propriety, and affectionate respect, gave him plainly but delicately to understand that his presence at that time in the United Provinces would neither be desirable, nor, without their passports, possible. They were quite aware of the uses to which the king was hoping to turn their reverence for the memory and the family of the great martyr, and were determined to foil such idle projects on the threshold.

The Archduke Albert, born on 3rd of November, 1560, was now in his thirty-sixth year. A small, thin, pale-faced man, with fair hair, and beard, commonplace features, and the hereditary underhanging Burgundian jaw prominently developed, he was not without a certain nobility of presence. His manners were distant to haughtiness and grave to solemnity. He spoke very little and very slowly. He had resided long in Spain, where he had been a favourite with his uncle—as much as any man could be a favourite with Philip—and he had carefully formed himself on that royal model. He looked upon the King of Spain as the greatest, wisest, and best of created beings, as the most illustrious specimen of kingcraft ever yet vouchsafed to the world. He did his best to look sombre and Spanish, to turn his visage into a mask; to conceal his thoughts and emotions, not only by the expression of his features but by direct misstatements of his tongue, and in all things to present to the obedient Flemings as elaborate a reproduction of his great prototype as copy can ever recall inimitable original. Old men in the Netherlands; who remembered in how short a time Philip had succeeded, by the baleful effect of his personal presence, in lighting up a hatred which not the previous twenty years of his father's

Page 2044

burnings, hangings, and butcherings in those provinces had been able to excite, and which forty subsequent years of bloodshed had not begun to allay, might well shake their heads when they saw this new representative of Spanish authority. It would have been wiser—so many astute politicians thought—for Albert to take the Emperor Charles for his model, who had always the power of making his tyranny acceptable to the Flemings, through the adroitness with which he seemed to be entirely a Fleming himself.

But Albert, although a German, valued himself on appearing like a Spaniard. He was industrious, regular in his habits, moderate in eating and drinking, fond of giving audiences on business. He spoke German, Spanish, and Latin, and understood French and Italian. He had at times been a student, and, especially, had some knowledge of mathematics. He was disposed to do his duty—so far as a man can do his duty, who imagines himself so entirely lifted above his fellow creatures as to owe no obligation except to exact their obedience and to personify to them the will of the Almighty. To Philip and the Pope he was ever faithful. He was not without pretensions to military talents, but his gravity, slowness, and silence made him fitter to shine in the cabinet than in the field. Henry *iv*., who loved his jests whether at his own expense or that of friend or foe, was wont to observe that there were three things which nobody would ever believe, and which yet were very true; that Queen Elizabeth deserved her title of the, throned vestal, that he was himself a good Catholic, and that Cardinal Albert was a good general. It is probable that the assertions were all equally accurate.

The new governor did not find a very able group of generals or statesmen assembled about him to assist in the difficult task which he had undertaken. There were plenty of fine gentlemen, with ancient names and lofty pretensions, but the working men in field or council had mostly disappeared. Mondragon, La Motte, Charles Mansfeld, Frank Verdugo were all dead. Fuentes was just taking his departure for Italy. Old Peter Ernest was a cipher; and his son's place was filled by the Marquis of Varambon; as principal commander in active military operations. This was a Burgundian of considerable military ability, but with an inordinate opinion of himself and of his family. "Accept the fact that his lineage is the highest possible, and that he has better connections than those of anybody else in the whole world, and he will be perfectly contented," said a sharp, splenetic Spaniard in the cardinal's confidence. "'Tis a faithful and loyal cavalier, but full of impertinences." The brother of Varambon, Count Varax, had succeeded la Motte as general of artillery, and of his doings there was a, tale ere long to be told. On the whole, the best soldier in the archduke's service for the moment was the Frenchman Savigny de Rosne, an ancient Leaguer, and a passionate hater of the Bearnese, of heretics,

Page 2045

and of France as then constituted. He had once made a contract with Henry by which he bound himself to his service; but after occasioning a good deal of injury by his deceitful attitude, he had accepted a large amount of Spanish dollars, and had then thrown off the mask and proclaimed himself the deadliest foe of his lawful sovereign. "He was foremost," said Carlos Coloma, "among those who were successfully angled for by the Commander Moreo with golden hooks." Although prodigiously fat, this renegade was an active and experienced campaigner; while his personal knowledge of his own country made his assistance of much value to those who were attempting its destruction.

The other great nobles, who were pressing themselves about the new viceroy with enthusiastic words of welcome, were as like to give him embarrassment as support. All wanted office, emoluments, distinctions, nor could, much dependence be placed on the ability or the character of any of them. The new duke of Arschot had in times past, as prince of Chimay, fought against the king, and had even imagined himself a Calvinist, while his wife was still a determined heretic. It is true that she was separated from her husband. He was a man of more quickness and acuteness than his father had been, but if possible more mischievous both to friend and foe; being subtle, restless, intriguing, fickle; ambitious, and deceitful. The Prince of Orange was considered a man of very ordinary intelligence, not more than half witted, according to Queen Elizabeth, and it was probable that the peculiar circumstances of his life would extinguish any influence that he might otherwise have attained with either party. He was likely to affect a neutral position and, in times of civil war, to be neutral is to be nothing.

Arenberg, unlike the great general on the Catholic side who had made the name illustrious in the opening scenes of the mighty contest, was disposed to quiet obscurity so far as was compatible with his rank. Having inherited neither fortune nor talent with his ancient name, he was chiefly occupied with providing for the wants of his numerous family. A good papist, well-inclined and docile, he was strongly recommended for the post of admiral, not because he had naval acquirements, but because he had a great many children. The Marquis of Havre, uncle to the Duke of Arschot, had played in his time many prominent parts in the long Netherland tragedy. Although older than he was when Requesens and Don John of Austria had been governors, he was not much wiser, being to the full as vociferous, as false, as insolent, as self-seeking, and as mischievous as in his youth. Alternately making appeals to popular passions in his capacity of high-born demagogue, or seeking crumbs of bounty as the supple slave of his sovereign, he was not more likely to acquire the confidence of the cardinal than he had done that of his predecessors.

Page 2046

The most important and opulent grandee of all the provinces was the Count de Ligne, who had become by marriage or inheritance Prince of Espinay, Seneschal of Hainault, and Viscount of Ghent. But it was only his enormous estates that gave him consideration, for he was not thought capable of either good or bad intentions. He had, however, in times past, succeeded in the chief object of his ambition, which was to keep out of trouble, and to preserve his estates from confiscation. His wife, who governed him, and had thus far guided him safely, hoped to do so to the end. The cardinal was informed that the Golden Fleece would be all-sufficient to keep him upon the right track.

Of the Egmonts, one had died on the famous field of Ivry, another was an outlaw, and had been accused of participation in plots of assassination against William of Orange; the third was now about the archduke's court, and was supposed, to be as dull a man—as Ligne, but likely to be serviceable so long as he could keep his elder brother out of his inheritance. Thus devoted to Church and King were the sons of the man whose head Philip had taken off on a senseless charge of treason. The two Counts Van den Berg—Frederic and Herman—sons of the sister of William the Silent, were, on the whole, as brave, efficient, and trustworthy servants of the king and cardinal as were to be found in the obedient, provinces.

The new governor had come well provided with funds, being supplied for the first three-quarters of the year with a monthly: allowance of 1,100,000 florins. For reasons soon to appear, it was not probable that the States-General would be able very, soon to make a vigorous campaign, and it was thought best for the cardinal to turn his immediate attention to France.

The negotiations for, effecting an alliance offensive and defensive, between the three powers most interested in opposing the projects of Spain for universal empire, were not yet begun, and will be reserved for a subsequent chapter. Meantime there had been much informal discussion and diplomatic trifling between France and England for the purpose of bringing about a sincere co-operation of the two crowns against the Fifth Monarchy—as it was much the fashion to denominate Philip's proposed dominion.

Henry had suggested at different times to Sir Robert Sidney, during his frequent presence in France as special envoy for the queen, the necessity of such a step, but had not always found a hearty sympathy. But as the king began to cool in his hatred to Spain, after his declaration of war against that power, it seemed desirable to Elizabeth to fan his resentment afresh, and to revert to those propositions which had been so coolly received when made. Sir Harry Umton, ambassador from her Majesty, was accordingly provided with especial letters on the subject from the queen's own hand, and presented them early in the year at Coucy (Feb. 13, 1596). No man in the world knew better the tone to adopt in his

Page 2047

communications with Elizabeth than did the chivalrous king. No man knew better than he how impossible it was to invent terms of adulation too gross for her to accept as spontaneous and natural effusions, of the heart. He received the letters from the hands of Sir Henry, read them with rapture, heaved a deep sigh, and exclaimed. “Ah! Mr. Ambassador, what shall I say to you? This letter of the queen, my sister, is full of sweetness and affection. I see that she loves me, while that I love her is not to be doubted. Yet your commission shows me the contrary, and this proceeds from her, ministers. How else can these obliquities stand with her professions of love? I am forced, as a king, to take a course which, as Henry, her loving brother, I could never adopt.”

They then walked out into the park, and the king fell into frivolous discourse, on purpose to keep the envoy from the important subject which had been discussed in the cabinet. Sir Henry brought him back to business, and insisted that there was no disagreement between her Majesty and her counsellors, all being anxious to do what she wished. The envoy, who shared in the prevailing suspicions that Henry was about to make a truce with Spain, vehemently protested against such a step, complaining that his ministers, whose minds were distempered with jealousy, were inducing him to sacrifice her friendship to a false and hollow reconciliation with Spain. Henry protested that his preference would be for England’s amity, but regretted that the English delays were so great, and that such dangers were ever impending over his head, as to make it impossible for him, as a king, to follow the inclinations of his heart.

They then met Madame de Monceaux, the beautiful Gabrielle, who was invited to join in the walk, the king saying that she was no meddler in politics, but of a tractable spirit.

This remark, in Sir Henry’s opinion, was just, for, said he to Burghley, she is thought incapable of affairs, and, very simple.

The duchess unmasked very graciously as the ambassador was presented; but, said the splenetic diplomatist, “I took no pleasure in it, nor held it any grace at all.” “She was attired in a plain satin gown,” he continued, “with a velvet hood to keep her from the weather, which became her very ill. In my opinion, she is altered very much for the worse, and was very grossly painted.” The three walked together discoursing of trifles, much to the annoyance of Umton. At last, a shower forced the lady into the house, and the king soon afterwards took the ambassador to his cabinet. “He asked me how I liked his mistress,” wrote Sir Henry to Burghley, “and I answered sparingly in her praise, and told him that if without offence I might speak it, I had the picture of a far more excellent mistress, and yet did her picture come far from the perfection of her beauty.”

“As you love me,” cried the king, “show it me, if you have it about you!”

Page 2048

“I made some difficulty,” continued Sir Henry, “yet upon his importunity I offered it to his view very secretly, still holding it in my hand. He beheld it with passion and admiration, saying that I was in the right.” “I give in,” said the king, “Je me rends.”

Then, protesting that he had never seen such beauty all his life, he kissed it reverently twice or thrice, Sir Henry still holding the miniature firmly in his hand.

The king then insisted upon seizing the picture, and there was a charming struggle between the two, ending in his Majesty’s triumph. He then told Sir Henry that he might take his leave of the portrait, for he would never give it up again for any treasure, and that to possess the favour of the original he would forsake all the world. He fell into many more such passionate and incoherent expressions of rhapsody, as of one suddenly smitten and spell-bound with hapless love, bitterly reproaching the ambassador for never having brought him any answers to the many affectionate letters which he had written to the queen, whose silence had made him so wretched. Sir Henry, perhaps somewhat confounded at being beaten at his own fantastic game, answered as well as he could, “but I found,” said he, “that the dumb picture did draw on more speech and affection from him than all my best arguments and eloquence. This was the effect of our conference, and, if infiniteness of vows and outward professions be a strong argument of inward affection, there is good likelihood of the king’s continuance of amity with her Majesty; only I fear lest his necessities may inconsiderately draw him into some hazardous treaty with Spain, which I hope confidently it is yet in the power of her Majesty to prevent.”

The king, while performing these apish tricks about the picture of a lady with beady black eyes, a hooked nose, black teeth, and a red wig, who was now in the sixty-fourth year of her age, knew very well that the whole scene would be at once repeated to the fair object of his passion by her faithful envoy; but what must have been the opinion entertained of Elizabeth by contemporary sovereigns and statesmen when such fantastic folly could be rehearsed and related every day in the year!

And the king knew, after all, and was destined very soon to acquire proof of it which there was no gainsaying, that the beautiful Elizabeth had exactly as much affection for him as he had for her, and was as capable of sacrificing his interests for her own, or of taking advantage of his direct necessities as cynically and as remorselessly, as the King of Spain, or the Duke of Mayenne, or the Pope had ever done.

Page 2049

Henry had made considerable progress in re-establishing his authority over a large portion of the howling wilderness to which forty years of civil war had reduced his hereditary kingdom. There was still great danger, however, at its two opposite extremities. Calais, key to the Norman gate of France, was feebly held; while Marseilles, seated in such dangerous proximity to Spain on the one side, and to the Republic of Genoa, that alert vassal of Spain, on the other, was still in the possession of the League. A concerted action was undertaken by means of John Andrew Doria, with a Spanish fleet from Genoa on the outside and a well-organised conspiracy from within, to carry the city bodily over to Philip. Had it succeeded, this great Mediterranean seaport would have become as much a Spanish 'possession as Barcelona or Naples, and infinite might have been the damage to Henry's future prospects in consequence. But there was a man in Marseilles; Petrus Libertas by name, whose ancestors had gained this wholesome family appellation by a successful effort once made by them to rescue the little town of Calvi, in Corsica, from the tyranny of Genoa. Peter Liberty needed no prompting to vindicate, on a fitting occasion, his right to his patronymic. In conjunction with men in Marseilles who hated oppression, whether of kings, priests, or renegade republics, as much as he did, and with a secret and well-arranged understanding with the Duke of Guise, who was burning with ambition to render a signal benefit to the cause which he had just espoused, this bold tribune of the people succeeded in stirring the population to mutiny at exactly the right moment, and in opening the gates of Marseilles to the Duke of Guise and his forces before it was possible for the Leaguers to admit the fleet of Doria into its harbour. Thus was the capital of Mediterranean France lost and won. Guise gained great favour in Henry's eyes; and with reason; for the son of the great Balafre, who was himself the League, had now given the League the stroke of mercy. Peter Liberty became consul of Marseilles, and received a patent of nobility. It was difficult, however, for any diploma to confer anything more noble upon him than the name which he hade inherited, and to which he had so well established his right.

But while Henry's cause had thus been so well served in the south, there was danger impending in the north. The king had been besieging, since autumn, the town of La Fere, an important military and strategic position, which had been Farnese's basis of operations during his memorable campaigns in France, and which had ever since remained in the hands of the League.

Page 2050

The cardinal had taken the field with an army of fifteen thousand foot and three thousand horse, assembled at Valenciennes, and after hesitating some time whether, or not he should attempt to relieve La Fere, he decided instead on a diversion. In the second week of April; De Rosne was detached at the head of four thousand men, and suddenly appeared before Calais. The city had been long governed by De Gordan, but this wary and experienced commander had unfortunately been for two years dead. Still more unfortunately, it had been in his power to bequeath, not only his fortune, which was very large, but the government of Calais, considered the most valuable command in France, to his nephew, De Vidosan. He had, however, not bequeathed to him his administrative and military genius.

The fortress called the Risban, or Rysbank, which entirely governed the harbour, and the possession of which made Calais nearly impregnable, as inexhaustible supplies could thus be poured into it by sea, had fallen into comparative decay. De Gordan had been occupied in strengthening the work, but since his death the nephew had entirely neglected the task. On the land side, the bridge of Nivelet was the key to the place. The faubourg was held by two Dutch companies, under Captains Le Gros and Dominique, who undertook to prevent the entrance of the archduke's forces. Vidosan, however; ordered these faithful auxiliaries into the citadel.

De Rosne, acting with great promptness; seized both the bridge of Nivelet and the fort of Rysbank by a sudden and well-concerted movement. This having been accomplished, the city was in his power, and, after sustaining a brief cannonade, it surrendered. Vidosan, with his garrison, however, retired into the citadel, and it was agreed between, himself and De Rosne that unless succour should be received from the French king before the expiration of six days; the citadel should also be-evacuated.

Meantime Henry, who was at Boulogne, much disgusted at this unexpected disaster, had sent couriers to the Netherlands, demanding assistance of the States-General and of the stadholder. Maurice had speedily responded to the appeal. Proceeding himself to Zeeland, he had shipped fifteen companies of picked troops from Middelburg, together with a flotilla laden with munitions and provisions enough to withstand a siege of several weeks. When the arrangements were completed, he went himself on board of a ship of war to take command of the expedition in person. On the 17th of April he arrived with his succours off the harbour of Calais, and found to his infinite disappointment that the Rysbank fort was in the hands of the enemy. As not a vessel could pass the bar without almost touching that fortress, the entrance to Calais was now impossible. Had the incompetent Vidosan heeded the advice of his brave Dutch officers; the place might still have been saved, for it had surrendered in a panic on the very day when the fleet of Maurice arrived off the port.

Page 2051

Henry had lost no time in sending, also, to his English allies for succour. The possession of Calais by the Spaniards might well seem alarming to Elizabeth, who could not well forget that up to the time of her sister this important position had been for two centuries an English stronghold. The defeat of the Spanish husband of an English queen had torn from England the last trophies of the Black Prince, and now the prize had again fallen into the hands of Spain; but of Spain no longer in alliance, but at war, with England. Obviously it was most dangerous to the interests and to the safety of the English realm, that this threatening position, so near the gates of London, should be in the hands of the most powerful potentate in the world and the dire enemy of England. In response to Henry's appeal, the Earl of Essex was despatched with a force of six thousand men—raised by express command of the queen on Sunday when the people were all at church—to Dover, where shipping was in readiness to transport the troops at once across the Channel. At the same time, the politic queen and some of her counsellors thought the opening a good one to profit by the calamity of their dear ally, Certainly it was desirable to prevent Calais from falling into the grasp of Philip. But it was perhaps equally desirable, now that the place without the assistance of Elizabeth could no longer be preserved by Henry, that Elizabeth, and not Henry, should henceforth be its possessor. To make this proposition as clear to the French king as it seemed to the English queen, Sir Robert Sidney was despatched in all haste to Boulogne, even while the guns of De Rosne were pointed at Calais citadel, and while Maurice's fleet, baffled by the cowardly surrender of the Risban, was on its retreat from the harbour.

At two o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st of April, Sidney landed at Boulogne. Henry, who had been intensely impatient to hear from England, and who suspected that the delay was boding no good to his cause, went down to the strand to meet the envoy, with whom then and there he engaged instantly in the most animated discourse.

As there was little time to be lost, and as Sidney on getting out of the vessel found himself thus confronted with the soldier-king in person, he at once made the demand which he had been sent across the Channel to make. He requested the king to deliver up the town and citadel of Calais to the Queen of England as soon as, with her assistance, he should succeed in recovering the place. He assigned as her Majesty's reasons for this peremptory summons that she would on no other terms find it in her power to furnish the required succour. Her subjects, she said, would never consent to it except on these conditions. It was perhaps not very common with the queen to exhibit so much deference to the popular will, but on this occasion the supposed inclinations of the nation furnished her with an excellent pretext for carrying out her own. Sidney urged moreover that her Majesty felt certain of being obliged—in case she did not take Calais into her own safe-keeping and protection—to come to the rescue again within four or six months to prevent it once more from being besieged, conquered, and sacked by the enemy.

Page 2052

The king had feared some such proposition as this, and had intimated as much to the States' envoy, Calvaert, who had walked with him down to the strand, and had left him when the conference began. Henry was not easily thrown from his equanimity nor wont to exhibit passion on any occasion, least of all in his discussions with the ambassadors of England, but the cool and insolent egotism of this communication was too much for him.

He could never have believed, he said in reply, that after the repeated assurances of her Majesty's affection for him which he had received from the late Sir Henry Umton in their recent negotiations, her Majesty would now so discourteously seek to make her profit out of his misery. He had come to Boulogne, he continued, on the pledge given by the Earl of Essex to assist him with seven or eight thousand men in the recovery of Calais. If this after all should fail him—although his own reputation would be more injured by the capture of the place thus before his eyes than if it had happened in his absence—he would rather a hundred times endure the loss of the place than have it succoured with such injurious and dishonourable conditions. After all, he said, the loss of Calais was substantially of more importance to the queen than to himself. To him the chief detriment would be in the breaking up of his easy and regular communications with his neighbours through this position, and especially with her Majesty. But as her affection for him was now proved to be so slender as to allow her to seek a profit from his misfortune and dishonour, it would be better for him to dispense with her friendship altogether and to strengthen his connections with truer and more honourable friends. Should the worst come to the worst, he doubted not that he should be able, being what he was and much more than he was of old, to make a satisfactory arrangement with, the King of Spain. He was ready to save Calais at the peril of his life, to conquer it in person, and not by the hands of any of his lieutenants; but having done so, he was not willing—at so great a loss of reputation without and at so much peril within—to deliver it to her Majesty or to any-one else. He would far rather see it fall into the hands of the Spaniards.

Thus warmly and frankly did Henry denounce the unhandsome proposition made in the name of the queen, while, during his vehement expostulations, Sidney grew red with shame, and did not venture to look the king for one moment in the face. He then sought to mitigate the effect of his demand by intimating, with much embarrassment of demeanour, that perhaps her Majesty would be satisfied with the possession of Calais for her own life-time, and—as this was at once plumply refused—by the suggestion of a pledge of it for the term of one year. But the king only grew the more indignant as the bargaining became more paltry, and he continued to heap bitter reproaches upon the queen, who, without having any children or known inheritor of her possessions, should nevertheless, be so desirous of compassing his eternal disgrace and of exciting the discontent of his subjects for the sake of an evanescent gain for herself. At such a price, he avowed, he had no wish to purchase her Majesty'a friendship.

Page 2053

After this explosion the conference became more amicable. The English envoy assured the king that there could be, at all events, no doubt of the arrival of Essex with eight thousand men on the following Thursday to assist in the relief of the citadel; notwithstanding the answer which, he had received to the demand of her Majesty.

He furthermore expressed the strong desire which he felt that the king might be induced to make a personal visit to the queen at Dover, whither she would gladly come to receive him, so soon as Calais should have been saved. To this the king replied with gallantry, that it was one of the things in the world that he had most at heart. The envoy rejoined that her Majesty would consider such a visit a special honour and favour. She had said that she could leave this world more cheerfully, when God should ordain, after she had enjoyed two hours' conversation with his Majesty.

Sidney on taking his departure repeated the assurance that the troops under Essex would arrive before Calais by Thursday, and that they were fast marching to the English coast; forgetting, apparently, that, at the beginning of the interview, he had stated, according to the queen's instructions, that the troops had been forbidden to march until a favourable answer had been returned by the king to her proposal.

Henry then retired to his headquarters for the purpose of drawing up information for his minister in England, De Saucy, who had not yet been received by the queen, and who had been kept in complete ignorance of this mission of Sidney and of its purport.

While the king was thus occupied, the English envoy was left in the company of Calvaert, who endeavoured, without much success, to obtain from him the result of the conference which had just taken place. Sidney was not to be pumped by the Dutch diplomatist, adroit as he unquestionably was, but, so soon as the queen's ambassador was fairly afloat again on his homeward track—which was the case within three hours after his arrival at Boulogne—Calvaert received from the king a minute account of the whole conversation.

Henry expressed unbounded gratitude to the States-General of the republic for their prompt and liberal assistance, and he eagerly contrasted the conduct of Prince Maurice —sailing forth in person so chivalrously to his rescue—with the sharp bargainings and shortcomings of the queen. He despatched a special messenger to convey his thanks to the prince, and he expressed his hope to Calvaert that the States might be willing that their troops should return to the besieged place under the command of Maurice, whose, presence alone, as he loudly and publicly protested, was worth four thousand men.

Page 2054

But it was too late. The six days were rapidly passing, away. The governor of Boulogne, Campagnolo, succeeded, by Henry's command, in bringing a small reinforcement of two or three hundred men into the citadel of Calais during the night of the 22nd of April. This devoted little band made their way, when the tide was low, along the flats which stretched between the fort of Rysbank and the sea. Sometimes wading up to the neck in water, sometimes swimming for their lives, and during a greater part of their perilous, march clinging so close to the hostile fortress as almost to touch its guns, the gallant adventurers succeeded in getting into the citadel in time to be butchered with the rest of the garrison on the following day. For so soon as the handful of men had gained admittance to the gates—although otherwise the aspect of affairs was quite unchanged—the rash and weak De Vidosan proclaimed that the reinforcements stipulated in his conditional capitulation having arrived, he should now resume hostilities. Whereupon he opened fire, upon the town, and a sentry was killed. De Rosne, furious, at what he considered a breach of faith, directed a severe cannonade against the not very formidable walls of the castle. During the artillery engagement which ensued the Prince of Orange, who had accompanied De Rosne to the siege, had a very narrow escape. A cannon-ball from the town took off the heads of two Spaniards standing near him, bespattering him with their blood and brains. He was urged to retire, but assured those about him that he came of too good a house to be afraid. His courage was commendable, but it seems not to have occurred to him that the place for his father's son was not by the aide of the general who was doing the work of his father's murderer. While his brother Maurice with a fleet of twenty Dutch war-ships was attempting in vain to rescue Calais from the grasp of the Spanish king, Philip William of Nassau was looking on, a pleased and passive spectator of the desperate and unsuccessful efforts at defence. The assault was then ordered? The-first storm was repulsed, mainly by the Dutch companies, who fought in the breach until most of their numbers were killed or wounded, their captains Dominique and Le Gros having both fallen. The next attack was successful, the citadel was carried; and the whole garrison, with exception of what remained of the Hollanders and Zeelanders, put to the sword. De Vidosan himself perished. Thus Calais was once more a Spanish city, and was re-annexed to the obedient provinces of Flanders. Of five thousand persons, soldiers and citizens, who had taken refuge in the castle, all were killed or reduced to captivity.'

Page 2055

The conversion of this important naval position into a Spanish-Flemish station was almost as disastrous to the republic as it was mortifying to France and dangerous to England. The neighbouring Dunkirk had long been a nest of pirates, whence small, fast-sailing vessels issued, daily and nightly, to prey indiscriminately upon the commerce of all nations. These corsairs neither gave nor took quarter, and were in the habit, after they had plundered their prizes, of setting them adrift, with the sailors nailed to the deck or chained to the rigging; while the officers were held for ransom. In case the vessels themselves were wanted, the crews were indiscriminately tossed overboard; while, on the ether hand, the buccaneers rarely hesitated to blow up their own ships, when unable to escape from superior force. Capture was followed by speedy execution, and it was but recently that one of these freebooters having been brought into Rotterdam, the whole crew, forty-four in number, were hanged on the day of their arrival, while some five and twenty merchant-captains held for ransom by the pirates thus obtained their liberty.

And now Calais was likely to become a second and more dangerous sea-robbers' cave than even Dunkirk had been.

Notwithstanding this unlucky beginning of the campaign for the three allies, it was determined to proceed with a considerable undertaking which had been arranged between England and the republic. For the time, therefore, the importunate demands of the queen for repayments by the States of her disbursements during the past ten years were suspended. It had, indeed, never been more difficult than at that moment for the republic to furnish extraordinary sums of money. The year 1595 had not been prosperous. Although the general advance in commerce, manufactures, and in every department of national development had been very remark able, yet there had recently been, for exceptional causes, an apparent falling off; while, on the other hand, there had been a bad harvest in the north of Europe. In Holland, where no grain was grown, and which yet was the granary of the world, the prices were trebled. One hundred and eight bushels (a last) of rye, which ordinarily was worth fifty florins, now sold for one hundred and fifty florins, and other objects of consumption were equally enhanced in value. On the other hand, the expenses of the war were steadily increasing, and were fixed for this year at five millions of florins. The republic, and especially the States of Holland, never hesitated to tax heroically. The commonwealth had no income except that which the several provinces chose to impose upon themselves in order to fill the quota assigned to them by the States-General; but this defect in their political organization was not sensibly felt so long as the enthusiasm for the war continued in full force. The people of the Netherlands knew full well that there was no liberty for them without fighting, no fighting without an army, no army

Page 2056

without wages, and no wages without taxation; and although by the end of the century the imposts had become so high that, in the language of that keen observer, Cardinal Bentivoglio; nuncio at Brussels, they could scarcely be imagined higher, yet, according to the same authority, they were laid unflinchingly and paid by the people without a murmur. During this year and the next the States of Holland, whose proportion often amounted to fifty per cent. of the whole contribution of the United Provinces, and who ever set a wholesome example in taxation, raised the duty on imports and all internal taxes by one-eighth, and laid a fresh impost on such articles of luxury as velvets and satins, pleas and processes. Starch, too, became a source of considerable revenue. With the fast-rising prosperity of the country luxury had risen likewise, and, as in all ages and countries of the world of which there is record, woman's dress signalized itself by extravagant and very often tasteless conceptions. In a country where, before the doctrine of popular sovereignty had been broached in any part of the world by the most speculative theorists, very vigorous and practical examples of democracy had been afforded to Europe; in a country where, ages before the science of political economy had been dreamed of, lessons of free trade on the largest scale had been taught to mankind by republican traders instinctively breaking in many directions through the nets by which monarchs and oligarchs, guilds and corporations, had hampered the movements of commerce; it was natural that fashion should instinctively rebel against restraint. The honest burgher's vrow of Middelburg or Enkhuyzen claimed the right to make herself as grotesque as Queen Elizabeth in all her glory. Sumptuary laws were an unwholesome part of feudal tyranny, and, as such, were naturally dropping into oblivion on the free soil of the Netherlands. It was the complaint therefore of moralists that unproductive consumption was alarmingly increasing. Formerly starch had been made of the refuse parts of corn, but now the manufacturers of that article made use of the bloom of the wheat and consumed as much of it as would have fed great cities. In the little village of Wormer the starch-makers used between three and four thousand bushels a week. Thus a substantial gentlewoman in fashionable array might bear the food of a parish upon her ample bosom. A single manufacturer in Amsterdam required four hundred weekly bushels. Such was the demand for the stiffening of the vast ruffs, the wonderful head-gear, the elaborate lace-work, stomachers and streamers, without which no lady who respected herself could possibly go abroad to make her daily purchases of eggs and poultry in the market-place.

"May God preserve us," exclaimed a contemporary chronicler, unreasonably excited on the starch question, "from farther luxury and wantonness, and abuse of His blessings and good gifts, that the punishment of Jeroboam, which followed upon Solomon's fortunate reign and the gold-ships of Ophir may not come upon us."

Page 2057

The States of Holland not confounding—as so often has been the case—the precepts of moral philosophy with those of political economy, did not, out of fear for the doom of Jeroboam, forbid the use of starch. They simply laid a tax of a stiver a pound on the commodity, or about six per cent, ad valorem; and this was a more wholesome way of serving the State than by abridging the liberty of the people in the choice of personal attire. Meantime the preachers were left to thunder from their pulpits upon the sinfulness of starched rues and ornamental top-knots, and to threaten their fair hearers with the wrath to come, with as much success as usually attends such eloquence.

There had been uneasiness in the provinces in regard to the designs of the queen, especially since the States had expressed their inability to comply in full with her demands for repayment. Spanish emissaries had been busily circulating calumnious reports that her Majesty was on the eve of concluding a secret peace with Philip, and that it was her intention to deliver the cautionary towns to the king. The Government attached little credence to such statements, but it was natural that Envoy Caron should be anxious at their perpetual recurrence both in England and in the provinces. So, one day, he had a long conversation with the Earl of Essex on the subject; for it will be recollected that Lord Leicester had strenuously attempted at an earlier day to get complete possession, not only of the pledged cities but of Leyden also, in order to control the whole country. Essex was aflame with indignation at once, and, expressed himself with his customary recklessness. He swore that if her Majesty were so far forsaken of God and so forgetful of her own glory, as through evil counsel to think of making any treaty with Spain without the knowledge of the States-General and in order to cheat them, he would himself make the matter as public as it was possible to do, and would place himself in direct opposition to such a measure, so as to show the whole world that his heart and soul were foreign at least to any vile counsel of the kind that might have been given to his Sovereign. Caron and Essex conversed much in this vein, and although the envoy, especially requested him not to do so, the earl, who was not distinguished, for his powers of dissimulation, and who suspected Burleigh of again tampering, as he had often before tampered, with secret agents of Philip, went straight to the queen with the story. Next day, Essex invited Caron to dine and to go with him after dinner to the queen. This was done, and, so soon as the States' envoy was admitted to the royal presence, her Majesty at once opened the subject. She had heard, she said, that the reports in question had been spread through the provinces, and she expressed much indignation in regard to them. She swore very vehemently, as usual, and protested that she had better never have been born than prove so miserable a princess as these tales would make

Page 2058

her. The histories of England, she said, should never describe her as guilty of such falsehood. She could find a more honourable and fitting means of making peace than by delivering up cities and strongholds so sincerely and confidingly placed in her hands. She hoped to restore them as faithfully as they had loyally been entrusted to her keeping. She begged Caron to acquaint the States-General with these asseverations; declaring that never since she had sent troops to the Netherlands had she lent her ear to those who had made such underhand propositions. She was aware that Cardinal Albert had propositions to make, and that he was desirous of inducing both the French king and, herself to consent to a peace with Spain: but she promised, the States' envoy solemnly before God to apprise him of any such overtures, so soon as they should be made known to herself.

Much more in this strain, with her usual vehemence and mighty oaths, did the great queen aver, and the republican envoy, to whom she was on this occasion very gracious, was fain to believe in her sincerity. Yet the remembrance of the amazing negotiations between the queen's ministers and the agents of Alexander Farnese, by which the invasion of the Armada had been masked; could not but have left an uneasy feeling in the mind of every Dutch statesman. "I trust in God," said Caron, "that He may never so abandon her as to permit her to do the reverse of what she now protests with so much passion. Should it be otherwise—which God forbid—I should think that He would send such chastisement upon her and her people that other princes would see their fate therein as in a mirror, should they make and break such oaths and promises. I tell you these things as they occur, because, as I often feel uneasiness myself, I imagine that my friends on the other side the water may be subject to the same anxiety. Nevertheless, beat the bush as I may, I can obtain no better information than this which I am now sending you."

It had been agreed that for a time the queen should desist from her demands for repayment—which, according to the Treaty of 1585, was to be made only after conclusion of peace between Spain and the provinces, but which Elizabeth was frequently urging on the ground that the States could now make that peace when they chose—and in return for such remission the republic promised to furnish twenty-four ships of war and four tenders for a naval expedition which was now projected against the Spanish coast. These war-ships were to be of four hundred, three hundred, and two hundred tons-eight of each dimension—and the estimated expense of their fitting out for five months was 512,796 florins.

Page 2059

Before the end of April, notwithstanding the disappointment occasioned in the Netherlands by the loss of Calais, which the States had so energetically striven to prevent, the fleet under Admiral John of Duvenwoord, Seigneur of Warmond, and Vice-Admirals Jan Gerbrantz and Cornelius Leusen, had arrived at Plymouth, ready to sail with their English allies. There were three thousand sailors of Holland and Zeeland on board, the best mariners in the world, and two thousand two hundred picked veterans from the garrisons of the Netherlands. These land-troops were English, but they belonged to the States' army, which was composed of Dutch, German, Walloon, Scotch, and Irish soldiers, and it was a liberal concession on the part of the republican Government to allow them to serve on the present expedition. By the terms of the treaty the queen had no more power to send these companies to invade Spain than to campaign against Tyr Owen in Ireland, while at a moment when the cardinal archduke had a stronger and better-appointed army in Flanders than had been seen for many years in the provinces, it was a most hazardous experiment for the States to send so considerable a portion of their land and naval forces upon a distant adventure. It was also a serious blow to them to be deprived for the whole season of that valiant and experienced commander, Sir Francis Vere, the most valuable lieutenant, save Lewis William, that Maurice had at his disposition. Yet Vere was to take command of this contingent thus sent to the coast of Spain, at the very moment when the republican army ought to issue from their winter quarters and begin active operations in the field. The consequence of this diminution of their strength and drain upon their resources was that the States were unable to put an army in the field during the current year, or make any attempt at a campaign.

The queen wrote a warm letter of thanks to Admiral Warmond for the promptness and efficiency with which he had brought his fleet to the place of rendezvous, and now all was bustle and preparation in the English ports for the exciting expedition resolved upon. Never during Philip's life-time, nor for several years before his birth, had a hostile foot trod the soil of Spain, except during the brief landing at Corunna in 1590, and, although the king's beard had been well singed ten years previously by Sir Francis Drake, and although the coast of Portugal had still more recently been invaded by Essex and Vere, yet the present adventure was on a larger scale, and held out brighter prospects of success than any preceding expedition had done. In an age when the line between the land and sea service, between regular campaigners and volunteers, between public and private warfare, between chivalrous knights-errant and buccaneers, was not very distinctly drawn, there could be nothing more exciting to adventurous spirits, more tempting to the imagination of those who hated the Pope and Philip, who loved fighting, prize-money, and the queen, than a foray into Spain.

Page 2060

It was time to return the visit of the Armada. Some of the sea-kings were gone. Those magnificent freebooters, Drake and Hawkins, had just died in the West Indies, and doughty Sir Roger Williams had left the world in which he had bustled so effectively, bequeathing to posterity a classic memorial of near a half century of hard fighting, written, one might almost imagine, in his demi-pique saddle. But that most genial, valiant, impracticable, reckless, fascinating hero of romance, the Earl of Essex—still a youth although a veteran in service—was in the spring-tide of favour and glory, and was to command the land-forces now assembled at Plymouth. That other “corsair”—as the Spaniards called him—that other charming and heroic shape in England’s chequered chronicle of chivalry and crime—famous in arts and arms, politics, science, literature, endowed with so many of the gifts by which men confer lustre on their age and country, whose name was already a part of England’s eternal glory, whose tragic destiny was to be her undying shame—Raleigh, the soldier, sailor, scholar, statesman, poet, historian, geographical discoverer, planter of empires yet unborn—was also present, helping to organize the somewhat chaotic elements of which the chief Anglo-Dutch enterprise for this year against—the Spanish world-dominion was compounded.

And, again, it is not superfluous to recal the comparatively slender materials, both in bulk and numbers, over which the vivid intelligence and restless energy of the two leading Protestant powers, the Kingdom and the Republic, disposed. Their contest against the overshadowing empire, which was so obstinately striving to become the fifth-monarchy of history, was waged by land: and naval forces, which in their aggregate numbers would scarce make a startling list of killed and wounded in a single modern battle; by ships such that a whole fleet of them might be swept out of existence with half-a-dozen modern broadsides; by weapons which would seem to modern eyes like clumsy toys for children. Such was the machinery by which the world was to be lost and won, less than three centuries ago. Could science; which even in that age had made gigantic strides out of the preceding darkness, have revealed its later miracles, and have presented its terrible powers to the despotism which was seeking to crush all Christendom beneath its feet, the possible result might have been most tragical to humanity. While there are few inventions in morals, the demon Intellect is ever at his work, knowing no fatigue and scorning contentment in his restless demands upon the infinite Unknown. Yet moral truth remains unchanged, gradually through the ages extending its influence, and it is only by conformity to its simple and, eternal dictates that nations, like individuals, can preserve a healthful existence. In the unending warfare between right and wrong, between liberty and despotism; Evil has the advantage of rapidly assuming many shapes. It has been well said that

Page 2061

constant vigilance is the price of liberty. The tendency of our own times, stimulated by scientific discoveries and their practical application, is to political consolidation, to the absorption of lesser communities in greater; just as disintegration was the leading characteristic of the darker ages. The scheme of Charlemagne to organize Europe into a single despotism was a brilliant failure because the forces which were driving human society into local and gradual reconstruction around various centres of crystallization: were irresistible to any countervailing enginry which the emperor had at his disposal. The attempt of Philip, eight centuries later, at universal monarchy, was frivolous, although he could dispose of material agencies which in the hands of Charlemagne might have made the dreams of Charlemagne possible. It was frivolous because the rising instinct of the age was for religious, political, and commercial freedom in a far intenser degree than those who lived in that age were themselves aware. A considerable republic had been evolved as it were involuntarily out of the necessities of the time almost without self-consciousness that it was a republic, and even against the desire of many who were guiding its destinies. And it found itself in constant combination with two monarchs, despotic at heart and of enigmatical or indifferent religious convictions, who yet reigned over peoples, largely influenced by enthusiasm for freedom. Thus liberty was preserved for the world; but, as the law of human progress would seem to be ever by a spiral movement, it; seems strange to the superficial observer not prone to generalizing, that Calvinism, which unquestionably was the hard receptacle in which the germ of human freedom was preserved in various countries and at different epochs, should have so often degenerated into tyranny. Yet notwithstanding the burning of Servetus at Geneva, and the hanging of Mary Dyer at Boston, it is certain that France, England, the Netherlands, and America, owe a large share of such political liberty as they have enjoyed to Calvinism. It may be possible for large masses of humanity to accept for ages the idea of one infallible Church, however tyrannical but the idea once admitted that there may be many churches; that what is called the State can be separated from what is called the Church; the plea of infallibility and of authority soon becomes ridiculous—a mere fiction of political or fashionable quackery to impose upon the uneducated or the unreflecting.

And now Essex, Raleigh and Howard, Vere, Warmond and Nassau were about to invade the shores of the despot who sat in his study plotting to annex England, Scotland, Ireland, France, the Dutch republic, and the German empire to the realms of Spain, Portugal, Naples, Milan, and the Eastern and Western Indies, over which he already reigned.

Page 2062

The fleet consisted of fifty-seven ships of war, of which twenty-four were Dutch vessels under Admiral Warmond, with three thousand sailors of Holland and Zeeland. Besides the sailors, there was a force of six thousand foot soldiers, including the English veterans from the Netherlands under Sir Francis Vere. There were also fifty transports laden with ammunition and stores. The expedition was under the joint command of Lord High Admiral Howard and of the Earl of Essex. Many noble and knightly volunteers, both from England and the republic, were on board, including, besides those already mentioned, Lord Thomas Howard, son of the Duke of Norfolk, Sir John Wingfield, who had commanded at Gertruydenburg, when it had been so treacherously surrendered to Farnese; Count Lewis Gunther of Nassau, who had so recently escaped from the disastrous fight with Mondragon in the Lippe, and was now continuing his education according to the plan laid down for him by his elder brother Lewis William; Nicolas Meetkerk, Peter Regesmortes, Don Christopher of Portugal, son of Don Antonio, and a host of other adventurers.

On the last day of June the expedition arrived off Cadiz. Next morning they found a splendid Spanish fleet in the harbour of that city, including four of the famous apostolic great galleons, St. Philip, St. Matthew, St. Thomas, and St. Andrew, with twenty or thirty great war-ships besides, and fifty-seven well-armed Indiamen, which were to be convoyed on their outward voyage, with a cargo estimated at twelve millions of ducats.

The St. Philip was the phenomenon of naval architecture of that day, larger and stronger than any ship before known. She was two thousand tons burthen, carried eighty-two bronze cannon, and had a crew of twelve hundred men. The other three apostles carried each fifty guns and four hundred men. The armament of the other war-ships varied from fifty-two to eighteen guns each. The presence of such a formidable force might have seemed a motive for discouragement, or at least of caution. On the contrary, the adventurers dashed at once upon their prey; thus finding a larger booty than they had dared to expect. There was but a brief engagement. At the outset a Dutch ship accidentally blew up, and gave much encouragement to the Spaniards. Their joy was but short-lived. Two of the great galleons were soon captured, the other two, the St. Philip and the St. Thomas, were run aground and burned. The rest of the war-ships were driven within the harbour, but were unable to prevent a landing of the enemy’s forces. In the eagerness of the allies to seize the city, they unluckily allowed many of the Indiamen to effect their escape through the puente del Zuazzo, which had not been supposed a navigable passage for ships of such burthen. Nine hundred soldiers under Essex, and four hundred noble volunteers under Lewis Gunther of Nassau, now sprang on shore, and drove some eleven hundred Spanish skirmishers back within

Page 2063

the gates of the city, or into a bastion recently raised to fortify the point when the troops had landed. Young Nassau stormed the bulwark sword in hand, carried it at the first assault, and planted his colours on its battlement. It was the flag of William the Silent; for the republican banner was composed of the family colours of the founder of the new commonwealth. The blazonry of the proscribed and assassinated rebel waved at last defiantly over one of the chief cities of Spain. Essex and Nassau and all the rest then entered the city. There was little fighting. Twenty-five English and Hollanders were killed, and about as many Spaniards. Essex knighted about fifty gentlemen, Englishmen and Hollanders, in the square of Cadiz for their gallantry. Among the number were Lewis Gunther of Nassau, Admiral Warmond, and Peter Regesmortes. Colonel Nicolas Meetkerke was killed in the brief action, and Sir John Wingfield, who insisted in prancing about on horseback without his armour, defying the townspeople and neglecting the urgent appeal of Sir Francis Vere, was also slain. The Spanish soldiers, discouraged by the defeat of the ships on which they had relied for protection of the town, retreated with a great portion of the inhabitants into the citadel. Next morning the citadel capitulated without striking a blow, although there, were six thousand able-bodied, well-armed men within its walls. It was one of the most astonishing panics ever recorded. The great fleet, making a third of the king's navy, the city of Cadiz and its fortress, were surrendered to this audacious little force, which had only arrived off the harbour thirty-six hours before. The invaders had, however, committed a great mistake. They had routed, and, as it were, captured the Spanish galleons, but they had not taken possession of them, such had been their eagerness to enter the city. It was now agreed that the fleet should be ransomed for two million ducats, but the proud Duke of Medina Sidonia, who had already witnessed the destruction of one mighty armada, preferred that these splendid ships too should perish rather than that they should pay tribute to the enemy. Scorning the capitulation of the commandant of the citadel, he ordered the fleet to be set on fire. Thirty-two ships, most of them vessels of war of the highest class, were burned, with all their equipments. Twelve hundred cannon sunk at once to the bottom of the Bay of Cadiz, besides arms for five or six thousand men. At least one-third of Philip's effective navy was thus destroyed.

The victors now sacked the city very thoroughly, but the results were disappointing. A large portion of the portable wealth of the inhabitants, their gold and their jewelry, had been so cunningly concealed that, although half a dozen persons were tortured till they should reveal hidden treasures, not more than five hundred thousand ducats worth of-plunder was obtained. Another sum of equal amount having been levied upon the citizens; forty notable personages;

Page 2064

among them eighteen ecclesiastical dignitaries, were carried off as hostages for its payment. The city was now set on fire by command of Essex in four different quarters. Especially the cathedral and other churches, the convents and the hospitals, were burned. It was perhaps not unnatural: that both Englishmen and Hollanders should be disposed to wreak a barbarous vengeance on everything representative of the Church which they abhorred, and from which such endless misery had issued to the, uttermost corners of their own countries. But it is at any rate refreshing to record amid these acts of pillage and destruction, in which, as must ever be the case, the innocent and the lowly were made to suffer for the crimes of crowned and mitred culprits, that not many special acts of cruelty were committed upon individuals:

No man was murdered in cold blood, no woman was outraged. The beautiful city was left a desolate and blackened ruin, and a general levy of spoil was made for the benefit of the victors, but there was no infringement of the theory and practice of the laws of war as understood in that day or in later ages. It is even recorded that Essex ordered one of his soldiers, who was found stealing a woman's gown, to be hanged on the spot, but that, wearied by the intercession of an ecclesiastic of Cadiz, the canon Quesada, he consented at last to pardon the marauder.

It was the earnest desire of Essex to hold Cadiz instead of destroying it. With three thousand men, and with temporary supplies from the fleet, the place could be maintained against all comers; Holland and England together commanding the seas. Admiral Warmond and all the Netherlanders seconded the scheme, and offered at once to put ashore from their vessels food and munitions enough to serve two thousand men for two months. If the English admiral would do as much, the place might be afterwards supplied without limit and held till doomsday, a perpetual thorn in Philip's side. Sir Francis Vere was likewise warmly in favour of the project, but he stood alone. All the other Englishmen opposed it as hazardous, extravagant, and in direct contravention of the minute instructions of the queen. With a sigh or a curse for what he considered the superfluous caution of his royal mistress, and the exaggerated docility of Lord High Admiral Howard, Essex was fain to content himself with the sack and the conflagration, and the allied fleet sailed away from Cadiz.

On their way towards Lisbon they anchored off Faro, and landed a force, chiefly of Netherlanders, who expeditiously burned and plundered the place. When they reached the neighbourhood of Lisbon, they received information that a great fleet of Indiamen, richly laden, were daily expected from the Flemish islands, as the Azores were then denominated. Again Essex was vehemently disposed to steer at once for that station, in order to grasp so tempting a prize; again he was strenuously supported by the Dutch

Page 2065

admiral and Yere, and again Lord Howard peremptorily interdicted the plan. It was contrary to his instructions and to his ideas of duty, he said, to risk so valuable a portion of her Majesty's fleet on so doubtful a venture. His ships were not fitted for a winter's cruise, he urged. Thus, although it was the very heart of midsummer, the fleet was ordered to sail homeward. The usual result of a divided command was made manifest, and it proved in the sequel that, had they sailed for the islands, they would have pounced at exactly the right moment upon an unprotected fleet of merchantmen, with cargoes valued at seven millions of ducats. Essex, not being willing to undertake the foray to the Azores with the Dutch ships alone, was obliged to digest his spleen as: best he could. Meantime the English fleet bore away for England, leaving Essex in his own ship, together with the two captured Spanish galleons, to his fate. That fate might, have been a disastrous one, for his prizes were not fully manned, his own vessel was far from powerful, and there were many rovers and cruisers upon the seas. The Dutch admiral, with all his ships, however, remained in company, and safely convoyed him to Plymouth, where they arrived only a day or two later than Howard and his fleet. Warmond, who had been disposed to sail up the Thames in order to pay his respects to the queen, was informed that his presence would not be desirable but rather an embarrassment. He, however, received the following letter from the hand of Elizabeth.

Monsieur DUYENWOORD,—The report made to me by the generals of our fleet, just happily arrived from the coast of Spain, of the devoirs of those who have been partakers in so, famous a victory, ascribes so much of it to the valour, skill, and readiness exhibited by yourself and our other friends from the Netherlands under your command, during the whole course of the expedition, as to fill our mind with special joy and satisfaction, and, with a desire to impart these feelings to you. No other means presenting themselves at this moment than that of a letter (in some sense darkening the picture of the conceptions of our soul), we are willing to make use of it while waiting for means more effectual. Wishing thus to disburthen ourselves we find ourselves confused, not knowing where to begin, the greatness of each part exceeding the merit of the other. For, the vigour and promptness with which my lords the States-General stepped into the enterprise, made us acknowledge that the good favour, which we have always borne the United Provinces and the proofs thereof which we have given in the benefits conferred by us upon them, had not been ill-bestowed. The valour, skill, and discipline manifested by you in this enterprise show that you and your, whole nation are worthy the favour and protection of princes against those who wish to tyrannize over you. But the honourableness and the valour shown by you, Sir Admiral, towards our cousin the Earl of

Page 2066

Essex on his return, when he unfortunately was cut off from the fleet, and deep in the night was deprived of all support, when you kept company with him and gave him escort into the harbour of Plymouth, demonstrate on the one hand your foresight in providing thus by your pains and patience against all disasters, which through an accident falling upon one of the chiefs of our armada might have darkened the great victory; and on the other hand the fervour and fire of the affection which you bear us, increasing thus, through a double bond, the obligations we are owing you, which is so great in our hearts that we have felt bound to discharge a part of it by means of this writing, which we beg you to communicate to the whole company of our friends under your command; saying to them besides, that they may feel assured that even as we have before given proof of our goodwill to their fatherland, so henceforth—incited by their devoirs and merits—we are ready to extend our bounty and affection in all ways which may become a princess recompensing the virtues and gratitude of a nation so worthy as yours.

"*Elizabeth*R.

"14th August, 1596."

This letter was transmitted by the admiral to the States-General; who, furnished him with a copy of it, but enrolled the original in their archives; recording as it did, in the hand of the great English queen, so striking a testimony to the valour and the good conduct of Netherlanders.

The results of this expedition were considerable, for the king's navy was crippled, a great city was destroyed, and some millions of plunder had been obtained. But the permanent possession of Cadiz, which, in such case, Essex hoped to exchange for Calais, and the destruction of the fleet at the Azores—possible achievements both, and unwisely neglected—would have been far more profitable, at least to England. It was also matter of deep regret that there was much quarrelling between the Netherlanders and the Englishmen as to their respective share of the spoils; the Netherlanders complaining loudly that they had been defrauded. Moreover the merchants of Middelburg, Amsterdam, and other commercial cities of Holland and Zeeland were, as it proved, the real owners of a large portion of the property destroyed or pillaged at Cadiz; so that a loss estimated as high as three hundred thousand florins fell upon those unfortunate traders through this triumph of the allies.

The internal consequences of the fall of Calais had threatened at the first moment to be as disastrous as the international results of that misfortune had already proved. The hour for the definite dismemberment and partition of the French kingdom, not by foreign conquerors but among its own self-seeking and disloyal grandees, seemed to have struck. The indomitable Henry, ever most buoyant when most pressed by misfortune,

was on the way to his camp at La Fere, encouraging the faint-hearted, and providing as well as he could

Page 2067

for the safety of the places most menaced, when he was met at St. Quentin by a solemn deputation of the principal nobles, military commanders, and provincial governors of France. The Duke of Montpensier was spokesman of the assembly, and, in an harangue carefully prepared for the occasion, made an elaborate proposition to the king that the provinces, districts, cities, castles; and other strong-holds throughout the kingdom should now be formally bestowed upon the actual governors and commandants thereof in perpetuity, and as hereditary property, on condition of rendering a certain military service to the king and his descendants. It seemed so amazing that this temporary disaster to the national arms should be used as a pretext for parcelling out France, and converting a great empire into a number of insignificant duchies and petty principalities; that this movement should be made, not by the partisans of Spain, but by the adherents of the king; and that its leader should be his own near relative, a prince of the blood, and a possible successor to the crown, that Henry was struck absolutely dumb. Misinterpreting his silence, the duke proceeded very confidently with his well-conned harangue; and was eloquently demonstrating that, under such a system, Henry, as principal feudal chief, would have greater military forces at his disposal whenever he chose to summon his faithful vassals to the field than could be the case while the mere shadow of royal power or dignity was allowed to remain; when the king, finding at last a tongue, rebuked his cousin; not angrily, but with a grave melancholy which was more impressive than wrath.

He expressed his pity for the duke that designing intriguers should have thus taken advantage of his facility of character to cause him to enact a part so entirely unworthy a Frenchman, a gentleman, and a prince of the blood. He had himself, at the outset of his career, been much farther from the throne than Montpensier was at that moment; but at no period of his life would he have consented to disgrace himself by attempting the dismemberment of the realm. So far from entering for a moment into the subject-matter of the duke’s discourse, he gave him and all his colleagues distinctly to understand that he would rather die a thousand deaths than listen to suggestions which would cover his family and the royal dignity with infamy.

Rarely has political cynicism been displayed in more revolting shape than in this deliberate demonstration by the leading patricians and generals of France, to whom patriotism seemed an unimaginable idea. Thus signally was their greediness to convert a national disaster into personal profit rebuked by the king. Henry was no respecter of the People, which he regarded as something immeasurably below his feet. On the contrary, he was the most sublime self-seeker of them all; but his courage, his intelligent ambition, his breadth and strength of purpose, never permitted him to doubt that his own greatness was inseparable from the greatness of France. Thus he represented a distinct and wholesome principle—the national integrity of a great homogeneous people at a period when that integrity seemed, through domestic treason and foreign hatred, to

be hopelessly lost. Hence it is not unnatural that he should hold his place in the national chronicle as Henry the Great.

Page 2068

Meantime, while the military events just recorded had been occurring in the southern peninsula, the progress of the archduke and his lieutenants in the north against the king and against the republic had been gratifying to the ambition of that martial ecclesiastic. Soon after the fall of Calais, De Rosne had seized the castles of Guynes and Hames, while De Mexia laid siege to the important stronghold of Ardres. The garrison, commanded by Count Belin, was sufficiently numerous and well supplied to maintain the place until Henry, whose triumph at La Fere could hardly be much longer delayed, should come to its relief. To the king's infinite dissatisfaction, however, precisely as Don Alvario de Osorio was surrendering La Fere to him, after a seven months' siege, Ardres was capitulating to De Mexia. The reproaches upon Belin for cowardice, imbecility, and bad faith, were bitter and general. All his officers had vehemently protested against the surrender, and Henry at first talked of cutting off his head. It was hardly probable, however—had the surrender been really the result of treachery—that the governor would have put himself, as he did at once in the king's power; for the garrison marched out of Ardres with the commandant at their head, banners displayed, drums beating, matches lighted and bullet in mouth, twelve hundred fighting men strong, besides invalids. Belin was possessed of too much influence, and had the means of rendering too many pieces of service to the politic king, whose rancour against Spain was perhaps not really so intense as was commonly supposed, to meet with the condign punishment which might have been the fate of humbler knaves.

These successes having been obtained in Normandy, the cardinal with a force of nearly fifteen thousand men now took the field in Flanders; and, after hesitating for a time whether he should attack Breda, Bergen, Ostend, or Gertruydenburg,—and after making occasional feints in various directions, came, towards the end of June, before Hulst. This rather insignificant place, with a population of but one thousand inhabitants, was defended by a strong garrison under command of that eminent and experienced officer Count Everard Solms. Its defences were made more complete by a system of sluices, through which the country around could be laid under water; and Maurice, whose capture of the town in the year 1591 had been one of his earliest military achievements, was disposed to hold it at all hazards. He came in person to inspect the fortifications, and appeared to be so eager on the subject, and so likely to encounter unnecessary hazards, that the States of Holland passed a resolution imploring him "that he would not, in his heroic enthusiasm and laudable personal service, expose a life on which the country so much depended to manifest dangers." The place was soon thoroughly invested, and the usual series of minings and counter-minings, assaults, and sorties followed, in the course of which that courageous

Page 2069

and corpulent renegade, De Rosne, had his head taken off by a cannon-ball, while his son, a lad of sixteen, was fighting by his side. On the 16th August the cardinal formally demanded the surrender of the place, and received the magnanimous reply that Hulst would be defended to the death. This did not, however, prevent the opening of negotiations the very same day. All the officers, save one, united in urging Solms to capitulate; and Solms, for somewhat mysterious reasons, and, as was stated, in much confusion, gave his consent. The single malcontent was the well-named Matthew Held, whose family name meant Hero, and who had been one of the chief actors in the far-famed capture of Breda. He was soon afterwards killed in an unsuccessful attack made by Maurice upon Venlo.

Hulst capitulated on the 18th August. The terms were honourable; but the indignation throughout the country against Count Solms was very great. The States of Zeeland, of whose regiment he had been commander ever, since the death of Sir Philip Sidney, dismissed him from their service, while a torrent of wrath flowed upon him from every part of the country. Members of the States-General refused to salute him in the streets; eminent person, ages turned their backs upon him, and for a time there was no one willing to listen to a word in his defence. The usual reaction in such cases followed; Maurice sustained the commander, who had doubtless committed a grave error, but who had often rendered honourable service to the republic, and the States-General gave him a command as important as that of which he had been relieved by the Zeeland States. It was mainly on account of the tempest thus created within the Netherlands, that an affair of such slight importance came to occupy so large a space in contemporary history. The defenders of Solmstold wild stories about the losses of the besieging army. The cardinal, who was thought prodigal of blood, and who was often quoted as saying “his soldiers’ lives belonged to God and their bodies to the king,” had sacrificed, it, was ridiculously said, according to the statement of the Spaniards themselves, five thousand soldiers before the walls of Hulst. It was very logically deduced therefrom that the capture of a few more towns of a thousand inhabitants each would cost him his whole army. People told each other, too, that the conqueror had refused a triumph which the burghers of Brussels wished to prepare for him on his entrance into the capital, and that he had administered the very proper rebuke that, if they had more money than they knew what to do with, they should expend it in aid of the wounded and of the families of the fallen, rather than in velvets and satins and triumphal arches. The humanity of the suggestion hardly tallied with the blood-thirstiness of which he was at the same time so unjustly accused—although it might well be doubted whether the commander-in-chief, even if he could witness unflinchingly the destruction of five thousand soldiers on the battle-field, would dare to confront a new demonstration of schoolmaster Houwaerts and his fellow-pedants.

Page 2070

The fact was, however, that the list of casualties in the cardinal's camp during the six weeks' siege amounted to six hundred, while the losses within the city were at least as many. There was no attempt to relieve the place; for the States, as before observed, had been too much cramped by the strain upon their resources and by the removal of so many veterans for the expedition against Cadiz to be able to muster any considerable forces in the field during the whole of this year.

For a vast war in which the four leading powers of the earth were engaged, the events, to modern eyes, of the campaign of 1596 seem sufficiently meagre. Meantime, during all this campaigning by land and sea in the west, there had been great but profitless bloodshed in the east. With difficulty did the holy Roman Empire withstand the terrible, ever-renewed assaults of the unholy realm of Ottoman—then in the full flush of its power—but the two empires still counterbalanced each other, and contended with each'other at the gates of Vienna.

As the fighting became more languid, however, in the western part of Christendom, the negotiations and intrigues grew only the more active. It was most desirable for the republic to effect, if possible, a formal alliance offensive and defensive with France and England against Spain. The diplomacy of the Netherlands had been very efficient in bringing about the declaration of war by Henry against Philip, by which the current year had opened, after Henry and Philip had been doing their best to destroy each other and each other's subjects during the half-dozen previous years. Elizabeth, too, although she had seen her shores invaded by Philip with the most tremendous armaments that had ever floated on the seas, and although she had herself just been sending fire and sword into the heart of Spain, had very recently made the observation that she and Philip were not formally at war with each other. It seemed, therefore, desirable to the States-General that this very practical warfare should be, as it were, reduced to a theorem. In this case the position of the republic to both powers and to Spain itself might perhaps be more accurately defined.

Calvaert, the States' envoy—to use his own words—haunted Henry like his perpetual shadow, and was ever doing his best to persuade him of the necessity of this alliance. De Saucy, as we have seen, had just arrived in England, when the cool proposition of the queen to rescue Calais from Philip on condition of keeping it for herself had been brought to Boulogne by Sidney. Notwithstanding the indignation of the king, he had been induced directly afterwards to send an additional embassy to Elizabeth, with the Duke of Bouillon at its head; and he had insisted upon Calvaert's accompanying the mission. He had, as he frequently observed, no secrets from the States-General, or from Calvaert, who had been negotiating upon these affairs for two years past and was so well acquainted with all their bearings.

Page 2071

The Dutch envoy was reluctant to go, for he was seriously ill and very poor in purse, but Henry urged the point so vehemently, that Calvaert found himself on board ship within six hours of the making of the proposition. The incident shows of how much account the republican diplomatist was held by so keen a judge of mankind as the Bearnese; but it will subsequently appear that the candour of the king towards the States-General and their representative was by no means without certain convenient limitations.

De Sancy had arrived just as—without his knowledge—Sidney had been despatched across the channel with the brief mission already mentioned. When he was presented to the queen, the next day, she excused herself for the propositions by which Henry had been so much enraged, by assuring the envoy that it had been her intention only to keep Calais out of the enemy's hand, so long as the king's forces were too much occupied at a distance to provide for its safety. As diplomatic conferences were about to begin in which—even more than in that age, at least, was usually the case—the object of the two conferring powers was to deceive each other, and at the same time still more decidedly to defraud other states, Sancy accepted the royal explanation, although Henry's special messenger, Lomenie, had just brought him from the camp at Boulogne a minute account of the propositions of Sidney.

The envoy had, immediately afterwards, an interview with Lord Burghley, and at once perceived that he was no friend to his master. Cecil observed that the queen had formerly been much bound to the king for religion's sake. As this tie no longer existed, there was nothing now to unite them save the proximity of the two States to each other and their ancient alliances, a bond purely of interest which existed only so long as princes found therein a special advantage.

De Sancy replied that the safety of the two crowns depended upon their close alliance against a very powerful foe who was equally menacing to them both. Cecil rejoined that he considered the Spaniards deserving of the very highest praise for having been able to plan so important an enterprise, and to have so well deceived the King of France by the promptness and the secrecy of their operations as to allow him to conceive no suspicion as to their designs.

To this not very friendly sarcasm the envoy, indignant that France should thus be insulted in her misfortunes, exclaimed that he prayed to God that the affairs of Englishmen might never be reduced to such a point as to induce the world to judge by the result merely, as to the sagacity of their counsels. He added that there were many passages through which to enter France, and that it was difficult to be present everywhere, in order to defend them all against the enemy.

A few days afterwards the Duke of Bouillon arrived in London. He had seen Lord Essex at Dover as he passed, and had endeavoured without success to dissuade him from his

expedition against the Spanish coast. The conferences opened on the 7th May, at Greenwich, between Burghley, Cobham, the Lord Chamberlain, and one or two other commissioners on the part of the queen, and Bouillon, Sancy, Du Yair, and Ancel, as plenipotentiaries of Henry.

Page 2072

There was the usual indispensable series of feints at the outset, as if it were impossible for statesmen to meet around a green table except as fencers in the field or pugilists in the ring.

“We have nothing to do,” said Burghley, “except to listen to such propositions as may be made on the part of the king, and to repeat them to her Highness the queen.”

“You cannot be ignorant,” replied Bouillon, “of the purpose for which we have been sent hither by his Very Christian Majesty. You know very well that it is to conclude a league with England. ’Tis necessary, therefore, for the English to begin by declaring whether they are disposed to enter into such an alliance. This point once settled, the French can make their propositions, but it would be idle to dispute about the conditions of a treaty, if there is after all no treaty to be made.”

To this Cecil rejoined, that, if the king were reduced to the necessity of asking succour from the queen, and of begging for her alliance, it was necessary for them, on the other hand, to see what he was ready to do for the queen in return, and to learn what advantage she could expect from the league.

The duke said that the English statesmen were perfectly aware of the French intention of proposing a league against the common enemy of both nations, and that it would be unquestionably for the advantage of both to unite their forces for a vigorous attack upon Spain, in which case it would be more difficult for the Spanish to resist them than if each were acting separately. It was no secret that the Spaniards would rather attack England than France, because their war against England, being coloured by a religious motive, would be much less odious, and would even have a specious pretext. Moreover the conquest of England would give them an excellent vantage ground to recover what they had lost in the Netherlands. If, on the contrary, the enemy should throw himself with his whole force upon France, the king, who would perhaps lose many places at once, and might hardly be able to maintain himself single-handed against domestic treason and a concentrated effort on the part of Spain, would probably find it necessary to make a peace with that power. Nothing could be more desirable for Spain than such a result, for she would then be free to attack England and Holland, undisturbed by any fear of France. This was a piece of advice, the duke said, which the king offered, in the most friendly spirit, and as a proof of his affection, to her Majesty’s earnest consideration.

Burghley replied that all this seemed to him no reason for making a league. “What more can the queen do,” he observed, “than she is already doing? She has invaded Spain by land and sea, she has sent troops to Spain, France, and the Netherlands; she has lent the king fifteen hundred thousand crowns in gold. In short, the envoys ought rather to be studying how to repay her Majesty for her former

Page 2073

benefits than to be soliciting fresh assistance." He added that the king was so much stronger by the recent gain of Marseilles as to be easily able to bear the loss of places of far less importance, while Ireland, on the contrary, was a constant danger to the queen. The country was already in a blaze, on account of the recent landing effected there by the Spaniards, and it was a very ancient proverb among the English, that to attack England it was necessary to take the road of Ireland.

Bouillon replied that in this war there was much difference between the position of France and that of England. The queen, notwithstanding hostilities, obtained her annual revenue as usual, while the king was cut off from his resources and obliged to ruin his kingdom in order to wage war. Sancy added, that it must be obvious to the English ministers that the peril of Holland was likewise the peril of England and of France, but that at the same time they could plainly see that the king, if not succoured, would be forced to a peace with Spain. All his counsellors were urging him to this, and it was the interest of all his neighbours to prevent such a step. Moreover, the proposed league could not but be advantageous to the English; whether by restraining the Spaniards from entering England, or by facilitating a combined attack upon the common enemy. The queen might invade any portion of the Flemish coast at her pleasure, while the king's fleet could sail with troops from his ports to prevent any attack upon her realms.

At this Burghley turned to his colleagues and said, in English, "The French are acting according to the proverb; they wish to sell us the bear-skin before they have killed the bear." Sancy, who understood English, rejoined, "We have no bear-skin to sell, but we are giving you a very good and salutary piece of advice. It is for you to profit by it as you may."

"Where are these ships of war, of which you were speaking?" asked Burghley.

"They are at Rochelle, at Bordeaux, and at St. Malo," replied de Sancy.

"And these ports are not in the king's possession," said the Lord Treasurer.

The discussion was growing warm. The Duke of Bouillon, in order to, put an end to it, said that what England had most to fear was a descent by Spain upon her coasts, and that the true way to prevent this was to give occupation to Philip's army in Flanders. The soldiers in the fleet then preparing were raw levies with which he would not venture to assail her kingdom. The veterans in Flanders were the men on whom he relied for that purpose. Moreover the queen, who had great influence with the States-General, would procure from them a prohibition of all commerce between the provinces and Spain; all the Netherlands would be lost to Philip, his armies would disperse of their own accord; the princes of Italy, to whom the power of Spain was a perpetual menace, would

secretly supply funds to the allied powers, and the Germans, declared enemies of Philip, would furnish troops.

Page 2074

Burghley asserted confidently that this could never be obtained from the Hollanders, who lived by commerce alone. Upon which Saucy, wearied with all these difficulties, interrupted the Lord Treasurer by exclaiming, “If the king is to expect neither an alliance nor any succour on your part, he will be very much obliged to the queen if she will be good enough to inform him of the decision taken by her, in order that he may, upon his side, take the steps most suitable to the present position of his affairs.”

The session then terminated. Two days afterwards, in another conference, Burghley offered three thousand men on the part of the queen, on condition that they should be raised at the king’s expense, and that they should not leave England until they had received a month’s pay in advance.

The Duke of Bouillon said this was far from being what had been expected of the generosity of her Majesty, that if the king had money he would find no difficulty in raising troops in Switzerland and Germany, and that there was a very great difference between hired princes and allies. The English ministers having answered that this was all the queen could do, the duke and Saucy rose in much excitement, saying that they had then no further business than to ask for an audience of leave, and to return to France as fast as possible.

Before they bade farewell to the queen, however, the envoys sent a memoir to her Majesty, in which they set forth that the first proposition as to a league had been made by Sir Henry Umton, and that now, when the king had sent commissioners to treat concerning an alliance, already recommended by the queen’s ambassador in France, they had been received in such a way as to indicate a desire to mock them rather than to treat with them. They could not believe, they said, that it was her Majesty’s desire to use such language as had been addressed to them, and they therefore implored her plainly to declare her intentions, in order that they might waste no more time unnecessarily, especially as the high offices with which their sovereign had honoured them did not allow them to remain for a long time absent from France.

The effect of this memoir upon the queen was, that fresh conferences were suggested, which took place at intervals between the 11th and the 26th of May. They were characterized by the same mutual complaints of overreachings and of shortcomings by which all the previous discussions had been distinguished. On the 17th May the French envoys even insisted on taking formal farewell of the queen, and were received by her Majesty for that purpose at a final audience. After they had left the presence—the preparations for their homeward journey being already made—the queen sent Sir Robert Cecil, Henry Brooke, son of Lord Cobham, and La Fontaine, minister of a French church in England, to say to them how very much mortified she was that the state of her affairs did not permit her to give the king as much assistance as he desired, and to express her wish to speak to them once more before their departure.

Page 2075

The result of the audience given accordingly to the envoys, two days later, was the communication of her decision to enter into the league proposed, but without definitely concluding the treaty until it should be ratified by the king.

On the 26th May articles were finally agreed upon, by which the king and queen agreed to defend each other's dominions, to unite in attacking the common enemy, and to invite other princes and states equally interested with themselves in resisting the ambitious projects of Spain, to join in the league. It was arranged that an army should be put in the field as soon as possible, at the expense of the king and queen, and of such other powers as should associate themselves in the proposed alliance; that this army should invade the dominions of the Spanish monarch, that the king and queen were never, without each other's consent, to make peace or truce with Philip; that the queen should immediately raise four thousand infantry to serve six months of every year in Picardy and Normandy, with the condition that they were never to be sent to a distance of more than fifty leagues from Boulogna; that when the troubles of Ireland should be over the queen should be at liberty to add new troops to the four thousand men thus promised by her to the league; that the queen was to furnish to these four thousand men six months' pay in advance before they should leave England, and that the king should agree to repay the amount six months afterwards, sending meanwhile four nobles to England as hostages. If the dominions of the queen should be attacked it was stipulated that, at two months' notice, the king should raise four thousand men at the expense of the queen and send them to her assistance, and that they were to serve for six months at her charge, but were not to be sent to a distance of more than fifty leagues from the coasts of France.

The English were not willing that the States-General should be comprehended among the powers to be invited to join the league, because being under the protection of the Queen of England they were supposed to have no will but hers. Burghley insisted accordingly that, in speaking of those who were thus to be asked, no mention was to be made of peoples nor of states, for fear lest the States-General might be included under those terms. The queen was, however, brought at last to yield the point, and consented, in order to satisfy the French envoys, that to the word princes should be added the general expression orders or estates. The obstacle thus interposed to the formation of the league by the hatred of the queen and of the privileged classes of England to popular liberty, and by the secret desire entertained of regaining that sovereignty over the provinces which had been refused ten years before by Elizabeth, was at length set aside. The republic, which might have been stifled at its birth, was now a formidable fact, and could neither be annexed to the English dominions nor deprived of its existence as a new member of the European family.

Page 2076

It being no longer possible to gainsay the presence of the young commonwealth among the nations, the next best thing—so it was thought—was to defraud her in the treaty to which she was now invited to accede. This, as it will presently appear, the King of France and the Queen of England succeeded in doing very thoroughly, and they accomplished it notwithstanding the astuteness and the diligence of the States' envoy, who at Henry's urgent request had accompanied the French mission to England. Calvaert had been very active in bringing about the arrangement, to assist in which he had, as we have seen, risen from a sick bed and made the journey to England: "The proposition for an offensive and defensive alliance was agreed to by her Majesty's Council, but under intolerable and impracticable conditions," said he, "and, as such, rejected by the duke and Sancy, so that they took leave of her Majesty. At last, after some negotiation in which, without boasting, I may say that I did some service, it was again taken in hand, and at last, thank God, although with much difficulty, the league has been concluded."

When the task was finished the French envoys departed to obtain their master's ratification of the treaty. Elizabeth expressed herself warmly in regard to her royal brother, inviting him earnestly to pay her a visit, in which case she said she would gladly meet him half way; for a sight of him would be her only consolation in the midst of her adversity and annoyance. "He may see other princesses of a more lovely appearance," she added, "but he will never make a visit to a more faithful friend."

But the treaty thus concluded was for the public. The real agreement between France and England was made by a few days later, and reduced the ostensible arrangement to a sham, a mere decoy to foreign nations, especially to the Dutch republic, to induce them to imitate England in joining the league, and to emulate her likewise in affording that substantial assistance to the league which in reality England was very far from giving.

"Two contracts were made," said Secretary of State Villeroy; "the one public, to give credit and reputation to the said league, the other secret, which destroyed the effects and the promises of the first. By the first his Majesty was to be succoured by four thousand infantry, which number was limited by the second contract to two thousand, who were to reside and to serve only in the cities of Boulogne and Montreuil, assisted by an equal number of French, and not otherwise, and on condition of not being removed from those towns unless his Majesty should be personally present in Picardy with an army, in which case they might serve in Picardy, but nowhere else."

An English garrison in a couple of French seaports, over against the English coast, would hardly have seemed a sufficient inducement to other princes and states to put large armies in the field to sustain the Protestant league, had they known that this was the meagre result of the protocolling and disputations that had been going on all the summer at Greenwich.

Page 2077

Nevertheless the decoy did its work, The envoys returned to France, and it was not until three months later that the Duke of Bouillon again made his appearance in England, bringing the treaty duly ratified by Henry. The league was then solemnized, on, the 26th August, by the queen with much pomp and ceremony. Three peers of the realm waited upon the French ambassador at his lodgings, and escorted him and his suite in seventeen royal coaches to the Tower. Seven splendid barges then conveyed them along the Thames to Greenwich. On the pier the ambassador was received by the Earl of Derby at the head of a great suite of nobles and high functionaries, and conducted to the palace of Nonesuch.

There was a religious ceremony in the royal chapel, where a special pavilion had been constructed. Standing, within this sanctuary, the queen; with her hand on her breast, swore faithfully to maintain the league just concluded. She then gave her hand to the Duke of Bouillon, who held it in both his own, while psalms were sung and the organ resounded through the chapel. Afterwards there was a splendid banquet in the palace, the duke sitting in solitary grandeur at the royal table, being placed at a respectful distance from her Majesty, and the dishes being placed on the board by the highest nobles of the realm, who, upon their knees, served the queen with wine. No one save the ambassador sat at Elizabeth's table, but in the same hall was spread another, at which the Earl of Essex entertained many distinguished guests, young Count Lewis Gunther of Nassau among the number.

In the midsummer twilight the brilliantly decorated barges were again floating on the historic river, the gaily-coloured lanterns lighting the sweep of the oars, and the sound of lute and viol floating merrily across the water. As the ambassador came into the courtyard of his house, he found a crowd of several thousand people assembled, who shouted welcome to the representative of Henry, and invoked blessings on the head of Queen Elizabeth and of her royal brother of France. Meanwhile all the bells of London were ringing, artillery was thundering, and bonfires were blazing, until the night was half spent.

Such was the holiday-making by which the league between the great Protestant queen and the ex-chief of the Huguenots of France was celebrated within a year after the pope had received him, a repentant sinner, into the fold of the Church. Truly it might be said that religion was rapidly ceasing to be the line of demarcation among the nations, as had been the case for the two last generations of mankind.

Page 2078

The Duke of Bouillon soon afterwards departed for the Netherlands, where the regular envoy to the commonwealth, Paul Chouart Seigneur de Buzanval, had already been preparing the States-General for their entrance into the league. Of course it was duly impressed upon those republicans that they should think themselves highly honoured by the privilege of associating themselves with so august an alliance. The queen wrote an earnest letter to the States, urging them to join the league. “Especially should you do so,” she said, “on account of the reputation which you will thereby gain for your affairs with the people who are under you, seeing you thus sustained (besides the certainty which you have of our favour) by the friendship of other confederated princes, and particularly by that of the most Christian king.”

On the 31st October the articles of agreement under which the republic acceded to the new confederation were signed at the Hague. Of course it was not the exact counterpart of the famous Catholic association. Madam League, after struggling feebly for the past few years, a decrepit beldame, was at last dead and buried. But there had been a time when she was filled with exuberant and terrible life. She, at least, had known the object of her creation, and never, so long as life was in her, had she faltered in her dread purpose. To extirpate Protestantism, to murder Protestants, to burn, hang, butcher, bury them alive, to dethrone every Protestant sovereign in Europe, especially to assassinate the Queen of England, the Prince of Orange, with all his race, and Henry of Navarre, and to unite in the accomplishment of these simple purposes all the powers of Christendom under the universal monarchy of Philip of Spain—for all this, blood was shed in torrents, and the precious metals of the “Indies” squandered as fast as the poor savages, who were thus taking their first lessons in the doctrines of Jesus of Nazareth, could dig it from the mines. For this America had been summoned, as it were by almighty fiat, out of previous darkness, in order that it might furnish money with which to massacre all the heretics of the earth. For this great purpose was the sublime discovery of the Genoese sailor to be turned to account. These aims were intelligible, and had in part been attained. William of Orange had fallen, and a patent of nobility, with a handsome fortune, had been bestowed upon his assassin. Elizabeth’s life had been frequently attempted. So had those of Henry, of Maurice, of Olden-Barneveld. Divine providence might perhaps guide the hand of future murderers with greater accuracy, for even if Madam League were dead, her ghost still walked among the Jesuits and summoned them to complete the crimes left yet unfinished.

But what was the design of the new confederacy? It was not a Protestant league. Henry of Navarre could no longer be the chief of such an association, although it was to Protestant powers only that he could turn for assistance. It was to the commonwealth of the Netherlands, to the northern potentates and to the Calvinist and Lutheran princes of Germany, that the king and queen could alone appeal in their designs against Philip of Spain.

Page 2079

The position of Henry was essentially a false one from the beginning. He felt it to be so, and the ink was scarce dry with which he signed the new treaty before he was secretly casting about him to, make peace with that power with which he was apparently summoning all the nations of the earth to do battle. Even the cautious Elizabeth was deceived by the crafty Bearnese, while both united to hoodwink the other states and princes.

On the 31st October, accordingly, the States-General agreed to go into the league with England and France; “in order to resist the enterprises and ambitious designs of the King of Spain against all the princes and potentates of Christendom.” As the queen had engaged—according to the public treaty or decoy—to furnish four thousand infantry to the league, the States now agreed to raise and pay for another four thousand to be maintained in the king’s service at a cost of four hundred and fifty thousand florins annually, to be paid by the month. The king promised, in case the Netherlands should be invaded by the enemy with the greater part of his force, that these four thousand soldiers should return to the Netherlands. The king further bound himself to carry on a sharp offensive war in Artois and Hainault.

The States-General would have liked a condition inserted in the treaty that no peace should be made with Spain by England or France without the consent of the provinces; but this was peremptorily refused.

Perhaps the republic had no special reason to be grateful for the grudging and almost contemptuous manner in which it had thus been virtually admitted into the community of sovereigns; but the men who directed its affairs were far too enlightened not to see how great a step was taken when their political position, now conceded to them, had been secured. In good faith they intended to carry out the provisions of the new treaty, and they immediately turned their attention to the vital matters of making new levies and of imposing new taxes, by means of which they might render themselves useful to their new allies.

Meantime Ancel was deputed by Henry to visit the various courts of Germany and the north in order to obtain, if possible, new members for the league? But Germany was difficult to rouse. The dissensions among Protestants were ever inviting the assaults of the Papists. Its multitude of sovereigns were passing their leisure moments in wrangling among themselves as usual on abstruse points of theology, and devoting their serious hours to banquetting, deep drinking, and the pleasures of the chase. The jeremiads of old John of Nassau grew louder than ever, but his voice was of one crying in the wilderness. The wrath to come of that horrible Thirty Years’ War, which he was not to witness seemed to inspire all his prophetic diatribes. But there were few to heed them. Two great dangers seemed ever impending over Christendom, and it is difficult to decide which

Page 2080

fate would have been the more terrible, the establishment of the universal monarchy of Philip *ii*., or the conquest of Germany by the Grand Turk. But when Ancel and other emissaries sought to obtain succour against the danger from the south-west, he was answered by the clash of arms and the shrieks of horror which came daily from the south-east. In vain was it urged, and urged with truth, that the Alcoran was less cruel than the Inquisition, that the soil of Europe might be overrun by Turks and Tartars, and the crescent planted triumphantly in every village, with less disaster to the human race, and with better hope that the germs of civilization and the precepts of Christianity might survive the invasion, than if the system of Philip, of Torquemada, and of Alva, should become the universal law. But the Turk was a frank enemy of Christianity, while Philip murdered Christians in the name of Christ. The distinction imposed upon the multitudes, with whom words were things. Moreover, the danger from the young and enterprising Mahomet seemed more appalling to the imagination than the menace, from which experience had taken something of its terrors, of the old and decrepit Philip.

The Ottoman empire, in its exact discipline, in its terrible concentration of purpose, in its contempt for all arts and sciences, and all human occupation save the trade of war and the pursuit of military dominion, offered a strong contrast to the distracted condition of the holy Roman empire, where an intellectual and industrious people, distracted by half a century of religious controversy and groaning under one of the most elaborately perverse of all the political systems ever invented by man, seemed to offer itself an easy prey to any conqueror. The Turkish power was in the fulness of its aggressive strength, and seemed far more formidable than it would have done had there been clearer perceptions of what constitutes the strength and the wealth of nations. Could the simple truth have been thoroughly, comprehended that a realm founded upon such principles was the grossest of absurdities, the Eastern might have seemed less terrible than the Western danger.

But a great campaign, at no considerable distance from the walls of Vienna, had occupied the attention of Germany during the autumn. Mahomet had taken the field in person with a hundred thousand men, and the emperor’s brother, Maximilian, in conjunction with the Prince of Transylvania, at the head of a force of equal magnitude, had gone forth to give him battle. Between the Theiss and the Danube, at Keveste, not far from the city of Erlau, on the 26th October, the terrible encounter on which the fate of Christendom seemed to hang at last took place, and Europe held its breath in awful suspense until its fate should be decided. When the result at last became known, a horrible blending of the comic and the tragic, such as has rarely been presented in history, startled the world. Seventy thousand human beings—Moslems

Page 2081

and Christians—were lying dead or wounded on the banks of a nameless little stream which flows into the Theisa, and the commanders-in-chief of both armies were running away as fast as horses could carry them. Each army believed itself hopelessly defeated, and abandoning tents, baggage, artillery, ammunition, the remnants of each, betook themselves to panic-stricken flight. Generalissimo Maximilian never looked behind him as he fled, until he had taken refuge in Kaschan, and had thence made his way, deeply mortified and despondent, to Vienna. The Prince of Transylvania retreated into the depths of his own principality. Mahomet, with his principal officers, shut himself up in Buda, after which he returned to Constantinople and abandoned himself for a time to a voluptuous ease, inconsistent with the Ottoman projects of conquering the world. The Turks, less prone to desperation than the Christians, had been utterly overthrown in the early part of the action, but when the victors were, as usual, greedily bent upon plunder before the victory had been fairly secured, the tide of battle was turned by the famous Italian renegade Cicala. The Turks, too, had the good sense to send two days afterwards and recover their artillery, trains, and other property, which ever since the battle had been left at the mercy of the first comers.

So ended the Turkish campaign of the year 1596. Ancel, accordingly, fared ill in his negotiations with Germany. On the other hand Mendoza, Admiral of Arragon, had been industriously but secretly canvassing the same regions as the representative of the Spanish king. It was important for Philip, who put more faith in the league of the three powers than Henry himself did, to lose no time in counteracting its influence. The condition of the holy Roman empire had for some time occupied his most serious thoughts. It seemed plain that Rudolph would never marry. Certainly he would never marry the Infanta, although he was very angry that his brother should aspire to the hand which he himself rejected. In case of his death without children, Philip thought it possible that there might be a Protestant revolution in Germany, and that the house of Habsburg might lose the imperial crown altogether. It was even said that the emperor himself was of that opinion, and preferred that the empire should “end with his own life.” Philip considered that neither Matthias nor Maximilian was fit to succeed their brother, being both of them “lukewarm in the Catholic faith.” In other words, he chose that his destined son-in-law, the Cardinal Albert, should supersede them, and he was anxious to have him appointed as soon as possible King of the Romans.

Page 2082

“His Holiness the Pope and the King of Spain,” said the Admiral of Arragon, “think it necessary to apply most stringent measures to the emperor to compel him to appoint a successor, because, in case of his death without one, the administration during the vacancy would fall to the elector palatine,—a most perverse Calvinistic heretic, and as great an enemy of the house of Austria and of our holy religion as the Turk himself—as sufficiently appears in those diabolical laws of his published in the palatinate a few months since. A vacancy is so dreadful, that in the north of Germany the world would come to an end; yet the emperor, being of rather a timid nature than otherwise, is inclined to quiet, and shrinks from the discussions and conflicts likely to be caused by an appointment. Therefore his Holiness and his Catholic Majesty, not choosing that we should all live in danger of the world’s falling in ruins, have resolved to provide the remedy. They are to permit the electors to use the faculty which they possess of suspending the emperor and depriving him of his power; there being examples of this in other times against emperors who governed ill.”

The Admiral farther alluded to the great effort made two years before to elect the King of Denmark emperor, reminding Philip that in Hamburg they had erected triumphal arches, and made other preparations to receive him. This year, he observed, the Protestants were renewing their schemes. On the occasion of the baptism of the child of the elector palatine, the English envoy being present, and Queen Elizabeth being god-mother, they had agreed upon nine articles of faith much more hostile to the Catholic creed than anything ever yet professed. In case of the death of the emperor, this elector palatine would of course make much trouble, and the emperor should therefore be induced, by fair means if possible, on account of the great inconvenience of forcing him, but not without a hint of compulsion, to acquiesce in the necessary measures. Philip was represented as willing to assist the empire with considerable force against the Turk—as there could be no doubt that Hungary was in great danger—but in recompense it was necessary to elect a King of the Romans in all respects satisfactory to him. There were three objections to the election of Albert, whose recent victories and great abilities entitled him in Philip’s opinion to the crown. Firstly, there was a doubt whether the kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia were elective or hereditary, and it was very important that the King of the Romans should succeed to those two crowns, because the electors and other princes having fiefs within those kingdoms would be unwilling to swear fealty to two suzerains, and as Albert was younger than his brothers he could scarcely expect to take by inheritance.

Secondly, Albert had no property of his own, but the Admiral suggested that the emperor might be made to abandon to him the income of the Tyrol.

Page 2083

Thirdly, it was undesirable for Albert to leave the Netherlands at that juncture. Nevertheless, it was suggested by the easy-going Admiral, with the same tranquil insolence which marked all his proposed arrangements, that as Rudolph would retire from the government altogether, Albert, as King of the Romans and acting emperor, could very well take care of the Netherlands as part of his whole realm. Albert being moreover about to marry the Infanta, the handsome dowry which he would receive with her from the king would enable him to sustain his dignity.

Thus did Philip who had been so industrious during the many past years in his endeavours to expel the heretic Queen of England and the Huguenot Henry from the realms of their ancestors, and to seat himself or his daughter, or one or another of his nephews, in their places, now busy himself with schemes to discrown Rudolph of Habsburg, and to place the ubiquitous Infanta and her future husband on his throne. Time would show the result.

Meantime, while the Protestant Ancel and other agents of the new league against Philip were travelling about from one court of Europe to another to gain adherents to their cause, the great founder of the confederacy was already secretly intriguing for a peace with that monarch. The ink was scarce dry on the treaty to which he had affixed his signature before he was closeted with the agents of the Archduke Albert, and receiving affectionate messages and splendid presents from that military ecclesiastic.

In November, 1596, La Balvena, formerly a gentleman of the Count de la Fera, came to Rouen. He had a very secret interview with Henry *iv*. at three o'clock one morning, and soon afterwards at a very late hour in the night. The king asked him why the archduke was not willing to make a general peace, including England and Holland. Balvena replied that he had no authority to treat on that subject; it being well known, however, that the King of Spain would never consent to a peace with the rebels, except on the ground of the exclusive maintenance of the Catholic religion.

He is taking the very course to destroy that religion, said Henry. The king then avowed himself in favour of peace for the sake of the poor afflicted people of all countries. He was not tired of arms, he said, which were so familiar to him, but his wish was to join in a general crusade against the Turk. This would be better for the Catholic religion than the present occupations of all parties. He avowed that the Queen of England was his very good friend, and said he had never yet broken his faith with her, and never would do so. She had sent him the Garter, and he had accepted it, as his brother Henry *iii*. had done before him, and he would negotiate no peace which did not include her. The not very distant future was to show how much these stout professions of sincerity were worth. Meantime Henry charged Balvena to keep their interviews a profound secret,

Page 2084

especially from every one in France. The king expressed great anxiety lest the Huguenots should hear of it, and the agent observed that any suspicion of peace negotiations would make great disturbance among the heretics, as one of the conditions of the king's absolution by the pope was supposed to be that he should make war upon his Protestant subjects. On his return from Rouen the emissary made a visit to Monlevet, marshal of the camp to Henry *iv*. and a Calvinist. There was much conversation about peace, in the course of which Monlevet observed, "We are much afraid of you in negotiation, for we know that you Spaniards far surpass us in astuteness."

"Nay," said Balvena, "I will only repeat the words of the Emperor Charles V.—'The Spaniards seem wise, and are madmen; the French seem madmen, and are wise.'"

A few weeks later the archduke sent Balvena again to Rouen. He had another interview with the king, at which not only Villeroy and other Catholics were present, but Monlevet also. This proved a great obstacle to freedom of conversation. The result was the same as before.

There were strong professions of a desire on the part of the king for a peace but it was for a general peace; nothing further.

On the 4th December Balvena was sent for by the king before daylight, just as he was mounting his horse for the chase.

"Tell his Highness," said Henry, "that I am all frankness, and incapable of dissimulation, and that I believe him too much a man of honour to wish to deceive me. Go tell him that I am most anxious for peace, and that I deeply regret the defeat that has been sustained against the Turk. Had I been there I would have come out dead or victorious. Let him arrange an agreement between us, so that presto he may see me there with my brave nobles, with infantry and with plenty of Switzers. Tell him that I am his friend: Begone. Be diligent."

On the last day but two of the year, the archduke, having heard this faithful report of Henry's affectionate sentiments, sent him a suit of splendid armour, such as was then made better in Antwerp than anywhere else, magnificently burnished of a blue colour, according to an entirely new fashion.

With such secret courtesies between his most Catholic Majesty's vicegerent and himself was Henry's league with the two Protestant powers accompanied.

Exactly at the same epoch Philip was again preparing an invasion of the queen's dominions. An armada of a hundred and twenty-eight ships, with a force of fourteen

thousand infantry and three thousand horse, had been assembled during the autumn of this year at Lisbon, notwithstanding the almost crushing blow that the English and Hollanders had dealt the king's navy so recently at Cadiz. This new expedition was intended for Ireland, where it was supposed that the Catholics would be easily roused. It was also hoped that the King of Scots might be induced to embrace this opportunity of wreaking vengeance on his mother's destroyer. "He was on the watch the last time that my armada went forth against the English," said Philip, "and he has now no reason to do the contrary, especially if he remembers that here is a chance to requite the cruelty which was practised on his mother."

Page 2085

The fleet sailed on the 5th October under the command of the Count Santa Gadea. Its immediate destination was the coast of Ireland, where they were to find some favourable point for disembarking the troops. Having accomplished this, the ships, with the exception of a few light vessels, were to take their departure and pass the winter in Ferrol. In case the fleet should be forced by stress of weather on the English coast, the port of Milford Haven in Wales was to be seized, “because,” said Philip, “there are a great many Catholics there well affected to our cause, and who have a special enmity to the English.” In case the English fleet should come forth to give battle, Philip sent directions that it was to be conquered at once, and that after the victory Milford Haven was to be firmly held.

This was easily said. But it was not fated that this expedition should be more triumphant than that of the unconquerable armada which had been so signally conquered eight years before. Scarcely had the fleet put to sea when it was overtaken by a tremendous storm, in which forty ships foundered with five thousand men. The shattered remnants took refuge in Ferrol. There the ships were to refit, and in the spring the attempt was to be renewed. Thus it was ever with the King of Spain. There was a placid unconsciousness on his part of defeat which sycophants thought sublime. And such insensibility might have been sublimity had the monarch been in person on the deck of a frigate in the howling tempest, seeing ship after ship go down before his eyes; and exerting himself with tranquil energy and skill to encourage his followers, and to preserve what remained afloat from destruction. Certainly such exhibitions of human superiority to the elements are in the highest degree inspiring. His father had shown himself on more than one occasion the master of his fate. The King of France, too, bare-headed, in his iron corslet, leading a forlorn hope, and, by the personal charm of his valour, changing fugitives into heroes and defeat into victory, had afforded many examples of sublime unconsciousness of disaster, such as must ever thrill the souls of mankind. But it is more difficult to be calm in battle and shipwreck than at the writing desk; nor is that the highest degree of fortitude which enables a monarch—himself in safety—to endure without flinching the destruction of his fellow creatures.

No sooner, however, was the remnant of the tempest-tost fleet safe in Ferrol than the king requested the cardinal to collect an army at Calais and forthwith to invade England. He asked his nephew whether he could not manage to send his troops across the channel in vessels of light draught, such as he already had at command, together with some others which might be furnished him from Spain. In this way he was directed to gain a foot-hold in England, and he was to state immediately whether he could accomplish this with his own resources or should require the assistance of the fleet at Ferrol. The king further suggested that the enemy, encouraged by his success at Cadiz the previous summer, might be preparing a fresh expedition against Spain, in which case the invasion of England would be easier to accomplish.

Page 2086

Thus on the last day of 1596, Philip, whose fleet sent forth for the conquest of Ireland and England had been too crippled to prosecute the adventure, was proposing to his nephew to conquer England without any fleet at all. He had given the same advice to Alexander Farnese so soon as he heard of the destruction of the invincible armada.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Allow her to seek a profit from his misfortune
Burning of Servetus at Geneva
Constant vigilance is the price of liberty
Evil has the advantage of rapidly assuming many shapes
French seem madmen, and are wise
Hanging of Mary Dyer at Boston
Imposed upon the multitudes, with whom words were things
Impossible it was to invent terms of adulation too gross
In times of civil war, to be neutral is to be nothing
Meet around a green table except as fencers in the field
One-third of Philip's effective navy was thus destroyed
Patriotism seemed an unimaginable idea
Placid unconsciousness on his part of defeat
Plea of infallibility and of authority soon becomes ridiculous
Religion was rapidly ceasing to be the line of demarcation
So often degenerated into tyranny (Calvinism)
Spaniards seem wise, and are madmen
The Alcoran was less cruel than the Inquisition
There are few inventions in morals
To attack England it was necessary to take the road of Ireland
Tranquil insolence
Unproductive consumption was alarmingly increasing
Upon their knees, served the queen with wine
Wish to sell us the bear-skin before they have killed the bear

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 69, 1597-1598

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Straggle of the Netherlands against Spain—March to Turnhout— Retreat of the Spanish commander—Pursuit and attack—Demolition of the Spanish army—Surrender of the garrison of Turnhout—Improved military science—Moral effect of the battle—The campaign in France—Attack on Amiens by the Spaniards—Sack and burning of the city —De Rosny's plan for reorganization of the finances—Jobbery and speculation—-Philip's repudiation of his debts—Effects of the measure—Renewal of persecution by the Jesuits—Contention between Turk and Christian—Envoy from the King of Poland to the Hague to plead for reconciliation with Philip—His subsequent presentation to Queen Elizabeth—Military events Recovery of Amiens—Feeble operations of the confederate powers against Spain—Marriage of the Princess Emilia, sister of Maurice—Reduction of the castle and town of Alphen—Surrender

Page 2087

of Rheinberg—Capitulation of Meurs—Surrender of Grol—Storming and taking of Brevoort Capitulation of Enschede, Ootmaxsum, Oldenzaal, and Lingen—Rebellion of the Spanish garrisons in Antwerp and Ghent—Progress of the peace movement between Henry and Philip—Relations of the three confederate powers—Henry's scheme for reconciliation with Spain—His acceptance of Philip's offer of peace announced to Elizabeth—Endeavours for a general peace.

The old year had closed with an abortive attempt of Philip to fulfil his favourite dream—-the conquest of England. The new year opened with a spirited effort of Prince Maurice to measure himself in the open field with the veteran legions of Spain.

Turnhout, in Brabant, was an open village—the largest in all the Netherlands lying about twenty-five English miles in almost a direct line south from Gertruydenburg. It was nearly as far distant in an easterly direction from Antwerp, and was about five miles nearer Breda than it was to Gertruydenberg.

At this place the cardinal-archduke had gathered a considerable force, numbering at least four thousand of his best infantry, with several squadrons of cavalry, the whole under-command of the general-in-chief of artillery, Count Varax. People in the neighbourhood were growing uneasy, for it was uncertain in what direction it might be intended to use this formidable force. It was perhaps the cardinal's intention to make a sudden assault upon Breda, the governor of which seemed not inclined to carry out his proposition to transfer that important city to the king, or it was thought that he might take advantage of a hard frost and cross the frozen morasses and estuaries into the land of Ter Tholen, where he might overmaster some of the important strongholds of Zeeland.

Marcellus Bax, that boldest and most brilliant of Holland's cavalry officers, had come to Maurice early in January with an urgent suggestion that no time might be lost in making an attack upon the force of Turnhout, before they should succeed in doing any mischief. The prince pondered the proposition, for a little time, by himself, and then conferred very privately upon the subject with the state-council. On the 14th January it was agreed with that body that the enterprise should be attempted, but with the utmost secrecy. A week later the council sent an express messenger to Maurice urging him not to expose his own life to peril, but to apprise them as soon as possible as to the results of the adventure.

Meantime, patents had been sent to the various garrisons for fifty companies of foot and sixteen squadrons of horse. On the 22nd January Maurice came to Gertruydenberg, the place of rendezvous, attended by Sir Francis Vere and Count Solms. Colonel Kloetingen was already there with the transports of ammunition and a few pieces of artillery from Zeeland, and in the course of the day the whole infantry force had assembled. Nothing could have been managed with greater promptness or secrecy.

Page 2088

Next day, before dawn, the march began. The battalia was led by Van der Noot, with six companies of Hollanders. Then came Vere, with eight companies of the reserve, Dockray with eight companies of Englishmen, Murray with eight companies of Scotch, and Kloetingen and La Corde with twelve companies of Dutch and Zeelanders. In front of the last troop under La Corde marched the commander of the artillery, with two demi-cannon and two field-pieces, followed by the ammunition and, baggage trains. Hohenlo arrived just as the march was beginning, to whom the stadholder, notwithstanding their frequent differences, communicated his plans, and entrusted the general command of the cavalry. That force met the expedition at Osterhout, a league's distance from Gertruydenberg, and consisted of the best mounted companies, English and Dutch, from the garrisons of Breda, Bergen, Nymegen, and the Zutphen districts.

It was a dismal, drizzly, foggy morning; the weather changing to steady rain as the expedition advanced. There had been alternate frost and thaw for the few previous weeks, and had that condition of the atmosphere continued the adventure could not have been attempted. It had now turned completely to thaw. The roads were all under water, and the march was sufficiently difficult. Nevertheless, it was possible; so the stout Hollanders, Zeelanders, and Englishmen struggled on manfully, shoulder to shoulder, through the mist and the mire. By nightfall the expedition had reached Ravels, at less than a league's distance from Turnhout, having accomplished, under the circumstances, a very remarkable march of over twenty miles. A stream of water, the Neethe, one of the tributaries of the Scheld, separated Ravels from Turnhout, and was crossed by a stone bridge. It was an anxious moment. Maurice discovered by his scouts that he was almost within cannon-shot of several of the most famous regiments in the Spanish army lying fresh, securely posted, and capable of making an attack at any moment. He instantly threw forward Marcellus Bax with four squadrons of Bergen cavalry, who, jaded as they were by their day's work, were to watch the bridge that night, and to hold it against all comers and at every hazard.

The Spanish commander, on his part, had reconnoitred the advancing, foe, for it was impossible for the movement to have been so secret or so swift over those inundated roads as to be shrouded to the last moment in complete mystery. It was naturally to be expected therefore that those splendid legions—the famous Neapolitan tercio of Trevico, the veteran troops of Sultz and Hachicourt, the picked Epirote and Spanish cavalry of Nicolas Basta and Guzman—would be hurled upon the wearied, benumbed, bemired soldiers of the republic, as they came slowly along after their long march through the cold winter's rain.

Page 2089

Varax took no such heroic resolution. Had he done so that January afternoon, the career of Maurice of Nassau might have been brought to a sudden close, despite the affectionate warning of the state-council. Certainly it was difficult for any commander to be placed in a more perilous position than that in which the stadholder found himself. He remained awake and afoot the whole night, perfecting his arrangements for the morning, and watching every indication of a possible advance on the part of the enemy. Marcellus Bax and his troopers remained at the bridge till morning, and were so near the Spaniards that they heard the voices of their pickets, and could even distinguish in the distance the various movements in their camp.

But no attack was made, and the little army of Maurice was allowed to sleep off its fatigue. With the dawn of the 24th January, a reconnoitring party, sent out from the republican camp, discovered that Varax, having no stomach for an encounter, had given his enemies the slip. Long before daylight his baggage and ammunition trains had been sent off in a southerly direction, and his whole force had already left the village of Turnhout. It was the intention of the commander to take refuge in the fortified city of Herenthals, and there await the attack of Maurice. Accordingly, when the stadholder arrived on the fields beyond the immediate precincts of the village, he saw the last of the enemy's rearguard just disappearing from view. The situation was a very peculiar one.

The rain and thaw, following upon frosty weather, had converted the fenny country in many directions into a shallow lake. The little river which flowed by the village had risen above its almost level banks, and could with difficulty be traversed at any point, while there was no permanent bridge, such as there was at Ravels. The retreating Spaniards had made their way through a narrow passage, where a roughly-constructed causeway of planks had enabled the infantry to cross the waters almost in single file, while the cavalry had floundered through as best they might. Those who were acquainted with the country reported that beyond this defile there was an upland heath, a league in extent, full of furze and thickets, where it would be easy enough for Varax to draw up his army in battle array, and conceal it from view. Maurice's scouts, too, brought information that the Spanish commander had left a force of musketeers to guard the passage at the farther end.

This looked very like an ambush. In the opinion of Hohenlo, of Solms, and of Sidney, an advance was not to be thought of; and if the adventure seemed perilous to such hardy and experienced campaigners as these three, the stadholder might well hesitate. Nevertheless, Maurice had made up his mind. Sir Francis Vere and Marcellus Bax confirmed him in his determination, and spoke fiercely of the disgrace which would come upon the arms of the republic if now, after having made a day's march to meet the enemy, they should turn their backs upon him just as he was doing his best to escape.

Page 2090

On leave obtained from the prince, these two champions, the Englishman and the Hollander, spurred their horses through the narrow pass, with the waters up to the saddle-bow, at the head of a mere handful of troopers, not more than a dozen men in all. Two hundred musketeers followed, picking their way across the planks. As they emerged into the open country beyond, the Spanish soldiers guarding the passage fled without firing a shot. Such was already the discouraging effect produced upon veterans by the unexpected order given that morning to retreat. Vere and Bax sent word for all the cavalry to advance at once, and meantime hovered about the rearguard of the retreating enemy, ready to charge upon him so soon as they should be strong enough.

Maurice lost no time in plunging with his whole mounted force through the watery defile; directing the infantry to follow as fast as practicable. When the commander-in-chief with his eight hundred horsemen, Englishmen, Zeelanders, Hollanders, and Germans, came upon the heath, the position and purpose of the enemy were plainly visible. He was not drawn up in battle order, waiting to sweep down upon his rash assailants so soon as, after struggling through the difficult pass, they should be delivered into his hands. On the contrary, it was obvious at a glance that his object was still to escape. The heath of Tiel, on which Spaniards, Italians, Walloons, Germans, Dutchmen, English; Scotch, and Irishmen now all found themselves together, was a ridgy, spongy expanse of country, bordered on one side by the swollen river, here flowing again through steeper banks which were overgrown with alders and pollard willows. Along the left of the Spanish army, as they moved in the direction of Herenthals, was a continuous fringe of scrub-oaks, intermixed with tall beeches, skirting the heath, and forming a leafless but almost impervious screen for the movements of small detachments of troops. Quite at the termination of the open apace, these thickets becoming closely crowded, overhung another extremely narrow passage, which formed the only outlet from the plain. Thus the heath of Tiel, upon that winter’s morning, had but a single entrance and a single exit, each very dangerous or very fortunate for those capable of taking or neglecting the advantages offered by the position.

The whole force of Varax, at least five thousand strong, was advancing in close marching order towards the narrow passage by which only they could emerge from the heath. Should they reach this point in time, and thus effect their escape, it would be useless to attempt to follow them, for, as was the case with the first defile, it was not possible for two abreast to go through, while beyond was a swampy-country in which military operations were impossible. Yet there remained less than half a league’s space for the retreating soldiers to traverse, while not a single foot-soldier Of Maurice’s army had thus far made his appearance on the heath. All

Page 2091

were still wallowing and struggling, single file, in the marshy entrance, through which only the cavalry had forced their way. Here was a dilemma. Should Maurice look calmly on while the enemy, whom he had made so painful a forced march to meet, moved off out of reach before his eyes? Yet certainly this was no slight triumph in itself. There sat the stadholder on his horse at the head of eight hundred carabineers, and there marched four of Philip's best infantry regiments, garnished with some of his most renowned cavalry squadrons, anxious not to seek but to avoid a combat. First came the Germans of Count Sultz, the musketeers in front, and the spearsmen, of which the bulk of this and of all the regiments was composed, marching in closely serried squares, with the company standards waving over each. Next, arranged in the same manner, came the Walloon regiments of Hachicourt and of La Barlotte. Fourth and last came the famous Neapolitans of Marquis Trevico. The cavalry squadrons rode on the left of the infantry, and were commanded by Nicolas Basta, a man who had been trampling upon the Netherlanders ever since the days of Alva, with whom he had first come to the country.

And these were the legions—these very men or their immediate predecessors—these Italians, Spaniards, Germans, and Walloons, who during so many terrible years had stormed and sacked almost every city of the Netherlands, and swept over the whole breadth of those little provinces as with the besom of destruction.

Both infantry and cavalry, that picked little army of Varax was of the very best that had shared in the devil's work which had been the chief industry practised for so long in the obedient Netherlands. Was it not madness for the stadholder, at the head of eight hundred horsemen, to assail such an army as this? Was it not to invoke upon his head the swift vengeance of Heaven? Nevertheless, the painstaking, cautious Maurice did not hesitate. He ordered Hohenlo, with all the Brabantine cavalry, to ride as rapidly as their horses could carry them along the edge of the plain, and behind the tangled woodland, by which the movement would be concealed. He was at all hazards to intercept the enemy's vanguard before it should reach the fatal pass. Vere and Marcellus Bax meanwhile, supported now by Edmont with the Nymegen squadrons, were to threaten the Spanish rear. A company of two under Laurentz was kept by Maurice near his person in reserve.

The Spaniards steadily continued their march, but as they became aware of certain slight and indefinite movements on their left, their cavalry, changing their position, were transferred from the right to the left of the line of march, and now rode between the infantry and the belt of woods.

Page 2092

In a few minutes after the orders given to Hohenlo, that dashing soldier had circumvented the Spaniards, and emerged upon the plain between them and the entrance to the defile, The next instant the trumpets sounded a charge, and Hohenlo fell upon the foremost regiment, that of Sultz, while the rearguard, consisting of Trevico's Neapolitan regiment, was assailed by Du Bois, Donck, Rysoir, Marcellus Bax, and Sir Francis Vere. The effect seemed almost supernatural. The Spanish cavalry—those far-famed squadrons of Guzman and Basta—broke at the first onset and galloped off for the pass as if they had been riding a race. Most of them escaped through the hollow into the morass beyond. The musketeers of Sultz's regiment hardly fired a shot, and fell back in confusion upon the thickly clustered pikemen. The assailants, every one of them in complete armour, on powerful horses, and armed not with lances but with carbines, trampled over the panic-struck and struggling masses of leather jerkined pikemen and shot them at arm's length. The charge upon Trevico's men at the same moment was just as decisive. In less time than it took afterwards to describe the scene, those renowned veterans were broken into a helpless mass of dying, wounded, or fugitive creatures, incapable of striking a blow.

Thus the Germans in the front and the Neapolitans in the rear had been simultaneously shattered, and rolled together upon the two other regiments, those of Hachicourt and La Barlotte, which were placed between them. Nor did these troops offer any better resistance, but were paralysed and hurled out of existence like the rest. In less than an hour the Spanish army was demolished. Varax himself lay dead upon the field, too fortunate not to survive his disgrace. It was hardly more than daylight on that dull January morning; nine o'clock had scarce chimed from the old brick steeples of Turnhout, yet two thousand Spaniards had fallen before the blows of eight hundred Netherlanders, and there were five hundred prisoners beside. Of Maurice's army not more than nine or ten were slain. The story sounds like a wild legend. It was as if the arm of each Netherlander had been nerved by the memory of fifty years of outrage, as if the spectre of their half-century of crime had appalled the soul of every Spaniard. Like a thunderbolt the son of William the Silent smote that army of Philip, and in an instant it lay blasted on the heath of Tiel. At least it could hardly be called sagacious generalship on the part of the stadholder. The chances were all against him, and if instead of Varax those legions had been commanded that morning by old Christopher Mondragon, there might perhaps have been another tale to tell. Even as it was, there had been a supreme moment when the Spanish disaster had nearly been changed to victory. The fight was almost done, when a small party of Staten' cavalry, who at the beginning of the action had followed the enemy's horse in its sudden retreat through the gap, came whirling

Page 2093

back over the plain in wild confusion, pursued by about forty of the enemy's lancers. They swept by the spot where Maurice, with not more than ten horsemen around him, was directing and watching the battle, and in vain the prince threw himself in front of them and strove to check their flight. They were panic-struck, and Maurice would himself have been swept off the field, had not Marcellus Bax and Edmont, with half a dozen heavy troopers, come to the rescue. A grave error had been committed by Parker, who, upon being ordered by Maurice to cause Louis Laurentz to charge, had himself charged with the whole reserve and left the stadholder almost alone upon the field. Thus the culprits—who after pursuing the Spanish cavalry through the pass had been plundering the enemy's baggage until they were set upon by the handful left to guard it, and had become fugitives in their turn—might possibly have caused the lose of the day after the victory had been won, had there been a man on the Spanish side to take in the situation at a glance. But it is probable that the rout had been too absolute to allow of any such sudden turning to account of the serious errors of the victors. The cavalry, except this handful, had long disappeared, at least half the infantry lay dead or wounded in the field, while the remainder, throwing away pipe and matchlock, were running helter-skelter for their lives.

Besides Prince Maurice himself, to whom the chief credit of the whole expedition justly belonged, nearly all the commanders engaged obtained great distinction by their skill and valour. Sir Francis Vere, as usual, was ever foremost in the thickest of the fray, and had a horse killed under him. Parker erred by too much readiness to engage, but bore himself manfully throughout the battle. Hohenlo, Solma, Sidney, Louis Laurentz, Du Bois, all displayed their usual prowess; but the real hero of the hour, the personal embodiment of the fortunate madness which prompted and won the battle, was undoubtedly Marcellus Bax.

Maurice remained an hour or two on the field of battle, and then, returning towards the village of Turnhout, summoned its stronghold. The garrison of sixty, under Captain Van der Delf, instantly surrendered. The victor allowed these troops to go off scot free, saying that there had been blood enough shed that day. Every standard borne by the Spaniards in the battle-thirty-eight in number—was taken, besides nearly all their arms. The banners were sent to the Hague to be hung up in the great hall of the castle. The dead body of Varax was sent to the archduke with a courteous letter, in which, however, a categorical explanation was demanded as to a statement in circulation that Albert had decided to give the soldiers of the republic no quarter.

No answer being immediately returned, Maurice ordered the five hundred prisoners to be hanged or drowned unless ransomed within twenty days, and this horrible decree appears from official documents to be consistent with the military usages of the period. The arrival of the letter from the cardinal-archduke, who levied the money for the

ransom on the villagers of Brabant, prevented, however, the execution of the menace, which could hardly have been seriously intended.

Page 2094

Within a week from the time of his departure from the Hague to engage in this daring adventure, the stadholder had returned to that little capital, having achieved a complete success. The enthusiastic demonstrations throughout the land on account of so signal a victory can easily be imagined. Nothing like this had ever before been recorded in the archives of the young commonwealth. There had been glorious defences of beleaguered cities, where scenes of heroic endurance and self-sacrifice had been enacted, such as never can be forgotten so long as the history of human liberty shall endure, but a victory won in the open field over the most famous legions of Spain and against overwhelming numbers, was an achievement entirely without example. It is beyond all doubt that the force under Varax was at least four times as large as that portion of the States' army which alone was engaged; for Maurice had not a foot-soldier on the field until the battle was over, save the handful of musketeers who had followed Vere and Bax at the beginning of the action.

Therefore it is that this remarkable action merits a much more attentive consideration than it might deserve, regarded purely as a military exploit. To the military student a mere cavalry affair, fought out upon an obscure Brabantine heath between a party of Dutch carabineers and Spanish pikemen, may seem of little account—a subject fitted by picturesque costume and animated action for the pencil of a Wouvermanns or a Terburg, but conveying little instruction. As illustrating a period of transition in which heavy armoured troopers—each one a human iron-clad fortress moving at speed and furnished with the most formidable portable artillery then known—could overcome the resistance of almost any number of foot-soldiers in light marching gear and armed with the antiquated pike, the affair may be worthy of a moment's attention; and for this improvement—itself now as obsolete as the slings and cataphracts of Roman legions—-the world was indebted to Maurice. But the shock of mighty armies, the manoeuvring of vast masses in one magnificent combination, by which the fate of empires, the happiness or the misery of the peoples for generations, may perhaps be decided in a few hours, undoubtedly require a higher constructive genius than could be displayed in any such hand-to-hand encounter as that of Turnhout, scientifically managed as it unquestionably was. The true and abiding interest of the battle is derived from is moral effect, from its influence on the people of the Netherlands. And this could scarcely be exaggerated. The nation was electrified, transformed in an instant. Who now should henceforth dare to say that one Spanish fighting-man was equal to five or ten Hollanders? At last the days of Jemmingen and Mooker-heath needed no longer to be remembered by every patriot with a shudder of shame. Here at least in the open field a Spanish army, after in vain refusing a combat and endeavouring to escape, had literally bitten the dust

Page 2095

before one fourth of its own number. And this effect was a permanent one. Thenceforth for foreign powers to talk of mediation between the republic and the ancient master, to suggest schemes of reconciliation and of a return to obedience, was to offer gratuitous and trivial insult, and we shall very soon have occasion to mark the simple eloquence with which the thirty-eight Spanish standards of Turnhout, hung up in the old hall of the Hague, were made to reply to the pompous rhetoric of an interfering ambassador.

This brief episode was not immediately followed by other military events of importance in the provinces during what remained of the winter. Very early in the spring, however, it was probable that the campaign might open simultaneously in France and on the frontiers of Flanders. Of all the cities in the north of France there was none, after Rouen, so important, so populous, so wealthy as Amiens. Situate in fertile fields, within three days march of Paris, with no intervening forests or other impediments of a physical nature to free communication, it was the key to the gates of the capital. It had no garrison, for the population numbered fifteen thousand men able to bear arms, and the inhabitants valued themselves on the prowess of their trained militiamen, five thousand of whom they boasted to be able to bring into the field at an hour's notice—-and they were perfectly loyal to Henry.

One morning in March there came a party of peasants, fifteen or twenty in number, laden with sacks of chestnuts and walnuts, to the northernmost gate of the town. They offered them for sale, as usual, to the soldiers at the guard-house, and chaffered and jested—as boors and soldiers are wont to do—over their wares. It so happened that in the course of the bargaining one of the bags became untied, and its contents, much to the dissatisfaction of the proprietor, were emptied on the ground. There was a scramble for the walnuts, and much shouting, kicking, and squabbling ensued, growing almost into a quarrel between the burgher-soldiers and the peasants. As the altercation was at its height a heavy wagon, laden with long planks, came towards the gate for the use of carpenters and architects within the town. The portcullis was drawn up to admit this lumbering vehicle, but in the confusion caused by the chance medley going on at the guard-house, the gate dropped again before the wagon had fairly got through the passage, and remained resting upon the timber with which it was piled.

At that instant a shrill whistle was heard; and as if by magic the twenty chestnut-selling peasants were suddenly transformed to Spanish and Walloon soldiers armed to the teeth, who were presently reinforced by as many more of their comrades, who sprang from beneath the plank-work by which the real contents of the wagon had thus been screened. Captain Dognano, his brother the sergeant-major, Captain d'Arco, and other officers of a Walloon regiment stationed in

Page 2096

Dourlans, were the leaders of the little party, and while they were busily occupied in putting the soldiers of the watch, thus taken unawares, to death, the master-spirit of the whole adventure suddenly made his appearance and entered the city at the head of fifteen hundred men. This was an extremely small, yellow, dried up, energetic Spanish captain, with a long red beard, Hernan Tello de Porto Carrero by came, governor of the neighbouring city of Dourlens, who had conceived this plan for obtaining possession of Amiens. Having sent these disguised soldiers on before him, he had passed the night with his men in ambush until the signal should sound. The burghers of the town were mostly in church; none were dreaming of an attack, as men rarely do—for otherwise how should they ever be surprised—and in half an hour Amiens was the property of Philip of Spain. There were not very many lives lost, for the resistance was small, but great numbers were tortured for ransom and few women escaped outrage. The sack was famous, for the city was rich and the captors were few in number, so that each soldier had two or three houses to plunder for his own profit.

When the work was done, the faubourgs were all destroyed, for it was the intention of the conquerors to occupy the place, which would be a most convenient basis of operations for any attack upon Paris, and it was desirable to contract the limits to be defended. Fifteen hundred houses, many of them beautiful villas surrounded with orchards and pleasure gardens,—were soon in flames, and afterwards razed to the ground. The governor of the place, Count St. Pol, managed to effect his escape. His place was now supplied by the Marquis of Montenegro, an Italian in the service of the Spanish king. Such was the fate of Amiens in the month of March, 1597; such the result of the refusal by the citizens to accept the garrison urged upon them by Henry.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the consternation produced. throughout France by this astounding and altogether unlooked for event. “It seemed,” said President De Thou, “as if it had extinguished in a moment the royal majesty and the French name.” A few nights later than the date of this occurrence, Maximilian de Bethune (afterwards Duke of Sully, but then called Marquis de Rosny) was asleep in his bed in Paris. He had returned, at past two o’clock in the morning, from a magnificent ball given by the Constable of France. The capital had been uncommonly brilliant during the winter with banquets and dances, tourneys and masquerades, as if to cast a lurid glare over the unutterable misery of the people and the complete desolation of the country; but this entertainment—given by Montmorency in honour of a fair dame with whom he supposed himself desperately in love, the young bride of a very ancient courtier—-surpassed in splendour every festival that had been heard of for years. De Bethune had hardly lost himself in slumber when he was startled by Beringen, who, on drawing his curtains in this dead hour of the night, presented such a ghastly visage that the faithful friend of Henry instantly imagined some personal disaster to his well-beloved sovereign. “Is the King dead?” he cried.

Page 2097

Being re-assured as to, this point and told to hasten to the Louvre, Rosny instantly complied with the command. When he reached the palace he was admitted at once to the royal bed-chamber, where he found the king in the most unsophisticated of costumes, striding up and down the room, with his hands clasped together behind his head, and with an expression of agony upon his face: Many courtiers were assembled there, stuck all of them like images against the wall, staring before them in helpless perplexity.

Henry rushed forward as Rosny entered, and wringing him by the hand, exclaimed, “Ah, my friend, what a misfortune, Amiens is taken!”

“Very well,” replied the financier, with unperturbed visage; “I have just completed a plan which will restore to your Majesty not only Amiens but many other places.”

The king drew a great sigh of relief and asked for his project. Rosny, saying that he would instantly go and fetch his papers, left the apartment for an interval, in order to give vent to the horrible agitation which he had been enduring and so bravely concealing ever since the fatal words had been spoken. That a city so important, the key to Paris, without a moment’s warning, without the semblance of a siege, should thus fall into the hands of the enemy, was a blow as directly to the heart of De Bethune as it could have been to any other of Henry’s adherents. But while they had been distracting the king by unavailing curses or wailings, Henry, who had received the intelligence just as he was getting into bed, had sent for support and consolation to the tried friend of years, and he now reproachfully contrasted their pusillanimity with De Rosny’s fortitude.

A great plan for reorganising the finances of the kingdom was that very night submitted by Rosny to the king, and it was wrought upon day by day thereafter until it was carried into effect.

It must be confessed that the crudities and immoralities which the project revealed do not inspire the political student of modern days with so high a conception of the financial genius of the great minister as his calm and heroic deportment on trying occasions, whether on the battle-field or in the council-chamber, does of his natural authority over his fellow-men. The scheme was devised to put money in the king’s coffers, which at that moment were completely empty. Its chief features were to create a great many new offices in the various courts of justice and tribunals of administration, all to be disposed of by sale to the highest bidder; to extort a considerable loan from the chief courtiers and from the richest burghers in the principal towns; to compel all the leading peculators—whose name in the public service was legion—to disgorge a portion of their ill-gotten gains, on being released from prosecution; and to increase the tax upon salt.

Page 2098

Such a project hardly seems a masterpiece of ethics or political economy, but it was hailed with rapture by the needy monarch. At once there was a wild excitement amongst the jobbers and speculators in places. The creation of an indefinite number of new judgeships and magistracies, to be disposed of at auction, was a tempting opportunity even in that age of corruption. One of the most notorious traders in the judicial ermine, limping Robin de Tours by name, at once made a private visit to Madame de Rosny and offered seventy-two thousand crowns for the exclusive right to distribute these new offices. If this could be managed to his satisfaction, he promised to give her a diamond worth two thousand crowns, and another, worth six thousand, to her husband. The wife of the great minister, who did not comprehend the whole amount of the insult, presented Robin to her husband. She was enlightened, however, as to the barefaced iniquity of the offer, when she heard De Bethune's indignant. reply, and saw the jobber limp away, crest-fallen and amazed. That a financier or a magistrate should decline a bribe or interfere with the private sale of places, which were after all objects of merchandise, was to him incomprehensible. The industrious Robin, accordingly, recovering from his discomfiture, went straightway to the chancellor, and concluded the same bargain in the council chamber which had been rejected by De Bethune, with the slight difference that the distribution of the places. was assigned to the speculator for seventy-five thousand instead of seventy-two thousand crowns. It was with great difficulty that De Bethune, who went at once to the king with complaints and insinuations as to the cleanness of the chancellor's hands, was able to cancel the operation. The day was fast approaching when the universal impoverishment of the great nobles and landholders—the result of the long, hideous, senseless massacres called the wars of religion—was to open the way for the labouring classes to acquire a property in the soil. Thus that famous fowl in every pot was to make its appearance, which vulgar tradition ascribes to the bounty of a king who hated everything like popular rights, and loved nothing but his own glory and his own amusement. It was not until the days of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren that Privilege could renew those horrible outrages on the People, which were to be avenged by a dread series of wars, massacres, and crimes, compared to which even the religious conflicts of the sixteenth century grow pale.

Meantime De Bethune comforted his master with these financial plans, and assured him in the spirit of prophecy that the King of Spain, now tottering as it was thought to his grave, would soon be glad to make a favourable peace with France even if he felt obliged to restore not only Amiens but every other city or stronghold that he had ever conquered in that kingdom. Time would soon show whether this prediction were correct or delusive; but while the secret negotiations between Henry and the Pope were vigorously proceeding for that peace with Spain which the world in general and the commonwealth of the Netherlands in particular thought to be farthest from the warlike king's wishes, it was necessary to set about the siege of Amiens.

Page 2099

Henry assembled a force of some twelve or fifteen thousand men for that purpose, while the cardinal-archduke, upon his part, did his best to put an army in the field in order to relieve the threatened city so recently acquired by a coarse but successful artifice.

But Albert was in even a worse plight than that in which his great antagonist found himself. When he had first arrived in the provinces, his exchequer was overflowing, and he was even supposed to devote a considerable portion of the military funds to defray the expenses of his magnificent housekeeping at Brussels. But those halcyon days were over. A gigantic fraud, just perpetrated by Philip; had descended like a thunderbolt upon the provinces and upon all commercial Europe, and had utterly blasted the unfortunate viceroy. In the latter days of the preceding year the king had issued a general repudiation of his debts.

He did it solemnly, too, and with great religious unction, for it was a peculiarity of this remarkable sovereign that he was ever wont to accomplish his darkest crimes, whether murders or stratagems, as if they were acts of virtue. Perhaps he really believed them to be such, for a man, before whom so many millions of his fellow worms had been writhing for half a century in the dust, might well imagine himself a deity.

So the king, on the 20th November, 1596, had publicly revoked all the assignments, mortgages, and other deeds by which the royal domains; revenues, taxes, and other public property had been transferred or pledged for moneys already advanced to merchants, banker, and other companies or individuals, and formally took them again into his own possession, on the ground that his exertions in carrying on this long war to save Christianity from destruction had reduced him to beggary, while the money-lenders, by charging him exorbitant interest, had all grown rich at his expense.

This was perfectly simple. There was no attempt to disguise the villany of the transaction. The massacre of so many millions of Protestants, the gigantic but puerile attempts to subjugate the Dutch republic, and to annex France, England, and the German empire to his hereditary dominions, had been attended with more expense than Philip had calculated upon. The enormous wealth which a long series of marriages, inheritances, conquests, and maritime discoveries had heaped upon Spain had been exhausted by the insane ambition of the king to exterminate heresy throughout the world, and to make himself the sovereign of one undivided, universal, catholic monarchy. All the gold and silver of America had not sufficed for this purpose, and he had seen, with an ever rising indignation, those very precious metals which, in his ignorance of the laws of trade, he considered his exclusive property flowing speedily into the coffers of the merchants of Europe, especially those of the hated commonwealth of the rebellious Netherlands.

Therefore he solemnly renounced all his contracts, and took God to witness that it was to serve His Divine will. How else could he hope to continue his massacre of the Protestants?

Page 2100

The effect of the promulgation of this measure was instantaneous. Two millions and a half of bills of exchange sold by the Cardinal Albert came back in one day protested. The chief merchants and bankers of Europe suspended payment. Their creditors became bankrupt. At the Frankfort fair there were more failures in one day than there had ever been in all the years since Frankfort existed. In Genoa alone a million dollars of interest were confiscated. It was no better in Antwerp; but Antwerp was already ruined. There was a general howl of indignation and despair upon every exchange, in every counting-room, in every palace, in every cottage of Christendom. Such a tremendous repudiation of national debts was never heard of before. There had been debasements of the currency, petty frauds by kings upon their unfortunate peoples, but such a crime as this had never been conceived by human heart before.

The archduke was fain to pawn his jewelry, his plate, his furniture, to support the daily expenses of his household. Meantime he was to set an army in the field to relieve a city, beleaguered by the most warlike monarch in Christendom. Fortunately for him, that prince was in very similar straits, for the pressure upon the public swindlers and the auction sales of judicial ermine throughout his kingdom were not as rapidly productive as had been hoped.

It was precisely at this moment, too, that an incident of another nature occurred in Antwerp, which did not tend to make the believers in the possibility of religious or political freedom more in love with the system of Spain and Rome. Those blood-dripping edicts against heresy in the Netherlands, of which enough has been said in previous volumes of this history, and which had caused the deaths, by axe, faggot, halter, or burial alive, of at least fifty thousand human creatures—however historical scepticism may shut its eyes to evidence—had now been, dormant for twenty years. Their activity had ceased with the pacification of Ghent; but the devilish spirit which had inspired them still lived in the persons of the Jesuits, and there were now more Jesuits in the obedient provinces than there had been for years. We have seen that Champagny's remedy for the ills the country was enduring was "more Jesuits." And this, too, was Albert's recipe. Always "more Jesuits." And now the time had come when the Jesuits thought that they might step openly with their works into the daylight again. Of late years they had shrouded themselves in comparative mystery, but from their seminaries and colleges had gone forth a plentiful company of assassins against Elizabeth and Henry, Nassau, Barneveld, and others who, whether avowedly or involuntarily, were prominent in the party of human progress. Some important murders had already been accomplished, and the prospect was fair that still others might follow, if the Jesuits persevered. Meantime those ecclesiastics thought that a wholesome example might be by the spectacle of a public execution.

Page 2101

Two maiden ladies lived on the north rampart of Antwerp. They had formerly professed the Protestant religion, and had been thrown into prison for that crime; but the fear of further persecution, human weakness, or perhaps sincere conviction, had caused them to renounce the error of their ways, and they now went to mass. But they had a maidservant, forty years of age, Anna van den Hove by name, who was staunch in that reformed faith in which she had been born and bred. The Jesuits denounced this maid-servant to the civil authority, and claimed her condemnation and execution under the edicts of 1540, decrees which every one had supposed as obsolete as the statutes of Draco, which they had so entirely put to shame.

The sentence having been obtained from the docile and priest-ridden magistrates, Anna van den Hove was brought to Brussels and informed that she was at once to be buried alive. At the same time, the Jesuits told her that by converting herself to the Church she might escape punishment.

When King Henry *iv*. was summoned to renounce that same Huguenot faith, of which he was the political embodiment and the military champion, the candid man answered by the simple demand to be instructed. When the proper moment came, the instruction was accomplished by an archbishop with the rapidity of magic. Half an hour undid the work of half a life-time. Thus expeditiously could religious conversion be effected when an earthly crown was its guerdon. The poor serving-maid was less open to conviction. In her simple fanaticism she too talked of a crown, and saw it descending from Heaven on her poor forlorn head as the reward, not of apostasy, but of steadfastness. She asked her tormentors how they could expect her to abandon her religion for fear of death. She had read her Bible every day, she said, and had found nothing there of the pope or purgatory, masses, invocation of saints, or the absolution of sins except through the blood of the blessed Redeemer. She interfered with no one who thought differently; she quarrelled with no one's religious belief. She had prayed for enlightenment from Him, if she were in error, and the result was that she felt strengthened in her simplicity, and resolved to do nothing against her conscience. Rather than add this sin to the manifold ones committed by her, she preferred, she said, to die the death. So Anna van den Hove was led, one fine midsummer morning, to the hayfield outside of Brussels, between two Jesuits, followed by a number of a peculiar kind of monks called love-brothers. Those holy men goaded her as she went, telling her that she was the devil's carrion, and calling on her to repent at the last moment, and thus save her life and escape eternal damnation beside. But the poor soul had no ear for them, and cried out that, like Stephen, she saw the heavens opening, and the angels stooping down to conduct her far away from the power of the evil one. When they came to the hay-field they found the pit already dug, and the maid-servant was ordered to descend into it. The executioner then covered her with earth up to the waist, and a last summons was made to her to renounce her errors. She refused, and then the earth was piled upon her, and the hangman jumped upon the grave till it was flattened and firm.

Page 2102

Of all the religious murders done in that hideous sixteenth century in the Netherlands; the burial of the Antwerp servantmaid was the last and the worst. The worst, because it was a cynical and deliberate attempt to revive the demon whose thirst for blood had been at last allayed, and who had sunk into repose. And it was a spasmodic revival only, for, in the provinces at least, that demon had finished his work.

Still, on the eastern borders of what was called civilization, Turk and Christian were contending for the mastery. The great battle of Kovesd had decided nothing, and the crescent still shone over the fortified and most important Hungarian stronghold of Raab, within arm's length of Vienna. How rapidly might that fatal and menacing emblem fill its horns, should it once be planted on the walls of the Imperial capital! It was not wonderful that a sincere impatience should be felt by all the frontier States for the termination of the insurrection of the Netherlands. Would that rebellious and heretical republic only consent to go out of existence, again bow its stubborn knee to Philip and the Pope, what a magnificent campaign might be made against Mahomet! The King of Spain was the only potentate at all comparable in power to the grand Turk. The King of France, most warlike of men, desired nothing better, as he avowed, than to lead his brave nobles into Hungary to smite the unbelievers. Even Prince Maurice, it was fondly hoped, might be induced to accept a high command in the united armies of Christendom, and seek for glory by campaigning, in alliance with Philip; Rudolph, and Henry, against the Ottoman, rather than against his natural sovereign. Such were the sagacity, the insight, the power of forecasting the future possessed in those days by monarchs, statesmen, and diplomatists who were imagining that they held the world's destiny in their hands.

There was this summer a solemn embassy from the emperor to the States-General proposing mediation referring in the usual conventional phraseology to the right of kings to command, and to the duty of the people to submit, and urging the gentle-mindedness and readiness to forgive which characterised the sovereign of the Netherlands and of Spain.

And the statesmen of the republic had answered as they always did, showing with courteous language, irresistible logic, and at, unmerciful length, that there never had been kings in the Netherlands at all, and that the gentle-mindedness of Philip had been exhibited in the massacre of a hundred thousand Netherlanders in various sieges and battles, and in the murder, under the Duke of Alva alone, of twenty thousand human beings by the hangman.

Page 2103

They liked not such divine right nor such gentle-mindedness. They recognised no duty on their part to consent to such a system. Even the friendly King of Denmark sent a legation for a similar purpose, which was respectfully but very decidedly allowed to return as it came; but the most persistent in schemes of interference for the purpose of putting an end to the effusion of blood in the Netherlands was Sigismund of Poland. This monarch, who occupied two very incompatible positions, being sovereign at once of fanatically Protestant Sweden and of orthodox Poland, and who was, moreover, son-in-law of Archduke Charles of Styria whose other daughter was soon to be espoused by the Prince of Spain—was personally and geographically interested in liberating Philip from the inconvenience of his Netherland war. Only thus could he hope to bring the Spanish power to the rescue of Christendom against the Turk. Troubles enough were in store for Sigismund in his hereditary northern realms, and he was to learn that his intermarriage with the great Catholic and Imperial house did not enable him to trample out Protestantism in those hardy Scandinavian and Flemish regions where it had taken secure root. Meantime he despatched, in solemn mission to the republic and to the heretic queen, a diplomatist whose name and whose oratorical efforts have by a caprice of history been allowed to endure to our times.

Paul Dialyn was solemnly received at the Hague on the 21st July. A pragmatical fop, attired in a long, magnificent Polish robe, covered with diamonds and other jewels, he was yet recognised by some of those present as having been several years before a student at Leyden under a different name, and with far less gorgeous surroundings. He took up his position in the council-chamber, in the presence of the stadholder and the leading members of the States-General, and pronounced a long Latin oration, in the manner, as it was said, of a monk delivering a sermon from the pulpit. He kept his eyes steadily fixed on the ceiling, never once looking at the men whom he was addressing, and speaking in a loud, nasal, dictatorial tone, not at all agreeable to the audience. He dwelt in terms of extravagant eulogy on the benignity and gentleness of the King of Spain—qualities in which he asserted that no prince on earth could be compared to him—and he said this to the very face of Maurice of Nassau. That the benignant and gentle king had caused the stadholder's father to be assassinated, and that he had rewarded the murderer's family with a patent of nobility, and with an ample revenue taken from the murdered man's property, appeared of no account to the envoy in the full sweep of his rhetoric. Yet the reminiscence caused a shudder of disgust in all who heard him.

Page 2104

He then stated the wish of his master the Polish king to be that, in regard to the Turk, the provinces might reconcile themselves to their natural master, who was the most powerful monarch in Christendom, and the only one able to make head against the common foe. They were solemnly warned of the enormous power and resources of the great king, with whom it was hopeless for them to protract a struggle sure to end at last in their uttermost destruction. It was for kings to issue commands; he said, and for the people to obey; but Philip was full of sweetness, and would accord them full forgiveness for their manifold sins against him. The wish to come to the rescue of Christendom, in this extreme peril from the Turk, was with him paramount to all other considerations.

Such; in brief, was the substance of the long Latin harangue by which it was thought possible to induce those sturdy republicans and Calvinists to renounce their vigorous national existence and to fall on their knees before the most Catholic king. This was understood to be mediation, statesmanship, diplomacy, in deference to which the world was to pause and the course of events to flow backwards. Truly, despots and their lackeys were destined to learn some rude lessons from that vigorous little commonwealth in the North Sea, before it should have accomplished its mission on earth.

The States-General dissembled their disgust, however, for it was not desirable to make open enemies of Sigismund or Rudolph. They refused to accept a copy of the oration, but they promised to send him a categorical answer to it in writing. Meantime the envoy had the honour of walking about the castle with the stadholder, and, in the course of their promenade, Maurice pointed to the thirty-eight standards taken at the battle of Turnhout, which hung from the cedarn rafters of the ancient banquetting hall. The mute eloquence of those tattered banners seemed a not illogical reply to the diplomatic Paul's rhetoric in regard to the hopelessness of a contest with Spanish armies.

Next, Van der Werken—pensionary of Leyden, and a classical scholar—waited upon the envoy with a Latin reply to his harangue, together with a courteous letter for Sigismund. Both documents were scathing denunciations of the policy pursued by the King of Spain and by all his aiders and abettors, and a distinct but polished refusal to listen to a single word in favour of mediation or of peace.

Paul Dialyn then received a courteous permission to leave the territory of the republic, and was subsequently forwarded in a States' vessel of war to England.

His reception, about a month later, by Queen Elizabeth is an event on which all English historians are fond of dwelling. The pedant, on being presented to that imperious and accomplished sovereign, deported himself with the same ludicrous arrogance which had characterised him at the Hague. His Latin oration, which had been duly drawn up for him by the Chancellor of Sweden, was quite as impertinent as his harangue to the States-General had been, and was delivered with the same conceited air. The queen

replied on the instant in the same tongue. She was somewhat in a passion, but spoke with majestic moderation?

Page 2105

“Oh, how I have been deceived!” she exclaimed. “I expected an ambassador, and behold a herald! In all my life I never heard of such an oration. Your boldness and unadvised temerity I cannot sufficiently admire. But if the king your master has given you any such thing in charge—which I much doubt—I believe it is because, being but a young man, and lately advanced to the crown, not by ordinary succession of blood, but by election, he understandeth not yet the way of such affairs.” And so on—for several minutes longer.

Never did envoy receive such a setting down from sovereign.

“God’s death, my lords!” said the queen to her ministers; as she concluded, “I have been enforced this day to scour up my old Latin that hath lain long in rusting.”

This combination of ready wit, high spirit, and good Latin, justly excited the enthusiasm of the queen’s subjects, and endeared her still more to every English heart. It may, however, be doubted whether the famous reply was in reality so entirely extemporaneous as it has usually been considered. The States-General had lost no time in forwarding to England a minute account of the proceedings of Paul Dialyn at the Hague, together with a sketch of his harangue and of the reply on behalf of the States. Her Majesty and her counsellors therefore, knowing that the same envoy was on his way to England with a similar errand, may be supposed to have had leisure to prepare the famous impromptu. Moreover, it is difficult to understand, on the presumption that these classic utterances were purely extemporaneous, how they have kept their place in all chronicles and histories from that day to the present, without change of a word in the text. Surely there was no stenographer present to take down the queen’s words as they fell from her lips.

The military events of the year did not testify to a much more successful activity on the part of the new league in the field than it had displayed in the sphere of diplomacy. In vain did the envoy of the republic urge Henry and his counsellors to follow up the crushing blow dealt to the cardinal at Turnhout by vigorous operations in conjunction with the States’ forces in Artois and Hainault. For Amiens had meantime been taken, and it was now necessary for the king to employ all his energy and all his resources to recover that important city. So much damage to the cause of the republic and of the new league had the little yellow Spanish captain inflicted in an hour, with his bags of chestnuts and walnuts. The siege of Amiens lasted nearly six months, and was the main event of the campaign, so far as Henry was concerned. It is true—as the reader has already seen, and as will soon be more clearly developed—that Henry’s heart had been fixed on peace from the moment that he consented in conjunction with the republic to declare war, and that he had entered into secret and separate negotiations for that purpose with the agents of Philip so soon as he had bound himself by solemn covenant with Elizabeth to have no negotiations whatever with him except with her full knowledge and consent.

Page 2106

The siege of Amiens, however, was considered a military masterpiece, and its whole progress showed the revolution which the stadholder of Holland had already effected in European warfare. Henry *iv*. beleaguered Amiens as if he were a pupil of Maurice, and contemporaries were enthusiastic over the science, the patience, the inventive ingenuity which were at last crowned with success. The heroic Hernan Tello de Porto Carrero was killed in a sortie during the defence of the place which he had so gallantly won, and when the city was surrendered to the king on the 19th of September it was stipulated in the first article of the capitulation that the tomb, epitaph, and trophies, by which his memory was honoured in the principal church, should not be disturbed, and that his body might be removed whenever and whither it seemed good to his sovereign. In vain the cardinal had taken the field with an army of eighteen thousand foot and fifteen hundred light cavalry. The king had learned so well to entrench himself and to moderate his ardour for inopportune pitched battles, that the relieving force could find, no occasion to effect its purpose. The archduke retired. He came to Amiens like a soldier, said Henry, but he went back like a priest. Moreover, he was obliged to renounce, besides the city, a most tempting prize which he thought that he had secured within the city. Alexander Farnese, in his last French campaign, had procured and sent to his uncle the foot of St. Philip and the head of St. Lawrence; but what was Albert's delight when he learned that in Amiens cathedral there was a large piece of the head of John the Baptist! "There will be a great scandal about it in this kingdom," he wrote to Philip, "if I undertake to transport it out of the country, but I will try to contrive it as your Majesty desires."

But the military events of the year prevented the cardinal from gratifying the king in regard to these choice curiosities.

After the reduction of the city Henry went a considerable distance with his army towards the frontier of Flanders, in order to return, as he said, "his cousin's visit." But the recovery of Amiens had placed too winning a card in the secret game which he was then playing to allow him to push his nominal adversary to extremities.

The result, suspected very early in the year by the statesmen of the republic, was already very plainly foreshadowing itself as the winter advanced.

Nor had the other two members of the league affected much in the field. Again an expedition had been fitted forth under Essex against the Spanish coast to return the compliment which Philip had intended with the unlucky armada under Santa Gadea; and again Sir Francis Vere, with two thousand veterans from the Netherlands, and the Dutch admirals, with ten ships of war and a large number of tenders and transports, had faithfully taken part in the adventure.

The fleet was tempest-tossed for ten days, during which it reached the threatened coast and was blown off again. It returned at last into the English ports, having accomplished nothing, and having expended superfluously a considerable amount of money and

trouble. Essex, with a few of the vessels, subsequently made a cruise towards the Azores, but, beyond the capture of a Spanish merchantman or two, gained no glory and inflicted no damage.

Page 2107

Nothing could be feebler than the military operations of the three confederated powers ever since they had so solemnly confederated themselves.

Sick at heart with the political intrigues of his allies which had—brought a paralysis upon his arms which the blows of the enemy could hardly have effected, Maurice took the field in August: for an autumnal campaign on the eastern frontier of the republic. Foiled in his efforts for a combined attack by the whole force of the league upon Philip's power in the west, he thought it at least expedient to liberate the Rhine, to secure the important provinces of Zutphen, Gelderland, and Overyssel from attack, and to provide against the dangerous intrigues and concealed warfare carried on by Spain in the territories of the mad Duke of Juliers, Clever and Berg. For the seeds of the Thirty Years' War of Germany were already sown broadcast in those fatal duchies, and it was the determination of the agents of Spain to acquire the mastery of that most eligible military position, that excellent 'sedes belli,' whenever Protestantism was to be assailed in England, the Netherlands, or Germany.

Meantime the Hispaniolated counsellors of Duke John had strangled—as it was strongly suspected—his duchess, who having gone to bed in perfect health one evening was found dead in her bed next morning, with an ugly mark on her throat; and it was now the purpose of these statesmen to find a new bride for their insane sovereign in the ever ready and ever orthodox house of Lorrain. And the Protestant brothers-in-law and nephews and nieces were making every possible combination in order to check such dark designs, and to save these important territories from the ubiquitous power of Spain.

The stadholder had also family troubles at this period. His sister Emilia had conceived a desperate passion for Don Emmanuel, the pauper son of the forlorn pretender to Portugal, Don Antonio, who had at last departed this life. Maurice was indignant that a Catholic, an outcast, and, as it was supposed, a bastard, should dare to mate with the daughter of William of Orange-Nassau; and there were many scenes of tenderness, reproaches, recriminations, and 'hysterica passio,' in which not only the lovers, the stadholder and his family, but also the high and mighty States-General, were obliged to enact their parts. The chronicles are filled with the incidents, which, however, never turned to tragedy, nor even to romance, but ended, without a catastrophe, in a rather insipid marriage. The Princess Emilia remained true both to her religion and her husband during a somewhat obscure wedded life, and after her death Don Emmanuel found means to reconcile himself with the King of Spain and to espouse, in second nuptials, a Spanish lady. On the 4th of August, Maurice arrived at Arnhem with a force of seven thousand foot and twelve hundred horse. Hohenlo was with him, and William Lewis, and there was yet another of the illustrious house of Nassau in the camp, Frederick Henry, a boy in his thirteenth year, the youngest born of William the Silent, the grandson of Admiral de Coligny, now about; in this his first campaign, to take the first step in a long and noble career.

Page 2108

Having reduced the town and castle of Alphen, the stadholder came before Rheinberg, which he very expeditiously invested. During a preliminary skirmish William Lewis received a wound in the leg, while during the brief siege Maurice had a narrow escape from death, a cannon-ball passing through his tent and over his head as he lay taking a brief repose upon his couch.

On the 19th, Rheinberg, the key to that portion of the river, surrendered. On the 31st the stadholder opened his batteries upon the city of Meurs, which capitulated on the 2nd of September; the commandant, Andrew Miranda, stipulating that he should carry off an old fifty-pounder, the only piece of cannon in the place. Maurice gave his permission with a laugh, begging Miranda not to batter down any cities with his big gun.

On the 8th September the stadholdet threw a bridge over the Rhine, and crossing that river and the Lippe, came on the 11th before Grol. There was no Christopher Mondragon now in his path to check his progress and spoil his campaign, so that in seventeen days the city, being completely surrounded with galleries and covered ways up to its walls, surrendered. Count van Stirum, royal governor of the place, dined with the stadholder on that day, and the garrison, from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred strong; together with such of the townsfolk as chose to be subjects of Philip rather than citizens of the republic, were permitted to depart in peace.

On the 9th October the town and castle of Brevoort were taken by storm and the town was burned.

On the 18th October, Maurice having summoned Enschede, the commandant requested permission to examine the artillery by which it was proposed to reduce the city. Leave being granted, two captains were deputed accordingly as inspectors, who reported that resistance was useless. The place accordingly capitulated at once.

Here, again, was an improvement on the heroic practice of Alva and Romero.

On the 21st and 22nd October, Ootmarsum and Oldenzaal were taken, and on the 28th the little army came before Lingen. This important city surrendered after a fortnight's siege.

Thus closed a sagacious, business-like, three-months' campaign, in the course of which the stadholder, although with a slender force, had by means of his excellent organization and his profound practical science, achieved very considerable results. He had taken nine strongly-fortified cities and five castles, opened the navigation of the Rhine, and strengthened the whole eastern bulwarks of the republic. He was censured by the superficial critics of the old school for his humanity towards the conquered garrisons. At least it was thought quite superfluous to let these Spanish soldiers go scot free. Five thousand veterans had thus been liberated to swell the ranks of the cardinal's army, but the result soon proved the policy of Maurice to be, in many ways,

wholesome. The great repudiation by Philip, and the consequent bankruptcy of Alberta converted large numbers of the royal troops into mutineers, and these garrisons from the eastern frontier were glad to join in the game.

Page 2109

After the successful siege of Hulst in the previous year the cardinal had reduced the formidable mutiny which had organized itself at Tirlemont and Chapelle in the days of his luckless predecessor. Those rebels had been paid off and had mainly returned to Italy and other lands to spend their money. But soon a new rebellion in all the customary form's established itself in Antwerp citadel during the temporary absence of Mexia, the governor, and great was the misery of the unhappy burghers thus placed at the mercy of the guns of that famous pentagon. They were obliged to furnish large sums to the whole garrison, paying every common foot-soldier twelve stivers a day and the officers in proportion, while the great Eletto demanded, beside his salary, a coach and six, a state bed with satin curtains and fine linen, and the materials for banquetting sumptuously every day. At the slightest demur to these demands the bombardment from the citadel would begin, and the accurate artillery practice of those experienced cannoneers soon convinced the loyal citizens of the propriety of the arrangement. The example spread. The garrison of Ghent broke into open revolt, and a general military rebellion lasted for more than a year.

While the loyal cities of the obedient provinces were thus enjoying the fruits of their loyalty and obedience, the rebellious capital of the republic was receiving its stadholder with exuberant demonstrations of gratitude. The year, begun with the signal victory of Turnhout, had worthily terminated, so far as military events were concerned, with the autumnal campaign on the Rhine, and great were the rejoicings throughout the little commonwealth.

Thus, with diminished resources, had the republic been doing its share of the work which the anti-Spanish league had been called into existence to accomplish. But, as already intimated, this league was a mere fraud upon the Netherlands, which their statesmen were not slow in discovering. Of course it was the object of Philip and of the pope to destroy this formidable triple alliance as soon as formed, and they found potent assistance, not only in Henry's counsellors, but in the bosom of that crafty monarch himself. Clement hated Philip as much as he feared him, so that the prospect both of obtaining Henry as a counterpoise to his own most oppressive and most Catholic protector, and of breaking up the great convert's alliance with the heretic queen and the rebellious republic, was a most tempting one to his Holiness. Therefore he employed, indefatigably, the matchless powers of intrigue possessed by Rome to effect this great purpose. As for Elizabeth, she was weary of the war, most anxious to be reimbursed her advances to the States, and profoundly jealous of the rising commercial and naval greatness of the new commonwealth. If the league therefore proved impotent from the beginning, certainly it was not the fault of the United Netherlands. We have seen how much the king deplored, in intimate conversation

Page 2110

with De Bethune, his formal declaration of war against Spain which the Dutch diplomatists had induced him to make; and indeed nothing can be more certain than that this public declaration of war, and this solemn formation of the triple alliance against Philip, were instantly accompanied on Henry's part by secret peace negotiations with Philip's agents. Villeroy, told Envoy Calvaert that as for himself he always trembled when he thought on what he had done, in seconding the will of his Majesty in that declaration at the instance of the States-General, of which measure so many losses and such bitter fruits had been the result. He complained, too, of the little assistance or co-operation yielded by England. Calvaert replied that he had nothing to say in defence of England, but that certainly the king could have no cause to censure the States. The republic, however, had good ground, he said, to complain that nothing had been done by France, that all favourable occasions had been neglected, and that there was a perpetual change of counsels. The envoy, especially, and justly, reproached the royal government for having taken no advantage of the opportunity offered by the victory of Turnhout, in which the republic had utterly defeated the principal forces of the common enemy. He bluntly remarked, too, that the mysterious comings and goings of Balvena had naturally excited suspicions in the Netherlands, and that it would be better that all such practices should be at once abandoned. They did his Majesty no service, and it was no wonder that they caused uneasiness to his allies. Villeroy replied that the king had good reasons to give satisfaction to those who were yearning for peace.

As Henry himself was yearning in this regard as much as any of his subjects, it was natural enough that he should listen to Balvena and all other informal negotiators whom Cardinal Ilbert might send from Brussels or Clement from Rome. It will be recollected that Henry's parting words to Balvena at Rouen had been: "Tell the archduke that I am very much his friend. Let him arrange a peace. Begone. Be diligent."

But the king's reply to Calvaert, when, after the interview with Villeroy, that envoy was admitted to the royal dressing room for private conversation and took the occasion to remonstrate with his Majesty on these intrigues with the Spanish agent, was that he should send off Balvena in such fashion that it would take from the cardinal-archduke all hope of troubling him with any further propositions.

It has been seen, too, with what an outbreak of wrath the proposition, made by Elizabeth through Robert Sydney, that she should succour Calais on condition of keeping it for herself, had been received by Henry. At a somewhat later moment, when Calais had passed entirely into the possession of Spain, the queen offered to lay siege to that city with twelve thousand men, but with the understanding that the success was to be entirely for her own profit. Again the king bad expressed great astonishment and indignation at the proposition.

Page 2111

Nevertheless, after Amiens had been lost, Henry had sent Fonquerolles on a special mission to England, asking Elizabeth's assistance in the siege for its recovery, and offering that she should keep Calais as a pledge for expenses thus incurred, on the same terms as those on which she held the Brill and Flushing in the Netherlands. This proposal, however, to make a considerable campaign in Picardy, and to be indemnified by Henry for her trouble with the pledge of a city which was not his property, did not seem tempting to Elizabeth: The mission of Fonquerolles was fruitless, as might have been supposed. Nothing certainly in the queen's attitude, up to that moment, could induce the supposition that she would help to reduce Amiens for the sake of the privilege of conquering Calais if she could.

So soon as her refusal was made certain, Henry dropped the mask. Buzanval, the regular French envoy at the Hague—even while amazing the States by rebukes for their short-comings in the field and by demands for immediate co-operation in the king's campaign, when the king was doing nothing but besiege Amiens—astonished the republican statesmen still further by telling them—that his master was listening seriously to the pope's secret offers.

His Holiness had assured the king, through the legate at Paris, that he could easily bring about a peace between him and Philip, if Henry would agree to make it alone, and he would so manage it that the king's name should not be mixed up with the negotiations, and that he should not appear as seeking for peace. It was to be considered however—so Henry's envoy intimated both at Greenwich and the Hague—-that if the king should accept the pope's intervention he would be obliged to exclude from a share in it the queen and all others not of the Catholic religion, and it was feared that the same necessity which had compelled him to listen to these overtures would force him still further in the same path. He dreaded lest, between peace and war, he might fall into a position in which the law would be dictated to him either by the enemy or by those who had undertaken to help him out of danger.

Much more information to this effect did Buzanval communicate to the States on the authority of a private letter from the king, telling him of the ill-success of the mission of Fonquerolles. That diplomatist had brought back nothing from England, it appeared, save excuses, general phrases, and many references to the troubles in Ireland and to the danger of a new Spanish Armada.

It was now for the first time, moreover, that the States learned how they had been duped both by England and France in the matter of the League. To their surprise they were informed that while they were themselves furnishing four thousand men, according to the contract signed by the three powers, the queen had in reality only agreed to contribute two thousand soldiers, and these only for four months' service, within a very strict territorial limit, and under promise of immediate reimbursement of the expenses thus incurred.

Page 2112

These facts, together with the avowal that their magnanimous ally had all along been secretly treating for peace with the common enemy, did not make a cheerful impression upon those plain-spoken republicans, nor was it much consolation to them to receive the assurance that “after the king’s death his affection and gratitude towards the States would be found deeply engraved upon his heart.”

The result of such a future autopsy might seem a matter of comparative indifference, since meantime the present effect to the republic of those deep emotions was a treacherous desertion. Calvaert, too, who had so long haunted the king like his perpetual shadow, and who had believed him—at least so far as the Netherlands were concerned—to be almost without guile, had been destined after all to a rude awakening. Sick and suffering, he did not cease, so long as life was in him, to warn the States-General of the dangers impending over them from the secret negotiations which their royal ally was doing his best to conceal from them, and as to which he had for a time succeeded so dexterously in hoodwinking their envoy himself. But the honest and energetic agent of the republic did not live to see the consummation of these manoeuvres of Henry and the pope. He died in Paris during the month of June of this year.

Certainly the efforts of Spanish and Papal diplomacy had not been unsuccessful in bringing about a dissolution of the bonds of amity by which the three powers seemed so lately to be drawing themselves very closely together. The republic and Henry *iv*. were now on a most uncomfortable footing towards each other. On the other hand, the queen was in a very ill humour with the States and very angry with Henry. Especially the persistent manner in which the Hollanders carried on trade with Spain and were at the same time making fortunes for themselves and feeding the enemy, while Englishmen, on pain of death, were debarred from participation in such traffic, excited great and general indignation in England. In vain was it represented that this trade, if prohibited to the commonwealth would fall into the hands of neutral powers, and that Spain would derive her supplies from the Baltic and other regions as regularly as ever, while the republic, whose whole life was in her foreign commerce, would not only become incapable of carrying on the war but would perish of inanition. The English statesmen threatened to declare all such trade contraband, and vessels engaging in it lawful prize to English cruisers.

Burghley declared, with much excitement, to Canon, that he, as well as all the council, considered the conduct of the Hollanders so unjustifiable as to make them regret that their princess had ever embarked with a State which chose to aid its own enemies in the destruction of itself and its allies. Such conduct was so monstrous that those who were told of it would hardly believe it.

The Dutch envoy observed that there were thirty thousand sailors engaged in this trade, and he asked the Lord Treasurer whether he proposed that these people should all starve or be driven into the service of the enemy. Burghley rejoined that the Hollanders

had the whole world beside to pursue their traffic in, that they did indeed trade over the whole world, and had thereby become so extraordinarily, monstrously rich that there was no believing it.

Page 2113

Caron declared his sincere wish that this was true, but said, on the contrary, that he knew too well what extreme trouble and labour the States-General had in providing for the expenses of the war and in extracting the necessary funds from the various communities. This would hardly be the case were such great wealth in the land as was imagined. But still the English counsellors protested that they would stop this trading with the enemy at every hazard.

On the question of peace or war itself the republican diplomatists were often baffled as to the true intentions of the English Government. “As the queen is fine and false,” said Marquis Havre, observing and aiding in the various intrigues which were weaving at Brussels, “and her council much the same, she is practising towards the Hollanders a double stratagem. On the one hand she induces them to incline to a general peace. On the other, her adherents, ten or twelve in number of those who govern Holland and have credit with the people, insist that the true. interest of the State is in a continuation of the war.”

But Havre, adept in diplomatic chicane as he undoubtedly was, would have found it difficult to find any man of intelligence or influence in that rebellious commonwealth, of which he was once a servant, who had any doubt on that subject. It needed no English argument to persuade Olden-Barneveld, and the other statesmen who guided the destiny of the republic, that peace would be destruction. Moreover, there is no question that both the queen and Burghley would have been truly grateful had the States-General been willing to make peace and return to the allegiance which they had long since spurned.

Nevertheless it is difficult to say whether there were at this moment more of animosity in Elizabeth’s mind towards her backsliding ally, with whom she had so recently and so pompously sworn an eternal friendship, or towards her ancient enemy. Although she longed for peace, she hardly saw her way to it, for she felt that the secret movements of Henry had in a manner barred the path. She confessed to the States’ envoy that it was as easy for her to make black white as to make peace with Spain. To this Caron cordially assented, saying with much energy, “There is as much chance for your Majesty and for us to make peace, during the life of the present King of Spain, as to find redemption in hell.”

To the Danish ambassadors, who had come to England with proposals of mediation, the queen had replied that the King of Spain had attacked her dominions many times, and had very often attempted her assassination, that after long patience she had begun to defend herself, and had been willing to show him that she had the courage and the means, not only to maintain herself against his assaults, but also to invade his realms; that, therefore, she was not disposed to speak first; nor to lay down any conditions. Yet, if she saw that the King of Spain had any remorse for his former offences against her, and wished to make atonement for them, she was willing to declare that her heart was not so alienated from peace; but that she could listen to propositions on the subject.

Page 2114

She said, too, that such a peace must be a general one, including both the King of France and the States of the Netherlands, for with these powers she had but lately made an offensive and defensive league against the King of Spain, from which she protested that for no consideration in the world would she ever swerve one jot.

Certainly these were words of Christian charity and good faith, but such professions are the common staple of orations and documents for public consumption. As the accounts became more and more minute, however, of Henry's intrigues with Albert, Philip, and Clement, the queen grew more angry.

She told Caron that she was quite aware that the king had long been in communication with the cardinal's emissaries, and that he had even sent some of his principal counsellors to confer with the cardinal himself at Arras, in direct violation of the stipulations of the league. She expressed her amazement at the king's conduct; for she knew very well, she said, that the league had hardly been confirmed and sworn to, before he was treating with secret agents sent to him by the cardinal. "And now," she continued, "they propose to send an ambassador to inform me of the whole proceeding, and to ask my advice and consent in regard to negotiations which they have, perchance, entirely concluded."

She further informed the republican envoy that the king had recently been taking the ground in these dealings with the common enemy; that the two kingdoms of France and England must first be provided for; that when the basis between these powers and Spain had been arranged, it would be time to make arrangements for the States, and that it would probably be found advisable to obtain a truce of three or four years between them and Spain, in which interval the government of the provinces might remain on its actual footing. During this armistice the King of Spain was to withdraw all Spanish troops from the Netherlands, in consequence of which measure all distrust would by degrees vanish, and the community, becoming more and more encouraged, would in time recognise the king for their sovereign once more.

This, according to the information received by Elizabeth from her resident minister in France, was Henry's scheme for carrying out the principles of the offensive and defensive league, which only the year before he had so solemnly concluded with the Dutch republic. Instead of assisting that commonwealth in waging her war of independence against Spain, he would endeavour to make it easy for her to return peacefully to her ancient thraldom.

The queen asked Caron what he thought of the project. How could that diplomatist reply but with polite scorn? Not a year of such an armistice would elapse, he said, before the Spanish partisans would have it all their own way in the Netherlands, and the King of Spain would be master of the whole country. Again and again he repeated that peace, so long as Philip lived, was an impossibility for the States. No doubt that monarch would gladly consent to the proposed truce, for it, would be indeed strange if

by means of it he could not so establish himself in the provinces as to easily overthrow the sovereigns who were thus helping him to so advantageous a position.

Page 2115

The queen listened patiently to a long and earnest remonstrance in this vein made by the envoy, and assured him that not even to gain another kingdom would she be the cause of a return of the provinces to the dominion of Spain. She would do her best to dissuade the king from his peace negotiations; but she would listen to De Maisae, the new special envoy from Henry, and would then faithfully report to Caron, by word of mouth, the substance of the conversation. The States-General did not deserve to be deceived, nor would she be a party to any deception, unless she were first cheated herself. "I feel indeed," she added, "that matters are not always managed as they should be by your Government, and that you have not always treated princes, especially myself, as we deserve to be treated. Nevertheless, your State is not a monarchy, and so we must take all things into consideration, and weigh its faults against its many perfections."

With this philosophical—and in the mouth of Elizabeth Tudor, surely very liberal—-reflection, the queen terminated the interview with the republican envoy.

Meantime the conferences with the special ambassador of France proceeded. For, so soon as Henry had completed all his arrangements, and taken his decision to accept the very profitable peace offered to him by Spain, he assumed that air of frankness which so well became him, and candidly avowed his intention of doing what he had already done. Hurault de Maisse arrived in England not long before the time when the peace-commissioners were about assembling at Vervins. He was instructed to inform her Majesty that he had done his best to bring about a general alliance of the European powers from which alone the league concluded between England, France, and the Netherlands would have derived substantial strength.

But as nothing was to be hoped for from Germany, as England offered but little assistance, and as France was exhausted by her perpetual conflicts, it had become necessary for the king to negotiate for a peace. He now wished to prove, therefore, to the queen, as to a sister to whom he was under such obligations, that the interests of England were as dear to him as those of France.

The proof of these generous sentiments did not, however, seem so clear as could be wished, and there were very stormy debates, so soon as the ambassador found himself in conference with her Majesty's counsellors. The English statesmen bitterly reproached the French for having thus lightly thrown away the alliance between the two countries, and they insisted upon the duty of the king to fulfil his solemn engagements.

The reply was very frank and very decided. Kings, said De Maisse, never make treaties except with the tacit condition to embrace every thing that may be useful to them, and carefully to avoid every thing prejudicial to their interests.

The corollary from this convenient and sweeping maxim was simple enough. The king could not be expected, by his allies to reject an offered peace which was very profitable,

nor to continue a war which, was very detrimental. All that they could expect was that he should communicate his intentions to them, and this he was now very cheerfully doing. Such in brief were the statements of De Maisse.

Page 2116

The English were indignant. They also said a stout word for the provinces, although it has been made sufficiently clear that they did not love that upstart republic. But the French ambassador replied that his, master really meant secretly to assist the States in carrying on the war until they should make an arrangement. He should send them very powerful succours for this purpose, and he expected confidently that England would assist him in this line of conduct. Thus Henry was secretly pledging himself, to make underhand but substantial war against Spain, with which power he was at that instant concluding peace, while at the same time he was abandoning his warlike league with the queen and the republic, in order to affect that very pacification. Truly the morality of the governing powers of the earth was not entirely according to the apostolic standard.

The interviews between the queen and the new ambassador were, of course, on his part, more courteous in tone than those with the counsellors, but mainly to the same effect. De Maisse stated that the Spanish king had offered to restore every place that he held in France, including Calais, Brittany, and the Marquisate of Saluces, and as he likewise manifested a willingness to come to favourable terms with her Majesty and with the States, it was obviously the duty of Henry to make these matters known to her Majesty, in whose hands was thus placed the decision between peace or continuation of the war. The queen asked what was the authority for the supposition that England was to be included by Spain in the pacification. De Maisse quoted President Richardot. In that case, the queen remarked, it was time for her to prepare for a third Spanish armada. When a former envoy from France had alluded to Richardot as expressing the same friendly sentiments on the part of his sovereign and himself, she had replied by referring to the sham negotiations of Bourbourg, by which the famous invasion of 1588 had been veiled, and she had intimated her expectation that another Spanish fleet would soon be at her throat. And within three weeks of the utterance of her prophecy the second armada, under Santa Gadea, had issued from Spain to assail her realms. Now then, as Richardot was again cited as a peace negotiator, it was time to look for a third invasion. It was an impertinence for Secretary of State Villeroy to send her word about Richardot. It was not an impertinence in King Henry, who understood war-matters better than he did affairs of state, in which kings were generally governed by their counsellors and secretaries, but it was very strange that Villeroy should be made quiet with a simple declaration of Richardot.

The queen protested that she would never consent to a peace with Spain, except with the knowledge and consent of the States. De Maisse replied that the king was of the same mind, upon which her Majesty remarked that in that case he had better have apprised her and the States of his intentions before treating alone and secretly with the enemy. The envoy denied that the king had been treating. He had only been listening to what the King of Spain had to propose, and suggesting his own wishes and intentions. The queen rejoined that this was treating if anything was, and certainly her Majesty was in the right if the term has any meaning at all.

Page 2117

Elizabeth further reproachfully observed, that although the king talked about continuing the war, he seemed really tired of that dangerous pursuit, in which he had exercised himself so many long years, and that he was probably beginning to find a quiet and agreeable life more to his taste. She expressed the hope, however, that he would acquit himself honourably towards herself and her allies, and keep the oaths which he had so solemnly sworn before God.

Such was the substance of the queen's conversations with De Maisse, as she herself subsequently reported them to the States' envoy.

The republican statesmen had certainly cause enough to suspect Henry's intentions, but they did not implicitly trust Elizabeth. They feared that both king and queen were heartily sick of the war, and disposed to abandon the league, while each was bent on securing better terms than the other in any negotiations for peace. Barneveld—on the whole the most sagacious of the men then guiding the affairs of Europe, although he could dispose of but comparatively slender resources, and was merely the chief minister of a scarcely-born little commonwealth of some three million souls—was doing his best to save the league and to divert Henry from thoughts of peace. Feeling that the queen, notwithstanding her professions to Caron and others, would have gladly entered into negotiations with Philip, had she found the door as wide open as Henry had found it, he did his best to prevent both his allies from proceeding farther in that direction. He promised the French envoy at the Hague that not only would the republic continue to furnish the four thousand soldiers as stipulated in the league, but that if Henry would recommence active operations, a States' army of nine thousand foot and two thousand horse should at once take the field on the Flemish frontier of France, and aid in the campaign to the full extent of their resources. If the king were disposed to undertake the siege of Calais, the Advocate engaged that he should be likewise energetically assisted in that enterprise.

Nor was it suggested in case the important maritime stronghold were recovered that it should be transferred, not to the sovereign of France, but to the dominions of the republic. That was the queen's method of assisting an ally, but it was not the practice of the States. Buzanval, who was quite aware of his master's decision to conclude peace, suggested Henry's notion of a preliminary and general truce for six months. But of course Barneveld rejected the idea with horror. He felt, as every intelligent statesman of the commonwealth could not but feel, that an armistice would be a death-blow. It would be better, he said, for the States to lose one or two towns than to make a truce, for there were so many people in the commonwealth sure to be dazzled by the false show of a pacification, that they would be likely, after getting into the suburbs, to wish to enter the heart of the city. "If," said the Advocate, "the French and the English know what they are doing when they are, facilitating the Spanish dominion in the provinces, they would prefer to lose a third of their own kingdoms to seeing the Spaniard absolute master here."

Page 2118

It was determined, in this grave position of affairs, to send a special mission both to France and to England with the Advocate as its chief. Henry made no objections to this step, but, on the contrary, affected much impatience for the arrival of the envoys, and ascribed the delay to the intrigues of Elizabeth. He sent word to Prince Maurice and to Barneveld that he suspected the queen of endeavouring to get before him in negotiating with Spain in order to obtain Calais for herself. And, in truth, Elizabeth very soon afterwards informed Barneveld that she might really have had Calais, and have got the better of the king in these secret transactions.

Meantime, while the special mission to France and England was getting ready to depart, an amateur diplomatist appeared in Brussels, and made a feeble effort to effect a reconciliation between the republic and the cardinal.

This was a certain Van der Meulen, an Antwerp merchant who, for religious reasons, had emigrated to Leyden, and who was now invited by the cardinal archduke to Brussels to confer with his counsellors as to the possibility of the rebellious States accepting his authority. For, as will soon be indicated, Philip had recently resolved on a most important step. He was about to transfer the sovereignty of all the Netherlands to his daughter Isabella and her destined husband, Cardinal Albert. It would, obviously, therefore, be an excessively advantageous arrangement for those new sovereigns if the rebellious States would join hands with the obedient provinces, accept the dominion of Albert and Isabella and give up their attempt to establish a republican government. Accordingly the cardinal had intimated that the States would be allowed the practice of their religion, while the military and civil functionaries might retain office. He even suggested that he would appoint Maurice of Nassau his stadholder for the northern provinces, unless he should prefer a high position in the Imperial armies. Such was the general admiration felt in Spain and elsewhere for the military talents of the prince, that he would probably be appointed commander-in-chief of the forces against Mahomet. Van der Meulen duly reported all these ingenious schemes to the States, but the sturdy republicans only laughed at them. They saw clearly enough through such slight attempts to sow discord in their commonwealth, and to send their great chieftain to Turkey.

A most affectionate letter, written by the cardinal-archduke to the States-General, inviting them to accept his sovereignty, and another from the obedient provinces to the united States of the same purport, remained unanswered.

But the Antwerp merchant, in his interviews with the crafty politicians who surrounded the cardinal, was able at least to obtain some insight into the opinions prevalent at Brussels; and these were undoubtedly to the effect that both England and France were willing enough to abandon the cause of the Netherlands, provided only that they could obtain satisfactory arrangements for themselves.

Page 2119

Van der Meulen remarked to Richardot that in all their talk about a general peace nothing had been said of the Queen of England, to whom the States were under so great obligations, and without whom they would never enter into any negotiations.

Richardot replied that the queen had very sagaciously provided for the safety of her own kingdom, and had kept up the fire everywhere else in order to shelter herself. There was more difficulty for this lady, he said, than for any of the rest. She had shown herself very obstinate, and had done them a great deal of mischief. They knew very well that the King of France did not love her. Nevertheless, as they had resolved upon a general peace, they were willing to treat with her as well as with the others.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Auction sales of judicial ermine
Decline a bribe or interfere with the private sale of places
Famous fowl in every pot
Fellow worms had been writhing for half a century in the dust
For his humanity towards the conquered garrisons (censured)
Historical scepticism may shut its eyes to evidence
Imagining that they held the world's destiny in their hands
King had issued a general repudiation of his debts
Loud, nasal, dictatorial tone, not at all agreeable
Peace would be destruction
Repudiation of national debts was never heard of before
Some rude lessons from that vigorous little commonwealth
Such a crime as this had never been conceived (bankruptcy)
They liked not such divine right nor such gentle-mindedness
Whether murders or stratagems, as if they were acts of virtue

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 70, 1598

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Mission of the States to Henry to prevent the consummation of peace with Spain—-Proposal of Henry to elevate Prince Maurice to the sovereignty, of the States—-Embarkation of the States' envoys for England—Their interview with Queen Elizabeth —Return of the envoys from England—Demand of Elizabeth for repayment of her

advances to the republic—Second embassy to England—Final arrangement between the Queen and the States.

The great Advocate was now to start on his journey in order to make a supreme effort both with Henry and with Elizabeth to prevent the consummation of this fatal peace. Admiral Justinus of Nassau, natural son of William the Silent, was associated with Barneveld in the mission, a brave fighting man, a staunch patriot, and a sagacious counsellor; but the Advocate on this occasion, as in other vital emergencies of the commonwealth, was all in all.

Page 2120

The instructions of the envoys were simple. They were to summon the king to fulfil his solemnly sworn covenants with the league. The States-General had never doubted, they said, that so soon as the enemy had begun to feel the effects, of that league he would endeavour to make a composition with one or other of the parties in order to separate them, and to break up that united strength which otherwise he could never resist. The king was accordingly called upon to continue the war against the common enemy, and the States-General offered, over and above the four hundred and fifty thousand florins promised by them for the support of the four thousand infantry for the year 1598, to bring their whole military power, horse and foot, into the field to sustain his Majesty in the war, whether separately or in conjunction, whether in the siege of cities or in open campaigns. Certainly they could hardly offer fairer terms than these.

Henry had complained, and not unreasonably, that Elizabeth had made no offers of assistance for carrying on the war either to Fonquerolles or to Hurault de Maisse; but he certainly could make no reproach of that nature against the republic, nor assign their lukewarmness as an excuse for his desertion.

The envoys were ready to take their departure for France on the last day of January.

It might be a curious subject to consider how far historical events are modified and the world’s destiny affected by the different material agencies which man at various epochs has had at his disposal. The human creature in his passions and ambitions, his sensual or sordid desires, his emotional and moral nature, undergoes less change than might be hoped from age to age. The tyrant; the patriot, the demagogue, the voluptuary, the peasant, the trader, the intriguing politician, the hair-splitting diplomatist, the self-sacrificing martyr, the self-seeking courtier, present essentially one type in the twelfth, the sixteenth, the nineteenth, or any other century. The human tragi-comedy seems ever to repeat itself with the same bustle, with the same excitement for immediate interests, for the development of the instant plot or passing episode, as if the universe began and ended with each generation—as in reality it would appear to do for the great multitude of the actors. There seems but a change of masks, of costume, of phraseology, combined with a noisy but eternal monotony. Yet while men are produced and are whirled away again in endless succession, Man remains, and to all appearance is perpetual and immortal even on this earth. Whatever science acquires man inherits. Whatever steadfastness is gained for great moral truths which change not through the ages—however they may be thought, in dark or falsely brilliant epochs, to resolve themselves into elemental vapour—gives man a securer foothold in his onward and upward progress. The great, continuous history of that progress is not made up of the reigns of kings or the lives of politicians, with whose names history has often found it convenient to mark its epochs. These are but milestones on the turnpike. Human progress is over a vast field, and it is only at considerable intervals that a retrospective view enables us to discern whether the movement has been slow or rapid, onward or retrograde.

Page 2121

The record of our race is essentially unwritten. What we call history is but made up of a few scattered fragments, while it is scarcely given to human intelligence to comprehend the great whole. Yet it is strange to reflect upon the leisurely manner in which great affairs were conducted in the period with which we are now occupied, as compared with the fever and whirl of our own times, in which the stupendous powers of steam and electricity are ever-ready to serve the most sublime or the most vulgar purposes of mankind. Whether there were ever a critical moment in which a rapid change might have been effected in royal or national councils, had telegraphic wires and express trains been at the command of Henry, or Burghley, or Barneveld, or the Cardinal Albert, need not and cannot be decided. It is almost diverting, however, to see how closely the intrigues of cabinets, the movements of armies, the plans of patriots, were once dependent on those natural elements over which man has now gained almost despotic control.

Here was the republic intensely eager to prevent, with all speed, the consummation of a treaty between its ally and its enemy—a step which it was feared might be fatal to its national existence, and concerning which there seemed a momentary hesitation. Yet Barneveld and Justinus of Nassau, although ready on the last day of January, were not able to sail from the Brill to Dieppe until the 18th March, on account of a persistent south-west wind.

After forty-six days of waiting, the envoys, accompanied by Buzanval, Henry's resident at the Hague, were at last, on the 18th March, enabled to set sail with a favourable breeze. As it was necessary for travellers in that day to provide themselves with every possible material for their journey—carriages, horses, hosts of servants, and beds, fortunate enough if they found roads and occasionally food—Barneveld and Nassau were furnished with three ships of war, while another legation on its way to England had embarked in two other vessels of the same class. A fleet of forty or fifty merchantmen sailed under their convoy. Departing from the Brill in this imposing manner, they sailed by Calais, varying the monotony of the voyage by a trifling sea-fight with some cruisers from that Spanish port, neither side receiving any damage.

Landing at Dieppe on the morning of the 20th, the envoys were received with much ceremony at the city gates by the governor of the place, who conducted them in a stately manner to a house called the king's mansion, which he politely placed at their disposal. "As we learned, however," says Barneveld, with grave simplicity; "that there was no furniture whatever in that royal abode, we thanked his Excellency, and declared that we would rather go to a tavern."

After three days of repose and preparation in Dieppe, they started at dawn on their journey to Rouen, where they arrived at sundown.

Page 2122

On the next morning but one they set off again on their travels, and slept that night at Louviers. Another long day's journey brought them to Evreux. On the 27th they came to Dreux, on the 28th to Chartres, and on the 29th to Chateaudun. On the 30th, having started an hour before sunrise, they were enabled after a toilsome journey to reach Blois at an hour after dark. Exhausted with fatigue, they reposed in that city for a day, and on the 1st April proceeded, partly by the river Loire and partly by the road, as far as Tours. Here they were visited by nobody, said Barneveld, but fiddlers and drummers, and were execrably lodged. Nevertheless they thought the town in other respects agreeable, and apparently beginning to struggle out of the general desolation of, France. On the end April they slept at Langeais, and on the night of the 3rd reached Saumur, where they were disappointed at the absence of the illustrious Duplessis Mornay, then governor of that city. A glance at any map of France will show the course of the journey taken by the travellers, which, after very hard work and great fatigue, had thus brought them from Dieppe to Saumur in about as much time as is now consumed by an average voyage from Europe to America. In their whole journey from Holland to Saumur, inclusive of the waiting upon the wind and other enforced delays, more than two months had been consumed. Twenty-four hours would suffice at present for the excursion.

At Saumur they received letters informing them that the king was "expecting them with great devotion at Angiers." A despatch from Cecil, who was already with Henry, also apprised them that he found "matters entirely arranged for a peace." This would be very easily accomplished, he said, for France and England, but the great difficulty was for the Netherlands. He had come to France principally for the sake of managing affairs for the advantage of the States, but he begged the envoys not to demean themselves as if entirely bent on war.

They arrived at Angiers next day before dark, and were met at a league's distance from the gates by the governor of the castle, attended by young Prince Frederic Henry of Nassau; followed by a long train of nobles and mounted troops. Welcomed in this stately manner on behalf of the king, the envoys were escorted to the lodgings provided for them in the city. The same evening they waited on the widowed princess of Orange, Louisa of Coligny, then residing temporarily with her son in Angiera, and were informed by her that the king's mind was irrevocably fixed on peace. She communicated, however, the advice of her step-son in law, the Duke of Bouillon, that they should openly express their determination to continue the war, notwithstanding that both their Majesties of England and France wished to negotiate. Thus the counsels of Bouillon to the envoys were distinctly opposed to those of Cecil, and it was well known to them that the duke was himself sincerely anxious that the king should refuse the pacific offers of Spain.

Page 2123

Next morning, 5th April, they were received at the gates of the castle by the governor of Anjou and the commandant of the citadel of Angiers, attended by a splendid retinue, and were conducted to the king, who was walking in the garden of the fortress. Henry received them with great demonstrations of respect, assuring them that he considered the States-General the best and most faithful friends that he possessed in the world, and that he had always been assisted by them in time of his utmost need with resoluteness and affection.

The approach of the English ambassador, accompanied by the Chancellor of France and several other persons, soon brought the interview to a termination. Barneveld then presented several gentlemen attached to the mission, especially his son and Hugo Grotius, then a lad of fifteen, but who had already gained such distinction at Leyden that Scaliger, Pontanus; Heinsius, Dousa, and other professors, foretold that he would become more famous than Erasmus. They were all very cordially received by the king, who subsequently bestowed especial marks of his consideration upon the youthful Grotius.

The same day the betrothal of Monsieur Caesar with the daughter of the Duke of Mercoeur was celebrated, and there was afterwards much dancing and banqueting at the castle. It was obvious enough to the envoys that the matter of peace and war was decided. The general of the Franciscans, sent by the pope, had been flitting very busily for many months between Rome, Madrid, Brussels, and Paris, and there could be little doubt that every detail of the negotiations between France and Spain had been arranged while Olden-Barneveld and his colleague had been waiting for the head-wind to blow itself out at the Brill.

Nevertheless no treaty had as yet been signed, and it was the business of the republican diplomatists to prevent the signature if possible. They felt, however, that they were endeavouring to cause water to run up hill. Villeroy, De Maisse, and Buzanval came to them to recount, by the king's order, everything that had taken place. This favour was, however, the less highly appreciated by them, as they felt that the whole world was in a very short time to be taken as well into the royal confidence.

These French politicians stated that the king, after receiving the most liberal offers of peace on the part of Spain, had communicated all the facts to the queen, and had proposed, notwithstanding these most profitable overtures, to continue the war as long as her Majesty and the States-General would assist him in it. De Maisse had been informed, however, by the queen that she had no means to assist the king withal, and was, on the contrary, very well disposed to make peace. The lord treasurer had avowed the same opinions as his sovereign, had declared himself to be a man of peace, and had exclaimed that peace once made he would sing "Nunc dimitte servum tuum Domine." Thereupon, at the suggestion

Page 2124

of the legate, negotiations had begun at Vervins, and although nothing was absolutely concluded, yet Sir Robert Cecil, having just been sent as special ambassador from the queen, had brought no propositions whatever of assistance in carrying on the war, but plenty of excuses about armadas, Irish rebellions, and the want of funds. There was nothing in all this, they said, but want of good will. The queen had done nothing and would do nothing for the league herself, nor would she solicit for it the adherence of other kings and princes. The king, by making peace, could restore his kingdom to prosperity, relieve the distress of his subjects, and get back all his lost cities—Calais, Ardres, Dourlens, Blavet, and many more—without any expense of treasure or of blood.

Certainly there was cogency in this reasoning from the point of view of the French king, but it would have been as well to state, when he was so pompously making a league for offensive and defensive war, that his real interests and his real purposes were peace. Much excellent diplomacy, much ringing of bells, firing of artillery, and singing of anthems in royal chapels, and much disappointment to honest Dutchmen, might have thus been saved. It is also instructive to observe the difference between the accounts of De Maisse's negotiations in England given by that diplomatist himself, and those rendered by the queen to the States' envoy.

Of course the objurgations of the Hollanders that the king, in a very fallacious hope of temporary gain to himself, was about to break his solemn promises to his allies and leave them to their fate, drew but few tears down the iron cheeks of such practised diplomatists as Villeroy and his friends.

The envoys visited De Rosuy, who assured them that he was very much their friend, but gave them to understand that there was not the slightest possibility of inducing the king to break off the negotiations.

Before taking final leave of his Majesty they concluded, by advice of the Princess of Orange and of Buzanval, to make the presents which they had brought with them from the States-General. Accordingly they sent, through the hands of the princess, four pieces of damask linen and two pieces of fine linen to the king's sister, Madame Catherine, two pieces of linen to Villeroy, and two to the beautiful Gabrielle. The two remaining pieces were bestowed upon Buzanval for his pains in accompanying them on the journey and on their arrival at court.

The incident shows the high esteem in which the Netherland fabrics were held at that period.

Page 2125

There was a solemn conference at last between the leading counsellors of the king, the chancellor, the Dukes of Espernon and Bouillon, Count Schomberg, and De Sancy, Plessis, Buzanval, Maisse, the Dutch envoys, and the English ambassador and commissioner Herbert. Cecil presided, and Barneveld once more went over the whole ground, resuming with his usual vigour all the arguments by which the king's interest and honour were proved to require him to desist from the peace negotiations. And the orator had as much success as is usual with those who argue against a foregone conclusion. Everyone had made up his mind. Everyone knew that peace was made. It is unnecessary, therefore, to repeat the familiar train of reasoning. It is superfluous to say that the conference was barren. On the same evening Villeroy called on the States' envoys, and informed them plainly, on the part of the king, that his Majesty had fully made up his mind.

On the 23rd April—three mortal weeks having thus been wasted in diplomatic trilling—-Barneveld was admitted to his Majesty's dressing-room. The Advocate at the king's request came without his colleague, and was attended only by his son. No other persons were present in the chamber save Buzanval and Beringen. The king on this occasion confirmed what had so recently been stated by Villeroy. He had thoroughly pondered, he said, all the arguments used by the States to dissuade him from the negotiation, and had found them of much weight. The necessities of his kingdom, however, compelled him to accept a period of repose. He would not, however, in the slightest degree urge the States to join in the treaty. He desired their security, and would aid in maintaining it. What had most vexed him was that the Protestants with great injustice accused him of intending to make war upon them. But innumerable and amazing reports were flying abroad, both among his own subjects, the English, and the enemies' spies, as to these secret conferences. He then said that he would tell the Duke of Bouillon to speak with Sir Robert Cecil concerning a subject which now for the first time he would mention privately to Olden-Barneveld.

The king then made a remarkable and unexpected suggestion. Alluding to the constitution of the Netherlands, he remarked that a popular government in such emergencies as those then existing was subject to more danger than monarchies were, and he asked the Advocate if he thought there was no disposition to elect a prince. Barneveld replied that the general inclination was rather for a good republic. The government, however, he said, was not of the people, but aristocratic, and the state was administered according to laws and charters by the principal inhabitants, whether nobles or magistrates of cities. Since the death of the late Prince of Orange, and the offer made to the King of France, and subsequently to the Queen of England, of the sovereignty, there had been no more talk on that subject, and to discuss again so delicate a matter might cause divisions and other difficulties in the State.

Page 2126

Henry then spoke of Prince Maurice, and asked whether, if he should be supported by the Queen of England and the King of France, it would not be possible to confer the sovereignty upon him.

Here certainly was an astounding question to be discharged like a pistol-shot full in the face of a republican minister.

The answer of the Advocate was sufficiently adroit if not excessively sincere.

If your Majesty, said he, together with her Majesty the queen, think the plan expedient, and are both willing on this footing to continue the war, to rescue all the Netherlands from the hands of the Spaniards and their adherents, and thus render the States eternally obliged to the sovereigns and kingdoms of France and England, my lords the States-General would probably be willing to accept this advice.

But the king replied by repeating that repose was indispensable to him.

Without inquiring for the present whether the project of elevating Maurice to the sovereignty of the Netherlands, at the expense of the republican constitution, was in harmony or not with the private opinions of Barneveld at that period, it must be admitted that the condition he thus suggested was a very safe one to offer. He had thoroughly satisfied himself during the period in which he had been baffled by the southwest gales at the Brill and by the still more persistent head-winds which he had found prevailing at the French court, that it was hopeless to strive for that much-desired haven, a general war. The admiral and himself might as well have endeavoured to persuade Mahomet *iii*. and Sigismund of Poland to join the States in a campaign against Cardinal Albert, as to hope for the same good offices from Elizabeth and Henry.

Having received exactly the answer which he expected, he secretly communicated, next day, to Cecil the proposition thus made by the king. Subsequently he narrated the whole conversation to the Queen of England.

On the 27th April both Barneveld and Nassau were admitted to the royal dressing-room in Nantes citadel for a final audience. Here, after the usual common places concerning his affection for the Netherlands, and the bitter necessity which compelled him to desert the alliance, Henry again referred to his suggestion in regard to Prince Maurice; urging a change from a republican to a monarchical form of government as the best means of preserving the State.

The envoys thanked the king for all the honours conferred upon them, but declared themselves grieved to the heart by his refusal to grant their request. The course pursued by his Majesty, they said, would be found very hard of digestion by the States, both in regard to the whole force of the enemy which would now come upon their throats, and because of the bad example thus set for other powers.

They then took leave, with the usual exchange of compliments. At their departure his Majesty personally conducted them through various apartments until they came to the chamber of his mistress, the Duchess of Beaufort, then lying in childbed. Here he drew wide open the bed-curtains, and bade them kiss the lady. They complied, and begging the duchess to use her influence in their behalf, respectfully bade her farewell. She promised not to forget their request, and thanked them for the presents of damask and fine linen.

Page 2127

Such was the result of the mission of the great Advocate and his colleague to Henry *iv*., from which so much had been hoped; and for anything useful accomplished, after such an expenditure of time, money, and eloquence, the whole transaction might have begun and ended in this touching interview with the beautiful Gabrielle.

On the 19th of May the envoys embarked at Dieppe for England, and on the 25th were safely lodged with the resident minister of the republic, Noel de Caron, at the village of Clapham.

Having so ill-succeeded in their attempts to prevent the treaty between France and Spain, they were now engaged in what seemed also a forlorn hope, the preservation of their offensive and defensive alliance with England. They were well aware that many of the leading counsellors of Elizabeth, especially Burghley and Buckhurst, were determined upon peace. They knew that the queen was also heartily weary of the war and of the pugnacious little commonwealth which had caused her so much expense. But they knew, too, that Henry, having now secured the repose of his own kingdom, was anything but desirous that his deserted allies should enjoy the same advantage. The king did not cease to assure the States that he would secretly give them assistance in their warfare against his new ally, while Secretary of State Villeroy, as they knew, would place every possible impediment in the way of the queen's negotiations with Spain.

Elizabeth, on her part, was vexed with everybody. What the States most feared was that she might, in her anger or her avarice, make use of the cautionary towns in her negotiations with Philip. At any rate, said Francis Aerssens, then States' minister in France, she will bring us to the brink of the precipice, that we may then throw ourselves into her arms in despair.

The queen was in truth resolved to conclude a peace if a peace could be made. If not, she was determined to make as good a bargain with the States as possible, in regard to the long outstanding account of her advances. Certainly it was not unreasonable that she should wish to see her exchequer reimbursed by people who, as she believed, were rolling in wealth, the fruit of a contraband commerce which she denied to her own subjects, and who were in honour bound to pay their debts to her now, if they wished her aid to be continued. Her subjects were impoverished and panting for peace, and although, as she remarked, "their sense of duty restrained them from the slightest disobedience to her absolute commands," still she could not forgive herself for thus exposing them to perpetual danger.

She preferred on the whole, however, that the commonwealth should consent to its own dissolution; for she thought it unreasonable that—after this war of thirty years, during fifteen of which she had herself actively assisted them—these republican Calvinists should, refuse to return to the dominion of their old tyrant and the pope. To Barneveld, Maurice of Nassau, and the States-General this did not seem a very logical termination to so much hard fighting.

Page 2128

Accordingly, when on the 26th of May the two envoys fell on their knees—as the custom was—before the great queen, and had been raised by her to their feet again, they found her Majesty in marvellously ill-humour. Olden-Barneveld recounted to her the results of their mission to France, and said that from beginning to end it had been obvious that there could be no other issue. The king was indifferent, he had said, whether the States preferred peace or war, but in making his treaty he knew that he had secured a profit for himself, inflicted damage on his enemy, and done no harm to his friends.

Her Majesty then interrupted the speaker by violent invectives against the French king for his treachery. She had written with her own hand, she said, to tell him that she never had believed him capable of doing what secretaries and other servants had reported concerning him, but which had now proved true.

Then she became very abusive to the Dutch envoys, telling them that they were quite unjustifiable in not following Sir Robert Cecil's advice, and in not engaging with him at once in peace negotiations; at least so far as to discover what the enemy's intentions might be. She added, pettishly, that if Prince Maurice and other functionaries were left in the enjoyment of their offices, and if the Spaniards were sent out of the country, there seemed no reason why such terms should not be accepted.

Barneveld replied that such accommodation was of course impossible, unless they accepted their ancient sovereign as prince. Then came the eternal two points—-obedience to God, which meant submission to the pope; and obedience to the king, that was to say, subjection to his despotic authority. Thus the Christian religion would be ruined throughout the provinces, and the whole land be made a bridge and a ladder for Spanish ambition.

The queen here broke forth into mighty oaths, interrupting the envoy's discourse, protesting over and over again by the living God that she would not and could not give the States any further assistance; that she would leave them to their fate; that her aid rendered in their war had lasted much longer than the siege of Troy did, and swearing that she had been a fool to help them and the king of France as she had done, for it was nothing but evil passions that kept the States so obstinate.

The envoy endeavoured to soothe her, urging that as she had gained the reputation over the whole world of administering her affairs with admirable, yea with almost divine wisdom, she should now make use of that sagacity in the present very difficult matter. She ought to believe that it was not evil passion, nor ambition, nor obstinacy that prevented the States from joining in these negotiations, but the determination to maintain their national existence, the Christian religion, and their ancient liberties and laws. They did not pretend, he said, to be wiser than great monarch or their counsellors, but the difference between their form of government and a monarchy must be their excuse.

Page 2129

Monarchs, when they made treaties, remained masters, and could protect their realms and their subjects from danger. The States-General could not accept a prince without placing themselves under his absolute authority, and the Netherlanders would never subject themselves to their deadly enemy, whom they had long ago solemnly renounced.

Surely these remarks of the Advocate should have seemed entirely unanswerable. Surely there was no politician in Europe so ignorant as not to know that any treaty of peace between Philip and the States meant their unconditional subjugation and the complete abolition of the Protestant religion. Least of all did the Queen of England require information on this great matter of state. It was cruel trifling therefore, it was inhuman insolence on her part, to suggest anything like a return of the States to the dominion of Spain.

But her desire for peace and her determination to get back her money overpowered at that time all other considerations.

The States wished to govern themselves, she said; why then could they not make arrangements against all dangers, and why could they not lay down conditions under which the king would not really be their master; especially if France and England should guarantee them against any infraction of their rights. By the living God! by the living God! by the living God! she swore over and over again as her anger rose, she would never more have anything to do with such people; and she deeply regretted having thrown away her money and the lives of her subjects in so stupid a manner.

Again the grave and experienced envoy of the republic strove with calm and earnest words to stay the torrent of her wrath; representing that her money and her pains had by no means been wasted, that the enemy had been brought to shame and his finances to confusion; and urging her, without paying any heed to the course pursued by the King of France, to allow the republic to make levies of troops, at its own expense, within her kingdom.

But her Majesty was obdurate. “How am I to defend myself?” she cried; “how are the affairs of Ireland to be provided for? how am I ever to get back my money? who is to pay the garrisons of Brill and Flushing?” And with this she left the apartment, saying that her counsellors would confer with the envoys.’

From the beginning to the end of the interview the queen was in a very evil temper, and took no pains to conceal her dissatisfaction with all the world.

Now there is no doubt whatever that the subsidies furnished by England to the common cause were very considerable, amounting in fourteen years, according to the queen’s calculation, to nearly fourteen hundred thousand pounds sterling. But in her interviews with the republican statesmen she was too prone to forget that it was a common cause,

to forget that the man who had over and over again attempted her assassination, who had repeatedly attempted the

Page 2130

invasion of her realms with the whole strength of the most powerful military organization in the world, whose dearest wish on earth was still to accomplish her dethronement and murder, to extirpate from England the religion professed by the majority of living Englishmen, and to place upon her vacant throne a Spanish, German, or Italian prince, was as much her enemy as he was the foe of his ancient subjects in the Netherlands. At that very epoch Philip was occupied in reminding the pope that the two had always agreed as to the justice of the claims of the Infanta Isabella to the English crown, and calling on his Holiness to sustain those pretensions, now that she had been obliged, in consequence of the treaty with the Prince of Bearne, to renounce her right to reign over France.

Certainly it was fair enough for the queen and her, counsellors to stand out for an equitable arrangement of the debt; but there was much to dispute in the figures. When was ever an account of fifteen years' standing adjusted, whether between nations or individuals, without much wrangling? Meantime her Majesty held excellent security in two thriving and most important Netherland cities. But had the States consented to re-establish the Spanish authority over the whole of their little Protestant republic, was there an English child so ignorant of arithmetic or of history as not to see how vast would be the peril, and how incalculable the expense, thus caused to England?

Yet besides the Cecils and the lord high admiral, other less influential counsellors of the crown—even the upright and accomplished Buckhurst, who had so often proved his friendship for the States—were in favour of negotiation. There were many conferences with meagre results. The Englishmen urged that the time had come for the States to repay the queen's advances, to relieve her from future subsidies, to assume the payment of the garrisons in the cautionary towns, and to furnish a force in defence of England when attacked. Such was the condition of the kingdom, they said—being, as it was, entirely without fortified cities—that a single battle would imperil the whole realm, so that it was necessary to keep the enemy out of it altogether.

These arguments were not unreasonable, but the inference was surely illogical. The special envoys from the republic had not been instructed to treat about the debt. This had been the subject of perpetual negotiation. It was discussed almost every day by the queen's commissioners at the Hague and by the States' resident minister at London. Olden-Barneveld and the admiral had been sent forth by the Staten in what in those days was considered great haste to prevent a conclusion of a treaty between their two allies and the common enemy. They had been too late in France, and now, on arriving in England, they found that government steadily drifting towards what seemed the hopeless shipwreck of a general peace.

What must have been the grief of Olden-Barneveld when he heard from the lips of the enlightened Buckhurst that the treaty of 1585 had been arranged to expire—according

to the original limitation—with a peace, and that as the States could now make peace and did not choose to do so, her Majesty must be considered as relieved from her contract of alliance, and as justified in demanding repayment of her advances!

Page 2131

To this perfidious suggestion what could the States' envoy reply but that as a peace such as the treaty of 1585 presupposed—to wit, with security for the Protestant religion and for the laws and liberties of the provinces—was impossible, should the States now treat with the king or the cardinal?

The envoys had but one more interview with, the queen, in which she was more benignant in manner but quite as peremptory in her demands. Let the States either thoroughly satisfy her as to past claims and present necessities, or let them be prepared for her immediate negotiation with the enemy. Should she decide to treat, she would not be unmindful of their interests, she said, nor deliver them over into the enemy's hands. She repeated, however, the absurd opinion that there were means enough of making Philip nominal sovereign of all the Netherlands, without allowing him to exercise any authority over them. As if the most Catholic and most absolute monarch that ever breathed could be tied down by the cobwebs of constitutional or treaty stipulations; as if the previous forty years could be effaced from the record of history.

She asked, too, in case the rumours of the intended transfer of the Netherlands to the cardinal or the Infanta should prove true, which she doubted, whether this arrangement would make any difference in the sentiments of the States.

Barneveld replied that the transfer was still uncertain, but that they had no more confidence in the cardinal or the Infants than in the King of Spain himself.

On taking leave of the queen the envoys waited upon Lord Burghley, whom they found sitting in an arm-chair in his bedchamber, suffering from the gout and with a very fierce countenance. He made no secret of his opinions in favour of negotiation, said that the contracts made by monarchs should always be interpreted reasonably, and pronounced a warm eulogy on the course pursued by the King of France. It was his Majesty's duty, he said, to seize the best opportunity for restoring repose to his subjects and his realms, and it was the duty of other sovereigns to do the same.

The envoys replied that they were not disposed at that moment to sit in judgment upon the king's actions. They would content themselves with remarking that in their opinion even kings and princes were bound by their, contracts, oaths, and pledges before God and man; and with this wholesome sentiment they took leave of the lord high treasurer.

They left London immediately, on the last day of May, without, passports. or despatches of recal, and embarked at Gravesend in the midst of a gale of wind.

Lord Essex, the sincere friend of the republic, was both surprised and disturbed at their sudden departure, and sent a special courier, after them to express his regrets at the unsatisfactory termination to their mission: "My mistress knows very well," said he, "that she is an absolute princess, and that, when her ministers have done their extreme duty, she wills what she wills."

Page 2132

The negotiations between England and Spain were deferred, however, for a brief space, and a special message was despatched to the Hague as to the arrangement of the debt. “Peace at once with Philip,” said the queen, “or else full satisfaction of my demands.”

Now it was close dealing between such very thrifty and acute bargainers as the queen and the Netherland republic.

Two years before, the States had offered to pay twenty thousand pounds a year on her Majesty’s birthday so long as the war should last, and after a peace, eighty thousand pounds annually for four years. The queen, on her part, fixed the sum total of the debt at nearly a million and a half sterling, and required instant payment of at least one hundred thousand pounds on account, besides provision for a considerable annual refunding, assumption by the States of the whole cost of the garrisons in the cautionary towns, and assurance of assistance in case of an attack upon England. Thus there was a whole ocean between the disputants.

Vere and Gilpin were protocolling and marshalling accounts at the Hague, and conducting themselves with much arrogance and bitterness, while, meantime, Barneveld had hardly had time to set his foot on his native shores before he was sent back again to England at the head of another solemn legation. One more effort was to be made to arrange this financial problem and to defeat the English peace party.

The offer of the year 1596 just alluded to was renewed and instantly rejected. Naturally enough, the Dutch envoys were disposed, in the exhausting warfare which was so steadily draining their finances, to pay down as little as possible on the nail, while providing for what they considered a liberal annual sinking fund.

The English, on the contrary, were for a good round sum in actual cash, and held the threatened negotiation with Spain over the heads of the unfortunate envoys like a whip.

So the queen’s counsellors and the republican envoys travelled again and again over the well-worn path.

On the 29th June, Buckhurst took Olden-Barneveld into his cabinet, and opened his heart to him, not as a servant of her Majesty, he said, but as a private Englishman. He was entirely for peace. Now that peace was offered to her Majesty, a continuance of the war was unrighteous, and the Lord God’s blessing could not be upon it. Without God’s blessing no resistance could be made by the queen nor by the States to the enemy, who was ten times more powerful than her Majesty in kingdoms, provinces, number of subjects, and money. He had the pope, the emperor, the Dukes of Savoy and Lorraine, and the republic of Genoa, for his allies. He feared that the war might come upon England, and that they might be fated on one single day to win or lose all. The queen possessed no mines, and was obliged to carry on the war by taxing her people. The

king had ever-flowing fountains in his mines; the queen nothing but a stagnant pool, which, when all the water was pumped out, must in the end be dry. He concluded, therefore, that as her Majesty had no allies but the Netherlands, peace was best for England, and advisable for the provinces. Arrangements could easily be made to limit the absolute authority of Spain.

Page 2133

This highly figurative view of the subject—more becoming to the author of Ferrex and Porrex than to so, experienced a statesman as Sackville had become since his dramatic days—did not much impress Barneveld. He answered that, although the King of Spain was unquestionably very powerful, the Lord God was still stronger; that England and the Netherlands together could maintain the empire of the seas, which was of the utmost importance, especially for England; but that if the republic were to make her submission to Spain, and become incorporate with that power, the control of the seas was lost for ever to England.

The Advocate added the unanswerable argument that to admit Philip as sovereign, and then to attempt a limitation of his despotism was a foolish dream.

Buckhurst repeated that the republic was the only ally of England, that there was no confidence to be placed by her in any other power, and that for himself, he was, as always, very much the friend of the States.

Olden-Barneveld might well have prayed, however, to be delivered from such friends. To thrust one's head into the lion's mouth, while one's friends urge moderation on the noble animal, can never be considered a cheerful or prudent proceeding.

At last, after all offers had been rejected which the envoys had ventured to make, Elizabeth sent for Olden-Barneveld and Caron and demanded their ultimatum within twenty-four hours. Should it prove unsatisfactory, she would at once make peace with Spain.

On the 1st August the envoys accordingly proposed to Cecil and the other ministers to pay thirty thousand pounds a year, instead of twenty thousand, so long as the war should last, but they claimed the right of redeeming the cautionary towns at one hundred thousand pounds each. This seemed admissible, and Cecil and his colleagues pronounced the affair arranged. But they had reckoned without the queen after all.

Elizabeth sent for Caron as soon as she heard of the agreement, flew into a great rage, refused the terms, swore that she would instantly make peace with Spain, and thundered loudly against her ministers.

"They were great beasts," she said, "if they had stated that she would not treat with the enemy. She had merely intended to defer the negotiations."

So the whole business was to be done over again. At last the sum claimed by the queen, fourteen hundred thousand pounds, was reduced by agreement to eight hundred thousand, and one-half of this the envoys undertook on the part of the States to refund in annual payments of thirty thousand pounds, while the remaining four hundred thousand should be provided for by some subsequent arrangement. All

attempts, however, to obtain a promise from the queen to restore the cautionary towns to the republic in case of a peace between Spain and England remained futile.

That was to be a bone of contention for many years.

It was further agreed by the treaty, which was definitely signed on the 16th August, that, in case England were invaded by the common enemy, the States should send to the queen’s assistance at least thirty ships of war, besides five thousand infantry and five squadrons of horse.

Page 2134

CHAPTER XXXV.

Negotiations between France and Spain—Conclusion of the treaty of peace—Purchase of the allegiance of the French nobles—Transfer of the Netherlands to Albert and Isabella—Marriage of the Infante and the Infanta—Illness of Philip *ii*.—Horrible nature of his malady— His last hours and death—Review of his reign—Extent of the Spanish dominions—Causes of the greatness of Spain, and of its downfall— Philip's wars and their expenses—The Crown revenues of Spain— Character of the people—Their inordinate self-esteem—Consequent deficiency of labour—Ecclesiastical Government —Revenues of the Church—Characteristics of the Spanish clergy—Foreign commerce of Spain—Governmental system of Philip *ii*.—Founded on the popular ignorance and superstition—Extinction of liberty in Spain—The Holy Inquisition—The work and character of Philip.

While the utterly barren conferences had been going on at Angiers and Nantes between Henry *iv*. and the republican envoys, the negotiations had been proceeding at Vervins.

President Richardot on behalf of Spain, and Secretary of State Villeroy as commissioner of Henry, were the chief negotiators.

Two old acquaintances, two ancient Leaguers, two bitter haters of Protestants and rebels, two thorough adepts in diplomatic chicane, they went into this contest like gladiators who thoroughly understood and respected each other's skill.

Richardot was recognized by all as the sharpest and most unscrupulous politician in the obedient Netherlands. Villeroy had conducted every intrigue of France during a whole generation of mankind. They scarcely did more than measure swords and test each other's objects, before arriving at a conviction as to the inevitable result of the encounter.

It was obvious at once to Villeroy that Philip was determined to make peace with France in order that the triple alliance might be broken up. It was also known to the French diplomatist that the Spanish king was ready for, almost every concession to Henry, in order that this object might be accomplished.

All that Richardot hoped to save out of the various conquests made by Spain over France was Calais.

But Villeroy told him that it was useless to say a word on that subject. His king insisted on the restoration of the place. Otherwise he would make no peace. It was enough, he said, that his Majesty said nothing about Navarre.

Richardot urged that at the time when the English had conquered Calais it had belonged to Artois, not to France. It was no more than equitable, then, that it should be retained by its original proprietor.

The general of the Franciscans, who acted as a kind of umpire in the transactions, then took each negotiator separately aside and whispered in his ear.

Villeroy shook his head, and said he had given his ultimatum. Richardot acknowledged that he had something in reserve, upon which the monk said that it was time to make it known.

Page 2135

Accordingly—the two being all ears—Richardot observed that what he was about to state he said with fear and trembling. He knew not what the King of Spain would think of his proposition, but he would, nevertheless, utter the suggestion that Calais should be handed over to the pope.

His Holiness would keep the city in pledge until the war with the rebels was over, and then there would be leisure enough to make definite arrangements on the subject.

Now Villeroy was too experienced a practitioner to be imposed upon, by this ingenious artifice. Moreover, he happened to have an intercepted letter in his possession in which Philip told the cardinal that Calais was to be given up if the French made its restitution a sine qua non. So Villeroy did make it a sine qua non, and the conferences soon after terminated in an agreement on the part of Spain to surrender all its conquests in France.

Certainly no more profitable peace than this could have been made by the French king under such circumstances, and Philip at the last moment had consented to pay a heavy price for bringing discord between the three friends. The treaty was signed at Vervins on the 2nd May, and contained thirty-five articles. Its basis was that of the treaty of Cateau Cambresis of 1559. Restitution of all places conquered by either party within the dominions of the other since the day of that treaty was stipulated. Henry recovered Calais, Ardres, Dourlens, Blavet, and many other places, and gave up the country of Charolois. Prisoners were to be surrendered on both sides without ransom, and such of those captives of war as had been enslaved at the galleys should be set free.

The pope, the emperor, all states, and cities under their obedience or control, the Duke of Savoy, the King of Poland and Sweden, the Kings of Denmark and Scotland, the Dukes of Lorraine and Tuscany, the Doge of Venice, the republic of Genoa, and many lesser states and potentates, were included in the treaty. The famous Edict of Nantes in favour of the Protestant subjects of the French king was drawn up and signed in the city of which it bears the name at about the same time with these negotiations. Its publication was, however, deferred until after the departure of the legate from France in the following year.

The treaty of Cateau Cambresis had been pronounced the most disgraceful and disastrous one that had ever been ratified by a French monarch; and surely Henry had now wiped away that disgrace and repaired that disaster. It was natural enough that he should congratulate himself on the rewards which he had gathered by deserting his allies.

He had now sufficient occupation for a time in devising ways and means, with the aid of the indefatigable Bethune, to pay the prodigious sums with which he had purchased the allegiance of the great nobles and lesser gentlemen of France. Thirty-two millions of livres were not sufficient to satisfy the claims of these patriots, most of whom had been

drawing enormous pensions from the King of Spain up to the very moment, or beyond it, when they consented to acknowledge the sovereign of their own country. Scarcely a, great name in the golden book of France but was recorded among these bills of sale.

Page 2136

Mayenne, Lorraine, Guise, Nemours, Mercoeur, Montpensier, Joyeuse, Epernon, Brissac, D'Arlincourt, Balagny, Rochefort, Villeroy, Villars, Montespan, Leviston, Beauvillars, and countless others, figured in the great financier's terrible account-book, from Mayenne, set down at the cool amount of three and a half millions, to Beauvoir or Beauvillars at the more modest price of a hundred and sixty thousand livres. "I should appal my readers," said De Bethune, "if I should show to them that this sum makes but a very small part of the amounts demanded from the royal treasury, either by Frenchmen or by strangers, as pay and pension, and yet the total was thirty-two millions's."

And now the most Catholic king, having brought himself at last to exchange the grasp of friendship with the great ex-heretic, and to recognize the Prince of Bearne as the legitimate successor of St. Louis, to prevent which consummation he had squandered so many thousands of lives, so many millions of treasure, and brought ruin to so many prosperous countries, prepared himself for another step which he had long hesitated to take.

He resolved to transfer the Netherlands to his daughter Isabella and to the Cardinal Archduke Albert, who, as the king had now decided, was to espouse the Infanta.

The deed of cession was signed at Madrid on the 6th May, 1598. It was accompanied by a letter of the same date from the Prince Philip, heir apparent to the crown.

On the 30th May the Infanta executed a procuration by which she gave absolute authority to her future husband to rule over the provinces of the Netherlands, Burgundy, and Charolois, and to receive the oaths of the estates and of public functionaries.

[See all the deeds and documents in Bor, *iv*. 461-466. Compare Herrera, iii. 766-770. Very elaborate provisions were made in regard to the children and grand-children to spring from this marriage, but it was generally understood at the time that no issue was to be expected. The incapacity of the cardinal seems to have been revealed by an indiscretion of the General of Franciscans— diplomatist and father confessor—and was supported by much collateral evidence. Hence all these careful stipulations were a solemn jest, like much of the diplomatic work of this reign.]

It was all very systematically done. No transfer of real estate, no 'donatio inter vivos' of mansions and messuages, parks and farms, herds and flocks, could have been effected in a more business-like manner than the gift thus made by the most prudent king to his beloved daughter.

The quit-claim of the brother was perfectly regular.

So also was the power of attorney, by which the Infanta authorised the middle-aged ecclesiastic whom she was about to espouse to take possession in her name of the very desirable property which she had thus acquired.

Page 2137

It certainly never occurred, either to the giver or the receivers, that the few millions of Netherlanders, male and female, inhabiting these provinces in the North Sea, were entitled to any voice or opinion as to the transfer of themselves and their native land to a young lady living in a remote country. For such was the blasphemous system of Europe at that day. Property had rights. Kings, from whom all property emanated, were enfeoffed directly from the Almighty; they bestowed certain privileges on their vassals, but man had no rights at all. He was property, like the ox or the ass, like the glebe which he watered with the sweat of his brow.

The obedient Netherlands acquiesced obediently in these new arrangements. They wondered only that the king should be willing thus to take from his crown its choicest jewels—for it is often the vanity of colonies and dependencies to consider themselves gems.

The republican Netherlanders only laughed at these arrangements, and treated the invitation to transfer themselves to the new sovereigns of the provinces with silent contempt.

The cardinal-archduke left Brussels in September, having accomplished the work committed to him by the power of attorney, and having left Cardinal Andrew of Austria, bishop of Constantia, son of the Archduke Ferdinand, to administer affairs during his absence. Francis de Mendoza, Admiral of Arragon, was entrusted with the supreme military command for the same interval.

The double marriage of the Infante of Spain with the Archduchess Margaret of Austria, and of the unfrocked Cardinal Albert of Austria with the Infanta Clara Eugenia Isabella, was celebrated by proxy, with immense pomp, at Ferrara, the pope himself officiating with the triple crown upon his head.

Meantime, Philip *ii*., who had been of delicate constitution all his life, and who had of late years been a confirmed valetudinarian, had been rapidly failing ever since the transfer of the Netherlands in May. Longing to be once more in his favourite retirement of the Escorial, he undertook the journey towards the beginning of June, and was carried thither from Madrid in a litter borne by servants, accomplishing the journey of seven leagues in six days.

When he reached the palace cloister, he was unable to stand. The gout, his life-long companion, had of late so tortured him in the hands and feet that the mere touch of a linen sheet was painful to him. By the middle of July a low fever had attacked him, which rapidly reduced his strength. Moreover, a new and terrible symptom of the utter disintegration of his physical constitution had presented itself. Imposthumes, from which he had suffered on the breast and at the joints, had been opened after the usual ripening applications, and the result was not the hoped relief, but swarms of vermin,

innumerable in quantities, and impossible to extirpate, which were thus generated and reproduced in the monarch’s blood and flesh.

Page 2138

The details of the fearful disorder may have attraction for the pathologist, but have no especial interest for the general reader. Let it suffice, that no torture ever invented by Torquemada or Peter Titelman to serve the vengeance of Philip and his ancestors or the pope against the heretics of Italy or Flanders, could exceed in acuteness the agonies which the most Catholic king was now called upon to endure. And not one of the long line of martyrs, who by decree of Charles or Philip had been strangled, beheaded, burned, or buried alive, ever faced a death of lingering torments with more perfect fortitude, or was sustained by more ecstatic visions of heavenly mercy, than was now the case with the great monarch of Spain.

That the grave-worms should do their office before soul and body were parted, was a torment such as the imagination of Dante might have invented for the lowest depths of his “Inferno.”

[A great English poet has indeed expressed the horrible thought:—

> “It is as if the dead could feel
> The icy worm about them steal:”—*Byron*.]

On the 22nd July, the king asked Dr. Mercado if his sickness was likely to have a fatal termination. The physician, not having the courage at once to give the only possible reply, found means to evade the question. On the 1st August his Majesty’s confessor, father Diego de Yepes, after consultation with Mercado, announced to Philip that the only issue to his malady was death. Already he had been lying for ten days on his back, a mass of sores and corruption, scarcely able to move, and requiring four men to turn him in his bed.

He expressed the greatest satisfaction at the sincerity which had now been used, and in the gentlest and most benignant manner signified his thanks to them for thus removing all doubts from his mind, and for giving him information which it was of so much importance for his eternal welfare to possess.

His first thought was to request the papal nuncio, Gaetano, to despatch a special courier to Rome to request the pope’s benediction. This was done, and it was destined that the blessing of his Holiness should arrive in time.

He next prepared himself to make a general confession, which lasted three days, father Diego having drawn up at his request a full and searching interrogatory. The confession may have been made the more simple, however, by the statement which he made to the priest, and subsequently repeated to the Infante his son, that in all his life he had never consciously done wrong to any one. If he had ever committed an act of injustice, it was unwittingly, or because he had been deceived in the circumstances. This internal conviction of general righteousness was of great advantage to him in the midst of his terrible sufferings, and accounted in great degree for the gentleness, thoughtfulness for

others, and perfect benignity, which, according to the unanimous testimony of many witnesses, characterised his conduct during this whole sickness.

Page 2139

After he had completed his long general confession, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered to him. Subsequently, the same rites were more briefly performed every few days.

His sufferings were horrible, but no saint could have manifested in them more gentle resignation or angelic patience. He moralized on the condition to which the greatest princes might thus be brought at last by the hand of God, and bade the prince observe well his father's present condition, in order that, when he too should be laid thus low, he might likewise be sustained by a conscience void of offence. He constantly thanked his assistants and nurses for their care, insisted upon their reposing themselves after their daily fatigues, and ordered others to relieve them in their task.

He derived infinite consolation from the many relics of saints, of which, as has been seen, he had made plentiful prevision during his long reign. Especially a bone of St. Alban, presented to him by Clement *viii*., in view of his present straits, was of great service. With this relic, and with the arm of St. Vincent of Ferrara, and the knee-bone of St. Sebastian, he daily rubbed his sores, keeping the sacred talismans ever in his sight on the altar, which was not far from his bed. He was much pleased when the priests and other bystanders assured him that the remains of these holy men would be of special efficacy to him, because he had cherished and worshipped them in times when misbelievers and heretics had treated them with disrespect.

On a sideboard in his chamber a human skull was placed, and upon this skull—in ghastly mockery of royalty, in truth, yet doubtless in the conviction that such an exhibition showed the superiority of anointed kings even over death—he ordered his servants to place a golden crown. And thus, during the whole of his long illness, the Antic held his state, while the poor mortal representative of absolute power lay living still, but slowly mouldering away.

With perfect composure, and with that minute attention to details which had characterised the king all his lifetime, and was now more evident than ever, he caused the provisions for his funeral obsequies to be read aloud one day by Juan Ruys de Velasco, in order that his children, his ministers, and the great officers of state who were daily in attendance upon him, might thoroughly learn their lesson before the time came for performing the ceremony.

"Having governed my kingdom for forty years," said he, "I now give it back, in the seventy-first year of my age, to God Almighty, to whom it belongs, recommending my soul into His blessed hands, that His Divine Majesty may do what He pleases therewith."

He then directed that after his body should have been kept as long as the laws prescribed, it should be buried thus:—

The officiating bishop was to head the procession, bearing the crucifix, and followed by the clergy.

Page 2140

The Adelantado was to come next, trailing the royal standard along the ground. Then the Duke of Novara was to appear, bearing the crown on an open salver, covered with a black cloth, while the Marquis of Avillaer carried the sword of state.

The coffin was to be borne by eight principal grandees, clad in mourning habiliments, and holding lighted torches.

The heir apparent was to follow, attended by Don Garcia de Loyasa, who had just been consecrated, in the place of Cardinal Albert, as Archbishop of Toledo.

The body was to be brought to the church, and placed in the stately tomb already prepared for its reception. "Mass being performed," said the king, "the prelate shall place me in the grave which shall be my last house until I go to my eternal dwelling. Then the prince, third king of my name, shall go into the cloister of St. Jerome at Madrid, where he shall keep nine days mourning. My daughter, and her aunt—my sister, the ex-empress—shall for the same purpose go to the convent of the grey sisters."

The king then charged his successor to hold the Infanta in especial affection and consideration; "for," said he, "she has been my mirror, yea; the light of my eyes." He also ordered that the Marquis of Mondejar be taken from prison and set free, on condition never to show himself at Court. The wife of Antonio Perez was also to be released from prison, in order that she might be immured in a cloister, her property being bestowed upon her daughters.

As this unfortunate lady's only crime consisted in her husband's intrigue with the king's mistress, Princess Eboli, in which she could scarcely be considered an accomplice, this permission to exchange one form of incarceration for another did not seem an act of very great benignity.

Philip further provided that thirty thousand masses should be said for his soul, five hundred slaves liberated from the galleys, and five hundred maidens provided with marriage portions.

After these elaborate instructions had been read, the king ordered a certain casket to be brought to him and opened in his presence. From this he took forth a diamond of great price and gave it to the Infanta, saying that it had belonged to her mother, Isabella of France. He asked the prince if he consented to the gift. The prince answered in the affirmative.

He next took from the coffer a written document, which he handed to his son, saying, "Herein you will learn how to govern your kingdoms."

Then he produced a scourge, which he said was the instrument with which his father, the emperor, had been in the habit of chastising himself during his retreat at the monastery of Juste. He told the by-standers to observe the imperial blood by which the lash was still slightly stained.

Page 2141

As the days wore on he felt himself steadily sinking, and asked to receive extreme unction. As he had never seen that rite performed he chose to rehearse it beforehand, and told Ruys Velasco; who was in constant attendance upon him, to go for minute instructions on the subject to the Archbishop of Toledo. The sacrament having been duly. administered; the king subsequently, on the 1st September, desired to receive it once more. The archbishop, fearing that the dying monarch's strength would be insufficient for the repetition of the function, informed him that the regulations of the Church required in such cases only a compliance with certain trifling forms, as the ceremony had been already once thoroughly carried out. But the king expressed himself as quite determined that the sacrament should be repeated in all its parts; that he should once more—be anointed—to use the phrase of brother Francis Neyen—with the oil which holy athletes require in their wrestle with death.

This was accordingly done in the presence of his son and daughter, and, of his chief secretaries, Christopher de Moura and John de Idiaquez, besides the Counts Chinchon, Fuensalido, and several other conspicuous personages. He was especially desirous that his son should be present, in order that; when he too should come to die, he might not find himself, like his father, in ignorance of the manner in which this last sacrament was to be performed.

When it was finished he described himself as infinitely consoled, and as having derived even more happiness from the rite than he had dared to anticipate.

Thenceforth he protested that he would talk no more of the world's affairs. He had finished with all things below, and for the days or hours still remaining to him he would keep his heart exclusively fixed upon Heaven. Day by day as he lay on his couch of unutterable and almost unexampled misery, his confessors and others read to him from religious works, while with perfect gentleness he would insist that one reader should relieve another, that none might be fatigued.

On the 11th September he dictated these words to Christopher de Moura, who was to take them to Diego de Yepes, the confessor:—

"Father Confessor, you are in the place of God, and I protest thus before His presence that I will do all that you declare necessary for my salvation. Thus upon you will be the, responsibility for my omissions, because I am ready to do all."

Finding that the last hour was approaching, he informed Don Fernando de Toledo where: he could find some candles of our lady of Montserrat, one of which he desired to keep in his hand at the supreme moment. He also directed Ruys de Velasco to take from a special shrine—which he had indicated to him six years before—a crucifix which the emperor his father had held upon his death-bed. All this was accomplished according to his wish.

He had already made arrangements for his funeral procession, and had subsequently provided all the details of his agony. It was now necessary to give orders as to the particulars of his burial.

Page 2142

He knew that decomposition had made such progress even while he was still living as to render embalming impossible: He accordingly instructed Don Christopher to see his body wrapped in a shroud just as it lay, and to cause it to be placed in a well-soldered metallic coffin already provided. The coffin of state, in which the leaden one was to be enclosed, was then brought into the chamber by his command, that he might see if it was entirely to his taste. Having examined it, he ordered that it should be lined with white satin and ornamented with gold nails and lace-work. He also described a particular brocade of black and gold, to be found in the jewelroom, which he desired for the pall.

Next morning he complained to Don Christopher that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper had not been administered to him for several days. It was urged that his strength was deemed insufficient, and that, as he had received that rite already four times during his illness, and extreme unction twice, it was thought that the additional fatigue might be spared him. But as the king insisted, the sacrament was once more performed and prayers were read. He said with great fervour many times, "Pater, non mea voluntas, sed tux fiat." He listened, too, with much devotion to the Psalm, "As the hart panteth for the water-brooks;" and he spoke faintly at long intervals of the Magdalen, of the prodigal son, and of the paralytic.

When these devotional exercises had been concluded, father Diego expressed the hope to him that he might then pass away, for it would be a misfortune by temporary convalescence to fall from the exaltation of piety which he had then reached. The remark was heard by Philip with an expression of entire satisfaction.

That day both the Infanta and the prince came for the last time to his bedside to receive his blessing. He tenderly expressed his regret to his daughter that he had not been permitted to witness her marriage, but charged her never to omit any exertion to augment and sustain the holy Roman Catholic religion in the Netherlands. It was in the interest of that holy Church alone that he had endowed her with those provinces, and he now urged it upon her with his dying breath to impress upon her future husband these his commands to both.

His two children took leave of him with tears and sobs: As the prince left the chamber he asked Don Christopher who it was that held the key to the treasury.

The secretary replied, "It is I, Sir." The prince demanded that he should give it into his hands. But Don Christopher excused himself, saying that it had been entrusted to him by the king, and that without his consent he could not part with it. Then the prince returned to the king's chamber, followed by the secretary, who narrated to the dying monarch what had taken place.

"You have done wrong," said Philip; whereupon Don Christopher, bowing to the earth, presented the key to the prince.

Page 2143

The king then feebly begged those about his bedside to repeat the dying words of our Saviour on the cross, in order that he might hear them and repeat them in his heart as his soul was taking flight.

His father's crucifix was placed in his hands, and he said distinctly, "I die like a good Catholic, in faith and obedience to the holy Roman Church." Soon after these last words had been spoken, a paroxysm, followed by faintness, came over him, and he lay entirely still.

They had covered his face with a cloth, thinking that he had already expired, when he suddenly started, with great energy, opened his eyes, seized the crucifix again from the hand of Don Fernando de Toledo, kissed it, and fell back again into agony.

The archbishop and the other priests expressed the opinion that he must have had, not a paroxysm, but a celestial vision, for human powers would not have enabled him to arouse himself so quickly and so vigorously as he had done at that crisis.

He did not speak again, but lay unconsciously dying for some hours, and breathed his last at five in the morning of Sunday the 13th September.

His obsequies were celebrated according to the directions which he had so minutely given.

These volumes will have been written in vain if it be now necessary to recal to my readers the leading events in the history of the man who had thus left the world where, almost invisible himself, he had so long played a leading part. It may not be entirely useless, however, to throw a parting glance at a character which it has been one of the main objects of this work, throughout its whole course, to portray. My theme has been the reign of Philip *ii*., because, as the less is included in the greater, the whole of that reign, with the exception of a few episodes, is included in the vast movement out of which the Republic of the United Netherlands was born and the assailed independence of France and England consolidated. The result of Philip's efforts to establish a universal monarchy was to hasten the decline of the empire which he had inherited, by aggravating the evils which had long made that downfall inevitable.

It is from no abstract hatred to monarchy that I have dwelt with emphasis upon the crimes of this king, and upon the vices of the despotic system, as illustrated during his lifetime. It is not probable that the military, monarchical system—founded upon conquests achieved by barbarians and pirates of a distant epoch over an effete civilization and over antique institutions of intolerable profligacy—will soon come to an

end in the older world. And it is the business of Europeans so to deal with the institutions of their inheritance or their choice as to ensure their steady melioration and to provide for the highest interests of the people. It matters comparatively little by what name a government is called, so long as the

Page 2144

intellectual and moral development of mankind, and the maintenance of justice among individuals, are its leading principles. A government, like an individual, may remain far below its ideal; but, without an ideal, governments and individuals are alike contemptible. It is tyranny only—whether individual or popular—that utters its feeble sneers at the ideologists, as if mankind were brutes to whom instincts were all in all and ideas nothing. Where intellect and justice are enslaved by that unholy trinity—Force; Dogma, and Ignorance—the tendency of governments, and of those subjected to them, must of necessity be retrograde and downward.

There can be little doubt to those who observe the movements of mankind during the course of the fourteen centuries since the fall of the Roman Empire—a mere fragment of human history—that its progress, however concealed or impeded, and whether for weal or woe, is towards democracy; for it is the tendency of science to liberate and to equalize the physical and even the intellectual forces of humanity. A horse and a suit of armour would now hardly enable the fortunate possessor of such advantages to conquer a kingdom, nor can wealth and learning be monopolised in these latter days by a favoured few. Yet veneration for a crown and a privileged church—as if without them and without their close connection with each other law and religion were impossible—-makes hereditary authority sacred to great masses of mankind in the old world. The obligation is the more stringent, therefore, on men thus set apart as it were by primordial selection for ruling and instructing their fellow-creatures, to keep their edicts and their practice in harmony with divine justice. For these rules cannot be violated with impunity during along succession of years, and it is usually left for a comparatively innocent generation, to atone for the sins of their forefathers. If history does not teach this it teaches nothing, and as the rules of morality; whether for individuals or for nations, are simple and devoid of mystery; there is the less excuse for governments which habitually and cynically violate the eternal law.

Among self-evident truths not one is more indisputable than that which, in the immortal words of our Declaration of Independence, asserts the right of every human being to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; but the only happiness that can be recognised by a true statesman as the birthright of mankind is that which comes from intellectual and moral development, and from the subjugation of the brutal instincts.

A system according to which clowns remain clowns through all the ages, unless when extraordinary genius or fortunate accident enables an exceptional individual to overleap the barrier of caste, necessarily retards the result to which the philosopher looks forward with perfect faith.

Page 2145

For us, whose business it is to deal with, and, so far as human fallibility will permit, to improve our inevitable form of government-which may degenerate into the most intolerable of polities unless we are ever mindful that it is yet in its rudimental condition; that, although an immense step has been taken in the right direction by the abolition of caste, the divorce of Church and State, and the limitation of intrusion by either on the domain of the individual, it is yet only a step from which, without eternal vigilance, a falling back is very easy; and that here, more than in other lands, ignorance of the scientific and moral truths on—which national happiness and prosperity depend, deserves bitter denunciation—for us it is wholesome to confirm our faith in democracy, and to justify our hope that the People will prove itself equal to the awful responsibility of self-government by an occasional study of the miseries which the opposite system is capable of producing. It is for this reason that the reign of the sovereign whose closing moments have just been recorded is especially worthy of a minute examination, and I still invite a parting glance at the spectacle thus presented, before the curtain falls.

The Spanish monarchy in the reign of Philip *ii*. was not only the most considerable empire then existing, but probably the most powerful and extensive empire that had ever been known. Certainly never before had so great an agglomeration of distinct and separate sovereignties been the result of accident. For it was owing to a series of accidents—in the common acceptation of that term—that Philip governed so mighty a realm. According to the principle that vast tracts: of the earth's surface, with the human beings feeding upon: them, were transferable in fee-simple from one man or woman to another by marriage, inheritance, or gift, a heterogeneous collection of kingdoms, principalities, provinces, and: wildernesses had been consolidated, without geographical continuity, into an artificial union—the populations differing from each other as much as human beings can differ, in race, language, institutions, and historical traditions, and resembling each other in little, save in being the property alike of the same fortunate individual.

Thus the dozen kingdoms of Spain, the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands, the kingdoms of the Two Sicilies, the duchy of Milan, and certain fortresses and districts of Tuscany, in Europe; the kingdom of Barbary, the coast of Guinea, and an indefinite and unmeasured expanse. of other territory, in Africa; the controlling outposts and cities all along the coast of the two Indian peninsulas, with as much of the country as it seemed good to occupy, the straits and the, great archipelagoes, so far as they had—been visited by Europeans, in Asia; Peru, Brazil, Mexico, the Antilles—the whole recently discovered fourth quarter of the world in short, from the "Land of Fire" in the

Page 2146

South to the frozen regions of the North—as much territory as the Spanish and Portuguese sea-captains could circumnavigate and the pope in the plentitude of his power and his generosity could bestow on his fortunate son, in America; all this enormous proportion of the habitable globe was the private property, of Philip; who was the son of Charles, who was the son of Joanna, who was the daughter of Isabella, whose husband was Ferdinand. By what seems to us the most whimsical of political arrangements, the Papuan islander, the Calabrian peasant, the Amsterdam merchant, the semi-civilized Aztec, the Moor of Barbary, the Castilian grandee, the roving Camanche, the Guinea negro, the Indian Brahmin, found themselves—could they but have known it—fellow-citizens of one commonwealth. Statutes of family descent, aided by fraud, force, and chicane, had annexed the various European sovereignties to the crown of Spain; the genius of a Genoese sailor had given to it the New World, and more recently the conquest of Portugal, torn from hands not strong enough to defend the national independence, had vested in the same sovereignty those Oriental possessions which were due to the enterprise of Vasco de Gama, his comrades and successors. The, voyager, setting forth from the straits of Gibraltar, circumnavigating the African headlands and Cape Comorin, and sailing through the Molucca channel and past the isles which bore the name of Philip in the Eastern sea, gave the hand at last to his adventurous comrade, who, starting from the same point, and following westward in the track of Magellaens and under the Southern Cross, coasted the shore of Patagonia, and threaded his path through unmapped and unnumbered clusters of islands in the Western Pacific; and during this spanning of the earth's whole circumference not an inch of land or water was traversed that was not the domain of Philip.

For the sea, too, was his as well as the dry land.

From Borneo to California the great ocean was but a Spanish lake, as much the king's private property as his fish-ponds at the Escorial with their carp and perch. No subjects but his dared to navigate those sacred waters. Not a common highway of the world's commerce, but a private path for the gratification of one human being's vanity, had thus been laid out by the bold navigators of the sixteenth century.

It was for the Dutch rebels to try conclusions upon this point, as they had done upon so many others, with the master of the land and sea. The opening scenes therefore in the great career of maritime adventure and discovery by which these republicans were to make themselves famous will soon engage the reader's attention.

Page 2147

Thus the causes of what is called the greatness of Spain are not far to seek. Spain was not a nation, but a temporary and factitious conjunction of several nations, which it was impossible to fuse into a permanent whole, but over whose united resources a single monarch for a time disposed. And the very concentration of these vast and unlimited, powers, fortuitous as it was, in this single hand, inspiring the individual, not unnaturally, with a consciousness of superhuman grandeur; impelled him to those frantic and puerile efforts to achieve the impossible which resulted, in the downfall of Spain. The man who inherited so much material greatness believed himself capable of destroying the invisible but omnipotent spirit of religious and political liberty in the Netherlands, of trampling out the national existence of France and of England, and of annexing those realms to his empire: It has been my task to relate, with much minuteness, how miserably his efforts failed.

But his resources were great. All Italy was in his hands, with the single exception of the Venetian republic; for the Grand Duke of Florence and the so-called republic of Genoa were little more than his vassals, the pope was generally his other self, and the Duke of Savoy was his son-in-law. Thus his armies, numbering usually a hundred thousand men, were supplied from the best possible sources. The Italians were esteemed the best soldiers for siege; assault, light skirmishing. The German heavy troopers and arquebuseers were the most effective for open field-work, and these were to be purchased at reasonable prices and to indefinite amount from any of the three or four hundred petty sovereigns to whom what was called Germany belonged. The Sicilian and Neapolitan pikemen, the Milanese light-horse, belonged exclusively to Philip, and were used, year after year, for more than a generation of mankind, to fight battles in which they had no more interest than had their follow-subjects in the Moluccas or in Mexico, but which constituted for them personally as lucrative a trade on the whole as was afforded them at that day by any branch of industry.

Silk, corn, wine, and oil were furnished in profusion from these favoured regions, not that the inhabitants might enjoy life, and, by accumulating wealth, increase the stock of human comforts and contribute to intellectual and scientific advancement, but in order that the proprietor of the soil might feed those eternal armies ever swarming from the south to scatter desolation over the plains of France, Burgundy, Flanders, and Holland, and to make the crown of Spain and the office of the Holy Inquisition supreme over the world. From Naples and Sicily were derived in great plenty the best materials and conveniences for ship-building and marine equipment. The galleys and the galley-slaves furnished by these subject realms formed the principal part of the royal navy. From distant regions, a commerce which in Philip’s days had become oceanic supplied the crown with as much revenue as could be expected in a period of gross ignorance as to the causes of the true grandeur and the true wealth of nations. Especially from the mines of Mexico came an annual average of ten or twelve millions of precious metals, of which the king took twenty-five per cent. for himself.

Page 2148

It would be difficult and almost superfluous to indicate the various resources placed in the hands of this one personage, who thus controlled so large a portion of the earth. All that breathed or grew belonged to him, and most steadily was the stream of blood and treasure poured through the sieve of his perpetual war. His system was essentially a gigantic and perpetual levy of contributions in kind, and it is only in this vague and unsatisfactory manner that the revenues of his empire can be stated. A despot really keeps no accounts, nor need to do so, for he is responsible to no man for the way in which he husbands or squanders his own. Moreover, the science of statistics had not a beginning of existence in those days, and the most common facts can hardly be obtained, even by approximation. The usual standard of value, the commodity which we call money—gold or silver—is well known to be at best a fallacious guide for estimating the comparative wealth—of individuals or of nations at widely different epochs. The dollar of Philip's day was essentially the same bit of silver that it is in our time in Spain, Naples, Rome, or America, but even should an elaborate calculation be made as to the quantity of beef, or bread or broadcloth to be obtained for that bit of silver in this or that place in the middle of the sixteenth century, the result, as compared with prices now prevalent, would show many remarkable discrepancies. Thus a bushel of wheat at Antwerp during Philip's reign might cost a quarter of a dollar, in average years, and there have been seasons in our own time when two bushels of wheat could have been bought for a quarter of a dollar in Illinois. Yet if, notwithstanding this, we should allow a tenfold value in exchange to the dollar of Philip's day, we should be surprised at the meagreness of his revenues, of his expenditures, and of the debts which at the close of his career brought him to bankruptcy; were the sums estimated in coin.

Thus his income was estimated by careful contemporary statesmen at what seemed to them the prodigious annual amount of sixteen millions of dollars. He carried on a vast war without interruption during the whole of his forty-three years' reign against the most wealthy and military nations of Christendom not recognising his authority, and in so doing he is said to have expended a sum total of seven hundred millions of dollars—a statement which made men's hair stand on their heads. Yet the American republic, during its civil war to repress the insurrection of the slaveholders, has spent nominally as large a sum as this every year; and the British Empire in time of profound peace spends half as much annually. And even if we should allow sixteen millions to have represented the value of a hundred and sixty millions—a purely arbitrary supposition—-as compared with our times, what are a hundred and sixty, millions of dollars, or thirty-three millions of pounds sterling—as the whole net revenue of the greatest empire that had ever existed in the world, when compared with the accumulated treasures over which civilized and industrious countries can now dispose? Thus the power of levying men and materials in kind constituted the chief part of the royal power, and, in truth, very little revenue in money was obtained from Milan or Naples, or from any of the outlying European possessions of the crown.

Page 2149

Eight millions a year were estimated as the revenue from the eight kingdoms incorporated under the general name of Castile, while not more than six hundred thousand came from the three kingdoms which constituted Arragon. The chief sources of money receipts were a tax of ten per cent. upon sales, paid by the seller, called Alcavala, and the Almoxarifalgo or tariff upon both imports and exports. Besides these imposts he obtained about eight hundred thousand dollars a year by selling to his subjects the privilege of eating eggs upon fast-days, according to the permission granted him by the pope, in the bull called the Cruzada. He received another annual million from the Sussidio and the Excusado. The first was a permission originally given by the popes to levy six hundred thousand dollars a year upon ecclesiastical property for equipment of a hundred war-galleys against the Saracens, but which had more recently established itself as a regular tax to pay for naval hostilities against Dutch and English heretics—a still more malignant species of unbelievers in the orthodox eyes of the period. The Excusado was the right accorded to the king always to select from the Church possessions a single benefice and to appropriate its fruit—a levy commuted generally for four hundred thousand dollars a year. Besides these regular sources of income, large but irregular amounts of money were picked up by his Majesty in small sums, through monks sent about the country simply as beggars, under no special license, to collect alms from rich and poor for sustaining the war against the infidels of England and Holland. A certain Jesuit, father Sicily by name, had been industrious enough at one period in preaching this crusade to accumulate more than a million and a half, so that a facetious courtier advised his sovereign to style himself thenceforth king, not of the two, but of the three Sicilies, in honour of the industrious priest.

It is worthy of remark that at different periods during Philip’s reign, and especially towards its close, the whole of his regular revenue was pledged to pay the interest, on his debts, save only the Sussidio and the Cruzada. Thus the master of the greatest empire of the earth had at times no income at his disposal except the alma he could solicit from his poorest subjects to maintain his warfare against foreign miscreants, the levy on the Church for war-galleys; and the proceeds of his permission to eat meat on Fridays. This sounds like an epigram, but it is a plain, incontestable fact.

Thus the revenues of his foreign dominions being nearly consumed by their necessary expenses, the measure of his positive wealth was to be found in the riches of Spain. But Spain at that day was not an opulent country. It was impossible that it should be rich, for nearly every law, according to which the prosperity of a country becomes progressive; was habitually violated. It is difficult to state even by approximation the amount of its population, but the kingdoms united under the crown of Castile were estimated by contemporaries to contain eight millions, while the kingdom of Portugal, together with those annexed to Arragon and the other provinces of the realm, must have numbered half as many. Here was a populous nation in a favoured land, but the foundation of all wealth was sapped by a perverted moral sentiment.

Page 2150

Labour was esteemed dishonourable. The Spaniard, from highest to lowest, was proud, ignorant, and lazy. For a people endowed by nature with many noble qualities—-courage, temperance, frugality, endurance, quickness of perception; a high sense of honour, a reverence for law—the course of the national history had proved as ingeniously bad a system of general education as could well be invented.

The eternal contests, century after century, upon the soil of Spain between the crescent and the cross, and the remembrance of the ancient days in which Oriental valour and genius had almost extirpated Germanic institutions and Christian faith from the peninsula, had inspired one great portion of the masses with a hatred, amounting almost to insanity, towards every form of religion except the Church of Rome, towards every race of mankind except the Goths and Vandals. Innate reverence for established authority had expanded into an intensity of religious emotion and into a fanaticism of loyalty which caused the anointed monarch leading true believers against infidels to be accepted as a god. The highest industrial and scientific civilization that had been exhibited upon Spanish territory was that of Moors and Jews. When in the course of time those races had been subjugated, massacred, or driven into exile, not only was Spain deprived of its highest intellectual culture and its most productive labour, but intelligence, science, and industry were accounted degrading, because the mark of inferior and detested peoples.

The sentiment of self-esteem, always a national characteristic, assumed an almost ludicrous shape. Not a ragged Biscayan muleteer, not a swineherd of Estremadura, that did not imagine himself a nobleman because he was not of African descent. Not a half-starved, ignorant brigand, gaining his living on the highways and byways by pilfering or assassination, that did not kneel on the church pavement and listen to orisons in an ancient tongue, of which he understood not a syllable, with a sentiment of Christian self-complacency to which Godfrey of Bouillon might have been a stranger. Especially those born towards the northern frontier, and therefore farthest removed from Moorish contamination, were proudest of the purity of their race. To be an Asturian or a Gallician, however bronzed by sun and wind, was to be furnished with positive proof against suspicion of Moorish blood; but the sentiment was universal throughout the peninsula.

It followed as a matter of course that labour of any kind was an impeachment against this gentility of descent. To work was the province of Moors, Jews, and other heretics; of the Marani or accursed, miscreants and descendants of miscreants; of the Sanbeniti or infamous, wretches whose ancestors had been convicted by the Holy Inquisition of listening, however secretly, to the Holy Scriptures as expounded by other lips than those of Roman priests. And it is a remarkable illustration of this degradation of labour and of

Page 2151

its results, that in the reign of Philip twenty-five thousand individuals of these dishonoured and comparatively industrious classes, then computed at four millions in number in the Castilian kingdoms alone, had united in a society which made a formal offer to the king to pay him two thousand dollars a head if the name and privileges of hidalgo could be conferred upon them. Thus an inconsiderable number of this vilest and most abject of the population—oppressed by taxation which was levied exclusively upon the low, and from which not only the great nobles but mechanics and other hidalgos were, exempt—had been able to earn and to lay by enough to offer the monarch fifty millions of dollars to purchase themselves out of semi-slavery into manhood, and yet found their offer rejected by an almost insolvent king. Nothing could exceed the idleness and the frivolity of the upper classes, as depicted by contemporary and not unfriendly observers. The nobles were as idle and as ignorant as their inferiors. They were not given to tournays nor to the delights of the chase and table, but were fond of brilliant festivities, dancing, gambling, masquerading, love-making, and pompous exhibitions of equipage, furniture, and dress. These diversions—together with the baiting of bulls and the burning of Protestants—made up their simple round of pleasures. When they went to the wars they scorned all positions but that of general, whether by land or sea, and as war is a trade which requires an apprenticeship; it is unnecessary to observe that these grandees were rarely able to command, having never learned to obey. The poorer Spaniards were most honourably employed perhaps—so far as their own mental development was concerned—when they were sent with pike and arquebus to fight heretics in France and Flanders. They became brave and indomitable soldiers when exported to the seat of war, and thus afforded proof—by strenuously doing the hardest physical work that human beings can be called upon to perform, campaigning year after year amid the ineffable deprivations, dangers, and sufferings which are the soldier's lot—that it was from no want of industry or capacity that the lower masses of Spaniards in that age were the idle, listless, dice-playing, begging, filching vagabonds into which cruel history and horrible institutions had converted them at home.

It is only necessary to recal these well-known facts to understand why one great element of production—human labour—was but meagrely supplied. It had been the deliberate policy of the Government for ages to extirpate the industrious classes, and now that a great portion of Moors and Jews were exiles and outcasts, it was impossible to supply their place by native workmen. Even the mechanics, who condescended to work with their hands in the towns, looked down alike upon those who toiled in the field and upon those who, attempted to grow rich by traffic. A locksmith or a wheelwright who could prove four

Page 2152

descents of western, blood called himself a son of somebody—a hidalgo—and despised the farmer and the merchant. And those very artisans were careful not to injure themselves by excessive industry, although not reluctant by exorbitant prices to acquire in one or-two days what might seem a fair remuneration for a week, and to impress upon their customers that it was rather by way of favour that they were willing to serve them at all.

Labour being thus deficient, it is obvious that there could hardly have been a great accumulation, according to modern ideas, of capital. That other chief element of national wealth, which is the result of generations of labour and of abstinence, was accordingly not abundant. And even those accretions of capital, which in the course of centuries had been inevitable, were as clumsily and inadequately diffused as the most exquisite human perverseness could desire. If the object of civil and political institutions had been to produce the greatest ill to the greatest number, that object had been as nearly attained at last in Spain as human imperfection permits; the efforts of government and of custom coming powerfully to the aid of the historical evils already indicated.

It is superfluous to say that the land belonged not to those who lived upon it—but subject to the pre-eminent right of the crown—to a small selection of the human species. Moderate holdings, small farms, peasant proprietorship's, were unknown. Any kind of terrestrial possession; in short, was as far beyond the reach of those men who held themselves so haughtily and esteemed themselves so inordinately, as were the mountains in the moon.

The great nobles—and of real grandees of Spain there were but forty-nine, although the number of titled families was much larger—owned all the country, except that vast portion of it which had reposed for ages in the dead-hand of the Church. The law of primogeniture, strictly enforced, tended with every generation to narrow the basis of society. Nearly every great estate was an entail, passing from eldest son to eldest son, until these were exhausted, in which case a daughter transferred the family possessions to a new house. Thus the capital of the country—meagre at best in comparison with what it might have been, had industry been honoured instead of being despised, had the most intelligent and most diligent classes been cherished rather than hunted to death or into obscure dens like vermin—was concentrated in very few hands. Not only was the accumulation less than it should have been, but the slenderness of its diffusion had nearly amounted to absolute stagnation. The few possessors of capital wasted their revenues in unproductive consumption. The millions of the needy never dreamed of the possibility of deriving benefit from the capital of the rich, nor would have condescended to employ it, nor known how to employ it, had its use in any form been vouchsafed to them.

Page 2153

The surface of Spain, save only around the few royal residences, exhibited no splendour of architecture, whether in town or country, no wonders of agricultural or horticultural skill, no monuments of engineering and constructive genius in roads, bridges, docks, warehouses, and other ornamental and useful fabrics, or in any of the thousand ways in which man facilitates intercourse among his kind and subdues nature to his will.

Yet it can never be too often repeated that it, is only the Spaniard of the sixteenth century, such as extraneous circumstances had made him, that is here depicted; that he, even like his posterity and his ancestors, had been endowed by Nature with some of her noblest gifts. Acuteness of intellect, wealth of imagination, heroic qualities of heart, and hand, and brain, rarely surpassed in any race, and manifested on a thousand battle-fields, and in the triumphs of a magnificent and most original literature, had not been able to save a whole nation from the disasters and the degradation which the mere words Philip *ii*, and the Holy Inquisition suggest to every educated mind.

Nor is it necessary for my purpose to measure exactly the space which separated Spain from the other leading monarchies of the day. That the standard of civilization was a vastly higher one in England, Holland, or even France—torn as they all were with perpetual civil war—no thinker will probably deny; but as it is rather my purpose at this moment to exhibit the evils which may spring from a perfectly bad monarchical system, as administered by a perfectly bad king, I prefer not to wander at present from the country which was ruled for almost half a century by Philip *ii*.

Besides the concentration of a great part of the capital of the country in a very small number of titled families, still another immense portion of the national wealth belonged, as already intimated, to the Church.

There were eleven archbishops, at the head of whom stood the Archbishop of Toledo, with the enormous annual revenue of three hundred thousand dollars. Next to him came the Archbishop of Seville, with one hundred and fifty thousand dollars yearly, while the income of the others varied from fifty thousand to twenty thousand dollars respectively.

There were sixty-two bishops, with annual incomes ranging from fifty thousand to six thousand dollars. The churches, also, of these various episcopates were as richly endowed as the great hierarchs themselves. But without fatiguing the reader with minute details, it is sufficient to say that one-third of the whole annual income of Spain and Portugal belonged to the ecclesiastical body. In return for this enormous proportion of the earth’s fruits, thus placed by the caprice of destiny at their disposal, these holy men did very little work in the world. They fed their flocks neither with bread nor with spiritual food. They taught little, preached little, dispensed

Page 2154

little in charity. Very few of the swarming millions of naked and hungry throughout the land were clothed or nourished out of these prodigious revenues of the Church. The constant and avowed care of those prelates was to increase their worldly, possessions, to build up the fortunes of their respective families, to grow richer and richer at the expense of the people whom for centuries they had fleeced. Of gross crime, of public ostentatious immorality, such as had made the Roman priesthood of that and preceding ages loathsome in the sight of man and God, the Spanish Church-dignitaries were innocent. Avarice; greediness, and laziness were their characteristics. It is almost superfluous to say that, while the ecclesiastical princes were rolling in this almost fabulous wealth, the subordinate clergy, the mob of working priests, were needy, half-starved mendicants.

From this rapid survey of the condition of the peninsula it will seem less surprising than it might do at first glance that the revenue of the greatest monarch of the world was rated at the small amount—even after due allowance for the difference of general values between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries—of sixteen millions of dollars. The King of Spain was powerful and redoubtable at home and abroad, because accident had placed the control of a variety of separate realms in his single hand. At the same time Spain was poor and weak, because she had lived for centuries in violation of the principles on which the wealth and strength of nations depend. Moreover, every one of those subject and violently annexed nations hated Spain with undying fervour, while an infernal policy—the leading characteristics of which were to sow dissensions among the nobles, to confiscate their property on all convenient occasions, and to bestow it upon Spaniards and other foreigners; to keep the discontented masses in poverty, but to deprive them of the power or disposition to unite with their superiors in rank in demonstrations against the crown—had sufficed to suppress any extensive revolt in the various Italian states united under Philip's sceptre. Still more intense than the hatred of the Italians was the animosity which was glowing in every Portuguese breast against the Spanish sway; while even the Arragonese were only held in subjection by terror, which, indeed, in one form or another, was the leading instrument of Philip's government.

It is hardly necessary to enlarge upon the regulations of Spain's foreign commerce; for it will be enough to repeat the phrase that in her eyes the great ocean from east to west was a Spanish lake, sacred to the ships of the king's subjects alone. With such a simple code of navigation coming in aid of the other causes which impoverished the land, it may be believed that the maritime traffic of the country would dwindle into the same exiguous proportions which characterised her general industry.

Page 2155

Moreover, it should never be forgotten that, although the various kingdoms of Spain were politically conjoined by their personal union under one despot, they were commercially distinct. A line of custom-houses separated each province from the rest, and made the various inhabitants of the peninsula practically strangers to each other. Thus there was less traffic between Castile, Biscay, and Arragon than there was between any one of them and remote foreign nations. The Biscayans, for example, could even import and export commodities to and from remote countries by sea, free of duty, while their merchandize to and from Castile was crushed by imposts. As this ingenious perversity of positive arrangements came to increase the negative inconveniences caused by the almost total absence of tolerable roads, canals, bridges, and other means of intercommunication, it may be imagined that internal traffic—the very life-blood of every prosperous nation—was very nearly stagnant in Spain. As an inevitable result, the most thriving branch of national industry was that of the professional smuggler, who, in the pursuit of his vocation, did his best to aid Government in sapping the wealth of the nation.

The whole accumulated capital of Spain, together with the land—in the general sense which includes not only the soil but the immovable property of a country being thus exclusively owned by the crown, the church, and a very small number of patrician families, while the supply of labour owing to the special causes which had converted the masses of the people into paupers ashamed to work but not unwilling to beg or to rob—was incredibly small, it is obvious that, so long as the same causes continued in operation, the downfall of the country was a logical result from which there was no escape. Nothing but a general revolution of mind and hand against the prevalent system, nothing but some great destructive but regenerating catastrophe, could redeem the people.

And it is the condition of the people which ought always to be the prominent subject of interest to those who study the records of the Past. It is only by such study that we can derive instruction from history, and enable ourselves, however dimly and feebly, to cast the horoscope of younger nations. Human history, so far as it has been written, is at best a mere fragment; for the few centuries or year-thousands of which there is definite record are as nothing compared to the millions of unnumbered years during which man has perhaps walked the earth. It may be as practicable therefore to derive instruction from a minute examination in detail of a very limited period of time and space, and thus to deduce general rules for the infinite future, during which our species may be destined to inhabit this planet, as by a more extensive survey, which must however be at best a limited one. Men die, but Man is immortal, and it would be a sufficiently forlorn prospect for humanity if we were not able

Page 2156

to discover causes in operation which would ultimately render the system of Philip *ii*. impossible in any part of the globe. Certainly, were it otherwise, the study of human history would be the most wearisome and unprofitable of all conceivable occupations. The festivities of courts, the magnificence of an aristocracy, the sayings and doings of monarchs and their servants, the dynastic wars, the solemn treaties; the Ossa upon Pelion of diplomatic and legislative rubbish by which, in the course of centuries, a few individuals or combinations of individuals have been able to obstruct the march of humanity, and have essayed to suspend the operation of elemental laws—all this contains but little solid food for grown human beings. The condition of the brave and quickwitted Spanish people in the latter half of the sixteenth century gives more matter for reflection and possible instruction.

That science is the hope of the world, that ignorance is the real enslaver of mankind, and therefore the natural ally of every form of despotism, may be assumed as an axiom, and it was certainly the ignorance and superstition of the people upon which the Philippian policy was founded.

A vast mass, entirely uneducated, half fed, half clothed, unemployed; and reposing upon a still lower and denser stratum—the millions namely of the “Accursed,” of the Africans, and last and vilest of all, the “blessed” descendants of Spanish protestants whom the Holy Office had branded with perpetual infamy because it had burned their progenitors—this was the People; and it was these paupers and outcasts, nearly the whole nation, that paid all the imposts of which the public revenue was composed. The great nobles, priests, and even the hidalgos, were exempt from taxation. Need more be said to indicate the inevitable ruin of both government and people?

And it was over such a people, and with institutions like these, that Philip *ii*. was permitted to rule during forty-three years. His power was absolute. With this single phrase one might as well dismiss any attempt at specification. He made war or peace at will with foreign nations. He had power of life and death over all his subjects. He had unlimited control of their worldly goods. As he claimed supreme jurisdiction over their religious opinions also, he was master of their minds, bodies, and estates. As a matter of course, he nominated and removed at will every executive functionary, every judge, every magistrate, every military or civil officer; and moreover, he not only selected, according to the license tacitly conceded to him by the pontiff, every archbishop, bishop, and other Church dignitary, but, through his great influence at Rome, he named most of the cardinals, and thus controlled the election of the popes. The whole machinery of society, political, ecclesiastical, military, was in his single hand. There was a show of provincial privilege here and there in different parts of Spain, but it

Page 2157

was but the phantom of that ancient municipal liberty which it had been the especial care of his father and his great-grandfather to destroy. Most patiently did Philip, by his steady inactivity, bring about the decay of the last ruins of free institutions in the peninsula. The councils and legislative assemblies were convoked and then wearied out in waiting for that royal assent to their propositions and transactions, which was deferred intentionally, year after year, and never given. Thus the time of the deputies was consumed in accomplishing infinite nothing, until the moment arrived when the monarch, without any violent stroke of state, could feel safe in issuing decrees and pragmatic edicts; thus reducing the ancient legislative and consultative bodies to nullity, and substituting the will of an individual for a constitutional fabric. To criticise the expenses of government or to attempt interference with the increase of taxation became a sorry farce. The forms remained in certain provinces after the life had long since fled. Only in Arragon had the ancient privileges seemed to defy the absolute authority of the monarch; and it was reserved for Antonio Perez to be the cause of their final extirpation. The grinning skulls of the Chief Justice of that kingdom and of the boldest and noblest advocates and defenders of the national liberties, exposed for years in the market-place, with the record of their death-sentence attached, informed the Spaniards, in language which the most ignorant could read, that the crime of defending a remnant of human freedom and constitutional law was sure to draw down condign punishment. It was the last time in that age that even the ghost of extinct liberty was destined to revisit the soil of Spain. It mattered not that the immediate cause for pursuing Perez was his successful amour with the king's Mistress, nor that the crime of which he was formally accused was the deadly offence of Calvinism, rather than his intrigue with the Eboli and his assassination of Escovedo; for it was in the natural and simple sequence of events that the last vestige of law or freedom should be obliterated wherever Philip could vindicate his sway. It must be admitted, too, that the king seized this occasion to strike a decisive blow with a promptness very different from his usual artistic sluggishness. Rarely has a more terrible epigram been spoken by man than the royal words which constituted the whole trial and sentence of the Chief Justice of Arragon, for the crime of defending the law of his country: "You will take John of Lanuza, and you will have his head cut off." This was the end of the magistrate and of the constitution which he had defended.

Page 2158

His power, was unlimited. A man endowed with genius and virtue, and possessing the advantages of a consummate education, could have perhaps done little more than attempt to mitigate the general misery, and to remove some of its causes. For it is one of the most pernicious dogmas of the despotic system, and the one which the candid student of history soonest discovers to be false, that the masses of mankind are to look to any individual, however exalted by birth or intellect, for their redemption. Woe to the world if the nations are never to learn that their fate is and ought to be in their own hands; that their institutions, whether liberal or despotic, are the result of the national biography and of the national character, not the work of a few individuals whose names have been preserved by capricious Accident as heroes and legislators. Yet there is no doubt that, while comparatively powerless for good, the individual despot is capable of almost infinite mischief. There have been few men known to history who have been able to accomplish by their own exertions so vast an amount of evil as the king who had just died. If Philip possessed a single virtue it has eluded the conscientious research of the writer of these pages. If there are vices—as possibly there are from which he was exempt, it is because it is not permitted to human nature to attain perfection even in evil. The only plausible explanation—for palliation there is none—of his infamous career is that the man really believed himself not a king but a god. He was placed so high above his fellow-creatures as, in good faith perhaps, to believe himself incapable of doing wrong; so that, whether indulging his passions or enforcing throughout the world his religious and political dogmas, he was ever conscious of embodying divine inspirations and elemental laws. When providing for the assassination of a monarch, or commanding the massacre of a townfull of Protestants; when trampling on every oath by which a human being can bind himself; when laying desolate with fire and sword, during more than a generation, the provinces which he had inherited as his private property, or in carefully maintaining the flames of civil war in foreign kingdoms which he hoped to acquire; while maintaining over all Christendom a gigantic system of bribery, corruption, and espionage, keeping the noblest names of England and Scotland on his pension-lists of traitors, and impoverishing his exchequer with the wages of iniquity paid in France to men of all degrees, from princes of blood like Guise and Mayenne down to the obscurest of country squires, he ever felt that these base or bloody deeds were not crimes, but the simple will of the godhead of which he was a portion. He never doubted that the extraordinary theological system which he spent his life in enforcing with fire and sword was right, for it was a part of himself. The Holy Inquisition, thoroughly established as it was in his ancestral Spain, was a portion of

Page 2159

the regular working machinery by which his absolute kingship and his superhuman will expressed themselves. A tribunal which performed its functions with a celerity, certainty, and invisibility resembling the attributes of Omnipotence; which, like the pestilence, entered palace or hovel at will, and which smote the wretch guilty or suspected of heresy with a precision against which no human ingenuity or sympathy could guard—-such an institution could not but be dear to his heart. It was inevitable that the extension and perpetuation of what he deemed its blessings throughout his dominions should be his settled purpose. Spain was governed by an established terrorism. It is a mistake to suppose that Philip was essentially beloved in his native land, or that his religious and political system was heartily accepted because consonant to the national character. On the contrary, as has been shown, a very large proportion of the inhabitants were either secretly false to the Catholic faith, or descended at least from those who had expiated their hostility to it with their lives. But the Grand Inquisitor was almost as awful a personage; as the king or the pope. His familiars were in every village and at every fireside, and from their fangs there was no escape. Millions of Spaniards would have rebelled against the crown or accepted the reformed religion, had they not been perfectly certain of being burned or hanged at the slightest movement in such a direction. The popular force in the course of the political combinations of centuries seemed at last to have been eliminated. The nobles, exempt from taxation, which crushed the people to the earth, were the enemies rather than the chieftains and champions of the lower classes in any possible struggle with a crown to which they were united by ties of interest as well as of affection, while the great churchmen, too, were the immediate dependants and of course the firm supporters of the king. Thus the people, without natural leaders, without organisation, and themselves divided into two mutually hostile sections, were opposed by every force in the State. Crown, nobility, and clergy; all the wealth and all that there was of learning, were banded together to suppress the democratic principle. But even this would hardly have sufficed to extinguish every spark of liberty, had it not been for the potent machinery of the Inquisition; nor could that perfection of terrorism have become an established institution but for the extraordinary mixture of pride and superstition of which the national character had been, in the course of the national history, compounded. The Spanish portion of the people hated the nobles, whose petty exactions and oppressions were always visible; but they had a reverential fear of the unseen monarch, as the representative both of the great unsullied Christian nation to which the meanest individual was proud to belong, and of the God of wrath who had decreed the extermination of all unbelievers. The “accursed”

Page 2160

portion of the people were sufficiently disloyal at heart, but were too much crushed by oppression and contempt to imagine themselves men. As to the Netherlanders, they did not fight originally for independence. It was not until after a quarter of a century of fighting that they ever thought of renouncing their allegiance to Philip. They fought to protect themselves against being taxed by the king without the consent of those constitutional assemblies which he had sworn to maintain, and to save themselves and their children from being burned alive if they dared to read the Bible. Independence followed after nearly a half-century of fighting, but it would never have been obtained, or perhaps demanded, had those grievances of the people been redressed.

Of this perfect despotism Philip was thus the sole administrator. Certainly he looked upon his mission with seriousness, and was industrious in performing his royal functions. But this earnestness and seriousness were, in truth, his darkest vices; for the most frivolous voluptuary that ever wore a crown would never have compassed a thousandth part of the evil which was Philip's life-work. It was because he was a believer in himself, and in what he called his religion, that he was enabled to perpetrate such a long catalogue of crimes. When an humble malefactor is brought before an ordinary court of justice, it is not often, in any age or country, that he escapes the pillory or the gallows because, from his own point of view, his actions, instead of being criminal, have been commendable, and because the multitude and continuity of his offences prove him to have been sincere. And because anointed monarchs are amenable to no human tribunal, save to that terrible assize which the People, bursting its chain from time to time in the course of the ages, sets up for the trial of its oppressors, and which is called Revolution, it is the more important for the great interests of humanity that before the judgment-seat of History a crown should be no protection to its wearer. There is no plea to the jurisdiction of history, if history be true to itself.

As for the royal criminal called Philip *ii*., his life is his arraignment, and these volumes will have been written in vain if a specification is now required.

Homicide such as was hardly ever compassed before by one human being was committed by Philip when in the famous edict of 1568 he sentenced every man, woman, and child in the Netherlands to death. That the whole of this population, three millions or more, were not positively destroyed was because no human energy could suffice to execute the diabolical decree. But Alva, toiling hard, accomplished much of this murderous work. By the aid of the "Council of Blood," and of the sheriffs and executioners of the Holy Inquisition, he was able sometimes to put eight hundred human beings to death in a single week for the crimes of Protestantism or of opulence, and at the end of half a dozen years he could boast of having strangled, drowned, burned, or beheaded somewhat more than eighteen thousand of his fellow-creatures. These were some of the non-combatant victims; for of the tens of thousands who

perished during his administration alone, in siege and battle, no statistical record has been preserved.

Page 2161

In face of such wholesale crimes, of these forty years of bloodshed, it is superfluous to refer to such isolated misdeeds as his repeated attempts to procure the assassination of the Prince of Orange, crowned at last by the success of Balthazar Gerard, nor to his persistent efforts to poison the Queen of England; for the enunciation of all these murders or attempts at murder would require a repetition of the story which it has been one of the main purposes of these volumes to recite.

For indeed it seems like mere railing to specify his crimes. Their very magnitude and unbroken continuity, together with their impunity, give them almost the appearance of inevitable phenomena. The horrible monotony of his career stupefies the mind until it is ready to accept the principle of evil as the fundamental law of the world.

His robberies, like his murders, were colossal. The vast, system of confiscation set up in the Netherlands was sufficient to reduce unnumbered innocent families to beggary, although powerless to break the spirit of civil and religious liberty or to pay the expenses of subjugating a people. Not often in the world's history have so many thousand individual been plundered by a foreign tyrant for no crime, save that they were rich enough to be worth robbing. For it can never be too often repeated that those confiscations and extortions were perpetrated upon Catholics as well as Protestants, monarchists as well as rebels; the possession of property making proof of orthodoxy or of loyalty well-nigh impossible.

Falsehood was the great basis of the king's character, which perhaps derives its chief importance, as a political and psychological study, from this very fact. It has been shown throughout the whole course of this history, by the evidence of his most secret correspondence, that he was false, most of all, to those to whom he gave what he called his heart. Granvelle, Alva, Don John, Alexander Farnese, all those, in short, who were deepest in his confidence experienced in succession his entire perfidy, while each in turn was sacrificed to his master's sleepless suspicion. The pope himself was often as much the dupe of the Catholic monarch's faithlessness as the vilest heretic had ever been. Could the great schoolmaster of iniquity for the sovereigns and politicians of the south have lived to witness the practice of the monarch who had most laid to heart the precepts of the "Prince," he would have felt that he had not written in vain, and that his great paragon of successful falsehood, Ferdinand of Arragon, had been surpassed by the great grandson. For the ideal perfection of perfidy, foreshadowed by the philosopher who died in the year of Philip's birth, was thoroughly embodied at last by this potentate. Certainly Nicholas Macchiavelli could have hoped for no more docile pupil. That all men are vile, that they are liars; scoundrels, poltroons, and idiots alike—-ever ready to deceive and yet easily to be duped, and that he only is fit to be king who excels his kind in the arts of deception; by this great maxim of the Florentine, Philip was ever guided. And those well-known texts of hypocrisy, strewn by the same hand, had surely not fallen on stony ground when received into Philip's royal soul.

Page 2162

“Often it is necessary, in order to maintain power, to act contrary to faith, contrary to charity, contrary to humanity, contrary to religion. . . . A prince ought therefore to have great care that from his mouth nothing should ever come that is not filled with those five qualities, and that to see and hear him he should appear all piety, all faith, all integrity, all humanity, all religion. And nothing is more necessary than to seem to have this last-mentioned quality. Every one sees what you seem, few perceive what you are.”

Surely this hand-book of cant had been Philip’s ‘vade mecum’ through his life’s pilgrimage.

It is at least a consolation to reflect that a career controlled by such principles came to an ignominious close. Had the mental capacity of this sovereign been equal to his criminal intent, even greater woe might have befallen the world. But his intellect was less than mediocre. His passion for the bureau, his slavery to routine, his puerile ambition personally to superintend details which could have been a thousand times better administered by subordinates, proclaimed every day the narrowness of his mind. His diligence in reading, writing, and commenting upon despatches may excite admiration only where there has been no opportunity of judging of his labours by personal inspection. Those familiar with the dreary displays of his penmanship must admit that such work could have been at least as well done by a copying clerk of average capacity. His ministers were men of respectable ability, but he imagined himself, as he advanced in life, far superior to any counsellor that he could possibly select, and was accustomed to consider himself the first statesman in the world.

His reign was a thorough and disgraceful failure. Its opening scene was the treaty of Catean Cambresis, by which a triumph over France had been achieved for him by the able generals and statesmen of his father, so humiliating and complete as to make every French soldier or politician gnash his teeth. Its conclusion was the treaty of Vervins with the same power, by which the tables were completely turned, and which was as utterly disgraceful to Spain as that of Cateau Cambresis had been to France. He had spent his life in fighting with the spirit of the age—that invincible power of which he had not the faintest conception—while the utter want of adaptation of his means to his ends often bordered, not on the ludicrous, but the insane.

He attempted to reduce the free Netherlands to slavery and to papacy. Before his death they had expanded into an independent republic, with a policy founded upon religious toleration and the rights of man. He had endeavoured all his life to exclude the Bearnese from his heritage and to place himself or his daughter on the vacant throne; before his death Henry *iv*. was the most powerful and popular sovereign that had ever reigned in France. He had sought to invade and to conquer England, and to dethrone and assassinate

Page 2163

its queen. But the queen outwitted, outgeneralled, and outlived, him; English soldiers and sailors, assisted. by their Dutch comrades in arms, accomplished on the shores of Spain what the Invincible Armada had in vain essayed against England and Holland; while England, following thenceforth the opposite system to that of absolutism and the Inquisition, became, after centuries of struggles towards the right, the most powerful, prosperous, and enlightened kingdom in the world.

His exchequer, so full when he ascended the throne as to excite the awe of contemporary financiers, was reduced before his death to a net income of some four millions of dollars. His armies; which had been the wonder of the age in the earlier period of his reign for discipline, courage, and every quality on which military efficiency depends, were in his later years a horde of starving, rebellious brigands, more formidable to their commanders than to the foe. Mutiny was the only organised military institution that was left in his dominions, while the Spanish Inquisition, which it was the fell purpose of his life from youth upwards to establish over the world, became a loathsome and impossible nuisance everywhere but in its natal soil.

If there be such a thing as historical evidence, then is Philip *ii*., convicted before the tribunal of impartial posterity of every crime charged in his indictment. He lived seventy-one years and three months, he reigned forty-three years. He endured the martyrdom of his last illness with the heroism of a saint, and died in the certainty of immortal bliss as the reward of his life of evil.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

A despot really keeps no accounts, nor need to do so
All Italy was in his hands
Every one sees what you seem, few perceive what you are
God of wrath who had decreed the extermination of all unbeliever
Had industry been honoured instead of being despised
History is but made up of a few scattered fragments
Hugo Grotius
Idle, listless, dice-playing, begging, filching vagabonds
Ignorance is the real enslaver of mankind
Innocent generation, to atone for the sins of their forefathers
Intelligence, science, and industry were accounted degrading
Labour was esteemed dishonourable
Man had no rights at all He was property
Matters little by what name a government is called
Moral nature, undergoes less change than might be hoped
Names history has often found it convenient to mark its epochs
National character, not the work of a few individuals

Proceeds of his permission to eat meat on Fridays
Rarely able to command, having never learned to obey
Rich enough to be worth robbing
Seems but a change of masks, of costume, of phraseology
Selling the privilege of eating eggs upon fast-days

Page 2164

Sentiment of Christian self-complacency
Spain was governed by an established terrorism
That unholy trinity—Force; Dogma, and Ignorance
The great ocean was but a Spanish lake
The most thriving branch of national industry (Smuggler)
The record of our race is essentially unwritten
Thirty thousand masses should be said for his soul
Those who argue against a foregone conclusion
Three or four hundred petty sovereigns (of Germany)
Utter want of adaptation of his means to his ends
While one's friends urge moderation
Whole revenue was pledged to pay the interest, on his debts

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 71, 1598-1599

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Commercial prospects of Holland—Travels of John Huygen van Linschoten Their effect on the trade and prosperity of the Netherlands—Progress of nautical and geographical science—Maritime exploration—Fantastic notions respecting the polar regions—State of nautical science—First arctic expedition—Success of the voyagers—Failure of the second expedition—Third attempt to discover the north-east passage—Discovery of Spitzbergen— Scientific results of the voyage—Adventures in the frozen regions—Death of William Barendz—Return of the voyagers to Amsterdam— Southern expedition against the Spanish power—Disasters attendant upon it—Extent of Dutch discovery.

During a great portion of Philip's reign the Netherlanders, despite their rebellion, had been permitted to trade with Spain. A spectacle had thus been presented of a vigorous traffic between two mighty belligerents, who derived from their intercourse with each other the means of more thoroughly carrying on their mutual hostilities. The war fed their commerce, and commerce fed their war. The great maritime discoveries at the

close of the fifteenth century had enured quite as much to the benefit of the Flemings and Hollanders as to that of the Spaniards and Portuguese, to whom they were originally due. Antwerp and subsequently Amsterdam had thriven on the great revolution of the Indian trade which Vasco de Gama's voyage around the Cape had effected. The nations of the Baltic and of farthest Ind now exchanged their products on a more extensive scale and with a wider sweep across the earth than when the mistress of the Adriatic alone held the keys of Asiatic commerce. The haughty but intelligent oligarchy of shopkeepers, which had grown so rich and attained so eminent a political position from its magnificent monopoly, already saw the sources of its grandeur drying up before its eyes, now that the world's trade—for the first time in human history—had become oceanic.

Page 2165

In Holland, long since denuded of forests, were great markets of timber, whither shipbuilders and architects came from all parts of the world to gather the utensils for their craft. There, too, where scarcely a pebble had been deposited in the course of the geological transformations of our planet, were great artificial quarries of granite, and marble, and basalt. Wheat was almost as rare a product of the soil as cinnamon, yet the granaries of Christendom, and the Oriental magazines of spices and drugs, were found chiefly on that barren spot of earth. There was the great international mart where the Osterling, the Turk, the Hindoo, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean traders stored their wares and negotiated their exchanges; while the curious and highly-prized products of Netherland skill—broadcloths, tapestries, brocades, laces, substantial fustians, magnificent damasks, finest linens—increased the mass of visible wealth piled mountains high upon that extraordinary soil which produced nothing and teemed with everything.

After the incorporation of Portugal with Spain however many obstacles were thrown in the way of the trade from the Netherlands to Lisbon and the Spanish ports. Loud and bitter were the railings uttered, as we know, by the English sovereign and her statesmen against the nefarious traffic which the Dutch republic persisted in carrying on with the common enemy. But it is very certain that although the Spanish armadas would have found it comparatively difficult to equip themselves without the tar and the timber, the cordage, the stores, and the biscuits furnished by the Hollanders, the rebellious commonwealth, if excluded from the world's commerce, in which it had learned to play so controlling a part, must have ceased to exist. For without foreign navigation the independent republic was an inconceivable idea. Not only would it have been incapable of continuing the struggle with the greatest monarch in the world, but it might as well have buried itself once and for ever beneath the waves from which it had scarcely emerged. Commerce and Holland were simply synonymous terms. Its morsel of territory was but the wharf to which the republic was occasionally moored; its home was in every ocean and over all the world. Nowhere had there ever existed before so large a proportion of population that was essentially maritime. They were born sailors—men and women alike—and numerous were the children who had never set foot on the shore. At the period now treated of the republic had three times as many ships and sailors as any one nation in the world. Compared with modern times, and especially with the gigantic commercial strides of the two great Anglo-Saxon families, the statistics both of population and of maritime commerce in that famous and most vigorous epoch would seem sufficiently meagre. Yet there is no doubt that in the relative estimate of forces then in activity it would be difficult to exaggerate the naval power of the young commonwealth. When

Page 2166

therefore, towards the close of Philip *ii*.'s reign, it became necessary to renounce the carrying trade with Spain and Portugal, by which the communication with India and China was effected, or else to submit to the confiscation of Dutch ships in Spanish ports, and the confinement of Dutch sailors in the dungeons of the Inquisition, a more serious dilemma was presented to the statesmen of the Netherlands than they had ever been called upon to solve.

For the splendid fiction of the Spanish lake was still a formidable fact. Not only were the Portuguese and Spaniards almost the only direct traders to the distant East, but even had no obstacles been interposed by Government, the exclusive possession of information as to the course of trade, the pre-eminent practical knowledge acquired by long experience of that dangerous highway around the world at a time when oceanic navigation was still in its infancy, would have given a monopoly of the traffic to the descendants of the bold discoverers who first opened the great path to the world's commerce.

The Hollanders as a nation had never been engaged in the direct trade around the Cape of Good Hope. Fortunately however at this crisis in their commercial destiny there was a single Hollander who had thoroughly learned the lesson which it was so necessary that all his countrymen should now be taught. Few men of that period deserve a more kindly and more honourable remembrance by posterity for their contributions to science and the progress of civilization than John Huygen van Linschoten, son of a plain burgher of West Friesland. Having always felt a strong impulse to study foreign history and distant nations and customs; he resolved at the early age of seventeen "to absent himself from his fatherland, and from the conversation of friends and relatives," in order to gratify this inclination for self-improvement. After a residence of two years in Lisbon he departed for India in the suite of the Archbishop of Goa, and remained in the East for nearly thirteen years. Diligently examining all the strange phenomena which came under his observation and patiently recording the results of his researches day by day and year by year, he amassed a fund of information which he modestly intended for the entertainment of his friends when he should return to his native country. It was his wish that "without stirring from their firesides or counting-houses" they might participate with him in the gratification and instruction to be derived from looking upon a world then so strange, and for Europeans still so new. He described the manners and customs, the laws, the religions, the social and political institutions, of the ancient races who dwelt in either peninsula of India. He studied the natural history, the botany, the geography of all the regions which he visited. Especially the products which formed the material of a great traffic; the system of culture, the means of transportation, and

Page 2167

the course of commerce, were examined by him with minuteness, accuracy, and breadth of vision. He was neither a trader nor a sailor, but a man of letters, a scientific and professional traveller. But it was obvious when he returned, rich with the spoils of oriental study during thirteen years of life, that the results of his researches were worthy of a wider circulation than that which he had originally contemplated. His work was given to the public in the year 1596, and was studied with avidity not only by men of science but by merchants and seafarers. He also added to the record of his Indian experiences a practical manual for navigators. He described the course of the voyage from Lisbon to the East, the currents, the trade-winds and monsoons, the harbours, the islands, the shoals, the sunken rocks and dangerous quicksands, and he accompanied his work with various maps and charts, both general and special, of land and water, rarely delineated before his day, as well as by various astronomical and mathematical calculations. Already a countryman of his own, Wagenaar of Zeeland, had laid the mariners of the world under special obligation by a manual which came into such universal use that for centuries afterwards the sailors of England and of other countries called their indispensable ‘vade-mecum’ a Wagenaar. But in that text-book but little information was afforded to eastern voyagers, because, before the enterprise of Linschoten, little was known of the Orient except to the Portuguese and Spaniards, by whom nothing was communicated.

The work of Linschoten was a source of wealth, both from the scientific treasures which it diffused among an active and intelligent people, and the impulse which it gave to that direct trade between the Netherlands and the East which had been so long deferred, and which now came to relieve the commerce of the republic, and therefore the republic itself, from the danger of positive annihilation.

It is not necessary for my purpose to describe in detail the series of voyages by way of the Cape of Good Hope which, beginning with the adventures of the brothers Houtmann at this period, and with the circumnavigation of the world by Olivier van Noord, made the Dutch for a long time the leading Christian nation in those golden regions, and which carried the United Netherlands to the highest point of prosperity and power. The Spanish monopoly of the Indian and the Pacific Ocean was effectually disposed of, but the road was not a new road, nor did any striking discoveries at this immediate epoch illustrate the enterprise of Holland in the East. In the age just opening the homely names most dear to the young republic were to be inscribed on capes, islands, and promontories, seas, bays, and continents. There was soon to be a “Staten Island” both in the frozen circles of the northern and of the southern pole, as well as in that favoured region where now the mighty current of a worldwide commerce flows through

Page 2168

the gates of that great metropolis of the western world, once called New Amsterdam. Those well-beloved words, Orange and Nassau, Maurice and William, intermingled with the names of many an ancient town and village, or with the simple patronymics of hardy navigators or honoured statesmen, were to make the vernacular of the new commonwealth a familiar sound in the remotest corners of the earth; while a fifth continent, discovered by the enterprise of Hollanders, was soon to be fitly baptized with the name of the fatherland. Posterity has been neither just nor grateful, and those early names which Dutch genius and enterprise wrote upon so many prominent points of the earth's surface, then seen for the first time by European eyes, are no longer known.

The impulse given to the foreign trade of the Netherlands by the publication of Linschoten's work was destined to be a lasting one. Meantime this most indefatigable and enterprising voyager—one of those men who had done nothing in his own estimation so long as aught remained to do—was deeply pondering the possibility of a shorter road to the opulent kingdoms of Cathay and of China than the one which the genius of De Gama had opened to his sovereigns. Geography as a science was manifesting the highest activity at that period, but was still in a rudimentary state. To the Hollanders especially much of the progress already made by it was owing. The maps of the world by Mercator of Leyden, published on a large scale, together with many astronomical and geographical charts, delineations of exploration, and other scientific works, at the magnificent printing establishment of William Blaeuw, in Amsterdam, the friend and pupil of Tycho Brahe, and the first in that line of typographers who made the name famous, constituted an epoch in cosmography. Another ardent student of geography lived in Amsterdam, Peter Plancius by name, a Calvinist preacher, and one of the most zealous and intolerant of his cloth. In an age and a country which had not yet thoroughly learned the lesson taught by hundreds of thousands of murders committed by an orthodox church, he was one of those who considered the substitution of a new dogma and a new hierarchy, a new orthodoxy and a new church, in place of the old ones, a satisfactory result for fifty, years of perpetual bloodshed. Nether Torquemada nor Peter Titelmann could have more thoroughly abhorred a Jew or a Calvinist than Peter Plancius detested a Lutheran, or any other of the unclean tribe of remonstranta. That the intolerance of himself and his comrades was confined to fiery words, and was not manifested in the actual burning alive of the heterodox, was a mark of the advance made by the mass of mankind in despite of bigotry. It was at any rate a solace to those who believed in human progress; even in matters of conscience, that no other ecclesiastical establishment was ever likely to imitate the matchless machinery for the extermination of heretical vermin which the Church of Rome had found in the Spanish Inquisition. The blasts of denunciation from the pulpit of Plancius have long since mingled with empty air and been forgotten, but his services in the cause of nautical enterprise and geographical science, which formed, as it were, a relaxation to what he deemed the more serious pursuits of theology, will endear his name for ever to the lovers of civilization.

Page 2169

Plancius and Dr. Francis Maalzoon—the enlightened pensionary of Enkhuizen—had studied long and earnestly the history and aspects of the oceanic trade, which had been unfolding itself then for a whole century, but was still comparatively new, while Barneveld, ever ready to assist in the advancement of science, and to foster that commerce which was the life of the commonwealth, was most favourably disposed towards projects of maritime exploration. For hitherto, although the Hollanders had been among the hardiest and the foremost in the art of navigation they had contributed but little to actual discovery. A Genoese had led the way to America, while one Portuguese mariner had been the first to double the southern cape of Africa, and another, at the opposite side of the world, had opened what was then supposed the only passage through the vast continent which, according to ideas then prevalent, extended from the Southern Pole to Greenland, and from Java to Patagonia. But it was easier to follow in the wake of Columbus, Gama, or Magellan, than to strike out new pathways by the aid of scientific deduction and audacious enterprise. At a not distant day many errors, disseminated by the boldest of Portuguese navigators, were to be corrected by the splendid discoveries of sailors sent forth by the Dutch republic, and a rich harvest in consequence was to be reaped both by science and commerce. It is true, too, that the Netherlanders claimed to have led the way to the great voyages of Columbus by their discovery of the Azores. Joshua van den Berg, a merchant of Bruges, it was vigorously maintained, had landed in that archipelago in the year 1445. He had found there, however, no vestiges of the human race, save that upon the principal island, in the midst of the solitude, was seen—so ran the tale—a colossal statue of a man on horseback, wrapped in a cloak, holding the reins of his steed in his left hand, and solemnly extending his right arm to the west. This gigantic and solitary apparition on a rock in the ocean was supposed to indicate the existence of a new world, and the direction in which it was to be sought, but it is probable that the shipwrecked Fleeting was quite innocent of any such magnificent visions. The original designation of the Flemish Islands, derived from their first colonization by Netherlanders, was changed to Azores by Portuguese mariners, amazed at the myriads of hawks which they found there. But if the Netherlanders had never been able to make higher claims as discoverers than the accidental and dubious landing upon an unknown shore of a tempest-tost mariner, their position in the records of geographical exploration would not be so eminent as it certainly is.

Page 2170

Meantime the eyes of Linschoten, Plancius, Maalzoon, Barneveld, and of many other ardent philosophers and patriots, were turned anxiously towards the regions of the North Pole. Two centuries later—and still more recently in our own day and generation—what heart has not thrilled with sympathy and with pride at the story of the magnificent exploits, the heroism, the contempt of danger and of suffering which have characterized the great navigators whose names are so familiar to the world; especially the arctic explorers of England and of our own country? The true chivalry of an advanced epoch—recognizing that there can be no sublimer vocation for men of action than to extend the boundary of human knowledge in the face of perils and obstacles more formidable and more mysterious than those encountered by the knights of old in the cause of the Lord's sepulchre or the holy grail—they have thus embodied in a form which will ever awaken enthusiasm in imaginative natures, the noble impulses of our latter civilization. To win the favour of that noblest of mistresses, Science; to take authoritative possession, in her name, of the whole domain of humanity; to open new pathways to commerce; to elevate and enlarge the human intellect, and to multiply indefinitely the sum of human enjoyments; to bring the inhabitants of the earth into closer and more friendly communication, so that, after some yet unimagined inventions and discoveries, and after the lapse of many years, which in the sight of the Omnipotent are but as one day, the human race may form one pacific family, instead of being broken up, as are the most enlightened of peoples now, into warring tribes of internecine savages, prating of the advancement of civilization while coveting each other's possessions, intriguing against each other's interests, and thoroughly in earnest when cutting each other's throats; this is truly to be the pioneers of a possible civilization, compared to which our present culture may seem but a poor barbarism. If the triumphs and joys of the battle-field have been esteemed among the noblest themes for poet, painter, or chronicler, alike in the mists of antiquity and in the full glare of later days, surely a still more encouraging spectacle for those who believe in the world's progress is the exhibition of almost infinite valour, skill, and endurance in the cause of science and humanity.

It was believed by the Dutch cosmographers that some ten thousand miles of voyaging might be saved, could the passage to what was then called the kingdoms of Cathay be effected by way of the north. It must be remembered that there were no maps of the unknown regions lying beyond the northern headlands of Sweden. Delineations of continents, islands, straits, rivers, and seas, over which every modern schoolboy pores, were not attempted even by the hand of fancy. It was perhaps easier at the end of the sixteenth century than it is now, to admit the possibility of a practical path to China and India across the pole;

Page 2171

for delusions as to climate and geographical configuration then prevalent have long since been dispelled. While, therefore, at least as much heroism was required then as now to launch into those unknown seas, in hope to solve the dread mystery of the North; there was even a firmer hope than can ever be cherished again of deriving an immediate and tangible benefit from the enterprise. Plancius and Maalzoon, the States-General and Prince Maurice, were convinced that the true road to Cathay would be found by sailing north-east. Linschoten, the man who knew India and the beaten paths to India better than any other living Christian, was so firmly convinced of the truth of this theory, that he volunteered to take the lead in the first expedition. Many were the fantastic dreams in which even the wisest thinkers of the age indulged as to the polar regions. Four straits or channels, pierced by a magic hand, led, it was thought, from the interior of Muscovy towards the arctic seas. According to some speculators, however, those seas enclosed a polar continent where perpetual summer and unbroken daylight reigned, and whose inhabitants, having obtained a high degree of culture; lived in the practice of every virtue and in the enjoyment of every blessing. Others peopled these mysterious regions with horrible savages, having hoofs of horses and heads of dogs, and with no clothing save their own long ears coiled closely around their limbs and bodies; while it was deemed almost certain that a race of headless men, with eyes in their breasts, were the most enlightened among those distant tribes. Instead of constant sunshine, it was believed by such theorists that the wretched inhabitants of that accursed zone were immersed in almost incessant fogs or tempests, that the whole population died every winter and were only recalled to temporary existence by the advent of a tardy and evanescent spring. No doubt was felt that the voyager in those latitudes would have to encounter volcanoes of fire and mountains of ice, together with land and sea monsters more ferocious than the eye of man had ever beheld; but it was universally admitted that an opening, either by strait or sea, into the desired Indian haven would reveal itself at last.

The instruments of navigation too were but rude and defective compared to the beautiful machinery with which modern art and science now assist their votaries along the dangerous path of discovery. The small yet unwieldy, awkward, and, to the modern mind, most grotesque vessels in which such audacious deeds were performed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries awaken perpetual astonishment. A ship of a hundred tons burden, built up like a tower, both at stem and stern, and presenting in its broad bulbous prow, its width of beam in proportion to its length, its depression amidships, and in other sins against symmetry, as much opposition to progress over the waves as could well be imagined, was the vehicle in which those indomitable

Page 2172

Dutchmen circumnavigated the globe and confronted the arctic terrors of either pole. An astrolabe—such as Martin Beheim had invented for the Portuguese, a clumsy astronomical ring of three feet in circumference—was still the chief machine used for ascertaining the latitude, and on shipboard a most defective one. There were no logarithms, no means of determining at sea the variations of the magnetic needle, no system of dead reckoning by throwing the log and chronicling the courses traversed. The firearms with which the sailors were to do battle with the unknown enemies that might beset their path were rude and clumsy to handle. The art of compressing and condensing provisions was unknown. They had no tea nor coffee to refresh the nervous system in its terrible trials; but there was one deficiency which perhaps supplied the place of many positive luxuries. Those Hollanders drank no ardent spirits. They had beer and wine in reasonable quantities, but no mention is ever made in the journals of their famous voyages of any more potent liquor; and to this circumstance doubtless the absence of mutinous or disorderly demonstrations, under the most trying circumstances, may in a great degree be attributed.

Thus, these navigators were but slenderly provided with the appliances with which hazardous voyages have been smoothed by modern art; but they had iron hearts, faith in themselves, in their commanders, in their republic, and in the Omnipotent; perfect discipline and unbroken cheerfulness amid toil, suffering, and danger. No chapter of history utters a more beautiful homily an devotion to duty as the true guiding principle of human conduct than the artless narratives which have been preserved of many of these maritime enterprises. It is for these noble lessons that they deserve to be kept in perpetual memory.

And in no individual of that day were those excellent qualities more thoroughly embodied than in William Barendz, pilot and burgher of Amsterdam. It was partly under his charge that the first little expedition set forth on the 5th of June, 1594, towards those unknown arctic seas, which no keel from Christendom had ever ploughed, and to those fabulous regions where the foot of civilized men had never trod. Maalzoon, Plancius, and Balthaser Moucheron, merchant of Middelburg, were the chief directors of the enterprise; but there was a difference of opinion between them.

The pensionary was firm in the faith that the true path to China would be found by steering through the passage which was known to exist between the land of Nova Zembla and the northern coasts of Muscovy, inhabited by the savage tribes called Samoyedes. It was believed that, after passing those straits, the shores of the great continent would be found to trend in a south-easterly direction, and that along that coast it would accordingly be easy to make the desired voyage to the eastern ports of China. Plancius, on the contrary, indicated as the most promising

Page 2173

passage the outside course, between the northern coast of Nova Zembla and the pole. Three ships and a fishing yacht were provided by the cities of Enkhuizen, Amsterdam, and by the province of Zeeland respectively. Linschoten was principal commissioner on board the Enkhuizen vessel, having with him an experienced mariner, Brandt Ijsbrantz by name, as skipper. Barendz, with the Amsterdam ship and the yacht, soon parted company with the others, and steered, according to the counsels of Plancius and his own convictions; for the open seas of the north. And in that memorable summer, for the first time in the world's history, the whole desolate region of Nova Zembla was visited, investigated, and thoroughly mapped out. Barendz sailed as far as latitude 77 deg. and to the extreme north-eastern point of the island. In a tremendous storm off a cape, which he ironically christened Consolationhook (Troost-hoek), his ship, drifting under bare poles amid ice and mist and tempest, was nearly dashed to pieces; but he reached at last the cluster of barren islets beyond the utmost verge of Nova Zembla, to which he hastened to affix the cherished appellation of Orange. This, however, was the limit of his voyage. His ship was ill-provisioned, and the weather had been severe beyond expectation. He turned back on the 1st of August, resolving to repeat his experiment early in the following year.

Meantime Linschoten, with the ships Swan and Mercury, had entered the passage which they called the Straits of Nassau, but which are now known to all the world as the Waigats. They were informed by the Samoyedes of the coast that, after penetrating the narrow channel, they would find themselves in a broad and open sea. Subsequent discoveries showed the correctness of the statement, but it was not permitted to the adventurers on this occasion to proceed so far. The strait was already filled with ice-drift, and their vessels were brought to a standstill, after about a hundred and fifty English miles of progress beyond the Waigats; for the whole sea of Tartary, converted into a mass of ice-mountains and islands, and lashed into violent agitation by a north easterly storm, seemed driving down upon the doomed voyagers. It was obvious that the sunny clime of Cathay was not thus to be reached, at least upon that occasion. With difficulty they succeeded in extricating themselves from the dangers surrounding them, and emerged at last from the Waigats.

On the 15th of August, in latitude 69 deg. 15', they met the ship of Barendz and returned in company to Holland, reaching Amsterdam on the 16th of September. Barendz had found the seas and coasts visited by him destitute of human inhabitants, but swarming with polar bears, with seals, with a terrible kind of monsters, then seen for the first time, as large as oxen, with almost human faces and with two long tusks protruding from each grim and grotesque visage. These mighty beasts, subsequently known as walrusses or sea-horses,

Page 2174

were found sometimes in swarms of two hundred at a time, basking in the arctic sun, and seemed equally at home on land, in the sea, and on icebergs. When aware of the approach of their human visitors, they would slide off an iceblock into the water, holding their cubs in their arms, and ducking up and down in the sea as if in sport. Then tossing the young ones away, they would rush upon the boats, and endeavour to sink the strangers, whom they instinctively recognised as their natural enemies. Many were the severe combats recorded by the diarist of that voyage of Barendz with the walrusses and the bears.

The chief result of this first expedition was the geographical investigation made, and, with unquestionable right; these earliest arctic pilgrims bestowed the names of their choice upon the regions first visited by themselves. According to the unfailing and universal impulse on such occasions, the names dear to the fatherland were naturally selected. The straits were called Nassau, the island at its mouth became States or Staten Island; the northern coasts of Tartary received the familiar appellations of New Holland, New Friesland, New Walcheren; while the two rivers, beyond which Linschoten did not advance, were designated Swan and Mercury respectively, after his two ships. Barendz, on his part, had duly baptized every creek, bay, islet, and headland of Nova Zembla, and assuredly Christian mariner had never taken the latitude of 77 deg. before. Yet the antiquary, who compares the maps soon afterwards published by William Blaeuw with the charts now in familiar use, will observe with indignation the injustice with which the early geographical records have been defaced, and the names rightfully bestowed upon those terrible deserts by their earliest discoverers rudely torn away. The islands of Orange can still be recognized, and this is almost the only vestige left of the whole nomenclature. But where are Cape Nassau, William's Island, Admiralty Island, Cape Plancius, Black-hook, Cross-hook, Bear's-hook, Ice-hook, Consolation-hook, Cape Desire, the Straits of Nassau, Maurice Island, Staten Island, Enkhuizen Island, and many other similar appellations.

The sanguine Linschoten, on his return, gave so glowing an account of the expedition that Prince Maurice and Olden-Barneveld, and prominent members of the States-General, were infected with his enthusiasm. He considered the north-east passage to China discovered and the problem solved. It would only be necessary to fit out another expedition on a larger scale the next year, provide it with a cargo of merchandize suitable for the China market, and initiate the direct polar-oriental trade without further delay. It seems amazing that so incomplete an attempt to overcome such formidable obstacles should have been considered a decided success. Yet there is no doubt of the genuineness of the conviction by which Linschoten was actuated. The calmer Barendz, and his friend and comrade Gerrit de Veer, were of opinion that the philosopher had made "rather a free representation" of the enterprise of 1594 and of the prospects for the future.

Page 2175

Nevertheless, the general Government, acting on Linschoten's suggestion, furnished a fleet of seven ships: two from Enkhuizen, two from Zeeland, two from Amsterdam; and a yacht which was to be despatched homeward with the news, so soon as the expedition should have passed through the straits of Nassau, forced its way through the frozen gulf of Tartary, doubled Cape Tabin, and turned southward on its direct course to China. The sublime credulity which accepted Linschoten's hasty solution of the polar enigma as conclusive was fairly matched by the sedateness with which the authorities made the preparations for the new voyage. So deliberately were the broadcloths, linens, tapestries, and other assorted articles for this first great speculation to Cathay, via the North Pole, stowed on board the fleet, that nearly half the summer had passed before anchor was weighed in the Meuse. The pompous expedition was thus predestined to an almost ridiculous failure. Yet it was in the hands of great men, both on shore and sea. Maurice, Barneveld, and Maalzoon had personally interested themselves in the details of its outfitting, Linschoten sailed as chief commissioner, the calm and intrepid Barendz was upper pilot of the whole fleet, and a man who was afterwards destined to achieve an immortal name in the naval history of his country, Jacob Heemskerk, was supercargo of the Amsterdam ship. In obedience to the plans of Linschoten and of Maalzoon, the passage by way of the Waigats was of course attempted. A landing was effected on the coast of Tartary. Whatever geographical information could be obtained from such a source was imparted by the wandering Samoyedes. On the 2nd of September a party went ashore on Staten Island and occupied themselves in gathering some glistening pebbles which the journalist of the expedition describes with much gravity as a "kind of diamonds, very plentiful upon the island." While two of the men were thus especially engaged in a deep hollow, one of them found himself suddenly twitched from behind. "What are you pulling at me for, mate?" he said, impatiently to his comrade as he supposed. But his companion was a large, long, lean white bear, and in another instant the head of the unfortunate diamond-gatherer was off and the bear was sucking his blood. The other man escaped to his friends, and together a party of twenty charged upon the beast. Another of the combatants was killed and half devoured by the hungry monster before a fortunate bullet struck him in the head. But even then the bear maintained his grip upon his two victims, and it was not until his brains were fairly beaten out with the butt end of a snaphance by the boldest of the party that they were enabled to secure the bodies of their comrades and give them a hurried kind of Christian burial. They flayed the bear and took away his hide with them, and this, together with an ample supply of the diamonds of Staten Island, was the only merchandize obtained upon the voyage for which such magnificent preparations had been made. For, by the middle of September, it had become obviously hopeless to attempt the passage of the frozen sea that season, and the expedition returned, having accomplished nothing. It reached Amsterdam upon the 18th of November, 1595.

Page 2176

The authorities, intensely disappointed at this almost ridiculous result, refused to furnish direct assistance to any farther attempts at arctic explorations. The States-General however offered a reward of twenty-five thousand florins to any navigators who might succeed in discovering the northern passage, with a proportionate sum to those whose efforts in that direction might be deemed commendable, even if not crowned with success.

Stimulated by the spirit of adventure and the love of science far more than by the hope of gaining a pecuniary prize, the undaunted Barendz, who was firm in the faith that a pathway existed by the north of Nova Zembla and across the pole to farthest Ind, determined to renew the attempt the following summer. The city of Amsterdam accordingly, early in the year 1596, fitted out two ships. Select crews of entirely unmarried men volunteered for the enterprise. John Cornelisz van der Ryp, an experienced sea-captain, was placed in charge of one of the vessels, William Barendz was upper pilot of the other, and Heemskerk, “the man who ever steered his way through ice or iron,” was skipper and supercargo.

The ships sailed from the Vlie on the 18th May. The opinions of Peter Plancius prevailed in this expedition at last; the main object of both Ryp and Barendz being to avoid the fatal, narrow, ice-clogged Waigats. Although identical in this determination, their views as to the configuration of the land and sea, and as to the proper course to be steered, were conflicting. They however sailed in company mainly in a N.E. by N. direction, although Barendz would have steered much more to the east.

On the 5th June the watch on deck saw, as they supposed, immense flocks of white swans swimming towards the ships, and covering the sea as far as the eye could reach. All hands came up to look at the amazing spectacle, but the more experienced soon perceived that the myriads of swans were simply infinite fields of ice, through which however they were able to steer their course without much impediment, getting into clear sea beyond about midnight, at which hour the sun was one degree above the horizon.

Proceeding northwards two days more they were again surrounded by ice, and, finding the “water green as grass, they believed themselves to be near Greenland.” On the 9th June they discovered an island in latitude, according to their observation, 74 deg. 30’, which seemed about five miles long. In this neighbourhood they remained four days, having on one occasion a “great fight which lasted four glasses” with a polar bear, and making a desperate attempt to capture him in order to bring him as a show to Holland. The effort not being successful, they were obliged to take his life to save their own; but in what manner they intended, had they secured him alive, to provide for such a passenger in the long voyage across the North Pole to China, and thence back to Amsterdam, did not appear. The attempt illustrated the calmness, however, of those hardy navigators. They left the island on the 13th June, having baptised it Bear Island in memory of their vanquished foe, a name which was subsequently exchanged for the

insipid appellation of Cherry Island, in honour of a comfortable London merchant who seven years afterwards sent a ship to those arctic regions.

Page 2177

Six days later they saw land again, took the sun, and found their latitude 80 deg. 11'. Certainly no men had ever been within less than ten degrees of the pole before. On the longest day of the year they landed on this newly discovered country, which they at first fancied to be a part of Greenland. They found its surface covered with eternal snow, broken into mighty glaciers, jagged with precipitous ice-peaks; and to this land of almost perpetual winter, where the mercury freezes during ten months in the year, and where the sun remains four months beneath the horizon, they subsequently gave the appropriate and vernacular name of Spitzbergen. Combats with the sole denizens of these hideous abodes, the polar bears, on the floating ice, on the water, or on land, were constantly occurring, and were the only events to disturb the monotony of that perpetual icy sunshine, where no night came to relieve the almost maddening glare. They rowed up a wide inlet on the western coast, and came upon great numbers of wild-geese sitting on their eggs. They proved to be the same geese that were in the habit of visiting Holland in vast flocks every summer, and it had never before been discovered where they laid and hatched their eggs. "Therefore," says the diarist of the expedition, "some voyagers have not scrupled to state that the eggs grow on trees in Scotland, and that such of the fruits of those trees as fall into the water become goslings, while those which drop on the ground burst in pieces and come to nothing. We now see that quite the contrary is the case," continues De Veer, with perfect seriousness, "nor is it to be wondered at, for nobody has ever been until now where those birds lay their eggs. No man, so far as known, ever reached the latitude of eighty degrees before. This land was hitherto unknown."

The scientific results of this ever-memorable voyage might be deemed sufficiently meagre were the fact that the eggs of wild geese did not grow on trees its only recorded discovery. But the investigations made into the dread mysteries of the north, and the actual problems solved, were many, while the simplicity of the narrator marks the infantine character of the epoch in regard to natural history. When so illustrious a mind as Grotius was inclined to believe in a race of arctic men whose heads grew beneath their shoulders; the ingenuous mariner of Amsterdam may be forgiven for his earnestness in combating the popular theory concerning goslings.

On the 23rd June they went ashore again, and occupied themselves, as well as the constant attacks of the bears would permit, in observing the variation of the needle, which they ascertained to be sixteen degrees. On the same day, the ice closing around in almost infinite masses, they made haste to extricate themselves from the land and bore southwards again, making Bear Island once more on the 1st July. Here Cornelius Ryp parted company with Heemskerk and Barendz, having announced his intention to sail northward again beyond

Page 2178

latitude 80 deg. in search of the coveted passage. Barendz, retaining his opinion that the true inlet to the circumpolar sea, if it existed, would be found N.E. of Nova Zembla, steered in that direction. On the 13th July they found themselves by observation in latitude 73 deg., and considered themselves in the neighbourhood of Sir Hugh Willoughby's land. Four days later they were in Lomms' Bay, a harbour of Nova Zembla, so called by them from the multitude of lomms frequenting it, a bird to which they gave the whimsical name of arctic parrots. On the 20th July the ice obstructed their voyage; covering the sea in all directions with floating mountains and valleys, so that they came to an anchor off an islet where on a former voyage the Hollanders had erected the precious emblem of Christian faith, and baptised the dreary solitude Cross Island. But these pilgrims, as they now approached the spot, found no worshippers there, while, as if in horrible mockery of their piety, two enormous white bears had reared themselves in an erect posture, in order the better to survey their visitors, directly at the foot of the cross. The party which had just landed were unarmed, and were for making off as fast as possible to their boats. But Skipper Heemskerk, feeling that this would be death to all of them, said simply, "The first man that runs shall have this boat-hook of mine in his hide. Let us remain together and face them off." It was done. The party moved slowly towards their boats, Heemskerlk bringing up the rear, and fairly staring the polar monsters out of countenance, who remained grimly regarding them, and ramping about the cross.

The sailors got into their boat with much deliberation, and escaped to the ship, "glad enough," said De Veer, "that they were alive to tell the story, and that they had got out of the cat-dance so fortunately."

Next day they took the sun, and found their latitude 76 deg. 15', and the variation of the needle twenty-six degrees.

For seventeen days more they were tossing about in mist and raging snow-storms, and amidst tremendous icebergs, some of them rising in steeples and pinnacles to a hundred feet above the sea, some grounded and stationary, others drifting fearfully around in all directions, threatening to crush them at any moment or close in about them and imprison them for ever. They made fast by their bower anchor on the evening of 7th August to a vast iceberg which was aground, but just as they had eaten their supper there was a horrible groaning, bursting, and shrieking all around them, an indefinite succession of awful, sounds which made their hair stand on end, and then the iceberg split beneath the water into more than four hundred pieces with a crash "such as no words could describe." They escaped any serious damage, and made their way to a vast steepled and towered block like a floating cathedral, where they again came to anchor.

Page 2179

On the 15th August they reached the isles of Orange, on the extreme north-eastern verge of Nova Zembla. Here a party going ashore climbed to the top of a rising ground, and to their infinite delight beheld an open sea entirely free from ice, stretching to the S. E. and E.S.E. as far as eye could reach. At last the game was won, the passage to Cathay was discovered. Full of joy, they pulled back in their boat to the ship, “not knowing how to get there quick enough to tell William Barendz.” Alas! they were not aware of the action of that mighty ocean river, the Gulf-stream, which was sweeping around those regions with its warm dissolving current.

Three days later they returned baffled in their sanguine efforts to sail through the open sea. The ice had returned upon them, setting southwardly in obedience to the same impulse which for a moment had driven it away, and they found themselves imprisoned again near the “Hook of Desire.”

On the 25th August they had given up all the high hopes by which they had been so lately inspired, and, as the stream was again driving the ice from the land, they trusted to sail southward and westward back towards the Waigats. Having passed by Nova Zembla, and found no opening into the seas beyond, they were disposed in the rapidly waning summer to effect their retreat by the south side of the island, and so through the Straits of Nassau home. In vain. The catastrophe was upon them. As they struggled slowly past the “Ice-haven,” the floating mountains and glaciers, impelled by the mighty current, once more gathered around and forced them back to that horrible harbour. During the remaining days of August the ship struggled, almost like a living creature, with the perils that, beset her; now rearing in the air, her bows propped upon mighty blocks, till she absolutely sat erect upon her stern, now lying prostrate on her side, and anon righting again as the ice-masses would for a moment float away and leave her breathing space and room to move in. A blinding snow-storm was raging the while, the ice was cracking and groaning in all directions, and the ship was shrieking, so that the medley of awful sights and sounds was beyond the power of language. “’Twas enough to make the hair stand on end,” said Gerrit de Veer, “to witness the hideous spectacle.”

But the agony was soon over. By the 1st September the ship was hard and fast. The ice was as immoveable as the dry land, and she would not move again that year even if she ever floated. Those pilgrims from the little republic were to spend the winter in their arctic harbour. Resigning themselves without a murmur to their inevitable fate, they set about their arrangements with perfect good humour and discipline. Most fortunately a great quantity of drift wood, masses of timber, and great trees torn away with their roots from distant shores, lay strewn along the coast, swept thither by the wandering currents. At once they resolved to build a house in which they might shelter themselves from the wild beasts, and from their still more cruel enemy, the cold. So thanking God for the providential and unexpected supply of building material and fuel, they lost no time in making sheds, in hauling timber, and in dragging supplies from the ship before the dayless winter should descend upon them.

Page 2180

Six weeks of steady cheerful labour succeeded. Tremendous snow-storms, accompanied by hurricanes of wind, often filled the atmosphere to suffocation, so that no human being could move a ship's length without perishing; while, did any of their number venture forth, as the tempest subsided, it was often to find himself almost in the arms of a polar bear before the dangerous snow-white form could be distinguished moving sluggishly through the white chaos.

For those hungry companions never left them so long as the sun remained above the horizon, swarming like insects and birds in tropical lands. When the sailors put their meat-tubs for a moment out upon the ice a bear's intrusive muzzle would forthwith be inserted to inspect the contents. Maddened by hunger, and their keen scent excited by the salted provisions, and by the living flesh and blood of these intruders upon their ancient solitary domains, they would often attempt to effect their entrance into the ship.

On one such occasion, when Heemskerk and two companions were the whole garrison, the rest being at a distance sledding wood, the future hero of Gibraltar was near furnishing a meal to his Nova Zembla enemies. It was only by tossing sticks and stones and marling-spikes across the ice, which the bears would instantly turn and pursue, like dogs at play with children, that the assault could be diverted until a fortunate shot was made.

Several were thus killed in the course of the winter, and one in particular was disembowelled and set frozen upon his legs near their house, where he remained month after month with a mass of snow and ice accumulated upon him, until he had grown into a fantastic and gigantic apparition, still wearing the semblance of their mortal foe.

By the beginning of October the weather became so intensely cold that it was almost impossible to work. The carpenter died before the house was half completed. To dig a grave was impossible, but they laid him in a cleft of the ice, and he was soon covered with the snow. Meantime the sixteen that were left went on as they best might with their task, and on October 2nd they had a house-raising. The frame-work was set up, and in order to comply with the national usage in such cases, they planted, instead of the May-pole with its fluttering streamers, a gigantic icicle before their new residence. Ten days later they moved into the house and slept there for the first time, while a bear, profiting by their absence, passed the night in the deserted ship.

On the 4th November the sun rose no more, but the moon at first shone day and night, until they were once in great perplexity to know whether it were midday or midnight. It proved to be exactly noon. The bears disappeared with the sun, but white foxes swarmed in their stead, and all day and night were heard scrambling over their roof. These were caught daily in traps and furnished them food, besides furs for raiment. The cold became appalling, and they

Page 2181

looked in each other's faces sometimes in speechless amazement. It was obvious that the extreme limit of human endurance had been reached. Their clothes were frozen stiff. Their shoes were like iron, so that they were obliged to array themselves from head to foot in the skins of the wild foxes. The clocks stopped. The beer became solid. The Spanish wine froze and had to be melted in saucepans. The smoke in the house blinded them. Fire did not warm them, and their garments were often in a blaze while their bodies were half frozen. All through the month of December an almost perpetual snow-deluge fell from the clouds. For days together they were unable to emerge, and it was then only by most vigorous labour that they could succeed in digging a passage out of their buried house. On the night of the 7th December sudden death had nearly put an end to the sufferings of the whole party. Having brought a quantity of seacoal from the ship, they had made a great fire, and after the smoke was exhausted, they had stopped up the chimney and every crevice of the house. Each man then turned into his bunk for the night, "all rejoicing much in the warmth and prattling a long time with each other." At last an unaccustomed giddiness and faintness came over them, of which they could not guess the cause, but fortunately one of the party had the instinct, before he lost consciousness, to open the chimney, while another forced open the door and fell in a swoon upon the snow. Their dread enemy thus came to their relief, and saved their lives.

As the year drew to a close, the frost and the perpetual snow-tempest became, if that were possible, still more frightful. Their Christmas was not a merry one, and for the first few days of the new year, it was impossible for them to move from the house. On the 25th January, the snow-storms having somewhat abated, they once more dug themselves as it were out of their living grave, and spent the whole day in hauling wood from the shore. As their hour-glasses informed them that night was approaching, they bethought themselves that it was Twelfth Night, or Three Kings' Eve. So they all respectfully proposed to Skipper Heemskerk, that, in the midst of their sorrow they might for once have a little diversion. A twelfth-night feast was forthwith ordained. A scanty portion of the wine yet remaining to them was produced. Two pounds weight of flour, which they had brought to make paste with for cartridges, was baked into pancakes with a little oil, and a single hard biscuit was served out to each man to be sopped in his meagre allowance of wine. "We were as happy," said Gerrit de veer, with simple pathos, "as if we were having a splendid banquet at home. We imagined ourselves in the fatherland with all our friends, so much did we enjoy our repast."

Page 2182

That nothing might be omitted, lots were drawn for king, and the choice fell on the gunner, who was forthwith proclaimed monarch of Nova Zembla. Certainly no men, could have exhibited more undaunted cheerfulness amid bears and foxes, icebergs and cold—such as Christians had never conceived of before—than did these early arctic pilgrims. Nor did Barendz neglect any opportunity of studying the heavens. A meridian was drawn near the house, on which the compass was placed, and observations of various stars were constantly made, despite the cold, with extraordinary minuteness. The latitude, from concurrent measurement of the Giant, the Bull, Orion, Aldebaran, and other constellations—in the absence of the sun—was ascertained to be a little above seventy-six degrees, and the variations of the needle were accurately noted.

On the 24th January it was clear weather and comparatively mild, so that Heemskerk, with De Veer and another, walked to the strand. To their infinite delight and surprise they again saw the disk of the sun on the edge of the horizon, and they all hastened back with the glad tidings. But Barendz shook his head. Many days must elapse, he said, before the declination of the sun should be once more 14 deg., at which point in the latitude of 76 deg. they had lost sight of the luminary on the 4th November, and at which only it could again be visible. This, according to his calculations, would be on the 10th February. Two days of mirky and stormy atmosphere succeeded, and those who had wagered in support of the opinion of Barendz were inclined to triumph over those who believed in the observation of Heemskerk. On the 27th January there was, however, no mistake. The sky was bright, and the whole disk of the sun was most distinctly seen by all, although none were able to explain the phenomenon, and Barendz least of all. They had kept accurate diaries ever since their imprisonment, and although the clocks sometimes had stopped, the hour-glasses had regularly noted the lapse of time. Moreover, Barendz knew from the Ephemerides for 1589 to 1600, published by Dr. Joseph Scala in Venice, a copy of which work he had brought with him, that on the 24th January, 1597, the moon would be seen at one o’clock A.M. at Venice, in conjunction with Jupiter. He accordingly took as good an observation as could be done with the naked eye and found that conjunction at six o’clock A.M. Of the same day, the two bodies appearing in the same vertical line in the sign of Taurus. The date was thus satisfactorily established, and a calculation of the longitude of the house was deduced with an accuracy which in those circumstances was certainly commendable. Nevertheless, as the facts and the theory of refraction were not thoroughly understood, nor Tycho Brahe’s tables of refraction generally known, pilot Barendz could not be expected to be wiser than his generation.

The startling discovery that in the latitude of 76 deg. the sun reappeared on the 24th January, instead of the 10th February, was destined to awaken commotion throughout the whole scientific world, and has perhaps hardly yet been completely explained.

Page 2183

But the daylight brought no mitigation of their sufferings. The merciless cold continued without abatement, and the sun seemed to mock their misery. The foxes disappeared, and the ice-bears in their stead swarmed around the house, and clambered at night over the roof. Again they constantly fought with them for their lives. Daily the grave question was renewed whether the men should feed on the bears or the bears on the men. On one occasion their dead enemy proved more dangerous to them than in life, for three of their number, who had fed on bear's liver, were nearly poisoned to death. Had they perished, none of the whole party would have ever left Nova Zembla. "It seemed," said the diarist, "that the beasts had smelt out that we meant to go away, and had just begin to have a taste for us."

And thus the days wore on. The hour-glass and the almanac told them that winter had given place to spring, but nature still lay in cold obstruction. One of their number, who had long been ill, died. They hollowed a grave for him in the frozen snow, performing a rude burial service, and singing a psalm; but the cold had nearly made them all corpses before the ceremony was done.

At last, on the 17th April, some of them climbing over the icebergs to the shore found much open sea. They also saw a small bird diving in the water, and looked upon it as a halcyon and harbinger of better fortunes. The open weather continuing, they began to hanker for the fatherland. So they brought the matter, "not mutinously but modestly and reasonably, before William Barendz; that he might suggest it to Heemskerk, for they were all willing to submit to his better judgment." It was determined to wait through the month of May. Should they then be obliged to abandon the ship they were to make the voyage in the two open boats, which had been carefully stowed away beneath the snow. It was soon obvious that the ship was hard and fast, and that she would never float again, except perhaps as a portion of the icebergs in which she had so long been imbedded, when they should be swept off from the shore.

As they now set to work repairing and making ready the frail skiffs which were now their only hope, and supplying them with provisions and even with merchandize from the ship, the ravages made by the terrible winter upon the strength of the men became painfully apparent. But Heemskerk encouraged them to persevere; "for," said he, "if the boats are not got soon under way we must be content to make our graves here as burghers of Nova Zembla."

On the 14th June they launched the boats, and "trusting themselves to God," embarked once more upon the arctic sea. Barendz, who was too ill to walk, together with Claas Anderson, also sick unto death, were dragged to the strand in sleds, and tenderly placed on board.

Barendz had, however, despite his illness, drawn up a triple record of their voyage; one copy being fastened to the chimney of their deserted house, and one being placed in each of the boats. Their voyage was full of danger as they slowly retraced their way

along the track by which they reached the memorable Ice Haven, once more doubling the Cape of Desire and heading for the Point of Consolation—landmarks on their desolate progress, whose nomenclature suggests the immortal apologue so familiar to Anglo-Saxon ears.

Page 2184

Off the Ice-hook, both boats came alongside each other, and Skipper Heemskerk called out to William Barendz to ask how it was with him.

“All right, mate,” replied Barendz, cheerfully; “I hope to be on my legs again before we reach the Ward-huis.” Then’ he begged De Veer to lift him up, that he might look upon the Ice-hook once more. The icebergs crowded around them, drifting this way and that, impelled by mighty currents and tossing on an agitated sea. There was “a hideous groaning and bursting and driving of the ice, and it seemed every moment as if the boats were to be dashed into a hundred pieces.” It was plain that their voyage would now be finished for ever, were it not possible for some one of their number to get upon the solid ice beyond and make fast a line. “But who is to bell the cat?” said Gerrit de Veer, who soon, however, volunteered himself, being the lightest of all. Leaping from one floating block to another at the imminent risk of being swept off into space, he at last reached a stationary island, and fastened his rope. Thus they warped themselves once more into the open sea.

On the 20th June William Barendz lay in the boat studying carefully the charts which they had made of the land and ocean discovered in their voyage. Tossing about in an open skiff upon a polar sea, too weak to sit upright, reduced by the unexampled sufferings of that horrible winter almost to a shadow, he still preserved his cheerfulness, and maintained that he would yet, with God’s help, perform his destined task. In his next attempt he would steer north-east from the North Cape, he said, and so discover the passage.

While he was “thus prattling,” the boatswain of the other boat came on board, and said that Claas Anderson would hold out but little longer.

“Then,” said William Barendz, “methinks I too shall last but a little while. Gerrit, give me to drink.” When he had drunk, he turned his eyes on De Veer and suddenly breathed his last.

Great was the dismay of his companions, for they had been deceived by the dauntless energy of the man, thus holding tenaciously to his great purpose, unbaffled by danger and disappointment, even to the last instant of life. He was their chief pilot and guide, “in whom next to God they trusted.”

And thus the hero, who for vivid intelligence, courage, and perseverance amid every obstacle, is fit to be classed among the noblest of maritime adventurers, had ended his career. Nor was it unmeet that the man who had led those three great although unsuccessful enterprises towards the North Pole, should be laid at last to rest—like the soldier dying in a lost battle—upon the field of his glorious labours.

Nearly six weeks longer they struggled amid tempestuous seas. Hugging the shore, ever in danger of being dashed to atoms by the ice, pursued by their never-failing

enemies the bears, and often sailing through enormous herds of walrusses, which at times gave chase to the boats, they at last reached the Schanshoek on the 28th July.

Page 2185

Here they met with some Russian fishermen, who recognised Heemskerk and De Veer, having seen them on their previous voyage. Most refreshing it was to see other human faces again, after thirteen months' separation from mankind, while the honest Muscovites expressed compassion for the forlorn and emaciated condition of their former acquaintance. Furnished by them with food and wine, the Hollanders sailed in company with the Russians as far as the Waigats.

On the 18th August they made Candenoes, at the mouth of the White Sea, and doubling that cape stood boldly across the gulf for Kildin. Landing on the coast they were informed by the Laps that there were vessels from Holland at Kola.

On the 25th August one of the party, guided by a Lap, set forth on foot for that place. Four days later the guide was seen returning without their comrade; but their natural suspicion was at once disarmed as the good-humoured savage straightway produced a letter which he handed to Heemakerk.

Breaking the seal, the skipper found that his correspondent expressed great surprise at the arrival of the voyagers, as he he had supposed them all to be long since dead. Therefore he was the more delighted with their coming, and promised to be with them soon, bringing with him plenty of food and drink.

The letter was signed—

"By me, *Jan Cornelisz Ryp*."

The occurrence was certainly dramatic, but, as one might think, sufficiently void of mystery. Yet, astonishing to relate, they all fell to pondering who this John Ryp might be who seemed so friendly and sympathetic. It was shrewdly suggested by some that it might perhaps be the sea-captain who had parted company with them off Bear Island fourteen months before in order to sail north by way of Spitzbergen. As his Christian name and surname were signed in full to the letter, the conception did not seem entirely unnatural, yet it was rejected on the ground that they had far more reasons to believe that he had perished than he for accepting their deaths as certain. One might imagine it to have been an every day occurrence for Hollanders to receive letters by a Lapland penny postman in those, desolate regions. At last Heemskerk bethought himself that among his papers were several letters from their old comrade, and, on comparison, the handwriting was found the same as that of the epistle just received. This deliberate avoidance of any hasty jumping at conclusions certainly inspires confidence in the general right accuracy of the adventurers, and we have the better right to believe that on the 24th January the sun's disk was really seen by them in the ice harbour—a fact long disputed by the learned world—when the careful weighing of evidence on the less important matter of Ryp's letter is taken into account.

Meantime while they were slowly admitting the identity of their friend and correspondent, honest John Cornelius Ryp himself arrived—no fantastic fly-away Hollander, but in full flesh and blood, laden with provisions, and greeting them heartily.

Page 2186

He had not pursued his Spitzbergen researches of the previous year, but he was now on a trading voyage in a stout vessel, and he conveyed them all by way of the Ward-huis, where he took in a cargo, back to the fatherland.

They dropped anchor in the Meuse on the 29th October, and on the 1st November arrived at Amsterdam. Here, attired in their robes and caps of white fox-skin which they had worn while citizens of Nova Zembla, they were straightway brought before the magistrates to give an account of their adventures.

They had been absent seventeen months, they had spent a whole autumn, winter, and spring—nearly ten months—under the latitude of 76 deg. in a frozen desert, where no human beings had ever dwelt before, and they had penetrated beyond 80 deg. north—a farther stride towards the pole than had ever been hazarded. They had made accurate geographical, astronomical, and meteorological observations of the regions visited. They had carefully measured latitudes and longitudes and noted the variations of the magnet. They had thoroughly mapped out, described, and designated every cape, island, hook, and inlet of those undiscovered countries, and more than all, they had given a living example of courage, endurance, patience under hardship, perfect discipline, fidelity, to duty, and trust in God, sufficient to inspire noble natures with emulation so long as history can read moral lessons to mankind.

No farther attempt was made to discover the north-eastern passage. The enthusiasm of Barendz had died with him, and it may be said that the stern negation by which this supreme attempt to solve the mystery of the pole was met was its best practical result. Certainly all visions of a circumpolar sea blessed with a gentle atmosphere and eternal tranquillity, and offering a smooth and easy passage for the world's commerce between Europe and Asia, had been for ever dispelled.

The memorable enterprise of Barendz and Heemskerk has been thought worthy of a minute description because it was a voyage of discovery, and because, however barren of immediate practical results it may, seem to superficial eyes, it forms a great landmark in the history of human progress and the advancement of science.

Contemporaneously with these voyages towards the North Pole, the enlightened magistrates of the Netherland municipalities, aided by eminent private citizens, fitted out expeditions in the opposite direction. It was determined to measure strength with the lord of the land and seas, the great potentate against whom these republicans had been so long in rebellion, in every known region of the globe. Both from the newly discovered western world, and from the ancient abodes of oriental civilization, Spanish monopoly had long been furnishing the treasure to support Spanish tyranny, and it was the dearest object of Netherland ambition to confront their enemy in both those regions, and to clip both those overshadowing wings of his commerce at once.

Page 2187

The intelligence, enthusiasm, and tenacity in wrestling against immense obstacles manifested by the young republic at this great expanding era of the world's history can hardly be exaggerated. It was fitting that the little commonwealth, which was foremost among the nations in its hatred of tyranny, its love of maritime adventure, and its aptitude for foreign trade, should take the lead in the great commercial movements which characterized the close of the sixteenth and the commencement of the seventeenth centuries.

While Barendz and Heemskerk were attempting to force the frozen gates which were then supposed to guard the northern highway of commerce, fleets were fitting out in Holland to storm the Southern Pole, or at least to take advantage of the pathways already opened by the genius and enterprise of the earlier navigators of the century. Linschoten had taught his countrymen the value of the technical details of the Indian trade as then understood. The voyages of the brothers Houtmann, 1595-1600, the first Dutch expeditions to reach the East by doubling the Cape of Good Hope, were undertaken according to his precepts, and directed by the practical knowledge obtained by the Houtmanns during a residence in Portugal, but were not signalized by important discoveries. They are chiefly memorable as having laid the foundation of the vast trade out of which the republic was to derive so much material power, while at the same time they mark the slight beginnings of that mighty monopoly, the Dutch East India Company, which was to teach such tremendous lessons in commercial restriction to a still more colossal English corporation, that mercantile tyrant only in our own days overthrown.

At the same time and at the other side of the world seven ships, fitted out from Holland by private enterprise, were forcing their way to the South Sea through the terrible strait between Patagonia and Fire Land; then supposed the only path around the globe. For the tortuous mountain channel, filled with whirlpools and reefs, and the home of perpetual tempest, which had been discovered in the early part of the century by Magellan, was deemed the sole opening pierced by nature through the mighty southern circumpolar continent. A few years later a daring Hollander was to demonstrate the futility of this theory, and to give his own name to a broader pathway, while the stormy headland of South America, around which the great current of universal commerce was thenceforth to sweep, was baptized by the name of the tranquil town in West Friesland where most of his ship's company were born.

Page 2188

Meantime the seven ships under command of Jacob Mahu, Simon de Cordes, and Sebald de Weerdt; were contending with the dangers of the older route. The expedition sailed from Holland in June, 1598, but already the custom was forming itself of directing those navigators of almost unknown seas by explicit instructions from those who remained on shore, and who had never navigated the ocean at all. The consequence on this occasion was that the voyagers towards the Straits of Magellan spent a whole summer on the coast of Africa, amid pestiferous heats and distracting calms, and reached the straits only in April of the following year. Admiral Mahu and a large proportion of the crew had meantime perished of fevers contracted by following the course marked out for them by their employers, and thus diminished in numbers, half-stripped of provisions, and enfeebled by the exhausting atmosphere of the tropics, the survivors were ill prepared to confront the antarctic ordeal which they were approaching. Five months longer the fleet, under command of Admiral de Cordes, who had succeeded to the command, struggled in those straits, where, as if in the home of Eolus, all the winds of heaven seemed holding revel; but indifference to danger, discipline, and devotion to duty marked the conduct of the adventurers, even as those qualities had just been distinguishing their countrymen at the other pole. They gathered no gold, they conquered no kingdoms, they made few discoveries, they destroyed no fleets, yet they were the first pioneers on a path on which thereafter were to be many such achievements by the republic.

At least one heroic incident, which marked their departure from the straits, deserves to be held in perpetual remembrance. Admiral de Cordes raised on the shore, at the western mouth of the channel, a rude memorial with an inscription that the Netherlanders were the first to effect this dangerous passage with a fleet of heavy ships. On the following day, in commemoration of the event, he founded an order of knighthood. The chief officers of the squadron were the knights-commanders, and the most deserving of the crew were the knights-brethren. The members of the fraternity made solemn oath to De Cordes, as general, and to each other, that “by no danger, no necessity, nor by the fear of death, would they ever be moved to undertake anything prejudicial to their honour, to, the welfare of the fatherland, or to the success of the enterprise in which they were engaged; pledging themselves to stake their lives in order, consistently with honour, to inflict every possible damage on the hereditary enemy, and to plant the banner of Holland in all those territories whence the King of Spain gathered the treasures with which he had carried on this perpetual war against the Netherlands.”

Page 2189

Thus was instituted on the desolate shores of Fire Land the order of Knights of the Unchained Lion, with such rude solemnities as were possible in those solitudes. The harbour where the fleet was anchored was called the Chevaliers' Bay, but it would be in vain to look on modern maps for that heroic appellation. Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego know the honest knights of the Unchained Lion no more; yet to an unsophisticated mind no stately brotherhood of sovereigns and patricians seems more thoroughly inspired with the spirit of Christian chivalry than were those weather-beaten adventurers. The reefs and whirlwinds of unknown seas, polar cold, Patagonian giants, Spanish cruisers, a thousand real or fabulous dangers environed them. Their provisions were already running near exhaustion; and they were feeding on raw seal-flesh, on snails and mussels, and on whatever the barren rocks and niggard seas would supply, to save them from absolutely perishing, but they held their resolve to maintain their honour unsullied, to be true to each other and to the republic, and to circumnavigate the globe to seek the proud enemy of their fatherland on every sea, and to do battle with him in every corner of the earth. The world had already seen, and was still to see, how nobly Netherlanders could keep their own. Meantime disaster on disaster descended on this unfortunate expedition. One ship after another melted away and was seen no more. Of all the seven, only one, that of Sebald de Weerdt, ever returned to the shores of Holland. Another reached Japan, and although the crew fell into hostile hands, the great trade with that Oriental empire was begun. In a third—the Blyde Boodachaft, or Good News—Dirk Gerrits sailed nearer the South Pole than man had ever been before, and discovered, as he believed, a portion of the southern continent, which he called, with reason good, Gerrit's Land. The name in course of time faded from maps and charts, the existence of the country was disputed, until more than two centuries later the accuracy of the Dutch commander was recognised. The rediscovered land however no longer bears his name, but has been baptized South Shetland.

Thus before the sixteenth century had closed, the navigators of Holland had reached almost the extreme verge of human discovery at either pole.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Military Operations in the Netherlands—Designs of the Spanish Commander—Siege of Orsoy—Advance upon Rheinberg—Murder of the Count of Broeck and his garrison—-Capture of Rees and Emmerich— Outrages of the Spanish soldiers in the peaceful provinces— Inglorious attempt to avenge the hostilities—State of trade in the Provinces —Naval expedition under van der Does—Arrival of Albert and Isabella at Brussels—-Military operations of Prince Maurice— Negotiation between London and Brussels—-Henry's determination to enact the Council of Trent—His projected

Page 2190

marriage—Queen Elizabeth and Envoy Caron—Peace proposals of Spain to Elizabeth —Conferences at Gertruydenberg—Uncertain state of affairs.

The military operations in the Netherlands during the whole year 1598 were on a comparatively small scale and languidly conducted. The States were exhausted by the demands made upon the treasury, and baffled by the disingenuous policy of their allies. The cardinal-archduke, on the other hand, was occupied with the great events of his marriage, of his father-in-law's death, and of his own succession in conjunction with his wife to the sovereignty of the provinces.

In the autumn, however, the Admiral of Arragon, who, as has been stated, was chief military commander during the absence of Albert, collected an army of twenty-five thousand foot and two thousand cavalry, crossed the Meuse at Roermond, and made his appearance before a small town called Orsoy, on the Rhine. It was his intention to invade the duchies of Clever, Juliers, and Berg, taking advantage of the supposed madness of the duke, and of the Spanish inclinations of his chief counsellors, who constituted a kind of regency. By obtaining possession of these important provinces—-wedged as they were between the territory of the republic, the obedient Netherlands, and Germany—an excellent military position would be gained for making war upon the rebellious districts from the east, for crushing Protestantism in the duchies, for holding important passages of the Rhine, and for circumventing the designs of the Protestant sons-in-law and daughters of the old Duke of Cleves. Of course, it was the determination of Maurice and the States-General to frustrate these operations. German and Dutch Protestantism gave battle on this neutral ground to the omnipotent tyranny of the papacy and Spain.

Unfortunately, Maurice had but a very slender force that autumn at his command. Fifteen hundred horse and six thousand infantry were all his effective troops, and with these he took the field to defend the borders of the republic, and to out-manoeuvre, so far as it might lie in his power, the admiral with his far-reaching and entirely unscrupulous designs.

With six thousand Spanish veterans, two thousand Italians, and many Walloon and German regiments under Bucquoy, Hachincourt, La Bourlotte, Stanley, and Frederic van den Berg, the admiral had reached the frontiers of the mad duke's territory. Orsoy was garrisoned by a small company of "cocks' feathers," or country squires, and their followers.

Presenting himself in person before the walls of the town, with a priest at his right hand and a hangman holding a bundle of halters at the other, he desired to be informed whether the governor would prefer to surrender or to hang with his whole garrison. The cock feathers surrendered. The admiral garrisoned and fortified Orsoy as a basis and

advanced upon Rheinberg, first surprising the Count of Broeck in his castle, who was at once murdered in cold blood with his little garrison.

Page 2191

He took Burik on the 11th October, Rheinberg on the 15th of the same month, and compounded with Wesel for a hundred and twenty thousand florins. Leaving garrisons in these and a few other captured places, he crossed the Lippe, came to Borhold, and ravaged the whole country side. His troops being clamorous for pay were only too eager to levy black-mail on this neutral territory. The submission of the authorities to this treatment brought upon them a reproach of violation of neutrality by the States-General; the Governments of Munster and of the duchies being informed that, if they aided and abetted the one belligerent, they must expect to be treated as enemies by the other.

The admiral took Rees on the 30th October, and Emmerich on the 2nd November—two principal cities of Cleves. On the 8th November he crossed into the territory of the republic and captured Deutekom, after a very short siege. Maurice, by precaution, occupied Sevenaer in Cleves. The prince—whose difficult task was to follow up and observe an enemy by whom he was outnumbered nearly four to one, to harass him by skirmishes, to make forays on his communications, to seize important points before he could reach them, to impose upon him by an appearance of far greater force than the republican army could actually boast, to protect the cities of the frontier like Zutphen, Lochem, and Doesburg, and to prevent him from attempting an invasion of the United Provinces in force, by crossing any of the rivers, either in the autumn or after the winter's ice had made them passable for the Spanish army-succeeded admirably in all his strategy. The admiral never ventured to attack him, for fear of risking a defeat of his whole army by an antagonist whom he ought to have swallowed at a mouthful, relinquished all designs upon the republic, passed into Munster, Cleves, and Berg, and during the whole horrible winter converted those peaceful provinces into a hell. No outrage which even a Spanish army could inflict was spared the miserable inhabitants. Cities and villages were sacked and burned, the whole country was placed under the law of black-mail. The places of worship, mainly Protestant, were all converted at a blow of the sword into Catholic churches. Men were hanged, butchered, tossed in sport from the tops of steeples, burned, and buried alive. Women of every rank were subjected by thousands to outrage too foul and too cruel for any but fiends or Spanish soldiers to imagine.

Such was the lot of thousands of innocent men and women at the hands of Philip's soldiers in a country at peace with Philip, at the very moment when that monarch was protesting with a seraphic smile on his expiring lips that he had never in his whole life done injury to a single human being.

Page 2192

In vain did the victims call aloud upon their sovereign, the Emperor Rudolph. The Spaniards laughed the feeble imperial mandates to scorn, and spurned the word neutrality. “Oh, poor Roman Empire!” cried John Fontanus, “how art thou fallen! Thy protector has become thy despoiler, and, although thy members see this and know it, they sleep through it all. One day they may have a terrible awakening from their slumbers . . . . . The Admiral of Arragon has entirely changed the character of the war, recognizes no neutrality, saying that there must be but one God, one pope, and one king, and that they who object to this arrangement must be extirpated with fire and sword, let them be where they may.”

The admiral, at least, thoroughly respected the claims of the dead Philip to universal monarchy.

Maurice gained as much credit by the defensive strategy through which he saved the republic from the horrors thus afflicting its neighbours, as he had ever done by his most brilliant victories. Queen Elizabeth was enchanted with the prowess of the prince, and with the sagacious administration of those republican magistrates whom she never failed to respect, even when most inclined to quarrel with them. “Never before was it written or heard of,” said the queen, “that so great an extent of country could be defended with so few troops, that an invasion of so superior a hostile force could be prevented, especially as it appeared that all the streams and rivers were frozen.” This, she added, was owing to the wise and far-seeing counsels of the States-General, and to the faithful diligence of their military commander, who now, as she declared, deserved the title of the first captain of all Christendom.

A period of languor and exhaustion succeeded. The armies of the States had dwindled to an effective force of scarcely four or five thousand men, while the new levies came in but slowly. The taxation, on the other hand, was very severe. The quotas for the provinces had risen to the amount of five million eight hundred thousand florins for the year 1599, against an income of four millions six hundred thousand, and this deficit went on increasing, notwithstanding a new tax of one-half per cent. on the capital of all estates above three thousand florins in value, and another of two and a half per cent. on all sales of real property. The finances of the obedient provinces were in a still worse condition, and during the absence of the cardinal-archduke an almost universal mutiny, occasioned by the inability of the exchequer to provide payment for the troops, established itself throughout Flanders and Brabant. There was much recrimination on the subject of the invasion of the Rhenish duchies, and a war of pamphlets and manifestos between the archduke’s Government and the States-General succeeded to those active military operations by which so much misery had been inflicted on the unfortunate inhabitants of that border land. There was a

Page 2193

slight attempt on the part of the Princes of Brunswick, Hesse, and Brandenburg to counteract and to punish the hostilities of the Spanish troops committed upon German soil. An army—very slowly organized, against the wishes of the emperor, the bishops, and the Catholic party—took the field, and made a feeble demonstration upon Rheinberg and upon Rees entirely without result and then disbanded itself ingloriously.

Meantime the admiral had withdrawn from German territory, and was amusing himself with a variety of blows aimed at vital points of the republic. An excursion into the Isle of Bommel was not crowned with much success. The assault on the city was repulsed. The fortress of Crevecoeur was, however, taken, and the fort of St. Andrew constructed —in spite of the attempts of the States to frustrate the design—at a point commanding the course of both the Waal and the Meuse. Having placed a considerable garrison in each of those strongholds, the admiral discontinued his labours and went into winter-quarters.

The States-General for political reasons were urgent that Prince Maurice should undertake some important enterprise, but the stadholder, sustained by the opinion of his cousin Lewis William, resisted the pressure. The armies of the Commonwealth were still too slender in numbers and too widely scattered for active service on a large scale, and the season for active campaigning was wisely suffered to pass without making any attempt of magnitude during the year.

The trade of the provinces, moreover, was very much hampered, and their revenues sadly diminished by the severe prohibitions which had succeeded to the remarkable indulgence hitherto accorded to foreign commerce. Edicts in the name of the King of Spain and of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, forbidding all intercourse between the rebellious provinces and the obedient Netherlands or any of the Spanish possessions, were met by countervailing decrees of the States-General. Free trade with its enemies and with all the world, by means of which the commonwealth had prospered in spite of perpetual war, was now for a season destroyed, and the immediate results were at once visible in its diminished resources. To employ a portion of the maritime energies of the Hollanders and Zeelanders, thus temporarily deprived of a sufficient field, a naval expedition of seventy-five war vessels under Admiral van der Does was fitted out, but met with very trifling success. They attacked and plundered the settlements and forts of the Canary Islands, inflicted much damage on the inhabitants, sailed thence to the Isle of St. Thomas, near the equator, where the towns and villages were sacked and burned, and where a contagious sickness broke out in the fleet, sweeping off in a very brief period a large proportion of the crew. The admiral himself fell a victim to the disease and was buried on the island. The fleet put to sea again under Admiral Storm van Wena, but the sickness

Page 2194

pursued the adventurers on their voyage towards Brazil, one thousand of them dying at sea in fifteen days. At Brazil they accomplished nothing, and, on their homeward voyage, not only the new commander succumbed to the same contagion, but the mortality continued to so extraordinary an extent that, on the arrival of the expedition late in the winter in Holland, there were but two captains left alive, and, in many of the vessels, not more than six sound men to each. Nothing could be more wretched than this termination of a great and expensive voyage, which had occasioned such high hopes throughout the provinces; nothing more dismal than the political atmosphere which surrounded the republic during the months which immediately ensued. It was obvious to Barneveld and the other leading personages, in whose hands was the administration of affairs, that a great military success was absolutely indispensable, if the treacherous cry of peace, when peace was really impossible, should not become universal and fatal.

Meantime affairs were not much more cheerful in the obedient provinces. Archduke Albert arrived with his bride in the early days of September, 1599, at Brussels, and was received with great pomp and enthusiastic rejoicings. When are pomp and enthusiasm not to be obtained by imperial personages, at brief notice and in vast quantities, if managers understand their business? After all, it may be doubted whether the theatrical display was as splendid as that which marked the beginning of the Ernestian era. Schoolmaster Houwaerts had surpassed himself on that occasion, and was no longer capable of deifying the new sovereign as thoroughly as he had deified his brother.

Much real discontent followed close upon the fictitious enthusiasm. The obedient provinces were poor and forlorn, and men murmured loudly at the enormous extravagance of their new master's housekeeping. There were one hundred and fifty mules, and as many horses in their sovereign's stables, while the expense of feeding the cooks; lackeys, pages, and fine gentlemen who swelled the retinue of the great household, was estimated, without, wages or salaries, at two thousand florins a day. Albert had wished to be called a king, but had been unable to obtain the gratification of his wish. He had aspired to be emperor, and he was at least sufficiently imperial in his ideas of expense. The murmurers were loftily rebuked for their complaints, and reminded of the duty of obedient provinces to contribute at least as much for the defence of their masters as the rebels did in maintenance of their rebellion. The provincial estates were summoned accordingly to pay roundly for the expenses of the war as well as of the court, and to enable the new sovereigns to suppress the military mutiny, which amid the enthusiasm greeting their arrival was the one prominent and formidable fact.

Page 2195

The archduke was now thirty-nine years of age, the Infanta Isabella six years younger. She was esteemed majestically beautiful by her courtiers, and Cardinal Bentivoglio, himself a man of splendid intellect, pronounced her a woman of genius, who had grown to be a prodigy of wisdom, under the tuition of her father, the most sagacious statesman of the age. In attachment to the Roman faith and ritual, in superhuman loftiness of demeanour, and in hatred of heretics, she was at least a worthy child of that sainted sovereign. In a moral point of view she was his superior. The archdukes—so Albert and Isabella were always designated—were a singularly attached couple, and their household, if extravagant and imperial, was harmonious. They loved each other—so it was believed—as sincerely as they abhorred heretics and rebels, but it does not appear that they had a very warm affection for their Flemish subjects. Every characteristic of their court was Spanish. Spanish costume, Spanish manners, the Spanish tongue, were almost exclusively predominant, and although the festivals, dances, banquets, and tourneys, were all very magnificent, the prevailing expression of the Brabantine capital resembled that of a Spanish convent, so severely correct, so stately, and so grim, was the demeanour of the court.

The earliest military operations of the stadholder in the first year of the new century were successful. Partly by menace; but more effectually by judicious negotiation. Maurice recovered Crevecoeur, and obtained the surrender of St. Andrew, the fort which the admiral had built the preceding year in honour of Albert's uncle. That ecclesiastic, with whom Mendoza had wrangled most bitterly during the whole interval of Albert's absence, had already taken his departure for Rome, where he soon afterwards died. The garrisons of the forts, being mostly Walloon soldiers, forsook the Spanish service for that of the States, and were banded together in a legion some twelve hundred strong, which became known as the "New Beggars," and were placed under the nominal command of Frederick Henry of Nassau, youngest child of William the Silent. The next military event of the year was a mad combat, undertaken by formal cartel, between Breaute, a young Norman noble in the service of the republic, and twenty comrades, with an equal number of Flemish warriors from the obedient provinces, under Grobbendonck. About one half of the whole number were killed, including the leaders, but the encounter, although exciting much interest at the time, had of course no permanent importance.

There was much negotiation, informal and secret, between Brussels and London during this and a portion of the following year. Elizabeth, naturally enough, was weary of the war, but she felt, after all, as did the Government of France, that a peace between the United Netherlands and Spain would have for its result the restoration of the authority of his most Catholic Majesty over all the provinces. The statesmen

Page 2196

of France and England, like most of the politicians of Europe, had but slender belief in the possibility of a popular government, and doubted therefore the continued existence of the newly-organized republic. Therefore they really deprecated the idea of a peace which should include the States, notwithstanding that from time to time the queen or some of her counsellors had so vehemently reproached the Netherlanders with their unwillingness to negotiate. "At the first recognition that these people should make of the mere shadow of a prince," said Buzanval, the keenly observing and experienced French envoy at the Hague, "they lose the form they have. All the blood of the body would flow to the head, and the game would be who should best play the valet. . . . The house of Nassau would lose its credit within a month in case of peace." As such statesmen could not imagine a republic, they ever dreaded the restoration in the United Provinces of the subverted authority of Spain.

France and England were jealous of each other, and both were jealous of Spain. Therefore even if the republican element, the strength and endurance of which was so little suspected, had been as trifling a factor in the problem, as was supposed, still it would have been difficult for any one of these powers to absorb the United Netherlands. As for France, she hardly coveted their possession. "We ought not to flatter ourselves," said Buzanval, "that these maritime peoples will cast themselves one day into our nets, nor do I know that it would be advisable to pull in the net if they should throw themselves in."

Henry was full of political schemes and dreams at this moment—as much as his passion for Mademoiselle d'Entraigues, who had so soon supplanted the image of the dead Gabrielle in his heart, would permit. He was very well disposed to obtain possession of the Spanish Netherlands, whenever he should see his way to such an acquisition, and was even indulging in visions of the imperial crown.

He was therefore already, and for the time at least, the most intense of papists. He was determined to sacrifice the Huguenot chiefs, and introduce the Council of Trent, in order, as he told Du Plessis, that all might be Christians. If he still retained any remembrance of the ancient friendship between himself and the heretic republic, it was not likely to exhibit itself, notwithstanding his promises and his pecuniary liabilities to her, in anything more solid than words. "I repeat it," said the Dutch envoy at Paris; "this court cares nothing for us, for all its cabals tend to close union with Rome, whence we can expect nothing but foul weather. The king alone has any memory of our past services." But imperturbable and self-confident as ever, Henry troubled himself little with fears in regard to the papal supremacy, even when his Parliament professed great anxiety in regard to the consequences of the Council of Trent, if not under him yet under his successors.

Page 2197

“I will so bridle the popes,” said he, cheerfully, “that they will never pass my restrictions. My children will be still more virtuous and valiant than I. If I have none, then the devil take the hindmost. Nevertheless I choose that the council shall be enacted. I desire it more ardently than I pressed the edict for the Protestants.” Such being the royal humour at the moment, it may well be believed that Duplessis Mornay would find but little sunshine from on high on the occasion of his famous but forgotten conferences with Du Perron, now archbishop of Evreux, before the king and all the court at Fontainebleau. It was natural enough that to please the king the king’s old Huguenot friend should be convicted of false citations from the fathers; but it would seem strange, were the motives unknown, that Henry should have been so intensely interested in this most arid and dismal of theological controversies. Yet those who had known and observed the king closely for thirty years, declared that he had never manifested so much passion, neither on the eve of battles nor of amorous assignations, as he then did for the demolition of Duplessis and his deductions. He had promised the Nuncius that the Huguenot should be utterly confounded, and with him the whole fraternity, “for,” said the king, “he has wickedly and impudently written against the pope, to whom I owe as much as I do to God.”

These were not times in which the Hollanders, battling as stoutly against Spain and the pope as they had done during the years when the republic stood shoulder to shoulder with Henry the Huguenot, could hope for aid and comfort from their ancient ally.

It is very characteristic of that age of dissimulation and of reckless political gambling, that at the very moment when Henry’s marriage with Marie de Medicis was already arranged, and when that princess was soon expected in Lyons, a cabal at the king’s court was busy with absurd projects to marry their sovereign to the Infanta of Spain. It is true that the Infanta was already the wife of the cardinal-archduke, but it was thought possible—for reasons divulged through the indiscretions or inventions of the father confessor—to obtain the pope’s dispensation on the ground of the nullity of the marriage. Thus there were politicians at the French court seriously occupied in an attempt to deprive the archduke of his wife, of his Netherland provinces, and of the crown of, the holy Roman empire, which he still hoped to inherit. Yet the ink was scarcely dry with which Henry had signed the treaty of amity with Madrid and Brussels.

The Queen of England, on the other hand—although often listening to secret agents from Brussels and Madrid who offered peace, and although perfectly aware that the great abject of Spain in securing peace with England was to be able to swoop down at once upon the republic, thus deprived of any allies was beside herself with rage, whenever she suspected, with or without reason, that Brussels or Madrid had been sending peace emissaries to the republic.

Page 2198

“Before I could get into the room,” said Caron, on one such occasion, “she called out, ’Have you not always told me that the States never could, would, or should treat for peace with the enemy? Yet now it is plain enough that they have proceeded only too far in negotiations.’ And she then swore a big oath that if the States were to deceive her she meant to take such vengeance that men should talk of it for ever and ever.” It was a long time before the envoy could induce her to listen to a single word, although the, perfect sincerity of the States in their attitude to the queen and to Spain was unquestionable, and her ill-humour on the subject continued long after it had been demonstrated how much she had been deceived.

Yet it was impossible in the nature of things for the States to play her false, even if no reliance were to be placed on their sagacity and their honour. Even the recent naval expedition of the republic against the distant possessions of Spain—which in its result had caused so much disappointment to the States, and cost them so many lives, including that of the noble admiral whom every sailor in the Netherlands adored had been of immense advantage to England. The queen acknowledged that the Dutch Navy had averted the storm which threatened to descend upon her kingdom out of Spain, the Spanish ships destined for the coast of Ireland having been dispersed and drawn to the other aide of the world by these demonstrations of her ally. For this she vowed that she would be eternally grateful, and she said as much in “letters full of sugar and honey”—according to the French envoy—which she sent to the States by Sir Francis Vere. She protested, in short, that she had been better and more promptly served in her necessities by the Netherlands than by her own subjects.

All this sugar and honey however did not make the mission of Envoy Edmonds less bitter to the States. They heard that he was going about through half the cities of the obedient Netherlands in a sort of triumphal procession, and it was the general opinion of the politicians and financiers of the continent that peace between Spain and England was as good as made. Naturally therefore, notwithstanding the exuberant expressions of gratitude on the part of Elizabeth, the republican Government were anxious to know what all this parleying meant. They could not believe that people would make a raree-show of the English envoy except for sufficient reason. Caron accordingly presented himself before the queen, with respectful inquiries on the subject. He found her in appearance very angry, not with him, but with Edmonds, from whom she had received no advices. “I don’t know what they are doing with him,” said her Majesty, “I hear from others that they are ringing the church bells wherever he goes, and that they have carried him through a great many more places than was necessary. I suppose that they think him a monster, and they are carrying him about to exhibit him. All this is done,” she continued, “to throw dust in the eyes of the poor people, and to put it into their heads that the Queen of England is suing for peace, which is very wide of the mark.”

Page 2199

She further observed that, as the agents of the Spanish Government had been perpetually sending to her, she had been inclined once for all to learn what they had to say. Thus she should make manifest to all the world that she was not averse to a treaty such as might prove a secure peace for herself and for Christendom; otherwise not.

It subsequently appeared that what they had to say was that if the queen would give up to the Spanish Government the cautionary towns which she held as a pledge for her advances to the republic, forbid all traffic and intercourse between her subjects and the Netherlanders, and thenceforth never allow an Englishman to serve in or with the armies of the States, a peace might be made.

Surely it needed no great magnanimity on the queen's part to spurn such insulting proposals, the offer of which showed her capable, in the opinion of Verreycken, the man who made them, of sinking into the very depths of dishonour. And she did spurn them. Surely, for the ally, the protrectress, the grateful friend of the republic, to give its chief seaports to its arch-enemy, to shut the narrow seas against its ships, so that they never more could sail westward, and to abandon its whole population to their fate, would be a deed of treachery such as history, full of human baseness as it is, has rarely been obliged to record.

Before these propositions had been made by Verreycken Elizabeth protested that, should he offer them, she would send him home with such an answer that people should talk of it for some time to come. "Before I consent to a single one of those points," said the queen, "I wish myself taken from this world. Until now I have been a princess of my word, who would rather die than so falsely deceive such good people as the States." And she made those protestations with such expression and attitude that the Dutch envoy believed her incapable at that moment of dissimulation.

Nevertheless her indignation did not carry her so far as to induce her to break off the negotiations. The answer of which mankind was to talk in time to come was simply that she would not send her commissioners to treat for peace unless the Spanish Government should recede from the three points thus offered by Verreycken. This certainly was not a very blasting reply, and the Spanish agents were so far from losing heart in consequence that the informal conferences continued for a long time, much to the discomfort of the Netherlanders.

For more than an hour and a half on one occasion of an uncommonly hot afternoon in April did Noel de Caron argue with her Majesty against these ill-boding negotiations, and ever and anon, oppressed by the heat of the weather and the argument, did the queen wander from one room of the palace to the other in search of cool air, still bidding the envoy follow her footsteps. "We are travelling about like pilgrims," said Elizabeth, "but what is life but a pilgrimage?"

Page 2200

Yet, notwithstanding this long promenade and these moral reflections, Caron could really not make out at the end of the interview whether or no she intended to send her commissioners. At last he asked her the question bluntly.

“Hallo! Hallo!” she replied. “I have only spoken to my servant once, and I must obtain more information and think over the matter before I decide. Be assured however that I shall always keep you informed of the progress of the negotiations, and do you inform the States that they may build upon me as upon a rock.”

After the envoy had taken his leave, the queen said to him in Latin, “Modicae fidei quare dubitasti?” Caron had however so nearly got out of the door that he did not hear this admonition.

This the queen perceived, and calling him by name repeated, “O Caron! modicae fidei quare dubitasti?” adding the injunction that he should remember this dictum, for he well knew what she meant by it.

Thus terminated the interview, while the negotiations with Spain, not for lack of good-will on her part, and despite the positive assertions to the contrary of Buzanval and other foreign agents, were destined to come to nothing.

At a little later period, at the time of certain informal and secret conferences at Gertruydenberg, the queen threatened the envoy with her severest displeasure, should the States dare to treat with Spain without her permission. “Her Majesty called out to me,” said Caron, “as soon as I entered the room, that I had always assured her that the States neither would nor could make peace with the enemy. Yet it was now looking very differently, she continued, swearing with a mighty oath that if the States should cheat her in that way she meant to revenge herself in such a fashion that men would talk of it through all eternity.”

The French Government was in a similar state of alarm in consequence of the Gertruydenberg conferences.

The envoy of the archdukes, Marquis d’Havre, reported on the other hand that all attempts to negotiate had proved fruitless, that Olden-Barneveld, who spoke for all his colleagues, was swollen with pride, and made it but too manifest that the States had no intention to submit to any foreign jurisdiction, but were resolved to maintain themselves in the form of a republic.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

Children who had never set foot on the shore
Done nothing so long as aught remained to do

Fed on bear’s liver, were nearly poisoned to death
Inhabited by the savage tribes called Samoyedes

Etext editor’s bookmarks, *entire* 1590-99 *united Netherlands*:

A pusillanimous peace, always possible at any period
A despot really keeps no accounts, nor need to do so
Accustomed to the faded gallantries
Alexander’s exuberant discretion

Page 2201

All Italy was in his hands
All fellow-worms together
Allow her to seek a profit from his misfortune
Anatomical study of what has ceased to exist
Artillery
At length the twig was becoming the tree
Auction sales of judicial ermine
Being the true religion, proved by so many testimonies
Beneficent and charitable purposes (War)
Bomb-shells were not often used although known for a century
Burning of Servetus at Geneva
Certainly it was worth an eighty years' war
Chief seafaring nations of the world were already protestant
Children who had never set foot on the shore
Chronicle of events must not be anticipated
Conceding it subsequently, after much contestation
Conformity of Governments to the principles of justice
Considerable reason, even if there were but little justice
Constant vigilance is the price of liberty
Continuing to believe himself invincible and infallible
Court fatigue, to scorn pleasure
Deal with his enemy as if sure to become his friend
Decline a bribe or interfere with the private sale of places
Disciple of Simon Stevinus
Divine right of kings
Done nothing so long as aught remained to do
Eat their own children than to forego one high mass
Ever met disaster with so cheerful a smile
Every one sees what you seem, few perceive what you are
Evil has the advantage of rapidly assuming many shapes
Famous fowl in every pot
Fed on bear's liver, were nearly poisoned to death
Fellow worms had been writhing for half a century in the dust
Fled from the land of oppression to the land of liberty
For his humanity towards the conquered garrisons (censured)
For us, looking back upon the Past, which was then the Future
French seem madmen, and are wise
Future world as laid down by rival priesthoods
German Highland and the German Netherland
God of wrath who had decreed the extermination of all unbeliever

Had industry been honoured instead of being despised
Hanging of Mary Dyer at Boston
Hardly an inch of French soil that had not two possessors
He spent more time at table than the Bearnese in sleep
Henry the Huguenot as the champion of the Council of Trent
Highest were not necessarily the least slimy
His invectives were, however, much stronger than his arguments
Historical scepticism may shut its eyes to evidence
History is but made up of a few scattered fragments
History is a continuous whole of which we see only fragments
Holy institution called the Inquisition
Hugo Grotius
Humanizing effect of science upon the barbarism of war
Idle, listless, dice-playing, begging, filching vagabonds

Page 2202

Ignorance is the real enslaver of mankind
Imagining that they held the world’s destiny in their hands
Imposed upon the multitudes, with whom words were things
Impossible it was to invent terms of adulation too gross
In times of civil war, to be neutral is to be nothing
Inevitable fate of talking castles and listening ladies
Infinite capacity for pecuniary absorption
Inhabited by the savage tribes called Samoyedes
Innocent generation, to atone for the sins of their forefathers
Intelligence, science, and industry were accounted degrading
Invaluable gift which no human being can acquire, authority
King was often to be something much less or much worse
King had issued a general repudiation of his debts
Labour was esteemed dishonourable
Leading motive with all was supposed to be religion
Life of nations and which we call the Past
Little army of Maurice was becoming the model for Europe
Loud, nasal, dictatorial tone, not at all agreeable
Luxury had blunted the fine instincts of patriotism
Magnificent hopefulness
Man had no rights at all He was property
Maritime heretics
Matters little by what name a government is called
Meet around a green table except as fencers in the field
Mondragon was now ninety-two years old
Moral nature, undergoes less change than might be hoped
More catholic than the pope
Myself seeing of it methinketh that I dream
Names history has often found it convenient to mark its epochs
National character, not the work of a few individuals
Nothing cheap, said a citizen bitterly, but sermons
Obscure were thought capable of dying natural deaths
Octogenarian was past work and past mischief
Often necessary to be blind and deaf
One-third of Philip’s effective navy was thus destroyed
Past was once the Present, and once the Future
Patriotism seemed an unimaginable idea
Peace would be destruction
Philip *ii*. gave the world work enough
Picturesqueness of crime

Placid unconsciousness on his part of defeat
Plea of infallibility and of authority soon becomes ridiculous
Portion of these revenues savoured much of black-mail
Proceeds of his permission to eat meat on Fridays
Rarely able to command, having never learned to obey
Religion was rapidly ceasing to be the line of demarcation
Repudiation of national debts was never heard of before
Rich enough to be worth robbing
Righteous to kill their own children
Road to Paris lay through the gates of Rome
Royal plans should be enforced adequately or abandoned entirely
Sacked and drowned ten infant princes
Sages of every generation, read the future like a printed scroll

Page 2203

Seems but a change of masks, of costume, of phraseology
Self-assertion—the healthful but not engaging attribute
Selling the privilege of eating eggs upon fast-days
Sentiment of Christian self-complacency
Sewers which have ever run beneath decorous Christendom
Shift the mantle of religion from one shoulder to the other
Slain four hundred and ten men with his own hand
So often degenerated into tyranny (Calvinism)
Some rude lessons from that vigorous little commonwealth
Spain was governed by an established terrorism
Spaniards seem wise, and are madmen
Strangled his nineteen brothers on his accession
Such a crime as this had never been conceived (bankruptcy)
That unholy trinity—Force; Dogma, and Ignorance
The history of the Netherlands is history of liberty
The great ocean was but a Spanish lake
The divine speciality of a few transitory mortals
The Alcoran was less cruel than the Inquisition
The nation which deliberately carves itself in pieces
The most thriving branch of national industry (Smuggler)
The record of our race is essentially unwritten
There are few inventions in morals
They liked not such divine right nor such gentle-mindedness
They had come to disbelieve in the mystery of kingcraft
Thirty thousand masses should be said for his soul
Thirty-three per cent. interest was paid (per month)
Those who argue against a foregone conclusion
Three or four hundred petty sovereigns (of Germany)
To attack England it was necessary to take the road of Ireland
Toil and sacrifices of those who have preceded us
Tranquil insolence
Under the name of religion (so many crimes)
Unproductive consumption was alarmingly increasing
Upon their knees, served the queen with wine
Use of the spade
Utter want of adaptation of his means to his ends
Utter disproportions between the king’s means and aims
Valour on the one side and discretion on the other
Walk up and down the earth and destroy his fellow-creatures
We have the reputation of being a good housewife

Weapons
Whether murders or stratagems, as if they were acts of virtue
While one's friends urge moderation
Whole revenue was pledged to pay the interest, on his debts
Wish to sell us the bear-skin before they have killed the bear
Worn nor caused to be worn the collar of the serf
Wrath of that injured personage as he read such libellous truths

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

Volume *iv*.

Motley's history of the Netherlands, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 84

Page 2204

History of the United Netherlands, 1600-1609, Complete

CHAPTER, XXXVIII.

Military events—Aggressive movement of the Netherlanders—State of the Archdukes provinces—Mutiny of the Spanish forces—Proposed invasion of Flanders by the States-General—Disembarkation of the troops on the Spanish coasts—Capture of Oudenburg and other places —Surprise of Nieuport—Conduct of the Archduke—Oudenburg and the other forts re-taken—Dilemma of the States' army—Attack of the Archduke on Count Ernest's cavalry—Panic and total overthrow of the advance-guard of the States' army—-Battle of Nieuport—Details of the action—Defeat of the Spanish army—Results of the whole expedition.

The effect produced in the republic by the defensive and uneventful campaigning of the year 1599 had naturally been depressing. There was murmuring at the vast amount of taxation, especially at the new imposition of one-half per cent. upon all property, and two-and-a-half per cent. on all sales, which seemed to produce so few results. The successful protection of the Isle of Bommel and the judicious purchase of the two forts of Crevecoeur and St. Andrew; early in the following year, together with their garrisons, were not military events of the first magnitude, and were hardly enough to efface the mortification felt at the fact that the enemy had been able so lately to construct one of those strongholds within the territory of the commonwealth.

It was now secretly determined to attempt an aggressive movement on a considerable scale, and to carry the war once for all into the heart of the obedient provinces. It was from Flanders that the Spanish armies drew a great portion of their supplies. It was by the forts erected on the coast of Flanders in the neighbourhood of Ostend that this important possession of the States was rendered nearly valueless. It was by privateers swarming from the ports of Flanders, especially from Nieuport and Dunkirk, that the foreign trade of the republic was crippled, and its intercommunications by river and estuary rendered unsafe. Dunkirk was simply a robbers' cave, a station from which an annual tax was levied upon the commerce of the Netherlands, almost sufficient, had it been paid to the national treasury instead of to the foreign freebooters, to support the expenses of a considerable army.

On the other hand the condition of the archdukes seemed deplorable. Never had mutiny existed before in so well-organised and definite a form even in the Spanish Netherlands.

Besides those branches of the "Italian republic," which had been established in the two fortresses of Crevecoeur and St. Andrew, and which had already sold themselves to the States, other organisations quite as formidable existed in various other portions of the obedient provinces. Especially at Diest and Thionville the rebellious Spaniards and

Italians were numbered by thousands, all veterans, well armed, fortified in strong cities; and supplying themselves with perfect regularity by contributions levied upon the peasantry, obeying their Eletto and other officers with exemplary promptness; and paying no more heed to the edicts or the solicitations of the archduke than if he had been the Duke of Muscovy.

Page 2205

The opportunity seemed tempting to strike a great blow. How could Albert and Isabella, with an empty exchequer and a mutinous army, hope either to defend their soil from attack or to aim a counter blow at the republic, even if, the republic for a season should be deprived of a portion of its defenders?

The reasoning was plausible, the prize tempting. The States-General, who habitually discountenanced rashness, and were wont to impose superfluous restraints upon the valiant but discreet Lewis William, and upon the deeply pondering but energetic Maurice, were now grown as ardent as they had hitherto been hesitating. In the early days of June it was determined in secret session to organize a great force in Holland and Zeeland, and to embark suddenly for Nieuport, to carry that important position by surprise or assault, and from that basis to redeem Dunkirk. The possession of these two cities, besides that of Ostend, which had always been retained by the Republic, would ensure the complete subjugation of Flanders. The trifling force of two thousand men under Rivas—all that the archduke then had in that province—and the sconces and earthworks which had been constructed around Ostend to impede the movements and obstruct the supplies of the garrison, would be utterly powerless to prevent the consummation of the plan. Flanders once subjugated, it would not be long before the Spaniards were swept from the obedient Netherlands as thoroughly as they had been from the domains of the commonwealth, and all the seventeen provinces, trampling out every vestige of a hated foreign tyranny, would soon take their natural place as states of a free; prosperous, and powerful union.

But Maurice of Nassau did not share the convictions of the States-General. The unwonted ardour of Barneveld did not inflame his imagination. He urged that the enterprise was inexcusably rash; that its execution would require the whole army of the States, except the slender garrisons absolutely necessary to protect important places from surprise; that a defeat would not be simply disaster, but annihilation; that retreat without absolute triumph would be impossible, and that amid such circumstances the archduke, in spite of his poverty and the rebellious condition of his troops, would doubtless assemble a sufficient force to dispute with reasonable prospects of victory, this invasion of his territory.

Sir Francis Vere, too, was most decidedly opposed to the plan. He pointed out with great clearness its dangerous and possibly fatal character; assuring the Staten that, within a fortnight after the expedition had begun, the archduke would follow upon their heels with an army fully able to cope with the best which they could put into the field. But besides this experienced and able campaigner, who so thoroughly shared the opinions of Prince Maurice, every military man in the provinces of any consideration, was opposed to, the scheme. Especially Lewis William—than

Page 2206

whom no more sagacious military critic or accomplished strategist existed in Europe, denounced it with energy and even with indignation. It was, in the opinion of the young stadholder of Friesland, to suspend the existence of the whole commonwealth upon a silken thread. Even success, he prophesied, would bring no permanent, fruits, while the consequences of an overthrow, were fearful to contemplate. The immediate adherents and most trusted counsellors of William Lewis were even more unmeasured in their denunciations than he was himself. "'Tis all the work of Barneveld and the long-gowns," cried Everard van Reyd. "We are led into a sack from which there is no extrication. We are marching to the Caudine Forks."

Certainly it is no small indication of the vast influence and the indomitable resolution of Barneveld that he never faltered in this storm of indignation. The Advocate had made up his mind to invade Flanders and to capture Nieuport; and the decree accordingly went forth, despite all opposition. The States-General were sovereign, and the Advocate and the States-General were one.

It was also entirely characteristic of Maurice that he should submit his judgment on this great emergency to that of Olden-Barneveld. It was difficult for him to resist the influence of the great intellect to which he had always willingly deferred in affairs of state, and from which; even in military matters, it was hardly possible for him to escape. Yet in military matters Maurice was a consummate professor, and the Advocate in comparison but a school-boy.

The ascendency of Barneveld was the less wholesome, therefore, and it might have been better had the stadholder manifested more resolution. But Maurice had not a resolute character. Thorough soldier as he was, he was singularly vacillating, at times almost infirm of purpose, but never before in his career had this want of decision manifested itself in so striking a manner.

Accordingly the States-General, or in other words John of Olden-Barneveld proposed to invade Flanders, and lay siege, to Nieuport. The States-General were sovereign, and Maurice bowed to their authority. After the matter had been entirely decided upon the state-council was consulted, and the state-council attempted no opposition to the project. The preparations were made with matchless energy and extraordinary secrecy. Lewis William, who meanwhile was to defend the eastern frontier of the republic against any possible attack, sent all the troops that it was possible to spare; but he sent, them with a heavy heart. His forebodings were dismal. It seemed to him that all was about to be staked upon a single cast of the dice. Moreover it was painful to him while the terrible game, was playing to be merely a looker on and a prophet of evil from a distance, forbidden to contribute by his personal skill and experience to a fortunate result. Hohenlo too was appointed to protect the southern border, and was excluded from, all participation in the great expedition.

Page 2207

As to the enemy, such rumors as might came to them from day to day of mysterious military, preparations on the part of the rebels only served to excite suspicion in others directions. The archduke was uneasy in, regard to the Rhine and the Gueldrian; quarter, but never dreamt of a hostile descent upon the Flemish coast.

Meantime, on the 19th June Maurice of Nassau made his appearance at Castle Rammekens, not far from Flushing, at the mouth of the Scheld, to superintend the great movement. So large a fleet as was there assembled had never before been seen or heard of in Christendom. Of war-ships, transports, and flat-bottomed barges there were at least thirteen hundred. Many eye-witnesses, who counted however with their imaginations, declared that there were in all at least three thousand vessels, and the statement has been reproduced by grave and trustworthy chroniclers. As the number of troops to be embarked upon the enterprise certainly did not exceed fourteen thousand, this would have been an allowance of one vessel to every five soldiers, besides the army munitions and provisions—a hardly reasonable arrangement.

Twelve thousand infantry and sixteen hundred cavalry, the consummate flower of the States' army, all well-paid, well-clad, well-armed, well-disciplined veterans, had been collected in this place of rendezvous and were ready to embark. It would be unjust to compare the dimensions of this force and the preparations for ensuring the success of the enterprise with the vast expeditions and gigantic armaments of later times, especially with the tremendous exhibitions of military and naval energy with which our own civil war has made us familiar. Maurice was an adept in all that science and art had as yet bequeathed to humanity for the purpose of human' destruction, but the number of his troops was small compared to the mighty hosts which the world since those days has seen embattled. War, as a trade, was then less easily learned. It was a guild in which apprenticeship was difficult, and in which enrolment was usually for life. A little republic of scarce three million souls, which could keep always on foot a regular well-appointed army of twenty-five thousand men and a navy of one or two hundred heavily armed cruisers, was both a marvel and a formidable element in the general polity of the world. The lesson to be derived both in military and political philosophy from the famous campaign of Nieuport does not depend for its value on the numbers of the ships or soldiers engaged in the undertaking. Otherwise, and had it been merely a military expedition like a thousand others which have been made and forgotten, it would not now deserve more than a momentary attention. But the circumstances were such as to make the issue of the impending battle one of the most important in human history. It was entirely possible that an overwhelming defeat of the republican forces on this foreign expedition would bring with it an absolute destruction of the republic, and place Spain once more in possession of the heretic "islands," from which basis she would menace the very existence of England more seriously than she had ever done before. Who could measure the consequences to Christendom of such a catastrophe?

Page 2208

The distance from the place where the fleet and army were assembled to Nieuport—the objective point of the enterprise—was but thirty-five miles as the crow flies. And the crow can scarcely fly in a straighter line than that described by the coast along which the ships were to shape their course.

And here it is again impossible not to reflect upon the change which physical science has brought over the conduct of human affairs. We have seen in a former chapter a most important embassy sent forth from the States for the purpose of preventing the consummation of a peace between their ally and their enemy. Celerity was a vital element in the success of such a mission; for the secret negotiations which it was intended to impede were supposed to be near their termination. Yet months were consumed in a journey which in our day would have been accomplished in twenty-four hours. And now in this great military expedition the essential and immediate purpose was to surprise a small town almost within sight from the station at which the army was ready to embark. Such a midsummer voyage in this epoch of steam-tugs and transports would require but a few hours. Yet two days long the fleet lay at anchor while a gentle breeze blew persistently from the south-west. As there seemed but little hope that the wind would become more favourable, and as the possibility of surprise grew fainter with every day's delay, it was decided to make a landing upon the nearest point of Flemish coast placed by circumstances within their reach: Count Ernest of Nassau; with the advance-guard, was accordingly, despatched on the 21st June to the neighbourhood of the Sas-of Ghent, where he seized a weakly guarded fort, called Philippine, and made thorough preparations, for the arrival of the whole army. On the following day the rest of the troops made their appearance, and in the course of five hours were safely disembarked.

The army, which consisted of Zeelanders, Frisians, Hollanders, Walloons, Germans, English, and Scotch, was divided into three corps. The advance was under the command of Count Ernest, the battalia under that of Count George Everard Solms, while the rear-guard during the march was entrusted to that experienced soldier Sir Francis Vere. Besides Prince Maurice, there were three other members of the house of Nassau serving in the expedition—his half-brother Frederic Henry, then a lad of sixteen, and the two brothers of the Frisian stadholder, Ernest and Lewis Gunther, whom Lewis William had been so faithfully educating in the arts of peace and war both by precept and example. Lewis Gunther, still a mere youth, but who had been the first to scale the fort of Cadiz, and to plant on its height the orange banner of the murdered rebel, and whose gallantry during the whole expedition had called forth the special commendations of Queen Elizabeth—expressed in energetic and affectionate terms to his father—now commanded all the cavalry. Certainly if the doctrine

Page 2209

of primordial selection could ever be accepted among human creatures, the race of Nassau at that day might have seemed destined to be chiefs of the Netherland soil. Old John of Nassau, ardent and energetic as ever in the cause of the religious reformation of Germany and the liberation of Holland, still watched from his retirement the progress of the momentous event. Four of his brethren, including the great founder of the republic, had already laid down their lives for the sacred cause. His son Philip had already fallen under the banner in the fight of Bislich, and three other sons were serving the republic day and night, by sea and land, with sword, and pen, and purse, energetically, conscientiously, and honourably. Of the stout hearts and quick intellects on which the safety of the commonwealth then depended, none was more efficient or true than the accomplished soldier and statesman Lewis William. Thoroughly disapproving of the present invasion of Flanders, he was exerting himself, now that it had been decided upon by his sovereigns the States-Generals, with the same loyalty as that of Maurice, to bring it to a favourable issue, although not personally engaged in the adventure.

So soon as the troops had been landed the vessels were sent off as expeditiously as possible, that none might fall into, the enemy's hands; the transports under a strong convoy of war-ships having been directed to proceed as fast as the wind would permit in the direction of Nieuport. The march then began. On the 23rd they advanced a league and halted for the night at Assenede. The next day brought them three leagues further, to a place called Eckerloo. On the 25th they marched to Male, a distance of three leagues and a half, passing close to the walls of Bruges, in which they had indulged faint hopes of exciting an insurrection, but obtained nothing but a feeble cannonade from the fortifications which did no damage except the killing of one muleteer. The next night was passed at Jabbeke, four leagues from Male, and on the 27th, after marching another league, they came before the fort of Oudenburg.

This important post on the road which the army would necessarily traverse in coming from the interior to the coast was easily captured and then strongly garrisoned. Maurice with the main army spent the two following days at the fortress, completing his arrangements. Solms was sent forward to seize the sconces and redoubts of the enemy around Ostend, at Breedene, Snaaskerk, Plassendaal, and other points, and especially to occupy the important fort called St. Albert, which was in the downs at about a league from that city. All this work was thoroughly accomplished; little or no resistance having been made to the occupation of these various places. Meantime the States-General, who at the special request of Maurice were to accompany the expedition in order to observe the progress of events for which they were entirely responsible, and to aid the army when necessary by their advice and

Page 2210

co-operation, had assembled to the number of thirteen in Ostend. Solms having strengthened the garrison of that place then took up his march along the beach to Nieuport. During the progress of the army through Holland and Zeeland towards its place of embarkation there had been nothing but dismal prognostics, with expressions of muttered indignation, wherever the soldiers passed. It seemed to the country people, and to the inhabitants of every town and village, that their defenders were going to certain destruction; that the existence of the commonwealth was hanging by a thread soon to be snapped asunder. As the forces subsequently marched from the Sas of Ghent towards the Flemish coast there was no rising of the people in their favour, and although Maurice had issued distinct orders that the peasantry were to be dealt with gently and justly, yet they found neither peasants nor villagers to deal with at all. The whole population on their line of march had betaken themselves to the woods, except the village sexton of Jabbeke and his wife, who were too old to run. Lurking in the thickets and marshes, the peasants fell upon all stragglers from the army and murdered them without mercy—so difficult is it in times of civil war to make human brains pervious to the light of reason. The stadholder and his soldiers came to liberate their brethren of the same race, and speaking the same language, from abject submission to a foreign despotism. The Flemings had but to speak a word, to lift a finger, and all the Netherlands, self-governed, would coalesce into one independent confederation of States, strong enough to defy all the despots of Europe. Alas! the benighted victims of superstition hugged their chains, and preferred the tyranny under which their kindred had been tortured, burned, and buried alive for half-a-century long, to the possibility of a single Calvinistic conventicle being opened in any village of obedient Flanders. So these excellent children of Philip and the pope, whose language was as unintelligible to them as it was to Peruvians or Iroquois, lay in wait for the men who spoke their own mother tongue, and whose veins were filled with their own blood, and murdered them, as a sacred act of duty. Retaliation followed as a matter of course, so that the invasion of Flanders, in this early stage of its progress, seemed not likely to call forth very fraternal feelings between the two families of Netherlanders.

The army was in the main admirably well supplied, but there was a deficiency of drink. The water as they advanced became brackish and intolerably bad, and there was great difficulty in procuring any substitute. At Male three cows were given for a pot of beer, and more of that refreshment might have been sold at the same price, had there been any sellers.

On the 30th June Maurice marched from Oudenburg, intending to strike a point called Niewendam—a fort in the neighbourhood of Nieuport—and so to march along the walls of that city and take up his position immediately in its front. He found the ground, however, so marshy and impracticable as he advanced, that he was obliged to countermarch, and to spend that night on the downs between forts Isabella and St. Albert.

Page 2211

On the 1st July he resumed his march, and passing a bridge over a small stream at a place called Leffingen, laying down a road as he went with sods and sand, and throwing bridges over streams and swamps, he arrived in the forenoon before Nieuport. The, fleet had reached the roadstead the same morning.

This was a strong, well-built, and well-fortified little city, situate half-a-league from the sea coast on low, plashy ground. At high water it was a seaport, for a stream or creek of very insignificant dimensions was then sufficiently filled by the tide to admit vessels of considerable burthen. This haven was immediately taken possession of by the stadholder, and two-thirds of his army were thrown across to the western side of the water, the troops remaining on the Ostend side being by a change of arrangement now under command of Count Ernest.

Thus the army which had come to surprise Nieuport had, after accomplishing a distance of nearly forty miles in thirteen days, at last arrived before that place. Yet there was no more expeditious or energetic commander in Christendom than Maurice, nor troops better trained in marching and fighting than his well-disciplined army.

It is now necessary to cast a glance towards the interior of Flanders, in order to observe how the archduke conducted himself in this emergency. So soon as the news of the landing of the States' army at the port of Ghent reached the sovereign's ears, he awoke from the delusion that danger was impending on his eastern border, and lost no time in assembling such troops as could be mustered from far and near to protect the western frontier. Especially he despatched messengers well charged with promises, to confer with the authorities of the "Italian Republic" at Diest and Thionville. He appealed to them in behalf of the holy Catholic religion, he sought to arouse their loyalty to himself and the Infanta Isabella—daughter of the great and good Philip *ii*., once foremost of earthly potentates, and now eminent among the saints of heaven—by whose fiat he and his wife had now become legitimate sovereigns of all the Netherlands. And those mutineers responded with unexpected docility. Eight hundred foot soldiers and six hundred cavalry men came forth at the first summons, making but two conditions in addition to the stipulated payment when payment should be possible—that they should be commanded by their own chosen officers, and that they should be placed in the first rank in the impending conflict. The example spread. Other detachments of mutineers in various strongholds, scenting the battle from afar, came in with offers to serve in the campaign on similar terms. Before the last week of June the archduke had a considerable army on foot. On the 29th of that month, accompanied by the Infanta, he reviewed a force of ten thousand foot and nearly two thousand cavalry in the immediate vicinity of Ghent. He addressed them in a few stirring words, reminding them of their duty to the

Page 2212

Church and to himself, and assuring them—as commanders of every nation and every age are wont to assure their troops at the eve of every engagement—that the cause in which they were going forth to battle was the most sacred and inspiring for which human creatures could possibly lay down their lives. Isabella, magnificently attired, and mounted on a white palfrey, galloped along the lines, and likewise made an harangue. She spoke to the soldiers as “her lions,” promised them boundless rewards in this world and the next, as the result of the great victory which they were now about to gain over the infidels; while as to their wages, she vowed that, rather than they should remain unpaid, she would sacrifice all her personal effects, even to the plate from which she ate her daily bread, and to the jewels which she wore in her ears.

Thousands of hoarse voices greeted the eloquence of the archdukes with rude acclamations, while the discharge of arquebus and volleys of cannon testified to the martial ardour with which the troops were inspired; none being more enthusiastic than the late mutineers. The army marched at once, under many experienced leaders—-Villars, Zapena, and Avalos among the most conspicuous. The command of the artillery was entrusted to Velasco; the marshal-general of the camp was Frederic van den Berg, in place of the superannuated Peter Ernest; while the Admiral of Arragon, Francisco de Mendoza, “terror of Germany and of Christendom,” a little man with flowing locks, long hooked nose, and a sinister glance from his evil black eyes, was general of the cavalry. The admiral had not displayed very extraordinary genius in his recent campaigning in the Rhenish duchies, but his cruelty had certainly been conspicuous. Not even Alva could have accomplished more murders and other outrages in the same space of time than had been perpetrated by the Spanish troops during the infamous winter of 1598-9. The assassination of Count Broeck at his own castle had made more stir than a thousand other homicides of nameless wretches at the same period had done, because the victim had been a man of rank and large possessions, but it now remained to be seen whether Mendoza was to gain fresh laurels of any kind in the battle which was probably impending.

On the 1st of July the archduke came before Oudenburg. Not a soul within that fortress nor in Ostend dreamed of an enemy within twenty miles of them, nor had it been supposed possible that a Spanish army could take the field for many weeks to come. The States-General at Ostend were complacently waiting for the first bulletin from Maurice announcing his capture of Nieuport and his advance upon Dunkirk, according to the program so succinctly drawn up for him, and meantime were holding meetings and drawing up comfortable protocols with great regularity. Colonel Piron, on his part, who had been left with several companies of veterans to hold Oudenburg and the other forts, and to protect

Page 2213

the rear of the invading army, was accomplishing that object by permitting a large portion of his force to be absent on foraging parties and general marauding. When the enemy came before Oudenburg they met with no resistance. The fort was surrendered at once, and with it fell the lesser sconces of Breedene, Snaaskerk, and Plassendaal—-all but the more considerable fort St. Albert. The archduke, not thinking it advisable to delay his march by the reduction of this position, and having possession of all the other fortifications around Ostend, determined to push forward next morning at daybreak. He had granted favourable terms of surrender to the various garrisons, which, however, did not prevent them from being dearly—every man of them immediately butchered in cold blood.

Thus were these strong and well-manned redoubts, by which Prince Maurice had hoped to impede for many days the march of a Spanish army—should a Spanish army indeed be able to take the field at all—already swept off in an hour. Great was the dismay in Ostend when Colonel Piron and a few stragglers brought the heavy news of discomfiture and massacre to the high and mighty States-General in solemn meeting assembled.

Meanwhile, the States' army before Nieuport, not dreaming of any pending interruption to their labours, proceeded in a steady but leisurely manner to invest the city. Maurice occupied himself in tracing the lines of encampment and entrenchment, and ordered a permanent bridge to be begun across the narrowest part of the creek, in order that the two parts of his army might not be so dangerously divided from each other as they now were, at high water, by the whole breadth and depth of the harbour. Evening came on before much had been accomplished on this first day of the siege. It was scarcely dusk when a messenger, much exhausted and terrified, made his appearance at Count Ernest's tent. He was a straggler who had made his escape from Oudenburg, and he brought the astounding intelligence that the archduke had already possession of that position and of all the other forts. Ernest instantly jumped into a boat and had himself rowed, together with the messenger, to the headquarters of Prince Maurice on the other side of the river. The news was as unexpected as it was alarming. Here was the enemy, who was supposed incapable of mischief for weeks to come, already in the field, and planted directly on their communications with Ostend. Retreat, if retreat were desired, was already impossible, and as to surprising the garrison of Nieuport and so obtaining that stronghold as a basis for further aggressive operations, it is very certain that if any man in Flanders was more surprised than another at that moment it was Prince Maurice himself. He was too good a soldier not to see at a glance that if the news brought by the straggler were true, the whole expedition was already a failure, and that, instead of a short siege and an easy victory, a great battle was to be fought upon the sands of Nieuport, in which defeat was destruction of the whole army of the republic, and very possibly of the republic itself.

Page 2214

The stadholder hesitated. He was prone in great emergencies to hesitate at first, but immovable when his resolution was taken. Vere, who was asleep in his tent, was sent for and consulted. Most of the generals were inclined to believe that the demonstrations at Oudenburg, which had been so successful, were merely a bravado of Rivas, the commander of the permanent troops in that district, which were comparatively insignificant in numbers. Vere thought otherwise. He maintained that the archduke was already in force within a few hours' march of them, as he had always supposed would be the case. His opinion was not shared by the rest, and he went back to his truckle-bed, feeling that a brief repose was necessary for the heavy work which would soon be upon him. At midnight the Englishman was again called from his slumbers. Another messenger, sent directly from the States-General at Ostend, had made his way to the stadholder. This time there was no possibility of error, for Colonel Piron had sent the accord with the garrison commanders of the forts which had been so shamefully violated, and which bore the signature of the archduke.

It was now perfectly obvious that a pitched battle was to be fought before another sunset, and most anxious were the deliberations in that brief midsummer's night. The dilemma was as grave a one as commander-in-chief had ever to solve in a few hours. A portentous change had come over the prospects of the commonwealth since the arrival of these despatches. But a few hours before, and never had its destiny seemed so secure, its attitude more imposing. The little republic, which Spain had been endeavouring forty years long to subjugate, had already swept every Spanish soldier out of its territory, had repeatedly carried fire and sword into Spain itself, and even into its distant dependencies, and at that moment—after effecting in a masterly manner the landing of a great army in the very face of the man who claimed to be sovereign of all the Netherlands, and after marching at ease through the heart of his territory—was preparing a movement, with every prospect of success, which should render the hold of that sovereign on any portion of Netherland soil as uncertain and shifting as the sands on which the States army was now encamped.

The son of the proscribed and murdered rebel stood at the head of as powerful and well-disciplined an army as had ever been drawn up in line of battle on that blood-stained soil. The daughter of the man who had so long oppressed the provinces might soon be a fugitive from the land over which she had so recently been endowed with perpetual sovereignty. And now in an instant these visions were fading like a mirage.

The archduke, whom poverty and mutiny were to render powerless against invasion, was following close up upon the heels of the triumphant army of the stadholder. A decision was immediately necessary. The siege of Nieuport was over before it had begun. Surprise had failed, assault for the moment was impossible, the manner how best to confront the advancing foe the only question.

Page 2215

Vere advised that the whole army should at once be concentrated and led without delay against the archduke before he should make further progress. The advice involved an outrageous impossibility, and it seems incredible that it could have been given in good faith; still more amazing that its rejection by Maurice should have been bitterly censured. Two-thirds of the army lay on the other side of the harbour, and it was high water at about three o'clock. While they were deliberating, the sea was rising, and, so soon as daybreak should make any evolutions possible, they would be utterly prohibited during several hours by the inexorable tide. More time would be consumed by the attempt to construct temporary bridges (for of course little progress had been made in the stone bridge hardly begun) or to make use of boats than in waiting for the falling of the water, and, should the enemy make his appearance while they were engaged in such confusing efforts, the army would be hopelessly lost.

Maurice, against the express advice of Vere, decided to send his cousin Ernest, with the main portion of the force established on the right bank of the harbour, in search of the archduke, for the purpose of holding him in check long enough to enable the rest of the army to cross the water when the tide should serve. The enemy, it was now clear, would advance by precisely the path over which the States' army had marched that morning. Ernest was accordingly instructed to move with the greatest expedition in order to seize the bridge at Leffingen before the archduke should reach the deep, dangerous, and marshy river, over which it was the sole passage to the downs. Two thousand infantry, being the Scotch regiment of Edmonds and the Zeelanders of Van der Noot, four squadrons of Dutch cavalry, and two pieces of artillery composed the force with which Ernest set forth at a little before dawn on his hazardous but heroic enterprise.

With a handful of troops he was to make head against an army, and the youth accepted the task in the cheerful spirit of self-sacrifice which characterized his house. Marching as rapidly as the difficult ground would permit, he had the disappointment, on approaching the fatal point at about eight o'clock, to see the bridge at Leffingen in the possession of the enemy. Maurice had sent off a messenger early that morning with a letter marked post haste (cito, cito) to Ostend ordering up some four hundred cavalry-men then stationed in that city under Piron and Bruges, to move up to the support of Ernest, and to destroy the bridge and dams at Leffingen before the enemy should arrive. That letter, which might have been so effective, was delivered, as it subsequently appeared, exactly ten days after it was written. The States, of their own authority, had endeavoured to send out those riders towards the scene of action, but it was with great difficulty that they could be got into the saddle at all, and they positively refused to go further than St. Albert fort.

Page 2216

What course should he now pursue? He had been sent to cut the archduke's road. He had failed. Had he remained in his original encampment his force would have been annihilated by the overwhelming numbers of the enemy so soon as they reached the right bank of Nieuport haven, while Maurice could have only looked hopelessly on from the opposite shore. At least nothing worse than absolute destruction could befal him now. Should he accept a combat of six or eight to one the struggle would be hopeless, but the longer it was protracted the better it would be for his main army, engaged at that very moment as he knew in crossing the haven with the ebbing tide. Should he retreat, it might be possible for him to escape into Fort Albert or even Ostend, but to do so would be to purchase his own safety and that of his command at the probable sacrifice of the chief army of the republic. Ernest hesitated but an instant. Coming within carbine-shot of the stream, where he met his cavalry which had been sent forward at full speed, in the vain hope of seizing or destroying the bridge before it should be too late, he took up a position behind a dyke, upon which he placed his two field-pieces, and formed his troops in line of battle exactly across the enemy's path. On the right he placed the regiment of Scots. On the left was Van der Noot's Zeeland infantry, garnished with four companies of riders under Risoir, which stood near St. Mary's church. The passage from the stream to the downs was not more than a hundred yards wide, being skirted on both sides by a swamp. Here Ernest with his two thousand men awaited the onset of the archduke's army. He was perfectly aware that it was a mere question of time, but he was sure that his preparations must interpose a delay to the advance of the Spaniards, should his troops, as he felt confident, behave themselves as they had always done, and that the delay would be of inestimable value to his friends at the haven of Nieuport.

The archduke paused; for he, too, could not be certain, on observing the resolute front thus presented to him, that he was not about to engage the whole of the States' army. The doubt was but of short duration, however, and the onset was made. Ernest's artillery fired four volleys into the advancing battalions with such effect as to stagger them for a moment, but they soon afterwards poured over the dyke in over whelming numbers, easily capturing the cannon. The attack began upon Ernest's left, and Risoir's cavalry, thinking that they should be cut off from all possibility of retreat into Fort St. Albert, turned their backs in the most disgraceful manner, without even waiting for the assault. Galloping around the infantry on the left they infected the Zeelanders with their own cowardice. Scarcely a moment passed before Van der Noot's whole regiment was running away as fast as the troopers, while the Scots on the right hesitated not for an instant to follow their example. Even before the expected battle had

Page 2217

begun, one of those hideous and unaccountable panics which sometimes break out like a moral pestilence to destroy all the virtue of an army, and to sweep away the best-considered schemes of a general, had spread through Ernest's entire force. So soon as the demi-cannon had discharged their fourth volley, Scots, Zeelanders, Walloons, pikemen, musketeers, and troopers, possessed by the demon of cowardice, were running like a herd of swine to throw themselves into the sea. Had they even kept the line of the downs in the direction of the fort many of them might have saved their lives, although none could have escaped disgrace. But the Scots, in an ecstasy of fear, throwing away their arms as they fled, ran through the waters behind the dyke, skimmed over the sands at full speed, and never paused till such as survived the sabre and musket of their swift pursuers had literally drowned themselves in the ocean. Almost every man of them was slain or drowned. All the captains—Stuart, Barclay, Murray, Kilpatrick, Michael, Nesbit—with the rest of the company officers, doing their best to rally the fugitives, were killed. The Zeelanders, more cautious in the midst of their panic, or perhaps knowing better the nature of the country, were more successful in saving their necks. Not more than a hundred and fifty of Van der Noot's regiment were killed, while such of the cavalry of Bruges and Piron as had come to the neighbourhood of Fort Albert, not caring to trust themselves to the shelter of that redoubt, now fled as fast as their horses' legs would carry them, and never pulled bridle till they found themselves in Ostend. And so beside themselves with panic were these fugitives, and so virulent was the contagion, that it was difficult to prevent the men who had remained in the fort from joining in the flight towards Ostend. Many of them indeed threw themselves over the walls and were sabred by the enemy when they might have been safe within the fortifications. Had these cavalry companies of Bruges and Piron been even tolerably self-possessed, had they concentrated themselves in the fort instead of yielding to the delirium which prompted them to participate in their comrades' flight, they would have had it entirely in their power, by making an attack, or even the semblance of an attack, by means of a sudden sally from the fort, to have saved, not the battle indeed, but a large number of lives. But the panic was hopeless and universal, and countless fugitives scrambling by the fort were shot in a leisurely manner by a comparative few of the enemy as easily as the rabbits which swarmed in those sands were often knocked down in multitudes by half-a-dozen sportsmen.

Page 2218

And thus a band of patriots, who were not cowards by nature, and who had often played the part of men, had horribly disgraced themselves, and were endangering the very existence of their country, already by mistaken councils brought within the jaws of death. The glory of Thermopyla; might have hung for ever over that bridge of Leffingen. It was now a pass of infamy, perhaps of fatal disaster. The sands were covered with weapons-sabre, pike, and arquebus—thrown away by almost every soldier as he fled to save the life which after all was sacrificed. The artillery, all the standards and colours, all the baggage and ammunition, every thing was lost. No viler panic, no more complete defeat was ever recorded. Such at half-past eight in the morning was that memorable Sunday of the 2nd July, 1600, big with the fate of the Dutch republic—-the festival of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary, always thought of happy augury for Spanish arms.

Thus began the long expected battle of Nieuport. At least a thousand of the choicest troops of the stadholder were slain, while the Spanish had hardly lost a man.

The archduke had annihilated his enemy, had taken his artillery and thirty flags. In great exultation he despatched a messenger to the Infanta at Ghent, informing her that he had entirely defeated the advance-guard of the States' army, and that his next bulletin would announce his complete triumph and the utter overthrow of Maurice, who had now no means of escape. He stated also that he would very soon send the rebel stadholder himself to her as a prisoner. The Infanta, much pleased with the promise, observed to her attendants that she was curious to see how Nassau would conduct himself when he should be brought a captive into her presence. As to the Catholic troops, they were informed by the archduke that after the complete victory which they were that day to achieve, not a man should be left alive save Maurice and his brother Frederic Henry. These should be spared to grace the conqueror's triumph, but all else should be put to the sword.

Meantime artillery thundered, bonfires blazed, and bells rang their merriest peals in Ghent, Bruges, and the other obedient cities as the news of the great victory spread through the land.

When the fight was done the archduke called a council of war. It was a grave question whether the army should at once advance in order to complete the destruction of the enemy that day, or pause for an interval that the troops fatigued with hard marching and with the victorious combat in which they just had been engaged, should recover their full strength. That the stadholder was completely in their power was certain. The road to Ostend was barred, and Nieuport would hold him at bay, now that the relieving army was close upon his heels. All that was necessary in order to annihilate his whole force, was that they should entrench themselves for the night on the road which he must cross. He would then be obliged to assault

Page 2219

their works with troops inferior in number to theirs and fatigued by the march. Should he remain where he was he would soon be starved into submission, and would be obliged to surrender his whole army. On the other hand, by advancing now, in the intolerable heat of a July sun over the burning and glaring sands, the troops already wearied would arrive on the field of battle utterly exhausted, and would be obliged to attack an enemy freshly and cheerfully awaiting them on ground of his own selection.

Moreover it was absolutely certain that Fort Albert would not hold an hour if resolutely assaulted in the midst of the panic of Ernest's defeat, and, with its capture, the annihilation of Maurice was certain.

Meantime the three thousand men under Velasco, who had been detached to protect the rear, would arrive to reinforce the archduke's main army, should he pause until the next day.

These arguments, which had much logic in them, were strongly urged by Zapena, a veteran marshal of the camp who had seen much service, and whose counsels were usually received with deference. But on this occasion commanders and soldiers were hot for following up their victory. They cared nothing for the numbers of their enemy, they cried, "The more infidels the greater glory in destroying them." Delay might after all cause the loss of the prize, it was eagerly shouted. The archduke ought to pray that the sun might stand still for him that morning, as for Joshua in the vale of Ajalon. The foe seeing himself entrapped, with destruction awaiting him, was now skulking towards his ships, which still offered him the means of escape. Should they give him time he would profit by their negligence, and next morning when they reached Nieuport, the birds would be flown. Especially the leaders of the mutineers of Diest and Thionville were hoarse with indignation at the proposed delay. They had not left their brethren, they shouted, nor rallied to the archduke's banner in order to sit down and dig in the sand like ploughmen. There was triumph for the Holy Church, there was the utter overthrow of the heretic army, there was rich booty to be gathered, all these things were within their reach if they now advanced and smote the rebels while, confused and panic-stricken, they were endeavouring to embark in their ships.

While these vehement debates were at the hottest, sails were descried in the offing; for the archduke's forces already stood upon the edge of the downs. First one ship, then another and another, moved steadily along the coast, returning from Nieuport in the direction of Ostend.

Page 2220

This was more than could be borne. It was obvious that the rebels were already making their escape, and it was urged upon the cardinal that probably Prince Maurice and the other chieftains were on board one of those very vessels, and were giving him the slip. With great expedition it would still be possible to overtake them before the main body could embark, and the attack might yet be made at the most favourable moment. Those white sails gleaming in the distance were more eloquent than Zapena or any other advocate of delay, and the order was given to advance. And it was exactly at this period that it still lay within the power of the States' cavalry at Ostend to partially redeem their character, and to render very effective service. Had four or five hundred resolute troopers hung upon the rear of the Spanish army now, as it moved toward Nieuport, they might, by judiciously skirmishing, advancing and retreating according to circumstances, have caused much confusion, and certainly have so harassed the archduke as to compel the detachment of a very considerable force of his own cavalry to protect himself against such assaults. But the terror was an enduring one. Those horsemen remained paralyzed and helpless, and it was impossible for the States, with all their commands or entreaties, to induce them to mount and ride even a half mile beyond the city gates.

While these events had been occurring in the neighbourhood of Ostend, Maurice had not been idle at Nieuport. No sooner had Ernest been despatched on his desperate errand than his brother Lewis Gunther was ordered by the stadholder to get on horseback and ride through the quarters of the army. On the previous afternoon there had been so little thought of an enemy that large foraging parties had gone out from camp in all directions, and had not returned. Lewis gave notice that a great battle was to be expected on the morrow, instead of the tranquil commencement of a leisurely siege, and that therefore no soul was henceforth to leave the camp, while a troop of horse was despatched at the first gleam of daylight to scour the country in search of all the stragglers. Maurice had no thought of retreating, and his first care was to bring his army across the haven. The arrangements were soon completed, but it was necessary to wait until nearly low water. Soon after eight o'clock Count Lewis began to cross with eight squadrons of cavalry, and partly swimming, partly wading, effected the passage in safety. The advanced guard of infantry, under Sir Francis Vere—consisting of two thousand six hundred Englishmen, and two thousand eight hundred Frisians, with some companies of horse, followed by the battalia under Solms, and the rearguard under Tempel—then slowly and with difficulty moved along the same dangerous path with the water as high as their armpits, and often rising nearly over their heads. Had the archduke not been detained near the bridge of Leffingen by Ernest's Scotchmen and Zeelanders during three or four precious hours that morning; had he arrived, as he otherwise might have done, just as the States' army—horse, foot, and artillery—was floundering through that treacherous tide, it would have fared ill for the stadholder and the republic. But the devotion of Ernest had at least prevented the attack of the archduke until Maurice and his men stood on dry land.

Page 2221

Dripping from head to foot, but safe and sound, the army had at last reached the beach at Nieuport. Vere had refused his soldiers permission to denude themselves in crossing of their shoes and lower garments. There was no time for that, he said, and they would either earn new clothes for themselves that day, or never need doublet and hose again any more in the world. Some hours had elapsed before the tedious and difficult crossing of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and munition trains had been accomplished.

Lewis Gunther, with eight squadrons of picked cavalry, including his own company, Maurice's own, Frederic Henry's own, with Batenburg's arquebus-men, and other veterans, was first to place himself in battle order on the beach. His squadrons in iron corslet and morion, and armed with lances, carbines, and sabres, stretched across from the water to the downs. He had not been long stationed there when he observed that far away in the direction of Ostend the beach was growing black with troops. He believed them at first to be his brother Ernest and his forces returning victorious from their hazardous expedition, but he was soon undeceived.

A couple of troopers from Ostend came spurring full gallop along the strand, and almost breathless with dismay, announced that it was the whole army of the archduke advancing in line of battle. They were instantly sent to the rear, without being allowed to speak further, in order that they might deliver their message in private to the commander-in-chief. And most terrible were the tidings to which Maurice now listened in very secret audience. Ernest was utterly defeated, his command cut to pieces, the triumphant foe advancing rapidly, and already in full sight. The stadholder heard the tale without flinching, and having quietly ordered the messengers upon their lives not to open their lips on the subject to living soul, sent them securely guarded in a boat on board one of the war-ships in the offing. With perfect cheerfulness he then continued his preparations, consulting with Vere, on whom he mainly relied for the marshalling of the army in the coming conflict. Undecided as he had sometimes shown himself, he was resolute now. He called no council of war, for he knew not how much might be known or suspected of the disaster already sustained, and he had fully made up his mind as to the course to be pursued. He had indeed taken a supreme resolution. Entirely out of his own breast, without advising with any man, he calmly gave directions that every war-ship, transport, barge, or wherry should put to sea at once. As the tide had now been long on the flood, the few vessels that had been aground—within the harbour were got afloat, and the whole vast, almost innumerable armada, was soon standing out to sea. No more heroic decision was ever taken by fighting man.

Page 2222

Sir Francis gave advice that entrenchments should be thrown up on the north-east, and that instead of advancing towards the enemy they should await his coming, and refuse the battle that day if possible. The Englishman, not aware of the catastrophe at Leffingen, which Maurice had locked up in his own breast, was now informed by the stadholder that there were to be no entrenchments that day but those of pike and arquebus. It was not the fault of Maurice that the fate of the commonwealth had been suspended on a silken thread that morning, but he knew that but one of two issues was possible. They must fight their way through the enemy back to Ostend, or perish, every man of them. The possibility of surrender did not enter his mind, and he felt that it was better to hasten the action before the news of Ernest's disaster should arrive to chill the ardour of the troops.

Meantime Lewis Gunther and his cavalry had been sitting motionless upon their horses on the beach. The enemy was already in full view, and the young general, most desirous to engage in a preliminary skirmish, sent repeated messages to the stadholder for permission to advance. Presently Sir Francis Vere rode to the front, to whom he eagerly urged his request that the infantry of the vanguard might be, brought up at once to support him. On the contrary the English general advised that the cavalry should fall back to the infantry, in order to avoid a premature movement. Lewis strongly objected to this arrangement, on the ground that the mere semblance of retreat, thus upon the eve of battle, would discourage all the troops. But he was over-ruled, for Maurice had expressly enjoined upon his cousin that morning to defer in all things to the orders of Vere. These eight squadrons of horse accordingly shifted their position, and were now placed close to the edge of the sea, on the left flank of the vanguard, which Vere had drawn up across the beach and in the downs. On the edge of the downs, on the narrow slip of hard sand above high-water mark, and on Vere's right, Maurice had placed a battery of six demi-cannon.

Behind the advance was the battalia, or centre, under command of that famous fighter, George Everard Solms, consisting of Germans, Swiss, French, and Walloons. The "New Beggars," as the Walloons were called, who had so recently surrendered the forts of Crevecoeur and St. Andrew, and gone over from the archduke's service to the army of the States, were included in this division, and were as eager to do credit to their new chief as were the mutineers in the archduke's army to merit the approbation of their sovereign.

The rearguard under Tempel was made up, like the other divisions, of the blended nationalities of German, Briton, Hollander, and Walloon, and, like the others, was garnished at each flank with heavy cavalry.

Page 2223

The Spanish army, after coming nearly within cannon-shot of their adversary, paused. It was plain that the States' troops were not in so great a panic as the more sanguine advisers of the archduke had hoped. They were not cowering among the shipping, preparing to escape. Still less had any portion of them already effected their retreat in those vessels, a few of which had so excited the enemy's ardour when they came in sight. It was obvious that a great struggle, in which the forces were very evenly balanced, was now to be fought out upon those sands. It was a splendid tournament—-a great duel for life and death between the champions of the Papacy and of Protestantism, of the Republic and of absolutism, that was to be fought out that midsummer's day. The lists were closed. The trumpet signal for the fray would soon be blown.

The archduke, in Milanese armour, on a wonderfully beautiful snow-white Spanish stallion, moved in the centre of his army. He wore no helmet, that his men might the more readily recognize him as he rode gallantly to and fro, marshalling, encouraging, exhorting the troops. Never before had he manifested such decided military talent, combined with unquestionable personal valour, as he had done since this campaign began. Friend and foe agreed that day that Albert fought like a lion. He was at first well seconded by Mendoza, who led the van, and by Villars, La Bourlotte, Avalos, Zapena, and many other officers of note. The mutinous Spanish and Italian cavalry, combined with a few choice squadrons of Walloon and German horse, were placed in front and on the flanks. They were under the special supervision of the admiral, who marshalled their squadrons and directed their charging, although mounted on a hackney himself, and not intending to participate in the action. Then came the battalia and rear, crowding very closely upon each other.

Face to face with them stood the republican host, drawn up in great solid squares of infantry, their standards waving above each closely planted clump of pikemen, with the musketeers fringing their skirts, while the iron-clad ponderous cavalry of Count Lewis and Marcellus Bax, in black casque and, corslet, were in front, restlessly expecting the signal for the onset. The volunteers of high rank who were then serving on the staff of the stadholder—the Duke of Holstein, the Prince of Anhalt, two young Counts Solms, and others—had been invited and even urged to abandon the field while there was yet time for setting them on board the fleet. Especially it was thought desirable that young Frederic Henry, a mere boy, on whom the hopes of the Orange-Nassau house would rest if Maurice fell in the conflict, should be spared the fate which seemed hanging over the commonwealth and her defenders. But the son of William the Silent implored his brother with clasped hands not to send him from his side at that moment, so that Maurice granted his prayer, and caused him to be provided with a complete suit of armour.

Page 2224

Thus in company with young Coligny—a lad of his own age, and like himself a grandson of the great admiral—the youth who was one day to play so noble a part on the stage of the world's affairs was now to be engaged in his first great passage of arms. No one left the field but Sir Robert Sidney, who had come over from Ostend, from irrepressible curiosity to witness the arrangements, but who would obviously have been guilty of unpardonable negligence had he been absent at such a crisis from the important post of which he was governor for the queen.

The arena of the conflict seemed elaborately prepared by the hand of nature. The hard, level, sandy beach, swept clean and smooth by the ceaseless action of the tides, stretched out far as the eye could reach in one long, bold, monotonous line. Like the whole coast of Flanders and of Holland, it seemed drawn by a geometrical rule, not a cape, cove, or estuary breaking the perfect straightness of the design. On the right, just beyond high-water mark, the downs, fantastically heaped together like a mimic mountain chain, or like tempestuous ocean-waves suddenly changed to sand, rolled wild and confused, but still in a regularly parallel course with the line of the beach. They seemed a barrier thrown up to protect the land from being bitten quite away by the ever-restless and encroaching sea. Beyond the downs, which were seven hundred yards in width; extended a level tract of those green fertile meadows, artificially drained, which are so characteristic a feature of the Netherland landscapes, the stream which ran from Ostend towards the town of Nieuport flowing sluggishly through them. It was a bright warm midsummer day. The waves of the German Ocean came lazily rolling in upon the crisp yellow sand, the surf breaking with its monotonous music at the very feet of the armies. A gentle south-west breeze was blowing, just filling the sails of more than a thousand ships in the offing, which moved languidly along the sparkling sea. It was an atmosphere better befitting a tranquil holiday than the scene of carnage which seemed approaching.

Maurice of Nassau, in complete armour, rapier in hand, with the orange-plumes waving from his helmet and the orange-scarf across his breast, rode through the lines, briefly addressing his soldiers with martial energy. Pointing to the harbour of Nieuport behind them, now again impassable with the flood, to the ocean on the left where rode the fleet, carrying with it all hope of escape by sea, and to the army of the archduke in front, almost within cannon-range, he simply observed that they had no possible choice between victory and death. They must either utterly overthrow the Spanish army, he said, or drink all the waters of the sea. Either drowning or butchery was their doom if they were conquered, for no quarter was to be expected from their unscrupulous and insolent foe. He was there to share their fate, to conquer or to perish with them, and from their tried valour and

Page 2225

from the God of battles he hoped a more magnificent victory than had ever before been achieved in this almost perpetual war for independence. The troops, perfectly enthusiastic, replied with a shout that they were ready to live or die with their chieftain, and eagerly demanded to be led upon the foe. Whether from hope or from desperation they were confident and cheerful. Some doubt was felt as to the Walloons, who had so lately transferred themselves from the archduke's army, but their commander, Marquette, made them all lift up their hands, and swear solemnly to live or die that day at the feet of Prince Maurice.

Two hours long these two armies had stood looking each other in the face. It was near two o'clock when the arch duke at last gave the signal to advance. The tide was again almost at the full. Maurice stood firm, awaiting the assault; the enemy slowly coming nearer, and the rising tide as steadily lapping away all that was left of the hard beach which fringed the rugged downs. Count Lewis chafed with impatience as it became each moment more evident that there would be no beach left for cavalry fighting, while in the downs the manoeuvring of horse was entirely impossible. Meantime, by command of Vere, all those sandy hillocks and steeps had been thickly sown with musketeers and pikemen. Arquebus-men and carabineers were planted in every hollow, while on the highest and most advantageous elevation two pieces of cannon had been placed by the express direction of Maurice. It seemed obvious that the battle would, after all, be transferred to the downs. Not long before the action began, a private of the enemy's cavalry was taken, apparently with his own consent, in a very trifling preliminary skirmish. He bragged loudly of the immense force of the archduke, of the great victory already gained over Ernest, with the utter annihilation of his forces, and of the impending destruction of the whole States' army. Strange to say, this was the first intimation received by Count Lewis of that grave disaster, although it had been for some hours known to Maurice. The prisoner was at once gagged, that he might spread his disheartening news no further, but as he persisted by signs and gestures in attempting to convey the information which he had evidently been sent forward to impart, he was shot by command of the stadholder, and so told no further tales.

The enemy had now come very close, and it was the desire of Count Lewis that a couple of companies of horse, in accordance with the commands of Maurice, should charge the cavalry in front, and that after a brief skirmish they should retreat as if panic-stricken behind the advance column, thus decoying the Spanish vanguard in hot pursuit towards the battery upon the edge of the downs. The cannon were then suddenly to open upon them, and during the confusion sure to be created in their ranks, the musketeers, ambushed among the hollows, were to attack them in flank, while

Page 2226

the cavalry in one mass should then make a concentrated charge in front. It seemed certain that the effect of this movement would be to hurl the whole of the enemy's advance, horse and foot, back upon his battalia, and thus to break up his army in irretrievable rout. The plan was a sensible one, but it was not ingeniously executed. Before the handful of cavalry had time to make the proposed feint the cannoneers, being unduly excited, and by express command of Sir Francis Vere, fired a volley into the advancing columns of the archduke. This precipitated the action; almost in an instant changed its whole character, and defeated the original plan of the republican leader. The enemy's cavalry broke at the first discharge from the battery, and wheeled in considerable disorder, but without panic, quite into and across the downs. The whole army of the archduke, which had already been veering in the same direction, as it advanced, both because the tide was so steadily devouring the even surface of the sands, and because the position of a large portion of the States' forces among the hillocks exposed him to an attack in flank, was now rapidly transferred to the downs. It was necessary for that portion of Maurice's army which still stood on what remained of the beach to follow this movement. A rapid change of front was then undertaken, and —thanks to the careful system of wheeling, marching, and counter-marching in which the army had been educated by William Lewis and Maurice—was executed with less confusion than might have been expected.

But very few companies of infantry now remained on the strip of beach still bare of the waves, and in the immediate vicinity of the artillery planted high and dry beyond their reach.

The scene was transformed as if by magic, and the battle was now to be fought out in those shifting, uneven hills and hollows, where every soldier stood mid-leg deep in the dry and burning sand. Fortunately for the States' army, the wind was in its back, blowing both sand and smoke into the faces of its antagonists, while the already weltering sun glared fiercely in their eyes. Maurice had skilfully made use of the great advantage which accident had given him that day, and his very refusal to advance and to bring on a premature struggle thus stood him in stead in a variety of ways Lewis Gunther was now ordered, with Marcellus Bax and six squadrons of horse, to take position within the belt of pasture land on the right of the downs. When he arrived there the van of the archduke's infantry had already charged the States' advance under Vere, while just behind and on the side of the musketeers and pikemen a large portion of the enemy's cavalry was standing stock still on the green. Without waiting for instructions Lewis ordered a charge. It was brilliantly successful. Unheeding a warm salutation in flank from the musketeers as they rode by them, and notwithstanding that they were obliged to take several ditches as they charged, they routed

Page 2227

the enemy's cavalry at the first onset, and drove them into panic-stricken flight. Some fled for protection quite to the rear of their infantry, others were hotly pursued across the meadows till they took refuge under the walls of Nieuport. The very success of the attack was nearly fatal however to Count Lewis; for, unable to restrain the ardour of his troopers in the chase, he found himself cut off from the army with only ten horsemen to support him, and completely enveloped by the enemy. Fortunately Prince Maurice had foreseen the danger, and had ordered all the cavalry to the meadows so soon as the charge was made. Captain Kloet, with a fresh company of mounted carabineers, marked the little squad of States' cavalry careering about in the midst of the Catholics, recognized their leader by the orange-plumes on his calque, and dashed forward to the rescue. Lewis again found himself at the head of his cavalry, but was obliged to wait a long time for the return of the stragglers.

While this brilliant diversion had been enacting as it were on the fringe of the battle, its real bustle and business had been going on in the downs. Just as Lewis made his charge in the pastures, the infantry of the archduke and the advance guard of the republicans met in deadly shock. More than an hour long they contended with varying success. Musketeers, pikemen, arquebusmen, swordmen, charged, sabred, or shot each other from the various hollows or heights of vantage, plunging knee-deep in the sand, torn and impeded by the prickly broom-plant which grew profusely over the whole surface, and fighting breast to breast and hand to hand in a vast series of individual encounters. Thrice were the Spaniards repulsed in what for a moment seemed absolute rout, thrice they rallied and drove their assailants at push of pike far beyond their original position; and again the conquered republicans recovered their energy and smote their adversaries as if the contest were just begun. The tide of battle ebbed and flowed like the waves of the sea, but it would be mere pedantry to affect any technical explanation of its various changes. It was a hot struggle of twenty thousand men, pent up in a narrow space, where the very nature of the ground had made artistic evolutions nearly impracticable. The advance, the battalia, even the rearguard on both sides were mixed together pell-mell, and the downs were soon covered at every step with the dead and dying-Briton, Hollander, Spaniard, Italian, Frisian, Frenchman, Walloon, fighting and falling together, and hotly contesting every inch of those barren sands.

It seemed, said one who fought there, as if the last day of the world had come.

Political and religious hatred, pride of race, remembrance of a half-century of wrongs, hope, fury, and despair; these were the real elements contending with each other that summer's day. It was a mere trial of ferocity and endurance, not more scientific than a fight between packs of wolves and of bloodhounds.

Page 2228

No doubt the brunt of the conflict fell upon Vere, with his Englishmen and Frisians, for this advance-guard made up nearly one-half of the States' army actually engaged. And most nobly, indefatigably, did the hardy veteran discharge his duty. Having personally superintended almost all the arrangements in the morning, he fought all day in the front, doing the work both of a field-marshal and a corporal.

He was twice wounded, shot each time through the same leg, yet still fought on as if it were some one else's blood and not his own that was flowing from "those four holes in his flesh." He complained that he was not sufficiently seconded, and that the reserves were not brought up rapidly enough to his support. He was manifestly unjust, for although it could not be doubted that the English and the Frisians did their best, it was equally certain that every part of the army was as staunch as the vanguard. It may be safely asserted that it would not have benefited the cause of the States, had every man been thrown into the fight at one and the same moment.

During this "bloody bit," as Vere called it, between the infantry on both sides, the little battery of two field-pieces planted on the highest hillock of the downs had been very effective. Meantime, while the desperate and decisive struggle had been going on, Lewis Gunther, in the meadow, had again rallied all the cavalry, which, at the first stage of the action, had been dispersed in pursuit of the enemy's horse. Gathering them together in a mass, he besought Prince Maurice to order him to charge. The stadholder bade him pause yet a little longer. The aspect of the infantry fight was not yet, in his opinion, sufficiently favourable. Again and again Lewis sent fresh entreaties, and at last received the desired permission. Placing three picked squadrons in front, the young general made a furious assault upon the Catholic cavalry, which had again rallied and was drawn up very close to the musketeers. Fortune was not so kind to him as at the earlier stage of the combat. The charge was received with dauntless front by the Spanish and Italian horse, while at the same moment the infantry poured a severe fire into their assailants. The advancing squadrons faltered, wheeled back upon the companies following them, and the whole mass of the republican cavalry broke into wild and disorderly retreat. At the same moment the archduke, observing his advantage, threw in his last reserves of infantry, and again there was a desperate charge upon Vere's wearied troops, as decisive as the counter charge of Lewis's cavalry had been unsuccessful. The English and Frisians, sorely tried during those hours of fighting with superior numbers in the intolerable heat, broke at last and turned their backs upon the foe. Some of them fled panic-stricken quite across the downs and threw themselves into the sea, but the mass retreated in a comparatively orderly manner, being driven from one down to another, and seeking

Page 2229

a last refuge behind the battery placed on the high-water line of the beach. In the confusion and panic Sir Francis Vere went down at last. His horse, killed by a stray shot fell with and upon him, and the heroic Englishman would then and there have finished his career—for he would hardly have found quarter from the Spaniards—had not Sir Robert Drury, riding by in the tumult, observed him as he lay almost exhausted in the sand. By his exertion and that of his servant Higham, Vere was rescued from his perilous situation, placed on the crupper of Sir Robert's horse, and so borne off the field.

The current of the retreating and pursuing hosts swept by the spot where Maurice sat on horseback, watching and directing the battle. His bravest and best general, the veteran Vere, had fallen; his cousin Lewis was now as utterly overthrown as his brother Ernest had been but a few hours before at the fatal bridge of Leffingen; the whole army, the only army, of the States was defeated, broken, panic-struck; the Spanish shouts of victory rang on every side. Plainly the day was lost, and with it the republic. In the blackest hour that the Netherland commonwealth had ever known, the fortitude of the stadholder did not desert him. Immoveable as a rock in the torrent he stemmed the flight of his troops. Three squadrons of reserved cavalry, Balen's own, Vere's own, and Cecil's, were all that was left him, and at the head of these he essayed an advance. He seemed the only man on the field not frightened; and menacing, conjuring, persuading the fugitives for the love of fatherland, of himself and his house, of their own honour, not to disgrace and destroy themselves for ever; urging that all was not yet lost, and beseeching them at least to take despair for their master, and rather to die like men on the field than to drown like dogs in the sea, he succeeded in rallying a portion of those nearest him. The enemy paused in their mad pursuit, impressed even more than were the States' troops at the dauntless bearing of the prince. It was one of those supreme moments in battle and in history which are sometimes permitted to influence the course of events during a long future. The archduke and his generals committed a grave error in pausing for an instant in their career. Very soon it was too late to repair the fault, for the quick and correct eye of the stadholder saw the point to which the whole battle was tending, and he threw his handful of reserved cavalry, with such of the fugitives as had rallied, straight towards the battery on the beach.

It was arranged that Balen should charge on the strand, Horace Vere through the upper downs, and Cecil along the margin of the beach. Balen rode slowly through the heavy sand, keeping his horses well in wind, and at the moment he touched the beach, rushed with fury upon the enemy's foot near the battery. The moment was most opportune, for the last shot had been fired from the guns, and they had just been nearly

Page 2230

abandoned in despair. The onset of Balen was successful: the Spanish infantry, thus suddenly attached, were broken, and many were killed and taken. Cecil and Vere were equally fortunate, so that the retreating English and Frisians began to hold firm again. It was the very crisis of the battle, which up to that instant seemed wholly lost by the republic, so universal was the overthrow and the flight. Some hundred and fifty Frisian pikemen now rallied from their sullen retreat, and drove the enemy off one hillock or dune.

Foiled in their attempt to intercept the backward movement of the States' army and to seize this vital point and the artillery with it, the Spaniards hesitated and were somewhat discouraged. Some Zeeland sailors, who had stuck like wax to those demi-cannon during the whole conflict, now promptly obeyed orders to open yet once more upon the victorious foe. At the first volley the Spaniards were staggered, and the sailors with a lively shout of "Ian-fall on," inspired the defeated army with a portion of their own cheerfulness. Others vehemently shouted victory without any reason whatever. At that instant Maurice ordered a last charge by those few cavalry squadrons, while the enemy was faltering under the play of the artillery. It was a forlorn hope, yet such was the shifting fortune of that memorable day that the charge decided the battle. The whole line of the enemy broke, the conquered became the victors, the fugitives quickly rallying and shouting victory almost before they had turned their faces to the foe, became in their turn the pursuers. The Catholic army could no longer be brought to a stand, but fled wildly in every direction, and were shot and stabbed by the republicans as they fled. The Admiral of Arragon fell with his hackney in this last charge. Unwounded, but struggling to extricate himself from his horse that had been killed, he was quickly surrounded by the enemy.

Two Spaniards, Mendo and Villalobos by name, who had recently deserted to the States, came up at the moment and recognised the fallen admiral. They had reason to recognise him, for both had been in his service, and one of them, who was once in immediate household attendance upon him, bore the mark of a wound which he had received from his insolent master. "Admiral, look at this," cried Villalobos, pointing to the scar on his face. The admiral looked and knew his old servants, and gave his scarf to the one and the hanger of his sword-belt to the other, as tokens that he was their prisoner. Thus his life was saved for heavy ransom, of which those who had actually captured him would receive a very trifling portion. The great prisoner was carried to the rear, where he immediately asked for food and drink, and fell to with an appetite, while the pursuit and slaughter went on in all directions.

Page 2231

The archduke, too, whose personal conduct throughout the day was admirable, had been slightly wounded by a halberd stroke on the ear. This was at an earlier stage of the action, and he had subsequently mounted another horse, exchanged his splendid armour for a plain black harness, over which he wore a shabby scarf. In the confusion of the rout he was hard beset. “Surrender, scoundrel!” cried a Walloon pikeman, seizing his horse by the bridle. But a certain Flemish Captain Kabbeljaw recognising his sovereign and rushing to his rescue, slew his assailant and four others with his own hand. He was at last himself killed, but Albert escaped, and, accompanied by the Duke of Aumale, who was also slightly wounded, by Colonel La Bourlotte, and half a dozen troopers rode for their life in the direction of Bruges. When they reached the fatal bridge of Leffingen, over which the archduke had marched so triumphantly but a few hours before to annihilate Count Ernest’s division, he was nearly taken prisoner. A few soldiers, collected from the scattered garrisons, had occupied the position, but knowing nothing of the result of the action in the downs, took to their heels and fled as the little party of cavaliers advanced. Had the commander at Ostend or the States-General promptly sent out a company or two so soon as the news of the victory reached them to seize this vital point, the doom of the archduke would have been sealed. Nothing then could have saved him from capture. Fortunately escaping this danger, he now pushed on, and never pulled bridle till he reached Bruges. Thence without pausing he was conveyed to Ghent, where he presented himself to the Infanta. He was not accompanied by the captive Maurice of Nassau, and the curiosity of the princess to know how that warrior would demean himself as a prisoner was not destined on this occasion to be gratified.

Isabella bore the disappointment and the bitter intelligence of the defeat with a stoicism worthy of her departed father. She had already had intimations that the day was going against her army, and had successively received tidings that her husband was killed, was dangerously wounded, was a prisoner; and she was now almost relieved to receive him, utterly defeated, but still safe and sound.

Meantime the mad chase continued along the beach and through the downs. Never was a rout more absolute than that of Albert’s army. Never had so brilliant a victory been achieved by Hollander or Spaniard upon that great battleground of Europe—the Netherlands.

Maurice, to whom the chief credit of the victory was unquestionably due, had been firm and impassive during the various aspects of the battle, never losing his self-command when affairs seemed blackest. So soon, however, as the triumph, after wavering so long, was decided in his favour—the veteran legions of Spain and Italy, the picked troops of Christendom, all flying at last before his troops—the stadholder was fairly melted. Dismounting from his horse, he threw himself on his knees in the sand, and with streaming eyes and uplifted hands exclaimed, “O God, what are we human creatures to whom Thou hast brought such honour, and to whom Thou hast vouchsafed such a victory!”

Page 2232

The slaughter went on until nightfall, but the wearied conquerors were then obliged to desist from the pursuit. Three thousand Spaniards were slain and about six hundred prisoners were taken. The loss of the States' army; including the affair in the morning at Leffingen, was about two thousand killed. Maurice was censured for not following up his victory more closely, but the criticism seems unjust. The night which followed the warm summer's day was singularly black and cloudy, the army was exhausted, the distance for the enemy to traverse before they found themselves safe within their own territory was not great. In such circumstances the stadholder might well deem himself sufficiently triumphant to have plucked a splendid victory out of the very jaws of death. All the artillery of the archduke—seven pieces besides the two captured from Ernest in the morning—one hundred and twenty standards, and a long list of distinguished prisoners, including the Admiral Zapena and many other officers of note, were the trophies of the conqueror. Maurice passed the night on the battle-field; the admiral supping with him in his tent. Next morning he went to Ostend, where a great thanksgiving was held, Uytenbogart preaching an eloquent sermon on the 116th Psalm. Afterwards there was a dinner at the house of the States-General, in honour of the stadholder, to which the Admiral of Arragon was likewise bidden. That arrogant but discomfited personage was obliged to listen to many a rough martial joke at his disaster as they sat at table, but he bore the brunt of the encounter with much fortitude.

"Monsieur the Admiral of Arragon," said the stadholder in French, "is more fortunate than many of his army. He has been desiring these four years to see Holland. Now he will make his entrance there without striking a blow." The gibe was perhaps deficient in delicacy towards a fallen foe, but a man who had passed a whole winter in murdering his prisoners in cold blood might be satisfied if he were stung only by a sharp sarcasm or two, when he had himself become a captive.

Others asked him demurely what he thought of these awkward apprentices of Holland and Zeeland, who were good enough at fighting behind dykes and ramparts of cities, but who never ventured to face a Spanish army in the open field. Mendoza sustained himself with equanimity however, and found plenty of answers. He discussed the battle with coolness, blamed the archduke for throwing the whole of his force prematurely into the contest, and applauded the prudence of Maurice in keeping his reserves in hand. He ascribed a great share of the result to the States' artillery, which had been well placed upon wooden platforms and well served, while the archduke's cannon, sinking in the sands, had been of comparatively little use. Especially he expressed a warm admiration for the heroism of Maurice in sending away his ships, and in thus leaving himself and his soldiers no alternative but death or triumph.

Page 2233

While they still sat at table many of the standards taken from the enemy were brought in and exhibited; the stadholder and others amusing themselves with reading the inscriptions and devices emblazoned upon them.

And thus on the 2nd July, 1600, the army of the States-General, led by Maurice of Nassau, had utterly defeated Albert of Austria.

["Enfin l'affaire vint auix mains et fut combattu bien furieusement de deux costes l'espace de deux heures. Enfin Dieu par sa grace voulut que la victoire demeura de more coste." Such were the simple words in which Maurice announced to his cousin Lewis William his victory in the most important battle that had been fought for half a century. Not even General Ulysses Grant could be more modest in the hour of immense triumph.]

Strange to say—on another 2nd July, three centuries and two years before, a former Albert of Austria had overthrown the emperor Adolphus of Nassau, who had then lost both crown and life in the memorable battle of Worms. The imperial shade of Maurice's ancestor had been signally appeased.

In Ostend, as may well be imagined, ineffable joy had succeeded to the horrible gloom in which the day had been passed, ever since the tidings had been received of Ernest's overthrow.

Those very cavalry men, who had remained all day cowering behind the walls of the city, seeing by the clouds of dust which marked the track of the fugitives that the battle had been won by the comrades whom they had so basely deserted in the morning, had been eager enough to join in the pursuit. It was with difficulty that the States, who had been unable to drive them out of the town while the fight was impending or going on, could keep enough of them within the walls to guard the city against possible accident, now that the work was done. Even had they taken the field a few hours earlier, without participating in the action, or risking their own lives, they might have secured the pass of Leffingen, and made the capture of the archduke or his destruction inevitable.

The city, which had seemed deserted, swarmed with the garrison and with the lately trembling burghers, for it seemed to all as if they had been born again. Even the soldiers on the battle-field had embraced each other like comrades who had met in another world. "Blessed be His holy name," said the stadholder's chaplain, "for His right hand has led us into hell and brought us forth again. I know not," he continued, "if I am awake or if I dream, when I think how God has in one moment raised us from the dead."

Lewis Gunther, whose services had been so conspicuous, was well rewarded. "I hope," said that general, writing to his brother Lewis William, "that this day's work will not have been useless to me, both for what I have learned in it and for another thing. His

Excellency has done me the honour to give me the admiral for my prisoner." And equally characteristic was the reply of the religious and thrifty stadholder of Friesland.

Page 2234

“I thank God,” he said, “for His singular grace in that He has been pleased to make use of your person as the instrument of so renowned and signal a victory, for which, as you have derived therefrom not mediocre praise, and acquired a great reputation, it should be now your duty to humble yourself before God, and to acknowledge that it is He alone who has thus honoured you . . . . You should reverence Him the more, that while others are admonished of their duty by misfortunes and miseries, the good God invites you to His love by benefits and honours . . . . I am very glad, too, that his Excellency has given you the admiral for your prisoner, both because of the benefit to you, and because it is a mark of your merit on that day. Knowing the state of our affairs, you will now be able to free your patrimony from encumbrances, when otherwise you would have been in danger of remaining embarrassed and in the power of others. It will therefore be a perpetual honour to you that you, the youngest of us all, have been able by your merits to do more to raise up our house out of its difficulties than your predecessors or myself have been able to do.”

The beautiful white horse which the archduke had ridden during the battle fell into the hands of Lewis Gunther, and was presented by him to Prince Maurice, who had expressed great admiration of the charger. It was a Spanish horse, for which the archduke had lately paid eleven hundred crowns.

A white hackney of the Infanta had also been taken, and became the property of Count Ernest.

The news of the great battle spread with unexampled rapidity, not only through the Netherlands but to neighbouring countries. On the night of the 7th July (N.S.) five days after the event, Envoy Caron, in England, received intimations of the favourable news from the French ambassador, who had received a letter from the Governor of Calais. Next morning, very early, he waited on Sir Robert Cecil at Greenwich, and was admitted to his chamber, although the secretary was not yet out of bed. He, too, had heard of the battle, but Richardot had informed the English ambassador in Paris that the victory had been gained, not by the stadholder, but by the archduke. While they were talking, a despatch-bearer arrived with letters from Vere to Cecil, and from the States-General to Caron, dated on the 3rd July. There could no longer be any doubt on the subject, and the envoy of the republic had now full details of the glorious triumph which the Spanish agent in Paris had endeavoured for a time to distort into a defeat.

While the two were conversing, the queen, who had heard of Caron’s presence in the palace, sent down for the latest intelligence. Cecil made notes of the most important points in the despatches to be forthwith conveyed to her Majesty. The queen, not satisfied however, sent for Caron himself. That diplomatist, who had just ridden down from London in foul weather, was accordingly obliged to present

Page 2235

himself—booted and spurred and splashed with mud from head to foot—before her Majesty. Elizabeth received him with such extraordinary manifestations of delight at the tidings that he was absolutely amazed, and she insisted upon his reading the whole of the letter just received from Olden-Barneveld, her Majesty listening very patiently as he translated it out of Dutch into French. She then expressed unbounded admiration of the States-General and of Prince Maurice. The sagacious administration of the States' government is "so full of good order and policy," she said, "as to far surpass in its wisdom the intelligence of all kings and potentates. We kings," she said, "understand nothing of such affairs in comparison, but require, all of us, to go to school to the States-General." She continued to speak in terms of warm approbation of the secrecy and discretion with which the invasion of Flanders had been conducted, and protested that she thanked God on both knees for vouchsafing such a splendid victory to the United Provinces.

Yet after all, her Majesty, as mankind in general, both wise and simple, are apt to do, had judged only according to the result, and the immediate result. No doubt John of Barneveld was second to no living statesman in breadth of view and adroitness of handling, yet the invasion of Flanders, which was purely his work, was unquestionably a grave mistake, and might easily have proved a fatal one. That the deadly peril was escaped was due, not to his prudence, but to the heroism of Maurice, the gallantry of Vere, Count Lewis Gunther, and the forces under them, and the noble self-devotion of Ernest. And even, despite the exertions of these brave men, it seems certain that victory would have been impossible had the archduke possessed that true appreciation of a situation which marks the consummate general.

Surely the Lord seemed to have delivered the enemy into his hands that morning. Maurice was shut in between Nieuport on one side and the archduke's army on the other, planted as it was on the only road of retreat. Had Albert entrenched himself, Maurice must either have attacked at great disadvantage or attempted embarkation in the face of his enemy. To stay indefinitely where he was would have proved an impossibility, and amid the confusion necessary to the shipping of his army, how could he have protected himself by six demi-cannon placed on the sea-beach?

That Maurice was able to extricate himself from the horrible dilemma in which he had been placed, through no fault of his own, and to convert imminent disaster into magnificent victory, will always redound to his reputation as a great military chief. And this was all the fruit of the expedition, planned, as Elizabeth thought, with so much secrecy and discretion. Three days after the battle the stadholder came again before Nieuport, only to find the garrison strengthened meantime by La Bourlotte to three thousand men. A rainy week succeeded, and Maurice then announced

Page 2236

to the States-General the necessity of abandoning an enterprise, a successful issue to which was in his opinion impossible. The States-General, grown more modest in military matters, testified their willingness to be governed by his better judgment, and left Ostend for the Hague on the 18th July. Maurice, after a little skirmishing with some of the forts around that city, in one of which the archduke's general La Bourlotte was killed, decided to close the campaign, and he returned with his whole army on the last day of July into Holland.

The expedition was an absolute failure, but the stadholder had gained a great victory. The effect produced at home and abroad by this triumphant measuring of the republican forces, horse, foot, and artillery, in a pitched battle and on so conspicuous an arena, with the picked veterans of Spain and Italy, was perhaps worth the cost, but no other benefit was derived from the invasion of Flanders.

The most healthy moral to be drawn from this brief but memorable campaign is that the wisest statesmen are prone to blunder in affairs of war, success in which seems to require a special education and a distinct genius. Alternation between hope and despair, between culpable audacity and exaggerated prudence, are but too apt to mark the warlike counsels of politicians who have not been bred soldiers. This, at least, had been eminently the case with Barneveld and his colleagues of the States-General.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Alas! the benighted victims of superstition hugged their chains
Culpable audacity and exaggerated prudence
The wisest statesmen are prone to blunder in affairs of war

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 74, 1600-1602

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Effects of the Nieuport campaign—The general and the statesman— The Roman empire and the Turk—Disgraceful proceedings of the mutinous soldiers in Hungary—-The Dunkirk pirates—Siege of Ostend by the Archduke—Attack on Rheinberg by Prince Maurice—Siege and capitulation of Meura—Attempt on Bois-le-Duc—Concentration of

the war at Ostend—Account of the belligerents—Details of the siege— Feigned offer of Sir Francis Vere to capitulate—Arrival of reinforcements from the States—Attack and overthrow of the besiegers.

The Nieuport campaign had exhausted for the time both belligerents. The victor had saved the republic from impending annihilation, but was incapable of further efforts during the summer. The conquered cardinal-archduke, remaining essentially in the same position as before, consoled himself with the agreeable fiction that the States, notwithstanding their triumph, had in reality suffered the most in the great battle. Meantime both parties did their best to repair damages and to recruit their armies.

Page 2237

The States—or in other words Barneveld, who was the States—had learned a lesson. Time was to show whether it would be a profitable one, or whether Maurice, who was the preceptor of Europe in the art of war, would continue to be a docile pupil of the great Advocate even in military affairs. It is probable that the alienation between the statesman and the general, which was to widen as time advanced, may be dated from the day of Nieuport.

Fables have even been told which indicated the popular belief in an intensity of resentment on the part of the prince, which certainly did not exist till long afterwards.

“Ah, scoundrel!” the stadholder was said to have exclaimed, giving the Advocate a box on the ear as he came to wish him joy of his great victory, “you sold us, but God prevented your making the transfer.”

History would disdain even an allusion to such figments—quite as disgraceful, certainly to Maurice as to Barneveld—did they not point the moral and foreshadow some of the vast but distant results of events which had already taken place, and had they not been so generally repeated that it is a duty for the lover of truth to put his foot upon the calumny, even at the risk for a passing moment of reviving it.

The condition of the war in Flanders had established a temporary equilibrium among the western powers—France and England discussing, intriguing, and combining in secret with each other, against each other, and in spite of each other, in regard to the great conflict—while Spain and the cardinal-archduke on the one side, and the republic on the other, prepared themselves for another encounter in the blood-stained arena.

Meantime, on the opposite verge of what was called European civilization, the perpetual war between the Roman Empire and the Grand Turk had for the moment been brought into a nearly similar equation. Notwithstanding the vast amount of gunpowder exploded during so many wearisome years, the problem of the Crescent and the Cross was not much nearer a solution in the East than was that of mass and conventicle in the West. War was the normal and natural condition of mankind. This fact, at least, seemed to have been acquired and added to the mass of human knowledge.

From the prolific womb of Germany came forth, to swell impartially the Protestant and Catholic hosts, vast swarms of human creatures. Sold by their masters at as high prices as could be agreed upon beforehand, and receiving for themselves five stivers a day, irregularly paid, until the carrion-crow rendered them the last service, they found at times more demand for their labor in the great European market than they could fully supply. There were not Germans enough every year for the consumption of the Turk, and the pope, and the emperor, and the republic, and the Catholic king, and the Christian king, with both ends of Europe ablaze at once. So it happened that the Duke of Mercoeur and other heroes of the League, having

Page 2238

effected their reconciliation with the Bearnese, and for a handsome price paid down on the nail having acknowledged him to be their legitimate and Catholic sovereign, now turned their temporary attention to the Turk. The sweepings of the League—-Frenchmen, Walloons, Germans, Italians, Spaniards—were tossed into Hungary, because for a season the war had become languid in Flanders. And the warriors grown grey in the religious wars of France astonished the pagans on the Danube by a variety of crimes and cruelties such as Christians only could imagine. Thus, while the forces of the Sultan were besieging Buda, a detachment of these ancient Leaguers lay in Pappa, a fortified town not far from Raab, which Archduke Maximilian had taken by storm two years before. Finding their existence monotonous and payments unpunctual, they rose upon the governor; Michael Maroti, and then entered into a treaty with the Turkish commander outside the walls. Bringing all the principal citizens of the town, their wives and children, and all their moveable property into the market-place, they offered to sell the lot, including the governor, for a hundred thousand rix dollars. The bargain was struck, and the Turk, paying him all his cash on hand and giving hostages for the remainder, carried off six hundred of the men and women, promising soon to return and complete the transaction. Meantime the imperial general, Schwartzenberg, came before the place, urging the mutineers with promises of speedy payment, and with appeals to their sense of shame, to abstain from the disgraceful work. He might as well have preached to the wild swine swarming in the adjacent forests. Siege thereupon was laid to the place. In a sortie the brave Schwartzenberg was killed, but Colonitz coming up in force the mutineers were locked up in the town which they had seized, and the Turk never came to their relief. Famine drove them at last to choose between surrender and a desperate attempt to cut their way out. They took the bolder course, and were all either killed or captured. And now—the mutineers having given the Turk this lesson in Christian honour towards captives—their comrades and the rest of the imperial forces showed them the latest and most approved Christian method of treating mutineers. Several hundred of the prisoners were distributed among the different nationalities composing the army to be dealt with at pleasure. The honest Germans were the most straightforward of all towards their portion of the prisoners, for they shot them down at once, without an instant’s hesitation. But the Lorrainers, the remainder of the French troops, the Walloons, and especially the Hungarians—whose countrymen and women had been sold into captivity—all vied with each other in the invention of cruelties at which the soul sickens, and which the pen almost refuses to depict.

Page 2239

These operations and diversions had no sensible effect upon the progress of the war, which crept on with the same monotonous and sluggish cruelty as ever; but the incidents narrated paint the course of civilization more vividly than the detailed accounts of siege and battle; mining and countermining, assaults and ambuscades can do, of which the history books are full. The leaguers of Buda and of other cities and fortresses in Hungary went their course; and it was destined to remain for a still longer season doubtful whether Cross or Crescent should ultimately wave over the whole territory of Eastern Europe, and whether the vigorous Moslem, believing in himself, his mission, his discipline, and his resources, should ultimately absorb what was left of the ancient Roman Empire.

Meantime, such of the Walloons, Lorrainers, Germans, and Frenchmen as had grown wearied of the fighting on the Danube and the Theiss—might have recourse for variety to the perpetual carnage on the Meuse, the Rhine, and the Scheld. If there was not bloodshed enough for all, it was surely not the fault of Mahomet, nor Clement, nor Philip.

During the remainder of the year not much was done in of the stadholder or the cardinal, but there was immense damage done to the Dutch shipping by the famous privateersman, Van der Waecken, with his squadron of twelve or fourteen armed cruisers. In vain had the States exerted themselves to destroy the robbers cave, Dunkirk. Shiploads of granite had been brought from Norway, and stone fleets had been sunk in the channel, but the insatiable quicksands had swallowed them as fast as they could be deposited, the tide rolled as freely as before, and the bold pirates sailed forth as gaily as ever to prey upon the defenceless trading vessels and herring-smacks of the States. For it was only upon non-combatants that Admiral Van der Waecken made war, and the fishermen especially, who mainly belonged to the Memnonite religion, with its doctrines of non-resistance—not a very comfortable practice in that sanguinary age—were his constant victims. And his cruelties might have almost served as a model to the Christian warriors on the Turkish frontier. After each vessel had been rifled of everything worth possessing, and then scuttled, the admiral would order the crews to be, thrown overboard at once, or, if he chanced to be in a merry mood, would cause them to be fastened to the cabin floor, or nailed crossways on the deck and then would sail away leaving ship and sailors to sink at leisure. The States gave chase as well as they could to the miscreant—a Dutchman born, and with a crew mainly composed of renegade Netherlanders and other outcasts, preying for base lucre on their defenceless countryman—and their cruisers were occasionally fortunate enough to capture and bring in one of the pirate ships. In such cases, short shrift was granted, and the buccaneers were hanged without mercy, thirty-eight having been executed in one morning at Rotterdam. The admiral with most of his vessels escaped, however, to the coast of Spain, where his crews during the autumn mainly contrived to desert, and where he himself died in the winter, whether from malady, remorse, or disappointment at not being rewarded by a high position in the Spanish navy.

Page 2240

The war was in its old age. The leaf of a new century had been turned, and men in middle life had never known what the word Peace meant. Perhaps they could hardly imagine such a condition. This is easily said, but it is difficult really to picture to ourselves the moral constitution of a race of mankind which had been born and had grown up, marrying and giving in marriage, dying and burying their dead, and so passing on from the cradle towards the grave, accepting the eternal clang of arms, and the constant participation by themselves and those nearest to them in the dangers, privations, and horrors of siege and battle-field as the commonplaces of life. At least, those Netherlanders knew what fighting for independence of a foreign tyrant meant. They must have hated Spain very thoroughly, and believed in the right of man to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, and to govern himself upon his own soil, however meagre, very earnestly, or they would hardly have spent their blood and treasure, year after year; with such mercantile regularity when it was always in their power to make peace by giving up the object for which they had been fighting.

Yet the war, although in its old age, was not fallen into decrepitude. The most considerable and most sanguinary pitched battle of what then were modern times had just been fought, and the combatants were preparing themselves for a fresh wrestle, as if the conflict had only begun. And now—although the great leaguers of Harlem, Leyden, and Antwerp, as well as the more recent masterpieces of Prince Maurice in Gelderland and Friesland were still fresh in men's memory—there was to be a siege, which for endurance, pertinacity, valour, and bloodshed on both sides, had not yet been foreshadowed, far less equalled, upon the fatal Netherland soil.

That place of fashionable resort, where the fine folk of Europe now bathe, and flirt, and prattle politics or scandal so cheerfully during the summer solstice—cool and comfortable Ostend—was throughout the sixteenth century as obscure a fishing village as could be found in Christendom. Nothing, had ever happened there, nobody had ever lived there, and it was not until a much later period that the famous oyster, now identified with its name, had been brought to its bay to be educated. It was known for nothing except for claiming to have invented the pickling of herrings, which was not at all the fact. Towards the latter part of the century, however, the poor little open village had been fortified to such purpose as to enable it to beat off the great Alexander Farnese, when he had made an impromptu effort to seize it in the year 1583, after his successful enterprise against Dunkirk and Nieuport, and subsequent preparation had fortunately been made against any further attempt. For in the opening period of the new century thousands and tens of thousands were to come to those yellow sands, not for a midsummer holiday, but to join hands in one of the most enduring struggles that history had yet recorded, and on which the attention of Europe was for a long time to be steadily fixed.

Page 2241

Ostend—East-end—was the only possession of the republic in Flanders. Having been at last thoroughly fortified according to the principles of the age, it was a place whence much damage was inflicted upon the enemy, and whence forays upon the obedient Flemings could very successfully be conducted. Being in the hands of so enterprising a naval power, it controlled the coast, while the cardinal-archduke on the other side fondly hoped that its possession would give him supremacy on the sea. The States of Flanders declared it to be a thorn in the Belgic lion's foot, and called urgently upon their sovereign to remove the annoyance.

They offered Albert 300,000 florins a month so long as the siege should last, besides an extraordinary sum of 300,000, of which one third was to be paid when the place should be invested, one-third when the breach had been made, and one-third after the town had been taken. It was obvious that, although they thought the extraction of the thorn might prove troublesome, the process would be accomplished within a reasonable time. The cardinal-archduke, on his part, was as anxious as the "members" of Flanders. Asking how long the Duke of Parma had been in taking Antwerp, and being told "eighteen months," he replied that, if necessary, he was willing to employ eighteen years in reducing Ostend.

The town thus about to assume so much importance in the world's eye had about three thousand inhabitants within its lowly; thatch-roofed houses. It fronted directly upon the seacoast and stretched backward in a southerly direction, having the sandy downs on the right and left, and a swampy, spongy soil on the inner verge, where it communicated with the land. Its northern part, small and scarcely inhabited, was lashed by the ocean, and exposed to perpetual danger from its storms and flood-tides, but was partially protected from these encroachments by a dyke stretching along the coast on the west. Here had hitherto been the harbour formed by the mouth of the river Iperleda as it mingled with the sea, but this entrance had become so choked with sand as to be almost useless at low water. This circumstance would have rendered the labours of the archduke comparatively easy, and much discouraged the States, had there not fortunately been a new harbour which had formed itself on the eastern side exactly at the period of threatened danger. The dwarf mountain range of dunes which encircled the town on the eastern side had been purposely levelled, lest the higher summits should offer positions of vantage to a besieging foe. In consequence of this operation, the sea had burst over the land and swept completely around the place, almost converting it into an island, while at high water there opened a wide and profound gulf which with the ebb left an excellent channel quite deep enough for even the ships of war of those days. The next care of the States authorities was to pierce their fortifications on this side at a convenient point, thus creating a safe and snug haven within the walls for the fleets of transports which were soon to arrive by open sea, laden with soldiers and munitions.

Page 2242

The whole place was about half an hour's walk in circumference. It was surrounded with a regular counterscarp, bastions, and casemates, while the proximity of the ocean and the humid nature of the soil ensured it a network of foss and canal on every side. On the left or western side, where the old harbour had once been, and which was the most vulnerable by nature, was a series of strong ravelins, the most conspicuous of which were called the Sand Hill, the Porcupine, and Hell's Mouth. Beyond these, towards the southwest, were some detached fortifications, resting for support, however, upon the place itself, called the Polder, the Square, and the South Square. On the east side, which was almost inaccessible, as it would seem, by such siege machinery as then existed, was a work called the Spanish half-moon, situate on the new harbour called the Guele or Gullet.

Towards the west and southwest, externally, upon the territory of Flanders—not an inch of which belonged to the republic, save the sea-beaten corner in which nestled the little town-eighteen fortresses had been constructed by the archduke as a protection against hostile incursions from the place. Of these, the most considerable were St. Albert, often mentioned during the Nieuport campaign, St. Isabella St. Clara, and Great-Thirst.

On the 5th July, 1601, the archduke came before the town, and formally began the siege. He established his headquarters in the fort which bore the name of his patron saint. Frederic van den Berg meanwhile occupied fort Breden on the eastern side, with the intention, if possible, of getting possession of the Gullet, or at least of rendering the entrance to that harbour impossible by means of his hostile demonstrations. Under Van den Berg was Count Bucquoy-Longueval, a Walloon officer of much energy and experience, now general-in-chief of artillery in the archduke's army.

The numbers with which Albert took the field at first have not been accurately stated, but it is probable that his object was to keep as many as twenty thousand constantly engaged in the siege, and that in this regard he was generally successful.

Within the town were fifty-nine companies of infantry, to which were soon added twenty-three more under command of young Chatillon, grandson of the great Coligny. It was "an olla podrida of nationalities," according to the diarist of the siege—[Meteren]. English, Scotch, Dutch, Flemings, Frenchmen, Germans, mixed in about equal proportions. Commander-in-chief at the outset was Sir Francis Vere, who established himself by the middle of July in the place, sent thither by order of the States-General. It had been the desire of that assembly that the stadholder should make another foray in Flanders for the purpose of driving off the archduke before he should have time to complete his preliminary operations. But for that year at least Maurice was resolved not to renounce his own schemes in deference to those so much more ignorant than himself of the art of war, even if Barneveld and his subordinates on their part had not learned a requisite lesson of modesty.

Page 2243

So the prince, instead of risking another Nieuport campaign, took the field with a small but well-appointed force, about ten thousand men in all, marched to the Rhine, and early in June, laid siege to Rheinberg. It was his purpose to leave the archduke for the time to break his teeth against the walls of Ostend, while he would himself protect the eastern frontier, over which came regular reinforcements and supplies for the Catholic armies. His works were laid out with his customary precision and neatness. But, standing as usual, like a professor at his blackboard, demonstrating his proposition to the town, he was disturbed in his calculations by the abstraction from his little army of two thousand English troops ordered by the States-General to march to the defence of Ostend. The most mathematical but most obedient of princes, annoyed but not disconcerted, sent off the troops but continued his demonstration.

“By this specimen,” cried the French envoy, with enthusiasm, “judge of the energy of this little commonwealth. They are besieging Berg with an army of twelve thousand men, a place beyond the frontier, and five days’ march from the Hague. They are defending another important place, besieged by the principal forces of the archdukes, and there is good chance of success at both points. They are doing all this too with such a train of equipages of artillery, of munitions, of barks, of ships of war, that I hardly know of a monarch in the world who would not be troubled to furnish such a force of warlike machinery.”

By the middle of July he sprang a mine under the fortifications, doing much damage and sending into the air a considerable portion of the garrison. Two of the soldiers were blown into his own camp, and one of them, strangely enough, was but slightly injured. Coming as he did through the air at cannon-ball speed, he was of course able to bring the freshest intelligence from the interior of the town.

His news as to the condition of the siege confirmed the theory of the stadholder. He persisted in his operations for three weeks longer, and the place was then surrendered. The same terms—moderate and honourable were given to the garrison and the burghers as in all Maurice’s victories. Those who liked to stay were at liberty to do so, accepting the prohibition of public worship according to the Roman ritual, but guaranteed against inquisition into household or conscience. The garrison went out with the honours of war, and thus the place, whose military value caused it to change hands almost as frequently as a counter in a game, was once more in possession of the republic. In the course of the following week Maurice laid siege to the city of Meurs, a little farther up the Rhine, which immediately capitulated. Thus the keys to the debatable land of Cleves and Juliers, the scene of the Admiral of Arragon’s recent barbarities, were now held by the stadholder.

Page 2244

These achievements were followed by an unsuccessful attempt upon Bois-le-Duc in the course of November. The place would have fallen notwithstanding the slenderness of the besieging army had not a sudden and severe frost caused the prudent prince to raise the siege. Feeling that his cousin Frederic van den Berg, who had been despatched from before Ostend to command the relieving force near Bois-le-Duc, might take advantage of the prematurely frozen canals and rivers to make an incursion into Holland, he left his city just as his works had been sufficiently advanced to ensure possession of the prize, and hastened to protect the heart of the republic from possible danger.

Nothing further was accomplished by Maurice that year, but meantime something had been doing within and around Ostend.

For now the siege of Ostend became the war, and was likely to continue to be the war for a long time to come; all other military operations being to a certain degree suspended, as if by general consent of both belligerants, or rendered subsidiary to the main design. So long as this little place should be beleaguered it was the purpose of the States, and of Maurice, acting in harmony with those authorities, to concentrate their resources so as to strengthen the grip with which the only scrap of Flanders was held by the republic,

And as time wore on, the supposed necessities of the wealthy province, which, in political importance, made up a full half of the archduke's dominions, together with self-esteem and an exaggerated idea of military honour, made that prelate more and more determined to effect his purpose.

So upon those barren sands was opened a great academy in which the science and the art of war were to be taught by the most skilful practitioners to all Europe; for no general, corporal, artillerist, barber-surgeon, or engineer, would be deemed to know his trade if he had not fought at Ostend; and thither resorted month after month warriors of every rank, from men of royal or of noblest blood to adventurers of lowlier degree, whose only fortune was buckled at their sides. From every land, of every religion, of every race, they poured into the town or into the besiegers' trenches. Habsburg and Holstein; Northumberland, Vere, and Westmoreland; Fairfax and Stuart; Bourbon, Chatillon, and Lorraine; Bentivoglio, Farnese, Spinola, Grimaldi, Arragon, Toledo, Avila, Berlaymont, Bucquoy, Nassau, Orange, Solms—such were the historic names of a few only of the pupils or professors in that sanguinary high school, mingled with the plainer but well known patronymics of the Baxes, Meetkerkes, Van Loons, Marquettes, Van der Meers, and Barendrechts, whose bearers were fighting, as they long had fought, for all that men most dearly prize on earth, and not to win honour or to take doctors' degrees in blood. Papist, Calvinist, Lutheran, Turk, Jew and Moor, European, Asiatic, African, all came to dance in that long carnival of death; and every incident,

Page 2245

every detail throughout the weary siege could if necessary be reproduced; for so profound and general was the attention excited throughout Christendom by these extensive operations, and so new and astonishing were many of the inventions and machines employed—most of them now as familiar as gunpowder or as antiquated as a catapult—that contemporaries have been most bountiful in their records for the benefit of posterity, feeling sure of a gratitude which perhaps has not been rendered to their shades.

Especially the indefatigable Philip Fleming-auditor and secretary of Ostend before and during the siege, bravest, most conscientious, and most ingenious of clerks—has chronicled faithfully in his diary almost every cannon-shot that was fired, house that was set on fire, officer that was killed, and has pourtrayed each new machine that was invented or imagined by native or foreign genius. For the adepts or, pretenders who swarmed to town or camp from every corner of the earth, bringing in their hands or brains to be disposed of by either belligerents infallible recipes for terminating the siege at a single blow, if only their theories could be understood and their pockets be filled, were as prolific and as sanguine as in every age. But it would be as wearisome, and in regard to the history of human culture as superfluous, to dilate upon the technics of Targone and Giustianini, and the other engineers, Italian and Flemish, who amazed mankind at this period by their successes, still more by their failures, or to describe every assault, sortie, and repulse, every excavation, explosion, and cannonade, as to disinter the details of the siege of Nineveh or of Troy. But there is one kind of enginry which never loses its value or its interest, and which remains the same in every age—-the machinery by which stout hearts act directly upon willing hands—and vast were the results now depending on its employment around Ostend.

On the outside and at a distance the war was superintended of course by the stadholder and commander-in-chief, while his cousin William Lewis, certainly inferior to no living man in the science of war, and whose studies in military literature, both ancient and modern, during the brief intervals of his active campaigning, were probably more profound than those of any contemporary, was always alert and anxious to assist with his counsels or to mount and ride to the fray.

In the town Sir Francis Vere commanded. Few shapes are more familiar to the student of those times than this veteran campaigner, the offshoot of a time-honoured race. A man of handsome, weather-beaten, battle-bronzed visage, with massive forehead, broad intelligent eyes, a high straight nose, close-clipped hair, and a great brown beard like a spade; captious, irascible, but most resolute, he seemed, in his gold inlaid Milan corslet and ruff of point-lace, the very image of a partizan chieftain; one of the noblest relics of a race of fighters slowly passing off the world’s stage.

Page 2246

An efficient colonel, he was not a general to be relied upon in great affairs either in council or the field. He hated the Nassaus, and the Nassaus certainly did not admire him, while his inordinate self-esteem, both personal and national, and his want of true sympathy for the cause in which, he fought, were the frequent source of trouble and danger to the republic.

Of the seven or eight thousand soldiers in the town when the siege began, at least two thousand were English. The queen, too intelligent, despite her shrewishness to the Staten; not to be faithful to the cause in which her own interests were quite as much involved as theirs, had promised Envoy Caron that although she was obliged to maintain twenty thousand men in Ireland to keep down the rebels, directly leagued as they were with Spain and the archdukes, the republic might depend upon five thousand soldiers from England. Detachment after detachment, the soldiers came as fast as the London prisons could be swept and the queen's press-gang perform its office. It may be imagined that the native land of those warriors was not inconsiderably benefited by the grant to the republic of the right to make and pay for these levies. But they had all red uniforms, and were as fit as other men to dig trenches, to defend them; and to fill them afterwards, and none could fight more manfully or plunder friend and foe with greater cheerfulness of impartiality than did those islanders.

The problem which the archduke had set himself to solve was not an easy one. He was to reduce a town, which he could invest and had already succeeded very thoroughly in investing on the land aide, but which was open to the whole world by sea; while the besieged on their part could not only rely upon their own Government and people, who were more at home on the ocean than was any nation in the world, but upon their alliance with England, a State hardly inferior in maritime resources to the republic itself.

On the western side, which was the weakest, his progress was from the beginning the more encouraging, and his batteries were soon able to make some impression upon the outer works, and even to do considerable damage to the interior of the town. In the course of a few months he had fifty siege-guns in position, and had constructed a practicable road all around the place, connecting his own fortifications on the west and south with those of Bucquoy on the east.

Albert's leading thought however was to cut off the supplies. The freaks of nature, as already observed, combined with his own exertions, had effectually disposed of the western harbour as a means of ingress. The tide ebbed and flowed through the narrow channel, but it was clogged with sand and nearly, dry at low water. Moreover, by an invention then considered very remarkable, a foundation was laid for the besiegers' forts and batteries by sinking large and deep baskets of wicker-work, twenty feet in length, and filled

Page 2247

with bricks and sand, within this abandoned harbour. These clumsy machines were called sausages,21 and were the delight of the camp and of all Europe. The works thus established on the dry side crept slowly on towards the walls, and some demi-cannon were soon placed upon, them, but the besieged, not liking these encroachments, took the resolution to cut the pea-dyke along the coast which had originally protected the old harbour. Thus the sea, when the tides were high and winds boisterous, was free to break in upon the archduke's works, and would often swallow sausages, men, and cannon far more rapidly than it was possible to place them there.

Yet still those human ants toiled on, patiently restoring what the elements so easily destroyed; and still, despite the sea; the cannonade, and the occasional sorties of the garrison, the danger came nearer and nearer. Bucquoy on the other side was pursuing the same system, but his task was immeasurably more difficult. The Gullet, or new eastern entrance, was a whirlpool at high tide, deep, broad, and swift as a millrace. Yet along its outer verge he too laid his sausages, protecting his men at their work as well as he could with gabions, and essayed to build a dyke of wicker-work upon which he might place a platform for artillery to prevent the ingress of the republican ships.

And his soldiers were kept steadily at work, exposed all the time to the guns of the Spanish half-moon from which the besieged never ceased to cannonade those industrious pioneers. It was a bloody business. Night and day the men were knee-deep in the trenches delving in mud and sand, falling every instant into the graves which they were thus digging for themselves, while ever and anon the sea would rise in its wrath and sweep them with their works away. Yet the victims were soon replaced by others, for had not the cardinal-archduke sworn to extract the thorn from the Belgic lion's paw even if he should be eighteen years about it, and would military honour permit him to break his vow? It was a piteous sight, even for the besieged, to see human life so profusely squandered. It is a terrible reflection, too, that those Spaniards, Walloons, Italians, confronted death so eagerly, not from motives of honour, religion, discipline, not inspired by any kind of faith or fanaticism, but because the men who were employed in this horrible sausage-making and dyke-building were promised five stivers a day instead of two.

And there was always an ample supply of volunteers for the service so long as the five stivers were paid.

But despite all Bucquoy's exertions the east harbour remained as free as ever. The cool, wary Dutch skippers brought in their cargoes as regularly as if there had been no siege at all. Ostend was rapidly acquiring greater commercial importance, and was more full of bustle and business than had ever been dreamed of in that quiet nook since the days of Robert the Frisian, who had built the old church of Ostend, as one of the thirty which he erected in honour of St. Peter, five hundred years before.

Page 2248

For the States did not neglect their favourite little city. Fleets of transports arrived day after day, week after week, laden with every necessary and even luxury for the use of the garrison. It was perhaps the cheapest place in all the Netherlands, so great was the abundance. Capons, bares, partridges, and butcher's meat were plentiful as blackberries, and good French claret was but two stivers the quart. Certainly the prospect was not promising of starving the town into a surrender.

But besides all this digging and draining there was an almost daily cannonade. Her Royal Highness the Infanta was perpetually in camp by the side of her well-beloved Albert, making her appearance there in great state, with eighteen coaches full of ladies of honour, and always manifesting much impatience if she did not hear the guns.

She would frequently touch off a forty-pounder with her own serene fingers in order to encourage the artillerymen, and great was the enthusiasm which such condescension excited.

Assaults, sorties, repulses, ambuscades were also of daily occurrence, and often with very sanguinary results; but it would be almost as idle now to give the details of every encounter that occurred, as to describe the besieging of a snow-fort by schoolboys.

It is impossible not to reflect that a couple of Parrots and a Monitor or two would have terminated the siege in half an hour in favor of either party, and levelled the town or the besiegers' works as if they had been of pasteboard.

Bucquoy's dyke was within a thousand yards of the harbour's entrance, yet the guns on his platform never sank a ship nor killed a man on board, while the archduke's batteries were even nearer their mark. Yet it was the most prodigious siege of modern days. Fifty great guns were in position around the place, and their balls weighed from ten to forty pounds apiece. It was generally agreed that no such artillery practice had ever occurred before in the world.

For the first six months, and generally throughout the siege, there was fired on an average a thousand of such shots a day. In the sieges of the American civil war there were sometimes three thousand shots an hour, and from guns compared to which in calibre and power those cannon and demi-cannon were but children's toys.

Certainly the human arm was of the same length then as now, a pike-thrust was as effective as the stab of the most improved bayonet, and when it came, as it was always the purpose to do, to the close embrace of foemen, the work was done as thoroughly as it could be in this second half of the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless it is impossible not to hope that such progress in science must at last render long wars impossible. The Dutch war of independence had already lasted nearly forty years. Had the civil war in America upon the territory of half a continent been

waged with the Ostend machinery it might have lasted two centuries. Something then may have been gained for humanity by giving war such preter-human attributes as to make its demands of gold and blood too exhaustive to become chronic.

Page 2249

Yet the loss of human life during that summer and winter was sufficiently wholesale as compared with the meagre results. Blood flowed in torrents, for no man could be more free of his soldiers' lives than was the cardinal-archduke, hurling them as he did on the enemy's works before the pretence of a practical breach had been effected, and before a reasonable chance existed of purchasing an advantage at such a price. Five hundred were killed outright in half-an-hour's assault on an impregnable position one autumn evening, and lay piled in heaps beneath the Sand Hill fort-many youthful gallants from Spain and Italy among them, noble volunteers recognised by their perfumed gloves and golden chains, and whose pockets were worth rifling. The Dutch surgeons, too, sallied forth in strength after such an encounter, and brought in great bags filled with human fat esteemed the sovereignst remedy in the world for wounds and disease.

Leaders were killed on both sides. Catrici, chief of the Italian artillery, and Braccamonte, commander of a famous Sicilian legion, with many less-known captains, lost their lives before the town. The noble young Chatillon, grandson of Coligny, who had distinguished himself at Nieuport, fell in the Porcupine fort, his head carried off by a cannon-ball, which destroyed another officer at his side, and just grazed the ear of the distinguished Colonel Uchtenbroek. Sir Francis Vere, too, was wounded in the head by a fragment of iron, and was obliged to leave the town for six weeks till his wound should heal.

The unfortunate inhabitants—men, women, and children—were of course exposed to perpetual danger, and very many were killed. Their houses were often burned to the ground, in which cases the English auxiliaries were indefatigable, not in rendering assistance, but in taking possession of such household goods as the flames had spared. Nor did they always wait for such opportunities, but were apt, at the death of an eminent burgher, to constitute themselves at once universal legatees. Thus, while honest Bartholomew Tysen, a worthy citizen grocer, was standing one autumn morning at his own door, a stray cannon-ball took off his head, and scarcely had he been put in a coffin before his house was sacked from garret to cellar and all the costly spices, drugs, and other valuable merchandize of his warehouse—the chief magazine in the town—-together with all his household furniture, appropriated by those London warriors. Bartholomew's friends and relatives appealed to Sir Francis Vere for justice, but were calmly informed by that general that Ostend was like a stranded ship, on its beamends on a beach, and that it was impossible not to consider it at the mercy of the wreckers. So with this highly figurative view of the situation from the lips of the governor of the place and the commander-in-chief of the English as well as the Dutch garrison, they were fain to go home and bury their dead, finding when they returned

Page 2250

that another cannonball had carried away poor Bartholomew's coffin-lid. Thus was never non-combatant and grocer, alive or dead, more out of suits with fortune than this citizen of Ostend; and such were the laws of war, as understood by one of the most eminent of English practitioners in the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is true, however, that Vere subsequently hanged a soldier for stealing fifty pounds of powder and another for uttering counterfeit money, but robberies upon the citizens were unavenged.

Nor did the deaths by shot or sword-stroke make up the chief sum of mortality. As usual the murrain-like pestilence which swept off its daily victims both within an without the town, was more effective than any direct agency of man. By the month of December the number of the garrison had been reduced to less than three thousand, while it is probable that the archduke had not eight thousand effective men left in his whole army.

It was a black and desolate scene. The wild waves of the German ocean, lashed by the wintry gales, would often sweep over the painfully constructed works of besieger and besieged and destroy in an hour the labour of many weeks. The Porcupine's small but vitally-important ravelin lying out in the counterscarp between the old town and the new, guarding the sluices by which the water for the town moats and canals was controlled, and preventing the pioneers of the enemy from undermining the western wall—was so damaged by the sea as to be growing almost untenable. Indefatigably had the besieged attempted with wicker-work and timber and palisades to strengthen this precious little fort, but they had found, even as Bucquoy and the archduke on their part had learned, that the North Sea in winter was not to be dammed by bulrushes. Moreover, in a bold and successful assault the besiegers had succeeded in setting fire to the inflammable materials heaped about the ravelin to such effect that the fire burned for days, notwithstanding the flooding of the works at each high tide. The men, working day and night, scorching in the flames, yet freezing kneedeep in the icy slush of the trenches and perpetually under fire of the hostile batteries, became daily more and more exhausted, notwithstanding their determination to hold the place. Christmas drew nigh, and a most gloomy, festival it was like to be, for it seemed as if the beleaguered garrison had been forgotten by the States. Weeks had passed away without a single company being sent to repair the hideous gaps made daily in the ranks of those defenders of a forlorn hope. It was no longer possible to hold the external works; the Square, the Polder, and the other forts on the southwest which Vere had constructed with so much care and where he had thus far kept his headquarters. On Sunday morning,—23rd December, he reluctantly gave orders that they should be abandoned on the following day and the whole garrison concentrated within the town.

Page 2251

The clouds were gathering darkly over the head of the gallant Vere; for no sooner had he arrived at this determination than he learned from a deserter that the archduke had fixed upon that very Sunday evening for a general assault upon the place. It was hopeless for the garrison to attempt to hold these outer forts, for they required a far larger number of soldiers than could be spared from the attenuated little army. Yet with those forts in the hands of the enemy there would be nothing left but to make the best and speediest terms that might be obtained. The situation was desperate. Sir Francis called his principal officers together, announced his resolve not to submit to the humiliation of a surrender after all their efforts, if there was a possibility of escape from their dilemma, reminded them that reinforcements might be expected to arrive at any moment, and that with even a few hundred additional soldiers the outer works might still be manned and the city saved. The officers English, Dutch, and French, listened respectfully to his remarks, but, without any suggestions on their own part, called on him as their Alexander to untie the Gordian knot. Alexander solved it, not with the sword, but with a trick which he hoped might prove sharper than a sword. He announced his intention of proposing at once to treat, and to protract the negotiations as long as possible, until the wished-for sails should be discerned in the offing, when he would at once break faith with them, resume hostilities, and so make fools of the besiegers.

This was a device worthy of a modern Alexander whose surname was Farnese. Even in that loose age such cynical trifling with the sacredness of trumpets of truce and offers of capitulation were deemed far from creditable among soldiers and statesmen, yet the council of war highly applauded the scheme, and importuned the general to carry it at once into effect.

When it came, however, to selecting the hostages necessary for the proposed negotiations, they became less ardent and were all disposed to recede. At last, after much discussion, the matter was settled, and before nightfall a drummer was set upon the external parapet of the Porcupine, who forthwith began to beat vigorously for a parley. The rattle was a welcome sound in the ears of the weary besiegers, just drawn up in column for a desperate assault, and the tidings were at once communicated to the archduke in Fort St. Albert. The prince manifested at first some unwillingness to forego the glory of the attack, from which he confidently expected a crowning victory, but yielding to the representations of his chief generals that it was better to have his town without further bloodshed, he consented to treat. Hostages were expeditiously appointed on both sides, and Captains Ogle and Fairfax were sent that same evening to the headquarters of the besieging army. It was at once agreed as a preliminary that the empty outer works of the place should remain unmolested. The English

Page 2252

officers were received with much courtesy. The archduke lifted his hat as they were presented, asked them of what nation they were, and then inquired whether they were authorized to agree upon terms of capitulation. They answered in the negative; adding, that the whole business would be in the hands of commissioners to be immediately sent by his Highness, as it was supposed, into the town. Albert then expressed the hope that there was no fraudulent intention in the proposition just made to negotiate. The officers professed themselves entirely ignorant of any contemplated deception; although Captain Ogle had been one of the council, had heard every syllable of Vere's stratagem, and had heartily approved of the whole plot. The Englishmen were then committed to the care of a Spanish nobleman of the duke's staff, and were treated with perfect politeness and hospitality.

Meantime no time was lost in despatching hostages, who should be at the same time commissioners, to Ostend. The quartermaster-general of the army, Don Matteo Antonio, and Matteo Serrano, governor of Sluys, but serving among the besiegers, were selected for this important business as personages of ability, discretion, and distinction.

They reached the town, coming in of course from the western side, as expeditiously as possible, but after nightfall. Before they arrived at headquarters there suddenly arose, from some unknown cause, a great alarm and beating to arms on the opposite or eastern side of the city. They were entirely innocent of any participation in this uproar and ignorant of its cause, but when they reached the presence of Sir Francis Vere they found that warrior in a towering passion. There was cheating going on, he exclaimed. The Spaniards, he cried, were taking advantage of these negotiations, and were about, by dishonourable stratagem, to assault the town.

Astounded, indignant, but utterly embarrassed, the grave Spaniards knew not how to reply. They were still more amazed when the general, rising to a still higher degree of exasperation, absolutely declined to exchange another word with them, but ordered Captains Carpentier and St. Hilaire, by whom they had been escorted to his quarters, to conduct them out of the town again by the same road which had brought them there. There was nothing for it but to comply, and to smother their resentment at such extraordinary treatment as best they could. When they got to the old harbour on the western side the tide had risen so high that it was impossible to cross.

Nobody knew better than Vere, when he gave the order, that this would be the case; so that when the escorting officers returned to state the fact, he simply ordered them to take the Spaniards back by the Gullet or eastern side. The strangers were not very young men, and being much fatigued with wandering to and fro in the darkness over the muddy roads, they begged permission to remain all night in Ostend, if it were only in

Page 2253

a guardhouse. But Vere was inexorable, after the duplicity which he affected to have discovered on the part of the enemy. So the quartermaster-general and the governor of Sluys, much to the detriment of their dignity, were forced once more to tramp through the muddy streets. And obeying their secret instructions, the escort led them round and round through the most miry and forlorn parts of the town, so that, sinking knee-deep at every step into sloughs and quicksands, and plunging about through the mist and sleet of a dreary December's night, they at last reached the precincts of the Spanish half-moon on the Gullet, be-draggled from head to foot and in a most dismal and exhausted condition.

"Ah, the villainous town of Ostend!" exclaimed Serrano, ruefully contemplating his muddy boots and imploring at least a pipe of tobacco. He was informed, however, that no such medical drugs were kept in the fort, but that a draught of good English ale was much at their service. The beer was brought in four foaming flagons, and, a little refreshed by this hospitality, the Spaniards were put in a boat and rowed under the guns of the fort across the Gullet and delivered to their own sentries on the outposts of Bucquoy's entrenchments. By this time it was midnight, so that it was necessary for them to remain for the night in the eastern encampment before reporting themselves at Fort St. Albert.

Thus far Vere's comedy had been eminently successful, and by taking advantage of the accidental alarm and so adroitly lashing himself into a fictitious frenzy, the general had gained nearly twenty-four additional hours of precious time on which he had not reckoned.

Next morning, after Serrano and Antonio had reported to the archduke, it was decided, notwithstanding the very inhospitable treatment which they had received, that those commissioners should return to their labours. Ogle and Fairfax still remained as hostages in camp, and of course professed entire ignorance of these extraordinary proceedings, attributing them to some inexplicable misunderstanding. So on Monday, 24th, December, the quartermaster and the governor again repaired to Ostend with orders to bring about the capitulation of the place as soon as possible. The same sergeant-major was again appointed by Vere to escort the strangers, and on asking by what way he should bring them in, was informed by Sir Francis that it would never do to allow those gentlemen, whose feet were accustomed to the soft sand of the sea-beach and downs, to bruise themselves upon the hard paving-stones of Ostend, but that the softest and muddiest road must be carefully selected for them. These reasons accordingly were stated with perfect gravity to the two Spaniards, who, in spite of their solemn remonstrances, were made to repeat a portion of their experiences and to accept it as an act of special courtesy from the English general. Thus so much time had been spent in preliminaries and so much more upon the road that the short winter's day was drawing to a close before they were again introduced to the presence of Vere.

Page 2254

They found that fiery personage on this occasion all smiles and blandishments. The Spaniards were received with most dignified courtesy, to which they gravely responded; and the general then proceeded to make excuses for the misunderstanding of the preceding day with its uncomfortable consequences. Thereupon arose much animated discussion as to the causes and the nature of the alarm on the east side which had created such excitement. Much time was ingeniously consumed in this utterly superfluous discussion; but at last the commissioners of the archduke insisted on making allusion to the business which had brought them to the town. “What terms of negotiation do you propose?” they asked Sir Francis. “His Highness has only to withdraw from before Ostend,” coolly replied the general, “and leave us, his poor neighbours, in peace and quietness. This would be the most satisfactory negotiation possible and the one most easily made.”

Serrano and Antonio found it difficult to see the matter in that cheerful light, and assured Sir Francis that they had not been commissioned by the archduke to treat for his own withdrawal but for the surrender of the town. Hereupon high words and fierce discussion very naturally arose, and at last, when a good deal of time had been spent in the sharp encounter of wits, Vere proposed an adjournment of the discussion until after supper; politely expressing the hope that the Spanish gentlemen would be his guests.

The conversation had been from the beginning in French, as Vere, although a master of the Spanish language, was desirous that the rest of the company present should understand everything said at the interview.

The invitation to table was graciously accepted, and the Christmas eve passed off more merrily than the preceding night had done, so far as Vere’s two guests were concerned. Several distinguished officers were present at the festive board: Captain Montesquieu de Roquette, Sir Horace Vere, Captains St. Hilaire, Meetkerke, De Ryck, and others among them. As it was strict fast for the Catholics that evening—while on the other hand the English, still reckoning according to the old style, would not keep Christmas until ten days later—the banquet consisted mainly of eggs and fish, and the like meagre articles, in compliment to the guests. It was, however, as well furnished as could be expected in a beleaguered town, out of whose harbour a winter gale had been for many weeks blowing and preventing all ingress. There was at least no lack of excellent Bordeaux wine; while the servants waiting upon the table did not fail to observe that Governor Serrano was not in all respects a model of the temperance usually characteristic of his race. They carefully counted and afterwards related with admiration, not unmingled with horror, that the veteran Spaniard drank fifty-two goblets of claret, and was emptying his glass as fast as filled, although by no means neglecting the beer, the quality

Page 2255

of which he had tested the night before at the Half-moon. Yet there seemed to be no perceptible effect produced upon him, save perhaps that he grew a shade more grave and dignified with each succeeding draught. For while the banquet proceeded in this very genial manner business was by no means neglected; the negotiations for the surrender of the city being conducted on both sides with a fuddled solemnity very edifying for the attendants to contemplate.

Vere complained that the archduke was unreasonable, for he claimed nothing less from his antagonists than their all. The commissioners replied that all was no more than his own property. It certainly could not be thought unjust of him to demand his own, and all Flanders was his by legal donation from his Majesty of Spain. Vere replied that he had never studied jurisprudence, and was not versed at all in that—science, but he had always heard in England that possession was nine points of the law. Now it so happened that they, and not his Highness, were in possession of Ostend, and it would be unreasonable to expect them to make a present of it to any one. The besiegers, he urged, had gained much honour by their steady persistence amid so many dangers; difficulties, and losses;—but winter had come, the weather was very bad, not a step of progress had been made, and he was bold enough to express his opinion that it would be far more sensible on the part of his Highness, after such deeds of valour, to withdraw his diminished forces out of the freezing and pestilential swamps before Ostend and go into comfortable winter-quarters at Ghent or Bruges. Enough had been done for glory, and it must certainly now be manifest that he had no chance of taking the city.

Serrano retorted that it was no secret to the besiegers that the garrison had dwindled to a handful; that it was quite impossible for them to defend their outer works any longer; that with the loss of the external boulevard the defence of the place would be impossible, and that, on the contrary, it was for the republicans to resign themselves to their fate. They, too, had done enough for glory, and had nothing for it but to retire into the centre of their ruined little nest, where they must burrow until the enemy should have leisure to entirely unearth them, which would be a piece of work very easily and rapidly accomplished.

This was called negotiation; and thus the winter’s evening wore away, until the Spaniards; heavy with fatigue and wine, were without much difficulty persuaded to seek the couches prepared for them.

Next day the concourse of people around the city was Christmas, wonderful to behold. The rumour had spread through the, provinces, and was on the, wing to all foreign countries, that Ostend had capitulated, and that the commissioners were at that moment arranging the details. The cardinal-archduke, in complete Milanese armour, with a splendid feather-bush waving from his casque and surrounded by his brilliant body-guard,

Page 2256

galloped to and fro outside the entrenchments, expecting every moment a deputation to come forth, bearing the keys of the town. The Infanta too, magnificent in ruff and farthingale and brocaded petticoat, and attended by a cavalcade of ladies of honour in gorgeous attire, pranced impatiently about, awaiting the dramatic termination of a leaguer which was becoming wearisome to besieger and besieged. Not even on the famous second of July of the previous year, when that princess was pleasing herself with imaginations as to the deportment of Maurice of Nassau as a captive, had her soul been so full of anticipated triumph as on this Christmas morning.

Such a festive scene as was now presented in the neighbourhood of Ostend had not been exhibited for many a long year in Flanders. From the whole country side came the peasants and burghers, men, women, and children, in holiday attire. It was like a kermiss or provincial fair. Three thousand people at least were roaming about in all direction, gaping with wonder at the fortifications of the besieging army, so soon to be superfluous, sliding, skating, waltzing on the ice, admiring jugglers, dancing bears, puppet shows and merry-go-rounds, singing, and carousing upon herrings, sausages, waffles, with mighty draughts of Flemish ale, manifesting their exuberant joy that the thorn was nearly extracted from the lion's paw, and awaiting with delight a blessed relief from that operation. Never was a merrier Christmas morning in Flanders. There should be an end now to the forays through the country of those red-coated English pikemen, those hard-riding, hard-drinking troopers of Germany and, Holland, with the French and Scotch arquebus men, and terrible Zeeland sailors who had for years swept out of Ostend, at any convenient opportunity, to harry the whole province. And great was the joy in Flanders.

Meantime within the city a different scene was enacting. Those dignified Spaniards—-governor Serrano and Don Matteo Antonio—having slept off their carouse, were prepared after breakfast next morning to resume the interrupted negotiations. But affairs were now to take an unexpected turn. In the night the wind had changed, and in the course of the forenoon three Dutch vessels of war were descried in the offing, and soon calmly sailed into the mouth of the Gullet. The news was at once brought to Vere's headquarters. That general's plans had been crowned with success even sooner than he expected. There was no further object in continuing the comedy of negotiation, for the ships now arriving seemed crowded with troops. Sir Francis accordingly threw off the mask, and assuring his guests with extreme politeness that it had given him great pleasure to make the acquaintance of such distinguished personages, he thanked them cordially for their visit, but regretted that it would be no longer in his power to entertain any propositions of a pacific nature. The necessary reinforcements, which he had been so long expecting, had at last reached him, and it would not yet be necessary for him to retire into his ruined nest. Military honour therefore would not allow him to detain them any longer. Should he ever be so hard pressed again he felt sure that so

magnanimous a prince as his Highness would extend to him all due clemency and consideration.

Page 2257

The Spaniards; digesting as they best could the sauce of contumely with which the gross treachery of the transaction was now seasoned, solemnly withdrew, disdaining to express their spleen in words of idle menace.

They were escorted back through the lines, and at once made their report at headquarters. The festival had been dismally interrupted before it was well begun. The vessels were soon observed by friend and foe making their way triumphantly up to the town where they soon dropped anchor at the wharf of the inner Gullet, having only a couple of sailors wounded, despite all the furious discharges of Bucquoy's batteries. The holiday makers dispersed, much discomfited, the English hostages returned to the town, and the archduke shut himself up, growling and furious. His generals and counsellors, who had recommended the abandonment of his carefully prepared assault, and acceptance of the perfidious propositions to negotiate, by which so much golden time had been squandered, were for several days excluded from his presence.

Meantime the army, disappointed, discontented, half-starved, unpaid, passed their days and nights as before, in the sloppy trenches, while deep and earnest were the complaints and the curses which succeeded to the momentary exultation of Christmas eve. The soldiers were more than ever embittered against their august commander-in-chief, for they had just enjoyed a signal opportunity of comparing the luxury and comfortable magnificence of his Highness and the Infanta, and of contrasting it with their own misery. Moreover, it had long been exciting much indignation in the ranks that veteran generals and colonels, in whom all men had confidence, had been in great numbers superseded in order to make place for court favourites, utterly without experience or talent. Thus the veterans; murmuring in the wet trenches. The archduke meanwhile, in his sullen retirement, brooded over a tragedy to follow the very successful comedy of his antagonist.

It was not long delayed. The assault which had been postponed in the latter days of December was to be renewed before the end of the first week of the new year. Vere, through scouts and deserters, was aware of the impending storm, and had made his arrangements in accordance with, the very minute information which he had thus received. The reinforcements, so opportunely sent by the States, were not numerous —only six hundred in all—but they were an earnest of fresh comrades to follow. Meantime they sufficed to fill the gaps in the ranks, and to enable Vere to keep possession of the external line of fortifications, including the all-important Porcupine. Moreover, during the fictitious negotiations, while the general had thus been holding—-as he expressed it—the wolf by both ears, the labor of repairing damages in dyke, moat, and wall had not been for an instant neglected.

Page 2258

The morning of the 7th January, 1602, opened with a vigorous cannonade from all the archduke's batteries, east, west, and south. Auditor Fleeting, counsellor and secretary of the city, aide-de-camp and right hand of the commander-in-chief, a grim, grizzled, leathern-faced man of fifty, steady under fire as a veteran arquebuseer, ready with his pen as a counting-house clerk, and as fertile in resource as the most experienced campaigner, was ever at the general's side. At his suggestion several houses had been demolished, to furnish materials in wood and iron to stop the gaps as soon as made. Especially about the Sand Hill fort and the Porcupine a plentiful supply was collected, no time having been lost in throwing up stockades, palisades, and every other possible obstruction to the expected assailants. Knowing perfectly well where the brunt of the battle was to be, Vere had placed his brother Sir Horace at the head of twelve picked companies of diverse nations in the Sand Hill. Four of the very best companies of the garrison were stationed in the Porcupine, and ten more of the choicest in Fort Hell's Mouth, under Colonel Meetkerke. It must be recollected that the first of these three works was the key to the fortifications of the old or outer town. The other two were very near it, and were the principal redoubts which defended the most exposed and vulnerable portion of the new town on the western side. The Sand Hill, as its name imported, was the only existing relic within the city's verge of the chain of downs once encircling the whole place. It had however been cannonaded so steadily during the six months' siege as to have become almost ironclad—a mass of metal gradually accumulating from the enemy's guns. With the curtain extending from it towards east and west it protected the old town quite up to the little ancient brick church, one of the only two in Ostend.

All day long the cannon thundered—a bombardment such as had never before been dreamed of in those days, two thousand shots having been distinctly counted, by the burghers. There was but languid response from the besieged, who were reserving their strength. At last, to the brief winter's day succeeded a pitch-dark evening. It was dead low tide at seven. At that hour the drums suddenly beat alarm along the whole line of fortifications from the Gullet on the east to the old harbour on the west, while through the mirky atmosphere sounded the trumpets of the assault, the shouts of the Spanish and Italian commanders, and the fierce responsive yells of their troops. Sir Francis, having visited every portion of the works, and satisfied himself that every man in the garrison was under arms, and that all his arrangements had been fulfilled, now sat on horseback, motionless as a statue, within the Sand Hill. Among the many serious and fictitious attacks now making he waited calmly for the one great assault, even allowing some of the enemy to scale the distant counterscarp of

Page 2259

the external works towards the south, which he had by design left insufficiently guarded. It was but a brief suspense, for in a few moments two thousand men had rushed through the bed of the old harbour, out of which the tide had ebbed, and were vigorously assailing the Sand Hill and the whole length of its curtain. The impenetrable darkness made it impossible to count, but the noise and the surging fury of the advance rendered it obvious that the critical moment had arrived. Suddenly a vivid illumination burst forth. Great pine torches, piles of tar-barrels, and heaps of other inflammable material, which had been carefully arranged in Fort Porcupine, were now all at once lighted by Vere's command.

As the lurid blaze flashed far and wide there started out of the gloom not only the long lines of yellow jerkined pikemen and arquebuseers, with their storm-hoods and scaling ladders, rushing swiftly towards the forts, but beyond the broken sea dyke the reserved masses supporting the attack, drawn up in solid clumps of spears, with their gay standards waving above them, and with a strong force of cavalry in iron corslet and morion stationed in the rear to urge on the infantry and prevent their faltering in the night's work, became visible—phantom-like but perfectly distinct.

At least four thousand men were engaged in this chief attack, and the light now permitted the besieged to direct their fire from cannon, demi-cannon, culverin, and snaphance, with fatal effect. The assailants, thinned, straggling, but undismayed, closed up their ranks, and still came fiercely on. Never had Spaniards, Walloons, and Italians, manifested greater contempt of death than on this occasion. They knew that the archduke and the infanta were waiting breathlessly in Fort St. Albert for the news of that victory of which the feigned negotiations had defrauded them at Christmas, and they felt perfectly confident of ending both the siege and the forty years' war this January night. But they had reckoned without their wily English host. As they came nearer—van, and at last reserve—they dropped in great heaps under the steady fire of the musketry—as Philip Flaming, looking on, exclaimed—like apples when the autumn wind blows through the orchard. And as the foremost still pressed nearer and nearer, striving to clamber up the shattered counterscarp and through every practicable breach, the English, Hollanders, and Zeelanders, met them in the gap, not only at push of pike, but with their long daggers and with flaming pitchhoops, and hurled them down to instant death.

And thus around the Sand Hill, the Porcupine, and Hell's Mouth, the battle raged nearly two hours long, without an inch of ground being gained by the assailants. The dead and dying were piled beneath the walls, while still the reserves, goaded up to the mark by the cavalry, mounted upon the bodies of their fallen comrades and strove to plant their, ladders. But now the tide was on the flood, the harbour was

Page 2260

filling, and cool Auditor Fleming, whom nothing escaped quietly asked the general's permission to open the western' sluice. It was obvious, he observed, that the fury of the attack was over, and that the enemy would soon be effecting a retreat before the water should have risen too high. He even pointed out many stragglers attempting to escape through the already deepening shallows. Vere's consent was at once given, the flood-gate was opened, and the assailants such as still survived—panic-struck in a moment, rushed wildly back through the old harbour towards their camp. It was too late. The waters were out, and the contending currents whirled the fugitives up and down through the submerged land, and beyond the broken dyke, until great numbers of them were miserably drowned in the haven, while others were washed out to sea. Horses and riders were borne off towards the Zealand coast, and several of their corpses were picked up days afterwards in the neighbourhood of Flushing.

Meantime those who had effected a lodgment in the Polder, the Square, and the other southern forts, found, after the chief assault had failed, that they had gained nothing by their temporary triumph but the certainty of being butchered. Retreat was impossible, and no quarter was given. Count Imbec, a noble of great wealth, offered his weight in gold for his ransom, but was killed by a private soldier, who preferred his blood, or doubted his solvency. Durango, marshal of the camp, Don Alvarez de Suarez, and Don Matteo Antonio, sergeant-major and quarter-master-general, whose adventures as a hostage within the town on Christmas eve have so recently been related, were also slain.

On the eastern side Bucquoy's attack was an entire failure. His arrangements were too slowly made, and before he could bring his men to the assault the water was so high in the Gullet that they refused to lay their pontoons and march to certain death. Only at lowest ebb, and with most exquisite skill in fording, would it have been possible to effect anything like an earnest demonstration or a surprise. Moreover some of the garrison, giving themselves out as deserters, stole out of the Spanish Half-moon, which had been purposely almost denuded of its defenders, towards the enemy's entrenchments, and offered to lead a body of Spaniards into that ravelin. Bucquoy fell into the trap, so that the detachment, after a victory as easily effected as that in the southern forts, found themselves when the fight was over not the captors but the caught. A few attempted to escape and were driven into the sea; the rest were massacred.

Fifteen hundred of the enemy's dead were counted and registered by Auditor Fleming. The whole number of the slain and drowned was reckoned as high as two thousand, which was at least, a quarter of the whole besieging army. And so ended this winter night's assault, by which the archduke had fondly hoped to avenge himself for Vere's perfidy, and to terminate the war at a blow. Only sixty of the garrison were killed, and Sir Horace Vere was wounded.

Page 2261

The winter now set in with severe sleet, and snow, and rain, and furious tempests lashing the sea over the works of besieger and besieged, and for weeks together paralyzing all efforts of either army. Eight weary months the siege had lasted; the men in town and hostile camp, exposed to the inclemency of the wintry trenches, sinking faster before the pestilence which now swept impartially through all ranks than the soldiers of the archduke had fallen at Nieuport, or in the recent assault on the Sand Hill. Of seven thousand hardly three thousand now remained in the garrison.

Yet still the weary sausage making and wooden castle building went on along the Gullet and around the old town. The Bredene dyke crept on inch by inch, but the steady ships of the republic came and went unharmed by the batteries with which Bucquoy hoped to shut up the New Harbour. The archduke's works were pushed up nearer on the west, but, as yet, not one practical advantage had been gained, and the siege had scarcely advanced a hair's breadth since the 5th of July of the preceding year, when the armies had first sat down before the place.

The stormy month of March had come, and Vere, being called to service in the field for the coming season, transferred the command at Ostend to Frederic van Dorp, a rugged, hard-headed, ill-favoured, stout-hearted Zealand colonel, with the face of a bull-dog, and with the tenacious grip of one.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Constitute themselves at once universal legatees
Crimes and cruelties such as Christians only could imagine
Human fat esteemed the sovereignst remedy (for wounds)
War was the normal and natural condition of mankind

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 75, 1602-1603

CHAPTER XL.

Protraction of the siege of Ostend—Spanish invasion of Ireland— Prince Maurice again on the march—Siege of Grave—State of the archduke's army—Formidable mutiny—-State of Europe—Portuguese expedition to Java—Foundation there of the first Batavian trading settlement—Exploits of Jacob Heemskerk—Capture of a Lisbon carrack—-Progress of Dutch commerce—Oriental and Germanic republics —Commercial

embassy from the King of Atsgen in Sumatra to the Netherlands—Surrender of Grave —Privateer work of Frederic Spinola —Destruction of Spinola's fleet by English and Dutch cruisers— Continuation of the siege of Ostend—Fearful hurricane and its effects —The attack—Capture of external forts—Encounter between Spinola and a Dutch squadron—Execution of prisoners by the archduke—Philip Fleming and his diary—- Continuation of operations before Ostend—Spanish veterans still mutinous—Their

Page 2262

capital besieged by Van den Berg—Maurice marches to their relief— Convention between the prince and the mutineers—Great commercial progress of the Dutch—-Opposition to international commerce— Organization of the Universal East India Company.

It would be desirable to concentrate the chief events of the siege of Ostend so that they might be presented to the reader's view in a single mass. But this is impossible. The siege was essentially the war—as already observed—and it was bidding fair to protract itself to such an extent that a respect for chronology requires the attention to be directed for a moment to other topics.

The invasion of Ireland under Aquila, so pompously heralded as almost to suggest another grand armada, had sailed in the beginning of the winter, and an army of six thousand men had been landed at Kinsale. Rarely had there been a better opportunity for the Celt to strike for his independence. Shane Mac Neil had an army on foot with which he felt confident of exterminating the Saxon oppressor, even without the assistance of his peninsular allies; while the queen's army, severely drawn upon as it had been for the exigencies of Vere and the States, might be supposed unable to cope with so formidable a combination. Yet Montjoy made short work of Aquila and Tyrone. The invaders, shut up in their meagre conquest, became the besieged instead of the assailants. Tyrone made a feeble attempt to relieve his Spanish allies, but was soon driven into his swamps, the peasants would not rise; in spite of proclamations and golden mountains of promise, and Aquila was soon glad enough to sign a capitulation by which he saved a portion of his army. He then returned, in transports provided by the English general, a much discomfited man, to Spain instead of converting Ireland into a province of the universal empire. He had not rescued Hibernia, as he stoutly proclaimed at the outset his intention of doing, from the jaws of the evil demon.

The States, not much wiser after the experience of Nieuport, were again desirous that Maurice should march into Flanders, relieve Ostend, and sweep the archduke into the sea. As for Vere, he proposed that a great army of cavalry and infantry should be sent into Ostend, while another force equally powerful should take the field as soon as the season permitted. Where the men were to be levied, and whence the funds for putting such formidable hosts in motion were to be derived, it was not easy to say: "'Tis astonishing," said Lewis William, "that the evils already suffered cannot open his eyes; but after all, 'tis no marvel. An old and good colonel, as I hold him to be, must go to school before he can become a general, and we must beware of committing any second folly, govern ourselves according to our means and the art of war, and leave the rest to God."

Page 2263

Prince Maurice, however; yielding as usual to the persuasions or importunities of those less sagacious than himself; and being also much influenced by the advice of the English queen and the French king, after reviewing the most splendid army that even he had ever equipped and set in the field, crossed the Waal at Nymegen, and the Meuse at Mook, and then moving leisurely along Meuse—side by way of Sambeck, Blitterswyck, and Maasyk, came past St. Truyden to the neighbourhood of Thienen, in Brabant. Here he stood, in the heart of the enemy's country, and within a day's march of Brussels. The sanguine portion of his countrymen and the more easily alarmed of the enemy already thought it would be an easy military promenade for the stadholder to march through Brabant and Flanders to the coast, defeat the Catholic forces before Ostend, raise the weary siege of that place, dictate peace to the archduke, and return in triumph to the Hague, before the end of the summer.

But the experienced Maurice too well knew the emptiness of such dreams. He had a splendid army—eighteen thousand foot and five thousand horse—of which Lewis William commanded the battalia, Vere the right, and Count Ernest the left, with a train of two thousand baggage wagons, and a considerable force of sutlers and camp-followers. He moved so deliberately, and with such excellent discipline, that his two wings could with ease be expanded for black-mail or forage over a considerable extent of country, and again folded together in case of sudden military necessity. But he had no intention of marching through Brussels, Ghent, and Bruges, to the Flemish coast. His old antagonist, the Admiral of Arragon, lay near Thienen in an entrenched camp, with a force of at least fifteen thousand men, while the archduke, leaving Rivas in command before Ostend, hovered in the neighbourhood of Brussels, with as many troops as could be spared from the various Flemish garrisons, ready to support the admiral.

But Maurice tempted the admiral in vain with the chances of a general action. That warrior, remembering perhaps too distinctly his disasters at Nieuport, or feeling conscious that his military genius was more fitly displayed in burning towns and villages in neutral territory, robbing the peasantry, plundering gentlemen's castles and murdering the proprietors, than it was like to be in a pitched battle with the first general of the age, remained sullenly within his entrenchments. His position was too strong and his force far too numerous to warrant an attack by the stadholder upon his works. After satisfying himself, therefore, that there was no chance of an encounter in Brabant except at immense disadvantage, Maurice rapidly counter-marched towards the lower Meuse, and on the 18th July laid siege to Grave. The position and importance of this city have been thoroughly set before the reader in a former volumes It is only necessary, therefore, to recal the fact that, besides being a vital possession

Page 2264

for the republic, the place was in law the private property of the Orange family, having been a portion of the estate of Count de Buren, afterwards redeemed on payment of a considerable sum of money by his son-in-law, William the Silent, confirmed to him at the pacification of Ghent, and only lost to his children by the disgraceful conduct of Captain Hamart, which had cost that officer his head. Maurice was determined at least that the place should not now slip through his fingers, and that the present siege should be a masterpiece. His forts, of which he had nearly fifty, were each regularly furnished with moat, drawbridge, and bulwark. His counterscarp and parapet, his galleries, covered ways and mines, were as elaborate, massive, and artistically finished as if he were building a city instead of besieging one. Buzanval, the French envoy, amazed at the spectacle, protested that his works “were rather worthy of the grand Emperor of the Turks than of, a little commonwealth, which only existed through the disorder of its enemies and the assistance of its friends;” but he admitted the utility of the stadholder’s proceedings to be very obvious.

While the prince calmly sat before Grave, awaiting the inexorable hour for burghers and garrison to surrender, the great Francis Mendoza, Admiral of Arragon, had been completing the arrangements for his exchange. A prisoner after the Nieuport battle, he had been assigned by Maurice, as will be recollected, to his cousin, young Lewis Gunther, whose brilliant services as commander of the cavalry had so much contributed to the victory. The amount of ransom for so eminent a captive could not fail to be large, and accordingly the thrifty Lewis William had congratulated his brother on being able, although so young, thus to repair the fortunes of the family by his military industry to a greater extent than had yet been accomplished by any of the race. Subsequently, the admiral had been released on parole, the sum of his ransom having been fixed at nearly one hundred thousand Flemish crowns. By an agreement now made by the States, with consent of the Nassau family, the prisoner was definitely released, on condition of effecting the exchange of all prisoners of the republic, now held in durance by Spain in any part of the world. This was in lieu of the hundred thousand crowns which were to be put into the impoverished coffers of Lewis Gunther. It may be imagined, as the hapless prisoners afterwards poured in—not only from the peninsula, but from more distant regions, whither they had been sent by their cruel taskmasters, some to relate their sufferings in the horrible dungeons of Spain, where they had long been expiating the crime of defending their fatherland, others to relate their experiences as chained galley-slaves in the naval service of their bitterest enemies, many with shorn heads and long beards like Turks, many with crippled limbs, worn out with chains and blows, and the squalor of disease and filth—that the hatred for

Page 2265

Spain and Rome did not glow any less fiercely within the republic, nor the hereditary love for the Nassaus, to whose generosity these poor victims were indebted for their deliverance, become fainter, in consequence of these revelations. It was at first vehemently disputed by many that the admiral could be exchanged as a prisoner of war, in respect to the manifold murders and other crimes which would seem to authorize his trial and chastisement by the tribunals of the republic. But it was decided by the States that the sacred aegis of military law must be held to protect even so bloodstained a criminal as he, and his release was accordingly effected. Not long afterwards he took his departure for Spain, where his reception was not enthusiastic.

From this epoch is to be dated a considerable reform in the laws regulating the exchange of prisoners of war.—[Grotius]

While Maurice was occupied with the siege of Grave, and thus not only menacing an important position, but spreading, danger and dismay over all Brabant and Flanders, it was necessary for the archduke to detach so large a portion of his armies to observe his indefatigable and scientific enemy, as to much weaken the vigour of the operations before Ostend. Moreover, the execrable administration of his finances, and the dismal delays and sufferings of that siege; had brought about another mutiny—on the whole, the most extensive, formidable, and methodical of all that had hitherto occurred in the Spanish armies.

By midsummer, at least three thousand five hundred veterans, including a thousand of excellent cavalry, the very best soldiers in the service, had seized the city of Hoogstraaten. Here they established themselves securely, and strengthened the fortifications; levying contributions in corn, cattle, and every other necessary, besides wine, beer, and pocket-money, from the whole country round with exemplary regularity. As usual, disorder assumed the forms of absolute order. Anarchy became the best organized of governments; and it would have been difficult to find in the world—outside the Dutch commonwealth—a single community where justice appeared to be so promptly administered as in this temporary republic, founded upon rebellion and theft.

For; although a brotherhood of thieves, it rigorously punished such of its citizens as robbed for their own, not for the public good. The immense booty swept daily from the granges, castles; and villages of Flanders was divided with the simplicity of early Christians, while the success and steadiness of the operations paralyzed their sovereign, and was of considerable advantage to the States.

Page 2266

Albert endeavoured in vain to negotiate with the rebels. Nuncius Frangipani went to them in person, but was received with calm derision. Pious exhortations might turn the keys of Paradise, but gold alone, he was informed, would unlock the gates of Hoogstraaten. In an evil hour the cardinal-archduke was tempted to try the effect of sacerdotal thunder. The ex-archbishop of Toledo could not doubt that the terrors of the Church would make those brown veterans tremble who could confront so tranquilly the spring-tides of the North Sea, and the batteries of Vere and Nassau. So he launched a manifesto, as highly spiced as a pamphlet of Marnig, and as severe as a sentence of Torquemada. Entirely against the advice of the States-General of the obedient provinces, he denounced the mutineers as outlaws and accursed. He called on persons of every degree to kill any of them in any way, at any time, or in any place, promising that the slayer of a private soldier should receive a reward of “ten crowns for each head” brought in, while for a subaltern officer’s head one hundred crowns were offered; for that of a superior officer two hundred, and for that of the Eletto or chief magistrate, five hundred crowns. Should the slayer be himself a member of the mutiny, his crime of rebellion was to be forgiven, and the price of murder duly paid. All judges, magistrates, and provost-marshals were ordered to make inventories of the goods, moveable and immoveable, of the mutineers, and of the clothing and other articles belonging to their wives and children, all which property was to be brought in and deposited in the hands of the proper functionaries of the archduke’s camp, in order that it might be duly incorporated into the domains of his Highness.

The mutineers were not frightened. The ban was an anachronism. If those Spaniards and Italians had learned nothing by their much campaigning in the land of Calvinism, they had at least unlearned their faith in bell, book, and candle. It happened, too, that among their numbers were to be found pamphleteers as ready and as unscrupulous as the scribes of the archduke.

So there soon came forth and was published to the world, in the name of the Eletto and council of Hoogstraaten, a formal answer to the ban.

“If scolding and cursing be payment,” said the magistrates of the mutiny, “then we might give a receipt in full for our wages. The ban is sufficient in this respect; but as these curses give no food for our bellies nor clothes for our backs, not preventing us, therefore, who have been fighting so long for the honour and welfare of the archdukes from starving with cold and hunger, we think a reply necessary in order to make manifest how much reason these archdukes have for thundering forth all this choler and fury, by which women and children may be frightened, but at which no soldier will feel alarm.

“When it is stated,” continued the mutineers, “that we have deserted our banners just as an attempt was making by the archduke to relieve Grave, we can only reply that the assertion proves how impossible it is to practise arithmetic with disturbed brains. Passion is a bad schoolmistress for the memory, but, as good friends, we will recal to

the recollection of your Highness that it was not your Highness, but the Admiral of Arragon, that commanded the relieving force before that city.

Page 2267

“’Tis very true that we summon your Highnesses, and levy upon your provinces, in order to obtain means of living; for in what other quarter should we make application. Your Highnesses give us nothing except promises; but soldiers are not chameleons, to live on such air. According to every principle of law, creditors have a lien on the property of their debtors.

“As to condemning to death as traitors and scoundrels those who don’t desire to be killed, and who have the means of killing such as attempt to execute the sentence; this is hardly in accordance with the extraordinary wisdom which has always characterized your Highnesses.

“As, to the confiscation of our goods, both moveable and immoveable, we would simply make this observation:

“Our moveable goods are our swords alone, and they can only be moved by ourselves. They are our immoveable goods as well; for should any one but ourselves undertake to move them, we assure your Highnesses that they will prove too heavy to be handled.

“As to the official register and deposit ordained of the money, clothing, and other property belonging to ourselves, our wives and children, the work may be done without clerks of inventory. Certainly, if the domains of your Highnesses have no other sources of revenue than the proceeds of this confiscation, wherewith to feed the ostrich-like digestions of those about you, ’tis to be feared that ere long they will be in the same condition as were ours, when we were obliged to come together in Hoogstraaten to devise means to keep ourselves, our wives, and children alive. And at that time we were an unbreeched people, like the Indians—saving your Highnesses’ reverence—and the climate here is too cold for such costume. Your Highnesses, and your relatives the Emperor and King of Spain, will hardly make your royal heads greasy with the fat of such property as we possess, ’Twill also be a remarkable spectacle after you have stripped our wives and children stark naked for the benefit of your treasury, to see them sent in that condition, within three days afterwards, out of the country, as the ban ordains.

“You order the ban to be executed against our children and our children’s children, but your Highness never learned this in the Bible, when you were an archbishop, and when you expounded, or ought to have expounded, the Holy Scriptures to your flock. What theology teaches your Highness to vent your wrath upon the innocent?

“Whenever the cause of discontent is taken away, the soldiers will become obedient and cheerful. All kings and princes may mirror themselves in the bad government of your Highness, and may see how they fare who try to carry on a war, while with their own hands they cut the sinews of war. The great leaders of old—Cyrus, Alexander, Scipio, Caesar—were accustomed, not to starve, but to enrich their soldiers. What did

Alexander, when in an arid desert they brought, him a helmet full of water? He threw it on the sand, saying that there was only enough for him, but not enough for his army.

Page 2268

“Your Highnesses have set ten crowns, and one hundred, and five hundred crowns upon our heads, but never could find five hundred mites nor ten mites to keep our souls and bodies together.

“Yet you have found means to live yourselves with pomp and luxury, far exceeding that of the great Emperor Charles and much surpassing the magnificence of your Highnesses’ brothers, the emperor and the king.”

Thus, and much more, the magistrates of the “Italian republic”—answering their master’s denunciations of vengeance, both in this world and the next, with a humorous scorn very refreshing in that age of the world to contemplate. The expanding influence of the Dutch commonwealth was already making itself felt even in the ranks of its most determined foes.

The mutineers had also made an agreement with the States-General, by which they had secured permission, in case of need, to retire within the territory of the republic.

Maurice had written to them from his camp before Grave, and at first they were disposed to treat him with as little courtesy as they had shown the Nuncius; for they put the prince’s letter on a staff, and fired at it as a mark, assuring the trumpeter who brought it that they would serve him in the same manner should he venture thither again. Very soon afterwards, however, the Eletto and council, reproving the folly of their subordinates, opened negotiations with the stadholder, who, with the consent of the States, gave them preliminary permission to take refuge under the guns of Bergenop-Zoom, should they by chance be hard pressed.

Thus throughout Europe a singular equilibrium of contending forces seemed established. Before Ostend, where the chief struggle between imperialism and republicanism had been proceeding for more than a year with equal vigour, there seemed no possibility of a result. The sands drank up the blood of the combatants on both sides, month after month, in summer; the pestilence in town and camp mowed down Catholic and Protestant with perfect impartiality during the winter, while the remorseless ocean swept over all in its wrath, obliterating in an hour the patient toil of months.

In Spain, in England, and Ireland; in Hungary, Germany, Sweden, and Poland, men wrought industriously day by day and year by year, to destroy each other, and to efface the products of human industry, and yet no progress could fairly be registered. The Turk was in Buda, on the right bank of the Danube, and the Christian in Pest, on the left, while the crescent; but lately supplanted by the cross, again waved in triumph over Stuhlweissenberg, capital city of the Magyars. The great Marshal Biron, foiled in his stupendous treachery, had laid down his head upon the block; the catastrophe following hard upon the madcap riot of Lord Essex in the Strand and his tragic end. The troublesome and restless favourites of Henry and of Elizabeth had closed their stormy

career, but the designs of the great king and the great queen were growing wider and wilder, more false and more fantastic than ever, as the evening shadows of both were lengthening.

Page 2269

But it was not in Europe nor in Christendom: alone during that twilight epoch of declining absolutism, regal and sacerdotal, and the coming glimmer of freedom, religious and commercial, that the contrast between the old and new civilizations was exhibiting itself.

The same fishermen and fighting men, whom we have but lately seen sailing forth from Zeeland and Friesland to confront the dangers of either pole, were now contending in the Indian seas with the Portuguese monopolists of the tropics.

A century long, the generosity of the Roman pontiff in bestowing upon others what was not his property had guaranteed to the nation of Vasco de Gama one half at least of the valuable possessions which maritime genius, unflinching valour, and boundless cruelty had won and kept. But the spirit of change was abroad in the world. Potentates and merchants under the equator had been sedulously taught that there were no other white men on the planet but the Portuguese and their conquerors the Spaniards, and that the Dutch—of whom they had recently heard, and the portrait of whose great military chieftain they had seen after the news of the Nieuport battle had made the circuit of the earth—were a mere mob of pirates and savages inhabiting the obscurest of dens. They were soon, however, to be enabled to judge for themselves as to the power and the merits of the various competitors for their trade.

Early in this year Andreas Hurtado de Mendoza with a stately fleet of galleons and smaller vessels, more than five-and-twenty in all, was on his way towards the island of Java to inflict summary vengeance upon those oriental rulers who had dared to trade with men forbidden by his Catholic Majesty and the Pope.

The city of Bantam was the first spot marked out for destruction, and it so happened that a Dutch skipper, Wolfert Hermann by name, commanding five trading vessels, in which were three hundred men, had just arrived in those seas to continue the illicit commerce which had aroused the ire of the Portuguese. His whole force both of men and of guns was far inferior to that of the flag-ship alone of Mendoza. But he resolved to make manifest to the Indians that the Batavians were not disposed to relinquish their promising commercial relations with them, nor to turn their backs upon their newly found friends in the hour of danger. To the profound astonishment of the Portuguese admiral the Dutchman with his five little trading ships made an attack on the pompous armada, intending to avert chastisement from the king of Bantam. It was not possible for Wolfert to cope at close quarters with his immensely superior adversary, but his skill and nautical experience enabled him to play at what was then considered long bowls with extraordinary effect. The greater lightness and mobility of his vessels made them more than a match, in this kind of encounter, for the clumsy, top-heavy, and sluggish marine castles in which Spain and Portugal then went

Page 2270

forth to battle on the ocean. It seems almost like the irony of history, and yet it is the literal fact, that the Dutch galleot of that day—hardly changed in two and a half centuries since—"the bull-browed galleot butting through the stream,"—[Oliver Wendell Holmes]—was then the model clipper, conspicuous among all ships for its rapid sailing qualities and ease of handling. So much has the world moved, on sea and shore, since those simple but heroic days. And thus Wolfert's swift-going galleots circled round and round the awkward, ponderous, and much-puzzled Portuguese fleet, until by well-directed shots and skilful manoeuvring they had sunk several ships, taken two, run others into the shallows, and, at last, put the whole to confusion. After several days of such fighting, Admiral Mendoza fairly turned his back upon his insignificant opponent, and abandoned his projects upon Java. Bearing away for the Island of Amboyna with the remainder of his fleet, he laid waste several of its villages and odoriferous spice-fields, while Wolfert and his companions entered Bantam in triumph, and were hailed as deliverers. And thus on the extreme western verge of this magnificent island was founded the first trading settlement of the Batavian republic in the archipelago of the equator—the foundation-stone of a great commercial empire which was to encircle the earth. Not many years later, at the distance, of a dozen leagues from Bantam, a congenial swamp was fortunately discovered in a land whose volcanic peaks rose two miles into the air, and here a town duly laid out with canals and bridges, and trim gardens and stagnant pools, was baptized by the ancient and well-beloved name of Good-Meadow or Batavia, which it bears to this day.

Meantime Wolfert Hermann was not the only Hollander cruising in those seas able to convince the Oriental mind that all Europeans save the Portuguese were not pirates and savages, and that friendly intercourse with other foreigners might be as profitable as slavery to the Spanish crown.

Captain Nek made treaties of amity and commerce with the potentates of Ternate, Tydor, and other Molucca islands. The King of Candy on the Island of Ceylon, lord of the odoriferous fields of cassia which perfume those tropical seas, was glad to learn how to exchange the spices of the equator for the thousand fabrics and products of western civilization which found their great emporium in Holland. Jacob Heemskerk, too, who had so lately astonished the world by his exploits and discoveries during his famous winter in Nova Zembla, was now seeking adventures and carrying the flag and fame of the republic along the Indian and Chinese coasts. The King of Johor on the Malayan peninsula entered into friendly relations with him, being well pleased, like so many of those petty rulers, to obtain protection against the Portuguese whom he had so long hated and feared. He informed Heemskerk of the arrival in the straits of Malacca of an immense Lisbon carrack,

Page 2271

laden with pearls and spices, brocades and precious-stones, on its way to Europe, and suggested an attack. It is true that the roving Hollander merely commanded a couple of the smallest galleots, with about a hundred and thirty men in the two. But when was Jacob Heemskerk ever known to shrink from an encounter—whether from single-handed combat with a polar bear, or from leading a forlorn hope against a Spanish fort, or from assailing a Portuguese armada. The carrack, more than one thousand tons burthen, carried seventeen guns, and at least eight times as many men as he commanded. Nevertheless, after a combat of but brief duration Heemskerk was master of the carrack: He spared the lives of his seven hundred prisoners, and set them on shore before they should have time to discover to what a handful of Dutchmen they had surrendered. Then dividing about a million florins' worth of booty among his men, who doubtless found such cruising among the spice-islands more attractive than wintering at the North Pole, he sailed in the carrack for Macao, where he found no difficulty in convincing the authorities of the celestial empire that the friendship of the Dutch republic was worth cultivating. There was soon to be work in other regions for the hardy Hollander—such as was to make the name of Heemskerk a word to conjure with down to the latest posterity. Meantime he returned to his own country to take part in the great industrial movements which were to make this year an epoch in commercial history.

The conquerors of Mendoza and deliverers of Bantam had however not paused in their work. From Java they sailed to Banda; and on those volcanic islands of nutmegs and cloves made, in the name of their commonwealth, a treaty with its republican antipodes. For there was no king to be found in that particular archipelago, and the two republics, the Oriental and the Germanic, dealt with each other with direct and becoming simplicity. Their convention was in accordance with the commercial ideas of the day, which assumed monopoly as the true basis of national prosperity. It was agreed that none but Dutchmen should ever purchase the nutmegs of Banda, and that neither nation should harbour refugees from the other. Other articles, however; showed how much farther, the practice of political and religious liberty had advanced than had any theory of commercial freedom. It was settled that each nation should judge its own citizens according to its own laws, that neither should interfere by force with the other in regard to religious matters, but that God should be judge over them all. Here at least was progress beyond the system according to which the Holy Inquisition furnished the only enginry of civilization. The guardianship assumed by Holland over these children of the sun was at least an improvement on the tyranny which roasted them alive if they rejected religious dogmas which they could not comprehend, and which proclaimed with fire, sword, and gibbet that the Omnipotent especially forbade the nutmeg trade to all but the subjects, of the most Catholic king.

Page 2272

In Atsgen or Achim, chief city of Sumatra, a treaty was likewise made with the government of the place, and it was arranged that the king of Atsgen should send over an embassy to the distant but friendly republic. Thus he might judge whether the Hollanders were enemies of all the world, as had been represented to him, or only of Spain; whether their knowledge of the arts and sciences, and their position among the western nations entitled them to respect, and made their friendship desirable; or whether they were only worthy of the contempt which their royal and aristocratic enemies delighted to heap upon their heads. The envoys sailed from Sumatra on board the same little fleet which, under the command of Wolfert Hermann, had already done such signal service, and on their way to Europe they had an opportunity of seeing how these republican sailors could deal with their enemies on the ocean.

Off St. Helena an immense Portuguese carrack richly laden and powerfully armed, was met, attacked, and overpowered by the little merchantmen with their usual audacity and skill. A magnificent booty was equitably divided among the captors, the vanquished crew were set safely on shore; and the Hollanders then pursued their home voyage without further adventures.

The ambassadors; with an Arab interpreter, were duly presented to Prince Maurice in the lines before the city of Grave. Certainly no more favourable opportunity could have been offered them for contrasting the reality of military power, science, national vigour; and wealth, which made the republic eminent among the nations, with the fiction of a horde of insignificant and bloodthirsty savages which her enemies had made so familiar at the antipodes. Not only were the intrenchments bastions, galleries, batteries, the discipline and equipment of the troops, a miracle in the eyes of these newly arrived Oriental ambassadors, but they had awakened the astonishment of Europe, already accustomed to such spectacles. Evidently the amity of the stadholder and his commonwealth was a jewel of price, and the King of Achim would have been far more barbarous than he had ever deemed the Dutchmen to be, had he not well heeded the lesson which he had sent so far to learn.

The chief of the legation, Abdulzamar, died in Zeeland, and was buried with honourable obsequies at Middleburg, a monument being raised to his memory. The other envoys returned to Sumatra, fully determined to maintain close relations with the republic.

There had been other visitors in Maurice’s lines before Grave at about the same period. Among others, Gaston Spinola, recently created by the archduke Count of Bruay, had obtained permission to make a visit to a wounded relative, then a captive in the republican camp, and was hospitably entertained at the stadholder’s table. Maurice, with soldierly bluntness, ridiculed the floating batteries, the castles on wheels, the sausages, and other newly-invented machines, employed before Ostend, and characterized them as rather fit to catch birds with than to capture a city, defended by mighty armies and fleets.

Page 2273

“If the archduke has set his heart upon it, he had far better try to buy Ostend,” he observed.

“What is your price?” asked the Italian; “will you take 200,000 ducats?”

“Certainly not less than a million and a half,” was the reply; so highly did Maurice rate the position and advantages of the city. He would venture to prophesy, he added, that the siege of Ostend would last as long as the siege of Troy.

“Ostend is no Troy,” said Spinola with a courtly flourish, “although there are certainly not wanting an Austrian Agamemnon, a Dutch Hector, and an Italian Achilles.” The last allusion was to the speaker’s namesake and kinsman, the Marquis Anibrose Spinola, of whom much was to be heard in the world from that time forth.

Meantime, although so little progress had been made at Ostend, Maurice had thoroughly done his work before Grave. On the 18th September the place surrendered, after sixty days’ siege, upon the terms usually granted by the stadholder. The garrison was to go out with the honours of war. Those of the inhabitants who wished to leave were to leave; those who preferred staying were to stay; rendering due allegiance to the republic, and abstaining in public from the rites of the Roman Church, without being exposed, however, to any inquiries as to their religious opinions, or any interference within their households.

The work went slowly on before Ostend. Much effect had been produced, however, by the operations of the archduke’s little naval force. The galley of that day, although a child’s toy as compared with the wonders of naval architecture of our own time, was an effective machine enough to harass fishing and coasting vessels in creeks and estuaries, and along the shores of Holland and Zeeland during tranquil weather.

The locomotive force of these vessels consisted of galley-slaves, in which respect the Spaniards had an advantage over other nations; for they had no scruples in putting prisoners of war into chains and upon the benches of the rowers. Humanity—“the law of Christian piety,” in the words of the noble Grotius—forbade the Hollanders from reducing their captives to such horrible slavery, and they were obliged to content themselves with condemned criminals, and with the few other wretches whom abject poverty and the impossibility of earning other wages could induce to accept the service. And as in the maritime warfare of our own day, the machinery—engines, wheels, and boilers—is the especial aim of the enemy’s artillery, so the chain-gang who rowed in the waist of the galley, the living enginry, without which the vessel became a useless tub, was as surely marked out for destruction whenever a sea-fight took place.

Page 2274

The Hollanders did not very much favour this species of war-craft, both by reason of the difficulty of procuring the gang, and because to a true lover of the ocean and of naval warfare the galley was about as clumsy and amphibious a production as could be hoped of human perverseness. High where it should be low. Exposed, flat, and fragile, where elevation and strength were indispensable—encumbered and top-heavy where it should be level and compact, weak in the waist, broad at stem and stern, awkward in manoeuvre, helpless in rough weather, sluggish under sail, although possessing the single advantage of being able to crawl over a smooth sea when better and faster ships were made stationary by absolute calm, the galley was no match for the Dutch galleot, either at close quarters or in a breeze.

Nevertheless for a long time there had been a certain awe produced by the possibility of some prodigious but unknown qualities in these outlandish vessels, and already the Hollanders had tried their hand at constructing them. On a late occasion a galley of considerable size, built at Dort, had rowed past the Spanish forts on the Scheld, gone up to Antwerp, and coolly cut out from the very wharves of the city a Spanish galley of the first class, besides seven war vessels of lesser dimensions, at first gaining advantage by surprise, and then breaking down all opposition in a brilliant little fight. The noise of the encounter summoned the citizens and garrison to the walls, only to witness the triumph achieved by Dutch audacity, and to see the victors dropping rapidly down the river, laden with booty and followed by their prizes. Nor was the mortification of these unwilling spectators diminished when the clear notes of a bugle on board the Dutch galley brought to their ears the well-known melody of “Wilhelmus of Nassau,” once so dear to every, patriotic heart in Antwerp, and perhaps causing many a renegade cheek on this occasion to tingle with shame.

Frederic Spinola, a volunteer belonging to the great and wealthy Genoese family of that name, had been performing a good deal of privateer work with a small force of galleys which he kept under his command at Sluys. He had succeeded in inflicting so much damage upon the smaller merchantmen of the republic, and in maintaining so perpetual a panic in calm weather among the seafaring multitudes of those regions, that he was disposed to extend the scale of his operations. On a visit to Spain he had obtained permission from Government to employ in this service eight great galleys, recently built on the Guadalquivir for the Royal Navy. He was to man and equip them at his own expense, and was to be allowed the whole of the booty that might result from his enterprise. Early in the autumn he set forth with his eight galleys on the voyage to Flanders, but, off Cezimbra, on the Portuguese coast, unfortunately fell in with Sir Robert Mansell, who; with a compact little squadron of English frigates,

Page 2275

was lying in wait for the homeward-bound India fleet on their entrance to Lisbon. An engagement took place, in which Spinola lost two of his galleys. His disaster might have been still greater, had not an immense Indian carrack, laden with the richest merchandize, just then hove in sight, to attract his conquerors with a hope of better prize-money than could be expected from the most complete victory over him and his fleet.

With the remainder of his vessels Spinola crept out of sight while the English were ransacking the carrack. On the 3rd of October he had entered the channel with a force which, according to the ideas of that day, was still formidable. Each of his galleys was of two hundred and fifty slave power, and carried, beside the chain-gang, four hundred fighting men. His flag-ship was called the St. Lewis; the names of the other vessels being the St. Philip, the Morning Star, the St. John, the Hyacinth, and the Padilla. The Trinity and the Opportunity had been destroyed off Cezimbra. Now there happened to be cruising just then in the channel, Captain Peter Mol, master of the Dutch war-ship Tiger, and Captain Lubbertson, commanding the Pelican. These two espied the Spanish squadron, paddling at about dusk towards the English coast, and quickly gave notice to Vice-Admiral John Kant, who in the States' ship Half-moon, with three other war-galleots, was keeping watch in that neighbourhood. It was dead calm as the night fell, and the galleys of Spinola, which had crept close up to the Dover cliffs, were endeavouring to row their way across in the darkness towards the Flemish coast, in the hope of putting unobserved into the Gut of Sluys. All went well with Spinola till the moon rose; but, with the moon, sprang up a steady breeze, so that the galleys lost all their advantage. Nearly off Gravelines another States' ship, the Mackerel, came in sight, which forthwith attacked the St: Philip, pouring a broadside into her by which fifty men were killed. Drawing off from this assailant, the galley found herself close to the Dutch admiral in the Half-moon, who, with all sail set, bore straight down upon her, struck her amidships with a mighty crash, carrying off her mainmast and her poop, and then, extricating himself with difficulty from the wreck, sent a tremendous volley of cannon-shot and lesser missiles straight into the waist where sat the chain-gang. A howl of pain and terror rang through the air, while oars and benches, arms, legs, and mutilated bodies, chained inexorably together, floated on the moonlit waves. An instant later, and another galleot bore down to complete the work, striking with her iron prow the doomed St. Philip so straightly and surely that she went down like a stone, carrying with her galley slaves, sailors, and soldiers, besides all the treasure brought by Spinola for the use of his fleet.

Page 2276

The Morning Star was the next galley attacked, Captain Sael, in a stout galleot, driving at her under full sail, with the same accuracy and solidity of shock as had been displayed in the encounter with the St. Philip and with the same result. The miserable, top-heavy monster galley was struck between mainmast and stern, with a blow which carried away the assailant's own bowsprit and fore-bulwarks, but which—completely demolished the stem of the galley, and crushed out of existence the greater portion of the live machinery sitting chained and rowing on the benches. And again, as the first enemy hauled off from its victim, Admiral pant came up once more in the Half-moon, steered straight at the floundering galley, and sent her with one crash to the bottom. It was not very scientific practice perhaps. It was but simple butting, plain sailing, good steering, and the firing of cannon at short pistol-shot. But after all, the work of those unsophisticated Dutch skippers was done very thoroughly, without flinching, and, as usual, at great odds of men and guns. Two more of the Spanish galleys were chased into the shallows near Gravelines, where they went to pieces. Another was wrecked near Calais. The galley which bore Frederic Spinola himself and his fortunes succeeded in reaching Dunkirk, whence he made his way discomfited, to tell the tale of his disaster to the archduke at Brussels. During the fight the Dutch admiral's boats had been active in picking up such of the drowning crews, whether galley-slaves or soldiers, as it was possible to save. But not more than two hundred were thus rescued, while by far the greater proportion of those on board, probably three thousand in number, perished, and the whole fleet, by which so much injury was to have been inflicted on Dutch commerce, was, save one damaged galley, destroyed. Yet scarcely any lives were lost by the Hollanders, and it is certain that the whole force in their fleet did not equal the crew of a single one of the enemy's ships. Neither Spinola nor the archduke seemed likely to make much out of the contract. Meantime, the Genoese volunteer kept quiet in Sluy's, brooding over schemes to repair his losses and to renew his forays on the indomitable Zeelanders.

Another winter had now closed in upon Ostend, while still the siege had scarcely advanced an inch. During the ten months of Governor Dorp's administration, four thousand men had died of wounds or malady within the town, and certainly twice as many in the trenches of the besieging force. Still the patient Bucquoy went on, day after day, night after night, month after month, planting his faggots and fascines, creeping forward almost imperceptibly with his dyke, paying five florins each to the soldiers who volunteered to bring the materials, and a double ducat to each man employed in laying them. So close were they under the fire of the town; that a life was almost laid down for every ducat, but the Gullet, which it

Page 2277

was hoped to close, yawned as wide as ever, and the problem how to reduce a city, open by sea to the whole world, remained without solution. On the last day of the year a splendid fleet of transports arrived in the town, laden with whole droves of beeves and flocks of sheep, besides wine and bread and beer enough to supply a considerable city; so that market provisions in the beleaguered town were cheaper than in any part of Europe.

Thus skilfully did the States-General and Prince Maurice watch from the outside over Ostend, while the audacious but phlegmatic sea-captains brought their cargoes unscathed through the Gullet, although Bucquoy's batteries had now advanced to within seventy yards of the shore.

On the west side, the besiegers were slowly eating their way through the old harbour towards the heart of the place. Subterranean galleries, patiently drained of their water, were met by counter-galleries leading out from the town, and many were the desperate hand-to-hand encounters, by dim lanterns, or in total darkness, beneath the ocean and beneath the earth; Hollander, Spaniard, German, Englishman, Walloon, digging and dying in the fatal trenches, as if there had been no graves at home. Those insatiable sand-banks seemed ready to absorb all the gold and all the life of Christendom. But the monotony of that misery it is useless to chronicle. Hardly an event of these dreary days has been left unrecorded by faithful diarists and industrious soldiers, but time has swept us far away from them, and the world has rolled on to fresher fields of carnage and ruin. All winter long those unwearied, intelligent, fierce, and cruel creatures toiled and fought in the stagnant waters, and patiently burrowed in the earth. It seemed that if Ostend were ever lost it would be because at last entirely bitten away and consumed. When there was no Ostend left, it might be that the archduke would triumph.

As there was always danger that the movements on the east side might be at last successful, it was the command of Maurice that the labours to construct still another harbour should go on in case the Gullet should become useless, as the old haven had been since the beginning of the siege. And the working upon that newest harbour was as dangerous to the Hollanders as Bucquoy's dike-building to the Spaniards, for the pioneers and sappers were perpetually under fire from the batteries which the count had at, last successfully established on the extremity of his work. It was a piteous sight to see those patient delvers lay down their spades and die, hour after hour, to be succeeded by their brethren only to share their fate. Yet still the harbour building progressed; for the republic was determined that the city should be open to the sea so long as the States had a stiver, or a ship, or a spade.

Page 2278

While this deadly industry went on, the more strictly military operations were not pretermitted day nor night. The Catholics were unwearied in watching for a chance of attack, and the Hollanders stood on the ramparts and in the trenches, straining eyes and ears through the perpetual icy mists of that black winter to catch the sight and sound of a coming foe. Especially the by-watches, as they were called, were enough to break down constitutions of iron; for, all day and night, men were stationed in the inundated regions, bound on pain of death to stand in the water and watch for a possible movement of the enemy, until the waves should rise so high as to make it necessary to swim. Then, until the tide fell again, there was brief repose.

And so the dreary winter faded away at last into chill and blustering spring. On the 13th of April a hurricane, such as had not occurred since the siege began; raged across the ocean, deluging and shattering the devoted town. The waters rose over dyke and parapet, and the wind swept from the streets and ramparts every living thing. Not a soldier or sailor could keep his feet, the chief tower of the church was blown into the square, chimneys and windows crashed on all sides, and the elements had their holiday, as if to prove how helpless a thing was man, however fierce and determined, when the powers of Nature arose in their strength. It was as if no siege existed, as if no hostile armies had been lying nearly two years long close to each other, and losing no opportunity to fly at each other's throats. The strife of wind and ocean gave a respite to human rage.

It was but a brief respite. At nightfall there was a lull in the tempest, and the garrison crept again to the ramparts. Instantly the departing roar of the winds and waters were succeeded by fainter but still more threatening sounds, and the sentinels and the drums and trumpets to rally the garrison, when the attack came. The sleepless Spaniards were already upon them. In the Porcupine fort, a blaze of wickerwork and building materials suddenly illuminated the gathering gloom of night; and the loud cries of the assailants, who had succeeded in kindling this fire by their missiles, proclaimed the fierceness of the attack. Governor Dorp was himself in the fort, straining every nerve to extinguish the flames, and to hold this most important position. He was successful. After a brief but bloody encounter the Spaniards were repulsed with heavy loss. All was quiet again, and the garrison in the Porcupine were congratulating themselves on their victory when suddenly the ubiquitous Philip Fleeting plunged, with a face of horror, into the governor's quarters, informing him that the attack on the redoubt had been a feint, and that the Spaniards were at that very moment swarming all over the three external forts, called the South Square, the West Square, and the Polder. These points, which have been already described, were most essential to the protection of the place, as without them the whole counterscarp was in danger. It was to save those exposed but vital positions that Sir Francis Vere had resorted to the slippery device of the last Christmas Eve but one.

Page 2279

Dorp refused to believe the intelligence. The squares were well guarded, the garrison ever alert. Spaniards were not birds of prey to fly up those perpendicular heights, and for beings without wings the thing was impossible. He followed Fleming through the darkness, and was soon convinced that the impossible was true. The precious squares were in the hands of the enemy. Nimble as monkeys, those yellow jerkined Italians, Walloons, and Spaniards—stormhats on their heads and swords in their teeth—had planted rope-ladders, swung themselves up the walls by hundreds upon hundreds, while the fight had been going on at the Porcupine, and were now rushing through the forts grinning defiance, yelling and chattering with fierce triumph, and beating down all opposition. It was splendidly done. The discomfited Dorp met small bodies of his men, panic-struck, reeling out from their stronghold, wounded, bleeding, shrieking for help and for orders. It seemed as if the Spaniards had dropped from the clouds. The Dutch commandant did his best to rally the fugitives, and to encourage those who had remained. All night long the furious battle raged, every inch of ground being contested; for both Catholics and Hollanders knew full well that this triumph was worth more than all that had been gained for the archduke in eighteen months of siege. Pike to pike, breast to breast, they fought through the dark April night; the last sobs of the hurricane dying unheard, the red lanterns flitting to and fro, the fireworks hissing in every direction of earth and air, the great wicker piles, heaped up with pitch and rosin, flaming over a scene more like a dance of goblins than a commonplace Christian massacre. At least fifteen hundred were killed—besiegers and besieged—during the storming of the forts and the determined but unsuccessful attempt of the Hollanders to retake them. And when at last the day had dawned, and the Spaniards could see the full extent of their victory, they set themselves with—unusual alacrity to killing such of the wounded and prisoners as were in their hands, while, at the same time, they turned the guns of their newly acquired works upon the main counterscarp of the town.

Yet the besieged—discomfited but undismayed lost not a moment in strengthening their inner works, and in doing their best, day after day, by sortie, cannonade, and every possible device, to prevent the foe from obtaining full advantage of his success. The triumph was merely a local one, and the patient Hollanders soon proved to the enemy that the town was not gained by carrying the three squares, but that every inch of the place was to be contested as hotly as those little redoubts had been. Ostend, after standing nearly two years of siege, was not to be carried by storm. A goodly slice of it had been pared off that April night, and was now in possession of the archduke, but this was all. Meantime the underground work was resumed on both sides.

Page 2280

Frederic Spinola, notwithstanding the stunning defeat sustained by him in the preceding October, had not lost heart while losing all his ships. On the contrary, he had been busy during the winter in building other galleys. Accordingly, one fine morning in May, Counsellor Flooswyk, being on board a war vessel convoying some empty transports from Ostend, observed signs of mischief brewing as he sailed past the Gut of Sluys; and forthwith gave notice of what he had seen to Admiral Joost de Moor, commanding the blockading squadron. The counsellor was right. Frederic Spinola meant mischief. It was just before sunrise of a beautiful summer's day. The waves were smooth—not a breath of wind stirring—and De Moor, who had four little war-ships of Holland, and was supported besides by a famous vessel called the Black Galley of Zeeland, under Captain Jacob Michelzoon, soon observed a movement from Sluys.

Over the flat and glassy surface of the sea, eight galleys of the largest size were seen crawling slowly, like vast reptiles, towards his .. position. Four lesser vessels followed in the wake of the great galleys. The sails of the admiral's little fleet flapped idly against the mast. He could only placidly await the onset. The Black Galley, however, moved forward according to her kind; and was soon vigorously attacked by two galleys of the enemy. With all the force that five hundred rowers could impart, these two huge vessels ran straight into the Zeeland ship, and buried their iron prows in her sides. Yet the Black Galley was made of harder stuff than were those which had gone down in the channel the previous autumn under the blows of John Kant. Those on board her, at least, were made of tougher material than were galley-slaves and land-soldiers. The ramming was certainly not like that of a thousand horse-power of steam, and there was no very great display of science in the encounter; yet Captain Jacob Michelzoon, with two enemy's ships thus stuck to his sides, might well have given himself up for lost. The disproportion of ships and men was monstrous. Beside the chain-gang, each of Spinola's ships was manned by two hundred soldiers, while thirty-six musketeers from the Flushing garrison were the only men-at-arms in De Moor's whole squadron. But those amphibious Zeelanders and Hollanders, perfectly at home in the water, expert in handling vessels, and excellent cannoneers, were more than a match for twenty times their number of landsmen. It was a very simple-minded, unsophisticated contest. The attempt to board the Black Galley was met with determined resistance, but the Zeeland sailors clambered like cats upon the bowsprits of the Spanish galleys, fighting with cutlass and handspike, while a broadside or two was delivered with terrible effect into the benches of the chained and wretched slaves. Captain Michelzoon was killed, but his successor, Lieutenant Hart, although severely wounded, swore that he would blow up his ship with his own hands rather than surrender. The decks of all the vessels ran with blood, but at last the Black Galley succeeded in beating off her assailants; the Zeelanders, by main force, breaking off the enemy's bowsprits, so that the two ships of Spinola were glad to sheer off, leaving their stings buried in the enemy's body.

Page 2281

Next, four galleys attacked the stout little galleot of Captain Logier, and with a very similar result. Their prows stuck fast in the bulwarks of the ship, but the boarders soon found themselves the boarded, and, after a brief contest, again the iron bowsprits snapped like pipe-stems, and again the floundering and inexperienced Spaniards shrank away from the terrible encounter which they had provoked. Soon afterwards, Joost de Moor was assailed by three galleys. He received them, however, with cannonade and musketry so warmly that they willingly obeyed a summons from Spinola, and united with the flag-ship in one more tremendous onset upon the Black Galley of Zeeland. And it might have gone hard with that devoted ship, already crippled in the previous encounter, had not Captain Logier fortunately drifted with the current near enough to give her assistance, while the other sailing ships lay becalmed and idle spectators. At last Spinola, conspicuous by his armour, and by magnificent recklessness of danger, fell upon the deck of his galley, torn to pieces with twenty-four wounds from a stone gun of the Black Galley, while at nearly the same, moment a gentle breeze began in the distance to ruffle the surface of the waters. More than a thousand men had fallen in Spinola's fleet, inclusive of the miserable slaves, who were tossed overboard as often as wounds made them a cumbrous part of the machinery, and the galleys, damaged, discomfited, laden with corpses and dripping with blood, rowed off into Sluys as speedily as they could move, without waiting until the coming wind should bring all the sailing ships into the fight, together with such other vessels under Haultain as might be cruising in the distance. They succeeded in getting into the Gut of Sluys, and so up to their harbour of refuge. Meantime, baldheaded, weather-beaten Joost de Moor—farther pursuit being impossible—piped all hands on deck, where officers and men fell on their knees, shouting in pious triumph the 34th Psalm: "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth . . . . O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." So rang forth the notes of humble thanksgiving across the placid sea. And assuredly those hardy mariners, having gained a victory with their little vessels over twelve ships and three thousand men—a numerical force of at least ten times their number,—such as few but Dutchmen could have achieved; had a right to give thanks to Him from whom all blessings flow.

Thus ended the career of Frederic Spinola, a wealthy, gallant, high-born, brilliant youth, who might have earned distinction, and rendered infinitely better service to the cause of Spain and the archdukes, had he not persuaded himself that he had a talent for seamanship. Certainly, never was a more misplaced ambition, a more unlucky career. Not even in that age of rash adventure, when grandees became admirals and field-marshals because they were grandees, had such incapacity been shown by any restless patrician. Frederic Spinola, at the age of thirty-two, a landsman and a volunteer, thinking to measure himself on blue water with such veterans as John Rant, Joost de Moor, and the other Dutchmen and Zeelanders whom it was his fortune to meet, could hardly escape the doom which so rapidly befell him.

Page 2282

On board the Black Galley Captain Michelznon, eleven of his officers, and fifteen of his men were killed; Admiral de Moor was slightly wounded, and had five of his men killed and twenty wounded; Captain Logier was wounded in the foot, and lost fifteen killed and twelve wounded.

The number of those killed in Spinola's fleet has been placed as high as fourteen hundred, including two hundred officers and gentlemen of quality, besides the crowds of galley-slaves thrown overboard. This was perhaps an exaggeration. The losses were, however, sufficient to put a complete atop to the enterprise out of which the unfortunate Spinola had conceived such extravagant hopes of fame and fortune.

The herring-smacks and other coasters, besides the transports passing to and from Ostend, sailed thenceforth unmolested by any galleys from Sluys. One unfortunate sloop, however, in moving out from the beleaguered city, ran upon some shoals before getting out of the Gullet and thus fell a prize to the besiegers. She was laden with nothing more precious than twelve wounded soldiers on their way to the hospitals at Flushing. These prisoners were immediately hanged, at the express command of the archduke, because they had been taken on the sea where, according to his highness, there were no laws of war.

The stadholder, against his will—for Maurice was never cruel—felt himself obliged to teach the cardinal better jurisprudence and better humanity for the future. In order to show him that there was but one belligerent law on sea and on land, he ordered two hundred Spanish prisoners within his lines to draw lots from an urn in which twelve of the tickets were inscribed with the fatal word gibbet. Eleven of the twelve thus marked by ill luck were at once executed. The twelfth, a comely youth, was pardoned at the intercession of a young girl. It is not stated whether or not she became his wife. It is also a fact worth mentioning, as illustrating the recklessness engendered by a soldier's life, that the man who drew the first blank sold it to one of his comrades and plunged his hand again into the fatal urn. Whether he succeeded in drawing the gibbet at his second trial has not been recorded. When these executions had taken place in full view of the enemy's camp, Maurice formally announced that for every prisoner thenceforth put to death by the archduke two captives from his own army should be hanged. These stern reprisals, as usual, put an end to the foul system of martial murder.

Throughout the year the war continued to be exclusively the siege of Ostend. Yet the fierce operations, recently recorded, having been succeeded by a period of comparative languor, Governor Dorp at last obtained permission to depart to repair his broken health. He was succeeded in command of the forces within the town by Charles Van der Noot, colonel of the Zeeland regiment which had suffered so much in the first act of the battle of Nieuport. Previously to this exchange, however, a day of solemn thanksgiving and prayer was set apart on the anniversary of the beginning of the siege. Since the 5th of July, 1601, two years had been spent by the whole power of the enemy

in the attempt to reduce this miserable village, and the whole result thus far had been the capture of three little external forts. There seemed cause for thanksgiving.

Page 2283

Philip Fleming, too, obtained a four weeks' holiday—the first in eleven years—and went with his family outside the pestiferous and beleaguered town. He was soon to return to his multifarious duties as auditor, secretary, and chronicler of the city, and unattached aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief, whoever that might be; and to perform his duty with the same patient courage and sagacity that had marked him from the beginning. "An unlucky cannon-ball of the enemy," as he observes, did some damage at this period to his diary, but it happened at a moment when comparatively little was doing, so that the chasm was of less consequence.

"And so I, Philip Fleming, auditor to the Council of War," he says with homely pathos, "have been so continually employed as not to have obtained leave in all these years to refresh, for a few days outside this town, my troubled spirit after such perpetual work, intolerable cares, and slavery, having had no other pleasure allotted me than with daily sadness, weeping eyes, and heavy yearnings to tread the ramparts, and, like a poor slave laden with fetters, to look at so many others sailing out of the harbour in order to feast their souls in other provinces with green fields and the goodly works of God. And thus it has been until it has nearly gone out of my memory how the fruits of the earth, growing trees, and dumb beasts appear to mortal eye."

He then, with whimsical indignation, alludes to a certain author who pleaded in excuse for the shortcomings of the history of the siege the damage done to his manuscripts by a cannon-ball. "Where the liar dreamt of or invented his cannon-ball," he says, "I cannot tell, inasmuch as he never saw the city of Ostend in his life; but the said cannon-ball, to my great sorrrow, did come one afternoon through my office, shot from the enemy's great battery, which very much damaged not his memoirs but mine; taking off the legs and arms at the same time of three poor invalid soldiers seated in the sun before my door and killing them on the spot, and just missing my wife, then great with child, who stood by me with faithfulness through all the sufferings of the bloody siege and presented me twice during its continuance, by the help of Almighty God, with young Amazons or daughters of war."

And so honest Philip Fleming went out for a little time to look at the green trees and the dumb creatures feeding in the Dutch pastures. Meantime the two armies—outside and within Ostend—went moiling on in their monotonous work; steadily returning at intervals, as if by instinct, to repair the ruin which a superior power would often inflict in a half-hour on the results of laborious weeks.

In the open field the military operations were very trifling, the wager of battle being by common consent fought out on the sands of Ostend, and the necessities for attack and defence absorbing, the resources of each combatant. France, England, and Spain were holding a perpetual diplomatic tournament to which our eyes must presently turn, and the Sublime Realm of the Ottoman and the holy Roman Empire were in the customary equilibrium of their eternal strife.

Page 2284

The mutiny of the veterans continued; the “Italian republic” giving the archduke almost as much trouble, despite his ban and edicts and outlawry, as the Dutch commonwealth itself. For more than a twelvemonth the best troops of the Spanish army had been thus established as a separate empire, levying black-mail on the obedient provinces, hanging such of their old officers as dared to remonstrate, and obeying their elected chief magistrates with exemplary docility.

They had become a force of five thousand strong, cavalry and infantry together, all steady, experienced veterans—the best and bravest soldiers of Europe. The least of them demanded two thousand florins as owed to him by the King of Spain and the archduke. The burghers of Bois-le-Duc and other neighbouring towns in the obedient provinces kept watch and ward, not knowing how soon the Spaniards might be upon them to reward them for their obedience. Not a peasant with provisions was permitted by the mutineers to enter Bois-le-Duc, while the priests were summoned to pay one year’s income of all their property on pain of being burned alive. “Very much amazed are the poor priests at these proceedings,” said Ernest Nassau, “and there is a terrible quantity of the vile race within and around the city. I hope one day to have the plucking of some of their feathers myself.”

The mutiny governed itself as a strict military democracy, and had caused an official seal to be engraved, representing seven snakes entwined in one, each thrusting forth a dangerous tongue, with the motto—

> “tutto in ore
> E sua Eccelenza in nostro favore.”

“His Excellency” meant Maurice of Nassau, with whom formal articles of compact had been arranged. It had become necessary for the archduke, notwithstanding the steady drain of the siege of Ostend, to detach a considerable army against this republic and to besiege them in their capital of Hoogstraaten. With seven thousand foot and three thousand cavalry Frederic Van den Berg took the field against them in the latter part of July. Maurice, with nine thousand five hundred infantry and three thousand horse, lay near Gertruydenberg. When united with the rebel “squadron,” two thousand five hundred strong, he would dispose of a force of fifteen thousand veterans, and he moved at once to relieve the besieged mutineers. His cousin Frederic, however, had no desire to measure himself with the stadholder at such odds, and stole away from him in the dark without beat of drum. Maurice entered Hoogstraaten, was received with rapture by the Spanish and Italian veterans, and excited the astonishment of all by the coolness with which he entered into the cage of these dangerous serpents—as they called themselves—handling them, caressing them, and being fondled by them in return. But the veterans knew a soldier when they saw one, and their hearts warmed to the prince—heretic though he were—more than they had ever done to the unfrocked bishop who, after starving them for years, had doomed them to destruction in this world and the next.

Page 2285

The stadholder was feasted and honoured by the mutineers during his brief visit to Hoogatraaten, and concluded with them a convention, according to which that town was to be restored to him, while they were to take temporary possession of the city of Grave. They were likewise to assist, with all their strength, in his military operations until they should make peace on their own terms with the archduke. For two weeks after such treaty they were not to fight against the States, and meantime, though fighting on the republican side, they were to act as an independent corps and in no wise to be merged in the stadholder's forces. So much and no more had resulted from the archduke's excommunication of the best part of his army. He had made a present of those troops to the enemy. He had also been employing a considerable portion of his remaining forces in campaigning against their own comrades. While at Grave, the mutineers, or the "squadron" as they were now called, were to be permitted to practise their own religious rites, without offering however, any interference with the regular Protestant worship of the place. When they should give up Grave, Hoogstraaten was to be restored to them if still in possession of the States and they were to enter into no negotiations with the archduke except with full knowledge of the stadholder.

There were no further military, operations of moment during the rest of the year.

Much, more important, however, than siege, battle, or mutiny, to human civilization, were the steady movements of the Dutch skippers and merchants at this period. The ears of Europe were stunned with the clatter of destruction going on all over Christendom, and seeming the only reasonable occupation of Christians; but the little republic; while fighting so heroically against the concentrated powers of despotism in the West, was most industriously building up a great empire in the East. In the new era just dawning, production was to become almost as honourable and potent, a principle as destruction.

The voyages among the spicy regions of the equator—so recently wrested from their Catholic and Faithful Majesties by Dutch citizens who did not believe in Borgia—and the little treaties made with petty princes and commonwealths, who for the first time ware learning that there were other white men in the world beside the Portuguese, had already led to considerable results. Before the close of, the previous year that great commercial corporation had been founded—an empire within an empire; a republic beneath a republic—a counting-house company which was to organize armies, conquer kingdoms, build forts and cities, make war and peace, disseminate and exchange among the nations of the earth the various products of civilization, more perfectly than any agency hitherto known, and bring the farthest disjoined branches of the human family into closer, connection than had ever existed before. That it was a monopoly, offensive to true commercial principles, illiberal, unjust, tyrannical; ignorant of the very rudiments of mercantile philosophy; is plain enough. For the sages of the world were but as clowns, at that period, in economic science.

Page 2286

Was not the great financier of the age; Maximilian de Bethune, at that very moment exhausting his intellect in devices for the prevention of all international commerce even in Europe? "The kingdom of France," he groaned, "is stuffed full of the manufactures of our neighbours, and it is incredible what a curse to us are these wares. The import of all foreign goods has now been forbidden under very great penalties." As a necessary corollary to this madhouse legislation an edict was issued, prohibiting the export of gold and silver from France, on pain, not only of confiscation of those precious metals, but of the whole fortune of such as engaged in or winked at the traffic. The king took a public oath never to exempt the culprits from the punishment thus imposed, and, as the thrifty Sully had obtained from the great king a private grant of all those confiscations, and as he judiciously promised twenty-five per cent. thereof to the informer, no doubt he filled his own purse while impoverishing the exchequer.

The United States, not enjoying the blessings, of a paternal government, against which they had been fighting almost half a century, could not be expected to rival the stupendous folly of such political economy, although certainly not emancipated from all the delusions of the age.

Nor are we to forget how very recently, and even dimly, the idea of freedom in commerce has dawned upon nations, the freest of all in polity and religion. Certainly the vices and shortcomings of the commercial system now inaugurated by the republic may be justly charged in great part to the epoch, while her vast share in the expanding and upward movement which civilization, under the auspices of self-government; self-help, political freedom, free thought, and unshackled science, was then to undertake—-never more perhaps to be permanently checked—must be justly ascribed to herself.

It was considered accordingly that the existence of so many private companies and copartnerships trading to the East was injurious to the interests of commerce. Merchants arriving at the different Indian ports would often find that their own countrymen had been too quick for them, and that other fleets had got the wind out of their sails, that the eastern markets had been stripped, and that prices had gone up to a ruinous height, while on the other hand, in the Dutch cities, nutmegs and cinnamon, brocades and indigo, were as plentiful as red herrings. It was hardly to be expected at that day to find this very triumph of successful traffic considered otherwise than as a grave misfortune, demanding interference on the part of the only free Government then existing in the world. That already free competition and individual enterprise, had made such progress in enriching the Hollanders and the Javanese respectively with a superfluity of useful or agreeable things, brought from the farthest ends of the earth, seemed to the eyes of that day a condition of things likely to end in a general catastrophe. With a simplicity, amazing only to those who are inclined to be vain of a superior wisdom—not their own but that of their wisest contemporaries—one of the chief reasons for establishing the East India Company was stated to be the necessity of providing against low prices of Oriental productions in Europe.

Page 2287

But national instinct is often wiser than what is supposed to be high national statesmanship, and there can be no doubt that the true foundation of the East India Company was the simple recognition of an iron necessity. Every merchant in Holland knew full well that the Portuguese and Spaniards could never be driven out of their commercial strongholds under the equator, except by a concentration of the private strength and wealth, of the mercantile community. The Government had enough on its hands in disputing, inch by inch, at so prodigious an expenditure of blood and treasure, the meagre territory with which nature had endowed the little commonwealth. Private organisation, self-help; union of individual purses and individual brains, were to conquer an empire at the antipodes if it were to be won at all. By so doing, the wealth of the nation and its power to maintain the great conflict with the spirit of the past might be indefinitely increased, and the resources of Spanish despotism proportionally diminished. It was not to be expected of Jacob Heemskerk, Wolfert Hermann, or Joris van Spilberg, indomitable skippers though they were, that each, acting on his own responsibility or on that of his supercargo, would succeed every day in conquering a whole Spanish fleet and dividing a million or two of prize-money among a few dozen sailors. Better things even than this might be done by wholesome and practical concentration on a more extended scale.

So the States-General granted a patent or charter to one great company with what, for the time, was an enormous paid-up capital, in order that the India trade might be made secure and the Spaniards steadily confronted in what they had considered their most impregnable possessions. All former trading companies were invited to merge themselves in the Universal East India Company, which, for twenty-one years, should alone have the right to trade to the east of the Cape of Good Hope and to sail through the Straits of Magellan.

The charter had been signed on 20th March, 1602, and was mainly to the following effect.

The company was to pay twenty-five thousand florins to the States-General for its privilege. The whole capital was to be six million six hundred thousand florins. The chamber of Amsterdam was to have one half of the whole interest, the chamber of Zeeland one fourth; the chambers of the Meuse, namely, Delft, Rotterdam, and the north quarter; that is to say, Hoorn and Enkhuizen, each a sixteenth. All the chambers were to be governed by the directors then serving, who however were to be allowed to die out, down to the number of twenty for Amsterdam, twelve for Zeeland, and seven for each of the other chambers. To fill a vacancy occurring among the directors, the remaining members of the board were to nominate three candidates, from whom the estates of the province should choose one. Each director was obliged, to have an interest in the company amounting to at least six

Page 2288

thousand florins, except the directors for Hoorn and Enkhuizen, of whom only three thousand should be required. The general assembly of these chambers should consist of seventeen directors, eight for Amsterdam, four for Zeeland, two for the Meuse, and two for the north quarter; the seventeenth being added by turns from the chambers of Zeeland, the Meuse, and the north quarter. This assembly was to be held six years at Amsterdam, and then two years in Zeeland. The ships were always to return to the port from which they had sailed. All the inhabitants of the provinces had the right, within a certain time, to take shares in the company. Any province or city subscribing for forty thousand florins or upwards might appoint an agent to look after its affairs.

The Company might make treaties with the Indian powers, in the name of the States-General of the United Netherlands or of the supreme authorities of the same, might build fortresses; appoint generals, and levy troops, provided such troops took oaths of fidelity to the States, or to the supreme authority, and to the Company. No ships, artillery, or other munitions of war belonging to the Company were to be used in service of the country without permission of the Company. The admiralty was to have a certain proportion of the prizes conquered from the enemy.

The directors should not be liable in property or person for the debts of the Company. The generals of fleets returning home were to make reports on the state of India to the States.

Notification; of the union of all India companies with this great corporation was duly sent to the fleets cruising in those regions, where it arrived in the course of the year 1603.

Meantime the first fleet of the Company, consisting of fourteen vessels under command of Admiral Wybrand van Warwyk, sailed before the end of 1602, and was followed towards the close of 1603 by thirteen other ships, under Stephen van der Hagen?

The equipment of these two fleets cost two million two hundred thousand florins.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Bestowing upon others what was not his property
Four weeks' holiday—the first in eleven years
Idea of freedom in commerce has dawned upon nations
Impossible it is to practise arithmetic with disturbed brains
Passion is a bad schoolmistress for the memory
Prisoners were immediately hanged
Unlearned their faith in bell, book, and candle
World has rolled on to fresher fields of carnage and ruin

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year’s Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 76, 1603-1604

CHAPTER XLI.

Page 2289

Death of Queen Elizabeth—Condition of Spain—Legations to James I. —Union of England and Scotland—Characteristics of the new monarch —The English Court and Government—Piratical practices of the English—Audience of the States' envoy with king James—Queen Elizabeth's scheme far remodelling Europe—Ambassador extraordinary from Henry *iv*. to James—De Rosny's strictures on the English people—-Private interview of De Rosny with the States' envoy—De Rosny's audience of the king —Objects of his mission—Insinuations of the Duke of Northumberland—Invitation of the embassy to Greenwich—Promise of James to protect the Netherlands against Spain—-Misgivings of Barneveld—Conference at Arundel House—Its unsatisfactory termination —Contempt of De Rosny for the English counsellors—Political aspect of Europe—De Rosny's disclosure to the king of the secret object of his mission—Agreement of James to the proposals of De Rosny—Ratification of the treaty of alliance— Return of De Rosny and suite to France—Arrival of the Spanish ambassador.

On the 24th of March, 1603, Queen Elizabeth died at Richmond, having nearly completed her seventieth year. The two halves of the little island of Britain were at last politically adjoined to each other by the personal union of the two crowns.

A foreigner, son of the woman executed by Elizabeth, succeeded to Elizabeth's throne. It was most natural that the Dutch republic and the French king, the archdukes and his Catholic Majesty, should be filled with anxiety as to the probable effect of this change of individuals upon the fortunes of the war.

For this Dutch war of independence was the one absorbing and controlling interest in Christendom. Upon that vast, central, and, as men thought, baleful constellation the fates of humanity, were dependent. Around it lesser political events were forced to gravitate, and, in accordance to their relation to it, were bright or obscure. It was inevitable that those whose vocation it was to ponder the aspects of the political firmament, the sages and high-priests who assumed to direct human action and to foretell human destiny, should now be more than ever perplexed.

Spain, since the accession of Philip *iii*. to his father's throne, although rapidly declining in vital energy, had not yet disclosed its decrepitude to the world. Its boundless ambition survived as a political tradition rather than a real passion, while contemporaries still trembled at the vision of universal monarchy in which the successor of Charlemagne and of Charles V. was supposed to indulge.

Meantime, no feebler nor more insignificant mortal existed on earth than this dreaded sovereign.

Scarcely a hairdresser or lemonade-dealer in all Spain was less cognizant of the political affairs of the kingdom than was its monarch, for Philip's first care upon assuming the crown was virtually to abdicate in favour of the man soon afterwards known as the Duke of Lerma.

Page 2290

It is therefore only by courtesy and for convenience that history recognizes his existence at all, as surely no human being in the reign of Philip *iii*. requires less mention than Philip *iii*. himself.

I reserve for a subsequent chapter such rapid glances at the interior condition of that kingdom with which it seemed the destiny of the Dutch republic to be perpetually at war, as may be necessary to illustrate the leading characteristics of the third Philip's reign.

Meantime, as the great queen was no more, who was always too sagacious to doubt that the Dutch cause was her own—however disposed she might be to browbeat the Dutchmen—it seemed possible to Spain that the republic might at last be deprived of its only remaining ally. Tassis was despatched as chief of a legation, precursory to a more stately embassy to be confided to the Duke of Frias. The archdukes sent the prince of Arenberg, while from the United States came young Henry of Nassau, associated with John of Olden-Barneveld, Falk, Brederode, and other prominent statesmen of the commonwealth. Ministers from Denmark and Sweden, from the palatinate and from numerous other powers, small and great, were also collected to greet the rising sun in united Britain, while the, awkward Scotchman, who was now called upon to play that prominent part in the world's tragi-comedy which had been so long and so majestically sustained by the "Virgin Queen," already began to tremble at the plaudits and the bustle which announced how much was expected of the new performer.

There was indeed a new sovereign upon the throne. That most regal spirit which had well expressed so many of the highest characteristics of the nation had fled. Mankind, has long been familiar with the dark, closing hours of the illustrious reign. The great queen, moody, despairing, dying, wrapt in profoundest thought, with eyes fixed upon the ground or already gazing into infinity, was besought by the counsellors around her to name the man to whom she chose that the crown should devolve.

"Not to a Rough," said Elizabeth, sententiously and grimly.

When the King of France was named, she shook her head. When Philip *iii*. was suggested, she made a still more significant sign of dissent. When the King of Scots was mentioned, she nodded her approval, and again relapsed into silent meditation.

She died, and James was King of Great Britain and Ireland. Cecil had become his prime minister long before the queen's eyes were closed. The hard-featured, rickety, fidgety, shambling, learned, most preposterous Scotchman hastened to take possession of the throne. Never—could there have been a more unfit place or unfit hour for such a man.

England, although so small in dimensions, so meager in population, so deficient, compared to the leading nations of Europe, in material and financial strength, had already her great future swelling in her heart. Intellectually and morally she was taking

the lead among the nations. Even at that day she had produced much which neither she herself nor any other nation seemed destined to surpass.

Page 2291

Yet this most redoubtable folk only numbered about three millions, one-tenth of them inhabiting London. With the Scots and Irish added they amounted to less than five millions of souls, hardly a third as many as the homogeneous and martial people of that dangerous neighbour France.

Ireland was always rebellious; a mere conquered province, hating her tyrant England's laws, religion, and people; loving Spain, and believing herself closely allied by blood as well as sympathy to that most Catholic land.

Scotland, on the accession of James, hastened to take possession of England. Never in history had two races detested each other more fervently. The leeches and locusts of the north, as they were universally designated in England, would soon have been swept forth from the country, or have left it of their own accord, had not the king employed all that he had of royal authority or of eloquent persuasion to retain them on the soil. Of union, save the personal union of the sceptre, there was no thought. As in Ireland there was hatred to England and adoration for Spain; so in Scotland, France was beloved quite as much as England was abhorred. Who could have foretold, or even hoped, that atoms so mutually repulsive would ever have coalesced into a sympathetic and indissoluble whole?

Even the virtues of James were his worst enemies. As generous as the day, he gave away with reckless profusion anything and everything that he could lay his hands upon. It was soon to appear that the great queen's most unlovely characteristic, her avarice; was a more blessed quality to the nation she ruled than the ridiculous prodigality of James.

Two thousand gowns, of the most, expensive material, adorned with gold, pearls, and other bravery—for Elizabeth was very generous to herself—were found in the queen's wardrobe, after death. These magnificent and costly robes, not one of which had she vouchsafed to bestow upon or to bequeath to any of her ladies of honour, were now presented by her successor to a needy Scotch lord, who certainly did not intend to adorn his own person therewith. "The hat was ever held out," said a splenetic observer, "and it was filled in overflowing measure by the new monarch."

In a very short period he had given away—mainly to Scotchmen—at least two millions of crowns, in various articles of personal property. Yet England was very poor.

The empire, if so it could be called, hardly boasted a regular revenue of more than two millions of dollars a year; less than that of a fortunate individual or two, in our own epoch, both in Europe and America; and not one-fifth part of the contemporary income of France. The hundred thousand dollars of Scotland's annual budget did not suffice to pay its expenses, and Ireland was a constant charge upon the imperial exchequer.

It is astounding, however, to reflect upon the pomp, extravagance, and inordinate pride which characterized the government and the court.

Page 2292

The expenses of James's household were at least five hundred thousand crowns, or about one quarter of the whole revenue of the empire. Henry *iv*., with all his extravagance, did not spend more than one-tenth of the public income of France upon himself and his court.

Certainly if England were destined to grow great it would be in despite of its new monarch. Hating the People, most intolerant in religion, believing intensely in royal prerogative, thoroughly convinced of his regal as well as his personal infallibility, loathing that inductive method of thought which was already leading the English nation so proudly on the road of intellectual advancement, shrinking from the love of free inquiry, of free action, of daring adventure, which was to be the real informing spirit of the great British nation; abhorring the Puritans—that is to say, one-third of his subjects—in whose harsh, but lofty nature he felt instinctively that popular freedom was enfolded—even as the overshadowing tree in the rigid husk—and sending them forth into the far distant wilderness to wrestle with wild beasts and with savages more ferocious than beasts; fearing and hating the Catholics as the sworn enemies of his realm; his race, and himself, trampling on them as much as he dared, forcing them into hypocrisy to save themselves from persecution or at least pecuniary ruin—if they would worship God according to their conscience; at deadly feud, therefore, on religious grounds, with much more than half his subjects—Puritans or Papists—and yet himself a Puritan in dogma and a Papist in Church government, if only the king could be pope; not knowing, indeed, whether a Puritan, or a Jesuit whom he called a Papist-Puritan, should be deemed the more disgusting or dangerous animal; already preparing for his unfortunate successor a path to the scaffold by employing all the pedantry, both theological and philosophical at his command to bring parliaments into contempt, and to place the royal prerogative on a level with Divinity; at the head of a most martial, dauntless, and practical nation, trembling, with unfortunate physical timidity, at the sight of a drawn sword; ever scribbling or haranguing in Latin, French, or broad Scotch, when the world was arming, it must always be a special wonder that one who might have been a respectable; even a useful, pedagogue, should by the caprice of destiny have been permitted, exactly at that epoch to be one of the most contemptible and mischievous of kings.

But he had a most effective and energetic minister. Even as in Spain and in France at the same period, the administration of government was essentially in-one pair of hands.

Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, ever since the termination of the splendid triumvirate of his father and Walsingham, had been in reality supreme. The proud and terrible hunchback, who never forgave, nor forgot to destroy, his enemies, had now triumphed over the last passion of the doting queen. Essex had gone to perdition.

Page 2293

Son of the great minister who had brought the mother of James to the scaffold, Salisbury had already extorted forgiveness for that execution from the feeble king. Before Elizabeth was in her grave, he was already as much the favourite of her successor as of herself, governing Scotland as well as England, and being Prime Minister of Great Britain before Great Britain existed.

Lord High Treasurer and First Secretary of State, he was now all in all in the council. The other great lords, highborn and highly titled as they were and served at their banquets by hosts of lackeys on their knees—Nottinghams, Northamptons, Suffolks—were, after all, ciphers or at best, mere pensioners of Spain. For all the venality of Europe was not confined to the Continent. Spain spent at least one hundred and fifty thousand crowns annually among the leading courtiers of James while his wife, Anne of Denmark, a Papist at heart, whose private boudoir was filled with pictures and images of the Madonna and the saints, had already received one hundred thousand dollars in solid cash from the Spanish court, besides much jewelry, and other valuable things. To negotiate with Government in England was to bribe, even as at Paris or Madrid. Gold was the only passkey to justice, to preferment, or to power.

Yet the foreign subsidies to the English court were, after all, of but little avail at that epoch. No man had influence but Cecil, and he was too proud, too rich, too powerful to be bribed. Alone with clean fingers among courtiers and ministers, he had, however, accumulated a larger fortune than any. His annual income was estimated at two hundred thousand crowns, and he had a vast floating capital, always well employed. Among other investments, he had placed half a million on interest in Holland,' and it was to be expected, therefore, that he should favour the cause of the republic, rebellious and upstart though it were.

The pigmy, as the late queen had been fond of nicknaming him, was the only giant in the Government. Those crooked shoulders held up, without flinching, the whole burden of the State. Pale, handsome, anxious, suffering, and intellectual of visage, with his indomitable spirit, ready eloquence, and nervous energy, he easily asserted supremacy over all the intriguers, foreign and domestic, the stipendiariea, the generals, the admirals, the politicians, at court, as well as over the Scotch Solomon who sat on the throne.

But most certainly, it was for the public good of Britain, that Europe should be pacified. It is very true that the piratical interest would suffer, and this was a very considerable and influential branch of business. So long as war existed anywhere, the corsairs of England sailed with the utmost effrontery from English ports, to prey upon the commerce of friend and foe alike. After a career of successful plunder, it was not difficult for the rovers to return to their native land, and, with the proceeds of their industry, to buy themselves positions of importance, both social and political. It was not the custom to consider too curiously the source of the wealth. If it was sufficient to

dazzle the eyes of the vulgar, it was pretty certain to prove the respectability of the owner.

Page 2294

It was in vain that the envoys of the Dutch and Venetian republics sought redress for the enormous damage inflicted on their commerce by English pirates, and invoked the protection of public law. It was always easy for learned juris-consuls to prove such depredations to be consistent with international usage and with sound morality. Even at that period, although England was in population and in wealth so insignificant, it possessed a lofty, insular contempt for the opinions and the doctrines of other nations, and expected, with perfect calmness, that her own principles should be not only admitted, but spontaneously adored.

Yet the piratical interest was no longer the controlling one. That city on the Thames, which already numbered more than three hundred thousand inhabitants, had discovered that more wealth was to be accumulated by her bustling shopkeepers in the paths of legitimate industry than by a horde of rovers over the seas, however adventurous and however protected by Government.

As for France, she was already defending herself against piracy by what at the period seemed a masterpiece of internal improvement. The Seine, the Loire, and the Rhone were soon to be united in one chain of communication. Thus merchandise might be water-borne from the channel to the Mediterranean, without risking the five or six months' voyage by sea then required from Havre to Marseilles, and exposure along the whole coast to attack from the corsairs of England Spain and Barbary.

The envoys of the States-General had a brief audience of the new sovereign, in which little more than phrases of compliment were pronounced.

"We are here," said Barneveld, "between grief and joy. We have lost her whose benefits to us we can never describe in words, but we have found a successor who is heir not only to her kingdom but to all her virtues." And with this exordium the great Advocate plunged at once into the depths of his subject, so far as was possible in an address of ceremony. He besought the king not to permit Spain, standing on the neck of the provinces, to grasp from that elevation at other empires. He reminded James of his duty to save those of his own religion from the clutch of a sanguinary superstition, to drive away those lurking satellites of the Roman pontiff who considered Britain their lawful prey. He implored him to complete the work so worthily begun by Elizabeth. If all those bound by one interest should now, he urged, unite their efforts, the Spaniard, deprived not only of the Netherlands, but, if he were not wise in time, banished from the ocean and stripped of all his transmarine possessions, would be obliged to consent to a peace founded on the only secure basis, equality of strength. The envoy concluded by beseeching the king for assistance to Ostend, now besieged for two years long.

Page 2295

But James manifested small disposition to melt in the fervour of the Advocate's eloquence. He answered with a few cold commonplaces. Benignant but extremely cautious, he professed goodwill enough to the States but quite as much for Spain, a power with which, he observed, he had never quarrelled, and from which he had received the most friendly offices. The archdukes, too, he asserted, had never been hostile to the realm, but only to the Queen of England. In brief, he was new to English affairs, required time to look about him, but would not disguise that his genius was literary, studious, and tranquil, and much more inclined to peace than to war.

In truth, James had cause to look very sharply about him. It required an acute brain and steady nerves to understand and to control the whirl of parties and the conflict of interests and intrigues, the chameleon shiftings of character and colour, at this memorable epoch of transition in the realm which he had just inherited. There was a Scotch party, favourable on the whole to France; there was a Spanish party, there was an English party, and, more busy than all, there was a party—not Scotch, nor French, nor English, nor Spanish—that un-dying party in all commonwealths or kingdoms which ever fights for itself and for the spoils.

France and Spain had made peace with each other at Vervins five years before, and had been at war ever since.

Nothing could be plainer nor more cynical than the language exchanged between the French monarch and the representative of Spain. That Philip *iii*.—as the Spanish Government by a convenient fiction was always called—was the head and front of the great Savoy-Biron conspiracy to take Henry's life and dismember his kingdom, was hardly a stage secret. Yet diplomatic relations were still preserved between the two countries, and wonderful diplomatic interviews had certainly been taking place in Paris.

Ambassador Tassis had walked with lofty port into Henry's cabinet, disdaining to salute any of the princes of the blood or high functionaries of state in the apartments through which he passed, and with insolent defiance had called Henry to account for his dealing with the Dutch rebels.

"Sire, the king my master finds it very strange," he said, "that you still continue to assist his rebels in Holland, and that you shoot at his troops on their way to the Netherlands. If you don't abstain from such infractions of his rights he prefers open war to being cheated by such a pretended peace. Hereupon I demand your reply."

"Mr. Ambassador," replied the king, "I find it still more strange that your master is so impudent as to dare to make such complaints—he who is daily making attempts upon my life and upon this State. Even if I do assist the Hollanders, what wrong is that to him? It is an organized commonwealth, powerful, neighbourly, acknowledging no subjection to him. But your master is stirring

Page 2296

up rebellion in my own kingdom, addressing himself to the princes of my blood and my most notable officers, so that I have been obliged to cut off the head of one of the most beloved of them all. By these unchristian proceedings he has obliged me to take sides with the Hollanders, whom I know to be devoted to me; nor have I done anything for them except to pay the debts I owed them. I know perfectly well that the king your master is the head of this conspiracy, and that the troops of Naples were meditating an attack upon my kingdom. I have two letters written by the hand of your master to Marshal Biron, telling him to trust Fuentes as if it were himself, and it is notorious that Fuentes has projected and managed all the attempts to assassinate me. Do you, think you have a child to deal with? The late King of Spain knew me pretty well. If this one thinks himself wiser I shall let him see who I am. Do you want peace or war? I am ready for either."

The ambassador, whose head had thus been so vigorously washed—as Henry expressed it in recounting the interview afterwards to the Dutch envoy, Dr. Aerssens—stammered some unintelligible excuses, and humbly begged his Majesty not to be offended. He then retired quite crest-fallen, and took leave most politely of everybody as he went, down even to the very grooms of the chambers.

"You must show your teeth to the Spaniard," said Henry to Aerssens, "if you wish for a quiet life."

Here was unsophisticated diplomacy; for the politic Henry, who could forgive assassins and conspirators, crowned or otherwise, when it suited his purpose to be lenient, knew that it was on this occasion very prudent to use the gift of language, not in order to conceal, but to express his thoughts.

"I left the king as red as a turkey-cock," said Tassis, as soon as he got home that morning, "and I was another turkey-cock. We have been talking a little bit of truth to each other."

In truth, it was impossible, as the world was then constituted, that France and Spain, in spite of many secret sympathies, should not be enemies; that France, England, and the Dutch commonwealth, although cordially disliking each other, should not be allies.

Even before the death of Elizabeth a very remarkable interview had taken place at Dover, in which the queen had secretly disclosed the great thoughts with which that most imperial brain was filled just before its boundless activity was to cease for ever.

She had wished for a personal interview with the French king, whose wit and valour she had always heartily admired, Henry, on his part, while unmercifully ridiculing that preterhuman vanity which he fed with fantastic adulation, never failed to do justice to

her genius, and had been for a moment disposed to cross the channel, or even to hold council with her on board ship midway between the two countries. It was however found impracticable to arrange any such meeting, and the gossips of the day hinted that the great Henry, whose delight was in battle, and who had never been known to shrink from danger on dry land, was appalled at the idea of sea-sickness, and even dreaded the chance of being kidnapped by the English pirates.

Page 2297

The corsairs who drove so profitable a business at that period by plundering the merchantmen of their enemy, of their Dutch and French allies, and of their own nation, would assuredly have been pleased with such a prize.

The queen had confided to De Bethune that she had some thing to say to the king which she could never reveal to other ears than his, but when the proposed visit of Henry was abandoned, it was decided that his confidential minister should slip across the channel before Elizabeth returned to her palace at Greenwich.

De Bethune accordingly came incognito from Calais to Dover, in which port he had a long and most confidential interview with the queen. Then and there the woman, nearly seventy years of age, who governed despotically the half of a small island, while the other half was in the possession of a man whose mother she had slain, and of a people who hated the English more than they hated the Spaniards or the French—a queen with some three millions of loyal but most turbulent subjects in one island, and with about half-a-million ferocious rebels in another requiring usually an army of twenty thousand disciplined soldiers to keep them in a kind of subjugation, with a revenue fluctuating between eight hundred thousand pounds sterling, and the half of that sum, and with a navy of a hundred privateersmen—disclosed to the French envoy a vast plan for regulating the polity and the religion of the civilized world, and for remodelling the map of Europe.

There should be three religions, said Elizabeth—not counting the dispensation from Mecca, about which Turk and Hun might be permitted to continue their struggle on the crepuscular limits of civilization. Everywhere else there should be toleration only for the churches of Peter, of Luther, and of Calvin. The house of Austria was to be humbled—-the one branch driven back to Spain and kept there, the other branch to be deprived of the imperial crown, which was to be disposed of as in times past by the votes of the princely electors. There should be two republics—the Swiss and the Dutch—each of those commonwealths to be protected by France and England, and each to receive considerable parings out of the possessions of Spain and the empire.

Finally, all Christendom was to be divided off into a certain number of powers, almost exactly equal to each other; the weighing, measuring, and counting, necessary to obtain this international equilibrium, being of course the duty of the king and queen when they should sit some day together at table.

Thus there were five points; sovereigns and politicians having always a fondness for a neat summary in five or six points. Number one, to remodel the electoral system of the holy Roman empire. Number two, to establish the republic of the United Provinces. Number three, to do as much for Switzerland. Number four, to partition Europe. Number five, to reduce all religions to three. Nothing could be more majestic, no plan fuller fraught with tranquillity for the rulers of mankind and their subjects. Thrice happy

the people, having thus a couple of heads with crowns upon them and brains within them to prescribe what was to be done in this world and believed as to the next!

Page 2298

The illustrious successor of that great queen now stretches her benignant sceptre over two hundred millions of subjects, and the political revenues of her empire are more than a hundredfold those of Elizabeth; yet it would hardly now be thought great statesmanship or sound imperial policy for a British sovereign even to imagine the possibility of the five points which filled the royal English mind at Dover.

But Henry was as much convinced as Elizabeth of the necessity and the possibility of establishing the five points, and De Bethune had been astonished at the exact similarity of the conclusion which those two sovereign intellects had reached, even before they had been placed in communion with each other. The death of the queen had not caused any change in the far-reaching designs of which the king now remained the sole executor, and his first thought, on the accession of James, was accordingly to despatch De Bethune, now created Marquis de Rosny, as ambassador extraordinary to England, in order that the new sovereign might be secretly but thoroughly instructed as to the scheme for remodelling Christendom.

As Rosny was also charged with the duty of formally congratulating King James, he proceeded upon his journey with remarkable pomp. He was accompanied by two hundred gentlemen of quality, specially attached to his embassy—young city fops, as he himself described them, who were out of their element whenever they left the pavement of Paris—and by an equal number of valets, grooms, and cooks. Such a retinue was indispensable to enable an ambassador to transact the public business and to maintain the public dignity in those days; unproductive consumption being accounted most sagacious and noble.

Before reaching the English shore the marquis was involved in trouble. Accepting the offer of the English vice-admiral lying off Calais, he embarked with his suite in two English vessels, much to the dissatisfaction of De Vic, vice-admiral of France, who was anxious to convey the French ambassador in the war-ships of his country. There had been suspicion afloat as to the good understanding between England and Spain, caused by the great courtesy recently shown to the Count of Arenberg, and there was intense irritation among all the seafaring people of France on account of the exploits of the English corsairs upon their coast. Rosny thought it best to begin his embassy by an act of conciliation, but soon had cause to repent his decision.

In mid-channel they were met by De Vic’s vessels with the French banner displayed, at which sight the English commander was so wroth that he forthwith ordered a broadside to be poured into the audacious foreigner;—swearing with mighty oaths that none but the English flag should be shown in those waters. And thus, while conveying a French ambassador and three hundred Frenchmen on a sacred mission to the British sovereign, this redoubtable mariner of England prepared to do battle with the

Page 2299

ships of France. It was with much difficulty and some prevarication that Rosny appeased the strife, representing that the French flag had only been raised in order that it might be dipped, in honour of the French ambassador, as the ships passed each other. The full-shotted broadside was fired from fifty guns, but the English commander consented, at De Rosny's representations, that it should be discharged wide of the mark.

A few shots, however, struck the side of one of the French vessels, and at the same time, as Cardinal Richelieu afterwards remarked, pierced the heart of every patriotic Frenchman.

The ambassador made a sign, which De Vic understood; to lower his flag and to refrain from answering the fire. Thus a battle between allies, amid the most amazing circumstances, was avoided, but it may well be imagined how long and how deeply the poison of the insult festered.

Such an incident could hardly predispose the ambassador in favour of the nation he was about to visit, or strengthen his hope of laying, not only the foundation of a perpetual friendship between the two crowns, but of effecting the palingenesis of Europe. Yet no doubt Sully—as the world has so long learned to call him—was actuated by lofty sentiments in many respects in advance of his age. Although a brilliant and successful campaigner in his youth, he detested war, and looked down with contempt at political systems which had not yet invented anything better than gunpowder for the arbitrament of international disputes. Instead of war being an occasional method of obtaining peace, it pained him to think that peace seemed only a process for arriving at war. Surely it was no epigram in those days, but the simplest statement of commonplace fact, that war was the normal condition of Christians. Alas will it be maintained that in the two and a half centuries which have since elapsed the world has made much progress in a higher direction? Is there yet any appeal among the most civilized nations except to the logic of the largest battalions and the eloquence of the biggest guns?

De Rosny came to be the harbinger of a political millennium, and he heartily despised war. The schemes, nevertheless, which were as much his own as his master's, and which he was instructed to lay before the English monarch as exclusively his own, would have required thirty years of successful and tremendous warfare before they could have a beginning of development.

It is not surprising that so philosophical a mind as his, while still inclining to pacific designs, should have been led by what met his eyes and ears to some rather severe generalizations.

“It is certain that the English hate us,” he said, “and with a hatred so strong and so general that one is tempted to place it among the natural dispositions of this people. Yet it is rather the effect of their pride and their presumption; since there is no nation in Europe more haughty, more disdainful, more besotted with the idea of its own excellence. If you were to take their word for it, mind and reason are only found with them; they adore all their opinions and despise those of all other nations; and it never occurs to them to listen to others, or to doubt themselves. . . . Examine what are called with them maxims of state; you will find nothing but the laws of pride itself, adopted through arrogance or through indolence.”

Page 2300

“Placed by nature amidst the tempestuous and variable ocean,” he wrote to his sovereign, “they are as shifting, as impetuous, as changeable as its waves. So self-contradictory and so inconsistent are their actions almost in the same instant as to make it impossible that they should proceed from the same persons and the same mind. Agitated and urged by their pride and arrogance alone, they take all their imaginations and extravagances for truths and realities; the objects of their desires and affections for inevitable events; not balancing and measuring those desires with the actual condition of things, nor with the character of the people with whom they have to deal.”

When the ambassador arrived in London he was lodged at Arundel palace. He at once became the cynosure of all indigenous parties and of adventurous politicians from every part of Europe; few knowing how to shape their course since the great familiar lustre had disappeared from the English sky.

Rosny found the Scotch lords sufficiently favourable to France; the English Catholic grandees, with all the Howards and the lord high admiral at their head, excessively inclined to Spain, and a great English party detesting both Spain and France with equal fervour and well enough disposed to the United Provinces, not as hating that commonwealth less but the two great powers more.

The ambassador had arrived with the five points, not in his portfolio but in his heart, and they might after all be concentrated in one phrase—Down with Austria, up with the Dutch republic. On his first interview with Cecil, who came to arrange for his audience with the king, he found the secretary much disposed to conciliate both Spain and the empire, and to leave the provinces to shift for themselves.

He spoke of Ostend as of a town not worth the pains taken to preserve it, and of the India trade as an advantage of which a true policy required that the United Provinces should be deprived. Already the fine commercial instinct of England had scented a most formidable rival on the ocean.

As for the king, he had as yet declared himself for no party, while all parties were disputing among each other for mastery over him. James found himself, in truth, as much, astray in English politics as he was a foreigner upon English earth. Suspecting every one, afraid of every one, he was in mortal awe, most of all, of his wife, who being the daughter of one Protestant sovereign and wife of another, and queen of a united realm dependent for its very existence on antagonism to Spain and Rome, was naturally inclined to Spanish politics and the Catholic faith.

The turbulent and intriguing Anne of Denmark was not at the moment in London, but James was daily expecting and De Bethune dreading her arrival.

The ambassador knew very well that, although the king talked big in her absence about the forms which he intended to prescribe for her conduct, he would take orders from her as soon as she arrived, refuse her nothing, conceal nothing from her, and tremble before her as usual.

Page 2301

The king was not specially prejudiced in favour of the French monarch or his ambassador, for he had been told that Henry had occasionally spoken of him as captain of arts and doctor of arms, and that both the Marquis de Rosny and his brother were known to have used highly disrespectful language concerning him.

Before his audience, De Rosny received a private visit from Barneveld and the deputies of the States-General, and was informed that since his arrival they had been treated with more civility by the king. Previously he had refused to see them after the first official reception, had not been willing to grant Count Henry of Nassau a private audience, and had spoken publicly of the States as seditious rebels.

Oh the 21st June Barneveld had a long private interview with the ambassador at Arundel palace, when he exerted all his eloquence to prove the absolute necessity of an offensive and defensive alliance between France and the United Provinces if the independence of the republic were ever to be achieved. Unless a French army took the field at once, Ostend would certainly fall, he urged, and resistance to the Spaniards would soon afterwards cease.

It is not probable that the Advocate felt in his heart so much despair as his words indicated, but he was most anxious that Henry should openly declare himself the protector of the young commonwealth, and not indisposed perhaps to exaggerate the dangers, grave as they were without doubt, by which its existence was menaced.

The ambassador however begged the Hollander to renounce any such hopes, assuring him that the king had no intention of publicly and singly taking upon his shoulders the whole burden of war with Spain, the fruits of which would not be his to gather. Certainly before there had been time thoroughly to study the character and inclinations of the British monarch it would be impossible for De Rosny to hold out any encouragement in this regard. He then asked Barneveld what he had been able to discover during his residence in London as to the personal sentiments of James.

The Advocate replied that at first the king, yielding to his own natural tendencies, and to the advice of his counsellors, had refused the Dutch deputies every hope, but that subsequently reflecting, as it would seem, that peace would cost England very dear if English inaction should cause the Hollanders to fall again under the dominion of the Catholic king, or to find their only deliverance in the protection of France, and beginning to feel more acutely how much England had herself to fear from a power like Spain, he had seemed to awake out of a profound sleep, and promised to take these important affairs into consideration.

Subsequently he had fallen into a dreary abyss of indecision, where he still remained. It was certain however that he would form no resolution without the concurrence of the King of France, whose ambassador he had been so impatiently expecting, and whose

proposition to him of a double marriage between their respective children had given him much satisfaction.

Page 2302

De Rosny felt sure that the Dutch statesmen were far too adroit to put entire confidence in anything said by James, whether favourable or detrimental to their cause. He conjured Barneveld therefore, by the welfare of his country, to conceal nothing from him in regard to the most secret resolutions that might have been taken by the States in the event of their being abandoned by England, or in case of their being embarrassed by a sudden demand on the part of that power for the cautionary towns offered to Elizabeth.

Barneveld, thus pressed, and considering the ambassador as the confidential counsellor of a sovereign who was the republic's only friend, no longer hesitated. Making a merit to himself of imparting an important secret, he said that the state-council of the commonwealth had resolved to elude at any cost the restoration of the cautionary towns.

The interview was then abruptly terminated by the arrival of the Venetian envoy.

The 22nd of June arrived. The marquis had ordered mourning suits for his whole embassy and retinue, by particular command of his sovereign, who wished to pay this public tribute to the memory of the great queen.

To his surprise and somewhat to his indignation, he was however informed that no one, stranger or native, Scotchman or Englishman, had been permitted to present himself to the king in black, that his appearance there in mourning would be considered almost an affront, and that it was a strictly enforced rule at court to abstain from any mention of Elizabeth, and to affect an entire oblivion of her reign.

At the last moment, and only because convinced that he might otherwise cause the impending negotiations utterly to fail, the ambassador consented to attire himself, the hundred and twenty gentlemen selected from his diplomatic family to accompany him on this occasion, and all his servants, in gala costume. The royal guards, with the Earl of Derby at their head, came early in the afternoon to Arundel House to escort him to the Thames, and were drawn up on the quay as the marquis and his followers embarked in the splendid royal barges provided to convey them to Greenwich.

On arriving at their destination they were met at the landing by the Earl of Northumberland, and escorted with great pomp and through an infinite multitude of spectators to the palace. Such was the crowd, without and within, of courtiers and common people, that it was a long time before the marquis, preceded by his hundred and twenty gentlemen, reached the hall of audience.

At last he arrived at the foot of the throne, when James arose and descended eagerly two steps of the dais in order to greet the ambassador. He would have descended them all had not one of the counsellors plucked him by the sleeve, whispering that he had gone quite far enough.

“And if I honour this ambassador,” cried James, in a loud voice, “more than is usual, I don’t intend that it shall serve as a precedent for others. I esteem and love him particularly, because of the affection which I know he cherishes for me, of his firmness in our religion, and of his fidelity to his master.”

Page 2303

Much more that was personally flattering to the marquis was said thus emphatically by James. To all this the ambassador replied, not by a set discourse, but only by a few words of compliment, expressing his sovereign's regrets at the death of Queen Elizabeth, and his joy at the accession of the new sovereign. He then delivered his letters of credence, and the complimentary conversation continued; the king declaring that he had not left behind him in Scotland his passion for the monarch of France, and that even had he found England at war with that country on his accession he would have instantly concluded a peace with a prince whom he so much venerated.

Thus talking, the king caused his guest to ascend with him to the uppermost steps of the dais, babbling on very rapidly and skipping abruptly from one subject to another. De Rosny took occasion to express his personal esteem and devotion, and was assured by the king in reply that the slanders in regard to him which had reached the royal ears had utterly failed of their effect. It was obvious that they were the invention of Spanish intriguers who wished to help that nation to universal monarchy. Then he launched forth into general and cordial abuse of Spain, much to the satisfaction of Count Henry of Nassau, who stood near enough to hear a good deal of the conversation, and of the other Dutch deputies who were moving about, quite unknown, in the crowd. He denounced very vigorously the malignity of the Spaniards in lighting fires everywhere in their neighbours' possessions, protested that he would always oppose their wicked designs, but spoke contemptuously of their present king as too feeble of mind and body ever to comprehend or to carry out the projects of his predecessors.

Among other gossip, James asked the envoy if he went to hear the Protestant preaching in London. Being answered in the affirmative, he expressed surprise, having been told, he said, that it was Rosny's intention to repudiate his religion as De Sancy had done, in order to secure his fortunes. The marquis protested that such a thought had never entered his head, but intimated that the reports might come from his familiar intercourse with the papal nuncius and many French ecclesiastics. The king asked if, when speaking with the nuncius, he called the pope his Holiness, as by so doing he would greatly offend God, in whom alone was holiness. Rosny replied that he commonly used the style prevalent at court, governing himself according to the rules adopted in regard to pretenders to crowns and kingdoms which they thought belonged to them, but the possession of which was in other hands, conceding to them, in order not to offend them, the titles which they claimed.

James shook his head portentously, and changed the subject.

The general tone of the royal-conversation was agreeable enough to the ambassador, who eagerly alluded to the perfidious conduct of a Government which, ever since concluding the peace of Vervins with Henry, had been doing its best to promote sedition and territorial dismemberment in his kingdom, and to assist all his open and his secret enemies.

Page 2304

James assented very emphatically, and the marquis felt convinced that a resentment against Spain, expressed so publicly and so violently by James, could hardly fail to, be sincere. He began seriously to, hope that his negotiations would be successful, and was for soaring at once into the regions of high politics, when the king suddenly began to talk of hunting.

“And so you sent half the stag I sent you; to Count Arenberg,” said James; “but he is very angry about it; thinking that you did so to show how much more I make of you than I do of him. And so I do; for I know the difference between your king, my brother; and his masters who have sent me an ambassador who can neither walk nor talk, and who asked me to give him audience in a garden because he cannot go upstairs.”

The king then alluded to Tassis, chief courier of his Catholic Majesty and special envoy from Spain, asking whether the marquis had seen him on his passage through France.

“Spain sends me a postillion-ambassador,” said he, “that he may travel the faster and attend to business by post.”

It was obvious that James took a sincere satisfaction in abusing everything relating to that country from its sovereign and the Duke of Lerma downwards; but he knew very well that Velasco, constable of Castile, had been already designated as ambassador, and would soon be on his way to England.

De Rosny on the termination of his audience, was escorted in great state by the Earl of Northumberland to the barges.

A few days later, the ambassador had another private audience, in which the king expressed himself with apparent candour concerning the balance of power.

Christendom, in his opinion, should belong in three equal shares to the families of Stuart, Bourbon, and Habsburg; but personal ambition and the force of events had given to the house of Austria more than its fair third. Sound policy therefore required a combination between France and England, in order to reduce their copartner within proper limits. This was satisfactory as far as it went, and the ambassador complimented the king on his wide views of policy and his lofty sentiments in regard to human rights.

Warming with the subject, James held language very similar to that which De Rosny and his master had used in their secret conferences, and took the ground unequivocally that the secret war levied by Spain against France and England, as exemplified in the Biron conspiracy, the assault on Geneva, the aid of the Duke of Savoy, and in the perpetual fostering of Jesuit intrigues, plots of assassination, and other conspiracies in the British islands, justified a secret war on the part of Henry and himself against Philip.

The ambassador would have been more deeply impressed with the royal language had he felt more confidence in the royal character.

Page 2305

Highly applauding the sentiments expressed, and desiring to excite still further the resentment of James against Spain, he painted a vivid picture of the progress of that aggressive power in the past century. She had devoured Flanders, Burgundy, Granada, Navarre, Portugal, the German Empire, Milan, Naples, and all the Indies. If she had not swallowed likewise both France and England those two crowns were indebted for their preservation, after the firmness of Elizabeth and Henry, to the fortunate incident of the revolt of the Netherlands.

De Rosny then proceeded to expound the necessity under which James would soon find himself of carrying on open war with Spain, and of the expediency of making preparations for the great struggle without loss of time.

He therefore begged the king to concert with him some satisfactory measure for the preservation of the United Provinces.

“But,” said James, “what better assistance could we give the Netherlanders than to divide their territory between the States and Spain; agreeing at the same time to drive the Spaniard out altogether, if he violates the conditions which we should guarantee.”

This conclusion was not very satisfactory to De Rosny, who saw in the bold language of the king—followed thus by the indication of a policy that might last to the Greek Kalends, and permit Ostend, Dutch Flanders, and even the republic to fall—nothing but that mixture of timidity, conceit, and procrastination which marked the royal character. He pointed out to him accordingly that Spanish statesmanship could beat the world in the art of delay, and of plucking the fruits of delay, and that when the United Provinces had been once subjugated, the turn of England would come. It would be then too late for him to hope to preserve himself by such measures as, taken now, would be most salutary.

A few days later the king invited De Rosny and the two hundred members of his embassy to dine at Greenwich, and the excursion down the Thames took place with the usual pomp.

The two hundred dined with the gentlemen of the court; while at the king’s table, on an elevated platform in the same hall, were no guests but De Rosny, and the special envoy of France, Count Beaumont.

The furniture and decorations of the table were sumptuous, and the attendants, to the surprise of the Frenchmen, went on their knees whenever they offered wine or dishes to the king. The conversation at first was on general topics, such as the heat of the weather, which happened to be remarkable, the pleasures of the chase, and the merits of the sermon which, as it was Sunday, De Rosny had been invited to hear before dinner in the royal chapel.

Soon afterwards, however, some allusion being made to the late queen, James spoke of her with contempt. He went so far as to say that, for a long time before her death, he had governed the councils, of England; all her ministers obeying and serving him much better than they did herself. He then called for wine, and, stretching out his glass towards his two. guests, drank to the health of the king and queen and royal family of France.

Page 2306

De Rosny, replied by proposing the health of his august host, not forgetting the queen and their children, upon which the king, putting his lips close to the ambassador's ear, remarked that his next toast should be in honour of the matrimonial union which was proposed between the families of Britain and France.

This was the first allusion made by James to the alliance; and the occasion did not strike the marquis as particularly appropriate to such a topic. He however replied in a whisper that he was rejoiced to hear this language from the king, having always believed that there would be no hesitation on his part between King Henry and the monarch of Spain, who, as he was aware, had made a similar proposition. James, expressing surprise that his guest was so well informed, avowed that he had in fact received the same offer of the Infanta for his son as had been made to his Christian Majesty for the Dauphin. What more convenient counters in the great game of state than an infant prince and princess in each of the three royal families to which Europe belonged! To how many grave political combinations were these unfortunate infants to give rise, and how distant the period when great nations might no longer be tied to the pinafores of children in the nursery!

After this little confidential interlude, James expressed in loud voice, so that all might hear, his determination never to permit the subjugation of the Netherlands by Spain. Measures should be taken the very next day, he promised, in concert with the ambassador, as to the aid to be given to the States. Upon the faith of this declaration De Rosny took from his pocket the plan of a treaty, and forthwith, in the presence of all the ministers, placed it in the hands of the king, who meantime had risen from table. The ambassador also took this occasion to speak publicly of the English piracies upon French commerce while the two nations were at peace. The king, in reply, expressed his dissatisfaction at these depredations and at the English admiral who attempted to defend what had been done.

He then took leave of his guests, and went off to bed, where it was his custom to pass his afternoons.

It was certain that the Constable of Castile was now to arrive very soon, and the marquis had, meantime, obtained information on which he relied, that this ambassador would come charged with very advantageous offers to the English court. Accounts had been got ready in council, of all the moneys due to England by France and by the States, and it was thought that these sums, payment of which was to be at once insisted upon, together with the Spanish dollars set afloat in London, would prove sufficient to buy up all resistance to the Spanish alliance.

Page 2307

Such being the nature of the information furnished to De Rosny, he did not look forward with very high hopes to the issue of the conference indicated by King James at the Greenwich dinner. As, after all, he would have to deal once more with Cecil, the master-spirit of the Spanish party, it did not seem very probable that the king's whispered professions of affection for France, his very loud denunciations of Spanish ambition, and his promises of support to the struggling provinces, would be brought into any substantial form for human nourishment. Whispers and big words, touching of glasses at splendid banquets, and proposing of royal toasts, would not go far to help those soldiers in Ostend, a few miles away, fighting two years long already for a square half-mile of barren sand, in which seemed centred the world's hopes of freedom.

Barneveld was inclined to take an even more gloomy view than that entertained by the French ambassador. He had, in truth, no reason to be sanguine. The honest republican envoys had brought no babies to offer in marriage. Their little commonwealth had only the merit of exchanging buffets forty years long with a power which, after subjugating the Netherlands, would have liked to annihilate France and England too, and which, during that period, had done its best to destroy and dismember both. It had only struggled as no nation in the world's history had ever done, for the great principle upon which the power and happiness of England were ever to depend. It was therefore not to be expected that its representatives should be received with the distinction conferred upon royal envoys. Barneveld and his colleagues accordingly were not invited, with two hundred noble hangers-on, to come down the Thames in gorgeous array, and dine at Greenwich palace; but they were permitted to mix in the gaping crowd of spectators, to see the fine folk, and to hear a few words at a distance which fell from august lips. This was not very satisfactory, as Barneveld could rarely gain admittance to James or his ministers. De Rosny, however, was always glad to confer with him, and was certainly capable of rendering justice both to his genius and to the sacredness of his cause. The Advocate, in a long conference with the ambassador, thought it politic to paint the situation of the republic in even more sombre colours than seemed to De Rosny justifiable. He was, indeed, the more struck with Barneveld's present despondency, because, at a previous conference, a few days before, he had spoken almost with contempt of the Spaniards, expressing the opinion that the mutinous and disorganized condition of the archduke's army rendered the conquest of Ostend improbable, and hinted at a plan, of which the world as yet knew nothing, which would save that place, or at any rate would secure such an advantage for the States as to more than counterbalance its possible loss? This very sanguine demeanour had rather puzzled those who had conferred with the

Page 2308

Advocate, although they were ere long destined to understand his allusions, and it was certainly a contrast to his present gloom. He assured De Rosny that the Hollanders were becoming desperate, and that they were capable of abandoning their country in mass, and seeking an asylum beyond the seas? The menace was borrowed from the famous project conceived by William the Silent in darker days, and seemed to the ambassador a present anachronism.

Obviously it was thought desirable to force the French policy to extreme lengths, and Barneveld accordingly proposed that Henry should take the burthen upon his shoulders of an open war with Spain, in the almost certain event that England would make peace with that power. De Rosny calmly intimated to the Advocate that this was asking something entirely beyond his power to grant, as the special object of his mission was to form a plan of concerted action with England.

The cautionary towns being next mentioned, Barneveld stated that a demand had been made upon Envoy Caron by Cecil for the delivery of those places to the English Government, as England had resolved to make peace with Spain.

The Advocate confided, however, to De Rosny that the States would interpose difficulties, and that it would be long before the towns were delivered. This important information was given under the seal of strictest secrecy, and was coupled with an inference that a war between the republic and Britain would be the probable result, in which case the States relied upon the alliance with France. The ambassador replied that in this untoward event the republic would have the sympathy of his royal master, but that it would be out of the question for him to go to war with Spain and England at the same time.

On the same afternoon there was a conference at Arundel House between the Dutch deputies, the English counsellors, and De Rosny, when Barneveld drew a most dismal picture of the situation; taking the ground that now or never was the time for driving the Spaniards entirely out of the Netherlands. Cecil said in a general way that his Majesty felt a deep interest in the cause of the provinces, and the French ambassador summoned the Advocate, now that he was assured of the sympathy of two great kings, to furnish some plan by which that sympathy might be turned to account. Barneveld, thinking figures more eloquent than rhetoric, replied that the States, besides garrisons, had fifteen thousand infantry and three thousand cavalry in the field, and fifty warships in commission, with artillery and munitions in proportion, and that it would be advisable for France and England to furnish an equal force, military and naval, to the common cause.

De Rosny smiled at the extravagance of the proposition. Cecil, again taking refuge in commonplaces, observed that his master was disposed to keep the peace with all his

neighbours, but that, having due regard to the circumstances, he was willing to draw a line between the wishes of the States and his own, and would grant them a certain amount of succour underhand.

Page 2309

Thereupon the Dutch deputies withdrew to confer. De Rosny, who had no faith in Cecil's sincerity—the suggestion being essentially the one which he had himself desired—went meantime a little deeper into the subject, and soon found that England, according to the Secretary of State, had no idea of ruining herself for the sake of the provinces, or of entering into any positive engagements in their behalf. In case Spain should make a direct attack upon the two kings who were to constitute themselves protectors of Dutch liberty, it might be necessary to take up arms. The admission was on the whole superfluous, it not being probable that Britain, even under a Stuart, would be converted to the doctrine of non-resistance. Yet in this case it was suggested by Cecil that the chief reliance of his Government would be on the debts owed by the Dutch and French respectively, which would then be forthwith collected.

De Rosny was now convinced that Cecil was trifling with him, and evidently intending to break off all practical negotiations. He concealed his annoyance, however, as well as he could, and simply intimated that the first business of importance was to arrange for the relief of Ostend; that eventualities, such as the possible attack by Spain upon France and England, might for the moment be deferred, but that if England thought it a safe policy to ruin Henry by throwing on his shoulders the whole burthen of a war with the common enemy, she would discover and deeply regret her fatal mistake. The time was a very ill-chosen one to summon France to pay old debts, and his Christian Majesty had given his ambassador no instructions contemplating such a liquidation.

It was the intention to discharge the sum annually, little by little, but if England desired to exhaust the king by these peremptory demands, it was an odious conduct, and very different from any that France had ever pursued.

The English counsellors were not abashed by this rebuke, but became, on the contrary, very indignant, avowing that if anything more was demanded of them, England would entirely abandon the United Provinces. "Cecil made himself known to me in this conference," said De Rosny, "for exactly what he was. He made use only of double meanings and vague propositions; feeling that reason was not on his side. He was forced to blush at his own self-contradictions, when, with a single word, I made him feel the absurdity of his language. Now, endeavouring to intimidate me, he exaggerated the strength of England, and again he enlarged upon the pretended offers made by Spain to that nation."

The secretary, desirous to sow discord between the Dutch deputies and the ambassador, then observed that France ought to pay to England L50,000 upon the nail, which sum would be at once appropriated to the necessities of the States. "But what most enraged me," said De Rosny, "was to see these ministers, who had come to me to state the intentions of their king, thus impudently substitute their own; for I knew that he had commanded them to do the very contrary to that which they did."

Page 2310

The conference ended with a suggestion by Cecil, that as France would only undertake a war in conjunction with England, and as England would only consent to this if paid by France and the States, the best thing for the two kings to do would be to do nothing, but to continue to live in friendship together, without troubling themselves about foreign complications.

This was the purpose towards which the English counsellors had been steadily tending, and these last words of Cecil seemed to the ambassador the only sincere ones spoken by him in the whole conference.

“If I kept silence,” said the ambassador, “it was not because I acquiesced in their reasoning. On the contrary, the manner in which they had just revealed themselves, and avowed themselves in a certain sort liars and impostors, had given me the most profound contempt for them. I thought, however, that by heating myself and contending with them so far from causing them to abandon a resolution which they had taken in concert—I might even bring about a total rupture. On the other hand, matters remaining as they were, and a friendship existing between the two kings, which might perhaps be cemented by a double marriage, a more favourable occasion might present itself for negotiation. I did not yet despair of the success of my mission, because I believed that the king had no part in the designs which his counsellors wished to carry out.”

That the counsellors, then struggling for dominion over the new king and his kingdom, understood the character of their sovereign better than did the ambassador, future events were likely enough to prove. That they preferred peace to war, and the friendship of Spain to an alliance, offensive and defensive, with France in favour of a republic which they detested, is certain. It is difficult, however, to understand why they were “liars and impostors” because, in a conference with the representative of France, they endeavoured to make their own opinions of public policy valid rather than content themselves simply with being the errand-bearers of the new king, whom they believed incapable of being stirred to an honourable action.

The whole political atmosphere of Europe was mephitic with falsehood, and certainly the gales which blew from the English court at the accession of James were not fragrant, but De Rosny had himself come over from France under false pretences. He had been charged by his master to represent Henry’s childish scheme, which he thought so gigantic, for the regeneration of Europe, as a project of his own, which he was determined to bring to execution, even at the risk of infidelity to his sovereign, and the first element in that whole policy was to carry on war underhand against a power with which his master had just sworn to preserve peace. In that age at least it was not safe for politicians to call each other hard names.

Page 2311

The very next day De Rosny had a long private interview with James at Greenwich. Being urged to speak without reserve, the ambassador depicted the privy counsellors to the king as false to his instructions, traitors to the best interests of their country, the humble servants of Spain, and most desirous to make their royal master the slave of that power, under the name of its ally. He expressed the opinion, accordingly, that James would do better in obeying only the promptings of his own superior wisdom, rather than the suggestions of the intriguers about him. The adroit De Rosny thus softly insinuated to the flattered monarch that the designs of France were the fresh emanations of his own royal intellect. It was the whim of James to imagine himself extremely like Henry of Bourbon in character, and he affected to take the wittiest, bravest, most adventurous, and most adroit knight-errant that ever won and wore a crown as his perpetual model.

It was delightful, therefore, to find himself in company with his royal brother; making and unmaking kings; destroying empires, altering the whole face of Christendom, and, better than all, settling then and for ever the theology of the whole world, without the trouble of moving from his easy chair, or of incurring any personal danger.

He entered at once, with the natural tendency to suspicion of a timid man, into the views presented by De Rosny as to the perfidy of his counsellors. He changed colour; and was visibly moved, as the ambassador gave his version of the recent conference with Cecil and the other ministers, and, being thus artfully stimulated, he was, prepared to receive with much eagerness the portentous communications now to be made.

The ambassador, however, caused him to season his admiration until he had taken a most solemn oath, by the sacrament of the Eucharist, never to reveal a syllable of what he was about to hear. This done, and the royal curiosity excited almost beyond endurance, De Rosny began to, unfold the stupendous schemes which had been, concerted between Elizabeth and Henry at Dover, and which formed the secret object of his present embassy. Feeling that the king was most malleable in the theological part of his structure, the wily envoy struck his first blows in that direction; telling him that his own interest in the religious, condition of Europe, and especially in the firm establishment of the Protestant faith, far surpassed in his mind all considerations of fortune, country, or even of fidelity to his sovereign. Thus far, political considerations had kept Henry from joining in the great Catholic League, but it was possible that a change might occur in his system, and the Protestant form of worship, abandoned by its ancient protector, might disappear entirely from France and from Europe. De Rosny had, therefore, felt the necessity of a new patron for the reformed religion in this great emergency, and had naturally fixed his eyes on the puissant and sagacious prince who now

Page 2312

occupied, the British throne. Now was the time, he urged, for James to immortalize his name by becoming the arbiter of the destiny of Europe. It would always seem his own design, although Henry was equally interested in it with himself. The plan was vast but simple, and perfectly easy of execution. There would be no difficulty in constructing an all-powerful league of sovereigns for the destruction of the house of Austria, the foundation-stones of which would of course be France, Great Britain, and the United Provinces. The double marriage between the Bourbon and Stuart families would indissolubly unite the two kingdoms, while interest and gratitude; a common hatred and a common love, would bind the republic as firmly to the union. Denmark and Sweden were certainly to be relied upon, as well as all other Protestant princes. The ambitious and restless Duke of Savoy would be gained by the offer of Lombardy and a kingly crown, notwithstanding his matrimonial connection with Spain. As for the German princes, they would come greedily into the arrangement, as the league, rich in the spoils of the Austrian house, would have Hungary, Bohemia, Silesia, Moravia, the archduchies, and other splendid provinces to divide among them.

The pope would be bought up by a present, in fee-simple, of Naples, and other comfortable bits of property, of which he was now only feudal lord. Sicily would be an excellent sop for the haughty republic of Venice. The Franche Comte; Alsace, Tirol, were naturally to be annexed to Switzerland; Liege and the heritage of the Duke of Cleves and Juliers to the Dutch commonwealth.

The King of France, who, according to De Rosny's solemn assertions, was entirely ignorant of the whole scheme, would, however, be sure to embrace it very heartily when James should propose it to him, and would be far too disinterested to wish to keep any of the booty for himself. A similar self-denial was, of course, expected of James, the two great kings satisfying themselves with the proud consciousness of having saved society, rescued the world from the sceptre of an Austrian universal monarchy, and regenerated European civilization for all future time.

The monarch listened with ravished ears, interposed here and there a question or a doubt, but devoured every detail of the scheme, as the ambassador slowly placed it before him.

De Rosny showed that the Spanish faction was not in reality so powerful as the league which would be constructed for its overthrow. It was not so much a religious as a political frontier which separated the nations. He undertook to prove this, but, after all, was obliged to demonstrate that the defection of Henry from the Protestant cause had deprived him of his natural allies, and given him no true friends in exchange for the old ones.

Page 2313

Essentially the Catholics were ranged upon one side, and the Protestants on the other, but both religions were necessary to Henry the Huguenot: The bold free-thinker adroitly balanced himself upon each creed. In making use of a stern and conscientious Calvinist, like Maximilian de Bethune, in his first assault upon the theological professor who now stood in Elizabeth's place, he showed the exquisite tact which never failed him. Toleration for the two religions which had political power, perfect intolerance for all others; despotic forms of polity, except for two little republics which were to be smothered with protection and never left out of leading strings, a thorough recasting of governments and races, a palingenesis of Europe, a nominal partition of its hegemony between France and England, which was to be in reality absorbed by France, and the annihilation of Austrian power east and west, these were the vast ideas with which that teeming Bourbon brain was filled. It is the instinct both of poetic and of servile minds to associate a sentiment of grandeur with such fantastic dreams, but usually on condition that the dreamer wears a crown. When the regenerator of society appears with a wisp of straw upon his head, unappreciative society is apt to send him back to his cell. There, at least, his capacity for mischief is limited.

If to do be as grand as to imagine what it were good to do, then the Dutchmen in Hell's Mouth and the Porcupine fighting Universal Monarchy inch by inch and pike to pike, or trying conclusions with the ice-bears of Nova Zembla, or capturing whole Portuguese fleets in the Moluccas, were effecting as great changes in the world, and doing perhaps as much for the advancement of civilization, as James of the two Britains and Henry of France and Navarre in those his less heroic days, were likely to accomplish. History has long known the results.

The ambassador did his work admirably. The king embraced him in a transport of enthusiasm, vowed by all that was most sacred to accept the project in all its details, and exacted from the ambassador in his turn an oath on the Eucharist never to reveal, except to his master, the mighty secrets of their conference.

The interview had lasted four hours. When it was concluded, James summoned Cecil, and in presence of the ambassador and of some of the counsellors, lectured him soundly on his presumption in disobeying the royal commands in his recent negotiations with De Rosny. He then announced his decision to ally himself strictly with France against Spain in consequence of the revelations just made to him, and of course to espouse the cause of the United Provinces. Telling the crest-fallen Secretary of State to make the proper official communications on the subject to the ambassadors of my lords the States-General,—thus giving the envoys from the republic for the first time that pompous designation, the king turned once more to the marquis with the exclamation, "Well, Mr. Ambassador, this time I hope that you are satisfied with me?"

Page 2314

In the few days following De Rosny busied himself in drawing up a plan of a treaty embodying all that had been agreed upon between Henry and himself, and which he had just so faithfully rehearsed to James. He felt now some inconvenience from his own artfulness, and was in a measure caught in his own trap. Had he brought over a treaty in his pocket, James would have signed it on the spot, so eager was he for the regeneration of Europe. It was necessary, however, to continue the comedy a little longer, and the ambassador, having thought it necessary to express many doubts whether his master could be induced to join in the plot, and to approve what was really his own most cherished plan, could now do no more than promise to use all his powers of persuasion unto that end.

The project of a convention, which James swore most solemnly to sign, whether it were sent to him in six weeks or six months, was accordingly rapidly reduced to writing and approved. It embodied, of course, most of the provisions discussed in the last secret interview at Greenwich. The most practical portion of it undoubtedly related to the United Provinces, and to the nature of assistance to be at once afforded to that commonwealth, the only ally of the two kingdoms expressly mentioned in the treaty. England was to furnish troops, the number of which was not specified, and France was to pay for them, partly out of her own funds, partly out of the amount due by her to England. It was, however, understood, that this secret assistance should not be considered to infringe the treaty of peace which already existed between Henry and the Catholic king. Due and detailed arrangements were made as to the manner in which the allies were to assist each other, in case Spain, not relishing this kind of neutrality, should think proper openly to attack either great Britain or France, or both.

Unquestionably the Dutch republic was the only portion of Europe likely to be substantially affected by these secret arrangements; for, after all, it had not been found very easy to embody the splendid visions of Henry, which had so dazzled the imagination of James in the dry clauses of a protocol.

It was also characteristic enough of the crowned conspirators, that the clause relating to the United Provinces provided that the allies would either assist them in the attainment of their independence, or—if it should be considered expedient to restore them to the domination of Spain or the empire—would take such precautions and lay down such conditions as would procure perfect tranquillity for them, and remove from the two allied kings the fear of a too absolute government by the house of Austria in those provinces.

It would be difficult to imagine a more impotent conclusion. Those Dutch rebels had not been fighting for tranquillity. The tranquillity of the rock amid raging waves—according to the device of the father of the republic—they had indeed maintained; but to exchange their turbulent and tragic existence, ever illumined by the great hope of freedom, for repose under one despot guaranteed to them by two others, was certainly not their aim. They lacked the breadth of vision enjoyed by the regenerators who sat upon mountain-tops.

Page 2315

They were fain to toil on in their own way. Perhaps, however, the future might show as large results from their work as from the schemes of those who were to begin the humiliation of the Austrian house by converting its ancient rebels into tranquil subjects.

The Marquis of Rosny, having distributed 60,000 crowns among the leading politicians and distinguished personages at the English court, with ample promises of future largess if they remained true to his master, took an affectionate farewell of King James, and returned with his noble two hundred to recount his triumphs to the impatient Henry. The treaty was soon afterwards duly signed and ratified by the high contracting parties. It was, however, for future history to register its results on the fate of pope, emperor, kings, potentates, and commonwealths, and to show the changes it would work in the geography, religion, and polity of the world.

The deputies from the States-General, satisfied with the practical assistance promised them, soon afterwards took their departure with comparative cheerfulness, having previously obtained the royal consent to raise recruits in Scotland. Meantime the great Constable of Castile, ambassador from his Catholic Majesty, had arrived in London, and was wroth at all that he saw and all that he suspected. He, too, began to scatter golden arguments with a lavish hand among the great lords and statesmen of Britain, but found that the financier of France had, on the whole; got before him in the business, and was skilfully maintaining his precedence from the other side of the channel.

But the end of these great diplomatic manoeuvres had not yet come.

CHAPTER XLII.

Siege of Ostend—The Marquis Spinola made commander-in-chief of the besieging army—Discontent of the troops—General aspect of the operations—Gradual encroachment of the enemy.

The scene again shifts to Ostend. The Spanish cabinet, wearied of the slow progress of the siege, and not entirely satisfied with the generals, now concluded almost without consent of the archdukes, one of the most extraordinary jobs ever made, even in those jobbing days. The Marquis Spinola, elder brother of the ill-fated Frederic, and head of the illustrious Genoese family of that name, undertook to furnish a large sum of money which the wealth of his house and its connection with the great money-lenders of Genoa enabled him to raise, on condition that he should have supreme command of the operations against Ostend and of the foreign armies in the Netherlands. He was not a soldier, but he entered into a contract, by his own personal exertions both on the exchange and in the field, to reduce the city which had now resisted all the efforts of the archduke for more than two years. Certainly this was an experiment not often hazarded in warfare. The defence of Ostend was in the hands of the best and moat seasoned

Page 2316

fighting-men in Europe. The operations were under the constant supervision of the foremost captain of the age; for Maurice, in consultation with the States-General, received almost daily reports from the garrison, and regularly furnished advice and instructions as to their proceedings. He was moreover ever ready to take the field for a relieving campaign. Nothing was known of Spinola save that he was a high-born and very wealthy patrician who had reached his thirty-fourth year without achieving personal distinction of any kind, and who, during the previous summer, like so many other nobles from all parts of Europe, had thought it worth his while to drawl through a campaign or two in the Low Countries. It was the mode to do this, and it was rather a stigma upon any young man of family not to have been an occasional looker on at that perpetual military game. His brother Frederic, as already narrated; had tried his chance for fame and fortune in the naval service, and had lost his life in the adventure without achieving the one or the other. This was not a happy augury for the head of the family. Frederic had made an indifferent speculation. What could the brother hope by taking the field against Maurice of Nassau and Lewis William and the Baxes and Meetkerkes? Nevertheless the archduke eagerly accepted his services, while the Infanta, fully confident of his success before he had ordered a gun to be fired, protested that if Spinola did not take Ostend nobody would ever take it. There was also, strangely enough, a general feeling through the republican ranks that the long-expected man had come.

Thus a raw volunteer, a man who had never drilled a hundred men, who had never held an officer’s commission in any army in the world, became, as by the waving of a wand, a field-marshal and commander-in-chief at a most critical moment in history, in the most conspicuous position in Christendom, and in a great war, now narrowed down to a single spot of earth, on which the eyes of the world were fixed, and the daily accounts from which were longed for with palpitating anxiety. What but failure and disaster could be expected from such astounding policy? Every soldier in the Catholic forces—from grizzled veterans of half a century who had commanded armies and achieved victories when this dainty young Italian was in his cradle, down to the simple musketeer or rider who had been campaigning for his daily bread ever since he could carry a piece or mount a horse was furious with discontent or outraged pride.

Very naturally too, it was said that the position of the archdukes had become preposterous. It was obvious, notwithstanding the pilgrimages of the Infanta to our Lady of Hall, to implore not only the fall of Ostend, but the birth of a successor to their sovereignty, that her marriage would for ever remain barren. Spain was already acting upon this theory, it was said, for the contract with Spinola was made, not at Brussels, but at Madrid, and a foreign army of Spaniards and Italians, under the supreme command of a Genoese adventurer, was now to occupy indefinitely that Flanders which had been proclaimed an independent nation, and duly bequeathed by its deceased proprietor to his daughter.

Page 2317

Ambrose Spinola, son of Philip, Marquis of Venafri, and his wife, Polyxena Grimaldi, was not appalled by the murmurs of hardly suppressed anger or public criticism. A handsome, aristocratic personage, with an intellectual, sad, but sympathetic face, fair hair and beard, and imposing but attractive presence—the young volunteer, at the beginning of October, made his first visit of inspection in the lines before Ostend. After studying the situation of affairs very thoroughly, he decided that the operations on the Gullet or eastern side, including Bucquoy's dike, with Pompey Targone's perambulatory castles and floating batteries, were of secondary importance. He doubted the probability of closing up a harbour, now open to the whole world and protected by the fleets of the first naval power of Europe, with wickerwork, sausages, and bridges upon barrels. His attention was at once concentrated on the western side, and he was satisfied that only by hard fighting and steady delving could he hope to master the place. To gain Ostend he would be obliged to devour it piecemeal as he went on.

Whatever else might be said of the new commander-in-chief, it was soon apparent that, although a volunteer and a patrician, he was no milksop. If he had been accustomed all his life to beds of down, he was as ready now to lie in the trenches, with a cannon for his pillow, as the most ironclad veteran in the ranks. He seemed to require neither sleep nor food, and his reckless habit of exposing himself to unnecessary danger was the subject of frequent animadversion on the part both of the archdukes and of the Spanish Government.

It was however in his case a wise temerity. The veterans whom he commanded needed no encouragement to daring deeds, but they required conviction as to the valour and zeal of their new commander, and this was afforded them in overflowing measure.

It is difficult to decide, after such a lapse of years, as to how much of the long series of daily details out of which this famous siege was compounded deserves to be recorded. It is not probable that for military history many of the incidents have retained vital importance. The world rang, at the beginning of the operations, with the skill and inventive talent of Targone, Giustiniani, and other Italian engineers, artificers, and pyrotechnists, and there were great expectations conceived of the effects to be produced by their audacious and original devices. But time wore on. Pompey's famous floating battery would not float, his moving monster battery would not move. With the one; the subtle Italian had intended to close up the Gullet to the States' fleets. It was to rest on the bottom at low water at the harbour's mouth, to rise majestically with the flood, and to be ever ready with a formidable broadside of fifty pounders against all comers. But the wild waves and tempests of the North Sea soon swept the ponderous toy into space, before it had fired a gun. The gigantic

Page 2318

chariot, on which a moveable fort was constructed, was still more portentous upon paper than the battery. It was directed against that republican work, defending the Gullet, which was called in derision the Spanish Half-moon. It was to be drawn by forty horses, and armed with no man knew how many great guns, with a mast a hundred and fifty feet high in the centre of the fort, up and down which played pulleys raising and lowering a drawbridge long enough to span the Gullet.

It was further provided with anchors, which were to be tossed over the parapet of the doomed redoubt, while the assailants, thus grappled to the enemy's work, were to dash over the bridge after having silenced the opposing fire by means of their own peripatetic battery.

Unfortunately for the fame of Pompey, one of his many wheels was crushed on the first attempt to drag the chariot to the scene of anticipated triumph, the whole structure remained embedded in the sand, very much askew; nor did all the mules and horses that could be harnessed to it ever succeed in removing it an inch out of a position, which was anything but triumphant.

It seemed probable enough therefore that, so far as depended on the operations from the eastern side, the siege of Ostend, which had now lasted two years and three months, might be protracted for two years and three months longer. Indeed, Spinola at once perceived that if the archduke was ever to be put in possession of the place for which he had professed himself ready to wait eighteen years, it would be well to leave Bucquoy and Targone to build dykes and chariots and bury them on the east at their leisure, while more energy was brought to bear upon the line of fortifications of the west than had hitherto been employed. There had been shooting enough, bloodshed enough, suffering enough, but it was amazing to see the slight progress made. The occupation of what were called the external Squares has been described. This constituted the whole result of the twenty-seven months' work.

The town itself—the small and very insignificant kernel which lay enclosed in such a complicated series of wrappings and layers of defences—seemed as far off as if it were suspended in the sky. The old haven or canal, no longer navigable for ships, still served as an admirable moat which the assailants had not yet succeeded in laying entirely dry. It protected the counterscarp, and was itself protected by an exterior aeries of works, while behind the counterscarp was still another ditch, not so broad nor deep as the canal, but a formidable obstacle even after the counterscarp should be gained. There were nearly fifty forts and redoubts in these lines, of sufficient importance to have names which in those days became household words, not only in the Netherlands, but in Europe; the siege of Ostend being the one military event of Christendom, so long as it lasted. These names are of course as much forgotten now as those

Page 2319

of the bastions before Nineveh. A very few of them will suffice to indicate the general aspect of the operations. On the extreme southwest of Ostend had been in peaceful times a polder—the general term to designate a pasture out of which the sea-water had been pumped—and the forts in that quarter were accordingly called by that name, as Polder Half-moon, Polder Ravelin, or great and little Polder Bulwark, as the case might be. Farther on towards the west, the north-west, and the north, and therefore towards the beach, were the West Ravelin, West Bulwark, Moses's Table, the Porcupine, the Hell's Mouth, the old church, and last and most important of all, the Sand Hill. The last-named work was protected by the Porcupine and Hell's Mouth, was the key to the whole series of fortifications, and was connected by a curtain with the old church, which was in the heart of the old town.

Spinola had assumed command in October, but the winter was already closing in with its usual tempests and floods before there had been time for him to produce much effect. It seemed plain enough to the besieged that the object of the enemy would be to work his way through the Polder, and so gradually round to the Porcupine and the Sand Hill. Precisely in what directions his subterraneous passages might be tending, in what particular spot of the thin crust upon which they all stood an explosion might at any moment be expected, it was of course impossible to know. They were sure that the process of mining was steadily progressing, and Maurice sent orders to countermine under every bulwark, and to secretly isolate every bastion, so that it would be necessary for Spinola to make his way, fort by fort, and inch by inch.

Thus they struggled drearily about under ground, friend and foe, often as much bewildered as wanderers in the catacombs. To a dismal winter succeeded a ferocious spring. Both in February and March were westerly storms, such as had not been recorded even on that tempest-swept coast for twenty years, and so much damage was inflicted on the precious Sand Hill and its curtain, that, had the enemy been aware of its plight, it is probable that one determined assault might have put him in possession of the place. But Ostend was in charge of a most watchful governor, Peter van Gieselles, who had succeeded Charles van der Noot at the close of the year 1603. A plain, lantern jawed, Dutch colonel; with close-cropped hair, a long peaked beard, and an eye that looked as if it had never been shut; always dressed in a shabby old jerkin with tarnished flowers upon it, he took command with a stout but heavy heart, saying that the place should never be surrendered by him, but that he should never live to see the close of the siege. He lost no time in repairing the damages of the tempest, being ready to fight the west wind, the North Sea, and Spinola at any moment, singly or conjoined. He rebuilt the curtain of the Sand Hill, added fresh batteries to the Porcupine and Hell's Mouth, and amused and distracted the enemy with almost daily sorties and feints. His soldiers passed their days and nights up to the knees in mud and sludge and sea-water, but they saw that their commander never spared himself, and having a superfluity of food and drink, owing to the watchful care of the States-General, who sent in fleets

laden with provisions faster than they could be consumed, they were cheerful and content.

Page 2320

On the 12th March there was a determined effort to carry the lesser Polder Bulwark. After a fierce and bloody action, the place was taken by storm, and the first success in the game was registered for Spinola. The little fort was crammed full of dead, but such of the defenders as survived were at last driven out of it, and forced to take refuge in the next work. Day after day the same bloody business was renewed, a mere monotony of assaults, repulses, sallies, in which hardly an inch of ground was gained on either side, except at the cost of a great pile of corpses. “Men will never know, nor can mortal pen ever describe,” said one who saw it all, “the ferocity and the pertinacity of both besiegers and besieged.” On the 15th of March, Colonel Catrice, an accomplished Walloon officer of engineers, commanding the approaches against the Polder, was killed. On the 21st March, as Peter Orieselles was taking his scrambling dinner in company with Philip Fleming, there was a report that the enemy was out again in force. A good deal of progress had been made during the previous weeks on the south-west and west, and more was suspected than was actually known. It was felt that the foe was steadily nibbling his way up to the counterscarp. Moreover, such was the emulation among the Germans, Walloons, Italians, and Spaniards for precedence in working across the canal, that a general assault and universal explosion were considered at any instant possible. The governor sent Fleming to see if all was right in the Porcupine, while he himself went to see if a new battery, which he had just established to check the approaches of the enemy towards the Polder Half-moon and Ravelin in a point very near the counterscarp, was doing its duty. Being, as usual, anxious to reconnoitre with his own eyes, he jumped upon the rampart. But there were sharp-shooters in the enemy’s trenches, and they were familiar with the governor’s rusty old doublet and haggard old face. Hardly had he climbed upon the breastwork when a ball pierced his heart, and he fell dead without a groan. There was a shout of triumph from the outside, while the tidings soon spread sadness through the garrison, for all loved and venerated the man. Philip Fleming, so soon as he learned the heavy news, lost no time in unavailing regrets, but instantly sent a courier to Prince Maurice; meantime summoning a council of superior officers, by whom Colonel John van Loon was provisionally appointed commandant.

A stately, handsome man, a good officer, but without extensive experience, he felt himself hardly equal to the immense responsibility of the post, but yielding to the persuasions of his comrades, proceeded to do his best. His first care was to secure the all-important Porcupine, towards which the enemy had been slowly crawling with his galleries and trenches. Four days after he had accepted the command he was anxiously surveying that fortification, and endeavouring to obtain a view of the enemy’s works, when a cannon-ball

Page 2321

struck him on the right leg, so that he died the next day. Plainly the post of commandant of Ostend was no sinecure. He was temporarily succeeded by Sergeant-Major Jacques de Bievry, but the tumults and confusion incident upon this perpetual change of head were becoming alarming. The enemy gave the garrison no rest night nor day, and it had long become evident that the young volunteer, whose name was so potent on the Genoa Exchange, was not a man of straw nor a dawdler, however the superseded veterans might grumble. At any rate the troops on either side were like to have their fill of work.

On the 2nd April the Polder Ravelin was carried by storm. It was a most bloody action. Never were a few square feet of earth more recklessly assailed, more resolutely maintained. The garrison did not surrender the place, but they all laid down their lives in its defence. Scarcely an individual of them all escaped, and the foe, who paid dearly with heaps of dead and wounded for his prize, confessed that such serious work as this had scarce been known before in any part of that great slaughter-house, Flanders.

A few days later, Colonel Bievry, provisional commandant, was desperately wounded in a sortie, and was carried off to Zeeland. The States-General now appointed Jacques van der Meer, Baron of Berendrecht, to the post of honour and of danger. A noble of Flanders, always devoted to the republican cause; an experienced middle-aged officer, vigilant, energetic, nervous; a slight wiry man, with a wizened little face, large bright eyes, a meagre yellow beard, and thin sandy hair flowing down upon his well-starched ruff, the new governor soon showed himself inferior to none of his predecessors in audacity and alertness. It is difficult to imagine a more irritating position in many respects than that of commander in such an extraordinary leaguer. It was not a formal siege. Famine, which ever impends over an invested place, and sickens the soul with its nameless horrors, was not the great enemy to contend against here. Nor was there the hideous alternative between starving through obstinate resistance or massacre on submission, which had been the lot of so many Dutch garrisons in the earlier stages of the war. Retreat by sea was ever open to the Ostend garrison, and there was always an ample supply of the best provisions and of all munitions of war. But they had been unceasingly exposed to two tremendous enemies. During each winter and spring the ocean often smote their bastions and bulwarks in an hour of wrath till they fell together like children’s toys, and it was always at work, night and day, steadily lapping at the fragile foundations on which all their structures stood. Nor was it easy to give the requisite attention to the devouring sea, because all the materials that could be accumulated seemed necessary to repair the hourly damages inflicted by their other restless foe.

Thus the day seemed to draw gradually but inexorably nearer when the place would be, not captured, but consumed. There was nothing for it, so long as the States were determined to hold the spot, but to meet the besieger at every point, above or below the

earth, and sell every inch of that little morsel of space at the highest price that brave men could impose.

Page 2322

So Berendrecht, as vigilant and devoted as even Peter Gieselles had ever been, now succeeded to the care of the Polders and the Porcupines, and the Hell's Mouths; and all the other forts, whose quaint designations had served, as usually is the case among soldiers, to amuse the honest patriots in the midst of their toils and danger. On the 18th April, the enemy assailed the great western Ravelin, and after a sanguinary hand-to-hand action, in which great numbers of officers and soldiers were lost on both sides, he carried the fort; the Spaniards, Italians, Germans, and Walloons vieing with each other in deeds of extraordinary daring, and overcoming at last the resistance of the garrison.

This was an important success. The foe had now worked his way with galleries and ditches along the whole length of the counterscarp till he was nearly up with the Porcupine, and it was obvious that in a few days he would be master of the counterscarp itself.

A less resolute commander, at the head of less devoted troops, might have felt that when that inevitable event should arrive all that honour demanded would have been done, and that Spinola was entitled to his city. Berendrecht simply decided that if the old counterscarp could no longer be held it was time to build a new counterscarp. This, too, had been for some time the intention of Prince Maurice. A plan for this work had already been sent into the place, and a distinguished English engineer, Ralph Dexter by name, arrived with some able assistants to carry it into execution. It having been estimated that the labour would take three weeks of time, without more ado the inner line was carefully drawn, cutting off with great nicety and precision about one half the whole place. Within this narrowed circle the same obstinate resistance was to be offered as before, and the bastions and redoubts of the new entrenchment were to be baptized with the same uncouth names which two long years of terrible struggle had made so precious. The work was very laborious; for the line was drawn straight through the town, and whole streets had to be demolished and the houses to their very foundations shovelled away. Moreover the men were forced to toil with spade in one hand and matchlock in the other, ever ready to ascend from the ancient dilapidated cellars in order to mount the deadly breach at any point in the whole circumference of the place.

It became absolutely necessary therefore to send a sufficient force of common workmen into the town to lighten the labours of the soldiers. Moreover the thought, although whistled to the wind, would repeatedly recur, that, after all, there must be a limit to these operations, and that at last there would remain no longer any earth in which to find a refuge.

The work of the new entrenchment went slowly on, but it was steadily done. Meantime they were comforted by hearing that the stadholder had taken the field in Flanders, at the head of a considerable force, and they lived in daily expectation of relief. It will be necessary, at the proper moment, to indicate the nature of Prince Maurice's operations.

For the present, it is better that the reader should confine his attention within the walls of Ostend.

Page 2323

By the 11th May, the enemy had effected a lodgment in a corner of the Porcupine, and already from that point might threaten the new counterscarp before it should be completed. At the same time he had gnawed through to the West Bulwark, and was busily mining under the Porcupine itself. In this fort friend and foe now lay together, packed like herrings, and profited by their proximity to each other to vary the monotony of pike and anaphance with an occasional encounter of epistolary wit.

Thus Spanish letters, tied to sticks, and tossed over into the next entrenchment, were replied to by others, composed in four languages by the literary man of Ostend, Auditor Fleming, and shot into the enemy's trenches on cross-bow bolts.

On the 29th May, a long prepared mine was sprung beneath the Porcupine. It did its work effectively, and the 29 May assailants did theirs no less admirably, crowding into the breach with headlong ferocity, and after a long and sanguinary struggle with immense lose on both sides, carrying the precious and long-coveted work by storm. Inch by inch the defenders were thus slowly forced back toward their new entrenchment. On the same day, however, they inflicted a most bloody defeat upon the enemy in an attempt to carry the great Polder. He withdrew, leaving heaps of slain, so that the account current for the day would have balanced itself, but that the Porcupine, having changed hands, now bristled most formidably against its ancient masters. The daily 'slaughter had become sickening to behold. There were three thousand effective men in the garrison. More could have been sent in to supply the steady depletion in the ranks, but there was no room for more. There was scarce space enough for the living to stand to their work, or for the dead to lie in their graves. And this was an advantage which could not fail to tell. Of necessity the besiegers would always very far outnumber the garrison, so that the final success of their repeated assaults became daily more and more possible.

Yet on the 2nd June the enemy met not only with another signal defeat, but also with a most bitter surprise. On that day the mine which he had been so long and so laboriously constructing beneath the great Polder Bulwark was sprung with magnificent effect. A breach, forty feet wide, was made in this last stronghold of the old defences, and the soldiers leaped into the crater almost before it had ceased to blaze, expecting by one decisive storm to make themselves masters at last of all the fortifications, and therefore of the town itself. But as emerging from the mine, they sprang exulting upon the shattered bulwark, a transformation more like a sudden change in some holiday pantomime than a new fact in this three years' most tragic siege presented itself to their astonished eyes. They had carried the last defence of the old counterscarp, and behold —a new one, which they had never dreamed of, bristling before their eyes, with a flanking battery turned directly upon them. The musketeers and pikemen, protected by their new works, now thronged towards the assailants; giving them so hearty a welcome that they reeled back, discomfited, after a brief but severe struggle, from the spot of their anticipated triumph, leaving their dead and dying in the breach.

Page 2324

Four days later, Berendrecht, with a picked party of English troops, stole out for a reconnaissance, not wishing to trust other eyes than his own in the imminent peril of the place.

The expedition was successful. A few prisoners were taken, and valuable information was obtained, but these advantages were counterbalanced by a severe disaster. The vigilant and devoted little governor, before effecting his entrance into the sally port, was picked off by a sharpshooter, and died the next day. This seemed the necessary fate of the commandants of Ostend, where the operations seemed more like a pitched battle lasting three years than an ordinary siege. Gieselles, Van Loon, Bievry, and now Berendrecht, had successively fallen at the post of duty since the beginning of the year. Not one of them was more sincerely deplored than Berendrecht. His place was supplied by Colonel Uytenhoove, a stalwart, hirsute, hard-fighting Dutchman, the descendant of an ancient race, and seasoned in many a hard campaign.

The enemy now being occupied in escarping and furnishing with batteries the positions he had gained, with the obvious intention of attacking the new counterscarp, it was resolved to prepare for the possible loss of this line of fortifications by establishing another and still narrower one within it.

Half the little place had been shorn away by the first change. Of the half which was still in possession of the besieged about one-third was now set off, and in this little corner of earth, close against the new harbour, was set up their last refuge. They called the new citadel Little Troy, and announced, with pardonable bombast, that they would hold out there as long as the ancient Trojans had defended Ilium. With perfect serenity the engineers set about their task with line, rule, and level, measuring out the bulwarks and bastions, the miniature salients, half-moons, and ditches, as neatly and methodically as if there were no ceaseless cannonade in their ears, and as if the workmen were not at every moment summoned to repel assaults upon the outward wall. They. sent careful drawings of Little Troy to Maurice and the States, and received every encouragement to persevere, together with promises of ultimate relief.

But there was one serious impediment to the contemplated construction of the new earth-works. They had no earth. Nearly everything solid had been already scooped away in the perpetual delving. The sea-dykes had been robbed of their material, so that the coming winter might find besiegers and besieged all washed together into the German Ocean, and it was hard digging and grubbing among the scanty cellarages of the dilapidated houses. But there were plenty of graves, filled with the results of three years' hard fighting. And now, not only were all the cemeteries within the precincts shovelled and carted in mass to the inner fortifications, but rewards being offered of ten stivers for each dead body, great heaps of disinterred soldiers were piled into the new ramparts. Thus these warriors, after laying down their lives for the cause of freedom, were made to do duty after death. Whether it were just or no thus to disturb the repose —if repose it could be called—of the dead that they might once more protect the living,

it can scarcely be doubted that they took ample revenge on the already sufficiently polluted atmosphere.

Page 2325

On the 17th June the foe sprang a mine under the western bulwark; close to a countermine exploded by the garrison the day before. The assailants thronged as merrily as usual to the breach, and were met with customary resolution by the besieged; Governor Uytenhoove, clad in complete armour, leading his troops. The enemy, after an hour's combat, was repulsed with heavy loss, but the governor fell in the midst of the fight. Instantly he was seized by the legs by a party of his own men, some English desperadoes among the number, who, shouting that the colonel was dead, were about to render him the last offices by plundering his body. The ubiquitous Fleming, observing the scene, flew to the rescue and, with the assistance of a few officers, drove off these energetic friends, and taking off the governor's casque, discovered that he still breathed. That he would soon have ceased to do so, had he been dragged much farther in his harness over that jagged and precipitous pile of rubbish, was certain. He was desperately wounded, and of course incapacitated for his post. Thus, in that year, before the summer solstice, a fifth commandant had fallen.

On the same day, simultaneously with this repulse in the West Bulwark, the enemy made himself at last completely master of the Polder. Here, too, was a savage hand-to-hand combat with broadswords and pikes, and when the pikes were broken, with great clubs and stakes pulled from the fascines; but the besiegers were victorious, and the defenders sullenly withdrew with their wounded to the inner entrenchments.

On the 27th June, Daniel de Hartaing, Lord of Marquette, was sent by the States-General to take command in Ostend. The colonel of the Walloon regiment which had rendered such good service on the famous field of Nieuport, the new governor, with his broad, brown, cheerful face, and his Milan armour, was a familiar figure enough to the campaigners on both sides in Flanders or Germany.

The stoutest heart might have sunk at the spectacle which the condition of the town presented at his first inspection. The States-General were resolved to hold the place, at all hazards, and Marquette had come to do their bidding, but it was difficult to find anything that could be called a town. The great heaps of rubbish, which had once been the outer walls, were almost entirely in the possession of the foe, who had lodged himself in all that remained of the defiant Porcupine, the Hell's Mouth, and other redoubts, and now pointed from them at least fifty great guns against their inner walls. The old town, with its fortifications, was completely honeycombed, riddled, knocked to pieces, and, although the Sand Hill still held out, it was plain enough that its days were numbered unless help should soon arrive. In truth, it required a clear head and a practised eye to discover among those confused masses of prostrate masonry, piles of brick, upturned graves, and mounds of sand and rubbish, anything like order

Page 2326

and regularity. Yet amid the chaos there was really form and meaning to those who could read aright, and Marquette saw, as well in the engineers' lines as in the indomitable spirit that looked out of the grim faces of the garrison, that Ostend, so long as anything of it existed in nature, could be held for the republic. Their brethren had not been firmer, when keeping their merry Christmas, seven years before, under the North Pole, upon a pudding made of the gunner's cartridge paste, or the Knights of the Invincible Lion in the horrid solitudes of Tierra del Fuego, than were the defenders of this sandbank.

Whether the place were worth the cost or not, it was for my lords the States-General to decide, not for Governor Marquette. And the decision of those "high and mighty" magistrates, to whom even Maurice of Nassau bowed without a murmur, although often against his judgment, had been plainly enough announced.

And so shiploads of deals and joists, bricks, nails, and fascines, with requisite building materials, were sent daily in from Zeeland, in order that Little Troy might be completed; and, with God's help, said the garrison, the republic shall hold its own.

And now there were two months more of mining and countermining, of assaults and repulses, of cannonading and hand-to-hand fights with pikes and clubs. Nearer and nearer, day by day, and inch by inch, the foe had crawled up to the verge of their last refuge, and the walls of Little Troy, founded upon fresh earth and dead men's bones, and shifting sands, were beginning to quake under the guns of the inexorable volunteer from Genoa. Yet on the 27th August there was great rejoicing in the beleaguered town. Cannon thundered salutes, bonfires blazed, trumpets rang jubilant blasts, and, if the church-bells sounded no merry peals, it was because the only church in the place had been cut off in the last slicing away by the engineers. Hymns of thanksgiving ascended to heaven, and the whole garrison fell on their knees, praying fervently to Almighty God, with devout and grateful hearts. It was not an ignoble spectacle to see those veterans kneeling where there was scarce room to kneel, amid ruin and desolation, to praise the Lord for his mercies. But to explain this general thanksgiving it is now necessary for a moment to go back.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Began to scatter golden arguments with a lavish hand
Certain number of powers, almost exactly equal to each other
Conceit, and procrastination which marked the royal character
Do you want peace or war? I am ready for either
Eloquence of the biggest guns
Even the virtues of James were his worst enemies
Gold was the only passkey to justice

If to do be as grand as to imagine what it were good to do
It is certain that the English hate us (Sully)
Logic of the largest battalions

Page 2327

Made peace—and had been at war ever since
Nations tied to the pinafores of children in the nursery
Natural tendency to suspicion of a timid man
Not safe for politicians to call each other hard names
One of the most contemptible and mischievous of kings (James I)
Peace founded on the only secure basis, equality of strength
Peace seemed only a process for arriving at war
Repose under one despot guaranteed to them by two others
Requires less mention than Philip *iii* himself
Rules adopted in regard to pretenders to crowns
Served at their banquets by hosts of lackeys on their knees
Take all their imaginations and extravagances for truths
The expenses of James's household
The pigmy, as the late queen had been fond of nicknaming him
To negotiate with Government in England was to bribe
Unproductive consumption being accounted most sagacious
War was the normal condition of Christians
We have been talking a little bit of truth to each other
What was to be done in this world and believed as to the next
You must show your teeth to the Spaniard

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 77, 1604-1605

CHAPTER XLIII.

Policy of the King of France—Operations of Prince Maurice—Plans for a Flemish Campaign—Passage into Flanders—Fort St. Catharine— Flight of its garrison, and occupation by Maurice—Surrender of Ysendyke and Aardenburg—Skirmish at Stamper's Hook—Siege of Sluys by Prince Maurice—Ineffectual attempt of Spinola to relieve the town—Its capitulation and restoration to the States—Death of Lewis Gunther of Nassau—Operations at Ostend—Surrender of the garrison— Desolation of the scene after its evacuation.

The States-General had begun to forget the severe lesson taught them in the Nieuport campaign. Being determined to hold Ostend, they became very impatient, in the early part of the present year, that Maurice should once more invade Flanders, at the head of a relieving army, and drive the archdukes from before the town.

They were much influenced in this policy by the persistent advice of the French king. To the importunities of their envoy at Paris, Henry had, during the past eighteen months, replied by urging the States to invade Flanders and seize its ports. When they had thus something to place as pledges in his hands, he might accede to their clamour and declare war against Spain. But he scarcely concealed his intention, in such case, to annex both the obedient and the United Netherlands to his own dominions. Meantime, before getting into the saddle, he chose to be guaranteed against

Page 2328

loss. “Assure my lords the States that I love them,” he said, “and shall always do my best for them.” His affection for the territory of my lords was even warmer than the sentiments he entertained for themselves. Moreover, he grudged the preliminary expenses which would be necessary even should he ultimately make himself sovereign of the whole country. Rosny assured the envoy that he was mistaken in expecting a declaration of war against Spain. “Not that he does not think it useful and necessary,” said the minister, “but he wishes to have war and peace both at once—peace because he wishes to make no retrenchments in his pleasures of women, dogs, and buildings, and so war would be very inopportune. In three months he would be obliged to turn tail for want of means (to use his own words), although I would furnish him funds enough, if he would make the use of them that he ought.”

The Queen of England, who, with all her parsimony and false pretences, never doubted in her heart that perpetual hostility to Spain was the chief bulwark of her throne, and that the republic was fighting her battles as well as its own, had been ready to make such a lively war in conjunction with France as would drive the Spaniard out of all the Netherlands. But Henry was not to be moved. “I know that if I should take her at her word,” said he, “she would at once begin to screw me for money. She has one object, I another.” Villeroy had said plainly to Aerssens, in regard to the prevalent system of Englishmen, Spaniards, and Frenchmen being at war with each other, while the Governments might be nominally at peace, “Let us take off our masks. If the Spaniard has designs against our State, has he not cause? He knows the aid we are giving you, and resents it. If we should abstain, he would leave us in peace. If the Queen of England expects to draw us into a league, she is mistaken. Look to yourselves and be on your guard. Richardot is intriguing with Cecil. You give the queen securities, fortresses, seats in your council. The king asks nothing but communication of your projects.”

In short, all the comfort that Aerssens had been able to derive from his experiences at the French court in the autumn of 1602, was that the republic could not be too suspicious both of England and France. Rosny especially he considered the most dangerous of all the politicians in France. His daughter was married to the Prince of Espinoy, whose 50,000 livres a year would be safer the more the archduke was strengthened. “But for this he would be stiffer,” said Aerssens. Nevertheless there were strong motives at work, pressing France towards the support of the States. There were strong political reasons, therefore, why they should carry the war into Flanders, in conformity with the wishes of the king.

Page 2329

The stadholder, after much argument, yielded as usual to the authority of the magistrates, without being convinced as to the sagacity of their plans. It was arranged that an army should make a descent upon the Flemish coast in the early spring, and make a demonstration upon Sluys. The effect of this movement, it was thought, would be to draw the enemy out of his entrenchments, in which case it would be in the power of Maurice to put an end at once to the siege. It is unquestionable that the better alternative, in the judgment of the prince, was to take possession; if possible, of Sluys itself. His preparations were, however, made with a view to either event, and by the middle of April he had collected at Willemstad a force of fifteen thousand foot and three thousand horse. As on the former memorable expedition, he now again insisted that a considerable deputation of the States and of the States' council should accompany the army. His brother Henry, and his cousins Lewis William, Lewis Gunther, and Ernest Casimir, were likewise with him, as well as the Prince of Anhalt and other distinguished personages.

On the 25th April the army, having crossed the mouth of the West Scheld, from Zeeland, in numberless vessels of all sizes and degrees, effected their debarkation on the island of Cadzand.

In the course of two days they had taken possession of the little town, and all the forts of that island, having made their entrance through what was called the Black Channel. Had they steered boldly through the Swint or Sluys channel at once, it is probable that they might have proceeded straight up to Sluy's, and taken the place by surprise. Maurice's habitual caution was, perhaps, on this occasion, a disadvantage to him, but he would have violated the rules of war, and what seemed the dictates of common sense, had he not secured a basis of operations, and a possibility of retreat, before plunging with his army into the heart of a hostile country. The republic still shuddered at the possible catastrophe of four years before, when circumstances had forced him to take the heroic but dangerous resolution of sending off his ships from Nieuport. Before he had completed his arrangements for supplies on the island of Cadzand, he learned from scouts and reconnoitring parties that Spinola had sent a thousand infantry, besides five hundred cavalry, under Trivulzio, to guard the passage across the Swint. Maurice was thus on the wrong side of the great channel by which Sluy's communicated with the sea?

The town of Sluy's and its situation have been described in a former chapter. As a port, it was in those days considered a commodious and important one, capable of holding five hundred ships. As a town, it was not so insignificant as geographical and historical changes have since made it, and was certainly far superior to Ostend, even if Ostend had not been almost battered out of existence. It had spacious streets and squares, and excellent fortifications

Page 2330

in perfectly good condition. It was situate in a watery labyrinth, many slender streams from the interior and several saltwater creeks being complicated around it, and then flowing leisurely, in one deep sluggish channel, to the sea. The wrath of Leicester, when all his efforts to relieve the place had been baffled by the superior skill of Alexander Farnese, has been depicted, and during the seventeen years which had elapsed since its capture, the republic had not ceased to deplore that disaster. Obviously if the present expedition could end in the restoration of Sluy's to its rightful owners, it would be a remarkable success, even if Ostend should fall. Sluy's and its adjacent domains formed a natural portion of the Zeeland archipelago, the geographical counterpart of Flushing. With both branches of the stately Scheld in its control, the republic would command the coast, and might even dispense with Ostend, which, in the judgment of Maurice, was an isolated and therefore not a desirable military possession. The States-General were of a different opinion. They much desired to obtain Sluy's, but they would not listen to the abandonment of Ostend. It was expected of the stadholder, therefore, that he should seize the one and protect the other. The task was a difficult one. A less mathematical brain than that of Maurice of Nassau would have reeled at the problem to be solved. To master such a plexus of canals, estuaries, and dykes, of passages through swamps, of fords at low water which were obliterated by flood-tide; to take possession of a series of redoubts built on the only firm points of land, with nothing but quaking morass over which to manoeuvre troops or plant batteries against them, would be a difficult study, even upon paper. To accomplish it in the presence of a vigilant and anxious foe seemed bewildering enough.

At first it was the intention of the stadholder, disappointed at learning the occupation of the Swint, to content himself with fortifying Cadzand, in view of future operations at some more favourable moment? So meagre a result would certainly not have given great satisfaction to the States, nor added much to the military reputation of Maurice. While he hesitated between plunging without a clue into the watery maze around him, and returning discomfited from the expedition on which such high hopes had been built, a Flemish boor presented himself. He offered to guide the army around the east and south of Sluy's, and to point out passages where it would be possible to cross the waters, which, through the care of Spinola, now seemed to forbid access to the place. Maurice lingered no longer. On the 28th April, led by the friendly boor, he advanced towards Oostburg. Next morning a small force of the enemy's infantry and cavalry was seen, showing that there must be foothold in that direction. He sent out a few companies to skirmish with those troops, who fled after a very brief action, and, in flying, showed their pursuers

Page 2331

the road. Maurice marched in force, straight through the waters, on the track of the retreating foe. They endeavoured to rally at the fort of Coxie, which stood upon and commanded a dyke, but the republicans were too quick for them, and “drove them out of the place.” The stadholder, thus obtaining an unexpected passage into Flanders, conceived strong hopes of success, despite the broken nature of the ground. Continuing to feel his way cautiously through the wilderness of quagmire, he soon came upon a very formidable obstacle. The well-built and well-equipped redoubt of St. Catharine rose frowning before him, overshadowing his path, and completely prohibiting all further progress. Plainly it would be necessary to reduce this work at once, unless he were willing to abandon his enterprise. He sent back to Cadzand for artillery, but it was flood-tide, the waters were out, and it was not till late in the afternoon that nine pieces arrived. The stadholder ordered a cannonade, less with the hope of producing an impression by such inadequate means on so strong a work, than with the intention of showing the enemy that he had brought field-guns with him, and was not merely on an accidental foray. At the same time, having learned that the garrison, which was commanded by Trivulzio, was composed of only a few regular troops, and a large force of guerillas, he gave notice that such combatants were not entitled to quarter, and that if captured they would be all put to the sword. The reply to this threat was not evacuation but defiance. Especially a volunteer ensign mounted upon a rampart, and danced about, waving his flag gaily in the face of the assailants. Maurice bitterly remarked to his staff that such a man alone was enough to hold the fort. As it was obvious that the place would require a siege in form, and that it would be almost impossible to establish batteries upon that quaking soil, where there was no dry land for cavalry or artillery to move, Maurice ordered the nine guns to be carried back to Cadzand that night, betaking himself, much disappointed, in the same direction. Yet it so happened that the cannoneers, floundering through the bogs, made such an outcry—especially when one of their guns became so bemired that it was difficult for them to escape the disgrace of losing it—that the garrison, hearing a great tumult, which they could not understand, fell into one of those panics to which raw and irregular troops are liable. Nothing would convince them that fresh artillery had not arrived, that the terrible stadholder with an immense force was not creating invincible batteries, and that they should be all butchered in cold blood, according to proclamation, before the dawn of day. They therefore evacuated the place under cover of the night, so that this absurd accident absolutely placed Maurice in possession of the very fort—without striking a blow—which he was about to abandon in despair, and which formed the first great obstacle to his advance.

Page 2332

Having occupied St. Catharine's, he moved forward to Ysendyke, a strongly fortified place three leagues to the eastward of Sluys and invested it in form. Meantime a great danger was impending over him. A force of well-disciplined troops, to the number of two thousand, dropped down in boats from Sluy's to Cadzand, for the purpose of surprising the force left to guard that important place.

The expedition was partially successful. Six hundred landed; beating down all opposition. But a few Scotch companies held firm, and by hard fighting were able at last to drive the invaders back to their sloops, many of which were sunk in the affray, with all on board. The rest ignominiously retreated. Had the enterprise been as well executed as it was safely planned, it would have gone hard with the stadholder and his army. It is difficult to see in what way he could have extricated himself from such a dilemma, being thus cut off from his supplies and his fleet, and therefore from all possibility of carrying out his design or effecting his escape to Zeeland. Certainly thus far, fortune had favoured his bold adventure.

He now sent his own trumpeter, Master Hans, to summon Ysendyke to a surrender. The answer was a bullet which went through the head of unfortunate Master Hans. Maurice, enraged at this barbarous violation of the laws of war, drew his lines closer. Next day the garrison, numbering six hundred, mostly Italians, capitulated, and gave up the musketeer who had murdered the trumpeter.

Two days later the army appeared before Aardenburg, a well-fortified town four miles south of Sluys. It surrendered disgracefully, without striking a blow. The place was a most important position for the investment of Sluys. Four or five miles further towards the west, two nearly parallel streams, both navigable, called the Sweet and the Salt, ran from Dam to Sluys. It was a necessary but most delicate operation, to tie up these two important arteries. An expedition despatched in this direction came upon Trivulzio with a strong force of cavalry, posted at a pass called Stamper's Hook, which controlled the first of these streams. The narrowness of the pathway gave the advantage to the Italian commander. A warm action took place, in which the republican cavalry were worsted, and Paul Bax severely wounded. Maurice coming up with the infantry at a moment when the prospect was very black, turned defeat into victory and completely routed the enemy, who fled from the precious position with a loss of five hundred killed and three hundred prisoners, eleven officers among them. The Sweet was now in the stadholder's possession.

Page 2333

Next day he marched against the Salt, at a pass where fourteen hundred Spaniards were stationed. Making very ostentatious preparations for an attack upon this position, he suddenly fell backwards down the stream to a point which he had discovered to be fordable at low water, and marched his whole army through the stream while the skirmishing was going on a few miles farther up. The Spaniards, discovering their error, and fearing to be cut off, scampered hastily away to Dam. Both streams were now in the control of the republican army, while the single fort of St. Joris was all that was now interposed between Maurice and the much-coveted Swint. This redoubt, armed with nine guns, and provided with a competent, garrison, was surrendered on the 23rd May.

The Swint, or great sea-channel of Sluys, being now completely in the possession of the stadholder, he deliberately proceeded to lay out his lines, to make his entrenched camp, and to invest his city with the beautiful neatness which ever characterized his sieges. A groan came from the learned Lipsius, as he looked from the orthodox shades of Louvain upon the progress of the heretic prince.

“Would that I were happier,” he cried, “but things are not going on in Flanders as I could wish. How easy it would have been to save Sluys, which we are now trying so hard to do, had we turned our attention thither in time! But now we have permitted the enemy to entrench and fortify himself, and we are the less excusable because we know to our cost how felicitously he fights with the spade, and that he builds works like an ancient Roman. . . . Should we lose Sluys, which God forbid, how much strength and encouragement will be acquired by the foe, and by all who secretly or openly favour him! Our neighbours are all straining their eyes, as from a watch-tower, eager to see the result of all these doings. But what if they too should begin to move? Where should we be? I pray God to have mercy on the Netherlanders, whom He has been so many years chastising with heavy whips.”

It was very true. The man with the spade had been allowed to work too long at his felicitous vocation. There had been a successful effort made to introduce reinforcements to the garrison. Troops, to the number of fifteen hundred, had been added to those already shut up there, but the attempts to send in supplies were not so fortunate. Maurice had completely invested the town before the end of May, having undisputed possession of the harbour and of all the neighbouring country. He was himself encamped on the west side of the Swint; Charles van der Noot lying on the south. The submerged meadows, stretching all around in the vicinity of the haven, he had planted thickly with gunboats. Scarcely a bird or a fish could go into or out of the place. Thus the stadholder exhibited to the Spaniards who, fifteen miles off towards the west, had been pounding and burrowing three years long before Ostend without success, what he understood by a siege.

Page 2334

On the 22nd of May a day of solemn prayer and fasting was, by command of Maurice, celebrated throughout the besieging camp. In order that the day should be strictly kept in penance, mortification, and thanksgiving, it was ordered, on severe penalties, that neither the commissaries nor sutlers should dispense any food whatever, throughout the twenty-four hours. Thus the commander-in-chief of the republic prepared his troops for the work before them.

In the very last days of May the experiment was once more vigorously tried to send in supplies. A thousand galley-slaves, the remnant of Frederic Spinola's unlucky naval forces, whose services were not likely very soon to be required at sea, were sent out into the drowned land, accompanied by five hundred infantry. Simultaneously Count Berlaymont, at the head of four thousand men, conveying a large supply of provisions and munitions, started from Dam. Maurice, apprised of the adventure, sallied forth with two thousand troops to meet them. Near Stamper's Hook he came upon a detachment of Berlaymont's force, routed them, and took a couple of hundred prisoners. Learning from them that Berlaymont himself, with the principal part of his force, had passed farther on, he started off in pursuit; but, unfortunately taking a different path through the watery wilderness from the one selected by the flying foe, he was not able to prevent his retreat by a circuitous route to Dam. From the prisoners, especially from the galley-slaves, who had no reason for disguising the condition of the place, he now learned that there were plenty of troops in Sluys, but that there was already a great lack of provisions. They had lost rather than gained by their success in introducing reinforcements without supplies. Upon this information Maurice now resolved to sit quietly down and starve out the garrison. If Spinola, in consequence, should raise the siege of Ostend, in order to relieve a better town, he was prepared to give him battle. If the marquis held fast to his special work, Sluys was sure to surrender. This being the position of affairs, the deputies of the States-General took their leave of the stadholder, and returned to the Hague.

Two months passed. It was midsummer, and the famine in the beleaguered town had become horrible. The same hideous spectacle was exhibited as on all occasions where thousands of human beings are penned together without food. They ate dogs, cats, and rats, the weeds from the churchyards, old saddles, and old shoes, and, when all was gone, they began to eat each other. The small children diminished rapidly in numbers, while beacons and signals of distress were fired day and night, that the obdurate Spinola, only a few miles off, might at last move to their relief.

Page 2335

The archdukes too were beginning to doubt whether the bargain were a good one. To give a strong, new, well-fortified city, with the best of harbours, in exchange for a heap of rubbish which had once been Ostend, seemed unthrifty enough. Moreover, they had not got Ostend, while sure to lose Sluys. At least the cardinal could no longer afford to dispense with the service of his beat corps of veterans who had demanded their wages so insolently, and who had laughed at his offer of excommunication by way of payment so heartily. Flinging away his pride, he accordingly made a treaty with the mutinous "squadron" at Grave, granting an entire pardon for all their offences, and promising full payment of their arrears. Until funds should be collected sufficient for this purpose, they were to receive twelve stivers a day each foot-soldier, and twenty-four stivers each cavalryman, and were to have the city of Roermond in pledge. The treaty was negotiated by Guerrera, commandant of Ghent citadel, and by the Archbishop of Roermond, while three distinguished hostages were placed in the keeping of the mutineers until the contract should be faithfully executed: Guerrera himself, Count Fontenoy, son of Marquis d'Havre, and Avalos, commander of a Spanish legion. Thus, after making a present of the services of these veterans for a twelvemonth to the stadholder, and after employing a very important portion of his remaining forces in a vain attempt to reduce their revolt, the archduke had now been fain to purchase their submission by conceding all their demands. It would have been better economy perhaps to come to this conclusion at an earlier day.

It would likewise have been more judicious, according to the lamentations of Justus Lipsius, had the necessity of saving Sluys been thought of in time. Now that it was thoroughly enclosed, so that a mouse could scarce creep through the lines, the archduke was feverish to send in a thousand wagon loads of provisions. Spinola, although in reality commander-in-chief of a Spanish army, and not strictly subject to the orders of the Flemish sovereigns, obeyed the appeal of the archduke, but he obeyed most reluctantly. Two-thirds of Ostend had been effaced, and it was hard to turn even for a moment from the spot until all should have been destroyed.

Leaving Rivas and Bucquoy to guard the entrenchments, and to keep steadily to the work, Spinola took the field with a large force of all arms, including the late mutineers and the troops of Count Trivulzio. On the 8th August he appeared in the neighbourhood of the Salt and Sweet streams, and exchanged a few cannon-shots with the republicans. Next day he made a desperate assault with three thousand men and some companies of cavalry, upon Lewis William's quarters, where he had reason to believe the lines were weakest. He received from that most vigilant commander a hearty welcome, however, and after a long skirmish was obliged to withdraw, carrying off his

Page 2336

dead and wounded, together with a few cart-horses which had been found grazing outside the trenches. Not satisfied with these trophies or such results, he remained several days inactive, and then suddenly whirled around Aardenburg with his whole army, directly southward of Sluys, seized the forts of St. Catharine and St. Philip, which had been left with very small garrisons, and then made a furious attempt to break the lines at Oostburg, hoping to cross the fords at that place, and thus push his way into the isle of Cadzand. The resistance to his progress was obstinate, the result for a time doubtful. After severe fighting however he crossed the waters of Oostburg in the face of the enemy. Maurice meantime had collected all his strength at the vital position of Cadzand, hoping to deal, or at least to parry, a mortal blow.

On the 17th, on Cadzand dyke, between two redoubts, Spinola again met Lewis William, who had been transferred to that important position. A severe struggle ensued. The Spaniards were in superior force, and Lewis William, commanding the advance only of the States troops, was hard pressed. Moving always in the thickest of the fight, he would probably have that day laid down his life, as so many of his race had done before in the cause of the republic, had not Colonel van Dorp come to his rescue, and so laid about him with a great broad sword, that the dyke was kept until Maurice arrived with Eytzinga's Frisian regiment and other reserves. Van Dorp then fell covered with wounds. Here was the decisive combat. The two commanders-in-chief met face to face for the first time, and could Spinola have gained the position of Cadzand the fate of Maurice must have been sealed. But all his efforts were vain. The stadholder, by coolness and promptness, saved the day, and inflicted a bloody repulse upon the Catholics. Spinola had displayed excellent generalship, but it is not surprising that the young volunteer should have failed upon his first great field day to defeat Maurice of Nassau and his cousin Lewis William. He withdrew discomfited at last, leaving several hundred dead upon the field, definitely renouncing all hope of relieving Sluys, and retiring by way of Dam to his camp before Ostend. Next day the town capitulated.

The garrison were allowed to depart with the honours of war, and the same terms were accorded to the inhabitants, both in secular and religious matters, as were usual when Maurice re-occupied any portion of the republic. Between three and four thousand creatures, looking rather like ghosts from the churchyards than living soldiers, marched out, with drums beating, colours displayed, matches lighted, and bullet in mouth. Sixty of them fell dead before the dismal procession had passed out of the gates. Besides these troops were nearly fifteen hundred galley-slaves, even more like shadows than the rest, as they had been regularly sent forth during the latter days of the siege to browse upon soutenelle in the submerged meadows, or to drown or starve if unable to find a sufficient supply of that weed. These unfortunate victims of Mahometan and Christian tyranny were nearly all Turks, and by the care of the Dutch Government were sent back by sea to their homes. A few of them entered the service of the States.

Page 2337

The evacuation of Sluys by Governor Serrano and his garrison was upon the 20th August. Next day the stadholder took possession, bestowing the nominal government of the place upon his brother Frederic Henry. The atmosphere, naturally enough, was pestiferous, and young Count Lewis Gunther of Nassau, who had so brilliantly led the cavalry on the famous day of Nieuport, died of fever soon after entering the town infinitely regretted by every one who wished well to the republic.

Thus an important portion of Zeeland was restored, to its natural owners. A seaport which in those days was an excellent one, and more than a compensation for the isolated fishing village already beleaguered for upwards of three years, had been captured in three months. The States-General congratulated their stadholder on such prompt and efficient work, while the garrison of Ostend, first learning the authentic news seven days afterwards, although at a distance of only fourteen miles, had cause to go upon their knees and sing praises to the Most High.

The question now arose as to the relief of Ostend. Maurice was decidedly opposed to any such scheme. He had got a better Ostend in Slays, and he saw no motive for spending money and blood in any further attempt to gain possession of a ruin, which, even if conquered, could only with extreme difficulty be held. The States were of a diametrically opposite opinion. They insisted that the stadholder, so soon he could complete his preparations, should march straight upon Spinola's works and break up the siege, even at the risk of a general action. They were willing once more to take the terrible chance of a defeat in Flanders. Maurice, with a heavy heart, bowed to their decision, showing by his conduct the very spirit of a republican soldier, obeying the civil magistrate, even when that obedience was like to bring disaster upon the commonwealth. But much was to be done before he could undertake this new adventure.

Meantime the garrison in Ostend were at their last gasp. On being asked by the States-General whether it was possible to hold out for twenty days longer, Marquette called a council of officers, who decided that they would do their best, but that it was impossible to fix a day or hour when resistance must cease. Obviously, however, the siege was in its extreme old age. The inevitable end was approaching.

Before the middle of September the enemy was thoroughly established in possession of the new Hell's Mouth, the new Porcupine, and all the other bastions of the new entrenchment. On the 13th of that month the last supreme effort was made, and the Sand Hill, that all-important redoubt, which during these three dismal years had triumphantly resisted every assault, was at last carried by storm. The enemy had now gained possession of the whole town except Little Troy. The new harbour would be theirs in a few hours, and as for Troy itself, those hastily and flimsily

Page 2338

constructed ramparts were not likely to justify the vaunts uttered when they were thrown up nor to hold out many minutes before the whole artillery of Spinola. Plainly on this last morsel of the fatal sandbank the word surrender must be spoken, unless the advancing trumpets of Maurice should now be heard. But there was no such welcome sound in the air. The weather was so persistently rainy and stormy that the roads became impassable, and Maurice, although ready and intending to march towards Spinola to offer him battle, was unable for some days to move. Meantime a council, summoned by Marquette, of all the officers, decided that Ostend must be abandoned now that Ostend had ceased to exist.

On the 20th September the Accord was signed with Spinola. The garrison were to march out with their arms. They were to carry off four cannon but no powder. All clerical persons were to leave the place, with their goods and chattels. All prisoners taken on both sides during the siege were to be released. Burghers, sutlers, and others, to go whither they would, undisturbed. And thus the archdukes, after three years and seventy-seven days of siege, obtained their prize. Three thousand men, in good health, marched out of little Troy with the honours of war. The officers were entertained by Spinola and his comrades at a magnificent banquet, in recognition of the unexampled heroism with which the town had been defended. Subsequently the whole force marched to the headquarters of the States' army in and about Sluys. They were received by Prince Maurice, who stood bareheaded and surrounded by his most distinguished officers; to greet them and to shake them warmly by the hand. Surely no defeated garrison ever deserved more respect from friend or foe.

The Archduke Albert and the Infants Isabella entered the place in triumph, if triumph it could be called. It would be difficult to imagine a more desolate scene. The artillery of the first years of the seventeenth century was not the terrible enginry of destruction that it has become in the last third of the nineteenth, but a cannonade, continued so steadily and so long, had done its work. There were no churches, no houses, no redoubts, no bastions, no walls, nothing but a vague and confused mass of ruin. Spinola conducted his imperial guests along the edge of extinct volcanoes, amid upturned cemeteries, through quagmires which once were moats, over huge mounds of sand, and vast shapeless masses of bricks and masonry, which had been forts. He endeavoured to point out places where mines had been exploded, where ravelins had been stormed, where the assailants had been successful, and where they had been bloodily repulsed. But it was all loathsome, hideous rubbish. There were no human habitations, no hovels, no casemates. The inhabitants had burrowed at last in the earth, like the dumb creatures of the swamps and forests. In every direction the dykes had burst, and the sullen wash of the liberated waves, bearing hither and thither

Page 2339

the floating wreck of fascines and machinery, of planks and building materials, sounded far and wide over what should have been dry land. The great ship channel, with the unconquered Half-moon upon one side and the incomplete batteries and platforms of Bucquoy on the other, still defiantly opened its passage to the sea, and the retiring fleets of the garrison were white in the offing. All around was the grey expanse of stormy ocean, without a cape or a headland to break its monotony, as the surges rolled mournfully in upon a desolation more dreary than their own. The atmosphere was mirky and surcharged with rain, for the wild equinoctial storm which had held Maurice spell-bound had been raging over land and sea for many days. At every step the unburied skulls of brave soldiers who had died in the cause of freedom grinned their welcome to the conquerors. Isabella wept at the sight. She had cause to weep. Upon that miserable sandbank more than a hundred thousand men had laid down their lives by her decree, in order that she and her husband might at last take possession of a most barren prize. This insignificant fragment of a sovereignty which her wicked old father had presented to her on his deathbed—a sovereignty which he had no more moral right or actual power to confer than if it had been in the planet Saturn—had at last been appropriated at the cost of all this misery. It was of no great value, although its acquisition had caused the expenditure of at least eight millions of florins, divided in nearly equal proportions between the two belligerents. It was in vain that great immunities were offered to those who would remain, or who would consent to settle in the foul Golgotha. The original population left the place in mass. No human creatures were left save the wife of a freebooter and her paramour, a journeyman blacksmith. This unsavoury couple, to whom entrance into the purer atmosphere of Zeeland was denied, thenceforth shared with the carrion crows the amenities of Ostend.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Equation between the contending powers—Treaty of peace between King James and the archdukes and the King of Spain—Position of the Provinces—States envoy in England to be styled ambassador—Protest of the Spanish ambassador—Effect of James’s peace-treaty on the people of England—Public rejoicings for the victory at Sluys— Spinola appointed commander-in-chief of the Spanish forces— Preparations for a campaign against the States—Seizure of Dutch cruisers—International discord—-Destruction of Sarmiento’s fleet by Admiral Haultain—Projected enterprise against Antwerp—Descent of Spinola on the Netherland frontier—Oldenzaal and Lingen taken — Movements of Prince Maurice—Encounter of the two armies—Panic of the Netherlanders—Consequent loss and disgrace—Wachtendonk and Cracow taken by Spinola—Spinola’s reception in Spain—Effect of his victories—Results of the struggle between Freedom and Absolutism—

Page 2340

Affairs in the East—Amboyna taken by Van der Hagen—Contest for possession of the Clove Islands—Commercial treaty between the States and the King of Ternate—-Hostilities between the Kings of Ternate and Tydor—Expulsion of the Portuguese from the Moluccas— Du Terrail's attempted assault on Bergen-op-Zoom—Attack on the Dunkirk pirate fleet—Practice of executing prisoners captured at sea.

I have invited the reader's attention to the details of this famous siege because it was not an episode, but almost the sum total, of the great war during the period occupied by its events. The equation between the contending forces indicated the necessity of peace. That equation seemed for the time to have established itself over all Europe. France had long since withdrawn from the actual strife, and kept its idle thunders in a concealed although ever threatening hand. In the East the Pacha of Buda had become Pacha of Pest. Even Gran was soon to fall before the Turk, whose advancing horse-tails might thus almost be descried from the walls of Vienna. Stephen Botschkay meantime had made himself master of Transylvania, concluded peace with Ahmet, and laughed at the Emperor Rudolph for denouncing him as a rebel.

Between Spain and England a far different result had been reached than the one foreshadowed in the portentous colloquies between King James and Maximilian de Bethune. Those conferences have been purposely described with some minuteness, in order that the difference often existing between vast projects and diametrically opposed and very insignificant conclusions might once more be exhibited.

In the summer of 1603 it had been firmly but mysteriously arranged between the monarchs of France and Great Britain that the House of Austria should be crushed, its territories parcelled out at the discretion of those two potentates, the imperial crown taken from the Habsburgs, the Spaniards driven out of the Netherlands, an alliance offensive and defensive made with the Dutch republic, while the East and West Indies were, to be wrested by main force of the allies, from Spain, whose subjects were thenceforth to be for ever excluded from those lucrative regions. As for the Jesuits, who were to James as loathsome as were the Puritans to Elizabeth, the British sovereign had implored the ambassador of his royal brother, almost with tears, never to allow that pestilential brood to regain an entrance into his dominions.

In the summer of 1604 King James made a treaty of peace and amity with the archdukes and with the monarch of Spain, thus extending his friendly relations with the doomed house of Austria. The republic of the Netherlands was left to fight her battles alone; her imaginary allies looking down upon her struggle with benevolent indifference. As for the Indies, not a syllable of allusion in the treaty was permitted by Spain to that sacred subject; the ambassador informing the British Government that he gave them access to

Page 2341

twelve kingdoms and two seas, while Spain acquired by the treaty access only to two kingdoms and one sea. The new world, however, east or west, from the Antilles to the Moluccas, was the private and indefeasible property of his Catholic Majesty. On religious matters, it was agreed that English residents in Spain should not be compelled to go to mass, but that they should kneel in the street to the Host unless they could get out of the ways. In regard to the Netherlands, it was agreed by the two contracting powers that one should never assist the rebels or enemies of the other. With regard to the cities and fortresses of Brill, Flushing, Rammekens, and other cautionary places, where English garrisons were maintained, and which King James was bound according to the contracts of Queen Elizabeth never to restore except to those who had pledged them to the English crown—the king would uphold those contracts. He would, however, endeavour to make an arrangement with the States by which they should agree within a certain period to make their peace with Spain. Should they refuse or fail, he would then consider himself liberated from these previous engagements and free to act concerning those cities in an honourable and reasonable manner, as became a friendly king? Meantime the garrisons should not in any way assist the Hollanders in their hostilities with Spain. English subjects were forbidden to carry into Spain or the obedient Netherlands any property or merchandize belonging to the Hollanders, or to make use of Dutch vessels in their trade with Spain. Both parties agreed to do their best to bring about a pacification in the Netherlands.

No irony certainly could be more exquisite that this last-named article. This was the end of that magnificent conception, the great Anglo-French League against the house of Austria. King James would combine his efforts with King Philip to pacify the Netherlands. The wolf and the watchdog would unite to bring back the erring flock to the fold. Meantime James would keep the cautionary towns in his clutches, not permitting their garrisons or any of his subjects to assist the rebels on sea or shore. As for the Jesuits, their triumphant re-appearance in France, and the demolition of the pyramid raised to their dishonour on the site of the house where John Castel, who had stabbed Henry *iv*., had resided, were events about to mark the opening year. Plainly enough Secretary Cecil had out-generalled the French party.

The secret treaty of Hampton Court, the result of the efforts of Rosny and Olden-Barneveld in July of the previous year, was not likely to be of much service in protecting the republic. James meant to let the dead treaties bury their dead, to live in peace with all the world, and to marry his sons and daughters to Spanish Infantes and Infantas. Meantime, although he had sheathed the sword which Elizabeth had drawn against the common enemy, and had no idea of fighting or spending money for the States, he was willing that

Page 2342

their diplomatic agent should be called ambassador. The faithful and much experienced Noel de Caron coveted that distinction, and moved thereby the spleen of Henry's envoy at the Hague, Buzanval, who probably would not have objected to the title himself. "'Twill be a folly," he said, "for him to present himself on the pavement as a prancing steed, and then be treated like a poor hack. He has been too long employed to put himself in such a plight. But there are lunatics everywhere and of all ages."

Never had the Advocate seemed so much discouraged. Ostend had fallen, and the defection of the British sovereign was an off-set for the conquest of Sluys. He was more urgent with the French Government for assistance than he had ever been before. "A million florins a year from France," he said "joined to two millions raised in the provinces, would enable them to carry on the war. The ship was in good condition," he added, "and fit for a long navigation without danger of shipwreck if there were only biscuit enough on board." Otherwise she was lost. Before that time came he should quit the helm which he had been holding the more resolutely since the peace of Vervins because the king had told him, when concluding it, that if three years' respite should be given him he would enter into the game afresh, and take again upon his shoulders the burthen which inevitable necessity had made him throw down. "But," added Olden-Barneveld, bitterly, "there is little hope of it now, after his neglect of the many admirable occasions during the siege of Ostend."

So soon as the Spanish ambassador learned that Caron was to be accepted into the same diplomatic rank as his own, he made an infinite disturbance, protested moat loudly and passionately to the king at the indignity done to his master by this concession to the representative of a crew of traitors and rebels, and demanded in the name of the treaty just concluded that Caron should be excluded in such capacity from all access to court.

As James was nearly forty years of age, as the Hollanders had been rebels ever since he was born, and as the King of Spain had exercised no sovereignty over them within his memory, this was naturally asking too much of him in the name of his new-born alliance with Spain. So he assumed a position of great dignity, notwithstanding the Constable's clamour, and declared his purpose to give audience to the agents of the States by whatever title they presented themselves before him. In so doing he followed the example, he said, of others who (a strange admission on his part) were as wise as himself. It was not for him to censure the crimes and faults of the States, if such they had committed. He had not been the cause of their revolt from Spanish authority, and it was quite sufficient that he had stipulated to maintain neutrality between the two belligerents's. And with this the ambassador of his Catholic Majesty, having obtained the substance of a very advantageous treaty, was fain to abandon opposition to the shadowy title by which James sought to indemnify the republic for his perfidy.

Page 2343

The treaty of peace with Spain gave no pleasure to the English public. There was immense enthusiasm in London at the almost simultaneous fall of Sluys, but it was impossible for the court to bring about a popular demonstration of sympathy with the abandonment of the old ally and the new-born affection for the ancient enemy. "I can assure your mightinesses," wrote Caron, "that no promulgation was ever received in London with more sadness. No mortal has shown the least satisfaction in words or deeds, but, on the contrary, people have cried out openly, 'God save our good neighbours the States of Holland and Zeeland, and grant them victory!' On Sunday, almost all the preachers gave thanks from their pulpits for the victory which their good neighbours had gained at Sluys, but would not say a word about the peace. The people were admonished to make bonfires, but you may be very sure not a bonfire was to be seen. But, in honour of the victory, all the vessels in St. Catharine's Docks fired salutes at which the Spaniards were like to burst with spite. The English clap their hands and throw their caps in the air when they hear anything published favourable to us, but, it must be confessed, they are now taking very dismal views of affairs. 'Vox populi vox Dei.'"

The rejoicing in Paris was scarcely less enthusiastic or apparently less sincere than in London. "The news of the surrender of Sluys," wrote Aerasens, "is received with so much joy by small and great that one would have said it was their own exploit. His Majesty has made such demonstrations in his actions and discourse that he has not only been advised by his council to dissemble in the matter, but has undergone reproaches from the pope's nuncius of having made a league with your Mightinesses to the prejudice of the King of Spain. His Majesty wishes your Mightinesses prosperity with all his heart, yea so that he would rather lose his right arm than see your Mightinesses in danger. Be assured that he means roundly, and we should pray God for his long life; for I don't see that we can expect anything from these regions after his death."

It was ere long to be seen, however, roundly as the king meant it, that the republic was to come into grave peril without causing him to lose his right arm, or even to wag his finger, save in reproach of their Mightinesses.

The republic, being thus left to fight its battles alone, girded its loins anew for the conflict. During the remainder of the year 1604, however, there were no military operations of consequence. Both belligerents needed a brief repose.

The siege of Ostend had not been a siege. It was a long pitched battle between the new system and the old, between absolutism and the spirit of religious, political and mercantile freedom. Absolutism had gained the lists on which the long duel had been fought, but the republic had meantime exchanged that war-blasted spot for a valuable and commodious position.

Page 2344

It was certainly an advantage, as hostilities were necessarily to have continued somewhere during all that period, that all the bloodshed and desolation had been concentrated upon one insignificant locality, and one more contiguous to the enemy's possessions than to those of the united States. It was very doubtful, however, whether all that money and blood might not have been expended in some other manner more beneficial to the cause of the archdukes. At least it could hardly be maintained that they took anything by the capitulation of Ostend but the most barren and worthless of trophies. Eleven old guns, partly broken, and a small quantity of ammunition, were all the spoils of war found in the city after its surrender.

The Marquis Spinola went to Spain. On passing through Paris he was received with immense enthusiasm by Henry *iv*., whose friendship for the States, and whose desperate designs against the house of Austria, did not prevent him from warmly congratulating the great Spanish general on his victory. It was a victory, said Henry, which he could himself have never achieved, and, in recognition of so great a triumph, he presented Spinola with a beautiful Thracian horse, valued at twelve hundred ducats. Arriving in Spain, the conqueror found himself at once the object of the open applause and the scarcely concealed hatred of the courtiers and politicians. He ardently desired to receive as his guerdon the rank of grandee of Spain. He met with a refusal. To keep his hat on his head in presence of the sovereign was the highest possible reward. Should that be bestowed upon him now, urged Lerma, what possible recompense could be imagined for the great services which all felt confident that he was about to render in the future? He must continue to remove his hat in the monarch's company. Meantime, if he wished the title of prince, with considerable revenues attached to his principality, this was at his disposal. It must be confessed that in a monarchy where the sentiment of honour was supposed to be the foundation of the whole structure there is something chivalrous and stimulating to the imagination in this preference by the great general of a shadowy but rare distinction to more substantial acquisitions. Nevertheless, as the grandeeship was refused, it is not recorded that he was displeased with the principality. Meantime there was a very busy intrigue to deprive him of the command-in-chief of the Catholic forces in Flanders, and one so nearly successful that Mexia, governor of Antwerp citadel, was actually appointed in Spinola's stead. It was only after long and anxious conferences at Valladolid with the king and the Duke of Lerma, and after repeated statements in letters from the archdukes that all their hopes of victory depended on retaining the Genoese commander-in-chief, that the matter was finally arranged. Mexia received an annual pension of eight thousand ducats, and to Spinola was assigned five hundred ducats monthly, as commander-in-chief under the archduke, with an equal salary as agent for the king's affairs in Flanders.

Page 2345

Early in the spring he returned to Brussels, having made fresh preparations for the new campaign in which he was to measure himself before the world against Maurice of Nassau.

Spinola had removed the thorn from the Belgic lion's foot: "Ostendae erasit fatalis Spinola spinam." And although it may be doubted whether the relief was as thorough as had been hoped, yet a freedom of movement had unquestionably been gained. There was now at least what for a long time had not existed, a possibility for imagining some new and perhaps more effective course of campaigning. The young Genoese commander-in-chief returned from Spain early in May, with the Golden Fleece around his neck, and with full powers from the Catholic king to lay out his work, subject only to the approbation of the archduke. It was not probable that Albert, who now thoroughly admired and leaned upon the man of whom he had for a time been disposed to be jealous, would interfere with his liberty of action. There had also been—thanks to Spinola's influence with the cabinet at Madrid and the merchants of Genoa—much more energy in recruiting and in providing the necessary sinews of war. Moreover it had been resolved to make the experiment of sending some of the new levies by sea, instead of subjecting them all to the long and painful overland march through Spain, Italy, and Germany. A terzo of infantry was on its way from Naples, and two more were expected from Milan, but it was decided that the Spanish troops should be embarked on board a fleet of transports, mainly German and English, and thus carried to the shores of the obedient Netherlands.

The States-General got wind of these intentions, and set Vice-Admiral Haultain upon the watch to defeat the scheme. That well-seasoned mariner accordingly, with a sufficient fleet of war-galleots, cruised thenceforth with great assiduity in the chops of the channel. Already the late treaty between Spain and England had borne fruits of bitterness to the republic. The Spanish policy had for the time completely triumphed in the council of James. It was not surprising therefore that the partisans of that policy should occasionally indulge in manifestations of malevolence towards the upstart little commonwealth which had presumed to enter into commercial rivalry with the British realm, and to assert a place among the nations of the earth. An order had just been issued by the English Government that none of its subjects should engage in the naval service of any foreign power. This decree was a kind of corollary to the Spanish treaty, was levelled directly against the Hollanders, and became the pretext of intolerable arrogance, both towards their merchantmen and their lesser war-vessels. Admiral Monson, an especial partisan of Spain, was indefatigable in exercising the right he claimed of visiting foreign vessels off the English coast, in search of English sailors violating the proclamation of neutrality. On repeated occasions prizes taken

Page 2346

by Dutch cruisers from the Spaniards, and making their way with small prize crews to the ports of the republic, were overhauled, visited, and seized by the English admiral, who brought the vessels into the harbours of his own country, liberated the crews, and handed ships and cargoes over to the Spanish ambassador. Thus prizes fairly gained by nautical skill and hard fighting, off Spain, Portugal, Brazil, or even more distant parts of the world, were confiscated almost in sight of port, in utter disregard of public law or international decency. The States-General remonstrated with bitterness. Their remonstrances were answered by copious arguments, proving, of course, to the entire satisfaction of the party who had done the wrong, that no practice could be more completely in harmony with reason and justice. Meantime the Spanish ambassador sold the prizes, and appropriated the proceeds towards carrying on the war against the republic; the Dutch sailors, thus set ashore against their will and against law on the neutral coast of England, being left to get home as they could, or to starve if they could do no better. As for the States, they had the legal arguments of their late ally to console them for the loss of their ships.

Simultaneously with these events considerable levies of troops were made in England by the archduke, in spite of all the efforts of the Dutch ambassador to prevent this one-sided; neutrality, while at the other ends of the world mercantile jealousy in both the Indies was fast combining with other causes already rife to increase the international discord. Out of all this fuel it was fated that a blaze of hatred between the two leading powers of the new era, the United Kingdom and the United Republic, should one day burst forth, which was to be fanned by passion, prejudice, and a mistaken sentiment of patriotism and self-interest on both sides, and which not all the bloodshed of more than one fierce war could quench. The traces of this savage sentiment are burnt deeply into the literature, language, and traditions of both countries; and it is strange enough that the epoch at which chronic wrangling and international coolness changed into furious antipathy between the two great Protestant powers of Europe—for great they already both were, despite the paucity of their population and resources, as compared with nations which were less influenced by the spirit of the age or had less aptness in obeying its impulse—should be dated from the famous year of Guy Fawkes.

Meantime the Spanish troops, embarked in eight merchant ships and a few pinnaces, were slowly approaching their destination. They had been instructed, in case they found it impracticable to enter a Flemish port, to make for the hospitable shores of England, the Spanish ambassador and those whom he had bribed at the court of James having already provided for their protection. Off Dover Admiral Haultain got sight of Sarmiento’s little fleet. He made

Page 2347

short work with it. Faithfully carrying out the strenuous orders of the States-General, he captured some of the ships, burned one, and ran others aground after a very brief resistance. Some of the soldiers and crews were picked up by English vessels cruising in the neighbourhood and narrowly watching the conflict. A few stragglers escaped by swimming, but by far, the greater proportion of the newly-arrived troops were taken prisoners, tied together two and two, and then, at a given signal from the admiral's ship, tossed into the sea.

Not Peter Titelmann, nor Julian Romero, nor the Duke of Alva himself, ever manifested greater alacrity in wholesale murder than was shown by this admiral of the young republic in fulfilling the savage decrees of the States-General.

Thus at least one-half of the legion perished. The pursuit of the ships was continued within English waters, when the guns of Dover Castle opened vigorously upon the recent allies of England, in order to protect her newly-found friends in their sore distress. Doubtless in the fervour of the work the Dutch admiral had violated the neutral coast of England, so that the cannonade from the castle waw technically justified. It was however a biting satire upon the proposed Protestant league against Spain and universal monarchy in behalf of the Dutch republic, that England was already doing her best to save a Spanish legion and to sink a Dutch fleet. The infraction of English sovereignty was unquestionable if judged by the more scrupulous theory of modern days, but it was well remarked by the States-General, in answer to the remonstrances of James's Government, that the Dutch admiral, knowing that the pirates of Dunkirk roamed at will through English waters in search of their prey, might have hoped for some indulgence of a similar character to the ships of the republic.

Thus nearly the whole of the Spanish legion perished. The soldiers who escaped to the English coast passed the winter miserably in huts, which they were allowed to construct on the sands, but nearly all, including the lieutenant-colonel commanding, Pedro Cubiera, died of famine or of wounds. A few small vessels of the expedition succeeded in reaching the Flemish coast, and landing a slight portion of the terzo.

The campaign of 1605 opened but languidly. The strain upon the resources of the Netherlands, thus unaided, was becoming severe, although there is no doubt that, as the India traffic slowly developed itself, the productive force of the commonwealth visibly increased, while the thrifty habits of its citizens, and their comparative abstinence from unproductive consumption, still enabled it to bear the tremendous burthen of the war. A new branch of domestic industry had grown out of the India trade, great quantities of raw silk being now annually imported from the East into Holland, to be wrought into brocades, tapestries, damasks, velvets, satins, and other luxurious fabrics for European consumption.

Page 2348

It is a curious phenomenon in the history of industry that while at this epoch Holland was the chief seat of silk manufactures, the great financier of Henry *iv*. was congratulating his sovereign and himself that natural causes had for ever prevented the culture or manufacture of silk in France. If such an industry were possible, he was sure that the decline of martial spirit in France and an eternal dearth of good French soldiers would be inevitable, and he even urged that the importation of such luxurious fabrics should be sternly prohibited, in order to preserve the moral health of the people. The practical Hollanders were more inclined to leave silk farthingales and brocaded petticoats to be dealt with by thunderers from the pulpit or indignant fathers of families. Meantime the States-General felt instinctively that the little commonwealth grew richer, the more useful or agreeable things its burghers could call into existence out of nothingness, to be exchanged for the powder and bullets, timber and cordage, requisite for its eternal fight with universal monarchy, and that the richer the burghers grew the more capable they were of paying their taxes. It was not the fault of the States that the insane ambition of Spain and the archdukes compelled them to exhaust themselves annually by the most unproductive consumption that man is ever likely to devise, that of scientifically slaughtering his brethren, because to practise economy in that regard would be to cease to exist, or to accept the most intolerable form of slavery.

The forces put into the field in the spring of 1605 were but meagre. There was also, as usual, much difference of opinion between Maurice and Barneveld as to the most judicious manner of employing them, and as usual the docile stadholder submitted his better judgment to the States. It can hardly be too much insisted upon that the high-born Maurice always deported himself in fact, and as it were unconsciously, as the citizen soldier of a little republic, even while personally invested with many of the attributes of exalted rank, and even while regarded by many of his leading fellow-citizens as the legitimate and predestined sovereign of the newly-born state.

Early in the spring a great enterprise against Antwerp was projected. It failed utterly. Maurice, at Bergen-op-Zoom, despatched seven thousand troops up the Scheld, under command of Ernest Casimir. The flotilla was a long time getting under weigh, and instead of effecting a surprise, the army, on reaching the walls of Antwerp, found the burghers and garrison not in the least astonished, but on the contrary entirely prepared. Ernest returned after a few insignificant skirmishes, having accomplished nothing.

Page 2349

Maurice next spent a few days in reducing the castle of Wouda, not far from Bergen, and then, transporting his army once more to the isle of Cadzand, he established his headquarters at Watervliet, near Ysendyke. Spinola followed him, having thrown a bridge across the Scheld. Maurice was disposed to reduce a fort, well called Patience, lying over against the isle of Walcheren. Spinola took up a position by which he defended the place as with an impenetrable buckler. A game of skill now began. between these two adepts in the art of war, for already the volunteer had taken rank among the highest professors of the new school. It was the object of Maurice, who knew himself on the whole outnumbered, to divine his adversary's intentions. Spinola was supposed to be aiming at Sluys, at Grave, at Bergen-op-Zoom, possibly even at some more remote city, like Rheinberg, while rumours as to his designs, flying directly from his camp, were as thick as birds in the air. They were let loose on purpose by the artful Genoese, who all the time had a distinct and definite plan which was not yet suspected. The dilatoriness of the campaign was exasperating. It might be thought that the war was to last another half century, from the excessive inertness of both parties. The armies had all gone into winter quarters in the previous November, Spinola had spent nearly six months in Spain, midsummer had came and gone, and still Maurice was at Watervliet, guessing at his adversary's first move. On the whole, he had inclined to suspect a design upon Rheinberg, and had accordingly sent his brother Henry with a detachment to strengthen the garrison of that place. On the 1st of August however he learned that Spinola had crossed the Meuse and the Rhine, with ten thousand foot and three thousand horse, and that leaving Count Bucquoy with six thousand foot and one thousand five hundred horse in the neighbourhood of the Rhine, to guard a couple of redoubts which had been constructed for a basis at Kaiserswerth, he was marching with all possible despatch towards Friesland and Groningen.

The Catholic general had concealed his design in a masterly manner. He had detained Maurice in the isle of Cadzand, the States still dreaming of a victorious invasion on their part of obedient Flanders, and the stadholder hesitating to quit his position of inactive observation, lest the moment his back was turned the rapid Spinola might whirl down upon Sluys, that most precious and skilfully acquired possession of the republic, when lo! his formidable antagonist was marching in force upon what the prince well knew to be her most important and least guarded frontier.

On the 8th August the Catholic general was before Olden-zaal which he took in three days, and then advanced to Lingen. Should that place fall—and the city was known to be most inadequately garrisoned and supplied—it would be easy for the foe to reduce Coeworden, and so seize the famous pass over the Bourtanger Morass, march straight to Embden—then in a state of municipal revolution on account of the chronic feuds between its counts and the population, and therefore an easy prey—after which all Friesland and Groningen would be at his mercy, and his road open to Holland and Utrecht; in short, into the very bowels of the republic.

Page 2350

On the 4th August Maurice broke up his camp in Flanders, and leaving five thousand men under Colonel Van der Noot, to guard the positions there, advanced rapidly to Deventer, with the intention of saving Lingen. It was too late. That very important place had been culpably neglected. The garrison consisted of but one cannoneer, and he had but one arm. A burgher guard, numbering about three hundred, made such resistance as they could, and the one-armed warrior fired a shot or two from a rusty old demi-cannon. Such opposition to the accomplished Italian was naturally not very effective. On the 18th August the place capitulated. Maurice, arriving at Deventer, and being now strengthened by his cousin Lewis William with such garrison troops as could be collected, learned the mortifying news with sentiments almost akin to despair. It was now to be a race for Coeworden, and the fleet-footed Spinola was a day's march at least in advance of his competitor. The key to the fatal morass would soon be in his hands. To the inexpressible joy of the stadholder, the Genoese seemed suddenly struck with blindness. The prize was almost in his hands and he threw away all his advantages. Instead of darting at once upon Coeworden he paused for nearly a month, during which period he seemed intoxicated with a success so rapidly achieved, and especially with his adroitness in outwitting the great stadholder. On the 14th September he made a retrograde movement towards the Rhine, leaving two thousand five hundred men in Lingen. Maurice, giving profound thanks to God for his enemy's infatuation, passed by Lingen, and having now, with his cousin's reinforcements, a force of nine thousand foot and three thousand horse, threw himself into Coeworden, strengthened and garrisoned that vital fortress which Spinola would perhaps have taken as easily as he had done Lingen, made all the neighbouring positions secure, and then fell back towards Wesel on the Rhine, in order to watch his antagonist. Spinola had established his headquarters at Ruhrort, a place where the river Ruhr empties into the Rhine. He had yielded to the remonstrances of the Archbishop of Cologne, to whom Kaiserwerth belonged, and had abandoned the forts which Bucquoy, under his directions, had constructed at that place.

The two armies now gazed at each other, at a respectful distance, for a fortnight longer, neither commander apparently having any very definite purpose. At last, Maurice having well reconnoitred his enemy, perceived a weak point in his extended lines. A considerable force of Italian cavalry, with some infantry, was stationed at the village of Mulheim, on the Ruhr, and apparently out of convenient supporting distance from Spinola's main army. The stadholder determined to deliver a sudden blow upon this tender spot, break through the lines, and bring on a general action by surprise. Assembling his well-seasoned and veteran troopers in force, he divided them into two formidable bands, one under the charge of his young brother Frederic Henry, the other under that most brilliant of cavalry officers, Marcellus Bax, hero of Turnhout and many another well-fought field.

Page 2351

The river Ruhr was a wide but desultory stream, easily fordable in many places. On the opposite bank to Mulheim was the Castle of Brock, and some hills of considerable elevation. Bax was ordered to cross the river and seize the castle and the heights, Count Henry to attack the enemy's camp in front, while Maurice himself, following rapidly with the advance of infantry and wagons, was to sustain the assault.

Marcellus Bax, rapid and dashing as usual, crossed the Ruhr, captured Broek Castle with ease, and stood ready to prevent the retreat of the Spaniards. Taken by surprise in front, they would naturally seek refuge on the other side of the river. That stream was not difficult for infantry, but as the banks were steep, cavalry could not easily extricate themselves from the water, except at certain prepared landings. Bax waited however for some time in vain for the flying Spaniards. It was not destined that the stadholder should effect many surprises that year. The troopers under Frederic Henry had made their approaches through an intricate path, often missing their way, and in far more leisurely fashion than was intended, so that outlying scouts had brought in information of the coming attack. As Count Henry approached the village, Trivulzio's cavalry was found drawn up in battle array, formidable in numbers, and most fully prepared for their visitors from Wesel. The party most astonished was that which came to surprise. In an instant one of those uncontrollable panics broke out to which even veterans are as subject as to dysentery or scurvy. The best cavalry of Maurice's army turned their backs at the very sight of the foe, and galloped off much faster than they had come.

Meantime, Marcellus Bax was assaulted, not only by his late handful of antagonists, who had now rallied, but by troops from Mulheim, who began to wade across the stream. At that moment he was cheered by the sight of Count Henry coming on with a very few of his troopers who had stood to their colours. A simultaneous charge from both banks at the enemy floundering in the river was attempted. It might have been brilliantly successful, but the panic had crossed the river faster than the Spaniards could do, and the whole splendid picked cavalry force of the republic, commanded by the youngest son of William the Silent, and by the favourite cavalry commander of her armies, was, after a hot but brief action, in disgraceful and unreasonable flight. The stadholder reached the bank of that fatal stream only to witness this maddening spectacle, instead of the swift and brilliant triumph which he was justified in expecting. He did his best to stem the retreating tide. He called upon the veterans, by the memory of Turnhout and Nieuport, and so many other victories, to pause and redeem their name before it was too late. He taunted them with their frequent demands to be led to battle, and their expressed impatience at enforced idleness. He denounced them as valiant only for plundering defenceless peasants, and as cowards against armed men; as trusting more to their horses' heels than to their own right hands. He invoked curses upon them for deserting his young brother, who, conspicuous among them by his gilded armour, the orange-plumes upon his calque, and the bright orange-scarf across his shoulders, was now sorely pressed in the struggling throng.

Page 2352

It was all in vain. Could Maurice have thrown himself into the field, he might, as in the crisis of the republic's fate at Nieuport, have once more converted ruin into victory by the magic of his presence. But the river was between him and the battle, and he was an enforced spectator of his country's disgrace.

For a few brief moments his demeanour, his taunts, and his supplications had checked the flight of his troops.

A stand was made by a portion of the cavalry and a few detached but fierce combats took place. Count Frederic Henry was in imminent danger. Leading a mere handful of his immediate retainers, he threw himself into the thickest of the fight, with the characteristic audacity of his house. A Spanish trooper aimed his carbine full at his face. It missed fire, and Henry, having emptied his own pistol, was seized by the floating scarf upon his breast by more than one enemy. There was a brief struggle, and death or capture seemed certain; when an unknown hand laid his nearest antagonist low, and enabled him to escape from over powering numbers. The soldier, whose devotion thus saved the career of the youngest Orange-Nassau destined to be so long and so brilliant, from being cut off so prematurely, was never again heard of, and doubtless perished in the fray.

Meantime the brief sparkle of valour on the part of the States' troops had already vanished. The adroit Spinola, hurrying personally to the front, had caused such a clangor from all the drums and trumpets in Broek and its neighbourhood to be made as to persuade the restive cavalry that the whole force of the enemy was already upon them. The day was obviously lost, and Maurice, with a heavy heart, now him self gave the signal to retreat. Drawing up the greater part of his infantry in solid mass upon the banks to protect the passage, he sent a force to the opposite side, Horace Vere being the first to wade the stream. All that was then possible to do was accomplished, and the panic flight converted into orderly retreat, but it was a day of disaster and disgrace for the republic.

About five hundred of the best States' cavalry were left dead on the field, but the stain upon his almost unsullied flag was more cutting to the stadholder's heart than the death of his veterans. The material results were in truth almost even. The famous cavalry general, Count Trivulzio, with at least three hundred Spaniards, fell in the combat, but the glory of having defeated the best cavalry of Europe in a stricken field and under the very eyes of the stadholder would have been sufficient compensation to Spinola for much greater losses.

Maurice withdrew towards Wesel, sullen but not desponding. His forces were meagre, and although he had been out-generalled, out-marched, and defeated in the open field, at least the Genoese had not planted the blow which he had meditated in the very heart of the republic.

Page 2353

Autumn was now far advanced, and dripping with rain. The roads and fields were fast becoming impassable sloughs, and no further large operations could be expected in this campaign. Yet the stadholder's cup was not full, and he was destined to witness two more triumphs of his rival, now fast becoming famous, before this year of disasters should close. On the 27th October, Spinola took the city of Wachtendonk, after ten days' siege, and on the 5th of November the strong place of Cracow.

Maurice was forced to see these positions captured almost under his eyes, being now quite powerless to afford relief. His troops had dwindled by sickness and necessary detachments for garrison-work to a comparatively, insignificant force, and very soon afterwards both armies went into winter quarters.

The States were excessively disappointed at the results of the year's work, and deep if not loud were the reproaches cast upon the stadholder. Certainly his military reputation had not been augmented by this campaign. He had lost many places, and had not gained an inch of ground anywhere. Already the lustre of Sluys, of Nieuport, and Turnhout were growing dim, for Maurice had so accustomed the republic to victories that his own past triumphs seemed now his greatest enemies. Moreover he had founded a school out of which apt pupils had already graduated, and it would seem that the Genoese volunteer had rapidly profited by his teachings as only a man endowed with exquisite military genius could have done.

Yet, after all, it seems certain that, with the stadholder's limited means, and with the awful consequences to the country of a total defeat in the open field, the Fabian tactics, which he had now deliberately adopted, were the most reasonable. The invader of foreign domains, the suppressor of great revolts, can indulge in the expensive luxury of procrastination only at imminent peril. For the defence, it is always possible to conquer by delay, and it was perfectly understood between Spinola and his ablest advisers at the Spanish court that the blows must be struck thick and fast, and at the most vulnerable places, or that the victory would be lost.

Time was the ally not of the Spanish invaders, who came from afar, but of the Dutch burghers, who remained at home. "Jam aut Nunquam," was the motto upon the Italian's banners.

In proportion to the depression in the republic at the results of this year's campaigning was the elation at the Spanish court. Bad news and false news had preceded the authentic intelligence of Spinola's victories. The English envoy had received unquestionable information that the Catholic general had sustained an overwhelming defeat at the close of the campaign, with a loss of three thousand five hundred men.

Page 2354

The tale was implicitly believed by king and cabinet, so that when, very soon afterwards, the couriers arrived bringing official accounts of the victory gained over the veteran cavalry of the States in the very presence of the stadholder, followed by the crowning triumph of Wachtendonk, the demonstrations of joy were all the more vivacious in consequence of the previous gloom. Spinola himself followed hard upon the latest messengers, and was received with ovations. Never, since the days of Alexander Farnese, had a general at the Spanish court been more cordially caressed or hated. Had Philip the Prudent been still upon the throne, he would have felt it his duty to make immediate arrangements for poisoning him. Certainly his plans and his popularity would have been undermined in the most artistic manner.

But Philip *iii*., more dangerous to rabbits than to generals, left the Genoese to settle the plans of his next campaign with Lerma and his parasites.

The subtle Spinola, having, in his despatches, ascribed the chief merit of the victories to Louis Velasco, a Spaniard, while his own original conception of transferring the war to Friesland was attributed by him with magnificent effrontery to Lerma and to the king—-who were probably quite ignorant of the existence of that remote province—succeeded in maintaining his favourable position at court, and was allowed, by what was called the war-council, to manage matters nearly at his pleasure.

It is difficult however to understand how so much clamour should have been made over such paltry triumphs. All Europe rang with a cavalry fight in which less than a thousand saddles on both sides had been emptied, leading to no result, and with the capture of a couple of insignificant towns, of which not one man in a thousand had ever heard.

Spinola had doubtless shown genius of a subtle and inventive order, and his fortunate audacity in measuring himself, while a mere apprentice, against the first military leader living had been crowned with wonderful success. He had nailed the stadholder fast to the island of Cadzand, while he was perfecting his arrangements and building boats on the Rhine; he had propounded riddles which Maurice had spent three of the best campaigning months in idle efforts to guess, and when he at last moved, he had swept to his mark with the swiftness and precision of a bird of prey. Yet the greatest of all qualities in a military commander, that of deriving substantial fruits from victory instead of barren trophies, he had not manifested. If it had been a great stroke of art to seize reach Deventer, it was an enormous blunder, worthy of a journeyman soldier, to fail to seize the Bourtange marshes, and drive his sword into the fiery vitals of the republic, thus placed at his mercy.

Meantime, while there had been all these rejoicings and tribulations at the great doings on the Rhine and the shortcoming in Friesland, the real operations of the war had been at the antipodes.

Page 2355

It is not a very unusual phenomenon in history that the events, upon whose daily development the contemporary world hangs with most palpitating interest, are far inferior in permanent influence upon the general movement of humanity to a series of distant and apparently commonplace transactions.

Empires are built up or undermined by the ceaseless industry of obscure multitudes often slightly observed, or but dimly comprehended.

Battles and sieges, dreadful marches, eloquent debates, intricate diplomacy—from time to time but only perhaps at rare intervals—have decided or modified the destiny of nations, while very often the clash of arms, the din of rhetoric, the whiz of political spindles, produce nothing valuable for human consumption, and made the world no richer.

If the age of heroic and religious passion was rapidly fading away before the gradual uprising of a politico-mercantile civilization—as it certainly was—the most vital events, those in which the fate of coming generations was most deeply involved, were those inspired by the spirit of commercial-enterprise.

Nor can it be denied that there is often a genial and poetic essence even among things practical or of almost vulgar exterior. In those early expeditions of the Hollanders to the flaming lands of the equator there is a rhythm and romance of historical movement not less significant than in their unexampled defence of fatherland and of the world’s liberty against the great despotism of the age.

Universal monarchy was baffled by the little republic, not within its own populous cities only, or upon its own barren sands. The long combat between Freedom and Absolutism had now become as wide as the world. The greatest European states had been dragged by the iron chain of necessity into a conflict from which they often struggled to escape, and on every ocean, and on almost every foot of soil, where the footsteps of mankind had as yet been imprinted, the fierce encounters were every day renewed. In the east and the west, throughout that great vague new world, of which geographers had hardly yet made a sketch, which comprised both the Americas and something called the East Indies, and which Spain claimed as her private property, those humbly born and energetic adventurers were rapidly creating a symmetrical system out of most dismal chaos.

The King of Spain warned all nations from trespassing upon those outlying possessions.

His edicts had not however prevented the English in moderate numbers, and the Hollanders in steadily increasing swarms, from enlarging and making profitable use of these new domains of the world’s commerce.

Page 2356

The days were coming when the People was to have more to say than the pope in regard to the disposition and arrangements of certain large districts of this planet. While the world-empire, which still excited so much dismay, was yielding to constant corrosion, another empire, created by well-directed toil and unflinching courage, was steadily rising out of the depths. It has often been thought amazing that the little republic should so long and so triumphantly withstand the enormous forces brought forward for her destruction. It was not, however, so very surprising. Foremost among nations, and in advance of the age, the republic had found the strength which comes from the spirit of association. On a wider scale than ever before known, large masses of men, with their pecuniary means, had been intelligently banded together to advance material interests. When it is remembered that, in addition to this force, the whole commonwealth was inspired by the divine influence of liberty, her power will no longer seem so wonderful.

A sinister event in the Isle of Ceylon had opened the series of transactions in the East, and had cast a gloom over the public sentiment at home. The enterprising voyager, Sebald de Weerdt, one of the famous brotherhood of the Invincible Lion which had wintered in the straits of Magellan, had been murdered through the treachery of the King of Candy. His countrymen had not taken vengeance on his assassins. They were perhaps too fearful of losing their growing trade in those lucrative regions to take a becoming stand in that emergency. They were also not as yet sufficiently powerful there.

The East India Company had sent out in May of this year its third fleet of eleven large ships, besides some smaller vessels, under the general superintendence of Matelieff de Jonghe, one of the directors. The investments for the voyage amounted to more than nineteen hundred thousand florins.

Meantime the preceding adventurers under Stephen van der Hagen, who had sailed at the end of 1603, had been doing much thorough work. A firm league had been made with one of the chief potentates of Malabar, enabling them to build forts and establish colonies in perpetual menace of Goa, the great oriental capital of the Portuguese. The return of the ambassadors sent out from Astgen to Holland had filled not only the island of Sumatra but the Moluccas, and all the adjacent regions, with praises of the power, wealth, and high civilization of that distant republic so long depicted by rivals as a nest of uncouth and sanguinary savages. The fleet now proceeded to Amboyna, a stronghold of the Spanish-Portuguese, and the seat of a most lucrative trade.

Page 2357

On the arrival of those foreign well-armed ships under the guns of the fortress, the governor sent to demand, with Castilian arrogance, who the intruders were, and by whose authority and with what intent they presumed to show themselves in those waters. The reply was that they came in the name and by the authority of their High Mightinesses the States-General, and their stadholder the Prince of Orange; that they were sworn enemies of the King of Spain and all his subjects, and that as to their intent, this would soon be made apparent. Whereupon, without much more ado, they began a bombardment of the fort, which mounted thirty-six guns. The governor, as often happened in those regions, being less valiant against determined European foes than towards the feebler oriental races on which he had been accustomed to trample, succumbed with hardly an effort at resistance. The castle and town and whole island were surrendered to the fleet, and thenceforth became virtually a colony of the republic with which, nominally, treaties of alliance and defence were, negotiated. Thence the fleet, after due possession had been taken of these new domains, sailed partly to Bands and partly to two small but most important islands of the Moluccas.

In that multitude of islands which make up the Eastern Archipelago there were but five at that period where grew the clove—Ternate, Tydor, Motiel, Makian, and Bacia.

Pepper and ginger, even nutmegs, cassia, and mace, were but vulgar drugs, precious as they were already to the world and the world's commerce, compared with this most magnificent spice.

It is wonderful to reflect upon the strange composition of man. The world had lived in former ages very comfortably without cloves. But by the beginning of the seventeenth century that odoriferous pistil had been the cause of so many pitched battles and obstinate wars, of so much vituperation, negotiation, and intriguing, that the world's destiny seemed to have almost become dependent upon the growth of a particular gillyflower. Out of its sweetness had grown such bitterness among great nations as not torrents of blood could wash away. A commonplace condiment enough it seems to us now, easily to be dispensed with, and not worth purchasing at a thousand human lives or so the cargo, but it was once the great prize to be struggled for by civilized nations. From that fervid earth, warmed from within by volcanic heat, and basking ever beneath the equatorial sun, arose vapours as deadly to human life as the fruits were exciting and delicious to human senses. Yet the atmosphere of pestiferous fragrance had attracted, rather than repelled. The poisonous delights of the climate, added to the perpetual and various warfare for its productions, spread a strange fascination around those fatal isles.

Page 2358

Especially Ternate and Tydor were objects of unending strife. Chinese, Malays, Persians, Arabs, had struggled centuries long for their possession; those races successively or simultaneously ruling these and adjacent portions of the Archipelago. The great geographical discoveries at the close of the fifteenth century had however changed the aspect of India and of the world. The Portuguese adventurers found two rival kings—in the two precious islands, and by ingeniously protecting one of these potentates and poisoning the other, soon made themselves masters of the field. The clove trade was now entirely in the hands of the strangers from the antipodes. Goa became the great mart of the lucrative traffic, and thither came Chinese, Arabs, Moors, and other oriental traders to be supplied from the Portuguese monopoly: Two-thirds of the spices however found their way directly to Europe.

Naturally enough, the Spaniards soon penetrated into these seas, and claimed their portion of the spice trade. They insisted that the coveted islands were included in their portion of the great Borgian grant. As there had hardly yet been time to make a trigonometrical survey of an unknown world, so generously divided by the pope, there was no way of settling disputed boundary questions save by apostolic blows. These were exchanged with much earnestness, year after year, between Spaniards, Portuguese, and all who came in their way. Especially the unfortunate natives, and their kings most of all, came in for a full share. At last Charles V. sold out his share of the spice islands to his Portuguese rival and co-proprietor, for three hundred and fifty thousand ducats. The emperor's very active pursuits caused him to require ready money more than cloves. Yet John *iii*. had made an excellent bargain, and the monopoly thenceforth brought him in at least two hundred thousand ducats annually. Goa became more flourishing, the natives more wretched, the Portuguese more detested than ever. Occasionally one of the royal line of victims would consent to put a diadem upon his head, but the coronation was usually the prelude to a dungeon or death. The treaties of alliance, which these unlucky potentates had formed with their powerful invaders, were, as so often is the case, mere deeds to convey themselves and their subjects into slavery.

Spain and Portugal becoming one, the slender weapon of defence which these weak but subtle Orientals sometimes employed with success—the international and commercial jealousy between their two oppressors—was taken away. It was therefore with joy that Zaida, who sat on the throne of Ternate at the end of the sixteenth century, saw the sails of a Dutch fleet arriving in his harbours. Very soon negotiations were opened, and the distant republic undertook to protect the Mahometan king against his Catholic master. The new friendship was founded upon trade monopoly, of course, but at that period at least the islanders were treated with justice and humanity by their republican allies. The Dutch undertook to liberate their friends from bondage, while the King of Ternate, panting under Portuguese oppression, swore to have no traffic, no dealings of any kind, with any other nation than Holland; not even with the English. The Dutch, they declared, were the liberators of themselves, of their friends, and of the seas.

Page 2359

The international hatred, already germinating between England and Holland, shot forth in these flaming regions like a tropical plant. It was carefully nurtured and tended by both peoples. Freedom of commerce, freedom of the seas, meant that none but the Dutch East India Company—so soon as the Portuguese and Spaniards were driven out—should trade in cloves and nutmegs. Decrees to that effect were soon issued, under very heavy penalties, by the States-General to the citizens of the republic and to the world at large. It was natural therefore that the English traders should hail the appearance of the Dutch fleets with much less enthusiasm than was shown by the King of Ternate.

On the other hand, the King of Tydor, persisting in his oriental hatred towards the rival potentate in the other island, allowed the Portuguese to build additional citadels, and generally to strengthen their positions within his dominions. Thus when Cornelius Sebastian, with his division of Ver Hagen's fleet, arrived in the Moluccas in the summer of 1605, he found plenty of work prepared for him. The peace recently concluded by James with Philip and the archdukes placed England in a position of neutrality in the war now waging in the clove islands between Spain and the republic's East India Company. The English in those regions were not slow to avail themselves of the advantage. The Portuguese of Tydor received from neutral sympathy a copious supply of powder and of pamphlets. The one explosive material enabled them to make a more effective defence of their citadel against the Dutch fleet; the other revealed to the Portuguese and their Mussulman allies that "the Netherlanders could not exist without English protection, that they were the scum of nations, and that if they should get possession of this clove monopoly, their insolence would become intolerable." Samples of polite literature such as these, printed but not published, flew about in volleys. It was an age of pamphleteering, and neither the English nor the Dutch were behind their contemporaries in the science of attack and self-defence. Nevertheless Cornelius Sebastian was not deterred by paper pellets, nor by the guns of the citadel, from carrying out his purpose. It was arranged with King Zaida that the islanders of Ternate should make a demonstration against Tydor, being set across the strait in Dutch vessels. Sebastian, however, having little faith in oriental tenacity, entrusted the real work of storming the fortress to his own soldiers and sailors. On a fine morning in May the assault was delivered in magnificent style. The resistance was obstinate; many of the assailants fell, and Captain Mol, whom we have once before seen as master of the Tiger, sinking the galleys of Frederic Spinola off the Gat of Sluys, found himself at the head of only seven men within the interior defences of the citadel. A Spanish soldier, Torre by name, rushed upon him with a spear. Avoiding the blow, Mol grappled with his antagonist,

Page 2360

and both rolled to the ground. A fortunate carbine-shot from one of the Dutch captain's comrades went through the Spaniard's head. Meantime the little band, so insignificant in numbers, was driven out of the citadel. Mol fell to the ground with a shattered leg, and reproached his companions, who sought to remove him, for neglecting their work in order to save his life. Let them take the fort, he implored them, and when that was done they might find leisure to pick him up if they chose. While he was speaking the principal tower of the fortress blew up, and sixty of the garrison were launched into the air. A well-directed shot had set fire to the magazine. The assault was renewed with fresh numbers, and the Dutch were soon masters of the place. Never was a stronghold more audaciously or more successfully stormed. The garrison surrendered. The women and children, fearing to be at the mercy of those who had been depicted to them as cannibals, had already made their escape, and were scrambling like squirrels among the volcanic cliffs. Famine soon compelled them to come down, however, when they experienced sufficiently kind treatment, but were all deported in Dutch vessels to the Philippine islands. The conquerors not only spared the life of the King of Tydor, but permitted him to retain his crown. At his request the citadel was razed to the ground. It would have been better perhaps to let it stand, and it was possible that in the heart of the vanquished potentate some vengeance was lurking which might bear evil fruit at a later day. Meantime the Portuguese were driven entirely out of the Moluccas, save the island of Timos, where they still retained a not very important citadel.

The East India Company was now in possession of the whole field. The Moluccas and the clove trade were its own, and the Dutch republic had made manifest to the world that more potent instruments had now been devised for parcelling out the new world than papal decrees, although signed by the immaculate hand of a Borgia.

During the main operations already sketched in the Netherlands, and during those vastly more important oriental movements to which the reader's attention has just been called, a detached event or two deserves notice.

Twice during the summer campaign of this year Du Terrail, an enterprising French refugee in the service of the archdukes, had attempted to surprise the important city of Bergen-op-Zoom. On the 21st August the intended assault had been discovered in time to prevent any very serious conflict on, either side. On the 20th September the experiment was renewed at an hour after midnight. Du Terrail, having arranged the attack at three different points, had succeeded in forcing his way across the moat and through one of the gates. The trumpets of the foremost Spaniards already sounded in, the streets. It was pouring with rain; the town was pitch dark. But the energetic Paul Bax was governor of the place, a man who was

Page 2361

awake at any hour of the twenty-four, and who could see in the darkest night. He had already informed himself of the enemy's project, and had strengthened his garrison by a large intermixture of the most trustworthy burgher guards, so that the advance of Du Terrail at the southern gate was already confronted by a determined band. A fierce battle began in the darkness. Meantime Paul Bax, galloping through the city, had aroused the whole population for the defence. At the Steinberg gate, where the chief assault had been prepared, Bax had caused great fires of straw and pitch barrels to be lighted, so that the invaders, instead of finding, as they expected, a profound gloom through the streets, saw themselves approaching a brilliantly illuminated city, fully prepared to give their uninvited guests a warm reception. The garrison, the townspeople, even the women, thronged to the ramparts, saluting the Spaniards with a rain of bullets, paving-stones, and pitch hoops, and with a storm of gibes and taunts. They were asked why they allowed their cardinal thus to send them to the cattle market, and whether Our Lady of Hall, to whom Isabella was so fond of making pilgrimages, did not live rather too far off to be of much use just then to her or to them. Catholics and Protestants all stood shoulder to shoulder that night to defend their firesides against the foreign foe, while mothers laid their sleeping children on the ground that they might fill their cradles with powder and ball, which they industriously brought to the soldiers. The less energetic women fell upon their knees in the street, and prayed aloud through the anxious night. The attack was splendidly repulsed. As morning dawned the enemy withdrew, leaving one hundred dead outside the walls or in the town, and carrying off thirty-eight wagon loads of wounded. Du Terrail made no further attempts that summer, although the list of his surprises was not yet full. He was a good engineer, and a daring partisan officer. He was also inspired by an especial animosity to the States-General, who had refused the offer of his services before he made application to the archdukes.

At sea there was no very important movement in European waters, save that Lambert Heinrichzoon, commonly called Pretty Lambert, a Rotterdam skipper, whom we have seen the sea-fights with Frederic Spinola, of the Dunkirk pirate fleet, Adrian Dirkzoon. It was a desperate fight.—Pretty Lambent, sustained at a distance by Rear-Admiral Gerbrantzon, laid himself yard-arm to yard-arm alongside the pirate vessel, boarded her, and after beating down all resistance made prisoners such of the crew as remained alive, and carried them into Rotterdam. Next day they were hanged, to the number of sixty. A small number were pardoned on account of their youth, and a few individuals who effected their escape when led to the gallows, were not pursued. The fact that the townspeople almost connived at the escape of these desperadoes showed

Page 2362

that there had been a surfeit of hangings in Rotterdam. It is moreover not easy to distinguish with exactness the lines which in those days separated regular sea belligerents, privateers, and pirates from each other. It had been laid down by the archdukes that there was no military law at sea, and that sick soldiers captured on the water should be hanged. Accordingly they were hanged. Admiral Fazardo, of the Spanish royal navy, not only captured all the enemy's merchant vessels which came in his way, but hanged, drowned, and burned alive every man found on board. Admiral Haultain, of the republican navy, had just been occupied in drowning a whole regiment of Spanish soldiers, captured in English and German transports. The complaints brought against the English cruisers by the Hollanders for capturing and confiscating their vessels, and banging, maiming, and torturing their crews—not only when England was neutral, but even when she was the ally of the republic—had been a standing topic for diplomatic discussion, and almost a standing joke. Why, therefore, these Dunkirk sea-rovers should not on the same principle be allowed to rush forth from their very convenient den to plunder friend and foe, burn ships, and butcher the sailors at pleasure, seems difficult to understand. To expect from the inhabitants of this robbers' cave—this "church on the downs"—a code of maritime law so much purer and sterner than the system adopted by the English, the Spaniards, and the Dutch, was hardly reasonable. Certainly the Dunkirkers, who were mainly Netherlanders—rebels to the republic and partisans of the Spanish crown—did their best to destroy the herring fishery and to cut the throats of the fishermen, but perhaps they received the halter more often than other mariners who had quite as thoroughly deserved it. And this at last appeared the prevailing opinion in Rotterdam.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Abstinence from unproductive consumption
Defeated garrison ever deserved more respect from friend or foe
His own past triumphs seemed now his greatest enemies
Hundred thousand men had laid down their lives by her decree
John Castel, who had stabbed Henry *iv*.
Looking down upon her struggle with benevolent indifference
No retrenchments in his pleasures of women, dogs, and buildings
Sick soldiers captured on the water should be hanged
The small children diminished rapidly in numbers
When all was gone, they began to eat each other

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 78, 1605-1607

CHAPTER XLV.

Page 2363

Preparations for the campaign of 1606—Diminution of Maurice's popularity—Quarrel between the pope and the Venetian republic— Surprise of Sluys by Du Terrail—-Dilatoriness of the republic's operations—Movements of Spinola—Influence of the weather on the military transactions of the year—Endeavours of Spinola to obtain possession of the Waal and Yssel—Surrender of Lochem to Spinola— Siege of Groll—-Siege and loss of Rheinberg—Mutiny in the Catholic army—Recovery of Lochem by Maurice—Attempted recovery of Groll— Sudden appearance of the enemy—-Withdrawal of the besieging army Close of the campaign—End of the war of independence—Motives of the Prince in his actions before Groll—Cruise of Admiral Haultain to the coast of Spain and Portugal—His encounter with the war— ships of Fazardo—Courageous conduct of the vice-admiral—Deaths of Justus Lipsius, Hohenlo, and Count John of Nassau.

After the close of the campaign of 1605 Spinola had gone once more to Spain. On his passage through Paris he had again been received with distinguished favour by that warm ally of the Dutch republic, Henry *iv*., and on being questioned by that monarch as to his plans for the next campaign had replied that he intended once more to cross the Rhine, and invade Friesland. Henry, convinced that the Genoese would of course not tell him the truth on such an occasion, wrote accordingly to the States-General that they might feel safe as to their eastern frontier. Whatever else might happen, Friesland and the regions adjacent would be safe next year from attack. The immediate future was to show whether the subtle Italian had not compassed as neat a deception by telling the truth as coarser politicians could do by falsehood.

Spinola found the royal finances in most dismal condition. Three hundred thousand dollars a month were the least estimate of the necessary expenses for carrying on the Netherland war, a sum which could not possibly be spared by Lerma, Uceda, the Marquis of the Seven Churches, and other financiers then industriously occupied in draining dry the exchequer for their own uses. Once more the general aided his sovereign with purse and credit, as well as with his sword. Once more the exchange at Genoa was glutted with the acceptances of Marquis Spinola. Here at least was a man of a nature not quite so depraved as that of the parasites bred out of the corruption of a noble but dying commonwealth, and doubtless it was with gentle contempt that the great favourite and his friends looked at the military and financial enthusiasm of the volunteer. It was so much more sagacious to make a princely fortune than to sacrifice one already inherited, in the service of one's country.

Spinola being thus ready not only to fight but to help to pay for the fighting, found his plans of campaigns received with great benignity by the king and his ministers. Meantime there was much delay. The enormous labours thus devolved upon one pair of shoulders by the do-nothing king and a mayor of the palace whose soul was absorbed by his own private robberies, were almost too much for human strength. On his return to the Netherlands Spinola fell dangerously ill in Genoa.

Page 2364

Meantime, during his absence and the enforced idleness of the Catholic armies, there was an opportunity for the republicans to act with promptness and vigour. They displayed neither quality. Never had there been so much sluggishness as in the preparations for the campaign of 1606. The States' exchequer was lower than it had been for years. The republic was without friends. Left to fight their battle for national existence alone, the Hollanders found themselves perpetually subjected to hostile censure from their late allies, and to friendly advice still more intolerable. There were many brave Englishmen and Frenchmen sharing in the fatigues of the Dutch war of independence, but the governments of Henry and of James were as protective, as severely virtuous, as offensive, and, in their secret intrigues with the other belligerent, as mischievous as it was possible for the best-intentioned neutrals to be.

The fame and the popularity of the stadholder had been diminished by the results of the past campaign. The States-General were disappointed, dissatisfied, and inclined to censure very unreasonably the public servant who had always obeyed their decrees with docility. While Henry *iv*. was rapidly transferring his admiration from Maurice to Spinola, the disagreements at home between the Advocate and the Stadholder were becoming portentous.

There was a want of means and of soldiers for the new campaign. Certain causes were operating in Europe to the disadvantage of both belligerents. In the south, Venice had almost drawn her sword against the pope in her settled resolution to put down the Jesuits and to clip the wings of the church party, before, with bequests and donations, votive churches and magnificent monasteries, four-fifths of the domains of the republic should fall into mortmain, as was already the case in Brabant.

Naturally there was a contest between the ex-Huguenot, now eldest son of the Church, and the most Catholic king, as to who should soonest defend the pope. Henry offered thorough protection to his Holiness, but only under condition that he should have a monopoly of that protection. He lifted his sword, but meantime it was doubtful whether the blow was to descend upon Venice or upon Spain. The Spanish levies, on their way to the Netherlands, were detained in Italy by this new exigency. The States-General offered the sister republic their maritime assistance, and notwithstanding their own immense difficulties, stood ready to send a fleet to the Mediterranean. The offer was gratefully declined, and the quarrel with the pope arranged, but the incident laid the foundation of a lasting friendship between the only two important republics then existing. The issue of the Gunpowder Plot, at the close of the preceding year, had confirmed James in his distaste for Jesuits, and had effected that which all the eloquence of the States-General and their ambassador had failed to accomplish, the prohibition of Spanish enlistments in his kingdom. Guido Fawkes had served under the archduke in Flanders.

Page 2365

Here then were delays additional to that caused by Spinola's illness. On the other hand, the levies of the republic were for a season paralysed by the altercation, soon afterwards adjusted, between Henry *iv*. and the Duke of Bouillon, brother-in-law of the stadholder and of the Palatine, and by the petty war between the Duke and Hanseatic city of Brunswick, in which Ernest of Nassau was for a time employed.

During this period of almost suspended animation the war gave no signs of life, except in a few spasmodic efforts on the part of the irrepressible Du Terrail. Early in the spring, not satisfied with his double and disastrous repulse before Bergen-op-Zoom, that partisan now determined to surprise Sluy's. That an attack was impending became known to the governor of that city, the experienced Colonel Van der Noot. Not dreaming, however, that any mortal—even the most audacious of Frenchmen and adventurers—would ever think of carrying a city like Sluy's by surprise, defended as it was by a splendid citadel and by a whole chain of forts and water-batteries, and capable of withstanding three months long, as it had so recently done, a siege in form by the acknowledged master of the beleaguering science, the methodical governor event calmly to bed one fine night in June. His slumbers were disturbed before morning by the sound of trumpets sounding Spanish melodies in the streets, and by a, great uproar and shouting. Springing out of bed, he rushed half-dressed to the rescue. Less vigilant than Paul Bax had been the year before in Bergen, he found that Du Terrail had really effected a surprise. At the head of twelve hundred Walloons and Irishmen, that enterprising officer had waded through the drowned land of Cadzand, with the promised support of a body of infantry under Frederic Van den Berg, from Damm, had stolen noiselessly by the forts of that island unchallenged and unseen, had effected with petards a small breach through the western gate of the city, and with a large number of his followers, creeping two and two through the gap, had found himself for a time master of Sluys.

The profound silence of the place had however somewhat discouraged the intruders. The whole population were as sound asleep as was the excellent commandant, but the stillness in the deserted streets suggested an ambush, and they moved stealthily forward, feeling their way with caution towards the centre of the town.

It so happened, moreover, that the sacristan had forgotten to wind up the great town clock. The agreement with the party first entering and making their way to the opposite end of the city, had been that at the striking of a certain hour after midnight they should attack simultaneously and with a great outcry all the guardhouses, so that the garrison might be simultaneously butchered. The clock never struck, the signal was never given, and Du Terrail and his immediate comrades remained near the western gate, suspicious

Page 2366

and much perplexed. The delay was fatal. The guard, the whole garrison, and the townspeople flew to arms, and half-naked, but equipped with pike and musket, and led on by Van der Noot in person, fell upon the intruders. A panic took the place of previous audacity in the breasts of Du Terrail's followers. Thinking only of escape, they found the gap by which they had crept into the town much less convenient as a means of egress in the face of an infuriated multitude. Five hundred of them were put to death in a very few minutes. Almost as many were drowned or suffocated in the marshes, as they attempted to return by the road over which they had come. A few stragglers June, of the fifteen hundred were all that were left to tell the tale.

It would seem scarcely worth while to chronicle such trivial incidents in this great war—-the all-absorbing drama of Christendom—were it not that they were for the moment the whole war. It might be thought that hostilities were approaching their natural termination, and that the war was dying of extreme old age, when the Quixotic pranks of a Du Terrail occupied so large a part of European attention.

The winter had passed, another spring had come and gone, and Maurice had in vain attempted to obtain sufficient means from the States to take the field in force. Henry, looking on from the outside, was becoming more and more exasperated with the dilatoriness which prevented the republic from profiting by the golden moments of Spinola's enforced absence. Yet the best that could be done seemed to be to take measures for defensive operations.

Spinola never reached Brussels until the beginning of June, yet, during all the good campaigning weather which had been fleeting away, not a blow had been struck, nor a wholesome counsel taken by the stadholder or the States. It was midsummer before the armies were in the field. The plans of the Catholic general however then rapidly developed themselves. Having assembled as large a force as had ever been under his command, he now divided it into two nearly equal portions. Bucquoy, with ten thousand foot, twelve hundred cavalry, and twelve guns, arrived on the 18th July at Nook, on the Meuse. Spinola, with eleven thousand infantry, two thousand horse, and eight guns, crossed the Rhine at the old redoubts of Ruhrort, and on the same 18th July took position at Goor, in Overyssel. The first plan of the commander-in-chief was to retrace exactly his campaign of the previous year, even as he had with so much frankness stated to Henry. But the republic, although deserted by her former friends, and looked upon askance by the monarch of Britain, and by the most Christian king, had this year a most efficient ally in the weather. Jupiter Pluvius had descended from on high to the rescue of the struggling commonwealth, and his decrees were omnipotent as to the course of the campaign. The seasons that year seemed all fused into one. It was difficult to tell on midsummer day whether

Page 2367

it were midwinter, spring, or autumn. The rain came down day after day, week after week, as if the contending armies and the very country which was to be invaded and defended were to be all washed out of existence together. Friesland resolved itself into a vast quagmire; the roads became fluid, the rivers lakes. Spinola turned his face from the east, and proceeded to carry out a second plan which he had long meditated, and even a more effective one, in the west.

The Waal and the Yssel formed two sides of a great quadrilateral; and furnished for the natural fortress, thus enclosed, two vast and admirable moats. Within lay Good-meadow and Foul-meadow—Bet-uwe and Vel-uwe—one, the ancient Batavian island which from time immemorial had given its name to the commonwealth, the other, the once dismal swamp which toil and intelligence had in the course of centuries transformed into the wealthy and flowery land of Gueldres.

Beyond, but in immediate proximity, lay the ancient episcopal city and province of Utrecht, over which lay the road to the adjacent Holland and Zeeland. The very heart of the republic would be laid bare to the conqueror's sword if he could once force the passage, and obtain the control of these two protecting streams. With Utrecht as his base, and all Brabant and Flanders—obedient provinces—at his back, Spinola might accomplish more in one season than Alva, Don John, and Alexander Farnese had compassed in forty years, and destroy at a blow what was still called the Netherland rebellion. The passage of the rivers once effected, the two enveloping wings would fold themselves together, and the conquest would be made.

Thus reasoned the brilliant young general, and his projects, although far-reaching, did not seem wild. The first steps were, however, the most important as well as the most difficult, and he had to reckon with a wary and experienced antagonist. Maurice had at last collected and reviewed at Arnhem an army of nearly fifteen thousand men, and was now watching closely from Doesburg and Deventer every movement of the foe.

Having been forced to a defensive campaign, in which he was not likely at best to gain many additional laurels, he was the more determined to lay down his own life, and sacrifice every man he could bring into the field, before Spinola should march into the cherished domains of Utrecht and Holland. Meantime the rain, which had already exerted so much influence on the military movements of the year, still maintained the supremacy over human plans. The Yssel and the Waal, always deep, broad, sluggish, but dangerous rivers—the Rhine in its old age—were swollen into enormous proportions, their currents flowing for the time with the vigour of their far away youth.

Maurice had confided the defence of the Waal to Warner Du Bois, under whose orders he placed a force of about seven thousand men, and whose business it was to prevent Bucquoy's passage. His own task was to baffle Spinola.

Page 2368

Bucquoy's ambition was to cross the Waal at a point as near as possible to the fork of that stream with the true Rhine, seize the important city of Nymegen, and then give the hand to Spinola, so soon as he should be on the other side of the Yssel. At the village of Spardorp or Kekerdom, he employed Pompeio Giustiniani to make a desperate effort, having secured a large number of barges in which he embarked his troops. As the boatmen neared the opposite bank, however, they perceived that Warner Du Bois had made effective preparations for their reception. They lost heart, and, on pretence that the current of the river was too rapid to allow them to reach the point proposed for their landing, gradually dropped down the stream, and, in spite of the remonstrances of the commanders, pushed their way back to the shore which they had left. From that time forth, the States' troops, in efficient numbers, fringed the inner side of the Waal, along the whole length of the Batavian island, while armed vessels of the republic patrolled the stream itself. In vain Count Bucquoy watched an opportunity, either by surprise or by main strength, to effect a crossing. The Waal remained as impassable as if it were a dividing ocean.

On the other side of the quadrilateral, Maurice's dispositions were as effective as those of his lieutenant on the Waal. The left shore of the Yssel, along its whole length, from Arnhem and Doesburg quite up to Zwoll and Campen, where the river empties itself into the Zuyder Zee, was now sprinkled thickly with forts, hastily thrown up, but strong enough to serve the temporary purpose of the stadholder. In vain the fleet-footed and audacious Spinola moved stealthily or fiercely to and fro, from one point to another, seeking an opening through which to creep, or a weak spot where he might dash himself against the chain. The whole line was securely guarded. The swollen river, the redoubts, and the musketeers of Maurice, protected the heart of the republic from the impending danger.

Wearied of this fruitless pacing up and down, Spinola, while apparently intending an assault upon Deventer, and thus attracting his adversary's attention to that important city, suddenly swerved to the right, and came down upon Lochem. The little town, with its very slender garrison, surrendered at once. It was not a great conquest, but it might possibly be of use in the campaign. It was taken before the stadholder could move a step to its assistance, even had he deemed it prudent to leave Yssel-side for an hour. The summer was passing away, the rain was still descending, and it was the 1st of August before Spinola left Lochem. He then made a rapid movement to the north, between Zwoll and Hasselt, endeavouring to cross the Blackwater, and seize Geelmuyden, on the Zuyder Zee. Had he succeeded, he might have turned Maurice's position. But the works in that direction had been entrusted to an experienced campaigner, Warmelo, sheriff of Zalant, who received the impetuous Spinola and his lieutenant, Count Solre, so warmly, that they reeled backwards at last, after repeated assaults and great loss of men, and never more attempted to cross the Yssel.

Page 2369

Obviously, the campaign had failed. Utrecht and Holland were as far out of the Catholic general's reach as the stars in the sky, but at least, with his large armies, he could earn a few trophies, barren or productive, as it might prove, before winter, uniting with the deluge, should drive him from the field.

On the 3rd August, he laid siege to Groll (or Groenlo), a fortified town of secondary importance in the country of Zutphen, and, squandering his men with much recklessness, in his determination not to be baffled, reduced the place in eleven days. Here he paused for a breathing spell, and then, renouncing all his schemes upon the inner defences of the republic, withdrew once more to the Rhine and laid siege to Rheinberg.

This frontier place had been tossed to and fro so often between the contending parties in the perpetual warfare, that its inhabitants must have learned to consider themselves rather as a convenient circulating medium for military operations than as burghers who had any part in the ordinary business of life. It had old-fashioned defences of stones which, during the recent occupation by the States, had been much improved, and had been strengthened with earthworks.

Before it was besieged, Maurice sent his brother Frederic Henry, with some picked companies, into the place, so that the garrison amounted to three thousand effective men.

The Prince de Soubise, brother of the Duc de Rohan, and other French volunteers of quality, also threw themselves into the place, in order to take lessons in the latest methods of attack and defence. It was now admitted that no more accomplished pupil of the stadholder in the beleaguering art had appeared in Europe than his present formidable adversary. On this occasion, however, there was no great display of science. Maurice obstinately refused to move to the relief of the place, despite all the efforts of a deputation of the States-General who visited his camp in September, urging him strenuously to take the chances of a stricken field.

Nothing could induce the stadholder, who held an observing position at Wesel, with his back against the precious watery quadrilateral, to risk the defence of those most vital lines of the Yssel and the Waal. While attempting to save Rheinberg, he felt it possible that he might lose Nymegen, or even Utrecht. The swift but wily Genoese was not to be trifled with or lost sight of an instant. The road to Holland might still be opened, and the destiny of the republic might hang on the consequences of a single false move. That destiny, under God, was in his hands alone, and no chance of winning laurels, even from his greatest rival's head, could induce him to shrink from the path of duty, however obscure it might seem. There were a few brilliant assaults and sorties, as in all sieges, the French volunteers especially distinguishing themselves; but the place fell at the end of forty days. The garrison marched out with the honours of war. In the modern

practice, armies were rarely captured in strongholds, nor were the defenders, together with the population, butchered.

Page 2370

The loss, after a six weeks' siege, of Rheinberg, which six years before, with far inferior fortifications, had held out a much longer time against the States, was felt as a bitter disappointment throughout the republic. Frederic Henry, on leaving the place, made a feeble and unsuccessful demonstration against Yenlo, by which the general dissatisfaction was not diminished. Soon afterwards, the war became more languid than ever. News arrived of a great crisis on the Genoa exchange. A multitude of merchants, involved in pecuniary transactions with Spinola, fell with one tremendous crash. The funds of the Catholic commander-in-chief were already exhausted, his acceptances could no longer be negotiated.

His credit was becoming almost as bad as the king's own. The inevitable consequence of the want of cash and credit followed. Mutiny, for the first time in Spinola's administration, raised its head once more, and stalked about defiant. Six hundred veterans marched to Breda, and offered their services to Justinus of Nassau. The proposal was accepted. Other bands, established their quarters in different places, chose their Elettos and lesser officers, and enacted the scenes which have been so often depicted in these pages. The splendid army of Spinola melted like April snow. By the last week of October there hardly seemed a Catholic army in the field. The commander-in-chief had scattered such companies as could still be relied upon in the villages of the friendly arch-episcopate of Cologne, and had obtained, not by murders and blackmail—according to the recent practice of the Admiral of Arragon, at whose grim name the whole country-side still shuddered—but from the friendship of the leading inhabitants and by honest loans, a sufficient sum to put bread into the mouths of the troops still remaining faithful to him.

The opportunity had at last arrived for the stadholder to strike a blow before the season closed. Bankruptcy and mutiny had reduced his enemy to impotence in the very season of his greatest probable success. On the 24th October Maurice came before Lochem, which he recaptured in five days. Next in the order of Spinola's victories was Groll, which the stadholder at once besieged. He had almost fifteen thousand infantry and three thousand horse. A career of brief triumph before winter should close in upon those damping fields, seemed now assured. But the rain, which during nearly the whole campaign had been his potent ally, had of late been playing him false. The swollen Yssel, during a brief period of dry weather, had sunk so low in certain shallows as not to be navigable for his transports, and after his trains of artillery and munitions had been dragged wearily overland as far as Groll, the deluge had returned in such force, that physical necessity as well as considerations of humanity compelled him to defer his entrenching operations until the weather should moderate. As there seemed no further danger to

Page 2371

be apprehended from the broken, mutinous, and dispersed forces of the enemy, the siege operations were conducted in a leisurely manner. What was the astonishment, therefore, among the soldiers, when a rumour flew about the camp in the early days of November that the indomitable Spinola was again advancing upon them! It was perfectly true. With extraordinary perseverance he had gathered up six or seven thousand infantry and twelve companies of horse—all the remnants of the splendid armies with which he had taken the field at midsummer—and was now marching to the relief of Groll, besieged as it was by a force at least doubly as numerous as his own. It was represented to the stadholder, however, that an impassable morass lay between him and the enemy, and that there would therefore be time enough to complete his entrenchments before Spinola could put his foolhardy attempt into execution. But the Catholic general, marching faster than rumour itself, had crossed the impracticable swamp almost before a spadeful of earth had been turned in the republican camp. His advance was in sight even while the incredulous were sneering at the absurdity of his supposed project. Informed by scouts of the weakest point in the stadholder's extended lines, Spinola was directing himself thither with beautiful precision. Maurice hastily contracted both his wings, and concentrated himself in the village of Lebel. At last the moment had come for a decisive struggle. There could be little doubt of the result. All the advantage was with the republican army. The Catholics had arrived in front of the enemy fatigued by forced marches through quagmires, in horrible weather, over roads deemed impassable. The States' troops were fresh, posted on ground of their own choosing, and partially entrenched. To the astonishment, even to the horror of the most eager portion of the army, the stadholder deliberately, and despite the groans of his soldiers, refused the combat, and gave immediate orders for raising the siege and abandoning the field.

On the 12th of November he broke up his camp and withdrew to a village called Zelem. On the same day the marquis, having relieved the city, without paying the expected price, retired in another direction, and established what was left of his army in the province of Munster. The campaign was closed. And thus the great war which had run its stormy course for nearly forty years, dribbled out of existence, sinking away that rainy November in the dismal fens of Zutphen. The long struggle for independence had come, almost unperceived, to an end.

Peace had not arrived, but the work of the armies was over for many a long year. Freedom and independence were secured. A deed or two, never to be forgotten by Netherland hearts, was yet to be done on the ocean, before the long and intricate negotiations for peace should begin, and the weary people permit themselves to rejoice; but the prize was already won.

Page 2372

Meantime, the conduct of Prince Maurice in these last days of the campaign was the subject of biting censure by friend and foe. The military fame of Spinola throughout Europe grew apace; and the fame of his great rival seemed to shrink in the same proportion.

Henry of France was especially indignant at what he considered the shortcomings of the republic and of its chief. Already, before the close of the summer, the agent Aerssens had written from Paris that his Majesty was very much displeased with Spinola's prosperity, ascribing it to the want of good councils on the part of the States' Government that so fine an army should lie idle so long, without making an attempt to relieve the beleaguered places, so that Spinola felt assured of taking anything as soon as he made his appearance. "Your Mightinesses cannot believe," continued the agent, "what a trophy is made by the Spanish ministers out of these little exploits, and they have so much address at this court, that if such things continue they may produce still greater results."

In December he wrote that the king was so malcontent concerning the siege of Groll as to make it impossible to answer him with arguments, that he openly expressed regret at not having employed the money lent to the States upon strengthening his own frontiers, so distrustful was he of their capacity for managing affairs, and that he mentioned with disgust statements received from his ambassador at Brussels and from the Duc de Rohan, to the effect that Spinola had between five and six thousand men only at the relief of Groll, against twelve thousand in the stadholder's army.

The motives of the deeds and the omissions of the prince at this supreme moment must be pondered with great caution. The States-General had doubtless been inclined for vigorous movements, and Olden-Barneveld, with some of his colleagues, had visited the camp late in September to urge the relief of Rheinberg. Maurice was in daily correspondence with the Government, and regularly demanded their advice, by which, on many former occasions, he had bound himself, even when it was in conflict with his own better judgment.

But throughout this campaign, the responsibility was entirely, almost ostentatiously, thrown by the States-General upon their commander-in-chief, and, as already indicated, their preparations in the spring and early summer had been entirely inadequate. Should he lose the army with which he had so quietly but completely checked Spinola in all his really important moves during the summer and autumn, he might despair of putting another very soon into the field. That his force in that November week before Groll was numerically far superior to the enemy is certain, but he had lost confidence in his cavalry since their bad behaviour at Mulheim the previous year, and a very large proportion of his infantry was on the sick-list at the moment of Spinola's approach. "Lest the continual bad weather should entirely consume the army," he said, "we are resolved, within a day or two after we have removed the sick who are here in great

numbers, to break up, unless the enemy should give us occasion to make some attempt upon him."

Page 2373

Maurice was the servant of a small republic, contending single-handed against an empire still considered the most formidable power in the world. His cue was not necessarily to fight on all occasions; for delay often fights better than an army against a foreign invader. When a battle and a victory were absolutely necessary we have seen the magnificent calmness which at Nieuport secured triumph under the shadow of death. Had he accepted Spinola's challenge in November, he would probably have defeated him and have taken Groll. He might not, however, have annihilated his adversary, who, even when worsted, would perhaps have effected his escape. The city was of small value to the republic. The principal advantage of a victory would have been increased military renown for himself. Viewed in this light, there is something almost sublime in the phlegmatic and perfectly republican composure with which he disdained laurels, easily enough, as it would stem, to have been acquired, and denied his soldiers the bloodshed and the suffering for which they were clamouring.

And yet, after thoroughly weighing and measuring all these circumstances, it is natural to regret that he did not on that occasion rise upon Spinola and smite him to the earth. The Lord had delivered him into his hands. The chances of his own defeat were small, its probable consequences, should it occur, insignificant. It is hardly conceivable that he could have been so completely overthrown as to allow the Catholic commander to do in November what he had tried all summer in vain to accomplish, cross the Yssel and the Waal, with the dregs of his army, and invade Holland and Zeeland in midwinter, over the prostrate bodies of Maurice and all his forces. On the other hand, that the stadholder would have sent the enemy reeling back to his bogs, with hardly the semblance of an army at his heels, was almost certain: The effect of such a blow upon impending negotiations, and especially upon the impressible imagination of Henry and the pedantic shrewdness of James, would have been very valuable. It was not surprising that the successful soldier who sat on the French throne, and who had been ever ready to wager life and crown on the results of a stricken field, should be loud in his expressions of disapprobation and disgust. Yet no man knew better than the sagacious Gascon that fighting to win a crown, and to save a republic, were two essentially different things.

In the early summer of this year Admiral Haultain, whom we lately saw occupied with tossing Sarmiento's Spanish legion into the sea off the harbour of Dover, had been despatched to the Spanish coast on a still more important errand. The outward bound Portuguese merchantmen and the home returning fleets from America, which had been absent nearly two years, might be fallen in with at any moment, in the latitude of 36-38 deg. The admiral, having received orders, therefore, to cruise carefully in those regions, sailed for the shores of Portugal with a squadron of twenty-four war-ships. His expedition was not very successful. He picked up a prize or two here and there, and his presence on the coast prevented the merchant-fleet from sailing out of Lisbon for the East Indies, the merchandise already on board being disembarked and the voyage postponed to a more favourable opportunity.

Page 2374

He saw nothing, however, of the long-expected ships from the golden West Indies—as Mexico, Peru, and Brazil were then indiscriminately called—and after parting company with six of his own ships, which were dispersed and damaged in a gale, and himself suffering from a dearth of provisions, he was forced to return without much gain or glory.

In the month of September he was once more despatched on the same service. He had nineteen war-galleots of the first class, and two yachts, well equipped and manned. Vice-admiral of the fleet was Regnier Klaaszoon (or Nicholson), of Amsterdam, a name which should always be held fresh in remembrance, not only by mariners and Netherlanders, but by all men whose pulses can beat in sympathy with practical heroism.

The admiral coasted deliberately along the shores of Spain and Portugal. It seemed impossible that the golden fleets, which, as it was ascertained, had not yet arrived, could now escape the vigilance of the Dutch cruisers. An occasional merchant-ship or small war-galley was met from time to time and chased into the harbours. A landing was here and there effected and a few villages burned. But these were not the prizes nor the trophies sought. On the 19th September a storm off the Portuguese coast scattered the fleet; six of the best and largest ships being permanently lost sight of and separated from the rest. With the other thirteen Haultain now cruised off Cape St. Vincent directly across the ordinary path of the homeward-bound treasure ships.

On the 6th October many sails were descried in the distance, and the longing eyes of the Hollanders were at last gratified with what was supposed to be the great West India commercial squadrons. The delusion was brief. Instead of innocent and richly Freighted merchantmen, the new comers soon proved to be the war-ships of Admiral Dan Luis de Fazardo, eighteen great galleons and eight galleys strong, besides lesser vessels—the most formidable fleet that for years had floated in those waters. There had been time for Admiral Haultain to hold but a very brief consultation with his chief officers. As it was manifest that the Hollanders were enormously over-matched, it was decided to manoeuvre as well as possible for the weather-gage, and then to fight or to effect an escape, as might seem most expedient after fairly testing the strength of the enemy. It was blowing a fresh gale, and the Netherland fleet had as much as they could stagger with under close-reefed topsails. The war-galleys, fit only for fair weather, were soon forced to take refuge under the lee of the land, but the eighteen galleons, the most powerful vessels then known to naval architecture, were bearing directly down, full before the wind, upon the Dutch fleet.

Page 2375

It must be admitted that Admiral Haultain hardly displayed as much energy now as he had done in the Straits of Dover against the unarmed transports the year before. His ships were soon scattered, right and left, and the manoeuvres for the weather-gage resolved themselves into a general scramble for escape. Vice-Admiral Klaaszoon alone held firm, and met the onset of the first comers of the Spanish fleet. A fierce combat, yard-arm to yard-arm, ensued. Klaaszoon's mainmast went by the board, but Haultain, with five ships, all that could be rallied, coming to the rescue, the assailants for a moment withdrew. Five Dutch vessels of moderate strength were now in action against the eighteen great galleons of Fazardo. Certainly it was not an even game, but it might have been played with more heart and better skill. There was but a half-hour of daylight left when Klaaszoon's crippled ship was again attacked. This time there was no attempt to offer him assistance; the rest of the Dutch fleet crowding all the sails their masts would bear, and using all the devices of their superior seamanship, not to harass the enemy, but to steal as swiftly as possible out of his way. Honestly confessing that they dared not come into the fight, they bore away for dear life in every direction. Night came on, and the last that the fugitives knew of the events off Cape St. Vincent was that stout Regnier Klaaszoon had been seen at sunset in the midst of the Spanish fleet; the sound of his broadsides saluting their ears as they escaped.

Left to himself, alone in a dismasted ship, the vice-admiral never thought of yielding to the eighteen Spanish galleons. To the repeated summons of Don Luis Fazardo that he should surrender he remained obstinately deaf. Knowing that it was impossible for him to escape, and fearing that he might blow up his vessel rather than surrender, the enemy made no attempt to board. Spanish chivalry was hardly more conspicuous on this occasion than Dutch valour, as illustrated by Admiral Haultain. Two whole days and nights Klaaszoon drifted about in his crippled ship, exchanging broadsides with his antagonists, and with his colours flying on the stump of his mast. The fact would seem incredible, were it not attested by perfectly trustworthy contemporary accounts. At last his hour seemed to have come. His ship was sinking; a final demand for surrender, with promise of quarter, was made. Out of his whole crew but sixty remained alive; many of them badly wounded.

He quietly announced to his officers and men his decision never to surrender, in which all concurred. They knelt together upon the deck, and the admiral made a prayer, which all fervently joined. With his own hand Klaaszoon then lighted the powder magazine, and the ship was blown into the air. Two sailors, all that were left alive, were picked out of the sea by the Spaniards and brought on board one of the vessels of the fleet. Desperately mutilated, those grim Dutchmen lived a few minutes to tell the tale, and then died defiant on the enemy's deck.

Page 2376

Yet it was thought that a republic, which could produce men like Regnier Klaaszoon and his comrades, could be subjected again to despotism, after a war for independence of forty years, and that such sailors could be forbidden to sail the eastern and western seas. No epigrammatic phrase has been preserved of this simple Regnier, the son of Nicholas. He only did what is sometimes talked about in phraseology more or less melo-dramatic, and did it in a very plain way.

Such extreme deeds may have become so much less necessary in the world, that to threaten them is apt to seem fantastic. Exactly at that crisis of history, however, and especially in view of the Dutch admiral commanding having refused a combat of one to three, the speechless self-devotion of the vice-admiral was better than three years of eloquent arguments and a ship-load of diplomatic correspondence, such as were already impending over the world.

Admiral Haultain returned with all his ships uninjured—the six missing vessels having found their way at last safely back to the squadron—but with a very great crack to his reputation. It was urged very justly, both by the States-General and the public, that if one ship under a determined commander could fight the whole Spanish fleet two days and nights, and sink unconquered at last, ten ships more might have put the enemy to flight, or at least have saved the vice-admiral from destruction.

But very few days after the incidents just described, the merchant fleet which, instead of Don Luis Fazardo's war galleons, Admiral Haultain had so longed to encounter, arrived safely at San Lucar. It was the most splendid treasure-fleet that had ever entered a Spanish port, and the Dutch admiral's heart might well have danced for joy, had he chanced to come a little later on the track. There were fifty ships, under charge of General Alonzo de Ochares Galindo and General Ganevaye. They had on board, according to the registers, 1,914,176 dollars worth of bullion for the king, and 6,086,617 dollars for merchants, or 8,000,000 dollars in all, besides rich cargoes of silk, cochineal, sarsaparilla, indigo, Brazil wood, and hides; the result of two years of pressure upon Peruvians, Mexicans, and Brazilians. Never had Spanish finances been at so low an ebb. Never was so splendid an income more desirable. The king's share of the cargo was enough to pay half the arrearages due to his mutinous troops; and for such housekeeping this was to be in funds.

There were no further exploits on land or sea that year. There were, however, deaths of three personages often mentioned in this history. The learned Justus Lipsius died in Louvain, a good editor and scholar, and as sincere a Catholic at last as he had been alternately a bigoted Calvinist and an earnest Lutheran. His reputation was thought to have suffered by his later publications, but the world at large was occupied with sterner stuff than those classic productions, and left the final decision to posterity.

Page 2377

A man of a different mould, the turbulent, high-born, hard fighting, hard-drinking Hohenlo, died also this year, brother-in-law and military guardian, subsequently rival and political and personal antagonist, of Prince Maurice. His daring deeds and his troublesome and mischievous adventures have been recounted in these pages. His name will be always prominent in the history of the republic, to which he often rendered splendid service, but he died, as he had lived, a glutton and a melancholy sot.

The third remarkable personage who passed away was one whose name will be remembered as long as the Netherlands have a history, old Count John of Nassau, only surviving brother of William the Silent. He had been ever prominent and deeply interested in the great religious and political movements of upper and lower Germany, and his services in the foundation of the Dutch commonwealth were signal, and ever generously acknowledged. At one period, as will be recollected, he was stadholder of Gelderland, and he was ever ready with sword, purse, and counsel to aid in the great struggle for independence.

CHAPTER XLVI.

General desire for peace—Political aspect of Europe—Designs of the kings of England, France, and Spain concerning the United Provinces —Matrimonial schemes of Spain—-Conference between the French ministers and the Dutch envoy—Confidential revelations—Henry's desire to annex the Netherlands to France—Discussion of the subject—Artifice of Barneveld—Impracticability of a compromise between the Provinces and Spain—Formation of a West India Company— Secret mission from the archdukes to the Hague—Reply of the States- General—Return of the archdukes' envoy—-Arrangement of an eight months' armistice.

The general tendency towards a pacification in Europe at the close of the year could hardly be mistaken. The languor of fatigue, rather than any sincere desire for peace seemed to make negotiations possible. It was not likely that great truths would yet be admitted, or that ruling individuals or classes would recognise the rise of a new system out of the rapidly dissolving elements of the one which had done its work. War was becoming more and more expensive, while commerce, as the world slowly expanded itself, and manifested its unsuspected resources, was becoming more and more lucrative. It was not, perhaps, that men hated each other less, but that they had for a time exhausted their power and their love for slaughter. Meanwhile new devices for injuring humanity and retarding its civilization were revealing themselves out of that very intellectual progress which ennobled the new era. Although war might still be regarded as the normal condition of the civilized world, it was possible for the chosen ones to whom the earth and its fulness belonged, to inflict general damage otherwise than by perpetual battles.

Page 2378

In the east, west, north, and south of Europe peace was thrusting itself as it were uncalled for and unexpected upon the general attention. Charles and his nephew Sigismund, and the false Demetrius, and the intrigues of the Jesuits, had provided too much work for Sweden, Poland, and Russia to leave those countries much leisure for mingling in the more important business of Europe at this epoch, nor have their affairs much direct connection with this history. Venice, in its quarrels with the Jesuits, had brought Spain, France, and all Italy into a dead lock, out of which a compromise had been made not more satisfactory to the various parties than compromises are apt to prove. The Dutch republic still maintained the position which it had assumed, a quarter of a century before, of actual and legal independence; while Spain, on the other hand, still striving after universal monarchy, had not, of course, abated one jot of its pretensions to absolute dominion over its rebellious subjects in the Netherlands.

The holy Roman and the sublime Ottoman empires had also drifted into temporary peace; the exploits of the Persians and other Asiatic movements having given Ahmed more work than was convenient on his eastern frontier, while Stephen Botshkay had so completely got the better of Rudolph in Transylvania as to make repose desirable. So there was a treaty between the great Turk and the great Christian on the basis of what each possessed; Stephen Botshkay was recognized as prince of Transylvania with part of Hungary, and, when taken off soon afterwards by family poison, he recommended on his death-bed the closest union between Hungary and Transylvania, as well as peace with the emperor, so long as it might be compatible with the rights of the Magyars.

France and England, while suspecting each other, dreading each other, and very sincerely hating each other, were drawn into intimate relations by their common detestation of Spain, with which power both had now formal treaties of alliance and friendship. This was the result of their mighty projects for humbling the house of Austria and annihilating its power. England hated the Netherlands because of the injuries she had done them, the many benefits she had conferred upon them, and more than all on account of the daily increasing commercial rivalry between the two most progressive states in Christendom, the two powers which, comparatively weak as they were in territory, capital, and population, were most in harmony with the spirit of the age.

The Government of England was more hostile than its people to the United Provinces. James never spoke of the Netherlanders but as upstarts and rebels, whose success ought to be looked upon with horror by the Lord’s anointed everywhere. He could not shut his eyes to the fact that, with the republic destroyed, and a Spanish sacerdotal despotism established in Holland and Zeeland, with Jesuit seminaries in full bloom in Amsterdam and the Hague, his own rebels in Ireland might prove more troublesome than ever, and gunpowder plots in London become common occurrences.

Page 2379

The Earl of Tyrone at that very moment was receiving enthusiastic hospitality at the archduke's court, much to the disgust of the Presbyterian sovereign of the United Kingdom, who nevertheless, despite his cherished theology, was possessed with an unconquerable craving for a close family alliance with the most Catholic king. His ministers were inclined to Spain, and the British Government was at heart favourable to some kind of arrangement by which the Netherlands might be reduced to the authority of their former master, in case no scheme could be carried into, effect for acquiring a virtual sovereignty over those provinces by the British crown. Moreover, and most of all, the King of France being supposed to contemplate the annexation of the Netherlands to his own dominions, the jealousy excited by such ambition made it even possible for James's Government to tolerate the idea of Dutch independence. Thus the court and cabinet of England were as full of contradictory hopes and projects as a madman's brain.

The rivalry between the courts of England and France for the Spanish marriages and by means of them to obtain ultimately the sovereignty of all the Netherlands, was the key to most of the diplomacy and interpalatial intrigue of the several first years of the century. The negotiations of Cornwallis at Madrid were almost simultaneous with the schemes of Villeroy and Rosny at Paris.

A portion of the English Government, so soon as its treaty with Spain had been signed, seemed secretly determined to do as much injury to the republic as might lie in its power. While at heart convinced that the preservation of the Netherlands was necessary for England's safety, it was difficult for James and the greater part of his advisers to overcome their repugnance to the republic, and their jealousy of the great commercial successes which the republic had achieved.

It was perfectly plain that a continuance of the war by England and the Netherlands united would have very soon ended in the entire humiliation of Spain. Now that peace had been made, however, it was thought possible that England might make a bargain with her late enemy for destroying the existence and dividing the territory of her late ally. Accordingly the Spanish cabinet lost no time in propounding, under seal of secrecy, and with even more mystery than was usually employed by the most Catholic court, a scheme for the marriage of the Prince of Wales with the Infanta; the bridal pair, when arrived at proper age, to be endowed with all the Netherlands, both obedient and republican, in full sovereignty. One thing was necessary to the carrying out of this excellent plot, the reduction of the republic into her ancient subjection to Spain before her territory could be transferred to the future Princess of Wales.

Page 2380

It was proposed by the Spanish Government that England should undertake this part of the job, and that King James for such service should receive an annual pension of one million ducats a year. It was also stipulated that certain cities in the republican dominions should be pledged to him as security for the regular payment of that stipend. Sir Charles Cornwallis, English ambassador in Spain, lent a most favourable ear to these proposals, and James eagerly sanctioned them so soon as they were secretly imparted to that monarch. “The king here,” said Cornwallis, “hath need of the King of Great Britain’s arm. Our king . . . hath good occasion to use the help of the King of Spain’s purse. The assistance of England to help that nation out of that quicksand of the Low Countries, where so long they have struggled to tread themselves out, and by proof find that deeper in, will be a sovereign medicine to the malady of this estate. The addition of a million of ducats to the revenue of our sovereign will be a good help to his estate.”

The Spanish Government had even the effrontery to offer the English envoy a reward of two hundred thousand crowns if the negotiations should prove successful. Care was to be taken however that Great Britain, by this accession of power, both present and in prospect, should not grow too great, Spain reserving to herself certain strongholds and maritime positions in the Netherlands, for the proper security of her European and Indian commerce.

It was thought high time for the bloodshed to cease in the provinces; and as England, by making a treaty of peace with Spain when Spain was at the last gasp, had come to the rescue of that power, it was logical that she should complete the friendly work by compelling the rebellious provinces to awake from their dream of independence. If the statesmen of Holland believed in the possibility of that independence, the statesmen of England knew better. If the turbulent little republic was not at last convinced that it had no right to create so much turmoil and inconvenience for its neighbours and for Christendom in general in order to maintain its existence, it should be taught its duty by the sovereigns of Spain and Britain.

It was observed, however, that the more greedily James listened day after day to the marriage propositions, the colder became the Spanish cabinet in regard to that point, the more disposed to postpone those nuptials “to God’s providence and future event.”

The high hopes founded on these secret stratagems were suddenly dashed to the earth before the end of the year; the explosion of the Gunpowder Plot blowing the castles in Spain into the air.

Of course the Spanish politicians vied with each other in expressions of horror and indignation at the Plot, and the wicked contrivers thereof, and suggested to Cornwallis that the King of France was probably at the bottom of it.

Page 2381

They declined to give up Owen and Baldwin, however, and meantime the negotiations for the marriage of the Prince of Wales and the Infanta, the million ducats of yearly pension for the needy James, and the reduction of the Dutch republic to its ancient slavery to Spain “under the eye and arm of Britain,” faded indefinitely away. Salisbury indeed was always too wise to believe in the possibility of the schemes with which James and some of his other counsellors had been so much infatuated.

It was almost dramatic that these plottings between James and the Catholic king against the life of the republic should have been signally and almost simultaneously avenged by the conspiracy of Guido Fawkes.

On the other hand, Rosny had imparted to the Dutch envoy the schemes of Henry and his ministers in regard to the same object, early in 1605. “Spain is more tired of the war,” said he to Aerssens, under seal of absolute secrecy, “than you are yourselves. She is now negotiating for a marriage between the Dauphin and the Infanta, and means to give her the United Provinces, as at present constituted, for a marriage portion. Villeroy and Sillery believe the plan feasible, but demand all the Netherlands together. As for me I shall have faith in it if they send their Infanta hither at once, or make a regular cession of the territory. Do you believe that my lords the States will agree to the proposition?”

It would be certainly difficult to match in history the effrontery of such a question. The republican envoy was asked point blank whether his country would resign her dearly gained liberty and give herself as a dowry for Philip the Second’s three-years-old grand daughter. Aerssens replied cautiously that he had never heard the matter discussed in the provinces. It had always been thought that the French king had no pretensions to their territory, but had ever advocated their independence. He hinted that such a proposition was a mere apple of discord thrown between two good allies by Spain. Rosny admitted the envoy’s arguments, and said that his Majesty would do nothing without the consent of the Dutch Government, and that he should probably be himself sent ere long to the Hague to see if he could not obtain some little recognition from the States.

Thus it was confidentially revealed to the agent of the republic that her candid adviser and ally was hard at work, in conjunction with her ancient enemy, to destroy her independence, annex her territory, and appropriate to himself all the fruits of her great war, her commercial achievements, and her vast sacrifices; while, as we have just seen, English politicians at the same moment were attempting to accomplish the same feat for England’s supposed advantage. All that was wished by Henry to begin with was a little, a very little, recognition of his sovereignty. “You will do well to reflect on this delicate matter in time,” wrote Aerssens to the Advocate; “I know that the King of Spain is inclined to make this offer, and that they are mad enough in this place to believe the thing feasible. For me, I reject all such talk until they have got the Infanta—that is to

say, until the Greek Kalends. I am ashamed that they should believe it here, and fearful that there is still more evil concealed than I know of."

Page 2382

Towards the close of the year 1606 the French Government became still more eager to carry out their plans of alliance and absorption. Aerssens, who loved a political intrigue better than became a republican envoy, was perfectly aware of Henry's schemes. He was disposed to humour them, in order to make sure of his military assistance, but with the secret intention of seeing them frustrated by the determined opposition of the States.

The French ministers, by command of their sovereign, were disposed to deal very plainly. They informed the Dutch diplomatist, with very little circumlocution, that if the republic wished assistance from France she was to pay a heavy price for it. Not a pound of flesh only, but the whole body corporate, was to be surrendered if its destruction was to be averted by French arms.

"You know," said Sillery, "that princes in all their actions consider their interests, and his Majesty has not so much affection for your conservation as to induce him to resign his peaceful position. Tell me, I pray you, what would you do for his Majesty in case anything should be done for you? You were lately in Holland. Do you think that they would give themselves to the king if he assisted them? Do you not believe that Prince Maurice has designs on the sovereignty, and would prevent the fulfilment of the king's hopes? What will you do for us in return for our assistance?"

Aerssens was somewhat perplexed, but he was cunning at fence. "We will do all we can," said he, "for any change is more supportable than the yoke of Spain."

"What can you do then?" persisted Sillery. "Give us your opinion in plain French, I beg of you, and lay aside all passion; for we have both the same object—your preservation. Besides interest, his Majesty has affection for you. Let him only see some advantage for himself to induce to assist you more powerfully. Suppose you should give us what you have and what you may acquire in Flanders with the promise to treat secretly with us when the time comes. Could you do that?"

The envoy replied that this would be tearing the commonwealth in pieces. If places were given away, the jealousy of the English would be excited. Certainly it would be no light matter to surrender Sluys, the fruit of Maurice's skill and energy, the splendidly earned equivalent for the loss of Ostend. "As to Sluys and other places in Flanders," said Aerssens, "I don't know if towns comprised in our Union could be transferred or pledged without their own consent and that of the States. Should such a thing get wind we might be ruined. Nevertheless I will write to learn what his Majesty may hope."

"The people," returned Sillery, "need know nothing of this transfer; for it might be made secretly by Prince Maurice, who could put the French quietly into Sluys and other Flemish places. Meantime you had best make a journey to Holland to arrange matters so that the deputies, coming hither, may be amply instructed in regard to Sluys, and no time be lost. His Majesty is determined to help you if you know how to help yourselves."

Page 2383

The two men then separated, Sillery enjoining it upon the envoy to see the king next morning, “in order to explain to his Majesty, as he had just been doing to himself, that this sovereignty could not be transferred, without the consent of the whole people, nor the people be consulted in secret.”

“It is necessary therefore to be armed,” continued Henry’s minister very significantly, “before aspiring to the sovereignty.”

Thus there was a faint glimmer of appreciation at the French court of the meaning of popular sovereignty. It did not occur to the minister that the right of giving consent was to be respected. The little obstacle was to be overcome by stratagem and by force. Prince Maurice was to put French garrisons stealthily into Sluys and other towns conquered by the republic in Flanders. Then the magnanimous ally was to rise at the right moment and overcome all resistance by force of arms. The plot was a good one. It is passing strange, however, that the character of the Nassaus and of the Dutch nation should after the last fifty years have been still so misunderstood. It seemed in France possible that Maurice would thus defile his honour and the Netherlanders barter their liberty, by accepting a new tyrant in place of the one so long ago deposed.

“This is the marrow of our conference,” said Aerssens to Barneveld, reporting the interview, “and you may thus perceive whither are tending the designs of his Majesty. It seems that they are aspiring here to the sovereignty, and all my letters have asserted the contrary. If you will examine a little more closely, however, you will find that there is no contradiction. This acquisition would be desirable for France if it could be made peacefully. As it can only be effected by war you may make sure that it will not be attempted; for the great maxim and basis of this kingdom is to preserve repose, and at the same time give such occupation to the King of Spain that his means shall be consumed and his designs frustrated. All this will cease if we make peace.

“Thus in treating with the king we must observe two rules. The first is that we can maintain ourselves no longer unless powerfully assisted, and that, the people inclining to peace, we shall be obliged to obey the people. Secondly, we must let no difficulty appear as to the desire expressed by his Majesty to have the sovereignty of these provinces. We ought to let him hope for it, but to make him understand that by ordinary and legitimate means he cannot aspire to it. We will make him think that we have an equal desire with himself, and we shall thus take from those evil-disposed counsellors the power to injure us who are always persuading him that he is only making us great for ourselves, and thus giving us the power to injure him. In short, the king can hope nothing from us overtly, and certainly nothing covertly. By explaining to him that we require the authorization of the people, and by showing ourselves prompt to

Page 2384

grant his request, he will be the very first to prevent us from taking any steps, in order that his repose may not be disturbed. I know that France does not wish to go to war with Spain. Let us then pretend that we wish to be under the dominion of France, and that we will lead our people to that point if the king desires it, but that it cannot be done secretly. Believe me, he will not wish it on such conditions, while we shall gain much by this course. Would to God that we could engage France in war with Spain. All the utility would be ours; and the accidents of arms would so press them to Spain, Italy, and other places, that they would have little leisure to think of us. Consider all this and conceal it from Buzanval."

Buzanval, it is well known, was the French envoy at the Hague, and it must be confessed that these schemes and paltry falsehoods on the part of the Dutch agent were as contemptible as any of the plots contrived every day in Paris or Madrid. Such base coin as this was still circulating in diplomacy as if fresh from the Machiavellian mint; but the republican agent ought to have known that his Government had long ago refused to pass it current.

Soon afterwards this grave matter was discussed at the Hague between Henry's envoy and Barneveld. It was a very delicate negotiation. The Advocate wished to secure the assistance of a powerful but most unscrupulous ally, and at the same time to conceal his real intention to frustrate the French design upon the independence of the republic.

Disingenuous and artful as his conduct unquestionably was, it may at least be questioned whether in that age of deceit any other great statesman would have been more frank. If the comparatively weak commonwealth, by openly and scornfully refusing all the insidious and selfish propositions of the French king, had incurred that monarch's wrath, it would have taken a noble position no doubt, but it would have perhaps been utterly destroyed. The Advocate considered himself justified in using the artifices of war against a subtle and dangerous enemy who wore the mask of a friend. When the price demanded for military protection was the voluntary abandonment of national independence in favour of the protector, the man who guided the affairs of the Netherlands did not hesitate to humour and to outwit the king who strove to subjugate the republic. At the same time—however one may be disposed to censure the dissimulation from the standing-ground of a lofty morality—it should not be forgotten that Barneveld never hinted at any possible connivance on his part with an infraction of the laws. Whatever might be the result of time, of persuasion, of policy, he never led Henry or his ministers to believe that the people of the Netherlands could be deprived of their liberty by force or fraud. He was willing to play a political game, in which he felt himself inferior to no man, trusting to his own skill and coolness for success. If the tyrant were defeated, and at the same time made to serve the cause of the free commonwealth, the Advocate believed this to be fair play.

Page 2385

Knowing himself surrounded by gamblers and tricksters, he probably did not consider himself to be cheating because he did not play his cards upon the table.

So when Buzanval informed him early in October that the possession of Sluys and other Flemish towns would not be sufficient for the king, but that they must offer the sovereignty on even more favourable conditions than had once been proposed to Henry *iii*., the Advocate told him roundly that my lords the States were not likely to give the provinces to any man, but meant to maintain their freedom and their rights. The envoy replied that his Majesty would be able to gain more favour perhaps with the common people of the country.

When it is remembered that the States had offered the sovereignty of the provinces to Henry *iii*., abjectly and as it were without any conditions at all, the effrontery of Henry *iv*. may be measured, who claimed the same sovereignty, after twenty years of republican independence, upon even more favourable terms than those which his predecessor had rejected.

Barneveld, in order to mitigate the effect of his plump refusal of the royal overtures, explained to Buzanval, what Buzanval very well knew, that the times had now changed; that in those days, immediately after the death of William the Silent, despair and disorder had reigned in the provinces, “while that dainty delicacy—liberty—had not so long been sweetly tickling the appetites of the people; that the English had not then acquired their present footing in the country, nor the house of Nassau the age, the credit, and authority to which it had subsequently attained.”

He then intimated—and here began the deception, which certainly did not deceive Buzanval—that if things were handled in the right way, there was little doubt as to the king’s reaching the end proposed, but that all depended on good management. It was an error, he said, to suppose that in one, two, or three months, eight provinces and their principal members, to wit, forty good cities all enjoying liberty and equality, could be induced to accept a foreign sovereign.

Such language was very like irony, and probably not too subtle to escape the fine perception of the French envoy.

The first thing to be done, continued the Advocate, is to persuade the provinces to aid the king with all their means to conquer the disunited provinces—to dispose of the archdukes, in short, and to drive the Spaniards from the soil—and then, little by little, to make it clear that there could be no safety for the States except in reducing the whole body of the Netherlands under the authority of the king. Let his Majesty begin by conquering and annexing to his crown the provinces nearest him, and he would then be able to persuade the others to a reasonable arrangement.

Page 2386

Whether the Advocate's general reply was really considered by Buzanval as a grave sarcasm, politely veiled, may be a question. That envoy, however, spoke to his Government of the matter as surrounded with difficulties, but not wholly desperate. Barneveld was, he said, inclined to doubt whether the archdukes would be able, before any negotiations were begun, to comply with the demand which he had made upon them to have a declaration in writing that the United Provinces were to be regarded as a free people over whom they pretended to no authority. If so, the French king would at once be informed of the fact. Meantime the envoy expressed the safe opinion that, if Prince Maurice and the Advocate together should take the matter of Henry's sovereignty in hand with zeal, they might conduct the bark to the desired haven. Surely this was an 'if' with much virtue in it. And notwithstanding that he chose to represent Barneveld as, rich, tired, at the end of his Latin, and willing enough to drop his anchor in a snug harbour, in order to make his fortune secure, it was obvious enough that Buzanval had small hope at heart of seeing his master's purpose accomplished.

As to Prince Maurice, the envoy did not even affect to believe him capable of being made use of, strenuous as the efforts of the French Government in that direction had been. "He has no private designs that I can find out," said Buzanval, doing full justice to the straightforward and sincere character of the prince. "He asks no change for himself or for his country." The envoy added, as a matter of private opinion however, that if an alteration were to be made in the constitution of the provinces, Maurice would prefer that it should be made in favour of France than of any other Government.

He lost no opportunity, moreover, of impressing it upon his Government that if the sovereignty were to be secured for France at all, it could only be done by observing great caution, and by concealing their desire to swallow the republic of which they were professing themselves the friends. The jealousy of England was sure to be awakened if France appeared too greedy at the beginning. On the other hand, that power "might be the more easily rocked into a profound sleep if France did not show its appetite at the very beginning of the banquet." That the policy of France should be steadily but stealthily directed towards getting possession of as many strong places as possible in the Netherlands had long been his opinion. "Since we don't mean to go to war," said he a year before to Villeroy, "let us at least follow the example of the English, who have known how to draw a profit out of the necessities of this state. Why should we not demand, or help ourselves to, a few good cities. Sluys, for example, would be a security for us, and of great advantage."

Page 2387

Suspicion was rife on this subject at the court of Spain. Certainly it would be less humiliating to the Catholic crown to permit the independence of its rebellious subjects than to see them incorporated into the realms of either France or England. It is not a very striking indication of the capacity of great rulers to look far into the future that both, France and England should now be hankering after the sovereignty of those very provinces, the solemn offer of which by the provinces themselves both France and England had peremptorily and almost contemptuously refused.

In Spain itself the war was growing very wearisome. Three hundred thousand dollars a month could no longer be relied upon from the royal exchequer, or from the American voyages, or from the kite-flying operations of the merchant princes on the Genoa exchange.

A great fleet, to be sure, had recently arrived, splendidly laden, from the West Indies, as already stated. Pagan slaves, scourged to their dreadful work, continued to supply to their Christian taskmasters the hidden treasures of the New World in exchange for the blessings of the Evangel as thus revealed; but these treasures could never fill the perpetual sieve of the Netherland war, rapidly and conscientiously as they were poured into it, year after year.

The want of funds in the royal exchequer left the soldiers in Flanders unpaid, and as an inevitable result mutiny admirably organized and calmly defiant was again established throughout the obedient provinces. This happened regularly once a year, so that it seemed almost as business-like a proceeding for an Eletto to proclaim mutiny as for a sovereign to declare martial law. Should the whole army mutiny at once, what might become of the kingdom of Spain?

Moreover, a very uneasy feeling was prevalent that, as formerly, the Turks had crossed the Hellespont into Europe by means of a Genoese alliance and Genoese galleys, so now the Moors were contemplating the reconquest of Granada, and of their other ancient possessions in Spain, with the aid of the Dutch republic and her powerful fleets. —[Grotius, xv. 715]

The Dutch cruisers watched so carefully on the track of the homeward-bound argosies, that the traffic was becoming more dangerous than lucrative, particularly since the public law established by Admiral Fazardo, that it was competent for naval commanders to hang, drown, or burn the crews of the enemy’s merchantmen.

The Portuguese were still more malcontent than the Spaniards. They had gained little by the absorption of their kingdom by Spain, save participation in the war against the republic, the result of which had been to strip them almost entirely of the conquests of Vasco de Gama and his successors, and to close to them the ports of the Old World and the New.

Page 2388

In the republic there was a party for peace, no doubt, but peace only with independence. As for a return to their original subjection to Spain they were unanimously ready to accept forty years more of warfare rather than to dream of such a proposition. There were many who deliberately preferred war to peace. Bitter experience had impressed very deeply on the Netherlanders the great precept that faith would never be kept with heretics. The present generation had therefore been taught from their cradles to believe that the word peace in Spanish mouths simply meant the Holy Inquisition. It was not unnatural, too, perhaps, that a people who had never known what it was to be at peace might feel, in regard to that blessing, much as the blind or the deaf towards colour or music; as something useful and agreeable, no doubt, but with which they might the more cheerfully dispense, as peculiar circumstances had always kept them in positive ignorance of its nature. The instinct of commercial greediness made the merchants of Holland and Zeeland, and especially those of Amsterdam, dread the revival of Antwerp in case of peace, to the imagined detriment of the great trading centres of the republic. It was felt also to be certain that Spain, in case of negotiations, would lay down as an indispensable preliminary the abstinence on the part of the Netherlanders from all intercourse with the Indies, East or West; and although such a prohibition would be received by those republicans with perfect contempt, yet the mere discussion of the subject moved their spleen. They had already driven the Portuguese out of a large portion of the field in the east, and they were now preparing by means of the same machinery to dispute the monopoly of the Spaniards in the west. To talk of excluding such a people as this from intercourse with any portion of the Old World or the New was the mumbling of dotage; yet nothing could be more certain than that such would be the pretensions of Spain.

As for the stadholder, his vocation was war, his greatness had been derived from war, his genius had never turned itself to pacific pursuits. Should a peace be negotiated, not only would his occupation be gone, but he might even find himself hampered for means. It was probable that his large salaries, as captain and admiral-general of the forces of the republic, would be seriously curtailed, in case his services in the field were no longer demanded, while such secret hopes as he might entertain of acquiring that sovereign power which Barneveld had been inclined to favour, were more likely to be fulfilled if the war should be continued. At the same time, if sovereignty were to be his at all, he was distinctly opposed to such limitations of his authority as were to have been proposed by the States to his father. Rather than reign on those conditions, he avowed that he would throw himself head foremost from the great tower of Hague Castle.

Page 2389

Moreover, the prince was smarting under the consciousness of having lost military reputation, however undeservedly, in the latter campaigns, and might reasonably hope to gain new glory in the immediate future. Thus, while his great rival, Marquis Spinola, whose fame had grown to so luxuriant a height in so brief a period, had many reasons to dread the results of future campaigning, Maurice seemed to have personally much to lose and nothing to hope for in peace. Spinola was over head and ears in debt. In the past two years he had spent millions of florins out of his own pocket. His magnificent fortune and boundless credit were seriously compromised. He had found it an easier task to take Ostend and relieve Grol than to bolster up the finances of Spain.

His acceptances were becoming as much a drug upon the exchanges of Antwerp, Genoa, or Augsburg, as those of the most Catholic king or their Highnesses the archdukes. Ruin stared him in the face, notwithstanding the deeds with which he had startled the world, and he was therefore sincerely desirous of peace, provided, of course, that all those advantages for which the war had been waged in vain could now be secured by negotiation.

There had been, since the arrival of the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands, just forty years of fighting. Maurice and the war had been born in the same year, and it would be difficult for him to comprehend that his whole life's work had been a superfluous task, to be rubbed away now with a sponge. Yet that Spain, on the entrance to negotiations, would demand of the provinces submission to her authority, re-establishment of the Catholic religion, abstinence from Oriental or American commerce, and the toleration of Spanish soldiers over all the Netherlands, seemed indubitable.

It was equally unquestionable that the seven provinces would demand recognition of their national independence by Spain, would refuse public practice of the Roman religion within their domains, and would laugh to scorn any proposed limitations to their participation in the world's traffic. As to the presence of Spanish troops on their soil, that was, of course, an inconceivable idea.

Where, then, could even a loophole be found through which the possibility of a compromise could be espied? The ideas of the contending parties were as much opposed to each other as fire and snow. Nevertheless, the great forces of the world seemed to have gradually settled into such an equilibrium as to make the continuance of the war for the present impossible.

Accordingly, the peace-party in Brussels had cautiously put forth its tentacles late in 1606, and again in the early days of the new year. Walrave van Wittenhorst and Doctor Gevaerts had been allowed to come to the Hague, ostensibly on private business, but with secret commission from the archdukes to feel and report concerning the political atmosphere. They found that it was a penal offence in the republic to talk of peace

Page 2390

or of truce. They nevertheless suspected that there might be a more sympathetic layer beneath the very chill surface which they everywhere encountered. Having intimated in the proper quarters that the archdukes would be ready to receive or to appoint commissioners for peace or armistice, if becoming propositions should be made, they were allowed on the 10th of January, 1607, to make a communication to the States-General. They indulged in the usual cheap commonplaces on the effusion of blood, the calamities of war, and the blessings of peace, and assured the States of the very benignant disposition of their Highnesses at Brussels.

The States-General, in their reply, seventeen days afterwards, remarking that the archdukes persisted in their unfounded pretensions of authority over them, took occasion to assure their Highnesses that they had no chance to obtain such authority except by the sword. Whether they were like to accomplish much in that way the history of the past might sufficiently indicate, while on the other hand the States would always claim the right, and never renounce the hope, of recovering those provinces which had belonged to their free commonwealth since the union of Utrecht, and which force and fraud had torn away.

During twenty-five years that union had been confirmed as a free state by solemn decrees, and many public acts and dealings with the mightiest potentates of Europe, nor could any other answer now be made to the archdukes than the one always given to his holy Roman Imperial Majesty, and other princes, to wit, that no negotiations could be had with powers making any pretensions in conflict with the solemn decrees and well-maintained rights of the United Netherlands.

It was in this year that two words became more frequent in the mouths of men than they had ever been before; two words which as the ages rolled on were destined to exercise a wider influence over the affairs of this planet than was yet dreamed of by any thinker in Christendom. Those words were America and Virginia. Certainly both words were known before, although India was the more general term for these auriferous regions of the west, which, more than a century long, had been open to European adventure, while the land, baptized in honour of the throned Vestal, had been already made familiar to European ears by the exploits of Raleigh. But it was not till 1607 that Jamestown was founded, that Captain John Smith’s adventures with Powhattan, “emperor of Virginia,” and his daughter the Princess Pocahontas, became fashionable topics in England, that the English attempts to sail up the Chickahominy to the Pacific Ocean—as abortive as those of the Netherlanders to sail across the North Pole to Cathay—were creating scientific discussion in Europe, and that the first cargo of imaginary gold dust was exported from the James River.

Page 2391

With the adventurous minds of England all aflame with enthusiasm for those golden regions, with the thick-coming fancies for digging, washing, refining the precious sands of Virginia rivers, it was certain that a great rent was now to be made in the Borgian grant. It was inevitable that the rivalry of the Netherlanders should be excited by the achievements and the marvellous tales of Englishmen beyond the Atlantic, and that they too should claim their share of traffic with that golden and magnificent Unknown which was called America. The rivalry between England and Holland, already so conspicuous in the spicy Archipelagos of the east, was now to be extended over the silvery regions of the west. The two leading commercial powers of the Old World were now to begin their great struggle for supremacy in the western hemisphere.

A charter for what was called a West India Company was accordingly granted by the States-General. West India was understood to extend from the French settlements in Newfoundland or Acadia, along the American coast to the Straits of Magellan, and so around to the South Sea, including the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, besides all of Africa lying between the tropic of Cancer and the Cape of Good Hope. At least, within those limits the West India Company was to have monopoly of trade, all other Netherlanders being warned off the precincts. Nothing could be more magnificent, nor more vague.

The charter was for thirty-six years. The company was to maintain armies and fleets, to build forts and cities, to carry on war, to make treaties of peace and of commerce. It was a small peripatetic republic of merchants and mariners, evolved out of the mother republic—which had at last established its position among the powers of Christendom—and it was to begin its career full grown and in full armour.

The States-General were to furnish the company at starting with one million of florins and with twenty ships of war. The company was to add twenty other ships. The Government was to consist of four chambers of directors. One-half the capital was to be contributed by the chamber of Amsterdam, one-quarter by that of Zeeland, one-eighth respectively by the chambers of the Meuse and of North Holland. The chambers of Amsterdam, of Zeeland, of the Meuse, and of North Holland were to have respectively thirty, eighteen, fifteen, and fifteen directors. Of these seventy-eight, one-third were to be replaced every sixth year by others, while from the whole number seventeen persons were to be elected as a permanent board of managers. Dividends were to be made as soon as the earnings amounted to ten per cent. on the capital. Maritime judges were to decide upon prizes, the proceeds of which were not to be divided for six years, in order that war might be self-sustaining. Afterwards, the treasury of the United Provinces should receive one-tenth, Prince Maurice one-thirtieth, and the merchant stockholders the remainder. Governors and generals were to take the oath of fidelity to the States-General. The merchandize of the company was to be perpetually free of taxation, so far as regarded old duties, and exempt from war-taxes for the first twenty years.

Page 2392

Very violent and conflicting were the opinions expressed throughout the republic in regard to this project. It was urged by those most in favour of it that the chief sources of the greatness of Spain would be thus transferred to the States-General; for there could be no doubt that the Hollanders, unconquerable at sea, familiar with every ocean-path, and whose hardy constitutions defied danger and privation and the extremes of heat and cold, would easily supplant the more delicately organized adventurers from Southern Europe, already enervated by the exhausting climate of America. Moreover, it was idle for Spain to attempt the defence of so vast a portion of the world. Every tribe over which she had exercised sway would furnish as many allies for the Dutch company as it numbered men; for to obey and to hate the tyrannical Spaniard were one. The republic would acquire, in reality, the grandeur which with Spain was but an empty boast, would have the glory of transferring the great war beyond the limits of home into those far distant possessions, where the enemy deemed himself most secure, and would teach the true religion to savages sunk in their own superstitions, and still further depraved by the imported idolatries of Rome. Commerce was now world-wide, and the time had come for the Netherlanders, to whom the ocean belonged, to tear out from the pompous list of the Catholic king's titles his appellation of Lord of the Seas.

There were others, however, whose language was not so sanguine. They spoke with a shiver of the inhabitants of America, who hated all men, simply because they were men, or who had never manifested any love for their species except as an article of food. To convert such cannibals to Christianity and Calvinism would be a hopeless endeavour, and meanwhile the Spaniards were masters of the country. The attempt to blockade half the globe with forty galleots was insane; for, although the enemy had not occupied the whole territory, he commanded every harbour and position of vantage. Men, scarcely able to defend inch by inch the meagre little sandbanks of their fatherland, who should now go forth in hopes to conquer the world, were but walking in their sleep. They would awake to the consciousness of ruin.

Thus men in the United Provinces spake of America. Especially Barneveld had been supposed to be prominent among the opponents of the new Company, on the ground that the more violently commercial ambition excited itself towards wider and wilder fields of adventure, the fainter grew inclinations for peace. The Advocate, who was all but omnipotent in Holland and Zeeland, subsequently denied the imputation of hostility to the new corporation, but the establishment of the West India Company, although chartered, was postponed.

The archdukes had not been discouraged by the result of their first attempts at negotiation, for Wittenhorst had reported a disposition towards peace as prevalent in the rebellious provinces, so far as he had contrived, during his brief mission, to feel the public pulse.

Page 2393

On the 6th February, 1607, Werner Cruwel, an insolvent tradesman of Brussels, and a relative of Recorder Aerssens, father of the envoy at Paris, made his appearance very unexpectedly at the house of his kinsman at the Hague. Sitting at the dinner-table, but neither eating nor drinking, he was asked by his host what troubled him. He replied that he had a load on his breast. Aerssens begged him, if it was his recent bankruptcy that oppressed him, to use philosophy and patience. The merchant answered that he who confessed well was absolved well. He then took from his pocket-book a letter from President Richardot, and said he would reveal what he had to say after dinner. The cloth being removed, and the wife and children of Aerssens having left the room, Cruwel disclosed that he had been sent by Richardot and Father Neyen on a secret mission. The recorder, much amazed and troubled, refused to utter a word, save to ask if Cruwel would object to confer with the Advocate. The merchant expressing himself as ready for such an interview, the recorder, although it was late, immediately sent a message to the great statesman. Barneveld was in bed and asleep, but was aroused to receive the communication of Aerssens. "We live in such a calumnious time," said the recorder, "that many people believe that you and I know more of the recent mission of Wittenhorst than we admit. You had best interrogate Cruwel in the presence of witnesses. I know not the man's humour, but it seems to me since his failure, that, in spite of his shy and lumpish manner, he is false and cunning."

The result was a secret interview, on the 8th February, between Prince Maurice, Barneveld, and the recorder, in which Cruwel was permitted to state the object of his mission. He then produced a short memorandum, signed by Spinola and by Father Neyen, to the effect that the archdukes were willing to treat for a truce of ten or twelve years, on the sole condition that the States would abstain from the India navigation. He exhibited also another paper, signed only by Neyen, in which that friar proposed to come secretly to the Hague, no one in Brussels to know of the visit save the archdukes and Spinola; and all in the United Provinces to be equally ignorant except the prince, the Advocate, and the recorder. Cruwel was then informed that if Neyen expected to discuss such grave matters with the prince, he must first send in a written proposal that could go on all fours and deserve attention. A week afterwards Cruwel came back with a paper in which Neyen declared himself authorized by the archdukes to treat with the States on the basis of their liberty and independence, and to ask what they would give in return for so great a concession as this renunciation of all right to "the so-called United Provinces."

This being a step in advance, it was decided to permit the visit of Neyen. It was, however, the recorded opinion of the distinguished personages to whom the proposal was made that it was a trick and a deception. The archdukes would, no doubt, it was said, nominally recognise the provinces as a free State, but without really meaning it. Meantime, they would do their best to corrupt the Government and to renew the war after the republic had by this means been separated from its friends.

Page 2394

John Neyen, father commissary of the Franciscans, who had thus invited himself to the momentous conference, was a very smooth Flemish friar, who seemed admirably adapted, for various reasons, to glide into the rebel country and into the hearts of the rebels. He was a Netherlander, born at Antwerp, when Antwerp was a portion of the united commonwealth, of a father who had been in the confidential service of William the Silent. He was eloquent in the Dutch language, and knew the character of the Dutch people. He had lived much at court, both in Madrid and Brussels, and was familiar with the ways of kings and courtiers. He was a holy man, incapable of a thought of worldly advancement for himself, but he was a master of the logic often thought most conclusive in those days; no man insinuating golden arguments more adroitly than he into half-reluctant palms. Blessed with a visage of more than Flemish frankness, he had in reality a most wily and unscrupulous disposition. Insensible to contumely, and incapable of accepting a rebuff, he could wind back to his purpose when less supple negotiators would have been crushed.

He was described by his admirers as uniting the wisdom of the serpent with the guilelessness of the dove. Who better than he then, in this double capacity, to coil himself around the rebellion, and to carry the olive-branch in his mouth?

On the 25th February the monk, disguised in the dress of a burgher, arrived at Ryswick, a village a mile and a half from the Hague. He was accompanied on the journey by Cruwel, and they gave themselves out as travelling tradesmen. After nightfall, a carriage having been sent to the hostelry, according to secret agreement, by Recorder Aerssens, John Neyen was brought to the Hague. The friar, as he was driven on through these hostile regions, was somewhat startled, on looking out, to find himself accompanied by two mounted musketeers on each side of the carriage, but they proved to have been intended as a protective escort. He was brought to the recorder's house, whence, after some delay, he was conveyed to the palace. Here he was received by an unknown and silent attendant, who took him by the hand and led him through entirely deserted corridors and halls. Not a human being was seen nor a sound heard until his conductor at last reached the door of an inner apartment through which he ushered him, without speaking a syllable. The monk then found himself in the presence of two personages, seated at a table covered with books and papers. One was in military undress, with an air about him of habitual command, a fair-complexioned man of middle age, inclining to baldness, rather stout, with a large blue eye, regular features, and a mouse-coloured beard. The other was in the velvet cloak and grave habiliments of a civil functionary, apparently sixty years of age, with a massive features, and a shaggy beard. The soldier was Maurice of Nassau, the statesman was John of Olden-Barneveld.

Page 2395

Both rose as the friar entered, and greeted him with cordiality.

“But,” said the prince, “how did you dare to enter the Hague, relying only on the word of a Beggar?”

“Who would not confide,” replied Neyen, “in the word of so exalted, so respectable a Beggar as you, O most excellent prince?”

With these facetious words began the negotiations through which an earnest attempt was at last to be made for terminating a seemingly immortal war. The conversation, thus begun, rolled amicably and informally along. The monk produced letters from the archdukes, in which, as he stated, the truly royal soul of the writers shone conspicuously forth. Without a thought for their own advantage, he observed, and moved only by a contemplation of the tears shed by so many thousands of beings reduced to extreme misery, their Highnesses, although they were such exalted princes, cared nothing for what would be said by the kings of Europe and all the potentates of the universe about their excessive indulgence.”

“What indulgence do you speak of?” asked the stadholder.

“Does that seem a trifling indulgence,” replied John Neyen, “that they are willing to abandon the right which they inherited from their ancestors over these provinces, to allow it so easily to slip from their fingers, to declare these people to be free, over whom, as their subjects refusing the yoke, they have carried on war so long?”

“It is our right hands that have gained this liberty,” said Maurice, “not the archdukes that have granted it. It has been acquired by our treasure, poured forth how freely! by the price of our blood, by so many thousands of souls sent to their account. Alas, how dear a price have we paid for it! All the potentates of Christendom, save the King of Spain alone, with his relatives the archdukes, have assented to our independence. In treating for peace we ask no gift of freedom from the archdukes. We claim to be regarded by them as what we are—free men. If they are unwilling to consider us as such, let them subject us to their dominion if they can. And as we have hitherto done, we shall contend more fiercely for liberty than for life.”

With this, the tired monk was dismissed to sleep off the effects of his journey and of the protracted discussion, being warmly recommended to the captain of the citadel, by whom he was treated with every possible consideration.

Several days of private discussion ensued between Neyen and the leading personages of the republic. The emissary was looked upon with great distrust. All schemes of substantial negotiation were regarded by the public as visions, while the monk on his part felt the need of all his tact and temper to wind his way out of the labyrinth into which he felt that he had perhaps too heedlessly entered. A false movement on his part would

involve himself and his masters in a hopeless maze of suspicion, and make a pacific result impossible.

Page 2396

At length, it having been agreed to refer the matter to the States-General, Recorder Aerssens waited upon Neyen to demand his credentials for negotiation. He replied that he had been forbidden to deliver his papers, but that he was willing to exhibit them to the States-General.

He came accordingly to that assembly, and was respectfully received. All the deputies rose, and he was placed in a seat near the presiding officer. Olden-Barneveld then in a few words told him why he had been summoned. The monk begged that a want of courtesy might not be imputed to him, as he had been sent to negotiate with three individuals, not with a great assembly.

Thus already the troublesome effect of publicity upon diplomacy was manifesting itself. The many-headed, many-tongued republic was a difficult creature to manage, adroit as the negotiator had proved himself to be in gliding through the cabinets and council-chambers of princes and dealing with the important personages found there.

The power was, however, produced, and handed around the assembly, the signature and seals being duly inspected by the members. Neyen was then asked if he had anything to say in public. He replied in the negative, adding only a few vague commonplaces about the effusion of blood and the desire of the archdukes for the good of mankind. He was then dismissed.

A few days afterwards a committee of five from the States-General, of which Barneveld was chairman, conferred with Neyen. He was informed that the paper exhibited by him was in many respects objectionable, and that they had therefore drawn up a form which he was requested to lay before the archdukes for their guidance in making out a new power. He was asked also whether the king of Spain was a party to these proposals for negotiation. The monk answered that he was not informed of the fact, but that he considered it highly probable.

John Neyen then departed for Brussels with the form prescribed by the States-General in his pocket. Nothing could exceed the indignation with which the royalists and Catholics at the court of the archdukes were inspired by the extreme arrogance and obstinacy thus manifested by the rebellious heretics. That the offer on the part of their master to negotiate should be received by them with cavils, and almost with contempt, was as great an offence as their original revolt. That the servant should dare to prescribe a form for the sovereign to copy seemed to prove that the world was coming to an end. But it was ever thus with the vulgar, said the courtiers and church dignitaries, debating these matters. The insanity of plebeians was always enormous, and never more so than when fortune for a moment smiled. Full of arrogance and temerity when affairs were prosperous, plunged in abject cowardice when dangers and reverses came —such was the People—such it must ever be.

Page 2397

Thus blustered the priests and the parasites surrounding the archduke, nor need their sentiments amaze us. Could those honest priests and parasites have ever dreamed, before the birth of this upstart republic, that merchants, manufacturers, and farmers, mechanics and advocates—the People, in short—should presume to meddle with affairs of state? Their vocation had been long ago prescribed—to dig and to draw, to brew and to bake, to bear burdens in peace and to fill bloody graves in war—what better lot could they desire?

Meantime their superiors, especially endowed with wisdom by the Omnipotent, would direct trade and commerce, conduct war and diplomacy, make treaties, impose taxes, fill their own pockets, and govern the universe. Was not this reasonable and according to the elemental laws? If the beasts of the field had been suddenly gifted with speech, and had constituted themselves into a free commonwealth for the management of public affairs, they would hardly have caused more profound astonishment at Brussels and Madrid than had been excited by the proceedings of the rebellious Dutchmen.

Yet it surely might have been suggested, when the lament of the courtiers over the abjectness of the People in adversity was so emphatic, that Dorp and Van Loon, Berendrecht and Gieselles, with the men under their command, who had disputed every inch of Little Troy for three years and three months, and had covered those fatal sands with a hundred thousand corpses, had not been giving of late such evidence of the People's cowardice in reverses as theory required. The siege of Ostend had been finished only three years before, and it is strange that its lessons should so soon have been forgotten.

It was thought best, however, to dissemble. Diplomacy in those days—certainly the diplomacy of Spain and Rome—meant simply dissimulation. Moreover, that solid apothegm, 'haereticis non servanda fides,' the most serviceable anchor ever forged for true believers, was always ready to be thrown out, should storm or quicksand threaten, during the intricate voyage to be now undertaken.

John Neyen soon returned to the Hague, having persuaded his masters that it was best to affect compliance with the preliminary demand of the States. During the discussions in regard to peace, it would not be dangerous to treat with the rebel provinces as with free states, over which the archdukes pretended to no authority, because—so it was secretly argued—this was to be understood with a sense of similitude. "We will negotiate with them as if they were free," said the greyfriar to the archduke and his counsellors, "but not with the signification of true and legitimate liberty. They have laid down in their formula that we are to pretend to no authority over them. Very well. For the time being we will pretend that we do not pretend to any such authority. To negotiate with them as if they were free will not make them free. It is no recognition by us that they are free. Their liberty could never be acquired by their rebellion. This is so manifest that neither the king nor the archdukes can lose any of their rights over the United Provinces, even should they make this declaration."

Page 2398

Thus the hair-sputters at Brussels—spinning a web that should be stout enough to entrap the noisy, blundering republicans at the Hague, yet so delicate as to go through the finest dialectical needle. Time was to show whether subtilty or bluntness was the best diplomatic material.

The monk brought with him three separate instruments or powers, to be used according to his discretion. Admitted to the assembly of the States-General, he produced number one.

It was instantly rejected. He then offered number two, with the same result. He now declared himself offended, not on his own account, but for the sake of his masters, and asked leave to retire from the assembly, leaving with them the papers which had been so benignantly drawn up, and which deserved to be more carefully studied.

The States, on their parts, were sincerely and vehemently indignant. What did all this mean, it was demanded, this producing one set of propositions after another? Why did the archdukes not declare their intentions openly and at once? Let the States depart each to the several provinces, and let John Neyen be instantly sent out of the country. Was it thought to bait a trap for the ingenuous Netherlanders, and catch them little by little, like so many wild animals? This was not the way the States dealt with the archdukes. What they meant they put in front—first, last, and always. Now and in the future they said and they would say exactly what they wished, candidly and seriously. Those who pursued another course would never come into negotiation with them.

The monk felt that he had excited a wrath which it would be difficult to assuage. He already perceived the difference between a real and an affected indignation, and tried to devise some soothing remedy. Early next morning he sent a petition in writing to the States for leave to make an explanation to the assembly. Barneveld and Recorder Aerssens, in consequence, came to him immediately, and heaped invectives upon his head for his duplicity.

Evidently it was a different matter dealing with this many-headed roaring beast, calling itself a republic, from managing the supple politicians with whom he was more familiar. The noise and publicity of these transactions were already somewhat appalling to the smooth friar who was accustomed to negotiate in comfortable secrecy. He now vehemently protested that never man was more sincere than he, and implored for time to send to Brussels for another power. It is true that number three was still in his portfolio, but he had seen so much indignation on the production of number two as to feel sure that the fury of the States would know no bounds should he now confess that he had come provided with a third.

It was agreed accordingly to wait eight days, in which period he might send for and receive the new power already in his possession. These little tricks were considered

masterly diplomacy in those days, and by this kind of negotiators; and such was the way in which it was proposed to terminate a half century of warfare.

Page 2399

[The narrative is the monk's own, as preserved by his admirer,
the Jesuit Gallucci, (ubi sup.)]

The friar wrote to his masters, not of course to ask for a new power, but to dilate on the difficulties to be anticipated in procuring that which the losing party is always most bent upon in circumstances like these, and which was most ardently desired by the archdukes—an armistice. He described Prince Maurice as sternly opposed to such a measure, believing that temporary cessation of hostilities was apt to be attended with mischievous familiarity between the opposing camps, with relaxation of discipline, desertion, and various kinds of treachery, and that there was no better path to peace than that which was trampled by contending hosts.

Seven days passed, and then Neyen informed the States that he had at last received a power which he hoped would prove satisfactory. Being admitted accordingly to the assembly, he delivered an eloquent eulogy upon the sincerity of the archdukes, who, with perhaps too little regard for their own dignity and authority, had thus, for the sake of the public good, so benignantly conceded what the States had demanded.

Barneveld, on receiving the new power, handed to Neyen a draught of an agreement which he was to study at his leisure, and in which he might suggest alterations. At the same time it was demanded that within three months the written consent of the King of Spain to the proposed negotiations should be produced. The Franciscan objected that it did not comport with the dignity of the archdukes to suppose the consent of any other sovereign needful to confirm their acts. Barneveld insisted with much vehemence on the necessity of this condition. It was perfectly notorious, he said, that the armies commanded by the archdukes were subject to the King of Spain, and were called royal armies. Prince Maurice observed that all prisoners taken by him had uniformly called themselves soldiers of the Crown, not of the archdukes, nor of Marquis Spinola.

Barneveld added that the royal power over the armies in the Netherlands and over the obedient provinces was proved by the fact that all commanders of regiments, all governors of fortresses, especially of Antwerp, Ghent, Cambray, and the like, were appointed by the King of Spain. These were royal citadels with royal garrisons. That without the knowledge and consent of the King of Spain it would be impossible to declare the United Provinces free, was obvious; for in the cession by Philip *ii*. of all the Netherlands it was provided that, without the consent of the king, no part of that territory could be ceded, and this on pain of forfeiting all the sovereignty. To treat without the king was therefore impossible.

The Franciscan denied that because the sovereigns of Spain sent funds and auxiliary troops to Flanders, and appointed military commanders there of various degrees, the authority of the archdukes was any the less supreme. Philip *ii*. had sent funds and troops to sustain the League, but he was not King of France.

Page 2400

Barneveld probably thought it not worth his while to reply that Philip, with those funds and those troops, had done his best to become King of France, and that his failure proved nothing for the argument either way.

Neyen then returned once more to Brussels, observing as he took leave that the decision of the archdukes as to the king's consent was very doubtful, although he was sure that the best thing for all parties would be to agree to an armistice out of hand.

This, however, was far from being the opinion of the States or the stadholder.

After conferring with his masters, the monk came down by agreement from Antwerp to the Dutch ships which lay in the, Scheld before Fort Lillo. On board one of these, Dirk van der Does had been stationed with a special commission from the States to compare documents. It was expressly ordered that in these preliminary negotiations neither party was to go on shore. On a comparison of the agreement brought by Neyen from Brussels with the draught furnished by Barneveld, of which Van der Does had a copy, so many discrepancies appeared that the document of the archdukes was at once rejected. But of course the monk had a number two, and this, after some trouble, was made to agree with the prescribed form. Brother John then, acting upon what he considered the soundest of principles—that no job was so difficult as not to be accomplished with the help of the precious metals—offered his fellow negotiator a valuable gold chain as a present from the archdukes. Dirk van der Does accepted the chain, but gave notice of the fact to his Government.

The monk now became urgent to accompany his friend to the Hague, but this had been expressly forbidden by the States. Neyen felt sure, he said, of being able by arguments, which he could present by word of mouth, to overcome the opposition to the armistice were he once more to be admitted to the assembly. Van der Does had already much overstaid his appointed time, bound to the spot, as it were, by the golden chain thrown around him by the excellent friar, and he now, in violation of orders, wrote to the Hague for leave to comply with this request. Pending the answer, the persuasive Neyen convinced him, much against his will, that they might both go together as far as Delft. To Delft they accordingly went; but, within half a league of that place, met a courier with strict orders that the monk was at once to return to Brussels. Brother John was in great agitation. Should he go back, the whole negotiation might come to nought; should he go on, he might be clapped into prison as a spy. Being conscious, however, that his services as a spy were intended to be the most valuable part of his mission, he resolved to proceed in that capacity. So he persuaded his friend Dirk to hide him in the hold of a canal-boat. Van der Does was in great trepidation himself, but on reaching the Hague and giving up his gold chain to Barneveld, he made his peace, and obtained leave for the trembling but audacious friar to come out of his hiding-place.

Page 2401

Appearing once more before the States-General on the afternoon of 7th May, Neyen urged with much eloquence the propriety of an immediate armistice both by sea and land, insisting that it would be a sanguinary farce to establish a cessation of hostilities upon one element while blood and treasure were profusely flowing on the oceans. There were potent reasons for this earnestness on the part of the monk to procure a truce to maritime operations, as very soon was to be made evident to the world. Meantime, on this renewed visit, the negotiator expressed himself as no longer doubtful in regard to the propriety of requesting the Spanish king's consent to the proposed negotiations. That consent, however, would in his opinion depend upon the earnestness now to be manifested by the States in establishing the armistice by sea and land, and upon their promptness in recalling the fleets now infesting the coast of Spain. No immediate answer was given to these representations, but Neyen was requested to draw up his argument in writing, in order that it might be duly pondered by the States of the separate provinces.

The radical defect of the Dutch constitution—the independent sovereignty claimed by each one of the provinces composing the confederation, each of those provinces on its part being composed of cities, each again claiming something very like sovereignty for itself—could not fail to be manifested whenever, great negotiations with foreign powers were to be undertaken. To obtain the unanimous consent of seven independent little republics was a work of difficulty, requiring immense expenditure of time in comparatively unimportant contingencies. How intolerable might become the obstructions, the dissensions, and the delays, now that a series of momentous and world-wide transactions was beginning, on the issue of which the admission of a new commonwealth into the family of nations, the international connections of all the great powers of Christendom, the commerce of the world, and the peace of Europe depended.

Yet there was no help for it but to make the best present use of the institutions which time and great events had bestowed upon the young republic, leaving to a more convenient season the task of remodelling the law. Meanwhile, with men who knew their own minds, who meant to speak the truth, and who were resolved to gather in at last the harvest honestly and bravely gained by nearly a half-century of hard fighting, it would be hard for a legion of friars, with their heads full of quirks and their wallets full of bills of exchange, to carry the day for despotism.

Page 2402

Barneveld was sincerely desirous of peace. He was well aware that his province of Holland, where he was an intellectual autocrat, was staggering under the burden of one half the expenses of the whole republic. He knew that Holland in the course of the last nine years, notwithstanding the constantly heightened rate of impost on all objects of ordinary consumption, was twenty-six millions of florins behindhand, and that she had reason therefore to wish for peace. The great Advocate, than whom no statesman in Europe could more accurately scan the world's horizon, was convinced that the propitious moment for honourable straightforward negotiations to secure peace, independence, and free commerce, free religion and free government, had come, and he had succeeded in winning the reluctant Maurice into a partial adoption, at least, of his opinions.

The Franciscan remained at Delft, waiting, by direction of the States, for an answer to his propositions, and doing his best according to the instructions of his own Government to espy the condition and sentiments of the enemy. Becoming anxious after the lapse of a fortnight, he wrote to Barneveld. In reply the Advocate twice sent a secret messenger, urging, him to be patient, assuring him that the affair was working well; that the opposition to peace came chiefly from Zeeland and from certain parties in Amsterdam vehemently opposed to peace or truce; but that the rest of Holland was decidedly in favour of the negotiations.

A few days passed, and Neyen was again summoned before the assembly. Barneveld now informed him that the Dutch fleet would be recalled from the coast of Spain so soon as the consent of his Catholic Majesty to the negotiations arrived, but that it would be necessary to confine the cessation of naval warfare within certain local limits. Both these conditions were strenuously opposed by the Franciscan, who urged that the consent of the Spanish king was certain, but that this new proposition to localize the maritime armistice would prove to be fraught with endless difficulties and dangers. Barneveld and the States remaining firm, however, and giving him a formal communication of their decision in writing, Neyen had nothing for it but to wend his way back rather malcontent to Brussels.

It needed but a brief deliberation at the court of the archdukes to bring about the desired arrangement. The desire for an armistice, especially for a cessation of hostilities by sea, had been marvellously stimulated by an event to be narrated in the next chapter. Meantime, more than the first three months of the year had been passed in these secret preliminary transactions, and so softly had the stealthy friar sped to and fro between Brussels and the Hague, that when at last the armistice was announced it broke forth like a sudden flash of fine weather in the midst of a raging storm. No one at the archduke's court knew of the mysterious negotiations save the monk himself, Spinola, Richardot, Verreycken, the chief auditor, and one or two others. The great Belgian nobles, from whom everything had been concealed, were very wroth, but the Belgian public was as much delighted as amazed at the prospects of peace. In the United

Provinces opinions were conflicting, but doubtless joy and confidence were the prevailing emotions.

Page 2403

Towards the middle of April the armistice was publicly announced. It was to last for eight months from the 4th of May. During this period no citadels were to be besieged, no camps brought near a city, no new fortifications built, and all troops were to be kept carefully within walls. Meantime commissioners were to be appointed by the archdukes to confer with an equal number of deputies of the United Provinces for peace or for a truce of ten, fifteen, or twenty years, on the express ground that the archdukes regarded the United Provinces as free countries, over which their Highnesses pretended to no authority.

The armistice on land was absolute. On sea, hostilities were to cease in the German Ocean and in the channel between England and France, while it was also provided that the Netherland fleet should, within a certain period, be recalled from the Spanish coast.

A day of public fast, humiliation, thanksgiving, and prayer was ordered throughout the republic for the 9th of May, in order to propitiate the favour of Heaven on the great work to be undertaken; and, as a further precaution, Prince Maurice ordered all garrisons in the strong places to be doubled, lest the slippery enemy should take advantage of too much confidence reposed in his good faith. The preachers throughout the commonwealth, each according to his individual bias, improved the occasion by denouncing the Spaniard from their pulpits and inflaming the popular hatred against the ancient enemy, or by dilating on the blessings of peace and the horrors of war. The peace party and the war party, the believers in Barneveld and the especial adherents of Prince Maurice, seemed to divide the land in nearly equal portions.

While the Netherlands, both rebellious and obedient, were filled with these various emotions, the other countries of Europe were profoundly amazed at the sudden revelation. It was on the whole regarded as a confession of impotence on the part of Spain that the archdukes should now prepare to send envoys to the revolted provinces as to a free and independent people. Universal monarchy, brought to such a pass as this, was hardly what had been expected after the tremendous designs and the grandiloquent language on which the world had so long been feeding as its daily bread. The spectacle of anointed monarchs thus far humbling themselves to the people of rebellion dictating terms, instead of writhing in dust at the foot of the throne—was something new in history. The heavens and earth might soon be expected to pass away, now that such a catastrophe was occurring.

The King of France had also been kept in ignorance of these events. It was impossible, however, that the negotiations could go forward without his consent and formal participation. Accordingly on receiving the news he appointed an especial mission to the Hague—President Jeannin and De Russy, besides his regular resident ambassador Buzanval. Meantime startling news reached the republic in the early days of May.

Page 2404

Etext editor's bookmarks:

A penal offence in the republic to talk of peace or of truce
Accepting a new tyrant in place of the one so long ago deposed
As if they were free will not make them free
As neat a deception by telling the truth
Cargo of imaginary gold dust was exported from the James River
Delay often fights better than an army against a foreign invader
Diplomacy of Spain and Rome—meant simply dissimulation
Draw a profit out of the necessities of this state
England hated the Netherlands
Friendly advice still more intolerable
Haereticis non servanda fides
He who confessed well was absolved well
Insensible to contumely, and incapable of accepting a rebuff
Languor of fatigue, rather than any sincere desire for peace
Much as the blind or the deaf towards colour or music
Subtle and dangerous enemy who wore the mask of a friend
Word peace in Spanish mouths simply meant the Holy Inquisition

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 79, 1607

CHAPTER XLVII.

A Dutch fleet under Heemskerk sent to the coast of Spain and Portugal—Encounter with the Spanish war fleet under D'Avila—Death of both commanders-in-chief—Victory of the Netherlanders—Massacre of the Spaniards.

The States-General had not been inclined to be tranquil under the check which Admiral Haultain had received upon the coast of Spain in the autumn of 1606. The deed of terrible self-devotion by which Klaaszoon and his comrades had in that crisis saved the reputation of the republic, had proved that her fleets needed only skilful handling and determined leaders to conquer their enemy in the Western seas as certainly as they had done in the archipelagos of the East. And there was one pre-eminent naval commander, still in the very prime of life, but seasoned by an experience at the poles and in the tropics such as few mariners in that early but expanding maritime epoch

could boast. Jacob van Heemskerk, unlike many of the navigators and ocean warriors who had made and were destined to make the Orange flag of the United Provinces illustrious over the world, was not of humble parentage. Sprung of an ancient, knightly race, which had frequently distinguished itself in his native province of Holland, he had followed the seas almost from his cradle. By turns a commercial voyager, an explorer, a privateer's-man, or an admiral of war-fleets, in days when sharp distinctions between the merchant service and the public service, corsairs' work and cruisers' work, did not exist, he had ever proved himself equal to any

Page 2405

emergency—a man incapable of fatigue, of perplexity, or of fear. We have followed his career during that awful winter in Nova Zembla, where, with such unflinching cheerful heroism, he sustained the courage of his comrades—the first band of scientific martyrs that had ever braved the dangers and demanded the secrets of those arctic regions. His glorious name—as those of so many of his comrades and countrymen—has been rudely torn from cape, promontory, island, and continent, once illustrated by courage and suffering, but the noble record will ever remain.

Subsequently he had much navigated the Indian ocean; his latest achievement having been, with two hundred men, in a couple of yachts, to capture an immense Portuguese carrack, mounting thirty guns, and manned with eight hundred sailors, and to bring back a prodigious booty for the exchequer of the republic. A man with delicate features, large brown eyes, a thin high nose, fair hair and beard, and a soft, gentle expression, he concealed, under a quiet exterior, and on ordinary occasions a very plain and pacific costume, a most daring nature, and an indomitable ambition for military and naval distinction.

He was the man of all others in the commonwealth to lead any new enterprise that audacity could conceive against the hereditary enemy.

The public and the States-General were anxious to retrace the track of Haultain, and to efface the memory of his inglorious return from the Spanish coast. The sailors of Holland and Zeeland were indignant that the richly freighted fleets of the two Indies had been allowed to slip so easily through their fingers. The great East India Corporation was importunate with Government that such blunders should not be repeated, and that the armaments known to be preparing in the Portuguese ports, the homeward-bound fleets that might be looked for at any moment off the peninsular coast, and the Spanish cruisers which were again preparing to molest the merchant fleets of the Company, should be dealt with effectively and in season.

Twenty-six vessels of small size but of good sailing qualities, according to the idea of the epoch, were provided, together with four tenders. Of this fleet the command was offered to Jacob van Heemskerk. He accepted with alacrity, expressing with his usual quiet self-confidence the hope that, living or dead, his fatherland would have cause to thank him. Inspired only by the love of glory, he asked for no remuneration for his services save thirteen per cent. of the booty, after half a million florins should have been paid into the public treasury. It was hardly probable that this would prove a large share of prize money, while considerable victories alone could entitle him to receive a stiver.

Page 2406

The expedition sailed in the early days of April for the coast of Spain and Portugal, the admiral having full discretion to do anything that might in his judgment redound to the advantage of the republic. Next in command was the vice-admiral of Zeeland, Laurenz Alteras. Another famous seaman in the fleet was Captain Henry Janszoon of Amsterdam, commonly called Long Harry, while the weather-beaten and well-beloved Admiral Lambert, familiarly styled by his countrymen “Pretty Lambert,” some of whose achievements have already been recorded in these pages, was the comrade of all others upon whom Heemskerk most depended. After the 10th April the admiral, lying off and on near the mouth of the Tagus, sent a lugger in trading disguise to reconnoitre that river. He ascertained by his spies, sent in this and subsequently in other directions, as well as by occasional merchantmen spoken with at sea, that the Portuguese fleet for India would not be ready to sail for many weeks; that no valuable argosies were yet to be looked for from America, but that a great war-fleet, comprising many galleons of the largest size, was at that very moment cruising in the Straits of Gibraltar. Such of the Netherland traders as were returning from the Levant, as well as those designing to enter the Mediterranean, were likely to fall prizes to this formidable enemy. The heart of Jacob Heemskerk danced for joy. He had come forth for glory, not for booty, and here was what he had scarcely dared to hope for—a powerful antagonist instead of peaceful, scarcely resisting, but richly-laden merchantmen. The accounts received were so accurate as to assure him that the Gibraltar fleet was far superior to his own in size of vessels, weight of metal, and number of combatants. The circumstances only increased his eagerness. The more he was over-matched, the greater would be the honour of victory, and he steered for the straits, tacking to and fro in the teeth of a strong head-wind.

On the morning of the 25th April he was in the narrowest part of the mountain-channel, and learned that the whole Spanish fleet was in the Bay of Gibraltar.

The marble pillar of Hercules rose before him. Heemskerk was of a poetic temperament, and his imagination was inflamed by the spectacle which met his eyes. Geographical position, splendour of natural scenery, immortal fable, and romantic history, had combined to throw a spell over that region. It seemed marked out for perpetual illustration by human valour. The deeds by which, many generations later, those localities were to become identified with the fame of a splendid empire—then only the most energetic rival of the young republic, but destined under infinitely better geographical conditions to follow on her track of empire, and with far more prodigious results—were still in the womb of futurity. But St. Vincent, Trafalgar, Gibraltar—words which were one day to stir the English heart, and to conjure heroic English shapes from the depths so long as history endures—were capes and promontories already familiar to legend and romance.

Page 2407

Those Netherlanders had come forth from their slender little fatherland to offer battle at last within his own harbours and under his own fortresses to the despot who aspired to universal monarchy, and who claimed the lordship of the seas. The Hollanders and Zeelanders had gained victories on the German Ocean, in the Channel, throughout the Indies, but now they were to measure strength with the ancient enemy in this most conspicuous theatre, and before the eyes of Christendom. It was on this famous spot that the ancient demigod had torn asunder by main strength the continents of Europe and Africa. There stood the opposite fragments of the riven mountain-chain, Calpe and Abyla, gazing at each other, in eternal separation, across the gulf, emblems of those two antagonistic races which the terrible hand of Destiny has so ominously disjoined. Nine centuries before, the African king, Moses son of Nuzir, and his lieutenant, Tarik son of Abdallah, had crossed that strait and burned the ships which brought them. Black Africa had conquered a portion of whiter Europe, and laid the foundation of the deadly mutual repugnance which nine hundred years of bloodshed had heightened into insanity of hatred. Tarik had taken the town and mountain, Carteia and Calpe, and given to both his own name. Gib-al-Tarik, the cliff of Tarik, they are called to this day.

Within the two horns of that beautiful bay, and protected by the fortress on the precipitous rock, lay the Spanish fleet at anchor. There were ten galleons of the largest size, besides lesser war-vessels and carracks, in all twenty-one sail. The admiral commanding was Don Juan Alvarez d'Avila, a veteran who had fought at Lepanto under Don John of Austria. His son was captain of his flag-ship, the St. Augustine. The vice-admiral's galleon was called 'Our Lady of La Vega,' the rear-admiral's was the 'Mother of God,' and all the other ships were baptized by the holy names deemed most appropriate, in the Spanish service, to deeds of carnage.

On the other hand, the nomenclature of the Dutch ships suggested a menagerie. There was the Tiger, the Sea Dog, the Griffin, the Red Lion, the Golden Lion, the Black Bear, the White Bear; these, with the AEolus and the Morning Star, were the leading vessels of the little fleet.

On first attaining a distant view of the enemy, Heemskerk summoned all the captains on board his flag-ship, the AEolus, and addressed them in a few stirring words.

"It is difficult," he said, "for Netherlanders not to conquer on salt water. Our fathers have gained many a victory in distant seas, but it is for us to tear from the enemy's list of titles his arrogant appellation of Monarch of the Ocean. Here, on the verge of two continents, Europe is watching our deeds, while the Moors of Africa are to learn for the first time in what estimation they are to hold the Batavian republic. Remember that you have no choice between triumph and destruction.

Page 2408

I have led you into a position whence escape is impossible—and I ask of none of you more than I am prepared to do myself—whither I am sure that you will follow. The enemy's ships are far superior to ours in bulk; but remember that their excessive size makes them difficult to handle and easier to hit, while our own vessels are entirely within control. Their decks are swarming with men, and thus there will be more certainty that our shot will take effect. Remember, too, that we are all sailors, accustomed from our cradles to the ocean; while yonder Spaniards are mainly soldiers and landsmen, qualmish at the smell of bilgewater, and sickening at the roll of the waves. This day begins a long list of naval victories, which will make our fatherland for ever illustrious, or lay the foundation of an honourable peace, by placing, through our triumph, in the hands of the States-General, the power of dictating its terms."

His comrades long remembered the enthusiasm which flashed from the man, usually so gentle and composed in demeanour, so simple in attire. Clad in complete armour, with the orange-plumes waving from his casque and the orange-scarf across his breast, he stood there in front of the mainmast of the AEolus, the very embodiment of an ancient Viking.

He then briefly announced his plan of attack. It was of antique simplicity. He would lay his own ship alongside that of the Spanish admiral. Pretty Lambert in the Tiger was to grapple with her on the other side. Vice-admiral Alteras and Captain Bras were to attack the enemy's vice-admiral in the same way. Thus, two by two, the little Netherland ships were to come into closest quarters with each one of the great galleons. Heemskerk would himself lead the way, and all were to follow, as closely as possible, in his wake. The oath to stand by each other was then solemnly renewed, and a parting health was drunk. The captains then returned to their ships.

As the Lepanto warrior, Don Juan d'Avila, saw the little vessels slowly moving towards him, he summoned a Hollander whom he had on board, one Skipper Gevaerts of a captured Dutch trading bark, and asked him whether those ships in the distance were Netherlanders.

"Not a doubt of it," replied the skipper.

The admiral then asked him what their purpose could possibly be, in venturing so near Gibraltar.

"Either I am entirely mistaken in my countrymen," answered Gevaerta, "or they are coming for the express purpose of offering you battle."

The Spaniard laughed loud and long. The idea that those puny vessels could be bent on such a purpose seemed to him irresistibly comic, and he promised his prisoner, with much condescension, that the St. Augustine alone should sink the whole fleet.

Gevaerts, having his own ideas on the subject, but not being called upon to express them, thanked the admiral for his urbanity, and respectfully withdrew.

At least four thousand soldiers were in D'Avila's ships, besides seamen. there were seven hundred in the St. Augustine, four hundred and fifty in Our Lady of Vega, and so on in proportion. There were also one or two hundred noble volunteers who came thronging on board, scenting the battle from afar, and desirous of having a hand in the destruction of the insolent Dutchmen.

Page 2409

It was about one in the afternoon. There was not much wind, but the Hollanders, slowly drifting on the eternal river that pours from the Atlantic into the Mediterranean, were now very near. All hands had been piped on board every one of the ships, all had gone down on their knees in humble prayer, and the loving cup had then been passed around.

Heemskerk, leading the way towards the Spanish admiral, ordered the gunners of the bolus not to fire until the vessels struck each other. “Wait till you hear it crack,” he said, adding a promise of a hundred florins to the man who should pull down the admiral’s flag. Avila, notwithstanding his previous merriment, thought it best, for the moment, to avoid the coming collision. Leaving to other galleons, which he interposed between himself and the enemy, the task of summarily sinking the Dutch fleet, he cut the cable of the St. Augustine and drifted farther into the bay. Heemskerk, not allowing himself to be foiled in his purpose, steered past two or three galleons, and came crashing against the admiral. Almost simultaneously, Pretty Lambert laid himself along her quarter on the other side. The St. Augustine fired into the AEolus as she approached, but without doing much damage. The Dutch admiral, as he was coming in contact, discharged his forward guns, and poured an effective volley of musketry into his antagonist.

The St. Augustine fired again, straight across the centre of the bolus, at a few yards’ distance. A cannon-ball took off the head of a sailor, standing near Heemskerk, and carried away the admiral’s leg, close to the body. He fell on deck, and, knowing himself to be mortally wounded, implored the next in command on board, Captain Verhoef, to fight his ship to the last, and to conceal his death from the rest of the fleet. Then prophesying a glorious victory for republic, and piously commending his soul to his Maker, he soon breathed his last. A cloak was thrown over him, and the battle raged. The few who were aware that the noble Heemskerk was gone, burned to avenge his death, and to obey the dying commands of their beloved chief. The rest of the Hollanders believed themselves under his directing influence, and fought as if his eyes were upon them. Thus the spirit of the departed hero still watched over and guided the battle.

The AEolus now fired a broadside into her antagonist, making fearful havoc, and killing Admiral D’Avila. The commanders-in-chief of both contending fleets had thus fallen at the very beginning of the battle. While the St. Augustine was engaged in deadly encounter, yardarm and yardarm, with the AEolus and the Tiger, Vice-admiral Alteras had, however, not carried out his part of the plan. Before he could succeed in laying himself alongside of the Spanish vice-admiral, he had been attacked by two galleons. Three other Dutch ships, however, attacked the vice-admiral, and, after an obstinate combat, silenced all her batteries

Page 2410

and set her on fire. Her conquerors were then obliged to draw off rather hastily, and to occupy themselves for a time in extinguishing their own burning sails, which had taken fire from the close contact with their enemy. Our Lady of Vega, all ablaze from top-gallant-mast to quarterdeck, floated helplessly about, a spectre of flame, her guns going off wildly, and her crew dashing themselves into the sea, in order to escape by drowning from a fiery death. She was consumed to the water's edge.

Meantime, Vice-admiral Alteras had successively defeated both his antagonists; drifting in with them until almost under the guns of the fortress, but never leaving them until, by his superior gunnery and seamanship, he had sunk one of them, and driven the other a helpless wreck on shore.

Long Harry, while Alteras had been thus employed, had engaged another great galleon, and set her on fire. She, too, was thoroughly burned to her hulk; but Admiral Harry was killed.

By this time, although it was early of an April afternoon, and heavy clouds of smoke, enveloping the combatants pent together in so small a space, seemed to make an atmosphere of midnight, as the flames of the burning galleons died away. There was a difficulty, too, in bringing all the Netherland ships into action—several of the smaller ones having been purposely stationed by Heemskerk on the edge of the bay to prevent the possible escape of any of the Spaniards. While some of these distant ships were crowding sail, in order to come to closer quarters, now that the day seemed going against the Spaniards, a tremendous explosion suddenly shook the air. One of the largest galleons, engaged in combat with a couple of Dutch vessels, had received a hot shot full in her powder magazine, and blew up with all on board. The blazing fragments drifted about among the other ships, and two more were soon on fire, their guns going off and their magazines exploding. The rock of Gibraltar seemed to reel. To the murky darkness succeeded the intolerable glare of a new and vast conflagration. The scene in that narrow roadstead was now almost infernal. It seemed, said an eye-witness, as if heaven and earth were passing away. A hopeless panic seized the Spaniards. The battle was over. The St. Augustine still lay in the deadly embrace of her antagonists, but all the other galleons were sunk or burned. Several of the lesser war-ships had also been destroyed. It was nearly sunset. The St. Augustine at last ran up a white flag, but it was not observed in the fierceness of the last moments of combat; the men from the bolus and the Tiger making a simultaneous rush on board the vanquished foe.

The fight was done, but the massacre was at its beginning. The trumpeter, of Captain Kleinsorg clambered like a monkey up the mast of the St. Augustine, hauled down the admiral's flag, the last which was still waving, and gained the hundred florins. The ship was full of dead and dying; but a brutal, infamous butchery now took place. Some Netherland prisoners were found in the hold, who related that two messengers had

been successively despatched to take their lives, as they lay there in chains, and that each had been shot, as he made his way towards the execution of the orders.

Page 2411

This information did not chill the ardour of their victorious countrymen. No quarter was given. Such of the victims as succeeded in throwing themselves overboard, out of the St. Augustine, or any of the burning or sinking ships, were pursued by the Netherlanders, who rowed about among them in boats, shooting, stabbing, and drowning their victims by hundreds. It was a sickening spectacle. The bay, said those who were there, seemed sown with corpses. Probably two or three thousand were thus put to death, or had met their fate before. Had the chivalrous Heemskerk lived, it is possible that he might have stopped the massacre. But the thought of the grief which would fill the commonwealth when the news should arrive of his death—thus turning the joy of the great triumph into lamentations—increased the animosity of his comrades. Moreover, in ransacking the Spanish admiral's ship, all his papers had been found, among them many secret instructions from Government signed "the King;" ordering most inhuman persecutions, not only of the Netherlanders, but of all who should in any way assist them, at sea or ashore. Recent examples of the thorough manner in which the royal admirals could carry out these bloody instructions had been furnished by the hangings, burnings, and drownings of Fazardo. But the barbarous ferocity of the Dutch on this occasion might have taught a lesson even to the comrades of Alva.

The fleet of Avila was entirely destroyed. The hulk of the St. Augustine drifted ashore, having been abandoned by the victors, and was set on fire by a few Spaniards who had concealed themselves on board, lest she might fall again into the enemy's hands.

The battle had lasted from half-past three until sunset. The Dutch vessels remained all the next day on the scene of their triumph. The townspeople were discerned, packing up their goods, and speeding panic-struck into the interior. Had Heemskerk survived he would doubtless have taken Gibraltar—fortress and town—and perhaps Cadiz, such was the consternation along the whole coast.

But his gallant spirit no longer directed the fleet. Bent rather upon plunder than glory, the ships now dispersed in search of prizes towards the Azores, the Canaries, or along the Portuguese coast; having first made a brief visit to Tetuan, where they were rapturously received by the Bey.

The Hollanders lost no ships, and but one hundred seamen were killed. Two vessels were despatched homeward directly, one with sixty wounded sailors, the other with the embalmed body of the fallen Heemskerk. The hero was honoured with a magnificent funeral in Amsterdam at the public expense—the first instance in the history of the republic—and his name was enrolled on the most precious page of her records.

[The chief authorities for this remarkable battle are Meteren, 547, 548. Grotius, xvi. 731-738. Wagenaar, ix. 251-258.]

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Page 2412

Internal condition of Spain—Character of the people—Influence of the Inquisition—-Population and Revenue—Incomes of Church and Government—Degradation of Labour—Expulsion of the Moors and its consequences—Venality the special characteristic of Spanish polity —Maxims of the foreign polity of Spain—The Spanish army and navy— Insolvent state of the Government—The Duke of Lerma—His position in the State—Origin of his power—System of bribery and trafficking—Philip *iii*. His character—Domestic life of the king and queen.

A glance at the interior condition of Spain, now that there had been more than nine years of a new reign, should no longer be deferred. Spain was still superstitiously regarded as the leading power of the world, although foiled in all its fantastic and gigantic schemes. It was still supposed, according to current dogma, to share with the Ottoman empire the dominion of the earth. A series of fortunate marriages having united many of the richest and fairest portions of Europe under a single sceptre, it was popularly believed in a period when men were not much given as yet to examine very deeply the principles of human governments or the causes of national greatness, that an aggregation of powers which had resulted from preposterous laws of succession really constituted a mighty empire, founded by genius and valour.

The Spanish people, endowed with an acute and exuberant genius, which had exhibited itself in many paths of literature, science, and art; with a singular aptitude for military adventure, organization, and achievement; with a great variety, in short, of splendid and ennobling qualities; had been, for a long succession of years, accursed with almost the very worst political institutions known to history. The depth of their misery and of their degradation was hardly yet known to themselves, and this was perhaps the most hideous proof of the tyranny of which they had been the victims. To the outward world, the hollow fabric, out of which the whole pith and strength had been slowly gnawed away, was imposing and majestic still. But the priest, the soldier, and the courtier had been busy too long, and had done their work too thoroughly, to leave much hope of arresting the universal decay.

Nor did there seem any probability that the attempt would be made.

It is always difficult to reform wide-spread abuses, even when they are acknowledged to exist, but when gigantic vices are proudly pointed to as the noblest of institutions and as the very foundations of the state, there seems nothing for the patriot to long for but the deluge.

Page 2413

It was acknowledged that the Spanish population—having a very large admixture of those races which, because not Catholic at heart, were stigmatized as miscreants, heretics, pagans, and, generally, as accursed—was by nature singularly prone to religious innovation. Had it not been for the Holy Inquisition, it was the opinion of acute and thoughtful observers in the beginning of the seventeenth century, that the infamous heresies of Luther, Calvin, and the rest, would have long before taken possession of the land. To that most blessed establishment it was owing that Spain had not polluted itself in the filth and ordure of the Reformation, and had been spared the horrible fate which had befallen large portions of Germany, France, Britain, and other barbarous northern nations. It was conscientiously and thankfully believed in Spain, two centuries ago, that the state had been saved from political and moral ruin by that admirable machine which detected heretics with unerring accuracy, burned them when detected, and consigned their descendants to political incapacity and social infamy to the remotest generation.

As the awful consequences of religious freedom, men pointed with a shudder to the condition of nations already speeding on the road to ruin, from which the two peninsulas at least had been saved. Yet the British empire, with the American republic still an embryo in its bosom, France, North Germany, and other great powers, had hardly then begun their headlong career. Whether the road of religious liberty was leading exactly to political ruin, the coming centuries were to judge.

Enough has been said in former chapters for the characterization of Philip *ii*. and his polity. But there had now been nearly ten years of another reign. The system, inaugurated by Charles and perfected by his son, had reached its last expression under Philip *iii*.

The evil done by father and son lived and bore plentiful fruit in the epoch of the grandson. And this is inevitable in history. No generation is long-lived enough to reap the harvest, whether of good or evil, which it sows.

Philip *ii*. had been indefatigable in evil, a thorough believer in his supernatural mission as despot, not entirely without capacity for affairs, personally absorbed by the routine of his bureau.

He was a king, as he understood the meaning of the kingly office. His policy was continued after his death; but there was no longer a king. That important regulator to the governmental machinery was wanting. How its place was supplied will soon appear.

Meantime the organic functions were performed very much in the old way. There was, at least, no lack of priests or courtiers.

Page 2414

Spain at this epoch had probably less than twelve millions of inhabitants, although the statistics of those days cannot be relied upon with accuracy. The whole revenue of the state was nominally sixteen or seventeen millions of dollars, but the greater portion of that income was pledged for many coming years to the merchants of Genoa. All the little royal devices for increasing the budget by debasing the coin of the realm, by issuing millions of copper tokens, by lowering the promised rate of interest on Government loans, by formally repudiating both interest and principal, had been tried, both in this and the preceding reign, with the usual success. An inconvertible paper currency, stimulating industry and improving morals by converting beneficent commerce into baleful gambling—that fatal invention did not then exist. Meantime, the legitimate trader and innocent citizen were harassed, and the general public endangered, as much as the limited machinery of the epoch permitted.

The available, unpledged revenue of the kingdom hardly amounted to five millions of dollars a-year. The regular annual income of the church was at least six millions. The whole personal property of the nation was estimated in a very clumsy and unsatisfactory way, no doubt—at sixty millions of dollars. Thus the income of the priesthood was ten per cent. of the whole funded estate of the country, and at least a million a year more than the income of the Government. Could a more biting epigram be made upon the condition to which the nation had been reduced?

Labour was more degraded than ever. The industrious classes, if such could be said to exist, were esteemed every day more and more infamous. Merchants, shopkeepers, mechanics, were reptiles, as vilely, esteemed as Jews, Moors, Protestants, or Pagans. Acquiring wealth by any kind of production was dishonourable. A grandee who should permit himself to sell the wool from his boundless sheep-walks disgraced his caste, and was accounted as low as a merchant. To create was the business of slaves and miscreants: to destroy was the distinguishing attribute of Christians and nobles. To cheat, to pick, and to steal, on the most minute and the most gigantic scale—these were also among the dearest privileges of the exalted classes. No merchandize was polluting save the produce of honest industry. To sell places in church and state, the army, the navy, and the sacred tribunals of law, to take bribes from rich and poor, high and low; in sums infinitesimal or enormous, to pillage the exchequer in, every imaginable form, to dispose of titles of honour, orders of chivalry, posts in municipal council, at auction; to barter influence, audiences, official interviews against money cynically paid down in rascal counters—all this was esteemed consistent with patrician dignity.

Page 2415

The ministers, ecclesiastics, and those about court, obtaining a monopoly of such trade, left the business of production and circulation to their inferiors, while, as has already been sufficiently indicated, religious fanaticism and a pride of race, which nearly amounted to idiocy, had generated a scorn for labour even among the lowest orders. As a natural consequence, commerce and the mechanical arts fell almost exclusively into the hands of foreigners—Italians, English, and French—who resorted in yearly increasing numbers to Spain for the purpose of enriching. themselves by the industry which the natives despised.

The capital thus acquired was at regular intervals removed from the country to other lands, where wealth resulting from traffic or manufactures was not accounted infamous.

Moreover, as the soil of the country was held by a few great proprietors—an immense portion in the dead-hand of an insatiate and ever-grasping church, and much of the remainder in vast entailed estates—it was nearly impossible for the masses of the people to become owners of any portion of the land. To be an agricultural day-labourer at less than a beggar's wage could hardly be a tempting pursuit for a proud and indolent race. It was no wonder therefore that the business of the brigand, the smuggler, the professional mendicant became from year to year more attractive and more overdone; while an ever-thickening swarm of priests, friars, and nuns of every order, engendered out of a corrupt and decaying society, increasing the general indolence, immorality, and unproductive consumption, and frightfully diminishing the productive force of the country, fed like locusts upon what was left in the unhappy land. "To shirk labour, infinite numbers become priests and friars," said, a good Catholic, in the year 1608—[Gir. Soranzo].

Before the end of the reign of Philip *iii*. the peninsula, which might have been the granary of the world, did not produce food enough for its own population. Corn became a regular article of import into Spain, and would have come in larger quantities than it did had the industry of the country furnished sufficient material to exchange for necessary food.

And as if it had been an object of ambition with the priests and courtiers who then ruled a noble country, to make at exactly this epoch the most startling manifestation of human fatuity that the world had ever seen, it was now resolved by government to expel by armed force nearly the whole stock of intelligent and experienced labour, agricultural and mechanical, from the country. It is unnecessary to dwell long upon an event which, if it were not so familiarly known to mankind, would seem almost incredible. But the expulsion of the Moors is, alas! no exaggerated and imaginary satire, but a monument of wickedness and insanity such as is not often seen in human history.

Already, in the very first years of the century, John Ribera, archbishop of Valencia, had recommended and urged the scheme.

Page 2416

It was too gigantic a project to be carried into execution at once, but it was slowly matured by the aid of other ecclesiastics. At last there were indications, both human and divine, that the expulsion of these miscreants could no longer be deferred. It was rumoured and believed that a general conspiracy existed among the Moors to rise upon the Government, to institute a general massacre, and, with the assistance of their allies and relatives on the Barbary coast, to re-establish the empire of the infidels.

A convoy of eighty ass-loads of oil on the way to Madrid had halted at a wayside inn. A few flasks were stolen, and those who consumed it were made sick. Some of the thieves even died, or were said to have died, in consequence. Instantly the rumour flew from mouth to mouth, from town to town, that the royal family, the court, the whole capital, all Spain, were to be poisoned with that oil. If such were the scheme it was certainly a less ingenious one than the famous plot by which the Spanish Government was suspected but a few years before to have so nearly succeeded in blowing the king, peers, and commons of England into the air.

The proof of Moorish guilt was deemed all-sufficient, especially as it was supported by supernatural evidence of the most portentous and convincing kind. For several days together a dark cloud, tinged with blood-red, had been seen to hang over Valencia.

In the neighbourhood of Daroca, a din of, drums and trumpets and the clang of arms had been heard in the sky, just as a procession went out of a monastery.

At Valencia the image of the Virgin had shed tears. In another place her statue had been discovered in a state of profuse perspiration.

What more conclusive indications could be required as to the guilt of the Moors? What other means devised for saving crown, church, and kingdom from destruction but to expel the whole mass of unbelievers from the soil which they had too long profaned?

Archbishop Ribera was fully sustained by the Archbishop of Toledo, and the whole ecclesiastical body received energetic support from Government.

Ribera had solemnly announced that the Moors were so greedy of money, so determined to keep it, and so occupied with pursuits most apt for acquiring it, that they had come to be the sponge of Spanish wealth. The best proof of this, continued the reverend sage, was that, inhabiting in general poor little villages and sterile tracts of country, paying to the lords of the manor one third of the crops, and being overladen with special taxes imposed only upon them, they nevertheless became rich, while the Christians, cultivating the most fertile land, were in abject poverty.

Page 2417

It seems almost incredible that this should not be satire. Certainly the most delicate irony could not portray the vicious institutions under which the magnificent territory and noble people of Spain were thus doomed to ruin more subtly end forcibly than was done by the honest brutality of this churchman. The careful tillage, the beautiful system of irrigation by aqueduct and canal, the scientific processes by which these “accursed” had caused the wilderness to bloom with cotton, sugar, and every kind of fruit and grain; the untiring industry, exquisite ingenuity, and cultivated taste by which the merchants, manufacturers, and mechanics, guilty of a darker complexion than that of the peninsular Goths, had enriched their native land with splendid fabrics in cloth, paper, leather, silk, tapestry, and by so doing had acquired fortunes for themselves, despite iniquitous taxation, religious persecution, and social contumely—all these were crimes against a race of idlers, steeped to the lips in sloth which imagined itself to be pride.

The industrious, the intelligent, the wealthy, were denounced as criminals, and hunted to death or into exile as vermin, while the Lermas, the Ucedas, and the rest of the brood of cormorants, settled more thickly than ever around their prey.

Meantime, Government declared that the piece of four maravedis should be worth eight maravedis; the piece of two maravedis being fixed at four. Thus the specie of the kingdom was to be doubled, and by means of this enlightened legislation, Spain, after destroying agriculture, commerce, and manufacture, was to maintain great armies and navies, and establish universal monarchy.

This measure, which a wiser churchman than Ribera, Cardinal Richelieu, afterwards declared the most audacious and barbarous ever recorded by history, was carried out with great regularity of organization. It was ordained that the Moors should be collected at three indicated points, whence they were not to move on pain of death, until duly escorted by troops to the ports of embarkation. The children under the age of four years were retained, of course without their parents, from whom they were forever separated. With admirable forethought, too, the priests took measures, as they supposed, that the arts of refining sugar, irrigating the rice-fields, constructing canals and aqueducts, besides many other useful branches of agricultural and mechanical business, should not die out with the intellectual, accomplished, and industrious race, alone competent to practise them, which was now sent forth to die. A very small number, not more than six in each hundred, were accordingly reserved to instruct other inhabitants of Spain in those useful arts which they were now more than ever encouraged to despise.

Five hundred thousand full-grown human beings, as energetic, ingenious, accomplished, as any then existing in the world, were thus thrust forth into the deserts beyond sea, as if Spain had been overstocked with skilled labour; and as if its native production had already outgrown the world’s power of consumption.

Page 2418

Had an equal number of mendicant monks, with the two archbishops who had contrived this deed at their head, been exported instead of the Moors, the future of Spain might have been a more fortunate one than it was likely to prove. The event was in itself perhaps of temporary advantage to the Dutch republic, as the poverty and general misery, aggravated by this disastrous policy, rendered the acknowledgment of the States' independence by Spain almost a matter of necessity.

It is superfluous to enter into any farther disquisiton as to the various branches of the royal revenue. They remained essentially the same as during the preceding reign, and have been elaborately set forth in a previous chapter. The gradual drying up of resources in all the wide-spread and heterogeneous territories subject to the Spanish sceptre is the striking phenomenon of the present epoch. The distribution of such wealth as was still created followed the same laws which had long prevailed, while the decay and national paralysis, of which the prognostics could hardly be mistaken, were a natural result of the system.

The six archbishops had now grown to eleven, and still received gigantic revenues; the income of the Archbishop of Toledo, including the fund of one hundred thousand destined for repairing the cathedral, being estimated at three hundred thousand dollars a year, that of the Archbishop of Seville and the others varying from one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to fifty thousand. The sixty-three bishops perhaps averaged fifty thousand a year each, and there were eight more in Italy.

The commanderies of chivalry, two hundred at least in number, were likewise enormously profitable. Some of them were worth thirty thousand a year; the aggregate annual value being from one-and-a-half to two millions, and all in Lerma's gift, upon his own terms.

Chivalry, that noblest of ideals, without which, in some shape or another, the world would be a desert and a sty; which included within itself many of the noblest virtues which can adorn mankind—generosity, self-denial, chastity, frugality, patience, protection to the feeble, the downtrodden, and the oppressed; the love of daring adventure, devotion to a pure religion and a lofty purpose, most admirably pathetic, even when in the eyes of the vulgar most fantastic—had been the proudest and most poetical of Spanish characteristics, never to be entirely uprooted from the national heart.

Alas! what was there in the commanderies of Calatrava, Alcantara, Santiago, and all the rest of those knightly orders, as then existing, to respond to the noble sentiments on which all were supposed to be founded? Institutions for making money, for pillaging the poor of their hard-earned pittance, trafficked in by greedy ministers and needy courtiers with a shamelessness which had long ceased to blush at vices however gross, at venality however mean.

Venality was in truth the prominent characteristic of the Spanish polity at this epoch. Everything political or ecclesiastical, from highest to lowest, was matter of merchandize.

Page 2419

It was the autocrat, governing king and kingdom, who disposed of episcopal mitres, cardinals' hats, commanders' crosses, the offices of regidores or municipal magistrates in all the cities, farmings of revenues, collectorships of taxes, at prices fixed by himself.

It was never known that the pope refused to confirm the ecclesiastical nominations which were made by the Spanish court.

The nuncius had the privilege of dispensing the small cures from thirty dollars a year downwards, of which the number was enormous. Many of these were capable, in careful hands, of becoming ten times as valuable as their nominal estimate, and the business in them became in consequence very extensive and lucrative. They were often disposed of for the benefit of servants and the hangers-on of noble families, to laymen, to women, children, to babes unborn.

When such was the most thriving industry in the land, was it wonderful that the poor of high and low degree were anxious in ever-increasing swarms to effect their entrance into convent, monastery, and church, and that trade, agriculture, and manufactures languished?

The foreign polity of the court remained as it had been established by Philip *ii*.

Its maxims were very simple. To do unto your neighbour all possible harm, and to foster the greatness of Spain by sowing discord and maintaining civil war in all other nations, was the fundamental precept. To bribe and corrupt the servants of other potentates, to maintain a regular paid bode of adherents in foreign lands, ever ready to engage in schemes of assassination, conspiracy, sedition, and rebellion against the legitimate authority, to make mankind miserable, so far as it was in the power of human force or craft to produce wretchedness, were objects still faithfully pursued.

They had not yet led to the entire destruction of other realms and their submission to the single sceptre of Spain, nor had they developed the resources, material or moral, of a mighty empire so thoroughly as might have been done perhaps by a less insidious policy, but they had never been abandoned.

It was a steady object of policy to keep such potentates of Italy as were not already under the dominion of the Spanish crown in a state of internecine feud with each other and of virtual dependence on the powerful kingdom. The same policy pursued in France, of fomenting civil war by subsidy, force, and chicane, during a long succession of years in order to reduce that magnificent realm under the sceptre of Philip, has been described in detail. The chronic rebellion of Ireland against the English crown had been assisted and inflamed in every possible mode, the system being considered as entirely justified by the aid and comfort afforded by the queen to the Dutch rebels.

Page 2420

It was a natural result of the system according to which kingdoms and provinces with the populations dwelling therein were transferable like real estate by means of marriage-settlements, entails, and testaments, that the proprietorship of most of the great realms in Christendom was matter of fierce legal dispute. Lawsuits, which in chancery could last for centuries before a settlement of the various claims was made, might have infinitely enriched the gentlemen of the long robe and reduced all the parties to beggary, had there been any tribunal but the battle-field to decide among the august litigants. Thus the King of Great Britain claimed the legal proprietorship and sovereignty of Brittany, Normandy, Anjou, Gascony, Calais, and Boulogne in France, besides the whole kingdom by right of conquest. The French king claimed to be rightful heir of Castile, Biscay, Guipuscoa, Arragon, Navarre, nearly all the Spanish peninsula in short, including the whole of Portugal and the Balearic islands to boot. The King of Spain claimed, as we have seen often enough, not only Brittany but all France as his lawful inheritance. Such was the virtue of the prevalent doctrine of proprietorship. Every potentate was defrauded of his rights, and every potentate was a criminal usurper. As for the people, it would have excited a smile of superior wisdom on regal, legal, or sacerdotal lips, had it been suggested that by any possibility the governed could have a voice or a thought in regard to the rulers whom God in His grace had raised up to be their proprietors and masters.

The army of Spain was sunk far below the standard at which it had been kept when it seemed fit to conquer and govern the world. Neither by Spain nor Italy could those audacious, disciplined, and obedient legions be furnished, at which the enemies of the mighty despot trembled from one extremity of earth to the other. Peculation, bankruptcy, and mutiny had done their work at last. We have recently had occasion to observe the conduct of the veterans in Flanders at critical epochs. At this moment, seventy thousand soldiers were on the muster and pay roll of the army serving in those provinces, while not thirty thousand men existed in the flesh.

The navy was sunk to fifteen or twenty old galleys, battered, dismantled, unseaworthy, and a few armed ships for convoying the East and West Indiamen to and from their destinations.

The general poverty was so great that it was often absolutely impossible to purchase food for the royal household. “If you ask me,” said a cool observer, “how this great show of empire is maintained, when the funds are so small, I answer that it is done by not paying at all.” The Government was shamelessly, hopelessly bankrupt. The noble band of courtiers were growing enormously rich. The state was a carcase which unclean vultures were picking to the bones.

The foremost man in the land—the autocrat, the absolute master in State and Church—was the Duke of Lerma.

Page 2421

Very rarely in human history has an individual attained to such unlimited power under a monarchy, without actually placing the crown upon his own head. Mayors of the palace, in the days of the do-nothing kings, wielded nothing like the imperial control which was firmly held by this great favourite. Yet he was a man of very moderate capacity and limited acquirements, neither soldier, lawyer, nor priest.

The duke was past sixty years of age, a tall, stately, handsome man, of noble presence and urbane manner. Born of the patrician house of Sandoval, he possessed, on the accession of Philip, an inherited income of ten or twelve thousand dollars. He had now, including what he had bestowed on his son, a funded revenue of seven hundred thousand a year. He had besides, in cash, jewels, and furniture, an estimated capital of six millions. All this he had accumulated in ten years of service, as prime minister, chief equerry, and first valet of the chamber to the king.

The tenure of his authority was the ascendancy of a firm character over a very weak one. At this moment he was doubtless the most absolute ruler in Christendom, and Philip *iii*. the most submissive and uncomplaining of his subjects.

The origin of his power was well known. During the reign of Philip *ii*., the prince, treated with great severity by his father, was looked upon with contempt by every one about court. He was allowed to take no part in affairs, and, having heard of the awful tragedy of his eldest half-brother, enacted ten years before his own birth, he had no inclination to confront the wrath of that terrible parent and sovereign before whom all Spain trembled. Nothing could have been more humble, more effaced, more obscure, than his existence as prince. The Marquis of Denia, his chamberlain, alone was kind to him, furnished him with small sums of money, and accompanied him on the shooting excursions in which his father occasionally permitted him to indulge. But even these little attentions were looked upon with jealousy by the king; so that the marquis was sent into honourable exile from court as governor of Valencia. It was hoped that absence would wean the prince of his affection for the kind chamberlain. The calculation was erroneous. No sooner were the eyes of Philip *ii*. closed in death than the new king made haste to send for Denia, who was at once created Duke of Lerma, declared of the privy council, and appointed master of the horse and first gentleman of the bed-chamber. From that moment the favourite became supreme. He was entirely without education, possessed little experience in affairs of state, and had led the life of a commonplace idler and voluptuary until past the age of fifty. Nevertheless he had a shrewd mother-wit, tact in dealing with men, aptitude to take advantage of events. He had directness of purpose, firmness of will, and always knew his own mind. From the beginning of his political career unto its end, he conscientiously and without swerving pursued a single aim. This was to rob the exchequer by every possible mode and at every instant of his life. Never was a more masterly financier in this respect. With a single eye to his own interests, he preserved a magnificent unity in all his actions. The result had been to make him in ten years the richest subject in the world, as well as the most absolute ruler.

Page 2422

He enriched his family, as a matter of course. His son was already made Duke of Uceda, possessed enormous wealth, and was supposed by those who had vision in the affairs of court to be the only individual ever likely to endanger the power of the father. Others thought that the young duke's natural dulness would make it impossible for him to supplant the omnipotent favourite. The end was not yet, and time was to show which class of speculators was in the right. Meantime the whole family was united and happy. The sons and daughters had intermarried with the Infantados, and other most powerful and wealthy families of grandees. The uncle, Sandoval, had been created by Lerma a cardinal and archbishop of Toledo; the king's own schoolmaster being removed from that dignity, and disgraced and banished from court for having spoken disrespectfully of the favourite. The duke had reserved for himself twenty thousand a year from the revenues of the archbishopric, as a moderate price for thus conducting himself as became a dutiful nephew. He had ejected Rodrigo de Vasquez from his post as president of the council. As a more conclusive proof of his unlimited sway than any other of his acts had been, he had actually unseated and banished the inquisitor-general, Don Pietro Porto Carrero, and supplanted him in that dread office, before which even anointed sovereigns trembled, by one of his own creatures.

In the discharge of his various functions, the duke and all his family were domesticated in the royal palace, so that he was at no charges for housekeeping. His apartments there were more sumptuous than those of the king and queen. He had removed from court the Dutchess of Candia, sister of the great Constable of Castile, who had been for a time in attendance on the queen, and whose possible influence he chose to destroy in the bud. Her place as mistress of the robes was supplied by his sister, the Countess of Lemos; while his wife, the terrible Duchess of Lerma, was constantly with the queen, who trembled at her frown. Thus the royal pair were completely beleaguered, surrounded, and isolated from all except the Lermas. When the duke conferred with the king, the doors were always double locked.

In his capacity as first valet it was the duke's duty to bring the king's shirt in the morning, to see to his wardrobe and his bed, and to supply him with ideas for the day. The king depended upon him entirely and abjectly, was miserable when separated from him four-and-twenty hours, thought with the duke's thoughts and saw with the duke's eyes. He was permitted to know nothing of state affairs, save such portions as were communicated to him by Lerma. The people thought their monarch bewitched, so much did he tremble before the favourite, and so unscrupulously did the duke appropriate for his own benefit and that of his creatures everything that he could lay his hands upon. It would have needed little to bring about a revolution, such was the universal hatred felt for the minister, and the contempt openly expressed for the king.

Page 2423

The duke never went to the council. All papers and documents relating to business were sent to his apartments. Such matters as he chose to pass upon, such decrees as he thought proper to issue, were then taken by him to the king, who signed them with perfect docility. As time went on, this amount of business grew too onerous for the royal hand, or this amount of participation by the king in affairs of state came to be esteemed superfluous and inconvenient by the duke, and his own signature was accordingly declared to be equivalent to that of the sovereign's sign-manual. It is doubtful whether such a degradation of the royal prerogative had ever been heard of before in a Christian monarch.

It may be imagined that this system of government was not of a nature to expedite business, however swiftly it might fill the duke's coffers. High officers of state, foreign ambassadors, all men in short charged with important affairs, were obliged to dance attendance for weeks and months on the one man whose hands grasped all the business of the kingdom, while many departed in despair without being able to secure a single audience. It was entirely a matter of trade. It was necessary to bribe in succession all the creatures of the duke before getting near enough to headquarters to bribe the duke himself. Never were such itching palms. To do business at court required the purse of Fortunatus. There was no deception in the matter. Everything was frank and above board in that age of chivalry. Ambassadors wrote to their sovereigns that there was no hope of making treaties or of accomplishing any negotiation except by purchasing the favour of the autocrat; and Lerma's price was always high. At one period the republic of Venice wished to put a stop to the depredations by Spanish pirates upon Venetian commerce, but the subject could not even be approached by the envoy until he had expended far more than could be afforded out of his meagre salary in buying an interview.

When it is remembered that with this foremost power in the world affairs of greater or less importance were perpetually to be transacted by the representatives of other nations as well as by native subjects of every degree; that all these affairs were to pass through the hands of Lerma, and that those hands had ever to be filled with coin, the stupendous opulence of the one man can be easily understood. Whether the foremost power of the world, thus governed, were likely to continue the foremost power, could hardly seem doubtful to those accustomed to use their reason in judging of the things of this world.

Meantime the duke continued to transact business; to sell his interviews and his interest; to traffic in cardinals' hats, bishops' mitres, judges' ermine, civic and magisterial votes in all offices, high or humble, of church, army, or state.

Page 2424

He possessed the art of remembering, or appearing to remember, the matters of business which had been communicated to him. When a negotiator, of whatever degree, had the good fortune to reach the presence, he found the duke to all appearance mindful of the particular affair which led to the interview, and fully absorbed by its importance. There were men who, trusting to the affability shown by the great favourite, and to the handsome price paid down in cash for that urbanity, had been known to go away from their interview believing that their business was likely to be accomplished, until the lapse of time revealed to them the wildness of their dream.

The duke perhaps never manifested his omnipotence on a more striking scale than when by his own fiat he removed the court and the seat of government to Valladolid, and kept it there six years long. This was declared by disinterested observers to be not only contrary to common sense, but even beyond the bounds of possibility. At Madrid the king had splendid palaces, and in its neighbourhood beautiful country residences, a pure atmosphere, and the facility of changing the air at will. At Valladolid there were no conveniences of any kind, no sufficient palace, no summer villa, no park, nothing but an unwholesome climate. But most of the duke's estates were in that vicinity, and it was desirable for him to overlook them in person. Moreover, he wished to get rid of the possible influence over the king of the Empress Dowager Maria, widow of Maximilian *ii*. and aunt and grandmother of Philip *iii*. The minister could hardly drive this exalted personage from court, so easily as he had banished the ex-Archbishop of Toledo, the Inquisitor General, the Duchess of Candia, besides a multitude of lesser note. So he did the next best thing, and banished the court from the empress, who was not likely to put up with the inconveniences of Valladolid for the sake of outrivalling the duke. This Babylonian captivity lasted until Madrid was nearly ruined, until the desolation of the capital, the moans of the trades-people, the curses of the poor, and the grumblings of the courtiers, finally produced an effect even upon the arbitrary Lerma. He then accordingly re-emigrated, with king and Government, to Madrid, and caused it to be published that he had at last overcome the sovereign's repugnance to the old capital, and had persuaded him to abandon Valladolid.

There was but one man who might perhaps from his position have competed with the influence of Lerma. This was the king's father-confessor, whom Philip wished—-although of course his wish was not gratified—to make a member of the council of state. The monarch, while submitting in everything secular to the duke's decrees, had a feeble determination to consult and to be guided by his confessor in all matters of conscience. As it was easy to suggest that high affairs of state, the duties of government, the interests of a great people, were matters not entirely

Page 2425

foreign to the conscience of anointed kings, an opening to power might have seemed easy to an astute and ambitious churchman. But the Dominican who kept Philip's conscience, Gasparo de Cordova by name, was, fortunately for the favourite, of a very tender paste, easily moulded to the duke's purpose. Dull and ignorant enough, he was not so stupid as to doubt that, should he whisper any suggestions or criticisms in regard to the minister's proceedings, the king would betray him and he would lose his office. The cautious friar accordingly held his peace and his place, and there was none to dispute the sway of the autocrat.

What need to dilate further upon such a minister and upon such a system of government? To bribe and to be bribed, to maintain stipendiaries in every foreign Government, to place the greatness of the empire upon the weakness, distraction, and misery of other nations, to stimulate civil war, revolts of nobles and citizens against authority; separation of provinces, religious discontents in every land of Christendom—-such were the simple rules ever faithfully enforced.

The other members of what was called the council were insignificant.

Philip *iii*., on arriving at the throne, had been heard to observe that the day of simple esquires and persons of low condition was past, and that the turn of great nobles had come. It had been his father's policy to hold the grandees in subjection, and to govern by means of ministers who were little more than clerks, generally of humble origin; keeping the reins in his own hands. Such great personages as he did employ, like Alva, Don John of Austria, and Farnese, were sure at last to excite his jealousy and to incur his hatred. Forty-three years of this kind of work had brought Spain to the condition in which the third Philip found it. The new king thought to have found a remedy in discarding the clerks, and calling in the aid of dukes. Philip *ii*. was at least a king. The very first act of Philip *iii*. at his father's death was to abdicate.

It was, however, found necessary to retain some members of the former Government. Fuentes, the best soldier and accounted the most dangerous man in the empire, was indeed kept in retirement as governor of Milan, while Cristoval di Mora, who had enjoyed much of the late king's confidence, was removed to Portugal as viceroy. But Don John of Idiaquez, who had really been the most efficient of the old administration, still remained in the council. Without the subordinate aid of his experience in the routine of business, it would have been difficult for the favourite to manage the great machine with his single hand. But there was no disposition on the part of the ancient minister to oppose the new order of things. A cautious, caustic, dry old functionary, talking more with his shoulders than with his tongue, determined never to commit himself, or to risk shipwreck by venturing again into deeper waters than those of the harbour in which he now hoped for repose, Idiaquez knew that his day of action was past. Content to be confidential clerk to the despot duke, as he had been faithful secretary to the despot

king, he was the despair of courtiers and envoys who came to pump, after having endeavoured to fill an inexhaustible cistern. Thus he proved, on the whole, a useful and comfortable man, not to the country, but to its autocrat.

Page 2426

Of the Count of Chinchon, who at one time was supposed to have court influence because a dabbler in architecture, much consulted during the building of the Escorial by Philip *ii*. until the auditing of his accounts brought him into temporary disgrace, and the Marquises of Velada, Villalonga, and other ministers, it is not necessary to speak. There was one man in the council, however, who was of great importance, wielding a mighty authority in subordination to the duke. This was Don Pietro de Franqueza. An emancipated slave, as his name indicated, and subsequently the body-servant of Lerma, he had been created by that minister secretary of the privy council. He possessed some of the virtues of the slave, such as docility and attachment to the hand that had fed and scourged him, and many vices of both slave and freedman. He did much of the work which it would have been difficult for the duke to accomplish in person, received his fees, sold and dispensed his interviews, distributed his bribes. In so doing, as might be supposed, he did not neglect his own interest. It was a matter of notoriety, no man knowing it better than the king, that no business, foreign or domestic, could be conducted or even begun at court without large preliminary fees to the secretary of the council, his wife, and his children. He had, in consequence, already accumulated an enormous fortune. His annual income, when it was stated, excited amazement. He was insolent and overbearing to all comers until his dues had been paid, when he became at once obliging, supple, and comparatively efficient. Through him alone lay the path to the duke's sanctuary.

The nominal sovereign, Philip *iii*., was thirty years of age. A very little man, with pink cheeks, flaxen hair, and yellow beard, with a melancholy expression of eye, and protruding under lip and jaw, he was now comparatively alert and vigorous in constitution, although for the first seven years of his life it had been doubtful whether he would live from week to week. He had been afflicted during that period with a chronic itch or leprosy, which had undermined his strength, but which had almost entirely disappeared as he advanced in life.

He was below mediocrity in mind, and had received scarcely any education. He had been taught to utter a few phrases, more or less intelligible, in French, Italian, and Flemish, but was quite incapable of sustaining a conversation in either of those languages. When a child, he had learned and subsequently forgotten the rudiments of the Latin grammar.

These acquirements, together with the catechism and the offices of the Church, made up his whole stock of erudition. That he was devout as a monk of the middle ages, conforming daily and hourly to religious ceremonies, need scarcely be stated. It was not probable that the son of Philip *ii*. would be a delinquent to church observances. He was not deficient in courage, rode well, was fond of hunting,

Page 2427

kept close to the staghounds, and confronted, spear in hand, the wild-boar with coolness and success. He was fond of tennis, but his especial passion and chief accomplishment was dancing. He liked to be praised for his proficiency in this art, and was never happier than when gravely leading out the queen or his daughter, then four or five years of age—for he never danced with any one else—to perform a stately bolero.

He never drank wine, but, on the other hand, was an enormous eater; so that, like his father in youth, he was perpetually suffering from stomach-ache as the effect of his gluttony. He was devotedly attached to his queen, and had never known, nor hardly looked at, any other woman. He had no vice but gambling, in which he indulged to a great extent, very often sitting up all night at cards. This passion of the king's was much encouraged by Lerma, for obvious reasons. Philip had been known to lose thirty thousand dollars at a sitting, and always to some one of the family or dependents of the duke, who of course divided with them the spoils. At one time the Count of Pelbes, nephew of Lerma, had won two hundred thousand dollars in a very few nights from his sovereign.

For the rest, Philip had few peculiarities or foibles. He was not revengeful, nor arrogant, nor malignant. He was kind and affectionate to his wife and children, and did his best to be obedient to the Duke of Lerma. Occasionally he liked to grant audiences, but there were few to request them. It was ridiculous and pathetic at the same time to see the poor king, as was very frequently the case, standing at a solemn green table till his little legs were tired, waiting to transact business with applicants who never came; while ushers, chamberlains, and valets were rushing up and down the corridors, bawling for all persons so disposed to come and have an audience of their monarch. Meantime, the doors of the great duke's apartments in the same palace would be beleaguered by an army of courtiers, envoys, and contractors, who had paid solid gold for admission, and who were often sent away grumbling and despairing without entering the sacred precincts.

As time wore on, the king, too much rebuked for attempting to meddle in state affairs, became solitary and almost morose, moping about in the woods by himself, losing satisfaction in his little dancing and ball-playing diversions, but never forgetting his affection for the queen nor the hours for his four daily substantial repasts of meats and pastry. It would be unnecessary and almost cruel to dwell so long upon a picture of what was after all not much better than human imbecility, were it not that humanity is, a more sacred thing than royalty. A satire upon such an embodiment of kingship is impossible, the simple and truthful characteristics being more effective than fiction or exaggeration. It would be unjust to exhume a private character after the lapse of two centuries merely to excite derision, but if history be not powerless to instruct, it certainly cannot be unprofitable to ponder the merits of a system which, after bestowing upon the

world forty-three years of Philip the tyrant, had now followed them up with a decade of Philip the simpleton.

Page 2428

In one respect the reigning sovereign was in advance of his age. In his devotion to the Madonna he claimed the same miraculous origin for her mother as for herself. When the prayer “O Sancta Maria sine labe originali concepta” was chanted, he would exclaim with emotion that the words embodied his devoutest aspirations. He had frequent interviews with doctors of divinity on the subject, and instructed many bishops to urge upon the pope the necessity of proclaiming the virginity of the Virgin’s mother. Could he secure this darling object of his ambition, he professed himself ready to make a pilgrimage on foot to Rome. The pilgrimage was never made, for it may well be imagined that Lerma would forbid any such adventurous scheme. Meantime, the duke continued to govern the empire and to fill his coffers, and the king to shoot rabbits.

The queen was a few years younger than her husband, and far from beautiful. Indeed, the lower portion of her face was almost deformed. She was graceful, however, in her movements, and pleasing and gentle in manner. She adored the king, looking up to him with reverence as the greatest and wisest of beings. To please him she had upon her marriage given up drinking wine, which, for a German, was considered a great sacrifice. She recompensed herself, as the king did, by eating to an extent which, according to contemporary accounts, excited amazement. Thus there was perfect sympathy between the two in the important article of diet. She had also learned to play at cards, in order to take a hand with him at any moment, feebly hoping that an occasional game for love might rescue the king from that frantic passion by which his health was shattered and so many courtiers were enriched.

Not being deficient in perception, the queen was quite aware of the greediness of all who surrounded the palace. She had spirit enough too to feel the galling tyranny to which the king was subjected. That the people hated the omnipotent favourite, and believed the king to be under the influence of sorcery, she was well aware. She had even a dim notion that the administration of the empire was not the wisest nor the noblest that could be devised for the first power in Christendom. But considerations of high politics scarcely troubled her mind. Of a People she had perhaps never heard, but she felt that the king was oppressed. She knew that he was helpless, and that she was herself his only friend. But of what avail were her timid little flutterings of indignation and resistance? So pure and fragile a creature could accomplish little good for king or people. Perpetually guarded and surrounded by the Countess of Lemos and the Duchess of Lerma, she lived in mortal awe of both. As to the duke himself, she trembled at his very name. On her first attempts to speak with Philip on political matters —to hint at the unscrupulous character of his government, to arouse him to the necessity of striking for a little

Page 2429

more liberty and for at least a trifling influence in the state—the poor little king instantly betrayed her to the favourite and she was severely punished. The duke took the monarch off at once on a long journey, leaving her alone for weeks long with the terrible duchess and countess. Never before had she been separated for a day from her husband, it having been the king's uniform custom to take her with him in all his expeditions. Her ambition to interfere was thus effectually cured. The duke forbade her thenceforth ever to speak of politics to her husband in public or in private—not even in bed—and the king was closely questioned whether these orders had been obeyed. She submitted without a struggle. She saw how completely her happiness was at Lerma's mercy. She had no one to consult with, having none but Spanish people about her, except her German father-confessor, whom, as a great favour, and after a severe struggle, she had beep allowed to retain, as otherwise her ignorance of the national language would have made it impossible for her to confess her little sins. Moreover her brothers, the archdukes at Gratz, were in receipt of considerable annual stipends from the Spanish exchequer, and the duke threatened to stop those pensions at once should the queen prove refractory. It is painful to dwell any longer on the abject servitude in which the king and queen were kept. The two were at least happy in each other's society, and were blessed with mutual affection, with pretty and engaging children, and with a similarity of tastes. It is impossible to imagine anything more stately, more devout, more regular, more innocent, more utterly dismal and insipid, than the lives of this wedded pair.

This interior view of the court and council of Spain will suffice to explain why, despite the languor and hesitations with which the transactions were managed, the inevitable tendency was towards a peace. The inevitable slowness, secrecy, and tergiversations were due to the dignity of the Spanish court, and in harmony with its most sacred traditions.

But what profit could the Duke of Lerma expect by the continuance of the Dutch war, and who in Spain was to be consulted except the Duke of Lerma?

Etext editor's bookmarks:

A man incapable of fatigue, of perplexity, or of fear
Converting beneficent commerce into baleful gambling
Gigantic vices are proudly pointed to as the noblest
No generation is long-lived enough to reap the harvest
Proclaiming the virginity of the Virgin's mother
Steeped to the lips in sloth which imagined itself to be pride
To shirk labour, infinite numbers become priests and friars



BOOKRAGS

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year’s Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 80, 1607

Page 2430

CHAPTER XLIX.

Peace deliberations in Spain—Unpopularity of the project— Disaffection of the courtiers —Complaints against Spinola— Conference of the Catholic party—Position of Henry *iv*. towards the republic—State of France Further peace negotiations—Desire of King James of England for the restoration of the States to Spain—Arrival of the French commissioners President Jeannin before the States- General—Dangers of a truce with Spain—Dutch legation to England— Arrival of Lewis Verreyken at the Hague with Philip's ratification— Rejection of the Spanish treaty—Withdrawal of the Dutch fleet from the Peninsula—The peace project denounced by the party of Prince Maurice—-Opposition of Maurice to the plans of Barneveld—Amended ratification presented to the States-General—Discussion of the conditions—Determination to conclude a peace—-Indian trade— Exploits of Admiral Matelieff in the Malay peninsula—He lays siege to Malacca—Victory over the Spanish fleet—Endeavour to open a trade with China—-Return of Matelieff to Holland.

The Marquis Spinola had informed the Spanish Government that if 300,000 dollars a month could be furnished, the war might be continued, but that otherwise it would be better to treat upon the basis of 'uti possidetis,' and according to the terms proposed by the States-General. He had further intimated his opinion that, instead of waiting for the king's consent, it more comported with the king's dignity for the archdukes to enter into negotiations, to make a preliminary and brief armistice with the enemy, and then to solicit the royal approval of what had been done.

In reply, the king—that is to say the man who thought, wrote, and signed in behalf of the king—had plaintively observed that among evils the vulgar rule was to submit to the least. Although, therefore, to grant to the Netherland rebels not only peace and liberty, but to concede to them whatever they had obtained by violence and the most abominable outrages, was the worst possible example to all princes; yet as the enormous sum necessary for carrying on the war was not to be had, even by attempting to scrape it together from every corner of the earth, he agreed with the opinion of the archdukes that it was better to put an end to this eternal and exhausting war by peace or truce, even under severe conditions. That the business had thus far proceeded without consulting him, was publicly known, and he expressed approval of the present movements towards a peace or a long truce, assuring Spinola that such a result would be as grateful to him as if the war had been brought to a successful issue.

Page 2431

When the Marquis sent formal notice of the armistice to Spain there were many complaints at court. Men said that the measure was beneath the king's dignity, and contrary to his interests. It was a cessation of arms under iniquitous conditions, accorded to a people formerly subject and now rebellious. Such a truce was more fatal than any conflict, than any amount of slaughter. During this long and dreadful war, the king had suffered no disaster so terrible as this, and the courtiers now declared openly that the archduke was the cause of the royal and national humiliation. Having no children, nor hope of any, he desired only to live in tranquillity and selfish indulgence, like the indolent priest that he was, not caring what detriment or dishonour might accrue to the crown after his life was over.

Thus murmured the parasites and the plunderers within the dominions of the do-nothing Philip, denouncing the first serious effort to put an end to a war which the laws of nature had proved to be hopeless on the part of Spain.

Spinola too, who had spent millions of his own money, who had plunged himself into debt and discredit, while attempting to sustain the financial reputation of the king, who had by his brilliant services in the field revived the ancient glory of the Spanish arms, and who now saw himself exposed with empty coffers to a vast mutiny, which was likely to make his future movements as paralytic as those of his immediate predecessors—-Spinola, already hated because he was an Italian, because he was of a mercantile family, and because he had been successful, was now as much the object of contumely with the courtiers as with the archduke himself.

The splendid victory of Heemskerk had struck the government with dismay and diffused a panic along the coast. The mercantile fleets, destined for either India, dared not venture forth so long as the terrible Dutch cruisers, which had just annihilated a splendid Spanish fleet, commanded by a veteran of Lepanto, and under the very guns of Gibraltar, were supposed to be hovering off the Peninsula. Very naturally, therefore, there was discontent in Spain that the cessation of hostilities had not originally been arranged for sea as well as land, and men said openly at court that Spinola ought to have his head cut off for agreeing to such an armistice. Quite as reasonably, however, it was now felt to be necessary to effect as soon as possible the recal of this very inconvenient Dutch fleet from the coast of Spain.

The complaints were so incessant against Spinola that it was determined to send Don Diego d'Ybarra to Brussels, charged with a general superintendence of the royal interests in the present confused condition of affairs. He was especially instructed to convey to Spinola the most vehement reproaches in regard to the terms of the armistice, and to insist upon the cessation of naval hostilities, and the withdrawal of the cruisers.

Page 2432

Spinola, on his part, was exceedingly irritated that the arrangements which he had so carefully made with the archduke at Brussels should be so contumaciously assailed, and even disavowed, at Madrid. He was especially irritated that Ybarra should now be sent as his censor and overseer, and that Fuentes should have received orders to levy seven thousand troops in the Milanese for Flanders, the arrival of which reinforcements would excite suspicion, and probably break off negotiations.

He accordingly sent his private secretary Biraga, posthaste to Spain with two letters. In number one he implored his Majesty that Ybarra might not be sent to Brussels. If this request were granted, number two was to be burned. Otherwise, number two was to be delivered, and it contained a request to be relieved from all further employment in the king's service. The marquis was already feeling the same effects of success as had been experienced by Alexander Farnese, Don John of Austria, and other strenuous maintainers of the royal authority in Flanders. He was railed against, suspected, spied upon, put under guardianship, according to the good old traditions of the Spanish court. Public disgrace or secret poison might well be expected by him, as the natural guerdons of his eminent deeds.

Biraga also took with him the draught of the form in which the king's consent to the armistice and pending negotiations was desired, and he was particularly directed to urge that not one letter or comma should be altered, in order that no pretext might be afforded to the suspicious Netherlanders for a rupture.

In private letters to his own superintendent Strata, to Don John of Idiaquez, to the Duke of Lerma, and to Stephen Ybarra, Spinola enlarged upon the indignity about to be offered him, remonstrated vehemently against the wrong and stupidity of the proposed policy, and expressed his reliance upon the efforts of these friends of his to prevent its consummation. He intimated to Idiaquez that a new deliberation would be necessary to effect the withdrawal of the Dutch fleet—a condition not inserted in the original armistice—but that within the three months allowed for the royal ratification there would be time enough to procure the consent of the States to that measure. If the king really desired to continue the war, he had but to alter a single comma in the draught, and, out of that comma, the stadholder's party would be certain to manufacture for him as long a war as he could possibly wish.

In a subsequent letter to the king, Spinola observed that he was well aware of the indignation created in Spain by the cessation of land hostilities without the recal of the fleet, but that nevertheless John Neyen had confidentially represented to the archdukes the royal assent as almost certain. As to the mission of Ybarra, the marquis reminded his master that the responsibility and general superintendence of the negotiations had been almost forced upon him.

Page 2433

Certainly he had not solicited them. If another agent were now interposed, it was an advertisement to the world that the business had been badly managed. If the king wished a rupture, he had but to lift his finger or his pen; but to appoint another commissioner was an unfit reward for his faithful service. He was in the king's hands. If his reputation were now to be destroyed, it was all over with him and his affairs. The man, whom mortals had once believed incapable, would be esteemed incapable until the end of his days.

It was too late to prevent the mission of Ybarra, who, immediately after his arrival in Brussels, began to urge in the king's name that the words in which the provinces had been declared free by the archdukes might be expunged. What could be more childish than such diplomacy? What greater proof could be given of the incapacity of the Spanish court to learn the lesson which forty years had been teaching? Spinola again wrote a most earnest remonstrance to the king, assuring him that this was simply to break off the negotiation. It was ridiculous to suppose, he said, that concessions already made by the archdukes, ratification of which on the part of the king had been guaranteed, could now be annulled. Those acquainted with Netherland obstinacy knew better. The very possibility of the king's refusal excited the scorn of the States-General.

Ybarra went about, too, prating to the archdukes and to others of supplies to be sent from Spain sufficient to carry on the war for many years, and of fresh troops to be forwarded immediately by Fuentes. As four millions of crowns a year were known to be required for any tolerable campaigning, such empty vaunts as these were preposterous. The king knew full well, said Spinola, and had admitted the fact in his letters, that this enormous sum could not be furnished. Moreover, the war cost the Netherlanders far less in proportion. They had river transportation, by which they effected as much in two days as the Catholic army could do in a fortnight, so that every siege was managed with far greater rapidity and less cost by the rebels than by their opponents. As to sending troops from Milan, he had already stated that their arrival would have a fatal effect. The minds of the people were full of suspicion. Every passing rumour excited a prodigious sensation, and the war party was already gaining the upper hand. Spinola warned the king, in the most solemn manner, that if the golden opportunity were now neglected the war would be eternal. This, he said, was more certain than certain. For himself, he had strained every nerve, and would continue to do his best in the interest of peace. If calamity must come, he at least would be held blameless.

Such vehement remonstrances from so eminent a source produced the needful effect. Royal letters were immediately sent, placing full powers of treating in the hands of the marquis, and sending him a ratification of the archduke's agreement. Government moreover expressed boundless confidence in Spinola, and deprecated the idea that Ybarra's mission was in derogation of his authority. He had been sent, it was stated,

only to procure that indispensable preliminary to negotiations, the withdrawal of the Dutch fleet, but as this had now been granted, Ybarra was already recalled.

Page 2434

Spinola now determined to send the swift and sure-footed friar, who had made himself so useful in opening the path to discussion, on a secret mission to Spain. Ybarra objected; especially because it would be necessary for him to go through France, where he would be closely questioned by the king. It would be equally dangerous, he said, for the Franciscan in that case to tell the truth or to conceal it. But Spinola replied that a poor monk like him could steal through France undiscovered. Moreover, he should be disguised as a footman, travelling in the service of Aurelio Spinola, a relative of the marquis, then proceeding to Madrid. Even should Henry hear of his presence and send for him, was it to be supposed that so practised a hand would not easily parry the strokes of the French king—accomplished fencer as he undoubtedly was? After stealing into and out of Holland as he had so recently done, there was nothing that might not be expected of him. So the wily friar put on the Spinola livery, and, without impediment, accompanied Don Aurelio to Madrid.

Meantime, the French commissioners—Pierre Jeannin, Buzanval, regular resident at the Hague, and De Russy, who was destined to succeed that diplomatist—had arrived in Holland.

The great drama of negotiation, which was now to follow the forty years' tragedy, involved the interests and absorbed the attention of the great Christian powers. Although serious enough in its substance and its probable consequences, its aspect was that of a solemn comedy. There was a secret disposition on the part of each leading personage—with a few exceptions—to make dupes of all the rest. Perhaps this was a necessary result of statesmanship, as it had usually been taught at that epoch.

Paul V., who had succeeded Clement *viii*. in 1605, with the brief interlude of the twenty-six days of Leo XI.'s pontificate, was zealous, as might be supposed, to check the dangerous growth of the pestilential little republic of the north. His diplomatic agents, Millino at Madrid, Barberini at Paris, and the accomplished Bentivoglio, who had just been appointed to the nunciatura at Brussels, were indefatigable in their efforts to suppress the heresy and the insolent liberty of which the upstart commonwealth was the embodiment.

Especially Barberini exerted all the powers at his command to bring about a good understanding between the kings of France and Spain. He pictured to Henry, in darkest colours, the blight that would come over religion and civilization if the progress of the rebellious Netherlands could not be arrested. The United Provinces were becoming dangerous, if they remained free, not only to the French kingdom, but to the very existence of monarchy throughout the world.

No potentate was ever more interested, so it was urged, than Henry *iv*. to bring down the pride of the Dutch rebels. There was always sympathy of thought and action between the Huguenots of France and their co-religionists in Holland. They were all believers alike in Calvinism—a sect inimical not less to temporal monarchies than to the

sovereign primacy of the Church—and the tendency and purposes of the French rebels were already sufficiently manifest in their efforts, by means of the so-called cities of security, to erect a state within a state; to introduce, in short, a Dutch republic into France.

Page 2435

A sovereign remedy for the disease of liberty, now threatening to become epidemic in Europe, would be found in a marriage between the second son of the King of Spain and a daughter of France. As the archdukes were childless, it might be easily arranged that this youthful couple should succeed them—the result of which would of course be the reduction of all the Netherlands to their ancient obedience.

It has already been seen, and will become still farther apparent, that nostrums like this were to be recommended in other directions. Meantime, Jeannin and his colleagues made their appearance at the Hague.

If there were a living politician in Europe capable of dealing with Barneveld on even terms, it was no doubt President Jeannin. An ancient Leaguer, an especial adherent of the Duke of Mayenne, he had been deep in all the various plots and counter-plots of the Guises, and often employed by the extinct confederacy in various important intrigues. Being secretly sent to Spain to solicit help for the League after the disasters of Ivry and Arques, he found Philip *ii*. so sincerely imbued with the notion that France was a mere province of Spain, and so entirely bent upon securing the heritage of the Infanta to that large property, as to convince him that the maintenance of the Roman religion was with that monarch only a secondary condition. Aid and assistance for the confederacy were difficult of attainment, unless coupled with the guarantee of the Infanta's rights to reign in France.

The Guise faction being inspired solely by religious motives of the loftiest kind, were naturally dissatisfied with the lukewarmness of his most Catholic Majesty. When therefore the discomfited Mayenne subsequently concluded his bargain with the conqueror of Ivry, it was a matter of course that Jeannin should also make his peace with the successful Huguenot, now become eldest son of the Church. He was very soon taken into especial favour by Henry, who recognised his sagacity, and who knew his hands to be far cleaner than those of the more exalted Leaguers with whom he had dealt. The "good old fellow," as Henry familiarly called him, had not filled his pockets either in serving or when deserting the League. Placed in control of the exchequer at a later period, he was never accused of robbery or peculation. He was a hard-working, not overpaid, very intelligent public functionary. He was made president of the parliament, or supreme tribunal of Burgundy, and minister of state, and was recognised as one of the ablest jurists and most skilful politicians in the kingdom. An elderly man, with a tall, serene forehead, a large dark eye and a long grey beard, he presented an image of vast wisdom and reverend probity. He possessed—an especial treasure for a statesman in that plotting age—a singularly honest visage. Never was that face more guileless, never was his heart more completely worn upon his sleeve, than when he was harbouring the

Page 2436

deepest or most dangerous designs. Such was the “good fellow,” whom that skilful reader of men, Henry of France, had sent to represent his interests and his opinions at the approaching conferences. What were those opinions? Paul V. and his legates Barberini, Millino, and the rest, were well enough aware of the secret strings of the king’s policy, and knew how to touch them with skill. Of all things past, Henry perhaps most regretted that not he, but the last and most wretched of the Valois line, was sovereign of France when the States-General came to Paris with that offer of sovereignty which had been so contumaciously refused.

If the object were attainable, the ex-chief of the Huguenots still meant to be king of the Netherlands as sincerely as Philip *ii*. had ever intended to be monarch of France. But Henry was too accurate a calculator of chances, and had bustled too much in the world of realities, to exhaust his strength in striving, year after year, for a manifest impossibility. The enthusiast, who had passed away at last from the dreams of the Escorial into the land of shadows, had spent a lifetime, and melted the wealth of an empire; but universal monarchy had never come forth from his crucible. The French king, although possessed likewise of an almost boundless faculty for ambitious visions, was capable of distinguishing cloud-land from substantial empire. Jeannin, as his envoy, would at any rate not reveal his master’s secret aspirations to those with whom he came to deal, as openly as Philip had once unveiled himself to Jeannin.

There could be no doubt that peace at this epoch was the real interest of France. That kingdom was beginning to flourish again, owing to the very considerable administrative genius of Bethune, an accomplished financier according to the lights of the age, and still more by reason of the general impoverishment of the great feudal houses and of the clergy. The result of the almost interminable series of civil and religious wars had been to cause a general redistribution of property. Capital was mainly in the hands of the middle and lower classes, and the consequence of this general circulation of wealth through all the channels of society was precisely what might have been expected, an increase of enterprise and of productive industry in various branches. Although the financial wisdom of the age was doing its best to impede commerce, to prevent the influx of foreign wares, to prohibit the outflow of specie—in obedience to the universal superstition, which was destined to survive so many centuries, that gold and silver alone constituted wealth—while, at the same time, in deference to the idiotic principle of sumptuary legislation, it was vigorously opposing mulberry culture, silk manufactures, and other creations of luxury, which, in spite of the hostility of government sages, were destined from that time forward to become better mines of wealth for the kingdom than the Indies had been for Spain, yet on the whole the arts of peace were in the ascendant in France.

Page 2437

The king, although an unscrupulous, self-seeking despot and the coarsest of voluptuaries, was at least a man of genius. He had also too much shrewd mother-wit to pursue such schemes as experience had shown to possess no reality. The talisman "Espoir," emblazoned on his shield, had led him to so much that it was natural for him at times to think all things possible.

But he knew how to renounce as well as how to dare. He had abandoned his hope to be declared Prince of Wales and successor to the English crown, which he had cherished for a brief period, at the epoch of the Essex conspiracy; he had forgotten his magnificent dream of placing the crown of the holy German empire upon his head, and if he still secretly resolved to annex the Netherlands to his realms, and to destroy his excellent ally, the usurping, rebellious, and heretic Dutch republic, he had craft enough to work towards his aim in the dark, and the common sense to know that by now throwing down the mask he would be for ever baffled of his purpose.

The history of France, during the last three-quarters of a century, had made almost every Frenchman, old enough to bear arms, an accomplished soldier. Henry boasted that the kingdom could put three hundred thousand veterans into the field—a high figure, when it is recollected that its population certainly did not exceed fifteen millions. No man however was better aware than he, that in spite, of the apparent pacification of parties, the three hundred thousand would not be all on one side, even in case of a foreign war. There were at least four thousand great feudal lords as faithful to the Huguenot faith and cause as he had been false to both; many of them still wealthy, notwithstanding the general ruin which had swept over the high nobility, and all of them with vast influence and a splendid following, both among the lesser gentry and the men of lower rank.

Although he kept a Jesuit priest ever at his elbow, and did his best to persuade the world and perhaps himself that he had become a devout Catholic, in consequence of those memorable five hours' instruction from the Bishop of Bourges, and that there was no hope for France save in its return to the bosom of the Church, he was yet too politic and too farseeing to doubt that for him to oppress the Protestants would be not only suicidal, but, what was worse in his eyes, ridiculous.

He knew, too, that with thirty or forty thousand fighting-men in the field, with seven hundred and forty churches in the various provinces for their places of worship, with all the best fortresses in France in their possession, with leaders like Rohan, Lesdiguieres, Bouillon, and many others, and with the most virtuous, self-denying, Christian government, established and maintained by themselves, it would be madness for him and his dynasty to deny the Protestants their political and religious liberty, or to attempt a crusade against their brethren in the Netherlands.

Page 2438

France was far more powerful than Spain, although the world had not yet recognised the fact. Yet it would have been difficult for both united to crush the new commonwealth, however paradoxical such a proposition seemed to contemporaries.

Sully was conscientiously in favour of peace, and Sully was the one great minister of France. Not a Lerma, certainly; for France was not Spain, nor was Henry *iv*. a Philip *iii*. The Huguenot duke was an inferior financier to his Spanish contemporary, if it were the height of financial skill for a minister to exhaust the resources of a great kingdom in order to fill his own pocket. Sully certainly did not neglect his own interests, for he had accumulated a fortune of at least seventy thousand dollars a year, besides a cash capital estimated at a million and a half. But while enriching himself, he had wonderfully improved the condition of the royal treasury. He had reformed many abuses and opened many new sources of income. He had, of course, not accomplished the whole Augean task of purification. He was a vigorous Huguenot, but no Hercules, and demigods might have shrunk appalled at the filthy mass of corruption which great European kingdoms everywhere presented to the reformer's eye. Compared to the Spanish Government, that of France might almost have been considered virtuous, yet even there everything was venal.

To negotiate was to bribe right and left, and at every step. All the ministers and great functionaries received presents, as a matter of course, and it was necessary to pave the pathway even of their ante-chambers with gold.

The king was fully aware of the practice, but winked at it, because his servants, thus paid enormous sums by the public and by foreign Governments, were less importunate for rewards and salaries from himself.

One man in the kingdom was said to have clean hands, the venerable and sagacious chancellor, Pomponne de Bellievre. His wife, however, was less scrupulous, and readily disposed of influence and court-favour for a price, without the knowledge, so it was thought, of the great judge.

Jeannin, too, was esteemed a man of personal integrity, ancient Leaguer and tricky politician though he were.

Highest offices of magistracy and judicature, Church and State, were objects of a traffic almost as shameless as in Spain. The ermine was sold at auction, mitres were objects of public barter, Church preferments were bestowed upon female children in their cradles. Yet there was hope in France, notwithstanding that the Pragmatic Sanction of St. Louis, the foundation of the liberties of the Gallican Church, had been annulled by Francis, who had divided the seamless garment of Church patronage with Leo.

Those four thousand great Huguenot lords, those thirty thousand hard-fighting weavers, and blacksmiths, and other plebeians, those seven hundred and forty churches, those

very substantial fortresses in every province of the kingdom, were better facts than the Holy Inquisition to preserve a great nation from sinking into the slough of political extinction.

Page 2439

Henry was most anxious that Sully should convert himself to the ancient Church, and the gossips of the day told each other that the duke had named his price for his conversion. To be made high constable of France, it was said would melt the resolve of the stiff Huguenot. To any other inducement or blandishment he was adamant. Whatever truth may have been in such chatter, it is certain that the duke never gratified his master's darling desire.

Yet it was for no lack of attempts and intrigues on the part of the king, although it is not probable that he would have ever consented to bestow that august and coveted dignity upon a Bethune.

The king did his best by intrigue, by calumny, by talebearing, by inventions, to set the Huguenots against each other, and to excite the mutual jealousy of all his most trusted adherents, whether Protestant or Catholic. The most good-humoured, the least vindictive, the most ungrateful, the falsest of mankind, he made it his policy, as well as his pastime, to repeat, with any amount of embroidery that his most florid fancy could devise, every idle story or calumny that could possibly create bitter feeling and make mischief among those who surrounded him. Being aware that this propensity was thoroughly understood, he only multiplied fictions, so cunningly mingled with truths, as to leave his hearers quite unable to know what to believe and what to doubt. By such arts, force being impossible, he hoped one day to sever the band which held the conventicles together, and to reduce Protestantism to insignificance. He would have cut off the head of D'Aubigne or Duplessis Mornay to gain an object, and have not only pardoned but caressed and rewarded Biron when reeking from the conspiracy against his own life and crown, had he been willing to confess and ask pardon for his stupendous crime. He hated vindictive men almost as much as he despised those who were grateful.

He was therefore far from preferring Sully to Villeroy or Jeannin, but he was perfectly aware that, in financial matters at least, the duke was his best friend and an important pillar of the state.

The minister had succeeded in raising the annual revenue of France to nearly eleven millions of dollars, and in reducing the annual expenditures to a little more than ten millions. To have a balance on the right side of the public ledger was a feat less easily accomplished in those days even than in our own. Could the duke have restrained his sovereign's reckless extravagance in buildings, parks, hunting establishments, and harems, he might have accomplished even greater miracles. He lectured the king roundly, as a parent might remonstrate with a prodigal son, but it was impossible even for a Sully to rescue that hoary-headed and most indomitable youth from wantonness and riotous living. The civil-list of the king amounted to more than one-tenth of the whole revenue.

On the whole, however, it was clear, as France was then constituted and administered, that a general peace would be, for the time at least, most conducive to its interests, and Henry and his great minister were sincerely desirous of bringing about that result.

Page 2440

Preliminaries for a negotiation which should terminate this mighty war were now accordingly to be laid down at the Hague. Yet it would seem rather difficult to effect a compromise. Besides the powers less interested, but which nevertheless sent representatives to watch the proceedings—such as Sweden, Denmark, Brandenburg, the Elector Palatine—there were Spain, France, England, the republic, and the archdukes.

Spain knew very well that she could not continue the war; but she hoped by some quibbling recognition of an impossible independence to recover that authority over her ancient vassals which the sword had for the time struck down. Distraction in councils, personal rivalries, the well-known incapacity of a people to govern itself, commercial greediness, provincial hatreds, envies and jealousies, would soon reduce that jumble of cities and villages, which aped the airs of sovereignty, into insignificance and confusion. Adroit management would easily re-assert afterwards the sovereignty of the Lord's anointed. That a republic of freemen, a federation of independent states, could take its place among the nations did not deserve a serious thought.

Spain in her heart preferred therefore to treat. It was however indispensable that the Netherlands should reestablish the Catholic religion throughout the land, should abstain then and for ever from all insolent pretences to trade with India or America, and should punish such of their citizens as attempted to make voyages to the one or the other. With these trifling exceptions, the court of Madrid would look with favour on propositions made in behalf of the rebels.

France, as we have seen, secretly aspired to the sovereignty of all the Netherlands, if it could be had. She was also extremely in favour of excluding the Hollanders from the Indies, East and West. The king, fired with the achievements of the republic at sea, and admiring their great schemes for founding empires at the antipodes by means of commercial corporations, was very desirous of appropriating to his own benefit the experience, the audacity, the perseverance, the skill and the capital of their merchants and mariners. He secretly instructed his commissioners, therefore, and repeatedly urged it upon them, to do their best to procure the renunciation, on the part of the republic, of the Indian trade, and to contrive the transplantation into France of the mighty trading companies, so successfully established in Holland and Zeeland.

The plot thus to deprive the provinces of their India trade was supposed by the statesmen of the republic to have been formed in connivance with Spain. That power, finding itself half pushed from its seat of power in the East by the "grand and infallible society created by the United Provinces,"—[Memoir of Aerssens, ubi sup]—would be but too happy to make use of this French intrigue in order to force the intruding Dutch navy from its conquests.

Page 2441

Olden-Barneveld, too politic to offend the powerful and treacherous ally by a flat refusal, said that the king's friendship was more precious than the India trade. At the same time he warned the French Government that, if they ruined the Dutch East India Company, "neither France nor any other nation would ever put its nose into India again."

James of England, too, flattered himself that he could win for England that sovereignty of the Netherlands which England as well as France had so decidedly refused. The marriage of Prince Henry with the Spanish Infanta was the bait, steadily dangled before him by the politicians of the Spanish court, and he deluded himself with the thought that the Catholic king, on the death of the childless archdukes, would make his son and daughter-in-law a present of the obedient Netherlands. He already had some of the most important places in the United Netherlands-the famous cautionary towns in his grasp, and it should go hard but he would twist that possession into a sovereignty over the whole land. As for recognising the rebel provinces as an independent sovereignty, that was most abhorrent to him. Such a tampering with the great principles of Government was an offence against all crowned heads, a crime in which he was unwilling to participate.

His instinct against rebellion seemed like second sight. The king might almost be imagined to have foreseen in the dim future those memorable months in which the proudest triumph of the Dutch commonwealth was to be registered before the forum of Christendom at the congress of Westphalia, and in which the solemn trial and execution of his own son and successor, with the transformation of the monarchy of the Tudors and Stuarts into a British republic, were simultaneously to startle the world. But it hardly needed the gift of prophecy to inspire James with a fear of revolutions.

He was secretly desirous therefore, sustained by Salisbury and his other advisers, of effecting the restoration of the provinces to the dominion of his most Catholic Majesty. It was of course the interest of England that the Netherland rebels should renounce the India trade. So would James be spared the expense and trouble of war; so would the great doctrines of divine right be upheld; so would the way be paved towards the ultimate absorption of the Netherlands by England. Whether his theological expositions would find as attentive pupils when the pope's authority had been reestablished over all his neighbours; whether the Catholic rebels in Ireland would become more tranquil by the subjugation of the Protestant rebels in Holland; whether the principles of Guy Fawkes might not find more effective application, with no bulwark beyond the seas against the incursion of such practitioners—all this he did not perhaps sufficiently ponder.

Thus far had the discursive mind of James wandered from the position which it occupied at the epoch of Maximilian de Bethune's memorable embassy to England.

Page 2442

The archdukes were disposed to quiet. On them fell the burthen of the war. Their little sovereignty, where—if they could only be allowed to expend the money squeezed from the obedient provinces in court diversions, stately architecture, splendid encouragement of the fine arts, and luxurious living, surrounded by a train of great nobles, fit to command regiments in the field or assist in the counsels of state, but chiefly occupied in putting dishes on the court table, handing ewers and napkins to their Highnesses, or in still more menial offices—so much enjoyment might be had, was reduced to a mere parade ground for Spanish soldiery. It was ridiculous, said the politicians of Madrid, to suppose that a great empire like Spain would not be continually at war in one direction or another, and would not perpetually require the use of large armies. Where then could there be a better mustering place for their forces than those very provinces, so easy of access, so opulent, so conveniently situate in the neighbourhood of Spain's most insolent enemies? It was all very fine for the archduke, who knew nothing of war, they declared, who had no hope of children, who longed only for a life of inglorious ease, such as he could have had as archbishop, to prate of peace and thus to compromise the dignity of the realm. On the contrary by making proper use of the Netherlands, the repose and grandeur of the monarchy would be secured, even should the war become eternal.

This prospect, not agreeable certainly for the archdukes or their subjects, was but little admired outside the Spanish court.

Such then were the sentiments of the archdukes, and such the schemes and visions of Spain, France, and England. On two or three points, those great powers were mainly, if unconsciously, agreed. The Netherlands should not be sovereign; they should renounce the India navigation; they should consent to the re-establishment of the Catholic religion.

On the other hand, the States-General knew their own minds, and made not the slightest secret of their intentions.

They would be sovereign, they would not renounce the India trade, they would not agree to the re-establishment of the Catholic religion.

Could the issue of the proposed negotiations be thought hopeful, or was another half century of warfare impending?

On the 28th May the French commissioners came before the States-General.

There had been many wild rumours flying through the provinces in regard to the king's secret designs upon the republic, especially since the visit made to the Hague a twelvemonth before by Francis Aerssens, States' resident at the French court. That diplomatist, as we know, had been secretly commissioned by Henry to feel the public pulse in regard to the sovereignty, so far as that could be done by very private and

delicate fingering. Although only two or three personages had been dealt with—the suggestions being made as the private views of the ambassadors only—there had been much gossip on the subject, not only in the Netherlands, but at the English and Spanish courts. Throughout the commonwealth there was a belief that Henry wished to make himself king of the country.

Page 2443

As this happened to be the fact, it was natural that the President, according to the statecraft of his school, should deny it at once, and with an air of gentle melancholy.

Wearing therefore his most ingenuous expression, Jeannin addressed the assembly.

He assured the States that the king had never forgotten how much assistance he had received from them when he was struggling to conquer the kingdom legally belonging to him, and at a time when they too were fighting in their own country for their very existence.

The king thought that he had given so many proofs of his sincere friendship as to make doubt impossible; but he had found the contrary, for the States had accorded an armistice, and listened to overtures of peace, without deigning to consult him on the subject. They had proved, by beginning and concluding so important a transaction without his knowledge, that they regarded him with suspicion, and had no respect for his name. Whence came the causes of that suspicion it was difficult to imagine, unless from certain false rumours of propositions said to have been put forward in his behalf, although he had never authorised anyone to make them, by which men had been induced to believe that he aspired to the sovereignty of the provinces.

“This falsehood,” continued the candid President, “has cut our king to the heart, wounding him more deeply than anything else could have done. To make the armistice without his knowledge showed merely your contempt for him, and your want of faith in him. But he blamed not the action in itself, since you deemed it for your good, and God grant that you may not have been deceived. But to pretend that his Majesty wished to grow great at your expense, this was to do a wrong to his reputation, to his good faith, and to the desire which he has always shown to secure the prosperity of your state.” Much more spoke Jeannin, in this vein, assuring the assembly that those abominable falsehoods proceeded from the enemies of the king, and were designed expressly to sow discord and suspicion in the provinces. The reader, already aware of the minute and detailed arrangements made by Henry and his ministers for obtaining the sovereignty of the United Provinces and destroying their liberties, will know how to appreciate the eloquence of the ingenuous President.

After the usual commonplaces concerning the royal desire to protect his allies against wrong and oppression, and to advance their interests, the President suggested that the States should forthwith communicate the pending deliberations to all the kings and princes who had favoured their cause, and especially to the King of England, who had so thoroughly proved his desire to promote their welfare.

Page 2444

As Jeannin had been secretly directed to pave the way by all possible means for the king's sovereignty over the provinces; as he was not long afterwards to receive explicit instructions to expend as much money as might be necessary in bribing Prince Maurice, Count Lewis William, Barneveld and his son, together with such others as might seem worth purchasing, in order to assist Henry in becoming monarch of their country; and as the English king was at that moment represented in Henry's private letters to the commissioners as actually loathing the liberty, power, and prosperity of the provinces, it must be conceded that the President had acquitted himself very handsomely in his first oration.

Such was the virtue of his honest face.

Barneveld answered with generalities and commonplaces. No man knew better than the Advocate the exact position of affairs; no man had more profoundly fathomed the present purposes of the French king; no man had more acutely scanned his character. But he knew the critical position of the commonwealth. He knew that, although the public revenue might be raised by extraordinary and spasmodic exertion to nearly a million sterling, a larger income than had ever been at the disposition of the great Queen of England, the annual deficit might be six millions of florins—more than half the revenue—if the war continued, and that there was necessity of peace, could the substantial objects of the war be now obtained. He was well aware too of the subtle and scheming brain which lay hid beneath that reverend brow of the President, although he felt capable of coping with him in debate or intrigue. Doubtless he was inspired with as much ardour for the intellectual conflict as Henry might have experienced on some great field-day with Alexander Farnese.

On this occasion, however, Barneveld preferred to glide gently over the rumours concerning Henry's schemes. Those reports had doubtless emanated, he said, from the enemies of Netherland prosperity. The private conclusion of the armistice he defended on the ground of necessity, and of temporary financial embarrassment, and he promised that deputies should at once be appointed to confer with the royal commissioners in regard to the whole subject.

In private, he assured Jeannin that the communications of Aerssens had only been discussed in secret, and had not been confided to more than three or four persons.

The Advocate, although the leader of the peace party, was by no means over anxious for peace.

The object of much insane obloquy, because disposed to secure that blessing for his country on the basis of freedom and independence, he was not disposed to trust in the sincerity of the archdukes, or the Spanish court, or the French king. "Timeo Danaos etiam dona ferentes," he had lately said to Aerssens. Knowing that the resistance of the

Netherlands had been forty years long the bulwark of Europe against the designs of the Spaniard for universal empire,

Page 2445

he believed the republic justified in expecting the support of the leading powers in the negotiations now proposed. "Had it not been for the opposition of these provinces," he said, "he might, in the opinion of the wisest, have long ago been monarch of all Europe, with small expense of men, money, or credit." He was far from believing therefore that Spain, which had sacrificed, according to his estimate, three hundred thousand soldiers and two hundred million ducats in vain endeavours to destroy the resistance of the United Provinces, was now ready to lay aside her vengeance and submit to a sincere peace. Rather he thought to see "the lambkins, now frisking so innocently about the commonwealth, suddenly transform themselves into lions and wolves." It would be a fatal error, he said, to precipitate the dear fatherland into the net of a simulated negotiation, from unwise impatience for peace. The Netherlanders were a simple, truthful people and could hope for no advantage in dealing with Spanish friars, nor discover all the danger and deceit lurking beneath their fair words. Thus the man, whom his enemies perpetually accused of being bought by the enemy, of wishing peace at any price, of wishing to bring back the Catholic party and ecclesiastical influence to the Netherlands, was vigorously denouncing a precipitate peace, and warning his countrymen of the danger of premature negotiations.

"As one can hardly know the purity and value of gold," he said, "without testing it, so it is much more difficult to distinguish a false peace from a genuine one; for one can never touch it nor taste it; and one learns the difference when one is cheated and lost. Ignorant people think peace negotiations as simple as a private lawsuit. Many sensible persons even think that; the enemy once recognising us for a free, sovereign state, we shall be in the same position as England and France, which powers have lately made peace with the archdukes and with Spain. But we shall find a mighty difference. Moreover, in those kingdoms the Spanish king has since the peace been ever busy corrupting their officers of state and their subjects, and exciting rebellion and murder within their realms, as all the world must confess. And the English merchants complain that they have suffered more injustice, violence, and wrong from the Spaniards since the peace than they did during the war."

The Advocate also reminded his countrymen that the archduke, being a vassal of Spain, could not bind that power by his own signature, and that there was no proof that the king would renounce his pretended rights to the provinces. If he affected to do so, it would only be to put the republic to sleep. He referred, with much significance, to the late proceedings of the Admiral of Arragon at Emmerich, who refused to release that city according to his plighted word, saying roundly that whatever he might sign and seal one day he would not hesitate absolutely to violate on the next if the king's service was thereby to be benefited.

Page 2446

With such people, who had always learned law-doctors and ghostly confessors to strengthen and to absolve them, they could never expect anything but broken faith and contempt for treaties however solemnly ratified.

Should an armistice be agreed upon and negotiations begun, the Advocate urged that the work of corruption and bribery would not be a moment delayed, and although the Netherlanders were above all nations a true and faithful race, it could hardly be hoped that no individuals would be gained over by the enemy.

“For the whole country,” said Barneveld, “would swarm with Jesuits, priests, and monks, with calumnies and corruptions—the machinery by which the enemy is wont to produce discord, relying for success upon the well-known maxim of Philip of Macedon, who considered no city impregnable into which he could send an ass laden with gold.”

The Advocate was charged too with being unfriendly to the India trade, especially to the West India Company.

He took the opportunity, however, to enlarge with emphasis and eloquence upon that traffic as constituting the very lifeblood of the country.

“The commerce with the East Indies is going on so prosperously,” he said, “that not only our own inhabitants but all strangers are amazed. The West India Company is sufficiently prepared, and will cost the commonwealth so little, that the investment will be inconsiderable in comparison with the profits. And all our dangers and difficulties have nearly vanished since the magnificent victory of Gibraltar, by which the enemy’s ships, artillery, and sailors have been annihilated, and proof afforded that the Spanish galleys are not so terrible as they pretend to be. By means of this trade to both the Indies, matters will soon be brought into such condition that the Spaniards will be driven out of all those regions and deprived of their traffic. Thus will the great wolf’s teeth be pulled out, and we need have no farther fear of his biting again. Then we may hope for a firm and assured peace, and may keep the Indies, with the whole navigation thereon depending, for ourselves, sharing it freely and in common with our allies.”

Certainly no statesman could more strongly depict the dangers of a pusillanimous treaty, and the splendid future of the republic, if she held fast to her resolve for political independence, free religion, and free trade, than did the great Advocate at this momentous epoch of European history.

Had he really dreamed of surrendering the republic to Spain, that republic whose resistance ever since the middle of the previous century had been all that had saved Europe, in the opinion of learned and experienced thinkers, from the universal empire of Spain—had the calumnies, or even a thousandth part of the calumnies, against him been true—how different might have been the history of human liberty!

Soon afterwards, in accordance with the suggestions of the French king and with their own previous intentions, a special legation was despatched by the States to England, in order to notify the approaching conferences to the sovereign of that country, and to invite his participation in the proceedings.

Page 2447

The States' envoys were graciously received by James, who soon appointed Richard Spencer and Ralph Winwood as commissioners to the Hague, duly instructed to assist at the deliberations, and especially to keep a sharp watch upon French intrigues. There were also missions and invitations to Denmark and to the Electors Palatine and of Brandenburg, the two latter potentates having, during the past three years, assisted the States with a hundred thousand florins annually.

The news of the great victory at Gibraltar had reached the Netherlands almost simultaneously with the arrival of the French commissioners. It was thought probable that John Neyen had received the weighty intelligence some days earlier, and the intense eagerness of the archdukes and of the Spanish Government to procure the recal of the Dutch fleet was thus satisfactorily explained. Very naturally this magnificent success, clouded though it was by the death of the hero to whom it was due, increased the confidence of the States in the justice of their cause and the strength of their position.

Once more, it is not entirely idle to consider the effect of scientific progress on the march of human affairs, as so often exemplified in history. Whether that half-century of continuous war would have been possible with the artillery, means of locomotion, and other machinery of destruction and communication now so terribly familiar to the world, can hardly be a question. The preterhuman prolixity of negotiation which appals us in the days when steam and electricity had not yet annihilated time and space, ought also to be obsolete. At a period when the news of a great victory was thirty days on its travels from Gibraltar to Flushing, aged counsellors justified themselves in a solemn consumption of time such as might have exasperated Jared or Methuselah in his boyhood. Men fought as if war was the normal condition of humanity, and negotiated as if they were all immortal. But has the art political kept pace with the advancement of physical science? If history be valuable for the examples it furnishes both for imitation and avoidance, then the process by which these peace conferences were initiated and conducted may be wholesome food for reflection.

John Neyen, who, since his secret transactions already described at the Hague and Fort Lillo, had been speeding back and forth between Brussels, London, and Madrid, had once more returned to the Netherlands, and had been permitted to reside privately at Delft until the king's ratification should arrive from Spain.

While thus established, the industrious friar had occupied his leisure in studying the situation of affairs. Especially he had felt inclined to renew some of those little commercial speculations which had recently proved so comfortable in the case of Dirk van der Does. Recorder Cornelius Aerssens came frequently to visit him, with the private consent of the Government, and it at once struck the friar

Page 2448

that Cornelius would be a judicious investment. So he informed the recorder that the archdukes had been much touched with his adroitness and zeal in facilitating the entrance of their secret agent into the presence of the Prince and the Advocate. Cruwel, in whose company the disguised Neyen had made his first journey to the Hague, was a near relative of Aerssena, The honest monk accordingly, in recognition of past and expected services, begged one day the recorder's acceptance of a bill, drawn by Marquis Spinola on Henry Beckman, merchant of Amsterdam, for eighty thousand ducats. He also produced a diamond ring, valued at ten thousand florins, which he ventured to think worthy the acceptance of Madame Aerssens. Furthermore, he declared himself ready to pay fifteen thousand crowns in cash, on account of the bill, whenever it might be, desired, and observed that the archdukes had ordered the house which the recorder had formerly occupied in Brussels to be reconveyed to him. Other good things were in store, it was delicately hinted, as soon as they had been earned.

Aerssens expressed his thanks for the house, which, he said, legally belonged to him according to the terms of the surrender of Brussels. He hesitated in regard to the rest, but decided finally to accept the bill of exchange and the diamond, apprising Prince Maurice and Olden-Barneveld of the fact, however, on his return to the Hague. Being subsequently summoned by Neyen to accept the fifteen thousand crowns, he felt embarrassed at the compromising position in which he had placed himself. He decided accordingly to make a public statement of the affair to the States-General. This was done, and the States placed the ring and the bill in the hands of their treasurer, Joris de Bie.

The recorder never got the eighty thousand ducats, nor his wife the diamond; but although there had been no duplicity on his part, he got plenty of slander. His evil genius had prompted him, not to listen seriously to the temptings of the monk, but to deal with him on his own terms. He was obliged to justify himself against public suspicion with explanations and pamphlets, but some taint of the calumny stuck by him to the last.

Meantime, the three months allotted for the reception of Philip's ratification had nearly expired. In March, the royal Government had expressly consented that the archdukes should treat with the rebels on the ground of their independence. In June that royal permission had been withdrawn, exactly because the independence could never be acknowledged. Albert, naturally enough indignant at such double-dealing, wrote to the king that his disapprobation was incomprehensible, as the concession of independence had been made by direct command of Philip. "I am much amazed," he said, "that, having treated with the islanders on condition of leaving them free, by express order of your Majesty (which you must doubtless very well remember), your Majesty now reproves my conduct, and declares your dissatisfaction." At last, on the 23rd July,

Spinola requested a safe conduct for Louis Verreyken, auditor of the council at Brussels, to come to the Hague.

Page 2449

On the 23rd of July that functionary accordingly arrived. He came before Prince Maurice and fifty deputies of the States-General, and exhibited the document. At the same time he urged them, now that the long-desired ratification had been produced, to fulfil at once their promise, and to recal their fleet from the coast of Spain.

Verreyken was requested to withdraw while the instrument was examined. When recalled, he was informed that the States had the most staight-forward intention to negotiate, but that the royal document did not at all answer their expectation. As few of the delegates could read Spanish, it would first of all be necessary to cause it to be translated.

When that was done they would be able to express their opinion concerning it and come to a decision in regard to the recal of the fleet. This ended the proceedings on that occasion.

Next day Prince Maurice invited Verreyken and others to dine. After dinner the stadholder informed him that the answer of the States might soon be expected; at the same time expressing his regret that the king should have sent such an instrument. It was very necessary, said the prince, to have plain speaking, and he, for one, had never believed that the king would send a proper ratification. The one exhibited was not at all to the purpose. The king was expected to express himself as clearly as the archdukes had done in their instrument. He must agree to treat with the States-General as with people entirely free, over whom he claimed no authority. If the king should refuse to make this public declaration, the States would at once break off all negotiations.

Three days afterwards, seven deputies conferred with Verreyken. Barneveld, as spokesman, declared that, so far as the provinces were concerned, the path was plain and open to an honest, ingenuous, lasting peace, but that the manner of dealing on the other side was artificial and provocative of suspicion. A most important line, which had been placed by the States at the very beginning of the form suggested by them, was wanting in the ratification now received. This hardly seemed an accidental omission. The whole document was constrained and defective. It was necessary to deal with Netherlanders in clear and simple language. The basis of any possible negotiation was that the provinces were to be treated with as and called entirely free. Unless this was done negotiations were impossible. The States-General were not so unskilled in affairs as to be ignorant that the king and the archdukes were quite capable, at a future day, of declaring themselves untrammelled by any conditions. They would boast that conventions with rebels and pledges to heretics were alike invalid. If Verreyken had brought no better document than the one presented, he had better go at once. His stay in the provinces was superfluous.

At a subsequent interview Barneveld informed Verreyken that the king’s confirmation had been unanimously rejected by the States-General as deficient both in form and substance. He added that the people of the provinces were growing very lukewarm in

regard to peace, that Prince Maurice opposed it, that many persons regretted the length to which the negotiations had already gone. Difficult as it seemed to be to recede, the archdukes might be certain that a complete rupture was imminent.

Page 2450

All these private conversations of Barneveld, who was known to be the chief of the peace party, were duly reported by Verreyken in secret notes to the archduke and to Spinola. Of course they produced their effect. It surely might have been seen that the tricks and shifts of an antiquated diplomacy were entirely out of place if any wholesome result were desired. But the habit of dissimulation was inveterate. That the man who cannot dissemble is unfit to reign, was perhaps the only one of his father's golden rules which Philip *iii*. could thoroughly comprehend, even if it be assumed that the monarch was at all consulted in regard to this most important transaction of his life. Verreyken and the friar knew very well when they brought the document that it would be spurned by the States, and yet they were also thoroughly aware that it was the king's interest to, begin the negotiations as soon as possible. When thus privately and solemnly assured by the Advocate that they were really wasting their time by being the bearers of these royal evasions, they learned therefore nothing positively new, but were able to assure their employers that to thoroughly disgust the peace party was not precisely the mode of terminating the war.

Verreyken now received public and formal notification that a new instrument must be procured from the king. In the ratification which had been sent, that monarch spoke of the archdukes as princes and sovereign proprietors of all the Netherlands. The clause by which, according to the form prescribed by the States, and already adopted by the archdukes, the United Provinces were described as free countries over which no authority was claimed had been calmly omitted, as if, by such a subterfuge, the independence of the republic could be winked out of existence. Furthermore, it was objected that the document was in Spanish, that it was upon paper instead of parchment, that it was not sealed with the great, but with the little seal, and that it was subscribed.

"I the King." This signature might be very appropriate for decrees issued by a monarch to his vassals, but could not be rightly appended, it was urged, to an instrument addressed to a foreign power. Potentates, treating with the States-General of the United Provinces, were expected to sign their names.

Whatever may be thought of the technical requirements in regard to the parchment, the signature, and the seal, it would be difficult to characterize too strongly the polity of the Spanish Government in the most essential point. To seek relief from the necessity of recognising-at least in the sense of similitude, according to the subtlety of Bentivoglio—-the freedom of the provinces, simply by running the pen through the most important line of a most important document, was diplomacy in its dotage. Had not Marquis Spinola, a man who could use his brains and his pen as well as his sword, expressly implored the politicians of Madrid not to change even a comma in the form of ratification which he sent to Spain?

Page 2451

Verreyken, placed face to face with plain-spoken, straightforward, strong-minded men, felt the dreary absurdity of the position. He could only stammer a ridiculous excuse about the clause, having been accidentally left out by a copying secretary. To represent so important an omission as a clerical error was almost as great an absurdity as the original device; but it was necessary for Verreyken to say something.

He promised, however, that the form prescribed by the States should be again transmitted to Madrid, and expressed confidence that the ratification would now be sent as desired. Meantime he trusted that the fleet would be at once recalled.

This at once created a stormy debate which lasted many days, both within the walls of the House of Assembly and out of doors. Prince Maurice bitterly denounced the proposition, and asserted the necessity rather of sending out more ships than of permitting their cruisers to return. It was well known that the Spanish Government, since the destruction of Avila's fleet, had been straining every nerve to procure and equip other war-vessels, and that even the Duke of Lerma had offered a small portion of his immense plunderings to the crown in aid of naval armaments.

On the other hand, Barneveld urged that the States, in the preliminary armistice, had already agreed to send no munitions nor reinforcements to the fleet already cruising on the coasts of the peninsula. It would be better, therefore, to recal those ships than to leave them where they could not be victualled nor strengthened without a violation of good faith.

These opinions prevailed, and on the 9th August, Verreyken was summoned before the Assembly, and informed by Barneveld that the States had decided to withdraw the fleet, and to declare invalid all prizes made six weeks after that date.

This was done, it was said, out of respect to the archdukes, to whom no blame was imputed for the negligence displayed in regard to the ratification. Furthermore, the auditor was requested to inform his masters that the documents brought from Spain were not satisfactory, and he was furnished with a draught, made both in Latin and French. With this form, it was added, the king was to comply within six weeks, if he desired to proceed further in negotiations with the States.

Verreyken thanked the States-General, made the best of promises, and courteously withdrew.

Next day, however, just as his preparations for departure had been made, he was once more summoned before the Assembly to meet with a somewhat disagreeable surprise. Barneveld, speaking as usual in behalf of the States-General, publicly produced Spinola's bill of exchange for eighty thousand ducats, the diamond ring intended for Madame Aerssens, and the gold chain given to Dirk van der Does, and expressed the

feelings of the republican Government in regard to those barefaced attempts of Friar John at bribery and corruption, in very scornful

Page 2452

language? Netherlanders were not to be bought—so the agent of Spain and of the archdukes was informed—and, even if the citizens were venal, it would be necessary in a popular Government to buy up the whole nation. "It is not in our commonwealth as in despotisms," said the Advocate, "where affairs of state are directed by the nod of two or three individuals, while the rest of the inhabitants are a mob of slaves. By turns, we all govern and are governed. This great council, this senate—should it seem not sufficiently fortified against your presents-could easily be enlarged. Here is your chain, your ring, your banker's draught. Take them all back to your masters. Such gifts are not necessary to ensure a just peace, while to accept them would be a crime against liberty, which we are incapable of committing."

Verreyken, astonished and abashed, could answer little save to mutter a few words about the greediness of monks, who, judging everyone else by themselves, thought no one inaccessible to a bribe. He protested the innocence of the archdukes in the matter, who had given no directions to bribe, and who were quite ignorant that the attempt had been made.

He did not explain by whose authority the chain, the ring, and the draught upon Beckman had been furnished to the friar.

Meantime that ecclesiastic was cheerfully wending his way to Spain in search of the new ratification, leaving his colleague vicariously to bide the pelting of the republican storm, and to return somewhat weather-beaten to Brussels.

During the suspension, thus ridiculously and gratuitously caused, of preliminaries which had already lasted the better portion of a year, party-spirit was rising day by day higher, and spreading more widely throughout the provinces. Opinions and sentiments were now sharply defined and loudly announced. The clergy, from a thousand pulpits, thundered against the peace, exposing the insidious practices, the faithless promises, the monkish corruptions, by which the attempt was making to reduce the free republic once more into vassalage to Spain. The people everywhere listened eagerly and applauded. Especially the mariners, cordwainers, smiths, ship-chandlers, boatmen, the tapestry weavers, lace-manufacturers, shopkeepers, and, above all, the India merchants and stockholders in the great commercial companies for the East and West, lifted up their voices for war. This was the party of Prince Maurice, who made no secret of his sentiments, and opposed, publicly and privately, the resumption of negotiations. Doubtless his adherents were the most numerous portion of the population.

Barneveld, however, was omnipotent with the municipal governments, and although many individuals in those bodies were deeply interested in the India navigation and the great corporations, the Advocate turned them as usual around his finger.

Ever since the memorable day of Nieuport there had been no love lost between the stadholder and the Advocate. They had been nominally reconciled to each other, and had, until lately, acted with tolerable harmony, but each was thoroughly conscious of the divergence of their respective aims.

Page 2453

Exactly at this period the long-smothered resentment of Maurice against his old preceptor, counsellor, and, as he believed, betrayer, flamed forth anew. He was indignant that a man, so infinitely beneath him in degree, should thus dare to cross his plans, to hazard, as he believed, the best interests of the state, and to interfere with the course of his legitimate ambition. There was more glory for a great soldier to earn in future battle-fields, a higher position before the world to be won. He had a right by birth, by personal and family service, to claim admittance among the monarchs of Europe. The pistol of Balthasar Gerard had alone prevented the elevation of his father to the sovereignty of the provinces. The patents, wanting only a few formalities, were still in possession of the son. As the war went on—and nothing but blind belief in Spanish treachery could cause the acceptance of a peace which would be found to mean slavery—there was no height to which he might not climb. With the return of peace and submission, his occupation would be gone, obscurity and poverty the sole recompense for his life long services and the sacrifices of his family. The memory of the secret movements twice made but a few years before to elevate him to the sovereignty, and which he believed to have been baffled by the Advocate, doubtless rankled in his breast. He did not forget that when the subject had been discussed by the favourers of the scheme in Barneveld's own house, Barneveld himself had prophesied that one day or another "the rights would burst out which his Excellency had to become prince of the provinces, on strength of the signed and sealed documents addressed to the late Prince of Orange; that he had further alluded to the efforts then on foot to make him Duke of Gelderland; adding with a sneer, that Zeeland was all agog on the subject, while in that province there were individuals very desirous of becoming children of Zebedee."

Barneveld, on his part, although accustomed to speak in public of his Excellency Prince Maurice in terms of profoundest respect, did not fail to communicate in influential quarters his fears that the prince was inspired by excessive ambition, and that he desired to protract the war, not for the good of the commonwealth, but for the attainment of greater power in the state. The envoys of France, expressly instructed on that subject by the king, whose purposes would be frustrated if the ill-blood between these eminent personages could not be healed, did their best to bring about a better understanding, but with hardly more than an apparent success.

Once more there were stories flying about that the stadholder had called the Advocate liar, and that he had struck him or offered to strike him—tales as void of truth, doubtless, as those so rife after the battle of Nieuport, but which indicated the exasperation which existed.

When the news of the rejection of the King's ratification reached Madrid, the indignation of the royal conscience-keepers was vehement.

Page 2454

That the potentate of so large a portion of the universe should be treated by those lately his subjects with less respect than that due from equals to equals, seemed intolerable. So thoroughly inspired, however, was the king by the love of religion and the public good—as he informed Marquis Spinola by letter—and so intense was his desire for the termination of that disastrous war, that he did not hesitate indulgently to grant what had been so obstinately demanded. Little was to be expected, he said, from the stubbornness of the provinces, and from their extraordinary manner of transacting business, but looking, nevertheless, only to divine duty, and preferring its dictates to a selfish regard for his own interests, he had resolved to concede that liberty to the provinces which had been so importunately claimed. He however imposed the condition that the States should permit free and public exercise of the Catholic religion throughout their territories, and that so long as such worship was unobstructed, so long and no longer should the liberty now conceded to the provinces endure.

“Thus did this excellent prince,” says an eloquent Jesuit, “prefer obedience to the Church before subjection to himself, and insist that those, whom he emancipated from his own dominions, should still be loyal to the sovereignty of the Pope.”

Friar John, who had brought the last intelligence from the Netherlands, might have found it difficult, if consulted, to inform the king how many bills of exchange would be necessary to force this wonderful condition on the Government of the provinces. That the republic should accept that liberty as a boon which she had won with the red right hand, and should establish within her domains as many agents for Spanish reaction as there were Roman priests, monks, and Jesuits to be found, was not very probable. It was not thus nor then that the great lesson of religious equality and liberty for all men—-the inevitable result of the Dutch revolt—was to be expounded. The insertion of such a condition in the preamble to a treaty with a foreign power would have been a desertion on the part of the Netherlands of the very principle of religious or civil freedom.

The monk, however, had convinced the Spanish Government that in six months after peace had been made the States would gladly accept the dominion of Spain once more, or, at the very least, would annex themselves to the obedient Netherlands under the sceptre of the archdukes.

Secondly, he assured the duke that they would publicly and totally renounce all connection with France.

Thirdly, he pledged himself that the exercise of the Catholic religion would be as free as that of any other creed.

And the duke of Lerma believed it all: such and no greater was his capacity for understanding the course of events which he imagined himself to be directing. Certainly Friar John did not believe what he said.

“Master Monk is not quite so sure of his stick as he pretends to be,” said Secretary-of-State Villeroy. Of course, no one knew better the absurdity of those assurances than Master Monk himself.

Page 2455

“It may be that he has held such language,” said Jeannin, “in order to accomplish his object in Spain. But ’tis all dreaming and moonshine, which one should laugh at rather than treat seriously. These people here mean to be sovereign for ever and will make no peace except on that condition. This grandeur and vanity have entered so deeply into their brains that they will be torn into little pieces rather than give it up.”

Spinola, as acute a politician as he was a brilliant commander, at once demonstrated to his Government the impotence of such senile attempts. No definite agreements could be made, he wrote, except by a general convention. Before a treaty of peace, no permission would be given by the States to the public exercise of the Catholic religion, for fear of giving offence to what were called the Protestant powers. Unless they saw the proper ratification they would enter into no negotiations at all. When the negotiations had produced a treaty, the Catholic worship might be demanded. Thus peace might be made, and the desired conditions secured, or all parties would remain as they had been.

The Spanish Government replied by sending a double form of ratification. It would not have been the Spanish Government, had one simple, straightforward document been sent. Plenty of letters came at the same time, triumphantly refuting the objections and arguments of the States-General. To sign “Yo el Rey” had been the custom of the king’s ancestors in dealing with foreign powers. Thus had Philip *ii*. signed the treaty of Vervins. Thus had the reigning king confirmed the treaty of Vervins. Thus had he signed the recent treaty with England as well as other conventions with other potentates. If the French envoys at the Hague said the contrary they erred from ignorance or from baser reasons. The provinces could not be declared free until Catholic worship was conceded. The donations must be mutual and simultaneous and the States would gain a much more stable and diuturnal liberty, founded not upon a simple declaration, but lawfully granted them as a compensation for a just and pious work performed. To this end the king sent ratification number one in which his sentiments were fully expressed. If, however, the provinces were resolved not to defer the declaration so ardently desired and to refuse all negotiation until they had received it, then ratification number two, therewith sent and drawn up in the required form, might be used. It was, however, to be exhibited but not delivered. The provinces would then see the clemency with which they were treated by the king, and all the world might know that it was not his fault if peace were not made.

Thus the politicians of Madrid; speaking in the name of their august sovereign and signing “Yo el Rey” for him without troubling him even to look at the documents.

Page 2456

When these letters arrived, the time fixed by the States for accepting the ratification had run out, and their patience was well-nigh exhausted. The archduke held council with Spinola, Verreyken, Richardot, and others, and it was agreed that ratification number two, in which the Catholic worship was not mentioned, should be forthwith sent to the States. Certainly no other conclusion could have been reached, and it was fortunate that a lucid interval in the deliberations of the 'lunati ceat' Madrid had furnished the archduke with an alternative. Had it been otherwise and had number one been presented, with all the accompanying illustrations, the same dismal comedy might have gone on indefinitely until the Dutchmen hissed it away and returned to their tragic business once more.

On the 25th October, Friar John and Verreyken came before the States-General, more than a hundred members being present, besides Prince Maurice and Count Lewis William.

The monk stated that he had faithfully represented to his Majesty at Madrid the sincere, straightforward, and undissembling proceedings of their lordships in these negotiations. He had also explained the constitution of their Government and had succeeded in obtaining from his royal Majesty the desired ratification, after due deliberation with the council. This would now give the assurance of a firm and durable peace, continued Neyen, even if his Majesty should come one day to die—being mortal. Otherwise, there might be inconveniences to fear. Now, however, the document was complete in all its parts, so far as regarded what was principal and essential, and in conformity with the form transmitted by the States-General. "God the Omnipotent knows," proceeded the friar, "how sincere is my intention in this treaty of peace as a means of delivering the Netherlands from the miseries of war, as your lordships will perceive by the form of the agreement, explaining itself and making manifest its pure and undissembling intentions, promising nothing and engaging to nothing which will not be effectually performed. This would not be the case if his Majesty were proceeding by finesse or deception. The ratification might be nakedly produced as demanded, without any other explanation. But his Majesty, acting in good faith, has now declared his last determination in order to avoid anything that might be disputed at some future day, as your lordships will see more amply when the auditor has exhibited the document."

When the friar had finished Verreyken spoke.

He reminded them of the proofs already given by the archdukes of their sincere desire to change the long and sanguinary war into a good and assured peace. Their lordships the States had seen how liberally, sincerely, and roundly their Highnesses had agreed to all demands and had procured the ratification of his Majesty, even although nothing had been proposed in that regard at the beginning of the negotiations.

Page 2457

He then produced the original document, together with two copies, one in French the other in Flemish, to be carefully collated by the States.

“It is true,” said the auditor, “that the original is not made out in Latin nor in French as your lordships demanded, but in Spanish, and in the same form and style as used by his Majesty in treating with all the kings, potentates, and republics of Christendom. To tell you the truth, it has seemed strange that there should be a wish to make so great and puissant a king change his style, such demand being contrary to all reason and equity, and more so as his Majesty is content with the style which your lordships have been pleased to adopt.”

The ratification was then exhibited.

It set forth that Don Philip, by grace of God King of Castile, Leon, Arragon, the Two Sicilies, Portugal, Navarre, and of fourteen or fifteen other European realms duly enumerated; King of the Eastern and Western Indies and of the continents on terra firma adjacent, King of Jerusalem, Archduke of Antioch, Duke of Burgundy, and King of the Ocean, having seen that the archdukes were content to treat with the States-General of the United Provinces in quality of, and as holding them for, countries, provinces, and free states over which they pretended to no authority; either by way of a perpetual peace or for a truce or suspension of arms for twelve, fifteen, or twenty years, at the choice of the said States, and knowing that the said most serene archdukes had promised to deliver the king’s ratification; had, after ripe deliberation with his council, and out of his certain wisdom and absolute royal power, made the present declarations, similar to the one made by the archdukes, for the accomplishment of the said promise so far as it concerned him:

“And we principally declare,” continued the King of Spain, Jerusalem, America, India, and the Ocean, “that we are content that in our name, and on our part, shall be treated with the said States in the quality of, and as held by us for, free countries, provinces, and states, over which we make no pretensions. Thus we approve and ratify every point of the said agreement, promising on faith and word of a king to guard and accomplish it as entirely as if we had consented to it from the beginning.”

“But we declare,” said the king, in conclusion, “that if the treaty for a peace or a truce of many years, by which the pretensions of both parties are to be arranged—as well in the matter of religion as all the surplus—shall not be concluded, then this ratification shall be of no effect and as if it never had been made and, in virtue of it, we are not to lose a single point of our right, nor the United Provinces to acquire one, but things are to remain, so far as regards the rights of the two parties, exactly as they what to each shall seem best.”

Such were the much superfluous verbiage lopped away—which had been signed “I the King” at Madrid on the 18th September, and the two copies of which were presented to the States-General on the 25th October, the commissioners retaining the original.

Page 2458

The papers were accepted, with a few general commonplaces by Barneveld meaning nothing, and an answer was promised after a brief delay.

A committee of seven, headed by the Advocate as chairman and spokesman, held a conference with the ambassadors of France and England, at four o'clock in the afternoon of the same day and another at ten o'clock next morning.

The States were not very well pleased with the ratification. What especially moved their discontent was the concluding clause, according to which it was intimated that if the pretensions of Spain in regard to religion were not fulfilled in the final treaty, the ratification was waste-paper and the king would continue to claim all his rights.

How much more loudly would they have vociferated, could they have looked into Friar John's wallet and have seen ratification number one! Then they would have learned that, after nearly a year of what was called negotiation, the king had still meant to demand the restoration of the Catholic worship before he would even begin to entertain the little fiction that the provinces were free.

As to the signature, the paper, and the Spanish language, those were minor matters. Indeed, it is difficult to say why the King of Spain should not issue a formal document in Spanish. It is doubtful whether, had he taken a fancy to read it, he could have understood it in any other tongue. Moreover, Spanish would seem the natural language for Spanish state-papers. Had he, as King of Jerusalem, America, or India, chosen the Hebrew, Aztec, or Sanscrit, in his negotiations with the United Provinces, there might have been more cause for dissatisfaction.

Jeannin, who was of course the leading spirit among the foreign members of the conference, advised the acceptance of the ratification. Notwithstanding the technical objections to its form, he urged that in substance it was in sufficient conformity to the draught furnished by the States. Nothing could be worse, in his opinion, for the provinces than to remain any longer suspended between peace and war. They would do well, therefore, to enter upon negotiations so soon as they had agreed among themselves upon three points.

They must fix the great indispensable terms which they meant to hold, and from which no arguments would ever induce them to recede. Thus they would save valuable time and be spared much frivolous discourse.

Next, they ought to establish a good interior government.

Thirdly, they should at once arrange their alliances and treaties with foreign powers, in order to render the peace to be negotiated a durable one.

As to the first and second of these points, the Netherlanders needed no prompter. They had long ago settled the conditions without which they would make no treaty at all, and certainly it was not the States-General that had thus far been frivolously consuming time.

Page 2459

As to the form of government, defective though it was, the leaders of the republic knew very well in whose interests such sly allusions to their domestic affairs were repeatedly ventured by the French envoys. In regard to treaties with foreign powers it was, of course, most desirable for the republic to obtain the formal alliance of France and England. Jeannin and his colleagues were ready to sign such a treaty, offensive and defensive, at once, but they found it impossible to induce the English ambassadors, with whom there was a conference on the 26th October, to come into any written engagement on the subject. They expressed approbation of the plan individually and in words, but deemed it best to avoid any protocol, by which their sovereign could be implicated in a promise. Should the negotiations for peace be broken off, it would be time enough to make a treaty to protect the provinces. Meantime, they ought to content themselves with the general assurance, already given them, that in case of war the monarchs of France and England would not abandon them, but would provide for their safety, either by succour or in some other way, so that they would be placed out of danger.

Such promises were vague without being magnificent, and, as James had never yet lifted his finger to assist the provinces, while indulging them frequently with oracular advice, it could hardly be expected that either the French envoys or the States-General would reckon very confidently on assistance from Great Britain, should war be renewed with Spain.

On the whole, it was agreed to draw up a paper briefly stating the opinion of the French and English plenipotentiaries that the provinces would do well to accept the ratification.

The committee of the States, with Barneveld as chairman, expressed acquiescence, but urged that they could not approve the clause in that document concerning religion. It looked as if the King of Spain wished to force them to consent by treaty that the Catholic religion should be re-established in their country. As they were free and sovereign, however, and so recognised by himself, it was not for him to meddle with such matters. They foresaw that this clause would create difficulties when the whole matter should be referred to the separate provinces, and that it would, perhaps, cause the entire rejection of the ratification.

The envoys, through the voice of Jeannin, remonstrated against such a course. After all, the objectionable clause, it was urged, should be considered only as a demand which the king was competent to make and it was not reasonable, they said, for the States to shut his mouth and prevent him from proposing what he thought good to propose.

On the other hand, they were not obliged to acquiesce in the proposition. In truth, it would be more expedient that the States themselves should grant this grace to the Catholics, thus earning their gratitude, rather than that it should be inserted in the treaty.

Page 2460

A day or two later there was an interview between the French envoys and Count Lewis William, for whose sage, dispassionate, and upright character they had all a great respect. It was their object—in obedience to the repeated instructions of the French king—to make use of his great influence over Prince Maurice in favour of peace. It would be better, they urged, that the stadholder should act more in harmony with the States than he had done of late, and should reflect that, the ratification being good, there was really no means of preventing a peace, except in case the King of Spain should refuse the conditions necessary for securing it. The prince would have more power by joining with the States than in opposing them. Count Lewis expressed sympathy with these views, but feared that Maurice would prefer that the ratification should not be accepted until the states of the separate provinces had been heard; feeling convinced that several of those bodies would reject that instrument on account of the clause relating to religion.

Jeannin replied that such a course would introduce great discord into the provinces, to the profit of the enemy, and that the King of France himself—so far from being likely to wish the ratification rejected because of the clause—would never favour the rupture of negotiations if it came on account of religion. He had always instructed them to use their efforts to prevent any division among the States, as sure to lead to their ruin. He would certainly desire the same stipulation as the one made by the King of Spain, and would support rather than oppose the demand thus made, in order to content the Catholics. To be sure, he would prefer that the States should wisely make this provision of their own accord rather than on the requisition of Spain, but a rupture of the pending negotiations from the cause suggested would be painful to him and very damaging to his character at Rome.

On the 2nd November the States-General gave their formal answer to the commissioners, in regard to the ratification.

That instrument, they observed, not only did not agree with the form as promised by the archdukes in language and style, but also in regard to the seal, and to the insertion and omission of several words. On this account, and especially by reason of the concluding clause, there might be inferred the annulment of the solemn promise made in the body of the instrument. The said king and archdukes knew very well that these States-General of free countries and provinces, over which the king and archdukes pretended to no authority, were competent to maintain order in all things regarding the good constitution and government of their land and its inhabitants. On this subject, nothing could be pretended or proposed on the part of the king and archdukes without, violation of formal and solemn promises.

Page 2461

“Nevertheless,” continued the States-General, “in order not to retard a good work, already begun, for the purpose of bringing the United Provinces out of a long and bloody war into a Christian and assured peace, the letters of ratification will be received in respect that they contain the declaration, on part of both the king and the archdukes, that they will treat for a peace or a truce of many years with the States-General of the United Provinces, in quality of, and as holding them to be, free countries, provinces, and states, over which they make no pretensions.”

It was further intimated, however, that the ratification was only received for reference to the estates of each of the provinces, and it was promised that, within six weeks, the commissioners should be informed whether the provinces would consent or refuse to treat. It was moreover declared that, neither at that moment nor at any future time, could any point in the letters of ratification be accepted which, directly or indirectly, might be interpreted as against that essential declaration and promise in regard to the freedom of the provinces. In case the decision should be taken to enter into negotiation upon the basis of that ratification, or any other that might meantime arrive from Spain, then firm confidence was expressed by the States that, neither on the part of the king nor that of the archdukes would there be proposed or pretended, in contravention of that promise, any point touching the good constitution, welfare, state, or government of the United Provinces, and of the inhabitants. The hope was furthermore expressed that, within ten days after the reception of the consent of the States to treat, commissioners would be sent by the archdukes to the Hague, fully authorised and instructed to declare, roundly their intentions, in order to make short work of the whole business. In that case, the States would duly authorize and instruct commissioners to act in their behalf.

Thus in the answer especial warning was given against any possible attempt to interfere with the religious question. The phraseology could not be mistaken.

At this stage of the proceedings, the States demanded that the original instrument of ratification should be deposited with them. The two commissioners declared that they were without power to consent to this. Hereupon the Assembly became violent, and many members denounced the refusal as equivalent to breaking off the negotiations. Everything indicated, so it was urged, a desire on the Spanish side to spin delays out of delays, and, meantime, to invent daily some new trap for deception. Such was the vehemence upon this point that the industrious Franciscan posted back to Brussels, and returned with the archduke’s permission to deliver the document. Three conditions, however, were laid down. The States must give a receipt for the ratification. They must say in that receipt that the archdukes, in obtaining the paper from Spain, had fulfilled their original promise. If peace should not be made, they were to return the document.

Page 2462

When these conditions were announced, the indignation of the republican Government at the trifling of their opponents was fiercer than ever. The discrepancies between the form prescribed and the ratification obtained had always been very difficult of digestion, but, although willing to pass them by, the States stoutly refused to accept the document on these conditions.

Tooth and nail Verreyken and Neyen fought out the contest and were worsted. Once more the nimble friar sped back and forth between the Hague and his employer's palace, and at last, after tremendous discussions in cabinet council, the conditions were abandoned.

"Nobody can decide," says the Jesuit historian, "which was greater—the obstinacy of the federal Government in screwing out of the opposite party everything it deemed necessary, or the indulgence of the archdukes in making every possible concession."

Had these solemn tricksters of an antiquated school perceived that, in dealing with men who meant what they said and said what they meant, all these little dilatory devices were superfluous, perhaps the wholesome result might have sooner been reached. In a contest of diplomacy against time it generally happens that time is the winner, and on this occasion, time and the republic were fighting on the same side.

On the 13th December the States-General re-assembled at the Hague, the separate provinces having in the interval given fresh instructions to their representatives. It was now decided that no treaty should be made, unless the freedom of the commonwealth was recognized in phraseology which, after consultation with the foreign ambassadors, should be deemed satisfactory. Farther it was agreed that, neither in ecclesiastical nor secular matters, should any conditions be accepted which could be detrimental to freedom. In case the enemy should strive for the contrary, the world would be convinced that he alone was responsible for the failure of the peace negotiations. Then, with the support of other powers friendly to the republic, hostilities could be resumed in such a manner as to ensure a favourable issue for an upright cause.

The armistice, begun on the 4th of May, was running to an end, and it was now renewed at the instance of the States. That Government, moreover, on the 23rd December formally notified to the archdukes that, trusting to their declarations, and to the statements of Neyen and Verreyken, it was willing to hold conferences for peace. Their Highnesses were accordingly invited to appoint seven or eight commissioners at once, on the same terms as formally indicated.

The original understanding had been that no envoys but Netherlanders should come from Brussels for these negotiations.

Page 2463

Barneveld and the peace party, however, were desirous that Spinola, who was known to be friendly to a pacific result, should be permitted to form part of the mission. Accordingly the letters, publicly drawn up in the Assembly, adhered to the original arrangement, but Barneveld, with the privity of other leading personages, although without the knowledge of Maurice, Lewis William, and the State-Council, secretly enclosed a little note in the principal despatch to Neyen and Verreyken. In this billet it was intimated that, notwithstanding the prohibition in regard to foreigners, the States were willing—it having been proposed that one or two who were not Netherlanders should be sent—that a single Spaniard, provided he were not one of the principal military commanders, should make part of the embassy.

The phraseology had a double meaning. Spinola was certainly the chief military commander, but he was not a Spaniard. This eminent personage might be supposed to have thus received permission to come to the Netherlands, despite all that had been urged by the war-party against the danger incurred, in case of a renewal of hostilities, by admitting so clear-sighted an enemy into the heart of the republic. Moreover, the terms of the secret note would authorize the appointment of another foreigner—even a Spaniard—while the crafty president Richardot might creep into the commission, on the ground that, being a Burgundian, he might fairly call himself a Netherlander.

And all this happened.

Thus, after a whole year of parley, in which the States-General had held firmly to their original position, while the Spanish Government had crept up inch by inch, and through countless windings and subterfuges, to the point on which they might have all stood together at first, and thus have saved a twelvemonth, it was finally settled that peace conferences should begin.

Barneveld had carried the day. Maurice and his cousin Lewis William had uniformly, deliberately, but not factiously, used all their influence against any negotiations. The prince had all along loudly expressed his conviction that neither the archdukes nor Spain would ever be brought to an honourable peace. The most to be expected of them was a truce of twelve or fifteen years, to which his consent at least should never be given, and during which cessation of hostilities, should it be accorded, every imaginable effort would be made to regain by intrigue what the king had lost by the sword. As for the King of England and his counsellors, Maurice always denounced them as more Spanish than Spaniards, as doing their best to put themselves on the most intimate terms with his Catholic Majesty, and as secretly desirous—insane policy as it seemed—of forcing the Netherlands back again under the sceptre of that monarch.

Page 2464

He had at first been supported in his position by the French ambassadors, who had felt or affected disinclination for peace, but who had subsequently, thrown the whole of their own and their master's influence on the side of Barneveld. They had done their best—-and from time to time they had been successful—to effect at least a superficial reconciliation between those two influential personages. They had employed all the arguments at their disposal to bring the prince over to the peace party. Especially they had made use of the 'argumentum ad crumenam,' which that veteran broker in politics, Jeannin, had found so effective in times past with the great lords of the League. But Maurice showed himself so proof against the golden inducements suggested by the President that he and his king both arrived at the conclusion that there were secret motives at work, and that Maurice was not dazzled by the brilliant prospects held out to him by Henry, only because his eyes were stedfastly fixed upon some unknown but splendid advantage, to be gained through other combinations. It was naturally difficult for Henry to imagine the possibility of a man, playing a first part in the world's theatre, being influenced by so weak a motive as conviction.

Lewis William too—that "grave and wise young man," as Lord Leicester used to call him twenty years before—remained steadily on the side of the prince. Both in private conversation and in long speeches to the States-General, he maintained that the Spanish court was incapable of sincere negotiations with the commonwealth, that to break faith with heretics and rebels would always prove the foundation of its whole policy, and that to deceive them by pretences of a truce or a treaty, and to triumph afterwards over the results of its fraud, was to be expected as a matter of course.

Sooner would the face of nature be changed than the cardinal maxim of Catholic statesmanship be abandoned.

But the influence of the Nassaus, of the province of Zeeland, of the clergy, and of the war-party in general, had been overbalanced by Barneveld and the city corporations, aided by the strenuous exertions of the French ambassadors.

The decision of the States-General was received with sincere joy at Brussels. The archdukes had something to hope from peace, and little but disaster and ruin to themselves from a continuance of the war. Spinola too was unaffectedly in favour of negotiations. He took the ground that the foreign enemies of Spain, as well as her pretended friends, agreed in wishing her to go on with the war, and that this ought to open her eyes as to the expediency of peace. While there was a general satisfaction in Europe that the steady exhaustion of her strength in this eternal contest made her daily less and less formidable to other nations, there were on the other hand puerile complaints at court that the conditions prescribed by impious and insolent rebels to their sovereign were derogatory

Page 2465

to the dignity of monarchy. The spectacle of Spain sending ambassadors to the Hague to treat for peace, on the basis of Netherland independence, would be a humiliation such as had never been exhibited before. That the haughty confederation should be allowed thus to accomplish its ends, to trample down all resistance to its dictation, and to defy the whole world by its insults to the Church and to the sacred principle, of monarchy, was most galling to Spanish pride. Spinola, as a son of Italy, and not inspired by the fervent hatred to Protestantism which was indigenous to the other peninsula, steadily resisted those arguments. None knew better than he the sternness of the stuff out of which that republic was made, and he felt that now or never was the time to treat, even as, five years before, 'jam ant nunquam' had been inscribed on his banner outside Ostend. But he protested that his friends gave him even harder work than his enemies had ever done, and he stoutly maintained that a peace against which all the rivals of Spain seemed to have conspired from fear of seeing her tranquil and disembarrassed, must be advantageous to Spain. The genial and quick-wined Genoese could not see and hear all the secret letters and private conversations of Henry and James and their ambassadors, and he may be pardoned for supposing that, notwithstanding all the crooked and incomprehensible politics of Greenwich and Paris, the serious object of both England and France was to prolong the war. In his most private correspondence he expressed great doubts as to a favourable issue to the pending conferences, but avowed his determination that if they should fail it would be from no want of earnest effort on his part to make them succeed. It should never be said that he preferred his own private advantage to the duty of serving the best interests of the crown.

Meantime the India trade, which was to form the great bone of contention in the impending conferences, had not been practically neglected of late by the enterprising Hollanders. Peter Verhoeff, fresh from the victory of Gibraltar, towards which he had personally so much contributed by the splendid manner in which he had handled the AEolus after the death of Admiral Heemskerk, was placed in command of a fleet to the East Indies, which was to sail early in the spring.

Admiral Matelieff, who had been cruising in those seas during the three years past, was now on his way home. His exploits had been worthy the growing fame of the republican navy. In the summer of 1606 he had laid siege to the town and fortress of Malacca, constructed by the Portuguese at the southmost extremity of the Malay peninsula. Andreas Hurtado de Mendoza commanded the position, with a force of three thousand men, among whom were many Indians. The King or Sultan of Johore, at the south-eastern extremity of the peninsula, remained faithful to his Dutch allies, and accepted the proposition of Matelieff to take part in the hostilities now begun. The

Page 2466

admiral's fleet consisted of eleven small ships, with fourteen hundred men. It was not exactly a military expedition. To the sailors of each ship were assigned certain shares of the general profits, and as it was obvious that more money was likely to be gained by trade with the natives, or by the capture of such stray carracks and other, merchantmen of the enemy as were frequently to be met in these regions, the men were not particularly eager to take part in sieges of towns or battles with cruisers. Matelieff, however, had sufficient influence over his comrades to inflame their zeal on this occasion for the fame of the republic, and to induce them to give the Indian princes and the native soldiery a lesson in Batavian warfare.

A landing was effected on the peninsula, the sailors and guns were disembarked, and an imposing auxiliary force, sent, according to promise, after much delay, by the Sultan of Johore, proceeded to invest Malacca. The ground proved wet, swampy, and impracticable for trenches, galleries, covered ways, and all the other machinery of a regular siege. Matelieff was not a soldier nor a naval commander by profession, but a merchant-skipper, like so many other heroes whose achievements were to be the permanent glory of their fatherland. He would not, however, have been a Netherlander had he not learned something of the science which Prince Maurice had so long been teaching, not only to his own countrymen but to the whole world. So moveable turrets, constructed of the spice-trees which grew in rank luxuriance all around, were filled with earth and stones, and advanced towards the fort. Had the natives been as docile to learn as the Hollanders were eager to teach a few easy lessons in the military art, the doom of Andreas Hurtado de Mendoza would have been sealed. But the great truths which those youthful pedants, Maurice and Lewis William, had extracted twenty years before from the works of the Emperor Leo and earlier pagans, amid the jeers of veterans, were not easy to transplant to the Malayan peninsula.

It soon proved that those white-turbaned, loose-garmented, supple jointed, highly-picturesque troops of the sultan were not likely to distinguish themselves for anything but wonderful rapidity in retreat. Not only did they shrink from any advance towards the distant forts, but they were incapable of abiding an attack within or behind their towers, and, at every random shot from the enemy's works, they threw down their arms and fled from their stations in dismay. It was obvious enough that the conquest and subjugation of such feeble warriors by the Portuguese and Spaniards were hardly to be considered brilliant national trophies. They had fallen an easy prey to the first European invader. They had no discipline, no obedience, no courage; and Matelieff soon found that to attempt a scientific siege with such auxiliaries against a well-constructed stone fortress, garrisoned with three thousand troops, under an experienced Spanish soldier, was but midsummer madness.

Page 2467

Fevers and horrible malaria, bred by the blazing sun of the equator out of those pestilential jungles, poisoned the atmosphere. His handful of troops, amounting to not much more than a hundred men to each of his ships, might melt away before his eyes. Nevertheless, although it was impossible for him to carry the place by regular approach, he would not abandon the hope of reducing it by famine. During four months long, accordingly, he kept every avenue by land or sea securely invested. In August, however, the Spanish viceroy of India, Don Alphonso de Castro, made his appearance on the scene. Coming from Goa with a splendid fleet, numbering fourteen great galleons, four galleys, and sixteen smaller vessels, manned by three thousand seven hundred Portuguese and other Europeans, and an equal number of native troops, he had at first directed his course towards Atchen, on the north-west point of Sumatra. Here, with the magnificent arrogance which Spanish and Portuguese viceroys were accustomed to manifest towards the natives of either India, he summoned the king to surrender his strongholds, to assist in constructing a fortress for the use of his conquerors, to deliver up all the Netherlanders within his domains, and to pay the expenses of the expedition which had thus been sent to chastise him. But the King of Atchen had not sent ambassadors into the camp of Prince Maurice before the city of Grave in vain. He had learned that there were other white skins besides the Spaniards at the antipodes, and that the republic whose achievements in arts and arms were conspicuous trophies of Western civilization, was not, as it had been represented to him, a mere nest of pirates. He had learned to prefer an alliance with Holland to slavery under Spain. Moreover, he had Dutch engineers and architects in his service, and a well-constructed system of Dutch fortifications around his capital. To the summons to surrender himself and his allies he returned a defiant answer. The viceroy ordered an attack upon the city. One fort was taken. From before the next he was repulsed with great loss. The Sumatrans had derived more profit from intercourse with Europeans than the inhabitants of Johore or the Moluccas had done. De Castro abandoned the siege. He had received intelligence of the dangerous situation of Malacca, and moved down upon the place with his whole fleet. Admiral Matelieff, apprised by scouts of his approach, behaved with the readiness and coolness of a veteran campaigner. Before De Castro could arrive in the roadstead of Malacca, he had withdrawn all his troops from their positions, got all his artillery reshipped, and was standing out in the straits, awaiting the enemy.

Page 2468

On the 17th August, the two fleets, so vastly disproportionate in number, size, equipment, and military force—eighteen galleons and galleys, with four or five thousand fighting men, against eleven small vessels and twelve or fourteen hundred sailors—met in that narrow sea. The action lasted all day. It was neither spirited nor sanguinary. It ought to have been within the power of the Spaniard to crush his diminutive adversary. It might have seemed a sufficient triumph for Matelieff to manoeuvre himself out of harm's way. No vessel on either side was boarded, not one surrendered, but two on each side were set on fire and destroyed. Eight of the Dutchmen were killed—not a very sanguinary result after a day's encounter with so imposing an armada. De Castro's losses were much greater, but still the battle was an insignificant one, and neither fleet gained a victory. Night put an end to the cannonading, and the Spaniards withdrew to Malacca, while Matelieff bore away to Johore. The siege of Malacca was relieved, and the Netherlanders now occupied themselves with the defence of the feeble sovereign at the other point of the peninsula.

Matelieff lay at Johore a month, repairing damages and laying in supplies. While still at the place, he received information that a large part of the Spanish armada had sailed from Malacca. Several of his own crew, who had lost their shares in the adventure by the burning of the ships to which they belonged in the action of 17th August, were reluctant and almost mutinous when their admiral now proposed to them a sudden assault on the portion of the Spanish fleet still remaining within reach. They had not come forth for barren glory, many protested, but in search of fortune; they were not elated by the meagre result of the expedition. Matelieff succeeded, however, at last in inspiring all the men of his command with an enthusiasm superior to sordid appeals, and made a few malcontents. On the 21st September, he sailed to Malacca, and late in the afternoon again attacked the Spaniards. Their fleet consisted of seven great galleons and three galleys lying in a circle before the town. The outermost ship, called the St. Nicholas, was boarded by men from three of the Dutch galleots with sudden and irresistible fury. There was a brief but most terrible action, the Netherlanders seeming endowed with superhuman vigour. So great was the panic that there was hardly an effort at defence, and within less than an hour nearly every Spaniard on board the St. Nicholas had been put to the sword. The rest of the armada engaged the Dutch fleet with spirit, but one of the great galleons was soon set on fire and burned to the water's edge. Another, dismasted and crippled, struck her flag, and all that remained would probably have been surrendered or destroyed had not the sudden darkness of a tropical nightfall put an end to the combat at set of sun. Next morning another galleon, in a shattered and sinking condition,

Page 2469

was taken possession of and found filled with dead and dying. The rest of the Spanish ships made their escape into the harbour of Malacca. Matelieff stood off and on in the straits for a day or two, hesitating for fear of shallows to follow into the roadstead. Before he could take a decision, he had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy, panic-struck, save him any further trouble. Not waiting for another attack, the Spaniards set fire to every one of their ships, and retired into their fortress, while Matelieff and his men enjoyed the great conflagration as idle spectators. Thus the enterprising Dutch admiral had destroyed ten great war-ships of the enemy, and, strange to relate, had scarcely lost one man of his whole squadron. Rarely had a more complete triumph been achieved on the water than in this battle in the straits of Malacca. Matelieff had gained much glory but very little booty. He was also encumbered with a great number of prisoners.

These he sent to Don Alphonso, exchanging them for a very few Netherlanders then in Spanish hands, at the rate of two hundred Spaniards for ten Dutchmen—thus showing that he held either the enemy very cheap, or his own countrymen very dear. The captured ships he burned as useless to him, but retained twenty-four pieces of artillery.

It was known to Matelieff that the Spanish viceroy had received instructions to inflict chastisement on all the oriental potentates and their subjects who had presumed of late to trade and to form alliances with the Netherlanders. Johore, Achem, Paham, Patane, Amboyna, and Bantam, were the most probable points of attack. Johore had now been effectually defended, Achem had protected itself. The Dutch fleet proceeded at first to Bantams for refreshment, and from this point Matelieff sent three of his ships back to Holland. With the six remaining to him, he sailed for the Moluccas, having heard of various changes which had taken place in that important archipelago. Pausing at the great emporium of nutmegs and all-spice, Amboyna, he took measures for strengthening the fortifications of the place, which was well governed by Frederick Houtman, and then proceeded to Ternate and Tidor.

During the absence of the Netherlanders, after the events on those islands recorded in a previous chapter, the Spaniards had swept down upon them from the Philippines with a fleet of thirty-seven ships, and had taken captive the Sultan of Ternate; while the potentate of Tidor, who had been left by Stephen van der Hagen in possession of his territories on condition of fidelity to the Dutch, was easily induced to throw aside the mask, and to renew his servitude to Spain. Thus both the coveted clove-islands had relapsed into the control of the enemy. Matelieff found it dangerous, on account of quicksands and shallows, to land on Tydore, but he took very energetic measures to recover possession of Ternate. On the southern side of the island, the Spaniards had built a fort and a town. The

Page 2470

Dutch admiral disembarked upon the northern side, and, with assistance of the natives, succeeded in throwing up substantial fortifications at a village called Malaya. The son of the former sultan, who was a Spanish prisoner at the Philippines, was now formally inducted into his father's sovereignty, and Matelieff established at Malaya for his protection a garrison of forty-five Hollanders and a navy of four small yachts. Such were the slender means with which Oriental empires were founded in those days by the stout-hearted adventurers of the little Batavian republic.

With this miniature army and navy, and by means of his alliance with the distant commonwealth, of whose power this handful of men was a symbol, the King of Ternate was thenceforth to hold his own against the rival potentate on the other island, supported by the Spanish king. The same convention of commerce and amity was made with the Ternatians as the one which Stephen van der Hagen had formerly concluded with the Bandians; and it was agreed that the potentate should be included in any treaty of peace that might be made between the republic and Spain.

Matelieff, with three ships and a cutter, now sailed for China, but lost his time in endeavouring to open trade with the Celestial empire. The dilatory mandarins drove him at last out of all patience, and, on turning his prows once more southward, he had nearly brought his long expedition to a disastrous termination. Six well-armed, well-equipped Portuguese galleons sailed out of Macao to assail him. It was not Matelieff's instinct to turn his back on a foe, however formidable, but on this occasion discretion conquered instinct. His three ships were out of repair; he had a deficiency of powder; he was in every respect unprepared for a combat; and he reflected upon the unfavourable impression which would be made on the Chinese mind should the Hollanders, upon their first appearance in the flowery regions, be vanquished by the Portuguese. He avoided an encounter, therefore, and, by skilful seamanship, eluded all attempts of the foe at pursuit. Returning to Ternate, he had the satisfaction to find that during his absence the doughty little garrison of Malaya had triumphantly defeated the Spaniards in an assault on the fortifications of the little town. On the other hand, the King of Johore, panic-struck on the departure of his Dutch protectors, had burned his own capital, and had betaken himself with all his court into the jungle.

Commending the one and rebuking the other potentate, the admiral provided assistance for both, some Dutch trading, vessels having meantime arrived in the archipelago. Matelieff now set sail for Holland, taking with him some ambassadors from the King of Siam and five ships well laden with spice. On his return he read a report of his adventures to the States-General, and received the warm commendations of their High Mightinesses. Before his departure from the tropics, Paul van Kaarden, with eight war-ships, had reached Bantam. On his arrival in Holland the fleet of Peter ver Hoef was busily fitting out for another great expedition to the East. This was the nation which Spanish courtiers thought to exclude for ever from commerce with India and America,

because the Pope a century before had divided half the globe between Ferdinand the Catholic and Emmanuel the Fortunate.

Page 2471

It may be supposed that the results of Matelieff's voyage were likely to influence the pending negotiations for peace.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

A sovereign remedy for the disease of liberty
All the ministers and great functionaries received presents
Because he had been successful (hated)
But the habit of dissimulation was inveterate
By turns, we all govern and are governed
Contempt for treaties however solemnly ratified
Despised those who were grateful
Idiotic principle of sumptuary legislation
Indulging them frequently with oracular advice
Justified themselves in a solemn consumption of time
Man who cannot dissemble is unfit to reign
Men fought as if war was the normal condition of humanity
Men who meant what they said and said what they meant
Negotiated as if they were all immortal
Philip of Macedon, who considered no city impregnable
To negotiate was to bribe right and left, and at every step
Unwise impatience for peace

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 81, 1608

CHAPTER L.

Movements of the Emperor Rudolph—Marquis Spinola's reception at the Hague—-Meeting of Spinola and Prince Maurice—Treaty of the Republic with the French Government—The Spanish commissioners before the States-General—Beginning of negotiations—Stormy discussions—Real object of Spain in the negotiations—Question of the India trade— Abandonment of the peace project—Negotiations for a truce—Prolongation of the armistice—Further delays—Treaty of the States with England—-Proposals of the Spanish ambassadors to Henry of France and to James of England—-Friar Neyen at the court of Spain— Spanish procrastination—Decision of Philip on the

conditions of peace—Further conference at the Hague—Answer of the States-General to the proposals of the Spanish Government—General rupture.

Towards the close of the year 1607 a very feeble demonstration was made in the direction of the Dutch republic by the very feeble Emperor of Germany. Rudolph, awaking as it might be from a trance, or descending for a moment from his star-gazing tower and his astrological pursuits to observe the movements of political spheres, suddenly discovered that the Netherlands were no longer revolving in their preordained orbit. Those provinces had been supposed to form part of one great system, deriving light and heat from the central imperial sun. It was time therefore to put an end to these perturbations. The emperor accordingly, as if he had not enough on his hands at that precise moment with the Hungarians, Transylvanians, Bohemian protestants, his brother Matthias and the Grand Turk, addressed a letter to the States of Holland, Zeeland, and the provinces confederated with them.

Page 2472

Reminding them of the care ever taken by himself and his father to hear all their petitions, and to obtain for them a good peace, he observed that he had just heard of their contemplated negotiations with King Philip and Archduke Albert, and of their desire to be declared free states and peoples. He was amazed, he said, that they should not have given him notice of so important an affair, inasmuch as all the United Provinces belonged to and were fiefs of the holy Roman Empire. They were warned, therefore, to undertake nothing that might be opposed to the feudal law except with his full knowledge. This letter was dated the 9th of October. The States took time to deliberate, and returned no answer until after the new year.

On the 2nd of January, 1608, they informed the emperor that they could never have guessed of his requiring notification as to the approaching conferences. They had not imagined that the archduke would keep them a secret from his brother, or the king from his uncle-cousin. Otherwise, the States would have sent due notice to his Majesty. They well remembered, they said, the appeals made by the provinces to the emperor from time to time, at the imperial diets, for help against the tyranny of the Spaniards. They well remembered, too, that no help was ever given them in response to those appeals. They had not forgotten either the famous Cologne negotiations for peace in presence of the imperial envoys, in consequence of which the enemy had carried on war against them with greater ferocity than before. At that epoch they had made use of an extreme remedy for an intolerable evil, and had solemnly renounced allegiance to the king. Since that epoch a whole generation of mankind had passed away, and many kings and potentates had recognised their freedom, obtained for just cause and maintained by the armed hand. After a long and bloody war, Albert and Philip had at last been brought to acknowledge the provinces as free countries over which they pretended to no right, as might be seen by the letters of both, copies of which were forwarded to the emperor. Full confidence was now expressed, therefore, that the emperor and all Germany would look with favour on such a God-fearing transaction, by which an end would be put to so terrible a war. Thus the States-General; replying with gentle scorn to the antiquated claim of sovereignty on the part of imperial majesty. Duly authenticated by citations of investitures, indulgences, and concordates, engrossed on yellowest parchment, sealed with reddest sealing-wax, and reposing in a thousand pigeon-holes in mustiest archives, no claim could be more solemn or stately. Unfortunately, however, rebel pikes and matchlocks, during the past forty years, had made too many rents in those sacred parchments to leave much hope of their ever being pieced handsomely together again. As to the historical theory of imperial enfeoffment, the States thought it more delicate to glide smoothly and silently over the whole matter. It would have been base to acknowledge and impolite to refute the claim.

Page 2473

It is as well to imitate this reserve. It is enough simply to remind the reader that although so late as the time of Charles V., the provinces had been declared constituent parts of the empire, liable to its burthens, and entitled to its protection; the Netherlanders being practical people, and deeming burthens and protection correlative, had declined the burthen because always deprived of the protection.

And now, after a year spent in clearing away the mountains of dust which impeded the pathway to peace, and which one honest vigorous human breath might at once have blown into space, the envoys of the archduke set forth towards the Hague.

Marquis Spinola, Don Juan de Mancicidor, private secretary to the King of Spain, President Richardot, Auditor Verreyken, and Brother John Neyen—a Genoese, a Spaniard, a Burgundian, a Fleming, and a Franciscan friar—travelling in great state, with a long train of carriages, horses, lackeys, cooks, and secretaries, by way of Breda, Bergen-op-Zoom,

Dort, Rotterdam, and Delft, and being received in each town and village through which they passed with great demonstrations of respect and cordial welcome, arrived at last within a mile of the Hague.

It was the dead of winter, and of the severest winter that had occurred for many years. Every river, estuary, canal was frozen hard. All Holland was one broad level sheet of ice, over which the journey had been made in sledges. On the last day of January Prince Maurice, accompanied by Lewes William, and by eight state coaches filled with distinguished personages, left the Hague and halted at the Hoorn bridge, about midway between Ryswyk and the capital. The prince had replied to the first request of the States that he should go forward to meet Spinola, by saying that he would do so willingly if it were to give him battle; otherwise not. Olden-Barneveld urged upon him however that, as servant of the republic, he was bound to do what the States commanded, as a matter involving the dignity of the nation. In consequence of this remonstrance Maurice consented to go, but he went unwillingly. The advancing procession of the Spanish ambassadors was already in sight. Far and wide in whatever direction the eye could sweep, the white surface of the landscape was blackened with human beings. It seemed as if the whole population of the Netherlands had assembled, in mass meeting, to witness the pacific interview between those two great chieftains who had never before stood face to face except upon the battle-field.

In carriages, in donkey carts, upon horseback, in sledges, on skates, upon foot-men, women, and children, gentle and simple, Protestants, Catholics, Gomarites, Armenians, anabaptists, country squires in buff and bandaleer, city magistrates and merchants in furs and velvet, artisans, boatmen, and peasants, with their wives and daughters in well-starched ruff and tremendous head-gear—they came thronging in countless

Page 2474

multitudes, those honest Hollanders, cheering and throwing up their caps in honour of the chieftain whose military genius had caused so much disaster to their country. This uproarious demonstration of welcome on the part of the multitude moved the spleen of many who were old enough to remember the horrors of Spanish warfare within their borders. “Thus unreflecting, gaping, boorish, are nearly all the common people of these provinces,” said a contemporary, describing the scene, and forgetting that both high and low, according to his own account, made up the mass of spectators on that winter’s day. Moreover it seems difficult to understand why the Hollanders should not have indulged a legitimate curiosity, and made a holiday on this memorable occasion. Spinola was not entering their capital in triumph, a Spanish army was not marching—as it might have done had the course of events been different—over the protective rivers and marshes of the fatherland, now changed by the exceptional cold into solid highways for invasion. On the contrary, the arrival of the great enemy within their gates, with the olive-branch instead of the sword in his hand, was a victory not for Spain but for the republic. It was known throughout the land that he was commissioned by the king and the archdukes to treat for peace with the States-General of the United Provinces as with the representatives of a free and independent nation, utterly beyond any foreign control.

Was not this opening of a cheerful and pacific prospect, after a half century’s fight for liberty, a fair cause for rejoicing?

The Spanish commissioners arrived at the Hoorn bridge, Spinola alighted from his coach, Prince Maurice stepped forward into the road to greet him. Then the two eminent soldiers, whose names had of late been so familiar in the mouths of men, shook hands and embraced with heroic cordiality, while a mighty shout went up from the multitude around. It was a stately and dramatic spectacle, that peaceful meeting of the rival leaders in a war which had begun before either of them was born. The bystanders observed, or thought that they observed, signs of great emotion on the faces of both. It has also been recorded that each addressed the other in epigrammatic sentences of compliment. “God is my witness,” Maurice was supposed to have said, “that the arrival of these honourable negotiators is most grateful to me. Time, whose daughter is truth, will show the faith to be given to my words.”

“This fortunate day,” replied Spinola, “has filled full the measure of my hopes and wishes, and taken from me the faculty of ever wishing for anything again. I trust in divine clemency that an opportunity may be given to show my gratitude, and to make a fit return for the humanity thus shown me by the most excellent prince that the sun shines upon.”

Page 2475

With this both got into the stadholder's carriage, Spinola being placed on Maurice's right hand. Their conversation during their brief drive to the capital, followed by their long retinue, and by the enthusiastic and vociferating crowd, has not been chronicled. It is also highly probable that the second-rate theatrical dialogue which the Jesuit historian, writing from Spinola's private papers, has preserved for posterity, was rather what seemed to his imagination appropriate for the occasion than a faithful shorthand report of anything really uttered. A few commonplace phrases of welcome, with a remark or two perhaps on the unexampled severity of the frost, seem more likely to have formed the substance of that brief conversation.

A couple of trumpeters of Spinola went braying through the streets of the village capital, heralding their master's approach with superfluous noise, and exciting the disgust of the quieter portion of the burghers. At last however the envoys and their train were all comfortably housed. The Marquis, President Richardot, and Secretary Mancicidor, were established at a new mansion on the Vyverberg, belonging to Goswyn Menskens. The rest of the legation were lodged at the house of Wassenaer.

It soon became plain that the ways of life and the style housekeeping habitual to great officers of the Spanish crown were very different from the thrifty manners and customs of Dutch republicans. It was so long since anything like royal pomp and circumstance had been seen in their borders that the exhibition, now made, excited astonishment. It was a land where every child went to school, where almost every individual inhabitant could read and write, where even the middle classes were proficients in mathematics and the classics, and could speak two or more modern languages; where the whole nation, with but few exceptions, were producers of material or intellectual wealth, and where comparatively little of unproductive consumption prevailed. Those self-governing and self-sustaining municipalities had almost forgotten the existence of the magnificent nothings so dear to the hearts of kings.

Spinola's house was open day and night. The gorgeous plate, gigantic candelabra, mighty ewers, shields and layers of silver and gold, which decorated his tables and sideboards, amazed the gaping crowd. He dined and supped in state every day, and the public were admitted to gaze upon his banquets as if he had been a monarch. It seemed, said those homely republicans, as if "a silver christening were going on every day in his house."

There were even grave remonstrances made to the magistracy and to, the States-General against the effect of such ostentatious and immoral proceedings upon the popular mind, and suggestions that at least the doors should be shut, so that the scandal might be confined to Spinola's own household. But the republican authorities deciding, not without wisdom, that the spectacle ought to serve rather as a wholesome warning than as a contaminating example, declined any inquisitorial interference with the housekeeping of the Spanish ambassadors.

Page 2476

Before the negotiations began, a treaty had been made between the republic and the French Government, by which it was stipulated that every effort should be made by both contracting parties to bring about an honourable and assured peace between the United Provinces, Spain, and the archdukes. In case of the continuance of the war, however, it was agreed that France should assist the States with ten thousand men, while in case at any time, during the continuance of the league, France should be attacked by a foreign enemy, she should receive from her ally five thousand auxiliary troops, or their equivalent in maritime assistance. This convention was thought by other powers to be so profitable to the Netherlands as to excite general uneasiness and suspicion.

The States would have gladly signed a similar agreement with England, but nothing was to be done with that Government until an old-standing dispute in regard to the cloth trade had been arranged. Middelburg had the exclusive right of deposit for the cloths imported from England. This monopoly for Zealand being naturally not very palatable to Amsterdam and other cities of Holland, the States-General had at last authorized the merchant-adventurers engaged in this traffic to deposit their goods in any city of the United Provinces. The course of trade had been to import the raw cloth from England, to dress and dye it in the Netherlands, and then to re-export it to England. Latterly, however, some dyers and clothiers emigrating from the provinces to that country, had obtained a monopoly from James for practising their art in his dominions. In consequence of this arrangement the exportation of undyed cloths had been forbidden. This prohibition had caused irritation both in the kingdom and the republic, had necessarily deranged the natural course of trade and manufacture, and had now prevented for the time any conclusion of an alliance offensive and defensive between the countries, even if political sentiment had made such a league possible. The States-General had recourse to the usual expedient by which bad legislation on one side was countervailed by equally bad legislation on the other. The exportation of undyed English cloths being forbidden by England, the importation of dyed English cloths was now prohibited by the Netherlands. The international cloth trade stopped. This embargo became at last so detestable to all parties that concession was made by the crown for a limited export of raw cloths. The concession was soon widened by custom into a general exportation, the royal Government looking through its fingers at the open infraction of its own laws, while the natural laws of trade before long re-established the old equilibrium. Meantime the ill-feeling produced by this dissension delayed any cordial political arrangement between the countries.

On the 5th of February the Spanish commissioners came for the first time before the States-General, assembled to the number of a hundred and thirty, in their palace at the Hague.

Page 2477

The first meeting was merely one of mutual compliment, President Richardot, on behalf of his colleagues, expressing gratitude for the cordial welcome which had been manifested to the envoys on their journey through so many towns of the United Provinces. They had been received, he said, not as enemies with whom an almost perpetual war had been waged, but as friends, confederates, and allies. A warmer reception they could never have hoped for nor desired.

Two special commissioners were now appointed by the States-General to negotiate with the envoys. These were count Lewis William and Brederode. With these delegates at large were associated seven others, one from each province. Barneveld of course represented Holland; Maldere, Zeeland; Berk, Utrecht; Hillama, Friesland; Bloat, Overyssel; Koender van Helpen, Groningen; Cornelius Vail Gend, Gelderland.

The negotiations began at once. The archdukes had empowered the five envoys to deal in their name and in that of the King of Spain. Philip had authorized the archdukes to take this course by an instrument dated 10th January.

In this paper he called the archdukes hereditary sovereigns of the Netherlands.

It was agreed that the various points of negotiation should be taken up in regular order; but the first question of all that presented itself was whether the conferences should be for a truce or, a peace.

The secret object of Spain was for a truce of years. Thus she thought to save her dignity, to reserve her rights of re-conquest, to replenish her treasury, and to repair her military strength. Barneveld and his party, comprising a large majority of the States-General, were for peace. Prince Maurice, having done his utmost to oppose negotiations for peace, was, for still stronger reasons, determined to avoid falling into what he considered the ambush of a truce. The French ambassadors were also for peace. The Spanish envoys accordingly concealed their real designs, and all parties began discussions for the purpose of establishing a permanent peace.

This preliminary being settled, Barneveld asked the Spaniards if they had full powers to treat with the States as with a free nation, and if they recognised them as such.

“The most ample power,” was the reply; “and we are content to treat with you even if you should choose to call yourself a kingdom.”

“By what right then are the archdukes called by the king hereditary sovereigns of the Netherlands, and why do they append the seals of the seven United Provinces to this document?” asked the Advocate, taking up from the table the full power of Albert and Isabella and putting his finger on the seals.”

“By the same right,” replied President Richardot, “that the King of France calls himself King of Navarre, that the King of Great Britain calls himself King of France, that the King of Spain calls himself King of Jerusalem.”

Page 2478

Nothing could be more logical, nothing more historically accurate. But those plain-spoken republicans saw no advantage in beginning a negotiation for peace on the basis of their independence by permitting the archduke to call himself their sovereign, and to seal solemn state papers with their signet. It might seem picturesque to genealogical minds, it might be soothing to royal vanity, that paste counterfeits should be substituted for vanished jewels. It would be cruelty to destroy the mock glitter without cause. But there was cause. On this occasion the sham was dangerous. James Stuart might call himself King of France. He was not more likely to take practical possession of that kingdom than of the mountains in the moon. Henry of Bourbon was not at present contemplating an invasion of the hereditary possessions of the house of Albret. It was a matter of indifference to the Netherlands whether Philip *iii*. were crowned in Jerusalem that very day, or the week afterwards, or never. It was very important however that the United Provinces should have it thoroughly recognised that they were a free and independent republic, nor could that recognition be complete so long as any human being in the whole world called himself their master, and signed with their seals of state. "'Tis absurd," said the Hollanders, "to use the names and arms of our provinces. We have as yet no precedent to prove that you consider the United Provinces as lost, and name and arms to be but wind." Barneveld reminded them that they had all expressed the most straightforward intention, and that the father commissary especially had pledged his very soul for the sincerity of the king and the archdukes. "We ourselves never wished and never could deceive any one," continued the Advocate, "and it is also very difficult for others to deceive us."

This being the universal sentiment of the Netherlanders, it was thought proper to express it in respectful but vigorous language. This was done and the session was terminated. Tile Spanish envoys, knowing very well that neither the king nor the archduke regarded the retention of the titles and seals of all the seventeen Netherlands as an empty show, but that a secret and solid claim lurked beneath that usurpation, were very indignant. They however dissembled their wrath from the States' commissioners. They were unwilling that the negotiations should be broken up at the very first session, and they felt that neither Prince Maurice nor Barneveld was to be trifled with upon this point. But they were loud and magnificent in their demonstrations when they came to talk the matter over with the ambassadors of France and England. It was most portentous, they thought, to the cause of monarchy and good government all over the world, that these republicans, not content to deal with kings and princes on a footing of equality, should presume to dictate to them as to inferiors. Having passed through rebellion to liberty, they were now proceeding

Page 2479

to trample upon the most hallowed customs and rites. What would become of royalty, if in the same breath it should not only renounce the substance, but even put away the symbols of authority. This insolence of the people was not more dangerous to the king and the archdukes than it was to every potentate in the universe. It was a sacred duty to resist such insults. Sage Jeannin did his best to pacify the vehemence of the commissioners. He represented to them that foreign titles borne by anointed kings were only ensigns of historical possessions which they had for ever renounced; but that it might become one day the pleasure of Spain, or lie in the power of Spain, to vindicate her ancient rights to the provinces.

Hence the anxiety of the States was but natural. The old Leaguer and political campaigner knew very well, moreover, that at least one half of Richardot's noble wrath was feigned. The commissioners would probably renounce the title and the seven seals, but in so doing would drive a hard bargain. For an empty phrase and a pennyworth of wax they would extort a heavy price. And this was what occurred. The commissioners agreed to write for fresh instructions to Brussels. A reply came in due time from the archdukes, in which they signified their willingness to abandon the title of sovereigns over all the Netherlands, and to abstain from using their signet. In exchange for this concession they merely demanded from the States-General a formal abandonment of the navigation to both the Indies. This was all. The archdukes granted liberty to the republic. The republic would renounce its commerce with more than half the world.

The scorn of the States' commissioners at this proposition can be imagined, and it became difficult indeed for them to speak on the subject in decorous language. Because the archdukes were willing to give up something which was not their property, the republic was voluntarily to open its veins and drain its very life-blood at the bidding of a foreign potentate. She was to fling away all the trophies of Heemskerk and Sebalt de Weerd, of Balthasar de Cordes, Van der Hagen, Matelieff, and Verhoeff; she was to abdicate the position which she had already acquired of mistress of the seas, and she was to deprive herself for ever of that daily increasing ocean commerce which was rapidly converting a cluster of puny, half-submerged provinces into a mighty empire. Of a certainty the Spanish court at this new epoch was an astounding anachronism. In its view Pope Alexander *vi*. still lived and reigned.

Liberty was not a boon conferred upon the Netherlanders by their defeated enemy. It had been gained by their own right hands; by the blood, and the gold, and the sweat of two generations. If it were the king's to give, let him try once more if he could take it away. Such were the opinions and emotions of the Dutchmen, expressed in as courteous language as they could find.

“It would be a political heresy,” said Barneveld to the Spanish commissioners at this session, “if my lords the States should by contract banish their citizens out of two-thirds of the world, both land and sea.”

Page 2480

“’Tis strange,” replied the Spaniards, “that you wish to have more than other powers—-kings or republics—who never make any such pretensions. The Indies, East and West, are our house, privately possessed by us for more than a hundred years, and no one has a right to come into it without our permission. This is not banishment, but a custom to which all other nations submit. We give you your sovereignty before all the world, quitting all claims upon it. We know very well that you deny receiving it from us; but to give you a quit claim, and to permit free trade besides, would be a little more than you have a right to expect.”

Was it not well for the cause of liberty, commercial intercourse, and advancement of the human intellect, that there was this obstinate little republic in the world, refusing to tolerate that to which all other great powers of the earth submitted; that there was one nation determined not to acknowledge three-quarters of the world, including America and India, as the private mansion of the King of Spain, to be locked against the rest of the human race?

The next session of the negotiators after the arrival of this communication from the archdukes was a stormy one. The India trade was the sole subject of discussion. As the States were firmly resolved never to relinquish that navigation which in truth was one of their most practical and valuable possessions, and as the royal commissioners were as solemnly determined that it should never be conceded, it may be imagined how much breath, how much foolscap paper, was wasted.

In truth, the negotiation for peace had been a vile mockery from the beginning. Spain had no real intention of abdicating her claim to the United Provinces.

At the very moment when the commissioners were categorically making that concession in Brussels, and claiming such a price for it, Hoboken, the archduke’s diplomatic representative in London, was earnestly assuring King James that neither his master nor Philip had the remotest notion of renouncing their sovereignty over all the Netherlands. What had been said and written to that effect was merely a device, he asserted, to bring about a temporary truce. During the interval of imaginary freedom it was certain that the provinces would fall into such dire confusion that it would be easier for Spain to effect their re-conquest, after a brief delay for repairing her own strength, than it would be by continuing the present war without any cessation.

The Spanish ambassador at Vienna too on his part assured the Emperor Rudolph that his master was resolved never to abdicate the sovereignty of the provinces. The negotiations then going on, he said, were simply intended to extort from the States a renunciation of the India trade and their consent to the re-introduction of the Catholic religion throughout their territories.

Page 2481

Something of all this was known and much more suspected at the Hague; the conviction therefore that no faith would be kept with rebels and heretics, whatever might be said or written, gained strength every day. That these delusive negotiations with the Hollanders were not likely to be so successful as the comedy enacted twenty years before at Bourbourg, for the amusement of Queen Elizabeth and her diplomatists while the tragedy of the Armada was preparing, might be safely prophesied. Richardot was as effective as ever in the part which he had so often played, but Spinola laboured under the disadvantage of being a far honester man than Alexander Farnese. Far from equal to that famous chieftain in the management of a great military campaign, it is certain that he was infinitely inferior to him in genteel comedy. Whether Maurice and Lewis William, Barneveld and Brederode, were to do better in the parts formerly assigned to John Rogers, Valentine Dale, Comptroller Croft, and their colleagues, remained to be seen.

On the 15th of February, at the fifth conference of the commissioners, the first pitched battle on the India trade was fought. Thereafter the combat was almost every day renewed. Exactly, as a year before, the news of Heemskerk's victory at Gibraltar had made the king and the archdukes eager to obtain an armistice with the rebels both by land and sea, so now the report of Matelieff's recent achievements in the Indian ocean was increasing their anxiety to exclude the Netherlanders from the regions which they were rapidly making their own.

As we look back upon the negotiations, after the lapse of two centuries and a half, it becomes difficult to suppress our amazement at those scenes of solemn trickery and superhuman pride. It is not necessary to follow, step by step, the proceedings at each daily conference, but it is impossible for me not to detain the reader for yet a season longer with those transactions, and especially to invite him to ponder the valuable lesson which in their entirety they convey.

No higher themes could possibly be laid before statesmen to discuss. Questions of political self-government, religious liberty, national independence, divine Right, rebellious Power, freedom of commerce, supremacy of the seas, omnipotence claimed by the old world over the destiny of what was called the new, were importunately demanding solution. All that most influenced human passion, or stirred human reason to its depths—at that memorable point of time when two great epochs seemed to be sweeping against each other in elemental conflict—was to be dealt with. The emancipated currents of human thought, the steady tide of ancient dogma, were mingling in wrath. There are times of paroxysm in which Nature seems to effect more in a moment, whether intellectually or materially, than at other periods during a lapse of years. The shock of forces, long preparing and long delayed, is apt at last to make itself sensible to those neglectful of gradual but vital changes. Yet there are always ears that are deaf to the most portentous din.

Page 2482

Thus, after that half century of war, the policy of Spain was still serenely planting itself on the position occupied before the outbreak of the revolt. The commonwealth, solidly established by a free people, already one of the most energetic and thriving among governments, a recognised member of the great international family, was now gravely expected to purchase from its ancient tyrant the independence which it had long possessed, while the price demanded for the free papers was not only extravagant, but would be disgraceful to an emancipated slave. Holland was not likely at that turning point in her history, and in the world's history, to be false to herself and to the great principles of public law. It was good for the cause of humanity that the republic should reappear at that epoch. It was wholesome for Europe that there should be just then a plain self-governing people, able to speak homely and important truths. It was healthy for the moral and political atmosphere—in those days and in the time to come—that a fresh breeze from that little sea-born commonwealth should sweep away some of the ancient fog through which a few very feeble and very crooked mortals had so long loomed forth like giants and gods.

To vindicate the laws of nations and of nature; to make a noble effort for reducing to a system—conforming, at least approximately, to divine reason—the chaotic elements of war and peace; to recal the great facts that earth, sea, and sky ought to belong to mankind, and not to an accidental and very limited selection of the species was not an unworthy task for a people which had made such unexampled sacrifice for liberty and right.

Accordingly, at the conference on the 15th February, the Spanish commissioners categorically summoned the States to desist entirely from the trade to either India, exactly as before the war. To enforce this prohibition, they said, was the principal reason why Philip desired peace. To obtain their freedom was surely well worth renunciation of this traffic; the more so, because their trade with Spain, which was so much shorter and safer, was now to be re-opened. If they had been able to keep that commerce, it was suggested, they would have never talked about the Indies. The commissioners added, that this boon had not been conceded to France nor England, by the treaties of Vervins and London, and that the States therefore could not find it strange that it should be refused to them.

The States' commissioners stoutly replied that commerce was open to all the world, that trade was free by the great law of nature, and that neither France, England, nor the United Provinces, were to receive edicts on this great subject from Spain and Portugal. It was absurd to circumscribe commercial intercourse at the very moment of exchanging war for peace. To recognise the liberty of the States upon paper, and to attempt the imposition of servitude in reality, was a manifest contradiction. The ocean was free to all nations. It had not been enclosed by Spain with a rail-fence.

Page 2483

The debate grew more stormy every hour. Spinola expressed great indignation that the Netherlanders should be so obstinate upon this point. The tall, spare President arose in wrath from his seat at the council-board, loudly protesting that the King of Spain would never renounce his sovereignty over the provinces until they had forsworn the India trade; and with this menace stalked out of the room.

The States' commissioners were not frightened. Barneveld was at least a match for Richardot, and it was better, after all, that the cards should be played upon the table. Subsequent meetings were quite as violent as the first, the country was agitated far and wide, the prospects of pacification dwindled to a speck in the remote horizon. Arguments at the Board of Conference, debates in the States-General, pamphlets by merchants and advocates—especially several emanating from the East India Company—handled the great topic from every point of view, and it became more and more evident that Spain could not be more resolute to prohibit than the republic to claim the trade.

It was an absolute necessity, so it was urged, for the Hollanders to resist the tyrannical dominion of the Spaniards. But this would be impossible for them, should they rely on the slender natural resources of their own land. Not a sixth part of the population could be nourished from the soil. The ocean was their inheritance, their birthright, their empire. It was necessary that Spain should understand this first, last, and always. She ought to comprehend, too, that her recognition of Dutch independence was not a gift, but the acknowledgment of a fact. Without that acknowledgment peace was impossible. If peace were to be established, it was not to be bought by either party. Each gave and each received, and certainly Spain was in no condition to dictate the terms of a sale. Peace, without freedom of commerce, would be merely war without killing, and therefore without result. The Netherlanders, who in the middle of the previous century had risen against unjust taxation and arbitrary laws, had not grown so vile as to accept from a vanquished foe what they had spurned from their prince. To be exiled from the ocean was an unimaginable position for the republic. Moreover, to retire from the Indies would be to abandon her Oriental allies, and would be a dishonour as well us a disaster. Her good faith, never yet contaminated, would be stained, were she now to desert the distant peoples and potentates with whom she had formed treaties of friendship and commerce, and hand them over to the vengeance of the Spaniards and Portuguese.

And what a trade it was which the United Provinces were thus called upon to renounce! The foreign commerce of no other nation could be compared in magnitude to that of their commonwealth. Twenty ships traded regularly to Guinea, eighty to the Cape de Verd Islands, twenty to America, and forty to the East Indies. Ten thousand sailors, who gained their living in this traffic, would be thrown out of employment, if the States should now listen to the Spanish propositions.

Page 2484

It was well known too that the profits of the East India Company had vastly increased of late, and were augmenting with every year. The trade with Cambay, Malabar, Ceylon, Koromandel, and Queda, had scarcely begun, yet was already most promising. Should the Hollanders only obtain a footing in China, they felt confident of making their way through the South Seas and across the pole to India. Thus the search for a great commercial highway between Cathay, Europe, and the New World, which had been baffled in the arctic regions, should be crowned with success at the antarctic, while it was deemed certain that there were many lands, lighted by the Southern Cross, awaiting the footsteps of the fortunate European discoverer. What was a coasting-trade with Spain compared with this boundless career of adventure? Now that the world's commerce, since the discovery of America and the passage around the Cape of Good Hope, had become oceanic and universal, was the nation which took the lead on blue water to go back to the creeping land-locked navigation of the ancient Greeks and Phoenicians? If the East India Company, in whose womb was empire, were now destroyed, it would perish with its offspring for ever. There would be no regeneration at a future day. The Company's ships too were a navy in themselves, as apt for war as for trade. This the Spaniards and Portuguese had already learned to their cost. The merchant-traders to Spain would be always in the power of Spain, and at any favourable moment might be seized by Spain. The Spanish monopoly in the East and West was the great source of Spanish power, the chief cause of the contempt with, which the Spanish monarchy looked down upon other nations. Let those widely expanded wings be clipped, and Spain would fall from her dizzy height. To know what the States ought to refuse the enemy, it was only necessary to observe what he strenuously demanded, to ponder the avowed reason why he desired peace. The enemy was doing his best to damage the commonwealth; the States were merely anxious to prevent injury to themselves and to all the world; to vindicate for themselves, and for all men, the common use of ocean, land, and sky.

A nation which strove to shut up the seas, and to acquire a monopoly of the world's trade, was a pirate, an enemy of mankind. She was as deserving of censure as those who created universal misery in time of famine, by buying up all the corn in order to enrich themselves. According to the principles of the ancients, it was legitimate to make war upon such States as closed their own ports to foreign intercourse. Still more just was it, therefore, to carry arms against a nation which closed the ports of other people.

The dispute about the India navigation could be settled in a moment, if Spain would but keep her word. She had acknowledged the great fact of independence, which could not be gainsaid. Let each party to the negotiation, therefore keep that which it already possessed. Let neither attempt to prescribe to the other—both being free and independent States—any regulations about interior or foreign trade.

Page 2485

Thus reasoned the States-General, the East India directors, the great majority of the population of the provinces, upon one great topic of discussion. A small minority only attempted to defend the policy of renouncing the India trade as a branch of industry, in which a certain class, and that only in the maritime provinces, was interested. It is certainly no slight indication of the liberty of thought, of speech, and of the press, enjoyed at that epoch in the Netherlands and nowhere else to anything like the same extent—that such opinions, on a subject deemed vital to the very existence of the republic, were freely published and listened to with toleration, if not with respect. Even the enlightened mind of Grotius was troubled with terrors as to the effect on the public mind at this crisis of anonymous pamphlets concerning political affairs. But in this regard it must be admitted that Grotius was not in advance of his age, although fully conceding that press-laws were inconsistent with human liberty.

Maurice and Barneveld were equally strenuous in maintaining the India trade; the prince, because he hoped that resistance to Spain upon this point would cause the negotiations to be broken off, the Advocate in the belief that firmness on the part of the States would induce the royal commissioners to yield.

The States-General were not likely to be deficient in firmness. They felt that the republic was exactly on the point of wresting the control of the East from the hands of the Portuguese, and they were not inclined to throw away the harvest of their previous labours just as it was ripening. Ten thousand persons at least, besides the sailors employed, were directly interested in the traffic, most of whom possessed great influence in the commonwealth, and would cause great domestic dissension should they now be sacrificed to Spain. To keep the India trade was the best guarantee for the future possession of the traffic to Spain; for the Spanish Government would never venture an embargo upon the direct intercourse between the provinces and its own dominions, for fear of vengeance in the East. On the other hand, by denouncing oceanic commerce, they would soon find themselves without a navy at all, and their peaceful coasting ships would be at the mercy of Spain or of any power possessing that maritime energy which would have been killed in the republic. By abandoning the ocean, the young commonwealth would sink into sloth, and become the just object of contempt to the world. It would cease to be an independent power, and deserve to fall a prey to any enterprising neighbour.

Even Villeroy admitted the common belief to be, that if the India trade were abandoned “the States would melt away like snow in the sun.” He would not, on that account, however, counsel to the States obstinacy upon the subject, if Spain refused peace or truce except on condition of their exclusion from the traffic. Jeannin, Villeroy, and their master; Isaac le Maire and Peter Plancius, could have told the reason why if they had chosen.

Page 2486

Early in March a triple proposition was made by the States' commissioners. Spain might take her choice to make peace on the basis of free trade; to make peace, leaving everything beyond the Tropic of Cancer to the chance of war; or to make peace in regard to all other than the tropical regions, concluding for those only a truce during a definite number of years.

The Spaniards rejected decidedly two of these suggestions. Of course they would not concede freedom of the sea. They considered the mixture of peace and war a monstrous conception. They were, however, willing to favour peace for Europe and truce in the tropics, provided the States bound themselves; on the expiration of the limited period, to abandon the Indian and American trade for ever. And to this proposition the States of course were deaf. And thus they went on spinning around, day after day, in the same vicious circle, without more hope of progress than squirrels in a cage.

Barneveld, always overbearing with friend or foe, and often violent, was not disposed to make preposterous concessions, notwithstanding his eager desire for peace. "The might of the States-General," said he, "is so great, thank God, that they need not yield so much to the King of Spain as seems to be expected, nor cover themselves with dishonour."

"And do you think yourselves more mighty than the Kings of England and France?" cried Richardot in a great rage, "for they never dared to make any attempt upon the Indies, East or West."

"We are willing to leave the king in his own quarters," was the reply, "and we expect him to leave us in ours."

"You had better take a sheet of paper at once," said Richardot, "write down exactly what you wish, and order us to agree to it all without discussion."

"We demand nothing that is unreasonable in these negotiations," was the firm rejoinder, "and expect that nothing unjust will be required of us."

It was now suggested by the States' commissioners that a peace; with free navigation, might be concluded for Europe, and a truce for other parts of the world, without any stipulations as to what should take place on its termination. This was hardly anything new, but it served as a theme for more intellectual buffeting. Hard words were freely exchanged during several hours; and all parties lost their temper. At last the Spaniards left the conference-chamber in a rage. Just as they were going, Barneveld asked them whether he should make a protocol of the session for the States-General, and whether it was desirable in future to resume the discussion.

“Let every one do exactly as he likes,” replied Spinola, wrathfully, as he moved to the door.

Friar John, always plausible, whispered a few soothing words in the ear of the marquis, adding aloud, so that the commissioners might hear, “Night brings counsel.” These words he spoke in Latin.

“He who wishes to get everything is apt to lose everything,” cried, out Maldere, the Zeeland deputy, in Spanish, to the departing commissioners.

Page 2487

“Take that to yourselves,” rejoined Richardot, very fiercely; “you may be sure that it will be your case."'

So ended that interview.

Directly afterwards there was a conference between the States’ commissioners and the French envoys.

Jeannin employed all his powers of argument: and persuasion to influence the Netherlanders against a rupture of the negotiations because of the India trade. It would be better to abandon that commerce, so he urged, than to give up the hope of peace. The commissioners failed to see the logic or to melt at the eloquence of his discourse. They would have been still less inclined, if that were possible, to move from their position, had they known of the secret conferences which Jeannin had just been holding with Isaac le Maire of Amsterdam, and other merchants practically familiar with the India trade. Carrying out the French king’s plan to rob the republic of that lucrative traffic, and to transplant it, by means of experienced Hollanders, into France, the president, while openly siding with the States, as their most disinterested friend, was secretly doing all in his power to destroy the very foundation of their commonwealth.

Isaac le Maire came over from Amsterdam in a mysterious manner, almost in disguise. Had his nocturnal dealings with the French minister been known, he would have been rudely dealt with by the East India Company. He was a native of Tournay, not a sincere republican therefore, was very strongly affected to France, and declared that all his former fellow-townsmen, and many more, had the fleur-de-lys stamped on their hearts. If peace should be made without stipulation in favour of the East India Company, he, with his three brothers, would do what they could to transfer that corporation to France. All the details of such a prospective arrangement were thoroughly discussed, and it was intimated that the king would be expected to take shares in the enterprise. Jeannin had also repeated conferences on the same subject with the great cosmographer Plancius. It may be well understood, therefore, that the minister of Henry *iv*. was not very ardent to encourage the States in their resolve to oppose peace or truce, except with concession of the India trade.

The States preferred that the negotiations should come to nought on the religious ground rather than on account of the India trade. The provinces were nearly unanimous as to the prohibition of the Catholic worship, not from bigotry for their own or hatred of other creeds, but from larger views of what was then called tolerance, and from practical regard for the necessities of the State. To permit the old worship, not from a sense of justice but as an article of bargain with a foreign power, was not only to abase the government of the States but to convert every sincere Catholic throughout the republic into a grateful adherent of Philip and the archdukes. It was deliberately to place a lever, to be used in all future time, for the overthrow of their political structure.

Page 2488

In this the whole population was interested, while the India navigation, although vital to the well-being of the nation, was not yet universally recognised as so supremely important, and was declared by a narrow-minded minority to concern the provinces of Holland and Zeeland alone.

All were silently agreed, therefore, to defer the religious question to the last.

Especially, commercial greed induced the States to keep a firm clutch on the great river on which the once splendid city of Antwerp stood. Ever since that commercial metropolis had succumbed to Farnese, the republic had maintained the lower forts, by means of which, and of Flushing at the river's mouth, Antwerp was kept in a state of suspended animation. To open the navigation of the Scheld, to permit free approach to Antwerp, would, according to the narrow notions of the Amsterdam merchants, be destructive to their own flourishing trade.

In vain did Richardot, in one well-fought conference, do his best to obtain concessions on this important point. The States' commissioners were as deaf as the Spaniards had been on the India question. Richardot, no longer loud and furious, began to cry. With tears running down his cheeks, he besought the Netherlanders not to insist so strenuously upon all their points, and to remember that concessions were mutually necessary, if an amicable arrangement were to be framed. The chances for peace were promising. "Let not a blight be thrown over all our hopes," he exclaimed, "by too great pertinacity on either side. Above all, let not the States dictate terms as to a captive or conquered king, but propose such conditions as a benevolent but powerful sovereign could accept."

These adjurations might be considered admirable, if it had been possible for the royal commissioners to point to a single mustard-seed of concession ever vouchsafed by them to the republic.

Meantime the month of March had passed. Nothing had been accomplished, but it was agreed to prolong the armistice through April and May.

The negotiations having feebly dribbled off into almost absolute extinction, Friar John was once more set in motion, and despatched to Madrid. He was sent to get fresh instructions from Philip, and he promised, on departing, to return in forty days. He hoped as his reward, he said, to be made bishop of Utrecht. "That will be a little above your calibre," replied Barneveld. Forty days was easily said, and the States consented to the additional delay.

During his absence there was much tedious discussion of minor matters, such as staple rights of wine and cloths, regulations of boundaries, removal of restrictions on trade and navigation, passports, sequestered estates, and the like; all of which were subordinate to the all-important subjects of India and Religion, those two most tender topics growing

so much more tender the more they were handled as to cause at last a shiver whenever they were approached. Nevertheless both were to be dealt with, or the negotiations would fall to the ground.

Page 2489

The States felt convinced that they would fall to the ground, that they had fallen to the ground, and they at least would not stoop to pick them up again.

The forty days passed away, but the friar never returned. April and May came and went, and again the armistice expired by its own limitation. The war party was disgusted with the solemn trifling, Maurice was exasperated beyond endurance, Barneveld and the peace men began to find immense difficulty in confronting the gathering storm.

The prince, with difficulty, consented to a prolongation of the armistice for two months longer; resolute to resume hostilities should no accord be made before the end of July. The Advocate, with much earnestness, and with more violence than was habitual with him, insisted on protracting the temporary truce until the end of the year. The debates in the States-General and the state-council were vehement; passion rose to fever-heat, but the stadholder, although often half beside himself with rage, ended by submitting once more to the will of Barneveld.

This was the easier, as the Advocate at last proposed an agreement which seemed to Maurice and Lewis William even better than their own original suggestion. It was arranged that the armistice should be prolonged until the end of the year, but it was at the same time stipulated that unless the negotiations had reached a definite result before the 1st of August, they should be forthwith broken off.

Thus a period of enforced calm—a kind of vacation, as if these great soldiers and grey-beards had been a troop of idle school-boys—was now established, without the slightest reason.

President Jeannin took occasion to make a journey to Paris, leaving the Hague on the 20th June.

During his absence a treaty of the States with England, similar in its terms to the one recently concluded between the republic and France, but only providing for half the number of auxiliary troops arranged for in the French convention, was signed at the Hague. The English plenipotentiaries, Vinwood and Spencer, wished to delay the exchange of signatures under the pending negotiations with Spain and the archdukes were brought to a close, as King James was most desirous at that epoch to keep on good terms with his Catholic Majesty. The States were so urgent, however, to bring at least this matter to a termination, and the English so anxious lest France should gain still greater influence than she now enjoyed in the provinces, that they at last gave way. It was further stipulated in the convention that the debt of the States to England, then amounting to L815,408 sterling, should be settled by annual payments of L60,000; to begin with the expected peace.

Besides this debt to the English Government, the States-General owed nine millions of florins (L900,000), and the separate provinces altogether eighteen millions (L1,800,000). In short, there would be a deficiency of at least three hundred thousand florins a month if the war went on, although every imaginable device had already been employed for increasing the revenue from taxation. It must be admitted therefore, that the Barneveld party were not to be severely censured for their desire to bring about an honourable peace.

Page 2490

That Jeannin was well aware of the disposition prevailing throughout a great part of the commonwealth is certain. It is equally certain that he represented to his sovereign, while at Paris, that the demand upon his exchequer by the States, in case of the resumption of hostilities, would be more considerable than ever. Immense was the pressure put upon Henry by the Spanish court, during the summer, to induce him to abandon his allies. Very complicated were the nets thrown out to entangle the wary old politician in “the grey jacket and with the heart of gold,” as he was fond of designating himself, into an alliance with Philip and the archdukes.

Don Pedro de Toledo, at the head of a magnificent embassy, arrived in Paris with projects of arranging single, double, or triple marriages between the respective nurseries of France and Spain. The Infanta might marry with a French prince, and have all the Netherlands for her dower, so soon as the childless archdukes should have departed this life. Or an Infante might espouse a daughter of France with the same heritage assigned to the young couple.

Such proposals, duly set forth in sonorous Spanish by the Constable of Castile, failed to produce a very soothing effect on Henry’s delicate ear. He had seen and heard enough of gaining thrones by Spanish marriages. Had not the very crown on his own head, which he had won with foot in stirrup and lance in rest, been hawked about for years, appended to the wedding ring of the Spanish Infanta? It might become convenient to him at some later day, to form a family alliance with the house of Austria, although he would not excite suspicion in the United Provinces by openly accepting it then. But to wait for the shoes of Albert and Isabella, and until the Dutch republic had been absorbed into the obedient Netherlands by his assistance, was not a very flattering prospect for a son or daughter of France. The ex-Huguenot and indomitable campaigner in the field or in politics was for more drastic measures. Should the right moment come, he knew well enough how to strike, and could appropriate the provinces, obedient or disobedient, without assistance from the Spanish babies.

Don Pedro took little by his propositions. The king stoutly declared that the Netherlands were very near to his heart, and that he would never abandon them on any consideration. So near, indeed, that he meant to bring them still nearer, but this was not then suspected by the Spanish court; Henry, the while, repelling as a personal insult to himself the request that he should secretly labour to reduce the United Provinces under subjection to the archdukes. It had even been proposed that he should sign a secret convention to that effect, and there were those about the court who were not ill-disposed for such a combination. The king was, however, far too adroit to be caught in any such trap. The marriage proposals in themselves he did not dislike, but Jeannin and he were both of a mind that they should be kept entirely secret.

Page 2491

Don Pedro, on the contrary, for obvious reasons, was for making the transactions ostentatiously public, and, as a guarantee of his master's good faith in regard to the heritage of the Netherlands, he proposed that every portion of the republic, thenceforth to be conquered by the allies, should be confided to hands in which Henry and the archdukes would have equal confidence.

But these artifices were too trivial to produce much effect. Henry remained true, in his way, to the States-General, and Don Pedro was much laughed at in Paris, although the public scarcely knew wherefore.

These intrigues had not been conducted so mysteriously but that Barneveld was aware of what was going on. Both before Jeannin's departure from the Hague in June, and on his return in the middle of August, he catechised him very closely on the subject. The old Leaguer was too deep, however, to be thoroughly pumped, even by so practised a hand as the Advocate's, so that more was suspected than at the time was accurately known.

As, at the memorable epoch of the accession of the King of Scots to the throne of Elizabeth, Maximilian de Bethune had flattered the new monarch with the prospect of a double marriage, so now Don Fernando Girono had been sent on solemn mission to England, in order to offer the same infants to James which Don Pedro was placing at the disposition of Henry.

The British sovereign, as secretly fascinated by the idea of a Spanish family alliance as he had ever been by the proposals of the Marquis de Rosny for the French marriages, listened with eagerness. Money was scattered as profusely among the English courtiers by Don Fernando as had been done by De Bethune four years before. The bribes were accepted, and often by the very personages who knew the colour of Bourbon money, but the ducats were scarcely earned. Girono, thus urging on the English Government the necessity of deserting the republic and cementing a cordial, personal, and political understanding between James and Philip, effected but little. It soon became thoroughly understood in England that the same bargaining was going on simultaneously in France. As it was evident that the Spanish children could not be disposed of in both markets at the same time, it was plain to the dullest comprehension that either the brokerage of Toledo or of Girono was a sham, and that a policy erected upon such flimsy foundations would soon be washed away.

It is certain, however, that James, while affecting friendship for the States, and signing with them the league of mutual assistance, was secretly longing to nibble the bait dangled before him by Girono, and was especially determined to prevent, if possible, the plans of Toledo.

Meantime, brother John Neyen was dealing with Philip and the Duke of Lerma, in Spain.

Page 2492

The friar strenuously urged upon the favourite and the rest of the royal advisers the necessity of prompt action with the States. This needed not interfere with an unlimited amount of deception. It was necessary to bring the negotiations to a definite agreement. It would be by no means requisite, however, to hold to that agreement whenever a convenient opportunity for breaking it should present itself. The first object of Spanish policy, argued honest John, should be to get the weapons out of the rebels' hands. The Netherlanders ought to be encouraged to return to their usual pursuits of commerce and manufactures, whence they derived their support, and to disband their military and naval forces. Their sailors and traders should be treated kindly in Spain, instead of being indulged as heretofore with no hospitality save that of the Holy Inquisition and its dungeons. Let their minds be disarmed of all suspicion. Now the whole population of the provinces had been convinced that Spain, in affecting to treat, was secretly devising means to re-impose her ancient yoke upon their necks.

Time went by in Aranjuez and Madrid. The forty days, promised as the period of Neyen's absence, were soon gone; but what were forty days, or forty times forty, at the Spanish court? The friar, who, whatever his faults, was anything but an idler, chafed at a procrastination which seemed the more stupendous to him, coming fresh as he did from a busy people who knew the value of time. In the anguish of his soul he went to Rodrigo Calderon, of the privy council, and implored his influence with Government to procure leave for him to depart. Calderon, in urbane but decisive terms, assured him that this would be impossible before the king should return to Madrid. The monk then went to Idiaquez, who was in favour of his proceeding at once to the Netherlands, but who on being informed that Calderon was of a different opinion, gave up the point. More distressed than ever, Neyen implored Prada's assistance, but Prada plunged him into still deeper despair. His Majesty, said that counsellor, with matchless effrontery, was studying the propositions of the States-General, and all the papers in the negotiation, line by line, comma by comma. There were many animadversions to make, many counter suggestions to offer. The king was pondering the whole subject most diligently. When those lucubrations were finished, the royal decision, aided by the wisdom of the privy council, would be duly communicated to the archdukes.

To wait for an answer to the propositions of the suspicious States-General until Philip *iii*. had mastered the subject in detail, was a prospect too dreary even for the equable soul of Brother John. Dismayed at the position in which he found himself, he did his best to ferret out the reasons for the preposterous delay; not being willing to be paid off in allusions to the royal investigations. He was still further appalled at last by discovering that the delay was

Page 2493

absolutely for the delay's sake. It was considered inconsistent with the dignity of the Government not to delay. The court and cabinet had quite made up their minds as to the answer to be made to the last propositions of the rebels, but to make it known at once was entirely out of the question. In the previous year his Majesty's administration, so it was now confessed with shame, had acted with almost indecent haste. That everything had been conceded to the confederated provinces was the—common talk of Europe. Let the time-honoured, inveterate custom of Spain in grave affairs to proceed slowly, and therefore surely, be in future observed. A proper self-respect required the king to keep the universe in suspense for a still longer period upon the royal will and the decision of the royal council.

Were the affairs of the mighty Spanish empire so subordinate to the convenience of that portion of it called the Netherlands that no time was to be lost before settling their affairs?

Such dismal frivolity, such palsied pride, seems scarcely credible; but more than all this has been carefully recorded in the letters of the friar.

If it were precipitation to spend the whole year 1607 in forming a single phrase; to wit, that the archdukes and the king would treat with the United Provinces as with countries to which they made no pretensions; and to spend the best part of another year in futile efforts to recal that phrase; if all this had been recklessness and haste, then, surely, the most sluggish canal in Holland was a raging cataract, and the march of a glacier electric speed.

Midsummer had arrived. The period in which peace was to be made or abandoned altogether had passed. Jeannin had returned from his visit to Paris; the Danish envoys, sent to watch the negotiations, had left the Hague, utterly disgusted with a puppet-show, all the strings of which, they protested, were pulled from the Louvre. Brother John, exasperated by the superhuman delays, fell sick of a fever at Burgos, and was sent, on his recovery, to the court at Valladolid to be made ill again by the same cause, and still there came no sound from the Government of Spain.

At last the silence was broken. Something that was called the voice of the king reached the ears of the archduke. Long had he wrestled in prayer on this great subject, said Philip *iii*., fervently had he besought the Omnipotent for light. He had now persuaded himself that he should not fulfil his duty to God, nor satisfy his own strong desire for maintaining the Catholic faith, nor preserve his self-respect, if he now conceded his supreme right to the Confederated Provinces at any other price than the uncontrolled exercise, within their borders, of the Catholic religion. He wished, therefore, as obedient son of the Church and Defender of the Faith, to fulfil this primary duty, untrammelled by

any human consideration, by any profit that might induce him towards a contrary course. That which

Page 2494

he had on other occasions more than once signified he now confirmed. His mind was fixed; this was his last and immutable determination, that if the confederates should permit the free and public exercise of the Catholic, Roman, Apostolic religion to all such as wished to live and die in it, for this cause so grateful to God, and for no other reason, he also would permit to them that supreme right over the provinces, and that authority which now belonged to himself. Natives and residents of those countries should enjoy liberty, just so long as the exercise of the Catholic religion flourished there, and not one day nor hour longer.

Philip then proceeded flatly to refuse the India navigation, giving reasons very satisfactory to himself why the provinces ought cheerfully to abstain from that traffic. If the confederates, in consequence of the conditions thus definitely announced, moved by their innate pride and obstinacy, and relying on the assistance of their allies, should break off the negotiations, then it would be desirable to adopt the plan proposed by Jeannin to Richardot, and conclude a truce for five or six years. The king expressed his own decided preference for a truce rather than a peace, and his conviction that Jeannin had made the suggestion by command of his sovereign.

The negotiators stood exactly where they did when Friar John, disguised as a merchant, first made his bow to the Prince and Barneveld in the palace at the Hague.

The archduke, on receiving at last this peremptory letter from the king, had nothing for it but to issue instructions accordingly to the plenipotentiaries at the Hague. A decisive conference between those diplomatists and the States' commissioners took place immediately afterwards.

It was on the 20th August.

Although it had been agreed on the 1st May to break off negotiations on the ensuing 1st of August, should no result be reached, yet three weeks beyond that period had been suffered to elapse, under a tacit agreement to wait a little longer for the return of the friar. President Jeannin, too, had gone to Paris on the 20th June, to receive new and important instructions; verbal and written, from his sovereign, and during his absence it had not been thought expedient to transact much business. Jeannin returned to the Hague on the 15th of August, and, as definite instructions from king and archduke had now arrived, there seemed no possibility of avoiding an explanation.

The Spanish envoys accordingly, with much gravity, and as if they had been propounding some cheerful novelty, announced to the assembled commissioners that all reports hitherto flying about as to the Spanish king's intentions were false.

Page 2495

His Majesty had no intention of refusing to give up the sovereignty of the provinces. On the contrary, they were instructed to concede that sovereignty freely and frankly to my lords the States-General—a pearl and a precious jewel, the like of which no prince had ever given away before. Yet the king desired neither gold nor silver, neither cities nor anything else of value in exchange. He asked only for that which was indispensable to the tranquillity of his conscience before God, to wit, the re-establishment in those countries of the Catholic Apostolic Roman religion. This there could surely be no reasons for refusing. They owed it as a return for the generosity of the king, they owed it to their own relatives, they owed it to the memory of their ancestors, not to show greater animosity to the ancient religion than to the new and pernicious sect of Anabaptists, born into the world for the express purpose of destroying empires; they owed it to their many fellow-citizens, who would otherwise be driven into exile, because deprived of that which is dearest to humanity.

In regard to the East India navigation, inasmuch as the provinces had no right whatever to it, and as no other prince but the sovereign of Spain had any pretensions to it, his Majesty expected that the States would at once desist from it.

This was the magnificent result of twenty months of diplomacy. As the king's father had long ago flung away the pearl and precious jewel which the son now made a merit of selling to its proprietors at the price of their life's blood—the world's commerce—it is difficult to imagine that Richardot, while communicating thin preposterous ultimatum, could have kept his countenance. But there were case-hardened politicians on both sides. The proposition was made and received with becoming seriousness, and it was decided by the States' commissioners to make no answer at all on that occasion. They simply promised to render their report to the States-General, who doubtless would make short work with the matter.

They made their report and it occasioned a tumult. Every member present joined in a general chorus of wrathful denunciation. The Spanish commissioners were infamous swindlers, it was loudly asserted. There should be no more dealings with them at all. Spain was a power only to be treated with on the battle-field. In the tempest of general rage no one would listen to argument, no one asked which would be the weaker, which the stronger party, what resources for the renewed warfare could be founds or who would be the allies of the republic. Hatred, warlike fury and scorn at the duplicity with which they had been treated, washed every more politic sentiment away, and metamorphosed that body of burghers as in an instant. The negotiations should be broken off, not on one point, but on all points, and nothing was left but to prepare instantly for war. Three days later, after the French and English ambassadors, as well as Prince Maurice and

Page 2496

Count Lewis William, had been duly consulted, comparative calm was restored, and a decisive answer was unanimously voted by the States-General. The proposition of the commissioners was simply declared to be in direct violation of the sovereignty and freedom of the country, and it was announced that, if it should be persisted in, the whole negotiation might be considered as broken off. A formal answer to the royal propositions would be communicated likewise to the envoys of foreign powers, in order that the royal commissioners might be placed completely in the wrong.

On the 25th August an elaborate response was accordingly delivered in writing by the States' commissioners to those of the archdukes and king, it being at the same time declared by Barneveld and his colleagues that their functions were ended, and that this document, emanating from the States-General, was a sovereign resolution, not a diplomatic note.

The contents of this paper may be inferred from all that has been previously narrated. The republic knew its own mind, and had always expressed itself with distinctness. The Spanish Government having at last been brought to disclose its intentions, there was an end to the negotiations for peace. The rupture was formally announced.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Night brings counsel
This obstinate little republic
Triple marriages between the respective nurseries
Usual expedient by which bad legislation on one side countered

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 82, 1608

CHAPTER LI.

Designs of Henry *iv*.—New marriage project between France and Spain Formal proposition of negotiating for a truce between the States and Spain—Exertions of Prince Maurice to counteract the designs of Barneveld—Strife between the two parties in the republic—Animosity of the people against Barneveld—Return of the Spanish commissioners—Further trifling—Dismissal of the commissioners— Close of the

negotiations—Accidental discovery of the secret instructions of the archdukes to the commissioners—Opposing factions in the republic—Oration of President Jeannin before the States-General—Comparison between the Dutch and Swiss republics— Calumnies against the Advocate—Ambassador Lambert in France— Henry's letter to Prince Maurice—Reconciliation of Maurice and Barneveld—Agreement of the States to accept a truce.

President Jeannin had long been prepared for this result. It was also by no means distasteful to him. A peace would not have accorded with the ulterior and secretly cherished schemes of his sovereign, and during his visit to Paris, he had succeeded in persuading Henry that a truce would be far the most advantageous solution of the question, so far as his interests were concerned.

Page 2497

For it had been precisely during that midsummer vacation of the President at Paris that Henry had completed his plot against the liberty of the republic, of which he professed himself the only friend. Another phase of Spanish marriage-making had excited his ever scheming and insidious brain. It had been proposed that the second son of the Spanish king should espouse one of Henry's daughters.

The papal Nuncius asked what benefit the King of Spain would receive for his share, in case of the marriage. The French king replied by plainly declaring to the Nuncius that the United States should abstain from and renounce all navigation to and commerce with the Indies, and should permit public exercise of the Catholic religion. If they refused, would incontinently abandon them to their fate. More than this, he said, could not honestly be expected of him.

Surely this was enough. Honestly or dishonestly, what more could Spain expect of the republic's best ally, than that he should use all his efforts to bring her back into Spanish subjection, should deprive her of commerce with three-quarters of the world, and compel her to re-establish the religion which she believed, at that period, to be incompatible with her constitutional liberties? It is difficult to imagine a more profligate or heartless course than the one pursued at this juncture by Henry. Secretly, he was intriguing, upon the very soil of the Netherlands, to filch from them that splendid commerce which was the wonder of the age, which had been invented and created by Dutch navigators and men of science, which was the very foundation of their State, and without which they could not exist, in order that he might appropriate it to himself, and transfer the East India Company to France; while at Paris he was solemnly engaging himself in a partnership with their ancient and deadly enemy to rob them of their precious and nobly gained liberty. Was better proof ever afforded that God alone can protect us against those whom we trust? Who was most dangerous to the United Provinces during those memorable peace negotiations, Spain the avowed enemy, or France the friend?

The little republic had but her own sword, her own brain, and her own purse to rely upon. Elizabeth was dead, and James loved Spain better than he did the Netherlands, and quiet better than Spain. "I have told you often," said Caron, "and I say it once more, the Spaniard is lucky that he has such a peaceable king as this to deal with in England."

The details of the new marriage project were arranged at Paris between the Nuncius, the Spanish ambassador, Don Pedro de Toledo, the diplomatic agent of the archdukes, and Henry's ministers, precisely as if there had been no negotiations going on between the States and Spain. Yet the French king was supposed to be the nearest friend of the States, and was consulted by them on every occasion, while his most intimate and trusted counsellor, the ingenuous Jeannin, whose open brow was stamped with sincerity, was privy to all their most secret deliberations.

Page 2498

But the statesman thus dealing with the Hollanders under such a mask of friendly candour, knew perfectly well the reason why his Government preferred a truce to a peace. During a prolonged truce, the two royal children would grow old enough for the consummation of marriage, and the States—so it was hoped—would be corrupted and cajoled into renouncing their liberty. All the Netherlands would be then formed into a secundogeniture for Spain, and the first sovereign would be the husband of a French princess. Even as an object of ambition, the prize to be secured by so much procrastination and so much treachery was paltry.

When the Spanish commissioners came to the French and English ambassadors accordingly, complaining of the abrupt and peremptory tone of the States' reply, the suggestion of conferences for truce, in place of fruitless peace negotiations, was made at once, and of course favourably received. It was soon afterwards laid before the States-General. To this end, in truth, Richardot and his colleagues had long been secretly tending. Moreover, the subject had been thoroughly but secretly discussed long before between Jeannin and Barneveld.

The French and English ambassadors, accordingly, on the 27th August, came before the States-General, and made a formal proposition for the opening of negotiations for a truce. They advised the adoption of this course in the strongest manner. "Let the truce be made with you," they said, "as with free States, over which the king and the archdukes have no pretensions, with the understanding that, during the time of the truce you are to have free commerce as well to the Indies as to Spain and the obedient Netherlands, and to every part of the Spanish dominions; that you are to retain all that you possess at present, and that such other conditions are to be added as you may find it reasonable to impose. During this period of leisure you will have time to put your affairs in order, to pay your debts, and to reform your Government, and if you remain united, the truce will change into an absolute peace."

Maurice was more indignant when the new scheme was brought to his notice than he had ever been before, and used more violent language in opposing a truce than he had been used to employ when striving against a peace. To be treated with, as with a free State, and to receive permission to trade with the outside world until the truce should expire, seemed to him a sorry result for the republic to accept.

The state-council declared, by way of answer to the foreign ambassadors, that the principal points and conditions which had been solemnly fixed, before the States had consented to begin the negotiations, had been disputed with infinite effrontery and shamelessness by the enemy. The pure and perfect sovereignty notoriously included religion and navigation to any part of the world; and the republic would never consent to any discussion of truce unless these points were confirmed beforehand with the Spanish king's signature and seal.

Page 2499

This resolution of the council—a body which stood much under the influence of the Nassaus—was adopted next day by the States-General, and duly communicated to the friendly ambassadors.

The foreign commissioners, when apprised of this decision, begged for six weeks' time; in order to be able to hear from Madrid.

Even the peace party was disgusted with this impertinence. Maurice boiled over with wrath. The ambassadors recommended compliance with the proposal. Their advice was discussed in the States-General, eighty members being present, besides Maurice and Lewis William. The stadholder made a violent and indignant speech.

He was justified in his vehemence. Nothing could exceed the perfidy of their great ally.

"I know that the King of France calculates thus"—wrote Aerssens at that moment from Paris—"'If the truce lasts seven years, my son will be old enough to accomplish the proposed marriage, and they will be obliged to fulfil their present offers. Otherwise; I would break the truce in the Netherlands, and my own peace with them, in order to take from the Spaniard by force what he led me to hope from alliance.' Thus it is," continued the States' envoy, "that his Majesty condescends to propose, to us a truce, which may have a double interpretation, according to the disposition of the strongest, and thus our commonwealth will be kept in perpetual disquiet, without knowing whether it is sovereign or not. Nor will it be sovereign unless it shall so please our neighbour, who by this means will always keep his foot upon our throat."

"To treat with the States as if they were free," said Henry to the Nuncius soon afterwards, "is not to make them free. This clause does no prejudice to the rights of the King of Spain, except for the time of the truce." Aerssens taxed the king with having said this. His Majesty flatly denied it. The republican envoy bluntly adduced the testimony of the ambassadors of Venice and of Wirtemberg. The king flew into a rage on seeing that his secrets had been divulged, and burst out with these words: "What you demand is not reasonable. You wish the king of Spain to renounce his rights in order to arrive at a truce. You wish to dictate the law to him. If you had just gained four battles over him, you could not demand more. I have always held you for sovereigns, because I am your friend, but if you would judge by equity and justice, you are not sovereigns. It is not reasonable that the king of Spain should quit the sovereignty for always, and you ought to be satisfied with having it so long as the treaty shall last."

Here was playing at sovereignty with a vengeance. Sovereignty was a rattle for the States to amuse themselves with, until the royal infants, French and Spanish, should be grown old enough to take the sovereignty for good. Truly this was indeed keeping the republic under the king's heel to be crushed at his pleasure, as Aerssens, with just bitterness, exclaimed.

Page 2500

Two days were passed at the Hague in vehement debate. The deputies of Zeeland withdrew. The deputies from Holland were divided, but, on the whole, it was agreed to listen to propositions of truce, provided the freedom of the United Provinces—not under conditions nor during a certain period, but simply and for all time—should be recognised beforehand.

It was further decided on the 14th September to wait until the end of the month for the answer from Spain.

After the 1st of October it was distinctly intimated to the Spanish commissioners that they must at once leave the country unless the king had then acknowledged the absolute independence of the provinces.

A suggestion which had been made by these diplomatists to prolong the actually existing armistice into a truce of seven years, a step which they professed themselves willing to take upon their own responsibility, had been scornfully rejected by the States. It was already carrying them far enough away, they said, to take them away from a peace to a truce, which was something far less secure than a peace, but the continuance of this floating, uncertain armistice would be the most dangerous insecurity of all. This would be going from firm land to slippery ice, and from slippery ice into the water. By such a process, they would have neither war nor peace—neither liberty of government nor freedom of commerce—and they unanimously refused to listen to any such schemes.

During the fortnight which followed this provisional consent of the States, the prince redoubled his efforts to counteract the Barneveld party.

He was determined, so far as in him lay, that the United Netherlands should never fall back under the dominion of Spain. He had long maintained the impossibility of effecting their thorough independence except by continuing the war, and had only with reluctance acquiesced in the arguments of the French ambassadors in favour of peace negotiations. As to the truce, he vehemently assured those envoys that it was but a trap. How could the Netherlanders know who their friends might be when the truce should have expired, and under what unfavourable auspices they might not be compelled to resume hostilities?

As if he had been actually present at the council boards in Madrid and Valladolid, or had been reading the secret letters of Friar John to Spinola, he affirmed that the only object of Spain was to recruit her strength and improve her finances, now entirely exhausted. He believed, on the other hand, that the people of the provinces, after they should have once become accustomed to repose; would shrink from exchanging their lucrative pursuits for war, and would prefer to fall back under the yoke of Spain. During the truce they would object to the furnishing of necessary contributions for garrison expenses, and the result would be that the most important cities and strongholds, especially those

on the frontier, which were mainly inhabited by Catholics, would become insecure. Being hostile to a Government which only controlled them by force, they would with difficulty be kept in check by diminished garrisons, unless they should obtain liberty of Catholic worship.

Page 2501

It is a dismal proof of the inability of a leading mind, after half a century's war, to comprehend the true lesson of the war—that toleration of the Roman religion seemed to Maurice an entirely inadmissible idea. The prince could not rise to the height on which his illustrious father had stood; and those about him, who encouraged him in his hostility to Catholicism, denounced Barneveld and Arminius as no better than traitors and atheists. In the eyes of the extreme party, the mighty war had been waged, not to liberate human thought, but to enforce predestination; and heretics to Calvinism were as offensive in their eyes as Jews and Saracens had ever been to Torquemada.

The reasons were unanswerable for the refusal of the States to bind themselves to a foreign sovereign in regard to the interior administration of their commonwealth; but that diversity of religious worship should be considered incompatible with the health of the young republic—that the men who had so bravely fought the Spanish Inquisition should now claim their own right of inquisition into the human conscience—this was almost enough to create despair as to the possibility of the world's progress. The seed of intellectual advancement is slow in ripening, and it is almost invariably the case that the generation which plants—often but half conscious of the mightiness of its work—is not the generation which reaps the harvest. But all mankind at last inherits what is sown in the blood and tears of a few. That Government, whether regal or democratic, should dare to thrust itself between man and his Maker—that the State, not with interfering in a thousand superfluous ways with the freedom of individual human action in the business of life, should combine with the Church to reduce human thought to slavery in regard to the sacred interests of eternity, was one day to be esteemed a blasphemous presumption in lands which deserved to call themselves free. But that hour had not yet come.

"If the garrisons should be weakened," said the prince, "nothing could be expected from the political fidelity of the town populations in question, unless they should be allowed the exercise of their own religion. But the States could hardly be disposed to grant this voluntarily, for fear of injuring the general insecurity and violating the laws of the commonwealth, built as it is upon a foundation which cannot suffer this diversity in the public exercise of religion. Already," continued Maurice, "there are the seeds of dissension in the provinces and in the cities, sure to ripen in the idleness and repose of peace to an open division. This would give the enemy a means of intriguing with and corrupting those who are already wickedly inclined."

Thus in the year 1608, the head of the Dutch republic, the son of William the Silent, seemed to express himself in favour of continuing a horrible war, not to maintain the political independence of his country, but to prevent Catholics from acquiring the right of publicly worshipping God according to the dictates of their conscience.

Page 2502

Yet it would be unjust to the prince, whose patriotism was as pure and unsullied as his sword, to confound his motives with his end. He was firmly convinced that liberty of religious worship, to be acquired during the truce, would inevitably cause the United Provinces to fall once more under the Spanish yoke. The French ambassador, with whom he conferred every day, never doubted his sincerity. Gelderland, Friesland, Overyssel, Groningen, and Utrecht, five provinces out of the united seven, the prince declared to be chiefly inhabited by Catholics. They had only entered the union, he said, because compelled by force. They could only be kept in the union by force, unless allowed freedom of religion. His inference from such a lamentable state of affairs was, not that the experiment of religious worship should be tried, but that the garrisons throughout the five provinces ought to be redoubled, and the war with Spain indefinitely waged. The President was likewise of opinion that “a revolt of these five provinces against the union might be at any moment expected, ill disposed as they were to recognise a sovereignty which abolished their religion.” Being himself a Catholic, however, it was not unnatural that he should make a different deduction from that of the prince, and warmly recommend, not more garrisons, but more liberty of worship.

Thus the very men who were ready to dare all, and to sacrifice all in behalf of their country, really believed themselves providing for the imperishable security of the commonwealth by placing it on the narrow basis of religious intolerance.

Maurice, not satisfied with making these vehement arguments against the truce in his conferences with the envoys of the French and British sovereigns, employed the brief interval yet to elapse before definitely breaking off or resuming the conferences with the Spanish commissioners in making vigorous appeals to the country.

“The weal or woe of the United Provinces for all time,” he said, “is depending on the present transactions.” Weigh well the reasons we urge, and make use of those which seem to you convincing. You know that the foe, according to his old deceitful manner, laid down very specious conditions at the beginning, in order to induce my lords the States-General to treat.

“If the king and the archdudes sincerely mean to relinquish absolutely their pretensions to these provinces, they can certainly have no difficulty in finding honest and convenient words to express their intention. As they are seeking other phrases than the usual and straightforward ones, they give certain proof that they mean to keep back from us the substance. They are trying to cheat us with dark, dubious, loosely-screwed terms, which secure nothing and bind to nothing. If it be wise to trust the welfare of our State to ambiguous words, you can judge according to your own discretion.

“Recognition of our sovereignty is the foundation-stone of these negotiations.

Page 2503

“Let every man be assured that, with such mighty enemies, we can do nothing by halves. We cannot afford to retract, mutilate, or moderate our original determination. He who swerves from the straight road at the beginning is lost; he who stumbles at the first step is apt to fall down the whole staircase. If, on account of imaginable necessity, we postpone that most vital point, the assurance of our freedom, we shall very easily allow less important points to pass muster, and at last come tamely into the path of reconciliation. That was exactly the danger which our ancestors in similar negotiations always feared, and against which we too have always done our best to guard ourselves.

“Wherefore, if the preservation of our beloved fatherland is dear to you, I exhort you to maintain that great fundamental resolution, at all times and against all men, even if this should cause the departure of the enemy’s commissioners. What can you expect from them but evil fruit?”

He then advised all the estates and magistracies which he was addressing to instruct their deputies, at the approaching session of the States-General, to hold on to the first article of the often-cited preliminary resolution without allowing one syllable to be altered. Otherwise nothing could save the commonwealth from dire and notorious confusion. Above all, he entreated them to act in entire harmony and confidence with himself and his cousin, even as they had ever done with his illustrious father.

Certainly the prince fully deserved the confidence of the States, as well for his own signal services and chivalrous self-devotion, as for the unexampled sacrifices and achievements of William the Silent. His words had the true patriotic ring of his father’s frequent and eloquent appeals; and I have not hesitated to give these extracts from his discourse, because comparatively few of such utterances of Maurice have been preserved, and because it gives a vivid impression of the condition of the republic and the state of parties at that momentous epoch. It was not merely the fate of the United Netherlands and the question of peace or war between the little republic and its hereditary enemy that were upon the issue. The peace of all Christendom, the most considerable material interests of civilization, and the highest political and moral principles that can influence human action, were involved in those negotiations.

There were not wanting many to impeach the purity of the stadholder’s motives. As admiral or captain-general, he received high salaries, besides a tenth part of all prize-money gained at sea by the fleets, or of ransom and blackmail on land by the armies of the republic. His profession, his ambition, his delights, were those of a soldier. As a soldier in a great war, he was more necessary to his countrymen than he could expect to be as a statesman in time of peace. But nothing ever appeared in public or in private, which threw a reasonable suspicion upon

Page 2504

his lofty patriotism. Peace he had always believed to be difficult of attainment. It had now been proved impossible. A truce he honestly considered a pitfall of destruction, and he denounced it, as we have seen, in the language of energetic conviction. He never alluded to his pecuniary losses in case peace should be made. His disinterested patriotism was the frequent subject of comment in the most secret letters of the French ambassadors to the king. He had repeatedly refused enormous offers if he would forsake the cause of the republic. The King of France was ever ready to tempt him with bribes, such as had proved most efficacious with men as highly born and as highly placed as a cadet of the house of Orange-Nassau. But there is no record that Jeannin assailed him at this crisis with such temptations, although it has not been pretended that the prince was obdurate to the influence of Mammon when that deity could be openly approached.

That Maurice loved power, pelf, and war, can hardly be denied. That he had a mounting ambition; that he thought a monarchy founded upon the historical institutions and charters of the provinces might be better than the burgher-aristocracy which, under the lead of Barneveld, was establishing itself in the country; that he knew no candidate so eligible for such a throne as his father's son, all this is highly probable and scarcely surprising. But that such sentiments or aspirations caused him to swerve the ninth part of a hair from what he considered the direct path of duty; that he determined to fight out the great fight with Spain and Rome until the States were free in form, in name, and in fact; only that he might then usurp a sovereignty which would otherwise revert to Philip of Spain or be snatched by Henry of Navarre—of all this there is no proof whatever.

The language of Lewis William to the provinces under his government was quite as vigorous as the appeals of Maurice.

During the brief interval remaining before the commissioners should comply with the demands of the States or take their departure, the press throughout the Netherlands was most active. Pamphlets fell thick as hail. The peace party and the war party contended with each other, over all the territory of the provinces, as vigorously as the troops of Fuentes or Bucquoy had ever battled with the columns of Bax and Meetkerke. The types of Blaauw and Plantin were as effective during the brief armistice, as pike and arquebus in the field, but unfortunately they were used by Netherlanders against each other. As a matter of course, each party impeached the motives as well as the actions of its antagonist. The adherents of the Advocate accused the stadholder of desiring the continuance of the war for personal aims. They averred that six thousand men for guarding the rivers would be necessary, in addition to the forty-five thousand men, now kept constantly on foot. They placed the requisite monthly expenses, if hostilities were resumed, at 800,000 florins, while they pointed to the 27,000,000 of debt over and above the 8,000,000 due to the British crown, as a burthen under which the

republic could scarcely stagger much longer. Such figures seem modest enough, as the price of a war of independence.

Page 2505

Familiar with the gigantic budgets of our own day, we listen with something like wonder, now that two centuries and a half have passed, to the fierce denunciations by the war party of these figures as wilful fictions. Science has made in that interval such gigantic strides. The awful intellect of man may at last make war impossible for his physical strength. He can forge but cannot wield the hammer of Thor; nor has Science yet discovered the philosopher's stone. Without it, what exchequer can accept chronic warfare and escape bankruptcy? After what has been witnessed in these latest days, the sieges and battles of that distant epoch seem like the fights of pigmies and cranes. Already an eighty years' war, such as once was waged, has become inconceivable. Let two more centuries pass away, and perhaps a three weeks' campaign may exhaust an empire.

Meantime the war of words continued. A proclamation with penalties was issued by the States against the epidemic plague of pamphlets or "blue-books," as those publications were called in Holland, but with little result. It was not deemed consistent with liberty by those republicans to put chains on the press because its utterances might occasionally be distasteful to magistrates. The writers, printers, and sellers of the "blue-books" remained unpunished and snapped their fingers at the placard.

We have seen the strenuous exertions of the Nassaus and their adherents by public appeals and private conversation to defeat all schemes of truce. The people were stirred by the eloquence of the two stadholders. They were stung to fury against Spain and against Barneveld by the waspish effusions of the daily press. The magistrates remained calm, and took part by considerable majorities with Barneveld. That statesman, while exercising almost autocratic influence in the estates, became more and more odious to the humbler classes, to the Nassaus, and especially to the Calvinist clergy. He was denounced, as a papist, an atheist, a traitor, because striving for an honourable peace with the foe, and because admitting the possibility of more than one road to the kingdom of Heaven. To doubt the infallibility of Calvin was as heinous a crime, in the eyes of his accusers, as to kneel to the host. Peter Titelmann, half a century earlier, dripping with the blood of a thousand martyrs, seemed hardly a more loathsome object to all Netherlanders than the Advocate now appeared to his political enemies, thus daring to preach religious toleration, and boasting of, humble ignorance as the safest creed. Alas! we must always have something to persecute, and individual man is never so convinced of his own wisdom as when dealing with subjects beyond human comprehension.

Page 2506

Unfortunately, however, while the great Advocate was clear in his conscience he had scarcely clean hands. He had very recently accepted a present of twenty thousand florins from the King of France. That this was a bribe by which his services were to be purchased for a cause not in harmony with his own convictions it would be unjust to say. We of a later generation, who have had the advantage of looking through the portfolio of President Jeannin, and of learning the secret intentions of that diplomatist and of his master, can fully understand however that there was more than sufficient cause at the time for suspecting the purity of the great Advocate's conduct. We are perfectly aware that the secret instructions of Henry gave his plenipotentiaries almost unlimited power to buy up as many influential personages in the Netherlands as could be purchased. So they would assist in making the king master of the United Provinces at the proper moment there was scarcely any price that he was not willing to pay.

Especially Prince Maurice, his cousin, and the Advocate of Holland, were to be secured by life pensions, property, offices, and dignities, all which Jeannin might offer to an almost unlimited amount, if by such means those great personages could possibly be induced to perform the king's work.

There is no record that the president ever held out such baits at this epoch to the prince. There could never be a doubt however in any one's mind that if the political chief of the Orange-Nassau house ever wished to make himself the instrument by which France should supplant Spain in the tyranny of the Netherlands, he might always name his own price. Jeannin never insulted him with any such trading propositions. As for Barneveld, he avowed long years afterwards that he had accepted the twenty thousand florins, and that the king had expressly exacted secrecy in regard to the transaction. He declared however that the money was a reward for public services rendered by him to the French Government ten years before, in the course of his mission to France at the time of the peace of Vervins. The reward had been promised in 1598, and the pledge was fulfilled in 1608. In accepting wages fairly earned, however, he protested that he had bound himself to no dishonourable service, and that he had never exchanged a word with Jeannin or with any man in regard to securing for Henry the sovereignty of the Netherlands.

His friends moreover maintained in his defence that there were no laws in the Netherlands forbidding citizens to accept presents or pensions from foreign powers. Such an excuse was as bad as the accusation. Woe to the republic whose citizens require laws to prevent them from becoming stipendiaries of foreign potentates! If public virtue, the only foundation of republican institutions, be so far washed away that laws in this regard are necessary to save it from complete destruction, then already the republic is impossible. Many

Page 2507

who bore illustrious names, and occupied the highest social positions at, that day in France, England, and the obedient provinces, were as venal as cattle at a fair. Philip and Henry had bought them over and over again, whenever either was rich enough to purchase and strong enough to enforce the terms of sale. Bribes were taken with both hands in overflowing measure; the difficulty was only in obtaining the work for the wage.

But it would have been humiliating beyond expression had the new commonwealth, after passing through the fiery furnace of its great war, proved no purer than leading monarchies at a most corrupt epoch. It was no wonder therefore that men sought to wipe off the stain from the reputation of Barneveld, and it is at least a solace that there was no proof of his ever rendering, or ever having agreed to render, services inconsistent with his convictions as to the best interests of the commonwealth. It is sufficiently grave that he knew the colour of the king's money, and that in a momentous crisis of history he accepted a reward for former professional services, and that the broker in the transaction, President Jeannin, seriously charged him by Henry's orders to keep the matter secret. It would be still more dismal if Jeannin, in his private letters, had ever intimated to Villeroy or his master that he considered it a mercantile transaction, or if any effort had ever been made by the Advocate to help Henry to the Batavian throne. This however is not the case.

In truth, neither Maurice nor Barneveld was likely to assist the French king in his intrigues against the independence of their fatherland. Both had higher objects of ambition than to become the humble and well-paid servants of a foreign potentate. The stadholder doubtless dreamed of a crown which might have been his father's, and which his own illustrious services might be supposed to have earned for himself. If that tempting prize were more likely to be gained by a continuance of the war, it is none the less certain that he considered peace, and still more truce, as fatal to the independence of the provinces.

The Advocate, on the other hand, loved his country well. Perhaps he loved power even better. To govern the city magistracies of Holland, through them the provincial estates; and through them again the States-General of the whole commonwealth; as first citizen of a republic to wield; the powers of a king; as statesman, diplomatist, and financier, to create a mighty empire out of those slender and but recently emancipated provinces of Spain, was a more flattering prospect for a man of large intellect, iron will, and infinite resources, than to sink into the contemptible position of stipendiary to a foreign master. He foresaw change, growth, transformation in the existing condition of things. Those great corporations the East and West India Companies were already producing a new organism out of the political and commercial chaos which had been so long brooding over civilization.

Page 2508

Visions of an imperial zone extending from the little Batavian island around the earth, a chain of forts and factories dotting the newly-discovered and yet undiscovered points of vantage, on island or promontory, in every sea; a watery, nebulous, yet most substantial empire—not fantastic, but practical—not picturesque and mediaeval, but modern and lucrative—a world-wide commonwealth with a half-submerged metropolis, which should rule the ocean with its own fleets and, like Venice and Florence, job its land wars with mercenary armies—all these dreams were not the cloudy pageant of a poet but the practical schemes of a great creative mind. They were destined to become reality. Had the geographical conditions been originally more favourable than they were, had Nature been less a stepmother to the metropolis of the rising Batavian realm, the creation might have been more durable. Barneveld, and the men who acted with him, comprehended their age, and with slender materials were prepared to do great things. They did not look very far perhaps into futurity, but they saw the vast changes already taking place, and felt the throb of forces actually at work.

The days were gone when the iron-clad man on horseback conquered a kingdom with his single hand. Doubtless there is more of poetry and romance in his deeds than in the achievements of the counting-house aristocracy, the hierarchy of joint-stock corporations that was taking the lead in the world's affairs. Enlarged views of the social compact and of human liberty, as compared with those which later generations ought to take, standing upon the graves, heaped up mountains high, of their predecessors, could hardly be expected of them. But they knew how to do the work before them. They had been able to smite a foreign and sacerdotal tyranny into the dust at the expense of more blood and more treasure, and with sacrifices continued through a longer cycle of years, than had ever been recorded by history.

Thus the Advocate believed that the chief fruits of the war—political independence, religious liberty, commercial expansion—could be now secured by diplomacy, and that a truce could be so handled as to become equivalent to a peace. He required no bribes therefore to labour for that which he believed to be for his own interests and for those of the country.

First citizen of Holland, perpetual chairman of a board of ambitious shopkeepers who purposed to dictate laws to the world from their counting-house table, with an unerring eye for the interests of the commonwealth and his own, with much vision, extraordinary eloquence, and a magnificent will, he is as good a sample of a great burgher—an imposing not a heroic figure—as the times had seen.

A vast stride had been taken in the world's progress. Even monopoly was freedom compared to the sloth and ignorance of an earlier epoch and of other lands, and although the days were still far distant when the earth was to belong to mankind, yet the

modern republic was leading, half unconsciously, to a period of wider liberty of government, commerce, and above all of thought.

Page 2509

Meantime, the period assigned for the departure of the Spanish commissioners, unless they brought a satisfactory communication from the king, was rapidly approaching.

On the 24th September Verreyken returned from Brussels, but it was soon known that he came empty handed. He informed the French and English ambassadors that the archdukes, on their own responsibility, now suggested the conclusion of a truce of seven years for Europe only. This was to be negotiated with the States-General as with free people, over whom no pretensions of authority were made, and the hope was expressed that the king would give his consent to this arrangement.

The ambassadors naturally refused to carry the message to the States. To make themselves the mouthpieces of such childish suggestions was to bring themselves and their masters into contempt. There had been trifling enough, and even Jeannin saw that the storm of indignation about to burst forth would be irresistible. There was no need of any attempt on the part of the commissioners to prolong their stay if this was the result of the fifteen days' grace which had so reluctantly been conceded to them. To express a hope that the king might perhaps give his future approval to a proceeding for which his signed and sealed consent had been exacted as an indispensable preliminary, was carrying effrontery further than had yet been attempted in these amazing negotiations.

Prince Maurice once more addressed the cities of Holland, giving vent to his wrath in language with which there was now more sympathy than there had been before. "Verreyken has come back," he said, "not with a signature, but with a hope. The longer the enemy remains in the country the more he goes back from what he had originally promised. He is seeking for nothing more than, in this cheating way and in this pretence of waiting for the king's consent—which we have been expecting now for more than eighteen months—to continue the ruinous armistice. Thus he keeps the country in a perpetual uncertainty, the only possible consequence of which is our complete destruction. We adjure you therefore to send a resolution in conformity with our late address, in order that through these tricks and snares the fatherland may not fall into the clutch of the enemy, and thus into eternal and intolerable slavery. God save us all from such a fate!"

Neither Barneveld nor Jeannin attempted to struggle against the almost general indignation. The deputies of Zeeland withdrew from the assembly of the States-General, protesting that they would never appear there again so long as the Spanish commissioners remained in the country. The door was opened wide, and it was plain that those functionaries must take their departure. Pride would not allow them to ask permission of the States to remain, although they intimated to the ambassadors their intense desire to linger for ten or twelve days longer. This was obviously inadmissible, and on the 30th September they appeared before the Assembly to take leave.

Page 2510

There were but three of them, the Genoese, the Spaniard, and the Burgundian—-Spinola, Mancicidor; and Richardot. Of the two Netherlanders, brother John was still in Spain, and Verreyken found it convenient that day to have a lame leg.

President Richardot, standing majestically before the States-General, with his robes wrapped around his tall, spare form, made a solemn farewell speech of mingled sorrow, pity, and the resentment of injured innocence. They had come to the Hague, he said, sent by the King of Spain and the archdukes to treat for a good and substantial peace, according to the honest intention of his Majesty and their Highnesses. To this end they had sincerely and faithfully dealt with the gentlemen deputed for that purpose by their High Mightinesses the States, doing everything they could think of to further the cause of peace. They lamented that the issue had not been such as they had hoped, notwithstanding that the king and archdukes had so far derogated from their reputation as to send their commissioners into the United Netherlands, it having been easy enough to arrange for negotiations on other soil. It had been their wish thus to prove to the world how straightforward were their intentions by not requiring the States to send deputies to them. They had accorded the first point in the negotiations, touching the free state of the country. Their High Mightinesses had taken offence upon the second, regarding the restoration of religion in the United Provinces. Thereupon the father commissary had gone to Spain, and had remained longer than was agreeable. Nevertheless, they had meantime treated of other points. Coming back at last to the point of religion, the States-General had taken a resolution, and had given them their dismissal, without being willing to hear a word more, or to make a single proposition of moderation or accommodation.

He could not refrain from saying that the commissioners had been treated roughly. Their High Mightinesses had fixed the time for their dismissal more precisely than one would do with a servant who was discharged for misconduct; for the lackey, if he asked for it, would be allowed at least a day longer to pack his trunk for the journey. They protested before God and the assembly of the States that the king and princes had meant most sincerely, and had dealt with all roundness and sincerity. They at least remained innocent of all the disasters and calamities to come from the war.

“As for myself,” said Richardot, “I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet; yet I will venture the prediction to you, my lords the States-General, that you will bitterly rue it that you did not embrace the peace thus presented, and which you might have had. The blood which is destined to flow, now that you have scorned our plan of reconciliation, will be not on our heads but your own.”

Page 2511

Barneveld replied by temperately but firmly repelling the charges brought against the States in this artful oration of the president. They had proceeded in the most straightforward manner, never permitting themselves to enter into negotiations except on the preliminary condition that their freedom should be once for all conceded and recognised. “You and you only,” he continued, “are to bear the blame that peace has not been concluded; you who have not been willing or not been able to keep your promises. One might, with better reason, hold you guilty of all the bloodshed; you whose edicts, bloodier and more savage than war itself, long, ago forced these provinces into the inevitable necessity of waging war; you whose cruelty, but yesterday exercised on the crews of defenceless and innocent merchantmen and fishing-vessels, has been fully exhibited to the world.”

Spinola’s countenance betrayed much emotion as he listened to the exchange of bitter recriminations which took place on this farewell colloquy. It was obvious that the brave and accomplished soldier honestly lamented the failure of the attempt to end the war.

But the rupture was absolute. The marquis and the president dined that day with Prince Maurice, by whom they were afterwards courteously accompanied a part of the way on their journey to Brussels.

Thus ended the comedy which had lasted nearly two years. The dismal leave-taking, as the curtain fell, was not as, entertaining to the public outside as the dramatic meeting between Maurice and Spinola had been at the opening scene near Ryswyk. There was no populace to throw up their hats for the departing guests. From the winter’s night in which the subtle Franciscan had first stolen into the prince’s cabinet down to this autumn evening, not a step of real progress could be recorded as the result of the intolerable quantity of speech-making and quill-driving. There were boat-loads of documents, protocols, and notes, drowsy and stagnant as the canals on which they were floated off towards their tombs in the various archives. Peace to the dust which we have not wantonly disturbed, believing it to be wholesome for the cause of human progress that the art of ruling the world by doing nothing, as practised some centuries since, should once and again be exhibited.

Not in vain do we listen to those long-bearded, venerable, very tedious old presidents, advocates, and friars of orders gray, in their high ruffs, taffety robes or gowns of frieze, as they squeak and gibber, for a fleeting moment, to a world which knew them not. It is something to learn that grave statesmen, kings, generals, and presidents could negotiate for two years long; and that the only result should be the distinction between a conjunction, a preposition, and an adverb. That the provinces should be held as free States, not for free States—that they should be free in similitude, not in substance—-thus much and no more had been accomplished.

Page 2512

And now to all appearance every chance of negotiation was gone. The half-century war, after this brief breathing space, was to be renewed for another century or so, and more furiously than ever. So thought the public. So meant Prince Maurice. Richardot and Jeannin knew better.

The departure of the commissioners was recorded upon the register of the resolutions of Holland, with the ominous note: "God grant that they may not have sown, evil seed here; the effects of which will one day be visible in the ruin of this commonwealth."

Hardly were the backs of the commissioners turned, before the indefatigable Jeannin was ready with his scheme for repatching the rupture. He was at first anxious that the deputies of Zeeland should be summoned again, now that the country was rid of the Spaniards. Prince Maurice, however, was wrathful when the president began to talk once more of truce. The proposition, he said, was simply the expression of a wish to destroy the State. Holland and Zeeland would never agree to any such measure, and they would find means to compel the other provinces to follow their example. If there were but three or four cities in the whole country to reject the truce, he would, with their assistance alone, defend the freedom of the republic, or at least die an honourable death in its defence. This at least would be better than after a few months to become slaves of Spain. Such a result was the object of those who began this work, but he would resist it at the peril of his life.

A singular incident now seemed to justify the wrath of the stadholder, and to be likely to strengthen his party. Young Count John of Nassau happened to take possession of the apartments in Goswyn Meursken's hostelry at the Hague, just vacated by Richardot. In the drawer of a writing-table was found a document, evidently left there by the president. This paper was handed by Count John to his cousin, Frederic Henry, who at once delivered it to his brother Maurice. The prince produced it in the assembly of the States-General, members from each province were furnished with a copy of it within two or three hours, and it was soon afterwards printed, and published. The document, being nothing less than the original secret instructions of the archdukes to their commissioners, was naturally read with intense interest by the States-General, by the foreign envoys, and by the general public.

It appeared, from an inspection of the paper, that the commissioners had been told that, if they should find the French, English, and Danish ambassadors desirous of being present at the negotiations for the treaty, they were to exclude them from all direct participation in the proceedings. They were to do this however so sweetly and courteously that it would be impossible for those diplomats to take offence or to imagine themselves distrusted. On the contrary, the States-General were to be informed that their communication in private

Page 2513

on the general subject with the ambassadors was approved by the archdukes, because they believed the sovereigns of France, England, and Denmark, their sincere and affectionate friends. The commissioners were instructed to domesticate themselves as much as possible with President Jeannin and to manifest the utmost confidence in his good intentions. They were to take the same course with the English envoys, but in more general terms, and were very discreetly to communicate to them whatever they already knew, and, on the other hand, carefully to conceal from them all that was still a secret.

They were distinctly told to make the point of the Catholic religion first and foremost in the negotiations; the arguments showing the indispensable necessity of securing its public exercise in the United Provinces being drawn up with considerable detail. They were to insist that the republic should absolutely renounce the trade with the East and West Indies, and should pledge itself to chastise such of its citizens as might dare to undertake those voyages, as disturbers of the peace and enemies of the public repose, whether they went to the Indies in person or associated themselves with men of other nations for that purpose, under any pretext whatever. When these points, together with many matters of detail less difficult of adjustment, had been satisfactorily settled, the commissioners were to suggest measures of union for the common defence between the united and the obedient Provinces. This matter was to be broached very gently. “In the sweetest terms possible,” it was to be hinted that the whole body of the Netherlanders could protect itself against every enemy, but if dismembered as it was about to be, neither the one portion nor the ocher would be safe. The commissioners were therefore to request the offer of some proposition from the States-General for the common defence. In case they remained silent, however, then the commissioners were to declare that the archdukes had no wish to speak of sovereignty over the United Provinces, however limited. “Having once given them that morsel to swallow,” said their Highnesses, “we have nothing of the kind in our thoughts. But if they reflect, it is possible that they may see fit to take us for protectors.”

The scheme was to be managed with great discreetness and delicacy, and accomplished by hook or by crook, if the means could be found. “You need not be scrupulous as to the form or law of protection, provided the name of protector can be obtained,” continued the archdukes.

At least the greatest pains were to be taken that the two sections of the Netherlands might remain friends. “We are in great danger unless we rely upon each other,” it was urged. “But touch this chord very gently, lest the French and English hearing of it suspect some design to injure them. At least we may each mutually agree to chastise such of our respective subjects as may venture to make any alliance with the enemies of the other.”

Page 2514

It was much disputed whether these instructions had been left purposely or by accident in the table-drawer. Jeannin could not make up his mind whether it was a trick or not, and the vociferous lamentations of Richardot upon his misfortunes made little impression upon his mind. He had small confidence in any austerity of principle on the part of his former fellow-leaguer that would prevent him from leaving the document by stealth, and then protesting that he had been foully wronged by its coming to light. On the whole, he was inclined to think, however, that the paper had been stolen from him.

Barneveld, after much inquiry, was convinced that it had been left in the drawer by accident.

Richardot himself manifested rage and dismay when he found that a paper, left by chance in his lodgings, had been published by the States. Such a proceeding was a violation, he exclaimed, of the laws of hospitality. With equal justice, he declared it to be an offence against the religious respect due to ambassadors, whose persons and property were sacred in foreign countries. “Decency required the States,” he said, “to send the document back to him, instead of showing it as a trophy, and he was ready to die of shame and vexation at the unlucky incident.”

Few honourable men will disagree with him in these complaints, although many contemporaries obstinately refused to believe that the crafty and experienced diplomatist could have so carelessly left about his most important archives. He was generally thought by those who had most dealt with him, to prefer, on principle, a crooked path to a straight one. “’Tis a mischievous old monkey,” said Villeroy on another occasion, “that likes always to turn its tail instead of going directly to the purpose.” The archduke, however, was very indulgent to his plenipotentiary. “My good master,” said the, president, “so soon as he learned the loss of that accursed paper, benignantly consoled, instead of chastising me; and, after having looked over the draught, was glad that the accident had happened; for thus his sincerity had been proved, and those who sought profit by the trick had been confounded.” On the other hand, what good could it do to the cause of peace, that these wonderful instructions should be published throughout the republic? They might almost seem a fiction, invented by the war party to inspire a general disgust for any further negotiation. Every loyal Netherlander would necessarily be qualmish at the word peace, now that the whole design of the Spanish party was disclosed.

The public exercise of the Roman religion was now known to be the indispensable condition—first, last, and always—to any possible peace. Every citizen of the republic was to be whipped out of the East and West Indies, should he dare to show his face in those regions. The States-General, while swallowing the crumb of sovereignty vouchsafed by the archdukes, were to accept them as protectors, in order not to fall a prey to the enemies whom they imagined to be their friends.

Page 2515

What could be more hopeless than such negotiations? What more dreary than the perpetual efforts of two lines to approach each other which were mathematically incapable of meeting? That the young republic, conscious of her daily growing strength, should now seek refuge from her nobly won independence in the protectorate of Albert, who was himself the vassal of Philip, was an idea almost inconceivable to the Dutch mind. Yet so impossible was it for the archdukes to put themselves into human relations with this new and popular Government, that in the inmost recesses of their breasts they actually believed themselves, when making the offer, to be performing a noble act of Christian charity.

The efforts of Jeannin and of the English ambassador were now unremitting, and thoroughly seconded by Barneveld. Maurice was almost at daggers drawn, not only with the Advocate but with the foreign envoys. Sir Ralph Winwood, who had, in virtue of the old treaty arrangements with England, a seat in the state-council at the Hague, and who was a man of a somewhat rough and insolent deportment, took occasion at a session of that body, when the prince was present, to urge the necessity of at once resuming the ruptured negotiations. The King of Great Britain; he said, only recommended a course which he was himself always ready to pursue. Hostilities which were necessary, and no others, were just. Such, and such only, could be favoured by God or by pious kings. But wars were not necessary which could be honourably avoided. A truce was not to be despised, by which religious liberty and commerce were secured, and it was not the part of wisdom to plunge into all the horrors of immediate war in order to escape distant and problematical dangers; that might arise when the truce should come to an end. If a truce were now made, the kings of both France and England would be guarantees for its faithful observance. They would take care that no wrong or affront was offered to the States-General.

Maurice replied, with a sneer, to these sententious commonplaces derived at second-hand from King James that great kings were often very indifferent to injuries sustained by their friends. Moreover, there was an eminent sovereign, he continued, who was even very patient under affronts directly offered to himself. It was not very long since a horrible plot had been discovered to murder the King of England, with his wife, his children, and all the great personages of the realm. That this great crime had been attempted under the immediate instigation of the King of Spain was notorious to the whole world, and certainly no secret to King James. Yet his Britannic Majesty had made haste to exonerate the great criminal from all complicity in the crime; and had ever since been fawning upon the Catholic king, and hankering for a family alliance with him. Conduct like this the prince denounced in plain terms as cringing and cowardly, and expressed the opinion that guarantees of Dutch independence from such a monarch could hardly be thought very valuable.

Page 2516

These were terrible words for the representative of James to have hurled in his face in full council by the foremost personage of the republic Winwood fell into a furious passion, and of course there was a violent scene, with much subsequent protesting and protocolling.

The British king insisted that the prince should make public amends for the insult, and Maurice firmly refused to do anything of the kind. The matter was subsequently arranged by some amicable concessions made by the prince in a private letter to James, but there remained for the time a abate of alienation between England and the republic, at which the French sincerely rejoiced. The incident, however, sufficiently shows the point of exasperation which the prince had reached, for, although choleric, he was a reasonable man, and it was only because the whole course of the negotiations had offended his sense of honour and of right that he had at last been driven quite beyond self-control.

On the 13th of October, the envoys of France, England, Denmark, and of the Elector Palatine, the Elector of Brandeburg, and other German princes, came before the States-General.

Jeannin, in the name of all these foreign ministers, made a speech warmly recommending the truce.

He repelled the insinuation that the measure proposed had been brought about by the artifices of the enemy, and was therefore odious. On the contrary, it was originated by himself and the other good friends of the republic.

In his opinion, the terms of the suggested truce contained sufficient guarantees for the liberty of the provinces, not only during the truce, but for ever.

No stronger recognition of their independence could be expected than the one given. It was entirely without example, argued the president, that in similar changes brought about by force of arms, sovereigns after having been despoiled of their states have been compelled to abandon their rights shamefully by a public confession, unless they had absolutely fallen into the hands of their enemies and were completely at their mercy. “Yet the princes who made this great concession,” continued Jeannin, “are not lying vanquished at your feet, nor reduced by dire necessity to yield what they have yielded.”

He reminded the assembly that the Swiss enjoyed at that moment their liberty in virtue of a simple truce, without ever having obtained from their former sovereign a declaration such as was now offered to the United Provinces.

The president argued, moreover, with much force and acuteness that it was beneath the dignity of the States, and inconsistent with their consciousness of strength, to lay so

much stress on the phraseology by which their liberty was recognised. That freedom had been won by the sword, and would be maintained against all the world by the sword.

“In truth,” said the orator, “you do wrong to your liberty by calling it so often in doubt, and in claiming with so much contentious anxiety from your enemies a title-deed for your independence. You hold it by your own public decree. In virtue of that decree, confirmed by the success of your arms, you have enjoyed it long. Nor could anything obtained from your enemies be of use to you if those same arms with which you gained your liberty could not still preserve it for you.”

Page 2517

Therefore, in the opinion of the president, this persistence in demanding a more explicit and unlimited recognition of independence was only a pretext for continuing the war, ingeniously used by those who hated peace.

Addressing himself more particularly to the celebrated circular letter of Prince Maurice against the truce, the president maintained that the liberty of the republic was as much acknowledged in the proposed articles as if the words “for ever” had been added. “To acknowledge liberty is an act which, by its very nature, admits of no conditions,” he observed, with considerable force.

The president proceeded to say that in the original negotiations the qualifications obtained had seemed to him enough. As there was an ardent desire, however, on the part of many for a more explicit phraseology, as something necessary to the public safety, he had thought it worth attempting.

“We all rejoiced when you obtained it,” continued Jeannin, “but not when they agreed to renounce the names, titles, and arms of the United Provinces; for that seemed to us shameful for them beyond all example. That princes should make concessions so entirely unworthy of their grandeur, excited at once our suspicion, for we could not imagine the cause of an offer so specious. We have since found out the reason.”

The archdukes being unable, accordingly, to obtain for the truce those specious conditions which Spain had originally pretended to yield, it was the opinion of the old diplomatist that the king should be permitted to wear the paste substitutes about which so many idle words had been wasted.

It would be better, he thought, for the States to be contented with what was precious and substantial, and not to lose the occasion of making a good treaty of truce, which was sure to be converted with time into an absolute peace.

“It is certain,” he said, “that the princes with whom you are treating will never go to law with you to get an exposition of the article in question. After the truce has expired, they will go to war with you if you like, but they will not trouble themselves to declare whether they are fighting you as rebels or as enemies, nor will it very much signify. If their arms are successful, they will give you no explanations. If you are the conquerors, they will receive none. The fortune of war will be the supreme judge to decide the dispute; not the words of a treaty. Those words are always interpreted to the disadvantage of the weak and the vanquished, although they may be so perfectly clear that no man could doubt them; never to the prejudice of those who have proved the validity of their rights by the strength of their arms.”

This honest, straightforward cynicism, coming from the lips of one of the most experienced diplomatists of Europe, was difficult to gainsay. Speaking as one having

authority, the president told the States-General in full assembly, that there was no law in Christendom, as between nations, but the good old fist-law, the code of brute force.

Page 2518

Two centuries and a half have rolled by since that oration was pronounced, and the world has made immense progress in science during that period. But there is still room for improvement in this regard in the law of nations. Certainly there is now a little more reluctance to come so nakedly before the world. But has the cause of modesty or humanity gained very much by the decorous fig-leaves of modern diplomacy?

The president alluded also to the ungrounded fears that bribery and corruption would be able to effect much, during the truce, towards the reduction of the provinces under their repudiated sovereign. After all, it was difficult to buy up a whole people. In a commonwealth, where the People was sovereign, and the persons of the magistrates ever changing, those little comfortable commercial operations could not be managed so easily as in civilized realms like France and England. The old Leaguer thought with pensive regret, no doubt, of the hard, but still profitable bargains by which the Guises and Mayennes and Mercoeurs, and a few hundred of their noble adherents, had been brought over to the cause of the king. He sighed at the more recent memories of the Marquis de Rosny's embassy in England, and his largess scattered broadcast among the great English lords. It would be of little use he foresaw—although the instructions of Henry were in his portfolio, giving him almost unlimited powers to buy up everybody in the Netherlands that could be bought—to attempt that kind of traffic on a large scale in the Netherlands.

Those republicans were greedy enough about the navigation to the East and West Indies, and were very litigious about the claim of Spain to put up railings around the Ocean as her private lake, but they were less keen than were their more polished contemporaries for the trade in human souls.

"When we consider," said Jeannin, "the constitution of your State, and that to corrupt a few people among you does no good at all, because the, frequent change of magistracies takes away the means of gaining over many of them at the same time, capable by a long duration of their power to conduct an intrigue against the commonwealth, this fear must appear wholly vain."

And then the old Leaguer, who had always refused bribes himself, although he had negotiated much bribery of others, warmed into sincere eloquence as he spoke of the simple virtues on which the little republic, as should be the case with all republics, was founded. He did homage to the Dutch love of liberty.

"Remember," he said, "the love of liberty which is engraved in the hearts of all your inhabitants, and that there are few persons now living who were born in the days of the ancient subjection, or who have not been nourished and brought up for so long a time in liberty that they have a horror for the very name of servitude. You will then feel that there is not one man in your commonwealth who would wish or dare to open his mouth to bring you back to subjection, without being in danger of instant punishment as a traitor to his country."

Page 2519

He again reminded his hearers that the Swiss had concluded a long and perilous war with their ancient masters by a simple truce, during which they had established so good a government that they were never more attacked. Honest republican principles, and readiness at any moment to defend dearly won liberties, had combined with geographical advantages to secure the national independence of Switzerland.

Jeannin paid full tribute to the maritime supremacy of the republic.

“You may have as much good fortune,” he said, “as the Swiss, if you are wise. You have the ocean at your side, great navigable rivers enclosing you in every direction, a multitude of ships, with sailors, pilots, and seafaring men of every description, who are the very best soldiers in battles at sea to be found in Christendom. With these you will preserve your military vigour and your habits of navigation, the long voyages to which you are accustomed continuing as usual. And such is the kind of soldiers you require. As for auxiliaries, should you need them you know where to find them.”

The president implored the States-General accordingly to pay no attention to the writings which were circulated among the people to prejudice them against the truce.

This was aimed directly at the stadholder, who had been making so many direct personal appeals to the people, and who was now the more incensed, recognising the taunt of the president as an arrow taken from Barneveld’s quiver. There had long ceased to be any communication between the Prince and the Advocate, and Maurice made no secret of his bitter animosity both to Barneveld and to Jeannin.

He hesitated on no occasion to denounce the Advocate as travelling straight on the road to Spain, and although he was not aware of the twenty thousand florins recently presented by the French king, he had accustomed himself, with the enormous exaggeration of party spirit, to look upon the first statesman of his country and of Europe as a traitor to the republic and a tool of the archdukes. As we look back upon those passionate days, we cannot but be appalled at the depths to which theological hatred could descend.

On the very morning after the session of the assembly in which Jeannin had been making his great speech, and denouncing the practice of secret and incendiary publication, three remarkable letters were found on the doorstep of a house in the Hague. One was addressed to the States-General, another to the Mates of Holland, and a third to the burgomaster of Amsterdam. In all these documents, the Advocate was denounced as an infamous traitor, who was secretly intriguing to bring about a truce for the purpose of handing over the commonwealth to the enemy. A shameful death, it was added, would be his fitting reward.

These letters were read in the Assembly of the States-General, and created great wrath among the friends of Barneveld. Even Maurice expressed indignation, and favoured a search for the anonymous author, in order that he might be severely punished.

Page 2520

It seems strange enough that anonymous letters picked up in the street should have been deemed a worthy theme of discussion before their High Mightinesses the States-General. Moreover, it was raining pamphlets and libels against Barneveld and his supporters every day, and the stories which grave burghers and pious elders went about telling to each other, and to everybody who would listen to them, about the Advocate's depravity, were wonderful to hear.

At the end of September, just before the Spanish commissioners left the Hague, a sledge of the kind used in the Dutch cities as drays stopped before Barneveld's front-door one fine morning, and deposited several large baskets, filled with money, sent by the envoys for defraying certain expenses of forage, hire of servants, and the like, incurred by them during their sojourn at the Hague, and disbursed by the States. The sledge, with its contents, was at once sent by order of the Advocate, under guidance of Commissary John Spronsen, to the Receiver-General of the republic.

Yet men wagged their beards dismally as they whispered this fresh proof of Barneveld's venality. As if Spinola and his colleagues were such blunderers in bribing as to send bushel baskets full of Spanish dollars on a sledge, in broad daylight, to the house of a great statesman whom they meant to purchase, expecting doubtless a receipt in full to be brought back by the drayman! Well might the Advocate say at a later moment, in the bitterness of his spirit, that his enemies, not satisfied with piercing his heart with their false, injurious and honour-filching libels and stories, were determined to break it. "He begged God Almighty," he said, "to be merciful to him, and to judge righteously between him and them."

Party spirit has rarely run higher in any commonwealth than in Holland during these memorable debates concerning a truce. Yet the leaders both of the war party and the truce party were doubtless pure, determined patriots, seeking their country's good with all their souls and strength.

Maurice answered the discourse of Jeannin by a second and very elaborate letter. In this circular, addressed to the magistracies of Holland, he urged his countrymen once more with arguments already employed by him, and in more strenuous language than ever, to beware of a truce even more than of a peace, and warned them not to swerve by a hair's breadth from the formula in regard to the sovereignty agreed upon at the very beginning of the negotiations. To this document was appended a paper of considerations, drawn up by Maurice and Lewis William, in refutation, point by point, of all the arguments of President Jeannin in his late discourse.

It is not necessary to do more than allude to these documents, which were marked by the close reasoning and fiery spirit which characterized all the appeals of the prince and his cousin at this period, because the time had now come which comes to all controversies when argument is exhausted and either action or compromise begins.

Page 2521

Meantime, Barneveld, stung almost to madness by the poisonous though ephemeral libels which buzzed so perpetually about him, had at last resolved to retire from the public service. He had been so steadily denounced as being burthensome to his superiors in birth by the power which he had acquired, and to have shot up so far above the heads of his equals; that he felt disposed to withdraw from a field where his presence was becoming odious.

His enemies, of course, considered this determination a trick by which he merely wished to prove to the country how indispensable he was, and to gain a fresh lease of his almost unlimited power by the alarm which his proposed abdication would produce. Certainly, however, if it were a trick, and he were not indispensable, it was easy enough to prove it and to punish him by taking him at his word.

On the morning after the anonymous letters had been found in the street he came into the House of Assembly and made a short speech. He spoke simply of his thirty-one years of service, during which he believed himself to have done his best for the good of the fatherland and for the welfare of the house of Nassau. He had been ready thus to go on to the end, but he saw himself environed by enemies, and felt that his usefulness had been destroyed. He wished, therefore, in the interest of the country, not from any fear for himself, to withdraw from the storm, and for a time at least to remain in retirement. The displeasure and hatred of the great were nothing new to him, he said. He had never shrunk from peril when he could serve his fatherland; for against all calumnies and all accidents he had worn the armour of a quiet conscience. But he now saw that the truce, in itself an unpleasant affair, was made still more odious by the hatred felt towards him. He begged the provinces, therefore, to select another servant less hated than himself to provide for the public welfare.

Having said these few words with the dignity which was natural to him he calmly walked out of the Assembly House.

The personal friends of Barneveld and the whole truce party were in consternation. Even the enemies of the Advocate shrank appalled at the prospect of losing the services of the foremost statesman of the commonwealth at this critical juncture. There was a brief and animated discussion as soon as his back was turned. Its result was the appointment of a committee of five to wait upon Barneveld and solemnly to request him to reconsider his decision. Their efforts were successful. After a satisfactory interview with the committee he resumed his functions with greater authority than ever. Of course there were not wanting many to whisper that the whole proceeding had been a comedy, and that Barneveld would have been more embarrassed than he had ever been in his life had his resignation been seriously accepted. But this is easy to say, and is always said, whenever a statesman who feels himself aggrieved, yet knows

Page 2522

himself useful, lays dawn his office. The Advocate had been the mark of unceasing and infamous calumnies. He had incurred the deadly hatred of the highest placed, the most powerful, and the most popular man in the commonwealth. He had more than once been obliged to listen to opprobrious language from the prince, and it was even whispered that he had been threatened with personal violence. That Maurice was perpetually denouncing him in public and private, as a traitor, a papist, a Spanish partisan, was notorious. He had just been held up to the States of the union and of his own province by unknown voices as a criminal worthy of death. Was it to be wondered at that a man of sixty, who had passed his youth, manhood, and old age in the service of the republic, and was recognised by all as the ablest, the most experienced, the most indefatigable of her statesmen, should be seriously desirous of abandoning an office which might well seem to him rather a pillory than a post of honour?

“As for neighbour Barneveld,” said recorder Aerssens, little dreaming of the foul witness he was to bear against that neighbour at a terrible moment to come, “I do what I can and wish to help him with my blood. He is more courageous than I. I should have sunk long ago, had I been obliged to stand against such tempests. The Lord God will, I hope, help him and direct his understanding for the good of all Christendom, and for his own honour. If he can steer this ship into a safe harbour we ought to raise a golden statue of him. I should like to contribute my mite to it. He deserves twice much honour, despite all his enemies, of whom he has many rather from envy than from reason. May the Lord keep him in health, or it will go hardly with us all.”

Thus spoke some of his grateful countrymen when the Advocate was contending at a momentous crisis with storms threatening to overwhelm the republic. Alas! where is the golden statue?

He believed that the truce was the most advantageous measure that the country could adopt. He believed this with quite as much sincerity as Maurice held to his conviction that war was the only policy. In the secret letter of the French ambassador there is not a trace of suspicion as to his fidelity to the commonwealth, not the shadow of proof of the ridiculous accusation that he wished to reduce the provinces to the dominion of Spain. Jeannin, who had no motive for concealment in his confidential correspondence with his sovereign, always rendered unequivocal homage to the purity and patriotism of the Advocate and the Prince.

He returned to the States-General and to the discharge of his functions as Advocate-General of Holland. His policy for the time was destined to be triumphant, his influence more extensive than ever. But the end of these calumnies and anonymous charges was not yet.

Page 2523

Meantime the opposition to the truce was confined to the States of Zeeland and two cities of Holland. Those cities were very important ones, Amsterdam and Delft, but they were already wavering in their opposition. Zeeland stoutly maintained that the treaty of Utrecht forbade a decision of the question of peace and war except by a unanimous vote of the whole confederacy. The other five provinces and the friends of the truce began with great vehemence to declare that the question at issue was now changed. It was no longer to be decided whether there should be truce or war with Spain, but whether a single member of the confederacy could dictate its law to the other six States. Zeeland, on her part, talked loudly of seceding from the union, and setting up for an independent, sovereign commonwealth. She would hardly have been a very powerful one, with her half-dozen cities, one prelate, one nobleman, her hundred thousand burghers at most, bustling and warlike as they were, and her few thousand mariners, although the most terrible fighting men that had ever sailed on blue water. She was destined ere long to abandon her doughty resolution of leaving her sister provinces to their fate.

Maurice had not slackened in his opposition to the truce, despite the renewed vigour with which Barneveld pressed the measure since his return to the public councils. The prince was firmly convinced that the kings of France and England would assist the republic in the war with Spain so soon as it should be renewed. His policy had been therefore to force the hand of those sovereigns, especially that of Henry, and to induce him to send more stringent instructions to Jeannin than those with which he believed him to be furnished. He had accordingly despatched a secret emissary to the French king, supplied with confidential and explicit instructions. This agent was a Captain Lambert. Whether it was “Pretty Lambert,” “Dandy Lambert”—the vice-admiral who had so much distinguished himself at the great victory of Gibraltar—does not distinctly appear. If it were so, that hard-hitting mariner would seem to have gone into action with the French Government as energetically as he had done eighteen months before, when, as master of the Tiger, he laid himself aboard the Spanish admiral and helped send the St. Augustine to the bottom. He seemed indisposed to mince matters in diplomacy. He intimated to the king and his ministers that Jeannin and his colleagues were pushing the truce at the Hague much further and faster than his Majesty could possibly approve, and that they were obviously exceeding their instructions. Jeannin, who was formerly so much honoured and cherished throughout the republic, was now looked upon askance because of his intimacy with Barneveld and his partisans. He assured the king that nearly all the cities of Holland, and the whole of Zeeland, were entirely agreed with Maurice, who would rather die than consent to the proposed truce. The other provinces, added

Page 2524

Lambert, would be obliged, will ye nill ye, to receive the law from Holland and Zeeland. Maurice, without assistance from France or any other power, would give Spain and the archdukes as much exercise as they could take for the next fifty years before he would give up, and had declared that he would rather die sword in hand than basely betray his country by consenting to such a truce. As for Barneveld, he was already discovering the blunders which he had made, and was trying to curry favour with Maurice. Barneveld and both the Aprasens were traitors to the State, had become the objects of general hatred and contempt, and were in great danger of losing their lives, or at least of being expelled from office.

Here was altogether too much zeal on the part of Pretty Lambert; a quality which, not for the first time, was thus proved to be less useful in diplomatic conferences than in a sea-fight. Maurice was obliged to disavow his envoy, and to declare that his secret instructions had never authorized him to hold such language. But the mischief was done. The combustion in the French cabinet was terrible. The Dutch admiral had thrown hot shot into the powder-magazine of his friends, and had done no more good by such tactics than might be supposed. Such diplomacy was denounced as a mere mixture of “indiscretion and impudence.” Henry was very wroth, and forthwith indited an imperious letter to his cousin Maurice.

“Lambert’s talk to me by your orders,” said the king, “has not less astonished than scandalized me. I now learn the new resolution which you have taken, and I observe that you have begun to entertain suspicions as to my will and my counsels on account of the proposition of truce.”

Henry’s standing orders to Jeannin, as we know, were to offer Maurice a pension of almost unlimited amount, together with ample rewards to all such of his adherents as could be purchased, provided they would bring about the incorporation of the United Provinces into France. He was therefore full of indignation that the purity of his intentions and the sincerity of his wish for the independence of the republic could be called in question.

“People have dared to maliciously invent,” he continued, “that I am the enemy of the repose and the liberty of the United Provinces, and that I was afraid lest they should acquire the freedom which had been offered them by their enemies, because I derived a profit from their war, and intended in time to deprive them of their liberty. Yet these falsehoods and jealousies have not been contradicted by you nor by anyone else, although you know that the proofs of my sincerity and good faith have been entirely without reproach or example. You knew what was said, written, and published everywhere, and I confess that when I knew this malice, and that you had not taken offence at it, I was much amazed and very malcontent.”

Queen Elizabeth, in her most waspish moods, had not often lectured the States-General more roundly than Henry now lectured his cousin Maurice.

Page 2525

The king once more alluded to the secret emissary's violent talk, which had so much excited his indignation.

"If by weakness and want of means," he said, "you are forced to abandon to your enemies one portion of your country in order to defend the other-as Lambert tells me you are resolved to do, rather than agree to the truce without recognition of your sovereignty for ever—I pray you to consider how many accidents and reproaches may befal you. Do you suppose that any ally of the States, or of your family, would risk his reputation and his realms in such a game, which would seem to be rather begun in passion and despair than required by reason or necessity?"

Here certainly was plain speaking enough, and Maurice could no longer expect the king for his partner, should he decide to risk once more the bloody hazard of the die.

But Henry was determined to leave no shade of doubt on the subject.

"Lambert tells me," he said, "that you would rather perish with arms in your hands than fall shamefully into inevitable ruin by accepting truce. I have been and am of a contrary opinion. Perhaps I am mistaken, not knowing as well as you do the constitution of your country and the wishes of your people. But I know the general affairs of Christendom better than you do, and I can therefore judge more soundly on the whole matter than you can, and I know that the truce, established and guaranteed as proposed, will bring you more happiness than you can derive from war."

Thus the king, in the sweeping, slashing way with which he could handle an argument as well as a sword, strode forward in conscious strength, cutting down right and left all opposition to his will. He was determined, once for all, to show the stadholder and his adherents that the friendship of a great king was not to be had by a little republic on easy terms, nor every day. Above all, the Prince of Nassau was not to send a loud-talking, free and easy Dutch sea-captain to dictate terms to the King of France and Navarre. "Lambert tells me"—and Maurice might well wish that Pretty Lambert had been sunk in the bay of Gibraltar, Tiger and all, before he had been sent on this diplomatic errand, "Lambert tells me," continued his Majesty, "that you and the States-General would rather that I should remain neutral, and let you make war in your own fashion, than that I should do anything more to push on this truce. My cousin, it would be very easy for me, and perhaps more advantageous for me and my kingdom than you think, if I could give you this satisfaction, whatever might be the result. If I chose to follow this counsel, I am, thanks be to God, in such condition, that I have no neighbour who is not as much in need of me as I can be of him, and who is not glad to seek for and to preserve my friendship. If they should all conspire against me moreover, I can by myself, and with no assistance but heaven's, which never failed me yet, wrestle with them altogether, and fling

Page 2526

them all, as some of my royal predecessors have done. Know then, that I do not favour war nor truce for the United Provinces because of any need I may have of the one or the other for the defence of my own sceptre. The counsels and the succours, which you have so largely received from me, were given because of my consideration for the good of the States, and of yourself in particular, whom I have always favoured and cherished, as I have done others of your house on many occasions."

The king concluded his lecture by saying, that after his ambassadors had fulfilled their promise, and had spoken the last word of their master at the Hague, he should leave Maurice and the States to do as they liked.

"But I desire," he said, "that you and the States should not do that wrong to yourselves or to me as to doubt the integrity of my counsels nor the actions of my ambassadors: I am an honest man and a prince of my word, and not ignorant of the things of this world. Neither the States nor you, with your adherents, can permit my honour to be compromised without tarnishing your own, and without being branded for ingratitude. I say not this in order to reproach you for the past nor to make you despair of the future, but to defend the truth. I expect, therefore, that you will not fall into this fault, knowing you as I do. I pay more heed to what you said in your letter than in all Lambert's fine talk, and you will find out that nobody wishes your prosperity and that of the States more sincerely than I do, or can be more useful to you than I can."

[I have abbreviated this remarkable letter, but of course the text of the passages cited is literally given. J.L.M.]

There could be but little doubt in the mind of Prince Maurice, after this letter had been well pondered, that Barneveld had won the game, and that the peace party had triumphed.

To resume the war, with the French king not merely neutral but angry and covertly hostile, and with the sovereign of Great Britain an almost open enemy in the garb of an ally, might well seem a desperate course.

And Maurice, although strongly opposed to the truce, and confident in his opinions at this crisis, was not a desperado.

He saw at once the necessity of dismounting from the high horse upon which, it must be confessed, he had been inclined for more rough-riding of late than the situation warranted. Peace was unattainable, war was impossible, truce was inevitable; Barneveld was master of the field.

The prince acquiesced in the result which the letter from the French king so plainly indicated. He was, however, more incensed than ever against Barneveld; for he felt himself not only checkmated but humiliated by the Advocate, and believed him a traitor, who was selling the republic to Spain. It was long since the two had exchanged a word.

Maurice now declared, on more than one occasion, that it was useless for him any longer to attempt opposition to the policy of truce. The States must travel on the road which they had chosen, but it should not be under his guidance, and he renounced all responsibility for the issue.

Page 2527

Dreading disunion, however, more than ought else that could befal the republic, he now did his best to bring about the return of Zeeland to the federal councils. He was successful. The deputies from that province reappeared in the States-General on the 11th November. They were still earnest, however, in their opposition to the truce, and warmly maintained, in obedience to instructions, that the Union of Utrecht forbade the conclusion of a treaty except by unanimous consent of the Seven Provinces. They were very fierce in their remonstrances, and again talked loudly of secession.

After consultation with Barneveld, the French envoys now thought it their duty to take the recalcitrant Zeelanders in hand; Maurice having, as it were, withdrawn from the contest.

On the 18th November, accordingly, Jeannin once more came very solemnly before the States-General, accompanied by his diplomatic colleagues.

He showed the impossibility of any arrangement, except by the submission of Zeeland to a vote of the majority. “It is certain,” he said, “that six provinces will never be willing to be conquered by a single one, nor permit her to assert that, according to a fundamental law of the commonwealth, her dissent can prevent the others from forming a definite conclusion.

“It is not for us,” continued the president, “who are strangers in your republic, to interpret your laws, but common sense teaches us that, if such a law exist, it could only have been made in order to forbid a surrender.

“If any one wishes to expound it otherwise, to him we would reply, in the words of an ancient Roman, who said of a law which seemed to him pernicious, that at least the tablet upon which it was inscribed, if it could not be destroyed, should be hidden out of sight. Thus at least the citizens might escape observing it, when it was plain that it would cause detriment to the republic, and they might then put in its place the most ancient of all laws, ‘salus populi suprema lex.’”

The president, having suggested this ingenious expedient of the antique Roman for getting rid of a constitutional provision by hiding the statute-book, proceeded to give very practical reasons for setting, up the supreme law of the people’s safety on this occasion. And, certainly, that magnificent common-place, which has saved and ruined so many States, the most effective weapon in the political arsenal, whether wielded by tyrants or champions of freedom, was not unreasonably recommended at this crisis to the States in their contest with the refractory Zeelanders. It was easy to talk big, but after all it would be difficult for that doughty little sandbank, notwithstanding the indomitable energy which it had so often shown by land and sea, to do battle by itself with the whole Spanish empire. Nor was it quite consistent with republican principles that the other six provinces should be plunged once more into war, when they had

agreed to accept peace and independence instead, only that Zeeland should have its way.

Page 2528

The orator went on to show the absurdity, in his opinion, of permitting one province to continue the war, when all seven united had not the means to do it without the assistance of their allies. He pointed out, too, the immense blunders that would be made, should it be thought that the Kings of France and England were so much interested in saving the provinces from perdition as to feel obliged in any event to render them assistance.

“Beware of committing an irreparable fault,” he said, “on so insecure a foundation. You are deceiving yourselves: And, in order that there may be no doubt on the subject, we declare to you by express command that if your adversaries refuse the truce, according to the articles presented to you by us, it is the intention of our kings to assist you with armies and subsidies, not only as during the past, but more powerfully than before. If, on the contrary, the rupture comes from your side, and you despise the advice they are giving you, you have no succour to expect from them. The refusal of conditions so honourable and advantageous to your commonwealth will render the war a useless one, and they are determined to do nothing to bring the reproach upon themselves.”

The president then intimated; not without adroitness, that the republic was placing herself in a proud position by accepting the truce, and that Spain was abasing herself by giving her consent to it. The world was surprised that the States should hesitate at all.

There was much more of scholastic dissertation in the president’s address, but enough has been given to show its very peremptory character.

If the war was to go on it was to be waged mainly by Zeeland alone. This was now plain beyond all peradventure. The other provinces had resolved to accept the proposed treaty. The cities of Delft and Amsterdam, which had stood out so long among the estates of Holland, soon renounced their opposition. Prince Maurice, with praiseworthy patriotism, reconciled himself with the inevitable, and now that the great majority had spoken, began to use his influence with the factious minority.

On the day after Jeannin’s speech he made a visit to the French ambassadors. After there had been some little discussion among them, Barneveld made his appearance. His visit seemed an accidental one, but it had been previously arranged with the envoys.

The general conversation went on a little longer, when the Advocate, frankly turning to the Prince, spoke of the pain which he felt at the schism between them. He defended himself with honest warmth against the rumours circulated, in which he was accused of being a Spanish partisan. His whole life had been spent in fighting Spain, and he was now more determined than ever in his hostility to that monarchy. He sincerely believed that by the truce now proposed all the solid advantages of the war would be secured, and that such a result was a triumphant one for the republic. He was also most desirous of being restored to the friendship and good opinion of the house of Nassau;

having proved during his whole life his sincere attachment to their interests—a sentiment never more lively in his breast than at that moment.

Page 2529

This advance was graciously met by the stadholder, and the two distinguished personages were, for the time at least, reconciled.

It was further debated as to the number of troops that it be advisable for the States to maintain during the truce and Barneveld expressed his decided opinion that thirty thousand men, at least, would be required. This opinion gave the prince at least as much pleasure as did the personal devotion expressed by the Advocate, and he now stated his intention of working with the peace party.

The great result was now certain. Delft and Amsterdam withdrew from their opposition to the treaty, so that Holland was unanimous before the year closed; Zeeland, yielding to the influence of Maurice, likewise gave in her adhesion to the truce.

The details of the mode in which the final arrangement was made are not especially interesting. The discussion was fairly at an end. The subject had been picked to the bones. It was agreed that the French ambassadors should go over the frontier, and hold a preliminary interview with the Spanish commissioners at Antwerp.

The armistice was to be continued by brief and repeated renewals, until it should be superseded by the truce of years:

Meantime, Archduke Albert sent his father confessor, Inigo Brizuela, to Spain, in order to make the treaty posed by Jeannin palatable to the king?

The priest was to set forth to Philip, as only a ghostly confessor could do with full effect, that he need not trouble himself about the recognition by the proposed treaty of the independence of the United Provinces. Ambiguous words had been purposely made use of in this regard, he was to explain, so that not only the foreign ambassadors were of opinion that the rights of Spain were not curtailed, but the emptiness of the imaginary recognition of Dutch freedom had been proved by the sharp criticism of the States.

It is true that Richardot, in the name of the archduke, had three months before promised the consent of the king, as having already been obtained. But Richardot knew very well when he made the statement that it was false. The archduke, in subsequent correspondence with the ambassadors in December, repeated the pledge. Yet, not only had the king not given that consent, but he had expressly refused it by a courier sent in November.

Philip, now convinced by Brother Inigo that while agreeing to treat with the States-General as with a free commonwealth, over which he pretended to no authority, he really meant that he was dealing with vassals over whom his authority was to be resumed when it suited his convenience, at last gave his consent to the, proposed treaty. The royal decision was, however, kept for a time concealed, in order that the States might become more malleable.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Page 2530

A truce he honestly considered a pitfall of destruction
Alas! we must always have something to persecute
Argument is exhausted and either action or compromise begins
Beware of a truce even more than of a peace
Could handle an argument as well as a sword
God alone can protect us against those whom we trust
Humble ignorance as the safest creed
Man is never so convinced of his own wisdom
Peace was unattainable, war was impossible, truce was inevitable
Readiness at any moment to defend dearly won liberties
Such an excuse was as bad as the accusation
The art of ruling the world by doing nothing
To doubt the infallibility of Calvin was as heinous a crime
What exchequer can accept chronic warfare and escape bankruptcy
Words are always interpreted to the disadvantage of the weak

HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

History United Netherlands, Volume 83, 1609

CHAPTER LII.

Vote of the States-General on the groundwork of the treaty— Meeting of the plenipotentiaries for arrangement of the truce— Signing of the twelve years' truce—Its purport—The negotiations concluded—Ratification by the States-General, the Archdukes, and the King of Spain—Question of toleration—Appeal of President Jeannin on behalf of the Catholics—Religious liberty the fruit of the war—Internal arrangements of the States under the rule of peace—Deaths of John Duke of Cleves and Jacob Arminius—Doctrines of Arminius and Gomarus—Theological warfare—Twenty years' truce between the Turkish and Roman empires—Ferdinand of Styria— Religious peace —Prospects of the future.

On the 11th January, 1609, the States-General decided by unanimous vote that the first point in the treaty should be not otherwise fixed than, thus:—

"That the archdukes—to superfluity—declare, as well in their own name as in that of the King of Spain, their willingness to treat with the lords States of the United Provinces in the capacity of, and as holding them for, free countries, provinces, and states, over

which they have no claim, and that they are making a treaty with them in those said names and qualities."

It was also resolved not to permit that any ecclesiastical or secular matters, conflicting with the above-mentioned freedom, should be proposed; nor that any delay should be sought for, by reason of the India navigation or any other point.

In case anything to the contrary should be attempted by the king or the archdukes, and the deliberations protracted in consequence more than eight days, it was further decided by unanimous vote that the negotiations should at once be broken off, and the war forthwith renewed, with the help, if possible, of the kings, princes, and states, friends of the good cause.

Page 2531

This vigorous vote was entirely the work of Barneveld, the man whom his enemies dared to denounce as the partisan of Spain, and to hold up as a traitor deserving of death. It was entirely within his knowledge that a considerable party in the provinces had grown so weary of the war, and so much alarmed at the prospect of the negotiations for truce coming to nought, as to be ready to go into a treaty without a recognition of the independence of the States. This base faction was thought to be instigated by the English Government, intriguing secretly with President Richardot. The Advocate, acting in full sympathy with Jeannin, frustrated the effects of the manoeuvre by obtaining all the votes of Holland and Zeeland for this supreme resolution. The other five provinces dared to make no further effort in that direction against the two controlling states of the republic.

It was now agreed that the French and English ambassadors should delay going to Antwerp until informed of the arrival in that city of Spinola and his colleagues; and that they should then proceed thither, taking with them the main points of the treaty, as laid down by themselves, and accepted with slight alterations by the States.

When the Spanish commissioners had signed these points the plenipotentiaries were to come to Antwerp in order to settle other matters of less vital import. Meantime, the States-General were to be summoned to assemble in Bergen-op-Zoom, that they might be ready to deal with difficulties, should any arise.

The first meeting took place on the 10th February, 1609. The first objection to the draught was made by the Spaniards. It was about words and wind. They liked not the title of high and puissant lords which was given to the States-General, and they proposed to turn the difficulty by abstaining from giving any qualifications whatever, either to the archdukes or the republican authorities. The States refused to lower these ensigns of their new-born power. It was, however, at last agreed that, instead of high and mighty, they should be called illustrious and serene.

This point being comfortably adjusted, the next and most important one was accepted by the Spaniards. The independence of the States was recognised according to the prescribed form. Then came the great bone of contention, over which there had been such persistent wrangling—the India trade.

The Spanish Government had almost registered a vow in heaven that the word India should not be mentioned in the treaty. It was no less certain that India was stamped upon the very heart of the republic, and could not be torn from it while life remained. The subtle diplomatists now invented a phrase in which the word should not appear, while the thing itself should be granted. The Spaniards, after much altercation, at last consented.

By the end of February, most of the plenipotentiaries thought it safe to request the appearance of the States-General at Bergen-op-Zoom.

Page 2532

Jeannin, not altogether satisfied, however, with the language of the Spaniards in regard to India, raised doubts as to the propriety of issuing the summons. Putting on his most reverend and artless expression of countenance, he assured Richardot that he had just received a despatch from the Hague, to the effect that the India point would, in all probability, cause the States at that very moment to break off the negotiations. It was surely premature, therefore, to invite them to Bergen. The despatch from the Hague was a neat fiction on the part of the president, but it worked admirably. The other president, himself quite as ready at inventions as Jeannin could possibly be, was nevertheless taken in; the two ex-leaguers being, on the whole, fully a match for each other in the art of intrigue. Richardot, somewhat alarmed, insisted that the States should send their plenipotentiaries to Antwerp as soon as possible. He would answer for it that they would not go away again without settling upon the treaty. The commissioners were forbidden, by express order from Spain, to name the Indies in writing, but they would solemnly declare, by word of mouth, that the States should have full liberty to trade to those countries; the King of Spain having no intention of interfering with such traffic during the period of the truce.

The commissioners came to Antwerp. The States-General assembled at Bergen. On the 9th April, 1609, the truce for twelve years was signed. This was its purport:

The preamble recited that the most serene princes and archdukes, Albert and Isabella Clara Eugenic, had made, on the 24th April, 1607, a truce and cessation of arms for eight months with the illustrious lords the States-General of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, in quality of, and as holding them for, states, provinces, and free countries, over which they pretended to nothing; which truce was ratified by his Catholic Majesty, as to that which concerned him, by letters patent of 18th September, 1607; and that, moreover, a special power had been given to the archdukes on the 10th January, 1608, to enable them in the king's name as well as their own to do everything that they might think proper to bring about a peace or a truce of many years.

It then briefly recited the rupture of the negotiations for peace, and the subsequent, proposition, originated by the foreign ambassadors, to renew the conference for the purpose of concluding a truce. The articles of the treaty thus agreed upon were:

That the archdukes declared, as well in their own name as that of the king, that they were content to treat with the lords the States-General of the United Provinces in quality of, and as holding them for, countries, provinces, and free states, over which they pretended to nothing, and to, make with them a truce on certain following conditions—to wit:

That the truce should be good, firm, loyal, inviolable, and for the term of twelve years, during which time there was to be cessation of all acts of hostility between the king, archdukes, and States-General, as well by sea and other waters as by land, in all their

kingdoms, countries, lands, and lordships, and for all their subjects and inhabitants of whatever quality and condition, without exception of places or of persons.

Page 2533

That each party should remain seized of their respective possessions, and be not troubled therein during the truce.

That the subjects and inhabitants of the respective countries should preserve amity and good correspondence during the truce, without referring to past offences, and should freely and securely entertain communication and traffic with each other by land and sea. This provision, however, was to be expressly understood as limited by the king to the kingdoms and countries possessed by him in Europe, and in other places and seas where the subjects of other kings and princes, his friends and allies, have amicable traffic. In regard, however, to places, cities, ports, and harbours which he possessed outside of those limits, the States and their subjects were to exercise no traffic, without express permission of the king. They could, however, if they chose, trade with the countries of all other princes, potentates, and peoples who were willing to permit it; even outside those limits, without any hindrance by the king;

That the truce should begin in regard to those distant countries after a year from date, unless actual notification could be sooner served there on those concerned;

That the subjects of the United Provinces should have the same liberty and privilege within the States of the king and archdukes as had been accorded to the subjects of the by the King of Great Britain, according to the last treaty made with that sovereign;

That letters of marque and reprisal should not be granted during the truce, except for special cause, and in cases permitted by the laws and imperial constitutions, and according to the rules therein prescribed;

That those who had retired into neutral territory during the war were also to enjoy the benefit of the truce, and could reside wherever they liked without being deprived of their property;

That the treaty should be ratified by the archdukes and the States-General within four days. As to the ratification of the king, the archdukes were bound to deliver it in good and due form within three months, in order that the lords the States-General, their subjects and inhabitants, might enjoy effectively the fruits of the treaty;

That the treaty should be published everywhere immediately after the ratification of the archdukes and States-General.

This document was signed by the ambassadors of the Kings of France and Great Britain, as mediators, and then by the deputies of the archdukes, and afterwards by those of the lords the States-General.

There were thirty-eight articles in all, but the chief provisions have been indicated. The other clauses, relating to boundaries, confiscations, regulations of duties, frontier

fortifications, the estates of the Nassau family, and other sequestrated property, have no abiding interest.

There was also a secret and special treaty which was demanded of the King of Spain by the States-General, and by him accorded.

Page 2534

This secret treaty consisted of a single clause. That clause was made up of a brief preamble and of a promise. The preamble recited textually article fourth of the public treaty relative to the India trade. The promise was to this effect.

For the period of the truce the Spanish commissioners pledged the faith of the king and of his successors that his Majesty would cause no impediment, whether by sea or land, to the States nor their subjects, in the traffic that thereafter might be made in the countries of all princes, potentates, and peoples who might permit the same, in whatever place it might be, even without the limits designated, and everywhere else, nor similarly to those carrying on such traffic with them, and that the king and his successors would faithfully carry into effect everything thus laid, down, so that the said traffic should be free and secure, consenting even, in order that the clause might be the more authentic, that it should be considered as inserted in the principal treaty, and as making part thereof.

It will be perceived that the first article of all, and the last or secret article, contained the whole marrow of the treaty. It may be well understood, therefore, with what wry faces the Spanish plenipotentiaries ultimately signed the document.

After two years and a quarter of dreary negotiation, the republic had carried all its points, without swerving a hair's breadth from the principles laid down in the beginning. The only concession made was that the treaty was for a truce of twelve years, and not for peace. But as after all, in those days, an interval of twelve years might be almost considered an eternity of peace, and as calling a peace perpetual can never make it so, the difference was rather one of phraseology than of fact.

On the other hand, the States had extorted from their former sovereign a recognition of their independence.

They had secured the India trade.

They had not conceded Catholic worship.

Mankind were amazed at this result—an event hitherto unknown in history. When before had a sovereign acknowledged the independence of his rebellious subjects, and signed a treaty with them as with equals? When before had Spain, expressly or by implication, admitted that the East and West Indies were not her private property, and that navigators to those regions, from other countries than her own, were not to be chastised as trespassers and freebooters?

Yet the liberty of the Netherlands was acknowledged in terms which convinced the world that it was thenceforth an established fact. And India was as plainly expressed by the omission of the word, as if it had been engrossed in large capitals in Article *iv*.

Page 2535

The King's Government might seek solace in syntax. They might triumph in Cardinal Bentivoglio's subtleties, and persuade themselves that to treat with the republic as a free nation was not to hold it for a free nation then and for ever. But the whole world knew that the republic really was free, and that it had treated, face to face, with its former sovereign, exactly as the Kings of France or Great Britain, or the Grand Turk, might treat with him. The new commonwealth had taken its place among the nations of the earth. Other princes and potentates made not the slightest difficulty in recognising it for an independent power and entering into treaties and alliances with it as with any other realm.

To the republic the substantial blessing of liberty: to his Catholic Majesty the grammatical quirk. When the twelve years should expire, Spain might reconquer the United Provinces if she could; relying upon the great truth that an adverb was not a preposition. And France or Great Britain might attempt the same thing if either felt strong enough for the purpose. Did as plausible a pretext as that ever fail to a state ambitious of absorbing its neighbours?

Jeannin was right enough in urging that this famous clause of recognition ought to satisfy both parties. If the United Provinces, he said, happened not to have the best muskets and cannons on their side when it should once more come to blows, small help would they derive from verbal bulwarks and advantages in the text of treaties.

Richardot consoled himself with his quibbles; for quibbles were his daily bread. "Thank God our truce is made," said he, "and we have only lost the sovereignty for twelve years, if after that we have the means or the will to resume the war—whatever Don Pedro de Toledo may say."

Barneveld, on his part, was devoutly and soberly pleased with the result. "To-day we have concluded our negotiations for the truce," he wrote to Aerssens. "We must pray to the Lord God, and we must do our highest duty that our work may redound to his honour and glory, and to the nation's welfare. It is certain that men will make their criticisms upon it according to their humours. But those who love their country, and all honest people who know the condition of the land, will say that it is well done."

Thus modestly, religiously, and sincerely spoke a statesman, who felt that he had accomplished a great work, and that he had indeed brought the commonwealth through the tempest at last.

The republic had secured the India trade. On this point the negotiators had taken refuge in that most useful figure of speech for hard-pressed diplomatists and law-makers—the ellipsis. They had left out the word India, and his Catholic Majesty might persuade himself that by such omission a hemisphere had actually been taken away from the Dutch merchants and navigators. But the whole world saw that Article *iv*. really

contained both the East and West Indies. It hardly needed the secret clause to make assurance doubly sure.

Page 2536

President Richardot was facetiously wont to observe that this point in the treaty was so obscure that he did not understand it himself. But he knew better. He understood it very well. The world understood it very well. The United Provinces had throughout the negotiations ridiculde the idea of being excluded from any part of the old world or, the new by reason of the Borgian grant. All the commissioners knew that the war would be renewed if any attempt were to be seriously made to put up those famous railings around the ocean, of which the Dutch diplomatists spoke in such bitter scorn. The Spanish plenipotentiaries, therefore, had insisted that the word itself should be left out, and that the republic should be forbidden access to territories subject to the crown of Spain. So the Hollanders were thenceforth to deal directly with the kings of Sumatra and the Moluccas, and the republics of Banda, and all the rich commonwealths and principalities of nutmegs; cloves, and indigo, unless, as grew every day more improbable, the Spaniards and Portuguese could exclude them from that traffic by main force. And the Orange flag of the republic was to float with equal facility over all America, from the Isle of Manhattan to the shores of Brazil and the Straits of Magellan, provided Philip had not ships and soldiers to vindicate with the sword that sovereignty which Spanish swords and Spanish genius had once acquired.

As for the Catholic worship, the future was to prove that liberty for the old religion and for all forms of religion was a blessing more surely to flow from the enlightened public sentiment of a free people emerging out of the most tremendous war for liberty ever waged, than from the stipulations of a treaty with a foreign power.

It was characteristic enough of the parties engaged in the great political drama that the republic now requested from France and Great Britain a written recognition of its independence, and that both France and England refused.

It was strange that the new commonwealth, in the very moment of extorting her freedom from the ancient tyranny, should be so unconscious of her strength as to think free papers from neutral powers a boon. As if the sign-manual of James and Henry were a better guarantee than the trophies of the Nassaus, of Heemskerk, of Matelieff, and of Olden-Barneveld!

It was not strange that the two sovereigns should decline the proposition; for we well know the secret aspirations of each, and it was natural that they should be unwilling to sign a formal quit-claim, however improbable it might be that those dreams should ever become a reality.

Both powers, however, united in a guarantee of the truce.

This was signed on the 17th June, and stipulated that, without their knowledge and consent, the States should make no treaty during the period of truce with the King of Spain or the archdukes. On the other hand, in case of an infraction of the truce by the

enemy, the two kings agreed to lend assistance to the States in the manner provided—-by the treaties concluded with the republic previously to the negotiation of the truce.

Page 2537

The treaty had been at once ratified by the States-General, assembled for the purpose with an extraordinary number of deputies at Bergen-op-Zoom. It was also ratified without delay by the archdukes. The delivery of the confirmation by his Catholic Majesty had been promised within three months after the signatures of the plenipotentiaries.

It would however have been altogether inconsistent with the dignity and the traditions of the Spanish court to fulfil this stipulation. It was not to be expected that “I the King” could be written either by the monarch himself, or by his alter ego the Duke of Lerma, in so short a time as a quarter of a year.

Several weeks accordingly went by after the expiration of the stated period. The ratification did not come, and the Netherlanders began to be once more indignant. Before the storm had risen very high, however, the despatches arrived. The king’s signature was ante-dated 7th April, being thus brought within the term of three months, and was a thorough confirmation of what had been done by his plenipotentiaries.

His Majesty, however, expressed a hope that during the truce the States would treat their Catholic subjects with kindness.

Certainly no exception could be taken to so reasonable an intimation as this. President Jeannin, too, just before his departure, handed in to the States-General an eloquent appeal on behalf of the Catholics of the Netherlands; a paper which was not immediately made public.

“Consider the great number of Catholics,” he said, “in your territory, both in the cities and the country. Remember that they have worked with you; spent their property, have been exposed to the same dangers, and have always kept their fidelity to the commonwealth inviolate as long as the war endured, never complaining that they did not enjoy liberty of religious worship, believing that you had thus, ordained because the public safety required such guaranty. But they always promised themselves, should the end of the war be happy, and should you be placed in the enjoyment of entire freedom, that they too would have some part in this good fortune, even as they had been sharers in the inconveniences, the expenses, and the perils of the war.

“But those cannot be said to share in any enjoyment from whom has been taken the power of serving God according to the religion in which they were brought up. On the contrary, no slavery is more intolerable nor more exasperates the mind than such restraint. You know this well, my lords States; you know too that it was the principal, the most puissant cause that made you fly to arms and scorn all dangers, in order to effect your deliverance from this servitude. You know that it has excited similar movements in various parts of Christendom, and even in the kingdom of France, with such fortunate success everywhere as to make it appear that God had so willed it, in order to prove that religion ought to be taught and

Page 2538

inspired by the movements which come from the Holy Ghost, and not by the force of man. Thus kings and princes should be induced by the evils and ruin which they and their subjects have suffered from this cause, as by a sentiment of their own interest, to take more care than has hitherto been taken to practise in good earnest those remedies which were wont to be used at a time when the church was in its greatest piety, in order to correct the abuses and errors which the corruption of mankind had tried to introduce as being the true and sole means of uniting all Christians in one and the same creed."

Surely the world had made progress in these forty years of war. Was it not something to gain for humanity, for intellectual advancement, for liberty of thought, for the true interests of religion, that a Roman Catholic, an ex-leaguer, a trusted representative of the immediate successor of Charles *ix*. and Henry *iii*., could stand up on the blood-stained soil of the Netherlands and plead for liberty of conscience for all mankind?

"Those cannot be said to share in, any enjoyment from whom has been taken the power of serving God according to the religion in which they have been brought up. No slavery is more intolerable nor more exasperating to the mind than such restraint."

Most true, O excellent president! No axiom in mathematics is more certain than this simple statement. To prove its truth William the Silent had lived and died. To prove it a falsehood, emperors, and kings, and priests, had issued bans, and curses, and damnable decrees. To root it out they had butchered, drowned, shot, strangled, poisoned, tortured, roasted alive, buried alive, starved, and driven mad, thousands and tens of thousands of their fellow creatures. And behold there had been almost a century of this work, and yet the great truth was not rooted out after all; and the devil-worshippers, who had sought at the outset of the great war to establish the Holy Inquisition in the Netherlands upon the ruins of religious and political liberty, were overthrown at last and driven back into the pit. It was progress; it was worth all the blood and treasure which had been spilled, that, instead of the Holy Inquisition, there was now holy liberty of thought.

That there should have been a party, that there should have been an individual here and there, after the great victory was won, to oppose the doctrine which the Catholic president now so nobly advocated, would be enough to cause every believer in progress to hide his face in the dust, did we not know that the march of events was destined to trample such opposition out of existence, and had not history proved to us that the great lesson of the war was not to be rendered nought by the efforts of a few fanatics. Religious liberty was the ripened and consummate fruit, and it could not but be gathered.

Page 2539

“Consider too,” continued the president, “how much injury your refusal, if you give it, will cause to those of your religion in the places where they are the weakest, and where they are every day imploring with tears and lamentations the grace of those Catholic sovereigns to whom they are subject, to enable them to enjoy the same religious liberty which our king is now demanding in favour of the Catholics among you. Do not cause it to come again into the minds of those sovereigns and their peoples, whom an inconsiderate zeal has often driven into violence and ferocity against protestants, that a war to compel the weakest to follow the religion of the strongest is just and lawful.”

Had not something been gained for the world when this language was held by a Catholic on the very spot where less than a half century before the whole population of the Netherlands, men, women, and children, had been condemned to death by a foreign tyrant, for the simple reason that it was just, legal, and a Christian duty to punish the weak for refusing to follow the religion of the strong?

“As for the perils which some affect to fear,” said Jeannin, further, “if this liberty of worship is accorded, experience teaches us every day that diversity of religion is not the cause of the ruin of states, and that a government does not cease to be good, nor its subjects to live in peace and friend ship with one another, rendering due obedience to the laws and to their, rulers as well as if they had all been of the same religion, without having another thought, save for the preservation of the dignity and grandeur of the state in which God had caused them to be born. The danger is not in the permission, but in the prohibition of religious liberty.”

All this seems commonplace enough to us on the western side of the Atlantic, in the middle of the nineteenth century, but it would have been rank blasphemy in New England in the middle of the seventeenth, many years after Jeannin spoke. It was a horrible sound, too, in the ears of some of his audience.

To the pretence so often urged by the Catholic persecutors, and now set up by their Calvinistic imitators; that those who still clung to the old religion were at liberty to depart from the land, the president replied with dignified scorn.

“With what justice,” he asked, “can you drive into, exile people who have committed no offence, and who have helped to conquer the very country from which you would now banish them? If you do drive them away, you will make solitudes in your commonwealth, which will, be the cause of evils such as I prefer that you should reflect upon without my declaring them now. Although these reasons,” he continued, “would seem sufficient to induce you to accord the free and public exercise of the Catholic religion, the king, not hoping as much as that, because aware that you are not disposed to go so far, is content to request only this grace in behalf of the Catholics, that you will tolerate them, and suffer them to have some exercise of their religion within their own households, without interference or inquiry on that account, and without execution of the rigorous decrees heretofore enforced against them.”

Page 2540

Certainly if such wholesome, moderate, and modest counsels as these had been rejected, it would have been sound doctrine to proclaim that the world did not move. And there were individuals enough, even an influential party, prepared to oppose them for both technical and practical reasons. And the cause of intolerance derived much warmth and comfort at this juncture from that great luminary of theology and political philosophy, the King of Great Britain. Direful and solemn were the warnings uttered by James to the republic against permitting the old religion, or any religion save his own religion, to obtain the slightest foothold within her borders.

“Let the religion be taught and preached in its parity throughout your provinces without the least mixture,” said Sir Ralph Winwood, in the name of his sovereign.

“On this foundation the justice of your cause is built. There is but one verity. Those who are willing to tolerate any religion, whatever it may be, and try to make you believe that liberty for both is necessary in your commonwealth, are paving the way towards atheism.”

Such were the counsels of King James to the united States of the Netherlands against harbouring Catholics. A few years later he was casting forth Calvinists from his own dominions as if they had been lepers; and they went forth on their weary pilgrimage to the howling wilderness of North America, those exiled Calvinists, to build a greater republic than had ever been dreamed of before on this planet; and they went forth, not to preach, but in their turn to denounce toleration and to hang heretics. “He who would tolerate another religion that his own may be tolerated, would if need be, hang God’s bible at the devil’s girdle.” So spoke an early Massachusetts pilgrim, in the very spirit, almost the very words of the royal persecutor; who had driven him into outer darkness beyond the seas. He had not learned the lesson of the mighty movement in which he was a pioneer, any more than Gomarus or Uytenbogaart had comprehended why the Dutch republic had risen.

Yet the founders of the two commonwealths, the United States of the seventeenth and of the nineteenth centuries, although many of them fiercely intolerant, through a natural instinct of resistance, not only to the oppressor but to the creed of the oppressor, had been breaking out the way, not to atheism, as King James believed, but to the only garden in which Christianity can perennially flourish—religious liberty.

Those most ardent and zealous path-finders may be forgiven, in view of the inestimable benefits conferred by them upon humanity, that they did not travel on their own road. It should be sufficient for us, if we make due use of their great imperishable work ourselves; and if we never cease rendering thanks to the Omnipotent, that there is at least one great nation on the globe where the words toleration and dissenter have no meaning whatever.

Page 2541

For the Dutch fanatics of the reformed church, at the moment of the truce, to attempt to reverse the course of events, and to shut off the mighty movement of the great revolt from its destined expanse, was as hopeless a dream as to drive back the Rhine, as it reached the ocean, into the narrow channel of the Rheinwald glacier whence it sprang.

The republic became the refuge for the oppressed of all nations, where Jews and Gentiles, Catholics, Calvinists, and Anabaptistis, prayed after their own manner to the same God and Father. It was too much, however, to hope that passions which had been so fiercely bubbling during fifty years would subside at once, and that the most intense religious hatreds that ever existed would exhale with the proclamation of truce. The march of humanity is rarely rapid enough to keep pace with the leaders in its most sublime movements, and it often happens that its chieftains are dwarfed in the estimation of the contemporaneous vulgar, by the very distance at which they precede their unconscious followers. But even if the progress of the human mind towards the truth is fated to be a spiral one, as if to remind us that mankind is of the earth, earthy—a worm in the dust while inhabiting this lower sphere—it is at least a consolation to reflect upon the gradual advancement of the intellect from age to age.

The spirit of Torquemada, of Charles, of Philip, of Titelmann, is even now not extinct on this globe, but there are counter forces at work, which must ultimately blast it into insignificance. At the moment of the great truce, that evil spirit was not exorcised from the human breast, but the number of its victims and the intensity of its influence had already miraculously diminished.

The truce was made and announced all over the Netherlands by the ringing of bells, the happy discharge of innocent artillery, by illuminations, by Te Deums in all the churches. Papist and Presbyterian fell on their knees in every grand cathedral or humblest village church, to thank God that what had seemed the eternal butchery was over. The inhabitants of the united and of the obedient Netherlands rushed across the frontiers into a fraternal embrace; like the meeting of many waters when the flood-gates are lifted. It was pity that the foreign sovereignty, established at Brussels, could not then and there have been for ever swept away, and self-government and beneficent union extended over all the seventeen Netherlands, Walloon and Flemish, Catholic and reformed. But it hardly needs a word to show that the course of events had created a deeper chasm between the two sections than the gravest physical catastrophe could have produced. The opposing cliffs which religious hatred had rent asunder, and between which it seemed destined to flow for ever, seemed very close, and yet eternally separated.

The great war had established the republic; and apparently doomed the obedient Netherlands to perpetual servitude.

Page 2542

There were many details of minor importance to be settled between the various governments involved in these great transactions; but this history draws to its predestined close, and it is necessary to glide rapidly over matters which rather belong to a later epoch than the one now under consideration.

The treaty between the republic and the government of Great Britain, according to which each was to assist the other in case of war with four thousand troops and twenty ships of war, was confirmed in the treaty of truce. The debt of the United Provinces to the Crown of England was definitely reckoned at 8,184,080 florins, and it was settled by the truce that 200,000 florins should be paid semi-annually, to begin with the year 1611, until the whole debt should be discharged.

The army establishment of the republic was fixed during the truce at thirty thousand infantry and three thousand horse. This was a reduction from the war footing of fifteen thousand men. Of the force retained, four thousand were a French legion maintained by the king, two thousand other French at the expense of the States, and distributed among other troops, two thousand Scotch, three thousand English, three thousand Germans. The rest were native Netherlanders, among whom, however, were very few Hollanders and Zeelanders, from which races the navy, both public and mercantile, was almost wholly supplied.

The revenue of the United Provinces was estimated at between seven and eight millions of florins.

It is superfluous to call attention again to the wonderful smallness of the means, the minuteness of the physical enginry, as compared with more modern manifestations, especially in our own land and epoch, by which so stupendous a result had been reached. In the midst of an age in which regal and sacerdotal despotism had seemed as omnipotent and irreversible as the elemental laws of the universe, the republic had been reproduced. A commonwealth of sand-banks, lagoons, and meadows, less than fourteen thousand square miles in extent, had done battle, for nearly half a century, with the greatest of existing powers, a realm whose territory was nearly a third of the globe, and which claimed universal monarchy. And this had been done with an army averaging forty-six thousand men, half of them foreigners hired by the job, and by a sea-faring population, volunteering into ships of every class and denomination, from a fly-boat to a galleot of war.

And when the republic had won its independence, after this almost eternal warfare, it owed four or five millions of dollars, and had sometimes an annual revenue of nearly that amount.

It was estimated by Barneveld, at the conclusion of the truce, that the interest on the public debt of Spain was about thrice the amount of the yearly income of the republic, and it was characteristic of the financial ideas of the period, that fears were entertained

lest a total repudiation of that burthen by the Spanish Government would enable it to resume the war against the provinces with redoubled energy.

Page 2543

The annual salary of Prince Maurice, who was to see his chief occupation gone by the cessation of the war, was fixed by the States at 120,000 florins. It was agreed, that in case of his marriage he should receive a further yearly sum of 25,000 florins, and this addition was soon afterwards voted to him outright, it being obvious that the prince would remain all his days a bachelor.

Count Frederic Henry likewise received a military salary of 25,000 florins, while the emoluments of Lewis William were placed at 36,000 florins a year.

It must be admitted that the republic was grateful. 70,000 dollars a year, in the seventeenth century, not only for life, but to be inherited afterwards by his younger brother, Frederic Henry, was surely a munificent sum to be accorded from the puny exchequer of the States-General to the chief magistrate of the nation.

The mighty transatlantic republic, with its population of thirty or forty millions, and its revenue of five hundred millions of dollars, pays 25,000 dollars annually for its president during his four years of office, and this in the second half of the nineteenth century, when a dollar is worth scarcely one-fifth of its value two hundred and fifty years ago.

Surely here is improvement, both in the capacity to produce and in the power to save.

In the year 1609, died John, the last sovereign of Cleves and Juliers, and Jacob Arminius, Doctor of Divinity at Leyden. It would be difficult to imagine two more entirely dissimilar individuals of the human family than this lunatic duke and that theological professor. And yet, perhaps, the two names, more concisely than those of any other mortals, might serve as an index to the ghastly chronicle over which a coming generation was to shudder. The death of the duke was at first thought likely to break off the negotiations for truce. The States-General at once declared that they would permit no movements on the part of the Spanish party to seize the inheritance in behalf of the Catholic claimants. Prince Maurice, nothing loth to make use of so well-timed an event in order to cut for ever the tangled skein at the Hague, was for marching forthwith into the duchies.

But the archdukes gave such unequivocal assurances of abstaining from interference, and the desire for peace was so strong both in the obedient and in the United Provinces, that the question of the duchies was postponed. It was to serve as both torch and fuel for one of the longest and most hideous tragedies that had ever disgraced humanity. A thirty years' war of demons was, after a brief interval, to succeed the forty years' struggle between slaves and masters, which had just ended in the recognition of Dutch independence.

The gentle Arminius was in his grave, but a bloody harvest was fast ripening from the seeds which he had sown. That evil story must find its place in the melancholy chapter where the fortunes of the Dutch republic are blended with the grim chronicle of the thirty

years' war. Until the time arrives for retracing the course of those united transactions to their final termination in the peace of Westphalia, it is premature to characterize an epoch which, at the moment with which we are now occupied, had not fairly begun.

Page 2544

The Gomarites accused the Arminians of being more lax than Papists, and of filling the soul of man with vilest arrogance and confidence in good works; while the Arminians complained that the God of the Gomarites was an unjust God, himself the origin of sin.

The disputes on these themes had been perpetual in the provinces ever since the early days of the Reformation. Of late, however, the acrimony of theological conflict had been growing day by day more intense. It was the eternal struggle of religious dogma to get possession of the State, and to make use of political forces in order to put fetters on the human soul; to condemn it to slavery where most it requires freedom.

The conflict between Gomarus and Arminius proceeded with such ferocity in Leyden, that, since the days of the memorable siege, to which the university owed its origin, men's minds had never been roused to such feverish anxiety: The theological cannonades, which thundered daily from the college buildings and caused all Holland to quake, seemed more appalling to the burghers than the enginry of Valdez and Boisot had ever seemed to their fathers.

The Gomarite doctrine gained most favour with the clergy, the Arminian creed with the municipal magistracies. The magistrates claimed that decisions concerning religious matters belonged to the supreme authority. The Gomarites contended that sacred matters should be referred to synods of the clergy. Here was the germ of a conflict which might one day shake the republic to its foundations.

Barneveld, the great leader of the municipal, party, who loved political power quite as well as he loved his country; was naturally a chieftain of the Arminians; for church, matters were no more separated from political matters in the commonwealth at that moment than they were in the cabinets of Henry, James, or Philip.

It was inevitable therefore that the war party should pour upon his head more than seven vials of theological wrath. The religious doctrines which he espoused were, odious not only because they were deemed vile in themselves but because he believed in them.

Arminianism was regarded as a new and horrible epidemic, daily gaining ground, and threatening to destroy the whole population. Men deliberated concerning the best means to cut off communication with the infected regions, and to extirpate the plague even by desperate and heroic remedies, as men in later days take measures against the cholera or the rinderpest.

Theological hatred was surely not extinct in the Netherlands. It was a consolation, however, that its influence was rendered less noxious by the vastly increased strength of principles long dormant in the atmosphere. Anna van der Hoven, buried alive in Brussels, simply because her Calvinistic creed was a crime in the eyes of the monks who murdered her, was the last victim to purely religious persecution. If there were one

day to be still a tragedy or two in the Netherlands it was inevitable that theological hatred would be obliged to combine with political party spirit in its most condensed form before any deadly effect could be produced.

Page 2545

Thus the year 1609 is a memorable one in the world's history. It forms a great landmark in human progress. It witnessed the recognition of a republic, powerful in itself, and whose example was destined to be most influential upon the career of two mighty commonwealths of the future. The British empire, just expanding for wider flight than it had hitherto essayed, and about to pass through a series of vast revolutions, gathering strength of wing as it emerged from cloud after cloud; and the American republic, whose frail and obscure beginnings at that very instant of time scarcely attracted a passing attention from the contemporaneous world—both these political organisms, to which so much of mankind's future liberties had been entrusted, were deeply indebted to the earlier self-governing commonwealth.

The Dutch republic was the first free nation to put a girdle of empire around the earth. It had courage, enterprise, intelligence, perseverance, faith in itself, the instinct of self-government and self-help, hatred of tyranny, the disposition to domineer, aggressiveness, greediness, inquisitiveness, insolence, the love of science, of liberty, and of money—all this in unlimited extent. It had one great defect, it had no country. Upon that meagre standing ground its hand had moved the world with an impulse to be felt through all the ages, but there was not soil enough in those fourteen thousand, square miles to form the metropolis of the magnificent empire which the genius of liberty had created beyond the seas.

That the political institutions bequeathed by the United States of the seventeenth century have been vastly improved, both in theory and practice, by the United States of the nineteenth, no American is likely to gainsay. That the elder Republic showed us also what to avoid, and was a living example of the perils besetting a Confederacy which dared not become a Union, is a lesson which we might take closely to heart.

But the year 1609 was not only memorable as marking an epoch in Dutch history. It was the beginning of a great and universal pause. The world had need of rest. Disintegration had been going on too rapidly, and it was absolutely necessary that there should be a new birth, if civilization were not to vanish.

A twenty years' truce between the Turkish and Holy Roman empires was nearly simultaneous with the twelve years' truce between Spain and the United Provinces. The Emperor Rudolph having refused to ratify the treaty which his brother Matthias had made, was in consequence partially discrowned. The same archduke who, thirty years before, had slipped away from Vienna in his nightgown; with his face blackened, to outwit and outgeneral William the Silent at Brussels, was now—more successful in his manoeuvres against his imperial brother. Standing at the head of his army in battle array, in the open fields before the walls of Prague, he received—from the unfortunate Rudolph the crown and regalia of Hungary, and was by solemn treaty declared sovereign of that ancient and chivalrous kingdom.

Page 2546

His triumphal entrance into Vienna succeeded, where, surrounded by great nobles and burghers, with his brother Maximilian at his side, with immense pomp and with flowers strewn before his feet, he ratified that truce with Ahmed which Rudolph had rejected. Three months later he was crowned at Pressburg, having first accepted the conditions proposed by the estates of Hungary. Foremost among these was the provision that the exercise of the reformed religion should be free in all the cities and villages beneath his sceptre, and that every man in the kingdom was to worship God according to his conscience.

In the following March, at the very moment accordingly when the conclusive negotiations were fast ripening at Antwerp, Matthias granted religious peace for Austria likewise. Great was the indignation of his nephew Leopold, the nuncius, and the Spanish ambassador in consequence, by each and all of whom the revolutionary mischief-maker, with his brother's crown on his head, was threatened with excommunication.

As for Ferdinand of Styria, his wrath may well be imagined. He refused religious peace in his dominions with scorn ineffable. Not Gomarus in Leyden could have shrunk from Arminianism with more intense horror than that with which the archduke at Gratz recoiled from any form of Protestantism. He wrote to his brother-in-law the King of Spain and to other potentates—as if the very soul of Philip *ii*. were alive within him—that he would rather have a country without inhabitants than with a single protestant on its soil. He strongly urged upon his Catholic Majesty—as if such urging were necessary at the Spanish court—the necessity of extirpating heresy, root and branch.

Here was one man at least who knew what he meant, and on whom the dread lessons of fifty years of bloodshed had been lost. Magnificent was the contempt which this pupil of the Jesuits felt for any little progress made by the world since the days of Torquemada. In Ferdinand's view Alva was a Christian hero, scarcely second to Godfrey of Bouillon, Philip *ii*. a sainted martyr, while the Dutch republic had never been born.

And Ferdinand was one day to sit on the throne of the holy Roman Empire. Might not a shudder come over the souls of men as coming events vaguely shaped themselves to prophetic eyes?

Meantime there was religious peace in Hungary, in Austria, in Bohemia, in France, in Great Britain, in the Netherlands. The hangman's hands were for a period at rest, so far as theology had need of them. Butchery in the name of Christ was suspended throughout Christendom. The Cross and the Crescent, Santiago and the Orange banner, were for a season in repose.

There was a vast lull between two mighty storms. The forty years' war was in the past, the thirty years' war in the not far distant future.

CHAPTER LIII.

CONCLUSION.

Page 2547

Forth-three years had passed since the memorable April morning in which the great nobles of the, Netherlands presented their “Request” to the Regent Margaret at Brussels.

They had requested that the holy Spanish Inquisition might not be established on their soil to the suppression of all their political and religious institutions.

The war which those high-born “beggars” had then kindled, little knowing what they were doing, had now come to a close, and the successor of Philip *ii*., instead of planting the Inquisition in the provinces, had recognised them as an independent, sovereign, protestant republic.

In the ratification which he had just signed of the treaty of truce the most Catholic king had in his turn made a Request. He had asked the States-General to deal kindly with their Catholic subjects.

That request was not answered with the age and faggot; with the avenging sword of mercenary legions. On the contrary, it was destined to be granted. The world had gained something in forty-three years. It had at least begun to learn that the hangman is not the most appropriate teacher of religion.

During the period of apparent chaos with which this history of the great revolt has been occupied, there had in truth been a great reorganization, a perfected new birth. The republic had once more appeared in the world.

Its main characteristics have been indicated in the course of the narrative, for it was a polity which gradually unfolded itself out of the decay and change of previous organisms.

It was, as it were, in their own despite and unwittingly that the United Provinces became a republic at all.

In vain, after originally declaring their independence of the ancient tyrant, had they attempted to annex themselves to France and to England. The sovereignty had been spurned. The magnificent prize which France for centuries since has so persistently coveted, and the attainment of which has been a cardinal point of her perpetual policy —the Low Countries and the banks of the Rhine—was deliberately laid at her feet, and as deliberately refused.

It was the secret hope of the present monarch to repair the loss which the kingdom had suffered through the imbecility of his two immediate predecessors. But a great nation cannot with impunity permit itself to be despotically governed for thirty years by lunatics. It was not for the Bearnese, with all his valour, his wit, and his duplicity, to obtain the prize which Charles *ix*. and Henry *iii*. had thrown away. Yet to make himself

sovereign of the Netherlands was his guiding but most secret thought during all the wearisome and tortuous negotiations which preceded the truce; nor did he abandon the great hope with the signature of the treaty of 1609.

Maurice of Nassau too was a formidable rival to Henry. The stadholder-prince was no republican. He was a good patriot, a noble soldier, an honest man. But his father had been offered the sovereignty of Holland and Zeeland, and the pistol of Balthasar Gerard had alone, in all human probability, prevented the great prince from becoming constitutional monarch of all the Netherlands, Batavian and Belgic.

Page 2548

Maurice himself asserted that not only had he been offered a million of dollars, and large estates besides in Germany, if he would leave the provinces to their fate, but that the archdukes had offered, would he join his fortunes with theirs, to place him in a higher position over all the Netherlands than he had ever enjoyed in the United Provinces, and that they had even unequivocally offered him the sovereignty over the whole land.

Maurice was a man of truth, and we have no right to dispute the accuracy of the extraordinary statement. He must however have reflected upon the offer once made by the Prince of Darkness from the mountain top, and have asked himself by what machinery the archdukes proposed to place him in possession of such a kingdom.

There had, however, been serious question among leading Dutch statesmen of making him constitutional, hereditary monarch of the United Netherlands. As late as 1602 a secret conference was held at the house of Olden-Barneveld, in which the Advocate had himself urged the claims of the prince to the sovereignty, and reminded his guests that the signed and sealed documents—with the concurrence of the Amsterdam municipality alone lacking—by which William the Silent had been invited to assume the crown were still in the possession of his son.

Nothing came of these deliberations. It was agreed that to stir in the matter at that moment would be premature, and that the pursuit by Maurice of the monarchy in the circumstances then existing would not only over-burthen him with expense, but make him a more conspicuous mark than ever for the assassin. It is certain that the prince manifested no undue anxiety at any period in regard to those transactions.

Subsequently, as Olden-Barneveld's personal power increased, and as the negotiations for peace became more and more likely to prove successful, the Advocate lost all relish for placing his great rival on a throne. The whole project, with the documents and secret schemes therewith connected, became mere alms for oblivion. Barneveld himself, although of comparatively humble birth and station, was likely with time to exercise more real power in the State than either Henry or Maurice; and thus while there were three individuals who in different ways aspired to supreme power, the republic, notwithstanding, asserted and established itself.

Freedom of government and freedom, of religion were, on the whole, assisted by this triple antagonism. The prince, so soon as war was over, hated the Advocate and his daily increasing power more and more. He allied himself more closely than ever with the Gomarites and the clerical party in general, and did his best to inflame the persecuting spirit, already existing in the provinces, against the Catholics and the later sects of Protestants.

Jeannin warned him that "by thus howling with the priests" he would be suspected of more desperately ambitious designs than he perhaps really cherished.

Page 2549

On the other hand, Barneveld was accused of a willingness to wink at the introduction, privately and quietly, of the Roman Catholic worship. That this was the deadliest of sins, there was no doubt whatever in the minds of his revilers. When it was added that he was suspected of the Arminian leprosy, and that he could tolerate the thought that a virtuous man or woman, not predestined from all time for salvation, could possibly find the way to heaven, language becomes powerless to stigmatize his depravity. Whatever the punishment impending over his head in this world or the next, it is certain that the cause of human freedom was not destined on the whole to lose ground through the life-work of Barneveld.

A champion of liberties rather than of liberty, he defended his fatherland with heart and soul against the stranger; yet the government of that fatherland was, in his judgments to be transferred from the hand of the foreigner, not to the self-governing people, but to the provincial corporations. For the People he had no respect, and perhaps little affection. He often spoke of popular rights with contempt. Of popular sovereignty he had no conception. His patriotism, like his ambition, was provincial. Yet his perceptions as to eternal necessity in all healthy governments taught him that comprehensible relations between the state and the population were needful to the very existence of a free commonwealth. The United Provinces, he maintained, were not a republic, but a league of seven provinces very loosely hung together, a mere provisional organization for which it was not then possible to substitute anything better. He expressed this opinion with deep regret, just as the war of independence was closing, and added his conviction that, without some well-ordered government, no republic could stand.

Yet, as time wore on, the Advocate was destined to acquiesce more and more in this defective constitution. A settled theory there was none, and it would have been difficult legally and historically to establish the central sovereignty of the States-General as matter of right.

Thus Barneveld, who was anything but a democrat, became, almost unwittingly, the champion of the least venerable or imposing of all forms of aristocracy—an oligarchy of traders who imagined themselves patricians. Corporate rights, not popular liberty, seemed, in his view, the precious gains made by such a prodigious expenditure of time, money, and blood. Although such acquisitions were practically a vast addition to the stock of human freedom then existing in the world, yet torrents of blood and millions of treasure were to be wasted in the coming centuries before mankind was to convince itself that a republic is only to be made powerful and perpetual by placing itself upon the basis of popular right rather than on that of municipal privilege.

The singular docility of the Dutch people, combined with the simplicity, honesty, and practical sagacity of the earlier burgher patricians, made the defects of the system tolerable for a longer period than might have been expected; nor was it until theological dissensions had gathered to such intensity as to set the whole commonwealth aflame that the grave defects in the political structure could be fairly estimated.

Page 2550

It would be anticipating a dark chapter in the history of the United Provinces were the reader's attention now to be called to those fearful convulsions. The greatest reserve is therefore necessary at present in alluding to the subject.

It was not to be expected that an imperious, energetic but somewhat limited nature like that of Barneveld should at that epoch thoroughly comprehend the meaning of religious freedom. William the Silent alone seems to have risen to that height. A conscientious Calvinist himself, the father of his country would have been glad to see Protestant and Papist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Anabaptist living together in harmony and political equality. This was not to be. The soul of the immortal prince could not inspire the hearts of his contemporaries. That Barneveld was disposed to a breadth of religious sympathy unusual in those days, seems certain. It was inevitable, too, that the mild doctrines of Arminius should be more in harmony with such a character than were the fierce dogmas of Calvin. But the struggle, either to force Arminianism upon the Church which considered itself the established one in the Netherlands, or to expel the Calvinists from it, had not yet begun; although the seeds of religious persecution of Protestants by Protestants had already been sown broadcast.

The day was not far distant when the very Calvinists, to whom, more than to any other class of men, the political liberties of Holland, England, and America are due, were to be hunted out of churches into farm-houses, suburban hovels, and canal-boats by the arm of provincial sovereignty and in the name of state-rights, as pitilessly as the early reformers had been driven out of cathedrals in the name of emperor and pope; and when even those refuges for conscientious worship were to be denied by the dominant sect. And the day was to come, too, when the Calvinists, regaining ascendency in their turn, were to hunt the heterodox as they had themselves been hunted; and this, at the very moment when their fellow Calvinists of England were driven by the Church of that kingdom into the American wilderness.

Toleration—that intolerable term of insult to all who love liberty—had not yet been discovered. It had scarcely occurred to Arminian or Presbyterian that civil authority and ecclesiastical doctrine could be divorced from each other. As the individual sovereignty of the seven states established itself more and more securely, the right of provincial power to dictate religious dogmas, and to superintend the popular conscience, was exercised with a placid arrogance which papal infallibility could scarcely exceed. The alternation was only between the sects, each in its turn becoming orthodox, and therefore persecuting. The lessened intensity of persecution however, which priesthood and authority were now allowed to exercise, marked the gains secured.

Yet while we censure—as we have a right to do from the point of view which we have gained after centuries—the crimes committed by bigotry against liberty, we should be false, to our faith in human progress did we not acknowledge our debt of gratitude to the hot gospellers of Holland and England.

Page 2551

The doctrine of predestination, the consciousness of being chosen soldiers of Christ, inspired those puritans, who founded the commonwealths of England, of Holland, and of America, with a contempt of toil, danger, and death which enabled them to accomplish things almost supernatural.

No uncouthness of phraseology, no unlovely austerity of deportment, could, except to vulgar minds, make that sublime enthusiasm ridiculous, which on either side the ocean ever confronted tyranny with dauntless front, and welcomed death on battle-field, scaffold, or rack with perfect composure.

The early puritan at least believed. The very intensity of his belief made him—all unconsciously to himself, and narrowed as was his view of his position—the great instrument by which the widest human liberty was to be gained for all mankind.

The elected favourite of the King of kings feared the power of no earthly king. Accepting in rapture the decrees of a supernatural tyranny, he rose on mighty wings above the reach of human wrath. Prostrating himself before a God of vengeance, of jealousy, and of injustice, he naturally imitated the attributes which he believed to be divine. It was inevitable, therefore, that Barneveld, and those who thought with him, when they should attempt to force the children of Belial into the company of the elect and to drive the faithful out of their own churches, should be detested as bitterly as papists had ever been.

Had Barneveld's intellect been broad enough to imagine in a great republic the separation of Church and State, he would deserve a tenderer sympathy, but he would have been far in advance of his age. It is not cheerful to see so powerful an intellect and so patriotic a character daring to entrust the relations between man and his Maker to the decree of a trading corporation. But alas! the world was to wait for centuries until it should learn that the State can best defend religion by letting it alone, and that the political arm is apt to wither with palsy when it attempts to control the human conscience.

It is not entirely the commonwealth of the United Netherlands that is of importance in the epoch which I have endeavoured to illustrate. History can have neither value nor charm for those who are not impressed with a conviction of its continuity.

More than ever during the period which we call modern history has this idea of the continuousness of our race, and especially of the inhabitants of Europe and America, become almost oppressive to the imagination. There is a sense of immortality even upon earth when we see the succession of heritages in the domains of science, of intellectual and material wealth by which mankind, generation after generation, is enriching itself.

If this progress be a dream, if mankind be describing a limited circle instead of advancing towards the infinite; then no study can be more contemptible than the study of history.

Page 2552

Few strides more gigantic have been taken in the march of humanity than those by which a parcel of outlying provinces in the north of Europe exchanged slavery to a foreign despotism and to the Holy Inquisition for the position of a self-governing commonwealth, in the, front rank of contemporary powers, and in many respects the foremost of the world. It is impossible to calculate the amount of benefit tendered to civilization by the example of the Dutch republic. It has been a model which has been imitated, in many respects, by great nations. It has even been valuable in its very defects; indicating to the patient observer many errors most important to avoid.

Therefore, had the little republic sunk for ever in the sea so soon as the treaty of peace had been signed at Antwerp, its career would have been prolific of good for all succeeding time.

Exactly at the moment when a splendid but decaying despotism, founded upon wrong —upon oppression of the human body and the immortal soul, upon slavery, in short, of the worst kind—was awaking from its insane dream of universal empire to a consciousness of its own decay, the new republic was recognised among the nations.

It would hardly be incorrect to describe the Holland of the beginning of the seventeenth century as the exact reverse of Spain. In, the commonwealth labour was most honourable; in the kingdom it was vile. In the north to be idle was accounted and punished as a crime. In the southern peninsula, to be contaminated with mechanical, mercantile, commercial, manufacturing pursuits, was to be accursed. Labour was for slaves, and at last the mere spectacle of labour became so offensive that even the slaves were expelled from the land. To work was as degrading in the south as to beg or to steal was esteemed unworthy of humanity in the north. To think a man’s thought upon high matters of religion and government, and through a thousand errors to pursue the truth; with the aid of the Most High and with the best use of human reason, was a privilege secured by the commonwealth, at the expense of two generations of continuous bloodshed. To lie fettered, soul and body, at the feet of authority wielded by a priesthood in its last stage of corruption, and monarchy almost reduced to imbecility, was the lot of the chivalrous, genial; but much oppressed Spaniard.

The pictures painted of the republic by shrewd and caustic observers, not inclined by nature or craft to portray freedom in too engaging colours, seem, when contrasted with those revealed of Spain, almost like enthusiastic fantasies of an ideal commonwealth.

Page 2553

During the last twenty years of the great war the material prosperity of the Netherlands had wonderfully increased. They had, become the first commercial nation in the world. They had acquired the supremacy of the seas. The population of Amsterdam had in twenty years increased from seventy thousand to a hundred and thirty thousand, and was destined to be again more than doubled in the coming decade. The population of Antwerp had sunk almost as rapidly as that of its rival had increased; having lessened by fifty thousand during the same period. The commercial capital of the obedient provinces, having already lost much of its famous traffic by the great changes in the commercial current of the world, was unable to compete with the cities of the United Provinces in the vast trade which the geographical discoveries of the preceding century had opened to civilization. Freedom of thought and action were denied, and without such liberty it was impossible for oceanic commerce to thrive. Moreover, the possession by the Hollanders of the Scheld forts below Antwerp, and of Flushing at the river's mouth, suffocated the ancient city, and would of itself have been sufficient to paralyze all its efforts.

In Antwerp the exchange, where once thousands of the great merchants of the earth held their daily financial parliament, now echoed to the solitary footfall of the passing stranger. Ships lay rotting at the quays; brambles grow in the commercial streets. In Amsterdam the city had been enlarged by two-thirds, and those who swarmed thither to seek their fortunes could not wait for the streets to be laid out and houses to be built, but established themselves in the environs, building themselves hovels and temporary residences, although certain to find their encampments swept away with the steady expanse of the city. As much land as could be covered by a man's foot was worth a ducat in gold.

In every branch of human industry these republicans took the lead. On that scrap of solid ground, rescued by human energy from the ocean, were the most fertile pastures in the world. On those pastures grazed the most famous cattle in the world. An ox often weighed more than two thousand pounds. The cows produced two and three calves at a time, the sheep four and five lambs. In a single village four thousand kine were counted. Butter and cheese were exported to the annual value of a million, salted provisions to an incredible extent. The farmers were industrious, thriving, and independent. It is an amusing illustration of the agricultural thrift and republican simplicity of this people that on one occasion a farmer proposed to Prince Maurice that he should marry his daughter, promising with her a dowry of a hundred thousand florins.

Page 2554

The mechanical ingenuity of the Netherlanders, already celebrated by Julius Caesar and by Tacitus, had lost nothing of its ancient fame. The contemporary world confessed that in many fabrics the Hollanders were at the head of mankind. Dutch linen, manufactured of the flax grown on their own fields or imported from the obedient provinces, was esteemed a fitting present for kings to make and to receive. The name of the country had passed into the literature of England as synonymous with the delicate fabric itself. The Venetians confessed themselves equalled, if not outdone, by the crystal workers and sugar refiners of the northern republic. The tapestries of Arras—the name of which Walloon city had become a household word of luxury in all modern languages—were now transplanted to the soil of freedom, more congenial to the advancement of art. Brocades of the precious metals; splendid satins and velvets; serges and homely fustians; laces of thread and silk; the finer and coarser manufactures of clay and porcelain; iron, steel, and all useful fabrics for the building and outfitting of ships; substantial broadcloths manufactured of wool imported from Scotland—all this was but a portion of the industrial production of the provinces.

They supplied the deficiency of coal, not then an article readily obtained by commerce, with other remains of antediluvian forests long since buried in the sea, and now recovered from its depths and made useful and portable by untiring industry. Peat was not only the fuel for the fireside, but for the extensive fabrics of the country, and its advantages so much excited the admiration of the Venetian envoys that they sent home samples of it, in the hope that the lagunes of Venice might prove as prolific of this indispensable article as the polders of Holland.

But the foundation of the national wealth, the source of the apparently fabulous power by which the republic had at last overthrown her gigantic antagonist, was the ocean. The republic was sea-born and sea-sustained.

She had nearly one hundred thousand sailors, and three thousand ships. The sailors were the boldest, the best disciplined, and the most experienced in the-world, whether for peaceable seafaring or ocean warfare. The ships were capable of furnishing from out of their number in time of need the most numerous and the best appointed navy then known to mankind.

The republic had the carrying trade for all nations. Feeling its very existence dependent upon commerce, it had strode centuries in advance of the contemporary world in the liberation of trade. But two or three per cent. ad valorem was levied upon imports; foreign goods however being subject, as well as internal products, to heavy imposts in the way of both direct and indirect taxation.

Every article of necessity or luxury known was to be purchased in profusion and at reasonable prices in the warehouses of Holland.

Page 2555

A swarm of river vessels and fly-boats were coming daily through the rivers of Germany, France and the Netherlands, laden with the agricultural products and the choice manufactures of central and western Europe. Wine and oil, and delicate fabrics in thread and wool, came from France, but no silks, velvets, nor satins; for the great Sully had succeeded in persuading his master that the white mulberry would not grow in his kingdom, and that silk manufactures were an impossible dream for France. Nearly a thousand ships were constantly employed in the Baltic trade. The forests of Holland were almost as extensive as those which grew on Norwegian hills, but they were submerged. The foundation of a single mansion required a grove, and wood was extensively used in the superstructure. The houses, built of a framework of substantial timber, and filled in with brick or rubble, were raised almost as rapidly as tents, during the prodigious expansion of industry towards the end of the war. From the realms of the Osterlings, or shores of the Baltic, came daily fleets laden with wheat and other grains so that even in time of famine the granaries of the republic were overflowing, and ready to dispense the material of life to the outer world.

Eight hundred vessels of lesser size but compact build were perpetually fishing for herrings on the northern coasts. These hardy mariners, the militia of the sea, who had learned in their life of hardship and daring the art of destroying Spanish and Portuguese armadas, and confronting the dangers of either pole, passed a long season on the deep. Commercial voyagers as well as fishermen, they salted their fish as soon as taken from the sea, and transported them to the various ports of Europe, thus reducing their herrings into specie before their return, and proving that a fishery in such hands was worth more than the mines of Mexico and Peru.

It is customary to speak of the natural resources of a country as furnishing a guarantee of material prosperity. But here was a republic almost without natural resources, which had yet supplied by human intelligence and thrift what a niggard nature had denied. Spain was overflowing with unlimited treasure, and had possessed half the world in fee; and Spain was bankrupt, decaying, sinking into universal pauperism. Holland, with freedom of thought, of commerce, of speech, of action, placed itself, by intellectual power alone, in the front rank of civilization.

From Cathay, from the tropical coasts of Africa, and from farthest Ind, came every drug, spice, or plant, every valuable jewel, every costly fabric, that human ingenuity had discovered or created. The Spaniards, maintaining a frail tenure upon a portion of those prolific regions, gathered their spice harvests at the point of the sword, and were frequently unable to prevent their northern rivals from ravaging such fields as they had not yet been able to appropriate.

Page 2556

Certainly this conduct of the Hollanders was barbarism and supreme selfishness, if judged by the sounder political economy of our time. Yet it should never be forgotten that the contest between Spain and Holland in those distant regions, as everywhere else, was war to the knife between superstition and freedom, between the spirits of progress and of dogma. Hard blows and foul blows were struck in such a fight, and humanity, although gaining at last immense results, had much to suffer and much to learn ere the day was won.

But Spain was nearly beaten out of those eastern regions, and the very fact that the naval supremacy of the republic placed her ancient tyrant at her mercy was the main reason for Spain to conclude the treaty of truce. Lest she should lose the India trade entirely, Spain consented to the treaty article by which, without mentioning the word, she conceded the thing. It was almost pathetic to witness, as we have witnessed, this despotism in its dotage, mumbling so long over the formal concession to her conqueror of a portion of that India trade which would have been entirely wrested from herself had the war continued. And of this Spain was at heart entirely convinced. Thus the Portuguese, once the lords and masters, as they had been the European discoverers, of those prolific regions and of the ocean highways which led to them, now came with docility to the republic which they had once affected to despise, and purchased the cloves and the allspice, the nutmegs and the cinnamon, of which they had held the monopoly; or waited with patience until the untiring Hollanders should bring the precious wares to the peninsula ports.

A Dutch Indianian would make her voyage to the antipodes and her return in less time than was spent by a Portuguese or a Spaniard in the outward voyage. To accomplish such an enterprise in two years was accounted a wonder of rapidity, and when it is remembered that inland navigation through France by canal and river from the North Sea to the Mediterranean was considered both speedier and safer, because the sea voyage between the same points might last four or five months, it must be admitted that two years occupied in passing from one end of the earth to the other and back again might well seem a miracle.

The republic was among the wealthiest and the most powerful of organized States. Her population might be estimated at three millions and a half, about equal to that of England at the same period. But she was richer than England. Nowhere in the world was so large a production in proportion to the numbers of a people. Nowhere were so few unproductive consumers. Every one was at work. Vagabonds, idlers, and do-nothings, such as must be in every community, were caught up by the authorities and made to earn their bread. The devil’s pillow, idleness, was smoothed for no portion of the population.

Page 2557

There were no beggars, few paupers, no insolently luxurious and ostentatiously idle class. The modesty, thrift, and simple elegance of the housekeeping, even among the wealthy, was noted by travellers with surprise. It will be remembered with how much amused wonder, followed by something like contempt, the, magnificent household of Spinola, during his embassy at the Hague, was surveyed by the honest burghers of Holland. The authorities showed their wisdom in permitting the absurd exhibition, as an example of what should be shunned, in spite of grave remonstrances from many of the citizens. Drunken Helotism is not the only form of erring humanity capable of reading lessons to a republic.

There had been monasteries, convents, ecclesiastical establishments of all kinds in the country, before the great war between Holland and the Inquisition. These had, as a matter of course, been confiscated as the strife went on. The buildings, farms, and funds, once the property of the Church, had not, however, been seized upon, as in other Protestant lands, by rapacious monarchs, and distributed among great nobles according to royal caprice. Monarchs might give the revenue of a suppressed convent to a cook, as reward for a successful pudding; the surface of Britain and the continent might be covered with abbeys and monasteries now converted into lordly palaces—passing thus from the dead hand of the Church into the idle and unproductive palm of the noble; but the ancient ecclesiastical establishments of the free Netherlands were changed into eleemosynary institutions, admirably organized and administered with wisdom and economy, where orphans of the poor, widows of those slain in the battles for freedom by land and sea, and the aged and the infirm, who had deserved well of the republic in the days of their strength, were educated or cherished at the expense of the public, thus endowed from the spoils of the Church.

In Spain, monasteries upon monasteries were rising day by day, as if there were not yet receptacles enough for monks and priests, while thousands upon thousands of Spaniards were pressing into the ranks of the priesthood, and almost forcing themselves into monasteries, that they might be privileged to beg, because ashamed to work. In the United Netherlands the confiscated convents, with their revenues, were appropriated for the good of those who were too young or too old to labour, and too poor to maintain themselves without work. Need men look further than to this simple fact to learn why Spain was decaying while the republic was rising?

Page 2558

The ordinary budget of the United Provinces was about equal to that of England, varying not much from four millions of florins, or four hundred thousand pounds. But the extraordinary revenue was comparatively without limits, and there had been years, during the war, when the citizens had taxed themselves as highly as fifty per cent. on each individual income, and doubled the receipts of the exchequer. The budget was proposed once a year, by the council of state, and voted by the States-General, who assigned the quota of each province; that of Holland being always one-half of the whole, that of Zeeland sixteen per cent., and that of the other five of course in lesser proportions. The revenue was collected in the separate provinces, one-third of the whole being retained for provincial expenses, and the balance paid into the general treasury. There was a public debt, the annual interest of which amounted to 200,000 florins. During the war, money had been borrowed at as high a rate as thirty-six per cent., but at the conclusion of hostilities the States could borrow at six per cent., and the whole debt was funded on that basis. Taxation was enormously heavy, but patriotism caused it to be borne with cheerfulness, and productive industry made it comparatively light. Rents were charged twenty-five per cent. A hundred per cent. was levied upon beer, wine, meat, salt, spirits. Other articles of necessity and luxury were almost as severely taxed. It is not easy to enumerate the tax-list, scarcely anything foreign or domestic being exempted, while the grave error was often committed of taxing the same article, in different forms, four, five, and six times.

The people virtually taxed themselves, although the superstition concerning the State, as something distinct from and superior to the people, was to linger long and work infinite mischief among those seven republics which were never destined to be welded theoretically and legally into a union. The sacredness of corporations had succeeded, in a measure, to the divinity which hedges kings. Nevertheless, those corporations were so numerous as to be effectively open to a far larger proportion of the population than, in those days, had ever dreamed before of participating in the Government. The magistracies were in general unpaid and little coveted, being regarded as a burthen and a responsibility rather than an object of ambition. The jurisconsults, called pensionaries, who assisted the municipal authorities, received, however, a modest salary, never exceeding 1500 florins a year.

These numerous bodies, provincial and municipal, elected themselves themselves by supplying their own vacancies. The magistrates were appointed by the stadholder, on a double or triple nomination from the municipal board. This was not impartial suffrage nor manhood suffrage. The germ of a hateful burgher-oligarchy was in the system, but, as compared with Spain, where municipal magistracies were sold by the crown at public auction; or with France, where every office in church, law, magistrature, or court was an object of merchandise disposed of in open market, the system was purity itself, and marked a great advance in the science of government.

Page 2559

It should never be forgotten, moreover, that while the presidents and judges of the highest courts of judicature in other civilized lands were at the mercy of an irresponsible sovereign, and held office—even although it had been paid for in solid specie—at his pleasure, the supreme justices of the high courts of appeal at the Hague were nominated by a senate, and confirmed by a stadholder, and that they exercised their functions for life, or so long as they conducted themselves virtuously in their high office —'quamdiu se bene gesserint.'

If one of the great objects of a civilized community is to secure to all men their own—'ut sua tenerent'—surely it must be admitted that the republic was in advance of all contemporary States in the laying down of this vital principle, the independence of judges.

As to the army and navy of the United Provinces, enough has been said, in earlier chapters of these volumes, to indicate the improvements introduced by Prince Maurice, and now carried to the highest point of perfection ever attained in that period. There is no doubt whatever, that for discipline, experience, equipment, effectiveness of movement, and general organization, the army of the republic was the model army of Europe. It amounted to but thirty thousand infantry and two thousand five hundred cavalry, but this number was a large one for a standing army at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It was composed of a variety of materials, Hollanders, Walloons, Flemings, Scotch, English, Irish, Germans, but all welded together into a machine of perfect regularity. The private foot-soldier received twelve florins for a so-called month of forty-two days, the drummer and corporal eighteen, the lieutenant fifty-two, and the captain one hundred and fifty florins. Prompt payment was made every week. Obedience was implicit; mutiny, such as was of periodical recurrence in the archduke's army, entirely unknown. The slightest theft was punished with the gallows, and there was therefore no thieving.

The most accurate and critical observers confessed, almost against their will, that no army in Europe could compare with the troops of the States. As to the famous regiments of Sicily, and the ancient legions of Naples and Milan, a distinguished Venetian envoy, who had seen all the camps and courts of Christendom, and was certainly not disposed to overrate the Hollanders at the expense of the Italians, if any rivalry between them had been possible, declared that every private soldier in the republic was fit to be a captain in any Italian army; while, on the other hand, there was scarcely an Italian captain who would be accepted as a private in any company of the States. So low had the once famous soldiery of Alva, Don John, and Alexander Farnese descended.

Page 2560

The cavalry of the republic was even more perfectly organized than was the infantry. “I want words to describe its perfection,” said Contarini. The pay was very high, and very prompt. A captain received four hundred florins a month (of forty-two days), a lieutenant one hundred and eighty florins, and other officers and privates in proportion. These rates would be very high in our own day. When allowance is made for the difference in the value of money at the respective epochs, the salaries are prodigious; but the thrifty republic found its account in paying well and paying regularly the champions on whom so much depended, and by whom such splendid services had been rendered.

While the soldiers in the pay of Queen Elizabeth were crawling to her palace gates to die of starvation before her eyes; while the veterans of Spain and of Italy had organized themselves into a permanent military, mutinous republic, on the soil of the so-called obedient Netherland, because they were left by their masters without clothing or food; the cavalry and infantry of the Dutch commonwealth, thanks to the organizing spirit and the wholesome thrift of the burgher authorities, were contented, obedient, well fed, well clothed, and well paid; devoted to their Government, and ever ready to die in its defence.

Nor was it only on the regular army that reliance was placed. On the contrary, every able-bodied man in the country was liable to be called upon to serve, at any moment, in the militia. All were trained to arms, and provided with arms, and there had been years during this perpetual war in which one man out of three of the whole male population was ready to be mustered at any moment into the field.

Even more could be said in praise of the navy than has been stated of the armies of the republic; for the contemporary accounts of foreigners, and of foreigners who were apt to be satirical, rather than enthusiastic, when describing the institutions, leading personages, and customs of other countries, seemed ever to speak of the United Provinces in terms of eulogy. In commerce, as in war, the naval supremacy of the republic was indisputable. It was easy for the States to place two thousand vessels of war in commission, if necessary, of tonnage varying from four hundred to twelve hundred tons, to man them with the hardiest and boldest sailors in the world, and to despatch them with promptness to any quarter of the globe.

It was recognised as nearly impossible to compel a war-vessel of the republic to surrender. Hardly an instance was on her naval record of submission, even to far superior force, while it was filled with the tragic but heroic histories of commanders who had blown their ships, with every man on board, into the air, rather than strike their flag. Such was the character, and such the capacity of the sea-born republic.

That republic had serious and radical defects, but the design remained to be imitated and improved upon, centuries afterwards. The history of the rise and progress of the Dutch republic is a leading chapter in the history of human liberty.

Page 2561

The great misfortune of the commonwealth of the United Provinces, next to the slenderness of its geographical proportions, was the fact that it was without a centre and without a head, and therefore not a nation capable of unlimited vitality. There were seven states. Each claimed to be sovereign. The pretension on the part of several of them was ridiculous. Overyssel, for example, contributed two and three-quarters per cent. of the general budget. It was a swamp of twelve hundred square miles in extent, with some heath-spots interspered, and it numbered perhaps a hundred thousand inhabitants. The doughty Count of Embden alone could have swallowed up such sovereignty, have annexed all the buckwheat patches and cranberry marshes of Overyssel to his own meagre territories, and nobody the wiser.

Zeeland, as we have seen, was disposed at a critical moment to set up its independent sovereignty. Zeeland, far more important than Overyssel, had a revenue of perhaps five hundred thousand dollars,—rather a slender budget for an independent republic, wedged in as it was by the most powerful empires of the earth, and half drowned by the ocean, from which it had scarcely emerged.

There was therefore no popular representation, and on the other hand no executive head. As sovereignty must be exercised in some way, however, in all living commonwealths, and as a low degree of vitality was certainly not the defect of those bustling provinces, the supreme functions had now fallen into the hands of Holland.

While William the Silent lived, the management of war, foreign affairs, and finance, for the revolted provinces, was in his control. He was aided by two council boards, but the circumstances of history and the character of the man had invested him with an inevitable dictatorship.

After his death, at least after Leicester’s time, the powers of the state-council, the head of which, Prince Maurice, was almost always absent at the wars, fell into comparative disuse. The great functions of the confederacy passed into the possession of the States-General. That body now came to sit permanently at the Hague. The number of its members, deputies from the seven provinces-envoys from those seven immortal and soulless sovereigns—was not large. The extraordinary assembly held at Bergen-op-Zoom for confirmation of the truce was estimated by, Bentivoglio at eight hundred. Bentivoglio, who was on the spot, being then nuncius at Brussels, ought to have been able to count them, yet it is very certain that the number was grossly exaggerated.

At any rate the usual assembly at the Hague rarely amounted to one hundred members. The presidency was changed once a week, the envoy of each province taking his turn as chairman.

Olden-Barneveld, as member for Holland, was always present in the diet. As Advocate-General of the leading province, and keeper of its great seal, more especially as possessor of the governing intellect of the whole commonwealth, he led the

administration of Holland, and as the estates of Holland contributed more than half of the whole budget of the confederacy, it was a natural consequence of the actual supremacy of that province, and of the vast legal hand political experience of the Advocate, that Holland should, govern the confederacy, and that Barneveld should govern Holland.

Page 2562

The States-General remained virtually supreme, receiving envoys from all the great powers, sending abroad their diplomatic representatives, to whom the title and rank of ambassador was freely accorded, and dealing in a decorous and dignified way with all European affairs. The ability of the republican statesmen was as fully recognised all over the earth, as was the genius of their generals and great naval commanders.

The People did not exist; but this was merely because, in theory, the People had not been invented. It was exactly because there was a People—an energetic and intelligent People—that the republic was possible.

No scheme had yet been devised for laying down in primary assemblies a fundamental national law, for distributing the various functions of governmental power among selected servants, for appointing representatives according to population or property, and for holding all trustees responsible at reasonable intervals to the nation itself.

Thus government was involved, fold within fold, in successive and concentric municipal layers. The States-General were the outer husk, of which the separate town-council was the kernel or bulb. Yet the number of these executive and legislative boards was so large, and the whole population comparatively so slender, as to cause the original inconveniences from so incomplete a system to be rather theoretic than practical. In point of fact, almost as large a variety of individuals served the State as would perhaps have been the case under a more philosophically arranged democracy. The difficulty was rather in obtaining a candidate for the post than in distributing the posts among candidates.

Men were occupied with their own affairs. In proportion to their numbers, they were more productive of wealth than any other nation then existing. An excellent reason why the people were so, well governed, so productive, and so enterprising, was the simple fact that they were an educated people. There was hardly a Netherlander—man, woman, or child—that could not read and write. The school was the common property of the people, paid for among the municipal expenses. In the cities, as well as in the rural districts, there were not only common schools but classical schools. In the burgher families it was rare to find boys who had not been taught Latin, or girls unacquainted with French. Capacity to write and speak several modern languages was very common, and there were many individuals in every city, neither professors nor pedants, who had made remarkable progress in science and classical literature. The position, too, of women in the commonwealth proved a high degree of civilization. They are described as virtuous, well-educated, energetic, sovereigns in their households, and accustomed to direct all the business at home. “It would be ridiculous,” said Donato, “to see a man occupying himself with domestic house-keeping. The women do it all, and command absolutely.” The Hollanders, so rebellious against Church and King, accepted with meekness the despotism of woman.

Page 2563

The great movement of emancipation from political and ecclesiastical tyranny had brought with it a general advancement of the human intellect. The foundation of the Leyden university in memory of the heroism displayed by the burghers during the siege was as noble a monument as had ever been raised by a free people jealous of its fame. And the scientific lustre of the university well sustained the nobility of its origin. The proudest nation on earth might be more proud of a seat of learning, founded thus amidst carnage and tears, whence so much of profound learning and brilliant literature had already been diffused. The classical labours of Joseph Scaliger, Heinsius father and son the elder Dousa, almost as famous with his pen in Latin poetry as his sword had made him in the vernacular chronicle; of Dousa the son, whom Grotius called “the crown and flower of all good learning, too soon snatched away by envious death, than whom no man more skilled in poetry, more consummate in acquaintance with ancient science and literature, had ever lived;” of Hugo Grotius himself, who at the age of fifteen had taken his doctor’s degree at Leyden who as a member of Olden-Barneveld’s important legation to France and England very soon afterwards had excited the astonishment of Henry *iv*. and Elizabeth, who had already distinguished himself by editions of classic poets, and by original poems and dramas in Latin, and was already, although but twenty-six years of age; laying the foundation of that magnificent reputation as a jurist, a philosopher, a historian, and a statesman, which was to be one of the enduring glories of humanity, all these were the precious possessions of the high school of Leyden.

The still more modern university of Franeker, founded amid the din of perpetual warfare in Friesland, could at least boast the name of Arminius, whose theological writings and whose expansive views were destined to exert such influence over his contemporaries and posterity.

The great history of Hoofd, in which the splendid pictures and the impassioned drama of the great war of independence were to be preserved for his countrymen through all time, was not yet written. It was soon afterwards, however, to form not only a chief source of accurate information as to the great events themselves, but a model of style never since surpassed by any prose writer in either branch of the German tongue.

Had Hoofd written for a wider audience, it would be difficult to name a contemporary author of any nation whose work would have been more profoundly studied or more generally admired.

Page 2564

But the great war had not waited to be chronicled by the classic and impassioned Hoofd. Already there were thorough and exhaustive narrators of what was instinctively felt to be one of the most pregnant episodes of human history. Bor of Utrecht, a miracle of industry, of learning, of unwearied perseverance, was already engaged in the production of those vast folios in which nearly all the great transactions of the forty years' war were conscientiously portrayed, with a comprehensiveness of material and an impartiality of statement, such as might seem almost impossible for a contemporary writer. Immersed in attentive study and profound contemplation, he seemed to lift his tranquil head from time to time over the wild ocean of those troublous times, and to survey with accuracy without being swayed or appalled by the tempest. There was something almost sublime in his steady, unimpassioned gaze.

Emanuel van Meteren, too, a plain Protestant merchant of Antwerp and Amsterdam, wrote an admirable history of the war and of his own times, full of precious details, especially rich in statistics—a branch of science which he almost invented—which still, remains as one of the leading authorities, not only for scholars, but for the general reader.

Reyd and Burgundius, the one the Calvinist private secretary of Lewis William, the other a warm Catholic partisan, both made invaluable contemporaneous contributions to the history of the war.

The trophies already secured by the Netherlanders in every department of the fine arts, as well as the splendour which was to enrich the coming epoch, are too familiar to the world to need more than a passing allusion.

But it was especially in physical science that the republic was taking a leading part in the great intellectual march of the nations.

The very necessities of its geographical position had forced it to pre-eminence in hydraulics and hydrostatics. It had learned to transform water into dry land with a perfection attained by no nation before or since. The wonders of its submarine horticulture were the despair of all gardeners in the world.

And as in this gentlest of arts, so also in the dread science of war, the republic had been the instructor of mankind.

The youthful Maurice and his cousin Lewis William had so restored and improved the decayed intelligence of antique strategy, that the greybeards of Europe became docile pupils in their school. The mathematical teacher of Prince Maurice amazed the contemporary world with his combinations and mechanical inventions; the flying chariots of Simon Stevinua seeming products of magical art.

Yet the character of the Dutch intellect was averse to sorcery. The small but mighty nation, which had emancipated itself from the tyranny of Philip and of the Holy Inquisition, was foremost to shake off the fetters of superstition. Out of Holland came the first voice to rebuke one of the hideous delusions of the age. While grave magistrates and sages of other lands were exorcising the devil by murdering his supposed victims, John Wier, a physician of Grave, boldly denounced the demon which had taken possession, not of the wizards, but of the judges.

Page 2565

The age was lunatic and sick, and it was fitting that the race which had done so much for the physical and intellectual emancipation of the world, should have been the first to apply a remedy for this monstrous madness. Englishmen and their descendants were drowning and hanging witches in New England, long after John Wier had rebuked and denounced the belief in witchcraft.

It was a Zeelander, too; who placed the instrument in the hand of Galileo by which that daring genius traced the movements of the universe, and who, by another wondrous invention, enabled future discoverers to study the infinite life which lies all around us, hidden not by its remoteness but it's minuteness. Zacharias Jansens of Middelburg, in 1590, invented both the telescope and the microscope.

The wonder-man of Alkmaar, Cornelius Drebbel, who performed such astounding feats for the amusement of Rudolph of Germany and James of Britain, is also supposed to have invented the thermometer and the barometer. But this claim has been disputed. The inventions of Jansens are proved.

Willebrod Snellius, mathematical professor of Leyden, introduced the true method of measuring the degrees of longitude and latitude, and Huygens, who had seen his manuscripts, asserted that Snellius had invented, before Descartes, the doctrine of refraction.

But it was especially to that noble band of heroes and martyrs, the great navigators and geographical discoverers of the republic, that science is above all indebted.

Nothing is more sublime in human story than the endurance and audacity with which those pioneers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries confronted the nameless horrors of either pole, in the interests of commerce, and for the direct purpose of enlarging the bounds of the human intellect.

The achievements, the sufferings, and the triumphs of Barendz and Cordes, Heemskerk, Van der Hagen, and many others, have been slightly indicated in these pages. The contributions to botany, mineralogy, geometry, geography, and zoology, of Linschoten, Plancius, Wagenaar, and Houtmann, and so many other explorers of pole and tropic, can hardly be overrated.

The Netherlanders had wrung their original fatherland out of the grasp of the ocean. They had confronted for centuries the wrath of that ancient tyrant, ever ready to seize the prey of which he had been defrauded.

They had waged fiercer and more perpetual battle with a tyranny more cruel than the tempest, with an ancient superstition more hungry than the sea. It was inevitable that a race, thus invigorated by the ocean, cradled to freedom by their conflicts with its power, and hardened almost to invincibility by their struggle against human despotism, should

be foremost among the nations in the development of political, religious, and commercial freedom.

The writer now takes an affectionate farewell of those who have followed him with an indulgent sympathy as he has attempted to trace the origin and the eventful course of the Dutch commonwealth. If by his labours a generous love has been fostered for that blessing, without which everything that this earth can afford is worthless—freedom of thought, of speech, and of life—his highest wish has been fulfilled. *Etext editor's bookmarks*:

Page 2566

About equal to that of England at the same period An unjust God, himself the origin of sin Butchery in the name of Christ was suspended Calling a peace perpetual can never make it so Chieftains are dwarfed in the estimation of followers Each in its turn becoming orthodox, and therefore persecuting Exorcising the devil by murdering his supposed victims Foremost to shake off the fetters of superstition God of vengeance, of jealousy, and of injustice Gomarites accused the Arminians of being more lax than Papists Hangman is not the most appropriate teacher of religion He often spoke of popular rights with contempt John Wier, a physician of Grave Necessity of extirpating heresy, root and branch Nowhere were so few unproductive consumers Paving the way towards atheism (by toleration) Privileged to beg, because ashamed to work Religious persecution of Protestants by Protestants So unconscious of her strength State can best defend religion by letting it alone Taxed themselves as highly as fifty per cent The People had not been invented The slightest theft was punished with the gallows Tolerate another religion that his own may be tolerated Toleration—that intolerable term of insult War to compel the weakest to follow the religion of the strongest.

Etext editor's bookmarks, *entire* 1600-09 *united Netherlands*:

A penal offence in the republic to talk of peace or of truce
A sovereign remedy for the disease of liberty
A man incapable of fatigue, of perplexity, or of fear
A truce he honestly considered a pitfall of destruction
About equal to that of England at the same period
Abstinence from unproductive consumption
Accepting a new tyrant in place of the one so long ago deposed
Alas! we must always have something to persecute
Alas! the benighted victims of superstition hugged their chains
All the ministers and great functionaries received presents
An unjust God, himself the origin of sin
Argument is exhausted and either action or compromise begins
As if they were free will not make them free
As neat a deception by telling the truth
Because he had been successful (hated)
Began to scatter golden arguments with a lavish hand
Bestowing upon others what was not his property
Beware of a truce even more than of a peace
But the habit of dissimulation was inveterate
Butchery in the name of Christ was suspended
By turns, we all govern and are governed
Calling a peace perpetual can never make it so
Cargo of imaginary gold dust was exported from the James River
Certain number of powers, almost exactly equal to each other
Chieftains are dwarfed in the estimation of followers

Conceit, and procrastination which marked the royal character
Constitute themselves at once universal legatees

Page 2567

Contempt for treaties however solemnly ratified
Converting beneficent commerce into baleful gambling
Could handle an argument as well as a sword
Crimes and cruelties such as Christians only could imagine
Culpable audacity and exaggerated prudence
Defeated garrison ever deserved more respect from friend or foe
Delay often fights better than an army against a foreign invader
Despised those who were grateful
Diplomacy of Spain and Rome—meant simply dissimulation
Do you want peace or war? I am ready for either
Draw a profit out of the necessities of this state
Each in its turn becoming orthodox, and therefore persecuting
Eloquence of the biggest guns
England hated the Netherlands
Even the virtues of James were his worst enemies
Exorcising the devil by murdering his supposed victims
Foremost to shake off the fetters of superstition
Four weeks' holiday—the first in eleven years
Friendly advice still more intolerable
Gigantic vices are proudly pointed to as the noblest
God alone can protect us against those whom we trust
God of vengeance, of jealousy, and of injustice
Gold was the only passkey to justice
Gomarites accused the Arminians of being more lax than Papists
Haereticis non servanda fides
Hangman is not the most appropriate teacher of religion
He often spoke of popular rights with contempt
He who confessed well was absolved well
His own past triumphs seemed now his greatest enemies
Human fat esteemed the sovereignst remedy (for wounds)
Humble ignorance as the safest creed
Hundred thousand men had laid down their lives by her decree
Idea of freedom in commerce has dawned upon nations
Idiotic principle of sumptuary legislation
If to do be as grand as to imagine what it were good to do
Impossible it is to practise arithmetic with disturbed brains
Indulging them frequently with oracular advice
Insensible to contumely, and incapable of accepting a rebuff
It is certain that the English hate us (Sully)
John Castel, who had stabbed Henry *iv*.

John Wier, a physician of Grave
Justified themselves in a solemn consumption of time
Languor of fatigue, rather than any sincere desire for peace
Logic of the largest battalions
Looking down upon her struggle with benevolent indifference
Made peace—and had been at war ever since
Man is never so convinced of his own wisdom
Man who cannot dissemble is unfit to reign
Men who meant what they said and said what they meant
Men fought as if war was the normal condition of humanity
Much as the blind or the deaf towards colour or music
Nations tied to the pinafores of children in the nursery

Page 2568

Natural tendency to suspicion of a timid man
Necessity of extirpating heresy, root and branch
Negotiated as if they were all immortal
Night brings counsel
No retrenchments in his pleasures of women, dogs, and buildings
No generation is long-lived enough to reap the harvest
Not safe for politicians to call each other hard names
Nowhere were so few unproductive consumers
One of the most contemptible and mischievous of kings (James I)
Passion is a bad schoolmistress for the memory
Paving the way towards atheism (by toleration)
Peace seemed only a process for arriving at war
Peace founded on the only secure basis, equality of strength
Peace was unattainable, war was impossible, truce was inevitable
Philip of Macedon, who considered no city impregnable
Prisoners were immediately hanged
Privileged to beg, because ashamed to work
Proclaiming the virginity of the Virgin's mother
Readiness at any moment to defend dearly won liberties
Religious persecution of Protestants by Protestants
Repose under one despot guaranteed to them by two others
Requires less mention than Philip *iii* himself
Rules adopted in regard to pretenders to crowns
Served at their banquets by hosts of lackeys on their knees
Sick soldiers captured on the water should be hanged
So unconscious of her strength
State can best defend religion by letting it alone
Steeped to the lips in sloth which imagined itself to be pride
Subtle and dangerous enemy who wore the mask of a friend
Such an excuse was as bad as the accusation
Take all their imaginations and extravagances for truths
Taxed themselves as highly as fifty per cent
The art of ruling the world by doing nothing
The slightest theft was punished with the gallows
The wisest statesmen are prone to blunder in affairs of war
The pigmy, as the late queen had been fond of nicknaming him
The expenses of James's household
The People had not been invented
The small children diminished rapidly in numbers
This obstinate little republic

To shirk labour, infinite numbers become priests and friars
To negotiate was to bribe right and left, and at every step
To doubt the infallibility of Calvin was as heinous a crime
To negotiate with Government in England was to bribe
Tolerate another religion that his own may be tolerated
Toleration—that intolerable term of insult
Triple marriages between the respective nurseries
Unlearned their faith in bell, book, and candle
Unproductive consumption being accounted most sagacious
Unwise impatience for peace
Usual expedient by which bad legislation on one side countered

Page 2569

War was the normal and natural condition of mankind
War was the normal condition of Christians
War to compel the weakest to follow the religion of the strongest
We have been talking a little bit of truth to each other
What was to be done in this world and believed as to the next
What exchequer can accept chronic warfare and escape bankruptcy
When all was gone, they began to eat each other
Word peace in Spanish mouths simply meant the Holy Inquisition
Words are always interpreted to the disadvantage of the weak
World has rolled on to fresher fields of carnage and ruin
You must show your teeth to the Spaniard

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS 1584-1609, COMPLETE

A hard bargain when both parties are losers
A penal offence in the republic to talk of peace or of truce
A despot really keeps no accounts, nor need to do so
A free commonwealth—was thought an absurdity
A burnt cat fears the fire
A pusillanimous peace, always possible at any period
A man incapable of fatigue, of perplexity, or of fear
A sovereign remedy for the disease of liberty
A truce he honestly considered a pitfall of destruction
Able men should be by design and of purpose suppressed
About equal to that of England at the same period
Abstinence from unproductive consumption
Accepting a new tyrant in place of the one so long ago deposed
Accustomed to the faded gallantries
Act of Uniformity required Papists to assist
Alas! we must always have something to persecute
Alas! the benighted victims of superstition hugged their chains
Alexander's exuberant discretion
All fellow-worms together
All business has been transacted with open doors
All Italy was in his hands
All the ministers and great functionaries received presents
Allow her to seek a profit from his misfortune

An unjust God, himself the origin of sin
Anarchy which was deemed inseparable from a non-regal form
Anatomical study of what has ceased to exist
And thus this gentle and heroic spirit took its flight
Are wont to hang their piety on the bell-rope
Argument is exhausted and either action or compromise begins
Arminianism
Artillery
As logical as men in their cups are prone to be
As if they were free will not make them free
As neat a deception by telling the truth
As lieve see the Spanish as the Calvinistic inquisition
At length the twig was becoming the tree
Auction sales of judicial ermine
Baiting his hook a little to his appetite
Beacons in the upward path of mankind
Because he had been successful (hated)

Page 2570

Been already crimination and recrimination more than enough
Began to scatter golden arguments with a lavish hand
Being the true religion, proved by so many testimonies
Beneficent and charitable purposes (War)
Bestowing upon others what was not his property
Beware of a truce even more than of a peace
Bomb-shells were not often used although known for a century
Bungling diplomatists and credulous dotards
Burning of Servetus at Geneva
But the habit of dissimulation was inveterate
Butchery in the name of Christ was suspended
By turns, we all govern and are governed
Calling a peace perpetual can never make it so
Canker of a long peace
Cargo of imaginary gold dust was exported from the James River
Casting up the matter “as pinchingly as possibly might be”
Certain number of powers, almost exactly equal to each other
Certainly it was worth an eighty years’ war
Chief seafaring nations of the world were already protestant
Chieftains are dwarfed in the estimation of followers
Children who had never set foot on the shore
Chronicle of events must not be anticipated
College of “peace-makers,” who wrangled more than all
Conceding it subsequently, after much contestation
Conceit, and procrastination which marked the royal character
Condemned first and inquired upon after
Conformity of Governments to the principles of justice
Considerable reason, even if there were but little justice
Constant vigilance is the price of liberty
Constitute themselves at once universal legatees
Contempt for treaties however solemnly ratified
Continuing to believe himself invincible and infallible
Converting beneficent commerce into baleful gambling
Could do a little more than what was possible
Could handle an argument as well as a sword
Courage and semblance of cheerfulness, with despair in his heart
Court fatigue, to scorn pleasure
Crimes and cruelties such as Christians only could imagine
Culpable audacity and exaggerated prudence
Deal with his enemy as if sure to become his friend

Decline a bribe or interfere with the private sale of places
Defeated garrison ever deserved more respect from friend or foe
Defect of enjoying the flattery, of his inferiors in station
Delay often fights better than an army against a foreign invader
Demanding peace and bread at any price
Despised those who were grateful
Diplomacy of Spain and Rome—meant simply dissimulation
Diplomatic adroitness consists mainly in the power to deceive
Disciple of Simon Stevinus
Dismay of our friends and the gratification of our enemies
Disordered, and unknit state needs no shaking, but propping

Page 2571

Disposed to throat-cutting by the ministers of the Gospel
Divine right of kings
Do you want peace or war? I am ready for either
Done nothing so long as aught remained to do
Draw a profit out of the necessities of this state
During this, whole war, we have never seen the like
Each in its turn becoming orthodox, and therefore persecuting
Eat their own children than to forego one high mass
Elizabeth, though convicted, could always confute
Elizabeth (had not) the faintest idea of religious freedom
Eloquence of the biggest guns
England hated the Netherlands
Englishmen and Hollanders preparing to cut each other's throats
Enmity between Lutherans and Calvinists
Even the virtues of James were his worst enemies
Even to grant it slowly is to deny it utterly
Ever met disaster with so cheerful a smile
Every one sees what you seem, few perceive what you are
Evil is coming, the sooner it arrives the better
Evil has the advantage of rapidly assuming many shapes
Exorcising the devil by murdering his supposed victims
Faction has rarely worn a more mischievous aspect
Famous fowl in every pot
Fed on bear's liver, were nearly poisoned to death
Fellow worms had been writhing for half a century in the dust
Find our destruction in our immoderate desire for peace
Fitter to obey than to command
Five great rivers hold the Netherland territory in their coils
Fled from the land of oppression to the land of liberty
Fool who useth not wit because he hath it not
For his humanity towards the conquered garrisons (censured)
For us, looking back upon the Past, which was then the Future
Forbidding the wearing of mourning at all
Foremost to shake off the fetters of superstition
Four weeks' holiday—the first in eleven years
French seem madmen, and are wise
Friendly advice still more intolerable
Full of precedents and declamatory commonplaces
Future world as laid down by rival priesthoods
German Highland and the German Netherland

German-Lutheran sixteenth-century idea of religious freedom
Gigantic vices are proudly pointed to as the noblest
God of vengeance, of jealousy, and of injustice
God alone can protect us against those whom we trust
God of wrath who had decreed the extermination of all unbeliever
God, whose cause it was, would be pleased to give good weather
Gold was the only passkey to justice
Gomarites accused the Arminians of being more lax than Papists
Guilty of no other crime than adhesion to the Catholic faith
Had industry been honoured instead of being despised
Haereticis non servanda fides
Hanging of Mary Dyer at Boston

Page 2572

Hangman is not the most appropriate teacher of religion
Hard at work, pouring sand through their sieves
Hardly an inch of French soil that had not two possessors
Hardly a distinguished family in Spain not placed in mourning
He often spoke of popular rights with contempt
He did his work, but he had not his reward
He who confessed well was absolved well
He spent more time at table than the Bearnese in sleep
He sat a great while at a time. He had a genius for sitting
Henry the Huguenot as the champion of the Council of Trent
Her teeth black, her bosom white and liberally exposed (Eliz.)
Heretics to the English Church were persecuted
Hibernian mode of expressing himself
High officers were doing the work of private, soldiers
Highest were not necessarily the least slimy
His invectives were, however, much stronger than his arguments
His own past triumphs seemed now his greatest enemies
His insolence intolerable
His inordinate arrogance
Historical scepticism may shut its eyes to evidence
History is but made up of a few scattered fragments
History is a continuous whole of which we see only fragments
Holland was afraid to give a part, although offering the whole
Holy institution called the Inquisition
Honor good patriots, and to support them in venial errors
Hugo Grotius
Human fat esteemed the sovereignst remedy (for wounds)
Humanizing effect of science upon the barbarism of war
Humble ignorance as the safest creed
Humility which was but the cloak to his pride
Hundred thousand men had laid down their lives by her decree
I will never live, to see the end of my poverty
I am a king that will be ever known not to fear any but God
I did never see any man behave himself as he did
Idea of freedom in commerce has dawned upon nations
Idiotic principle of sumptuary legislation
Idle, listless, dice-playing, begging, filching vagabonds
If to do be as grand as to imagine what it were good to do
Ignorance is the real enslaver of mankind
Imagining that they held the world’s destiny in their hands

Imposed upon the multitudes, with whom words were things
Impossible it was to invent terms of adulation too gross
Impossible it is to practise arithmetic with disturbed brains
In times of civil war, to be neutral is to be nothing
Individuals walking in advance of their age
Indulging them frequently with oracular advice
Inevitable fate of talking castles and listening ladies
Infamy of diplomacy, when diplomacy is unaccompanied by honesty
Infinite capacity for pecuniary absorption
Inhabited by the savage tribes called Samoyedes
Innocent generation,

Page 2573

to atone for the sins of their forefathers
Inquisitors enough; but there were no light vessels in The Armada
Insensible to contumely, and incapable of accepting a rebuff
Intelligence, science, and industry were accounted degrading
Intentions of a government which did not know its own intentions
Intolerable tendency to puns
Invaluable gift which no human being can acquire, authority
Invincible Armada had not only been vanquished but annihilated
It is certain that the English hate us (Sully)
John Castel, who had stabbed Henry *iv*.
John Wier, a physician of Grave
Justified themselves in a solemn consumption of time
King had issued a general repudiation of his debts
King was often to be something much less or much worse
Labour was esteemed dishonourable
Languor of fatigue, rather than any sincere desire for peace
Leading motive with all was supposed to be religion
Life of nations and which we call the Past
Little army of Maurice was becoming the model for Europe
Logic of the largest battalions
Longer they delay it, the less easy will they find it
Look for a sharp war, or a miserable peace
Looking down upon her struggle with benevolent indifference
Lord was better pleased with adverbs than nouns
Loud, nasal, dictatorial tone, not at all agreeable
Loving only the persons who flattered him
Luxury had blunted the fine instincts of patriotism
Made peace—and had been at war ever since
Magnificent hopefulness
Make sheep of yourselves, and the wolf will eat you
Man is never so convinced of his own wisdom
Man had no rights at all He was property
Man who cannot dissemble is unfit to reign
Maritime heretics
Matter that men may rather pray for than hope for
Matters little by what name a government is called
Meet around a green table except as fencers in the field
Men who meant what they said and said what they meant
Men fought as if war was the normal condition of humanity
Mendacity may always obtain over innocence and credulity
Military virtue in the support of an infamous cause
Mistakes might occur from occasional deviations into sincerity

Mondragon was now ninety-two years old
Moral nature, undergoes less change than might be hoped
More catholic than the pope
Much as the blind or the deaf towards colour or music
Myself seeing of it methinketh that I dream
Names history has often found it convenient to mark its epochs
National character, not the work of a few individuals
Nations tied to the pinafores of children in the nursery
Natural tendency to suspicion of a timid man
Necessity of kingship
Necessity of extirpating

Page 2574

heresy, root and branch
- Negotiated as if they were all immortal
- Neighbour’s blazing roof was likely soon to fire their own
- Never did statesmen know better how not to do
- Never peace well made, he observed, without a mighty war
- New Years Day in England, 11th January by the New Style
- Night brings counsel
- Nine syllables that which could be more forcibly expressed in on
- No retrenchments in his pleasures of women, dogs, and buildings
- No generation is long-lived enough to reap the harvest
- Nor is the spirit of the age to be pleaded in defence
- Not many more than two hundred Catholics were executed
- Not a friend of giving details larger than my ascertained facts
- Not distinguished for their docility
- Not of the genus Reptilia, and could neither creep nor crouch
- Not safe for politicians to call each other hard names
- Nothing cheap, said a citizen bitterly, but sermons
- Nothing could equal Alexander’s fidelity, but his perfidy
- Nowhere were so few unproductive consumers
- Obscure were thought capable of dying natural deaths
- Octogenarian was past work and past mischief
- Often necessary to be blind and deaf
- One-third of Philip’s effective navy was thus destroyed
- One could neither cry nor laugh within the Spanish dominions
- One of the most contemptible and mischievous of kings (James I)
- Only citadel against a tyrant and a conqueror was distrust
- Oration, fertile in rhetoric and barren in facts
- Others that do nothing, do all, and have all the thanks
- Passion is a bad schoolmistress for the memory
- Past was once the Present, and once the Future
- Patriotism seemed an unimaginable idea
- Pauper client who dreamed of justice at the hands of law
- Paving the way towards atheism (by toleration)
- Peace and quietness is brought into a most dangerous estate
- Peace seemed only a process for arriving at war
- Peace founded on the only secure basis, equality of strength
- Peace would be destruction
- Peace-at-any-price party
- Peace was unattainable, war was impossible, truce was inevitable
- Philip *ii*. gave the world work enough
- Philip of Macedon, who considered no city impregnable
- Picturesqueness of crime

Placid unconsciousness on his part of defeat
Plea of infallibility and of authority soon becomes ridiculous
Portion of these revenues savoured much of black-mail
Possible to do, only because we see that it has been done
Pray here for satiety, (said Cecil) than ever think of variety
Prisoners were immediately hanged
Privileged to beg, because ashamed to work
Proceeds of his permission to eat meat on Fridays
Proclaiming the virginity of the Virgin’s mother

Page 2575

Rarely able to command, having never learned to obey
Readiness at any moment to defend dearly won liberties
Rebuked him for his obedience
Religion was rapidly ceasing to be the line of demarcation
Religion was not to be changed like a shirt
Religious persecution of Protestants by Protestants
Repentance, as usual, had come many hours too late
Repose under one despot guaranteed to them by two others
Repose in the other world, “Repos ailleurs”
Repudiation of national debts was never heard of before
Requires less mention than Philip *iii* himself
Resolved thenceforth to adopt a system of ignorance
Respect for differences in religious opinions
Rich enough to be worth robbing
Righteous to kill their own children
Road to Paris lay through the gates of Rome
Round game of deception, in which nobody was deceived
Royal plans should be enforced adequately or abandoned entirely
Rules adopted in regard to pretenders to crowns
Sacked and drowned ten infant princes
Sacrificed by the Queen for faithfully obeying her orders
Sages of every generation, read the future like a printed scroll
Security is dangerous
Seeking protection for and against the people
Seem as if born to make the idea of royalty ridiculous
Seems but a change of masks, of costume, of phraseology
Self-assertion—the healthful but not engaging attribute
Selling the privilege of eating eggs upon fast-days
Sentiment of Christian self-complacency
Served at their banquets by hosts of lackeys on their knees
Sewers which have ever run beneath decorous Christendom
She relieth on a hope that will deceive her
Shift the mantle of religion from one shoulder to the other
Shutting the stable-door when the steed is stolen
Sick soldiers captured on the water should be hanged
Simple truth was highest skill
Sixteen of their best ships had been sacrificed
Slain four hundred and ten men with his own hand
So often degenerated into tyranny (Calvinism)
So unconscious of her strength

Soldiers enough to animate the good and terrify the bad
Some rude lessons from that vigorous little commonwealth
Spain was governed by an established terrorism
Spaniards seem wise, and are madmen
Sparing and war have no affinity together
Stake or gallows (for) heretics to transubstantiation
State can best defend religion by letting it alone
States were justified in their almost unlimited distrust
Steeped to the lips in sloth which imagined itself to be pride
Strangled his nineteen brothers on his accession
Strength does a falsehood acquire in determined and skilful hand
String of homely proverbs

Page 2576

worthy of Sancho Panza
- Subtle and dangerous enemy who wore the mask of a friend
- Succeeded so well, and had been requited so ill
- Such an excuse was as bad as the accusation
- Such a crime as this had never been conceived (bankruptcy)
- Sure bind, sure find
- Sword in hand is the best pen to write the conditions of peace
- Take all their imaginations and extravagances for truths
- Taxed themselves as highly as fifty per cent
- Tension now gave place to exhaustion
- That crowned criminal, Philip the Second
- That unholy trinity—Force; Dogma, and Ignorance
- The very word toleration was to sound like an insult
- The blaze of a hundred and fifty burning vessels
- The expenses of James's household
- The worst were encouraged with their good success
- The history of the Netherlands is history of liberty
- The great ocean was but a Spanish lake
- The divine speciality of a few transitory mortals
- The sapling was to become the tree
- The nation which deliberately carves itself in pieces
- The most thriving branch of national industry (Smuggler)
- The record of our race is essentially unwritten
- The busy devil of petty economy
- The small children diminished rapidly in numbers
- The People had not been invented
- The Alcoran was less cruel than the Inquisition
- The wisest statesmen are prone to blunder in affairs of war
- The art of ruling the world by doing nothing
- The slightest theft was punished with the gallows
- The pigmy, as the late queen had been fond of nicknaming him
- Their existence depended on war
- There are few inventions in morals
- There was apathy where there should have been enthusiasm
- There is no man fitter for that purpose than myself
- They were always to deceive every one, upon every occasion
- They had come to disbelieve in the mystery of kingcraft
- They liked not such divine right nor such gentle-mindedness
- They chose to compel no man's conscience
- Thirty-three per cent. interest was paid (per month)
- Thirty thousand masses should be said for his soul
- This obstinate little republic

Those who argue against a foregone conclusion
Thought that all was too little for him
Three hundred and upwards are hanged annually in London
Three or four hundred petty sovereigns (of Germany)
Tis pity he is not an Englishman
To negotiate with Government in England was to bribe
To negotiate was to bribe right and left, and at every step
To work, ever to work, was the primary law of his nature
To attack England it was necessary to take the road of Ireland
To shirk labour, infinite numbers become priests and friars
To doubt the infallibility of Calvin was as heinous a crime

Page 2577

Toil and sacrifices of those who have preceded us
Tolerate another religion that his own may be tolerated
Tolerating religious liberty had never entered his mind
Toleration—that intolerable term of insult
Torturing, hanging, embowelling of men, women, and children
Tranquil insolence
Tranquillity rather of paralysis than of health
Triple marriages between the respective nurseries
Trust her sword, not her enemy's word
Twas pity, he said, that both should be heretics
Under the name of religion (so many crimes)
Undue anxiety for impartiality
Universal suffrage was not dreamed of at that day
Unlearned their faith in bell, book, and candle
Unproductive consumption being accounted most sagacious
Unproductive consumption was alarmingly increasing
Unwise impatience for peace
Upon their knees, served the queen with wine
Upper and lower millstones of royal wrath and loyal subserviency
Use of the spade
Usual expedient by which bad legislation on one side countered
Utter want of adaptation of his means to his ends
Utter disproportions between the king's means and aims
Uttering of my choler doth little ease my grief or help my case
Valour on the one side and discretion on the other
Waiting the pleasure of a capricious and despotic woman
Walk up and down the earth and destroy his fellow-creatures
War was the normal and natural condition of mankind
War to compel the weakest to follow the religion of the strongest
War was the normal condition of Christians
Wasting time fruitlessly is sharpening the knife for himself
We have the reputation of being a good housewife
We must all die once
We mustn't tickle ourselves to make ourselves laugh
We have been talking a little bit of truth to each other
We were sold by their negligence who are now angry with us
Wealthy Papists could obtain immunity by an enormous fine
Weapons
Weary of place without power
What exchequer can accept chronic warfare and escape bankruptcy

What was to be done in this world and believed as to the next
When persons of merit suffer without cause
When all was gone, they began to eat each other
Whether murders or stratagems, as if they were acts of virtue
While one’s friends urge moderation
Who the “people” exactly were
Whole revenue was pledged to pay the interest, on his debts
Wish to sell us the bear-skin before they have killed the bear
With something of feline and feminine duplicity
Word peace in Spanish mouths simply meant the Holy Inquisition
Words are always interpreted to the disadvantage of the weak
World has rolled on to fresher fields of carnage and ruin

Page 2578

Worn nor caused to be worn the collar of the serf
Wrath of bigots on both sides
Wrath of that injured personage as he read such libellous truths
Write so illegibly or express himself so awkwardly
You must show your teeth to the Spaniard

THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

1880

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Volume 99

The life and death of John of Barneveld, 1609-1623, Complete

PREFACE:

These volumes make a separate work in themselves. They form also the natural sequel to the other histories already published by the Author, as well as the necessary introduction to that concluding portion of his labours which he has always desired to lay before the public; a History of the Thirty Years' War.

For the two great wars which successively established the independence of Holland and the disintegration of Germany are in reality but one; a prolonged Tragedy of Eighty Years. The brief pause, which in the Netherlands was known as the Twelve Years' Truce with Spain, was precisely the epoch in which the elements were slowly and certainly gathering for the renewal over nearly the whole surface of civilized Europe of that immense conflict which for more than forty years had been raging within the narrow precincts of the Netherlands.

The causes and character of the two wars were essentially the same. There were many changes of persons and of scenery during a struggle which lasted for nearly three

generations of mankind; yet a natural succession both of actors, motives, and events will be observed from the beginning to the close.

The designs of Charles V. to establish universal monarchy, which he had passionately followed for a lifetime through a series of colossal crimes against humanity and of private misdeeds against individuals, such as it has rarely been permitted to a single despot to perpetrate, had been baffled at last. Disappointed, broken, but even to our own generation never completely unveiled, the tyrant had withdrawn from the stage of human affairs, leaving his son to carry on the great conspiracy against Human Right, independence of nations, liberty of thought, and equality of religions, with the additional vigour which sprang from intensity of conviction.

For Philip possessed at least that superiority over his father that he was a sincere bigot. In the narrow and gloomy depths of his soul he had doubtless persuaded himself that it was necessary for the redemption of the human species that the empire of the world should be vested in his hands, that Protestantism in all its forms should be extirpated as a malignant disease, and that to behead, torture, burn alive, and bury alive all heretics who opposed the decree of himself and the Holy Church was the highest virtue by which he could merit Heaven.

Page 2579

The father would have permitted Protestantism if Protestantism would have submitted to universal monarchy. There would have been small difficulty in the early part of his reign in effecting a compromise between Rome and Augsburg, had the gigantic secular ambition of Charles not preferred to weaken the Church and to convert conscientious religious reform into political mutiny; a crime against him who claimed the sovereignty of Christendom.

The materials for the true history of that reign lie in the Archives of Spain, Austria, Rome, Venice, and the Netherlands, and in many other places. When out of them one day a complete and authentic narrative shall have been constructed, it will be seen how completely the policy of Charles foreshadowed and necessitated that of Philip, how logically, under the successors of Philip, the Austrian dream of universal empire ended in the shattering, in the minute subdivision, and the reduction to a long impotence of that Germanic Empire which had really belonged to Charles.

Unfortunately the great Republic which, notwithstanding the aid of England on the one side and of France on the other, had withstood almost single-handed the onslaughts of Spain, now allowed the demon of religious hatred to enter into its body at the first epoch of peace, although it had successfully exorcised the evil spirit during the long and terrible war.

There can be no doubt whatever that the discords within the interior of the Dutch Republic during the period of the Truce, and their tragic catastrophe, had weakened her purpose and partially paralysed her arm. When the noble Commonwealth went forward to the renewed and general conflict which succeeded the concentrated one in which it had been the chief actor, the effect of those misspent twelve years became apparent.

Indeed the real continuity of the war was scarcely broken by the fitful, armistice. The death of John of Cleve, an event almost simultaneous with the conclusion of the Truce, seemed to those gifted with political vision the necessary precursor of a new and more general war.

The secret correspondence of Barneveld shows the almost prophetic accuracy with which he indicated the course of events and the approach of an almost universal conflict, while that tragedy was still in the future, and was to be enacted after he had been laid in his bloody grave. No man then living was so accustomed as he was to sweep the political horizon, and to estimate the signs and portents of the times. No statesman was left in Europe during the epoch of the Twelve Years' Truce to compare with him in experience, breadth of vision, political tact, or administrative sagacity.

Imbued with the grand traditions and familiar with the great personages of a most heroic epoch; the trusted friend or respected counsellor of William the Silent, Henry *iv*., Elizabeth, and the sages and soldiers on whom they leaned; having been employed during an already long lifetime in the administration of greatest affairs, he stood alone

after the deaths of Henry of France and the second Cecil, and the retirement of Sully, among the natural leaders of mankind.

Page 2580

To the England of Elizabeth, of Walsingham, Raleigh, and the Cecils, had succeeded the Great Britain of James, with his Carrs and Carletons, Nauntons, Lakes, and Winwoods. France, widowed of Henry and waiting for Richelieu, lay in the clutches of Concini's, Epernons, and Bouillons, bound hand and foot to Spain. Germany, falling from Rudolph to Matthias, saw Styrian Ferdinand in the background ready to shatter the fabric of a hundred years of attempted Reformation. In the Republic of the Netherlands were the great soldier and the only remaining statesman of the age. At a moment when the breathing space had been agreed upon before the conflict should be renewed; on a wider field than ever, between Spanish-Austrian world-empire and independence of the nations; between the ancient and only Church and the spirit of religious Equality; between popular Right and royal and sacerdotal Despotism; it would have been desirable that the soldier and the statesman should stand side by side, and that the fortunate Confederacy, gifted with two such champions and placed by its own achievements at the very head of the great party of resistance, should be true to herself.

These volumes contain a slight and rapid sketch of Barneveld's career up to the point at which the Twelve Years' Truce with Spain was signed in the year 1609. In previous works the Author has attempted to assign the great Advocate's place as part and parcel of history during the continuance of the War for Independence. During the period of the Truce he will be found the central figure. The history of Europe, especially of the Netherlands, Britain, France, and Germany, cannot be thoroughly appreciated without a knowledge of the designs, the labours, and the fate of Barneveld.

The materials for estimating his character and judging his judges lie in the national archives of the land of which he was so long the foremost citizen. But they have not long been accessible. The letters, state papers, and other documents remain unprinted, and have rarely been read. M. van Deventer has published three most interesting volumes of the Advocate's correspondence, but they reach only to the beginning of 1609. He has suspended his labours exactly at the moment when these volumes begin. I have carefully studied however nearly the whole of that correspondence, besides a mass of other papers. The labour is not light, for the handwriting of the great Advocate is perhaps the worst that ever existed, and the papers, although kept in the admirable order which distinguishes the Archives of the Hague, have passed through many hands at former epochs before reaching their natural destination in the treasure-house of the nation. Especially the documents connected with the famous trial were for a long time hidden from mortal view, for Barneveld's judges had bound themselves by oath to bury the proceedings out of sight. And the concealment lasted for centuries. Very recently a small portion of those papers has been published by the Historical Society of Utrecht. The "Verhooren," or Interrogatories of the Judges, and the replies of Barneveld, have thus been laid before the reading public of Holland, while within the last two years the distinguished and learned historian, Professor Fruin, has edited the "Verhooren" of Hugo Grotius.

Page 2581

But papers like these, important as they are, make but a slender portion of the material out of which a judgment concerning these grave events can be constructed. I do not therefore offer an apology for the somewhat copious extracts which I have translated and given in these volumes from the correspondence of Barneveld and from other manuscripts of great value—most of them in the Royal Archives of Holland and Belgium—which are unknown to the public.

I have avoided as much as possible any dealings with the theological controversies so closely connected with the events which I have attempted to describe. This work aims at being a political study. The subject is full of lessons, examples, and warnings for the inhabitants of all free states. Especially now that the republican system of government is undergoing a series of experiments with more or less success in one hemisphere—-while in our own land it is consolidated, powerful, and unchallenged—will the conflicts between the spirits of national centralization and of provincial sovereignty, and the struggle between the church, the sword, and the magistracy for supremacy in a free commonwealth, as revealed in the first considerable republic of modern history, be found suggestive of deep reflection.

Those who look in this work for a history of the Synod of Dordtrecht will look in vain. The Author has neither wish nor power to grapple with the mysteries and passions which at that epoch possessed so many souls. The Assembly marks a political period. Its political aspects have been anxiously examined, but beyond the ecclesiastical threshold there has been no attempt to penetrate.

It was necessary for my purpose to describe in some detail the relations of Henry *iv*. with the Dutch Republic during the last and most pregnant year of his life, which makes the first of the present history. These relations are of European importance, and the materials for appreciating them are of unexpected richness, in the Dutch and Belgian Archives.

Especially the secret correspondence, now at the Hague, of that very able diplomatist Francis Aerssens with Barneveld during the years 1609, 1610, and 1611, together with many papers at Brussels, are full of vital importance.

They throw much light both on the vast designs which filled the brain of Henry at this fatal epoch and on his extraordinary infatuation for the young Princess of Conde by which they were traversed, and which was productive of such widespread political anal tragical results. This episode forms a necessary portion of my theme, and has therefore been set forth from original sources.

I am under renewed obligations to my friend M. Gachard, the eminent publicist and archivist of Belgium, for his constant and friendly offices to me (which I have so often experienced before), while studying the documents under his charge relating to this

epoch; especially the secret correspondence of Archduke Albert with Philip *iii*, and his ministers, and with Pecquius, the Archduke's agent at Paris.

Page 2582

It is also a great pleasure to acknowledge the unceasing courtesy and zealous aid rendered me during my renewed studies in the Archives at the Hague—lasting through nearly two years—by the Chief Archivist, M. van den Berg, and the gentlemen connected with that institution, especially M. de Jonghe and M. Hingman, without whose aid it would have been difficult for me to decipher and to procure copies of the almost illegible holographs of Barneveld.

I must also thank M. van Deventer for communicating copies of some curious manuscripts relating to my subject, some from private archives in Holland, and others from those of Simancas.

A single word only remains to be said in regard to the name of the statesman whose career I have undertaken to describe.

His proper appellation and that by which he has always been known in his own country is Oldenbarneveld, but in his lifetime and always in history from that time to this he has been called Barneveld in English as well as French, and this transformation, as it were, of the name has become so settled a matter that after some hesitation it has been adopted in the present work.

The Author would take this opportunity of expressing his gratitude for the indulgence with which his former attempts to illustrate an important period of European history have been received by the public, and his anxious hope that the present volumes may be thought worthy of attention. They are the result at least of severe and conscientious labour at the original sources of history, but the subject is so complicated and difficult that it may well be feared that the ability to depict and unravel is unequal to the earnestness with which the attempt has been made.

London, 1873.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOHN OF BARNEVELD, v1, 1609

CHAPTER I.

John of Barneveld the Founder of the Commonwealth of the United Provinces—Maurice of Orange Stadholder, but Servant to the States- General—The Union of Utrecht maintained—Barneveld makes a Compromise between Civil Functionaries and Church Officials— Embassies to France, England, and to Venice—the Appointment of Arminius to be Professor of Theology at Leyden creates Dissension— The Catholic League opposed by the Great Protestant Union—Death of the Duke of Cleve and Struggle for his Succession—The Elector of Brandenburg and Palatine of Neuburg hold the Duchies

at Barneveld's Advice against the Emperor, though having Rival Claims themselves—Negotiations with the King of France—He becomes the Ally of the States-General to Protect the Possessory Princes, and prepares for war.

I propose to retrace the history of a great statesman's career. That statesman's name, but for the dark and tragic scenes with which it was ultimately associated, might after the lapse of two centuries and a half have faded into comparative oblivion, so impersonal and shadowy his presence would have seemed upon the great European theatre where he was so long a chief actor, and where his efforts and his achievements were foremost among those productive of long enduring and widespread results.

Page 2583

There is no doubt whatever that John of Barneveld, Advocate and Seal Keeper of the little province of Holland during forty years of as troubled and fertile an epoch as any in human history, was second to none of his contemporary statesmen. Yet the singular constitution and historical position of the republic whose destinies he guided and the peculiar and abnormal office which he held combined to cast a veil over his individuality. The ever-teeming brain, the restless almost omnipresent hand, the fertile pen, the eloquent and ready tongue, were seen, heard, and obeyed by the great European public, by the monarchs, statesmen, and warriors of the time, at many critical moments of history, but it was not John of Barneveld that spoke to the world. Those "high and puissant Lords my masters the States-General" personified the young but already majestic republic. Dignified, draped, and concealed by that overshadowing title the informing and master spirit performed its never ending task.

Those who study the enormous masses of original papers in the archives of the country will be amazed to find how the penmanship, most difficult to decipher, of the Advocate meets them at every turn. Letters to monarchs, generals, ambassadors, resolutions of councils, of sovereign assemblies, of trading corporations, of great Indian companies, legal and historical disquisitions of great depth and length on questions agitating Europe, constitutional arguments, drafts of treaties among the leading powers of the world, instructions to great commissions, plans for European campaigns, vast combinations covering the world, alliances of empire, scientific expeditions and discoveries—papers such as these covered now with the satirical dust of centuries, written in the small, crabbed, exasperating characters which make Barneveld's handwriting almost cryptographic, were once, when fairly engrossed and sealed with the great seal of the haughty burgher-aristocracy, the documents which occupied the close attention of the cabinets of Christendom.

It is not unfrequent to find four or five important despatches compressed almost in miniature upon one sheet of gigantic foolscap. It is also curious to find each one of these rough drafts conscientiously beginning in the statesman's own hand with the elaborate phrases of compliment belonging to the epoch such as "Noble, strenuous, severe, highly honourable, very learned, very discreet, and very wise masters," and ending with "May the Lord God Almighty eternally preserve you and hold you in His holy keeping in this world and for ever"—decorations which one might have thought it safe to leave to be filled in by the secretary or copying clerk.

Page 2584

Thus there have been few men at any period whose lives have been more closely identical than his with a national history. There have been few great men in any history whose names have become less familiar to the world, and lived less in the mouths of posterity. Yet there can be no doubt that if William the Silent was the founder of the independence of the United Provinces Barneveld was the founder of the Commonwealth itself. He had never the opportunity, perhaps he might have never had the capacity, to make such prodigious sacrifices in the cause of country as the great prince had done. But he had served his country strenuously from youth to old age with an abiding sense of duty, a steadiness of purpose, a broad vision, a firm grasp, and an opulence of resource such as not one of his compatriots could even pretend to rival.

Had that country of which he was so long the first citizen maintained until our own day the same proportionate position among the empires of Christendom as it held in the seventeenth century, the name of John of Barneveld would have perhaps been as familiar to all men as it is at this moment to nearly every inhabitant of the Netherlands. Even now political passion is almost as ready to flame forth either in ardent affection or enthusiastic hatred as if two centuries and a half had not elapsed since his death. His name is so typical of a party, a polity, and a faith, so indelibly associated with a great historical cataclysm, as to render it difficult even for the grave, the conscientious, the learned, the patriotic of his own compatriots to speak of him with absolute impartiality.

A foreigner who loves and admires all that is great and noble in the history of that famous republic and can have no hereditary bias as to its ecclesiastical or political theories may at least attempt the task with comparative coldness, although conscious of inability to do thorough justice to a most complex subject.

In former publications devoted to Netherland history I have endeavoured to trace the course of events of which the life and works of the Advocate were a vital ingredient down to the period when Spain after more than forty years of hard fighting virtually acknowledged the independence of the Republic and concluded with her a truce of twelve years.

That convention was signed in the spring of 1609. The ten ensuing years in Europe were comparatively tranquil, but they were scarcely to be numbered among the full and fruitful sheaves of a pacific epoch. It was a pause, a breathing spell during which the sulphurous clouds which had made the atmosphere of Christendom poisonous for nearly half a century had sullenly rolled away, while at every point of the horizon they were seen massing themselves anew in portentous and ever accumulating strength. At any moment the faint and sickly sunshine in which poor exhausted Humanity was essaying a feeble twitter of hope as it plumed itself for a peaceful flight might be again obscured. To us of a remote posterity the momentary division of epochs seems hardly discernible. So rapidly did that fight of Demons which we call the Thirty Years' War tread on the heels of the forty years' struggle for Dutch Independence which had just

been suspended that we are accustomed to think and speak of the Eighty Years' War as one pure, perfect, sanguinary whole.

Page 2585

And indeed the Tragedy which was soon to sweep solemnly across Europe was foreshadowed in the first fitful years of peace. The throb of the elementary forces already shook the soil of Christendom. The fantastic but most significant conflict in the territories of the dead Duke of Clove reflected the distant and gigantic war as in a mirage. It will be necessary to direct the reader's attention at the proper moment to that episode, for it was one in which the beneficent sagacity of Barneveld was conspicuously exerted in the cause of peace and conservation. Meantime it is not agreeable to reflect that this brief period of nominal and armed peace which the Republic had conquered after nearly two generations of warfare was employed by her in tearing her own flesh. The heroic sword which had achieved such triumphs in the cause of freedom could have been bitter employed than in an attempt at political suicide.

In a picture of the last decade of Barneveld's eventful life his personality may come more distinctly forward perhaps than in previous epochs. It will however be difficult to disentangle a single thread from the great historical tapestry of the Republic and of Europe in which his life and achievements are interwoven. He was a public man in the fullest sense of the word, and without his presence and influence the record of Holland, France, Spain, Britain, and Germany might have been essentially modified.

The Republic was so integral a part of that system which divided Europe into two great hostile camps according to creeds rather than frontiers that the history of its foremost citizen touches at every point the general history of Christendom.

The great peculiarity of the Dutch constitution at this epoch was that no principle was absolutely settled. In throwing off a foreign tyranny and successfully vindicating national independence the burghers and nobles had not had leisure to lay down any organic law. Nor had the day for profound investigation of the political or social contract arrived. Men dealt almost exclusively with facts, and when the facts arranged themselves illogically and incoherently the mischief was grave and difficult to remedy. It is not a trifling inconvenience for an organized commonwealth to be in doubt as to where, in whom, and of what nature is its sovereignty. Yet this was precisely the condition of the United Netherlands. To the eternal world so dazzling were the reputation and the achievements of their great captain that he was looked upon by many as the legitimate chief of the state and doubtless friendly monarchs would have cordially welcomed him into their brotherhood.

Page 2586

During the war he had been surrounded by almost royal state. Two hundred officers lived daily at his table. Great nobles and scions of sovereign houses were his pupils or satellites. The splendour of military despotism and the awe inspired by his unquestioned supremacy in what was deemed the greatest of all sciences invested the person of Maurice of Nassau with a grandeur which many a crowned potentate might envy. His ample appointments united with the spoils of war provided him with almost royal revenues, even before the death of his elder brother Philip William had placed in his hands the principality and wealthy possessions of Orange. Hating contradiction, arbitrary by instinct and by military habit, impatient of criticism, and having long acknowledged no master in the chief business of state, he found himself at the conclusion of the truce with his great occupation gone, and, although generously provided for by the treasury of the Republic, yet with an income proportionately limited.

Politics and theology were fields in which he had hardly served an apprenticeship, and it was possible that when he should step forward as a master in those complicated and difficult pursuits, soon to absorb the attention of the Commonwealth and the world, it might appear that war was not the only science that required serious preliminary studies.

Meantime he found himself not a king, not the master of a nominal republic, but the servant of the States-General, and the limited stadholder of five out of seven separate provinces.

And the States-General were virtually John of Barneveld. Could antagonism be more sharply defined? Jealousy, that potent principle which controls the regular movements and accounts for the aberrations of humanity in widest spheres as well as narrowest circles far more generally and conclusively than philosophers or historians have been willing to admit, began forthwith to manifest its subtle and irresistible influence.

And there were not to be wanting acute and dangerous schemers who saw their profit in augmenting its intensity.

The Seven Provinces, when the truce of twelve years had been signed, were neither exhausted nor impoverished. Yet they had just emerged from a forty years' conflict such as no people in human history had ever waged against a foreign tyranny. They had need to repose and recruit, but they stood among the foremost great powers of the day. It is not easy in imagination to thrust back the present leading empires of the earth into the contracted spheres of their not remote past. But to feel how a little confederacy of seven provinces loosely tied together by an ill-defined treaty could hold so prominent and often so controlling a place in the European system of the seventeenth century, we must remember that there was then no Germany, no Russia, no Italy, no United States of America, scarcely even a Great Britain in the sense which belongs to that mighty empire now.

Page 2587

France, Spain, England, the Pope, and the Emperor were the leading powers with which the Netherlands were daily called on to solve great problems and try conclusions; the study of political international equilibrium, now rapidly and perhaps fortunately becoming one of the lost arts, being then the most indispensable duty of kings and statesmen.

Spain and France, which had long since achieved for themselves the political union of many independent kingdoms and states into which they had been divided were the most considerable powers and of necessity rivals. Spain, or rather the House of Austria divided into its two great branches, still pursued its persistent and by no means fantastic dream of universal monarchy. Both Spain and France could dispose of somewhat larger resources absolutely, although not relatively, than the Seven Provinces, while at least trebling them in population. The yearly revenue of Spain after deduction of its pledged resources was perhaps equal to a million sterling, and that of France with the same reservation was about as much. England had hardly been able to levy and make up a yearly income of more than L600,000 or L700,000 at the end of Elizabeth's reign or in the first years of James, while the Netherlands had often proved themselves capable of furnishing annually ten or twelve millions of florins, which would be the equivalent of nearly a million sterling.

The yearly revenues of the whole monarchy of the Imperial house of Habsburg can scarcely be stated at a higher figure than L350,000.

Thus the political game—for it was a game—was by no means a desperate one for the Netherlands, nor the resources of the various players so unequally distributed as at first sight it might appear.

The emancipation of the Provinces from the grasp of Spain and the establishment by them of a commonwealth, for that epoch a very free one, and which contained within itself the germs of a larger liberty, religious, political, and commercial, than had yet been known, was already one of the most considerable results of the Reformation. The probability of its continued and independent existence was hardly believed in by potentate or statesman outside its own borders, and had not been very long a decided article of faith even within them. The knotty problem of an acknowledgment of that existence, the admission of the new-born state into the family of nations, and a temporary peace guaranteed by two great powers, had at last been solved mainly by the genius of Barneveld working amid many disadvantages and against great obstructions. The truce had been made, and it now needed all the skill, coolness, and courage of a practical and original statesman to conduct the affairs of the Confederacy. The troubled epoch of peace was even now heaving with warlike emotions, and was hardly less stormy than the war which had just been suspended.

The Republic was like a raft loosely strung together, floating almost on a level of the ocean, and often half submerged, but freighted with inestimable treasures for itself and

the world. It needed an unsleeping eye and a powerful brain to conduct her over the quicksands and through the whirlpools of an unmapped and intricate course.

Page 2588

The sovereignty of the country so far as its nature could be satisfactorily analysed seemed to be scattered through, and inherent in each one of, the multitudinous boards of magistracy—close corporations, self-elected—by which every city was governed. Nothing could be more preposterous. Practically, however, these boards were represented by deputies in each of the seven provincial assemblies, and these again sent councillors from among their number to the general assembly which was that of their High Mightinesses the Lords States-General.

The Province of Holland, being richer and more powerful than all its six sisters combined, was not unwilling to impose a supremacy which on the whole was practically conceded by the rest. Thus the Union of Utrecht established in 1579 was maintained for want of anything better as the foundation of the Commonwealth.

The Advocate and Keeper of the Great Seal of that province was therefore virtually prime minister, president, attorney-general, finance minister, and minister of foreign affairs of the whole republic. This was Barneveld's position. He took the lead in the deliberations both of the States of Holland and the States-General, moved resolutions, advocated great measures of state, gave heed to their execution, collected the votes, summed up the proceedings, corresponded with and instructed ambassadors, received and negotiated with foreign ministers, besides directing and holding in his hands the various threads of the home policy and the rapidly growing colonial system of the Republic.

All this work Barneveld had been doing for thirty years.

The Reformation was by no mans assured even in the lands where it had at first made the most essential progress. But the existence of the new commonwealth depended on the success of that great movement which had called it into being. Losing ground in France, fluctuating in England, Protestantism was apparently more triumphant in vast territories where the ancient Church was one day to recover its mastery. Of the population of Bohemia, there were perhaps ten Protestants to one Papist, while in the United Netherlands at least one-third of the people were still attached to the Catholic faith.

The great religious struggle in Bohemia and other dominions of the Habsburg family was fast leading to a war of which no man could even imagine the horrors or foresee the vast extent. The Catholic League and the Protestant Union were slowly arranging Europe into two mighty confederacies.

They were to give employment year after year to millions of mercenary freebooters who were to practise murder, pillage, and every imaginable and unimaginable outrage as the most legitimate industry that could occupy mankind. The Holy Empire which so ingeniously combined the worst characteristics of despotism and republicanism kept all Germany and half Europe in the turmoil of a perpetual presidential election. A theatre

where trivial personages and graceless actors performed a tragi-comedy of mingled folly, intrigue, and crime, and where earnestness and vigour were destined to be constantly baffled, now offered the principal stage for the entertainment and excitement of Christendom.

Page 2589

There was but one king in Europe, Henry the Bearnese. The men who sat on the thrones in Madrid, Vienna, London, would have lived and died unknown but for the crowns they wore, and while there were plenty of bustling politicians here and there in Christendom, there were not many statesmen.

Among them there was no stronger man than John of Barneveld, and no man had harder or more complicated work to do.

Born in Amersfoort in 1547, of the ancient and knightly house of Oldenbarneveldt, of patrician blood through all his ancestors both male and female, he was not the heir to large possessions, and was a diligent student and hardworking man from youth upward. He was not wont to boast of his pedigree until in later life, being assailed by vilest slander, all his kindred nearest or most remote being charged with every possible and unmentionable crime, and himself stigmatized as sprung from the lowest kennels of humanity—as if thereby his private character and public services could be more legitimately blackened—he was stung into exhibiting to the world the purity and antiquity of his escutcheon, and a roll of respectably placed, well estated, and authentically noble, if not at all illustrious, forefathers in his country's records of the previous centuries.

Without an ancestor at his back he might have valued himself still more highly on the commanding place he held in the world by right divine of intellect, but as the father of lies seemed to have kept his creatures so busy with the Barneveld genealogy, it was not amiss for the statesman once for all to make the truth known.

His studies in the universities of Holland, France, Italy, and Germany had been profound. At an early age he was one of the first civilians of the time. His manhood being almost contemporary with the great war of freedom, he had served as a volunteer and at his own expense through several campaigns, having nearly lost his life in the disastrous attempt to relieve the siege of Haarlem, and having been so disabled by sickness and exposure at the heroic leaguer of Leyden as to have been deprived of the joy of witnessing its triumphant conclusion.

Successfully practising his profession afterwards before the tribunals of Holland, he had been called at the comparatively early age of twenty-nine to the important post of Chief Pensionary of Rotterdam. So long as William the Silent lived, that great prince was all in all to his country, and Barneveld was proud and happy to be among the most trusted and assiduous of his counsellors.

When the assassination of William seemed for an instant to strike the Republic with paralysis, Barneveld was foremost among the statesmen of Holland to spring forward and help to inspire it with renewed energy.

Page 2590

The almost completed negotiations for conferring the sovereignty, not of the Confederacy, but of the Province of Holland, upon the Prince had been abruptly brought to an end by his death. To confer that sovereign countship on his son Maurice, then a lad of eighteen and a student at Leyden, would have seemed to many at so terrible a crisis an act of madness, although Barneveld had been willing to suggest and promote the scheme. The confederates under his guidance soon hastened however to lay the sovereignty, and if not the sovereignty, the protectorship, of all the provinces at the feet first of England and then of France.

Barneveld was at the head of the embassy, and indeed was the indispensable head of all important, embassies to each of those two countries throughout all this portion of his career. Both monarchs refused, almost spurned, the offered crown in which was involved a war with the greatest power in the world, with no compensating dignity or benefit, as it was thought, beside.

Then Elizabeth, although declining the sovereignty, promised assistance and sent the Earl of Leicester as governor-general at the head of a contingent of English troops. Precisely to prevent the consolidation thus threatened of the Provinces into one union, a measure which had been attempted more than once in the Burgundian epoch, and always successfully resisted by the spirit of provincial separatism, Barneveld now proposed and carried the appointment of Maurice of Nassau to the stadholdership of Holland. This was done against great opposition and amid fierce debate. Soon afterwards Barneveld was vehemently urged by the nobles and regents of the cities of Holland to accept the post of Advocate of that province. After repeatedly declining the arduous and most responsible office, he was at last induced to accept it. He did it under the remarkable condition that in case any negotiation should be undertaken for the purpose of bringing back the Province of Holland under the dominion of the King of Spain, he should be considered as from that moment relieved from the service.

His brother Elias Barneveld succeeded him as Pensionary of Rotterdam, and thenceforth the career of the Advocate is identical with the history of the Netherlands. Although a native of Utrecht, he was competent to exercise such functions in Holland, a special and ancient convention between those two provinces allowing the citizens of either to enjoy legal and civic rights in both. Gradually, without intrigue or inordinate ambition, but from force of circumstances and the commanding power of the man, the native authority stamped upon his forehead, he became the political head of the Confederacy. He created and maintained a system of public credit absolutely marvellous in the circumstances, by means of which an otherwise impossible struggle was carried to a victorious end.

When the stadholderate of the provinces of Gelderland, Utrecht, and Overyssel became vacant, it was again Barneveld’s potent influence and sincere attachment to the House of Nassau that procured the election of Maurice to those posts. Thus within six years after his father’s death the youthful soldier who had already given proof of his

surpassing military genius had become governor, commander-in-chief, and high admiral, of five of the seven provinces constituting the Confederacy.

Page 2591

At about the same period the great question of Church and State, which Barneveld had always felt to be among the vital problems of the age, and on which his opinions were most decided, came up for partial solution. It would have been too much to expect the opinion of any statesman to be so much in advance of his time as to favor religious equality. Toleration of various creeds, including the Roman Catholic, so far as abstinence from inquisition into consciences and private parlours could be called toleration, was secured, and that was a considerable step in advance of the practice of the sixteenth century. Burning, hanging, and burying alive of culprits guilty of another creed than the dominant one had become obsolete. But there was an established creed—the Reformed religion, founded on the Netherland Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. And there was one established principle then considered throughout Europe the grand result of the Reformation; “Cujus regio ejus religio;” which was in reality as impudent an invasion of human right as any heaven-born dogma of Infallibility. The sovereign of a country, having appropriated the revenues of the ancient church, prescribed his own creed to his subjects. In the royal conscience were included the million consciences of his subjects. The inevitable result in a country like the Netherlands, without a personal sovereign, was a struggle between the new church and the civil government for mastery. And at this period, and always in Barneveld’s opinion, the question of dogma was subordinate to that of church government. That there should be no authority over the King had been settled in England.

Henry *viii*., Elizabeth, and afterwards James, having become popes in their own realm, had no great hostility to, but rather an affection for, ancient dogma and splendid ceremonial. But in the Seven Provinces, even as in France, Germany, and Switzerland, the reform where it had been effected at all had been more thorough, and there was little left of Popish pomp or aristocratic hierarchy. Nothing could be severer than the simplicity of the Reformed Church, nothing more imperious than its dogma, nothing more infallible than its creed. It was the true religion, and there was none other. But to whom belonged the ecclesiastical edifices, the splendid old minsters in the cities—-raised by the people’s confiding piety and the purchased remission of their sins in a bygone age—and the humbler but beautiful parish churches in every town and village? To the State; said Barneveld, speaking for government; to the community represented by the states of the provinces, the magistracies of the cities and municipalities. To the Church itself, the one true church represented by its elders, and deacons, and preachers, was the reply.

And to whom belonged the right of prescribing laws and ordinances of public worship, of appointing preachers, church servants, schoolmasters, sextons? To the Holy Ghost inspiring the Class and the Synod, said the Church.

Page 2592

To the civil authority, said the magistrates, by which the churches are maintained, and the salaries of the ecclesiastics paid. The states of Holland are as sovereign as the kings of England or Denmark, the electors of Saxony or Brandenburg, the magistrates of Zurich or Basel or other Swiss cantons. “Cujus regio ejus religio.”

In 1590 there was a compromise under the guidance of Barneveld. It was agreed that an appointing board should be established composed of civil functionaries and church officials in equal numbers. Thus should the interests of religion and of education be maintained.

The compromise was successful enough during the war. External pressure kept down theological passion, and there were as yet few symptoms of schism in the dominant church. But there was to come a time when the struggle between church and government was to break forth with an intensity and to rage to an extent which no man at that moment could imagine.

Towards the end of the century Henry *iv*. made peace with Spain. It was a trying moment for the Provinces. Barneveld was again sent forth on an embassy to the King. The cardinal point in his policy, as it had ever been in that of William the Silent, was to maintain close friendship with France, whoever might be its ruler. An alliance between that kingdom and Spain would be instantaneous ruin to the Republic. With the French and English sovereigns united with the Provinces, the cause of the Reformation might triumph, the Spanish world-empire be annihilated, national independence secured.

Henry assured the Ambassador that the treaty of Vervins was indispensable, but that he would never desert his old allies. In proof of this, although he had just bound himself to Spain to give no assistance to the Provinces, open or secret, he would furnish them with thirteen hundred thousand crowns, payable at intervals during four years. He was under great obligations to his good friends the States, he said, and nothing in the treaty forbade him to pay his debts.

It was at this period too that Barneveld was employed by the King to attend to certain legal and other private business for which he professed himself too poor at the moment to compensate him. There seems to have been nothing in the usages of the time or country to make the transaction, innocent in itself, in any degree disreputable. The King promised at some future clay, when he should be more in funds, to pay him a liberal fee. Barneveld, who a dozen years afterwards received 20,000 florins for his labour, professed that he would much rather have had one thousand at the time.

Page 2593

Thence the Advocate, accompanied by his colleague, Justinus de Nassau, proceeded to England, where they had many stormy interviews with Elizabeth. The Queen swore with many an oath that she too would make peace with Philip, recommended the Provinces to do the same thing with submission to their ancient tyrant, and claimed from the States immediate payment of one million sterling in satisfaction of their old debts to her. It would have been as easy for them at that moment to pay a thousand million. It was at last agreed that the sum of the debt should be fixed at L800,000, and that the cautionary towns should be held in Elizabeth's hands by English troops until all the debt should be discharged. Thus England for a long time afterwards continued to regard itself, as in a measure the sovereign and proprietor of the Confederacy, and Barneveld then and there formed the resolve to relieve the country of the incubus, and to recover those cautionary towns and fortresses at the earliest possible moment. So long as foreign soldiers commanded by military governors existed on the soil of the Netherlands, they could hardly account themselves independent. Besides, there was the perpetual and horrid nightmare, that by a sudden pacification between Spain and England those important cities, keys to the country's defence, might be handed over to their ancient tyrant.

Elizabeth had been pacified at last, however, by the eloquence of the Ambassador. "I will assist you even if you were up to the neck in water," she said. "Jusque la," she added, pointing to her chin.

Five years later Barneveld, for the fifth time at the head of a great embassy, was sent to England to congratulate James on his accession. It was then and there that he took measure of the monarch with whom he was destined to have many dealings, and who was to exert so baleful an influence on his career. At last came the time when it was felt that peace between Spain and her revolted provinces might be made. The conservation of their ancient laws, privileges, and charters, the independence of the States, and included therein the freedom to establish the Reformed religion, had been secured by forty years of fighting.

The honour of Spain was saved by a conjunction. She agreed to treat with her old dependencies "as" with states over which she had no pretensions. Through virtue of an "as," a truce after two years' negotiation, perpetually traversed and secretly countermined by the military party under the influence of Maurice, was carried by the determination of Barneveld. The great objects of the war had been secured. The country was weary of nearly half a century of bloodshed. It was time to remember that there could be such a condition as Peace.

The treaty was signed, ratifications exchanged, and the usual presents of considerable sums of money to the negotiators made. Barneveld earnestly protested against carrying out the custom on this occasion, and urged that those presents should be given for the public use. He was overruled by those who were more desirous of receiving

their reward than he was, and he accordingly, in common with the other diplomatists, accepted the gifts.

Page 2594

The various details of these negotiations have been related by the author in other volumes, to which the present one is intended as a sequel. It has been thought necessary merely to recall very briefly a few salient passages in the career of the Advocate up to the period when the present history really opens.

Their bearing upon subsequent events will easily be observed. The truce was the work of Barneveld. It was detested by Maurice and by Maurice's partisans.

"I fear that our enemies and evil reports are the cause of many of our difficulties," said the Advocate to the States' envoy in Paris, in 1606. "You are to pay no heed to private advices. Believe and make others believe that more than one half the inhabitants of the cities and in the open country are inclined to peace. And I believe, in case of continuing adversities, that the other half will not remain constant, principally because the Provinces are robbed of all traffic, prosperity, and navigation, through the actions of France and England. I have always thought it for the advantage of his Majesty to sustain us in such wise as would make us useful in his service. As to his remaining permanently at peace with Spain, that would seem quite out of the question."

The King had long kept, according to treaty, a couple of French regiments in the States' service, and furnished, or was bound to furnish, a certain yearly sum for their support. But the expenses of the campaigning had been rapidly increasing and the results as swiftly dwindling. The Advocate now explained that, "without loss both of important places and of reputation," the States could not help spending every month that they took the field 200,000 florins over and above the regular contributions, and some months a great deal more. This sum, he said, in nine months, would more than eat up the whole subsidy of the King. If they were to be in the field by March or beginning of April, they would require from him an extraordinary sum of 200,000 crowns, and as much more in June or July.

Eighteen months later, when the magnificent naval victory of Heemskerk in the Bay of Gibraltar had just made a startling interlude to the languishing negotiations for peace, the Advocate again warned the French King of the difficulty in which the Republic still laboured of carrying on the mighty struggle alone. Spain was the common enemy of all. No peace or hope was possible for the leading powers as long as Spain was perpetually encamped in the very heart of Western Europe. The Netherlands were not fighting their own battle merely, but that of freedom and independence against the all-encroaching world-power. And their means to carry on the conflict were dwindling, while at the same time there was a favourable opportunity for cropping some fruit from their previous labours and sacrifices.

Page 2595

“We are led to doubt,” he wrote once more to the envoy in France, “whether the King’s full powers will come from Spain. This defeat is hard for the Spaniards to digest. Meantime our burdens are quite above our capacity, as you will understand by the enclosed statement, which is made out with much exactness to show what is absolutely necessary for a vigorous defence on land and a respectable position at sea to keep things from entire confusion. The Provinces could raise means for the half of this estimate. But, it is a great difference when the means differ one half from the expenses. The sovereignst and most assured remedy would be the one so often demanded, often projected, and sometimes almost prepared for execution, namely that our neighbour kings, princes, and republics should earnestly take the matter in hand and drive the Spaniards and their adherents out of the Netherlands and over the mountains. Their own dignity and security ought not to permit such great bodies of troops of both belligerents permanently massed in the Netherlands. Still less ought they to allow these Provinces to fall into the hands of the Spaniards, whence they could with so much more power and convenience make war upon all kings, princes, and republics. This must be prevented by one means or another. It ought to be enough for every one that we have been between thirty and forty years a firm bulwark against Spanish ambition. Our constancy and patience ought to be strengthened by counsel and by deed in order that we may exist; a Christian sympathy and a small assistance not being sufficient. Believe and cause to be believed that the present condition of our affairs requires more aid in counsel and money than ever before, and that nothing could be better bestowed than to further this end.

“Messieurs Jeannin, Buzenval, and de Russy have been all here these twelve days. We have firm hopes that other kings, princes, and republics will not stay upon formalities, but will also visit the patients here in order to administer sovereign remedies.

“Lend no ear to any flying reports. We say with the wise men over there, ‘Metuo Danaos et dons ferentes.’ We know our antagonists well, and trust their hearts no more than before, ‘sed ultra posse non est esse.’ To accept more burthens than we can pay for will breed military mutiny; to tax the community above its strength will cause popular tumults, especially in ‘rebus adversis,’ of which the beginnings were seen last year, and without a powerful army the enemy is not to be withstood. I have received your letters to the 17th May. My advice is to trust to his upright proceedings and with patience to overcome all things. Thus shall the detractors and calumniators best be confounded. Assure his Majesty and his ministers that I will do my utmost to avert our ruin and his Majesty’s disservice.”

The treaty was made, and from that time forth the antagonism between the eminent statesman and the great military chieftain became inevitable. The importance of the one seemed likely to increase day by day. The occupation of the other for a time was over.

Page 2596

During the war Maurice had been, with exception of Henry *iv*., the most considerable personage in Europe. He was surrounded with that visible atmosphere of power the poison of which it is so difficult to resist, and through the golden haze of which a mortal seems to dilate for the vulgar eye into the supernatural. The attention of Christendom was perpetually fixed upon him. Nothing like his sieges, his encampments, his military discipline, his scientific campaigning had been seen before in modern Europe. The youthful aristocracy from all countries thronged to his camp to learn the game of war, for he had restored by diligent study of the ancients much that was noble in that pursuit, and had elevated into an art that which had long since degenerated into a system of butchery, marauding, and rapine. And he had fought with signal success and unquestionable heroism the most important and most brilliant pitched battle of the age. He was a central figure of the current history of Europe. Pagan nations looked up to him as one of the leading sovereigns of Christendom. The Emperor of Japan addressed him as his brother monarch, assured him that his subjects trading to that distant empire should be welcomed and protected, and expressed himself ashamed that so great a prince, whose name and fame had spread through the world, should send his subjects to visit a country so distant and unknown, and offer its emperor a friendship which he was unconscious of deserving.

He had been a commander of armies and a chief among men since he came to man's estate, and he was now in the very vigour of life, in his forty-second year. Of Imperial descent and closely connected by blood or alliance with many of the most illustrious of reigning houses, the acknowledged master of the most royal and noble of all sciences, he was of the stuff of which kings were made, and belonged by what was then accounted right divine to the family of kings. His father's death had alone prevented his elevation to the throne of Holland, and such possession of half the sovereignty of the United Netherlands would probably have expanded into dominion over all the seven with a not fantastic possibility of uniting the ten still obedient provinces into a single realm. Such a kingdom would have been more populous and far wealthier than contemporary Great Britain and Ireland. Maurice, then a student at Leyden, was too young at that crisis, and his powers too undeveloped to justify any serious attempt to place him in his father's place.

The Netherlands drifted into a confederacy of aristocratic republics, not because they had planned a republic, but because they could not get a king, foreign or native. The documents regarding the offer of the sovereign countship to William remained in the possession of Maurice, and a few years before the peace there had been a private meeting of leading personages, of which Barneveld was the promoter and chief spokesman, to take into consideration the propriety and possibility of conferring that sovereignty upon the son which had virtually belonged to the father. The obstacles were deemed so numerous, and especially the scheme seemed so fraught with danger to Maurice, that it was reluctantly abandoned by his best friends, among whom unquestionably was the Advocate.

Page 2597

There was no reason whatever why the now successful and mature soldier, to whom the country was under such vast obligations, should not aspire to the sovereignty. The Provinces had not pledged themselves to republicanism, but rather to monarchy, and the crown, although secretly coveted by Henry *iv*., could by no possibility now be conferred on any other man than Maurice. It was no impeachment on his character that he should nourish thoughts in which there was nothing criminal.

But the peace negotiations had opened a chasm. It was obvious enough that Barneveld having now so long exercised great powers, and become as it were the chief magistrate of an important commonwealth, would not be so friendly as formerly to its conversion into a monarchy and to the elevation of the great soldier to its throne. The Advocate had even been sounded, cautiously and secretly, so men believed, by the Princess-Dowager, Louise de Coligny, widow of William the silent, as to the feasibility of procuring the sovereignty for Maurice. She had done this at the instigation of Maurice, who had expressed his belief that the favourable influence of the Advocate would make success certain and who had represented to her that, as he was himself resolved never to marry, the inheritance after his death would fall to her son Frederick Henry. The Princess, who was of a most amiable disposition, adored her son. Devoted to the House of Nassau and a great admirer of its chief, she had a long interview with Barneveld, in which she urged the scheme upon his attention without in any probability revealing that she had come to him at the solicitation of Maurice.

The Advocate spoke to her with frankness and out of the depths of his heart. He professed an ardent attachment to her family, a profound reverence for the virtues, sacrifices, and achievements of her lamented husband, and a warm desire to do everything to further the interests of the son who had proved himself so worthy of his parentage.

But he proved to her that Maurice, in seeking the sovereignty, was seeking his ruin. The Hollanders, he said, liked to be persuaded and not forced. Having triumphantly shaken off the yoke of a powerful king, they would scarcely consent now to accept the rule of any personal sovereign. The desire to save themselves from the claws of Spain had led them formerly to offer the dominion over them to various potentates. Now that they had achieved peace and independence and were delivered from the fears of Spanish ferocity and French intrigue, they shuddered at the dangers from royal hands out of which they had at last escaped. He believed that they would be capable of tearing in pieces any one who might make the desired proposition. After all, he urged, Maurice was a hundred times more fortunate as he was than if he should succeed in desires so opposed to his own good. This splendour of sovereignty was a false glare which would lead him to a precipice. He had now the power of a sovereign without the envy which ever followed it. Having essentially such power, he ought, like his father, to despise an empty name, which would only make him hated. For it was well known that William the Silent had only yielded to much solicitation, agreeing to accept that which then seemed desirable for the country’s good but to him was more than indifferent.

Page 2598

Maurice was captain-general and admiral-general of five provinces. He appointed to governments and to all military office. He had a share of appointment to the magistracies. He had the same advantages and the same authority as had been enjoyed in the Netherlands by the ancient sovereign counts, by the dukes of Burgundy, by Emperor Charles V. himself.

Every one now was in favour of increasing his pensions, his salaries, his material splendour. Should he succeed in seizing the sovereignty, men would envy him even to the ribbands of his pages' and his lackeys' shoes. He turned to the annals of Holland and showed the Princess that there had hardly been a sovereign count against whom his subjects had not revolted, marching generally into the very courtyard of the palace at the Hague in order to take his life.

Convinced by this reasoning, Louise de Coligny had at once changed her mind, and subsequently besought her stepson to give up a project sure to be fatal to his welfare, his peace of mind, and the good of the country. Maurice listened to her coldly, gave little heed to the Advocate's logic, and hated him in his heart from that day forth.

The Princess remained loyal to Barneveld to the last.

Thus the foundation was laid of that terrible enmity which, inflamed by theological passion, was to convert the period of peace into a hell, to rend the Provinces asunder when they had most need of repose, and to lead to tragical results for ever to be deplored. Already in 1607 Francis Aerssens had said that the two had become so embroiled and things had gone so far that one or the other would have to leave the country. He permitted also the ridiculous statement to be made in his house at Paris, that Henry *iv*. believed the Advocate to have become Spanish, and had declared that Prince Maurice would do well to have him put into a sack and thrown into the sea.

His life had been regularly divided into two halves, the campaigning season and the period of winter quarters. In the one his business, and his talk was of camps, marches, sieges, and battles only. In the other he was devoted to his stud, to tennis, to mathematical and mechanical inventions, and to chess, of which he was passionately fond, and which he did not play at all well. A Gascon captain serving in the States' army was his habitual antagonist in that game, and, although the stakes were but a crown a game, derived a steady income out of his gains, which were more than equal to his pay. The Prince was sulky when he lost, sitting, when the candles were burned out and bed-time had arrived, with his hat pulled over his brows, without bidding his guest good night, and leaving him to find his way out as he best could; and, on the contrary, radiant with delight when successful, calling for valets to light the departing captain through the corridor, and accompanying him to the door of the apartment himself. That warrior was accordingly too shrewd not to allow his great adversary as fair a share of triumph as was consistent with maintaining the frugal income on which he reckoned.

Page 2599

He had small love for the pleasures of the table, but was promiscuous and unlicensed in his amours. He was methodical in his household arrangements, and rather stingy than liberal in money matters. He personally read all his letters, accounts, despatches, and other documents trivial or important, but wrote few letters with his own hand, so that, unlike his illustrious father's correspondence, there is little that is characteristic to be found in his own. He was plain but not shabby in attire, and was always dressed in exactly the same style, wearing doublet and hose of brown woollen, a silk under vest, a short cloak lined with velvet, a little plaited ruff on his neck, and very loose boots. He ridiculed the smart French officers who, to show their fine legs, were wont to wear such tight boots as made them perspire to get into them, and maintained, in precept and practice, that a man should be able to jump into his boots and mount and ride at a moment's notice. The only ornaments he indulged in, except, of course, on state occasions, were a golden hilt to his famous sword, and a rope of diamonds tied around his felt hat.

He was now in the full flower of his strength and his fame, in his forty-second year, and of a noble and martial presence. The face, although unquestionably handsome, offered a sharp contrast within itself; the upper half all intellect, the lower quite sensual. Fair hair growing thin, but hardly tinged with grey, a bright, cheerful, and thoughtful forehead, large hazel eyes within a singularly large orbit of brow; a straight, thin, slightly aquiline, well-cut nose—such features were at open variance with the broad, thick-lipped, sensual mouth, the heavy pendant jowl, the sparse beard on the glistening cheek, and the moleskin-like moustachio and chin tuft. Still, upon the whole, it was a face and figure which gave the world assurance of a man and a commander of men. Power and intelligence were stamped upon him from his birth.

Barneveld was tall and majestic of presence, with large quadrangular face, austere, blue eyes looking authority and command, a vast forehead, and a grizzled beard. Of fluent and convincing eloquence with tongue and pen, having the power of saying much in few words, he cared much more for the substance than the graces of speech or composition. This tendency was not ill exemplified in a note of his written on a sheet of questions addressed to him by a States' ambassador about to start on an important mission, but a novice in his business, the answers to which questions were to serve for his diplomatic instructions.

"Item and principally," wrote the Envoy, "to request of M. de Barneveld a formulary or copy of the best, soundest, wisest, and best couched despatches done by several preceding ambassadors in order to regulate myself accordingly for the greater service of the Province and for my uttermost reputation."

The Advocate's answer, scrawled in his nearly illegible hand, was—

Page 2600

“Unnecessary. The truth in shortest about matters of importance shall be taken for good style.”

With great love of power, which he was conscious of exerting with ease to himself and for the good of the public, he had little personal vanity, and not the smallest ambition of authorship. Many volumes might be collected out of the vast accumulation of his writings now mouldering and forgotten in archives. Had the language in which they are written become a world’s language, they would be worthy of attentive study, as containing noble illustrations of the history and politics of his age, with theories and sentiments often far in advance of his age. But he cared not for style. “The truth in shortest about matters of importance” was enough for him; but the world in general, and especially the world of posterity, cares much for style. The vehicle is often prized more than the freight. The name of Barneveld is fast fading out of men’s memory. The fame of his pupil and companion in fortune and misfortune, Hugo Grotius, is ever green. But Grotius was essentially an author rather than a statesman: he wrote for the world and posterity with all the love, pride, and charm of the devotee of literature, and he composed his noblest works in a language which is ever living because it is dead. Some of his writings, epochmaking when they first appeared, are text-books still familiar in every cultivated household on earth. Yet Barneveld was vastly his superior in practical statesmanship, in law, in the science of government, and above all in force of character, while certainly not his equal in theology, nor making any pretensions to poetry. Although a ripe scholar, he rarely wrote in Latin, and not often in French. His ambition was to do his work thoroughly according to his view of duty, and to ask God’s blessing upon it without craving overmuch the applause of men.

Such were the two men, the soldier and the statesman. Would the Republic, fortunate enough to possess two such magnificent and widely contrasted capacities, be wise enough to keep them in its service, each supplementing the other, and the two combining in a perfect whole?

Or was the great law of the Discords of the World, as potent as that other principle of Universal Harmony and planetary motion which an illustrious contemporary—that Wurtemberg astronomer, once a soldier of the fierce Alva, now the half-starved astrologer of the brain-sick Rudolph—was at that moment discovering, after “God had waited six thousand years for him to do it,” to prevail for the misery of the Republic and shame of Europe? Time was to show.

The new state had forced itself into the family of sovereignties somewhat to the displeasure of most of the Lord’s anointed. Rebellious and republican, it necessarily excited the jealousy of long-established and hereditary governments.

The King of Spain had not formally acknowledged the independence of the United Provinces. He had treated with them as free, and there was supposed to be much virtue in the conjunction. But their sovereign independence was virtually recognized by

the world. Great nations had entered into public and diplomatic relations and conventions with them, and their agents at foreign courts were now dignified with the rank and title of ambassadors.

Page 2601

The Spanish king had likewise refused to them the concession of the right of navigation and commerce in the East Indies, but it was a matter of notoriety that the absence of the word India, suppressed as it was in the treaty, implied an immense triumph on the part of the States, and that their flourishing and daily increasing commerce in the farthest East and the imperial establishments already rising there were cause of envy and jealousy not to Spain alone, but to friendly powers.

Yet the government of Great Britain affected to regard them as something less than a sovereign state. Although Elizabeth had refused the sovereignty once proffered to her, although James had united with Henry *iv*. in guaranteeing the treaty just concluded between the States and Spain, that monarch had the wonderful conception that the Republic was in some sort a province of his own, because he still held the cautionary towns in pledge for the loans granted by his predecessor. His agents at Constantinople were instructed to represent the new state as unworthy to accredit its envoys as those of an independent power. The Provinces were represented as a collection of audacious rebels, a piratical scum of the sea. But the Sultan knew his interests better than to incur the enmity of this rising maritime power. The Dutch envoy declaring that he would sooner throw himself into the Bosphorus than remain to be treated with less consideration than that accorded to the ministers of all great powers, the remonstrances of envious colleagues were hushed, and Haga was received with all due honours.

Even at the court of the best friend of the Republic, the French king, men looked coldly at the upstart commonwealth. Francis Aerssens, the keen and accomplished minister of the States, resident in Paris for many years, was received as ambassador after the truce with all the ceremonial befitting the highest rank in the diplomatic service; yet Henry could not yet persuade himself to look upon the power accrediting him as a thoroughly organized commonwealth.

The English ambassador asked the King if he meant to continue his aid and assistance to the States during the truce. “Yes,” answered Henry.

“And a few years beyond it?”

“No. I do not wish to offend the King of Spain from mere gaiety of heart.”

“But they are free,” replied the Ambassador; “the King of Spain could have no cause for offence.”

“They are free,” said the King, “but not sovereign.”—“Judge then,” wrote Aerssens to Barneveld, “how we shall be with the King of Spain at the end of our term when our best friends make this distinction among themselves to our disadvantage. They insist on making a difference between liberty and sovereignty; considering liberty as a mean term between servitude and sovereignty.”

“You would do well,” continued the Dutch ambassador, “to use the word ‘sovereignty’ on all occasions instead of ‘liberty.’” The hint was significant and the advice sound.

Page 2602

The haughty republic of Venice, too, with its “golden Book” and its pedigree of a thousand years, looked askance at the republic of yesterday rising like herself out of lagunes and sand banks, and affecting to place herself side by side with emperors, kings, and the lion of St. Mark. But the all-accomplished council of that most serene commonwealth had far too much insight and too wide experience in political combinations to make the blunder of yielding to this aristocratic sentiment.

The natural enemy of the Pope, of Spain, of Austria, must of necessity be the friend of Venice, and it was soon thought highly desirable to intimate half officially that a legation from the States-General to the Queen of the Adriatic, announcing the conclusion of the Twelve Years’ Truce, would be extremely well received.

The hint was given by the Venetian ambassador at Paris to Francis Aerssens, who instantly recommended van der Myle, son-in-law of Barneveld, as a proper personage to be entrusted with this important mission. At this moment an open breach had almost occurred between Spain and Venice, and the Spanish ambassador at Paris, Don Pedro de Toledo, naturally very irate with Holland, Venice, and even with France, was vehement in his demonstrations. The arrogant Spaniard had for some time been employed in an attempt to negotiate a double marriage between the Dauphin and the eldest daughter of Philip *iii*., and between the eldest son of that king and the Princess Elizabeth of France. An indispensable but secret condition of this negotiation was the absolute renunciation by France of its alliance and friendly relations with the United Provinces. The project was in truth a hostile measure aimed directly at the life of the Republic. Henry held firm however, and Don Pedro was about to depart malcontent, his mission having totally failed. He chanced, when going to his audience of leave-taking, after the arrival of his successor, Don Inigo de Cardenas, to meet the Venetian ambassador, Antonio Foscarini. An altercation took place between them, during which the Spaniard poured out his wrath so vehemently, calling his colleague with neat alliteration “a poltroon, a pantaloon, and a pig,” that Henry heard him.

What Signor Antonio replied has not been preserved, but it is stated that he was first to seek a reconciliation, not liking, he said, Spanish assassinations.

Meantime the double marriage project was for a season at least suspended, and the alliance between the two republics went forwards. Van der Myle, appointed ambassador to Venice, soon afterwards arrived in Paris, where he made a very favourable impression, and was highly lauded by Aerssens in his daily correspondence with Barneveld. No portentous shadow of future and fatal discord between those statesmen fell upon the cheerful scene. Before the year closed, he arrived at his post, and was received with great distinction, despite the obstacles thrown in his way by Spain and other powers; the ambassador of France itself, de Champigny, having privately urged that he ought to be placed on the same footing with the envoys of Savoy and of Florence.

Page 2603

Van der Myle at starting committed the trifling fault of styling the States-General “most illustrious” (illustrissimi) instead of “most serene,” the title by which Venice designated herself.

The fault was at once remedied, however, Priuli the Doge seating the Dutch ambassador on his right hand at his solemn reception, and giving directions that van der Myle should be addressed as Excellency, his post being assigned him directly after his seniors, the ambassadors of Pope, Emperor, and kings. The same precedence was settled in Paris, while Aerssens, who did not consider himself placed in a position of greater usefulness by his formal installation as ambassador, received private intimation from Henry, with whom he was on terms of great confidence and intimacy, that he should have private access to the King as frequently and as in formally as before. The theory that the ambassador, representing the personality of his sovereign, may visit the monarch to whom he is accredited, without ceremony and at his own convenience, was as rarely carried into practice in the sixteenth century as in the nineteenth, while on the other hand Aerssens, as the private and confidential agent of a friendly but not publicly recognized commonwealth, had been for many years in almost daily personal communication with the King.

It is also important to note that the modern fallacy according to which republics being impersonal should not be represented by ambassadors had not appeared in that important epoch in diplomatic history. On the contrary, the two great republics of the age, Holland and Venice, vindicated for themselves, with as much dignity and reason as success, their right to the highest diplomatic honours.

The distinction was substantial not shadowy; those haughty commonwealths not considering it advantageous or decorous that their representatives should for want of proper official designations be ranked on great ceremonial occasions with the ministers of petty Italian principalities or of the three hundred infinitesimal sovereignties of Germany.

It was the advice of the French king especially, who knew politics and the world as well as any man, that the envoys of the Republic which he befriended and which stood now on the threshold of its official and national existence, should assert themselves at every court with the self-reliance and courtesy becoming the functionaries of a great power. That those ministers were second to the representatives of no other European state in capacity and accomplishment was a fact well known to all who had dealings with them, for the States required in their diplomatic representatives knowledge of history and international law, modern languages, and the classics, as well as familiarity with political customs and social courtesies; the breeding of gentlemen in short, and the accomplishments of scholars. It is both a literary enjoyment and a means of historical and political instruction to read after the lapse of centuries their reports and despatches. They worthily compare as works of art with those diplomatic masterpieces the letters and ‘Relazioni’ of the Venetian ambassadors; and it is well known that the

earlier and some of the most important treatises on public and international law ever written are from the pens of Hollanders, who indeed may be said to have invented that science.’

Page 2604

The Republic having thus steadily shouldered its way into the family of nations was soon called upon to perform a prominent part in the world's affairs. More than in our own epoch there was a close political commingling of such independent states as held sympathetic views on the great questions agitating Europe. The policy of isolation so wisely and successfully carried out by our own trans-Atlantic commonwealth was impossible for the Dutch republic, born as it was of a great religious schism, and with its narrow territory wedged between the chief political organizations of Christendom. Moreover the same jealousy on the part of established powers which threw so many obstacles in its path to recognized sovereignty existed in the highest degree between its two sponsors and allies, France and England, in regard to their respective relations to the new state.

"If ever there was an obliged people," said Henry's secretary of state, Villeroy, to Aerssens, "then it is you Netherlanders to his Majesty. He has converted your war into peace, and has never abandoned you. It is for you now to show your affection and gratitude."

In the time of Elizabeth, and now in that of her successor, there was scarcely a day in which the envoys of the States were not reminded of the immense load of favour from England under which they tottered, and of the greater sincerity and value of English friendship over that of France.

Sully often spoke to Aerssens on the subject in even stronger language, deeming himself the chief protector and guardian angel of the Republic, to whom they were bound by ties of eternal gratitude. "But if the States," he said, "should think of caressing the King of England more than him, or even of treating him on an equality with his Majesty, Henry would be very much affronted. He did not mean that they should neglect the friendship of the King of Britain, but that they should cultivate it after and in subordination to his own, for they might be sure that James held all things indifferent, their ruin or their conservation, while his Majesty had always manifested the contrary both by his counsels and by the constant furnishing of supplies."

Henry of France and Navarre—soldier, statesman, wit, above all a man and every inch a king—brimful of human vices, foibles, and humours, and endowed with those high qualities of genius which enabled him to mould events and men by his unscrupulous and audacious determination to conform to the spirit of his times which no man better understood than himself, had ever been in such close relations with the Netherlands as to seem in some sort their sovereign.

James Stuart, emerging from the school of Buchanan and the atmosphere of Calvinism in which he had been bred, now reigned in those more sunny and liberal regions where Elizabeth so long had ruled. Finding himself at once, after years of theological study, face to face with a foreign commonwealth and a momentous epoch, in which politics

were so commingled with divinity as to offer daily the most puzzling problems, the royal pedant hugged himself at beholding so conspicuous a field for his talents.

Page 2605

To turn a throne into a pulpit, and amaze mankind with his learning, was an ambition most sweet to gratify. The Calvinist of Scotland now proclaimed his deadly hatred of Puritans in England and Holland, and denounced the Netherlanders as a pack of rebels whom it always pleased him to irritate, and over whom he too claimed, through the possession of the cautionary towns, a kind of sovereignty. Instinctively feeling that in the rough and unlovely husk of Puritanism was enclosed the germ of a wider human liberty than then existed, he was determined to give battle to it with his tongue, his pen, with everything but his sword.

Doubtless the States had received most invaluable assistance from both France and England, but the sovereigns of those countries were too apt to forget that it was their own battles, as well as those of the Hollanders, that had been fought in Flanders and Brabant. But for the alliance and subsidies of the faithful States, Henry would not so soon have ascended the throne of his ancestors, while it was matter of history that the Spanish government had for years been steadily endeavouring to subjugate England not so much for the value of the conquest in itself as for a stepping-stone to the recovery of the revolted Netherlands.

For the dividing line of nations or at least of national alliances was a frontier not of language but of faith. Germany was but a geographical expression. The union of Protestantism, subscribed by a large proportion of its three hundred and seven sovereigns, ran zigzag through the country, a majority probably of the people at that moment being opposed to the Roman Church.

It has often been considered amazing that Protestantism having accomplished so much should have fallen backwards so soon, and yielded almost undisputed sway in vast regions to the long dominant church. But in truth there is nothing surprising about it. Catholicism was and remained a unit, while its opponents were eventually broken up into hundreds of warring and politically impotent organizations. Religious faith became distorted into a weapon for selfish and greedy territorial aggrandizement in the hands of Protestant princes. “Cujus regio ejus religio” was the taunt hurled in the face of the imploring Calvinists of France and the Low Countries by the arrogant Lutherans of Germany. Such a sword smote the principle of religious freedom and mutual toleration into the dust, and rendered them comparatively weak in the conflict with the ancient and splendidly organized church.

The Huguenots of France, notwithstanding the protection grudgingly afforded them by their former chieftain, were dejected and discomfited by his apostasy, and Henry, placed in a fearfully false position, was an object of suspicion to both friends and foes. In England it is difficult to say whether a Jesuit or a Puritan was accounted the more noxious animal by the dominant party.

In the United Provinces perhaps one half the population was either openly or secretly attached to the ancient church, while among the Protestant portion a dire and tragic

convulsion was about to break forth, which for a time at least was to render Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants more fiercely opposed to each other than to Papists.

Page 2606

The doctrine of predestination in its sternest and strictest sense had long been the prevailing one in the Reformed Church of the revolted Netherlands, as in those of Scotland, France, Geneva, and the Palatinate. No doubt up to the period of the truce a majority had acquiesced in that dogma and its results, although there had always been many preachers to advocate publicly a milder creed. It was not until the appointment of Jacob Arminius to the professorship of theology at Leyden, in the place of Francis Junius, in the year 1603, that a danger of schism in the Church, seemed impending. Then rose the great Gomarus in his wrath, and with all the powers of splendid eloquence, profound learning, and the intense bigotry of conviction, denounced the horrible heresy. Conferences between the two before the Court of Holland, theological tournaments between six champions on a side, gallantly led by their respective chieftains, followed, with the usual result of confirming both parties in the conviction that to each alone belonged exclusively the truth.

The original influence of Arminius had however been so great that when the preachers of Holland had been severally called on by a synod to sign the Heidelberg Catechism, many of them refused. Here was open heresy and revolt. It was time for the true church to vindicate its authority. The great war with Spain had been made, so it was urged and honestly believed, not against the Inquisition, not to prevent Netherlanders from being burned and buried alive by the old true church, not in defence of ancient charters, constitutions, and privileges—the precious result of centuries of popular resistance to despotic force—not to maintain an amount of civil liberty and local self-government larger in extent than any then existing in the world, not to assert equality of religion for all men, but simply to establish the true religion, the one church, the only possible creed; the creed and church of Calvin.

It is perfectly certain that the living fire which glowed in the veins of those hot gospellers had added intense enthusiasm to the war spirit throughout that immense struggle. It is quite possible that without that enthusiasm the war might not have been carried on to its successful end. But it is equally certain that Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, and devotees of many other creeds, had taken part in the conflict in defence both of hearth and altar, and that without that aid the independence of the Provinces would never have been secured.

Yet before the war was ended the arrogance of the Reformed priesthood had begun to dig a chasm. Men who with William the Silent and Barneveld had indulged in the vision of religious equality as a possible result of so much fighting against the Holy Inquisition were perhaps to be disappointed.

Preachers under the influence of the gentle Arminius having dared to refuse signing the Creed were to be dealt with. It was time to pass from censure to action.

Page 2607

Heresy must be trampled down. The churches called for a national synod, and they did this as by divine right. “My Lords the States-General must observe,” they said, “that this assembly now demanded is not a human institution but an ordinance of the Holy Ghost in its community, not depending upon any man’s authority, but proceeding from God to the community.” They complained that the true church was allowed to act only through the civil government, and was thus placed at a disadvantage compared even with Catholics and other sects, whose proceedings were winked at. “Thus the true church suffered from its apparent and public freedom, and hostile sects gained by secret connivance.”

A crisis was fast approaching. The one church claimed infallibility and superiority to the civil power. The Holy Ghost was placed in direct, ostentatious opposition to My Lords the States-General. It was for Netherlanders to decide whether, after having shaken off the Holy Inquisition, and subjected the old true church to the public authority, they were now to submit to the imperious claims of the new true church.

There were hundreds of links connecting the Church with the State. In that day a divorce between the two was hardly possible or conceivable. The system of Congregationalism so successfully put into practice soon afterwards in the wilderness of New England, and to which so much of American freedom political as well as religious is due, was not easy to adopt in an old country like the Netherlands. Splendid churches and cathedrals, the legal possession of which would be contended for by rival sects, could scarcely be replaced by temporary structures of lath and plaster, or by humble back parlours of mechanics’ shops. There were questions of property of complicated nature. Not only the states and the communities claimed in rivalry the ownership of church property, but many private families could show ancient advowsons and other claims to present or to patronize, derived from imperial or ducal charters.

So long as there could be liberty of opinion within the Church upon points not necessarily vital, open schism could be avoided, by which the cause of Protestantism throughout Europe must be weakened, while at the same time subordination of the priesthood to the civil authority would be maintained. But if the Holy Ghost, through the assembled clergy, were to dictate an iron formulary to which all must conform, to make laws for church government which every citizen must obey, and to appoint preachers and school-masters from whom alone old and young could receive illumination and instruction religious or lay, a theocracy would be established which no enlightened statesman could tolerate.

The States-General agreed to the synod, but imposed a condition that there should be a revision of Creed and Catechism. This was thundered down with one blast. The condition implied a possibility that the vile heresy of Arminius might be correct. An unconditional synod was demanded. The Heidelberg Creed and Netherland Catechism were sacred, infallible, not to be touched. The answer of the government, through the

mouth of Barneveld, was that “to My Lords the States-General as the foster-fathers and protectors of the churches every right belonged.”

Page 2608

Thus far the States-General under the leadership of the Advocate were unanimous. The victory remained with State against Church. But very soon after the truce had been established, and men had liberty to devote themselves to peaceful pursuits, the ecclesiastical trumpet again sounded far and wide, and contending priests and laymen rushed madly to the fray. The Remonstrance and Contra-Remonstrance, and the appointment of Conrad Vorstius, a more abominable heretic than Arminius, to the vacant chair of Arminius—a step which drove Gomarus and the Gomarites to frenzy, although Gomarus and Vorstius remained private and intimate friends to the last—are matters briefly to be mentioned on a later page.

Thus to the four chief actors in the politico-religious drama, soon to be enacted as an interlude to an eighty years' war, were assigned parts at first sight inconsistent with their private convictions. The King of France, who had often abjured his religion, and was now the best of Catholics, was denounced ferociously in every Catholic pulpit in Christendom as secretly an apostate again, and the open protector of heretics and rebels. But the cheerful Henry troubled himself less than he perhaps had cause to do with these thunderblasts. Besides, as we shall soon see, he had other objects political and personal to sway his opinions.

James the ex-Calvinist, crypto-Arminian, pseudo-Papist, and avowed Puritan hater, was girding on his armour to annihilate Arminians and to defend and protect Puritans in Holland, while swearing that in England he would pepper them and harry them and hang them and that he would even like to bury them alive.

Barneveld, who turned his eyes, as much as in such an inflammatory age it was possible, from subtle points of theology, and relied on his great-grandfather's motto of humility, "Nil scire tutissima fides" was perhaps nearer to the dogma of the dominant Reformed Church than he knew, although always the consistent and strenuous champion of the civil authority over Church as well as State.

Maurice was no theologian. He was a steady churchgoer, and his favorite divine, the preacher at his court chapel, was none other than Uytenbogaert. The very man who was instantly to be the champion of the Arminians, the author of the Remonstrance, the counsellor and comrade of Barneveld and Grotius, was now sneered at by the Gomarites as the "Court Trumpeter." The preacher was not destined to change his opinions. Perhaps the Prince might alter. But Maurice then paid no heed to the great point at issue, about which all the Netherlanders were to take each other by the throat—absolute predestination. He knew that the Advocate had refused to listen to his stepmother's suggestion as to his obtaining the sovereignty. "He knew nothing of predestination," he was wont to say, "whether it was green or whether it was blue. He only knew that his pipe and the Advocate's were not likely to make music together." This much of predestination he did know, that if the Advocate and his friends were to come to open conflict with the Prince of Orange-Nassau, the conqueror of Nieuwpoort, it was predestined to go hard with the Advocate and his friends.

Page 2609

The theological quibble did not interest him much, and he was apt to blunder about it.

“Well, preacher,” said he one day to Albert Huttenus, who had come to him to intercede for a deserter condemned to be hanged, “are you one of those Arminians who believe that one child is born to salvation and another to damnation?”

Huttenus, amazed to the utmost at the extraordinary question, replied, “Your Excellency will be graciously pleased to observe that this is not the opinion of those whom one calls by the hateful name of Arminians, but the opinion of their adversaries.”

“Well, preacher,” rejoined Maurice, “don’t you think I know better?” And turning to Count Lewis William, Stadholder of Friesland, who was present, standing by the hearth with his hand on a copper ring of the chimneypiece, he cried,

“Which is right, cousin, the preacher or I?”

“No, cousin,” answered Count Lewis, “you are in the wrong.”

Thus to the Catholic League organized throughout Europe in solid and consistent phalanx was opposed the Great Protestant Union, ardent and enthusiastic in detail, but undisciplined, disobedient, and inharmonious as a whole.

The great principle, not of religious toleration, which is a phrase of insult, but of religious equality, which is the natural right of mankind, was to be evolved after a lapse of, additional centuries out of the elemental conflict which had already lasted so long. Still later was the total divorce of State and Church to be achieved as the final consummation of the great revolution. Meantime it was almost inevitable that the privileged and richly endowed church, with ecclesiastical armies and arsenals vastly superior to anything which its antagonist could improvise, should more than hold its own.

At the outset of the epoch which now occupies our attention, Europe was in a state of exhaustion and longing for repose. Spain had submitted to the humiliation of a treaty of truce with its rebellious subjects which was substantially a recognition of their independence. Nothing could be more deplorable than the internal condition of the country which claimed to be mistress of the world and still aspired to universal monarchy.

It had made peace because it could no longer furnish funds for the war. The French ambassador, Barante, returning from Madrid, informed his sovereign that he had often seen officers in the army prostrating themselves on their knees in the streets before their sovereign as he went to mass, and imploring him for payment of their salaries, or at least an alms to keep them from starving, and always imploring in vain.

The King, who was less than a cipher, had neither capacity to feel emotion, nor intelligence to comprehend the most insignificant affair of state. Moreover the means were wanting to him even had he been disposed to grant assistance. The terrible Duke of Lerma was still his inexorably lord and master, and the secretary of that powerful personage, who kept an open shop for the sale of offices of state both high and low, took care that all the proceeds should flow into the coffers of the Duke and his own lap instead of the royal exchequer.

Page 2610

In France both king and people declared themselves disgusted with war. Sully disapproved of the treaty just concluded between Spain and the Netherlands, feeling sure that the captious and equivocal clauses contained in it would be interpreted to the disadvantage of the Republic and of the Reformed religion whenever Spain felt herself strong enough to make the attempt. He was especially anxious that the States should make no concessions in regard to the exercise of the Catholic worship within their territory, believing that by so doing they would compromise their political independence besides endangering the cause of Protestantism everywhere. A great pressure was put upon Sully that moment by the King to change his religion.

“You will all be inevitably ruined if you make concessions in this regard,” said he to Aerssens. “Take example by me. I should be utterly undone if I had listened to any overture on this subject.”

Nevertheless it was the opinion of the astute and caustic envoy that the Duke would be forced to yield at last. The Pope was making great efforts to gain him, and thus to bring about the extirpation of Protestantism in France. And the King, at that time much under the influence of the Jesuits, had almost set his heart on the conversion. Aerssens insinuated that Sully was dreading a minute examination into the affairs of his administration of the finances—a groundless calumny—and would be thus forced to comply. Other enemies suggested that nothing would effect this much desired apostasy but the office of Constable of France, which it was certain would never be bestowed on him.

At any rate it was very certain that Henry at this period was bent on peace.

“Make your account,” said Aerssens to Barneveld, as the time for signing the truce drew nigh, “on this indubitable foundation that the King is determined against war, whatever pretences he may make. His bellicose demeanour has been assumed only to help forward our treaty, which he would never have favoured, and ought never to have favoured, if he had not been too much in love with peace. This is a very important secret if we manage it discreetly, and a very dangerous one if our enemies discover it.”

Sully would have much preferred that the States should stand out for a peace rather than for a truce, and believed it might have been obtained if the King had not begun the matter so feebly, and if he had let it be understood that he would join his arms to those of the Provinces in case of rupture.

He warned the States very strenuously that the Pope, and the King of Spain, and a host of enemies open and covert, were doing their host to injure them at the French court. They would find little hindrance in this course if the Republic did not show its teeth, and especially if it did not stiffly oppose all encroachments of the Roman religion, without even showing any deference to the King in this regard, who was much importuned on the subject.

Page 2611

He advised the States to improve the interval of truce by restoring order to their finances and so arranging their affairs that on the resumption of hostilities, if come they must, their friends might be encouraged to help them, by the exhibition of thorough vigour on their part.

France then, although utterly indisposed for war at that moment, was thoroughly to be relied on as a friend and in case of need an ally, so long as it was governed by its present policy. There was but one king left in Europe since the death of Elizabeth of England.

But Henry was now on the abhorred threshold of old age which he obstinately refused to cross.

There is something almost pathetic, in spite of the censure which much of his private life at this period provokes, in the isolation which now seemed his lot.

Deceived and hated by his wife and his mistresses, who were conspiring with each other and with his ministers, not only against his policy but against his life; with a vile Italian adventurer, dishonouring his household, entirely dominating the queen, counteracting the royal measures, secretly corresponding, by assumed authority, with Spain, in direct violation of the King’s instructions to his ambassadors, and gorging himself with wealth and offices at the expense of everything respectable in France; surrounded by a pack of malignant and greedy nobles, who begrudged him his fame, his authority, his independence; without a home, and almost without a friend, the Most Christian King in these latter days led hardly as merry a life as when fighting years long for his crown, at the head of his Gascon chivalry, the beloved chieftain of Huguenots.

Of the triumvirate then constituting his council, Villeroy, Sillery, and Sully, the two first were ancient Leaguers, and more devoted at heart to Philip of Spain than to Henry of France and Navarre.

Both silent, laborious, plodding, plotting functionaries, thriftily gathering riches; skilled in routine and adepts at intrigue; steady self-seekers, and faithful to office in which their lives had passed, they might be relied on at any emergency to take part against their master, if to ruin would prove more profitable than to serve him.

There was one man who was truer to Henry than Henry had been to himself. The haughty, defiant, austere grandee, brave soldier, sagacious statesman, thrifty financier, against whom the poisoned arrows of religious hatred, envious ambition, and petty court intrigue were daily directed, who watched grimly over the exchequer confided to him, which was daily growing fuller in despite of the cormorants who trembled at his frown; hard worker, good hater, conscientious politician, who filled his own coffers without dishonesty, and those of the state without tyranny; unsociable, arrogant; pious, very avaricious, and inordinately vain, Maximilian de Bethune, Duke of Sully, loved and

respected Henry as no man or woman loved and respected him. In truth, there was but one living being for whom the Duke had greater reverence and affection than for the King, and that was the Duke of Sully himself.

Page 2612

At this moment he considered himself, as indeed he was, in full possession of his sovereign's confidence. But he was alone in this conviction. Those about the court, men like Epernon and his creatures, believed the great financier on the brink of perdition. Henry, always the loosest of talkers even in regard to his best friends, had declared, on some temporary vexation in regard to the affair between Aiguillon and Balagny, that he would deal with the Duke as with the late Marshal de Biron, and make him smaller than he had ever made him great: goading him on this occasion with importunities, almost amounting to commands, that both he and his son should forthwith change their religion or expect instant ruin. The blow was so severe that Sully shut himself up, refused to see anyone, and talked of retiring for good to his estates. But he knew, and Henry knew, how indispensable he was, and the anger of the master was as shortlived as the despair of the minister.

There was no living statesman for whom Henry had a more sincere respect than for the Advocate of Holland. "His Majesty admires and greatly extols your wisdom, which he judges necessary for the preservation of our State; deeming you one of the rare and sage counsellors of the age." It is true that this admiration was in part attributed to the singular coincidence of Barneveld's views of policy with the King's own. Sully, on his part, was a severe critic of that policy. He believed that better terms might have been exacted from Spain in the late negotiations, and strongly objected to the cavilling and equivocal language of the treaty. Rude in pen as in speech, he expressed his mind very freely in his conversation and correspondence with Henry in regard to leading personages and great affairs, and made no secret of his opinions to the States' ambassador.

He showed his letters in which he had informed the King that he ought never to have sanctioned the truce without better securities than existed, and that the States would never have moved in any matter without him. It would have been better to throw himself into a severe war than to see the Republic perish. He further expressed the conviction that Henry ought to have such authority over the Netherlands that they would embrace blindly whatever counsel he chose to give them, even if they saw in it their inevitable ruin; and this not so much from remembrance of assistance rendered by him, but from the necessity in which they should always feel of depending totally upon him.

"You may judge, therefore," concluded Aerssens, "as to how much we can build on such foundations as these. I have been amazed at these frank communications, for in those letters he spares neither My Lords the States, nor his Excellency Prince Maurice, nor yourself; giving his judgment of each of you with far too much freedom and without sufficient knowledge."

Page 2613

Thus the alliance between the Netherlands and France, notwithstanding occasional traces of caprice and flaws of personal jealousy, was on the whole sincere, for it was founded on the surest foundation of international friendship, the self-interest of each. Henry, although boasting of having bought Paris with a mass, knew as well as his worst enemy that in that bargain he had never purchased the confidence of the ancient church, on whose bosom he had flung himself with so much dramatic pomp. His noble position, as champion of religious toleration, was not only unappreciated in an age in which each church and every sect arrogated to itself a monopoly of the truth, but it was one in which he did not himself sincerely believe.

After all, he was still the chieftain of the Protestant Union, and, although Eldest Son of the Church, was the bitter antagonist of the League and the sworn foe to the House of Austria. He was walking through pitfalls with a crowd of invisible but relentless foes dogging his every footstep. In his household or without were daily visions of dagger and bowl, and he felt himself marching to his doom. How could the man on whom the heretic and rebellious Hollanders and the Protestant princes of Germany relied as on their saviour escape the unutterable wrath and the patient vengeance of a power that never forgave?

In England the jealousy of the Republic and of France as co-guardian and protector of the Republic was even greater than in France. Though placed by circumstances in the position of ally to the Netherlands and enemy to Spain, James hated the Netherlands and adored Spain. His first thought on escaping the general destruction to which the Gunpowder Plot was to have involved himself and family and all the principal personages of the realm seems to have been to exculpate Spain from participation in the crime. His next was to deliver a sermon to Parliament, exonerating the Catholics and going out of his way to stigmatize the Puritans as entertaining doctrines which should be punished with fire. As the Puritans had certainly not been accused of complicity with Guy Fawkes or Garnet, this portion of the discourse was at least superfluous. But James loathed nothing so much as a Puritan. A Catholic at heart, he would have been the warmest ally of the League had he only been permitted to be Pope of Great Britain. He hated and feared a Jesuit, not for his religious doctrines, for with these he sympathized, but for his political creed. He liked not that either Roman Pontiff or British Presbyterian should abridge his heaven-born prerogative. The doctrine of Papal superiority to temporal sovereigns was as odious to him as Puritan rebellion to the hierarchy of which he was the chief. Moreover, in his hostility to both Papists and Presbyterians, there was much of professional rivalry. Having been deprived by the accident of birth of his true position as theological professor, he lost no opportunity of turning his throne into a pulpit and his sceptre into a controversial pen.

Page 2614

Henry of France, who rarely concealed his contempt for Master Jacques, as he called him, said to the English ambassador, on receiving from him one of the King's books, and being asked what he thought of it—"It is not the business of us kings to write, but to fight. Everybody should mind his own business, but it is the vice of most men to wish to appear learned in matters of which they are ignorant."

The flatterers of James found their account in pandering to his sacerdotal and royal vanity. "I have always believed," said the Lord Chancellor, after hearing the King argue with and browbeat a Presbyterian deputation, "that the high-priesthood and royalty ought to be united, but I never witnessed the actual junction till now, after hearing the learned discourse of your Majesty." Archbishop Whitgift, grovelling still lower, declared his conviction that James, in the observations he had deigned to make, had been directly inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Nothing could be more illogical and incoherent with each other than his theological and political opinions. He imagined himself a defender of the Protestant faith, while hating Holland and fawning on the House of Austria.

In England he favoured Arminianism, because the Anglican Church recognized for its head the temporal chief of the State. In Holland he vehemently denounced the Arminians, indecently persecuting their preachers and statesmen, who were contending for exactly the same principle—the supremacy of State over Church. He sentenced Bartholomew Legate to be burned alive in Smithfield as a blasphemous heretic, and did his best to compel the States of Holland to take the life of Professor Vorstius of Leyden. He persecuted the Presbyterians in England as furiously as he defended them in Holland. He drove Bradford and Carver into the New England wilderness, and applauded Gomarus and Walaeus and the other famous leaders of the Presbyterian party in the Netherlands with all his soul and strength.

He united with the French king in negotiations for Netherland independence, while denouncing the Provinces as guilty of criminal rebellion against their lawful sovereign.

"He pretends," said Jeannin, "to assist in bringing about the peace, and nevertheless does his best openly to prevent it."

Richardot declared that the firmness of the King of Spain proceeded entirely from reliance on the promise of James that there should be no acknowledgment in the treaty of the liberty of the States. Henry wrote to Jeannin that he knew very well "what that was capable of, but that he should not be kept awake by anything he could do."

As a king he spent his reign—so much of it as could be spared from gourmandizing, drunkenness, dalliance with handsome minions of his own sex, and theological pursuits—in rescuing the Crown from dependence on Parliament; in straining to the utmost the royal prerogative; in substituting proclamations for statutes; in doing everything in his

power, in short, to smooth the path for his successor to the scaffold. As father of a family he consecrated many years of his life to the wondrous delusion of the Spanish marriages.

Page 2615

The Gunpowder Plot seemed to have inspired him with an insane desire for that alliance, and few things in history are more amazing than the persistency with which he pursued the scheme, until the pursuit became not only ridiculous, but impossible.

With such a man, frivolous, pedantic, conceited, and licentious, the earnest statesmen of Holland were forced into close alliance. It is pathetic to see men like Barneveld and Hugo Grotius obliged, on great occasions of state, to use the language of respect and affection to one by whom they were hated, and whom they thoroughly despised.

But turning away from France, it was in vain for them to look for kings or men either among friends or foes. In Germany religious dissensions were gradually ripening into open war, and it would be difficult to imagine a more hopelessly incompetent ruler than the man who was nominally chief of the Holy Roman Realm. Yet the distracted Rudolph was quite as much an emperor as the chaos over which he was supposed to preside was an empire. Perhaps the very worst polity ever devised by human perverseness was the system under which the great German race was then writhing and groaning. A mad world with a lunatic to govern it; a democracy of many princes, little and big, fighting amongst each other, and falling into daily changing combinations as some masterly or mischievous hand whirled the kaleidoscope; drinking Rhenish by hogsheads, and beer by the tun; robbing churches, dictating creeds to their subjects, and breaking all the commandments themselves; a people at the bottom dimly striving towards religious freedom and political life out of abject social, ecclesiastical, and political serfdom, and perhaps even then dumbly feeling within its veins, with that prophetic instinct which never abandons great races, a far distant and magnificent Future of national unity and Imperial splendour, the very reverse of the confusion which was then the hideous Present; an Imperial family at top with many heads and slender brains; a band of brothers and cousins wrangling, intriguing, tripping up each others' heels, and unlucky Rudolph, in his Hradschin, looking out of window over the peerless Prague, spread out in its beauteous landscape of hill and dale, darkling forest, dizzy cliffs, and rushing river, at his feet, feebly cursing the unhappy city for its ingratitude to an invisible and impotent sovereign; his excellent brother Matthias meanwhile marauding through the realms and taking one crown after another from his poor bald head.

It would be difficult to depict anything more precisely what an emperor in those portentous times should not be. He collected works of art of many kinds—pictures, statues, gems. He passed his days in his galleries contemplating in solitary grandeur these treasures, or in his stables, admiring a numerous stud of horses which he never drove or rode. Ambassadors and ministers of state disguised themselves as grooms and

Page 2616

stable-boys to obtain accidental glimpses of a sovereign who rarely granted audiences. His nights were passed in star-gazing with Tycho de Brake, or with that illustrious Suabian whose name is one of the great lights and treasures of the world. But it was not to study the laws of planetary motion nor to fathom mysteries of divine harmony that the monarch stood with Kepler in the observatory. The influence of countless worlds upon the destiny of one who, by capricious accident, if accident ever exists in history, had been entrusted with the destiny of so large a portion of one little world; the horoscope, not of the Universe, but of himself; such were the limited purposes with which the Kaiser looked upon the constellations.

For the Catholic Rudolph had received the Protestant Kepler, driven from Tubingen because Lutheran doctors, knowing from Holy Writ that the sun had stood still in Ajalon, had denounced his theory of planetary motion. His mother had just escaped being burned as a witch, and the world owes a debt of gratitude to the Emperor for protecting the astrologer, when enlightened theologians might, perhaps, have hanged the astronomer.

A red-faced, heavy fowled, bald-headed, somewhat goggle-eyed old gentleman, Rudolph did his best to lead the life of a hermit, and escape the cares of royalty. Timid by temperament, yet liable to fits of uncontrollable anger, he broke his furniture to pieces when irritated, and threw dishes that displeased him in his butler’s face, but left affairs of state mainly to his valet, who earned many a penny by selling the Imperial signature.

He had just signed the famous “Majestatsbrief,” by which he granted vast privileges to the Protestants of Bohemia, and had bitten the pen to pieces in a paroxysm of anger, after dimly comprehending the extent of the concessions which he had made.

There were hundreds of sovereign states over all of which floated the shadowy and impalpable authority of an Imperial crown scarcely fixed on the head of any one of the rival brethren and cousins; there was a confederation of Protestants, with the keen-sighted and ambitious Christian of Anhalt acting as its chief, and dreaming of the Bohemian crown; there was the just-born Catholic League, with the calm, far-seeing, and egotistical rather than self-seeking Maximilian at its head; each combination extending over the whole country, stamped with imbecility of action from its birth, and perverted and hampered by inevitable jealousies. In addition to all these furrows ploughed by the very genius of discord throughout the unhappy land was the wild and secret intrigue with which Leopold, Archduke and Bishop, dreaming also of the crown of Wenzel, was about to tear its surface as deeply as he dared.

Thus constituted were the leading powers of Europe in the earlier part of 1609—the year in which a peaceful period seemed to have begun. To those who saw the

entangled interests of individuals, and the conflict of theological dogmas and religious and political intrigue which furnished so much material out of which wide-reaching schemes of personal ambition could be spun, it must have been obvious that the interval of truce was necessarily but a brief interlude between two tragedies.

Page 2617

It seemed the very mockery of Fate that, almost at the very instant when after two years' painful negotiation a truce had been made, the signal for universal discord should be sounded. One day in the early summer of 1609, Henry *iv*. came to the Royal Arsenal, the residence of Sully, accompanied by Zamet and another of his intimate companions. He asked for the Duke and was told that he was busy in his study. "Of course," said the King, turning to his followers, "I dare say you expected to be told that he was out shooting, or with the ladies, or at the barber's. But who works like Sully? Tell him," he said, "to come to the balcony in his garden, where he and I are not accustomed to be silent."

As soon as Sully appeared, the King observed: "Well; here the Duke of Cleve is dead, and has left everybody his heir."

It was true enough, and the inheritance was of vital importance to the world.

It was an apple of discord thrown directly between the two rival camps into which Christendom was divided. The Duchies of Cleve, Berg, and Julich, and the Counties and Lordships of Mark, Ravensberg, and Ravenstein, formed a triangle, political and geographical, closely wedged between Catholicism and Protestantism, and between France, the United Provinces, Belgium, and Germany. Should it fall into Catholic hands, the Netherlands were lost, trampled upon in every corner, hedged in on all sides, with the House of Austria governing the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt. It was vital to them to exclude the Empire from the great historic river which seemed destined to form the perpetual frontier of jealous powers and rival creeds.

Should it fall into heretic hands, the States were vastly strengthened, the Archduke Albert isolated and cut off from the protection of Spain and of the Empire. France, although Catholic, was the ally of Holland and the secret but well known enemy of the House of Austria. It was inevitable that the king of that country, the only living statesman that wore a crown, should be appealed to by all parties and should find himself in the proud but dangerous position of arbiter of Europe.

In this emergency he relied upon himself and on two men besides, Maximilian de Bethune and John of Barneveld. The conference between the King and Sully and between both and Francis Aerssens, ambassador of the States, were of almost daily occurrence. The minute details given in the adroit diplomatist's correspondence indicate at every stage the extreme deference paid by Henry to the opinion of Holland's Advocate and the confidence reposed by him in the resources and the courage of the Republic.

All the world was claiming the heritage of the duchies.

Page 2618

It was only strange that an event which could not be long deferred and the consequences of which were soon to be so grave, the death of the Duke of Cleve, should at last burst like a bomb-shell on the council tables of the sovereigns and statesmen of Europe. That mischievous madman John William died childless in the spring of 1609. His sister Sibylla, an ancient and malignant spinster, had governed him and his possessions except in his lucid intervals. The mass of the population over which he ruled being Protestant, while the reigning family and the chief nobles were of the ancient faith, it was natural that the Catholic party under, the lead of Maximilian of Bavaria should deem it all-important that there should be direct issue to that family. Otherwise the inheritance on his death would probably pass to Protestant princes.

The first wife provided for him was a beautiful princess; Jacobea of Baden. The Pope blessed the nuptials, and sent the bride a golden rose, but the union was sterile and unhappy. The Duke, who was in the habit of careering through his palace in full armour, slashing at and wounding anyone that came in his way, was at last locked up. The hapless Jacobea, accused by Sibylla of witchcraft and other crimes possible and impossible, was thrown into prison. Two years long the devilish malignity of the sister-in-law was exercised upon her victim, who, as it is related, was not allowed natural sleep during all that period, being at every hour awakened by command of Sibylla. At last the Duchess was strangled in prison. A new wife was at once provided for the lunatic, Antonia of Lorraine. The two remained childless, and Sibylla at the age of forty-nine took to herself a husband, the Margrave of Burgau, of the House of Austria, the humble birth of whose mother, however, did not allow him the rank of Archduke. Her efforts thus to provide Catholic heirs to the rich domains of Clove proved as fruitless as her previous attempts.

And now Duke John William had died, and the representatives of his three dead sisters, and the living Sibylla were left to fight for the duchies.

It would be both cruel and superfluous to inflict on the reader a historical statement of the manner in which these six small provinces were to be united into a single state. It would be an equally sterile task to retrace the legal arguments by which the various parties prepared themselves to vindicate their claims, each pretender more triumphantly than the other. The naked facts alone retain vital interest, and of these facts the prominent one was the assertion of the Emperor that the duchies, constituting a fief masculine, could descend to none of the pretenders, but were at his disposal as sovereign of Germany.

On the other hand nearly all the important princes of that country sent their agents into the duchies to look after the interests real or imaginary which they claimed.

There were but four candidates who in reality could be considered serious ones.

Page 2619

Mary Eleanor, eldest sister of the Duke, had been married in the lifetime of their father to Albert Frederic of Brandenburg, Duke of Prussia. To the children of this marriage was reserved the succession of the whole property in case of the masculine line becoming extinct. Two years afterwards the second sister, Anne, was married to Duke Philip Lewis, Count-Palatine of Neuburg; the children of which marriage stood next in succession to those of the eldest sister, should that become extinguished. Four years later the third sister, Magdalen, espoused the Duke John, Count-Palatine of Deux-Ponts; who, like Neuburg, made resignation of rights of succession in favour of the descendants of the Brandenburg marriage. The marriage of the youngest sister, Sibylla, with the Margrave of Burgau has been already mentioned. It does not appear that her brother, whose lunatic condition hardly permitted him to assure her the dowry which had been the price of renunciation in the case of her three elder sisters, had obtained that renunciation from her.

The claims of the childless Sibylla as well as those of the Deux-Ponts branch were not destined to be taken into serious consideration.

The real competitors were the Emperor on the one side and the Elector of Brandenburg and the Count-Palatine of Neuburg on the other.

It is not necessary to my purpose to say a single word as to the legal and historical rights of the controversy. Volumes upon volumes of forgotten lore might be consulted, and they would afford exactly as much refreshing nutriment as would the heaps of erudition hardly ten years old, and yet as antiquated as the title-deeds of the Pharaohs, concerning the claims to the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein. The fortunate house of Brandenburg may have been right or wrong in both disputes. It is certain that it did not lack a more potent factor in settling the political problems of the world in the one case any more than in the other.

But on the occasion with which we are occupied it was not on the might of his own right hand that the Elector of Brandenburg relied. Moreover, he was dilatory in appealing to the two great powers on whose friendship he must depend for the establishment of his claims: the United Republic and the King of France. James of England was on the whole inclined to believe in the rights of Brandenburg. His ambassador, however, with more prophetic vision than perhaps the King ever dreamt—of, expressed a fear lest Brandenburg should grow too great and one day come to the Imperial crown.

The States openly favoured the Elector. Henry as at first disposed towards Neuburg, but at his request Barneveld furnished a paper on the subject, by which the King seems to have been entirely converted to the pretensions of Brandenburg.

But the solution of the question had but little to do with the legal claim of any man. It was instinctively felt throughout Christendom that the great duel between the ancient

church and the spirit of the Reformation was now to be renewed upon that narrow, debateable spot.

Page 2620

The Emperor at once proclaimed his right to arbitrate on the succession and to hold the territory until decision should be made; that is to say, till the Greek Kalends. His familiar and most tricksy spirit, Bishop-Archduke Leopold, played at once on his fears and his resentments, against the ever encroaching, ever menacing, Protestantism of Germany, with which he had just sealed a compact so bitterly detested.

That bold and bustling prelate, brother of the Queen of Spain and of Ferdinand of Styria, took post from Prague in the middle of July. Accompanied by a certain canon of the Church and disguised as his servant, he arrived after a rapid journey before the gates of Julich, chief city and fortress of the duchies. The governor of the place, Nestelraed, inclined like most of the functionaries throughout the duchies to the Catholic cause, was delighted to recognize under the livery of the lackey the cousin and representative of the Emperor. Leopold, who had brought but five men with him, had conquered his capital at a blow. For while thus comfortably established as temporary governor of the duchies he designed through the fears or folly of Rudolph to become their sovereign lord. Strengthened by such an acquisition and reckoning on continued assistance in men and money from Spain and the Catholic League, he meant to sweep back to the rescue of the perishing Rudolph, smite the Protestants of Bohemia, and achieve his appointment to the crown of that kingdom.

The Spanish ambassador at Prague had furnished him with a handsome sum of money for the expenses of his journey and preliminary enterprise. It should go hard but funds should be forthcoming to support him throughout this audacious scheme. The champion of the Church, the sovereign prince of important provinces, the possession of which ensured conclusive triumph to the House of Austria and to Rome—who should oppose him in his path to Empire? Certainly not the moody Rudolph, the slippery and unstable Matthias, the fanatic and Jesuit-ridden Ferdinand.

“Leopold in Julich,” said Henry’s agent in Germany, “is a ferret in a rabbit warren.”

But early in the spring and before the arrival of Leopold, the two pretenders, John Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg, and Philip Lewis, Palatine of Neuburg, had made an arrangement. By the earnest advice of Barneveld in the name of the States-General and as the result of a general council of many Protestant princes of Germany, it had been settled that those two should together provisionally hold and administer the duchies until the principal affair could be amicably settled.

The possessory princes were accordingly established in Dusseldorf with the consent of the provincial estates, in which place those bodies were wont to assemble.

Here then was Spain in the person of Leopold quietly perched in the chief citadel of the country, while Protestantism in the shape of the possessory princes stood menacingly in the capital.

Page 2621

Hardly was the ink dry on the treaty which had suspended for twelve years the great religious war of forty years, not yet had the ratifications been exchanged, but the trumpet was again sounding, and the hostile forces were once more face to face.

Leopold, knowing where his great danger lay, sent a friendly message to the States-General, expressing the hope that they would submit to his arrangements until the Imperial decision should be made.

The States, through the pen and brain of Barneveld, replied that they had already recognized the rights of the possessory princes, and were surprised that the Bishop-Archduke should oppose them. They expressed the hope that, when better informed, he would see the validity of the Treaty of Dortmund. “My Lords the States-General,” said the Advocate, “will protect the princes against violence and actual disturbances, and are assured that the neighbouring kings and princes will do the same. They trust that his Imperial Highness will not allow matters, to proceed to extremities.”

This was language not to be mistaken. It was plain that the Republic did not intend the Emperor to decide a question of life and death to herself, nor to permit Spain, exhausted by warfare, to achieve this annihilating triumph by a petty intrigue.

While in reality the clue to what seemed to the outside world a labyrinthine maze of tangled interests and passions was firmly held in the hand of Barneveld, it was not to him nor to My Lords the States-General that the various parties to the impending conflict applied in the first resort.

Mankind were not yet sufficiently used to this young republic, intruding herself among the family of kings, to defer at once to an authority which they could not but feel.

Moreover, Henry of France was universally looked to both by friends and foes as the probable arbiter or chief champion in the great debate. He had originally been inclined to favour Neuberg, chiefly, so Aerssens thought, on account of his political weakness. The States-General on the other hand were firmly disposed for Brandenburg from the first, not only as a strenuous supporter of the Reformation and an ancient ally of their own always interested in their safety, but because the establishment of the Elector on the Rhine would roll back the Empire beyond that river. As Aerssens expressed it, they would have the Empire for a frontier, and have no longer reason to fear the Rhine.

The King, after the representations of the States, saw good ground to change his opinion and; becoming convinced that the Palatine had long been coquetting with the Austrian party, soon made no secret of his preference for Brandenburg. Subsequently Neuburg and Brandenburg fell into a violent quarrel notwithstanding an arrangement that the Palatine should marry the daughter of the Elector. In the heat of discussion Brandenburg on one occasion is said to have given his intended son-in-law a box on the ear! an argument

Page 2622

‘ad hominem’ which seems to have had the effect of sending the Palatine into the bosom of the ancient church and causing him to rely thenceforth upon the assistance of the League. Meantime, however, the Condominium settled by the Treaty of Dortmund continued in force; the third brother of Brandenburg and the eldest son of Neuburg sharing possession and authority at Dusseldorf until a final decision could be made.

A flock of diplomatists, professional or volunteers, openly accredited or secret, were now flying busily about through the troubled atmosphere, indicating the coming storm in which they revelled. The keen-sighted, subtle, but dangerously intriguing ambassador of the Republic, Francis Aerssens, had his hundred eyes at all the keyholes in Paris, that centre of ceaseless combination and conspiracy, and was besides in almost daily confidential intercourse with the King. Most patiently and minutely he kept the Advocate informed, almost from hour to hour, of every web that was spun, every conversation public or whispered in which important affairs were treated anywhere and by anybody. He was all-sufficient as a spy and intelligencer, although not entirely trustworthy as a counsellor. Still no man on the whole could scan the present or forecast the future more accurately than he was able to do from his advantageous position and his long experience of affairs.

There was much general jealousy between the States and the despotic king, who loved to be called the father of the Republic and to treat the Hollanders as his deeply obliged and very ungrateful and miserly little children. The India trade was a sore subject, Henry having throughout the negotiations sought to force or wheedle the States into renouncing that commerce at the command of Spain, because he wished to help himself to it afterwards, and being now in the habit of secretly receiving Isaac Le Maire and other Dutch leaders in that lucrative monopoly, who lay disguised in Paris and in the house of Zamet—but not concealed from Aerssens, who pledged himself to break, the neck of their enterprise—and were planning with the King a French East India Company in opposition to that of the Netherlands.

On the whole, however, despite these commercial intrigues which Barneveld through the aid of Aerssens was enabled to baffle, there was much cordiality and honest friendship between the two countries. Henry, far from concealing his political affection for the Republic, was desirous of receiving a special embassy of congratulation and gratitude from the States on conclusion of the truce; not being satisfied with the warm expressions of respect and attachment conveyed through the ordinary diplomatic channel.

“He wishes,” wrote Aerssens to the Advocate, “a public demonstration—in order to show on a theatre to all Christendom the regard and deference of My Lords the States for his Majesty.” The Ambassador suggested that Cornelis van der Myle, son-in-law of

Barneveld, soon to be named first envoy for Holland to the Venetian republic, might be selected as chief of such special embassy.

Page 2623

“Without the instructions you gave me,” wrote Aerssens, “Neuburg might have gained his cause in this court. Brandenburg is doing himself much injury by not soliciting the King.”

“Much deference will be paid to your judgment,” added the envoy, “if you see fit to send it to his Majesty.”

Meantime, although the agent of Neuburg was busily dinning in Henry’s ears the claims of the Palatine, and even urging old promises which, as he pretended, had been made, thanks to Barneveld, he took little by his importunity, notwithstanding that in the opinion both of Barneveld and Villeroy his claim ‘stricti-juris’ was the best. But it was policy and religious interests, not the strict letter of the law, that were likely to prevail. Henry, while loudly asserting that he would oppose any usurpation on the part of the Emperor or any one else against the Condominium, privately renewed to the States assurances of his intention to support ultimately the claims of Brandenburg, and notified them to hold the two regiments of French infantry, which by convention they still kept at his expense in their service, to be ready at a moment’s warning for the great enterprise which he was already planning. “You would do well perhaps,” wrote Aerssens to Barneveld, “to set forth the various interests in regard to this succession, and of the different relations of the claimants towards our commonwealth; but in such sort nevertheless and so dexterously that the King may be able to understand your desires, and on the other hand may see the respect you bear him in appearing to defer to his choice.”

Neuburg, having always neglected the States and made advances to Archduke Albert, and being openly preferred over Brandenburg by the Austrians, who had however no intention of eventually tolerating either, could make but small headway at court, notwithstanding Henry’s indignation that Brandenburg had not yet made the slightest demand upon him for assistance.

The Elector had keenly solicited the aid of the states, who were bound to him by ancient contract on this subject, but had manifested wonderful indifference or suspicion in regard to France. “These nonchalant Germans,” said Henry on more than one occasion, “do nothing but sleep or drink.”

It was supposed that the memory of Metz might haunt the imagination of the Elector. That priceless citadel, fraudulently extorted by Henry *ii*. as a forfeit for assistance to the Elector of Saxony three quarters of a century before, gave solemn warning to Brandenburg of what might be exacted by a greater Henry, should success be due to his protection. It was also thought that he had too many dangers about him at home, the Poles especially, much stirred up by emissaries from Rome, making many troublesome demonstrations against the Duchy of Prussia.

It was nearly midsummer before a certain Baron Donals arrived as emissary of the Elector. He brought with him, many documents in support of the Brandenburg claims,

and was charged with excuses for the dilatoriness of his master. Much stress was laid of course on the renunciation made by Neuburg at the tithe of his marriage, and Henry was urged to grant his protection to the Elector in his good rights. But thus far there were few signs of any vigorous resolution for active measures in an affair which could scarcely fail to lead to war.

Page 2624

“I believe,” said Henry to the States ambassador, “that the right of Brandenburg is indubitable, and it is better for you and for me that he should be the man rather than Neuburg, who has always sought assistance from the House of Austria. But he is too lazy in demanding possession. It is the fault of the doctors by whom he is guided. This delay works in favour of the Emperor, whose course however is less governed by any determination of his own than by the irresolution of the princes.”

Then changing the conversation, Henry asked the Ambassador whether the daughter of de Maldere, a leading statesman of Zealand, was married or of age to be married, and if she was rich; adding that they must make a match between her and Barneveld’s second son, then a young gentleman in the King’s service, and very much liked by him.

Two months later a regularly accredited envoy, Belin by name, arrived from the Elector. His instructions were general. He was to thank the King for his declarations in favour of the possessory princes, and against all usurpation on the part of the Spanish party. Should the religious cord be touched, he was to give assurances that no change would be made in this regard. He was charged with loads of fine presents in yellow amber, such as ewers, basins, tables, cups, chessboards, for the King and Queen, the Dauphin, the Chancellor, Villeroy, Sully, Bouillon, and other eminent personages. Beyond the distribution of these works of art and the exchange of a few diplomatic commonplaces, nothing serious in the way of warlike business was transacted, and Henry was a few weeks later much amused by receiving a letter from the possessory princes coolly thrown into the post-office, and addressed like an ordinary letter to a private person, in which he was requested to advance them a loan of 400,000 crowns. There was a great laugh at court at a demand made like a bill of exchange at sight upon his Majesty as if he had been a banker, especially as there happened to be no funds of the drawers in his hands. It was thought that a proper regard for the King’s quality and the amount of the sum demanded required that the letter should be brought at least by an express messenger, and Henry was both diverted and indignant at these proceedings, at the months long delay before the princes had thought proper to make application for his protection, and then for this cool demand for alms on a large scale as a proper beginning of their enterprise.

Such was the languid and extremely nonchalant manner in which the early preparations for a conflict which seemed likely to set Europe in a blaze, and of which possibly few living men might witness the termination, were set on foot by those most interested in the immediate question.

Chessboards in yellow amber and a post-office order for 400,000 crowns could not go far in settling the question of the duchies in which the great problem dividing Christendom as by an abyss was involved.

Page 2625

Meantime, while such were the diplomatic beginnings of the possessory princes, the League was leaving no stone unturned to awaken Henry to a sense of his true duty to the Church of which he was Eldest Son.

Don Pedro de Toledo's mission in regard to the Spanish marriages had failed because Henry had spurned the condition which was unequivocally attached to them on the part of Spain, the king's renunciation of his alliance with the Dutch Republic, which then seemed an equivalent to its ruin. But the treaty of truce and half-independence had been signed at last by the States and their ancient master, and the English and French negotiators had taken their departure, each receiving as a present for concluding the convention 20,000 livres from the Archdukes, and 30,000 from the States-General. Henry, returning one summer's morning from the chase and holding the Count of Soissons by one hand and Ambassador Aerssens by the other, told them he had just received letters from Spain by which he learned that people were marvellously rejoiced at the conclusion of the truce. Many had regretted that its conditions were so disadvantageous and so little honourable to the grandeur and dignity of Spain, but to these it was replied that there were strong reasons why Spain should consent to peace on these terms rather than not have it at all. During the twelve years to come the King could repair his disasters and accumulate mountains of money in order to finish the war by the subjugation of the Provinces by force of gold.

Soissons here interrupted the King by saying that the States on their part would finish it by force of iron.

Aerssens, like an accomplished courtier, replied they would finish it by means of his Majesty's friendship.

The King continued by observing that the clear-sighted in Spain laughed at these rodomontades, knowing well that it was pure exhaustion that had compelled the King to such extremities. "I leave you to judge," said Henry, "whether he is likely to have any courage at forty-five years of age, having none now at thirty-two. Princes show what they have in them of generosity and valour at the age of twenty-five or never." He said that orders had been sent from Spain to disband all troops in the obedient Netherlands except Spaniards and Italians, telling the Archdukes that they must raise the money out of the country to content them. They must pay for a war made for their benefit, said Philip. As for him he would not furnish one maravedi.

Aerssens asked if the Archdukes would disband their troops so long as the affair of Cleve remained unsettled. "You are very lucky," replied the King, "that Europe is governed by such princes as you wot of. The King of Spain thinks of nothing but tranquillity. The Archdukes will never move except on compulsion. The Emperor, whom every one is so much afraid of in this matter, is in such plight that one of these days, and before long, he will be stripped of all his possessions. I have news that the Bohemians are ready to expel him."

Page 2626

It was true enough that Rudolph hardly seemed a formidable personage. The Utraquists and Bohemian Brothers, making up nearly the whole population of the country, were just extorting religious liberty from their unlucky master in his very palace and at the point of the knife. The envoy of Matthias was in Paris demanding recognition of his master as King of Hungary, and Henry did not suspect the wonderful schemes of Leopold, the ferret in the rabbit warren of the duchies, to come to the succour of his cousin and to get himself appointed his successor and guardian.

Nevertheless, the Emperor's name had been used to protest solemnly against the entrance into Dusseldorf of the Margrave Ernest of Brandenburg and Palatine Wolfgang William of Neuburg, representatives respectively of their brother and father.

The induction was nevertheless solemnly made by the Elector-Palatine and the Landgrave of Hesse, and joint possession solemnly taken by Brandenburg and Neuburg in the teeth of the protest, and expressly in order to cut short the dilatory schemes and the artifices of the Imperial court.

Henry at once sent a corps of observation consisting of 1500 cavalry to the Luxemburg frontier by way of Toul, Mezieres, Verdun, and Metz, to guard against movements by the disbanded troops of the Archdukes, and against any active demonstration against the possessory princes on the part of the Emperor.

The 'Condominium' was formally established, and Henry stood before the world as its protector threatening any power that should attempt usurpation. He sent his agent Vidomacq to the Landgrave of Hesse with instructions to do his utmost to confirm the princes of the Union in organized resistance to the schemes of Spain, and to prevent any interference with the Condominium.

He wrote letters to the Archdukes and to the Elector of Cologne, sternly notifying them that he would permit no assault upon the princes, and meant to protect them in their rights. He sent one of his most experienced diplomatists, de Boississe, formerly ambassador in England, to reside for a year or more in the duchies as special representative of France, and directed him on his way thither to consult especially with Barneveld and the States-General as to the proper means of carrying out their joint policy either by diplomacy or, if need should be, by their united arms.

Troops began at once to move towards the frontier to counteract the plans of the Emperor's council and the secret levies made by Duchess Sibylla's husband, the Margrave of Burgau. The King himself was perpetually at Monceaux watching the movements of his cavalry towards the Luxemburg frontier, and determined to protect the princes in their possession until some definite decision as to the sovereignty of the duchies should be made.

Meantime great pressure was put upon him by the opposite party. The Pope did his best through the Nuncius at Paris directly, and through agents at Prague, Brussels, and Madrid indirectly, to awaken the King to a sense of the enormity of his conduct.

Page 2627

Being a Catholic prince, it was urged, he had no right to assist heretics. It was an action entirely contrary to his duty as a Christian and of his reputation as Eldest Son of the Church. Even if the right were on the side of the princes, his Majesty would do better to strip them of it and to clothe himself with it than to suffer the Catholic faith and religion to receive such notable detriment in an affair likely to have such important consequences.

Such was some of the advice given by the Pontiff. The suggestions were subtle, for they were directed to Henry's self-interest both as champion of the ancient church and as a possible sovereign of the very territories in dispute. They were also likely, and were artfully so intended, to excite suspicion of Henry's designs in the breasts of the Protestants generally and of the possessory princes especially. Allusions indeed to the rectification of the French border in Henry *ii*.'s time at the expense of Lorraine were very frequent. They probably accounted for much of the apparent supineness and want of respect for the King of which he complained every day and with so much bitterness.

The Pope's insinuations, however, failed to alarm him, for he had made up his mind as to the great business of what might remain to him of life; to humble the House of Austria and in doing so to uphold the Dutch Republic on which he relied for his most efficient support. The situation was a false one viewed from the traditional maxims which governed Europe. How could the Eldest Son of the Church and the chief of an unlimited monarchy make common cause with heretics and republicans against Spain and Rome? That the position was as dangerous as it was illogical, there could be but little doubt. But there was a similarity of opinion between the King and the political chief of the Republic on the great principle which was to illume the distant future but which had hardly then dawned upon the present; the principle of religious equality. As he protected Protestants in France so he meant to protect Catholics in the duchies. Apostate as he was from the Reformed Church as he had already been from the Catholic, he had at least risen above the paltry and insolent maxim of the princely Protestantism of Germany: "Cujus regio ejus religio."

While refusing to tremble before the wrath of Rome or to incline his ear to its honeyed suggestions, he sent Cardinal Joyeuse with a special mission to explain to the Pope that while the interests of France would not permit him to allow the Spaniard's obtaining possession of provinces so near to her, he should take care that the Church received no detriment and that he should insist as a price of the succour he intended for the possessory princes that they should give ample guarantees for the liberty of Catholic worship.

There was no doubt in the mind either of Henry or of Barneveld that the secret blows attempted by Spain at the princes were in reality aimed at the Republic and at himself as her ally.

Page 2628

While the Nuncius was making these exhortations in Paris, his colleague from Spain was authorized to propound a scheme of settlement which did not seem deficient in humour. At any rate Henry was much diverted with the suggestion, which was nothing less than that the decision as to the succession to the duchies should be left to a board of arbitration consisting of the King of Spain, the Emperor, and the King of France. As Henry would thus be painfully placed by himself in a hopeless minority, the only result of the scheme would be to compel him to sanction a decision sure to be directly the reverse of his own resolve. He was hardly such a schoolboy in politics as to listen to the proposal except to laugh at it.

Meantime arrived from Julich, without much parade, a quiet but somewhat pompous gentleman named Teynagel. He had formerly belonged to the Reformed religion, but finding it more to his taste or advantage to become privy councillor of the Emperor, he had returned to the ancient church. He was one of the five who had accompanied the Archduke Leopold to Julich.

That prompt undertaking having thus far succeeded so well, the warlike bishop had now despatched Teynagel on a roving diplomatic mission. Ostensibly he came to persuade Henry that, by the usages and laws of the Empire, fiefs left vacant for want of heirs male were at the disposal of the Emperor. He expressed the hope therefore of obtaining the King's approval of Leopold's position in Julich as temporary vicegerent of his sovereign and cousin. The real motive of his mission, however, was privately to ascertain whether Henry was really ready to go to war for the protection of the possessory princes, and then, to proceed to Spain. It required an astute politician, however, to sound all the shoals, quicksands, and miseries through which the French government was then steering, and to comprehend with accuracy the somewhat varying humours of the monarch and the secret schemes of the ministers who immediately surrounded him.

People at court laughed at Teynagel and his mission, and Henry treated him as a crackbrained adventurer. He announced himself as envoy of the Emperor, although he had instructions from Leopold only. He had interviews with the Chancellor and with Villeroy, and told them that Rudolf claimed the right of judge between the various pretenders to the duchies. The King would not be pleased, he observed, if the King of Great Britain should constitute himself arbiter among claimants that might make their appearance for the crown of France; but Henry had set himself up as umpire without being asked by any one to act in that capacity among the princes of Germany. The Emperor, on the contrary, had been appealed to by the Duke of Nevers, the Elector of Saxony, the Margrave of Burgau, and other liege subjects of the Imperial crown as a matter of course and of right. This policy of the King, if persisted in, said Teynagel, must lead to war. Henry might begin such a war, but he would be obliged to bequeath it to the Dauphin. He should remember that France had always been unlucky when waging war with the Empire and with the house of Austria.'

Page 2629

The Chancellor and Villeroy, although in their hearts not much in love with Henry's course, answered the emissary with arrogance equal to his own that their king could finish the war as well as begin it, that he confided in his strength and the justice of his cause, and that he knew very well and esteemed very little the combined forces of Spain and the Empire. They added that France was bound by the treaty of Vervins to protect the princes, but they offered no proof of that rather startling proposition.

Meantime Teynagel was busy in demonstrating that the princes of Germany were in reality much more afraid of Henry than of the Emperor. His military movements and deep designs excited more suspicion throughout that country and all Europe than the quiet journey of Leopold and five friends by post to Julich.

He had come provided with copies of the King's private letters to the princes, and seemed fully instructed as to his most secret thoughts. For this convenient information he was supposed to be indebted to the revelations of Father Cotton, who was then in disgrace; having been detected in transmitting to the General of Jesuits Henry's most sacred confidences and confessions as to his political designs.

Fortified with this private intelligence, and having been advised by Father Cotton to carry matters with a high hand in order to inspire the French court with a wholesome awe, he talked boldly about the legitimate functions of the Emperor. To interfere with them, he assured the ministers, would lead to a long and bloody war, as neither the King nor the Archduke Albert would permit the Emperor to be trampled upon.

Peter Pecquius, the crafty and experienced agent of the Archduke at Paris, gave the bouncing envoy more judicious advice, however, than that of the Jesuit, assuring him that he would spoil his whole case should he attempt to hold such language to the King.

He was admitted to an audience of Henry at Monceaux, but found him prepared to show his teeth as Aerssens had predicted. He treated Teynagel as a mere madcap and, adventurer who had no right to be received as a public minister at all, and cut short his rodomontades by assuring him that his mind was fully made up to protect the possessory princes. Jeannin was present at the interview, although, as Aerssens well observed, the King required no pedagogue on such an occasion? Teynagel soon afterwards departed malcontent to Spain, having taken little by his abnormal legation to Henry, and being destined to find at the court of Philip as urgent demands on that monarch for assistance to the League as he was to make for Leopold and the House of Austria.

For the League, hardly yet thoroughly organized under the leadership of Maximilian of Bavaria, was rather a Catholic corrival than cordial ally of the Imperial house. It was universally suspected that Henry meant to destroy and discrown the Habsburgs, and it lay not in the schemes of Maximilian to suffer the whole Catholic policy to be bound to the fortunes of that one family.

Page 2630

Whether or not Henry meant to commit the anachronism and blunder of reproducing the part of Charlemagne might be doubtful. The supposed design of Maximilian to renew the glories of the House of Wittelsbach was equally vague. It is certain, however, that a belief in such ambitious schemes on the part of both had been insinuated into the ears of Rudolf, and had sunk deeply into his unsettled mind.

Scarcely had Teynagel departed than the ancient President Richardot appeared upon the scene. "The mischievous old monkey," as he had irreverently been characterized during the Truce negotiations, "who showed his tail the higher he climbed," was now trembling at the thought that all the good work he had been so laboriously accomplishing during the past two years should be annihilated. The Archdukes, his masters, being sincerely bent on peace, had deputed him to Henry, who, as they believed, was determined to rekindle war. As frequently happens in such cases, they were prepared to smooth over the rough and almost impassable path to a cordial understanding by comfortable and cheap commonplaces concerning the blessings of peace, and to offer friendly compromises by which they might secure the prizes of war without the troubles and dangers of making it.

They had been solemnly notified by Henry that he would go to war rather than permit the House of Austria to acquire the succession to the duchies. They now sent Richardot to say that neither the Archdukes nor the King of Spain would interfere in the matter, and that they hoped the King of France would not prevent the Emperor from exercising his rightful functions of judge.

Henry, who knew that Don Baltasar de Cuniga, Spanish ambassador at the Imperial court, had furnished Leopold, the Emperor's cousin, with 50,000 crowns to defray his first expenses in the Julich expedition, considered that the veteran politician had come to perform a school boy's task. He was more than ever convinced by this mission of Richardot that the Spaniards had organized the whole scheme, and he was likely only to smile at any propositions the President might make.

At the beginning of his interview, in which the King was quite alone, Richardot asked if he would agree to maintain neutrality like the King of Spain and the Archdukes, and allow the princes to settle their business with the Emperor.

"No," said the King.

He then asked if Henry would assist them in their wrong.

"No," said the King.

He then asked if the King thought that the princes had justice on their side, and whether, if the contrary were shown, he would change his policy?

Henry replied that the Emperor could not be both judge and party in the suit and that the King of Spain was plotting to usurp the provinces through the instrumentality of his brother-in-law Leopold and under the name of the Emperor. He would not suffer it, he said.

“Then there will be a general war,” replied Richardot, since you are determined to assist these princes.”

Page 2631

“Be it so,” said the King.

“You are right,” said the President, “for you are a great and puissant monarch, having all the advantages that could be desired, and in case of rupture I fear that all this immense power will be poured out over us who are but little princes.”

“Cause Leopold to retire then and leave the princes in their right,” was the reply. “You will then have nothing to fear. Are you not very unhappy to live under those poor weak archdukes? Don’t you foresee that as soon as they die you will lose all the little you have acquired in the obedient Netherlands during the last fifty years?”

The President had nothing to reply to this save that he had never approved of Leopold’s expedition, and that when Spaniards make mistakes they always had recourse to their servants to repair their faults. He had accepted this mission inconsiderately, he said, inspired by a hope to conjure the rising storms mingled with fears as to the result which were now justified. He regretted having come, he said.

The King shrugged his shoulders.

Richardot then suggested that Leopold might be recognized in Julich, and the princes at Dusseldorf, or that all parties might retire until the Emperor should give his decision.

All these combinations were flatly refused by the King, who swore that no one of the House of Austria should ever perch in any part of those provinces. If Leopold did not withdraw at once, war was inevitable.

He declared that he would break up everything and dare everything, whether the possessory princes formally applied to him or not. He would not see his friends oppressed nor allow the Spaniard by this usurpation to put his foot on the throat of the States-General, for it was against them that this whole scheme was directed.

To the President’s complaints that the States-General had been moving troops in Gelderland, Henry replied at once that it was done by his command, and that they were his troops.

With this answer Richardot was fain to retire crestfallen, mortified, and unhappy. He expressed repentance and astonishment at the result, and protested that those peoples were happy whose princes understood affairs. His princes were good, he said, but did not give themselves the trouble to learn their business.

Richardot then took his departure from Paris, and very soon afterwards from the world. He died at Arras early in September, as many thought of chagrin at the ill success of his mission, while others ascribed it to a surfeit of melons and peaches.

“Senectus edam maorbus est,” said Aerssens with Seneca.

Henry said he could not sufficiently wonder at these last proceedings at his court, of a man he had deemed capable and sagacious, but who had been committing an irreparable blunder. He had never known two such impertinent ambassadors as Don Pedro de Toledo and Richardot on this occasion. The one had been entirely ignorant of the object of his mission; the other had shown a vain presumption in thinking he could drive him from his fixed purpose by a flood of words. He had accordingly answered him on the spot without consulting his council, at which poor Richardot had been much amazed.

Page 2632

And now another envoy appeared upon the scene, an ambassador coming directly from the Emperor. Count Hohenzollern, a young man, wild, fierce, and arrogant, scarcely twenty-three years of age, arrived in Paris on the 7th of September, with a train of forty horsemen.

De Colly, agent of the Elector-Palatine, had received an outline of his instructions, which the Prince of Anhalt had obtained at Prague. He informed Henry that Hohenzollern would address him thus: "You are a king. You would not like that the Emperor should aid your subjects in rebellion. He did not do this in the time of the League, although often solicited to do so. You should not now sustain the princes in disobeying the Imperial decree. Kings should unite in maintaining the authority and majesty of each other." He would then in the Emperor's name urge the claims of the House of Saxony to the duchies.

Henry was much pleased with this opportune communication by de Colly of the private instructions to the Emperor's envoy, by which he was enabled to meet the wild and fierce young man with an arrogance at least equal to his own.

The interview was a stormy one. The King was alone in the gallery of the Louvre, not choosing that his words and gestures should be observed. The Envoy spoke much in the sense which de Colly had indicated; making a long argument in favour of the Emperor's exclusive right of arbitration, and assuring the King that the Emperor was resolved on war if interference between himself and his subjects was persisted in. He loudly pronounced the proceedings of the possessory princes to be utterly illegal, and contrary to all precedent. The Emperor would maintain his authority at all hazards, and one spark of war would set everything in a blaze within the Empire and without.

Henry replied sternly but in general terms, and referred him for a final answer to his council.

"What will you do," asked the Envoy, categorically, at a subsequent interview about a month later, "to protect the princes in case the Emperor constrains them to leave the provinces which they have unjustly occupied?"

"There is none but God to compel me to say more than I choose to say," replied the King. "It is enough for you to know that I will never abandon my friends in a just cause. The Emperor can do much for the general peace. He is not to lend his name to cover this usurpation."

And so the concluding interview terminated in an exchange of threats rather than with any hope of accommodation.

Hohenzollern used as high language to the ministers as to the monarch, and received payment in the same coin. He rebuked their course not very adroitly as being contrary

to the interests of Catholicism. They were placing the provinces in the hands of Protestants, he urged. It required no envoy from Prague to communicate this startling fact. Friends and foes, Villeroy and Jeannin, as well as Sully and Duplessis, knew well enough that Henry was not taking up arms for Rome. “Sir! do you look at the matter in that way?” cried Sully, indignantly. “The Huguenots are as good as the Catholics. They fight like the devil!”

Page 2633

“The Emperor will never permit the, princes to remain nor Leopold to withdraw,” said the Envoy to Jeannin.

Jeannin replied that the King was always ready to listen to reason, but there was no use in holding language of authority to him. It was money he would not accept.

“Fiat justitia pereat mundus,” said the haggard Hohenzollern.

“Your world may perish,” replied Jeannin, “but not ours. It is much better put together.”

A formal letter was then written by the King to the Emperor, in which Henry expressed his desire to maintain peace and fraternal relations, but notified him that if, under any pretext whatever, he should trouble the princes in their possession, he would sustain them with all his power, being bound thereto by treaties and by reasons of state.

This letter was committed to the care of Hohenzollern, who forthwith departed, having received a present of 4000 crowns. His fierce, haggard face thus vanishes for the present from our history.

The King had taken his ground, from which there was no receding. Envoys or agents of Emperor, Pope, King of Spain, Archduke at Brussels, and Archduke at Julich, had failed to shake his settled purpose. Yet the road was far from smooth. He had thus far no ally but the States-General. He could not trust James of Great Britain. Boderie came back late in the summer from his mission to that monarch, reporting him as being favourably inclined to Brandenburg, but hoping for an amicable settlement in the duchies. No suggestion being made even by the sagacious James as to the manner in which the ferret and rabbits were to come to a compromise, Henry inferred, if it came to fighting, that the English government would refuse assistance. James had asked Boderie in fact whether his sovereign and the States, being the parties chiefly interested, would be willing to fight it out without allies. He had also sent Sir Ralph Winwood on a special mission to the Hague, to Dusseldorf, and with letters to the Emperor, in which he expressed confidence that Rudolph would approve the proceedings of the possessory princes. As he could scarcely do that while loudly claiming through his official envoy in Paris that the princes should instantly withdraw on pain of instant war, the value of the English suggestion of an amicable compromise might easily be deduced.

Great was the jealousy in France of this mission from England. That the princes should ask the interference of James while neglecting, despising, or fearing Henry, excited Henry’s wrath. He was ready, and avowed his readiness, to put on armour at once in behalf of the princes, and to arbitrate on the destiny of Germany, but no one seemed ready to follow his standard. No one asked him to arbitrate. The Spanish faction wheedled and threatened by turns, in order to divert him from his purpose, while the Protestant party held aloof, and babbled of Charlemagne and of Henry *ii*.

Page 2634

He said he did not mean to assist the princes by halves, but as became a King of France, and the princes expressed suspicion of him, talked of the example of Metz, and called the Emperor their very clement lord.

It was not strange that Henry was indignant and jealous. He was holding the wolf by the ears, as he himself observed more than once. The war could not long be delayed; yet they in whose behalf it was to be waged treated him with a disrespect and flippancy almost amounting to scorn.

They tried to borrow money of him through the post, and neglected to send him an ambassador. This was most decidedly putting the cart before the oxen, so Henry said, and so thought all his friends. When they had blockaded the road to Julich, in order to cut off Leopold's supplies, they sent to request that the two French regiments in the States' service might be ordered to their assistance, Archduke Albert having threatened to open the passage by force of arms. "This is a fine stratagem," said Aerssens, "to fling the States-General headlong into the war, and, as it were, without knowing it."

But the States-General, under the guidance of Barneveld, were not likely to be driven headlong by Brandenburg and Neuburg. They managed with caution, but with perfect courage, to move side by side with Henry, and to leave the initiative to him, while showing an unfaltering front to the enemy. That the princes were lost, Spain and the Emperor triumphant, unless Henry and the States should protect them with all their strength, was as plain as a mathematical demonstration.

Yet firm as were the attitude and the language of Henry, he was thought to be hoping to accomplish much by bluster. It was certain that the bold and unexpected stroke of Leopold had produced much effect upon his mind, and for a time those admitted to his intimacy saw, or thought they saw, a decided change in his demeanour. To the world at large his language and his demonstrations were even more vehement than they had been at the outset of the controversy; but it was believed that there was now a disposition to substitute threats for action. The military movements set on foot were thought to be like the ringing of bells and firing of cannon to dissipate a thunderstorm. Yet it was treason at court to doubt the certainty of war. The King ordered new suits of armour, bought splendid chargers, and gave himself all the airs of a champion rushing to a tournament as gaily as in the earliest days of his king-errantry. He spoke of his eager desire to break a lance with Spinola, and give a lesson to the young volunteer who had sprung into so splendid a military reputation, while he had been rusting, as he thought, in pacific indolence, and envying the laurels of the comparatively youthful Maurice. Yet those most likely to be well informed believed that nothing would come of all this fire and fury.

The critics were wrong. There was really no doubt of Henry's sincerity, but his isolation was terrible. There was none true to him at home but Sully. Abroad, the States-General alone were really friendly, so far as positive agreements existed. Above all, the

intolerable tergiversations and suspicions of those most interested, the princes in possession, and their bickerings among themselves, hampered his movements.

Page 2635

Treason and malice in his cabinet and household, jealousy and fear abroad, were working upon and undermining him like a slow fever. His position was most pathetic, but his purpose was fixed.

James of England, who admired, envied, and hated Henry, was wont to moralize on his character and his general unpopularity, while engaged in negotiations with him. He complained that in the whole affair of the truce he had sought only his particular advantage. “This is not to be wondered at in one of his nature,” said the King, “who only careth to provide for the felicities of his present life, without any respect for his life to come. Indeed, the consideration of his own age and the youth of his children, the doubt of their legitimation, the strength of competitioners, and the universal hatred borne unto him, makes him seek all means of security for preventing of all dangers.”

There were changes from day to day; hot and cold fits necessarily resulting from the situation. As a rule, no eminent general who has had much experience wishes to go into a new war inconsiderately and for the mere love of war. The impatience is often on the part of the non-combatants. Henry was no exception to the rule. He felt that the complications then existing, the religious, political, and dynastic elements arrayed against each other, were almost certain to be brought to a crisis and explosion by the incident of the duchies. He felt that the impending struggle was probably to be a desperate and a general one, but there was no inconsistency in hoping that the show of a vigorous and menacing attitude might suspend, defer, or entirely dissipate the impending storm.

The appearance of vacillation on his part from day to day was hardly deserving of the grave censure which it received, and was certainly in the interests of humanity.

His conferences with Sully were almost daily and marked by intense anxiety. He longed for Barneveld, and repeatedly urged that the Advocate, laying aside all other business, would come to Paris, that they might advise together thoroughly and face to face. It was most important that the combination of alliances should be correctly arranged before hostilities began, and herein lay the precise difficulty. The princes applied formally and freely to the States-General for assistance. They applied to the King of Great Britain. The agents of the opposite party besieged Henry with entreaties, and, failing in those, with threats; going off afterwards to Spain, to the Archdukes, and to other Catholic powers in search of assistance.

The States-General professed their readiness to put an army of 15,000 foot and 3000 horse in the field for the spring campaign, so soon as they were assured of Henry’s determination for a rupture.

“I am fresh enough still,” said he to their ambassador, “to lead an army into Cleve. I shall have a cheap bargain enough of the provinces. But these Germans do nothing but eat and sleep. They will get the profit and assign to me the trouble. No matter, I will

never suffer the aggrandizement of the House of Austria. The States-General must disband no troops, but hold themselves in readiness."

Page 2636

Secretary of State Villeroy held the same language, but it was easy to trace beneath his plausible exterior a secret determination to traverse the plans of his sovereign. “The Cleve affair must lead to war,” he said. “The Spaniard, considering how necessary it is for him to have a prince there at his devotion, can never quietly suffer Brandenburg and Neuburg to establish themselves in those territories. The support thus gained by the States-General would cause the loss of the Spanish Netherlands.”

This was the view of Henry, too, but the Secretary of State, secretly devoted to the cause of Spain, looked upon the impending war with much aversion.

“All that can come to his Majesty from war,” he said, “is the glory of having protected the right. Counterbalance this with the fatigue, the expense, and the peril of a great conflict, after our long repose, and you will find this to be buying glory too dearly.”

When a Frenchman talked of buying glory too dearly, it seemed probable that the particular kind of glory was not to his taste.

Henry had already ordered the officers, then in France, of the 4000 French infantry kept in the States’ service at his expense to depart at once to Holland, and he privately announced his intention of moving to the frontier at the head of 30,000 men.

’Yet not only Villeroy, but the Chancellor and the Constable, while professing opposition to the designs of Austria and friendliness to those of Brandenburg and Neuburg, deprecated this precipitate plunge into war. “Those most interested,” they said, “refuse to move; fearing Austria, distrusting France. They leave us the burden and danger, and hope for the spoils themselves. We cannot play cat to their monkey. The King must hold himself in readiness to join in the game when the real players have shuffled and dealt the cards. It is no matter to us whether the Spaniard or Brandenburg or anyone else gets the duchies. The States-General require a friendly sovereign there, and ought to say how much they will do for that result.”

The Constable laughed at the whole business. Coming straight from the Louvre, he said “there would be no serious military movement, and that all those fine freaks would evaporate in air.”

But Sully never laughed. He was quietly preparing the ways and means for the war, and he did not intend, so far as he had influence, that France should content herself with freaks and let Spain win the game. Alone in the council he maintained that “France had gone too far to recede without sacrifice of reputation.”—“The King’s word is engaged both within and without,” he said. “Not to follow it with deeds would be dangerous to the kingdom. The Spaniard will think France afraid of war. We must strike a sudden blow, either to drive the enemy away or to crush him at once. There is no time for delay. The Netherlands must prevent the aggrandizement of Austria or consent to their own ruin.”

Page 2637

Thus stood the game therefore. The brother of Brandenburg and son of Neuburg had taken possession of Dusseldorf.

The Emperor, informed of this, ordered them forthwith to decamp. He further summoned all pretenders to the duchies to appear before him, in person or by proxy, to make good their claims. They refused and appealed for advice and assistance to the States-General. Barneveld, aware of the intrigues of Spain, who disguised herself in the drapery of the Emperor, recommended that the Estates of Cleve, Julich, Berg, Mark, Ravensberg, and Ravenstein, should be summoned in Dusseldorf. This was done and a resolution taken to resist any usurpation.

The King of France wrote to the Elector of Cologne, who, by directions of Rome and by means of the Jesuits, had been active in the intrigue, that he would not permit the princes to be disturbed.

The Archduke Leopold suddenly jumped into the chief citadel of the country and published an edict of the Emperor. All the proceedings were thereby nullified as illegal and against the dignity of the realm and the princes proclaimed under ban.

A herald brought the edict and ban to the princes in full assembly. The princes tore it to pieces on the spot. Nevertheless they were much frightened, and many members of the Estates took themselves off; others showing an inclination to follow.

The princes sent forth with a deputation to the Hague to consult My Lords the States-General. The States-General sent an express messenger to Paris. Their ambassador there sent him back a week later, with notice of the King's determination to risk everything against everything to preserve the rights of the princes. It was added that Henry required to be solicited by them, in order not by volunteer succour to give cause for distrust as to his intentions. The States-General were further apprised by the King that his interests and theirs were so considerable in the matter that they would probably be obliged to go into a brisk and open war, in order to prevent the Spaniard from establishing himself in the duchies. He advised them to notify the Archdukes in Brussels that they would regard the truce as broken if, under pretext of maintaining the Emperor's rights, they should molest the princes. He desired them further to send their forces at once to the frontier of Gelderland under Prince Maurice, without committing any overt act of hostility, but in order to show that both the King and the States were thoroughly in earnest.

The King then sent to Archduke Albert, as well as to the Elector of Cologne, and despatched a special envoy to the King of Great Britain.

Page 2638

Immediately afterwards came communications from Barneveld to Henry, with complete adhesion to the King's plans. The States would move in exact harmony with him, neither before him nor after him, which was precisely what he wished. He complained bitterly to Aerssens, when he communicated the Advocate's despatches, of the slothful and timid course of the princes. He ascribed it to the arts of Leopold, who had written and inspired many letters against him insinuating that he was secretly in league and correspondence with the Emperor; that he was going to the duchies simply in the interest of the Catholics; that he was like Henry *ii*. only seeking to extend the French frontier; and Leopold, by these intrigues and falsehoods, had succeeded in filling the princes with distrust, and they had taken umbrage at the advance of his cavalry.

Henry professed himself incapable of self-seeking or ambition. He meant to prevent the aggrandizement of Austria, and was impatient at the dilatoriness and distrust of the princes.

"All their enemies are rushing to the King of Spain. Let them address themselves to the King of France," he said, "for it is we two that must play this game."

And when at last they did send an embassy, they prefaced it by a post letter demanding an instant loan, and with an intimation that they would rather have his money than his presence!

Was it surprising that the King's course should seem occasionally wavering when he found it so difficult to stir up such stagnant waters into honourable action? Was it strange that the rude and stern Sully should sometimes lose his patience, knowing so much and suspecting more of the foul designs by which his master was encompassed, of the web of conspiracy against his throne, his life, and his honour, which was daily and hourly spinning?

"We do nothing and you do nothing," he said one day to Aerssens. "You are too soft, and we are too cowardly. I believe that we shall spoil everything, after all. I always suspect these sudden determinations of ours. They are of bad augury. We usually founder at last when we set off so fiercely at first. There are words enough an every side, but there will be few deeds. There is nothing to be got out of the King of Great Britain, and the King of Spain will end by securing these provinces for himself by a treaty." Sully knew better than this, but he did not care to let even the Dutch envoy know, as yet, the immense preparations he had been making for the coming campaign.

The envoys of the possessory princes, the Counts Solms, Colonel Pallandt, and Dr. Steyntgen, took their departure, after it had been arranged that final measures should be concerted at the general congress of the German Protestants to be held early in the ensuing year at Hall, in Suabia.

At that convention de Boississe would make himself heard on the part of France, and the representatives of the States-General, of Venice, and Savoy, would also be present.

Page 2639

Meantime the secret conferences between Henry and his superintendent of finances and virtual prime minister were held almost every day. Scarcely an afternoon passed that the King did not make his appearance at the Arsenal, Sully's residence, and walk up and down the garden with him for hours, discussing the great project of which his brain was full. This great project was to crush for ever the power of the Austrian house; to drive Spain back into her own limits, putting an end to her projects for universal monarchy; and taking the Imperial crown from the House of Habsburg. By thus breaking up the mighty cousinship which, with the aid of Rome, overshadowed Germany and the two peninsulas, besides governing the greater part of both the Indies, he meant to bring France into the preponderant position over Christendom which he believed to be her due.

It was necessary, he thought, for the continued existence of the Dutch commonwealth that the opportunity should be taken once for all, now that a glorious captain commanded its armies and a statesman unrivalled for experience, insight, and patriotism controlled its politics and its diplomacy, to drive the Spaniard out of the Netherlands.

The Cleve question, properly and vigorously handled, presented exactly the long desired opportunity for carrying out these vast designs.

The plan of assault upon Spanish power was to be threefold. The King himself at the head of 35,000 men, supported by Prince Maurice and the States' forces amounting to at least 14,000, would move to the Rhine and seize the duchies. The Duke de la Force would command the army of the Pyrenees and act in concert with the Moors of Spain, who roused to frenzy by their expulsion from the kingdom could be relied on for a revolt or at least a most vigorous diversion. Thirdly, a treaty with the Duke of Savoy by which Henry accorded his daughter to the Duke's eldest son, the Prince of Piedmont, a gift of 100,000 crowns, and a monthly pension during the war of 50,000 crowns a month, was secretly concluded.

Early in the spring the Duke was to take the field with at least 10,000 foot and 1200 horse, supported by a French army of 12,000 to 15,000 men under the experienced Marshal de Lesdiguieres. These forces were to operate against the Duchy of Milan with the intention of driving the Spaniards out of that rich possession, which the Duke of Savoy claimed for himself, and of assuring to Henry the dictatorship of Italy. With the cordial alliance of Venice, and by playing off the mutual jealousies of the petty Italian princes, like Florence, Mantua, Montserrat, and others, against each other and against the Pope, it did not seem doubtful to Sully that the result would be easily accomplished. He distinctly urged the wish that the King should content himself with political influence, with the splendid position of holding all Italy dependent upon his will and guidance, but without annexing a particle of territory to his own crown.

Page 2640

It was Henry's intention, however, to help himself to the Duchy of Savoy, and to the magnificent city and port of Genoa as a reward to himself for the assistance, matrimonial alliance, and aggrandizement which he was about to bestow upon Charles Emmanuel. Sully strenuously opposed these self-seeking views on the part of his sovereign, however, constantly placing before him the far nobler aim of controlling the destinies of Christendom, of curbing what tended to become omnipotent, of raising up and protecting that which had been abased, of holding the balance of empire with just and steady hand in preference to the more vulgar and commonplace ambition of annexing a province or two to the realms of France.

It is true that these virtuous homilies, so often preached by him against territorial aggrandizement in one direction, did not prevent him from indulging in very extensive visions of it in another. But the dreams pointed to the east rather than to the south. It was Sully's policy to swallow a portion not of Italy but of Germany. He persuaded his master that the possessory princes, if placed by the help of France in the heritage which they claimed, would hardly be able to maintain themselves against the dangers which surrounded them except by a direct dependence upon France. In the end the position would become an impossible one, and it would be easy after the war was over to indemnify Brandenburg with money and with private property in the heart of France for example, and obtain the cession of those most coveted provinces between the Meuse and the Weser to the King. "What an advantage for France," whispered Sully, "to unite to its power so important a part of Germany. For it cannot be denied that by accepting the succour given by the King now those princes oblige themselves to ask for help in the future in order to preserve their new acquisition. Thus your Majesty will make them pay for it very dearly."

Thus the very virtuous self-denial in regard to the Duke of Savoy did not prevent a secret but well developed ambition at the expense of the Elector of Brandenburg. For after all it was well enough known that the Elector was the really important and serious candidate. Henry knew full well that Neuburg was depending on the Austrians and the Catholics, and that the claims of Saxony were only put forward by the Emperor in order to confuse the princes and excite mutual distrust.

The King's conferences with the great financier were most confidential, and Sully was as secret as the grave. But Henry never could keep a secret even when it concerned his most important interests, and nothing would serve him but he must often babble of his great projects even to their minutest details in presence of courtiers and counsellors whom in his heart he knew to be devoted to Spain and in receipt of pensions from her king. He would boast to them of the blows by which he meant to demolish Spain and the whole house of Austria, so that there should

Page 2641

be no longer danger to be feared from that source to the tranquillity and happiness of Europe, and he would do this so openly and in presence of those who, as he knew, were perpetually setting traps for him and endeavouring to discover his deepest secrets as to make Sully's hair stand on end. The faithful minister would pluck his master by the cloak at times, and the King, with the adroitness which never forsook him when he chose to employ it, would contrive to extricate himself from a dilemma and pause at the brink of tremendous disclosures.—[Memoires de Sully, t. vii. p. 324.]—But Sully could not be always at his side, nor were the Nuncius or Don Inigo de Cardenas or their confidential agents and spies always absent. Enough was known of the general plan, while as to the probability of its coming into immediate execution, perhaps the enemies of the King were often not more puzzled than his friends.

But what the Spanish ambassador did not know, nor the Nuncius, nor even the friendly Aerssens, was the vast amount of supplies which had been prepared for the coming conflict by the finance minister. Henry did not know it himself. "The war will turn on France as on a pivot," said Sully; "it remains to be seen if we have supplies and money enough. I will engage if the war is not to last more than three years and you require no more than 40,000 men at a time that I will show you munitions and ammunition and artillery and the like to such an extent that you will say, 'It is enough.'

"As to money—"

"How much money have I got?" asked the King; "a dozen millions?"

"A little more than that," answered the Minister.

"Fourteen millions?"

"More still."

"Sixteen?" continued the King.

"More yet," said Sully.

And so the King went on adding two millions at each question until thirty millions were reached, and when the question as to this sum was likewise answered in the affirmative, he jumped from his chair, hugged his minister around the neck, and kissed him on both cheeks.

"I want no more than that," he cried.

Sully answered by assuring him that he had prepared a report showing a reserve of forty millions on which he might draw for his war expenses, without in the least degree infringing on the regular budget for ordinary expenses.

The King was in a transport of delight, and would have been capable of telling the story on the spot to the Nuncius had he met him that afternoon, which fortunately did not occur.

But of all men in Europe after the faithful Sully, Henry most desired to see and confer daily and secretly with Barneveld. He insisted vehemently that, neglecting all other business, he should come forthwith to Paris at the head of the special embassy which it had been agreed that the States should send. No living statesman, he said, could compare to Holland's Advocate in sagacity, insight, breadth of view, knowledge of mankind and of great affairs, and none he knew was more sincerely attached to his person or felt more keenly the value of the French alliance.

Page 2642

With him he indeed communicated almost daily through the medium of Aerssens, who was in constant receipt of most elaborate instructions from Barneveld, but he wished to confer with him face to face, so that there would be no necessity of delay in sending back for instructions, limitations, and explanation. No man knew better than the King did that so far as foreign affairs were concerned the States-General were simply Barneveld.

On the 22nd January the States' ambassador had a long and secret interview with the King.' He informed him that the Prince of Anhalt had been assured by Barneveld that the possessory princes would be fully supported in their position by the States, and that the special deputies of Archduke Albert, whose presence at the Hague made Henry uneasy, as he regarded them as perpetual spies, had been dismissed. Henry expressed his gratification. They are there, he said, entirely in the interest of Leopold, who has just received 500,000 crowns from the King of Spain, and is to have that sum annually, and they are only sent to watch all your proceedings in regard to Cleve.

The King then fervently pressed the Ambassador to urge Barneveld's coming to Paris with the least possible delay. He signified his delight with Barneveld's answer to Anhalt, who thus fortified would be able to do good service at the assembly at Hall. He had expected nothing else from Barneveld's sagacity, from his appreciation of the needs of Christendom, and from his affection for himself. He told the Ambassador that he was anxiously waiting for the Advocate in order to consult with him as to all the details of the war. The affair of Cleve, he said, was too special a cause. A more universal one was wanted. The King preferred to begin with Luxemburg, attacking Charlemont or Namur, while the States ought at the same time to besiege Venlo, with the intention afterwards of uniting with the King in laying siege to Maestricht.

He was strong enough, he said, against all the world, but he still preferred to invite all princes interested to join him in putting down the ambitious and growing power of Spain. Cleve was a plausible pretext, but the true cause, he said, should be found in the general safety of Christendom.

Boississe had been sent to the German princes to ascertain whether and to what extent they would assist the King. He supposed that once they found him engaged in actual warfare in Luxemburg, they would get rid of their jealousy and panic fears of him and his designs. He expected them to furnish at least as large a force as he would supply as a contingent.

For it was understood that Anhalt as generalissimo of the German forces would command a certain contingent of French troops, while the main army of the King would be led by himself in person.

Henry expressed the conviction that the King of Spain would be taken by surprise finding himself attacked in three places and by three armies at once, he believing that

the King of France was entirely devoted to his pleasures and altogether too old for warlike pursuits, while the States, just emerging from the misery of their long and cruel conflict, would be surely unwilling to plunge headlong into a great and bloody war.

Page 2643

Henry inferred this, he said, from observing the rude and brutal manner in which the soldiers in the Spanish Netherlands were now treated. It seemed, he said, as if the Archdukes thought they had no further need of them, or as if a stamp of the foot could raise new armies out of the earth. “My design,” continued the King, “is the more likely to succeed as the King of Spain, being a mere gosling and a valet of the Duke of Lerma, will find himself stripped of all his resources and at his wits’ end; unexpectedly embarrassed as he will be on the Italian side, where we shall be threatening to cut the jugular vein of his pretended universal monarchy.”

He intimated that there was no great cause for anxiety in regard to the Catholic League just formed at Wurzburg. He doubted whether the King of Spain would join it, and he had learned that the Elector of Cologne was making very little progress in obtaining the Emperor’s adhesion. As to this point the King had probably not yet thoroughly understood that the Bavarian League was intended to keep clear of the House of Habsburg, Maximilian not being willing to identify the success of German Catholicism with the fortunes of that family.

Henry expressed the opinion that the King of Spain, that is to say, his counsellors, meant to make use of the Emperor’s name while securing all the profit, and that Rudolph quite understood their game, while Matthias was sure to make use of this opportunity, supported by the Protestants of Bohemia, Austria, and Moravia, to strip the Emperor of the last shred of Empire.

The King was anxious that the States should send a special embassy at once to the King of Great Britain. His ambassador, de la Boderie, gave little encouragement of assistance from that quarter, but it was at least desirable to secure his neutrality. “’Tis a prince too much devoted to repose,” said Henry, “to be likely to help in this war, but at least he must not be allowed to traverse our great designs. He will probably refuse the league offensive and defensive which I have proposed to him, but he must be got, if possible, to pledge himself to the defensive. I mean to assemble my army on the frontier, as if to move upon Julich, and then suddenly sweep down on the Meuse, where, sustained by the States’ army and that of the princes, I will strike my blows and finish my enterprise before our adversary has got wind of what is coming. We must embark James in the enterprise if we can, but at any rate we must take measures to prevent his spoiling it.”

Henry assured the Envoy that no one would know anything of the great undertaking but by its effect; that no one could possibly talk about it with any knowledge except himself, Sully, Villeroy, Barneveld, and Aerssens. With them alone he conferred confidentially, and he doubted not that the States would embrace this opportunity to have done for ever with the Spaniards. He should take the field in person, he said, and with several powerful armies would sweep the enemy away from the Meuse, and after obtaining control of that river would quietly take possession of the sea-coast of Flanders, shut up

Archduke Albert between the States and the French, who would thus join hands and unite their frontiers.

Page 2644

Again the King expressed his anxiety for Barneveld's coming, and directed the Ambassador to urge it, and to communicate to him the conversation which had just taken place. He much preferred, he said, a general war. He expressed doubts as to the Prince of Anhalt's capacity as chief in the Cleve expedition, and confessed that being jealous of his own reputation he did not like to commit his contingent of troops to the care of a stranger and one so new to his trade. The shame would fall on himself, not on Anhalt in case of any disaster. Therefore, to avoid all petty jealousies and inconveniences of that nature by which the enterprise might be ruined, it was best to make out of this small affair a great one, and the King signified his hope that the Advocate would take this view of the case and give him his support. He had plenty of grounds of war himself, and the States had as good cause of hostilities in the rupture of the truce by the usurpation attempted by Leopold with the assistance of Spain and in the name of the Emperor. He hoped, he said, that the States would receive no more deputations from Archduke Albert, but decide to settle everything at the point of the sword. The moment was propitious, and, if neglected, might never return. Marquis Spinola was about to make a journey to Spain on various matters of business. On his return, Henry said, he meant to make him prisoner as a hostage for the Prince of Conde, whom the Archdukes were harbouring and detaining. This would be the pretext, he said, but the object would be to deprive the Archdukes of any military chief, and thus to throw them into utter confusion. Count van den Berg would never submit to the authority of Don Luis de Velasco, nor Velasco to his, and not a man could come from Spain or Italy, for the passages would all be controlled by France.

Fortunately for the King's reputation, Spinola's journey was deferred, so that this notable plan for disposing of the great captain fell to the ground.

Henry agreed to leave the two French regiments and the two companies of cavalry in the States' service as usual, but stipulated in certain contingencies for their use.

Passing to another matter concerning which there had been so much jealousy on the part of the States, the formation of the French East India Company—to organize which undertaking Le Roy and Isaac Le Maire of Amsterdam had been living disguised in the house of Henry's famous companion, the financier Zamet at Paris—the King said that Barneveld ought not to envy him a participation in the great profits of this business.

Nothing would be done without consulting him after his arrival in Paris. He would discuss the matter privately with him, he said, knowing that Barneveld was a great personage, but however obstinate he might be, he felt sure that he would always yield to reason. On the other hand the King expressed his willingness to submit to the Advocate's opinions if they should seem the more just.

Page 2645

On leaving the King the Ambassador had an interview with Sully, who again expressed his great anxiety for the arrival of Barneveld, and his hopes that he might come with unlimited powers, so that the great secret might not leak out through constant referring of matters back to the Provinces.

After rendering to the Advocate a detailed account of this remarkable conversation, Aerssens concluded with an intimation that perhaps his own opinion might be desired as to the meaning of all those movements developing themselves so suddenly and on so many sides.

“I will say,” he observed, “exactly what the poet sings of the army of ants—

> ’Hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta
> Pulveris exigui jactu contacts quiescunt.’

If the Prince of Conde comes back, we shall be more plausible than ever. If he does not come back, perhaps the consideration of the future will sweep us onwards. All have their special views, and M. de Villeroy more warmly than all the rest.”

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

Abstinence from inquisition into consciences and private parlour
Allowed the demon of religious hatred to enter into its body
Behead, torture, burn alive, and bury alive all heretics
Christian sympathy and a small assistance not being sufficient
Contained within itself the germs of a larger liberty
Could not be both judge and party in the suit
Covered now with the satirical dust of centuries
Deadly hatred of Puritans in England and Holland
Doctrine of predestination in its sternest and strictest sense
Emperor of Japan addressed him as his brother monarch
Estimating his character and judging his judges
Everybody should mind his own business
He was a sincere bigot
Impatience is often on the part of the non-combatants
Intense bigotry of conviction
International friendship, the self-interest of each
It was the true religion, and there was none other
James of England, who admired, envied, and hated Henry
Jealousy, that potent principle
Language which is ever living because it is dead
More fiercely opposed to each other than to Papists
None but God to compel me to say more than I choose to say
Power the poison of which it is so difficult to resist

Presents of considerable sums of money to the negotiators made
Princes show what they have in them at twenty-five or never
Putting the cart before the oxen
Religious toleration, which is a phrase of insult
Secure the prizes of war without the troubles and dangers
Senectus edam maorbus est
So much in advance of his time as to favor religious equality
The Catholic League and the Protestant Union
The truth in shortest about matters of importance

Page 2646

The vehicle is often prized more than the freight
There was but one king in Europe, Henry the Bearnese
There was no use in holding language of authority to him
Thirty Years' War tread on the heels of the forty years
Unimaginable outrage as the most legitimate industry
Wish to appear learned in matters of which they are ignorant

THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

The Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v2, 1609-10

CHAPTER II.

Passion of Henry *iv*. for Margaret de Montmorency—Her Marriage with the Prince of Conde—Their Departure for the Country-Their Flight to the Netherlands-Rage of the King—Intrigues of Spain—Reception of the Prince and Princess of Conde by the Archdukes at Brussels— Splendid Entertainments by Spinola—Attempts of the King to bring the Fugitives back—Mission of De Coeuvres to Brussels—Difficult Position of the Republic—Vast but secret Preparations for War.

"If the Prince of Conde comes back." What had the Prince of Conde, his comings and his goings, to do with this vast enterprise?

It is time to point to the golden thread of most fantastic passion which runs throughout this dark and eventful history.

One evening in the beginning of the year which had just come to its close there was to be a splendid fancy ball at the Louvre in the course of which several young ladies of highest rank were to perform a dance in mythological costume.

The King, on ill terms with the Queen, who harassed him with scenes of affected jealousy, while engaged in permanent plots with her paramour and master, the Italian

Concini, against his policy and his life; on still worse terms with his latest mistress in chief, the Marquise de Verneuil, who hated him and revenged herself for enduring his caresses by making him the butt of her venomous wit, had taken the festivities of a court in dudgeon where he possessed hosts of enemies and flatterers but scarcely a single friend.

He refused to attend any of the rehearsals of the ballet, but one day a group of Diana and her nymphs passed him in the great gallery of the palace. One of the nymphs as she went by turned and aimed her gilded javelin at his heart. Henry looked and saw the most beautiful young creature, so he thought, that mortal eye had ever gazed upon, and according to his wont fell instantly over head and ears in love. He said afterwards that he felt himself pierced to the heart and was ready to faint away.

The lady was just fifteen years of age. The King was turned of fifty-five. The disparity of age seemed to make the royal passion ridiculous. To Henry the situation seemed poetical and pathetic. After this first interview he never missed a single rehearsal. In the intervals he called perpetually for the services of the court poet Malherbe, who certainly contrived to perpetrate in his behalf some of the most detestable verses that even he had ever composed.

Page 2647

The nymph was Marguerite de Montmorency, daughter of the Constable of France, and destined one day to become the mother of the great Conde, hero of Rocroy. There can be no doubt that she was exquisitely beautiful. Fair-haired, with a complexion of dazzling purity, large expressive eyes, delicate but commanding features, she had a singular fascination of look and gesture, and a winning, almost childlike, simplicity of manner. Without feminine artifice or commonplace coquetry, she seemed to bewitch and subdue at a glance men of all ranks, ages, and pursuits; kings and cardinals, great generals, ambassadors and statesmen, as well as humbler mortals whether Spanish, Italian, French, or Flemish. The Constable, an ignorant man who, as the King averred, could neither write nor read, understood as well as more learned sages the manners and humours of the court. He had destined his daughter for the young and brilliant Bassompierre, the most dazzling of all the cavaliers of the day. The two were betrothed.

But the love-stricken Henry, then confined to his bed with the gout, sent for the chosen husband of the beautiful Margaret.

“Bassompierre, my friend,” said the aged king, as the youthful lover knelt before him at the bedside, “I have become not in love, but mad, out of my senses, furious for Mademoiselle de Montmorency. If she should love you, I should hate you. If she should love me, you would hate me. ’Tis better that this should not be the cause of breaking up our good intelligence, for I love you with affection and inclination. I am resolved to marry her to my nephew the Prince of Conde, and to keep her near my family. She will be the consolation and support of my old age into which I am now about to enter. I shall give my nephew, who loves the chase a thousand times better than he does ladies, 100,000 livres a year, and I wish no other favour from her than her affection without making further pretensions.”

It was eight o’clock of a black winter’s morning, and the tears as he spoke ran down the cheeks of the hero of Ivry and bedewed the face of the kneeling Bassompierre.

The courtly lover sighed and—obeyed. He renounced the hand of the beautiful Margaret, and came daily to play at dice with the King at his bedside with one or two other companions.

And every day the Duchess of Angouleme, sister of the Constable, brought her fair niece to visit and converse with the royal invalid. But for the dark and tragic clouds which were gradually closing around that eventful and heroic existence there would be something almost comic in the spectacle of the sufferer making the palace and all France ring with the howlings of his grotesque passion for a child of fifteen as he lay helpless and crippled with the gout.

One day as the Duchess of Angouleme led her niece away from their morning visit to the King, Margaret as she passed by Bassompierre shrugged her shoulders with a scornful glance. Stung by this expression of contempt, the lover who had renounced

her sprang from the dice table, buried his face in his hat, pretending that his nose was bleeding, and rushed frantically from the palace.

Page 2648

Two days long he spent in solitude, unable to eat, drink, or sleep, abandoned to despair and bewailing his wretched fate, and it was long before he could recover sufficient equanimity to face his lost Margaret and resume his place at the King's dicing table. When he made his appearance, he was according to his own account so pale, changed, and emaciated that his friends could not recognise him.

The marriage with Conde, first prince of the blood, took place early in the spring. The bride received magnificent presents, and the husband a, pension of 100,000 livres a year. The attentions of the King became soon outrageous and the reigning scandal of the hour. Henry, discarding the grey jacket and simple costume on which he was wont to pride himself, paraded himself about in perfumed ruffs and glittering doublet, an ancient fop, very little heroic, and much ridiculed. The Princess made merry with the antics of her royal adorer, while her vanity at least, if not her affection, was really touched, and there was one great round of court festivities in her honour, at which the King and herself were ever the central figures. But Conde was not at all amused. Not liking the part assigned to him in the comedy thus skilfully arranged by his cousin king, never much enamoured of his bride, while highly appreciating the 100,000 livres of pension, he remonstrated violently with his wife, bitterly reproached the King, and made himself generally offensive. "The Prince is here," wrote Henry to Sully, "and is playing the very devil. You would be in a rage and be ashamed of the things he says of me. But at last I am losing patience, and am resolved to give him a bit of my mind." He wrote in the same terms to Montmorency. The Constable, whose conduct throughout the affair was odious and pitiable, promised to do his best to induce the Prince, instead of playing the devil, to listen to reason, as he and the Duchess of Angouleme understood reason.

Henry had even the ineffable folly to appeal to the Queen to use her influence with the refractory Conde. Mary de' Medici replied that there were already thirty go-betweens at work, and she had no idea of being the thirty-first—[Henrard, 30].

Conde, surrounded by a conspiracy against his honour and happiness, suddenly carried off his wife to the country, much to the amazement and rage of Henry.

In the autumn he entertained a hunting party at a seat of his, the Abbey of Verneuille, on the borders of Picardy. De Traigny, governor of Amiens, invited the Prince, Princess, and the Dowager-Princess to a banquet at his chateau not far from the Abbey. On their road thither they passed a group of huntsmen and grooms in the royal livery. Among them was an aged lackey with a plaister over one eye, holding a couple of hounds in leash. The Princess recognized at a glance under that ridiculous disguise the King.

"What a madman!" she murmured as she passed him, "I will never forgive you;" but as she confessed many years afterwards, this act of gallantly did not displease her.'

Page 2649

In truth, even in mythological fable, Trove has scarcely ever reduced demi-god or hero to more fantastic plight than was this travesty of the great Henry. After dinner Madame de Traigny led her fair guest about the castle to show her the various points of view. At one window she paused, saying that it commanded a particularly fine prospect.

The Princess looked from it across a courtyard, and saw at an opposite window an old gentleman holding his left hand tightly upon his heart to show that it was wounded, and blowing kisses to her with the other: "My God! it is the King himself," she cried to her hostess. The princess with this exclamation rushed from the window, feeling or affecting much indignation, ordered horses to her carriage instantly, and overwhelmed Madame de Traigny with reproaches. The King himself, hastening to the scene, was received with passionate invectives, and in vain attempted to assuage the Princess's wrath and induce her to remain.

They left the chateau at once, both Prince and Princess.

One night, not many weeks afterwards, the Due de Sully, in the Arsenal at Paris, had just got into bed at past eleven o'clock when he received a visit from Captain de Praslin, who walked straight into his bed-chamber, informing him that the King instantly required his presence.

Sully remonstrated. He was obliged to rise at three the next morning, he said, enumerating pressing and most important work which Henry required to be completed with all possible haste. "The King said you would be very angry," replied Praslin; "but there is no help for it. Come you must, for the man you know of has gone out of the country, as you said he would, and has carried away the lady on the crupper behind him."

"Ho, ho," said the Duke, "I am wanted for that affair, am I?" And the two proceeded straightway to the Louvre, and were ushered, of all apartments in the world, into the Queen's bedchamber. Mary de' Medici had given birth only four days before to an infant, Henrietta Maria, future queen of Charles I. of England. The room was crowded with ministers and courtiers; Villeroy, the Chancellor, Bassompierre, and others, being stuck against the wall at small intervals like statues, dumb, motionless, scarcely daring to breathe. The King, with his hands behind him and his grey beard sunk on his breast, was pacing up and down the room in a paroxysm of rage and despair.

"Well," said he, turning to Sully as he entered, "our man has gone off and carried everything with him. What do you say to that?"

The Duke beyond the boding "I told you so" phrase of consolation which he was entitled to use, having repeatedly warned his sovereign that precisely this catastrophe was impending, declined that night to offer advice. He insisted on sleeping on it. The manner in which the proceedings of the King at this juncture would be regarded by the

Archdukes Albert and Isabella—for there could be no doubt that Conde had escaped to their territory—and by the King of Spain, in complicity with whom the step had unquestionably been taken—was of gravest political importance.

Page 2650

Henry had heard the intelligence but an hour before. He was at cards in his cabinet with Bassompierre and others when d'Elbene entered and made a private communication to him. "Bassompierre, my friend," whispered the King immediately in that courtier's ear, "I am lost. This man has carried his wife off into a wood. I don't know if it is to kill her or to take her out of France. Take care of my money and keep up the game."

Bassompierre followed the king shortly afterwards and brought him his money. He said that he had never seen a man so desperate, so transported.

The matter was indeed one of deepest and universal import. The reader has seen by the preceding narrative how absurd is the legend often believed in even to our own days that war was made by France upon the Archdukes and upon Spain to recover the Princess of Conde from captivity in Brussels.

From contemporary sources both printed and unpublished; from most confidential conversations and revelations, we have seen how broad, deliberate, and deeply considered were the warlike and political combinations in the King's ever restless brain. But although the abduction of the new Helen by her own Menelaus was not the cause of the impending, Iliad, there is no doubt whatever that the incident had much to do with the crisis, was the turning point in a great tragedy, and that but for the vehement passion of the King for this youthful princess events might have developed themselves on a far different scale from that which they were destined to assume. For this reason a court intrigue, which history under other conditions might justly disdain, assumes vast proportions and is taken quite away from the scandalous chronicle which rarely busies itself with grave affairs of state.

"The flight of Conde," wrote Aerssens, "is the catastrophe to the comedy which has been long enacting. 'Tis to be hoped that the sequel may not prove tragical."

"The Prince," for simply by that title he was usually called to distinguish him from all other princes in France, was next of blood. Had Henry no sons, he would have succeeded him on the throne. It was a favourite scheme of the Spanish party to invalidate Henry's divorce from Margaret of Valois, and thus to cast doubts on the legitimacy of the Dauphin and the other children of Mary de' Medici.

The Prince in the hands of the Spanish government might prove a docile and most dangerous instrument to the internal repose of France not only after Henry's death but in his life-time. Conde's character was frivolous, unstable, excitable, weak, easy to be played upon by designing politicians, and he had now the deepest cause for anger and for indulging in ambitious dreams.

He had been wont during this unhappy first year of his marriage to loudly accuse Henry of tyranny, and was now likely by public declaration to assign that as the motive of his

flight. Henry had protested in reply that he had never been guilty of tyranny but once in his life, and that was when he allowed this youth to take the name and title of Conde?

Page 2651

For the Princess-Dowager his mother had lain for years in prison, under the terrible accusation of having murdered her husband, in complicity with her paramour, a Gascon page, named Belcastel. The present prince had been born several months after his reputed father's death. Henry, out of good nature, or perhaps for less creditable reasons, had come to the rescue of the accused princess, and had caused the process to be stopped, further enquiry to be quashed, and the son to be recognized as legitimate Prince of Conde. The Dowager had subsequently done her best to further the King's suit to her son's wife, for which the Prince bitterly reproached her to her face, heaping on her epithets which she well deserved.

Henry at once began to threaten a revival of the criminal suit, with a view of bastardizing him again, although the Dowager had acted on all occasions with great docility in Henry's interests.

The flight of the Prince and Princess was thus not only an incident of great importance to the internal politics of trance, but had a direct and important bearing on the impending hostilities. Its intimate connection with the affairs of the Netherland commonwealth was obvious. It was probable that the fugitives would make their way towards the Archdukes' territory, and that afterwards their first point of destination would be Breda, of which Philip William of Orange, eldest brother of Prince Maurice, was the titular proprietor. Since the truce recently concluded the brothers, divided so entirely by politics and religion, could meet on fraternal and friendly terms, and Breda, although a city of the Commonwealth, received its feudal lord. The Princess of Orange was the sister of Conde. The morning after the flight the King, before daybreak, sent for the Dutch ambassador. He directed him to despatch a courier forthwith to Barneveld, notifying him that the Prince had left the kingdom without the permission or knowledge of his sovereign, and stating the King's belief that he had fled to the territory of the Archdukes. If he should come to Breda or to any other place within the jurisdiction of the States, they were requested to make sure of his person at once, and not to permit him to retire until further instructions should be received from the King. De Praslin, captain of the body-guards and lieutenant of Champagne, it was further mentioned, was to be sent immediately on secret mission concerning this affair to the States and to the Archdukes.

The King suspected Conde of crime, so the Advocate was to be informed. He believed him to be implicated in the conspiracy of Poitou; the six who had been taken prisoners having confessed that they had thrice conferred with a prince at Paris, and that the motive of the plot was to free themselves and France from the tyranny of Henry *iv*. The King insisted peremptorily, despite of any objections from Aerssens, that the thing must be done and his instructions carried out to the letter. So much he expected of the States, and they should care no more for ulterior consequences, he said, than he had done for the wrath of Spain when he frankly undertook their cause. Conde was important only because his relative, and he declared that if the Prince should escape,

having once entered the territory of the Republic, he should lay the blame on its government.

Page 2652

“If you proceed languidly in the affair,” wrote Aerssens to Barneveld, “our affairs will suffer for ever.”

Nobody at court believed in the Poitou conspiracy, or that Conde had any knowledge of it. The reason of his flight was a mystery to none, but as it was immediately followed by an intrigue with Spain, it seemed ingenious to Henry to make, use of a transparent pretext to conceal the ugliness of the whole affair.

He hoped that the Prince would be arrested at Breda and sent back by the States. Villeroy said that if it was not done, they would be guilty of black ingratitude. It would be an awkward undertaking, however, and the States devoutly prayed that they might not be put to the test. The crafty Aerssens suggested to Barneveld that if Conde was not within their territory it would be well to assure the King that, had he been there, he would have been delivered up at once. “By this means,” said the Ambassador, “you will give no cause of offence to the Prince, and will at the same time satisfy the King. It is important that he should think that you depend immediately upon him. If you see that after his arrest they take severe measures against him, you will have a thousand ways of parrying the blame which posterity might throw upon you. History teaches you plenty of them.”

He added that neither Sully nor anyone else thought much of the Poitou conspiracy. Those implicated asserted that they had intended to raise troops there to assist the King in the Cleve expedition. Some people said that Henry had invented this plot against his throne and life. The Ambassador, in a spirit of prophecy, quoted the saying of Domitian: “Misera conditio imperantium quibus de conspiratione non creditor nisi occisis.”

Meantime the fugitives continued their journey. The Prince was accompanied by one of his dependants, a rude officer, de Rochefort, who carried the Princess on a pillion behind him. She had with her a lady-in-waiting named du Certeau and a lady’s maid named Philippote. She had no clothes but those on her back, not even a change of linen. Thus the young and delicate lady made the wintry journey through the forests. They crossed the frontier at Landrecies, then in the Spanish Netherlands, intending to traverse the Archduke’s territory in order to reach Breda, where Conde meant to leave his wife in charge of his sister, the Princess of Orange, and then to proceed to Brussels.

He wrote from the little inn at Landrecies to notify the Archduke of his project. He was subsequently informed that Albert would not prevent his passing through his territories, but should object to his making a fixed residence within them. The Prince also wrote subsequently to the King of Spain and to the King of France.

To Henry he expressed his great regret at being obliged to leave the kingdom in order to save his honour and his life, but that he had no intention of being anything else than his very humble and faithful cousin, subject, and servant. He would do nothing against his service, he said, unless forced thereto, and he begged the King not to take it amiss if he

refused to receive letters from any one whomsoever at court, saving only such letters as his Majesty himself might honour him by writing.

Page 2653

The result of this communication to the King was of course to enrage that monarch to the utmost, and his first impulse on finding that the Prince was out of his reach was to march to Brussels at once and take possession of him and the Princess by main force. More moderate counsels prevailed for the moment however, and negotiations were attempted.

Praslin did not contrive to intercept the fugitives, but the States-General, under the advice of Barneveld, absolutely forbade their coming to Breda or entering any part of their jurisdiction. The result of Conde's application to the King of Spain was an ultimate offer of assistance and asylum, through a special emissary, one Anover; for the politicians of Madrid were astute enough to see what a card the Prince might prove in their hands.

Henry instructed his ambassador in Spain to use strong and threatening language in regard to the harbouring a rebel and a conspirator against the throne of France; while on the other hand he expressed his satisfaction with the States for having prohibited the Prince from entering their territory. He would have preferred, he said, if they had allowed him entrance and forbidden his departure, but on the whole he was content. It was thought in Paris that the Netherland government had acted with much adroitness in thus abstaining both from a violation of the law of nations and from giving offence to the King.

A valet of Conde was taken with some papers of the Prince about him, which proved a determination on his part never to return to France during the lifetime of Henry. They made no statement of the cause of his flight, except to intimate that it might be left to the judgment of every one, as it was unfortunately but too well known to all.

Refused entrance into the Dutch territory, the Prince was obliged to renounce his project in regard to Breda, and brought his wife to Brussels. He gave Bentivoglio, the Papal nuncio, two letters to forward to Italy, one to the Pope, the other to his nephew, Cardinal Borghese. Encouraged by the advices which he had received from Spain, he justified his flight from France both by the danger to his honour and to his life, recommending both to the protection of his Holiness and his Eminence. Bentivoglio sent the letters, but while admitting the invincible reasons for his departure growing out of the King's pursuit of the Princess, he refused all credence to the pretended violence against Conde himself. Conde informed de Praslin that he would not consent to return to France. Subsequently he imposed as conditions of return that the King should assign to him certain cities and strongholds in Guienne, of which province he was governor, far from Paris and very near the Spanish frontier; a measure dictated by Spain and which inflamed Henry's wrath almost to madness. The King insisted on his instant return, placing himself and of course the Princess entirely in his hands and receiving a

Page 2654

full pardon for this effort to save his honour. The Prince and Princess of Orange came from Breda to Brussels to visit their brother and his wife. Here they established them in the Palace of Nassau, once the residence in his brilliant youth of William the Silent; a magnificent mansion, surrounded by park and garden, built on the brow of the almost precipitous hill, beneath which is spread out so picturesquely the antique and beautiful capital of Brabant.

The Archdukes received them with stately courtesy at their own palace. On their first ceremonious visit to the sovereigns of the land, the formal Archduke, coldest and chastest of mankind, scarcely lifted his eyes to gaze on the wondrous beauty of the Princess, yet assured her after he had led her through a portrait gallery of fair women that formerly these had been accounted beauties, but that henceforth it was impossible to speak of any beauty but her own.

The great Spinola fell in love with her at once, sent for the illustrious Rubens from Antwerp to paint her portrait, and offered Mademoiselle de Chateau Vert 10,000 crowns in gold if she would do her best to further his suit with her mistress. The Genoese banker-soldier made love, war, and finance on a grand scale. He gave a magnificent banquet and ball in her honour on Twelfth Night, and the festival was the wonder of the town. Nothing like it had been seen in Brussels for years. At six in the evening Spinola in splendid costume, accompanied by Don Luis Velasco, Count Ottavio Visconti, Count Bucquoy, with other nobles of lesser note, drove to the Nassau Palace to bring the Prince and Princess and their suite to the Marquis's mansion. Here a guard of honour of thirty musketeers was standing before the door, and they were conducted from their coaches by Spinola preceded by twenty-four torch-bearers up the grand staircase to a hall, where they were received by the Princesses of Mansfeld, Velasco, and other distinguished dames. Thence they were led through several apartments rich with tapestry and blazing with crystal and silver plate to a splendid saloon where was a silken canopy, under which the Princess of Conde and the Princess of Orange seated themselves, the Nuncius Bentivoglio to his delight being placed next the beautiful Margaret. After reposing for a little while they were led to the ball-room, brilliantly lighted with innumerable torches of perfumed wax and hung with tapestry of gold and silk, representing in fourteen embroidered designs the chief military exploits of Spinola. Here the banquet, a cold collation, was already spread on a table decked and lighted with regal splendour. As soon as the guests were seated, an admirable concert of instrumental music began. Spinola walked up and down providing for the comforts of his company, the Duke of Aumale stood behind the two princesses to entertain them with conversation, Don Luis Velasco served the Princess of Conde with plates, handed her the dishes, the wine, the napkins, while Bucquoy and

Page 2655

Visconti in like manner waited upon the Princess of Orange; other nobles attending to the other ladies. Forty-eight pages in white, yellow, and red scarves brought and removed the dishes. The dinner, of courses innumerable, lasted two hours and a half, and the ladies, being thus fortified for the more serious business of the evening, were led to the tiring-rooms while the hall was made ready for dancing. The ball was opened by the Princess of Conde and Spinola, and lasted until two in the morning. As the apartment grew warm, two of the pages went about with long staves and broke all the windows until not a single pane of glass remained. The festival was estimated by the thrifty chronicler of Antwerp to have cost from 3000 to 4000 crowns. It was, he says, "an earthly paradise of which soon not a vapour remained." He added that he gave a detailed account of it "not because he took pleasure in such voluptuous pomp and extravagance, but that one might thus learn the vanity of the world." These courtesies and assiduities on the part of the great "shopkeeper," as the Constable called him, had so much effect, if not on the Princess, at least on Conde himself, that he threatened to throw his wife out of window if she refused to caress Spinola. These and similar accusations were made by the father and aunt when attempting to bring about a divorce of the Princess from her husband. The Nuncius Bentivoglio, too, fell in love with her, devoting himself to her service, and his facile and eloquent pen to chronicling her story. Even poor little Philip of Spain in the depths of the Escurial heard of her charms, and tried to imagine himself in love with her by proxy.

Thenceforth there was a succession of brilliant festivals in honour of the Princess. The Spanish party was radiant with triumph, the French maddened with rage. Henry in Paris was chafing like a lion at bay. A petty sovereign whom he could crush at one vigorous bound was protecting the lady for whose love he was dying. He had secured Conde's exclusion from Holland, but here were the fugitives splendidly established in Brussels; the Princess surrounded by most formidable suitors, the Prince encouraged in his rebellious and dangerous schemes by the power which the King most hated on earth, and whose eternal downfall he had long since sworn to accomplish.

For the weak and frivolous Conde began to prattle publicly of his deep projects of revenge. Aided by Spanish money and Spanish troops he would show one day who was the real heir to the throne of France—the illegitimately born Dauphin or himself.

The King sent for the first president of Parliament, Harlay, and consulted with him as to the proper means of reviving the suppressed process against the Dowager and of publicly degrading Conde from his position of first prince of the blood which he had been permitted to usurp. He likewise procured a decree accusing him of high-treason and ordering him to be punished at his Majesty's pleasure, to be prepared by the Parliament of Paris; going down to the court himself in his impatience and seating himself in everyday costume on the bench of judges to see that it was immediately proclaimed.

Page 2656

Instead of at once attacking the Archdukes in force as he intended in the first ebullition of his wrath, he resolved to send de Boutteville-Montmorency, a relative of the Constable, on special and urgent mission to Brussels. He was to propose that Conde and his wife should return with the Prince and Princess of Orange to Breda, the King pledging himself that for three or four months nothing should be undertaken against him. Here was a sudden change of determination fit to surprise the States-General, but the King's resolution veered and whirled about hourly in the tempests of his wrath and love.

That excellent old couple, the Constable and the Duchess of Angouleme, did their best to assist their sovereign in his fierce attempts to get their daughter and niece into his power.

The Constable procured a piteous letter to be written to Archduke Albert, signed "Montmorency his mark," imploring him not to "suffer that his daughter, since the Prince refused to return to France, should leave Brussels to be a wanderer about the world following a young prince who had no fixed purpose in his mind."

Archduke Albert, through his ambassador in Paris, Peter Pecquius, suggested the possibility of a reconciliation between Henry and his kinsman, and offered himself as intermediary. He enquired whether the King would find it agreeable that he should ask for pardon in name of the Prince. Henry replied that he was willing that the Archduke should accord to Conde secure residence for the time within his dominions on three inexorable conditions:—firstly, that the Prince should ask for pardon without any stipulations, the King refusing to listen to any treaty or to assign him towns or places of security as had been vaguely suggested, and holding it utterly unreasonable that a man sueing for pardon should, instead of deserved punishment, talk of terms and acquisitions; secondly, that, if Conde should reject the proposition, Albert should immediately turn him out of his country, showing himself justly irritated at finding his advice disregarded; thirdly, that, sending away the Prince, the Archduke should forthwith restore the Princess to her father the Constable and her aunt Angouleme, who had already made their petitions to Albert and Isabella for that end, to which the King now added his own most particular prayers.

If the Archduke should refuse consent to these three conditions, Henry begged that he would abstain from any farther attempt to effect a reconciliation and not suffer Conde to remain any longer within his territories.

Pecquius replied that he thought his master might agree to the two first propositions while demurring to the third, as it would probably not seem honourable to him to separate man and wife, and as it was doubtful whether the Princess would return of her own accord.

Page 2657

The King, in reporting the substance of this conversation to Aerssens, intimated his conviction that they were only wishing in Brussels to gain time; that they were waiting for letters from Spain, which they were expecting ever since the return of Conde's secretary from Milan, whither he had been sent to confer with the Governor, Count Fuentes. He said farther that he doubted whether the Princess would go to Breda, which he should now like, but which Conde would not now permit. This he imputed in part to the Princess of Orange, who had written a letter full of invectives against himself to the Dowager—Princess of Conde which she had at once sent to him. Henry expressed at the same time his great satisfaction with the States-General and with Barneveld in this affair, repeating his assurances that they were the truest and best friends he had.

The news of Conde's ceremonious visit to Leopold in Julich could not fail to exasperate the King almost as much as the pompous manner in which he was subsequently received at Brussels; Spinola and the Spanish Ambassador going forth to meet him. At the same moment the secretary of Vaucelles, Henry's ambassador in Madrid, arrived in Paris, confirming the King's suspicions that Conde's flight had been concerted with Don Inigo de Cardenas, and was part of a general plot of Spain against the peace of the kingdom. The Duc d'Epernon, one of the most dangerous plotters at the court, and deep in the intimacy of the Queen and of all the secret adherents of the Spanish policy, had been sojourning a long time at Metz, under pretence of attending to his health, had sent his children to Spain, as hostages according to Henry's belief, had made himself master of the citadel, and was turning a deaf ear to all the commands of the King.

The supporters of Conde in France were openly changing their note and proclaiming by the Prince's command that he had left the kingdom in order to preserve his quality of first prince of the blood, and that he meant to make good his right of primogeniture against the Dauphin and all competitors.

Such bold language and such open reliance on the support of Spain in disputing the primogeniture of the Dauphin were fast driving the most pacifically inclined in France into enthusiasm for the war.

The States, too, saw their opportunity more vividly every day. "What could we desire more," wrote Aerssens to Barneveld, "than open war between France and Spain? Posterity will for ever blame us if we reject this great occasion."

Peter Pecquius, smoothest and sliest of diplomatists, did his best to make things comfortable, for there could be little doubt that his masters most sincerely deprecated war. On their heads would come the first blows, to their provinces would return the great desolation out of which they had hardly emerged. Still the Archduke, while racking his brains for the means of accommodation, refused, to his honour, to wink at any violation of the law of nations, gave

Page 2658

a secret promise, in which the Infanta joined, that the Princess should not be allowed to leave Brussels without her husband's permission, and resolutely declined separating the pair except with the full consent of both. In order to protect himself from the King's threats, he suggested sending Conde to some neutral place for six or eight months, to Prague, to Breda, or anywhere else; but Henry knew that Conde would never allow this unless he had the means by Spanish gold of bribing the garrison there, and so of holding the place in pretended neutrality, but in reality at the devotion of the King of Spain.

Meantime Henry had despatched the Marquis de Coeuvres, brother of the beautiful Gabrielle, Duchess de Beaufort, and one of the most audacious and unscrupulous of courtiers, on a special mission to Brussels. De Coeuvres saw Conde before presenting his credentials to the Archduke, and found him quite impracticable. Acting under the advice of the Prince of Orange, he expressed his willingness to retire to some neutral city of Germany or Italy, drawing meanwhile from Henry a pension of 40,000 crowns a year. But de Coeuvres firmly replied that the King would make no terms with his vassal nor allow Conde to prescribe conditions to him. To leave him in Germany or Italy, he said, was to leave him in the dependence of Spain. The King would not have this constant apprehension of her intrigues while, living, nor leave such matter in dying for turbulence in his kingdom. If it appeared that the Spaniards wished to make use of the Prince for such purposes, he would be beforehand with them, and show them how much more injury he could inflict on Spain than they on France. Obviously committed to Spain, Conde replied to the entreaties of the emissary that if the King would give him half his kingdom he would not accept the offer nor return to France; at least before the 8th of February, by which date he expected advices from Spain. He had given his word, he said, to lend his ear to no overtures before that time. He made use of many threats, and swore that he would throw himself entirely into the arms of the Spanish king if Henry would not accord him the terms which he had proposed.

To do this was an impossibility. To grant him places of security would, as the King said, be to plant a standard for all the malcontents of France to rally around. Conde had evidently renounced all hopes of a reconciliation, however painfully his host the Archduke might intercede for it. He meant to go to Spain. Spinola was urging this daily and hourly, said Henry, for he had fallen in love with the Princess, who complained of all these persecutions in her letters to her father, and said that she would rather die than go to Spain.

The King's advices from de Coeuvres were however to the effect that the step would probably be taken, that the arrangements were making, and that Spinola had been shut up with Conde six hours long with nobody present but Rochefort and a certain counsellor of the Prince of Orange named Keeremans.

Page 2659

Henry was taking measures to intercept them on their flight by land, but there was some thought of their proceeding to Spain by sea. He therefore requested the States to send two ships of war, swift sailors, well equipped, one to watch in the roads of St. Jean and the other on the English coast. These ships were to receive their instructions from Admiral de Vicq, who would be well informed of all the movements of the Prince and give warning to the captains of the Dutch vessels by a preconcerted signal. The King begged that Barneveld would do him this favour, if he loved him, and that none might have knowledge of it but the Advocate and Prince Maurice. The ships would be required for two or three months only, but should be equipped and sent forth as soon as possible.

The States had no objection to performing this service, although it subsequently proved to be unnecessary, and they were quite ready at that moment to go openly into the war to settle the affairs of Clove, and once for all to drive the Spaniards out of the Netherlands and beyond seas and mountains. Yet strange to say, those most conversant with the state of affairs could not yet quite persuade themselves that matters were serious, and that the King's mind was fixed. Should Conde return, renounce his Spanish stratagems, and bring back the Princess to court, it was felt by the King's best and most confidential friends that all might grow languid again, the Spanish faction get the upper hand in the King's councils, and the States find themselves in a terrible embarrassment.

On the other hand, the most prying and adroit of politicians were puzzled to read the signs of the times. Despite Henry's garrulity, or perhaps in consequence of it, the envoys of Spain, the Empire, and of Archduke Albert were ignorant whether peace were likely to be broken or not, in spite of rumours which filled the air. So well had the secrets been kept which the reader has seen discussed in confidential conversations—-the record of which has always remained unpublished—between the King and those admitted to his intimacy that very late in the winter Pecquius, while sadly admitting to his masters that the King was likely to take part against the Emperor in the affair of the duchies, expressed the decided opinion that it would be limited to the secret sending of succour to Brandenburg and Neuburg as formerly to the United Provinces, but that he would never send troops into Cleve, or march thither himself.

It is important, therefore, to follow closely the development of these political and amorous intrigues, for they furnish one of the most curious and instructive lessons of history; there being not the slightest doubt that upon their issue chiefly depended the question of a great and general war.

Page 2660

Pecquius, not yet despairing that his master would effect a reconciliation between the King and Conde, proposed again that the Prince should be permitted to reside for a time in some place not within the jurisdiction of Spain or of the Archdukes, being allowed meantime to draw his annual pension of 100,000 livres. Henry ridiculed the idea of Conde's drawing money from him while occupying his time abroad with intrigues against his throne and his children's succession. He scoffed at the Envoy's pretences that Conde was not in receipt of money from Spain, as if a man so needy and in so embarrassing a position could live without money from some source; and as if he were not aware, from his correspondents in Spain, that funds were both promised and furnished to the Prince.

He repeated his determination not to accord him pardon unless he returned to France, which he had no cause to leave, and, turning suddenly on Pecquius, demanded why, the subject of reconciliation having failed, the Archduke did not immediately fulfil his promise of turning Conde out of his dominions.

Upon this Albert's minister drew back with the air of one amazed, asking how and when the Archduke had ever made such a promise.

"To the Marquis de Coeuvres," replied Henry.

Pecquius asked if his ears had not deceived him, and if the King had really said that de Coeuvres had made such a statement.

Henry repeated and confirmed the story.

Upon the Minister's reply that he had himself received no such intelligence from the Archduke, the King suddenly changed his tone, and said,

"No, I was mistaken—I was confused—the Marquis never wrote me this; but did you not say yourself that I might be assured that there would be no difficulty about it if the Prince remained obstinate."

Pecquius replied that he had made such a proposition to his masters by his Majesty's request; but there had been no answer received, nor time for one, as the hope of reconciliation had not yet been renounced. He begged Henry to consider whether, without instructions from his master, he could have thus engaged his word.

"Well," said the King, "since you disavow it, I see very well that the Archduke has no wish to give me pleasure, and that these are nothing but tricks that you have been amusing me with all this time. Very good; each of us will know what we have to do."

Pecquius considered that the King had tried to get him into a net, and to entrap him into the avowal of a promise which he had never made. Henry remained obstinate in his assertions, notwithstanding all the envoy's protestations.

“A fine trick, indeed, and unworthy of a king, ‘Si dicere fas est,’” he wrote to Secretary of State Praets. “But the force of truth is such that he who spreads the snare always tumbles into the ditch himself.”

Henry concluded the subject of Conde at this interview by saying that he could have his pardon on the conditions already named, and not otherwise.

Page 2661

He also made some complaints about Archduke Leopold, who, he said, notwithstanding his demonstrations of wishing a treaty of compromise, was taking towns by surprise which he could not hold, and was getting his troops massacred on credit.

Pecquius expressed the opinion that it would be better to leave the Germans to make their own arrangements among themselves, adding that neither his masters nor the King of Spain meant to mix themselves up in the matter.

“Let them mix themselves in it or keep out of it, as they like,” said Henry, “I shall not fail to mix myself up in it.”

The King was marvellously out of humour.

Before finishing the interview, he asked Pecquius whether Marquis Spinola was going to Spain very soon, as he had permission from his Majesty to do so, and as he had information that he would be on the road early in Lent. The Minister replied that this would depend on the will of the Archduke, and upon various circumstances. The answer seemed to displease the King, and Pecquius was puzzled to know why. He was not aware, of course, of Henry’s project to kidnap the Marquis on the road, and keep him as a surety for Conde.

The Envoy saw Villeroy after the audience, who told him not to mind the King’s ill-temper, but to bear it as patiently as he could. His Majesty could not digest, he said, his infinite displeasure at the obstinacy of the Prince; but they must nevertheless strive for a reconciliation. The King was quick in words, but slow in deeds, as the Ambassador might have observed before, and they must all try to maintain peace, to which he would himself lend his best efforts.

As the Secretary of State was thoroughly aware that the King was making vast preparations for war, and had given in his own adhesion to the project, it is refreshing to observe the candour with which he assured the representative of the adverse party of his determination that friendliest relations should be preserved.

It is still more refreshing to find Villeroy, the same afternoon, warmly uniting with Sully, Lesdiguieres, and the Chancellor, in the decision that war should begin forthwith.

For the King held a council at the Arsenal immediately after this interview with Pecquius, in which he had become convinced that Conde would never return. He took the Queen with him, and there was not a dissentient voice as to the necessity of beginning hostilities at once.

Sully, however, was alone in urging that the main force of the attack should be in the north, upon the Rhine and Meuse. Villeroy and those who were secretly in the Spanish interest were for beginning it with the southern combination and against Milan. Sully

believed the Duke of Savoy to be variable and attached in his heart to Spain, and he thought it contrary to the interests of France to permit an Italian prince to grow so great on her frontier. He therefore thoroughly disapproved the plan, and explained to

Page 2662

the Dutch ambassador that all this urgency to carry on the war in the south came from hatred to the United Provinces, jealousy of their aggrandizement, detestation of the Reformed religion, and hope to engage Henry in a campaign which he could not carry on successfully. But he assured Aerssens that he had the means of counteracting these designs and of bringing on an invasion for obtaining possession of the Meuse. If the possessory princes found Henry making war in the Milanese only, they would feel themselves ruined, and might throw up the game. He begged that Barneveld would come on to Paris at once, as now or never was the moment to assure the Republic for all time.

The King had acted with malicious adroitness in turning the tables upon the Prince and treating him as a rebel and a traitor because, to save his own and his wife's honour, he had fled from a kingdom where he had but too good reason to suppose that neither was safe. The Prince, with infinite want of tact, had played into the King's hands. He had bragged of his connection with Spain and of his deep designs, and had shown to all the world that he was thenceforth but an instrument in the hands of the Spanish cabinet, while all the world knew the single reason for which he had fled.

The King, hopeless now of compelling the return of Conde, had become most anxious to separate him from his wife. Already the subject of divorce between the two had been broached, and it being obvious that the Prince would immediately betake himself into the Spanish dominions, the King was determined that the Princess should not follow him thither.

He had the incredible effrontery and folly to request the Queen to address a letter to her at Brussels, urging her to return to France. But Mary de' Medici assured her husband that she had no intention of becoming his assistant, using, to express her thought, the plainest and most vigorous word that the Italian language could supply. Henry had then recourse once more to the father and aunt.

That venerable couple being about to wait upon the Archduke's envoy, in compliance with the royal request, Pecquius, out of respect to their advanced age, went to the Constable's residence. Here both the Duchess and Constable, with tears in their eyes, besought that diplomatist to do his utmost to prevent the Princess from the sad fate of any longer sharing her husband's fortunes.

The father protested that he would never have consented to her marriage, preferring infinitely that she should have espoused any honest gentleman with 2000 crowns a year than this first prince of the blood, with a character such as it had proved to be; but that he had not dared to disobey the King.

Page 2663

He spoke of the indignities and cruelties to which she was subjected, said that Rochefort, whom Conde had employed to assist him in their flight from France, and on the crupper of whose horse the Princess had performed the journey, was constantly guilty of acts of rudeness and incivility towards her; that but a few days past he had fired off pistols in her apartment where she was sitting alone with the Princess of Orange, exclaiming that this was the way he would treat anyone who interfered with the commands of his master, Conde; that the Prince was incessantly railing at her for refusing to caress the Marquis of Spinola; and that, in short, he would rather she were safe in the palace of the Archduchess Isabella, even in the humblest position among her gentlewomen, than to know her vagabondizing miserably about the world with her husband.

This, he said, was the greatest fear he had, and he would rather see her dead than condemned to such a fate.

He trusted that the Archdukes were incapable of believing the stories that he and the Duchess of Angouleme were influenced in the appeals they made for the separation of the Prince and Princess by a desire to serve the purposes of the King. Those were fables put about by Conde. All that the Constable and his sister desired was that the Archduchess would receive the Princess kindly when she should throw herself at her feet, and not allow her to be torn away against her will. The Constable spoke with great gravity and simplicity, and with all the signs of genuine emotion, and Peter Pecquius was much moved. He assured the aged pair that he would do his best to comply with their wishes, and should immediately apprise the Archdukes of the interview which had just taken place. Most certainly they were entirely disposed to gratify the Constable and the Duchess as well as the Princess herself, whose virtues, qualities, and graces had inspired them with affection, but it must be remembered that the law both human and divine required wives to submit themselves to the commands of their husbands and to be the companions of their good and evil fortunes. Nevertheless, he hoped that the Lord would so conduct the affairs of the Prince of Conde that the Most Christian King and the Archdukes would all be satisfied.

These pious and consolatory commonplaces on the part of Peter Pecquius deeply affected the Constable. He fell upon the Envoy's neck, embraced him repeatedly, and again wept plentifully.

CHAPTER III.

Strange Scene at the Archduke's Palace—Henry's Plot frustrated—
His Triumph changed to Despair—Conversation of the Dutch Ambassador
with the King—The War determined upon.

Page 2664

It was in the latter part of the Carnival, the Saturday night preceding Shrove Tuesday, 1610. The winter had been a rigorous one in Brussels, and the snow lay in drifts three feet deep in the streets. Within and about the splendid palace of Nassau there was much commotion. Lights and flambeaux were glancing, loud voices, martial music, discharge of pistols and even of artillery were heard together with the trampling of many feet, but there was nothing much resembling the wild revelry or cheerful mummery of that holiday season. A throng of the great nobles of Belgium with drawn swords and menacing aspect were assembled in the chief apartments, a detachment of the Archduke's mounted body-guard was stationed in the courtyard, and five hundred halberdiers of the burgher guilds kept watch and ward about the palace.

The Prince of Conde, a square-built, athletic young man of middle stature, with regular features, but a sulky expression, deepened at this moment into ferocity, was seen chasing the secretary of the French resident minister out of the courtyard, thwacking him lustily about the shoulders with his drawn sword, and threatening to kill him or any other Frenchman on the spot, should he show himself in that palace. He was heard shouting rather than speaking, in furious language against the King, against Coeuvres, against Berny, and bitterly bewailing his misfortunes, as if his wife were already in Paris instead of Brussels.

Upstairs in her own apartment which she had kept for some days on pretext of illness sat the Princess Margaret, in company' of Madame de Berny, wife of the French minister, and of the Marquis de Coeuvres, Henry's special envoy, and a few other Frenchmen. She was passionately fond of dancing. The adoring cardinal described her as marvellously graceful and perfect in that accomplishment. She had begged her other adorer, the Marquis Spinola, "with sweetest words," that she might remain a few days longer in the Nassau Palace before removing to the Archduke's residence, and that the great general, according to the custom in France and Flanders, would be the one to present her with the violins. But Spinola, knowing the artifice concealed beneath these "sweetest words," had summoned up valour enough to resist her blandishments, and had refused a second entertainment.

It was not, therefore, the disappointment at losing her ball that now made the Princess sad. She and her companions saw that there had been a catastrophe; a plot discovered. There was bitter disappointment and deep dismay upon their faces. The plot had been an excellent one. De Coeuvres had arranged it all, especially instigated thereto by the father of the Princess acting in concurrence with the King. That night when all was expected to be in accustomed quiet, the Princess, wrapped in her mantilla, was to have stolen down into the garden, accompanied only by her maid the adventurous and faithful Philipotte, to have gone through a breach which led through a

Page 2665

garden wall to the city ramparts, thence across the foss to the counterscarp, where a number of horsemen under trustworthy commanders were waiting. Mounting on the crupper behind one of the officers of the escort, she was then to fly to the frontier, relays of horses having been provided at every stage until she should reach Rocroy, the first pausing place within French territory; a perilous adventure for the young and delicate Princess in a winter of almost unexampled severity.

On the very morning of the day assigned for the adventure, despatches brought by special couriers from the Nuncius and the Spanish ambassador at Paris gave notice of the plot to the Archdukes and to Conde, although up to that moment none knew of it in Brussels. Albert, having been apprised that many Frenchmen had been arriving during the past few days, and swarming about the hostelries of the city and suburbs, was at once disposed to believe in the story. When Conde came to him, therefore, with confirmation from his own letters, and demanding a detachment of the body-guard in addition to the burgher militiamen already granted by the magistrates, he made no difficulty granting the request. It was as if there had been a threatened assault of the city, rather than the attempted elopement of a young lady escorted by a handful of cavaliers.

The courtyard of the Nassau Palace was filled with cavalry sent by the Archduke, while five hundred burgher guards sent by the magistrates were drawn up around the gate. The noise and uproar, gaining at every moment more mysterious meaning by the darkness of night, soon spread through the city. The whole population was awake, and swarming through the streets. Such a tumult had not for years been witnessed in Brussels, and the rumour flew about and was generally believed that the King of France at the head of an army was at the gates of the city determined to carry off the Princess by force. But although the superfluous and very scandalous explosion might have been prevented, there could be no doubt that the stratagem had been defeated.

Nevertheless, the effrontery and ingenuity of de Coeuvres became now sublime. Accompanied by his colleague, the resident minister, de Berny, who was sure not to betray the secret because he had never known it—his wife alone having been in the confidence of the Princess—he proceeded straightway to the Archduke’s palace, and, late in the night as it was, insisted on an audience.

Here putting on his boldest face when admitted to the presence, he complained loudly of the plot, of which he had just become aware, contrived by the Prince of Conde to carry off his wife to Spain against her will, by main force, and by assistance of Flemish nobles, archiducal body-guard, and burgher militia.

Page 2666

It was all a plot of Conde, he said, to palliate still more his flight from France. Every one knew that the Princess could not fly back to Paris through the air. To take her out of a house filled with people, to pierce or scale the walls of the city, to arrange her journey by ordinary means, and to protect the whole route by stations of cavalry, reaching from Brussels to the frontier, and to do all this in profound secrecy, was equally impossible. Such a scheme had never been arranged nor even imagined, he said. The true plotter was Conde, aided by ministers in Flanders hostile to France, and as the honour of the King and the reputation of the Princess had been injured by this scandal, the Ambassador loudly demanded a thorough investigation of the affair in order that vengeance might fall where it was due.

The prudent Albert was equal to the occasion. Not wishing to state the full knowledge which he possessed of de Coeuvres' agency and the King's complicity in the scheme of abduction to France, he reasoned calmly with the excited marquis, while his colleague looked and listened in dumb amazement, having previously been more vociferous and infinitely more sincere than his colleague in expressions of indignation.

The Archduke said that he had not thought the plot imputed to the King and his ambassador very probable. Nevertheless, the assertions of the Prince had been so positive as to make it impossible to refuse the guards requested by him. He trusted, however, that the truth would soon be known, and that it would leave no stain on the Princess, nor give any offence to the King.

Surprised and indignant at the turn given to the adventure by the French envoys, he nevertheless took care to conceal these sentiments, to abstain from accusation, and calmly to inform them that the Princess next morning would be established under his own roof; and enjoy the protection of the Archduchess.

For it had been arranged several days before that Margaret should leave the palace of Nassau for that of Albert and Isabella on the 14th, and the abduction had been fixed for the night of the 13th precisely because the conspirators wished to profit by the confusion incident on a change of domicile.

The irrepressible de Coeuvres, even then hardly willing to give up the whole stratagem as lost, was at least determined to discover how and by whom the plot had been revealed. In a cemetery piled three feet deep with snow on the evening following that mid-winter's night which had been fixed for the Princess's flight, the unfortunate ambassador waited until a certain Vallobre, a gentleman of Spinola's, who was the go-between of the enamoured Genoese and the Princess, but whom de Coeuvres had gained over, came at last to meet him by appointment. When he arrived, it was only to inform him of the manner in which he had been baffled, to convince him that the game was up, and that nothing was left him but to retreat utterly foiled in his attempt, and to be stigmatized as a blockhead by his enraged sovereign.

Page 2667

Next day the Princess removed her residence to the palace of the Archdukes, where she was treated with distinguished honour by Isabella, and installed ceremoniously in the most stately, the most virtuous, and the most dismal of courts. Her father and aunt professed themselves as highly pleased with the result, and Pecquius wrote that “they were glad to know her safe from the importunities of the old fop who seemed as mad as if he had been stung by a tarantula.”

And how had the plot been revealed? Simply through the incorrigible garrulity of the King himself. Apprised of the arrangement in all its details by the Constable, who had first received the special couriers of de Coeuvres, he could not keep the secret to himself for a moment, and the person of all others in the world to whom he thought good to confide it was the Queen herself. She received the information with a smile, but straightway sent for the Nuncius Ubaldini, who at her desire instantly despatched a special courier to Spinola with full particulars of the time and mode of the proposed abduction.

Nevertheless the ingenuous Henry, confiding in the capacity of his deeply offended queen to keep the secret which he had himself divulged, could scarcely contain himself for joy.

Off he went to Saint-Germain with a train of coaches, impatient to get the first news from de Coeuvres after the scheme should have been carried into effect, and intending to travel post towards Flanders to meet and welcome the Princess.

“Pleasant farce for Shrove Tuesday,” wrote the secretary of Pecquius, “is that which the Frenchmen have been arranging down there! He in whose favour the abduction is to be made was seen going out the same day spangled and smart, contrary to his usual fashion, making a gambado towards Saint-Germain-en-Laye with four carriages and four to meet the nymph.”

Great was the King’s wrath and mortification at this ridiculous exposure of his detestable scheme. Vociferous were Villeroy’s expressions of Henry’s indignation at being supposed to have had any knowledge of or complicity in the affair. “His Majesty cannot approve of the means one has taken to guard against a pretended plot for carrying off the Princess,” said the Secretary of State; “a fear which was simulated by the Prince in order to defame the King.” He added that there was no reason to suspect the King, as he had never attempted anything of the sort in his life, and that the Archduke might have removed the Princess to his palace without sending an army to the hotel of the Prince of Orange, and causing such an alarm in the city, firing artillery on the rampart as if the town had been full of Frenchmen in arms, whereas one was ashamed next morning to find that there had been but fifteen in all. “But it was all Marquis Spinola’s fault,” he said, “who wished to show himself off as a warrior.”

Page 2668

The King, having thus through the mouth of his secretary of state warmly protested against his supposed implication in the attempted abduction, began as furiously to rail at de Coeuvres for its failure; telling the Duc de Vendome that his uncle was an idiot, and writing that unlucky envoy most abusive letters for blundering in the scheme which had been so well concerted between them. Then he sent for Malherbe, who straightway perpetrated more poems to express the King's despair, in which Henry was made to liken himself to a skeleton with a dried skin, and likewise to a violet turned up by the ploughshare and left to wither.

He kept up through Madame de Berny a correspondence with "his beautiful angel," as he called the Princess, whom he chose to consider a prisoner and a victim; while she, wearied to death with the frigid monotony and sepulchral gaieties of the archiducal court, which she openly called her "dungeon" diverted herself with the freaks and fantasies of her royal adorer, called him in very ill-spelled letters "her chevalier, her heart, her all the world," and frequently wrote to beg him, at the suggestion of the intriguing Chateau Vert, to devise some means of rescuing her from prison.

The Constable and Duchess meanwhile affected to be sufficiently satisfied with the state of things. Conde, however, received a letter from the King, formally summoning him to return to France, and, in case of refusal, declaring him guilty of high-treason for leaving the kingdom without the leave and against the express commands of the King. To this letter, brought to him by de Coeuvres, the Prince replied by a paper, drawn up and served by a notary of Brussels, to the effect that he had left France to save his life and honour; that he was ready to return when guarantees were given him for the security of both. He would live and die, he said, faithful to the King. But when the King, departing from the paths of justice, proceeded through those of violence against him, he maintained that every such act against his person was null and invalid. Henry had even the incredible meanness and folly to request the Queen to write to the Archdukes, begging that the Princess might be restored to assist at her coronation. Mary de' Medici vigorously replied once more that, although obliged to wink at the King's amours, she declined to be his procuress. Conde then went off to Milan very soon after the scene at the Nassau Palace and the removal of the Princess to the care of the Archdukes. He was very angry with his wife, from whom he expressed a determination to be divorced, and furious with the King, the validity of whose second marriage and the legitimacy of whose children he proposed with Spanish help to dispute.

The Constable was in favour of the divorce, or pretended to be so, and caused importunate letters to be written, which he signed, to both Albert and Isabella, begging that his daughter might be restored to him to be the staff of his old age, and likewise to be present at the Queen's coronation. The Archdukes, however, resolutely refused to permit her to leave their protection without Conde's consent, or until after a divorce had been effected, notwithstanding that the father and aunt demanded it. The Constable and Duchess however, acquiesced in the decision, and expressed immense gratitude to Isabella.

Page 2669

“The father and aunt have been talking to Pecquius,” said Henry very dismally; “but they give me much pain. They are even colder than the season, but my fire thaws them as soon as I approach.”

“P. S.—I am so pining away in my anguish that I am nothing but skin and bones. Nothing gives me pleasure. I fly from company, and if in order to comply with the law of nations I go into some assembly or other, instead of enlivening, it nearly kills me.”—-[Lettres missives de Henri vii. 834].

And the King took to his bed. Whether from gout, fever, or the pangs of disappointed love, he became seriously ill. Furious with every one, with Conde, the Constable, de Coeuvres, the Queen, Spinola, with the Prince of Orange, whose councillor Keeremans had been encouraging Conde in his rebellion and in going to Spain with Spinola, he was now resolved that tho war should go on. Aerssens, cautious of saying too much on paper of this very delicate affair, always intimated to Barneveld that, if the Princess could be restored, peace was still possible, and that by moving an inch ahead of the King in the Cleve matter the States at the last moment might be left in the lurch. He distinctly told the Advocate, on his expressing a hope that Henry might consent to the Prince’s residence in some neutral place until a reconciliation could be effected, that the pinch of the matter was not there, and that van der Myle, who knew all about it, could easily explain it.

Alluding to the project of reviving the process against the Dowager, and of divorcing the Prince and Princess, he said these steps would do much harm, as they would too much justify the true cause of the retreat of the Prince, who was not believed when he merely talked of his right of primogeniture: “The matter weighs upon us very heavily,” he said, “but the trouble is that we don’t search for the true remedies. The matter is so delicate that I don’t dare to discuss it to the very bottom.”

The Ambassador had a long interview with the King as he lay in his bed feverish and excited. He was more impatient than ever for the arrival of the States’ special embassy, reluctantly acquiesced in the reasons assigned for the delay, but trusted that it would arrive soon with Barneveld at the head, and with Count Lewis William as a member for “the sword part of it.”

He railed at the Prince of Orange, not believing that Keeremans would have dared to do what he had done but with the orders of his master. He said that the King of Spain would supply Conde with money and with everything he wanted, knowing that he could make use of him to trouble his kingdom. It was strange, he thought, that Philip should venture to these extremities with his affairs in such condition, and when he had so much need of repose. He recalled all his ancient grievances against Spain, his rights to the Kingdom of Navarre and the County of St. Pol violated; the conspiracy of Biron, the intrigues of Bouillon, the

Page 2670

plots of the Count of Auvergne and the Marchioness of Verneuil, the treason of Meragne, the corruption of L'Hoste, and an infinity of other plots of the King and his ministers; of deep injuries to him and to the public repose, not to be tolerated by a mighty king like himself, with a grey beard. He would be revenged, he said, for this last blow, and so for all the rest. He would not leave a troublesome war on the hands of his young son. The occasion was favourable. It was just to defend the oppressed princes with the promptly accorded assistance of the States-General. The King of Great Britain was favourable. The Duke of Savoy was pledged. It was better to begin the war in his green old age than to wait the pleasure and opportunity of the King of Spain.

All this he said while racked with fever, and dismissed the Envoy at last, after a long interview, with these words: "Mr. Ambassador—I have always spoken roundly and frankly to you, and you will one day be my witness that I have done all that I could to draw the Prince out of the plight into which he has put himself. But he is struggling for the succession to this crown under instructions from the Spaniards, to whom he has entirely pledged himself. He has already received 6000 crowns for his equipment. I know that you and my other friends will work for the conservation of this monarchy, and will never abandon me in my designs to weaken the power of Spain. Pray God for my health."

The King kept his bed a few days afterwards, but soon recovered. Villeroy sent word to Barneveld in answer to his suggestions of reconciliation that it was too late, that Conde was entirely desperate and Spanish. The crown of France was at stake, he said, and the Prince was promising himself miracles and mountains with the aid of Spain, loudly declaring the marriage of Mary de' Medici illegal, and himself heir to the throne. The Secretary of State professed himself as impatient as his master for the arrival of the embassy; the States being the best friends France ever had and the only allies to make the war succeed.

Jeannin, who was now never called to the council, said that the war was not for Germany but for Conde, and that Henry could carry it on for eight years. He too was most anxious for Barneveld's arrival, and was of his opinion that it would have been better for Conde to be persuaded to remain at Breda and be supported by his brother-in-law, the Prince of Orange. The impetuosity of the King had however swept everything before it, and Conde had been driven to declare himself Spanish and a pretender to the crown. There was no issue now but war.

Boderie, the King's envoy in Great Britain, wrote that James would be willing to make a defensive league for the affairs of Cleve and Julich only, which was the slenderest amount of assistance; but Henry always suspected Master Jacques of intentions to baulk him if possible and traverse his designs. But the die was cast. Spinola had carried off Conde in triumph; the Princess was pining in her gilt cage in Brussels, and

demanding a divorce for desertion and cruel treatment; the King considered himself as having done as much as honour allowed him to effect a reconciliation, and it was obvious that, as the States' ambassador said, he could no longer retire from the war without shame, which would be the greatest danger of all.

Page 2671

“The tragedy is ready to begin,” said Aerssens. “They are only waiting now for the arrival of our ambassadors.”

On the 9th March the King before going to Fontainebleau for a few days summoned that envoy to the Louvre. Impatient at a slight delay in his arrival, Henry came down into the courtyard as he was arriving and asked eagerly if Barneveld was coming to Paris. Aerssens replied, that the Advocate had been hastening as much as possible the departure of the special embassy, but that the condition of affairs at home was such as not to permit him to leave the country at that moment. Van der Myle, who would be one of the ambassadors, would more fully explain this by word of mouth.

The King manifested infinite annoyance and disappointment that Barneveld was not to make part of the embassy. “He says that he reposes such singular confidence in your authority in the state, experience in affairs, and affection for himself,” wrote Aerssens, “that he might treat with you in detail and with open heart of all his designs. He fears now that the ambassadors will be limited in their powers and instructions, and unable to reply at once on the articles which at different times have been proposed to me for our enterprise. Thus much valuable time will be wasted in sending backwards and forwards.”

The King also expressed great anxiety to consult with Count Lewis William in regard to military details, but his chief sorrow was in regard to the Advocate. “He acquiesced only with deep displeasure and regret in your reasons,” said the Ambassador, “and says that he can hope for nothing firm now that you refuse to come.”

Villeroy intimated that Barneveld did not come for fear of exciting the jealousy of the English.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

He who spreads the snare always tumbles into the ditch himself
Most detestable verses that even he had ever composed
She declined to be his procuress

THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS’ WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

The Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v3, 1610

CHAPTER IV.

Difficult Position of Barneveld—Insurrection at Utrecht subdued by the States' Army—-Special Embassies to England and France—Anger of the King with Spain and the Archdukes—Arrangements of Henry for the coming War—Position of Spain—Anxiety of the King for the Presence of Barneveld in Paris—Arrival of the Dutch Commissioners in France and their brilliant Reception—Their Interview with the King and his Ministers—-Negotiations—Delicate Position of the Dutch Government— India Trade—Simon Danzer, the Corsair—Conversations of Henry with the Dutch Commissioners—Letter

Page 2672

of the King to Archduke Albert— Preparations for the Queen's Coronation, and of Henry to open the Campaign in person—Perplexities of Henry—Forebodings and Warnings —The Murder accomplished—Terrible Change in France—Triumph of Concini and of Spain—Downfall of Sully—Disputes of the Grandees among themselves—Special Mission of Condelence from the Republic— Conference on the great Enterprise—-Departure of van der Myle from Paris.

There were reasons enough why the Advocate could not go to Paris at this juncture. It was absurd in Henry to suppose it possible. Everything rested on Barneveld's shoulders. During the year which had just passed he had drawn almost every paper, every instruction in regard to the peace negotiations, with his own hand, had assisted at every conference, guided and mastered the whole course of a most difficult and intricate negotiation, in which he had not only been obliged to make allowance for the humbled pride and baffled ambition of the ancient foe of the Netherlands, but to steer clear of the innumerable jealousies, susceptibilities, cavillings, and insolences of their patronizing friends.

It was his brain that worked, his tongue that spoke, his restless pen that never paused. His was not one of those easy posts, not unknown in the modern administration of great affairs, where the subordinate furnishes the intellect, the industry, the experience, while the bland superior, gratifying the world with his sign-manual, appropriates the applause. So long as he lived and worked, the States-General and the States of Holland were like a cunningly contrived machine, which seemed to be alive because one invisible but mighty mind vitalized the whole.

And there had been enough to do. It was not until midsummer of 1609 that the ratifications of the Treaty of Truce, one of the great triumphs in the history of diplomacy, had been exchanged, and scarcely had this period been put to the eternal clang of arms when the death of a lunatic threw the world once more into confusion. It was obvious to Barneveld that the issue of the Cleve-Julich affair, and of the tremendous religious fermentation in Bohemia, Moravia, and Austria, must sooner or later lead to an immense war. It was inevitable that it would devolve upon the States to sustain their great though vacillating, their generous though encroaching, their sincere though most irritating, ally. And yet, thoroughly as Barneveld had mastered all the complications and perplexities of the religious and political question, carefully as he had calculated the value of the opposing forces which were shaking Christendom, deeply as he had studied the characters of Matthias and Rudolph, of Charles of Denmark and Ferdinand of Graz, of Anhalt and Maximilian, of Brandenburg and Neuburg, of James and Philip, of Paul V. and Charles Emmanuel, of Sully and Yilleroy, of Salisbury and Bacon, of Lerma and Infantado; adroitly as he could measure, weigh, and analyse all these elements in the great problem which was forcing itself on the attention of Europe—there was one factor with which it was difficult for this austere republican, this cold, unsusceptible statesman, to deal: the intense and imperious passion of a greybeard for a woman of sixteen.

Page 2673

For out of the cauldron where the miscellaneous elements of universal war were bubbling rose perpetually the fantastic image of Margaret Montmorency: the fatal beauty at whose caprice the heroic sword of Ivry and Cahors was now uplifted and now sheathed.

Aerssens was baffled, and reported the humours of the court where he resided as changing from hour to hour. To the last he reported that all the mighty preparations then nearly completed “might evaporate in smoke” if the Princess of Conde should come back. Every ambassador in Paris was baffled. Peter Pecquius was as much in the dark as Don Inigo de Cardenas, as Ubaldini or Edmonds. No one save Sully, Aerssens, Barneveld, and the King knew the extensive arrangements and profound combinations which had been made for the war. Yet not Sully, Aerssens, Barneveld, or the King, knew whether or not the war would really be made.

Barneveld had to deal with this perplexing question day by day. His correspondence with his ambassador at Henry’s court was enormous, and we have seen that the Ambassador was with the King almost daily; sleeping or waking; at dinner or the chase; in the cabinet or the courtyard.

But the Advocate was also obliged to carry in his arms, as it were, the brood of snarling, bickering, cross-grained German princes, to supply them with money, with arms, with counsel, with brains; to keep them awake when they went to sleep, to steady them in their track, to teach them to go alone. He had the congress at Hall in Suabia to supervise and direct; he had to see that the ambassadors of the new republic, upon which they in reality were already half dependent and chafing at their dependence, were treated with the consideration due to the proud position which the Commonwealth had gained. Questions of etiquette were at that moment questions of vitality. He instructed his ambassadors to leave the congress on the spot if they were ranked after the envoys of princes who were only feudatories of the Emperor. The Dutch ambassadors, “recognising and relying upon no superiors but God and their sword,” placed themselves according to seniority with the representatives of proudest kings.

He had to extemporize a system of free international communication with all the powers of the earth—with the Turk at Constantinople, with the Czar of Muscovy; with the potentates of the Baltic, with both the Indies. The routine of a long established and well organized foreign office in a time-honoured state running in grooves; with well-balanced springs and well oiled wheels, may be a luxury of civilization; but it was a more arduous task to transact the greatest affairs of a state springing suddenly into recognized existence and mainly dependent for its primary construction and practical working on the hand of one man.

Page 2674

Worse than all, he had to deal on the most dangerous and delicate topics of state with a prince who trembled at danger and was incapable of delicacy; to show respect for a character that was despicable, to lean on a royal word falser than water, to inhale almost daily the effluvia from a court compared to which the harem of Henry was a temple of vestals. The spectacle of the slobbering James among his Kars and Hays and Villiers's and other minions is one at which history covers her eyes and is dumb; but the republican envoys, with instructions from a Barneveld, were obliged to face him daily, concealing their disgust, and bowing reverentially before him as one of the arbiters of their destinies and the Solomon of his epoch.

A special embassy was sent early in the year to England to convey the solemn thanks of the Republic to the King for his assistance in the truce negotiations, and to treat of the important matters then pressing on the attention of both powers. Contemporaneously was to be despatched the embassy for which Henry was waiting so impatiently at Paris.

Certainly the Advocate had enough with this and other, important business already mentioned to detain him at his post. Moreover the first year of peace had opened disastrously in the Netherlands. Tremendous tempests such as had rarely been recorded even in that land of storms had raged all the winter. The waters everywhere had burst their dykes and inundations, which threatened to engulph the whole country, and which had caused enormous loss of property and even of life, were alarming the most courageous. It was difficult in many district to collect the taxes for the every-day expenses of the community, and yet the Advocate knew that the Republic would soon be forced to renew the war on a prodigious scale.

Still more to embarrass the action of the government and perplex its statesmen, an alarming and dangerous insurrection broke out in Utrecht.

In that ancient seat of the hard-fighting, imperious, and opulent sovereign archbishops of the ancient church an important portion of the population had remained Catholic. Another portion complained of the abolition of various privileges which they had formerly enjoyed; among others that of a monopoly of beer-brewing for the province. All the population, as is the case with all populations in all countries and all epochs, complained of excessive taxation.

A clever politician, Dirk Kanter by name, a gentleman by birth, a scholar and philosopher by pursuit and education, and a demagogue by profession, saw an opportunity of taking an advantage of this state of things. More than twenty years before he had been burgomaster of the city, and had much enjoyed himself in that position. He was tired of the learned leisure to which the ingratitude of his fellow-citizens had condemned him. He seems to have been of easy virtue in the matter of religion, a Catholic, an Arminian, an ultra orthodox Contra-Remonstrant by turns.

Page 2675

He now persuaded a number of determined partisans that the time had come for securing a church for the public worship of the ancient faith, and at the same time for restoring the beer brewery, reducing the taxes, recovering lost privileges, and many other good things. Beneath the whole scheme lay a deep design to effect the secession of the city and with it of the opulent and important province of Utrecht from the Union. Kanter had been heard openly to avow that after all the Netherlands had flourished under the benign sway of the House of Burgundy, and that the time would soon come for returning to that enviable condition.

By a concerted assault the city hall was taken possession of by main force, the magistracy was overpowered, and a new board of senators and common council-men appointed, Kanter and a devoted friend of his, Heldingen by name, being elected burgomasters.

The States-Provincial of Utrecht, alarmed at these proceedings in the city, appealed for protection against violence to the States-General under the 3rd Article of the Union, the fundamental pact which bore the name of Utrecht itself. Prince Maurice proceeded to the city at the head of a detachment of troops to quell the tumults. Kanter and his friends were plausible enough to persuade him of the legality and propriety of the revolution which they had effected, and to procure his formal confirmation of the new magistracy. Intending to turn his military genius and the splendour of his name to account, they contrived to keep him for a time at least in an amiable enthralment, and induced him to contemplate in their interest the possibility of renouncing the oath which subjected him to the authority of the States of Utrecht. But the far-seeing eye of Barneveld could not be blind to the danger which at this crisis beset the Stadholder and the whole republic. The Prince was induced to return to the Hague, but the city continued by armed revolt to maintain the new magistracy. They proceeded to reduce the taxes, and in other respects to carry out the measures on the promise of which they had come into power. Especially the Catholic party sustained Kanter and his friends, and promised themselves from him and from his influence over Prince Maurice to obtain a power of which they had long been deprived.

The States-General now held an assembly at Woerden, and summoned the malcontents of Utrecht to bring before that body a statement of their grievances. This was done, but there was no satisfactory arrangement possible, and the deputation returned to Utrecht, the States-General to the Hague. The States-Provincial of Utrecht urged more strongly than ever upon the assembly of the Union to save the city from the hands of a reckless and revolutionary government. The States-General resolved accordingly to interfere by force. A considerable body of troops was ordered to march at once upon Utrecht and besiege the city. Maurice, in his capacity of captain-general and stadholder

Page 2676

of the province, was summoned to take charge of the army. He was indisposed to do so, and pleaded sickness. The States, determined that the name of Nassau should not be used as an encouragement to disobedience, and rebellion, then directed the brother of Maurice, Frederic Henry, youngest son of William the Silent, to assume the command. Maurice insisted that his brother was too young, and that it was unjust to allow so grave a responsibility to fall upon his shoulders. The States, not particularly pleased with the Prince's attitude at this alarming juncture, and made anxious by the glamour which seemed to possess him since his conferences with the revolutionary party at Utrecht, determined not to yield.

The army marched forth and laid siege to the city, Prince Frederic Henry at its head. He was sternly instructed by the States-General, under whose orders he acted, to take possession of the city at all hazards. He was to insist on placing there a garrison of 2000 foot and 300 horse, and to permit not another armed man within the walls. The members of the council of state and of the States of Utrecht accompanied the army. For a moment the party in power was disposed to resist the forces of the Union. Dick Kanter and his friends were resolute enough; the Catholic priests turned out among the rest with their spades and worked on the entrenchments. The impossibility of holding the city against the overwhelming power of the States was soon obvious, and the next day the gates were opened, and easy terms were granted. The new magistracy was set aside, the old board that had been deposed by the rebels reinstated. The revolution and the counterrevolution were alike bloodless, and it was determined that the various grievances of which the discontented party had complained should be referred to the States-General, to Prince Maurice, to the council of state, and to the ambassadors of France and England. Amnesty was likewise decreed on submission.

The restored government was Arminian in its inclinations, the revolutionary one was singularly compounded both of Catholic and of ultra-orthodox elements. Quiet was on the whole restored, but the resources of the city were crippled. The event occurring exactly at the crisis of the Clove and Julich expedition angered the King of France.

"The trouble of Utrecht," wrote Aerssens to Barneveld, "has been turned to account here marvellously, the Archdukes and Spaniards boasting that many more revolts like this may be at once expected. I have explained to his Majesty, who has been very much alarmed about it, both its source and the hopes that it will be appeased by the prudence of his Excellency Prince Maurice and the deputies of the States. The King desires that everything should be pacified as soon as possible, so that there may be no embarrassment to the course of public affairs. But he fears, he tells me, that this may create some new jealousy between Prince Maurice and yourself. I don't comprehend what he means, although he held this language to me very expressly and without reserve. I could only answer that you were living on the best of terms together in perfect amity and intelligence. If you know if this talk of his has any other root, please to

enlighten me, that I may put a stop to false reports, for I know nothing of affairs except what you tell me.”

Page 2677

King James, on the other hand, thoroughly approved the promptness of the States-General in suppressing the tumult.

Nothing very serious of alike nature occurred in Utrecht until the end of the year, when a determined and secret conspiracy was discovered, having for its object to overpower the garrison and get bodily possession of Colonel John Ogle, the military commander of the town. At the bottom of the movement were the indefatigable Dirk Kanter and his friend Heldingen. The attempt was easily suppressed, and the two were banished from the town. Kanter died subsequently in North Holland, in the odour of ultra-orthodoxy. Four of the conspirators—a post-master, two shoemakers, and a sexton, who had bound themselves by oath to take the lives of two eminent Arminian preachers, besides other desperate deeds—were condemned to death, but pardoned on the scaffold. Thus ended the first revolution at Utrecht.

Its effect did not cease, however, with the tumults which were its original manifestations. This earliest insurrection in organized shape against the central authority of the States-General; this violent though abortive effort to dissolve the Union and to nullify its laws; this painful necessity for the first time imposed upon the federal government to take up arms against misguided citizens of the Republic, in order to save itself from disintegration and national death, were destined to be followed by far graver convulsions on the self-same spot. Religious differences and religious hatreds were to mingle their poison with antagonistic political theories and personal ambitions, and to develop on a wide scale the danger ever lurking in a constitution whose fundamental law was unstable, ill defined, and liable to contradictory interpretations. For the present it need only be noticed that the States-General, guided by Barneveld, most vigorously suppressed the local revolt and the incipient secession, while Prince Maurice, the right arm of the executive, the stadholder of the province, and the representative of the military power of the Commonwealth, was languid in the exertion of that power, inclined to listen to the specious arguments of the Utrecht rebels, and accused at least of tampering with the fell spirit which the Advocate was resolute to destroy. Yet there was no suspicion of treason, no taint of rebellion, no accusation of unpatriotic motives uttered against the Stadholder.

There was a doubt as to the true maxims by which the Confederacy was to be governed, and at this moment, certainly, the Prince and the Advocate represented opposite ideas. There was a possibility, at a future day, when the religious and political parties might develop themselves on a wider scale and the struggles grow fiercer, that the two great champions in the conflict might exchange swords and inflict mutual and poisoned wounds. At present the party of the Union had triumphed, with Barneveld at its head. At a later but not far distant day, similar scenes might be enacted in the ancient city of Utrecht, but with a strange difference and change in the cast of parts and with far more tragical results.

Page 2678

For the moment the moderate party in the Church, those more inclined to Arminianism and the supremacy of the civil authority in religious matters, had asserted their ascendency in the States-General, and had prevented the threatened rupture.

Meantime it was doubly necessary to hasten the special embassies to France and to England, in both which countries much anxiety as to the political health and strength of the new republic had been excited by these troubles in Utrecht. It was important for the States-General to show that they were not crippled, and would not shrink from the coming conflict, but would justify the reliance placed on them by their allies.

Thus there were reasons enough why Barneveld could not himself leave the country in the eventful spring of 1610. It must be admitted, however, that he was not backward in placing his nearest relatives in places of honour, trust, and profit.

His eldest son Reinier, Seignior of Groeneveld, had been knighted by Henry *iv*.; his youngest, William, afterwards called Seignior of Stoutenburg, but at this moment bearing the not very mellifluous title of Craimgepolder, was a gentleman-in-waiting at that king's court, with a salary of 3000 crowns a year. He was rather a favourite with the easy-going monarch, but he gave infinite trouble to the Dutch ambassador Aerssens, who, feeling himself under immense obligations to the Advocate and professing for him boundless gratitude, did his best to keep the idle, turbulent, extravagant, and pleasure-loving youth up to the strict line of his duties.

"Your son is in debt again," wrote Aerssens, on one occasion, "and troubled for money. He is in danger of going to the usurers. He says he cannot keep himself for less than 200 crowns a month. This is a large allowance, but he has spent much more than that. His life is not irregular nor his dress remarkably extravagant. His difficulty is that he will not dine regularly with me nor at court. He will keep his own table and have company to dinner. That is what is ruining him. He comes sometimes to me, not for the dinner nor the company, but for tennis, which he finds better in my faubourg than in town. His trouble comes from the table, and I tell you frankly that you must regulate his expenses or they will become very onerous to you. I am ashamed of them and have told him so a hundred times, more than if he had been my own brother. It is all for love of you . . . . I have been all to him that could be expected of a man who is under such vast obligations to you; and I so much esteem the honour of your friendship that I should always neglect my private affairs in order to do everything for your service and meet your desires . . . . . If M. de Craimgepolder comes back from his visit home, you must restrict him in two things, the table and tennis, and you can do this if you require him to follow the King assiduously as his service requires."

Something at a future day was to be heard of William of Barneveld, as well as of his elder brother Reinier, and it is good, therefore, to have these occasional glimpses of him while in the service of the King and under the supervision of one who was then his

father’s devoted friend, Francis Aerssens. There were to be extraordinary and tragical changes in the relations of parties and of individuals ere many years should go by.

Page 2679

Besides the sons of the Advocate, his two sons-in-law, Brederode, Seignior of Veenhuizep, and Cornelis van der Myle, were constantly employed? in important embassies. Van der Myle had been the first ambassador to the great Venetian republic, and was now placed at the head of the embassy to France, an office which it was impossible at that moment for the Advocate to discharge. At the same critical moment Barneveld's brother Elias, Pensionary of Rotterdam, was appointed one of the special high commissioners to the King of Great Britain.

It is necessary to give an account of this embassy.

They were provided with luminous and minute instructions from the hand of the Advocate.

They were, in the first place, and ostensibly, to thank the King for his services in bringing about the truce, which, truly, had been of the slightest, as was very well known. They were to explain, on the part of the States, their delay in sending this solemn commission, caused by the tardiness of the King of Spain in sending his ratification to the treaty, and by the many disputations caused by the irresolutions of the Archdukes and the obstinacy of their commissioners in regard to their many contraventions of the treaty. After those commissioners had gone, further hindrances had been found in the "extraordinary tempests, high floods, rising of the waters, both of the ocean and the rivers, and the very disastrous inundations throughout nearly all the United Provinces, with the immense and exorbitant damage thus inflicted, both on the public and on many individuals; in addition to all which were to be mentioned the troubles in the city of Utrecht."

They were, in almost hyperbolical language, directed to express the eternal gratitude of the States for the constant favours received by them from the crown of England, and their readiness to stand forth at any moment with sincere affection and to the utmost of their power, at all times and seasons, in resistance of any attempts against his Majesty's person or crown, or against the Prince of Wales or the royal family. They were to thank him for his "prudent, heroic, and courageous resolve to suffer nothing to be done under colour of justice, authority, or any other pretext, to the hindrance of the Elector of Brandenburg and Palatine of Neuburg, in the maintenance of their lawful rights and possession of the principalities of Julich, Cleve, and Berg, and other provinces."

By this course his Majesty, so the commissioners were to state, would put an end to the imaginations of those who thought they could give the law to everybody according to their pleasure.

They were to assure the King that the States-General would exert themselves to the utmost to second his heroic resolution, notwithstanding the enormous burthens of their everlasting war, the very exorbitant damage caused by the inundations, and the

sensible diminution in the contributions and other embarrassments then existing in the country.

Page 2680

They were to offer 2000 foot and 500 horse for the general purpose under Prince Henry of Nassau, besides the succours furnished by the King of France and the electors and princes of Germany. Further assistance in men, artillery, and supplies were promised under certain contingencies, and the plan of the campaign on the Meuse in conjunction with the King of France was duly mapped.

They were to request a corresponding promise of men and money from the King of Great Britain, and they were to propose for his approval a closer convention for mutual assistance between his Majesty, the United Netherlands, the King of France, the electors and princes and other powers of Germany; as such close union would be very beneficial to all Christendom. It would put a stop to all unjust occupations, attempts, and intrigues, and if the King was thereto inclined, he was requested to indicate time and place for making such a convention.

The commissioners were further to point out the various contraventions on the part of the Archdukes of the Treaty of Truce, and were to give an exposition of the manner in which the States-General had quelled the tumults at Utrecht, and reasons why such a course had of necessity been adopted.

They were instructed to state that, “over and above the great expenses of the late war and the necessary maintenance of military forces to protect their frontiers against their suspected new friends or old enemies, the Provinces were burthened with the cost of the succour to the Elector of Brandenburg and Palatine of Neuburg, and would be therefore incapable of furnishing the payments coming due to his Majesty. They were accordingly to sound his Majesty as to whether a good part of the debt might not be remitted or at least an arrangement made by which the terms should begin to run only after a certain number of years.”

They were also directed to open the subject of the fisheries on the coasts of Great Britain, and to remonstrate against the order lately published by the King forbidding all foreigners from fishing on those coasts. This was to be set forth as an infringement both of natural law and of ancient treaties, and as a source of infinite danger to the inhabitants of the United Provinces.

The Seignior of Warmond, chief of the commission, died on the 15th April. His colleagues met at Brielle on the 16th, ready to take passage to England in the ship of war, the Hound. They were, however, detained there six days by head winds and great storms, and it was not until the 22nd that they were able to put to sea. The following evening their ship cast anchor in Gravesend. Half an hour before, the Duke of Wurtemberg had arrived from Flushing in a ship of war brought from France by the Prince of Anhalt.

Page 2681

Sir Lewis Lewkener, master of ceremonies, had been waiting for the ambassadors at Gravesend, and informed them that the royal barges were to come next morning from London to take them to town. They remained that night on board the Hound, and next morning, the wind blowing up the river, they proceeded in their ship as far as Blackwall, where they were formally received and bade welcome in the name of the King by Sir Thomas Cornwallis and Sir George Carew, late ambassador in France. Escorted by them and Sir Lewis, they were brought in the court barges to Tower Wharf. Here the royal coaches were waiting, in which they were taken to lodgings provided for them in the city at the house of a Dutch merchant. Noel de Caron, Seignior of Schonewal, resident ambassador of the States in London, was likewise there to greet them. This was Saturday night: On the following Tuesday they went by appointment to the Palace of Whitehall in royal carriages for their first audience. Manifestations of as entire respect and courtesy had thus been made to the Republican envoys as could be shown to the ambassadors of the greatest sovereigns. They found the King seated on his throne in the audience chamber, accompanied by the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, the Lord High Treasurer and Lord High Admiral, the Duke of Lenox, the Earls of Arundel and Northampton, and many other great nobles and dignitaries. James rose from his seat, took off his hat, and advanced several paces to meet the ambassadors, and bade them courteously and respectfully welcome. He then expressed his regret at the death of the Seignior of Warmond, and after the exchange of a few commonplaces listened, still with uncovered head, to the opening address.

The spokesman, after thanking the King for his condolences on the death of the chief commissioner, whom, as was stated with whimsical simplicity, “the good God had called to Himself after all his luggage had been put on board ship,” proceeded in the French language to give a somewhat abbreviated paraphrase of Barneveld’s instructions.

When this was done and intimation made that they would confer more fully with his Majesty’s council on the subjects committed to their charge, the ambassadors were conducted home with the same ceremonies as had accompanied their arrival. They received the same day the first visit from the ambassadors of France and Venice, Boderie and Carrero, and had a long conference a few days afterwards with the High Treasurer, Lord Salisbury.

On the 3rd May they were invited to attend the pompous celebration of the festival of St. George in the palace at Westminster, where they were placed together with the French ambassador in the King’s oratorium; the Dukes of Wurtemberg and Brunswick being in that of the Queen.

Page 2682

These details are especially to be noted, and were at the moment of considerable importance, for this was the first solemn and extraordinary embassy sent by the rebel Netherlanders, since their independent national existence had been formally vindicated, to Great Britain, a power which a quarter of a century before had refused the proffered sovereignty over them. Placed now on exactly the same level with the representatives of emperors and kings, the Republican envoys found themselves looked upon by the world with different eyes from those which had regarded their predecessors askance, and almost with derision, only seven years before. At that epoch the States' commissioners, Barneveld himself at the head of them, had gone solemnly to congratulate King James on his accession, had scarcely been admitted to audience by king or minister, and had found themselves on great festivals unsprinkled with the holy water of the court, and of no more account than the crowd of citizens and spectators who thronged the streets, gazing with awe at the distant radiance of the throne.

But although the ambassadors were treated with every external consideration befitting their official rank, they were not likely to find themselves in the most genial atmosphere when they should come to business details. If there was one thing in the world that James did not intend to do, it was to get himself entangled in war with Spain, the power of all others which he most revered and loved. His "heroic and courageous resolve" to defend the princes, on which the commissioners by instructions of the Advocate had so highly complimented him, was not strong enough to carry him much beyond a vigorous phraseology. He had not awoke from the delusive dream of the Spanish marriage which had dexterously been made to flit before him, and he was not inclined, for the sake of the Republic which he hated the more because obliged to be one of its sponsors, to risk the animosity of a great power which entertained the most profound contempt for him. He was destined to find himself involved more closely than he liked, and through family ties, with the great Protestant movement in Germany, and the unfortunate "Winter King" might one day find his father-in-law as unstable a reed to lean upon as the States had found their godfather, or the Brandenburgs and Neuburgs at the present juncture their great ally. Meantime, as the Bohemian troubles had not yet reached the period of actual explosion, and as Henry's wide-reaching plan against the House of Austria had been strangely enough kept an inviolable secret by the few statesmen, like Sully and Barneveld, to whom they had been confided, it was necessary for the King and his ministers to deal cautiously and plausibly with the Dutch ambassadors. Their conferences were mere dancing among eggs, and if no actual mischief were done, it was the best result that could be expected.

On the 8th of May, the commissioners met in the council chamber at Westminster, and discussed all the matters contained in their instructions with the members of the council; the Lord Treasurer Salisbury, Earl of Northampton, Privy Seal and Warden of the Cinque Ports, Lord Nottingham, Lord High Admiral, the Lord Chamberlain, Earl of Suffolk, Earls of Shrewsbury, Worcester, and several others being present.

Page 2683

The result was not entirely satisfactory. In regard to the succour demanded for the possessory princes, the commissioners were told that they seemed to come with a long narrative of their great burthens during the war, damage from inundations, and the like, to excuse themselves from doing their share in the succour, and thus the more to overload his Majesty, who was not much interested in the matter, and was likewise greatly encumbered by various expenses. The King had already frankly declared his intention to assist the princes with the payment of 4000 men, and to send proportionate artillery and powder from England. As the States had supplies in their magazines enough to move 12,000 men, he proposed to draw upon those, reimbursing the States for what was thus consumed by his contingent.

With regard to the treaty of close alliance between France, Great Britain, the princes, and the Republic, which the ambassadors had proposed, the—Lord Treasurer and his colleagues gave a reply far from gratifying. His Majesty had not yet decided on this point, they said. The King of France had already proposed to treat for such an alliance, but it did not at present seem worth while for all to negotiate together.

This was a not over-courteous hint that the Republic was after all not expected to place herself at the council-board of kings on even terms of intimacy and fraternal alliance.

What followed was even less flattering. If his Majesty, it was intimated, should decide to treat with the King of France, he would not shut the door on their High Mightinesses; but his Majesty was not yet exactly informed whether his Majesty had not certain rights over the provinces ‘in petitorio.’

This was a scarcely veiled insinuation against the sovereignty of the States, a sufficiently broad hint that they were to be considered in a certain degree as British provinces. To a soldier like Maurice, to a statesman like Barneveld, whose sympathies already were on the side of France, such rebuffs and taunts were likely to prove unpalatable. The restiveness of the States at the continual possession by Great Britain of those important sea-ports the cautionary towns, a fact which gave colour to these innuendoes, was sure to be increased by arrogant language on the part of the English ministers. The determination to be rid of their debt to so overbearing an ally, and to shake off the shackles imposed by the costly mortgages, grew in strength from that hour.

In regard to the fisheries, the Lord Treasurer and his colleagues expressed amazement that the ambassadors should consider the subjects of their High Mightinesses to be so much beloved by his Majesty. Why should they of all other people be made an exception of, and be exempt from, the action of a general edict? The reasons for these orders in council ought to be closely examined. It would be very difficult to bring the opinions of the English jurists into harmony with those of the States. Meantime it would be well to look up such treaties as might be in existence, and have a special joint commission to confer together on the subject. It was very plain, from the course of the

conversation, that the Netherland fishermen were not to be allowed, without paying roundly for a license, to catch herrings on the British coasts as they had heretofore done.

Page 2684

Not much more of importance was transacted at this first interview between the ambassadors and the Ding's ministers. Certainly they had not yet succeeded in attaining their great object, the formation of an alliance offensive and defensive between Great Britain and the Republic in accordance with the plan concerted between Henry and Barneveld. They could find but slender encouragement for the warlike plans to which France and the States were secretly committed; nor could they obtain satisfactory adjustment of affairs more pacific and commercial in their tendencies. The English ministers rather petulantly remarked that, while last year everybody was talking of a general peace, and in the present conjuncture all seemed to think, or at least to speak, of nothing but a general war, they thought best to defer consideration of the various subjects connected with duties on the manufactures and products of the respective countries, the navigation laws, the "entrecours," and other matters of ancient agreement and controversy, until a more convenient season.

After the termination of the verbal conference, the ambassadors delivered to the King's government, in writing, to be pondered by the council and recorded in the archives, a summary of the statements which had been thus orally treated. The document was in French, and in the main a paraphrase of the Advocate's instructions, the substance of which has been already indicated. In regard, however, to the far-reaching designs of Spain, and the corresponding attitude which it would seem fitting for Great Britain to assume, and especially the necessity of that alliance the proposal for which had in the conference been received so haughtily, their language was far plainer, bolder, and more vehement than that of the instructions.

"Considering that the effects show," they said, "that those who claim the monarchy of Christendom, and indeed of the whole world, let slip no opportunity which could in any way serve their designs, it is suitable to the grandeur of his Majesty the King, and to the station in which by the grace of the good God he is placed, to oppose himself thereto for the sake of the common liberty of Christendom, to which end, and in order the better to prevent all unjust usurpations, there could be no better means devised than a closer alliance between his Majesty and the Most Christian King, My Lords the States-General, and the electors, princes, and states of Germany. Their High Mightinesses would therefore be most glad to learn that his Majesty was inclined to such a course, and would be glad to discuss the subject when and wherever his Majesty should appoint, or would readily enter into such an alliance on reasonable conditions."

Page 2685

This language and the position taken up by the ambassadors were highly approved by their government, but it was fated that no very great result was to be achieved by this embassy. Very elaborate documents, exhaustive in legal lore, on the subject of the herring fisheries, and of the right to fish in the ocean and on foreign coasts, fortified by copious citations from the ‘Pandects’ and ‘Institutes’ of Justinian, were presented for the consideration of the British government, and were answered as learnedly, exhaustively, and ponderously. The English ministers were also reminded that the curing of herrings had been invented in the fifteenth century by a citizen of Biervliet, the inscription on whose tombstone recording that faces might still be read in the church of that town.

All this did not prevent, however, the Dutch herring fishermen from being excluded from the British waters unless they chose to pay for licenses.

The conferences were however for a season interrupted, and a new aspect was given to affairs by an unforeseen and terrible event.

Meanwhile it is necessary to glance for a moment at the doings of the special embassy to France, the instructions for which were prepared by Barneveld almost at the same moment at which he furnished those for the commission to England.

The ambassadors were Walraven, Seignior of Brederode, Cornelis van der Myle, son-in-law of the Advocate, and Jacob van Maldere. Remembering how impatient the King of France had long been for their coming, and that all the preparations and decisions for a great war were kept in suspense until the final secret conferences could be held with the representatives of the States-General, it seems strange enough to us to observe the extreme deliberation with which great affairs of state were then conducted and the vast amount of time consumed in movements and communications which modern science has either annihilated or abridged from days to hours. While Henry was chafing with anxiety in Paris, the ambassadors, having received Barneveld’s instructions dated 31st March, set forth on the 8th April from the Hague, reached Rotterdam at noon, and slept at Dordrecht. Newt day they went to Breda, where the Prince of Orange insisted upon their passing a couple of days with him in his castle, Easter-day being 11th April. He then provided them with a couple of coaches and pair in which they set forth on their journey, going by way of Antwerp, Ghent, Courtray, Ryssel, to Arras, making easy stages, stopping in the middle of the day to bait, and sleeping at each of the cities thus mentioned, where they duly received the congratulatory visit and hospitalities of their respective magistracies.

While all this time had been leisurely employed in the Netherlands in preparing, instructing, and despatching the commissioners, affairs were reaching a feverish crisis in France.

Page 2686

The States' ambassador resident thought that it would have been better not to take such public offence at the retreat of the Prince of Conde. The King had enough of life and vigour in him; he could afford to leave the Dauphin to grow up, and when he should one day be established on the throne, he would be able to maintain his heritage. "But," said Aerssens, "I fear that our trouble is not where we say it is, and we don't dare to say where it is." Writing to Carew, former English ambassador in Paris, whom we have just seen in attendance on the States' commissioners in London, he said: "People think that the Princess is wearying herself much under the protection of the Infanta, and very impatient at not obtaining the dissolution of her marriage, which the Duchess of Angouleme is to go to Brussels to facilitate. This is not our business, but I mention it only as the continuation of the Tragedy which you saw begin. Nevertheless I don't know if the greater part of our deliberations is not founded on this matter."

It had been decided to cause the Queen to be solemnly crowned after Easter. She had set her heart with singular persistency upon the ceremony, and it was thought that so public a sacrament would annihilate all the wild projects attributed to Spain through the instrumentality of Conde to cast doubts on the validity of her marriage and the legitimacy of the Dauphin. The King from the first felt and expressed a singular repugnance, a boding apprehension in regard to the coronation, but had almost yielded to the Queen's importunity. He told her he would give his consent provided she sent Concini to Brussels to invite in her own name the Princess of Conde to be present on the occasion. Otherwise he declared that at least the festival should be postponed till September.

The Marquis de Coeuvres remained in disgrace after the failure of his mission, Henry believing that like all the world he had fallen in love with the Princess, and had only sought to recommend himself, not to further the suit of his sovereign.

Meanwhile Henry had instructed his ambassador in Spain, M. de Vaucelas, to tell the King that his reception of Conde within his dominions would be considered an infraction of the treaty of Vervins and a direct act of hostility. The Duke of Lerma answered with a sneer that the Most Christian King had too greatly obliged his Most Catholic Majesty by sustaining his subjects in their rebellion and by aiding them to make their truce to hope now that Conde would be sent back. France had ever been the receptacle of Spanish traitors and rebels from Antonio Perez down, and the King of Spain would always protect wronged and oppressed princes like Conde. France had just been breaking up the friendly relations between Savoy and Spain and goading the Duke into hostilities.

Page 2687

On the other hand the King had more than one stormy interview with Don Inigo de Cardenas in Paris. That ambassador declared that his master would never abandon his only sister the most serene Infanta, such was the affection he born her, whose dominions were obviously threatened by these French armies about to move to the frontiers. Henry replied that the friends for whom he was arming had great need of his assistance; that his Catholic Majesty was quite right to love his sister, whom he also loved; but that he did not choose that his own relatives should be so much beloved in Spain as they were. "What relatives?" asked Don Inigo. "The Prince of Conde," replied the King, in a rage, "who has been debauched by the Spaniards just as Marshal Biron was, and the Marchioness Verneuil, and so many others. There are none left for them to debauch now but the Dauphin and his brothers." The Ambassador replied that, if the King had consulted him about the affair of Conde, he could have devised a happy issue from it. Henry rejoined that he had sent messages on the subject to his Catholic Majesty, who had not deigned a response, but that the Duke of Lerma had given a very indiscreet one to his ambassador. Don Inigo professed ignorance of any such reply. The King said it was a mockery to affect ignorance of such matters. Thereupon both grew excited and very violent in their discourses; the more so as Henry knowing but little Spanish and the Envoy less French they could only understand from tone and gesture that each was using exceedingly unpleasant language. At last Don Inigo asked what he should write to his sovereign. "Whatever you like," replied the King, and so the audience terminated, each remaining in a towering passion.

Subsequently Villeroy assured the Archduke's ambassador that the King considered the reception given to the Prince in the Spanish dominions as one of the greatest insults and injuries that could be done to him. Nothing could excuse it, said the Secretary of State, and for this reason it was very difficult for the two kings to remain at peace with each other, and that it would be wiser to prevent at once the evil designs of his Catholic Majesty than to leave leisure for the plans to be put into execution, and the claims of the Dauphin to his father's crown to be disputed at a convenient season.

He added that war would not be made for the Princess, but for the Prince, and that even the war in Germany, although Spain took the Emperor's side and France that of the possessory princes, would not necessarily produce a rupture between the two kings if it were not for this affair of the Prince—true cause of the disaster now hanging over Christianity. Pecquius replied by smooth commonplaces in favour of peace with which Villeroy warmly concurred; both sadly expressing the conviction however that the wrath divine had descended on them all on account of their sins.

A few days later, however, the Secretary changed his tone.

Page 2688

“I will speak to you frankly and clearly,” he said to Pecquius, “and tell you as from myself that there is passion, and if one is willing to arrange the affair of the Princess, everything else can be accommodated and appeased. Put if the Princess remain where she is, we are on the eve of a rupture which may set fire to the four corners of Christendom.” Pecquius said he liked to talk roundly, and was glad to find that he had not been mistaken in his opinion, that all these commotions were only made for the Princess, and if all the world was going to war, she would be the principal subject of it. He could not marvel sufficiently, he said, at this vehement passion which brought in its train so great and horrible a conflagration; adding many arguments to show that it was no fault of the Archdukes, but that he who was the cause of all might one day have reason to repent.

Villeroy replied that “the King believed the Princess to be suffering and miserable for love of him, and that therefore he felt obliged to have her sent back to her father.” Pecquius asked whether in his conscience the Secretary of State believed it right or reasonable to make war for such a cause. Villeroy replied by asking “whether even admitting the negative, the Ambassador thought it were wisely done for such a trifle, for a formality, to plunge into extremities and to turn all Christendom upside down.” Pecquius, not considering honour a trifle or a formality, said that “for nothing in the world would his Highness the Archduke descend to a cowardly action or to anything that would sully his honour.” Villeroy said that the Prince had compelled his wife, pistol in hand, to follow him to the Netherlands, and that she was no longer bound to obey a husband who forsook country and king. Her father demanded her, and she said “she would rather be strangled than ever to return to the company of her husband.” The Archdukes were not justified in keeping her against her will in perpetual banishment. He implored the Ambassador in most pathetic terms to devise some means of sending back the Princess, saying that he who should find such expedient would do the greatest good that was ever done to Christianity, and that otherwise there was no guarantee against a universal war. The first design of the King had been merely to send a moderate succour to the Princes of Brandenburg and Neuburg, which could have given no umbrage to the Archdukes, but now the bitterness growing out of the affairs of the Prince and Princess had caused him to set on foot a powerful army to do worse. He again implored Pecquius to invent some means of sending back the Princess, and the Ambassador besought him ardently to divert the King from his designs. Of this the Secretary of State left little hope and they parted, both very low and dismal in mind. Subsequent conversations with the leading councillors of state convinced Pecquius that these violent menaces were only used to shake the constancy of the Archduke, but that they almost all highly disapproved the policy of the King. “If this war goes on, we are all ruined,” said the Duke d’Epernon to the Nuncius.

Page 2689

Thus there had almost ceased to be any grimacing between the two kings, although it was still a profound mystery where or when hostilities would begin, and whether they would break out at all. Henry frequently remarked that the common opinion all over Europe was working in his favour. Few people in or out of France believed that he meant a rupture, or that his preparations were serious. Thus should he take his enemies unawares and unprepared. Even Aerssens, who saw him almost daily, was sometimes mystified, in spite of Henry's vehement assertions that he was resolved to make war at all hazards and on all sides, provided My Lords the States would second him as they ought, their own existence being at stake.

"For God's sake," cried the King, "let us take the bit into our mouths. Tell your masters that I am quite resolved, and that I am shrieking loudly at their delays." He asked if he could depend on the States, if Barneveld especially would consent to a league with him. The Ambassador replied that for the affair of Cleve and Julich he had instructions to promise entire concurrence, that Barneveld was most resolute in the matter, and had always urged the enterprise and wished information as to the levies making in France and other military preparations.

"Tell him," said Henry, "that they are going on exactly as often before stated, but that we are holding everything in suspense until I have talked with your ambassadors, from whom I wish counsel, safety, and encouragement for doing much more than the Julich business. That alone does not require so great a league and such excessive and unnecessary expense."

The King observed however that the question of the duchies would serve as just cause and excellent pretext to remove those troublesome fellows for ever from his borders and those of the States. Thus the princes would be established safely in their possession and the Republic as well as himself freed from the perpetual suspicions which the Spaniards excited by their vile intrigues, and it was on this general subject that he wished to confer with the special commissioners. It would not be possible for him to throw succour into Julich without passing through Luxemburg in arms. The Archdukes would resist this, and thus a cause of war would arise. His campaign on the Meuse would help the princes more than if he should only aid them by the contingent he had promised. Nor could the jealousy of King James be excited since the war would spring out of the Archdukes' opposition to his passage towards the duchies, as he obviously could not cut himself off from his supplies, leaving a hostile province between himself and his kingdom. Nevertheless he could not stir, he said, without the consent and active support of the States, on whom he relied as his principal buttress and foundation.

Page 2690

The levies for the Milanese expedition were waiting until Marshal de Lesdiguieres could confer personally with the Duke of Savoy. The reports as to the fidelity of that potentate were not to be believed. He was trifling with the Spanish ambassadors, so Henry was convinced, who were offering him 300,000 crowns a year besides Piombino, Monaco, and two places in the Milanese, if he would break his treaty with France. But he was thought to be only waiting until they should be gone before making his arrangements with Lesdiguieres. "He knows that he can put no trust in Spain, and that he can confide in me," said the King. "I have made a great stroke by thus entangling the King of Spain by the use of a few troops in Italy. But I assure you that there is none but me and My Lords the States that can do anything solid. Whether the Duke breaks or holds fast will make no difference in our first and great designs. For the honour of God I beg them to lose no more time, but to trust in me. I will never deceive them, never abandon them."

At last 25,000 infantry and 5000 cavalry were already in marching order, and indeed had begun to move towards the Luxemburg frontier, ready to co-operate with the States' army and that of the possessory princes for the campaign of the Meuse and Rhine.

Twelve thousand more French troops under Lesdiguieres were to act with the Duke of Savoy, and an army as large was to assemble in the Pyrenees and to operate on the Spanish frontier, in hope of exciting and fomenting an insurrection caused by the expulsion of the Moors. That gigantic act of madness by which Spain thought good at this juncture to tear herself to pieces, driving hundreds of thousands of the most industrious, most intelligent, and most opulent of her population into hopeless exile, had now been accomplished, and was to stand prominent for ever on the records of human fatuity.

Twenty-five thousand Moorish families had arrived at Bayonne, and the Viceroy of Canada had been consulted as to the possibility and expediency of establishing them in that province, although emigration thither seemed less tempting to them than to Virginia. Certainly it was not unreasonable for Henry to suppose that a kingdom thus torn by internal convulsions might be more open to a well organized attack, than capable of carrying out at that moment fresh projects of universal dominion.

As before observed, Sully was by no means in favour of this combined series of movements, although at a later day, when dictating his famous memoirs to his secretaries, he seems to describe himself as enthusiastically applauding and almost originating them. But there is no doubt at all that throughout this eventful spring he did his best to concentrate the whole attack on Luxemburg and the Meuse districts, and wished that the movements in the Milanese and in Provence should be considered merely a slight accessory, as not much more than a diversion to the chief design, while Villeroy

Page 2691

and his friends chose to consider the Duke of Savoy as the chief element in the war. Sully thoroughly distrusted the Duke, whom he deemed to be always put up at auction between Spain and France and incapable of a sincere or generous policy. He was entirely convinced that Villeroy and Epernon and Jeannin and other earnest Papists in France were secretly inclined to the cause of Spain, that the whole faction of the Queen, in short, were urging this scattering of the very considerable forces now at Henry's command in the hope of bringing him into a false position, in which defeat or an ignominious peace would be the alternative. To concentrate an immense attack upon the Archdukes in the Spanish Netherlands and the debateable duchies would have for its immediate effect the expulsion of the Spaniards out of all those provinces and the establishment of the Dutch commonwealth on an impregnable basis. That this would be to strengthen infinitely the Huguenots in France and the cause of Protestantism in Bohemia, Moravia and Austria, was unquestionable. It was natural, therefore, that the stern and ardent Huguenot should suspect the plans of the Catholics with whom he was in daily council. One day he asked the King plumply in the presence of Villeroy if his Majesty meant anything serious by all these warlike preparations. Henry was wroth, and complained bitterly that one who knew him to the bottom of his soul should doubt him. But Sully could not persuade himself that a great and serious war would be carried on both in the Netherlands and in Italy.

As much as his sovereign he longed for the personal presence of Barneveld, and was constantly urging the States' ambassador to induce his coming to Paris. "You know," said Aerssens, writing to the French ambassador at the Hague, de Russy, "that it is the Advocate alone that has the universal knowledge of the outside and the inside of our commonwealth."

Sully knew his master as well as any man knew him, but it was difficult to fix the chameleon hues of Henry at this momentous epoch. To the Ambassador expressing doubts as to the King's sincerity the Duke asserted that Henry was now seriously piqued with the Spaniard on account of the Conde business. Otherwise Anhalt and the possessory princes and the affair of Cleve might have had as little effect in driving him into war as did the interests of the Netherlands in times past. But the bold demonstration projected would make the "whole Spanish party bleed at the nose; a good result for the public peace."

Therefore Sully sent word to Barneveld, although he wished his name concealed, that he ought to come himself, with full powers to do everything, without referring to any superiors or allowing any secrets to be divulged. The King was too far committed to withdraw, unless coldness on part of the States should give him cause. The Advocate must come prepared to answer all questions; to say how much in men and money the States would

Page 2692

contribute, and whether they would go into the war with the King as their only ally. He must come with the bridle on his neck. All that Henry feared was being left in the lurch by the States; otherwise he was not afraid of Rome. Sully was urgent that the Provinces should now go vigorously into the war without stumbling at any consideration. Thus they would confirm their national power for all time, but if the opportunity were now lost, it would be their ruin, and posterity would most justly blame them. The King of Spain was so stripped of troops and resources, so embarrassed by the Moors, that in ten months he would not be able to send one man to the Netherlands.

Meantime the Nuncius in Paris was moving heaven and earth; storming, intriguing, and denouncing the course of the King in protecting heresy, when it would have been so easy to extirpate it, encouraging rebellion and disorder throughout Christendom, and embarking in an action against the Church and against his conscience. A new legate was expected daily with the Pope's signature to the new league, and a demand upon the King to sign it likewise, and to pause in a career of which something was suspected, but very little accurately known. The preachers in Paris and throughout the kingdom delivered most vehement sermons against the King, the government, and the Protestants, and seemed to the King to be such "trumpeters of sedition" that he ordered the seneschals and other officers to put a stop to these turbulent discourses, censure their authors, and compel them to stick to their texts.

But the preparations were now so far advanced and going on so warmly that nothing more was wanting than, in the words of Aerssens, "to uncouple the dogs and let them run." Recruits were pouring steadily to their places of rendezvous; their pay having begun to run from the 25th March at the rate of eight sous a day for the private foot soldier and ten sous for a corporal. They were moved in small parties of ten, lodged in the wayside inns, and ordered, on pain of death, to pay for everything they consumed.

It was growing difficult to wait much longer for the arrival of the special ambassadors, when at last they were known to be on their way. Aerssens obtained for their use the Hotel Gondy, formerly the residence of Don Pedro de Toledo, the most splendid private palace in Paris, and recently purchased by the Queen. It was considered expedient that the embassy should make as stately an appearance as that of royal or imperial envoys. He engaged an upholsterer by the King's command to furnish, at his Majesty's expense, the apartments, as the Baron de Gondy, he said, had long since sold and eaten up all the furniture. He likewise laid in six pieces of wine and as many of beer, "tavern drinks" being in the opinion of the thrifty ambassador "both dear and bad."

Page 2693

He bought a carriage lined with velvet for the commissioners, and another lined with broadcloth for the principal persons of their suite, and with his own coach as a third he proposed to go to Amiens to meet them. They could not get on with fewer than these, he said, and the new carriages would serve their purpose in Paris. He had paid 500 crowns for the two, and they could be sold, when done with, at a slight loss. He bought likewise four dapple-grey horses, which would be enough, as nobody had more than two horses to a carriage in town, and for which he paid 312 crowns—a very low price, he thought, at a season when every one was purchasing. He engaged good and experienced coachmen at two crowns a month, and; in short, made all necessary arrangements for their comfort and the honour of the state.

The King had been growing more and more displeased at the tardiness of the commission, petulantly ascribing it to a design on the part of the States to "excuse themselves from sharing in his bold conceptions," but said that "he could resolve on nothing without My Lords the States, who were the only power with which he could contract confidently, as mighty enough and experienced enough to execute the designs to be proposed to them; so that his army was lying useless on his hands until the commissioners arrived," and lamented more loudly than ever that Barneveld was not coming with them. He was now rejoiced, however, to hear that they would soon arrive, and went in person to the Hotel Gondy to see that everything was prepared in a manner befitting their dignity and comfort.

His anxiety had moreover been increased, as already stated, by the alarming reports from Utrecht and by his other private accounts from the Netherlands.

De Russy expressed in his despatches grave doubts whether the States would join the king in a war against the King of Spain, because they feared the disapprobation of the King of Great Britain, "who had already manifested but too much jealousy of the power and grandeur of the Republic." Pecquius asserted that the Archdukes had received assurances from the States that they would do nothing to violate the truce. The Prince of Anhalt, who, as chief of the army of the confederated princes, was warm in his demonstrations for a general war by taking advantage of the Cleve expedition, was entirely at cross purposes with the States' ambassador in Paris, Aerssens maintaining that the forty-three years' experience in their war justified the States in placing no dependence on German princes except with express conventions. They had no such conventions now, and if they should be attacked by Spain in consequence of their assistance in the Cleve business, what guarantee of aid had they from those whom Anhalt represented? Anhalt was loud in expressions of sympathy with Henry's designs against Spain, but said that he and the States meant a war of thirty or forty years, while the princes would finish what they meant to do in one.

Page 2694

A more erroneous expression of opinion, when viewed in the light of subsequent events, could hardly have been hazarded. Villeroy made as good use as he could of these conversations to excite jealousy between the princes and the States for the furtherance of his own ends, while affecting warm interest in the success of the King's projects.

Meantime Archduke Albert had replied manfully and distinctly to the menaces of the King and to the pathetic suggestions made by Villeroy to Pecquius as to a device for sending back the Princess. Her stay at Brussels being the chief cause of the impending war, it would be better, he said, to procure a divorce or to induce the Constable to obtain the consent of the Prince to the return of his wife to her father's house. To further either of these expedients, the Archduke would do his best. "But if one expects by bravados and threats," he added, "to force us to do a thing against our promise, and therefore against reason, our reputation, and honour, resolutely we will do nothing of the kind. And if the said Lord King decided on account of this misunderstanding for a rupture and to make war upon us, we will do our best to wage war on him. In such case, however, we shall be obliged to keep the Princess closer in our own house, and probably to send her to such parts as may be most convenient in order to remove from us an instrument of the infinite evils which this war will produce."

Meantime the special commissioners whom we left at Arras had now entered the French kingdom.

On the 17th April, Aerssens with his three coaches met them on their entrance into Amiens, having been waiting there for them eight days. As they passed through the gate, they found a guard of soldiers drawn up to receive them with military honours, and an official functionary to apologize for the necessary absence of the governor, who had gone with most of the troops stationed in the town to the rendezvous in Champagne. He expressed regret, therefore, that the King's orders for their solemn reception could not be literally carried out. The whole board of magistrates, however, in their costumes of ceremony, with sergeants bearing silver maces marching before them, came forth to bid the ambassadors welcome. An advocate made a speech in the name of the city authorities, saying that they were expressly charged by the King to receive them as coming from his very best friends, and to do them all honour. He extolled the sage government of their High Mightinesses and the valour of the Republic, which had become known to the whole world by the successful conduct of their long and mighty war.

The commissioners replied in words of compliment, and the magistrates then offered them, according to ancient usage, several bottles of hippocras.

Page 2695

Next day, sending back the carriages of the Prince of Orange, in which they had thus far performed the journey, they set forth towards Paris, reaching Saint-Denis at noon of the third day. Here they were met by de Bonoeil, introducer of ambassadors, sent thither by the King to give them welcome, and to say that they would be received on the road by the Duke of Vendome, eldest of the legitimatized children of the King. Accordingly before reaching the Saint-Denis gate of Paris, a splendid cavalcade of nearly five hundred noblemen met them, the Duke at their head, accompanied by two marshals of France, de Brissac and Boisdaulphin. The three instantly dismounted, and the ambassadors alighted from their coach. The Duke then gave them solemn and cordial welcome, saying that he had been sent by his father the King to receive them as befitted envoys of the best and most faithful friends he possessed in the world.

The ambassadors expressed their thanks for the great and extraordinary honour thus conferred on them, and they were then requested to get into a royal carriage which had been sent out for that purpose. After much ceremonious refusal they at last consented and, together with the Duke of Vendome, drove through Paris in that vehicle into the Faubourg Saint Germain. Arriving at the Hotel Gondy, they were, notwithstanding all their protestations, escorted up the staircase into the apartments by the Duke.

“This honour is notable,” said the commissioners in their report to the States, “and never shown to anyone before, so that our ill-wishers are filled with spite.”

And Peter Pecquius was of the same opinion. “Everyone is grumbling here,” about the reception of the States’ ambassadors, “because such honours were never paid to any ambassador whatever, whether from Spain, England, or any other country.”

And there were many men living and employed in great affairs of State, both in France and in the Republic—the King and Villeroy, Barneveld and Maurice—who could remember how twenty-six years before a solemn embassy from the States had proceeded from the Hague to France to offer the sovereignty of their country to Henry’s predecessor, had been kept ignominiously and almost like prisoners four weeks long in Rouen, and had been thrust back into the Netherlands without being admitted even to one audience by the monarch. Truly time, in the course of less than one generation of mankind, had worked marvellous changes in the fortunes of the Dutch Republic.

President Jeannin came to visit them next day, with friendly proffers of service, and likewise the ambassador of Venice and the charge d’affaires of Great Britain.

On the 22nd the royal carriages came by appointment to the Hotel Gondy, and took them for their first audience to the Louvre. They were received at the gate by a guard of honour, drums beating and arms presented, and conducted with the greatest ceremony to an apartment in the palace. Soon afterwards they were ushered into a gallery where the King stood, surrounded by a number of princes and distinguished officers of the crown. These withdrew on the approach of the Netherlanders, leaving the King

standing alone. They made their reverence, and Henry saluted them all with respectful cordiality. Begging them to put on their hats again, he listened attentively to their address.

Page 2696

The language of the discourse now pronounced was similar in tenour to that almost contemporaneously held by the States' special envoys in London. Both documents, when offered afterwards in writing, bore the unmistakable imprint of the one hand that guided the whole political machine. In various passages the phraseology was identical, and, indeed, the Advocate had prepared and signed the instructions for both embassies on the same day.

The commissioners acknowledged in the strongest possible terms the great and constant affection, quite without example, that Henry had manifested to the Netherlands during the whole course of their war. They were at a loss to find language adequately to express their gratitude for that friendship, and the assistance subsequently afforded them in the negotiations for truce. They apologized for the tardiness of the States in sending this solemn embassy of thanksgiving, partly on the ground of the delay in receiving the ratifications from Spain, partly by the protracted contraventions by the Archdukes of certain articles in the treaty, but principally by the terrible disasters occasioned throughout their country by the great inundations, and by the commotions in the city of Utrecht, which had now been "so prudently and happily pacified."

They stated that the chief cause of their embassy was to express their respectful gratitude, and to say that never had prince or state treasured more deeply in memory benefits received than did their republic the favours of his Majesty, or could be more disposed to do their utmost to defend his Majesty's person, crown, or royal family against all attack. They expressed their joy that the King had with prudence, and heroic courage undertaken the defence of the just rights of Brandenburg and Neuburg to the duchies of Cleve, Julich, and the other dependent provinces. Thus had he put an end to the presumption of those who thought they could give the law to all the world. They promised the co-operation of the States in this most important enterprise of their ally, notwithstanding their great losses in the war just concluded, and the diminution of revenue occasioned by the inundations by which they had been afflicted; for they were willing neither to tolerate so unjust an usurpation as that attempted by the Emperor nor to fail to second his Majesty in his generous designs. They observed also that they had been instructed to enquire whether his Majesty would not approve the contracting of a strict league of mutual assistance between France, England, the United Provinces, and the princes of Germany.

Page 2697

The King, having listened with close attention, thanked the envoys in words of earnest and vigorous cordiality for their expressions of affection to himself. He begged them to remember that he had always been their good friend, and that he never would forsake them; that he had always hated the Spaniards, and should ever hate them; and that the affairs of Julich must be arranged not only for the present but for the future. He requested them to deliver their propositions in writing to him, and to be ready to put themselves into communication with the members of his council, in order that they might treat with each other roundly and without reserve. He should always deal with the Netherlanders as with his own people, keeping no back-door open, but pouring out everything as into the lap of his best and most trusty friends.

After this interview conferences followed daily between the ambassadors and Villeroy, Sully, Jeannin, the Chancellor, and Puysieug.

The King's counsellors, after having read the written paraphrase of Barneveld's instructions, the communication of which followed their oral statements, and which, among other specifications, contained a respectful remonstrance against the projected French East India Company, as likely to benefit the Spaniards only, while seriously injuring the States, complained that "the representations were too general, and that the paper seemed to contain nothing but compliments."

The ambassadors, dilating on the various points and articles, maintained warmly that there was much more than compliments in their instructions. The ministers wished to know what the States practically were prepared to do in the affair of Cleve, which they so warmly and encouragingly recommended to the King. They asked whether the States' army would march at once to Dusseldorf to protect the princes at the moment when the King moved from Mezieres, and they made many enquiries as to what amount of supplies and munitions they could depend upon from the States' magazines.

The envoys said that they had no specific instructions on these points, and could give therefore no conclusive replies. More than ever did Henry regret the absence of the great Advocate at this juncture. If he could have come, with the bridle on his neck, as Henry had so repeatedly urged upon the resident ambassador, affairs might have marched more rapidly. The despotic king could never remember that Barneveld was not the unlimited sovereign of the United States, but only the seal-keeper of one of the seven provinces and the deputy of Holland to the General Assembly. His indirect power, however vast, was only great because it was so carefully veiled.

It was then proposed by Villeroy and Sully, and agreed to by the commissioners, that M. de Bethune, a relative of the great financier, should be sent forthwith to the Hague, to confer privately with Prince Maurice and Barneveld especially, as to military details of the coming campaign.

Page 2698

It was also arranged that the envoys should delay their departure until de Bethune's return. Meantime Henry and the Nuncius had been exchanging plain and passionate language. Ubaldini reproached the King with disregarding all the admonitions of his Holiness, and being about to plunge Christendom into misery and war for the love of the Princess of Conde. He held up to him the enormity of thus converting the King of Spain and the Archdukes into his deadly enemies, and warned him that he would by such desperate measures make even the States-General and the King of Britain his foes, who certainly would never favour such schemes. The King replied that "he trusted to his own forces, not to those of his neighbours, and even if the Hollanders should not declare for him still he would execute his designs. On the 15th of May most certainly he would put himself at the head of his army, even if he was obliged to put off the Queen's coronation till October, and he could not consider the King of Spain nor the Archdukes his friends unless they at once made him some demonstration of friendship. Being asked by the Nuncius what demonstration he wished, he answered flatly that he wished the Princess to be sent back to the Constable her father, in which case the affair of Julich could be arranged amicably, and, at all events, if the war continued there, he need not send more than 4000 men."

Thus, in spite of his mighty preparations, vehement demands for Barneveld, and profound combinations revealed to that statesman, to Aerssens, and to the Duke of Sully only, this wonderful monarch was ready to drop his sword on the spot, to leave his friends in the lurch, to embrace his enemies, the Archduke first of all, instead of bombarding Brussels the very next week, as he had been threatening to do, provided the beautiful Margaret could be restored to his arms through those of her venerable father.

He suggested to the Nuncius his hope that the Archduke would yet be willing to wink at her escape, which he was now trying to arrange through de Preaux at Brussels, while Ubaldini, knowing the Archduke incapable of anything so dishonourable, felt that the war was inevitable.

At the very same time too, Father Cotton, who was only too ready to betray the secrets of the confessional when there was an object to gain, had a long conversation with the Archduke's ambassador, in which the holy man said that the King had confessed to him that he made the war expressly to cause the Princess to be sent back to France, so that as there could be no more doubt on the subject the father-confessor begged Pecquius, in order to prevent so great an evil, to devise "some prompt and sudden means to induce his Highness the Archduke to order the Princess to retire secretly to her own country." The Jesuit had different notions of honour, reputation, and duty from those which influenced the Archduke. He added that "at Easter the King had been so well disposed to seek his salvation that he could

Page 2699

easily have forgotten his affection for the Princess, had she not rekindled the fire by her letters, in which she caressed him with amorous epithets, calling him ‘my heart,’ ’my chevalier,’ and similar terms of endearment.” Father Cotton also drew up a paper, which he secretly conveyed to Pecquius, “to prove that the Archduke, in terms of conscience and honour, might decide to permit this escape, but he most urgently implored the Ambassador that for the love of God and the public good he would influence his Serene Highness to prevent this from ever coming to the knowledge of the world, but to keep the secret inviolably.”

Thus, while Henry was holding high council with his own most trusted advisers, and with the most profound statesmen of Europe, as to the opening campaign within a fortnight of a vast and general war, he was secretly plotting with his father-confessor to effect what he avowed to be the only purpose of that war, by Jesuitical bird-lime to be applied to the chief of his antagonists. Certainly Barneveld and his colleagues were justified in their distrust. To move one step in advance of their potent but slippery ally might be a step off a precipice.

On the 1st of May, Sully made a long visit to the commissioners. He earnestly urged upon them the necessity of making the most of the present opportunity. There were people in plenty, he said, who would gladly see the King take another course, for many influential persons about him were altogether Spanish in their inclinations.

The King had been scandalized to hear from the Prince of Anhalt, without going into details, that on his recent passage through the Netherlands he had noticed some change of feeling, some coolness in their High Mightinesses. The Duke advised that they should be very heedful, that they should remember how much more closely these matters regarded them than anyone else, that they should not deceive themselves, but be firmly convinced that unless they were willing to go head foremost into the business the French would likewise not commit themselves. Sully spoke with much earnestness and feeling, for it was obvious that both he and his master had been disappointed at the cautious and limited nature of the instructions given to the ambassadors.

An opinion had indeed prevailed, and, as we have seen, was to a certain extent shared in by Aerssens, and even by Sully himself, that the King’s military preparations were after all but a feint, and that if the Prince of Conde, and with him the Princess, could be restored to France, the whole war cloud would evaporate in smoke.

Page 2700

It was even asserted that Henry had made a secret treaty with the enemy, according to which, while apparently ready to burst upon the House of Austria with overwhelming force, he was in reality about to shake hands cordially with that power, on condition of being allowed to incorporate into his own kingdom the very duchies in dispute, and of receiving the Prince of Conde and his wife from Spain. He was thus suspected of being about to betray his friends and allies in the most ignoble manner and for the vilest of motives. The circulation of these infamous reports no doubt paralysed for a time the energy of the enemy who had made no requisite preparations against the threatened invasion, but it sickened his friends with vague apprehensions, while it cut the King himself to the heart and infuriated him to madness.

He asked the Nuncius one day what people thought in Rome and Italy of the war about to be undertaken. Ubaldini replied that those best informed considered the Princess of Conde as the principal subject of hostilities; they thought that he meant to have her back. “I do mean to have her back,” cried Henry, with a mighty oath, and foaming with rage, “and I shall have her back. No one shall prevent it, not even the Lieutenant of God on earth.”

But the imputation of this terrible treason weighed upon his mind and embittered every hour.

The commissioners assured Sully that they had no knowledge of any coolness or change such as Anhalt had reported on the part of their principals, and the Duke took his leave.

It will be remembered that Villeroy had, it was thought, been making mischief between Anhalt and the States by reporting and misreporting private conversations between that Prince and the Dutch ambassador.

As soon as Sully had gone, van der Myle waited upon Villeroy to ask, in name of himself and colleagues, for audience of leave-taking, the object of their mission having been accomplished. The Secretary of State, too, like Sully, urged the importance of making the most of the occasion. The affair of Cleve, he said, did not very much concern the King, but his Majesty had taken it to heart chiefly on account of the States and for their security. They were bound, therefore, to exert themselves to the utmost, but more would not be required of them than it would be possible to fulfil.

Van der Myle replied that nothing would be left undone by their High Mightinesses to support the King faithfully and according to their promise.

On the 5th, Villeroy came to the ambassadors, bringing with him a letter from the King for the States-General, and likewise a written reply to the declarations made orally and in writing by the ambassadors to his Majesty.

Page 2701

The letter of Henry to “his very dear and good friends, allies, and confederates,” was chiefly a complimentary acknowledgment of the expressions of gratitude made to him on part of the States-General, and warm approbation of their sage resolve to support the cause of Brandenburg and Neuburg. He referred them for particulars to the confidential conferences held between the commissioners and himself. They would state how important he thought it that this matter should be settled now so thoroughly as to require no second effort at any future time when circumstances might not be so propitious; and that he intended to risk his person, at the head of his army, to accomplish this result.

To the ambassadors he expressed his high satisfaction at their assurances of affection, devotion, and gratitude on the part of the States. He approved and commended their resolution to assist the Elector and the Palatine in the affair of the duchies. He considered this a proof of their prudence and good judgment, as showing their conviction that they were more interested and bound to render this assistance than any other potentates or states, as much from the convenience and security to be derived from the neighbourhood of princes who were their friends as from dangers to be apprehended from other princes who were seeking to appropriate those provinces. The King therefore begged the States to move forward as soon as possible the forces which they offered for this enterprise according to his Majesty’s suggestion sent through de Bethune. The King on his part would do the same with extreme care and diligence, from the anxiety he felt to prevent My Lords the States from receiving detriment in places so vital to their preservation.

He begged the States likewise to consider that it was meet not only to make a first effort to put the princes into entire possession of the duchies, but to provide also for the durable success of the enterprise; to guard against any invasions that might be made in the future to eject those princes. Otherwise all their present efforts would be useless; and his Majesty therefore consented on this occasion to enter into the new league proposed by the States with all the princes and states mentioned in the memoir of the ambassadors for mutual assistance against all unjust occupations, attempts, and baneful intrigues.

Having no special information as to the infractions by the Archdukes of the recent treaty of truce, the King declined to discuss that subject for the moment, although holding himself bound to all required of him as one of the guarantees of that treaty.

In regard to the remonstrance made by the ambassadors concerning the trade of the East Indies, his Majesty disclaimed any intention of doing injury to the States in permitting his subjects to establish a company in his kingdom for that commerce. He had deferred hitherto taking action in the matter only out of respect to the States, but he could no longer refuse the just claims of his subjects if they should persist in them as urgently as they had thus far been doing. The right and liberty which they demanded

was common to all, said the King, and he was certainly bound to have as great care for the interests of his subjects as for those of his friends and allies.

Page 2702

Here, certainly, was an immense difference in tone and in terms towards the Republic adopted respectively by their great and good friends and allies the Kings of France and Great Britain. It was natural enough that Henry, having secretly expressed his most earnest hope that the States would move at his side in his broad and general assault upon the House of Austria, should impress upon them his conviction, which was a just one, that no power in the world was more interested in keeping a Spanish and Catholic prince out of the duchies than they were themselves. But while thus taking a bond of them as it were for the entire fulfilment of the primary enterprise, he accepted with cordiality, and almost with gratitude, their proposition of a close alliance of the Republic with himself and with the Protestant powers which James had so superciliously rejected.

It would have been difficult to inflict a more petty and, more studied insult upon the Republic than did the King of Great Britain at that supreme moment by his preposterous claim of sovereign rights over the Netherlands. He would make no treaty with them, he said, but should he find it worth while to treat with his royal brother of France, he should probably not shut the door in their faces.

Certainly Henry's reply to the remonstrances of the ambassadors in regard to the India trade was as moderate as that of James had been haughty and peremptory in regard to the herring fishery. It is however sufficiently amusing to see those excellent Hollanders nobly claiming that "the sea was as free as air" when the right to take Scotch pilchards was in question, while at the very same moment they were earnest for excluding their best allies and all the world besides from their East India monopoly. But Isaac Le Maire and Jacques Le Roy had not lain so long disguised in Zamet's house in Paris for nothing, nor had Aerssens so completely "broke the neck of the French East India Company" as he supposed. A certain Dutch freebooter, however, Simon Danzer by name, a native of Dordrecht, who had been alternately in the service of Spain, France, and the States, but a general marauder upon all powers, was exercising at that moment perhaps more influence on the East India trade than any potentate or commonwealth.

He kept the seas just then with four swift-sailing and well-armed vessels, that potent skimmer of the ocean, and levied tribute upon Protestant and Catholic, Turk or Christian, with great impartiality. The King of Spain had sent him letters of amnesty and safe-conduct, with large pecuniary offers, if he would enter his service. The King of France had outbid his royal brother and enemy, and implored him to sweep the seas under the white flag.

Page 2703

The States' ambassador begged his masters to reflect whether this "puissant and experienced corsair" should be permitted to serve Spaniard or Frenchman, and whether they could devise no expedient for turning him into another track. "He is now with his fine ships at Marseilles," said Aerssens. "He is sought for in all quarters by the Spaniard and by the directors of the new French East India Company, private persons who equip vessels of war. If he is not satisfied with this king's offers, he is likely to close with the King of Spain, who offers him 1000 crowns a month. Avarice tickles him, but he is neither Spaniard nor Papist, and I fear will be induced to serve with his ships the East India Company, and so will return to his piracy, the evil of which will always fall on our heads. If My Lords the States will send me letters of abolition for him, in imitation of the French king, on condition of his returning to his home in Zealand and quitting the sea altogether, something might be done. Otherwise he will be off to Marseilles again, and do more harm to us than ever. Isaac Le Maire is doing as much evil as he can, and one holds daily council with him here."

Thus the slippery Simon skimmed the seas from Marseilles to the Moluccas, from Java to Mexico, never to be held firmly by Philip, or Henry, or Barneveld. A dissolute but very daring ship's captain, born in Zealand, and formerly in the service of the States, out of which he had been expelled for many evil deeds, Simon Danzer had now become a professional pirate, having his head-quarters chiefly at Algiers. His English colleague Warde stationed himself mainly at Tunis, and both acted together in connivance with the pachas of the Turkish government. They with their considerable fleet, one vessel of which mounted sixty guns, were the terror of the Mediterranean, extorted tribute from the commerce of all nations indifferently, and sold licenses to the greatest governments of Europe. After growing rich with his accumulated booty, Simon was inclined to become respectable, a recourse which was always open to him—France, England, Spain, the United Provinces, vieing with each other to secure him by high rank and pay as an honoured member of their national marine. He appears however to have failed in his plan of retiring upon his laurels, having been stabbed in Paris by a man whom he had formerly robbed and ruined.

Villeroy, having delivered the letters with his own hands to the ambassadors, was asked by them when and where it would be convenient for the King to arrange the convention of close alliance. The Secretary of State—in his secret heart anything but kindly disposed for this loving union with a republic he detested and with heretics whom he would have burned—answered briefly that his Majesty was ready at any time, and that it might take place then if they were provided with the necessary powers. He said in parting that the States should "have an eye to everything, for occasions like the present were irrecoverable." He then departed, saying that the King would receive them in final audience on the following day.

Page 2704

Next morning accordingly Marshal de Boisdaulphin and de Bonoeil came with royal coaches to the Hotel Gondy and escorted the ambassadors to the Louvre. On the way they met de Bethune, who had returned solo from the Hague bringing despatches for the King and for themselves. While in the antechamber, they had opportunity to read their letters from the States-General, his Majesty sending word that he was expecting them with impatience, but preferred that they should read the despatches before the audience.

They found the King somewhat out of humour. He expressed himself as tolerably well satisfied with the general tenour of the despatches brought by de Bethune, but complained loudly of the request now made by the States, that the maintenance and other expenses of 4000 French in the States' service should be paid in the coming campaign out of the royal exchequer. He declared that this proposition was "a small manifestation of ingratitude," that my Lords the, States were "little misers," and that such proceedings were "little avaricious tricks" such as he had not expected of them.

So far as England was concerned, he said there was a great difference. The English took away what he was giving. He did cheerfully a great deal for his friends, he said, and was always ready doubly to repay what they did for him. If, however, the States persisted in this course, he should call his troops home again.

The King, as he went on, became more and more excited, and showed decided dissatisfaction in his language and manner. It was not to be wondered at, for we have seen how persistently he had been urging that the Advocate should come in person with "the bridle on his neck," and now he had sent his son-in-law and two colleagues tightly tied up by stringent instructions. And over an above all this, while he was contemplating a general war with intention to draw upon the States for unlimited supplies, behold, they were haggling for the support of a couple of regiments which were virtually their own troops.

There were reasons, however, for this cautiousness besides those unfounded, although not entirely chimerical, suspicions as to the King's good faith, to which we have alluded. It should not be forgotten that, although Henry had conversed secretly with the States' ambassador at full length on his far-reaching plans, with instructions that he should confidentially inform the Advocate and demand his co-operation, not a word of it had been officially propounded to the States-General, nor to the special embassy with whom he was now negotiating. No treaty of alliance offensive or defensive existed between the Kingdom and the Republic or between the Republic and any power whatever. It would have been culpable carelessness therefore at this moment for the prime minister of the States to have committed his government in writing to a full participation in a general assault upon the House of Austria; the first step in which would have been a breach of the treaty just concluded and instant hostilities with the Archdukes Albert and Isabella.

Page 2705

That these things were in the immediate future was as plain as that night would follow day, but the hour had not yet struck for the States to throw down the gauntlet.

Hardly two months before, the King, in his treaty with the princes at Hall, had excluded both the King of Great Britain and the States-General from participation in those arrangements, and it was grave matter for consideration, therefore, for the States whether they should allow such succour as they might choose to grant the princes to be included in the French contingent. The opportunity for treating as a sovereign power with the princes and making friends with them was tempting, but it did not seem reasonable to the States that France should make use of them in this war without a treaty, and should derive great advantage from the alliance, but leave the expense to them.

Henry, on the other hand, forgetting, when it was convenient to him, all about the Princess of Conde, his hatred of Spain, and his resolution to crush the House of Austria, chose to consider the war as made simply for the love of the States-General and to secure them for ever from danger.

The ambassadors replied to the King's invectives with great respect, and endeavoured to appease his anger. They had sent a special despatch to their government, they said, in regard to all those matters, setting forth all the difficulties that had been raised, but had not wished to trouble his Majesty with premature discussions of them. They did not doubt, however, that their High Mightinesses would so conduct this great affair as to leave the King no ground of complaint.

Henry then began to talk of the intelligence brought by de Bethune from the Hague, especially in regard to the sending of States' troops to Dusseldorf and the supply of food for the French army. He did not believe, he said, that the Archdukes would refuse him the passage with his forces through their territory, inasmuch as the States' army would be on the way to meet him. In case of any resistance, however, he declared his resolution to strike his blow and to cause people to talk of him. He had sent his quartermaster-general to examine the passes, who had reported that it would be impossible to prevent his Majesty's advance. He was also distinctly informed that Marquis Spinola, keeping his places garrisoned, could not bring more than 8000 men into the field. The Duke of Bouillon, however, was sending advices that his communications were liable to be cut off, and that for this purpose Spinola could set on foot about 16,000 infantry and 4000 horse.

If the passage should be allowed by the Archdukes, the King stated his intention of establishing magazines for his troops along the whole line of march through the Spanish Netherlands and neighbouring districts, and to establish and fortify himself everywhere in order to protect his supplies and cover his possible retreat. He was still in doubt, he said, whether to demand the passage at once or to wait until he had began to move his

army. He was rather inclined to make the request instantly in order to gain time, being persuaded that he should receive no answer either of consent or refusal.

Page 2706

Leaving all these details, the King then frankly observed that the affair of Cleve had a much wider outlook than people thought. Therefore the States must consider well what was to be done to secure the whole work as soon as the Cleve business had been successfully accomplished. Upon this subject it was indispensable that he should consult especially with his Excellency (Prince Maurice) and some members of the General Assembly, whom he wished that My Lords the States-General should depute to the army.

“For how much good will it do,” said the King, “if we drive off Archduke Leopold without establishing the princes in security for the future? Nothing is easier than to put the princes in possession. Every one will yield or run away before our forces, but two months after we have withdrawn the enemy will return and drive the princes out again. I cannot always be ready to spring out of my kingdom, nor to assemble such great armies. I am getting old, and my army moreover costs me 400,000 crowns a month, which is enough to exhaust all the treasures of France, Spain, Venice, and the States-General together.”

He added that, if the present occasion were neglected, the States would afterwards bitterly lament and never recover it. The Pope was very much excited, and was sending out his ambassadors everywhere. Only the previous Saturday the new nuncius destined for France had left Rome. If My Lords the States would send deputies to the camp with full powers, he stood there firm and unchangeable, but if they remained cool in the business, he warned them that they would enrage him.

The States must seize the occasion, he repeated. It was bald behind, and must be grasped by the forelock. It was not enough to have begun well. One must end well. “Finis coronat opus.” It was very easy to speak of a league, but a league was not to be made in order to sit with arms tied, but to do good work. The States ought not to suffer that the Germans should prove themselves more energetic, more courageous, than themselves.

And again the King vehemently urged the necessity of his Excellency and some deputies of the States coming to him “with absolute power” to treat. He could not doubt in that event of something solid being accomplished.

“There are three things,” he continued, “which cause me to speak freely. I am talking with my friends whom I hold dear—yes, dearer, perhaps, than they hold themselves. I am a great king, and say what I choose to say. I am old, and know by experience the ways of this world’s affairs. I tell you, then, that it is most important that you should come to me resolved and firm on all points.”

He then requested the ambassadors to make full report of all that he had said to their masters, to make the journey as rapidly as possible, in order to encourage the States to

the great enterprise and to meet his wishes. He required from them, he said, not only activity of the body, but labour of the intellect.

Page 2707

He was silent for a few moments, and then spoke again. “I shall not always be here,” he said, “nor will you always have Prince Maurice, and a few others whose knowledge of your commonwealth is perfect. My Lords the States must be up and doing while they still possess them. Nest Tuesday I shall cause the Queen to be crowned at Saint-Denis; the following Thursday she will make her entry into Paris. Next day, Friday, I shall take my departure. At the end of this month I shall cross the Meuse at Mezieres or in that neighbourhood.”

He added that he should write immediately to Holland, to urge upon his Excellency and the States to be ready to make the junction of their army with his forces without delay. He charged the ambassadors to assure their High Mightinesses that he was and should remain their truest friend, their dearest neighbour. He then said a few gracious and cordial words to each of them, warmly embraced each, and bade them all farewell.

The next day was passed by the ambassadors in paying and receiving farewell visits, and on Saturday, the 8th, they departed from Paris, being escorted out of the gate by the Marshal de Boisdaulphin, with a cavalcade of noblemen. They slept that night at Saint Denis, and then returned to Holland by the way of Calais and Rotterdam, reaching the Hague on the 16th of May.

I make no apology for the minute details thus given of the proceedings of this embassy, and especially of the conversations of Henry.

The very words of those conversations were taken down on the spot by the commissioners who heard them, and were carefully embodied in their report made to the States-General on their return, from which I have transcribed them.

It was a memorable occasion. The great king—for great he was, despite his numerous vices and follies—stood there upon the threshold of a vast undertaking, at which the world, still half incredulous, stood gazing, half sick with anxiety. He relied on his own genius and valour chiefly, and after these on the brain of Barneveld and the sword of Maurice. Nor was his confidence misplaced.

But let the reader observe the date of the day when those striking utterances were made, and which have never before been made public. It was Thursday, the 6th May. “I shall not always be here,” said the King, . . . “I cannot be ready at any moment to spring out of my kingdom.” . . . “Friday of next week I take my departure.”

How much of heroic pathos in Henry’s attitude at this supreme moment! How mournfully ring those closing words of his address to the ambassadors!

The die was cast. A letter drawn up by the Duc de Sully was sent to Archduke Albert by the King.

“My brother,” he said; “Not being able to refuse my best allies and confederates the help which they have asked of me against those who wish to trouble them in the succession to the duchies and counties of Cleve, Julich, Mark, Berg, Ravensberg, and Ravenstein, I am advancing towards them with my army. As my road leads me through your country, I desire to notify you thereof, and to know whether or not I am to enter as a friend or enemy.”

Page 2708

Such was the draft as delivered to the Secretary of State; “and as such it was sent,” said Sully, “unless Villeroy changed it, as he had a great desire to do.”

Henry was mistaken in supposing that the Archduke would leave the letter without an answer. A reply was sent in due time, and the permission demanded was not refused. For although France was now full of military movement, and the regiments everywhere were hurrying hourly to the places of rendezvous, though the great storm at last was ready to burst, the Archdukes made no preparations for resistance, and lapped themselves in fatal security that nothing was intended but an empty demonstration.

Six thousand Swiss newly levied, with 20,000 French infantry and 6000 horse, were waiting for Henry to place himself at their head at Mezieres. Twelve thousand foot and 2000 cavalry, including the French and English contingents—a splendid army, led by Prince Maurice—were ready to march from Holland to Dusseldorf. The army of the princes under Prince Christian of Anhalt numbered 10,000 men. The last scruples of the usually unscrupulous Charles Emmanuel had been overcome, and the Duke was quite ready to act, 25,000 strong, with Marshal de Lesdiguieres, in the Milanese; while Marshal de la Force was already at the head of his forces in the Pyrenees, amounting to 12,000 foot and 2000 horse.

Sully had already despatched his splendid trains of artillery to the frontier. “Never was seen in France, and perhaps never will be seen there again, artillery more complete and better furnished,” said the Duke, thinking probably that artillery had reached the climax of perfect destructiveness in the first decade of the seventeenth century.

His son, the Marquis de Rosny, had received the post of grand master of artillery, and placed himself at its head. His father was to follow as its chief, carrying with him as superintendent of finance a cash-box of eight millions.

The King had appointed his wife, Mary de’ Medici, regent, with an eminent council.

The new nuncius had been requested to present himself with his letters of credence in the camp. Henry was unwilling that he should enter Paris, being convinced that he came to do his best, by declamation, persuasion, and intrigue, to paralyse the enterprise. Sully’s promises to Ubaldini, the former nuncius, that his Holiness should be made king, however flattering to Paul V., had not prevented his representatives from vigorously denouncing Henry’s monstrous scheme to foment heresy and encourage rebellion.

The King’s chagrin at the cautious limitations imposed upon the States’ special embassy was, so he hoped, to be removed by full conferences in the camp. Certainly he had shown in the most striking manner the respect he felt for the States, and the confidence he reposed in them.

“In the reception of your embassy,” wrote Aerssens to the Advocate, “certainly the King has so loosened the strap of his affection that he has reserved nothing by which he could put the greatest king in the world above your level.”

Page 2709

He warned the States, however, that Henry had not found as much in their propositions as the common interest had caused him to promise himself. “Nevertheless he informs me in confidence,” said Aerssens, “that he will engage himself in nothing without you; nay, more, he has expressly told me that he could hardly accomplish his task without your assistance, and it was for our sakes alone that he has put himself into this position and incurred this great expense.”

Some days later he informed Barneveld that he would leave to van der Myle and his colleagues the task of describing the great dissatisfaction of the King at the letters brought by de Bethune. He told him in confidence that the States must equip the French regiments and put them in marching order if they wished to preserve Henry’s friendship. He added that since the departure of the special embassy the King had been vehemently and seriously urging that Prince Maurice, Count Lewis William, Barneveld, and three or four of the most qualified deputies of the States-General, entirely authorized to treat for the common safety, should meet with him in the territory of Julich on a fixed day.

The crisis was reached. The King stood fully armed, thoroughly prepared, with trustworthy allies at his side, disposing of overwhelming forces ready to sweep down with irresistible strength upon the House of Austria, which, as he said and the States said, aspired to give the law to the whole world. Nothing was left to do save, as the Ambassador said, to “uncouple the dogs of war and let them run.”

What preparations had Spain and the Empire, the Pope and the League, set on foot to beat back even for a moment the overwhelming onset? None whatever. Spinola in the Netherlands, Fuentes in Milan, Bucquoy and Lobkowitz and Lichtenstein in Prague, had hardly the forces of a moderate peace establishment at their disposal, and all the powers save France and the States were on the verge of bankruptcy.

Even James of Great Britain—shuddering at the vast thundercloud which had stretched itself over Christendom growing blacker and blacker, precisely at this moment, in which he had proved to his own satisfaction that the peace just made would perpetually endure—even James did not dare to traverse the designs of the king whom he feared, and the republic which he hated, in favour of his dearly loved Spain. Sweden, Denmark, the Hanse Towns, were in harmony with France, Holland, Savoy, and the whole Protestant force of Germany—a majority both in population and resources of the whole empire. What army, what combination, what device, what talisman, could save the House of Austria, the cause of Papacy, from the impending ruin?

A sudden, rapid, conclusive victory for the allies seemed as predestined a result as anything could be in the future of human affairs.

On the 14th or 15th day of May, as he had just been informing the States' ambassadors, Henry meant to place himself at the head of his army. That was the moment fixed by himself for "taking his departure."

Page 2710

And now the ides of May had come—but not gone.

In the midst of all the military preparations with which Paris had been resounding, the arrangements for the Queen's coronation had been simultaneously going forward. Partly to give check in advance to the intrigues which would probably at a later date be made by Conde, supported by the power of Spain, to invalidate the legitimacy of the Dauphin, but more especially perhaps to further and to conceal what the faithful Sully called the "damnable artifices" of the Queen's intimate councillors—sinister designs too dark to be even whispered at that epoch, and of which history, during the lapse of more than two centuries and a half, has scarcely dared to speak above its breath—it was deemed all important that the coronation should take place.

A certain astrologer, Thomassin by name, was said to have bidden the King to beware the middle of the next month of May. Henry had tweaked the soothsayer by the beard and made him dance twice or thrice about the room. To the Duc de Vendome expressing great anxiety in regard to Thomassin, Henry replied, "The astrologer is an old fool, and you are a young fool." A certain prophetess called Pasithea had informed the Queen that the King could not survive his fifty-seventh year. She was much in the confidence of Mary de' Medici, who had insisted this year on her returning to Paris. Henry, who was ever chafing and struggling to escape the invisible and dangerous net which he felt closing about him, and who connected the sorceress with all whom he most loathed among the intimate associates of the Queen, swore a mighty oath that she should not show her face again at court. "My heart presages that some signal disaster will befall me on this coronation. Concini and his wife are urging the Queen obstinately to send for this fanatic. If she should come, there is no doubt that my wife and I shall squabble well about her. If I discover more about these private plots of hers with Spain, I shall be in a mighty passion." And the King then assured the faithful minister of his conviction that all the jealousy affected by the Queen in regard to the Princess of Conde was but a veil to cover dark designs. It was necessary in the opinion of those who governed her, the vile Concini and his wife, that there should be some apparent and flagrant cause of quarrel. The public were to receive payment in these pretexts for want of better coin. Henry complained that even Sully and all the world besides attributed to jealousy that which was really the effect of a most refined malice.

And the minister sometimes pauses in the midst of these revelations made in his old age, and with self-imposed and shuddering silence intimates that there are things he could tell which are too odious and dreadful to be breathed.

Henry had an invincible repugnance to that coronation on which the Queen had set her heart. Nothing could be more pathetic than the isolated position in which he found himself, standing thus as he did on the threshold of a mighty undertaking in which he was the central figure, an object for the world to gaze upon with palpitating interest. At his hearth in the Louvre were no household gods. Danger lurked behind every tapestry

in that magnificent old palace. A nameless dread dogged his footsteps through those resounding corridors.

Page 2711

And by an exquisite refinement in torture the possible father of several of his children not only dictated to the Queen perpetual outbreaks of frantic jealousy against her husband, but moved her to refuse with suspicion any food and drink offered her by his hands. The Concini's would even with unparalleled and ingenious effrontery induce her to make use of the kitchen arrangements in their apartments for the preparation of her daily meals?

Driven from house and home, Henry almost lived at the Arsenal. There he would walk for hours in the long alleys of the garden, discussing with the great financier and soldier his vast, dreamy, impracticable plans. Strange combination of the hero, the warrior, the voluptuary, the sage, and the schoolboy—it would be difficult to find in the whole range of history a more human, a more attractive, a more provoking, a less venerable character.

Haunted by omens, dire presentiments, dark suspicions with and without cause, he was especially averse from the coronation to which in a moment of weakness he had given his consent.

Sitting in Sully's cabinet, in a low chair which the Duke had expressly provided for his use, tapping and drumming on his spectacle case, or starting up and smiting himself on the thigh, he would pour out his soul hours long to his one confidential minister. "Ah, my friend, how this sacrament displeases me," he said; "I know not why it is, but my heart tells me that some misfortune is to befall me. By God I shall die in this city, I shall never go out of it; I see very well that they are finding their last resource in my death. Ah, accursed coronation! thou wilt be the, cause of my death."

So many times did he give utterance to these sinister forebodings that Sully implored him at last for leave to countermand the whole ceremony notwithstanding the great preparations which had been made for the splendid festival. "Yes, yes," replied the King, "break up this coronation at once. Let me hear no more of it. Then I shall have my mind cured of all these impressions. I shall leave the town and fear nothing."

He then informed his friend that he had received intimations that he should lose his life at the first magnificent festival he should give, and that he should die in a carriage. Sully admitted that he had often, when in a carriage with him, been amazed at his starting and crying out at the slightest shock, having so often seen him intrepid among guns and cannon, pikes and naked swords.

The Duke went to the Queen three days in succession, and with passionate solicitations and arguments and almost upon his knees implored her to yield to the King's earnest desire, and renounce for the time at least the coronation. In vain. Mary de' Medici was obdurate as marble to his prayers.

The coronation was fixed for Thursday, the 13th May, two days later than the time originally appointed when the King conversed with the States' ambassadors. On the following Sunday was to be the splendid and solemn entrance of the crowned Queen. On the Monday, Henry, postponing likewise for two days his original plan of departure, would leave for the army.

Page 2712

Meantime there were petty annoyances connected with the details of the coronation. Henry had set his heart on having his legitimatized children, the offspring of the fair Gabrielle, take their part in the ceremony on an equal footing with the princes of the blood. They were not entitled to wear the lilies of France upon their garments, and the King was solicitous that “the Count”—as Soissons, brother of Prince Conti and uncle of Conde, was always called—should dispense with those ensigns for his wife upon this solemn occasion, and that the other princesses of the blood should do the same. Thus there would be no appearance of inferiority on the part of the Duchess of Vendome.

The Count protested that he would have his eyes torn out of his head rather than submit to an arrangement which would do him so much shame. He went to the Queen and urged upon her that to do this would likewise be an injury to her children, the Dukes of Orleans and of Anjou. He refused flatly to appear or allow his wife to appear except in the costume befitting their station. The King on his part was determined not to abandon his purpose. He tried to gain over the Count by the most splendid proposals, offering him the command of the advance-guard of the army, or the lieutenancy-general of France in the absence of the King, 30,000 crowns for his equipment and an increase of his pension if he would cause his wife to give up the fleurs-de-lys on this occasion. The alternative was to be that, if she insisted upon wearing them, his Majesty would never look upon him again with favourable eyes.

The Count never hesitated, but left Paris, refusing to appear at the ceremony. The King was in a towering passion, for to lose the presence of this great prince of the blood at a solemnity expressly intended as a demonstration against the designs hatching by the first of all the princes of the blood under patronage of Spain was a severe blow to his pride and a check to his policy.’

Yet it was inconceivable that he could at such a moment commit so superfluous and unmeaning a blunder. He had forced Conde into exile, intrigue with the enemy, and rebellion, by open and audacious efforts to destroy his domestic peace, and now he was willing to alienate one of his most powerful subjects in order to place his bastards on a level with royalty. While it is sufficiently amusing to contemplate this proposed barter of a chief command in a great army or the lieutenancy-general of a mighty kingdom at the outbreak of a general European war against a bit of embroidery on the court dress of a lady, yet it is impossible not to recognize something ideal and chivalrous from his own point of view in the refusal of Soissons to renounce those emblems of pure and high descent, those haughty lilies of St. Louis, against any bribes of place and pelf however dazzling.

Page 2713

The coronation took place on Thursday, 13th May, with the pomp and glitter becoming great court festivals; the more pompous and glittering the more the monarch's heart was wrapped in gloom. The representatives of the great powers were conspicuous in the procession; Aerssens, the Dutch ambassador, holding a foremost place. The ambassadors of Spain and Venice as usual squabbled about precedence and many other things, and actually came to fisticuffs, the fight lasting a long time and ending somewhat to the advantage of the Venetian. But the sacrament was over, and Mary de' Medici was crowned Queen of France and Regent of the Kingdom during the absence of the sovereign with his army.

Meantime there had been mysterious warnings darker and more distinct than the babble of the soothsayer Thomassin or the ravings of the lunatic Pasithea. Count Schomberg, dining at the Arsenal with Sully, had been called out to converse with Mademoiselle de Gournay, who implored that a certain Madame d'Escomans might be admitted to audience of the King. That person, once in direct relations with the Marchioness of Verneuil, the one of Henry's mistresses who most hated him, affirmed that a man from the Duke of Epernon's country was in Paris, agent of a conspiracy seeking the King's life.

The woman not enjoying a very reputable character found it impossible to obtain a hearing, although almost frantic with her desire to save her sovereign's life. The Queen observed that it was a wicked woman, who was accusing all the world, and perhaps would accuse her too.

The fatal Friday came. Henry drove out, in his carriage to see the preparations making for the triumphal entrance of the Queen into Paris on the following Sunday. What need to repeat the tragic, familiar tale? The coach was stopped by apparent accident in the narrow street de la Feronniere, and Francis Ravaillac, standing on the wheel, drove his knife through the monarch's heart. The Duke of Epernon, sitting at his side, threw his cloak over the body and ordered the carriage back to the Louvre.

"They have killed him, 'e ammazato,'" cried Concini (so says tradition), thrusting his head into the Queen's bedchamber.

[Michelet, 197. It is not probable that the documents concerning the trial, having been so carefully suppressed from the beginning, especially the confession dictated to Voisin —who wrote it kneeling on the ground, and was perhaps so appalled at its purport that he was afraid to write it legibly—will ever see the light. I add in the Appendix some contemporary letters of persons, as likely as any one to know what could be known, which show how dreadful were the suspicions which men entertained, and which they hardly ventured to whisper to each other].

That blow had accomplished more than a great army could have done, and Spain now reigned in Paris. The House of Austria, without making any military preparations, had

conquered, and the great war of religion and politics was postponed for half a dozen years.

Page 2714

This history has no immediate concern with solving the mysteries of that stupendous crime. The woman who had sought to save the King's life now denounced Epernon as the chief murderer, and was arrested, examined, accused of lunacy, proved to be perfectly sane, and, persisting in her statements with perfect coherency, was imprisoned for life for her pains; the Duke furiously demanding her instant execution.

The documents connected with the process were carefully suppressed. The assassin, tortured and torn by four horses, was supposed to have revealed nothing and to have denied the existence of accomplices.

The great accused were too omnipotent to be dealt with by humble accusers or by convinced but powerless tribunals. The trial was all mystery, hugger-mugger, horror. Yet the murderer is known to have dictated to the Greflier Voisin, just before expiring on the Greve, a declaration which that functionary took down in a handwriting perhaps purposely illegible.

Two centuries and a half have passed away, yet the illegible original record is said to exist, to have been plainly read, and to contain the names of the Queen and the Duke of Epernon.

Twenty-six years before, the pistol of Balthasar Gerard had destroyed the foremost man in Europe and the chief of a commonwealth just struggling into existence. Yet Spain and Rome, the instigators and perpetrators of the crime, had not reaped the victory which they had the right to expect. The young republic, guided by Barneveld and loyal to the son of the murdered stadholder, was equal to the burthen suddenly descending upon its shoulders. Instead of despair there had been constancy. Instead of distracted counsels there had been heroic union of heart and hand. Rather than bend to Rome and grovel to Philip, it had taken its sovereignty in its hands, offered it successively, without a thought of self-aggrandizement on the part of its children, to the crowns of France and Great Britain, and, having been repulsed by both, had learned after fiery trials and incredible exertions to assert its own high and foremost place among the independent powers of the world.

And now the knife of another priest-led fanatic, the wretched but unflinching instrument of a great conspiracy, had at a blow decapitated France. No political revolution could be much more thorough than that which had been accomplished in a moment of time by Francis Ravaillac.

On the 14th of May, France, while in spiritual matters obedient to the Pope, stood at the head of the forces of Protestantism throughout Europe, banded together to effect the downfall of the proud house of Austria, whose fortunes and fate were synonymous with Catholicism. The Baltic powers, the majority of the Teutonic races, the Kingdom of Britain, the great Republic of the Netherlands, the northernmost and most warlike

governments of Italy, all stood at the disposition of the warrior-king. Venice, who had hitherto, in the words of a veteran

Page 2715

diplomatist, “shunned to look a league or a confederation in the face, if there was any Protestant element in it, as if it had been the head of Medusa,” had formally forbidden the passage of troops northwards to the relief of the assailed power. Savoy, after direful hesitations, had committed herself body and soul to the great enterprise. Even the Pope, who feared the overshadowing personality of Henry, and was beginning to believe his house’s private interests more likely to flourish under the protection of the French than the Spanish king, was wavering in his fidelity to Spain and tempted by French promises: If he should prove himself incapable of effecting a pause in the great crusade, it was doubtful on which side he would ultimately range himself; for it was at least certain that the new Catholic League, under the chieftainship of Maximilian of Bavaria, was resolved not to entangle its fortunes inextricably with those of the Austrian house.

The great enterprise, first unfolding itself with the episode of Cleve and Berg and whimsically surrounding itself with the fantastic idyl of the Princess of Conde, had attained vast and misty proportions in the brain of its originator. Few political visions are better known in history than the “grand design” of Henry for rearranging the map of the world at the moment when, in the middle of May, he was about to draw his sword. Spain reduced to the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees, but presented with both the Indies, with all America and the whole Orient in fee; the Empire taken from Austria and given to Bavaria; a constellation of States in Italy, with the Pope for president-king; throughout the rest of Christendom a certain number of republics, of kingdoms, of religions—a great confederation of the world, in short—with the most Christian king for its dictator and protector, and a great Amphictyonic council to regulate all disputes by solemn arbitration, and to make war in the future impossible, such in little was his great design.

Nothing could be more humane, more majestic, more elaborate, more utterly preposterous. And all this gigantic fabric had passed away in an instant—at one stroke of a broken table knife sharpened on a carriage wheel.

Most pitiful was the condition of France on the day after, and for years after, the murder of the King. Not only was the kingdom for the, time being effaced from the roll of nations, so far as external relations were concerned, but it almost ceased to be a kingdom. The ancient monarchy of Hugh Capet, of Saint-Louis, of Henry of France and Navarre, was transformed into a turbulent, self-seeking, quarrelsome, pillaging, pilfering democracy of grandees. The Queen-Regent was tossed hither and thither at the sport of the winds and waves which shifted every hour in that tempestuous court.

No man pretended to think of the State. Every man thought only of himself. The royal exchequer was plundered with a celerity and cynical recklessness such as have been rarely seen in any age or country. The millions so carefully hoarded by Sully, and

exhibited so dramatically by that great minister to the enraptured eyes of his sovereign; that treasure in the Bastille on which Henry relied for payment of the armies with which he was to transform the world, all disappeared in a few weeks to feed the voracious maw of courtiers, paramours, and partisans!

Page 2716

The Queen showered gold like water upon her beloved Concini that he might purchase his Marquisate of Ancre, and the charge of first gentleman of the court from Bouillon; that he might fit himself for the government of Picardy; that he might elevate his marquisate into a dukedom. Conde, having no further reason to remain in exile, received as a gift from the trembling Mary de' Medici the magnificent Hotel Gondy, where the Dutch ambassadors had so recently been lodged, for which she paid 65,000 crowns, together with 25,000 crowns to furnish it, 50,000 crowns to pay his debts, 50,000 more as yearly pension.

He claimed double, and was soon at sword's point with the Queen in spite of her lavish bounty.

Epernon, the true murderer of Henry, trampled on courts of justice and councils of ministers, frightened the court by threatening to convert his possession of Metz into an independent sovereignty, as Balagny had formerly seized upon Cambray, smothered for ever the process of Ravaillac, caused those to be put to death or immured for life in dungeons who dared to testify to his complicity in the great crime, and strode triumphantly over friends and enemies throughout France, although so crippled by the gout that he could scarcely walk up stairs.

There was an end to the triumvirate. Sully's influence was gone for ever. The other two dropped the mask. The Chancellor and Villeroy revealed themselves to be what they secretly had always been—humble servants and stipendiaries of Spain. The formal meetings of the council were of little importance, and were solemn, tearful, and stately; draped in woe for the great national loss. In the private cabinet meetings in the entresol of the Louvre, where the Nuncius and the Spanish ambassador held counsel with Epernon and Villeroy and Jeannin and Sillery, the tone was merry and loud; the double Spanish marriage and confusion to the Dutch being the chief topics of consultation.

But the anarchy grew day by day into almost hopeless chaos. There was no satisfying the princes of the blood nor the other grandees. Conde, whose reconciliation with the Princess followed not long after the death of Henry and his own return to France, was insatiable in his demands for money, power, and citadels of security. Soissons, who might formerly have received the lieutenancy-general of the kingdom by sacrificing the lilies on his wife's gown, now disputed for that office with his elder brother Conti, the Prince claiming it by right of seniority, the Count denouncing Conti as deaf, dumb, and imbecile, till they drew poniards on each other in the very presence of the Queen; while Conde on one occasion, having been refused the citadels which he claimed, Blaye and Chateau Trompette, threw his cloak over his nose and put on his hat while the Queen was speaking, and left the council in a fury, declaring that Villeroy and the chancellor were traitors, and that he would have them both soundly cudgelled. Guise, Lorraine, Epernon, Bouillon, and other great lords always appeared in the streets of Paris at the head of three, four, or five hundred mounted and armed retainers; while the Queen in her distraction gave orders to arm the Paris mob to the number of fifty thousand, and to

throw chains across the streets to protect herself and her son against the turbulent nobles.

Page 2717

Sully, hardly knowing to what saint to burn his candle, being forced to resign his great posts, was found for a time in strange political combination with the most ancient foes of his party and himself. The kaleidoscope whirling with exasperating quickness showed ancient Leaguers and Lorrainers banded with and protecting Huguenots against the Crown, while princes of the blood, hereditary patrons and chiefs of the Huguenots, became partisans and stipendiaries of Spain.

It is easy to see that circumstances like these rendered the position of the Dutch commonwealth delicate and perilous.

Sully informed Aerssens and van der Myle, who had been sent back to Paris on special mission very soon after the death of the King, that it took a hundred hours now to accomplish a single affair, whereas under Henry a hundred affairs were transacted in a single hour. But Sully's sun had set, and he had few business conferences now with the ambassadors.

Villeroy and the Chancellor had fed fat their ancient grudge to the once omnipotent minister, and had sworn his political ruin. The old secretary of state had held now complete control of the foreign alliances and combinations of France, and the Dutch ambassadors could be under no delusion as to the completeness of the revolution.

"You will find a passion among the advisers of the Queen," said Villeroy to Aerssens and van der Myle, "to move in diametrical opposition to the plans of the late king." And well might the ancient Leaguer and present pensionary of Spain reveal this foremost fact in a policy of which he was in secret the soul. He wept profusely when he first received Francis Aerssens, but after these "useless tears," as the Envoy called them, he soon made it manifest that there was no more to be expected of France, in the great project which its government had so elaborately set on foot.

Villeroy was now sixty-six years of age, and had been secretary of state during forty-two years and under four kings. A man of delicate health, frail body, methodical habits, capacity for routine, experience in political intrigue, he was not personally as greedy of money as many of his contemporaries, and was not without generosity; but he loved power, the Pope, and the House of Austria. He was singularly reserved in public, practised successfully the talent of silence, and had at last arrived at the position he most coveted, the virtual presidency of the council, and saw the men he most hated beneath his feet.

At the first interview of Aerssens with the Queen-Regent she was drowned in tears, and could scarcely articulate an intelligible sentence. So far as could be understood she expressed her intention of carrying out the King's plans, of maintaining the old alliances, of protecting both religions. Nothing, however, could be more preposterous than such phrases. Villeroy, who now entirely directed the foreign affairs of the kingdom, assured the Ambassador that France

Page 2718

was much more likely to apply to the States for assistance than render them aid in any enterprise whatever. “There is no doubt,” said Aerssens, “that the Queen is entirely in the hands of Spain and the priests.” Villeroy, whom Henry was wont to call the pedagogue of the council, went about sighing dismally, wishing himself dead, and perpetually ejaculating, “Ho! poor France, how much hast thou still to suffer!” In public he spoke of nothing but of union, and of the necessity of carrying out the designs of the King, instructing the docile Queen to hold the same language. In private he was quite determined to crush those designs for ever, and calmly advised the Dutch government to make an amicable agreement with the Emperor in regard to the Cleve affair as soon as possible; a treaty which would have been shameful for France and the possessory princes, and dangerous, if not disastrous, for the States-General. “Nothing but feverish and sick counsels,” he said, “could be expected from France, which had now lost its vigour and could do nothing but groan.”

Not only did the French council distinctly repudiate the idea of doing anything more for the princes than had been stipulated by the treaty of Hall—that is to say, a contingent of 8000 foot and 2000 horse—but many of them vehemently maintained that the treaty, being a personal one of the late king, was dead with him? The duty of France was now in their opinion to withdraw from these mad schemes as soon as possible, to make peace with the House of Austria without delay, and to cement the friendship by the double marriages.

Bouillon, who at that moment hated Sully as much as the most vehement Catholic could do, assured the Dutch envoy that the government was, under specious appearances, attempting to deceive the States; a proposition which it needed not the evidence of that most intriguing duke to make manifest to so astute a politician; particularly as there was none more bent on playing the most deceptive game than Bouillon. There would be no troops to send, he said, and even if there were, there would be no possibility of agreeing on a chief. The question of religion would at once arise. As for himself, the Duke protested that he would not accept the command if offered him. He would not agree to serve under the Prince of Anhalt, nor would he for any consideration in the world leave the court at that moment. At the same time Aerssens was well aware that Bouillon, in his quality of first marshal of France, a Protestant and a prince having great possessions on the frontier, and the brother-in-law of Prince Maurice, considered himself entitled to the command of the troops should they really be sent, and was very indignant at the idea of its being offered to any one else.

Page 2719

[Aerssens worked assiduously, two hours long on one occasion, to effect a reconciliation between the two great Protestant chiefs, but found Bouillon's demands "so shameful and unreasonable" that he felt obliged to renounce all further attempts. In losing Sully from the royal councils, the States' envoy acknowledged that the Republic had lost everything that could be depended on at the French court. "All the others are time-serving friends," he said, "or saints without miracles."—Aerssens to Barneveld, 11 June, 1610.]

He advised earnestly therefore that the States should make a firm demand for money instead of men, specifying the amount that might be considered the equivalent of the number of troops originally stipulated.

It is one of the most singular spectacles in history; France sinking into the background of total obscurity in an instant of time, at one blow of a knife, while the Republic, which she had been patronizing, protecting, but keeping always in a subordinate position while relying implicitly upon its potent aid, now came to the front, and held up on its strong shoulders an almost desperate cause. Henry had been wont to call the States-General "his courage and his right arm," but he had always strictly forbidden them to move an inch in advance of him, but ever to follow his lead, and to take their directions from himself. They were a part, and an essential one, in his vast designs; but France, or he who embodied France, was the great providence, the destiny, the all-directing, all-absorbing spirit, that was to remodel and control the whole world. He was dead, and France and her policy were already in a state of rapid decomposition.

Barneveld wrote to encourage and sustain the sinking state. "Our courage is rising in spite and in consequence of the great misfortune," he said. He exhorted the Queen to keep her kingdom united, and assured her that My Lords the States would maintain themselves against all who dared to assail them. He offered in their name the whole force of the Republic to take vengeance on those who had procured the assassination, and to defend the young king and the Queen-Mother against all who might make any attempt against their authority. He further declared, in language not to be mistaken, that the States would never abandon the princes and their cause.

This was the earliest indication on the part of the Advocate of the intention of the Republic—so long as it should be directed by his counsels—to support the cause of the young king, helpless and incapable as he was, and directed for the time being by a weak and wicked mother, against the reckless and depraved grandees, who were doing their best to destroy the unity and the independence of France, Cornelis van der Myle was sent back to Paris on special mission of condolence and comfort from the States-General to the sorely afflicted kingdom.

Page 2720

On the 7th of June, accompanied by Aerssens, he had a long interview with Villeroy. That minister, as usual, wept profusely, and said that in regard to Cleve it was impossible for France to carry out the designs of the late king. He then listened to what the ambassadors had to urge, and continued to express his melancholy by weeping. Drying his tears for a time, he sought by a long discourse to prove that France during this tender minority of the King would be incapable of pursuing the policy of his father. It would be even too burthensome to fulfil the Treaty of Hall. The friends of the crown, he said, had no occasion to further it, and it would be much better to listen to propositions for a treaty. Archduke Albert was content not to interfere in the quarrel if the Queen would likewise abstain; Leopold's forces were altogether too weak to make head against the army of the princes, backed by the power of My Lords the States, and Julich was neither strong nor well garrisoned. He concluded by calmly proposing that the States should take the matter in hand by themselves alone, in order to lighten the burthen of France, whose vigour had been cut in two by that accursed knife.

A more sneaking and shameful policy was never announced by the minister of a great kingdom. Surely it might seem that Ravaillac had cut in twain not the vigour only but the honour and the conscience of France. But the envoys, knowing in their hearts that they were talking not with a French but a Spanish secretary of state, were not disposed to be the dupes of his tears or his blandishments.

They reminded him that the Queen-Regent and her ministers since the murder of the King had assured the States-General and the princes of their firm intention to carry out the Treaty of Hall, and they observed that they had no authority to talk of any negotiation. The affair of the duchies was not especially the business of the States, and the Secretary was well aware that they had promised their succour on the express condition that his Majesty and his army should lead the way, and that they should follow. This was very far from the plan now suggested, that they should do it all, which would be quite out of the question. France had a strong army, they said, and it would be better to use it than to efface herself so pitiably. The proposition of abstention on the part of the Archduke was a delusion intended only to keep France out of the field.

Villeroy replied by referring to English affairs. King James, he said, was treating them perfidiously. His first letters after the murder had been good, but by the following ones England seemed to wish to put her foot on France's throat, in order to compel her to sue for an alliance. The British ministers had declared their resolve not to carry out that convention of alliance, although it had been nearly concluded in the lifetime of the late king, unless the Queen would bind herself to make good to the King of Great Britain that third part of the subsidies advanced by France to the States which had been furnished on English account!

Page 2721

This was the first announcement of a grievance devised by the politicians now governing France to make trouble for the States with that kingdom and with Great Britain likewise. According to a treaty made at Hampton Court by Sully during his mission to England at the accession of James, it had been agreed that one-third of the moneys advanced by France in aid of the United Provinces should be credited to the account of Great Britain, in diminution of the debt for similar assistance rendered by Elizabeth to Henry. In regard to this treaty the States had not been at all consulted, nor did they acknowledge the slightest obligation in regard to it. The subsidies in men and in money provided for them both by France and by England in their struggle for national existence had always been most gratefully acknowledged by the Republic, but it had always been perfectly understood that these expenses had been incurred by each kingdom out of an intelligent and thrifty regard for its own interest. Nothing could be more ridiculous than to suppose France and England actuated by disinterested sympathy and benevolence when assisting the Netherland people in its life-and-death struggle against the dire and deadly enemy of both crowns. Henry protested that, while adhering to Rome in spiritual matters, his true alliances and strength had been found in the United Provinces, in Germany, and in Great Britain. As for the States, he had spent sixteen millions of livres, he said, in acquiring a perfect benevolence on the part of the States to his person. It was the best bargain he had ever made, and he should take care to preserve it at any cost whatever, for he considered himself able, when closely united with them, to bid defiance to all the kings in Europe together.

Yet it was now the settled policy of the Queen-Regent's council, so far as the knot of politicians guided by the Nuncius and the Spanish ambassador in the entresols of the Louvre could be called a council, to force the States to refund that third, estimated at something between three and four million livres, which France had advanced them on account of Great Britain.

Villeroy told the two ambassadors at this interview that, if Great Britain continued to treat the Queen-Regent in such fashion, she would be obliged to look about for other allies. There could hardly be doubt as to the quarter in which Mary de' Medici was likely to look. Meantime, the Secretary of State urged the envoys "to intervene at once to-mediate the difference." There could be as little doubt that to mediate the difference was simply to settle an account which they did not owe.

The whole object of the Minister at this first interview was to induce the States to take the whole Cleve enterprise upon their own shoulders, and to let France off altogether. The Queen-Regent as then advised meant to wash her hands of the possessory princes once and for ever. The envoys cut the matter short by assuring Villeroy that they would do nothing of the kind. He begged them piteously not to leave the princes in the lurch, and at the same time not to add to the burthens of France at so disastrous a moment.

Page 2722

So they parted. Next day, however, they visited the Secretary again, and found him more dismal and flaccid than ever.

He spoke feebly and drearily about the succour for the great enterprise, recounted all the difficulties in the way, and, having thrown down everything that the day before had been left standing, he tried to excuse an entire change of policy by the one miserable crime.

He painted a forlorn picture of the council and of France. “I can myself do nothing as I wish,” added the undisputed controller of that government’s policy, and then with a few more tears he concluded by requesting the envoys to address their demands to the Queen in writing.

This was done with the customary formalities and fine speeches on both sides; a dull comedy by which no one was amused.

Then Bouillon came again, and assured them that there had been a chance that the engagements of Henry, followed up by the promise of the Queen-Regent, would be carried out, but now the fact was not to be concealed that the continued battery of the Nuncius, of the ambassadors of Spain and of the Archdukes, had been so effective that nothing sure or solid was thenceforth to be expected; the council being resolved to accept the overtures of the Archduke for mutual engagement to abstain from the Julich enterprise.

Nothing in truth could be more pitiable than the helpless drifting of the once mighty kingdom, whenever the men who governed it withdrew their attention for an instant from their private schemes of advancement and plunder to cast a glance at affairs of State. In their secret heart they could not doubt that France was rushing on its ruin, and that in the alliance of the Dutch commonwealth, Britain, and the German Protestants, was its only safety. But they trembled before the Pope, grown bold and formidable since the death of the dreaded Henry. To offend his Holiness, the King of Spain, the Emperor, and the great Catholics of France, was to make a crusade against the Church. Garnier, the Jesuit, preached from his pulpit that “to strike a blow in the Cleve enterprise was no less a sin than to inflict a stab in the body of our Lord.” The Parliament of Paris having ordered the famous treatise of the Jesuit Mariana—justifying the killing of excommunicated kings by their subjects—to be publicly burned before Notre Dame, the Bishop opposed the execution of the decree. The Parliament of Paris, although crushed by Epernon in its attempts to fix the murder of the King upon himself as the true culprit, was at least strong enough to carry out this sentence upon a printed, volume recommending the deed, and the Queen’s council could only do its best to mitigate the awakened wrath of the Jesuits at this exercise of legal authority.—At the same time, it found on the whole so many more difficulties in a cynical and shameless withdrawal from the Treaty of Hall than in a nominal and tardy fulfilment of its conditions that it resolved at last

Page 2723

to furnish the 8000 foot and 2000 horse promised to the possessory princes. The next best thing to abandoning entirely even this little shred, this pitiful remnant, of the splendid designs of Henry was to so arrange matters that the contingent should be feebly commanded, and set on foot in so dilatory a manner that the petty enterprise should on the part of France be purely perfunctory. The grandees of the kingdom had something more important to do than to go crusading in Germany, with the help of a heretic republic, to set up the possessory princes. They were fighting over the prostrate dying form of their common mother for their share of the spoils, stripping France before she was dead, and casting lots for her vesture.

Soissons was on the whole in favour of the Cleve expedition. Epernon was desperately opposed to it, and maltreated Villeroy in full council when he affected to say a word, insincere as the Duke knew it to be, in favour of executing agreements signed by the monarch, and sealed with the great seal of France. The Duke of Guise, finding himself abandoned by the Queen, and bitterly opposed and hated by Soissons, took sides with his deaf and dumb and imbecile brother, and for a brief interval the Duke of Sully joined this strange combination of the House of Lorraine and chiefs of ancient Leaguers, who welcomed him with transport, and promised him security.

Then Bouillon, potent by his rank, his possessions, and his authority among the Protestants, publicly swore that he would ruin Sully and change the whole order of the government. What more lamentable spectacle, what more desolate future for the cause of religious equality, which for a moment had been achieved in France, than this furious alienation of the trusted leaders of the Huguenots, while their adversaries were carrying everything before them? At the council board Bouillon quarrelled ostentatiously with Sully, shook his fist in his face, and but for the Queen's presence would have struck him. Next day he found that the Queen was intriguing against himself as well as against Sully, was making a cat's-paw of him, and was holding secret councils daily from which he as well as Sully was excluded. At once he made overtures of friendship to Sully, and went about proclaiming to the world that all Huguenots were to be removed from participation in affairs of state. His vows of vengeance were for a moment hushed by the unanimous resolution of the council that, as first marshal of France, having his principality on the frontier, and being of the Reformed religion, he was the fittest of all to command the expedition. Surely it might be said that the winds and tides were not more changeful than the politics of the Queen's government. The Dutch ambassador was secretly requested by Villeroy to negotiate with Bouillon and offer him the command of the Julich expedition. The Duke affected to make difficulties, although burning to obtain the post, but at last consented. All was settled.

Page 2724

Aerssens communicated at once with Villeroy, and notice of Bouillon's acceptance was given to the Queen, when, behold, the very next day Marshal de la Chatre was appointed to the command expressly because he was a Catholic. Of course the Duke of Bouillon, furious with Soissons and Epernon and the rest of the government, was more enraged than ever against the Queen. His only hope was now in Conde, but Conde at the outset, on arriving at the Louvre, offered his heart to the Queen as a sheet of white paper. Epernon and Soissons received him with delight, and exchanged vows of an eternal friendship of several weeks' duration. And thus all the princes of the blood, all the cousins of Henry of Navarre, except the imbecile Conti, were ranged on the side of Spain, Rome, Mary de' Medici, and Concino Concini, while the son of the Balafre, the Duke of Mayenne, and all their adherents were making common cause with the Huguenots. What better example had been seen before, even in that country of pantomimic changes, of the effrontery with which Religion was made the strumpet of Political Ambition?

All that day and the next Paris was rife with rumours that there was to be a general massacre of the Huguenots to seal the new-born friendship of a Conde with a Medici. France was to renounce all her old alliances and publicly to enter into treaties offensive and defensive with Spain. A league like that of Bayonne made by the former Medicean Queen-Regent of France was now, at Villeroy's instigation, to be signed by Mary de' Medici. Meantime, Marshal de la Chatre, an honest soldier and fervent Papist, seventy-three years of age, ignorant of the language, the geography, the politics of the country to which he was sent, and knowing the road thither about as well, according to Aerssens, who was requested to give him a little preliminary instruction, as he did the road to India, was to co-operate with Barneveld and Maurice of Nassau in the enterprise against the duchies.

These were the cheerful circumstances amid which the first step in the dead Henry's grand design against the House of Austria and in support of Protestantism in half Europe and of religious equality throughout Christendom, was now to be ventured.

Cornelis van der Myle took leave of the Queen on terminating his brief special embassy, and was fain to content himself with languid assurances from that corpulent Tuscan dame of her cordial friendship for the United Provinces. Villeroy repeated that the contingent to be sent was furnished out of pure love to the Netherlands, the present government being in no wise bound by the late king's promises. He evaded the proposition of the States for renewing the treaty of close alliance by saying that he was then negotiating with the British government on the subject, who insisted as a preliminary step on the repayment of the third part of the sums advanced to the States by the late king.

He exchanged affectionate farewell greetings and good wishes with Jeannin and with the dropsical Duke of Mayenne, who was brought in his chair to his old fellow Leaguer's apartments at the moment of the Ambassador's parting interview.

Page 2725

There was abundant supply of smooth words, in the plentiful lack of any substantial nutriment, from the representatives of each busy faction into which the Medicean court was divided. Even Epernon tried to say a gracious word to the retiring envoy, assuring him that he would do as much for the cause as a good Frenchman and lover of his fatherland could do. He added, in rather a surly way, that he knew very well how foully he had been described to the States, but that the devil was not as black as he was painted. It was necessary, he said, to take care of one's own house first of all, and he knew very well that the States and all prudent persons would do the same thing.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

And now the knife of another priest-led fanatic
As with his own people, keeping no back-door open
At a blow decapitated France
Conclusive victory for the allies seemed as predestined
Epernon, the true murderer of Henry
Father Cotton, who was only too ready to betray the secrets
Great war of religion and politics was postponed
Jesuit Mariana—justifying the killing of excommunicated kings
No man pretended to think of the State
Practised successfully the talent of silence
Queen is entirely in the hands of Spain and the priests
Religion was made the strumpet of Political Ambition
Smooth words, in the plentiful lack of any substantial
Stroke of a broken table knife sharpened on a carriage wheel
The assassin, tortured and torn by four horses
They have killed him, 'e ammazato,' cried Concini
Things he could tell which are too odious and dreadful
Uncouple the dogs and let them run
Vows of an eternal friendship of several weeks' duration
What could save the House of Austria, the cause of Papacy
Wrath of the Jesuits at this exercise of legal authority

THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v4, 1610-12

CHAPTER V.

Interviews between the Dutch Commissioners and King James—Prince Maurice takes command of the Troops—Surrender of Julich—Matthias crowned King of Bohemia—-Death of Rudolph—James's Dream of a Spanish Marriage—Appointment of Vorstius in place of Arminius at Leyden—Interview between Maurice and Winwood—Increased Bitterness between Barneveld and Maurice—Projects of Spanish Marriages in France.

It is refreshing to escape from the atmosphere of self-seeking faction, feverish intrigue, and murderous stratagem in which unhappy France was stifling into the colder and calmer regions of Netherland policy.

Page 2726

No sooner had the tidings of Henry's murder reached the States than they felt that an immense responsibility had fallen on their shoulders. It is to the eternal honour of the Republic, of Barneveld, who directed her councils, and of Prince Maurice, who wielded her sword, that she was equal to the task imposed upon her.

There were open bets on the Exchange in Antwerp, after the death of Henry, that Maurice would likewise be killed within the month. Nothing seemed more probable, and the States implored the Stadholder to take special heed to himself. But this was a kind of caution which the Prince was not wont to regard. Nor was there faltering, distraction, cowardice, or parsimony in Republican councils.

We have heard the strong words of encouragement and sympathy addressed by the Advocate's instructions to the Queen-Regent and the leading statesmen of France. We have seen their effects in that lingering sentiment of shame which prevented the Spanish stipendiaries who governed the kingdom from throwing down the mask as cynically as they were at first inclined to do.

Not less manful and statesmanlike was the language held to the King of Great Britain and his ministers by the Advocate's directions. The news of the assassination reached the special ambassadors in London at three o'clock of Monday, the 17th May. James returned to Whitehall from a hunting expedition on the 21st, and immediately signified his intention of celebrating the occasion by inviting the high commissioners of the States to a banquet and festival at the palace.

Meantime they were instructed by Barneveld to communicate the results of the special embassy of the States to the late king according to the report just delivered to the Assembly. Thus James was to be informed of the common resolution and engagement then taken to support the cause of the princes. He was now seriously and explicitly to be summoned to assist the princes not only with the stipulated 4000 men, but with a much greater force, proportionate to the demands for the security and welfare of Christendom, endangered by this extraordinary event. He was assured that the States would exert themselves to the full measure of their ability to fortify and maintain the high interests of France, of the possessory princes, and of Christendom, so that the hopes of the perpetrators of the foul deed would be confounded.

"They hold this to be the occasion," said the envoys, "to show to all the world that it is within your power to rescue the affairs of France, Germany, and of the United Provinces from the claws of those who imagine for themselves universal monarchy."

They concluded by requesting the King to come to "a resolution on this affair royally, liberally, and promptly, in order to take advantage of the time, and not to allow the adversary to fortify himself in his position"; and they pledged the States-General to stand by and second him with all their power.

Page 2727

The commissioners, having read this letter to Lord Salisbury before communicating it to the King, did not find the Lord Treasurer very prompt or sympathetic in his reply. There had evidently been much jealousy at the English court of the confidential and intimate relations recently established with Henry, to which allusions were made in the documents read at the present conference. Cecil, while expressing satisfaction in formal terms at the friendly language of the States, and confidence in the sincerity of their friendship for his sovereign, intimated very plainly that more had passed between the late king and the authorities of the Republic than had been revealed by either party to the King of Great Britain, or than could be understood from the letters and papers now communicated. He desired further information from the commissioners, especially in regard to those articles of their instructions which referred to a general rupture. They professed inability to give more explanations than were contained in the documents themselves. If suspicion was felt, they said, that the French King had been proposing anything in regard to a general rupture, either on account of the retreat of Conde, the affair of Savoy, or anything else, they would reply that the ambassadors in France had been instructed to decline committing the States until after full communication and advice and ripe deliberation with his British Majesty and council, as well as the Assembly of the States-General; and it had been the intention of the late king to have conferred once more and very confidentially with Prince Maurice and Count Lewis William before coming to a decisive resolution.

It was very obvious however to the commissioners that their statement gave no thorough satisfaction, and that grave suspicions remained of something important kept back by them. Cecil's manner was constrained and cold, and certainly there were no evidences of profound sorrow at the English court for the death of Henry.

"The King of France," said the High Treasurer, "meant to make a master-stroke—a coup de maistre—but he who would have all may easily lose all. Such projects as these should not have been formed or taken in hand without previous communication with his Majesty of Great Britain."

All arguments on the part of the ambassadors to induce the Lord Treasurer or other members of the government to enlarge the succour intended for the Cleve affair were fruitless. The English troops regularly employed in the States' service might be made use of with the forces sent by the Republic itself. More assistance than this it was idle to expect, unless after a satisfactory arrangement with the present regency of France. The proposition, too, of the States for a close and general alliance was coldly repulsed. "No resolution can be taken as to that," said Cecil; "the death of the French king has very much altered such matters."

At a little later hour on the same day the commissioners, according to previous invitation, dined with the King.

Page 2728

No one sat at the table but his Majesty and themselves, and they all kept their hats on their heads. The King was hospitable, gracious, discursive, loquacious, very theological.

He expressed regret for the death of the King of France, and said that the pernicious doctrine out of which such vile crimes grew must be uprooted. He asked many questions in regard to the United Netherlands, enquiring especially as to the late commotions at Utrecht, and the conduct of Prince Maurice on that occasion. He praised the resolute conduct of the States-General in suppressing those tumults with force, adding, however, that they should have proceeded with greater rigour against the ringleaders of the riot. He warmly recommended the Union of the Provinces.

He then led the conversation to the religious controversies in the Netherlands, and in reply to his enquiries was informed that the points in dispute related to predestination and its consequences.

“I have studied that subject,” said James, “as well as anybody, and have come to the conclusion that nothing certain can be laid down in regard to it. I have myself not always been of one mind about it, but I will bet that my opinion is the best of any, although I would not hang my salvation upon it. My Lords the States would do well to order their doctors and teachers to be silent on this topic. I have hardly ventured, moreover, to touch upon the matter of justification in my own writings, because that also seemed to hang upon predestination.”

Thus having spoken with the air of a man who had left nothing further to be said on predestination or justification, the King rose, took off his hat, and drank a bumper to the health of the States-General and his Excellency Prince Maurice, and success to the affair of Cleve.

After dinner there was a parting interview in the gallery. The King, attended by many privy councillors and high functionaries of state, bade the commissioners a cordial farewell, and, in order to show his consideration for their government, performed the ceremony of knighthood upon them, as was his custom in regard to the ambassadors of Venice. The sword being presented to him by the Lord Chamberlain, James touched each of the envoys on the shoulder as he dismissed him. “Out of respect to My Lords the States,” said they in their report, “we felt compelled to allow ourselves to be burthened with this honour.”

Thus it became obvious to the States-General that there was but little to hope for from Great Britain or France. France, governed by Concini and by Spain, was sure to do her best to traverse the designs of the Republic, and, while perfunctorily and grudgingly complying with the letter of the Hall treaty, was secretly neutralizing by intrigue the slender military aid which de la Chatre was to bring to Prince Maurice. The close

alliance of France and Protestantism had melted into air. On the other hand the new Catholic

Page 2729

League sprang into full luxuriance out of the grave of Henry, and both Spain and the Pope gave their hearty adhesion to the combinations of Maximilian of Bavaria, now that the mighty designs of the French king were buried with him. The Duke of Savoy, caught in the trap of his own devising, was fain to send his son to sue to Spain for pardon for the family upon his knees, and expiated by draining a deep cup of humiliation his ambitious designs upon the Milanese and the matrimonial alliance with France. Venice recoiled in horror from the position she found herself in as soon as the glamour of Henry's seductive policy was dispelled, while James of Great Britain, rubbing his hands with great delight at the disappearance from the world of the man he so admired, bewailed, and hated, had no comfort to impart to the States-General thus left in virtual isolation. The barren burthen of knighthood and a sermon on predestination were all he could bestow upon the high commissioners in place of the alliance which he eluded, and the military assistance which he point-blank refused. The possessory princes, in whose cause the sword was drawn, were too quarrelsome and too fainthearted to serve for much else than an incumbrance either in the cabinet or the field.

And the States-General were equal to the immense responsibility. Steadily, promptly, and sagaciously they confronted the wrath, the policy, and the power of the Empire, of Spain, and of the Pope. Had the Republic not existed, nothing could have prevented that debateable and most important territory from becoming provinces of Spain, whose power thus dilated to gigantic proportions in the very face of England would have been more menacing than in the days of the Armada. Had the Republic faltered, she would have soon ceased to exist. But the Republic did not falter.

On the 13th July, Prince Maurice took command of the States' forces, 13,000 foot and 3000 horse, with thirty pieces of cannon, assembled at Schenkenschans. The July English and French regiments in the regular service of the United Provinces were included in these armies, but there were no additions to them: "The States did seven times as much," Barneveld justly averred, "as they had stipulated to do." Maurice, moving with the precision and promptness which always marked his military operations, marched straight upon Julich, and laid siege to that important fortress. The Archdukes at Brussels, determined to keep out of the fray as long as possible, offered no opposition to the passage of his supplies up the Rhine, which might have been seriously impeded by them at Rheinberg. The details of the siege, as of all the Prince's sieges, possess no more interest to the general reader than the working out of a geometrical problem. He was incapable of a flaw in his calculations, but it was impossible for him quite to complete the demonstration before the arrival of de la Chatre. Maurice received with courtesy the Marshal, who arrived on the 18th August, at the head of his contingent of 8000 foot and a few squadrons of cavalry, and there was great show of harmony between them. For any practical purposes, de la Chatre might as well have remained in France. For political ends his absence would have been preferable to his presence.

Page 2730

Maurice would have rejoiced, had the Marshal blundered longer along the road to the debateable land than he had done. He had almost brought Julich to reduction. A fortnight later the place surrendered. The terms granted by the conqueror were equitable. No change was to be made in the liberty of Roman Catholic worship, nor in the city magistracy. The citadel and its contents were to be handed over to the Princes of Brandenburg and Neuburg. Archduke Leopold and his adherents departed to Prague, to carry out as he best could his farther designs upon the crown of Bohemia, this first portion of them having so lamentably failed, and Sergeant-Major Frederick Pithan, of the regiment of Count Ernest Casimir of Nassau, was appointed governor of Julich in the interest of the possessory princes.

Thus without the loss of a single life, the Republic, guided by her consummate statesman and unrivalled general, had gained an immense victory, had installed the Protestant princes in the full possession of those splendid and important provinces, and had dictated her decrees on German soil to the Emperor of Germany, and had towed, as it were, Great Britain and France along in her wake, instead of humbly following those powers, and had accomplished all that she had ever proposed to do, even in alliance with them both.

The King of England considered that quite enough had been done, and was in great haste to patch up a reconciliation. He thought his ambassador would soon “have as good occasion to employ his tongue and his pen as General Cecil and his soldiers have done their swords and their mattocks.”

He had no sympathy with the cause of Protestantism, and steadily refused to comprehend the meaning of the great movements in the duchies. “I only wish that I may handsomely wind myself out of this quarrel, where the principal parties do so little for themselves,” he said.

De la Chatre returned with his troops to France within a fortnight after his arrival on the scene. A mild proposition made by the French government through the Marshal, that the provinces should be held in seguestration by France until a decision as to the true sovereignty could be reached, was promptly declined. Maurice of Nassau had hardly gained so signal a triumph for the Republic and for the Protestant cause only to hand it over to Concini and Villeroy for the benefit of Spain. Julich was thought safer in the keeping of Sergeant Pithan.

By the end of September the States’ troops had returned to their own country.

Thus the Republic, with eminent success, had accomplished a brief and brilliant campaign, but no statesman could suppose that the result was more than a temporary one. These coveted provinces, most valuable in themselves and from their important position, would probably not be suffered peacefully to remain very long under the protection of the heretic States-General and in the ‘Condominium’ of two Protestant

Page 2731

princes. There was fear among the Imperialists, Catholics, and Spaniards, lest the baleful constellation of the Seven Provinces might be increased by an eighth star. And this was a project not to be tolerated. It was much already that the upstart confederacy had defied Pope, Emperor, and King, as it were, on their own domains, had dictated arrangements in Germany directly in the teeth of its emperor, using France as her subordinate, and compelling the British king to acquiesce in what he most hated.

But it was not merely to surprise Julich, and to get a foothold in the duchies, that Leopold had gone forth on his adventure. His campaign, as already intimated, was part of a wide scheme in which he had persuaded his emperor-cousin to acquiesce. Poor Rudolph had been at last goaded into a feeble attempt at revolt against his three brothers and his cousin Ferdinand. Peace-loving, inert, fond of his dinner, fonder of his magnificent collections of gems and intagli, liking to look out of window at his splendid collection of horses, he was willing to pass a quiet life, afar from the din of battles and the turmoil of affairs. As he happened to be emperor of half Europe, these harmless tastes could not well be indulged. Moon-faced and fat, silent and slow, he was not imperial of aspect on canvas or coin, even when his brows were decorated with the conventional laurel wreath. He had been stripped of his authority and all but discrowned by his more bustling brothers Matthias and Max, while the sombre figure of Styrian Ferdinand, pupil of the Jesuits, and passionate admirer of Philip *ii*., stood ever in the background, casting a prophetic shadow over the throne and over Germany.

The brothers were endeavouring to persuade Rudolph that he would find more comfort in Innsbruck than in Prague; that he required repose after the strenuous labours of government. They told him, too, that it would be wise to confer the royal crown of Bohemia upon Matthias, lest, being elective and also an electorate, the crown and vote of that country might pass out of the family, and so both Bohemia and the Empire be lost to the Habsburgs. The kingdom being thus secured to Matthias and his heirs, the next step, of course, was to proclaim him King of the Romans. Otherwise there would be great danger and detriment to Hungary, and other hereditary states of that conglomerate and anonymous monarchy which owned the sway of the great Habsburg family.

The unhappy emperor was much piqued. He had been deprived by his brother of Hungary, Moravia, and Austria, while Matthias was now at Prague with an army, ostensibly to obtain ratification of the peace with Turkey, but in reality to force the solemn transfer of those realms and extort the promise of Bohemia. Could there be a better illustration of the absurdities of such a system of Imperialism?

And now poor Rudolph was to be turned out of the Hradschin, and sent packing with or without his collections to the Tyrol.

Page 2732

The bellicose bishop of Strassburg and Passau, brother of Ferdinand, had little difficulty in persuading the downtrodden man to rise to vengeance. It had been secretly agreed between the two that Leopold, at the head of a considerable army of mercenaries which he had contrived to levy, should dart into Julich as the Emperor's representative, seize the debateable duchies, and hold them in sequestration until the Emperor should decide to whom they belonged, and, then, rushing back to Bohemia, should annihilate Matthias, seize Prague, and deliver Rudolph from bondage. It was further agreed that Leopold, in requital of these services, should receive the crown of Bohemia, be elected King of the Romans, and declared heir to the Emperor, so far as Rudolph could make him his heir.

The first point in the program he had only in part accomplished. He had taken Julich, proclaimed the intentions of the Emperor, and then been driven out of his strong position by the wise policy of the States under the guidance of Barneveld and by the consummate strategy of Maurice. It will be seen therefore that the Republic was playing a world's game at this moment, and doing it with skill and courage. On the issue of the conflict which had been begun and was to be long protracted in the duchies, and to spread over nearly all Christendom besides, would depend the existence of the United Netherlands and the fate of Protestantism.

The discomfited Leopold swept back at the head of his mercenaries, 9000 foot and 3000 horse, through Alsace and along the Danube to Linz and so to Prague, marauding, harrying, and black-mailing the country as he went. He entered the city on the 15th of February 1611, fighting his way through crowds of exasperated burghers. Sitting in full harness on horseback in the great square before the cathedral, the warlike bishop compelled the population to make oath to him as the Emperor's commissary. The street fighting went on however day by day, poor Rudolph meantime cowering in the Hradschin. On the third day, Leopold, driven out of the town, took up a position on the heights, from which he commanded it with his artillery. Then came a feeble voice from the Hradschin, telling all men that these Passau marauders and their episcopal chief were there by the Emperor's orders. The triune city—the old, the new, and the Jew—-was bidden to send deputies to the palace and accept the Imperial decrees. No deputies came at the bidding. The Bohemians, especially the Praguers, being in great majority Protestants knew very well that Leopold was fighting the cause of the Papacy and Spain in Bohemia as well as in the duchies.

Page 2733

And now Matthias appeared upon the scene. The Estates had already been in communication with him, better hopes, for the time at least, being entertained from him than from the flaccid Rudolph. Moreover a kind of compromise had been made in the autumn between Matthias and the Emperor after the defeat of Leopold in the duchies. The real king had fallen at the feet of the nominal one by proxy of his brother Maximilian. Seven thousand men of the army of Matthias now came before Prague under command of Colonitz. The Passauers, receiving three months pay from the Emperor, marched quietly off. Leopold disappeared for the time. His chancellor and counsellor in the duchies, Francis Teynagel, a Geldrian noble, taken prisoner and put to the torture, revealed the little plot of the Emperor in favour of the Bishop, and it was believed that the Pope, the King of Spain, and Maximilian of Bavaria were friendly to the scheme. This was probable, for Leopold at last made no mystery of his resolve to fight Protestantism to the death, and to hold the duchies, if he could, for the cause of Rome and Austria.

Both Rudolph and Matthias had committed themselves to the toleration of the Reformed religion. The famous “Majesty-Letter,” freshly granted by the Emperor (1609), and the Compromise between the Catholic and Protestant Estates had become the law of the land. Those of the Bohemian confession, a creed commingled of Hussism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism, had obtained toleration. In a country where nine-tenths of the population were Protestants it was permitted to Protestants to build churches and to worship God in them unmolested. But these privileges had been extorted by force, and there was a sullen, dogged determination which might be easily guessed at to revoke them should it ever become possible. The House of Austria, reigning in Spain, Italy, and Germany, was bound by the very law of their being to the Roman religion. Toleration of other worship signified in their eyes both a defeat and a crime.

Thus the great conflict, to be afterwards known as the Thirty Years’ War, had in reality begun already, and the Netherlands, in spite of the truce, were half unconsciously taking a leading part in it. The odds at that moment in Germany seemed desperately against the House of Austria, so deep and wide was the abyss between throne and subjects which religious difference had created. But the reserved power in Spain, Italy, and Southern Germany was sure enough to make itself felt sooner or later on the Catholic side.

Meantime the Estates of Bohemia knew well enough that the Imperial house was bent on destroying the elective principle of the Empire, and on keeping the crown of Bohemia in perpetuity. They had also discovered that Bishop-Archduke Leopold had been selected by Rudolph as chief of the reactionary movement against Protestantism. They could not know at that moment whether his plans were likely to prove fantastic or dangerous.

Page 2734

So Matthias came to Prague at the invitation of the Estates, entering the city with all the airs of a conqueror. Rudolph received his brother with enforced politeness, and invited him to reside in the Hradschin. This proposal was declined by Matthias, who sent a colonel however, with six pieces of artillery, to guard and occupy that palace. The Passau prisoners were pardoned and released, and there was a general reconciliation. A month later, Matthias went in pomp to the chapel of the holy Wenceslaus, that beautiful and barbarous piece of mediaeval, Sclavonic architecture, with its sombre arches, and its walls encrusted with huge precious stones. The Estates of Bohemia, arrayed in splendid Zchech costume, and kneeling on the pavement, were asked whether they accepted Matthias, King of Hungary, as their lawful king. Thrice they answered Aye. Cardinal Dietrichstein then put the historic crown of St. Wenceslaus on the King's head, and Matthias swore to maintain the laws and privileges of Bohemia, including the recent charters granting liberty of religion to Protestants. Thus there was temporary, if hollow, truce between the religious parties, and a sham reconciliation between the Emperor and his brethren. The forlorn Rudolph moped away the few months of life left to him in the Hradschin, and died 1612 soon after the new year. The House of Austria had not been divided, Matthias succeeded his brother, Leopold's visions melted into air, and it was for the future to reveal whether the Majesty-Letter and the Compromise had been written on very durable material.

And while such was the condition of affairs in Germany immediately following the Cleve and Julich campaign, the relations of the Republic both to England and France were become rapidly more dangerous than they ever had been. It was a severe task for Barneveld, and enough to overtax the energies of any statesman, to maintain his hold on two such slippery governments as both had become since the death of their great monarchs. It had been an easier task for William the Silent to steer his course, notwithstanding all the perversities, short-comings, brow-beatings, and inconsistencies that he had been obliged to endure from Elizabeth and Henry. Genius, however capricious and erratic at times, has at least vision, and it needed no elaborate arguments to prove to both those sovereigns that the severance of their policy from that of the Netherlands was impossible without ruin to the Republic and incalculable danger themselves.

But now France and England were both tending towards Spain through a stupidity on the part of their rulers such as the gods are said to contend against in vain. Barneveld was not a god nor a hero, but a courageous and wide-seeing statesman, and he did his best. Obliged by his position to affect admiration, or at least respect, where no emotion but contempt was possible, his daily bread was bitter enough. It was absolutely necessary to humour those whom knew to be traversing his policy and desiring his ruin, for there was no other way to serve his country and save it from impending danger. So long as he was faithfully served by his subordinates, and not betrayed by those to whom he gave his heart, he could confront external enemies and mould the policy of wavering allies.

Page 2735

Few things in history are more pitiable than the position of James in regard to Spain. For seven long years he was as one entranced, the slave to one idea, a Spanish marriage for his son. It was in vain that his counsellors argued, Parliament protested, allies implored. Parliament was told that a royal family matter regarded himself alone, and that interference on their part was an impertinence. Parliament's duty was a simple one, to give him advice if he asked it, and money when he required it, without asking for reasons. It was already a great concession that he should ask for it in person. They had nothing to do with his affairs nor with general politics. The mystery of government was a science beyond their reach, and with which they were not to meddle. "Ne sutor ultra crepidam," said the pedant.

Upon that one point his policy was made to turn. Spain held him in the hollow of her hand. The Infanta, with two million crowns in dowry, was promised, withheld, brought forward again like a puppet to please or irritate a froward child. Gondemar, the Spanish ambassador, held him spellbound. Did he falter in his opposition to the States—did he cease to goad them for their policy in the duchies—did he express sympathy with Bohemian Protestantism, or, as time went on, did he dare to lift a finger or touch his pocket in behalf of his daughter and the unlucky Elector-Palatine; did he, in short, move a step in the road which England had ever trod and was bound to tread—the road of determined resistance to Spanish ambition—instantaneously the Infanta withheld, and James was on his knees again. A few years later, when the great Raleigh returned from his trans-Alantic expedition, Gondemar fiercely denounced him to the King as the worst enemy of Spain. The usual threat was made, the wand was waved, and the noblest head in England fell upon the block, in pursuance of an obsolete sentence fourteen years old.

It is necessary to hold fast this single clue to the crooked and amazing entanglements of the policy of James. The insolence, the meanness, and the prevarications of this royal toad-eater are only thus explained.

Yet Philip *iii*. declared on his death-bed that he had never had a serious intention of bestowing his daughter on the Prince.

The vanity and the hatreds of theology furnished the chief additional material in the policy of James towards the Provinces. The diplomacy of his reign so far as the Republic was concerned is often a mere mass of controversial divinity, and gloomy enough of its kind. Exactly at this moment Conrad Vorstius had been called by the University of Leyden to the professorship vacant by the death of Arminius, and the wrath of Peter Plancius and the whole orthodox party knew no bounds. Born in Cologne, Vorstius had been a lecturer in Geneva, and beloved by Beza. He had written a book against the Jesuit Belarmino, which he had dedicated to the States-General.

Page 2736

But he was now accused of Arminianism, Socianism, Pelagianism, Atheism—one knew not what. He defended himself in writing against these various charges, and declared himself a believer in the Trinity, in the Divinity of Christ, in the Atonement. But he had written a book on the Nature of God, and the wrath of Gomarus and Plancius and Bogerman was as nothing to the ire of James when that treatise was one day handed to him on returning from hunting. He had scarcely looked into it before he was horror-struck, and instantly wrote to Sir Ralph Winwood, his ambassador at the Hague, ordering him to insist that this blasphemous monster should at once be removed from the country. Who but James knew anything of the Nature of God, for had he not written a work in Latin explaining it all, so that humbler beings might read and be instructed.

Sir Ralph accordingly delivered a long sermon to the States on the brief supplied by his Majesty, told them that to have Vorstius as successor to Arminius was to fall out of the frying-pan into the fire, and handed them a “catalogue” prepared by the King of the blasphemies, heresies, and atheisms of the Professor. “Notwithstanding that the man in full assembly of the States of Holland,” said the Ambassador with headlong and confused rhetoric, “had found the means to palliate and plaster the dung of his heresies, and thus to dazzle the eyes of good people,” yet it was necessary to protest most vigorously against such an appointment, and to advise that “his works should be publicly burned in the open places of all the cities.”

The Professor never was admitted to perform his functions of theology, but he remained at Leyden, so Winwood complained, “honoured, recognized as a singularity and ornament to the Academy in place of the late Joseph Scaliger.”—“The friendship of the King and the heresy of Vorstius are quite incompatible,” said the Envoy.

Meantime the Advocate, much distressed at the animosity of England bursting forth so violently on occasion of the appointment of a divinity professor at Leyden, and at the very instant too when all the acuteness of his intellect was taxed to keep on good or even safe terms with France, did his best to stem these opposing currents. His private letters to his old and confidential friend, Noel de Carom, States’ ambassador in London, reveal the perplexities of his soul and the upright patriotism by which he was guided in these gathering storms. And this correspondence, as well as that maintained by him at a little later period with the successor of Aerssens at Paris, will be seen subsequently to have had a direct and most important bearing upon the policy of the Republic and upon his own fate. It is necessary therefore that the reader, interested in these complicated affairs which were soon to bring on a sanguinary war on a scale even vaster than the one which had been temporarily suspended, should give close attention to papers never before exhumed from the musty sepulchre of national archives, although constantly alluded to in the records of important state trials. It is strange enough to observe the apparent triviality of the circumstances out of which gravest events seem to follow. But

the circumstances were in reality threads of iron which led down to the very foundations of the earth.

Page 2737

“I wish to know,” wrote the Advocate to Caron, “from whom the Archbishop of Canterbury received the advices concerning Vorstius in order to find out what is meant by all this.”

It will be remembered that Whitgift was of opinion that James was directly inspired by the Holy Ghost, and that as he affected to deem him the anointed High-priest of England, it was natural that he should encourage the King in his claims to be ‘Pontifex maximus’ for the Netherlands likewise.

“We are busy here,” continued Barneveld, “in examining all things for the best interests of the country and the churches. I find the nobles and cities here well resolved in this regard, although there be some disagreements ‘in modo.’ Vorstius, having been for many years professor and minister of theology at Steinfurt, having manifested his learning in many books written against the Jesuits, and proved himself pure and moderate in doctrine, has been called to the vacant professorship at Leyden. This appointment is now countermined by various means. We are doing our best to arrange everything for the highest good of the Provinces and the churches. Believe this and believe nothing else. Pay heed to no other information. Remember what took place in Flanders, events so well known to you. It is not for me to pass judgment in these matters. Do you, too, suspend your judgment.”

The Advocate’s allusion was to the memorable course of affairs in Flanders at an epoch when many of the most inflammatory preachers and politicians of the Reformed religion, men who refused to employ a footman or a housemaid not certified to be thoroughly orthodox, subsequently after much sedition and disturbance went over to Spain and the Catholic religion.

A few weeks later Barneveld sent copies to Caron of the latest harangues of Winwood in the Assembly and the reply of My Lords on the Vorstian business; that is to say, the freshest dialogue on predestination between the King and the Advocate. For as James always dictated word for word the orations of his envoy, so had their Mightinesses at this period no head and no mouthpiece save Barneveld alone. Nothing could be drearier than these controversies, and the reader shall be spared as much, as possible the infliction of reading them. It will be necessary, however, for the proper understanding of subsequent events that he should be familiar with portions of the Advocate’s confidential letters.

“Sound well the gentleman you wot of,” said Barneveld, “and other personages as to the conclusive opinions over there. The course of the propositions does not harmonize with what I have myself heard out of the King’s mouth at other times, nor with the reports of former ambassadors. I cannot well understand that the King should, with such preciseness, condemn all other opinions save those of Calvin and Beza. It is important to the service of this country that one should know the final intention of his Majesty.”

Page 2738

And this was the misery of the position. For it was soon to appear that the King's definite and final intentions, varied from day to day. It was almost humorous to find him at that moment condemning all opinions but those of Calvin and Beza in Holland, while his course to the strictest confessors of that creed in England was so ferocious.

But Vorstius was a rival author to his Majesty on subjects treated of by both, so that literary spite of the most venomous kind, stirred into theological hatred, was making a dangerous mixture. Had a man with the soul and sense of the Advocate sat on the throne which James was regarding at that moment as a professor's chair, the world's history would have been changed.

"I fear," continued Barneveld, "that some of our own precisians have been spinning this coil for us over there, and if the civil authority can be thus countermined, things will go as in Flanders in your time. Pray continue to be observant, discreet, and moderate."

The Advocate continued to use his best efforts to smooth the rising waves. He humoured and even flattered the King, although perpetually denounced by Winwood in his letters to his sovereign as tyrannical, over-bearing, malignant, and treacherous. He did his best to counsel moderation and mutual toleration, for he felt that these needless theological disputes about an abstract and insoluble problem of casuistry were digging an abyss in which the Republic might be swallowed up for ever. If ever man worked steadily with the best lights of experience and inborn sagacity for the good of his country and in defence of a constitutional government, horribly defective certainly, but the only legal one, and on the whole a more liberal polity than any then existing, it was Barneveld. Courageously, steadily, but most patiently, he stood upon that position so vital and daily so madly assailed; the defence of the civil authority against the priesthood. He felt instinctively and keenly that where any portion of the subjects or citizens of a country can escape from the control of government and obey other head than the lawful sovereignty, whether monarchical or republican, social disorder and anarchy must be ever impending.

"We are still tortured by ecclesiastical disputes," he wrote a few weeks later to Caron. "Besides many libels which have appeared in print, the letters of his Majesty and the harangues of Winwood have been published; to what end you who know these things by experience can judge. The truth of the matter of Vorstius is that he was legally called in July 1610, that he was heard last May before My Lords the States with six preachers to oppose him, and in the same month duly accepted and placed in office. He has given no public lectures as yet. You will cause this to be known on fitting opportunity. Believe and cause to be believed that his Majesty's letters and Sir R. Winwood's propositions have been and shall be well considered, and that I am working

Page 2739

with all my strength to that end. You know the constitution of our country, and can explain everything for the best. Many pious and intelligent people in this State hold themselves assured that his Majesty according to his royal exceeding great wisdom, foresight, and affection for the welfare of this land will not approve that his letters and Winwood's propositions should be scattered by the press among the common people. Believe and cause to be believed, to your best ability, that My Lords the States of Holland desire to maintain the true Christian, Reformed religion as well in the University of Leyden as in all their cities and villages. The only dispute is on the high points of predestination and its adjuncts, concerning which moderation and a more temperate teaching is furthered by some amongst us. Many think that such is the edifying practice in England. Pray have the kindness to send me the English Confession of the year 1572, with the corrections and alterations up to this year."

But the fires were growing hotter, fanned especially by Flemish ministers, a brotherhood of whom Barneveld had an especial distrust, and who certainly felt great animosity to him. His moderate counsels were but oil to the flames. He was already depicted by zealots and calumniators as false to the Reformed creed.

"Be assured and assure others," he wrote again to Caron, "that in the matter of religion I am, and by God's grace shall remain, what I ever have been. Make the same assurances as to my son-in-law and brother. We are not a little amazed that a few extraordinary Puritans, mostly Flemings and Frisians, who but a short time ago had neither property nor kindred in the country, and have now very little of either, and who have given but slender proofs of constancy or service to the fatherland, could through pretended zeal gain credit over there against men well proved in all respects. We wonder the more because they are endeavouring, in ecclesiastical matters at least, to usurp an extraordinary authority, against which his Majesty, with very weighty reasons, has so many times declared his opinion founded upon God's Word and upon all laws and principles of justice."

It was Barneveld's practice on this as on subsequent occasions very courteously to confute the King out of his own writings and speeches, and by so doing to be unconsciously accumulating an undying hatred against himself in the royal breast. Certainly nothing could be easier than to show that James, while encouraging in so reckless a manner the emancipation of the ministers of an advanced sect in the Reformed Church from control of government, and their usurpation of supreme authority which had been destroyed in England, was outdoing himself in dogmatism and inconsistency. A king-highpriest, who dictated his supreme will to bishops and ministers as well as to courts and parliaments, was ludicrously employed in a foreign country in enforcing the superiority of the Church to the State.

Page 2740

“You will give good assurances,” said the Advocate, “upon my word, that the conservation of the true Reformed religion is as warmly cherished here, especially by me, as at any time during the war.”

He next alluded to the charges then considered very grave against certain writings of Vorstius, and with equal fairness to his accusers as he had been to the Professor gave a pledge that the subject should be examined.

“If the man in question,” he said, “be the author, as perhaps falsely imputed, of the work ‘De Filiatione Christi’ or things of that sort, you may be sure that he shall have no furtherance here.” He complained, however, that before proof the cause was much prejudiced by the circulation through the press of letters on the subject from important personages in England. His own efforts to do justice in the matter were traversed by such machinations. If the Professor proved to be guilty of publications fairly to be deemed atheistical and blasphemous, he should be debarred from his functions, but the outcry from England was doing more harm than good.

“The published extract from the letter of the Archbishop,” he wrote, “to the effect that the King will declare My Lords the States to be his enemies if they are not willing to send the man away is doing much harm.”

Truly, if it had come to this—that a King of England was to go to war with a neighbouring and friendly republic because an obnoxious professor of theology was not instantly hurled from a university of which his Majesty was not one of the overseers—it was time to look a little closely into the functions of governments and the nature of public and international law. Not that the sword of James was in reality very likely to be unsheathed, but his shriekings and his scribblings, pacific as he was himself, were likely to arouse passions which torrents of blood alone could satiate.

“The publishing and spreading among the community,” continued Barneveld, “of M. Winwood’s protestations and of many indecent libels are also doing much mischief, for the nature of this people does not tolerate such things. I hope, however, to obtain the removal according to his Majesty’s desire. Keep me well informed, and send me word what is thought in England by the four divines of the book of Vorstius, ‘De Deo,’ and of his declarations on the points sent here by his Majesty. Let me know, too, if there has been any later confession published in England than that of the year 1562, and whether the nine points pressed in the year 1595 were accepted and published in 1603. If so, pray send them, as they maybe made use of in settling our differences here.”

Thus it will be seen that the spirit of conciliation, of a calm but earnest desire to obtain a firm grasp of the most reasonable relations between Church and State through patient study of the phenomena exhibited in other countries, were the leading motives of the man. Yet he was perpetually denounced in private as an unbeliever, an atheist, a tyrant,

because he resisted dictation from the clergy within the Provinces and from kings outside them.

Page 2741

“It was always held here to be one of the chief infractions of the laws and privileges of this country,” he said, “that former princes had placed themselves in matter of religion in the tutelage of the Pope and the Spanish Inquisition, and that they therefore on complaint of their good subjects could take no orders on that subject. Therefore it cannot be considered strange that we are not willing here to fall into the same obloquy. That one should now choose to turn the magistrates, who were once so seriously summoned on their conscience and their office to adopt the Reformation and to take the matter of religion to heart, into ignorants, to deprive them of knowledge, and to cause them to see with other eyes than their own, cannot by many be considered right and reasonable. ‘Intelligenti pauca.’”

[The interesting letter from which I have given these copious extracts was ordered by its writer to be burned. “Lecta vulcano” was noted at the end of it, as was not unfrequently the case with the Advocate. It never was burned; but, innocent and reasonable as it seems, was made use of by Barneveld’s enemies with deadly effect. J.L.M.]

Meantime M. de Refuge, as before stated, was on his way to the Hague, to communicate the news of the double marriage. He had fallen sick at Rotterdam, and the nature of his instructions and of the message he brought remained unknown, save from the previous despatches of Aerssens. But reports were rife that he was about to propose new terms of alliance to the States, founded on large concessions to the Roman Catholic religion. Of course intense jealousy was excited at the English court, and calumny plumed her wings for a fresh attack upon the Advocate. Of course he was sold to Spain, the Reformed religion was to be trampled out in the Provinces, and the Papacy and Holy Inquisition established on its ruins. Nothing could be more diametrically the reverse of the fact than such hysterical suspicions as to the instructions of the ambassador extraordinary from France, and this has already appeared. The Vorstian affair too was still in the same phase, the Advocate professing a willingness that justice should be done in the matter, while courteously but firmly resisting the arrogant pretensions of James to take the matter out of the jurisdiction of the States.

“I stand amazed,” he said, “at the partisanship and the calumnious representations which you tell me of, and cannot imagine what is thought nor what is proposed. Should M. de Refuge make any such propositions as are feared, believe, and cause his Majesty and his counsellors to believe, that they would be of no effect. Make assurances upon my word, notwithstanding all advices to the contrary, that such things would be flatly refused. If anything is published or proven to the discredit of Vorstius, send it to me. Believe that we shall not defend heretics nor schismatics against the pure Evangelical doctrine, but one cannot conceive here

Page 2742

that the knowledge and judicature of the matter belongs anywhere else than to My Lords the States of Holland, in whose service he has legally been during four months before his Majesty made the least difficulty about it. Called hither legally a year before, with the knowledge and by the order of his Excellency and the councillors of state of Holland, he has been countermined by five or six Flemings and Frisians, who, without recognizing the lawful authority of the magistrates, have sought assistance in foreign countries—in Germany and afterwards in England. Yes, they have been so presumptuous as to designate one of their own men for the place. If such a proceeding should be attempted in England, I leave it to those whose business it would be to deal with it to say what would be done. I hope therefore that one will leave the examination and judgment of this matter freely to us, without attempting to make us—against the principles of the Reformation and the liberties and laws of the land—executors of the decrees of others, as the man here wishes to obtrude it upon us."

He alluded to the difficulty in raising the ways and means; saying that the quota of Holland, as usual, which was more than half the whole, was ready, while other provinces were in arrears. Yet they were protected, while Holland was attacked.

"Methinks I am living in a strange world," he said, "when those who have received great honour from Holland, and who in their conscience know that they alone have conserved the Commonwealth, are now traduced with such great calumnies. But God the Lord Almighty is just, and will in His own time do chastisement."

The affair of Vorstius dragged its slow length along, and few things are more astounding at this epoch than to see such a matter, interesting enough certainly to theologians, to the University, and to the rising generation of students, made the topic of unceasing and embittered diplomatic controversy between two great nations, who had most pressing and momentous business on their hands. But it was necessary to humour the King, while going to the verge of imprudence in protecting the Professor. In March he was heard, three or four hours long, before the Assembly of Holland, in answer to various charges made against him, being warned that "he stood before the Lord God and before the sovereign authority of the States." Although thought by many to have made a powerful defence, he was ordered to set it forth in writing, both in Latin and in the vernacular. Furthermore it was ordained that he should make a complete refutation of all the charges already made or that might be made during the ensuing three months against him in speech, book, or letter in England, Germany, the Netherlands, or anywhere else. He was allowed one year and a half to accomplish this work, and meantime was to reside not in Leyden, nor the Hague, but in some other town of Holland, not delivering lectures or practising his profession in any way. It might

Page 2743

be supposed that sufficient work had been thus laid out for the unfortunate doctor of divinity without lecturing or preaching. The question of jurisdiction was saved. The independence of the civil authority over the extreme pretensions of the clergy had been vindicated by the firmness of the Advocate. James bad been treated with overflowing demonstrations of respect, but his claim to expel a Dutch professor from his chair and country by a royal fiat had been signally rebuked. Certainly if the Provinces were dependent upon the British king in regard to such a matter, it was the merest imbecility for them to affect independence. Barneveld had carried his point and served his country strenuously and well in this apparently small matter which human folly had dilated into a great one. But deep was the wrath treasured against him in consequence in clerical and royal minds.

Returning from Wesel after the negotiations, Sir Ralph Winwood had an important interview at Arnheim with Prince Maurice, in which they confidentially exchanged their opinions in regard to the Advocate, and mutually confirmed their suspicions and their jealousies in regard to that statesman.

The Ambassador earnestly thanked the Prince in the King's name for his "careful and industrious endeavours for the maintenance of the truth of religion, lively expressed in prosecuting the cause against Vorstius and his adherents."

He then said:

"I am expressly commanded that his Majesty conferring the present condition of affairs of this quarter of the world with those advertisements he daily receives from his ministers abroad, together with the nature and disposition of those men who have in their hands the managing of all business in these foreign parts, can make no other judgment than this.

"There is a general ligue and confederation complotted far the subversion and ruin of religion upon the subsistence whereof his Majesty doth judge the main welfare of your realms and of these Provinces solely to consist.

"Therefore his Majesty has given me charge out of the knowledge he has of your great worth and sufficiency," continued Winwood, "and the confidence he reposes in your faith and affection, freely to treat with you on these points, and withal to pray you to deliver your opinion what way would be the most compendious and the most assured to contrequarr these complots, and to frustrate the malice of these mischievous designs."

The Prince replied by acknowledging the honour the King had vouchsafed to do him in holding so gracious an opinion of him, wherein his Majesty should never be deceived.

“I concur in judgment with his Majesty,” continued the Prince, “that the main scope at which these plots and practices do aim, for instance, the alliance between France and Spain, is this, to root out religion, and by consequence to bring under their yoke all those countries in which religion is professed.

Page 2744

“The first attempt,” continued the Prince, “is doubtless intended against these Provinces. The means to countermine and defeat these projected designs I take to be these: the continuance of his Majesty’s constant resolution for the protection of religion, and then that the King would be pleased to procure a general confederation between the kings, princes, and commonwealths professing religion, namely, Denmark, Sweden, the German princes, the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, and our United Provinces.

“Of this confederation, his Majesty must be not only the director, but the head and protector.

“Lastly, the Protestants of France should be, if not supported, at least relieved from that oppression which the alliance of Spain doth threaten upon them. This, I insist,” repeated Maurice with great fervour, “is the only coupegorge of all plots whatever between France and Spain.”

He enlarged at great length on these points, which he considered so vital.

“And what appearance can there be,” asked Winwood insidiously and maliciously, “of this general confederation now that these Provinces, which heretofore have been accounted a principal member of the Reformed Church, begin to falter in the truth of religion?

“He who solely governs the metropolitan province of Holland,” continued the Ambassador, with a direct stab in the back at Barneveld, “is reputed generally, as your Excellency best knows, to be the only patron of Vorstius, and the protector of the schisms of Arminius. And likewise, what possibility is there that the Protestants of France can expect favour from these Provinces when the same man is known to depend at the devotion of France?”

The international, theological, and personal jealousy of the King against Holland’s Advocate having been thus plainly developed, the Ambassador proceeded to pour into the Prince’s ear the venom of suspicion, and to inflame his jealousy against his great rival. The secret conversation showed how deeply laid was the foundation of the political hatred, both of James and of Maurice, against the Advocate, and certainly nothing could be more preposterous than to imagine the King as the director and head of the great Protestant League. We have but lately seen him confidentially assuring his minister that his only aim was “to wind himself handsomely out of the whole business.” Maurice must have found it difficult to preserve his gravity when assigning such a part to “Master Jacques.”

“Although Monsieur Barneveld has cast off all care of religion,” said Maurice, “and although some towns in Holland, wherein his power doth reign, are infected with the like neglect, yet so long as so many good towns in Holland stand sound, and all the other

provinces of this confederacy, the proposition would at the first motion be cheerfully accepted.

Page 2745

“I confess I find difficulty in satisfying your second question,” continued the Prince, “for I acknowledge that Barneveld is wholly devoted to the service of France. During the truce negotiations, when some difference arose between him and myself, President Jeannin came to me, requiring me in the French king’s name to treat Monsieur Barneveld well, whom the King had received into his protection. The letters which the States’ ambassador in France wrote to Barneveld (and to him all ambassadors address their despatches of importance), the very autographs themselves, he sent back into the hands of Villeroy.”

Here the Prince did not scruple to accuse the Advocate of doing the base and treacherous trick against Aerssens which he had expressly denied doing, and which had been done during his illness, as he solemnly avowed, by a subordinate probably for the sake of making mischief.

Maurice then discoursed largely and vehemently of the suspicious proceedings of Barneveld, and denounced him as dangerous to the State. “When one man who has the conduct of all affairs in his sole power,” he said, “shall hold underhand intelligence with the ministers of Spain and the Archduke, and that without warrant, thereby he may have the means so to carry the course of affairs that, do what they will, these Provinces must fall or stand at the mercy and discretion of Spain. Therefore some good resolutions must be taken in time to hold up this State from a sudden downfall, but in this much moderation and discretion must be used.”

The Prince added that he had invited his cousin Lewis William to appear at the Hague at May day, in order to consult as to the proper means to preserve the Provinces from confusion under his Majesty’s safeguard, and with the aid of the Englishmen in the States’ service whom Maurice pronounced to be “the strength and flower of his army.”

Thus the Prince developed his ideas at great length, and accused the Advocate behind his back, and without the faintest shadow of proof, of base treachery to his friends and of high-treason. Surely Barneveld was in danger, and was walking among pitfalls. Most powerful and deadly enemies were silently banding themselves together against him. Could he long maintain his hold on the slippery heights of power, where he was so consciously serving his country, but where he became day by day a mere shining mark for calumny and hatred?

The Ambassador then signified to the Prince that he had been instructed to carry to him the King’s purpose to confer on him the Order of the Garter.

“If his Majesty holds me worthy of so great honour,” said the Prince, “I and my family shall ever remain bound to his service and that of his royal posterity.

“That the States should be offended I see no cause, but holding the charge I do in their service, I could not accept the honour without first acquainting them and receiving their approbation.”

Page 2746

Winwood replied that, as the King knew the terms on which the Prince lived with the States, he doubted not his Majesty would first notify them and say that he honoured the mutual amity between his realms and these Provinces by honouring the virtues of their general, whose services, as they had been most faithful and affectionate, so had they been accompanied with the blessings of happiness and prosperous success.

Thus said Winwood to the King: "Your Majesty may plaster two walls with one trowel ('una fidelia duos dealbare parietes'), reverse the designs of them who to facilitate their own practices do endeavour to alienate your affections from the good of these Provinces, and oblige to your service the well-affected people, who know that there is no surety for themselves, their wives and children, but under the protection of your Majesty's favour. Perhaps, however, the favourers of Vorstius and Arminius will buzz into the ears of their associates that your Majesty would make a party in these Provinces by maintaining the truth of religion and also by gaining unto you the affections of their chief commander. But your Majesty will be pleased to pass forth whose worthy ends will take their place, which is to honour virtue where you find it, and the suspicious surmises of malice and envy in one instant will vanish into smoke."

Winwood made no scruple in directly stating to the English government that Barneveld's purpose was to "cause a divorce between the King's realms and the Provinces, the more easily to precipitate them into the arms of Spain." He added that the negotiation with Count Maurice then on foot was to be followed, but with much secrecy, on account of the place he held in the State.

Soon after the Ambassador's secret conversation with Maurice he had an interview with Barneveld. He assured the Advocate that no contentment could be given to his Majesty but by the banishment of Vorstius. "If the town of Leyden should understand so much," replied Barneveld, "I fear the magistrates would retain him still in their town."

"If the town of Leyden should retain Vorstius," answered Winwood, "to brave or despight his Majesty, the King has the means, if it pleases him to use them, and that without drawing sword, to range them to reason, and to make the magistrates on their knees demand his pardon, and I say as much of Rotterdam."

Such insolence on the part of an ambassador to the first minister of a great republic was hard to bear. Barneveld was not the man to brook it. He replied with great indignation. "I was born in liberty," he said with rising choler, "I cannot digest this kind of language. The King of Spain himself never dared to speak in so high a style."

"I well understand that logic," returned the Ambassador with continued insolence. "You hold your argument to be drawn 'a majori ad minus;' but I pray you to believe that the King of Great Britain is peer and companion to the King of Spain, and that his motto is, 'Nemo me impune lacessit.'"

Page 2747

And so they parted in a mutual rage; Winwood adding on going out of the room, “Whatsoever I propose to you in his Majesty’s name can find with you neither goust nor grace.”

He then informed Lord Rochester that “the man was extremely distempered and extremely distasted with his Majesty.

“Some say,” he added, “that on being in England when his Majesty first came to the throne he conceived some offence, which ever since hath rankled in his heart, and now doth burst forth with more violent malice.”

Nor was the matter so small as it superficially appeared. Dependence of one nation upon the dictation of another can never be considered otherwise than grave. The subjection of all citizens, clerical or lay, to the laws of the land, the supremacy of the State over the Church, were equally grave subjects. And the question of sovereignty now raised for the first time, not academically merely, but practically, was the gravest one of all. It was soon to be mooted vigorously and passionately whether the United Provinces were a confederacy or a union; a league of sovereign and independent states bound together by treaty for certain specified purposes or an incorporated whole. The Advocate and all the principal lawyers in the country had scarcely a doubt on the subject. Whether it were a reasonable system or an absurd one, a vigorous or an imbecile form of government, they were confident that the Union of Utrecht, made about a generation of mankind before, and the only tie by which the Provinces were bound together at all, was a compact between sovereigns.

Barneveld styled himself always the servant and officer of the States of Holland. To them was his allegiance, for them he spoke, wrought, and thought, by them his meagre salary was paid. At the congress of the States-General, the scene of his most important functions, he was the ambassador of Holland, acting nominally according to their instructions, and exercising the powers of minister of foreign affairs and, as it were, prime minister for the other confederates by their common consent. The system would have been intolerable, the great affairs of war and peace could never have been carried on so triumphantly, had not the preponderance of the one province Holland, richer, more powerful, more important in every way than the other six provinces combined, given to the confederacy illegally, but virtually, many of the attributes of union. Rather by usucaption than usurpation Holland had in many regards come to consider herself and be considered as the Republic itself. And Barneveld, acting always in the name of Holland and with the most modest of titles and appointments, was for a long time in all civil matters the chief of the whole country. This had been convenient during the war, still more convenient during negotiations for peace, but it was inevitable that there should be murmurs now that the cessation from military operations on a large scale had given men time to look more deeply into the nature of a constitution partly inherited and partly improvised, and having many of the defects usually incident to both sources of government.

Page 2748

The military interest, the ecclesiastical power, and the influence of foreign nations exerted through diplomatic intrigue, were rapidly arraying themselves in determined hostility to Barneveld and to what was deemed his tyrannous usurpation. A little later the national spirit, as opposed to provincial and municipal patriotism, was to be aroused against him, and was likely to prove the most formidable of all the elements of antagonism.

It is not necessary to anticipate here what must be developed on a subsequent page. This much, however, it is well to indicate for the correct understanding of passing events. Barneveld did not consider himself the officer or servant of their High Mightinesses the States-General, while in reality often acting as their master, but the vassal and obedient functionary of their Great Mightinesses the States of Holland, whom he almost absolutely controlled.

His present most pressing business was to resist the encroachments of the sacerdotal power and to defend the magistracy. The casuistical questions which were fast maddening the public mind seemed of importance to him only as enclosing within them a more vital and practical question of civil government.

But the anger of his opponents, secret and open, was rapidly increasing. Envy, jealousy, political and clerical hate, above all, that deadliest and basest of malignant spirits which in partisan warfare is bred out of subserviency to rising and rival power, were swarming about him and stinging him at every step. No parasite of Maurice could more effectively pay his court and more confidently hope for promotion or reward than by vilipending Barneveld. It would be difficult to comprehend the infinite extent and power of slander without a study of the career of the Advocate of Holland.

“I thank you for your advices,” he wrote to Carom’ “and I wish from my heart that his Majesty, according to his royal wisdom and clemency towards the condition of this country, would listen only to My Lords the States or their ministers, and not to his own or other passionate persons who, through misunderstanding or malice, furnish him with information and so frequently flatter him. I have tried these twenty years to deserve his Majesty’s confidence, and have many letters from him reaching through twelve or fifteen years, in which he does me honour and promises his royal favour. I am the more chagrined that through false and passionate reports and information—because I am resolved to remain good and true to My Lords the States, to the fatherland, and to the true Christian religion—I and mine should now be so traduced. I hope that God Almighty will second my upright conscience, and cause his Majesty soon to see the injustice done to me and mine. To defend the resolutions of My Lords the States of Holland is my office, duty, and oath, and I assure you that those resolutions are taken with wider vision and scope than his Majesty can believe. Let this serve for My Lords’ defence and my own against indecent calumny, for my duty allows me to pursue no other course.”

Page 2749

He again alluded to the dreary affair of Vorstius, and told the Envoy that the venation caused by it was incredible. “That men unjustly defame our cities and their regents is nothing new,” he said; “but I assure you that it is far more damaging to the common weal than the defamers imagine.”

Some of the private admirers of Arminius who were deeply grieved at so often hearing him “publicly decried as the enemy of God” had been defending the great heretic to James, and by so doing had excited the royal wrath not only against the deceased doctor and themselves, but against the States of Holland who had given them no commission.

On the other hand the advanced orthodox party, most bitter haters of Barneveld, and whom in his correspondence with England he uniformly and perhaps designedly called the Puritans, knowing that the very word was a scarlet rag to James, were growing louder and louder in their demands. “Some thirty of these Puritans,” said he, “of whom at least twenty are Flemings or other foreigners equally violent, proclaim that they and the like of them mean alone to govern the Church. Let his Majesty compare this proposal with his Royal Present, with his salutary declaration at London in the year 1603 to Doctor Reynolds and his associates, and with his admonition delivered to the Emperor, kings, sovereigns, and republics, and he will best understand the mischievous principles of these people, who are now gaining credit with him to the detriment of the freedom and laws of these Provinces.”

A less enlightened statesman than Barneveld would have found it easy enough to demonstrate the inconsistency of the King in thus preaching subserviency of government to church and favouring the rule of Puritans over both. It needed but slender logic to reduce such a policy on his part to absurdity, but neither kings nor governments are apt to value themselves on their logic. So long as James could play the pedagogue to emperors, kings, and republics, it mattered little to him that the doctrines which he preached in one place he had pronounced flat blasphemy in another.

That he would cheerfully hang in England the man whom he would elevate to power in Holland might be inconsistency in lesser mortals; but what was the use of his infallibility if he was expected to be consistent?

But one thing was certain. The Advocate saw through him as if he had been made of glass, and James knew that he did. This fatal fact outweighed all the decorous and respectful phraseology under which Barneveld veiled his remorseless refutations. It was a dangerous thing to incur the wrath of this despot-theologian.

Prince Maurice, who had originally joined in the invitation given by the overseers of Leyden to Vorstius, and had directed one of the deputies and his own “court trumpeter,” Uytenbogaert, to press him earnestly to grant his services to the University, now finding

the coldness of Barneveld to the fiery remonstrances of the King, withdrew his protection of the Professor.

Page 2750

“The Count Maurice, who is a wise and understanding prince,” said Winwood, “and withal most affectionate to his Majesty’s service, doth foresee the miseries into which these countries are likely to fall, and with grief doth pine away.”

It is probable that the great stadholder had never been more robust, or indeed inclining to obesity, than precisely at this epoch; but Sir Ralph was of an imaginative turn. He had discovered, too, that the Advocate’s design was “of no other nature than so to stem the course of the State that insensibly the Provinces shall fall by relapse into the hands of Spain.”

A more despicable idea never entered a human brain. Every action, word, and thought, of Barneveld’s life was a refutation of it. But he was unwilling, at the bidding of a king, to treat a professor with contumely who had just been solemnly and unanimously invited by the great university, by the States of Holland, and by the Stadholder to an important chair; and that was enough for the diplomatist and courtier. “He, and only he,” said Winwood passionately, “hath opposed his Majesty’s purposes with might and main.” Formerly the Ambassador had been full of complaints of “the craving humour of Count Maurice,” and had censured him bitterly in his correspondence for having almost by his inordinate pretensions for money and other property brought the Treaty of Truce to a standstill. And in these charges he was as unjust and as reckless as he was now in regard to Barneveld.

The course of James and his agents seemed cunningly devised to sow discord in the Provinces, to inflame the growing animosity of the Stadholder to the Advocate, and to paralyse the action of the Republic in the duchies. If the King had received direct instructions from the Spanish cabinet how to play the Spanish game, he could hardly have done it with more docility. But was not Gondemar ever at his elbow, and the Infanta always in the perspective?

And it is strange enough that, at the same moment, Spanish marriages were in France as well as England the turning-point of policy.

Henry had been willing enough that the Dauphin should espouse a Spanish infanta, and that one of the Spanish princes should be affianced to one of his daughters. But the proposition from Spain had been coupled with a condition that the friendship between France and the Netherlands should be at once broken off, and the rebellious heretics left to their fate. And this condition had been placed before him with such arrogance that he had rejected the whole scheme. Henry was not the man to do anything dishonourable at the dictation of another sovereign. He was also not the man to be ignorant that the friendship of the Provinces was necessary to him, that cordial friendship between France and Spain was impossible, and that to allow Spain to reoccupy that splendid possession between his own realms and Germany, from which she had been driven by the Hollanders in close alliance with himself, would be unworthy

of the veriest schoolboy in politics. But Henry was dead, and a Medici reigned in his place, whose whole thought was to make herself agreeable to Spain.

Page 2751

Aerssens, adroit, prying, experienced, unscrupulous, knew very well that these double Spanish marriages were resolved upon, and that the inevitable condition refused by the King would be imposed upon his widow. He so informed the States-General, and it was known to the French government that he had informed them. His position soon became almost untenable, not because he had given this information, but because the information and the inference made from it were correct.

It will be observed that the policy of the Advocate was to preserve friendly relations between France and England, and between both and the United Provinces. It was for this reason that he submitted to the exhortations and denunciations of the English ambassadors. It was for this that he kept steadily in view the necessity of dealing with and supporting corporate France, the French government, when there were many reasons for feeling sympathy with the internal rebellion against that government. Maurice felt differently. He was connected by blood or alliance with more than one of the princes now perpetually in revolt. Bouillon was his brother-in-law, the sister of Conde was his brother's wife. Another cousin, the Elector-Palatine, was already encouraging distant and extravagant hopes of the Imperial crown. It was not unnatural that he should feel promptings of ambition and sympathy difficult to avow even to himself, and that he should feel resentment against the man by whom this secret policy was traversed in the well-considered interest of the Republican government.

Aerssens, who, with the keen instinct of self-advancement was already attaching himself to Maurice as to the wheels of the chariot going steadily up the hill, was not indisposed to loosen his hold upon the man through whose friendship he had first risen, and whose power was now perhaps on the decline. Moreover, events had now caused him to hate the French government with much fervour. With Henry *iv*. he had been all-powerful. His position had been altogether exceptional, and he had wielded an influence at Paris more than that exerted by any foreign ambassador. The change naturally did not please him, although he well knew the reasons. It was impossible for the Dutch ambassador to be popular at a court where Spain ruled supreme. Had he been willing to eat humiliation as with a spoon, it would not have sufficed. They knew him, they feared him, and they could not doubt that his sympathies would ever be with the malcontent princes. At the same time he did not like to lose his hold upon the place, nor to have it known, as yet, to the world that his power was diminished.

"The Queen commands me to tell you," said the French ambassador de Russy to the States-General, "that the language of the Sieur Aerssens has not only astonished her, but scandalized her to that degree that she could not refrain from demanding if it came from My Lords the States or from himself. He having, however, affirmed to her Majesty that he had express charge to justify it by reasons so remote from the hope and the belief that she had conceived of your gratitude to the Most Christian King and herself, she is constrained to complain of it, and with great frankness."

Page 2752

Some months later than this Aerssens communicated to the States-General the project of the Spanish marriage, “which,” said he, “they have declared to me with so many oaths to be false.” He informed them that M. de Refuge was to go on special mission to the Hague, “having been designated to that duty before Aerssens’ discovery of the marriage project.” He was to persuade their Mightinesses that the marriages were by no means concluded, and that, even if they were, their Mightinesses were not interested therein, their Majesties intending to remain by the old maxims and alliances of the late king. Marriages, he would be instructed to say, were mere personal conventions, which remained of no consideration when the interests of the crown were touched. “Nevertheless, I know very well,” said Aerssens, “that in England these negotiations are otherwise understood, and that the King has uttered great complaints about them, saying that such a negotiation as this ought not to have been concealed from him. He is pressing more than ever for reimbursement of the debt to him, and especially for the moneys pretended to have been furnished to your Mightinesses in his Majesty’s name.”

Thus it will be seen how closely the Spanish marriages were connected with the immediate financial arrangements of France, England, and the States, without reference to the wider political consequences anticipated.

“The princes and most gentlemen,” here continued the Ambassador, “believe that these reciprocal and double marriages will bring about great changes in Christendom if they take the course which the authors of them intend, however much they may affect to believe that no novelties are impending. The marriages were proposed to the late king, and approved by him, during the negotiations for the truce, and had Don Pedro do Toledo been able to govern himself, as Jeannin has just been telling me, the United Provinces would have drawn from it their assured security. What he means by that, I certainly cannot conceive, for Don Pedro proposed the marriage of the Dauphin (now Louis XIII.) with the Infanta on the condition that Henry should renounce all friendship with your Mightinesses, and neither openly nor secretly give you any assistance. You were to be entirely abandoned, as an example for all who throw off the authority of their lawful prince. But his Majesty answered very generously that he would take no conditions; that he considered your Mightinesses as his best friends, whom he could not and would not forsake. Upon this Don Pedro broke off the negotiation. What should now induce the King of Spain to resume the marriage negotiations but to give up the conditions, I am sure I don’t know, unless, through the truce, his designs and his ambition have grown flaccid. This I don’t dare to hope, but fear, on the contrary, that he will so manage the irresolution, weakness, and faintheartedness of this kingdom as through the aid of his pensioned friends here to arrive at all his former aims.”

Page 2753

Certainly the Ambassador painted the condition of France in striking and veracious colours, and he was quite right in sending the information which he was first to discover, and which it was so important for the States to know. It was none the less certain in Barneveld's mind that the best, not the worst, must be made of the state of affairs, and that France should not be assisted in throwing herself irrecoverably into the arms of Spain.

"Refuge will tell you," said Aerssens, a little later, "that these marriages will not interfere with the friendship of France for you nor with her subsidies, and that no advantage will be given to Spain in the treaty to your detriment or that of her other allies. But whatever fine declarations they may make, it is sure to be detrimental. And all the princes, gentlemen, and officers here have the same conviction. Those of the Reformed religion believe that the transaction is directed solely against the religion which your Mightinesses profess, and that the next step will be to effect a total separation between the two religions and the two countries."

Refuge arrived soon afterwards, and made the communication to the States-General of the approaching nuptials between the King of France and the Infanta of Spain; and of the Prince of Spain with Madame, eldest daughter of France, exactly as Aerssens had predicted four months before. There was a great flourish of compliments, much friendly phrase-making, and their Mightinesses were informed that the communication of the marriages was made to them before any other power had been notified, in proof of the extraordinary affection entertained for them by France. "You are so much interested in the happiness of France," said Refuge, "that this treaty by which it is secured will be for your happiness also. He did not indicate, however, the precise nature of the bliss beyond the indulgence of a sentimental sympathy, not very refreshing in the circumstances, which was to result to the Confederacy from this close alliance between their firmest friend and their ancient and deadly enemy. He would have found it difficult to do so.

"Don Rodrigo de Calderon, secretary of state, is daily expected from Spain," wrote, Aerssens once more. "He brings probably the articles of the marriages, which have hitherto been kept secret, so they say. 'Tis a shrewd negotiator; and in this alliance the King's chief design is to injure your Mightinesses, as M. de Villeroy now confesses, although he says that this will not be consented to on this side. It behoves your Mightinesses to use all your ears and eyes. It is certain these are much more than private conventions. Yes, there is nothing private about them, save the conjunction of the persons whom they concern. In short, all the conditions regard directly the state, and directly likewise, or by necessary consequence, the state of your Mightinesses' Provinces. I reserve explanations until it shall please your Mightinesses to hear me by word of mouth."

Page 2754

For it was now taken into consideration by the States' government whether Aerssens was to remain at his post or to return. Whether it was his wish to be relieved of his embassy or not was a question. But there was no question that the States at this juncture, and in spite of the dangers impending from the Spanish marriages, must have an ambassador ready to do his best to keep France from prematurely sliding into positive hostility to them. Aerssens was enigmatical in his language, and Barneveld was somewhat puzzled.

"I have according to your reiterated requests," wrote the Advocate to the Ambassador, "sounded the assembly of My Lords the States as to your recall; but I find among some gentlemen the opinion that if earnestly pressed to continue you would be willing to listen to the proposal. This I cannot make out from your letters. Please to advise me frankly as to your wishes, and assure yourself in everything of my friendship."

Nothing could be more straightforward than this language, but the Envoy was less frank than Barneveld, as will subsequently appear. The subject was a most important one, not only in its relation to the great affairs of state, but to momentous events touching the fate of illustrious personages.

Meantime a resolution was passed by the States of Holland "in regard to the question whether Ambassador Aerssens should retain his office, yes or no?" And it was decided by a majority of votes "to leave it to his candid opinion if in his free conscience he thinks he can serve the public cause there any longer. If yes, he may keep his office one year more. If no, he may take leave and come home. In no case is his salary to be increased."

Surely the States, under the guidance of the Advocate, had thus acted with consummate courtesy towards a diplomatist whose position from no apparent fault of his own but by the force of circumstances—and rather to his credit than otherwise—was gravely compromised.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Advanced orthodox party-Puritans
Atheist, a tyrant, because he resisted dictation from the clergy
Give him advice if he asked it, and money when he required
He was not imperial of aspect on canvas or coin
He who would have all may easily lose all
King's definite and final intentions, varied from day to day
Neither kings nor governments are apt to value logic
Outdoing himself in dogmatism and inconsistency
Small matter which human folly had dilated into a great one
The defence of the civil authority against the priesthood

BOOKRAGS

THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

The Life of John of Barneveld, v5, 1609-14

Page 2755

CHAPTER VI.

Establishment of the Condominium in the Duchies—Dissensions between the Neuburgers and Brandenburgers—Occupation of Julich by the Brandenburgers assisted by the States-General—Indignation in Spain and at the Court of the Archdukes—Subsidy despatched to Brussels Spinola descends upon Aix-la-Chapelle and takes possession of Orsoy and other places—Surrender of Wesel—Conference at Xanten—-Treaty permanently dividing the Territory between Brandenburg and Neuburg—Prohibition from Spain—Delays and Disagreements.

Thus the ‘Condominium’ had been peaceably established.

Three or four years passed away in the course of which the evils of a joint and undivided sovereignty of two rival houses over the same territory could not fail to manifest themselves. Brandenburg, Calvinist in religion, and for other reasons more intimately connected with and more favoured by the States’ government than his rival, gained ground in the duchies. The Palatine of Neuburg, originally of Lutheran faith like his father, soon manifested Catholic tendencies, which excited suspicion in the Netherlands. These suspicions grew into certainties at the moment when he espoused the sister of Maximilian of Bavaria and of the Elector of Cologne. That this close connection with the very heads of the Catholic League could bode no good to the cause of which the States-General were the great promoters was self-evident. Very soon afterwards the Palatine, a man of mature age and of considerable talents, openly announced his conversion to the ancient church. Obviously the sympathies of the States could not thenceforth fail to be on the side of Brandenburg. The Elector’s brother died and was succeeded in the governorship of the Condeminium by the Elector’s brother, a youth of eighteen. He took up his abode in Cleve, leaving Dusseldorf to be the sole residence of his co-stadholder.

Rivalry growing warmer, on account of this difference of religion, between the respective partisans of Neuburg and Brandenburg, an attempt was made in Dusseldorf by a sudden entirely unsuspected rising of the Brandenburgers to drive their antagonist colleagues and their portion of the garrison out of the city. It failed, but excited great anger. A more successful effort was soon afterwards made in Julich; the Neuburgers were driven out, and the Brandenburgers remained in sole possession of the town and citadel, far the most important stronghold in the whole territory. This was partly avenged by the Neuburgers, who gained absolute control of Dusseldorf. Here were however no important fortifications, the place being merely an agreeable palatial residence and a thriving mart. The States-General, not concealing their predilection for Brandenburg, but under pretext of guarding the peace which they had done so much to establish, placed a garrison of 1400 infantry and a troop or two of horse in the citadel of Julich.

Page 2756

Dire was the anger not unjustly excited in Spain when the news of this violation of neutrality reached that government. Julich, placed midway between Liege and Cologne, and commanding those fertile plains which make up the opulent duchy, seemed virtually converted into a province of the detested heretical republic. The German gate of the Spanish Netherlands was literally in the hands of its most formidable foe.

The Spaniards about the court of the Archduke did not dissemble their rage. The seizure of Julich was a stain upon his reputation, they cried. Was it not enough, they asked, for the United Provinces to have made a truce to the manifest detriment and discredit of Spain, and to have treated her during all the negotiation with such insolence? Were they now to be permitted to invade neutral territory, to violate public faith, to act under no responsibility save to their own will? What was left for them to do except to set up a tribunal in Holland for giving laws to the whole of Northern Europe? Arrogating to themselves absolute power over the controverted states of Cleve, Julich, and the dependencies, they now pretended to dispose of them at their pleasure in order at the end insolently to take possession of them for themselves.

These were the egregious fruits of the truce, they said tauntingly to the discomfited Archduke. It had caused a loss of reputation, the very soul of empires, to the crown of Spain. And now, to conclude her abasement, the troops in Flanders had been shaven down with such parsimony as to make the monarch seem a shopkeeper, not a king. One would suppose the obedient Netherlands to be in the heart of Spain rather than outlying provinces surrounded by their deadliest enemies. The heretics had gained possession of the government at Aix-la-Chapelle; they had converted the insignificant town of Mulheim into a thriving and fortified town in defiance of Cologne and to its manifest detriment, and in various other ways they had insulted the Catholics throughout those regions. And who could wonder at such insolence, seeing that the army in Flanders, formerly the terror of heretics, had become since the truce so weak as to be the laughing-stock of the United Provinces? If it was expensive to maintain these armies in the obedient Netherlands, let there be economy elsewhere, they urged.

From India came gold and jewels. From other kingdoms came ostentation and a long series of vain titles for the crown of Spain. Flanders was its place of arms, its nursery of soldiers, its bulwark in Europe, and so it should be preserved.

There was ground for these complaints. The army at the disposition of the Archduke had been reduced to 8000 infantry and a handful of cavalry. The peace establishment of the Republic amounted to 20,000 foot, 3000 horse, besides the French and English regiments.

Page 2757

So soon as the news of the occupation of Julich was officially communicated to the Spanish cabinet, a subsidy of 400,000 crowns was at once despatched to Brussels. Levies of Walloons and Germans were made without delay by order of Archduke Albert and under guidance of Spinola, so that by midsummer the army was swollen to 18,000 foot and 3000 horse. With these the great Genoese captain took the field in the middle of August. On the 22nd of that month the army was encamped on some plains mid-way between Maestricht and Aachen. There was profound mystery both at Brussels and at the Hague as to the objective point of these military movements. Anticipating an attack upon Julich, the States had meantime strengthened the garrison of that important place with 3000 infantry and a regiment of horse. It seemed scarcely probable therefore that Spinola would venture a foolhardy blow at a citadel so well fortified and defended. Moreover, there was not only no declaration of war, but strict orders had been given by each of the apparent belligerents to their military commanders to abstain from all offensive movements against the adversary. And now began one of the strangest series of warlike evolution's that were ever recorded. Maurice at the head of an army of 14,000 foot and 3000 horse manoeuvred in the neighbourhood of his great antagonist and professional rival without exchanging a blow. It was a phantom campaign, the prophetic rehearsal of dreadful marches and tragic histories yet to be, and which were to be enacted on that very stage and on still wider ones during a whole generation of mankind. That cynical commerce in human lives which was to become one of the chief branches of human industry in the century had already begun.

Spinola, after hovering for a few days in the neighbourhood, descended upon the Imperial city of Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle). This had been one of the earliest towns in Germany to embrace the Reformed religion, and up to the close of the sixteenth century the control of the magistracy had been in the hands of the votaries of that creed. Subsequently the Catholics had contrived to acquire and keep the municipal ascendency, secretly supported by Archduke Albert, and much oppressing the Protestants with imprisonments, fines, and banishment, until a new revolution which had occurred in the year 1610, and which aroused the wrath of Spinola. Certainly, according to the ideas of that day, it did not seem unnatural in a city where a very large majority of the population were Protestants that Protestants should have a majority in the town council. It seemed, however, to those who surrounded the Archduke an outrage which could no longer be tolerated, especially as a garrison of 600 Germans, supposed to have formed part of the States' army, had recently been introduced into the town. Aachen, lying mostly on an extended plain, had but very slight fortifications, and it was commanded by a neighbouring range of hills. It had no garrison but the 600 Germans. Spinola

Page 2758

placed a battery or two on the hills, and within three days the town surrendered. The inhabitants expected a scene of carnage and pillage, but not a life was lost. No injury whatever was inflicted on person or property, according to the strict injunctions of the Archduke. The 600 Germans were driven out, and 1200 other Germans then serving under Catholic banners were put in their places to protect the Catholic minority, to whose keeping the municipal government was now confided.

Spinola, then entering the territory of Cleve, took session of Orsoy, an important place on the Rhine, besides Duren, Duisburg, Kaster, Greevenbroek and Berchem. Leaving garrisons in these places, he razed the fortifications of Mulheim, much to the joy of the Archbishop and his faithful subjects of Cologne, then crossed the Rhine at Rheinberg, and swooped down upon Wesel. This flourishing and prosperous city had formerly belonged to the Duchy of Cleve. Placed at the junction of the Rhine and Lippe and commanding both rivers, it had become both powerful and Protestant, and had set itself up as a free Imperial city, recognising its dukes no longer as sovereigns, but only as protectors. So fervent was it in the practice of the Reformed religion that it was called the Rhenish Geneva, the cradle of German Calvinism. So important was its preservation considered to the cause of Protestantism that the States-General had urged its authorities to accept from them a garrison. They refused. Had they complied, the city would have been saved, because it was the rule in this extraordinary campaign that the belligerents made war not upon each other, nor in each others territory, but against neutrals and upon neutral soil. The Catholic forces under Spinola or his lieutenants, meeting occasionally and accidentally with the Protestants under Maurice or his generals, exchanged no cannon shots or buffets, but only acts of courtesy; falling away each before the other, and each ceding to the other with extreme politeness the possession of towns which one had preceded the other in besieging.

The citizens of Wesel were amazed at being attacked, considering themselves as Imperial burghers. They regretted too late that they had refused a garrison from Maurice, which would have prevented Spinola from assailing them. They had now nothing for it but to surrender, which they did within three days. The principal condition of the capitulation was that when Julich should be given up by the States Wesel should be restored to its former position. Spinola then took and garrisoned the city of Xanten, but went no further. Having weakened his army sufficiently by the garrisons taken from it for the cities captured by him, he declined to make any demonstration upon the neighbouring and important towns of Emmerich and Rees. The Catholic commander falling back, the Protestant moved forward. Maurice seized both Emmerich and Rees, and placed garrisons within them, besides occupying Goch, Kranenburg, Gennip, and various places in the County of Mark. This closed the amicable campaign.

Page 2759

Spinola established himself and his forces near Wesel. The Prince encamped near Rees. The two armies were within two hours' march of each other. The Duke of Neuburg—for the Palatine had now succeeded on his father's death to the ancestral dukedom and to his share of the Condominium of the debateable provinces—now joined Spinola with an army of 4000 foot and 400 horse. The young Prince of Brandenburg came to Maurice with 800 cavalry and an infantry regiment of the Elector-Palatine.

Negotiations destined to be as spectral and fleeting as the campaign had been illusory now began. The whole Protestant world was aflame with indignation at the loss of Wesel. The States' government had already proposed to deposit Julich in the hands of a neutral power if the Archduke would abstain from military movements. But Albert, proud of his achievements in Aachen, refused to pause in his career. Let them make the deposit first, he said.

Both belligerents, being now satiated with such military glory as could flow from the capture of defenceless cities belonging to neutrals, agreed to hold conferences at Xanten. To this town, in the Duchy of Cleve, and midway between the rival camps, came Sir Henry Wotton and Sir Dudley Carleton, ambassadors of Great Britain; de Refuge and de Russy, the special and the resident ambassador of France at the Hague; Chancellor Peter Pecquius and Counsellor Visser, to represent the Archdukes; seven deputies from the United Provinces, three from the Elector of Cologne, three from Brandenburg, three from Neuburg, and two from the Elector-Palatine, as representative of the Protestant League.

In the earlier conferences the envoys of the Archduke and of the Elector of Cologne were left out, but they were informed daily of each step in the negotiation. The most important point at starting was thought to be to get rid of the 'Condominium.' There could be no harmony nor peace in joint possession. The whole territory should be cut provisionally in halves, and each possessory prince rule exclusively within the portion assigned to him. There might also be an exchange of domain between the two every six months. As for Wesel and Julich, they could remain respectively in the hands then holding them, or the fortifications of Julich might be dismantled and Wesel restored to the status quo. The latter alternative would have best suited the States, who were growing daily more irritated at seeing Wesel, that Protestant stronghold, with an exclusively Calvinistic population, in the hands of Catholics.

The Spanish ambassador at Brussels remonstrated, however, at the thought of restoring his precious conquest, obtained without loss of time, money, or blood, into the hands of heretics, at least before consultation with the government at Madrid and without full consent of the King.

"How important to your Majesty's affairs in Flanders," wrote Guadaleste to Philip, "is the acquisition of Wesel may be seen by the manifest grief of your enemies. They see with

immense displeasure your royal ensigns planted on the most important place on the Rhine, and one which would become the chief military station for all the armies of Flanders to assemble in at any moment.

Page 2760

“As no acquisition could therefore be greater, so your Majesty should never be deprived of it without thorough consideration of the case. The Archduke fears, and so do his ministers, that if we refuse to restore Wesel, the United Provinces would break the truce. For my part I believe, and there are many who agree with me, that they would on the contrary be more inclined to stand by the truce, hoping to obtain by negotiation that which it must be obvious to them they cannot hope to capture by force. But let Wesel be at once restored. Let that be done which is so much desired by the United Provinces and other great enemies and rivals of your Majesty, and what security will there be that the same Provinces will not again attempt the same invasion? Is not the example of Julich fresh? And how much more important is Wesel! Julich was after all not situate on their frontiers, while Wesel lies at their principal gates. Your Majesty now sees the good and upright intentions of those Provinces and their friends. They have made a settlement between Brandenburg and Neuburg, not in order to breed concord but confusion between those two, not tranquillity for the country, but greater turbulence than ever before. Nor have they done this with any other thought than that the United Provinces might find new opportunities to derive the same profit from fresh tumults as they have already done so shamelessly from those which are past. After all I don’t say that Wesel should never be restored, if circumstances require it, and if your Majesty, approving the Treaty of Xanten, should sanction the measure. But such a result should be reached only after full consultation with your Majesty, to whose glorious military exploits these splendid results are chiefly owing.”

The treaty finally decided upon rejected the principle of alternate possession, and established a permanent division of the territory in dispute between Brandenburg and Neuburg.

The two portions were to be made as equal as possible, and lots were to be thrown or drawn by the two princes for the first choice. To the one side were assigned the Duchy of Cleve, the County of Mark, and the Seigniories of Ravensberg and Ravenstein, with some other baronies and feuds in Brabant and Flanders; to the other the Duchies of Julich and Berg with their dependencies. Each prince was to reside exclusively within the territory assigned to him by lot. The troops introduced by either party were to be withdrawn, fortifications made since the preceding month of May to be razed, and all persons who had been expelled, or who had emigrated, to be restored to their offices, property, or benefices. It was also stipulated that no place within the whole debateable territory should be put in the hands of a third power.

Page 2761

These articles were signed by the ambassadors of France and England, by the deputies of the Elector-Palatine and of the United Provinces, all binding their superiors to the execution of the treaty. The arrangement was supposed to refer to the previous conventions between those two crowns, with the Republic, and the Protestant princes and powers. Count Zollern, whom we have seen bearing himself so arrogantly as envoy from the Emperor Rudolph to Henry *iv*., was now despatched by Matthias on as fruitless a mission to the congress at Xanten, and did his best to prevent the signature of the treaty, except with full concurrence of the Imperial government. He likewise renewed the frivolous proposition that the Emperor should hold all the provinces in sequestration until the question of rightful sovereignty should be decided. The “proud and haggard” ambassador was not more successful in this than in the diplomatic task previously entrusted to him, and he then went to Brussels, there to renew his remonstrances, menaces, and intrigues.

For the treaty thus elaborately constructed, and in appearance a triumphant settlement of questions so complicated and so burning as to threaten to set Christendom at any moment in a blaze, was destined to an impotent and most unsatisfactory conclusion.

The signatures were more easily obtained than the ratifications. Execution was surrounded with insurmountable difficulties which in negotiation had been lightly skipped over at the stroke of a pen. At the very first step, that of military evacuation, there was a stumble. Maurice and Spinola were expected to withdraw their forces, and to undertake to bring in no troops in the future, and to make no invasion of the disputed territory.

But Spinola construed this undertaking as absolute; the Prince as only binding in consequence of, with reference to, and for the duration of; the Treaty of Xanten. The ambassadors and other commissioners, disgusted with the long controversy which ensued, were making up their minds to depart when a courier arrived from Spain, bringing not a ratification but strict prohibition of the treaty. The articles were not to be executed, no change whatever was to be made, and, above all, Wesel was not to be restored without fresh negotiations with Philip, followed by his explicit concurrence.

Thus the whole great negotiation began to dissolve into a shadowy, unsatisfactory pageant. The solid barriers which were to imprison the vast threatening elements of religious animosity and dynastic hatreds, and to secure a peaceful future for Christendom, melted into films of gossamer, and the great war of demons, no longer to be quelled by the commonplaces of diplomatic exorcism, revealed its close approach. The prospects of Europe grew blacker than ever.

The ambassadors, thoroughly disheartened and disgusted, all took their departure from Xanten, and the treaty remained rather a by-word than a solution or even a suggestion.

Page 2762

“The accord could not be prevented,” wrote Archduke Albert to Philip, “because it depended alone on the will of the signers. Nor can the promise to restore Wesel be violated, should Julich be restored. Who can doubt that such contravention would arouse great jealousies in France, England, the United Provinces, and all the members of the heretic League of Germany? Who can dispute that those interested ought to procure the execution of the treaty? Suspicions will not remain suspicions, but they light up the flames of public evil and disturbance. Either your Majesty wishes to maintain the truce, in which case Wesel must be restored, or to break the truce, a result which is certain if Wesel be retained. But the reasons which induced your Majesty to lay down your arms remain the same as ever. Our affairs are not looking better, nor is the requisition of Wesel of so great importance as to justify our involving Flanders in a new and more atrocious war than that which has so lately been suspended. The restitution is due to the tribunal of public faith. It is a great advantage when actions done for the sole end of justice are united to that of utility. Consider the great successes we have had. How well the affairs of Aachen and Mulbeim have been arranged; those of the Duke of Neuburg how completely re-established. The Catholic cause, always identical with that of the House of Austria, remains in great superiority to the cause of the heretics. We should use these advantages well, and to do so we should not immaturely pursue greater ones. Fortune changes, flies when we most depend on her, and delights in making her chief sport of the highest quality of mortals.”

Thus wrote the Archduke sensibly, honourably from his point of view, and with an intelligent regard to the interests of Spain and the Catholic cause. After months of delay came conditional consent from Madrid to the conventions, but with express condition that there should be absolute undertaking on the part of the United Provinces never to send or maintain troops in the duchies. Tedious and futile correspondence followed between Brussels, the Hague, London, Paris. But the difficulties grew every moment. It was a Penelope’s web of negotiation, said one of the envoys. Amid pertinacious and wire-drawn subtleties, every trace of practical business vanished. Neuburg departed to look after his patrimonial estates; leaving his interests in the duchies to be watched over by the Archduke. Even Count Zollern, after six months of wrangling in Brussels, took his departure. Prince Maurice distributed his army in various places within the debateable land, and Spinola did the same, leaving a garrison of 3000 foot and 300 horse in the important city of Wesel. The town and citadel of Julich were as firmly held by Maurice for the Protestant cause. Thus the duchies were jointly occupied by the forces of Catholicism and Protestantism, while nominally possessed and administered by the princes of Brandenburg and Neuburg. And so they were destined to remain until that Thirty Years’ War, now so near its outbreak, should sweep over the earth, and bring its fiery solution at last to all these great debates.

Page 2763

CHAPTER VII.

Proud Position of the Republic—France obeys her—Hatred of Carleton —Position and Character of Aerssens—Claim for the “Third”—Recall of Aerssens—Rivalry between Maurice and Barneveld, who always sustains the separate Sovereignties of the Provinces—Conflict between Church and State added to other Elements of Discord in the Commonwealth—Religion a necessary Element in the Life of all Classes.

Thus the Republic had placed itself in as proud a position as it was possible for commonwealth or kingdom to occupy. It had dictated the policy and directed the combined military movements of Protestantism. It had gathered into a solid mass the various elements out of which the great Germanic mutiny against Rome, Spain, and Austria had been compounded. A breathing space of uncertain duration had come to interrupt and postpone the general and inevitable conflict. Meantime the Republic was encamped upon the enemy’s soil.

France, which had hitherto commanded, now obeyed. England, vacillating and discontented, now threatening and now cajoling, saw for the time at least its influence over the councils of the Netherlands neutralized by the genius of the great statesman who still governed the Provinces, supreme in all but name. The hatred of the British government towards the Republic, while in reality more malignant than at any previous period, could now only find vent in tremendous, theological pamphlets, composed by the King in the form of diplomatic instructions, and hurled almost weekly at the heads of the States-General, by his ambassador, Dudley Carleton.

Few men hated Barneveld more bitterly than did Carleton. I wish to describe as rapidly, but as faithfully, as I can the outline at least of the events by which one of the saddest and most superfluous catastrophes in modern history was brought about. The web was a complex one, wrought apparently of many materials; but the more completely it is unravelled the more clearly we shall detect the presence of the few simple but elemental fibres which make up the tissue of most human destinies, whether illustrious or obscure, and out of which the most moving pictures of human history are composed.

The religious element, which seems at first view to be the all pervading and controlling one, is in reality rather the atmosphere which surrounds and colours than the essence which constitutes the tragedy to be delineated.

Personal, sometimes even paltry, jealousy; love of power, of money, of place; rivalry between civil and military ambition for predominance in a free state; struggles between Church and State to control and oppress each other; conflict between the cautious and healthy, but provincial and centrifugal, spirit on the one side, and the ardent centralizing, imperial, but dangerous, instinct on the other, for ascendancy in a federation; mortal combat between aristocracy disguised in the

Page 2764

plebeian form of trading and political corporations and democracy sheltering itself under a famous sword and an ancient and illustrious name;—all these principles and passions will be found hotly at work in the melancholy five years with which we are now to be occupied, as they have entered, and will always enter, into every political combination in the great tragi-comedy which we call human history. As a study, a lesson, and a warning, perhaps the fate of Barneveld is as deserving of serious attention as most political tragedies of the last few centuries.

Francis Aerssens, as we have seen, continued to be the Dutch ambassador after the murder of Henry *iv*. Many of the preceding pages of this volume have been occupied with his opinions, his pictures, his conversations, and his political intrigues during a memorable epoch in the history of the Netherlands and of France. He was beyond all doubt one of the ablest diplomatists in Europe. Versed in many languages, a classical student, familiar with history and international law, a man of the world and familiar with its usages, accustomed to associate with dignity and tact on friendliest terms with sovereigns, eminent statesmen, and men of letters; endowed with a facile tongue, a fluent pen, and an eye and ear of singular acuteness and delicacy; distinguished for unflagging industry and singular aptitude for secret and intricate affairs;—he had by the exercise of these various qualities during a period of nearly twenty years at the court of Henry the Great been able to render inestimable services to the Republic which he represented. Of respectable but not distinguished lineage, not a Hollander, but a Belgian by birth, son of Cornelis Aerssens, Grefter of the States-General, long employed in that important post, he had been brought forward from a youth by Barneveld and early placed by him in the diplomatic career, of which through his favour and his own eminent talents he had now achieved the highest honours.

He had enjoyed the intimacy and even the confidence of Henry *iv*., so far as any man could be said to possess that monarch’s confidence, and his friendly relations and familiar access to the King gave him political advantages superior to those of any of his colleagues at the same court.

Acting entirely and faithfully according to the instructions of the Advocate of Holland, he always gratefully and copiously acknowledged the privilege of being guided and sustained in the difficult paths he had to traverse by so powerful and active an intellect. I have seldom alluded in terms to the instructions and despatches of the chief, but every position, negotiation, and opinion of the envoy—and the reader has seen many of them—is pervaded by their spirit. Certainly the correspondence of Aerssens is full to overflowing of gratitude, respect, fervent attachment to the person and exalted appreciation of the intellect and high character of the Advocate.

Page 2765

There can be no question of Aerssen's consummate abilities. Whether his heart were as sound as his head, whether his protestations of devotion had the ring of true gold or not, time would show. Hitherto Barneveld had not doubted him, nor had he found cause to murmur at Barneveld.

But the France of Henry *iv*., where the Dutch envoy was so all-powerful, had ceased to exist. A duller eye than that of Aerssens could have seen at a glance that the potent kingdom and firm ally of the Republic had been converted, for a long time to come at least, into a Spanish province. The double Spanish marriages (that of the young Louis XIII. with the Infanta Anna, and of his sister with the Infante, one day to be Philip *iv*.), were now certain, for it was to make them certain that the knife of Ravaillac had been employed. The condition precedent to those marriages had long been known. It was the renunciation of the alliance between France and Holland. It was the condemnation to death, so far as France had the power to condemn her to death, of the young Republic. Had not Don Pedro de Toledo pompously announced this condition a year and a half before? Had not Henry spurned the bribe with scorn? And now had not Francis Aerssens been the first to communicate to his masters the fruit which had already ripened upon Henry's grave? As we have seen, he had revealed these intrigues long before they were known to the world, and the French court knew that he had revealed them. His position had become untenable. His friendship for Henry could not be of use to him with the delicate-featured, double-chinned, smooth and sluggish Florentine, who had passively authorized and actively profited by her husband's murder.

It was time for the Envoy to be gone. The Queen-Regent and Concini thought so. And so did Villeroy and Sillery and the rest of the old servants of the King, now become pensionaries of Spain. But Aerssens did not think so. He liked his position, changed as it was. He was deep in the plottings of Bouillon and Conde and the other malcontents against the Queen-Regent. These schemes, being entirely personal, the rank growth of the corruption and apparent disintegration of France, were perpetually changing, and could be reduced to no principle. It was a mere struggle of the great lords of France to wrest places, money, governments, military commands from the Queen-Regent, and frantic attempts on her part to save as much as possible of the general wreck for her lord and master Concini.

It was ridiculous to ascribe any intense desire on the part of the Duc de Bouillon to aid the Protestant cause against Spain at that moment, acting as he was in combination with Conde, whom we have just seen employed by Spain as the chief instrument to effect the destruction of France and the bastardy of the Queen's children. Nor did the sincere and devout Protestants who had clung to the cause through good and bad report, men like Duplessis-Mornay, for example, and those who usually acted with him, believe in any of these schemes for partitioning France on pretence of saving Protestantism. But Bouillon, greatest of all French fishermen in troubled waters, was brother-in-law of Prince Maurice of Nassau, and Aerssens instinctively felt that the time had come when he should anchor himself to firm holding ground at home.

Page 2766

The Ambassador had also a personal grievance. Many of his most secret despatches to the States-General in which he expressed himself very freely, forcibly, and accurately on the general situation in France, especially in regard to the Spanish marriages and the Treaty of Hampton Court, had been transcribed at the Hague and copies of them sent to the French government. No baser act of treachery to an envoy could be imagined. It was not surprising that Aerssens complained bitterly of the deed. He secretly suspected Barneveld, but with injustice, of having played him this evil turn, and the incident first planted the seeds of the deadly hatred which was to bear such fatal fruit.

"A notable treason has been played upon me," he wrote to Jacques de Maldere, "which has outraged my heart. All the despatches which I have been sending for several months to M. de Barneveld have been communicated by copy in whole or in extracts to this court. Villeroy quoted from them at our interview to-day, and I was left as it were without power of reply. The despatches were long, solid, omitting no particularity for giving means to form the best judgment of the designs and intrigues of this court. No greater damage could be done to me and my usefulness. All those from whom I have hitherto derived information, princes and great personages, will shut themselves up from me . . . . What can be more ticklish than to pass judgment on the tricks of those who are governing this state? This single blow has knocked me down completely. For I was moving about among all of them, making my profit of all, without any reserve. M. de Barneveld knew by this means the condition of this kingdom as well as I do. Certainly in a well-ordered republic it would cost the life of a man who had thus trifled with the reputation of an ambassador. I believe M. de Barneveld will be sorry, but this will never restore to me the confidence which I have lost. If one was jealous of my position at this court, certainly I deserved rather pity from those who should contemplate it closely. If one wished to procure my downfall in order to raise oneself above me, there was no need of these tricks. I have been offering to resign my embassy this long time, which will now produce nothing but thorns for me. How can I negotiate after my private despatches have been read? L'Hoste, the clerk of Villeroy, was not so great a criminal as the man who revealed my despatches; and L'Hoste was torn by four horses after his death. Four months long I have been complaining of this to M. de Barneveld. . . . Patience! I am groaning without being able to hope for justice. I console myself, for my term of office will soon arrive. Would that my embassy could have finished under the agreeable and friendly circumstances with which it began. The man who may succeed me will not find that this vile trick will help him much. . . . Pray find out whence and from whom this intrigue has come."

Page 2767

Certainly an envoy's position could hardly be more utterly compromised. Most unquestionably Aerssens had reason to be indignant, believing as he did that his conscientious efforts in the service of his government had been made use of by his chief to undermine his credit and blast his character. There was an intrigue between the newly appointed French minister, de Russy, at the Hague and the enemies of Aerssens to represent him to his own government as mischievous, passionate, unreasonably vehement in supporting the claims and dignity of his own country at the court to which he was accredited. Not often in diplomatic history has an ambassador of a free state been censured or removed for believing and maintaining in controversy that his own government is in the right. It was natural that the French government should be disturbed by the vivid light which he had flashed upon their pernicious intrigues with Spain to the detriment of the Republic, and at the pertinacity with which he resisted their preposterous claim to be reimbursed for one-third of the money which the late king had advanced as a free subsidy towards the war of the Netherlands for independence. But no injustice could be more outrageous than for the Envoy's own government to unite with the foreign State in damaging the character of its own agent for the crime of fidelity to itself.

Of such cruel perfidy Aerssens had been the victim, and he most wrongfully suspected his chief as its real perpetrator.

The claim for what was called the "Third" had been invented after the death of Henry. As already explained, the "Third" was not a gift from England to the Netherlands. It was a loan from England to France, or more properly a consent to abstain from pressing for payment for this proportion of an old debt. James, who was always needy, had often desired, but never obtained, the payment of this sum from Henry. Now that the King was dead, he applied to the Regent's government, and the Regent's government called upon the Netherlands, to pay the money.

Aerssens, as the agent of the Republic, protested firmly against such claim. The money had been advanced by the King as a free gift, as his contribution to a war in which he was deeply interested, although he was nominally at peace with Spain. As to the private arrangements between France and England, the Republic, said the Dutch envoy, was in no sense bound by them. He was no party to the Treaty of Hampton Court, and knew nothing of its stipulations.

Courtiers and politicians in plenty at the French court, now that Henry was dead, were quite sure that they had heard him say over and over again that the Netherlands had bound themselves to pay the Third. They persuaded Mary de' Medici that she likewise had often heard him say so, and induced her to take high ground on the subject in her interviews with Aerssens. The luckless queen, who was always in want of money to satisfy the insatiable greed of her favourites, and to buy off the enmity of the great princes, was very vehement—although she knew as much of those transactions as of

the finances of Prester John or the Lama of Thibet—in maintaining this claim of her government upon the States.

Page 2768

“After talking with the ministers,” said Aerssens, “I had an interview with the Queen. I knew that she had been taught her lesson, to insist on the payment of the Third. So I did not speak at all of the matter, but talked exclusively and at length of the French regiments in the States’ service. She was embarrassed, and did not know exactly what to say. At last, without replying a single word to what I had been saying, she became very red in the face, and asked me if I were not instructed to speak of the money due to England. Whereupon I spoke in the sense already indicated. She interrupted me by saying she had a perfect recollection that the late king intended and understood that we were to pay the Third to England, and had talked with her very seriously on the subject. If he were living, he would think it very strange, she said, that we refused; and so on.

“Soissons, too, pretends to remember perfectly that such were the King’s intentions. ’Tis a very strange thing, Sir. Every one knows now the secrets of the late king, if you are willing to listen. Yet he was not in the habit of taking all the world into his confidence. The Queen takes her opinions as they give them to her. ’Tis a very good princess, but I am sorry she is so ignorant of affairs. As she says she remembers, one is obliged to say one believes her. But I, who knew the King so intimately, and saw him so constantly, know that he could only have said that the Third was paid in acquittal of his debts to and for account of the King of England, and not that we were to make restitution thereof. The Chancellor tells me my refusal has been taken as an affront by the Queen, and Puysieux says it is a contempt which she can’t swallow.”

Aerssens on his part remained firm; his pertinacity being the greater as he thoroughly understood the subject which he was talking about, an advantage which was rarely shared in by those with whom he conversed. The Queen, highly scandalized by his demeanour, became from that time forth his bitter enemy, and, as already stated, was resolved to be rid of him.

Nor was the Envoy at first desirous of remaining. He had felt after Henry’s death and Sully’s disgrace, and the complete transformation of the France which he had known, that his power of usefulness was gone. “Our enemies,” he said, “have got the advantage which I used to have in times past, and I recognize a great coldness towards us, which is increasing every day.” Nevertheless, he yielded reluctantly to Barneveld’s request that he should for the time at least remain at his post. Later on, as the intrigues against him began to unfold themselves, and his faithful services were made use of at home to blacken his character and procure his removal, he refused to resign, as to do so would be to play into the hands of his enemies, and by inference at least to accuse himself of infidelity to his trust.

But his concealed rage and his rancor grew more deadly every day. He was fully aware of the plots against him, although he found it difficult to trace them to their source.

Page 2769

“I doubt not,” he wrote to Jacques de Maldere, the distinguished diplomatist and senator, who had recently returned from his embassy to England, “that this beautiful proposition of de Russy has been sent to your Province of Zealand. Does it not seem to you a plot well woven as well in Holland as at this court to remove me from my post with disreputation? What have I done that should cause the Queen to disapprove my proceedings? Since the death of the late king I have always opposed the Third, which they have been trying to fix upon the treasury, on the ground that Henry never spoke to me of restitution, that the receipts given were simple ones, and that the money given was spent for the common benefit of France and the States under direction of the King’s government. But I am expected here to obey M. de Villeroy, who says that it was the intention of the late king to oblige us to make the payment. I am not accustomed to obey authority if it be not supported by reason. It is for my masters to reply and to defend me. The Queen has no reason to complain. I have maintained the interests of my superiors. But this is not the cause of the complaints. My misfortune is that all my despatches have been sent from Holland in copy to this court. Most of them contained free pictures of the condition and dealings of those who govern here. M. de Villeroy has found himself depicted often, and now under pretext of a public negotiation he has found an opportunity of revenging himself. . . . Besides this cause which Villeroy has found for combing my head, Russy has given notice here that I have kept my masters in the hopes of being honourably exempted from the claims of this government. The long letter which I wrote to M. de Barneveld justifies my proceedings.”

It is no wonder that the Ambassador was galled to the quick by the outrage which those concerned in the government were seeking to put upon him. How could an honest man fail to be overwhelmed with rage and anguish at being dishonoured before the world by his masters for scrupulously doing his duty, and for maintaining the rights and dignity of his own country? He knew that the charges were but pretexts, that the motives of his enemies were as base as the intrigues themselves, but he also knew that the world usually sides with the government against the individual, and that a man’s reputation is rarely strong enough to maintain itself unsullied in a foreign land when his own government stretches forth its hand not to, shield, but to stab him.

> [See the similarity of Aerssens position to that of Motley 250 years later, in the biographical sketch of Motley by Oliver Wendell Holmes. D.W.]

“I know,” he said, “that this plot has been woven partly in Holland and partly here by good correspondence, in order to drive me from my post with disreputation. To this has tended the communication of my despatches to make me lose my best friends. This too was the object of the particular imparting to de Russy of all my propositions, in order to draw a complaint against me from this court.

Page 2770

“But as I have discovered this accurately, I have resolved to offer to my masters the continuance of my very humble service for such time and under such conditions as they may think good to prescribe. I prefer forcing my natural and private inclinations to giving an opportunity for the ministers of this kingdom to discredit us, and to my enemies to succeed in injuring me, and by fraud and malice to force me from my post . . . I am truly sorry, being ready to retire, wishing to have an honourable testimony in recompense of my labours, that one is in such hurry to take advantage of my fall. I cannot believe that my masters wish to suffer this. They are too prudent, and cannot be ignorant of the treachery which has been practised on me. I have maintained their cause. If they have chosen to throw down the fruits of my industry, the blame should be imputed to those who consider their own ambition more than the interests of the public . . . . What envoy will ever dare to speak with vigour if he is not sustained by the government at home? . . . . . My enemies have misrepresented my actions, and my language as passionate, exaggerated, mischievous, but I have no passion except for the service of my superiors. They say that I have a dark and distrustful disposition, but I have been alarmed at the alliance now forming here with the King of Spain, through the policy of M. de Villeroy. I was the first to discover this intrigue, which they thought buried in the bosom of the Triumvirate. I gave notice of it to My Lords the States as in duty bound. It all came back to the government in the copies furnished of my secret despatches. This is the real source of the complaints against me. The rest of the charges, relating to the Third and other matters, are but pretexts. To parry the blow, they pretend that all that is said and done with the Spaniard is but feigning. Who is going to believe that? Has not the Pope intervened in the affair? . . . I tell you they are furious here because I have my eyes open. I see too far into their affairs to suit their purposes. A new man would suit them better.”

His position was hopelessly compromised. He remained in Paris, however, month after month, and even year after year, defying his enemies both at the Queen’s court and in Holland, feeding fat the grudge he bore to Barneveld as the supposed author of the intrigue against him, and drawing closer the personal bands which united him to Bouillon and through him to Prince Maurice.

The wrath of the Ambassador flamed forth without disguise against Barneveld and all his adherents when his removal, as will be related on a subsequent page, was at last effected. And his hatred was likely to be deadly. A man with a shrewd, vivid face, cleanly cut features and a restless eye; wearing a close-fitting skull cap, which gave him something the lock of a monk, but with the thoroughbred and facile demeanour of one familiar with the world; stealthy, smooth, and cruel, a man coldly intellectual, who feared no one, loved but few, and never forgot or forgave; Francis d’Aerssens, devoured by ambition and burning with revenge, was a dangerous enemy.

Page 2771

Time was soon to show whether it was safe to injure him. Barneveld, from well-considered motives of public policy, was favouring his honourable recall. But he allowed a decorous interval of more than three years to elapse in which to terminate his affairs, and to take a deliberate departure from that French embassy to which the Advocate had originally promoted him, and in which there had been so many years of mutual benefit and confidence between the two statesmen. He used no underhand means. He did not abuse the power of the States-General which he wielded to cast him suddenly and brutally from the distinguished post which he occupied, and so to attempt to dishonour him before the world. Nothing could be more respectful and conciliatory than the attitude of the government from first to last towards this distinguished functionary. The Republic respected itself too much to deal with honourable agents whose services it felt obliged to dispense with as with vulgar malefactors who had been detected in crime. But Aerssens believed that it was the Advocate who had caused copies of his despatches to be sent to the French court, and that he had deliberately and for a fixed purpose been undermining his influence at home and abroad and blackening his character. All his ancient feelings of devotion, if they had ever genuinely existed towards his former friend and patron, turned to gall. He was almost ready to deny that he had ever respected Barneveld, appreciated his public services, admired his intellect, or felt gratitude for his guidance.

A fierce controversy—to which at a later period it will be necessary to call the reader's attention, because it is intimately connected with dark scenes afterwards to be enacted—took place between the late ambassador and Cornelis van der Myle. Meantime Barneveld pursued the policy which he had marked out for the States-General in regard to France.

Certainly it was a difficult problem. There could be no doubt that metamorphosed France could only be a dangerous ally for the Republic. It was in reality impossible that she should be her ally at all. And this Barneveld knew. Still it was better, so he thought, for the Netherlands that France should exist than that it should fall into utter decomposition. France, though under the influence of Spain, and doubly allied by marriage contracts to Spain, was better than Spain itself in the place of France. This seemed to be the only choice between two evils. Should the whole weight of the States-General be thrown into the scale of the malcontent and mutinous princes against the established but tottering government of France, it was difficult to say how soon Spain might literally, as well as inferentially, reign in Paris.

Between the rebellion and the legitimate government, therefore, Barneveld did not hesitate. France, corporate France, with which the Republic had bean so long in close and mutually advantageous alliance, and from whose late monarch she had received such constant and valuable benefits, was in the Advocate's opinion the only power to be recognised, Papal and Spanish though it was. The advantage of an alliance with the fickle, self-seeking, and ever changing mutiny, that was seeking to make use of Protestantism to effect its own ends, was in his eyes rather specious than real.

Page 2772

By this policy, while making the breach irreparable with Aerssens and as many leading politicians as Aerssens could influence, he first brought on himself the stupid accusation of swerving towards Spain. Dull murmurs like these, which were now but faintly making themselves heard against the reputation of the Advocate, were destined ere long to swell into a mighty roar; but he hardly listened now to insinuations which seemed infinitely below his contempt. He still effectually ruled the nation through his influence in the States of Holland, where he reigned supreme. Thus far Barneveld and My Lords the States-General were one personage.

But there was another great man in the State who had at last grown impatient of the Advocate's power, and was secretly resolved to brook it no longer. Maurice of Nassau had felt himself too long rebuked by the genius of the Advocate. The Prince had perhaps never forgiven him for the political guardianship which he had exercised over him ever since the death of William the Silent. He resented the leading strings by which his youthful footstep had been sustained, and which he seemed always to feel about his limbs so long as Barneveld existed. He had never forgotten the unpalatable advice given to him by the Advocate through the Princess-Dowager.

The brief campaign in Cleve and Julich was the last great political operation in which the two were likely to act in even apparent harmony. But the rivalry between the two had already pronounced itself emphatically during the negotiations for the truce. The Advocate had felt it absolutely necessary for the Republic to suspend the war at the first moment when she could treat with her ancient sovereign on a footing of equality. Spain, exhausted with the conflict, had at last consented to what she considered the humiliation of treating with her rebellious provinces as with free states over which she claimed no authority. The peace party, led by Barneveld, had triumphed, notwithstanding the steady opposition of Prince Maurice and his adherents.

Why had Maurice opposed the treaty? Because his vocation was over, because he was the greatest captain of the age, because his emoluments, his consideration, his dignity before the world, his personal power, were all vastly greater in war than in his opinion they could possibly be in peace. It was easy for him to persuade himself that what was manifestly for his individual interest was likewise essential to the prosperity of the country.

The diminution in his revenues consequent on the return to peace was made good to him, his brother, and his cousin, by most munificent endowments and pensions. And it was owing to the strenuous exertions of the Advocate that these large sums were voted. A hollow friendship was kept up between the two during the first few years of the truce, but resentment and jealousy lay deep in Maurice's heart.

Page 2773

At about the period of the return of Aerssens from his French embassy, the suppressed fire was ready to flame forth at the first fanning by that artful hand. It was impossible, so Aerssens thought and whispered, that two heads could remain on one body politic. There was no room in the Netherlands for both the Advocate and the Prince. Barneveld was in all civil affairs dictator, chief magistrate, supreme judge; but he occupied this high station by the force of intellect, will, and experience, not through any constitutional provision. In time of war the Prince was generalissimo, commander-in-chief of all the armies of the Republic. Yet constitutionally he was not captain-general at all. He was only stadholder of five out of seven provinces.

Barneveld suspected him of still wishing to make himself sovereign of the country. Perhaps his suspicions were incorrect. Yet there was every reason why Maurice should be ambitious of that position. It would have been in accordance with the openly expressed desire of Henry *iv*. and other powerful allies of the Netherlands. His father's assassination had alone prevented his elevation to the rank of sovereign Count of Holland. The federal policy of the Provinces had drifted into a republican form after their renunciation of their Spanish sovereign, not because the people, or the States as representing the people, had deliberately chosen a republican system, but because they could get no powerful monarch to accept the sovereignty. They had offered to become subjects of Protestant England and of Catholic France. Both powers had refused the offer, and refused it with something like contumely. However deep the subsequent regret on the part of both, there was no doubt of the fact. But the internal policy in all the provinces, and in all the towns, was republican. Local self-government existed everywhere. Each city magistracy was a little republic in itself. The death of William the Silent, before he had been invested with the sovereign power of all seven provinces, again left that sovereignty in abeyance. Was the supreme power of the Union, created at Utrecht in 1579, vested in the States-General?

They were beginning theoretically to claim it, but Barneveld denied the existence of any such power either in law or fact. It was a league of sovereignties, he maintained; a confederacy of seven independent states, united for certain purposes by a treaty made some thirty years before. Nothing could be more imbecile, judging by the light of subsequent events and the experience of centuries, than such an organization. The independent and sovereign republic of Zealand or of Groningen, for example, would have made a poor figure campaigning, or negotiating, or exhibiting itself on its own account before the world. Yet it was difficult to show any charter, precedent, or prescription for the sovereignty of the States-General. Necessary as such an incorporation was for the very

Page 2774

existence of the Union, no constitutional union had ever been enacted. Practically the Province of Holland, representing more than half the population, wealth, strength, and intellect of the whole confederation, had achieved an irregular supremacy in the States-General. But its undeniable superiority was now causing a rank growth of envy, hatred, and jealousy throughout the country, and the great Advocate of Holland, who was identified with the province, and had so long wielded its power, was beginning to reap the full harvest of that malice.

Thus while there was so much of vagueness in theory and practice as to the sovereignty, there was nothing criminal on the part of Maurice if he was ambitious of obtaining the sovereignty himself. He was not seeking to compass it by base artifice or by intrigue of any kind. It was very natural that he should be restive under the dictatorship of the Advocate. If a single burgher and lawyer could make himself despot of the Netherlands, how much more reasonable that he—with the noblest blood of Europe in his veins, whose direct ancestor three centuries before had been emperor not only of those provinces, but of all Germany and half Christendom besides, whose immortal father had under God been the creator and saviour of the new commonwealth, had made sacrifices such as man never made for a people, and had at last laid down his life in its defence; who had himself fought daily from boyhood upwards in the great cause, who had led national armies from victory to victory till he had placed his country as a military school and a belligerent power foremost among the nations, and had at last so exhausted and humbled the great adversary and former tyrant that he had been glad of a truce while the rebel chief would have preferred to continue the war—should aspire to rule by hereditary right a land with which his name and his race were indelibly associated by countless sacrifices and heroic achievements.

It was no crime in Maurice to desire the sovereignty. It was still less a crime in Barneveld to believe that he desired it. There was no special reason why the Prince should love the republican form of government provided that an hereditary one could be legally substituted for it. He had sworn allegiance to the statutes, customs, and privileges of each of the provinces of which he had been elected stadholder, but there would have been no treason on his part if the name and dignity of stadholder should be changed by the States themselves for those of King or sovereign Prince.

Yet it was a chief grievance against the Advocate on the part of the Prince that Barneveld believed him capable of this ambition.

Page 2775

The Republic existed as a fact, but it had not long existed, nor had it ever received a formal baptism. So undefined was its constitution, and so conflicting were the various opinions in regard to it of eminent men, that it would be difficult to say how high-treason could be committed against it. Great lawyers of highest intellect and learning believed the sovereign power to reside in the separate states, others found that sovereignty in the city magistracies, while during a feverish period of war and tumult the supreme function had without any written constitution, any organic law, practically devolved upon the States-General, who had now begun to claim it as a right. The Republic was neither venerable by age nor impregnable in law. It was an improvised aristocracy of lawyers, manufacturers, bankers, and corporations which had done immense work and exhibited astonishing sagacity and courage, but which might never have achieved the independence of the Provinces unaided by the sword of Orange-Nassau and the magic spell which belonged to that name.

Thus a bitter conflict was rapidly developing itself in the heart of the Commonwealth. There was the civil element struggling with the military for predominance; sword against gown; states' rights against central authority; peace against war; above all the rivalry of one prominent personage against another, whose mutual hatred was now artfully inflamed by partisans.

And now another element of discord had come, more potent than all the rest: the terrible, never ending, struggle of Church against State. Theological hatred which forty years long had found vent in the exchange of acrimony between the ancient and the Reformed churches was now assuming other shapes. Religion in that age and country was more than has often been the case in history the atmosphere of men's daily lives. But during the great war for independence, although the hostility between the two religious forces was always intense, it was modified especially towards the close of the struggle by other controlling influences. The love of independence and the passion for nationality, the devotion to ancient political privileges, was often as fervid and genuine in Catholic bosoms as in those of Protestants, and sincere adherents of the ancient church had fought to the death against Spain in defence of chartered rights.

At that very moment it is probable that half the population of the United Provinces was Catholic. Yet it would be ridiculous to deny that the aggressive, uncompromising; self-sacrificing, intensely believing, perfectly fearless spirit of Calvinism had been the animating soul, the motive power of the great revolt. For the Provinces to have encountered Spain and Rome without Calvinism, and relying upon municipal enthusiasm only, would have been to throw away the sword and fight with the scabbard.

Page 2776

But it is equally certain that those hot gospellers who had suffered so much martyrdom and achieved so many miracles were fully aware of their power and despotic in its exercise. Against the oligarchy of commercial and juridical corporations they stood there the most terrible aristocracy of all: the aristocracy of God's elect, predestined from all time and to all eternity to take precedence of and to look down upon their inferior and lost fellow creatures. It was inevitable that this aristocracy, which had done so much, which had breathed into a new-born commonwealth the breath of its life, should be intolerant, haughty, dogmatic.

The Church of Rome, which had been dethroned after inflicting such exquisite tortures during its period of power, was not to raise its head. Although so large a proportion of the inhabitants of the country were secretly or openly attached to that faith, it was a penal offence to participate openly in its rites and ceremonies. Religious equality, except in the minds of a few individuals, was an unimaginable idea. There was still one Church which arrogated to itself the sole possession of truth, the Church of Geneva. Those who admitted the possibility of other forms and creeds were either Atheists or, what was deemed worse than Atheists, Papists, because Papists were assumed to be traitors also, and desirous of selling the country to Spain. An undevout man in that land and at that epoch was an almost unknown phenomenon. Religion was as much a recognized necessity of existence as food or drink. It were as easy to find people about without clothes as without religious convictions.

The Advocate, who had always adhered to the humble spirit of his ancestral device, "Nil scire tutissima fedes," and almost alone among his fellow citizens (save those immediate apostles and pupils of his who became involved in his fate) in favour of religious toleration, began to be suspected of treason and Papacy because, had he been able to give the law, it was thought he would have permitted such horrors as the public exercise of the Roman Catholic religion.

The hissings and screamings of the vulgar against him as he moved forward on his stedfast course he heeded less than those of geese on a common. But there was coming a time when this proud and scornful statesman, conscious of the superiority conferred by great talents and unparalleled experience, would find it less easy to treat the voice of slanderers, whether idiots or powerful and intellectual enemies, with contempt.

CHAPTER VIII.

Page 2777

Schism in the Church a Public Fact—Struggle for Power between the Sacerdotal and Political Orders—Dispute between Arminius and Gomarus—Rage of James I. at the Appointment of Voratius—Arminians called Remonstrants—Hague Conference—-Contra-Remonstrance by Gomarites of Seven Points to the Remonstrants' Five—Fierce Theological Disputes throughout the Country—Ryswyk Secession— Maurice wishes to remain neutral, but finds himself the Chieftain of the Contra-Remonstrant Party—The States of Holland Remonstrant by a large Majority—The States-General Contra-Remonstrant—Sir Ralph Winwood leaves the Hague—Three Armies to take the Field against Protestantism.

Schism in the Church had become a public fact, and theological hatred was in full blaze throughout the country.

The great practical question in the Church had been as to the appointment of preachers, wardens, schoolmasters, and other officers. By the ecclesiastical arrangements of 1591 great power was conceded to the civil authority in church matters, especially in regard to such appointments, which were made by a commission consisting of four members named by the churches and four by the magistrates in each district.

Barneveld, who above all things desired peace in the Church, had wished to revive this ordinance, and in 1612 it had been resolved by the States of Holland that each city or village should, if the magistracy approved, provisionally conform to it. The States of Utrecht made at the same time a similar arrangement.

It was the controversy which has been going on since the beginning of history and is likely to be prolonged to the end of time—the struggle for power between the sacerdotal and political orders; the controversy whether priests shall control the state or the state govern the priests.

This was the practical question involved in the fierce dispute as to dogma. The famous duel between Arminius and Gomarus; the splendid theological tournaments which succeeded; six champions on a side armed in full theological panoply and swinging the sharpest curtal axes which learning, passion, and acute intellect could devise, had as yet produced no beneficent result. Nobody had been convinced by the shock of argument, by the exchange of those desperate blows. The High Council of the Hague had declared that no difference of opinion in the Church existed sufficient to prevent fraternal harmony and happiness. But Gomarus loudly declared that, if there were no means of putting down the heresy of Arminius, there would before long be a struggle such as would set province against province, village against village, family against family, throughout the land. He should be afraid to die in such doctrine. He shuddered that any one should dare to come before God's tribunal with such blasphemies. Meantime his great adversary, the learned and eloquent, the musical, frolicsome, hospitable heresiarch was no more. Worn out with controversy, but peaceful and happy

in the convictions which were so bitterly denounced by Gomarus and a large proportion of both preachers and laymen in the Netherlands, and convinced that the schism which in his view had been created by those who called themselves the orthodox would weaken the cause of Protestantism throughout Europe, Arminius died at the age of forty-nine.

Page 2778

The magistrates throughout Holland, with the exception of a few cities, were Arminian, the preachers Gomarian; for Arminius ascribed to the civil authority the right to decide upon church matters, while Gomarus maintained that ecclesiastical affairs should be regulated in ecclesiastical assemblies. The overseers of Leyden University appointed Conrad Vorstius to be professor of theology in place of Arminius. The selection filled to the brim the cup of bitterness, for no man was more audaciously latitudinarian than he. He was even suspected of Socinianism. There came a shriek from King James, fierce and shrill enough to rouse Arminius from his grave. James foamed to the mouth at the insolence of the overseers in appointing such a monster of infidelity to the professorship. He ordered his books to be publicly burned in St. Paul's Churchyard and at both Universities, and would have burned the Professor himself with as much delight as Torquemada or Peter Titelman ever felt in roasting their victims, had not the day for such festivities gone by. He ordered the States of Holland on pain of for ever forfeiting his friendship to exclude Vorstius at once from the theological chair and to forbid him from "nestling anywhere in the country."

He declared his amazement that they should tolerate such a pest as Conrad Vorstius. Had they not had enough of the seed sown by that foe of God, Arminius? He ordered the States-General to chase the blasphemous monster from the land, or else he would cut off all connection with their false and heretic churches and make the other Reformed churches of Europe do the same, nor should the youth of England ever be allowed to frequent the University of Leyden.

In point of fact the Professor was never allowed to qualify, to preach, or to teach; so tremendous was the outcry of Peter Plancius and many orthodox preachers, echoing the wrath of the King. He lived at Gouda in a private capacity for several years, until the Synod of Dordrecht at last publicly condemned his opinions and deprived him of his professorship.

Meantime, the preachers who were disciples of Arminius had in a private assembly drawn up what was called a Remonstrance, addressed to the States of Holland, and defending themselves from the reproach that they were seeking change in the Divine service and desirous of creating tumult and schism.

This Remonstrance, set forth by the pen of the famous Uytenbogaert, whom Gomarus called the Court Trumpeter, because for a long time he had been Prince Maurice's favourite preacher, was placed in the hands of Barneveld, for delivery to the States of Holland. Thenceforth the Arminians were called Remonstrants.

The Hague Conference followed, six preachers on a side, and the States of Holland exhorted to fraternal compromise. Until further notice, they decreed that no man should be required to believe more than had been laid down in the Five Points:

I. God has from eternity resolved to choose to eternal life those who through his grace believe in Jesus Christ, and in faith and obedience so continue to the end, and to condemn the unbelieving and unconverted to eternal damnation.

Page 2779

II. Jesus Christ died for all; so, nevertheless, that no one actually except believers is redeemed by His death.

III. Man has not the saving belief from himself, nor out of his free will, but he needs thereto God's grace in Christ.

IV. This grace is the beginning, continuation, and completion of man's salvation; all good deeds must be ascribed to it, but it does not work irresistibly.

V. God's grace gives sufficient strength to the true believers to overcome evil; but whether they cannot lose grace should be more closely examined before it should be taught in full security.

Afterwards they expressed themselves more distinctly on this point, and declared that a true believer, through his own fault, can fall away from God and lose faith.

Before the conference, however, the Gomarite preachers had drawn up a Contra-Remonstrance of Seven Points in opposition to the Remonstrants' five.

They demanded the holding of a National Synod to settle the difference between these Five and Seven Points, or the sending of them to foreign universities for arbitration, a mutual promise being given by the contending parties to abide by the decision.

Thus much it has been necessary to state concerning what in the seventeenth century was called the platform of the two great parties: a term which has been perpetuated in our own country, and is familiar to all the world in the nineteenth.

These were the Seven Points:

I. God has chosen from eternity certain persons out of the human race, which in and with Adam fell into sin and has no more power to believe and Convert itself than a dead man to restore himself to life, in order to make them blessed through Christ; while He passes by the rest through His righteous judgment, and leaves them lying in their sins.

II. Children of believing parents, as well as full-grown believers, are to be considered as elect so long as they with action do not prove the contrary.

III. God in His election has not looked at the belief and the repentance of the elect; but, on the contrary, in His eternal and unchangeable design, has resolved to give to the elect faith and stedfastness, and thus to make them blessed.

IV. He, to this end, in the first place, presented to them His only begotten Son, whose sufferings, although sufficient for the expiation of all men's sins, nevertheless, according to God's decree, serves alone to the reconciliation of the elect.

V. God causest he Gospel to be preached to them, making the same through the Holy Ghost, of strength upon their minds; so that they not merely obtain power to repent and to believe, but also actually and voluntarily do repent and believe.

VI. Such elect, through the same power of the Holy Ghost through which they have once become repentant and believing, are kept in such wise that they indeed through weakness fall into heavy sins; but can never wholly and for always lose the true faith.

Page 2780

VII. True believers from this, however, draw no reason for fleshly quiet, it being impossible that they who through a true faith were planted in Christ should bring forth no fruits of thankfulness; the promises of God's help and the warnings of Scripture tending to make their salvation work in them in fear and trembling, and to cause them more earnestly to desire help from that spirit without which they can do nothing.

There shall be no more setting forth of these subtle and finely wrought abstractions in our pages. We aspire not to the lofty heights of theological and supernatural contemplation, where the atmosphere becomes too rarefied for ordinary constitutions. Rather we attempt an objective and level survey of remarkable phenomena manifesting themselves on the earth; direct or secondary emanations from those distant spheres.

For in those days, and in that land especially, theology and politics were one. It may be questioned at least whether this practical fusion of elements, which may with more safety to the Commonwealth be kept separate, did not tend quite as much to lower and contaminate the religious sentiments as to elevate the political idea. To mix habitually the solemn phraseology which men love to reserve for their highest and most sacred needs with the familiar slang of politics and trade seems to our generation not a very desirable proceeding.

The aroma of doubly distilled and highly sublimated dogma is more difficult to catch than to comprehend the broader and more practical distinctions of every-day party strife.

King James was furious at the thought that common men—the vulgar, the people in short—should dare to discuss deep problems of divinity which, as he confessed, had puzzled even his royal mind. Barneveld modestly disclaimed the power of seeing with absolute clearness into things beyond the reach of the human intellect. But the honest Netherlanders were not abashed by thunder from the royal pulpit, nor perplexed by hesitations which darkened the soul of the great Advocate.

In burghers' mansions, peasants' cottages, mechanics' back-parlours, on board herring smacks, canal boats, and East Indiamen; in shops, counting-rooms, farmyards, guard-rooms, ale-houses; on the exchange, in the tennis-court, on the mall; at banquets, at burials, christenings, or bridals; wherever and whenever human creatures met each other, there was ever to be found the fierce wrangle of Remonstrant and Contra-Remonstrant, the hissing of red-hot theological rhetoric, the pelting of hostile texts. The blacksmith's iron cooled on the anvil, the tinker dropped a kettle half mended, the broker left a bargain unclinched, the Scheveningen fisherman in his wooden shoes forgot the cracks in his pinkie, while each paused to hold high converse with friend or foe on fate, free will, or absolute foreknowledge; losing himself in wandering mazes whence there was no issue. Province against province, city against city, family against family; it was one vast scene of bickering, denunciation, heart-burnings, mutual excommunication and hatred.

Page 2781

Alas! a generation of mankind before, men had stood banded together to resist, with all the might that comes from union, the fell spirit of the Holy Inquisition, which was dooming all who had wandered from the ancient fold or resisted foreign tyranny to the axe, the faggot, the living grave. There had been small leisure then for men who fought for Fatherland, and for comparative liberty of conscience, to tear each others' characters in pieces, and to indulge in mutual hatreds and loathing on the question of predestination.

As a rule the population, especially of the humbler classes, and a great majority of the preachers were Contra-Remonstrant; the magistrates, the burgher patricians, were Remonstrant. In Holland the controlling influence was Remonstrant; but Amsterdam and four or five other cities of that province held to the opposite doctrine. These cities formed therefore a small minority in the States Assembly of Holland sustained by a large majority in the States-General. The Province of Utrecht was almost unanimously Remonstrant. The five other provinces were decidedly Contra-Remonstrant.

It is obvious therefore that the influence of Barneveld, hitherto so all-controlling in the States-General, and which rested on the complete submission of the States of Holland to his will, was tottering. The battle-line between Church and State was now drawn up; and it was at the same time a battle between the union and the principles of state sovereignty.

It had long since been declared through the mouth of the Advocate, but in a solemn state manifesto, that My Lords the States-General were the foster-fathers and the natural protectors of the Church, to whom supreme authority in church matters belonged.

The Contra-Remonstrants, on the other hand, maintained that all the various churches made up one indivisible church, seated above the States, whether Provincial or General, and governed by the Holy Ghost acting directly upon the congregations.

As the schism grew deeper and the States-General receded from the position which they had taken up under the lead of the Advocate, the scene was changed. A majority of the Provinces being Contra-Remonstrant, and therefore in favour of a National Synod, the States-General as a body were of necessity for the Synod.

It was felt by the clergy that, if many churches existed, they would all remain subject to the civil authority. The power of the priesthood would thus sink before that of the burgher aristocracy. There must be one church—the Church of Geneva and Heidelberg—if that theocracy which the Gomarites meant to establish was not to vanish as a dream. It was founded on Divine Right, and knew no chief magistrate but the Holy Ghost. A few years before the States-General had agreed to a National Synod, but with a condition that there should be revision of the Netherland Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism.

Against this the orthodox infallibilists had protested and thundered, because it was an admission that the vile Arminian heresy might perhaps be declared correct. It was now however a matter of certainty that the States-General would cease to oppose the unconditional Synod, because the majority sided with the priesthood.

Page 2782

The magistrates of Leyden had not long before opposed the demand for a Synod on the ground that the war against Spain was not undertaken to maintain one sect; that men of various sects and creeds had fought with equal valour against the common foe; that religious compulsion was hateful, and that no synod had a right to claim Netherlanders as slaves.

To thoughtful politicians like Barneveld, Hugo Grotius, and men who acted with them, fraught with danger to the state, that seemed a doctrine by which mankind were not regarded as saved or doomed according to belief or deeds, but as individuals divided from all eternity into two classes which could never be united, but must ever mutually regard each other as enemies.

And like enemies Netherlanders were indeed beginning to regard each other. The man who, banded like brothers, had so heroically fought for two generations long for liberty against an almost superhuman despotism, now howling and jeering against each other like demons, seemed determined to bring the very name of liberty into contempt.

Where the Remonstrants were in the ascendant, they excited the hatred and disgust of the orthodox by their overbearing determination to carry their Five Points. A broker in Rotterdam of the Contra-Remonstrant persuasion, being about to take a wife, swore he had rather be married by a pig than a parson. For this sparkling epigram he was punished by the Remonstrant magistracy with loss of his citizenship for a year and the right to practise his trade for life. A casuistical tinker, expressing himself violently in the same city against the Five Points, and disrespectfully towards the magistrates for tolerating them, was banished from the town. A printer in the neighbourhood, disgusted with these and similar efforts of tyranny on the part of the dominant party, thrust a couple of lines of doggrel into the lottery:

> “In name of the Prince of Orange, I ask once and again,
> What difference between the Inquisition of Rotterdam and Spain?”

For this poetical effort the printer was sentenced to forfeit the prize that he had drawn in the lottery, and to be kept in prison on bread and water for a fortnight.

Certainly such punishments were hardly as severe as being beheaded or burned or buried alive, as would have been the lot of tinkers and printers and brokers who opposed the established church in the days of Alva, but the demon of intolerance, although its fangs were drawn, still survived, and had taken possession of both parties in the Reformed Church. For it was the Remonstrants who had possession of the churches at Rotterdam, and the printer’s distich is valuable as pointing out that the name of Orange was beginning to identify itself with the Contra-Remonstrant faction. At this time, on the other hand, the gabble that Barneveld had been bought by Spanish gold, and was about to sell his country to Spain, became louder than a whisper. Men were not ashamed, from theological hatred, to utter such senseless calumnies against a

venerable statesman whose long life had been devoted to the cause of his country's independence and to the death struggle with Spain.

Page 2783

As if because a man admitted the possibility of all his fellow-creatures being saved from damnation through repentance and the grace of God, he must inevitably be a traitor to his country and a pensionary of her deadliest foe.

And where the Contra-Remonstrants held possession of the churches and the city governments, acts of tyranny which did not then seem ridiculous were of everyday occurrence. Clergymen, suspected of the Five Points, were driven out of the pulpits with bludgeons or assailed with brickbats at the church door. At Amsterdam, Simon Goulart, for preaching the doctrine of universal salvation and for disputing the eternal damnation of young children, was forbidden thenceforth to preach at all.

But it was at the Hague that the schism in religion and politics first fatally widened itself. Henry Rosaeus, an eloquent divine, disgusted with his colleague Uytenbogaert, refused all communion with him, and was in consequence suspended. Excluded from the Great Church, where he had formerly ministered, he preached every Sunday at Ryswyk, two or three miles distant. Seven hundred Contra-Remonstrants of the Hague followed their beloved pastor, and, as the roads to Ryswyk were muddy and sloppy in winter, acquired the unsavoury nickname of the “Mud Beggars.” The vulgarity of heart which suggested the appellation does not inspire to-day great sympathy with the Remonstrant party, even if one were inclined to admit, what is not the fact, that they represented the cause of religious equality. For even the illustrious Grotius was at that very moment repudiating the notion that there could be two religions in one state. “Difference in public worship,” he said, “was in kingdoms pernicious, but in free commonwealths in the highest degree destructive.”

It was the struggle between Church and State for supremacy over the whole body politic. “The Reformation,” said Grotius, “was not brought about by synods, but by kings, princes, and magistrates.” It was the same eternal story, the same terrible two-edged weapon, “Cujus reggio ejus religio,” found in the arsenal of the first Reformers, and in every politico-religious arsenal of history.

“By an eternal decree of God,” said Gomarus in accordance with Calvin, “it has been fixed who are to be saved and who damned. By His decree some are drawn to faith and godliness, and, being drawn, can never fall away. God leaves all the rest in the general corruption of human nature and their own misdeeds.”

“God has from eternity made this distinction in the fallen human race,” said Arminius, “that He pardons those who desist from their sins and put their faith in Christ, and will give them eternal life, but will punish those who remain impenitent. Moreover, it is pleasanter to God that all men should repent, and, coming to knowledge of truth, remain therein, but He compels none.”

Page 2784

This was the vital difference of dogma. And it was because they could hold no communion with those who believed in the efficacy of repentance that Rosaeus and his followers had seceded to Ryswyk, and the Reformed Church had been torn into two very unequal parts. But it is difficult to believe that out of this arid field of controversy so plentiful a harvest of hatred and civil convulsion could have ripened. More practical than the insoluble problems, whether repentance could effect salvation, and whether dead infants were hopelessly damned, was the question who should rule both Church and State.

There could be but one church. On that Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants were agreed. But should the five Points or the Seven Points obtain the mastery? Should that framework of hammered iron, the Confession and Catechism, be maintained in all its rigidity around the sheepfold, or should the disciples of the arch-heretic Arminius, the salvation-mongers, be permitted to prowl within it?

Was Barneveld, who hated the Reformed religion (so men told each other), and who believed in nothing, to continue dictator of the whole Republic through his influence over one province, prescribing its religious dogmas and laying down its laws; or had not the time come for the States-General to vindicate the rights of the Church, and to crush for ever the pernicious principle of State sovereignty and burgher oligarchy?

The abyss was wide and deep, and the wild waves were raging more madly every hour. The Advocate, anxious and troubled, but undismayed, did his best in the terrible emergency. He conferred with Prince Maurice on the subject of the Ryswyk secession, and men said that he sought to impress upon him, as chief of the military forces, the necessity of putting down religious schism with the armed hand.

The Prince had not yet taken a decided position. He was still under the influence of John Uytenbogaert, who with Arminius and the Advocate made up the fateful three from whom deadly disasters were deemed to have come upon the Commonwealth. He wished to remain neutral. But no man can be neutral in civil contentions threatening the life of the body politic any more than the heart can be indifferent if the human frame is sawn in two.

“I am a soldier,” said Maurice, “not a divine. These are matters of theology which I don’t understand, and about which I don’t trouble myself.”

On another occasion he is reported to have said, “I know nothing of predestination, whether it is green or whether it is blue; but I do know that the Advocate’s pipe and mine will never play the same tune.”

Page 2785

It was not long before he fully comprehended the part which he must necessarily play. To say that he was indifferent to religious matters was as ridiculous as to make a like charge against Barneveld. Both were religious men. It would have been almost impossible to find an irreligious character in that country, certainly not among its highest-placed and leading minds. Maurice had strong intellectual powers. He was a regular attendant on divine worship, and was accustomed to hear daily religious discussions. To avoid them indeed, he would have been obliged not only to fly his country, but to leave Europe. He had a profound reverence for the memory of his father, Calbo y Calbanista, as William the Silent had called himself. But the great prince had died before these fierce disputes had torn the bosom of the Reformed Church, and while Reformers still were brethren. But if Maurice were a religious man, he was also a keen politician; a less capable politician, however, than a soldier, for he was confessedly the first captain of his age. He was not rapid in his conceptions, but he was sure in the end to comprehend his opportunity.

The Church, the people, the Union—the sacerdotal, the democratic, and the national element—united under a name so potent to conjure with as the name of Orange-Nassau, was stronger than any other possible combination. Instinctively and logically therefore the Stadholder found himself the chieftain of the Contra-Remonstrant party, and without the necessity of an apostasy such as had been required of his great contemporary to make himself master of France.

The power of Barneveld and his partisans was now put to a severe strain. His efforts to bring back the Hague seceders were powerless. The influence of Uytenbogaert over the Stadholder steadily diminished. He prayed to be relieved from his post in the Great Church of the Hague, especially objecting to serve with a Contra-Remonstrant preacher whom Maurice wished to officiate there in place of the seceding Rosaeus. But the Stadholder refused to let him go, fearing his influence in other places. “There is stuff in him,” said Maurice, “to outweigh half a dozen Contra-Remonstrant preachers.” Everywhere in Holland the opponents of the Five Points refused to go to the churches, and set up tabernacles for themselves in barns, outhouses, canal-boats. And the authorities in town and village nailed up the barn-doors, and dispersed the canal boat congregations, while the populace pelted them with stones. The seceders appealed to the Stadholder, pleading that at least they ought to be allowed to hear the word of God as they understood it without being forced into churches where they were obliged to hear Arminian blasphemy. At least their barns might be left them. “Barns,” said Maurice, “barns and outhouses! Are we to preach in barns? The churches belong to us, and we mean to have them too.”

Not long afterwards the Stadholder, clapping his hand on his sword hilt, observed that these differences could only be settled by force of arms. An ominous remark and a dreary comment on the forty years’ war against the Inquisition.

Page 2786

And the same scenes that were enacting in Holland were going on in Overyssel and Friesland and Groningen; but with a difference. Here it was the Five Points men who were driven into secession, whose barns were nailed up, and whose preachers were mobbed. A lugubrious spectacle, but less painful certainly than the hangings and drownings and burnings alive in the previous century to prevent secession from the indivisible church.

It is certain that stadholders and all other magistrates ever since the establishment of independence were sworn to maintain the Reformed religion and to prevent a public divine worship under any other form. It is equally certain that by the 13th Article of the Act of Union—the organic law of the confederation made at Utrecht in 1579—each province reserved for itself full control of religious questions. It would indeed seem almost unimaginable in a country where not only every province, but every city, every municipal board, was so jealous of its local privileges and traditional rights that the absolute disposition over the highest, gravest, and most difficult questions that can inspire and perplex humanity should be left to a general government, and one moreover which had scarcely come into existence.

Yet into this entirely illogical position the Commonwealth was steadily drifting. The cause was simple enough. The States of Holland, as already observed, were Remonstrant by a large majority. The States-General were Contra-Remonstrant by a still greater majority. The Church, rigidly attached to the Confession and Catechism, and refusing all change except through decree of a synod to be called by the general government which it controlled, represented the national idea. It thus identified itself with the Republic, and was in sympathy with a large majority of the population.

Logic, law, historical tradition were on the side of the Advocate and the States' right party. The instinct of national self-preservation, repudiating the narrow and destructive doctrine of provincial sovereignty, were on the side of the States-General and the Church.

Meantime James of Great Britain had written letters both to the States of Holland and the States-General expressing his satisfaction with the Five Points, and deciding that there was nothing objectionable in the doctrine of predestination therein set forth. He had recommended unity and peace in Church and Assembly, and urged especially that these controverted points should not be discussed in the pulpit to the irritation and perplexity of the common people.

The King's letters had produced much satisfaction in the moderate party. Barneveld and his followers were then still in the ascendant, and it seemed possible that the Commonwealth might enjoy a few moments of tranquillity. That James had given a new exhibition of his astounding inconsistency was a matter very indifferent to all but himself, and he was the last man to trouble himself for that reproach.

Page 2787

It might happen, when he should come to realize how absolutely he had obeyed the tuition of the Advocate and favoured the party which he had been so vehemently opposing, that he might regret and prove willing to retract. But for the time being the course of politics had seemed running smoother. The acrimony of the relations between the English government and dominant party at the Hague was sensibly diminished. The King seemed for an instant to have obtained a true insight into the nature of the struggle in the States. That it was after all less a theological than a political question which divided parties had at last dawned upon him.

“If you have occasion to write on the subject,” said Barneveld, “it is above all necessary to make it clear that ecclesiastical persons and their affairs must stand under the direction of the sovereign authority, for our preachers understand that the disposal of ecclesiastical persons and affairs belongs to them, so that they alone are to appoint preachers, elders, deacons, and other clerical persons, and to regulate the whole ecclesiastical administration according to their pleasure or by a popular government which they call the community.”

“The Counts of Holland from all ancient times were never willing under the Papacy to surrender their right of presentation to the churches and control of all spiritual and ecclesiastical benefices. The Emperor Charles and King Philip even, as Counts of Holland, kept these rights to themselves, save that they in enfeoffing more than a hundred gentlemen, of noble and ancient families with seigniorial manors, enfeoffed them also with the right of presentation to churches and benefices on their respective estates. Our preachers pretend to have won this right against the Countship, the gentlemen, nobles, and others, and that it belongs to them.”

It is easy to see that this was a grave, constitutional, legal, and historical problem not to be solved offhand by vehement citations from Scripture, nor by pragmatical dissertations from the lips of foreign ambassadors.

“I believe this point,” continued Barneveld, “to be the most difficult question of all, importing far more than subtle searchings and conflicting sentiments as to passages of Holy Writ, or disputations concerning God’s eternal predestination and other points thereupon depending. Of these doctrines the Archbishop of Canterbury well observed in the Conference of 1604 that one ought to teach them ascendendo and not descendendo.”

The letters of the King had been very favourably received both in the States-General and in the Assembly of Holland. “You will present the replies,” wrote Barneveld to the ambassador in London, “at the best opportunity and with becoming compliments. You may be assured and assure his Majesty that they have been very agreeable to both assemblies. Our commissioners over there on the East Indian matter ought to know nothing of these letters.”

Page 2788

This statement is worthy of notice, as Grotius was one of those commissioners, and, as will subsequently appear, was accused of being the author of the letters.

“I understand from others,” continued the Advocate, “that the gentleman well known to you—[Obviously Francis Aerssens]—is not well pleased that through other agency than his these letters have been written and presented. I think too that the other business is much against his grain, but on the whole since your departure he has accommodated himself to the situation.”

But if Aerssens for the moment seemed quiet, the orthodox clergy were restive.

“I know,” said Barneveld, “that some of our ministers are so audacious that of themselves, or through others, they mean to work by direct or indirect means against these letters. They mean to show likewise that there are other and greater differences of doctrine than those already discussed. You will keep a sharp eye on the sails and provide against the effect of counter-currents. To maintain the authority of their Great Mightinesses over ecclesiastical matters is more than necessary for the conservation of the country’s welfare and of the true Christian religion. As his Majesty would not allow this principle to be controverted in his own realms, as his books clearly prove, so we trust that he will not find it good that it should be controverted in our state as sure to lead to a very disastrous and inequitable sequel.”

And a few weeks later the Advocate and the whole party of toleration found themselves, as is so apt to be the case, between two fires. The Catholics became as turbulent as the extreme Calvinists, and already hopes were entertained by Spanish emissaries and spies that this rapidly growing schism in the Reformed Church might be dexterously made use of to bring the Provinces, when they should become fairly distracted, back to the dominion of Spain.

“Our precise zealots in the Reformed religion, on the one side,” wrote Barneveld, “and the Jesuits on the other, are vigorously kindling the fire of discord. Keep a good lookout for the countermine which is now working against the good advice of his Majesty for mutual toleration. The publication of the letters was done without order, but I believe with good intent, in the hope that the vehemence and exorbitance of some precise Puritans in our State should thereby be checked. That which is now doing against us in printed libels is the work of the aforesaid Puritans and a few Jesuits. The pretence in those libels, that there are other differences in the matter of doctrine, is mere fiction designed to make trouble and confusion.”

Page 2789

In the course of the autumn, Sir Ralph Winwood departed from the Hague, to assume soon afterwards in England the position of secretary of state for foreign affairs. He did not take personal farewell of Barneveld, the Advocate being absent in North Holland at the moment, and detained there by indisposition. The leave-taking was therefore by letter. He had done much to injure the cause which the Dutch statesman held vital to the Republic, and in so doing he had faithfully carried out the instructions of his master. Now that James had written these conciliatory letters to the States, recommending toleration, letters destined to be famous, Barneveld was anxious that the retiring ambassador should foster the spirit of moderation, which for a moment prevailed at the British court. But he was not very hopeful in the matter.

“Mr. Winwood is doubtless over there now,” he wrote to Caron. “He has promised in public and private to do all good offices. The States-General made him a present on his departure of the value of L4000. I fear nevertheless that he, especially in religious matters, will not do the best offices. For besides that he is himself very hard and precise, those who in this country are hard and precise have made a dead set at him, and tried to make him devoted to their cause, through many fictitious and untruthful means.”

The Advocate, as so often before, sent assurances to the King that “the States-General, and especially the States of Holland, were resolved to maintain the genuine Reformed religion, and oppose all novelties and impurities conflicting with it,” and the Ambassador was instructed to see that the countermine, worked so industriously against his Majesty’s service and the honour and reputation of the Provinces, did not prove successful.

“To let the good mob play the master,” he said, “and to permit hypocrites and traitors in the Flemish manner to get possession of the government of the provinces and cities, and to cause upright patriots whose faith and truth has so long been proved, to be abandoned, by the blessing of God, shall never be accomplished. Be of good heart, and cause these Flemish tricks to be understood on every occasion, and let men know that we mean to maintain, with unchanging constancy, the authority of the government, the privileges and laws of the country, as well as the true Reformed religion.”

The statesman was more than ever anxious for moderate counsels in the religious questions, for it was now more important than ever that there should be concord in the Provinces, for the cause of Protestantism, and with it the existence of the Republic, seemed in greater danger than at any moment since the truce. It appeared certain that the alliance between France and Spain had been arranged, and that the Pope, Spain, the Grand-duke of Tuscany, and their various adherents had organized a strong combination, and were enrolling large armies to take the field in the spring, against

Page 2790

the Protestant League of the princes and electors in Germany. The great king was dead. The Queen-Regent was in the hand of Spain, or dreamed at least of an impossible neutrality, while the priest who was one day to resume the part of Henry, and to hang upon the sword of France the scales in which the opposing weights of Protestantism and Catholicism in Europe were through so many awful years to be balanced, was still an obscure bishop.

The premonitory signs of the great religious war in Germany were not to be mistaken. In truth, the great conflict had already opened in the duchies, although few men as yet comprehended the full extent of that movement. The superficial imagined that questions of hereditary succession, like those involved in the dispute, were easily to be settled by statutes of descent, expounded by doctors of law, and sustained, if needful, by a couple of comparatively bloodless campaigns. Those who looked more deeply into causes felt that the limitations of Imperial authority, the ambition of a great republic, suddenly starting into existence out of nothing, and the great issues of the religious reformation, were matters not so easily arranged. When the scene shifted, as it was so soon to do, to the heart of Bohemia, when Protestantism had taken the Holy Roman Empire by the beard in its ancient palace, and thrown Imperial stadholders out of window, it would be evident to the blindest that something serious was taking place.

Meantime Barneveld, ever watchful of passing events, knew that great forces of Catholicism were marshalling in the south. Three armies were to take the field against Protestantism at the orders of Spain and the Pope. One at the door of the Republic, and directed especially against the Netherlands, was to resume the campaign in the duchies, and to prevent any aid going to Protestant Germany from Great Britain or from Holland. Another in the Upper Palatinate was to make the chief movement against the Evangelical hosts. A third in Austria was to keep down the Protestant party in Bohemia, Hungary, Austria, Moravia, and Silesia. To sustain this movement, it was understood that all the troops then in Italy were to be kept all the winter on a war footing.'

Was this a time for the great Protestant party in the Netherlands to tear itself in pieces for a theological subtlety, about which good Christians might differ without taking each other by the throat?

"I do not lightly believe or fear," said the Advocate, in communicating a survey of European affairs at that moment to Carom "but present advices from abroad make me apprehend dangers."

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Aristocracy of God's elect
Determined to bring the very name of liberty into contempt

Disputing the eternal damnation of young children
Fate, free will, or absolute foreknowledge
Louis XIII.
No man can be neutral

Page 2791

in civil contentions
No synod had a right to claim Netherlanders as slaves
Philip *iv*.
Priests shall control the state or the state govern the priests
Schism in the Church had become a public fact
That cynical commerce in human lives
The voice of slanderers
Theological hatred was in full blaze throughout the country
Theology and politics were one
To look down upon their inferior and lost fellow creatures
Whether dead infants were hopelessly damned
Whether repentance could effect salvation
Whose mutual hatred was now artfully inflamed by partisans
Work of the aforesaid Puritans and a few Jesuits

THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

Life of John of Barneveld, 1613-15

CHAPTER IX.

Aerssens remains Two Years longer in France—Derives many Personal Advantages from his Post—He visits the States-General—Aubery du Maurier appointed French Ambassador—He demands the Recall of Aerssens—Peace of Sainte-Menehould—-Asperen de Langerac appointed in Aerssens' Place.

Francis Aerssens had remained longer at his post than had been intended by the resolution of the States of Holland, passed in May 1611.

It is an exemplification of the very loose constitutional framework of the United Provinces that the nomination of the ambassador to France belonged to the States of Holland, by whom his salary was paid, although, of course, he was the servant of the States-General, to whom his public and official correspondence was addressed. His most important despatches were however written directly to Barneveld so long as he

remained in power, who had also the charge of the whole correspondence, public or private, with all the envoys of the States.

Aerssens had, it will be remembered, been authorized to stay one year longer in France if he thought he could be useful there. He stayed two years, and on the whole was not useful. He had too many eyes and too many ears. He had become mischievous by the very activity of his intelligence. He was too zealous. There were occasions in France at that moment in which it was as well to be blind and deaf. It was impossible for the Republic, unless driven to it by dire necessity, to quarrel with its great ally. It had been calculated by Duplessis-Mornay that France had paid subsidies to the Provinces amounting from first to last to 200 millions of livres. This was an enormous exaggeration. It was Barneveld's estimate that before the truce the States had received from France eleven millions of florins in cash, and during the truce up to the year 1613, 3,600,000 in

Page 2792

addition, besides a million still due, making a total of about fifteen millions. During the truce France kept two regiments of foot amounting to 4200 soldiers and two companies of cavalry in Holland at the service of the States, for which she was bound to pay yearly 600,000 livres. And the Queen-Regent had continued all the treaties by which these arrangements were secured, and professed sincere and continuous friendship for the States. While the French-Spanish marriages gave cause for suspicion, uneasiness, and constant watchfulness in the States, still the neutrality of France was possible in the coming storm. So long as that existed, particularly when the relations of England with Holland through the unfortunate character of King James were perpetually strained to a point of imminent rupture, it was necessary to hold as long as it was possible to the slippery embrace of France.

But Aerssens was almost aggressive in his attitude. He rebuked the vacillations, the shortcomings, the imbecility, of the Queen's government in offensive terms. He consorted openly with the princes who were on the point of making war upon the Queen-Regent. He made a boast to the Secretary of State Villeroy that he had unravelled all his secret plots against the Netherlands. He declared it to be understood in France, since the King's death, by the dominant and Jesuitical party that the crown depended temporally as well as spiritually on the good pleasure of the Pope.

No doubt he was perfectly right in many of his opinions. No ruler or statesman in France worthy of the name would hesitate, in the impending religious conflict throughout Europe and especially in Germany, to maintain for the kingdom that all controlling position which was its splendid privilege. But to preach this to Mary de' Medici was waste of breath. She was governed by the Concini's, and the Concini's were governed by Spain. The woman who was believed to have known beforehand of the plot to murder her great husband, who had driven the one powerful statesman on whom the King relied, Maximilian de Bethune, into retirement, and whose foreign affairs were now completely in the hands of the ancient Leaguer Villeroy—who had served every government in the kingdom for forty years—was not likely to be accessible to high views of public policy.

Two years had now elapsed since the first private complaints against the Ambassador, and the French government were becoming impatient at his presence. Aerssens had been supported by Prince Maurice, to whom he had long paid his court. He was likewise loyally protected by Barneveld, whom he publicly flattered and secretly maligned. But it was now necessary that he should be gone if peaceful relations with France were to be preserved.

Page 2793

After all, the Ambassador had not made a bad business of his embassy from his own point of view. A stranger in the Republic, for his father the Greffier was a refugee from Brabant, he had achieved through his own industry and remarkable talents, sustained by the favour of Barneveld—to whom he owed all his diplomatic appointments—an eminent position in Europe. Secretary to the legation to France in 1594, he had been successively advanced to the post of resident agent, and when the Republic had been acknowledged by the great powers, to that of ambassador. The highest possible functions that representatives of emperors and kings could enjoy had been formally recognized in the person of the minister of a new-born republic. And this was at a moment when, with exception of the brave but insignificant cantons of Switzerland, the Republic had long been an obsolete idea.

In a pecuniary point of view, too, he had not fared badly during his twenty years of diplomatic office. He had made much money in various ways. The King not long before his death sent him one day 20,000 florins as a present, with a promise soon to do much more for him.

Having been placed in so eminent a post, he considered it as due to himself to derive all possible advantage from it. “Those who serve at the altar,” he said a little while after his return, “must learn to live by it. I served their High Mightinesses at the court of a great king, and his Majesty’s liberal and gracious favours were showered upon me. My upright conscience and steady obsequiousness greatly aided me. I did not look upon opportunity with folded arms, but seized it and made my profit by it. Had I not met with such fortunate accidents, my office would not have given me dry bread.”

Nothing could exceed the frankness and indeed the cynicism with which the Ambassador avowed his practice of converting his high and sacred office into merchandise. And these statements of his should be scanned closely, because at this very moment a cry was distantly rising, which at a later day was to swell into a roar, that the great Advocate had been bribed and pensioned. Nothing had occurred to justify such charges, save that at the period of the truce he had accepted from the King of France a fee of 20,000 florins for extra official and legal services rendered him a dozen years before, and had permitted his younger son to hold the office of gentleman-in-waiting at the French court with the usual salary attached to it. The post, certainly not dishonourable in itself, had been intended by the King as a kindly compliment to the leading statesman of his great and good ally the Republic. It would be difficult to say why such a favour conferred on the young man should be held more discreditable to the receiver than the Order of the Garter recently bestowed upon the great soldier of the Republic by another friendly sovereign. It is instructive however to note the language in which Francis Aerssens spoke of favours and money bestowed by a foreign monarch upon himself, for Aerssens had come back from his embassy full of gall and bitterness against Barneveld. Thenceforth he was to be his evil demon.

Page 2794

“I didn’t inherit property,” said this diplomatist. “My father and mother, thank God, are yet living. I have enjoyed the King’s liberality. It was from an ally, not an enemy, of our country. Were every man obliged to give a reckoning of everything he possesses over and above his hereditary estates, who in the government would pass muster? Those who declare that they have served their country in her greatest trouble, and lived in splendid houses and in service of princes and great companies and the like on a yearly salary of 4000 florins, may not approve these maxims.”

It should be remembered that Barneveld, if this was a fling at the Advocate, had acquired a large fortune by marriage, and, although certainly not averse from gathering gear, had, as will be seen on a subsequent page, easily explained the manner in which his property had increased. No proof was ever offered or attempted of the anonymous calumnies levelled at him in this regard.

“I never had the management of finances,” continued Aerssens. “My profits I have gained in foreign parts. My condition of life is without excess, and in my opinion every means are good so long as they are honourable and legal. They say my post was given me by the Advocate. Ergo, all my fortune comes from the Advocate. Strenuously to have striven to make myself agreeable to the King and his counsellors, while fulfilling my office with fidelity and honour, these are the arts by which I have prospered, so that my splendour dazzles the eyes of the envious. The greediness of those who believe that the sun should shine for them alone was excited, and so I was obliged to resign the embassy.”

So long as Henry lived, the Dutch ambassador saw him daily, and at all hours, privately, publicly, when he would. Rarely has a foreign envoy at any court, at any period of history, enjoyed such privileges of being useful to his government. And there is no doubt that the services of Aerssens had been most valuable to his country, notwithstanding his constant care to increase his private fortune through his public opportunities. He was always ready to be useful to Henry likewise. When that monarch same time before the truce, and occasionally during the preliminary negotiations for it, had formed a design to make himself sovereign of the Provinces, it was Aerssens who charged himself with the scheme, and would have furthered it with all his might, had the project not met with opposition both from the Advocate and the Stadholder. Subsequently it appeared probable that Maurice would not object to the sovereignty himself, and the Ambassador in Paris, with the King’s consent, was not likely to prove himself hostile to the Prince’s ambition.

Page 2795

“There is but this means alone,” wrote Jeannini to Villeroy, “that can content him, although hitherto he has done like the rowers, who never look toward the place whither they wish to go.” The attempt of the Prince to sound Barneveld on this subject through the Princess-Dowager has already been mentioned, and has much intrinsic probability. Thenceforward, the republican form of government, the municipal oligarchies, began to consolidate their power. Yet although the people as such were not sovereigns, but subjects, and rarely spoken of by the aristocratic magistrates save with a gentle and patronizing disdain, they enjoyed a larger liberty than was known anywhere else in the world. Buzenval was astonished at the “infinite and almost unbridled freedom” which he witnessed there during his embassy, and which seemed to him however “without peril to the state.”

The extraordinary means possessed by Aerssens to be important and useful vanished with the King’s death. His secret despatches, painting in sombre and sarcastic colours the actual condition of affairs at the French court, were sent back in copy to the French court itself. It was not known who had played the Ambassador this vilest of tricks, but it was done during an illness of Barneveld, and without his knowledge. Early in the year 1613 Aerssens resolved, not to take his final departure, but to go home on leave of absence. His private intention was to look for some substantial office of honour and profit at home. Failing of this, he meant to return to Paris. But with an eye to the main chance as usual, he ingeniously caused it to be understood at court, without making positive statements to that effect, that his departure was final. On his leavetaking, accordingly, he received larger presents from the crown than had been often given to a retiring ambassador. At least 20,000 florins were thus added to the frugal store of profits on which he prided himself. Had he merely gone away on leave of absence, he would have received no presents whatever. But he never went back. The Queen-Regent and her ministers were so glad to get rid of him, and so little disposed, in the straits in which they found themselves, to quarrel with the powerful republic, as to be willing to write very complimentary public letters to the States, concerning the character and conduct of the man whom they so much detested.

Pluming himself upon these, Aerssens made his appearance in the Assembly of the States-General, to give account by word of mouth of the condition of affairs, speaking as if he had only come by permission of their Mightinesses for temporary purposes. Two months later he was summoned before the Assembly, and ordered to return to his post.

Page 2796

Meantime a new French ambassador had arrived at the Hague, in the spring of 1613. Aubery du Maurier, a son of an obscure country squire, a Protestant, of moderate opinions, of a sincere but rather obsequious character, painstaking, diligent, and honest, had been at an earlier day in the service of the turbulent and intriguing Due de Bouillon. He had also been employed by Sully as an agent in financial affairs between Holland and France, and had long been known to Villeroy. He was living on his estate, in great retirement from all public business, when Secretary Villeroy suddenly proposed him the embassy to the Hague. There was no more important diplomatic post at that time in Europe. Other countries were virtually at peace, but in Holland, notwithstanding the truce, there vas really not much more than an armistice, and great armies lay in the Netherlands, as after a battle, sleeping face to face with arms in their hands. The politics of Christendom were at issue in the open, elegant, and picturesque village which was the social capital of the United Provinces. The gentry from Spain, Italy, the south of Europe, Catholic Germany, had clustered about Spinola at Brussels, to learn the art of war in his constant campaigning against Maurice. English and Scotch officers, Frenchmen, Bohemians, Austrians, youths from the Palatinate and all Protestant countries in Germany, swarmed to the banners of the prince who had taught the world how Alexander Farnese could be baffled, and the great Spinola outmanoeuvred. Especially there was a great number of Frenchmen of figure and quality who thronged to the Hague, besides the officers of the two French regiments which formed a regular portion of the States' army. That army was the best appointed and most conspicuous standing force in Europe. Besides the French contingent there were always nearly 30,000 infantry and 3000 cavalry on a war footing, splendidly disciplined, experienced, and admirably armed. The navy, consisting of thirty war ships, perfectly equipped and manned, was a match for the combined marine forces of all Europe, and almost as numerous.

When the Ambassador went to solemn audience of the States-General, he was attended by a brilliant group of gentlemen and officers, often to the number of three hundred, who volunteered to march after him on foot to honour their sovereign in the person of his ambassador; the Envoy's carriage following empty behind. Such were the splendid diplomatic processions often received by the stately Advocate in his plain civic garb, when grave international questions were to be publicly discussed.

Page 2797

There was much murmuring in France when the appointment of a personage comparatively so humble to a position so important was known. It was considered as a blow aimed directly at the malcontent princes of the blood, who were at that moment plotting their first levy of arms against the Queen. Du Maurier had been ill-treated by the Due de Bouillon, who naturally therefore now denounced the man whom he had injured to the government to which he was accredited. Being the agent of Mary de' Medici, he was, of course, described as a tool of the court and a secret pensioner of Spain. He was to plot with the arch traitor Barneveld as to the best means for distracting the Provinces and bringing them back into Spanish subjection. Du Maurier, being especially but secretly charged to prevent the return of Francis Aerssens to Paris, incurred of course the enmity of that personage and of the French grandees who ostentatiously protected him. It was even pretended by Jeannin that the appointment of a man so slightly known to the world, so inexperienced in diplomacy, and of a parentage so little distinguished, would be considered an affront by the States-General.

But on the whole, Villeroy had made an excellent choice. No safer man could perhaps have been found in France for a post of such eminence, in circumstances so delicate, and at a crisis so grave. The man who had been able to make himself agreeable and useful, while preserving his integrity, to characters so dissimilar as the refining, self-torturing, intellectual Duplessis-Mornay, the rude, aggressive, and straightforward Sully, the deep-revolving, restlessly plotting Bouillon, and the smooth, silent, and tortuous Villeroy—men between whom there was no friendship, but, on the contrary, constant rancour—had material in him to render valuable services at this particular epoch. Everything depended on patience, tact, watchfulness in threading the distracting, almost inextricable, maze which had been created by personal rivalries, ambitions, and jealousies in the state he represented and the one to which he was accredited. "I ascribe it all to God," he said, in his testament to his children, "the impenetrable workman who in His goodness has enabled me to make myself all my life obsequious, respectful, and serviceable to all, avoiding as much as possible, in contenting some, not to discontent others." He recommended his children accordingly to endeavour "to succeed in life by making themselves as humble, intelligent, and capable as possible."

This is certainly not a very high type of character, but a safer one for business than that of the arch intriguer Francis Aerssens. And he had arrived at the Hague under trying circumstances. Unknown to the foreign world he was now entering, save through the disparaging rumours concerning him, sent thither in advance by the powerful personages arrayed against his government, he might have sunk under such a storm at the outset, but for the incomparable kindness and friendly aid of the Princess-Dowager, Louise de Coligny. "I had need of her protection and recommendation as much as of life," said du Maurier; "and she gave them in such excess as to annihilate an infinity of calumnies which envy had excited against me on every side." He had also a most difficult and delicate matter to arrange at the very moment of his arrival.

Page 2798

For Aerssens had done his best not only to produce a dangerous division in the politics of the Republic, but to force a rupture between the French government and the States. He had carried matters before the assembly with so high a hand as to make it seem impossible to get rid of him without public scandal. He made a parade of the official letters from the Queen-Regent and her ministers, in which he was spoken of in terms of conventional compliment. He did not know, and Barneveld wished, if possible, to spare him the annoyance of knowing, that both Queen and ministers, so soon as informed that there was a chance of coming back to them, had written letters breathing great repugnance to him and intimating that he would not be received. Other high personages of state had written to express their resentment at his duplicity, perpetual mischief-making, and machinations against the peace of the kingdom, and stating the impossibility of his resuming the embassy at Paris. And at last the queen wrote to the States-General to say that, having heard their intention to send him back to a post "from which he had taken leave formally and officially," she wished to prevent such a step. "We should see M. Aerssens less willingly than comports with our friendship for you and good neighbourhood. Any other you could send would be most welcome, as M. du Maurier will explain to you more amply."

And to du Maurier himself she wrote distinctly, "Rather than suffer the return of the said Aerssens, you will declare that for causes which regard the good of our affairs and our particular satisfaction we cannot and will not receive him in the functions which he has exercised here, and we rely too implicitly upon the good friendship of My Lords the States to do anything in this that would so much displease us."

And on the same day Villeroy privately wrote to the Ambassador, "If, in spite of all this, Aerssens should endeavour to return, he will not be received, after the knowledge we have of his factious spirit, most dangerous in a public personage in a state such as ours and in the minority of the King."

Meantime Aerssens had been going about flaunting letters in everybody's face from the Duc de Bouillon insisting on the necessity of his return! The fact in itself would have been sufficient to warrant his removal, for the Duke was just taking up arms against his sovereign. Unless the States meant to interfere officially and directly in the civil war about to break out in France, they could hardly send a minister to the government on recommendation of the leader of the rebellion.

It had, however, become impossible to remove him without an explosion. Barneveld, who, said du Maurier, "knew the man to his finger nails," had been reluctant to "break the ice," and wished for official notice in the matter from the Queen. Maurice protected the troublesome diplomatist. "'Tis incredible," said the French ambassador "how covertly Prince Maurice is carrying himself, contrary to his wont, in this whole affair. I don't know whether it is from simple jealousy to Barneveld, or if there is some mystery concealed below the surface."

Page 2799

Du Maurier had accordingly been obliged to ask his government for distinct and official instructions. “He holds to his place,” said he, “by so slight and fragile a root as not to require two hands to pluck him up, the little finger being enough. There is no doubt that he has been in concert with those who are making use of him to re-establish their credit with the States, and to embark Prince Maurice contrary to his preceding custom in a cabal with them.”

Thus a question of removing an obnoxious diplomatist could hardly be graver, for it was believed that he was doing his best to involve the military chief of his own state in a game of treason and rebellion against the government to which he was accredited. It was not the first nor likely to be the last of Bouillon’s deadly intrigues. But the man who had been privy to Biron’s conspiracy against the crown and life of his sovereign was hardly a safe ally for his brother-in-law, the straightforward stadholder.

The instructions desired by du Maurier and by Barneveld had, as we have seen, at last arrived. The French ambassador thus fortified appeared before the Assembly of the States-General and officially demanded the recall of Aerssens. In a letter addressed privately and confidentially to their Mightinesses, he said, “If in spite of us you throw him at our feet, we shall fling him back at your head.”

At last Maurice yielded to, the representations of the French envoy, and Aerssens felt obliged to resign his claims to the post. The States-General passed a resolution that it would be proper to employ him in some other capacity in order to show that his services had been agreeable to them, he having now declared that he could no longer be useful in France. Maurice, seeing that it was impossible to save him, admitted to du Maurier his unsteadiness and duplicity, and said that, if possessed of the confidence of a great king, he would be capable of destroying the state in less than a year.

But this had not always been the Prince’s opinion, nor was it likely to remain unchanged. As for Villeroy, he denied flatly that the cause of his displeasure had been that Aerssens had penetrated into his most secret affairs. He protested, on the contrary, that his annoyance with him had partly proceeded from the slight acquaintance he had acquired of his policy, and that, while boasting to be better informed than any one, he was in the habit of inventing and imagining things in order to get credit for himself.

It was highly essential that the secret of this affair should be made clear; for its influence on subsequent events was to be deep and wide. For the moment Aerssens remained without employment, and there was no open rupture with Barneveld. The only difference of opinion between the Advocate and himself, he said, was whether he had or had not definitely resigned his post on leaving Paris.

Page 2800

Meantime it was necessary to fix upon a successor for this most important post. The war soon after the new year had broken out in France. Conde, Bouillon, and the other malcontent princes with their followers had taken possession of the fortress of Mezieres, and issued a letter in the name of Conde to the Queen-Regent demanding an assembly of the States-General of the kingdom and rupture of the Spanish marriages. Both parties, that of the government and that of the rebellion, sought the sympathy and active succour of the States. Maurice, acting now in perfect accord with the Advocate, sustained the Queen and execrated the rebellion of his relatives with perfect frankness. Conde, he said, had got his head stuffed full of almanacs whose predictions he wished to see realized. He vowed he would have shortened by a head the commander of the garrison who betrayed Mezieres, if he had been under his control. He forbade on pain of death the departure of any officer or private of the French regiments from serving the rebels, and placed the whole French force at the disposal of the Queen, with as many Netherland regiments as could be spared. One soldier was hanged and three others branded with the mark of a gibbet on the face for attempting desertion. The legal government was loyally sustained by the authority of the States, notwithstanding all the intrigues of Aerssens with the agents of the princes to procure them assistance. The mutiny for the time was brief, and was settled on the 15th of May 1614, by the peace of Sainte-Menehould, as much a caricature of a treaty as the rising had been the parody of a war. Van der Myle, son-in-law of Barneveld, who had been charged with a special and temporary mission to France, brought back the terms, of the convention to the States-General. On the other hand, Conde and his confederates sent a special agent to the Netherlands to give their account of the war and the negotiation, who refused to confer either with du Maurier or Barneveld, but who held much conference with Aerssens.

It was obvious enough that the mutiny of the princes would become chronic. In truth, what other condition was possible with two characters like Mary de' Medici and the Prince of Conde respectively at the head of the government and the revolt? What had France to hope for but to remain the bloody playground for mischievous idiots, who threw about the firebrands and arrows of reckless civil war in pursuit of the paltriest of personal aims?

Van der Myle had pretensions to the vacant place of Aerssens. He had some experience in diplomacy. He had conducted skilfully enough the first mission of the States to Venice, and had subsequently been employed in matters of moment. But he was son-in-law to Barneveld, and although the Advocate was certainly not free from the charge of nepotism, he shrank from the reproach of having apparently removed Aerssens to make a place for one of his own family.

Van der Myle remained to bear the brunt of the late ambassador's malice, and to engage at a little later period in hottest controversy with him, personal and political. "Why should van der Myle strut about, with his arms akimbo like a peacock?"

complained Aerssens one day in confused metaphor. A question not easy to answer satisfactorily.

Page 2801

The minister selected was a certain Baron Asperen de Langerac, wholly unversed in diplomacy or other public affairs, with abilities not above the average. A series of questions addressed by him to the Advocate, the answers to which, scrawled on the margin of the paper, were to serve for his general instructions, showed an ingenuousness as amusing as the replies of Barneveld were experienced and substantial.

In general he was directed to be friendly and respectful to every one, to the Queen-Regent and her counsellors especially, and, within the limits of becoming reverence for her, to cultivate the good graces of the Prince of Conde and the other great nobles still malcontent and rebellious, but whose present movement, as Barneveld foresaw, was drawing rapidly to a close. Langerac arrived in Paris on the 5th of April 1614.

Du Maurier thought the new ambassador likely to “fall a prey to the specious language and gentle attractions of the Due de Bouillon.” He also described him as very dependent upon Prince Maurice. On the other hand Langerac professed unbounded and almost childlike reverence for Barneveld, was devoted to his person, and breathed as it were only through his inspiration. Time would show whether those sentiments would outlast every possible storm.

CHAPTER X

Weakness of the Rulers of France and England—The Wisdom of Barneveld inspires Jealousy—Sir Dudley Carleton succeeds Winwood— Young Neuburg under the Guidance of Maximilian—Barneveld strives to have the Treaty of Xanten enforced—-Spain and the Emperor wish to make the States abandon their Position with regard to the Duchies— The French Government refuses to aid the States—Spain and the Emperor resolve to hold Wesel—The great Religious War begun—The Protestant Union and Catholic League both wish to secure the Border Provinces—Troubles in Turkey—-Spanish Fleet seizes La Roche—Spain places large Armies on a War Footing.

Few things are stranger in history than the apathy with which the wide designs of the Catholic party were at that moment regarded. The preparations for the immense struggle which posterity learned to call the Thirty Years’ War, and to shudder when speaking of it, were going forward on every side. In truth the war had really begun, yet those most deeply menaced by it at the outset looked on with innocent calmness because their own roofs were not quite yet in a blaze. The passage of arms in the duchies, the outlines of which have just been indicated, and which was the natural sequel of the campaign carried out four years earlier on the same territory, had been ended by a mockery. In France, reduced almost to imbecility by the absence of a guiding brain during a long minority, fallen under the distaff of a dowager both weak and wicked, distracted by the intrigues and quarrels of a swarm of self-seeking grandees, and with all its offices, from highest to lowest, of court,

Page 2802

state, jurisprudence, and magistracy, sold as openly and as cynically as the commonest wares, there were few to comprehend or to grapple with the danger. It should have seemed obvious to the meanest capacity in the kingdom that the great house of Austria, reigning supreme in Spain and in Germany, could not be allowed to crush the Duke of Savoy on the one side, and Bohemia, Moravia, and the Netherlands on the other without danger of subjection for France. Yet the aim of the Queen-Regent was to cultivate an impossible alliance with her inevitable foe.

And in England, ruled as it then was with no master mind to enforce against its sovereign the great lessons of policy, internal and external, on which its welfare and almost its imperial existence depended, the only ambition of those who could make their opinions felt was to pursue the same impossibility, intimate alliance with the universal foe.

Any man with slightest pretensions to statesmanship knew that the liberty for Protestant worship in Imperial Germany, extorted by force, had been given reluctantly, and would be valid only as long as that force could still be exerted or should remain obviously in reserve. The “Majesty-Letter” and the “Convention” of the two religions would prove as flimsy as the parchment on which they were engrossed, the Protestant churches built under that sanction would be shattered like glass, if once the Catholic rulers could feel their hands as clear as their consciences would be for violating their sworn faith to heretics. Men knew, even if the easy-going and uxorious emperor, into which character the once busy and turbulent Archduke Matthias had subsided, might be willing to keep his pledges, that Ferdinand of Styria, who would soon succeed him, and Maximilian of Bavaria were men who knew their own minds, and had mentally never resigned one inch of the ground which Protestantism imagined itself to have conquered.

These things seem plain as daylight to all who look back upon them through the long vista of the past; but the sovereign of England did not see them or did not choose to see them. He saw only the Infanta and her two millions of dowry, and he knew that by calling Parliament together to ask subsidies for an anti-Catholic war he should ruin those golden matrimonial prospects for his son, while encouraging those “shoemakers,” his subjects, to go beyond their “last,” by consulting the representatives of his people on matters pertaining to the mysteries of government. He was slowly digging the grave of the monarchy and building the scaffold of his son; but he did his work with a laborious and pedantic trifling, when really engaged in state affairs, most amazing to contemplate. He had no penny to give to the cause in which his nearest relatives mere so deeply involved and for which his only possible allies were pledged; but he was ready to give advice to all parties, and with ludicrous gravity imagined himself playing the umpire between great contending hosts, when in reality he was only playing the fool at the beck of masters before whom he quaked.

Page 2803

“You are not to vilipend my counsel,” said he one day to a foreign envoy. “I am neither a camel nor an ass to take up all this work on my shoulders. Where would you find another king as willing to do it as I am?”

The King had little time and no money to give to serve his own family and allies and the cause of Protestantism, but he could squander vast sums upon worthless favourites, and consume reams of paper on controverted points of divinity. The appointment of Vorstius to the chair of theology in Leyden aroused more indignation in his bosom, and occupied more of his time, than the conquests of Spinola in the duchies, and the menaces of Spain against Savoy and Bohemia. He perpetually preached moderation to the States in the matter of the debateable territory, although moderation at that moment meant submission to the House of Austria. He chose to affect confidence in the good faith of those who were playing a comedy by which no statesman could be deceived, but which had secured the approbation of the Solomon of the age.

But there was one man who was not deceived. The warnings and the lamentations of Barneveld sound to us out of that far distant time like the voice of an inspired prophet. It is possible that a portion of the wrath to come might have been averted had there been many men in high places to heed his voice. I do not wish to exaggerate the power and wisdom of the man, nor to set him forth as one of the greatest heroes of history. But posterity has done far less than justice to a statesman and sage who wielded a vast influence at a most critical period in the fate of Christendom, and uniformly wielded it to promote the cause of temperate human liberty, both political and religious. Viewed by the light of two centuries and a half of additional experience, he may appear to have made mistakes, but none that were necessarily disastrous or even mischievous. Compared with the prevailing idea of the age in which he lived, his schemes of polity seem to dilate into large dimensions, his sentiments of religious freedom, however limited to our modern ideas, mark an epoch in human progress, and in regard to the general commonwealth of Christendom, of which he was so leading a citizen, the part he played was a lofty one. No man certainly understood the tendency of his age more exactly, took a broader and more comprehensive view than he did of the policy necessary to preserve the largest portion of the results of the past three-quarters of a century, or had pondered the relative value of great conflicting forces more skilfully. Had his counsels been always followed, had illustrious birth placed him virtually upon a throne, as was the case with William the Silent, and thus allowed him occasionally to carry out the designs of a great mind with almost despotic authority, it might have been better for the world. But in that age it was royal blood alone that could command unflinching obedience without exciting personal rivalry.

Page 2804

Men quailed before his majestic intellect, but hated him for the power which was its necessary result. They already felt a stupid delight in cavilling at his pedigree. To dispute his claim to a place among the ancient nobility to which he was an honour was to revenge themselves for the rank he unquestionably possessed side by side in all but birth with the kings and rulers of the world. Whether envy and jealousy be vices more incident to the republican form of government than to other political systems may be an open question. But it is no question whatever that Barneveld's every footstep from this period forward was dogged by envy as patient as it was devouring. Jealousy stuck to him like his shadow. We have examined the relations which existed between Winwood and himself; we have seen that ambassador, now secretary of state for James, never weary in denouncing the Advocate's haughtiness and grim resolution to govern the country according to its laws rather than at the dictate of a foreign sovereign, and in flinging forth malicious insinuations in regard to his relations to Spain. The man whose every hour was devoted in spite of a thousand obstacles strewn by stupidity, treachery, and apathy, as well as by envy, hatred, and bigotry—to the organizing of a grand and universal league of Protestantism against Spain, and to rolling up with strenuous and sometimes despairing arms a dead mountain weight, ever ready to fall back upon and crush him, was accused in dark and mysterious whispers, soon to grow louder and bolder, of a treacherous inclination for Spain.

There is nothing less surprising nor more sickening for those who observe public life, and wish to retain faith in the human species, than the almost infinite power of the meanest of passions.

The Advocate was obliged at the very outset of Langerac's mission to France to give him a warning on this subject.

"Should her Majesty make kindly mention of me," he said, "you will say nothing of it in your despatches as you did in your last, although I am sure with the best intentions. It profits me not, and many take umbrage at it; wherefore it is wise to forbear."

But this was a trifle. By and by there would be many to take umbrage at every whisper in his favour, whether from crowned heads or from the simplest in the social scale. Meantime he instructed the Ambassador, without paying heed to personal compliments to his chief, to do his best to keep the French government out of the hands of Spain, and with that object in view to smooth over the differences between the two great parties in the kingdom, and to gain the confidence, if possible, of Conde and Nevers and Bouillon, while never failing in straightforward respect and loyal friendship to the Queen-Regent and her ministers, as the legitimate heads of the government.

Page 2805

From England a new ambassador was soon to take the place of Winwood. Sir Dudley Carleton was a diplomatist of respectable abilities, and well trained to business and routine. Perhaps on the whole there was none other, in that epoch of official mediocrity, more competent than he to fill what was then certainly the most important of foreign posts. His course of life had in no wise familiarized him with the intricacies of the Dutch constitution, nor could the diplomatic profession, combined with a long residence at Venice, be deemed especially favourable for deep studies of the mysteries of predestination. Yet he would be found ready at the bidding of his master to grapple with Grotius and Barneveld on the field of history and law, and thread with Uytenbogaert or Taurinus all the subtleties of Arminianism and Gomarism as if he had been half his life both a regular practitioner at the Supreme Court of the Hague and professor of theology at the University of Leyden. Whether the triumphs achieved in such encounters were substantial and due entirely to his own genius might be doubtful. At all events he had a sovereign behind him who was incapable of making a mistake on any subject.

“You shall not forget,” said James in his instructions to Sir Dudley, “that you are the minister of that master whom God hath made the sole protector of his religion . . . . . and you may let fall how hateful the maintaining of erroneous opinions is to the majesty of God and how displeasing to us.”

The warlike operations of 1614 had been ended by the abortive peace of Xanten. The two rival pretenders to the duchies were to halve the territory, drawing lots for the first choice, all foreign troops were to be withdrawn, and a pledge was to be given that no fortress should be placed in the hands of any power. But Spain at the last moment had refused to sanction the treaty, and everything was remitted to what might be exactly described as a state of sixes and sevens. Subsequently it was hoped that the States’ troops might be induced to withdraw simultaneously with the Catholic forces on an undertaking by Spinola that there should be no re-occupation of the disputed territory either by the Republic or by Spain. But Barneveld accurately pointed out that, although the Marquis was a splendid commander and, so long as he was at the head of the armies, a most powerful potentate, he might be superseded at any moment. Count Bucquoy, for example, might suddenly appear in his place and refuse to be bound by any military arrangement of his predecessor. Then the Archduke proposed to give a guarantee that in case of a mutual withdrawal there should be no return of the troops, no recapture of garrisons. But Barneveld, speaking for the States, liked not the security. The Archduke was but the puppet of Spain, and Spain had no part in the guarantee. She held the strings, and might cause him at any moment to play what pranks she chose. It would be the easiest thing in the world for despotic

Page 2806

Spain, so the Advocate thought, to reappear suddenly in force again at a moment's notice after the States' troops had been withdrawn and partially disbanded, and it would be difficult for the many-headed and many-tongued republic to act with similar promptness. To withdraw without a guarantee from Spain to the Treaty of Xanten, which had once been signed, sealed, and all but ratified, would be to give up fifty points in the game. Nothing but disaster could ensue. The Advocate as leader in all these negotiations and correspondence was ever actuated by the favourite quotation of William the Silent from Demosthenes, that the safest citadel against an invader and a tyrant is distrust. And he always distrusted in these dealings, for he was sure the Spanish cabinet was trying to make fools of the States, and there were many ready to assist it in the task. Now that one of the pretenders, temporary master of half the duchies, the Prince of Neuburg, had espoused both Catholicism and the sister of the Archbishop of Cologne and the Duke of Bavaria, it would be more safe than ever for Spain to make a temporary withdrawal. Maximilian of Bavaria was beyond all question the ablest and most determined leader of the Catholic party in Germany, and the most straightforward and sincere. No man before or since his epoch had, like him, been destined to refuse, and more than once refuse, the Imperial crown.

Through his apostasy the Prince of Neuburg was in danger of losing his hereditary estates, his brothers endeavouring to dispossess him on the ground of the late duke's will, disinheriting any one of his heirs who should become a convert to Catholicism. He had accordingly implored aid from the King of Spain. Archduke Albert had urged Philip to render such assistance as a matter of justice, and the Emperor had naturally declared that the whole right as eldest son belonged, notwithstanding the will, to the Prince.

With the young Neuburg accordingly under the able guidance of Maximilian, it was not likely that the grasp of the Spanish party upon these all-important territories would be really loosened. The Emperor still claimed the right to decide among the candidates and to hold the provinces under sequestration till the decision should be made—that was to say, until the Greek Kalends. The original attempt to do this through Archduke Leopold had been thwarted, as we have seen, by the prompt movements of Maurice sustained by the policy of Barneveld. The Advocate was resolved that the Emperor's name should not be mentioned either in the preamble or body of the treaty. And his course throughout the simulations, which were never negotiations, was perpetually baffled as much by the easiness and languor of his allies as the ingenuity of the enemy.

Page 2807

He was reproached with the loss of Wesel, that Geneva of the Rhine, which would never be abandoned by Spain if it was not done forthwith. Let Spain guarantee the Treaty of Xanten, he said, and then she cannot come back. All else is illusion. Moreover, the Emperor had given positive orders that Wesel should not be given up. He was assured by Villeroy that France would never put on her harness for Aachen, that cradle of Protestantism. That was for the States-General to do, whom it so much more nearly concerned. The whole aim of Barneveld was not to destroy the Treaty of Xanten, but to enforce it in the only way in which it could be enforced, by the guarantee of Spain. So secured, it would be a barrier in the universal war of religion which he foresaw was soon to break out. But it was the resolve of Spain, instead of pledging herself to the treaty, to establish the legal control of the territory in the hand of the Emperor. Neuburg complained that Philip in writing to him did not give him the title of Duke of Julich and Cleve, although he had been placed in possession of those estates by the arms of Spain. Philip, referring to Archduke Albert for his opinion on this subject, was advised that, as the Emperor had not given Neuburg the investiture of the duchies, the King was quite right in refusing him the title. Even should the Treaty of Xanten be executed, neither he nor the Elector of Brandenburg would be anything but administrators until the question of right was decided by the Emperor.

Spain had sent Neuburg the Order of the Golden Fleece as a reward for his conversion, but did not intend him to be anything but a man of straw in the territories which he claimed by sovereign right. They were to form a permanent bulwark to the Empire, to Spain, and to Catholicism.

Barneveld of course could never see the secret letters passing between Brussels and Madrid, but his insight into the purposes of the enemy was almost as acute as if the correspondence of Philip and Albert had been in the pigeonholes of his writing-desk in the Kneuterdyk.

The whole object of Spain and the Emperor, acting through the Archduke, was to force the States to abandon their positions in the duchies simultaneously with the withdrawal of the Spanish troops, and to be satisfied with a bare convention between themselves and Archduke Albert that there should be no renewed occupation by either party. Barneveld, finding it impossible to get Spain upon the treaty, was resolved that at least the two mediating powers, their great allies, the sovereigns of Great Britain and France, should guarantee the convention, and that the promises of the Archduke should be made to them. This was steadily refused by Spain; for the Archduke never moved an inch in the matter except according to the orders of Spain, and besides battling and buffeting with the Archduke, Barneveld was constantly deafened with the clamour of the English king, who always declared Spain to be in the right whatever she did, and forced to endure with what patience he might the goading of that King’s envoy. France, on the other hand, supported the States as firmly as could have been reasonably expected.

Page 2808

“We proposed,” said the Archduke, instructing an envoy whom he was sending to Madrid with detailed accounts of these negotiations, “that the promise should be made to each other as usual in treaties. But the Hollanders said the promise should be made to the Kings of France and England, at which the Emperor would have been deeply offended, as if in the affair he was of no account at all. At any moment by this arrangement in concert with France and England the Hollanders might walk in and do what they liked.”

Certainly there could have been no succincter eulogy of the policy steadily recommended, as we shall have occasion to see, by Barneveld. Had he on this critical occasion been backed by England and France combined, Spain would have been forced to beat a retreat, and Protestantism in the great general war just beginning would have had an enormous advantage in position. But the English Solomon could not see the wisdom of this policy. “The King of England says we are right,” continued the Archduke, “and has ordered his ambassador to insist on our view. The French ambassador here says that his colleague at the Hague has similar instructions, but admits that he has not acted up to them. There is not much chance of the Hollanders changing. It would be well that the King should send a written ultimatum that the Hollanders should sign the convention which we propose. If they don’t agree, the world at least will see that it is not we who are in fault.”

The world would see, and would never have forgiven a statesman in the position of Barneveld, had he accepted a bald agreement from a subordinate like the Archduke, a perfectly insignificant personage in the great drama then enacting, and given up guarantees both from the Archduke’s master and from the two great allies of the Republic. He stood out manfully against Spain and England at every hazard, and under a pelting storm of obloquy, and this was the man whose designs the English secretary of state had dared to describe “as of no other nature than to cause the Provinces to relapse into the hands of Spain.”

It appeared too a little later that Barneveld’s influence with the French government, owing to his judicious support of it so long as it was a government, had been decidedly successful. Drugged as France was by the Spanish marriage treaty, she was yet not so sluggish nor spell-bound as the King of Great Britain.

“France will not urge upon the Hollanders to execute the proposal as we made it,” wrote the Archduke to the King, “so negotiations are at a standstill. The Hollanders say it is better that each party should remain with what each possesses. So that if it does not come to blows, and if these insolences go on as they have done, the Hollanders will be gaining and occupying more territory every day.”

Thus once more the ancient enemies and masters of the Republic were making the eulogy of the Dutch statesman. It was impossible at present for the States to regain

Wesel, nor that other early stronghold of the Reformation, the old Imperial city of Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle). The price to be paid was too exorbitant.

Page 2809

The French government had persistently refused to assist the States and possessory princes in the recovery of this stronghold. The Queen-Regent was afraid of offending Spain, although her government had induced the citizens of the place to make the treaty now violated by that country. The Dutch ambassador had been instructed categorically to enquire whether their Majesties meant to assist Aachen and the princes if attacked by the Archdukes. "No," said Villeroy; "we are not interested in Aachen, 'tis too far off. Let them look for assistance to those who advised their mutiny."

To the Ambassador's remonstrance that France was both interested in and pledged to them, the Secretary of State replied, "We made the treaty through compassion and love, but we shall not put on harness for Aachen. Don't think it. You, the States and the United Provinces, may assist them if you like."

The Envoy then reminded the Minister that the States-General had always agreed to go forward evenly in this business with the Kings of Great Britain and France and the united princes, the matter being of equal importance to all. They had given no further pledge than this to the Union.

It was plain, however, that France was determined not to lift a finger at that moment. The Duke of Bouillon and those acting with him had tried hard to induce their Majesties "to write seriously to the Archduke in order at least to intimidate him by stiff talk," but it was hopeless. They thought it was not a time then to quarrel with their neighbour and give offence to Spain.

So the stiff talk was omitted, and the Archduke was not intimidated. The man who had so often intimidated him was in his grave, and his widow was occupied in marrying her son to the Infanta. "These are the first-fruits," said Aerssens, "of the new negotiations with Spain."

Both the Spanish king and the Emperor were resolved to hold Wesel to the very last. Until the States should retire from all their positions on the bare word of the Archduke, that the Spanish forces once withdrawn would never return, the Protestants of those two cities must suffer. There was no help for it. To save them would be to abandon all. For no true statesman could be so ingenuous as thus to throw all the cards on the table for the Spanish and Imperial cabinet to shuffle them at pleasure for a new deal. The Duke of Neuburg, now Catholic and especially protected by Spain, had become, instead of a pretender with more or less law on his side, a mere standard-bearer and agent of the Great Catholic League in the debateable land. He was to be supported at all hazard by the Spanish forces, according to the express command of Philip's government, especially now that his two brothers with the countenance of the States were disputing his right to his hereditary dominions in Germany.

The Archduke was sullen enough at what he called the weak-mindedness of France. Notwithstanding that by express orders from Spain he had sent 5000 troops under

command of Juan de Rivas to the Queen’s assistance just before the peace of Sainte-Menehould, he could not induce her government to take the firm part which the English king did in browbeating the Hollanders.

Page 2810

"'Tis certain," he complained, "that if, instead of this sluggishness on the part of France, they had done us there the same good services we have had from England, the Hollanders would have accepted the promise just as it was proposed by us." He implored the King, therefore, to use his strongest influence with the French government that it should strenuously intervene with the Hollanders, and compel them to sign the proposal which they rejected. "There is no means of composition if France does not oblige them to sign," said Albert rather piteously.

But it was not without reason that Barneveld had in many of his letters instructed the States' ambassador, Langerac, "to caress the old gentleman" (meaning and never naming Villeroy), for he would prove to be in spite of all obstacles a good friend to the States, as he always had been. And Villeroy did hold firm. Whether the Archduke was right or not in his conviction, that, if France would only unite with England in exerting a strong pressure on the Hollanders, they would evacuate the duchies, and so give up the game, the correspondence of Barneveld shows very accurately. But the Archduke, of course, had not seen that correspondence.

The Advocate knew what was plotting, what was impending, what was actually accomplished, for he was accustomed to sweep the whole horizon with an anxious and comprehensive glance. He knew without requiring to read the secret letters of the enemy that vast preparations for an extensive war against the Reformation were already completed. The movements in the duchies were the first drops of a coming deluge. The great religious war which was to last a generation of mankind had already begun; the immediate and apparent pretext being a little disputed succession to some petty sovereignties, the true cause being the necessity for each great party—the Protestant Union and the Catholic League—to secure these border provinces, the possession of which would be of such inestimable advantage to either. If nothing decisive occurred in the year 1614, the following year would still be more convenient for the League. There had been troubles in Turkey. The Grand Vizier had been murdered. The Sultan was engaged in a war with Persia. There was no eastern bulwark in Europe to the ever menacing power of the Turk and of Mahometanism in Europe save Hungary alone. Supported and ruled as that kingdom was by the House of Austria, the temper of the populations of Germany had become such as to make it doubtful in the present conflict of religious opinions between them and their rulers whether the Turk or the Spaniard would be most odious as an invader. But for the moment, Spain and the Emperor had their hands free. They were not in danger of an attack from below the Danube. Moreover, the Spanish fleet had been achieving considerable successes on the Barbary coast, having seized La Roche, and one or two important citadels, useful both against the corsairs and against sudden attacks by sea from the Turk. There were at least 100,000 men on a war footing ready to take the field at command of the two branches of the House of Austria, Spanish and German. In the little war about Montserrat, Savoy was on the point of being crushed, and Savoy was by position and policy the only possible ally, in the south, of the Netherlands and of Protestant Germany.

Page 2811

While professing the most pacific sentiments towards the States, and a profound anxiety to withdraw his troops from their borders, the King of Spain, besides daily increasing those forces, had just raised 4,000,000 ducats, a large portion of which was lodged with his bankers in Brussels. Deeds like those were of more significance than sugared words.

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Almost infinite power of the meanest of passions
Ludicrous gravity
Safest citadel against an invader and a tyrant is distrust
Their own roofs were not quite yet in a blaze
Therefore now denounced the man whom he had injured

Etext editor's bookmarks, *entire John of Barneveld* 1609-1615:

Abstinence from inquisition into consciences and private parlour
Advanced orthodox party-Puritans
Allowed the demon of religious hatred to enter into its body
Almost infinite power of the meanest of passions
And now the knife of another priest-led fanatic
Aristocracy of God's elect
As with his own people, keeping no back-door open
At a blow decapitated France
Atheist, a tyrant, because he resisted dictation from the clergy
Behead, torture, burn alive, and bury alive all heretics
Christian sympathy and a small assistance not being sufficient
Conclusive victory for the allies seemed as predestined
Contained within itself the germs of a larger liberty
Could not be both judge and party in the suit
Covered now with the satirical dust of centuries
Deadly hatred of Puritans in England and Holland
Determined to bring the very name of liberty into contempt
Disputing the eternal damnation of young children
Doctrine of predestination in its sternest and strictest sense
Emperor of Japan addressed him as his brother monarch
Epernon, the true murderer of Henry
Estimating his character and judging his judges
Everybody should mind his own business
Fate, free will, or absolute foreknowledge
Father Cotton, who was only too ready to betray the secrets
Give him advice if he asked it, and money when he required
Great war of religion and politics was postponed
He was not imperial of aspect on canvas or coin

He was a sincere bigot
He who would have all may easily lose all
He who spreads the snare always tumbles into the ditch himself
Impatience is often on the part of the non-combatants
Intense bigotry of conviction
International friendship, the self-interest of each
It was the true religion, and there was none other
James of England, who admired, envied, and hated Henry
Jealousy, that potent principle
Jesuit Mariana—justifying

Page 2812

the killing of excommunicated kings
- King’s definite and final intentions, varied from day to day
- Language which is ever living because it is dead
- Louis XIII.
- Ludicrous gravity
- More fiercely opposed to each other than to Papists
- Most detestable verses that even he had ever composed
- Neither kings nor governments are apt to value logic
- No man can be neutral in civil contentions
- No synod had a right to claim Netherlanders as slaves
- No man pretended to think of the State
- None but God to compel me to say more than I choose to say
- Outdoing himself in dogmatism and inconsistency
- Philip *iv*.
- Power the poison of which it is so difficult to resist
- Practised successfully the talent of silence
- Presents of considerable sums of money to the negotiators made
- Priests shall control the state or the state govern the priests
- Princes show what they have in them at twenty-five or never
- Putting the cart before the oxen
- Queen is entirely in the hands of Spain and the priests
- Religion was made the strumpet of Political Ambition
- Religious toleration, which is a phrase of insult
- Safest citadel against an invader and a tyrant is distrust
- Schism in the Church had become a public fact
- Secure the prizes of war without the troubles and dangers
- Senectus edam maorbus est
- She declined to be his procuress
- Small matter which human folly had dilated into a great one
- Smooth words, in the plentiful lack of any substantial
- So much in advance of his time as to favor religious equality
- Stroke of a broken table knife sharpened on a carriage wheel
- That cynical commerce in human lives
- The defence of the civil authority against the priesthood
- The assassin, tortured and torn by four horses
- The truth in shortest about matters of importance
- The voice of slanderers
- The Catholic League and the Protestant Union
- The vehicle is often prized more than the freight
- Their own roofs were not quite yet in a blaze
- Theological hatred was in full blaze throughout the country
- Theology and politics were one

There was no use in holding language of authority to him
There was but one king in Europe, Henry the Bearnese
Therefore now denounced the man whom he had injured
They have killed him, ‘e ammazato,’ cried Concini
Things he could tell which are too odious and dreadful
Thirty Years’ War tread on the heels of the forty years
To look down upon their inferior and lost fellow creatures
Uncouple the dogs and let them run
Unimaginable outrage as the most legitimate industry
Vows of an eternal friendship of several weeks’ duration
What could save the House of Austria, the cause of Papacy

Page 2813

Whether repentance could effect salvation
Whether dead infants were hopelessly damned
Whose mutual hatred was now artfully inflamed by partisans
Wish to appear learned in matters of which they are ignorant
Work of the aforesaid Puritans and a few Jesuits
Wrath of the Jesuits at this exercise of legal authority

THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

Motley's history of the Netherlands, Project Gutenberg Edition, Volume 98

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Complete, 1614-23

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v7, 1614-17

CHAPTER XI.

The Advocate sounds the Alarm in Germany—His Instructions to Langerac and his Forethought—The Prince—Palatine and his Forces take Aachen, Mulheim, and other Towns—Supineness of the Protestants—Increased Activity of Austria and the League—-Barneveld strives to obtain Help from England—Neuburg departs for Germany—Barneveld the Prime Minister of Protestantism—Ernest Mansfield takes service under Charles Emmanuel—Count John of Nassau goes to Savoy—Slippery Conduct of King James in regard to the New Treaty proposed—Barneveld's Influence greater in France than in England— Sequestration feared—The Elector of Brandenburg cited to appear before the Emperor at Prague—Murder of John van Wely—Uytenbogaert incurs Maurice's Displeasure—Marriage of the King of France with Anne of Austria—-Conference between King James and Caron concerning Piracy, Cloth Trade and Treaty of Xanten—Barneveld's Survey of the Condition of Europe—His Efforts to avert the impending general War.

I have thus purposely sketched the leading features of a couple of momentous, although not eventful, years—so far as the foreign policy of the Republic is concerned—in order that the reader may better understand the bearings and the value of the Advocate's actions and writings at that period. This work aims at being a political study. I would attempt to exemplify the influence of individual humours and passions—some of

them among the highest and others certainly the basest that agitate humanity-upon the march of great events, upon general historical results at certain epochs, and upon the destiny of eminent personages. It may also be not uninteresting to venture a glance into the internal structure and workings of a republican and federal system of government, then for the first time reproduced almost spontaneously upon an extended scale.

Perhaps the revelation of some of its defects, in spite of the faculty and vitality struggling against them, may not be without value for our own country and epoch. The system of Switzerland was too limited and homely, that of Venice too purely oligarchical, to have much moral for us now, or to render a study of their pathological phenomena especially instructive. The lessons taught us by the history of the Netherland confederacy may have more permanent meaning.

Page 2814

Moreover, the character of a very considerable statesman at an all-important epoch, and in a position of vast responsibility, is always an historical possession of value to mankind. That of him who furnishes the chief theme for these pages has been either overlooked and neglected or perhaps misunderstood by posterity. History has not too many really important and emblematic men on its records to dispense with the memory of Barneveld, and the writer therefore makes no apology for dilating somewhat fully upon his lifework by means of much of his entirely unpublished and long forgotten utterances.

The Advocate had ceaselessly been sounding the alarm in Germany. For the Protestant Union, fascinated, as it were, by the threatening look of the Catholic League, seemed relapsing into a drowse.

“I believe,” he said to one of his agents in that country, “that the Evangelical electors and princes and the other estates are not alive to the danger. I am sure that it is not apprehended in Great Britain. France is threatened with troubles. These are the means to subjugate the religion, the laws and liberties of Germany. Without an army the troops now on foot in Italy cannot be kept out of Germany. Yet we do not hear that the Evangelicals are making provision of troops, money, or any other necessaries. In this country we have about one hundred places occupied with our troops, among whom are many who could destroy a whole army. But the maintenance of these places prevents our being very strong in the field, especially outside our frontiers. But if in all Germany there be many places held by the Evangelicals which would disperse a great army is very doubtful. Keep a watchful eye. Economy is a good thing, but the protection of a country and its inhabitants must be laid to heart. Watch well if against these Provinces, and against Bohemia, Austria, and other as it is pretended rebellious states, these plans are not directed. Look out for the movements of the Italian and Bavarian troops against Germany. You see how they are nursing the troubles and misunderstandings in France, and turning them to account.”

He instructed the new ambassador in Paris to urge upon the French government the absolute necessity of punctuality in furnishing the payment of their contingent in the Netherlands according to convention. The States of Holland themselves had advanced the money during three years’ past, but this anticipation was becoming very onerous. It was necessary to pay the troops every month regularly, but the funds from Paris were always in arrear. England contributed about one-half as much in subsidy, but these moneys went in paying the garrisons of Brielle, Flushing, and Rammekens, fortresses pledged to that crown. The Ambassador was shrewdly told not to enlarge on the special employment of the English funds while holding up to the Queen’s government that she was not the only potentate who helped bear burthens for the Provinces, and insisted on a continuation

Page 2815

of this aid. “Remember and let them remember,” said the Advocate, “that the reforms which they are pretending to make there by relieving the subjects of contributions tends to enervate the royal authority and dignity both within and without, to diminish its lustre and reputation, and in sum to make the King unable to gratify and assist his subjects, friends, and allies. Make them understand that the taxation in these Provinces is ten times higher than there, and that My Lords the States hitherto by the grace of God and good administration have contrived to maintain it in order to be useful to themselves and their friends. Take great pains to have it well understood that this is even more honourable and more necessary for a king of France, especially in his minority, than for a republic ‘hoc turbato seculo.’ We all see clearly how some potentates in Europe are keeping at all time under one pretext or another strong forces well armed on a war footing. It therefore behoves his Majesty to be likewise provided with troops, and at least with a good exchequer and all the requirements of war, as well for the security of his own state as for the maintenance of the grandeur and laudable reputation left to him by the deceased king.”

Truly here was sound and substantial advice, never and nowhere more needed than in France. It was given too with such good effect as to bear fruit even upon stoniest ground, and it is a refreshing spectacle to see this plain Advocate of a republic, so lately sprung into existence out of the depths of oppression and rebellion, calmly summoning great kings as it were before him and instructing them in those vital duties of government in discharge of which the country he administered already furnished a model. Had England and France each possessed a Barneveld at that epoch, they might well have given in exchange for him a wilderness of Epernons and Sillerys, Bouillons and Conde’s; of Winwoods, Lakes, Carrs, and Villierses. But Elizabeth with her counsellors was gone, and Henry was gone, and Richelieu had not come; while in England James and his minions were diligently opening an abyss between government and people which in less than half a lifetime more should engulph the kingdom.

Two months later he informed the States’ ambassador of the communications made by the Prince of Conde and the Dukes of Nevers and Bouillon to the government at the Hague now that they had effected a kind of reconciliation with the Queen. Langerac was especially instructed to do his best to assist in bringing about cordial relations, if that were possible, between the crown and the rebels, and meantime he was especially directed to defend du Maurier against the calumnious accusations brought against him, of which Aerssens had been the secret sower.

“You will do your best to manage,” he said, “that no special ambassador be sent hither, and that M. du Maurier may remain with us, he being a very intelligent and moderate person now well instructed as to the state of our affairs, a professor of the Reformed religion, and having many other good qualities serviceable to their Majesties and to us.

Page 2816

“You will visit the Prince, and other princes and officers of the crown who are coming to court again, and do all good offices as well for the court as for M. du Maurier, in order that through evil plots and slanderous reports no harm may come to him.

“Take great pains to find out all you can there as to the designs of the King of Spain, the Archdukes, and the Emperor, in the affair of Julich. You are also to let it be known that the change of religion on the part of the Prince-Palatine of Neuburg will not change our good will and affection for him, so far as his legal claims are concerned.”

So long as it was possible for the States to retain their hold on both the claimants, the Advocate, pursuant to his uniform policy of moderation, was not disposed to help throw the Palatine into the hands of the Spanish party. He was well aware, however, that Neuburg by his marriage and his conversion was inevitably to become the instrument of the League and to be made use of in the duchies at its pleasure, and that he especially would be the first to submit with docility to the decree of the Emperor. The right to issue such decree the States under guidance of Barneveld were resolved to resist at all hazards.

“Work diligently, nevertheless,” said he, “that they permit nothing there directly or indirectly that may tend to the furtherance of the League, as too prejudicial to us and to all our fellow religionists. Tell them too that the late king, the King of Great Britain, the united electors and princes of Germany, and ourselves, have always been resolutely opposed to making the dispute about the succession in the duchies depend on the will of the Emperor and his court. All our movements in the year 1610 against the attempted sequestration under Leopold were to carry out that purpose. Hold it for certain that our present proceedings for strengthening and maintaining the city and fortress of Julich are considered serviceable and indispensable by the British king and the German electors and princes. Use your best efforts to induce the French government to pursue the same policy—if it be not possible openly, then at least secretly. My conviction is that, unless the Prince-Palatine is supported by, and his whole designs founded upon, the general league against all our brethren of the religion, affairs may be appeased.”

The Envoy was likewise instructed to do his best to further the matrimonial alliance which had begun to be discussed between the Prince of Wales and the second daughter of France. Had it been possible at that moment to bring the insane dream of James for a Spanish alliance to naught, the States would have breathed more freely. He was also to urge payment of the money for the French regiments, always in arrears since Henry’s death and Sully’s dismissal, and always supplied by the exchequer of Holland. He was informed that the Republic had been sending some war ships to the Levant, to watch the armada recently sent thither by Spain, and other armed vessels into the Baltic, to pursue the corsairs with whom every sea was infested. In one year alone he estimated the loss to Dutch merchants by these pirates at 800,000 florins. “We have just captured two of the rovers, but the rascally scum is increasing,” he said.

Page 2817

Again alluding to the resistance to be made by the States to the Imperial pretensions, he observed, “The Emperor is about sending us a herald in the Julich matter, but we know how to stand up to him.”

And notwithstanding the bare possibility which he had admitted, that the Prince of Neuburg might not yet have wholly sold himself, body and soul, to the Papists, he gave warning a day or two afterwards in France that all should be prepared for the worst.

“The Archdukes and the Prince of Neuburg appear to be taking the war earnestly in hand,” he said. “We believe that the Papistical League is about to make a great effort against all the co-religionists. We are watching closely their movements. Aachen is first threatened, and the Elector-Palatine likewise. France surely, for reasons of state, cannot permit that they should be attacked. She did, and helped us to do, too much in the Julich campaign to suffer the Spaniards to make themselves masters there now.”

It has been seen that the part played by France in the memorable campaign of 1610 was that of admiring auxiliary to the States’ forces; Marshal de la Chatre having in all things admitted the superiority of their army and the magnificent generalship of Prince Maurice. But the government of the Dowager had been committed by that enterprise to carry out the life-long policy of Henry, and to maintain his firm alliance with the Republic. Whether any of the great king’s acuteness and vigour in countermining and shattering the plans of the House of Austria was left in the French court, time was to show. Meantime Barneveld was crying himself hoarse with warnings into the dull ears of England and France.

A few weeks later the Prince of Neuburg had thrown off the mask. Twelve thousand foot and 1500 horse had been raised in great haste, so the Advocate informed the French court, by Spain and the Archdukes, for the use of that pretender. Five or six thousand Spaniards were coming by sea to Flanders, and as many Italians were crossing the mountains, besides a great number mustering for the same purpose in Germany and Lorraine. Barneveld was constantly receiving most important intelligence of military plans and movements from Prague, which he placed daily before the eyes of governments wilfully blind.

“I ponder well at this crisis,” he said to his friend Caron, “the intelligence I received some months back from Ratisbon, out of the cabinet of the Jesuits, that the design of the Catholic or Roman League is to bring this year a great army into the field, in order to make Neuburg, who was even then said to be of the Roman profession and League, master of Julich and the duchies; to execute the Imperial decree against Aachen and Mulheim, preventing any aid from being sent into Germany by these Provinces, or by Great Britain, and placing the Archduke and Marquis Spinola in command of the forces; to put another army on the frontiers of Austria, in order to prevent

Page 2818

any succour coming from Hungary, Bohemia, Austria, Moravia, and Silesia into Germany; to keep all these disputed territories in subjection and devotion to the Emperor, and to place the general conduct of all these affairs in the hands of Archduke Leopold and other princes of the House of Austria. A third army is to be brought into the Upper Palatinate, under command of the Duke of Bavaria and others of the League, destined to thoroughly carry out its designs against the Elector-Palatine, and the other electors, princes, and estates belonging to the religion."

This intelligence, plucked by Barneveld out of the cabinet of the Jesuits, had been duly communicated by him months before to those whom it most concerned, and as usual it seemed to deepen the lethargy of the destined victims and their friends. Not only the whole Spanish campaign of the present year had thus been duly mapped out by the Advocate, long before it occurred, but this long buried and forgotten correspondence of the statesman seems rather like a chronicle of transactions already past, so closely did the actual record, which posterity came to know too well, resemble that which he saw, and was destined only to see, in prophetic vision.

Could this political seer have cast his horoscope of the Thirty Years' War at this hour of its nativity for the instruction of such men as Walsingham or Burleigh, Henry of Navarre or Sully, Richelieu or Gustavus Adolphus, would the course of events have been modified? These very idlest of questions are precisely those which inevitably occur as one ponders the seeming barrenness of an epoch in reality so pregnant.

"One would think," said Barneveld, comparing what was then the future with the real past, "that these plans in Prague against the Elector-Palatine are too gross for belief; but when I reflect on the intense bitterness of these people, when I remember what was done within living men's memory to the good elector Hans Frederic of Saxony for exactly the same reasons, to wit, hatred of our religion, and determination to establish Imperial authority, I have great apprehension. I believe that the Roman League will use the present occasion to carry out her great design; holding France incapable of opposition to her, Germany in too great division, and imagining to themselves that neither the King of Great Britain nor these States are willing or able to offer effectual and forcible resistance. Yet his Majesty of Great Britain ought to be able to imagine how greatly the religious matter in general concerns himself and the electoral house of the Palatine, as principal heads of the religion, and that these vast designs should be resisted betimes, and with all possible means and might. My Lords the States have good will, but not sufficient strength, to oppose these great forces single-handed. One must not believe that without great and prompt assistance in force from his Majesty and other fellow religionists My Lords the States can undertake so vast an affair. Do your uttermost duty there, in order that, ere it be too late, this matter be taken to heart by his Majesty, and that his authority and credit be earnestly used with other kings, electors,

princes, and republics, that they do likewise. The promptest energy, good will, and affection may be reckoned on from us."

Page 2819

Alas! it was easy for his Majesty to take to heart the matter of Conrad Vorstius, to spend reams of diplomatic correspondence, to dictate whole volumes for orations brimming over with theological wrath, for the edification of the States-General, against that doctor of divinity. But what were the special interests of his son-in-law, what the danger to all the other Protestant electors and kings, princes and republics, what the imperilled condition of the United Provinces, and, by necessary consequence, the storm gathering over his own throne, what the whole fate of Protestantism, from Friesland to Hungary, threatened by the insatiable, all-devouring might of the double house of Austria, the ancient church, and the Papistical League, what were hundred thousands of men marching towards Bohemia, the Netherlands, and the duchies, with the drum beating for mercenary recruits in half the villages of Spain, Italy, and Catholic Germany, compared with the danger to Christendom from an Arminian clergyman being appointed to the theological professorship at Leyden?

The world was in a blaze, kings and princes were arming, and all the time that the monarch of the powerful, adventurous, and heroic people of Great Britain could spare from slobbering over his minions, and wasting the treasures of the realm to supply their insatiate greed, was devoted to polemical divinity, in which he displayed his learning, indeed, but changed his positions and contradicted himself day by day. The magnitude of this wonderful sovereign's littleness oppresses the imagination.

Moreover, should he listen to the adjurations of the States and his fellow religionists, should he allow himself to be impressed by the eloquence of Barneveld and take a manly and royal decision in the great emergency, it would be indispensable for him to come before that odious body, the Parliament of Great Britain, and ask for money. It would be perhaps necessary for him to take them into his confidence, to degrade himself by speaking to them of the national affairs. They might not be satisfied with the honour of voting the supplies at his demand, but were capable of asking questions as to their appropriation. On the whole it was more king-like and statesman-like to remain quiet, and give advice. Of that, although always a spendthrift, he had an inexhaustible supply.

Barneveld had just hopes from the Commons of Great Britain, if the King could be brought to appeal to Parliament. Once more he sounded the bugle of alarm. "Day by day the Archdukes are making greater and greater enrolments of riders and infantry in ever increasing mass," he cried, "and therewith vast provision of artillery and all munitions of war. Within ten or twelve days they will be before Julich in force. We are sending great convoys to reinforce our army there. The Prince of Neuburg is enrolling more and more troops every day. He will soon be master of Mulheim. If the King of Great Britain will lay this matter earnestly to heart for the preservation of the princes, electors, and estates of the religion, I cannot doubt that Parliament would cooperate well with his Majesty, and this occasion should be made use of to redress the whole state of affairs."

Page 2820

It was not the Parliament nor the people of Great Britain that would be in fault when the question arose of paying in money and in blood for the defence of civil and religious liberty. But if James should venture openly to oppose Spain, what would the Count of Gondemar say, and what would become of the Infanta and the two millions of dowry?

It was not for want of some glimmering consciousness in the mind of James of the impending dangers to Northern Europe and to Protestantism from the insatiable ambition of Spain, and the unrelenting grasp of the Papacy upon those portions of Christendom which were slipping from its control, that his apathy to those perils was so marked. We have seen his leading motives for inaction, and the world was long to feel its effects.

“His Majesty firmly believes,” wrote Secretary Winwood, “that the Papistical League is brewing great and dangerous plots. To obviate them in everything that may depend upon him, My Lords the States will find him prompt. The source of all these entanglements comes from Spain. We do not think that the Archduke will attack Julich this year, but rather fear for Mulheim and Aix-la-Chapelle.”

But the Secretary of State, thus acknowledging the peril, chose to be blind to its extent, while at the same time undervaluing the powers by which it might be resisted. “To oppose the violence of the enemy,” he said, “if he does resort to violence, is entirely impossible. It would be furious madness on our part to induce him to fall upon the Elector-Palatine, for this would be attacking Great Britain and all her friends and allies. Germany is a delicate morsel, but too much for the throat of Spain to swallow all at once. Behold the evil which troubles the conscience of the Papistical League. The Emperor and his brothers are all on the brink of their sepulchre, and the Infants of Spain are too young to succeed to the Empire. The Pope would more willingly permit its dissolution than its falling into the hands of a prince not of his profession. All that we have to do in this conjuncture is to attend the best we can to our own affairs, and afterwards to strengthen the good alliance existing among us, and not to let ourselves be separated by the tricks and sleights of hand of our adversaries. The common cause can reckon firmly upon the King of Great Britain, and will not find itself deceived.”

Excellent commonplaces, but not very safe ones. Unluckily for the allies, to attend each to his own affairs when the enemy was upon them, and to reckon firmly upon a king who thought it furious madness to resist the enemy, was hardly the way to avert the danger. A fortnight later, the man who thought it possible to resist, and time to resist, before the net was over every head, replied to the Secretary by a picture of the Spaniards’ progress.

Page 2821

“Since your letter,” he said, “you have seen the course of Spinola with the army of the King and the Archdukes. You have seen the Prince-Palatine of Neuburg with his forces maintained by the Pope and other members of the Papistical League. On the 29th of August they forced Aachen, where the magistrates and those of the Reformed religion have been extremely maltreated. Twelve hundred soldiers are lodged in the houses there of those who profess our religion. Mulheim is taken and dismantled, and the very houses about to be torn down. Duren, Castre, Grevenborg, Orsoy, Duisburg, Ruhrort, and many other towns, obliged to receive Spanish garrisons. On the 4th of September they invested Wesel. On the 6th it was held certain that the cities of Cleve, Emmerich, Rees, and others in that quarter, had consented to be occupied. The States have put one hundred and thirty-five companies of foot (about 14,000 men) and 4000 horse and a good train of artillery in the field, and sent out some ships of war. Prince Maurice left the Hague on the 4th of September to assist Wesel, succour the Prince of Brandenburg, and oppose the hostile proceedings of Spinola and the Palatine of Neuburg . . . . Consider, I pray you, this state of things, and think how much heed they have paid to the demands of the Kings of Great Britain and France to abstain from hostilities. Be sure that without our strong garrison in Julich they would have snapped up every city in Julich, Cleve, and Berg. But they will now try to make use of their slippery tricks, their progress having been arrested by our army. The Prince of Neuburg is sending his chancellor here ’cum mediis componendae pacis,’ in appearance good and reasonable, in reality deceptive . . . . If their Majesties, My Lords the States, and the princes of the Union, do not take an energetic resolution for making head against their designs, behold their League in full vigour and ours without soul. Neither the strength nor the wealth of the States are sufficient of themselves to withstand their ambitious and dangerous designs. We see the possessory princes treated as enemies upon their own estates, and many thousand souls of the Reformed religion cruelly oppressed by the Papistical League. For myself I am confirmed in my apprehensions and believe that neither our religion nor our Union can endure such indignities. The enemy is making use of the minority in France and the divisions among the princes of Germany to their great advantage . . . . I believe that the singular wisdom of his Majesty will enable him to apply promptly the suitable remedies, and that your Parliament will make no difficulty in acquitting itself well in repairing those disorders.”

Page 2822

The year dragged on to its close. The supineness of the Protestants deepened in direct proportion to the feverish increase of activity on the part of Austria and the League. The mockery of negotiation in which nothing could be negotiated, the parade of conciliation when war of extermination was intended, continued on the part of Spain and Austria. Barneveld was doing his best to settle all minor differences between the States and Great Britain, that these two bulwarks of Protestantism might stand firmly together against the rising tide. He instructed the Ambassador to exhaust every pacific means of arrangement in regard to the Greenland fishery disputes, the dyed cloth question, and like causes of ill feeling. He held it more than necessary, he said, that the inhabitants of the two countries should now be on the very best terms with each other. Above all, he implored the King through the Ambassador to summon Parliament in order that the kingdom might be placed in position to face the gathering danger.

“I am amazed and distressed,” he said, “that the statesmen of England do not comprehend the perils with which their fellow religionists are everywhere threatened, especially in Germany and in these States. To assist us with bare advice and sometimes with traducing our actions, while leaving us to bear alone the burthens, costs, and dangers, is not serviceable to us.” Referring to the information and advice which he had sent to England and to France fifteen months before, he now gave assurance that the Prince of Neuburg and Spinola were now in such force, both foot and cavalry, with all necessary munitions, as to hold these most important territories as a perpetual “sedem bedli,” out of which to attack Germany at their pleasure and to cut off all possibility of aid from England and the States. He informed the court of St. James that besides the forces of the Emperor and the House of Austria, the Duke of Bavaria and Spanish Italy, there were now several thousand horse and foot under the Bishop of Wurzburg, 8000 or 9000 under the Bishop-Elector of Mayence, and strong bodies of cavalry under Count Vaudemont in Lorraine, all mustering for the war. The pretext seems merely to reduce Frankfurt to obedience, even as Donauworth had previously been used as a colour for vast designs. The real purpose was to bring the Elector-Palatine and the whole Protestant party in Germany to submission. “His Majesty,” said the Advocate, “has now a very great and good subject upon which to convoke Parliament and ask for a large grant. This would be doubtless consented to if Parliament receives the assurance that the money thus accorded shall be applied to so wholesome a purpose. You will do your best to further this great end. We are waiting daily to hear if the Xanten negotiation is broken off or not. I hope and I fear. Meantime we bear as heavy burthens as if we were actually at war.”

He added once more the warning, which it would seem superfluous to repeat even to schoolboys in diplomacy, that this Xanten treaty, as proposed by the enemy, was a mere trap.

Page 2823

Spinola and Neuburg, in case of the mutual disbanding, stood ready at an instant's warning to re-enlist for the League not only all the troops that the Catholic army should nominally discharge, but those which would be let loose from the States' army and that of Brandenburg as well. They would hold Rheinberg, Groll, Lingen, Oldenzaal, Wachtendonk, Maestricht, Aachen, and Mulheim with a permanent force of more than 20,000 men. And they could do all this in four days' time.

A week or two later all his prophesies had been fulfilled. "The Prince of Neuburg," he said, "and Marquis Spinola have made game of us most impudently in the matter of the treaty. This is an indignity for us, their Majesties, and the electors and princes. We regard it as intolerable. A despatch came from Spain forbidding a further step in the negotiation without express order from the King. The Prince and Spinola are gone to Brussels, the ambassadors have returned to the Hague, the armies are established in winter-quarters. The cavalry are ravaging the debateable land and living upon the inhabitants at their discretion. M. de Refuge is gone to complain to the Archdukes of the insult thus put upon his sovereign. Sir Henry Wotton is still here. We have been plunged into an immensity of extraordinary expense, and are amazed that at this very moment England should demand money from us when we ought to be assisted by a large subsidy by her. We hope that now at least his Majesty will take a vigorous resolution and not suffer his grandeur and dignity to be vilipended longer. If the Spaniard is successful in this step, he is ready for greater ones, and will believe that mankind is ready to bear and submit to everything. His Majesty is the first king of the religion. He bears the title of Defender of the Faith. His religion, his only daughter, his son-in-law, his grandson are all especially interested besides his own dignity, besides the common weal."

He then adverted to the large subsidies from Queen Elizabeth many years before, guaranteed, it was true, by the cautionary towns, and to the gallant English regiments, sent by that great sovereign, which had been fighting so long and so splendidly in the Netherlands for the common cause of Protestantism and liberty. Yet England was far weaker then, for she had always her northern frontier to defend against Scotland, ever ready to strike her in the back. "But now his Majesty," said Barneveld, "is King of England and Scotland both. His frontier is free. Ireland is at peace. He possesses quietly twice as much as the Queen ever did. He is a king. Her Majesty was a woman. The King has children and heirs. His nearest blood is engaged in this issue. His grandeur and dignity have been wronged. Each one of these considerations demands of itself a manly resolution. You will do your best to further it."

The almost ubiquitous power of Spain, gaining after its exhaustion new life through the strongly developed organization of the League, and the energy breathed into that mighty conspiracy against human liberty by the infinite genius of the "cabinet of Jesuits," was not content with overshadowing Germany, the Netherlands, and England, but was threatening Savoy with 40,000 men, determined to bring Charles Emmanuel either to perdition or submission.

Page 2824

Like England, France was spell-bound by the prospect of Spanish marriages, which for her at least were not a chimera, and looked on composedly while Savoy was on point of being sacrificed by the common invader of independent nationality whether Protestant or Catholic. Nothing ever showed more strikingly the force residing in singleness of purpose with breadth and unity of design than all these primary movements of the great war now beginning. The chances superficially considered were vastly in favour of the Protestant cause. In the chief lands, under the sceptre of the younger branch of Austria, the Protestants outnumbered the Catholics by nearly ten to one. Bohemia, the Austrias, Moravia, Silesia, Hungary were filled full of the spirit of Huss, of Luther, and even of Calvin. If Spain was a unit, now that the Moors and Jews had been expelled, and the heretics of Castille and Aragon burnt into submission, she had a most lukewarm ally in Venice, whose policy was never controlled by the Church, and a dangerous neighbour in the warlike, restless, and adventurous House of Savoy, to whom geographical considerations were ever more vital than religious scruples. A sincere alliance of France, the very flower of whose nobility and people inclined to the Reformed religion, was impossible, even if there had been fifty infantes to espouse fifty daughters of France. Great Britain, the Netherlands, and the united princes of Germany seemed a solid and serried phalanx of Protestantism, to break through which should be hopeless. Yet at that moment, so pregnant with a monstrous future, there was hardly a sound Protestant policy anywhere but in Holland. How long would that policy remain sound and united? How long would the Republic speak through the imperial voice of Barneveld? Time was to show and to teach many lessons. The united princes of Germany were walking, talking, quarrelling in their sleep; England and France distracted and bedrugged, while Maximilian of Bavaria and Ferdinand of Gratz, the cabinets of Madrid and the Vatican, were moving forward to their aims slowly, steadily, relentlessly as Fate. And Spain was more powerful than she had been since the Truce began. In five years she had become much more capable of aggression. She had strengthened her positions in the Mediterranean by the acquisition and enlargement of considerable fortresses in Barbary and along a large sweep of the African coast, so as to be almost supreme in Africa. It was necessary for the States, the only power save Turkey that could face her in those waters, to maintain a perpetual squadron of war ships there to defend their commerce against attack from the Spaniard and from the corsairs, both Mahometan and Christian, who infested every sea. Spain was redoubtable everywhere, and the Turk, engaged in Persian campaigns, was offering no diversion against Hungary and Vienna.

“Reasons of state worthy of his Majesty’s consideration and wisdom,” said Barneveld, “forbid the King of Great Britain from permitting the Spaniard to give the law in Italy. He is about to extort obedience and humiliation from the Duke of Savoy, or else with 40,000 men to mortify and ruin him, while entirely assuring himself of France by the double marriages. Then comes the attack on these Provinces, on Protestant Germany, and all other states and realms of the religion.”

Page 2825

With the turn of the year, affairs were growing darker and darker. The League was rolling up its forces in all directions; its chiefs proposed absurd conditions of pacification, while war was already raging, and yet scarcely any government but that of the Netherlands paid heed to the rising storm. James, fatuous as ever, listened to Gondemar, and wrote admonitory letters to the Archduke. It was still gravely proposed by the Catholic party that there should be mutual disbanding in the duchies, with a guarantee from Marquis Spinola that there should be no more invasion of those territories. But powers and pledges from the King of Spain were what he needed.

To suppose that the Republic and her allies would wait quietly, and not lift a finger until blows were actually struck against the Protestant electors or cities of Germany, was expecting too much ingenuousness on the part of statesmen who had the interests of Protestantism at heart. What they wanted was the signed, sealed, ratified treaty faithfully carried out. Then if the King of Spain and the Archdukes were willing to contract with the States never to make an attempt against the Holy German Empire, but to leave everything to take its course according to the constitutions, liberties, and traditions and laws of that empire, under guidance of its electors, princes, estates, and cities, the United Provinces were ready, under mediation of the two kings, their allies and friends, to join in such an arrangement. Thus there might still be peace in Germany, and religious equality as guaranteed by the “Majesty-Letter,” and the “Compromise” between the two great churches, Roman and Reformed, be maintained. To bring about this result was the sincere endeavour of Barneveld, hoping against hope. For he knew that all was hollowness and sham on the part of the great enemy. Even as Walsingham almost alone had suspected and denounced the delusive negotiations by which Spain continued to deceive Elizabeth and her diplomatists until the Armada was upon her coasts, and denounced them to ears that were deafened and souls that were stupified by the frauds practised upon them, so did Barneveld, who had witnessed all that stupendous trickery of a generation before, now utter his cries of warning that Germany might escape in time from her impending doom.

“Nothing but deceit is lurking in the Spanish proposals,” he said. “Every man here wonders that the English government does not comprehend these malversations. Truly the affair is not to be made straight by new propositions, but by a vigorous resolution of his Majesty. It is in the highest degree necessary to the salvation of Christendom, to the conservation of his Majesty’s dignity and greatness, to the service of the princes and provinces, and of all Germany, nor can this vigorous resolution be longer delayed without enormous disaster to the common weal . . . . . I have the deepest affection for the cause of the Duke of Savoy, but I cannot further it so long as I cannot tell what his Majesty specifically is resolved to do, and what hope is held out from Venice, Germany, and other quarters. Our taxes are prodigious, the ordinary and extraordinary, and we have a Spanish army at our front door.”

Page 2826

The armaments, already so great, had been enlarged during the last month of the year. Vaudemont was at the head of a further force of 2000 cavalry and 8000 foot, paid for by Spain and the Pope; 24,000 additional soldiers, riders and infantry together, had been gathered by Maximilian of Bavaria at the expense of the League. Even if the reports were exaggerated, the Advocate thought it better to be too credulous than as apathetic as the rest of the Protestants.

“We receive advices every day,” he wrote to Caron, “that the Spaniards and the Roman League are going forward with their design. They are trying to amuse the British king and to gain time, in order to be able to deal the heavier blows. Do all possible duty to procure a timely and vigorous resolution there. To wait again until we are anticipated will be fatal to the cause of the Evangelical electors and princes of Germany and especially of his Electoral Highness of Brandenburg. We likewise should almost certainly suffer irreparable damage, and should again bear our cross, as men said last year in regard to Aachen, Wesel, and so many other places. The Spaniard is sly, and has had a long time to contrive how he can throw the net over the heads of all our religious allies. Remember all the warnings sent from here last year, and how they were all tossed to the winds, to the ruin of so many of our co-religionists. If it is now intended over there to keep the Spaniards in check merely by speeches or letters, it would be better to say so clearly to our friends. So long as Parliament is not convoked in order to obtain consents and subsidies for this most necessary purpose, so long I fail to believe that this great common cause of Christendom, and especially of Germany, is taken to heart by England.”

He adverted with respectfully subdued scorn to King James’s proposition that Spinola should give a guarantee. “I doubt if he accepts the suggestion,” said Barneveld, “unless as a notorious trick, and if he did, what good would the promise of Spinola do us? We consider Spinola a great commander having the purses and forces of the Spaniards and the Leaguers in his control; but should they come into other hands, he would not be a very considerable personage for us. And that may happen any day. They don’t seem in England to understand the difference between Prince Maurice in his relations to our state and that of Marquis Spinola to his superiors. Try to make them comprehend it. A promise from the Emperor, King of Spain, and the princes of the League, such as his Majesty in his wisdom has proposed to Spinola, would be most tranquillizing for all the Protestant princes and estates of the Empire, especially for the Elector and Electress Palatine, and for ourselves. In such a case no difficulty would be made on our side.”

After expressing his mind thus freely in regard to James and his policy, he then gave the Ambassador a word of caution in characteristic fashion. “Cogita,” he said, “but beware of censuring his Majesty’s projects. I do not myself mean to censure them, nor are they publicly laughed at here, but look closely at everything that comes from Brussels, and let me know with diligence.”

Page 2827

And even as the Advocate was endeavouring with every effort of his skill and reason to stir the sluggish James into vigorous resolution in behalf of his own children, as well as of the great cause of Protestantism and national liberty, so was he striving to bear up on his strenuous shoulders the youthful king of France, and save him from the swollen tides of court intrigue and Jesuitical influence fast sweeping him to destruction.

He had denounced the recent and paltry proposition made on the part of the League, and originally suggested by James, as a most open and transparent trap, into which none but the blind would thrust themselves. The Treaty of Xanten, carried out as it had been signed and guaranteed by the great Catholic powers, would have brought peace to Christendom. To accept in place of such guarantee the pledge of a simple soldier, who to-morrow might be nothing, was almost too ridiculous a proposal to be answered gravely. Yet Barneveld through the machinations of the Catholic party was denounced both at the English and French courts as an obstacle to peace, when in reality his powerful mind and his immense industry were steadily directed to the noblest possible end—to bring about a solemn engagement on the part of Spain, the Emperor, and the princes of the League, to attack none of the Protestant powers of Germany, especially the Elector-Palatine, but to leave the laws, liberties, and privileges of the States within the Empire in their original condition. And among those laws were the great statutes of 1609 and 1610, the “Majesty-Letter” and the “Compromise,” granting full right of religious worship to the Protestants of the Kingdom of Bohemia. If ever a policy deserved to be called truly liberal and truly conservative, it was the policy thus steadily maintained by Barneveld.

Adverting to the subterfuge by which the Catholic party had sought to set aside the treaty of Xanten, he instructed Langerac, the States’ ambassador in Paris, and his own pupils to make it clear to the French government that it was impossible that in such arrangements the Spanish armies would not be back again in the duchies at a moment’s notice. It could not be imagined even that they were acting sincerely.

“If their upright intention,” he said, “is that no actual, hostile, violent attack shall be made upon the duchies, or upon any of the princes, estates, or cities of the Holy Empire, as is required for the peace and tranquillity of Christendom, and if all the powers interested therein will come into a good and solid convention to that effect. My Lords the States will gladly join in such undertaking and bind themselves as firmly as the other powers. If no infraction of the laws and liberties of the Holy Empire be attempted, there will be peace for Germany and its neighbours. But the present extravagant proposition can only lead to chicane and quarrels. To press such a measure is merely to inflict a disgrace upon us. It is an attempt to prevent us from helping

Page 2828

the Elector-Palatine and the other Protestant princes of Germany and coreligionists everywhere against hostile violence. For the Elector-Palatine can receive aid from us and from Great Britain through the duchies only. It is plainly the object of the enemy to seclude us from the Palatine and the rest of Protestant Germany. It is very suspicious that the proposition of Prince Maurice, supported by the two kings and the united princes of Germany, has been rejected."

The Advocate knew well enough that the religious franchises granted by the House of Habsburg at the very moment in which Spain signed her peace with the Netherlands, and exactly as the mad duke of Cleve was expiring—with a dozen princes, Catholic and Protestant, to dispute his inheritance—would be valuable just so long as they could be maintained by the united forces of Protestantism and of national independence and no longer. What had been extorted from the Catholic powers by force would be retracted by force whenever that force could be concentrated. It had been necessary for the Republic to accept a twelve years' truce with Spain in default of a peace, while the death of John of Cleve, and subsequently of Henry *iv*., had made the acquisition of a permanent pacification between Catholicism and Protestantism, between the League and the Union, more difficult than ever. The so-called Thirty Years' War—rather to be called the concluding portion of the Eighty Years' War—had opened in the debateable duchies exactly at the moment when its forerunner, the forty years' war of the Netherlands, had been temporarily and nominally suspended. Barneveld was perpetually baffled in his efforts to obtain a favourable peace for Protestant Europe, less by the open diplomacy and military force of the avowed enemies of Protestantism than by the secret intrigues and faintheartedness of its nominal friends. He was unwearied in his efforts simultaneously to arouse the courts of England and France to the danger to Europe from the overshadowing power of the House of Austria and the League, and he had less difficulty in dealing with the Catholic Lewis and his mother than with Protestant James. At the present moment his great designs were not yet openly traversed by a strong Protestant party within the very republic which he administered.

"Look to it with earnestness and grave deliberation," he said to Langerac, "that they do not pursue us there with vain importunity to accept something so notoriously inadmissible and detrimental to the common weal. We know that from the enemy's side every kind of unseemly trick is employed, with the single object of bringing about misunderstanding between us and the King of France. A prompt and vigorous resolution on the part of his Majesty, to see the treaty which we made duly executed, would be to help the cause. Otherwise, not. We cannot here believe that his Majesty, in this first year of his majority, will submit to such a notorious

Page 2829

and flagrant affront, or that he will tolerate the oppression of the Duke of Savoy. Such an affair in the beginning of his Majesty's reign cannot but have very great and prejudicial consequences, nor can it be left to linger on in uncertainty and delay. Let him be prompt in this. Let him also take a most Christian—kingly, vigorous resolution against the great affront put upon him in the failure to carry out the treaty. Such a resolve on the part of the two kings would restore all things to tranquillity and bring the Spaniard and his adherents 'in terminos modestiae. But so long as France is keeping a suspicious eye upon England, and England upon France, everything will run to combustion, detrimental to their Majesties and to us, and ruinous to all the good inhabitants."

To the Treaty of Xanten faithfully executed he held as to an anchor in the tempest until it was torn away, not by violence from without, but by insidious mutiny within. At last the government of James proposed that the pledges on leaving the territory should be made to the two allied kings as mediators and umpires. This was better than the naked promises originally suggested, but even in this there was neither heartiness nor sincerity. Meantime the Prince of Neuburg, negotiations being broken off, departed for Germany, a step which the Advocate considered ominous. Soon afterwards that prince received a yearly pension of 24,000 crowns from Spain, and for this stipend his claims on the sovereignty of the duchies were supposed to be surrendered.

"If this be true," said Barneveld, "we have been served with covered dishes."

The King of England wrote spirited and learned letters to the Elector-Palatine, assuring him of his father-in-law's assistance in case he should be attacked by the League. Sir Henry Wotton, then on special mission at the Hague, showed these epistles to Barneveld.

"When I hear that Parliament has been assembled and has granted great subsidies," was the Advocate's comment, "I shall believe that effects may possibly follow from all these assurances."

It was wearisome for the Advocate thus ever to be foiled; by the pettinesses and jealousies of those occupying the highest earthly places, in his efforts to stem the rising tide of Spanish and Catholic aggression, and to avert the outbreak of a devastating war to which he saw Europe doomed. It may be wearisome to read the record. Yet it is the chronicle of Christendom during one of the most important and fateful epochs of modern history. No man can thoroughly understand the complication and precession of phenomena attending the disastrous dawn of the renewed war, on an even more awful scale than the original conflict in the Netherlands, without studying the correspondence of Barneveld. The history of Europe is there. The fate of Christendom is there. The

conflict of elements, the crash of contending forms of religion and of nationalities, is pictured there in vivid if

Page 2830

homely colours. The Advocate, while acting only in the name of a slender confederacy, was in truth, so long as he held his place, the prime minister of European Protestantism. There was none other to rival him, few to comprehend him, fewer still to sustain him. As Prince Maurice was at that moment the great soldier of Protestantism without clearly scanning the grandeur of the field in which he was a chief actor, or foreseeing the vastness of its future, so the Advocate was its statesman and its prophet. Could the two have worked together as harmoniously as they had done at an earlier day, it would have been a blessing for the common weal of Europe. But, alas! the evil genius of jealousy, which so often forbids cordial relations between soldier and statesman, already stood shrouded in the distance, darkly menacing the strenuous patriot, who was wearing his life out in exertions for what he deemed the true cause of progress and humanity.

Nor can the fate of the man himself, his genuine character, and the extraordinary personal events towards which he was slowly advancing, be accurately unfolded without an attempt by means of his letters to lay bare his inmost thoughts. Especially it will be seen at a later moment how much value was attached to this secret correspondence with the ambassadors in London and Paris.

The Advocate trusted to the support of France, Papal and Medicean as the court of the young king was, because the Protestant party throughout the kingdom was too powerful, warlike, and numerous to be trifled with, and because geographical considerations alone rendered a cordial alliance between Spain and France very difficult. Notwithstanding the Spanish marriages, which he opposed so long as opposition was possible, he knew that so long as a statesman remained in the kingdom, or a bone for one existed, the international policy of Henry, of Sully, and of Jeannin could not be wholly abandoned.

He relied much on Villeroy, a political hack certainly, an ancient Leaguer, and a Papist, but a man too cool, experienced, and wily to be ignorant of the very hornbook of diplomacy, or open to the shallow stratagems by which Spain found it so easy to purchase or to deceive. So long as he had a voice in the council, it was certain that the Netherland alliance would not be abandoned, nor the Duke of Savoy crushed. The old secretary of state was not especially in favour at that moment, but Barneveld could not doubt his permanent place in French affairs until some man of real power should arise there. It was a dreary period of barrenness and disintegration in that kingdom while France was mourning Henry and waiting for Richelieu.

Page 2831

The Dutch ambassador at Paris was instructed accordingly to maintain. good relations with Villeroy, who in Barneveld's opinion had been a constant and sincere friend to the Netherlands. "Don't forget to caress the old gentleman you wot of," said the Advocate frequently, but suppressing his name, "without troubling yourself with the reasons mentioned in your letter. I am firmly convinced that he will overcome all difficulties. Don't believe either that France will let the Duke of Savoy be ruined. It is against every reason of State." Yet there were few to help Charles Emmanuel in this Montferrat war, which was destined to drag feebly on, with certain interludes of negotiations, for two years longer. The already notorious condottiere Ernest Mansfeld, natural son of old prince Peter Ernest, who played so long and so high a part in command of the Spanish armies in the Netherlands, had, to be sure, taken service under the Duke. Thenceforth he was to be a leader and a master in that wild business of plunder, burning, blackmailing, and murder, which was opening upon Europe, and was to afford occupation for many thousands of adventurers of high and low degree.

Mansfeld, reckless and profligate, had already changed his banner more than once. Commanding a company under Leopold in the duchies, he had been captured by the forces of the Union, and, after waiting in vain to be ransomed by the Archduke, had gone secretly over to the enemy. Thus recovering his liberty, he had enlisted a regiment under Leopold's name to fight the Union, and had then, according to contract, transferred himself and most of his adventurers to the flag of the Union. The military operations fading away in the duchies without being succeeded by permanent peace, the Count, as he was called, with no particular claim to such title, had accepted a thousand florins a year as retainer from the Union and had found occupation under Charles Emmanuel. Here the Spanish soldier of a year or two before found much satisfaction and some profit in fighting Spanish soldiers. He was destined to reappear in the Netherlands, in France, in Bohemia, in many places where there were villages to be burned, churches to be plundered, cities to be sacked, nuns and other women to be outraged, dangerous political intrigues to be managed. A man in the prime of his age, fair-haired, prematurely wrinkled, battered, and hideous of visage, with a hare-lip and a humpback; slovenly of dress, and always wearing an old grey hat without a band to it; audacious, cruel, crafty, and licentious—such was Ernest Mansfeld, whom some of his contemporaries spoke of as Ulysses Germanicus, others as the new Attila, all as a scourge to the human race. The cockneys of Paris called him "Machefer," and nurses long kept children quiet by threatening them with that word. He was now enrolled on the Protestant side, although at the moment serving Savoy against Spain in a question purely personal. His armies, whether in Italy or in Germany, were a miscellaneous collection of adventurers of high and low degree, of all religions, of all countries, unfrocked priests and students, ruined nobles, bankrupt citizens, street vagabonds—-earliest type perhaps of the horrible military vermin which were destined to feed so many years long on the unfortunate dismembered carcass of Germany.

Page 2832

Many demands had been made upon the States for assistance to Savoy,—as if they and they alone were to bear the brunt and pay the expense of all the initiatory campaigns against Spain.

“We are much importuned,” said the Advocate, “to do something for the help of Savoy . . . . We wish and we implore that France, Great Britain, the German princes, the Venetians, and the Swiss would join us in some scheme of effective assistance. But we have enough on our shoulders at this moment.”

They had hardly money enough in their exchequer, admirably ordered as it was, for enterprises so far from home when great Spanish armies were permanently encamped on their border.

Partly to humour King James and partly from love of adventure, Count John of Nassau had gone to Savoy at the head of a small well disciplined body of troops furnished by the States.

“Make use of this piece of news,” said Barneveld, communicating the fact to Langerac, “opportunely and with discretion. Besides the wish to give some contentment to the King of Great Britain, we consider it inconsistent with good conscience and reasons of state to refuse help to a great prince against oppression by those who mean to give the law to everybody; especially as we have been so earnestly and frequently importuned to do so.”

And still the Spaniards and the League kept their hold on the duchies, while their forces, their munitions, their accumulation of funds waged hourly. The war of chicane was even more deadly than an actual campaign, for when there was no positive fighting the whole world seemed against the Republic. And the chicane was colossal.

“We cannot understand,” said Barneveld, “why M. de Prevaulx is coming here on special mission. When a treaty is signed and sealed, it only remains to execute it. The Archduke says he is himself not known in the treaty, and that nothing can be demanded of him in relation to it. This he says in his letters to the King of Great Britain. M. de Refuge knows best whether or not Marquis Spinola, Ottavio Visconti, Chancellor Pecquius, and others, were employed in the negotiation by the Archduke. We know very well here that the whole business was conducted by them. The Archduke is willing to give a clean and sincere promise not to re-occupy, and asks the same from the States. If he were empowered by the Emperor, the King of Spain, and the League, and acted in such quality, something might be done for the tranquillity of Germany. But he promises for himself only, and Emperor, King, or League, may send any general to do what they like to-morrow. What is to prevent it?

“And so My Lords the States, the Elector of Brandenburg, and others interested are cheated and made fools of. And we are as much troubled by these tricks as by armed

force. Yes, more; for we know that great enterprises are preparing this year against Germany and ourselves, that all Neuburg's troops have been disbanded and re-enlisted under the Spanish commanders, and that forces are levying not only in Italy and Spain, but in Germany, Lorraine, Luxemburg, and Upper Burgundy, and that Wesel has been stuffed full of gunpowder and other munitions, and very strongly fortified."

Page 2833

For the States to agree to a treaty by which the disputed duchies should be held jointly by the Princes of Neuburg and of Brandenburg, and the territory be evacuated by all foreign troops; to look quietly on while Neuburg converted himself to Catholicism, espoused the sister of Maximilian of Bavaria, took a pension from Spain, resigned his claims in favour of Spain, and transferred his army to Spain; and to expect that Brandenburg and all interested in Brandenburg, that is to say, every Protestant in Europe, should feel perfectly easy under such arrangement and perfectly protected by the simple promise of a soldier of fortune against Catholic aggression, was a fantastic folly hardly worthy of a child. Yet the States were asked to accept this position, Brandenburg and all Protestant Germany were asked to accept it, and Barneveld was howled at by his allies as a marplot and mischief-maker, and denounced and insulted by diplomatists daily, because he mercilessly tore away the sophistries of the League and of the League's secret friend, James Stuart.

The King of Spain had more than 100,000 men under arms, and was enlisting more soldiers everywhere and every day, had just deposited 4,000,000 crowns with his Antwerp bankers for a secret purpose, and all the time was exuberant in his assurances of peace. One would have thought that there had never been negotiations in Bourbourg, that the Spanish Armada had never sailed from Coruna.

"You are wise and prudent in France," said the Advocate, "but we are used to Spanish proceedings, and from much disaster sustained are filled with distrust. The King of England seems now to wish that the Archduke should draw up a document according to his good pleasure, and that the States should make an explanatory deed, which the King should sign also and ask the King of France to do the same. But this is very hazardous.

"We do not mean to receive laws from the King of Spain, nor the Archduke . . . . The Spanish proceedings do not indicate peace but war. One must not take it ill of us that we think these matters of grave importance to our friends and ourselves. Affairs have changed very much in the last four months. The murder of the first vizier of the Turkish emperor and his designs against Persia leave the Spanish king and the Emperor free from attack in that quarter, and their armaments are far greater than last year . . . . I cannot understand why the treaty of Xanten, formerly so highly applauded, should now be so much disapproved. . . . The King of Spain and the Emperor with their party have a vast design to give the law to all Christendom, to choose a Roman king according to their will, to reduce the Evangelical electors, princes, and estates of Germany to obedience, to subject all Italy, and, having accomplished this, to proceed to triumph over us and our allies, and by necessary consequence over France and England. They say they have established the Emperor's authority by means of Aachen and Mulheim, will soon

Page 2834

have driven us out of Julich, and have thus arranged matters entirely to their heart's content. They can then, in name of the Emperor, the League, the Prince of Neuburg, or any one else, make themselves in eight days masters of the places which they are now imaginarily to leave as well as of those which we are actually to surrender, and by possession of which we could hold out a long time against all their power."

Those very places held by the States—Julich, Emmerich, and others—had recently been fortified at much expense, under the superintendence of Prince Maurice, and by advice of the Advocate. It would certainly be an act of madness to surrender them on the terms proposed. These warnings and forebodings of Barneveld sound in our ears like recorded history, yet they were far earlier than the actual facts. And now to please the English king, the States had listened to his suggestion that his name and that of the King of France should be signed as mediators to a new arrangement proposed in lieu of the Xanten treaty. James had suggested this, Lewis had agreed to it. Yet before the ink had dried in James's pen, he was proposing that the names of the mediating sovereigns should be omitted from the document? And why? Because Gondemar was again whispering in his ear. "They are renewing the negotiations in England," said the Advocate, "about the alliance between the Prince of Wales and the second daughter of Spain; and the King of Great Britain is seriously importuning us that the Archdukes and My Lords the States should make their pledges 'impersonaliter' and not to the kings." James was also willing that the name of the Emperor should appear upon it. To prevent this, Barneveld would have had himself burned at the stake. It would be an ignominious and unconditional surrender of the whole cause.

"The Archduke will never be contented," said the Advocate, "unless his Majesty of Great Britain takes a royal resolution to bring him to reason. That he tries to lay the fault on us is pure malice. We have been ready and are still ready to execute the treaty of Xanten. The Archduke is the cause of the dispute concerning the act. We approved the formularies of their Majesties, and have changed them three times to suit the King of Great Britain. Our Provincial States have been notified in the matter, so that we can no longer digest the Spanish impudence, and are amazed that his Majesty can listen any more to the Spanish ministers. We fear that those ministers are working through many hands, in order by one means or another to excite quarrels between his Majesty, us, and the respective inhabitants of the two countries . . . . . Take every precaution that no attempt be made there to bring the name of the Emperor into the act. This would be contrary to their Majesties' first resolution, very prejudicial to the Elector of Brandenburg, to the duchies, and to ourselves. And it is indispensable that the promise be made to the two kings as mediators, as much for their reputation and dignity as for the interests of the Elector, the territories, and ourselves. Otherwise too the Spaniards will triumph over us as if they had driven us by force of arms into this promise."

Page 2835

The seat of war, at the opening of the apparently inevitable conflict between the Catholic League and the Protestant Union, would be those debateable duchies, those border provinces, the possession of which was of such vital importance to each of the great contending parties, and the populations of which, although much divided, were on the whole more inclined to the League than to the Union. It was natural enough that the Dutch statesman should chafe at the possibility of their being lost to the Union through the adroitness of the Catholic managers and the supineness of the great allies of the Republic.

Three weeks later than these last utterances of the Advocate, he was given to understand that King James was preparing to slide away from the position which had been three times changed to make it suitable for him. His indignation was hot.

“Sir Henry Wotton,” he said, “has communicated to me his last despatches from Newmarket. I am in the highest degree amazed that after all our efforts at accommodation, with so much sacrifice to the electors, the provinces, and ourselves, they are trying to urge us there to consent that the promise be not made to the Kings of France and Great Britain as mediators, although the proposition came from the Spanish side. After we had renounced, by desire of his Majesty, the right to refer the promise to the Treaty of Xanten, it was judged by both kings to be needful and substantial that the promise be made to their Majesties. To change this now would be prejudicial to the kings, to the electors, the duchies, and to our commonwealth; to do us a wrong and to leave us naked. France maintains her position as becoming and necessary. That Great Britain should swerve from it is not to be digested here. You will do your utmost according to my previous instructions to prevent any pressure to this end. You will also see that the name of the Emperor is mentioned neither in the preamble nor the articles of the treaty. It would be contrary to all our policy since 1610. You may be firmly convinced that malice is lurking under the Emperor’s name, and that he and the King of Spain and their adherents, now as before, are attempting a sequestration. This is simply a pretext to bring those principalities and provinces into the hands of the Spaniards, for which they have been labouring these thirty years. We are constantly cheated by these Spanish tricks. Their intention is to hold Wesel and all the other places until the conclusion of the Italian affair, and then to strike a great blow.”

Certainly were never words more full of sound statesmanship, and of prophecy too soon to be fulfilled, than these simple but pregnant warnings. They awakened but little response from the English government save cavils and teasing reminders that Wesel had been the cradle of German Calvinism, the Rhenish Geneva, and that it was sinful to leave it longer in the hands of Spain. As if the Advocate had not proved to demonstration that to stock hands for a new deal at that moment was to give up the game altogether.

Page 2836

His influence in France was always greater than in England, and this had likewise been the case with William the Silent. And even now that the Spanish matrimonial alliance was almost a settled matter at the French court, while with the English king it was but a perpetual will-o'the-wisp conducting to quagmires ineffable, the government at Paris sustained the policy of the Advocate with tolerable fidelity, while it was constantly and most capriciously traversed by James.

Barneveld sighed over these approaching nuptials, but did not yet despair. "We hope that the Spanish-French marriages," he said, "may be broken up of themselves; but we fear that if we should attempt to delay or prevent them authoritatively, or in conjunction with others, the effort would have the contrary effect."

In this certainly he was doomed to disappointment.

He had already notified the French court of the absolute necessity of the great points to be insisted upon in the treaty, and there he found more docility than in London or Newmarket.

All summer he was occupied with this most important matter, uttering Cassandra-like warnings into ears wilfully deaf. The States had gone as far as possible in concession. To go farther would be to wreck the great cause upon the very quicksands which he had so ceaselessly pointed out. "We hope that nothing further will be asked of us, no scruples be felt as to our good intentions," he said, "and that if Spain and the Archdukes are not ready now to fulfil the treaty, their Majesties will know how to resent this trifling with their authority and dignity, and how to set matters to rights with their own hands in the duchies. A new treaty, still less a sequestration, is not to be thought of for a moment."

Yet the month of August came and still the names of the mediating kings were not on the treaty, and still the spectre of sequestration had not been laid. On the contrary, the peace of Asti, huddled up between Spain and Savoy, to be soon broken again, had caused new and painful apprehensions of an attempt at sequestration, for it was established by several articles in that treaty that all questions between Savoy and Mantua should be referred to the Emperor's decision. This precedent was sure to be followed in the duchies if not resisted by force, as it had been so successfully resisted five years before by the armies of the States associated with those of France. Moreover the first step at sequestration had been actually taken. The Emperor had peremptorily summoned the Elector of Brandenburg and all other parties interested to appear before him on the 1st of August in Prague. There could be but one object in this citation, to drive Brandenburg and the States out of the duchies until the Imperial decision as to the legitimate sovereignty should be given. Neuburg being already disposed of and his claims ceded to the Emperor, what possibility was there in such circumstances of saving one scrap

Page 2837

of the territory from the clutch of the League? None certainly if the Republic faltered in its determination, and yielded to the cowardly advice of James. "To comply with the summons," said Barneveld, "and submit to its consequences will be an irreparable injury to the electoral house of Brandenburg, to the duchies, and to our co-religionists everywhere, and a very great disgrace to both their Majesties and to us."

He continued, through the ambassador in London, to hold up to the King, in respectful but plain language, the shamelessness of his conduct in dispensing the enemy from his pledge to the mediators, when the Republic expressly, in deference to James, had given up the ampler guarantees of the treaty. The arrangement had been solemnly made, and consented to by all the provinces, acting in their separate and sovereign capacity. Such a radical change, even if it were otherwise permissible, could not be made without long debates, consultations, and votes by the several states. What could be more fatal at such a crisis than this childish and causeless delay. There could be no doubt in any statesman's eyes that the Spanish party meant war and a preparatory hoodwinking. And it was even worse for the government of the Republic to be outwitted in diplomacy than beaten in the field.

"Every man here," said the Advocate, "has more apprehension of fraud than of force. According to the constitution of our state, to be overcome by superior power must be endured, but to be overreached by trickery is a reproach to the government."

The summer passed away. The States maintained their positions in the duchies, notwithstanding the objurgations of James, and Barneveld remained on his watch-tower observing every movement of the fast-approaching war, and refusing at the price of the whole territory in dispute to rescue Wesel and Aix-la-Chapelle from the grasp of the League.

Caron came to the Hague to have personal consultations with the States-General, the Advocate, and Prince Maurice, and returned before the close of the year. He had an audience of the King at the palace of Whitehall early in November, and found him as immovable as ever in his apathetic attitude in regard to the affairs of Germany. The murder of Sir Thomas Overbury and the obscene scandals concerning the King's beloved Carr and his notorious bride were then occupying the whole attention of the monarch, so that he had not even time for theological lucubrations, still less for affairs of state on which the peace of Christendom and the fate of his own children were hanging.

The Ambassador found him sulky and dictatorial, but insisted on expressing once more to him the apprehensions felt by the States-General in regard to the trickery of the Spanish party in the matter of Cleve and Julich. He assured his Majesty that they had no intention of maintaining the Treaty of Xanten, and respectfully requested that the

King would no longer urge the States to surrender the places held by them. It was a matter of vital importance to retain them, he said.

Page 2838

“Sir Henry Wotton told me,” replied James, “that the States at his arrival were assembled to deliberate on this matter, and he had no doubt that they would take a resolution in conformity with my intention. Now I see very well that you don’t mean to give up the places. If I had known that before, I should not have warned the Archduke so many times, which I did at the desire of the States themselves. And now that the Archdukes are ready to restore their cities, you insist on holding yours. That is the dish you set before me.”

And upon this James swore a mighty oath, and beat himself upon the breast.

“Now and nevermore will I trouble myself about the States’ affairs, come what come will,” he continued. “I have always been upright in my words and my deeds, and I am not going to embark myself in a wicked war because the States have plunged themselves into one so entirely unjust. Next summer the Spaniard means to divide himself into two or three armies in order to begin his enterprises in Germany.”

Caron respectfully intimated that these enterprises would be most conveniently carried on from the very advantageous positions which be occupied in the duchies. “No,” said the King, “he must restore them on the same day on which you make your surrender, and he will hardly come back in a hurry.”

“Quite the contrary,” said the Ambassador, “they will be back again in a twinkling, and before we have the slightest warning of their intention.”

But it signified not the least what Caron said. The King continued to vociferate that the States had never had any intention of restoring the cities.

“You mean to keep them for yourselves,” he cried, “which is the greatest injustice that could be perpetrated. You have no right to them, and they belong to other people.”

The Ambassador reminded him that the Elector of Brandenburg was well satisfied that they should be occupied by the States for his greater security and until the dispute should be concluded.

“And that will never be,” said James; “never, never. The States are powerful enough to carry on the war all alone and against all the world.”

And so he went on, furiously reiterating the words with which he had begun the conversation, “without accepting any reasons whatever in payment,” as poor Caron observed.

“It makes me very sad,” said the Ambassador, “to find your Majesty so impatient and so resolved. If the names of the kings are to be omitted from the document, the Treaty of Xanten should at least be modified accordingly.”

“Nothing of the kind,” said James; “I don’t understand it so at all. I speak plainly and without equivocation. It must be enough for the States that I promise them, in case the enemy is cheating or is trying to play any trick whatever, or is seeking to break the Treaty of Xanten in a single point, to come to their assistance in person.”

And again the warlike James swore a big oath and smote his breast, affirming that he meant everything sincerely; that he cheated no one, but always spoke his thoughts right on, clearly and uprightly.

Page 2839

It was certainly not a cheerful prospect for the States. Their chief ally was determined that they should disarm, should strip themselves naked, when the mightiest conspiracy against the religious freedom and international independence of Europe ever imagined was perfecting itself before their eyes, and when hostile armies, more numerous than ever before known, were at their very door. To wait until the enemy was at their throat, and then to rely upon a king who trembled at the sight of a drawn sword, was hardly the highest statesmanship. Even if it had been the chivalrous Henry instead of the pacific James that had held out the promise of help, they would have been mad to follow such counsel.

The conversation lasted more than an hour. It was in vain that Caron painted in dark colours the cruel deeds done by the Spaniards in Mulheim and Aachen, and the proceedings of the Archbishop of Cologne in Rees. The King was besotted, and no impression could be made upon him.

“At any rate,” said the Envoy, “the arrangement cannot be concluded without the King of France.”

“What excuse is that?” said James. “Now that the King is entirely Spanish, you are trying to excuse your delays by referring to him. You have deferred rescuing the poor city of Wesel from the hands of the Spaniard long enough. I am amazed to have heard never a word from you on that subject since your departure. I had expressed my wish to you clearly enough that you should inform the States of my intention to give them any assurance they chose to demand.”

Caron was much disappointed at the humour of his Majesty. Coming freshly as he did from the council of the States, and almost from the seat of war, he had hoped to convince and content him. But the King was very angry with the States for putting him so completely in the wrong. He had also been much annoyed at their having failed to notify him of their military demonstration in the Electorate of Cologne to avenge the cruelties practised upon the Protestants there. He asked Caron if he was instructed to give him information regarding it. Being answered in the negative, he said he had thought himself of sufficient importance to the States and enough in their confidence to be apprised of their military movements. It was for this, he said, that his ambassador sat in their council. Caron expressed the opinion that warlike enterprises of the kind should be kept as secret as possible in order to be successful. This the King disputed, and loudly declared his vexation at being left in ignorance of the matter. The Ambassador excused himself as well as he could, on the ground that he had been in Zealand when the troops were marching, but told the King his impression that they had been sent to chastise the people of Cologne for their cruelty in burning and utterly destroying the city of Mulheim.

“That is none of your affair,” said the King.

“Pardon me, your Majesty,” replied Caron, “they are our fellow religionists, and some one at least ought to resent the cruelty practised upon them.”

Page 2840

The King admitted that the destruction of the city had been an unheard—of cruelty, and then passed on to speak of the quarrel between the Duke and City of Brunswick, and other matters. The interview ended, and the Ambassador, very downhearted, went to confer with the Secretary of State Sir Ralph Winwood, and Sir Henry Wotton.

He assured these gentlemen that without fully consulting the French government these radical changes in the negotiations would never be consented to by the States. Winwood promised to confer at once with the French ambassador, admitting it to be impossible for the King to take up this matter alone. He would also talk with the Archduke's ambassador next day noon at dinner, who was about leaving for Brussels, and "he would put something into his hand that he might take home with him."

"When he is fairly gone," said Caron, "it is to be hoped that the King's head will no longer be so muddled about these things. I wish it with all my heart."

It was a dismal prospect for the States. The one ally on whom they had a right to depend, the ex-Calvinist and royal Defender of the Faith, in this mortal combat of Protestantism with the League, was slipping out of their grasp with distracting lubricity. On the other hand, the Most Christian King, a boy of fourteen years, was still in the control of a mother heart and soul with the League—so far as she had heart or soul—-was betrothed to the daughter of Spain, and saw his kingdom torn to pieces and almost literally divided among themselves by rebellious princes, who made use of the Spanish marriages as a pretext for unceasing civil war.

The Queen-Mother was at that moment at Bordeaux, and an emissary from the princes was in London. James had sent to offer his mediation between them and the Queen. He was fond of mediation. He considered it his special mission in the world to mediate. He imagined himself as looked up to by the nations as the great arbitrator of Christendom, and was wont to issue his decrees as if binding in force and infallible by nature. He had protested vigorously against the Spanish-French marriages, and declared that the princes were justified in formalizing an opposition to them, at least until affairs in France were restored to something like order. He warned the Queen against throwing the kingdom "into the combustion of war without necessity," and declared that, if she would trust to his guidance, she might make use of him as if her affairs were his own. An indispensable condition for much assistance, however, would be that the marriages should be put off.

As James was himself pursuing a Spanish marriage for his son as the chief end and aim of his existence, there was something almost humorous in this protest to the Queen-Dowager and in his encouragement of mutiny in France in order to prevent a catastrophe there which he desired at home.

Page 2841

The same agent of the princes, de Monbaran by name, was also privately accredited by them to the States with instructions to borrow 200,000 crowns of them if he could. But so long as the policy of the Republic was directed by Barneveld, it was not very probable that, while maintaining friendly and even intimate relations with the legitimate government, she would enter into negotiations with rebels against it, whether princes or plebeians, and oblige them with loans. “He will call on me soon, no doubt,” said Caron, “but being so well instructed as to your Mightinesses intentions in this matter, I hope I shall keep him away from you.” Monbaran was accordingly kept away, but a few weeks later another emissary of Conde and Bouillon made his appearance at the Hague, de Valigny by name. He asked for money and for soldiers to reinforce Bouillon’s city of Sedan, but he was refused an audience of the States-General. Even the martial ardour of Maurice and his sympathy for his relatives were cooled by this direct assault on his pocket. “The Prince,” wrote the French ambassador, du Maurier, “will not furnish him or his adherents a thousand crowns, not if they had death between their teeth. Those who think it do not know how he loves his money.”

In the very last days of the year (1615) Caron had another interview with the King in which James was very benignant. He told the Ambassador that he should wish the States to send him some special commissioners to make a new treaty with him, and to treat of all unsettled affairs which were daily arising between the inhabitants of the respective countries. He wished to make a firmer union and accord between Great Britain and the Netherlands. He was very desirous of this, “because,” said he, “if we can unite with and understand each other, we have under God no one what ever to fear, however mighty they may be.”

Caron duly notified Barneveld of these enthusiastic expressions of his Majesty. The Advocate too was most desirous of settling the troublesome questions about the cloth trade, the piracies, and other matters, and was in favour of the special commission. In regard to a new treaty of alliance thus loosely and vaguely suggested, he was not so sanguine however. He had too much difficulty in enforcing the interests of Protestantism in the duchies against the infatuation of James in regard to Spain, and he was too well aware of the Spanish marriage delusion, which was the key to the King’s whole policy, to put much faith in these casual outbursts of eternal friendship with the States. He contented himself therefore with cautioning Caron to pause before committing himself to any such projects. He had frequently instructed him, however, to bring the disputed questions to his Majesty’s notice as often as possible with a view to amicable arrangement.

Page 2842

This preventive policy in regard to France was highly approved by Barneveld, who was willing to share in the blame profusely heaped upon such sincere patriots and devoted Protestants as Duplessis-Mornay and others, who saw small advantage to the great cause from a mutiny against established government, bad as it was, led by such intriguers as Conde and Bouillon. Men who had recently been in the pay of Spain, and one of whom had been cognizant of Biron's plot against the throne and life of Henry *iv*., to whom sedition was native atmosphere and daily bread, were not likely to establish a much more wholesome administration than that of Mary de' Medici. Prince Maurice sympathized with his relatives by marriage, who were leading the civil commotions in France and endeavouring to obtain funds in the Netherlands. It is needless to say that Francis Aerssens was deep in their intrigues, and feeding full the grudge which the Stadholder already bore the Advocate for his policy on this occasion.

The Advocate thought it best to wait until the young king should himself rise in mutiny against his mother and her minions. Perhaps the downfall of the Concini's and their dowager and the escape of Lewis from thraldom might not be so distant as it seemed. Meantime this was the legal government, bound to the States by treaties of friendship and alliance, and it would be a poor return for the many favours and the constant aid bestowed by Henry *iv*. on the Republic, and an imbecile mode of avenging his murder to help throw his kingdom into bloodshed and confusion before his son was able to act for himself. At the same time he did his best to cultivate amicable relations with the princes, while scrupulously abstaining from any sympathy with their movements. "If the Prince and the other gentlemen come to court," he wrote to Langerac, "you will treat them with all possible caresses so far as can be done without disrespect to the government."

While the British court was occupied with the foul details of the Overbury murder and its consequences, a crime of a more commonplace nature, but perhaps not entirely without influence on great political events, had startled the citizens of the Hague. It was committed in the apartments of the Stadholder and almost under his very eyes. A jeweller of Amsterdam, one John van Wely, had come to the court of Maurice to lay before him a choice collection of rare jewellery. In his caskets were rubies and diamonds to the value of more than 100,000 florins, which would be the equivalent of perhaps ten times as much to-day. In the Prince's absence the merchant was received by a confidential groom of the chambers, John of Paris by name, and by him, with the aid of a third John, a soldier of his Excellency's guard, called Jean de la Vigne, murdered on the spot. The deed was done in the Prince's private study. The unfortunate jeweller was shot, and to make sure was strangled with the blue riband of the Order of the Garter recently conferred upon Maurice, and which happened to be lying conspicuously in the room.

Page 2843

The ruffians had barely time to take possession of the booty, to thrust the body behind the tapestry of the chamber, and to remove the more startling evidences of the crime, when the Prince arrived. He supped soon afterwards in the same room, the murdered jeweller still lying behind the arras. In the night the valet and soldier carried the corpse away from the room, down the stairs, and through the great courtyard, where, strange to say, no sentinels were on duty, and threw it into an ashpit.

A deed so bloody, audacious, and stupid was of course soon discovered and the murderers arrested and executed. Nothing would remove the incident from the catalogue of vulgar crimes, or even entitle it to a place in history save a single circumstance. The celebrated divine John Uytenbogaert, leader among the Arminians, devoted friend of Barneveld, and up to that moment the favorite preacher of Maurice, stigmatized indeed, as we have seen, by the orthodox as “Court Trumpeter,” was requested by the Prince to prepare the chief criminal for death. He did so, and from that day forth the Stadholder ceased to be his friend, although regularly listening to his preaching in the French chapel of the court for more than a year longer. Some time afterwards the Advocate informed Uytenbogaert that the Prince was very much embittered against him. “I knew it well,” says the clergyman in his memoirs, “but not the reasons for it, nor do I exactly comprehend them to this day. Truly I have some ideas relating to certain things which I was obliged to do in discharge of my official duty, but I will not insist upon them, nor will I reveal them to any man.”

These were mysterious words, and the mystery is said to have been explained; for it would seem that the eminent preacher was not so entirely reticent among his confidential friends as before the public. Uytenbogaert—so ran the tale—in the course of his conversation with the condemned murderer, John of Paris, expressed a natural surprise that there should have been no soldiers on guard in the court on the evening when the crime was committed and the body subsequently removed. The valet informed him that he had for a long time been empowered by the Prince to withdraw the sentinels from that station, and that they had been instructed to obey his orders—-Maurice not caring that they should be witnesses to the equivocal kind of female society that John of Paris was in the habit of introducing of an evening to his master’s apartments. The valet had made use of this privilege on the night in question to rid himself of the soldiers who would have been otherwise on guard.

The preacher felt it his duty to communicate these statements to the Prince, and to make perhaps a somewhat severe comment upon them. Maurice received the information sullenly, and, as soon as Uytenbogaert was gone, fell into a violent passion, throwing his hat upon the floor, stamping upon it, refusing to eat his supper, and allowing no one to speak to him. Next day some courtiers asked the clergyman what in the world he had been saying to the Stadholder.

Page 2844

From that time forth his former partiality for the divine, on whose preaching he had been a regular attendant, was changed to hatred; a sentiment which lent a lurid colour to subsequent events.

The attempts of the Spanish party by chicane or by force to get possession of the coveted territories continued year after year, and were steadily thwarted by the watchfulness of the States under guidance of Barneveld. The martial stadholder was more than ever for open war, in which he was opposed by the Advocate, whose object was to postpone and, if possible, to avert altogether the dread catastrophe which he foresaw impending over Europe. The Xanten arrangement seemed hopelessly thrown to the winds, nor was it destined to be carried out; the whole question of sovereignty and of mastership in those territories being swept subsequently into the general whirlpool of the Thirty Years' War. So long as there was a possibility of settlement upon that basis, the Advocate was in favour of settlement, but to give up the guarantees and play into the hands of the Catholic League was in his mind to make the Republic one of the conspirators against the liberties of Christendom.

"Spain, the Emperor and the rest of them," said he, "make all three modes of pacification—the treaty, the guarantee by the mediating kings, the administration divided between the possessory princes—alike impossible. They mean, under pretext of sequestration, to make themselves absolute masters there. I have no doubt that Villeroy means sincerely, and understands the matter, but meantime we sit by the fire and burn. If the conflagration is neglected, all the world will throw the blame on us."

Thus the Spaniards continued to amuse the British king with assurances of their frank desire to leave those fortresses and territories which they really meant to hold till the crack of doom. And while Gondemar was making these ingenuous assertions in London, his colleagues at Paris and at Brussels distinctly and openly declared that there was no authority whatever for them, that the Ambassador had received no such instructions, and that there was no thought of giving up Wesel or any other of the Protestant strongholds captured, whether in the duchies or out of them. And Gondemar, still more to keep that monarch in subjection, had been unusually flattering in regard to the Spanish marriage. "We are in great alarm here," said the Advocate, "at the tidings that the projected alliance of the Prince of Wales with the daughter of Spain is to be renewed; from which nothing good for his Majesty's person, his kingdom, nor for our state can be presaged. We live in hope that it will never be."

Page 2845

But the other marriage was made. Despite the protest of James, the forebodings of Barneveld, and the mutiny of the princes, the youthful king of France had espoused Anne of Austria early in the year 1616. The British king did his best to keep on terms with France and Spain, and by no means renounced his own hopes. At the same time, while fixed as ever in his approbation of the policy pursued by the Emperor and the League, and as deeply convinced of their artlessness in regard to the duchies, the Protestant princes of Germany, and the Republic, he manifested more cordiality than usual in his relations with the States. Minor questions between the countries he was desirous of arranging—so far as matters of state could be arranged by orations—and among the most pressing of these affairs were the systematic piracy existing and encouraged in English ports, to the great damage of all seafaring nations and to the Hollanders most of all, and the quarrel about the exportation of undyed cloths, which had almost caused a total cessation of the woollen trade between the two countries. The English, to encourage their own artisans, had forbidden the export of undyed cloths, and the Dutch had retorted by prohibiting the import of dyed ones.

The King had good sense enough to see the absurdity of this condition of things, and it will be remembered that Barneveld had frequently urged upon the Dutch ambassador to bring his Majesty's attention to these dangerous disputes. Now that the recovery of the cautionary towns had been so dexterously and amicably accomplished, and at so cheap a rate, it seemed a propitious moment to proceed to a general extinction of what would now be called "burning questions."

James was desirous that new high commissioners might be sent from the States to confer with himself and his ministers upon the subjects just indicated, as well as upon the fishery questions as regarded both Greenland and Scotland, and upon the general affairs of India.

He was convinced, he said to Caron, that the sea had become more and more unsafe and so full of freebooters that the like was never seen or heard of before. It will be remembered that the Advocate had recently called his attention to the fact that the Dutch merchants had lost in two months 800,000 florins' worth of goods by English pirates.

The King now assured the Ambassador of his intention of equipping a fleet out of hand and to send it forth as speedily as possible under command of a distinguished nobleman, who would put his honour and credit in a successful expedition, without any connivance or dissimulation whatever. In order thoroughly to scour these pirates from the seas, he expressed the hope that their Mightinesses the States would do the same either jointly or separately as they thought most advisable. Caron bluntly replied that the States had already ten or twelve war-ships at sea for this purpose, but that unfortunately, instead of finding any help from the English in this regard, they had always found the pirates favoured in his Majesty's ports, especially in Ireland and Wales.

Page 2846

“Thus they have so increased in numbers,” continued the Ambassador, “that I quite believe what your Majesty says, that not a ship can pass with safety over the seas. More over, your Majesty has been graciously pleased to pardon several of these corsairs, in consequence of which they have become so impudent as to swarm everywhere, even in the river Thames, where they are perpetually pillaging honest merchantmen.”

“I confess,” said the King, “to having pardoned a certain Manning, but this was for the sake of his old father, and I never did anything so unwillingly in my life. But I swear that if it were the best nobleman in England, I would never grant one of them a pardon again.”

Caron expressed his joy at hearing such good intentions on the part of his Majesty, and assured him that the States-General would be equally delighted.

In the course of the summer the Dutch ambassador had many opportunities of seeing the King very confidentially, James having given him the use of the royal park at Bayscot, so that during the royal visits to that place Caron was lodged under his roof.

On the whole, James had much regard and respect for Noel de Caron. He knew him to be able, although he thought him tiresome. It is amusing to observe the King and Ambassador in their utterances to confidential friends each frequently making the charge of tediousness against the other. “Caron’s general education,” said James on one occasion to Cecil, “cannot amend his native German prolixity, for had I not interrupted him, it had been tomorrow morning before I had begun to speak. God preserve me from hearing a cause debated between Don Diego and him! . . . But in truth it is good dealing with so wise and honest a man, although he be somewhat longsome.”

Subsequently James came to Whitehall for a time, and then stopped at Theobalds for a few days on his way to Newmarket, where he stayed until Christmas. At Theobalds he sent again for the Ambassador, saying that at Whitehall he was so broken down with affairs that it would be impossible to live if he stayed there.

He asked if the States were soon to send the commissioners, according to his request, to confer in regard to the cloth-trade. Without interference of the two governments, he said, the matter would never be settled. The merchants of the two countries would never agree except under higher authority.

“I have heard both parties,” he said, “the new and the old companies, two or three times in full council, and tried to bring them to an agreement, but it won’t do. I have heard that My Lords the States have been hearing both sides, English and the Hollanders, over and over again, and that the States have passed a provisional resolution, which however does not suit us. Now it is not reasonable, as we are allies, that our merchants

should be obliged to send their cloths roundabout, not being allowed either to sell them in the United Provinces

Page 2847

or to pass them through your territories. I wish I could talk with them myself, for I am certain, if they would send some one here, we could make an agreement. It is not necessary that one should take everything from them, or that one should refuse everything to us. I am sure there are people of sense in your assembly who will justify me in favouring my own people so far as I reasonably can, and I know very well that My Lords the States must stand up for their own citizens. If we have been driving this matter to an extreme and see that we are ruining each other, we must take it up again in other fashion, for Yesterday is the preceptor of To-morrow. Let the commissioners come as soon as possible. I know they have complaints to make, and I have my complaints also. Therefore we must listen to each other, for I protest before God that I consider the community of your state with mine to be so entire that, if one goes to perdition, the other must quickly follow it."

Thus spoke James, like a wise and thoughtful sovereign interested in the welfare of his subjects and allies, with enlightened ideas for the time upon public economy. It is difficult, in the man conversing thus amicably and sensibly with the Dutch ambassador, to realise the shrill pedant shrieking against Vorstius, the crapulous comrade of Carrs and Steenies, the fawning solicitor of Spanish marriages, the "pepperer" and hangman of Puritans, the butt and dupe of Gondemar and Spinola.

"I protest," he said further, "that I seek nothing in your state but all possible friendship and good fellowship. My own subjects complain sometimes that your people follow too closely on their heels, and confess that your industry goes far above their own. If this be so, it is a lean kind of reproach; for the English should rather study to follow you. Nevertheless, when industry is directed by malice, each may easily be attempting to snap an advantage from the other. I have sometimes complained of many other things in which my subjects suffered great injustice from you, but all that is excusable. I will willingly listen to your people and grant them to be in the right when they are so. But I will never allow them to be in the right when they mistrust me. If I had been like many other princes, I should never have let the advantage of the cautionary towns slip out of my fingers, but rather by means of them attempted to get even a stronger hold on your country. I have had plenty of warnings from great statesmen in France, Germany, and other nations that I ought to give them up nevermore. Yet you know how frankly and sincerely I acquitted myself in that matter without ever making pretensions upon your state than the pretensions I still make to your friendship and co-operation."

Page 2848

James, after this allusion to an important transaction to be explained in the next chapter, then made an observation or two on a subject which was rapidly overtopping all others in importance to the States, and his expressions were singularly at variance with his last utterances in that regard. “I tell you,” he said, “that you have no right to mistrust me in anything, not even in the matter of religion. I grieve indeed to hear that your religious troubles continue. You know that in the beginning I occupied myself with this affair, but fearing that my course might be misunderstood, and that it might be supposed that I was seeking to exercise authority in your republic, I gave it up, and I will never interfere with the matter again, but will ever pray God that he may give you a happy issue out of these troubles.”

Alas! if the King had always kept himself on that height of amiable neutrality, if he had been able to govern himself in the future by these simplest principles of reason and justice, there might have been perhaps a happier issue from the troubles than time was like to reveal.

Once more James referred to the crisis pending in German affairs, and as usual spoke of the Clove and Julich question as if it were a simple matter to be settled by a few strokes of the pen and a pennyworth of sealing-wax, instead of being the opening act in a vast tragedy, of which neither he, nor Carom nor Barneveld, nor Prince Maurice, nor the youthful king of France, nor Philip, nor Matthias, nor any of the men now foremost in the conduct of affairs, was destined to see the end.

The King informed Caron that he had just received most satisfactory assurances from the Spanish ambassador in his last audience at Whitehall.

“He has announced to me on the part of the King his master with great compliments that his Majesty seeks to please me and satisfy me in everything that I could possibly desire of him,” said James, rolling over with satisfaction these unctuous phrases as if they really had any meaning whatever.

“His Majesty says further,” added the King, “that as he has been at various times admonished by me, and is daily admonished by other princes, that he ought to execute the treaty of Xanten by surrendering the city of Wesel and all other places occupied by Spinola, he now declares himself ready to carry out that treaty in every point. He will accordingly instruct the Archduke to do this, provided the Margrave of Brandenburg and the States will do the same in regard to their captured places. As he understands however that the States have been fortifying Julich even as he might fortify Wesel, he would be glad that no innovation be made before the end of the coming month of March. When this term shall have expired, he will no longer be bound by these offers, but will proceed to fortify Wesel and the other places, and to hold them as he best may for himself. Respect for me has alone induced his Majesty to make this resolution.”

Page 2849

We have already seen that the Spanish ambassador in Paris was at this very time loudly declaring that his colleague in London had no commission whatever to make these propositions. Nor when they were in the slightest degree analysed, did they appear after all to be much better than threats. Not a word was said of guarantees. The names of the two kings were not mentioned. It was nothing but Albert and Spinola then as always, and a recommendation that Brandenburg and the States and all the Protestant princes of Germany should trust to the candour of the Catholic League. Caron pointed out to the King that in these proposals there were no guarantees nor even promises that the fortresses would not be reoccupied at convenience of the Spaniards. He engaged however to report the whole statement to his masters. A few weeks afterwards the Advocate replied in his usual vein, reminding the King through the Ambassador that the Republic feared fraud on the part of the League much more than force. He also laid stress on the affairs of Italy, considering the fate of Savoy and the conflicts in which Venice was engaged as components of a general scheme. The States had been much solicited, as we have seen, to render assistance to the Duke of Savoy, the temporary peace of Asti being already broken, and Barneveld had been unceasing in his efforts to arouse France as well as England to the danger to themselves and to all Christendom should Savoy be crushed. We shall have occasion to see the prominent part reserved to Savoy in the fast opening debate in Germany. Meantime the States had sent one Count of Nassau with a couple of companies to Charles Emmanuel, while another (Ernest) had just gone to Venice at the head of more than three thousand adventurers. With so many powerful armies at their throats, as Barneveld had more than once observed, it was not easy for them to despatch large forces to the other end of Europe, but he justly reminded his allies that the States were now rendering more effective help to the common cause by holding great Spanish armies in check on their own frontier than if they assumed a more aggressive line in the south. The Advocate, like every statesman worthy of the name, was accustomed to sweep the whole horizon in his consideration of public policy, and it will be observed that he always regarded various and apparently distinct and isolated movements in different parts of Europe as parts of one great whole. It is easy enough for us, centuries after the record has been made up, to observe the gradual and, as it were, harmonious manner in which the great Catholic conspiracy against the liberties of Europe was unfolded in an ever widening sphere. But to the eyes of contemporaries all was then misty and chaotic, and it required the keen vision of a sage and a prophet to discern the awful shape which the future might assume. Absorbed in the contemplation of these portentous phenomena, it was not unnatural that the Advocate should attach less significance

Page 2850

to perturbations nearer home. Devoted as was his life to save the great European cause of Protestantism, in which he considered political and religious liberty bound up, from the absolute extinction with which it was menaced, he neglected too much the furious hatreds growing up among Protestants within the narrow limits of his own province. He was destined one day to be rudely awakened. Meantime he was occupied with organizing a general defence of Italy, Germany, France, and England, as well as the Netherlands, against the designs of Spain and the League.

"We wish to know," he said in answer to the affectionate messages and fine promises of the King of Spain to James as reported by Caron, "what his Majesty of Great Britain has done, is doing, and is resolved to do for the Duke of Savoy and the Republic of Venice. If they ask you what we are doing, answer that we with our forces and vigour are keeping off from the throats of Savoy and Venice 2000 riders and 10,000 infantry, with which forces, let alone their experience, more would be accomplished than with four times the number of new troops brought to the field in Italy. This is our succour, a great one and a very costly one, for the expense of maintaining our armies to hold the enemy in check here is very great."

He alluded with his usual respectful and quiet scorn to the arrangements by which James so wilfully allowed himself to be deceived.

"If the Spaniard really leaves the duchies," he said, "it is a grave matter to decide whether on the one side he is not resolved by that means to win more over us and the Elector of Brandenburg in the debateable land in a few days than he could gain by force in many years, or on the other whether by it he does not intend despatching 1200 or 1500 cavalry and 5000 or 6000 foot, all his most experienced soldiers, from the Netherlands to Italy, in order to give the law at his pleasure to the Duke of Savoy and the Republic of Venice, reserving his attack upon Germany and ourselves to the last. The Spaniards, standing under a monarchical government, can in one hour resolve to seize to-morrow all that they and we may abandon to-day. And they can carry such a resolution into effect at once. Our form of government does not permit this, so that our republic must be conserved by distrust and good garrisons."

Thus during this long period of half hostilities Barneveld, while sincerely seeking to preserve the peace in Europe, was determined, if possible, that the Republic should maintain the strongest defensive position when the war which he foreboded should actually begin. Maurice and the war party had blamed him for the obstacles which he interposed to the outbreak of hostilities, while the British court, as we have seen, was perpetually urging him to abate from his demands and abandon both the well strengthened fortresses in the duchies and that strong citadel of distrust which in his often repeated language he was determined never to surrender.

Page 2851

Spinola and the military party of Spain, while preaching peace, had been in truth most anxious for fighting. “The only honour I desire henceforth,” said that great commander, “is to give battle to Prince Maurice.” The generals were more anxious than the governments to make use of the splendid armies arrayed against each other in such proximity that, the signal for conflict not having been given, it was not uncommon for the soldiers of the respective camps to aid each other in unloading munition waggons, exchanging provisions and other articles of necessity, and performing other small acts of mutual service.

But heavy thunder clouds hanging over the earth so long and so closely might burst into explosion at any moment. Had it not been for the distracted condition of France, the infatuation of the English king, and the astounding inertness of the princes of the German Union, great advantages might have been gained by the Protestant party before the storm should break. But, as the French ambassador at the Hague well observed, “the great Protestant Union of Germany sat with folded arms while Hannibal was at their gate, the princes of which it was composed amusing themselves with staring at each other. It was verifying,” he continued, bitterly, “the saying of the Duke of Alva, ’Germany is an old dog which still can bark, but has lost its teeth to bite with.’”

To such imbecility had that noble and gifted people—which had never been organized into a nation since it crushed the Roman empire and established a new civilization on its ruins, and was to wait centuries longer until it should reconstruct itself into a whole—-been reduced by subdivision, disintegration, the perpetual dissolvent of religious dispute, and the selfish policy of infinitesimal dynasties.

CHAPTER XII.

James still presses for the Payment of the Dutch Republic’s Debt to him—A Compromise effected, with Restitution of the Cautionary Towns—Treaty of Loudun—-James’s Dream of a Spanish Marriage revives—James visits Scotland—The States-General agree to furnish Money and Troops in fulfilment of the Treaty of 1609—Death of Concini—Villeroy returns to Power.

Besides matters of predestination there were other subjects political and personal which increased the King’s jealousy and hatred. The debt of the Republic to the British crown, secured by mortgage of the important sea-ports and fortified towns of Flushing, Brielle, Rammekens, and other strong places, still existed. The possession of those places by England was a constant danger and irritation to the States. It was an axe perpetually held over their heads. It threatened their sovereignty, their very existence. On more than one occasion, in foreign courts, the representatives of the Netherlands had been

exposed to the taunt that the Republic was after all not an independent power, but a British province.

Page 2852

The gibe had always been repelled in a manner becoming the envoys of a proud commonwealth; yet it was sufficiently galling that English garrisons should continue to hold Dutch towns; one of them among the most valuable seaports of the Republic,—the other the very cradle of its independence, the seizure of which in Alva's days had always been reckoned a splendid achievement. Moreover, by the fifth article of the treaty of peace between James and Philip *iii*., although the King had declared himself bound by the treaties made by Elizabeth to deliver up the cautionary towns to no one but the United States, he promised Spain to allow those States a reasonable time to make peace with the Archdukes on satisfactory conditions. Should they refuse to do so, he held himself bound by no obligations to them, and would deal with the cities as he thought proper, and as the Archdukes themselves might deem just.

The King had always been furious at "the huge sum of money to be advanced, nay, given, to the States," as he phrased it. "It is so far out of all square," he had said, "as on my conscience I cannot think that ever they craved it 'animo obtinendi,' but only by that objection to discourage me from any thought of getting any repayment of my debts from them when they shall be in peace. . . . Should I ruin myself for maintaining them? Should I bestow as much on them as cometh to the value of my whole yearly rent?" He had proceeded to say very plainly that, if the States did not make great speed to pay him all his debt so soon as peace was established, he should treat their pretence at independence with contempt, and propose dividing their territory between himself and the King of France.

"If they be so weak as they cannot subsist either in peace or war," he said, "without I ruin myself for upholding them, in that case surely 'minus malunv est eligendum,' the nearest harm is first to be eschewed, a man will leap out of a burning ship and drown himself in the sea; and it is doubtless a farther off harm for me to suffer them to fall again in the hands of Spain, and let God provide for the danger that may with time fall upon me or my posterity than presently to starve myself and mine with putting the meat in their mouth. Nay, rather if they be so weak as they can neither sustain themselves in peace nor war, let them leave this vainglorious thirsting for the title of a free state (which no people are worthy or able to enjoy that cannot stand by themselves like substantives), and 'dividantur inter nos;' I mean, let their countries be divided between France and me, otherwise the King of Spain shall be sure to consume us."

Such were the eyes with which James had always regarded the great commonwealth of which he affected to be the ally, while secretly aspiring to be its sovereign, and such was his capacity to calculate political forces and comprehend coming events.

Page 2853

Certainly the sword was hanging by a thread. The States had made no peace either with the Archdukes or with Spain. They had made a truce, half the term of which had already run by. At any moment the keys of their very house-door might be placed in the hands of their arch enemy. Treacherous and base as the deed would be, it might be defended by the letter of a treaty in which the Republic had no part; and was there anything too treacherous or too base to be dreaded from James Stuart?

But the States owed the crown of England eight millions of florins, equivalent to about L750,000. Where was this vast sum to be found? It was clearly impossible for the States to beg or to borrow it, although they were nearly as rich as any of the leading powers at that day.

It was the merit of Barneveld, not only that he saw the chance for a good bargain, but that he fully comprehended a great danger. Years long James had pursued the phantom of a Spanish marriage for his son. To achieve this mighty object, he had perverted the whole policy of the realm; he had grovelled to those who despised him, had repaid attempts at wholesale assassination with boundless sycophancy. It is difficult to imagine anything more abject than the attitude of James towards Philip. Prince Henry was dead, but Charles had now become Prince of Wales in his turn, and there was a younger infanta whose hand was not yet disposed of.

So long as the possible prize of a Most Catholic princess was dangling before the eyes of the royal champion of Protestantism, so long there was danger that the Netherlanders might wake up some fine morning and see the flag of Spain waving over the walls of Flushing, Brielle, and Rammekens.

It was in the interest of Spain too that the envoys of James at the Hague were perpetually goading Barneveld to cause the States' troops to be withdrawn from the duchies and the illusory treaty of Xanten to be executed. Instead of an eighth province added to the free Netherlands, the result of such a procedure would have been to place that territory enveloping them in the hands of the enemy; to strengthen and sharpen the claws, as the Advocate had called them, by which Spain was seeking to clutch and to destroy the Republic.

The Advocate steadily refused to countenance such policy in the duchies, and he resolved on a sudden stroke to relieve the Commonwealth from the incubus of the English mortgage.

James was desperately pushed for money. His minions, as insatiable in their demands on English wealth as the parasites who fed on the Queen-Regent were exhaustive of the French exchequer, were greedier than ever now that James, who feared to face a parliament disgusted with the meanness of his policy and depravity of his life, could not be relied upon to minister to their wants.

The Advocate judiciously contrived that the proposal of a compromise should come from the English government. Noel de Caron, the veteran ambassador of the States in London, after receiving certain proposals, offered, under instructions' from Barneveld, to pay L250,000 in full of all demands. It was made to appear that the additional L250,000 was in reality in advance of his instructions. The mouths of the minions watered at the mention of so magnificent a sum of money in one lump.

Page 2854

The bargain was struck. On the 11th June 1616, Sir Robert Sidney, who had become Lord Lisle, gave over the city of Flushing to the States, represented by the Seignior van Maldere, while Sir Horace Vere placed the important town of Brielle in the hands of the Seignior van Mathenesse. According to the terms of the bargain, the English garrisons were converted into two regiments, respectively to be commanded by Lord Lisle's son, now Sir Robert Sidney, and by Sir Horace Vere, and were to serve the States. Lisle, who had been in the Netherlands since the days of his uncle Leicester and his brother Sir Philip Sidney, now took his final departure for England.

Thus this ancient burthen had been taken off the Republic by the masterly policy of the Advocate. A great source of dread for foreign complication was closed for ever.

The French-Spanish marriages had been made. Henry *iv*. had not been murdered in vain. Conde and his confederates had issued their manifesto. A crisis came to the States, for Maurice, always inclined to take part for the princes, and urged on by Aerssens, who was inspired by a deadly hatred for the French government ever since they had insisted on his dismissal from his post, and who fed the Stadholder's growing jealousy of the Advocate to the full, was at times almost ready for joining in the conflict. It was most difficult for the States-General, led by Barneveld, to maintain relations of amity with a government controlled by Spain, governed by the Concini's, and wafted to and fro by every wind that blew. Still it was the government, and the States might soon be called upon, in virtue of their treaties with Henry, confirmed by Mary de' Medici, not only to prevent the daily desertion of officers and soldiers of the French regiments to the rebellious party, but to send the regiments themselves to the assistance of the King and Queen.

There could be no doubt that the alliance of the French Huguenots at Grenoble with the princes made the position of the States very critical. Bouillon was loud in his demands upon Maurice and the States for money and reinforcements, but the Prince fortunately understood the character of the Duke and of Conde, and comprehended the nature of French politics too clearly to be led into extremities by passion or by pique. He said loudly to any one that chose to listen:

"It is not necessary to ruin the son in order to avenge the death of the father. That should be left to the son, who alone has legitimate authority to do it." Nothing could be more sensible, and the remark almost indicated a belief on the Prince's part in Mary's complicity in the murder of her husband. Duplessis-Mornay was in despair, and, like all true patriots and men of earnest character, felt it almost an impossibility to choose between the two ignoble parties contending for the possession of France, and both secretly encouraged by France's deadly enemy.

Page 2855

The Treaty of Loudun followed, a treaty which, said du Maurier, had about as many negotiators as there were individuals interested in the arrangements. The rebels were forgiven, Conde sold himself out for a million and a half livres and the presidency of the council, came to court, and paraded himself in greater pomp and appearance of power than ever. Four months afterwards he was arrested and imprisoned. He submitted like a lamb, and offered to betray his confederates.

King James, faithful to his self-imposed part of mediator-general, which he thought so well became him, had been busy in bringing about this pacification, and had considered it eminently successful. He was now angry at this unexpected result. He admitted that Conde had indulged in certain follies and extravagancies, but these in his opinion all came out of the quiver of the Spaniard, “who was the head of the whole intrigue.” He determined to recall Lord Hayes from Madrid and even Sir Thomas Edmonds from Paris, so great was his indignation. But his wrath was likely to cool under the soothing communications of Gondemar, and the rumour of the marriage of the second infanta with the Prince of Wales soon afterwards started into new life. “We hope,” wrote Barneveld, “that the alliance of his Highness the Prince of Wales with the daughter of the Spanish king will make no further progress, as it will place us in the deepest embarrassment and pain.”

For the reports had been so rife at the English court in regard to this dangerous scheme that Caron had stoutly gone to the King and asked him what he was to think about it. “The King told me,” said the Ambassador, “that there was nothing at all in it, nor any appearance that anything ever would come of it. It was true, he said, that on the overtures made to him by the Spanish ambassador he had ordered his minister in Spain to listen to what they had to say, and not to bear himself as if the overtures would be rejected.”

The coyness thus affected by James could hardly impose on so astute a diplomatist as Noel de Caron, and the effect produced upon the policy of one of the Republic’s chief allies by the Spanish marriages naturally made her statesmen shudder at the prospect of their other powerful friend coming thus under the malign influence of Spain.

“He assured me, however,” said the Envoy, “that the Spaniard is not sincere in the matter, and that he has himself become so far alienated from the scheme that we may sleep quietly upon it.” And James appeared at that moment so vexed at the turn affairs were taking in France, so wounded in his self-love, and so bewildered by the ubiquitous nature of nets and pitfalls spreading over Europe by Spain, that he really seemed waking from his delusion. Even Caron was staggered? “In all his talk he appears so far estranged from the Spaniard,” said he, “that it would seem impossible that he should consider this marriage as good for his state. I have also had other advices on the subject which in the highest degree comfort me. Now your Mightinesses may think whatever you like about it.”

Page 2856

The mood of the King was not likely to last long in so comfortable a state. Meantime he took the part of Conde and the other princes, justified their proceedings to the special envoy sent over by Mary de' Medici, and wished the States to join with him in appealing to that Queen to let the affair, for his sake, pass over once more.

"And now I will tell your Mightinesses," said Caron, reverting once more to the dreaded marriage which occupies so conspicuous a place in the strangely mingled and party-coloured tissue of the history of those days, "what the King has again been telling me about the alliance between his son and the Infanta. He hears from Carleton that you are in very great alarm lest this event may take place. He understands that the special French envoy at the Hague, M. de la None, has been representing to you that the King of Great Britain is following after and begging for the daughter of Spain for his son. He says it is untrue. But it is true that he has been sought and solicited thereto, and that in consequence there have been talks and propositions and rejoinders, but nothing of any moment. As he had already told me not to be alarmed until he should himself give me cause for it, he expressed his amazement that I had not informed your Mightinesses accordingly. He assured me again that he should not proceed further in the business without communicating it to his good friends and neighbours, that he considered My Lords the States as his best friends and allies, who ought therefore to conceive no jealousy in the matter."

This certainly was cold comfort. Caron knew well enough, not a clerk in his office but knew well enough, that James had been pursuing this prize for years. For the King to represent himself as persecuted by Spain to give his son to the Infanta was about as ridiculous as it would have been to pretend that Emperor Matthias was persuading him to let his son-in-law accept the crown of Bohemia. It was admitted that negotiations for the marriage were going on, and the assertion that the Spanish court was more eager for it than the English government was not especially calculated to allay the necessary alarm of the States at such a disaster. Nor was it much more tranquillizing for them to be assured, not that the marriage was off, but that, when it was settled, they, as the King's good friends and neighbours, should have early information of it.

"I told him," said the Ambassador, "that undoubtedly this matter was of the highest 'importance to your Mightinesses, for it was not good for us to sit between two kingdoms both so nearly allied with the Spanish monarch, considering the pretensions he still maintained to sovereignty over us. Although his Majesty might not now be willing to treat to our prejudice, yet the affair itself in the sequence of time must of necessity injure our commonwealth. We hoped therefore that it would never come to pass."

Caron added that Ambassador Digby was just going to Spain on extraordinary mission in regard to this affair, and that eight or ten gentlemen of the council had been deputed to confer with his Majesty about it. He was still inclined to believe that the whole negotiation would blow over, the King continuing to exhort him not to be alarmed, and

assuring him that there were many occasions moving princes to treat of great affairs although often without any effective issue.

Page 2857

At that moment too the King was in a state of vehement wrath with the Spanish Netherlands on account of a stinging libel against himself, “an infamous and wonderfully scandalous pamphlet,” as he termed it, called ‘Corona Regis’, recently published at Louvain. He had sent Sir John Bennet as special ambassador to the Archdukes to demand from them justice and condign and public chastisement on the author of the work—a rector Putianus as he believed, successor of Justus Lipsius in his professorship at Louvain—and upon the printer, one Flaminius. Delays and excuses having followed instead of the punishment originally demanded, James had now instructed his special envoy in case of further delay or evasion to repudiate all further friendship or intercourse with the Archduke, to ratify the recall of his minister-resident Trumbull, and in effect to announce formal hostilities.

“The King takes the thing wonderfully to heart,” said Caron.

James in effect hated to be made ridiculous, and we shall have occasion to see how important a part other publications which he deemed detrimental to the divinity of his person were to play in these affairs.

Meantime it was characteristic of this sovereign that—while ready to talk of war with Philip’s brother-in-law for a pamphlet, while seeking the hand of Philip’s daughter for his son—he was determined at the very moment when the world was on fire to take himself, the heaven-born extinguisher of all political conflagrations, away from affairs and to seek the solace of along holiday in Scotland. His counsellors persistently and vehemently implored him to defer that journey until the following year at least, all the neighbouring nations being now in a state of war and civil commotion. But it was in vain. He refused to listen to them for a moment, and started for Scotland before the middle of March.

Conde, who had kept France in a turmoil, had sought aid alternately from the Calvinists at Grenoble and the Jesuits in Rome, from Spain and from the Netherlands, from the Pope and from Maurice of Nassau, had thus been caged at last. But there was little gained. There was one troublesome but incompetent rebel the less, but there was no king in the land. He who doubts the influence of the individual upon the fate of a country and upon his times through long passages of history may explain the difference between France of 1609, with a martial king aided by great statesmen at its head, with an exchequer overflowing with revenue hoarded for a great cause—and that cause an attempt at least to pacificate Christendom and avert a universal and almost infinite conflict now already opening—and the France of 1617, with its treasures already squandered among ignoble and ruffianly favourites, with every office in state, church, court, and magistracy sold to the highest bidder, with a queen governed by an Italian adventurer who was governed by Spain, and with a little king who had but lately expressed triumph at his confirmation because now he should no longer be whipped, and who was just married to a daughter of the hereditary and inevitable foe of France.

Page 2858

To contemplate this dreary interlude in the history of a powerful state is to shiver at the depths of inanity and crime to which mankind can at once descend. What need to pursue the barren, vulgar, and often repeated chronicle? France pulled at by scarcely concealed strings and made to perform fantastic tricks according as its various puppets were swerved this way or that by supple bands at Madrid and Rome is not a refreshing spectacle. The States-General at last, after an agitated discussion, agreed in fulfilment of the treaty of 1609 to send 4000 men, 2000 being French, to help the King against the princes still in rebellion. But the contest was a most bitter one, and the Advocate had a difficult part to play between a government and a rebellion, each more despicable than the other. Still Louis XIII. and his mother were the legitimate government even if ruled by Concini. The words of the treaty made with Henry *iv*. were plain, and the ambassadors of his son had summoned the States to fulfil it. But many impediments were placed in the path of obvious duty by the party led by Francis Aerssens.

“I know very well,” said the Advocate to ex-Burgomaster Hooft of Amsterdam, father of the great historian, sending him confidentially a copy of the proposals made by the French ambassadors, “that many in this country are striving hard to make us refuse to the King the aid demanded, notwithstanding that we are bound to do it by the pledges given not only by the States-General but by each province in particular. By this no one will profit but the Spaniard, who unquestionably will offer much, aye, very much, to bring about dissensions between France and us, from which I foresee great damage, inconvenience, and difficulties for the whole commonwealth and for Holland especially. This province has already advanced 1,000,000 florins to the general government on the money still due from France, which will all be lost in case the subsidy should be withheld, besides other evils which cannot be trusted to the pen.”

On the same day on which it had been decided at the Hague to send the troops, a captain of guards came to the aid of the poor little king and shot Concini dead one fine spring morning on the bridge of the Louvre. “By order of the King,” said Vitry. His body was burned before the statue of Henry *iv*. by the people delirious with joy. “L’hanno ammazzato” was shouted to his wife, Eleanora Galigai, the supposed sorceress. They were the words in which Concini had communicated to the Queen the murder of her husband seven years before. Eleanora, too, was burned after having been beheaded. Thus the Marshal d’Ancre and wife ceased to reign in France.

Page 2859

The officers of the French regiments at the Hague danced for joy on the Vyverberg when the news arrived there. The States were relieved from an immense embarrassment, and the Advocate was rewarded for having pursued what was after all the only practicable policy. "Do your best," said he to Langerac, "to accommodate differences so far as consistent with the conservation of the King's authority. We hope the princes will submit themselves now that the 'lapis offensionis,' according to their pretence, is got rid of. We received a letter from them to-day sealed with the King's arms, with the circumscription 'Periclitante Regno, Regis vita et Regia familia."

The shooting of Concini seemed almost to convert the little king into a hero. Everyone in the Netherlands, without distinction of party, was delighted with the achievement. "I cannot represent to the King," wrote du Maurier to Villeroy, "one thousandth part of the joy of all these people who are exalting him to heaven for having delivered the earth from this miserable burthen. I can't tell you in what execration this public pest was held. His Majesty has not less won the hearts of this state than if he had gained a great victory over the Spaniards. You would not believe it, and yet it is true, that never were the name and reputation of the late king in greater reverence than those of our reigning king at this moment."

Truly here was glory cheaply earned. The fame of Henry the Great, after a long career of brilliant deeds of arms, high statesmanship, and twenty years of bountiful friendship for the States, was already equalled by that of Louis XIII., who had tremblingly acquiesced in the summary execution of an odious adventurer—his own possible father—and who never had done anything else but feed his canary birds.

As for Villeroy himself, the Ambassador wrote that he could not find portraits enough of him to furnish those who were asking for them since his return to power.

Barneveld had been right in so often instructing Langerac to "caress the old gentleman."

Etext editor's bookmarks:

And give advice. Of that, although always a spendthrift
Casual outbursts of eternal friendship
Changed his positions and contradicted himself day by day
Conciliation when war of extermination was intended
Considered it his special mission in the world to mediate
Denoungced as an obstacle to peace
France was mourning Henry and waiting for Richelieu
Hardly a sound Protestant policy anywhere but in Holland
History has not too many really important and emblematic men
I hope and I fear
King who thought it furious madness to resist the enemy
Mockery of negotiation in which nothing could be negotiated

More apprehension of fraud than of force
Opening an abyss between government and people

Page 2860

Successful in this step, he is ready for greater ones
That he tries to lay the fault on us is pure malice
The magnitude of this wonderful sovereign's littleness
This wonderful sovereign's littleness oppresses the imagination
Wise and honest a man, although he be somewhat longsome
Yesterday is the preceptor of To-morrow

THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v8, 1617

CHAPTER XIII.

Ferdinand of Gratz crowned King of Bohemia—His Enmity to Protestants—Slawata and Martinitz thrown from the Windows of the Hradschin—Real Beginning of the Thirty Years' War—The Elector- Palatine's Intrigues in Opposition to the House of Austria—He supports the Duke of Savoy—The Emperor Matthias visits Dresden— Jubilee for the Hundredth Anniversary of the Reformation.

When the forlorn emperor Rudolph had signed the permission for his brother Matthias to take the last crown but one from his head, he bit the pen in a paroxysm of helpless rage. Then rushing to the window of his apartment, he looked down on one of the most stately prospects that the palaces of the earth can offer. From the long monotonous architectural lines of the Hradschin, imposing from its massiveness and its imperial situation, and with the dome and minarets of the cathedral clustering behind them, the eye swept across the fertile valley, through which the rapid, yellow Moldau courses, to the opposite line of cliffs crested with the half imaginary fortress-palaces of the Wyscherad. There, in the mythical legendary past of Bohemia had dwelt the shadowy Libuscha, daughter of Krok, wife of King Premysl, foundress of Prague, who, when wearied of her lovers, was accustomed to toss them from those heights into the river. Between these picturesque precipices lay the two Pragues, twin-born and quarrelsome, fighting each other for centuries, and growing up side by side into a double, bellicose,

stormy, and most splendid city, bristling with steeples and spires, and united by the ancient many-statued bridge with its blackened mediaeval entrance towers.

But it was not to enjoy the prospect that the aged, discrowned, solitary emperor, almost as dim a figure among sovereigns as the mystic Libuscha herself, was gazing from the window upon the imperial city.

“Ungrateful Prague,” he cried, “through me thou hast become thus magnificent, and now thou hast turned upon and driven away thy benefactor. May the vengeance of God descend upon thee; may my curse come upon thee and upon all Bohemia.”

Page 2861

History has failed to record the special benefits of the Emperor through which the city had derived its magnificence and deserved this malediction. But surely if ever an old man's curse was destined to be literally fulfilled, it seemed to be this solemn imprecation of Rudolph. Meantime the coronation of Matthias had gone on with pomp and popular gratulations, while Rudolph had withdrawn into his apartments to pass the little that was left to him of life in solitude and in a state of hopeless pique with Matthias, with the rest of his brethren, with all the world.

And now that five years had passed since his death, Matthias, who had usurped so much power prematurely, found himself almost in the same condition as that to which he had reduced Rudolph.

Ferdinand of Styria, his cousin, trod closely upon his heels. He was the presumptive successor to all his crowns, had not approved of the movements of Matthias in the lifetime of his brother, and hated the Vienna Protestant baker's son, Cardinal Clesel, by whom all those movements had been directed. Professor Taubmann, of Wittenberg, ponderously quibbling on the name of that prelate, had said that he was of "one hundred and fifty ass power." Whether that was a fair measure of his capacity may be doubted, but it certainly was not destined to be sufficient to elude the vengeance of Ferdinand, and Ferdinand would soon have him in his power.

Matthias, weary of ambitious intrigue, infirm of purpose, and shattered in health, had withdrawn from affairs to devote himself to his gout and to his fair young wife, Archduchess Anna of Tyrol, whom at the age of fifty-four he had espoused.

On the 29th June 1617, Ferdinand of Gratz was crowned King of Bohemia. The event was a shock and a menace to the Protestant cause all over the world. The sombre figure of the Archduke had for years appeared in the background, foreshadowing as it were the wrath to come, while throughout Bohemia and the neighbouring countries of Moravia, Silesia, and the Austrias, the cause of Protestantism had been making such rapid progress. The Emperor Maximilian *ii*. had left five stalwart sons, so that there had seemed little probability that the younger line, the sons of his brother, would succeed. But all the five were childless, and now the son of Archduke Charles, who had died in 1590, had become the natural heir after the death of Matthias to the immense family honours—his cousins Maximilian and Albert having resigned their claims in his favour.

Ferdinand, twelve years old at his father's death, had been placed under the care of his maternal uncle, Duke William of Bavaria. By him the boy was placed at the high school of Ingolstadt, to be brought up by the Jesuits, in company with Duke William's own son Maximilian, five years his senior. Between these youths, besides the tie of cousinship, there grew up the most intimate union founded on perfect sympathy in religion and politics.

Page 2862

When Ferdinand entered upon the government of his paternal estates of Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola, he found that the new religion, at which the Jesuits had taught him to shudder as at a curse and a crime, had been widely spreading. His father had fought against heresy with all his might, and had died disappointed and broken-hearted at its progress. His uncle of Bavaria, in letters to his son and nephew, had stamped into their minds with the enthusiasm of perfect conviction that all happiness and blessing for governments depended on the restoration and maintenance of the unity of the Catholic faith. All the evils in times past and present resulting from religious differences had been held up to the two youths by the Jesuits in the most glaring colours. The first duty of a prince, they had inculcated, was to extirpate all false religions, to give the opponents of the true church no quarter, and to think no sacrifice too great by which the salvation of human society, brought almost to perdition by the new doctrines, could be effected.

Never had Jesuits an apter scholar than Ferdinand. After leaving school, he made a pilgrimage to Loretto to make his vows to the Virgin Mary of extirpation of heresy, and went to Rome to obtain the blessing of Pope Clement *viii*.

Then, returning to the government of his inheritance, he seized that terrible two-edged weapon of which the Protestants of Germany had taught him the use.

“Cujus regio ejus religio;” to the prince the choice of religion, to the subject conformity with the prince, as if that formula of shallow and selfish princelings, that insult to the dignity of mankind, were the grand result of a movement which was to go on centuries after they had all been forgotten in their tombs. For the time however it was a valid and mischievous maxim. In Saxony Catholics and Calvinists were proscribed; in Heidelberg Catholics and Lutherans. Why should either Calvinists or Lutherans be tolerated in Styria? Why, indeed? No logic could be more inexorable, and the pupil of the Ingolstadt Jesuits hesitated not an instant to carry out their teaching with the very instrument forged for him by the Reformation. Gallows were erected in the streets of all his cities, but there was no hanging. The sight of them proved enough to extort obedience to his edict, that every man, woman, and child not belonging to the ancient church should leave his dominions. They were driven out in hordes in broad daylight from Gratz and other cities. Rather reign over a wilderness than over heretics was the device of the Archduke, in imitation of his great relative, Philip *ii*. of Spain. In short space of time his duchies were as empty of Protestants as the Palatinate of Lutherans, or Saxony of Calvinists, or both of Papists. Even the churchyards were rifled of dead Lutherans and Utraquists, their carcasses thrown where they could no longer pollute the true believers mouldering by their side.

Page 2863

It was not strange that the coronation as King of Bohemia of a man of such decided purposes—a country numbering ten Protestants to one Catholic—should cause a thrill and a flutter. Could it be doubted that the great elemental conflict so steadily prophesied by Barneveld and instinctively dreaded by all capable of feeling the signs of the time would now begin? It had begun. Of what avail would be Majesty-Letters and Compromises extorted by force from trembling or indolent emperors, now that a man who knew his own mind, and felt it to be a crime not to extirpate all religions but the one orthodox religion, had mounted the throne? It is true that he had sworn at his coronation to maintain the laws of Bohemia, and that the Majesty-Letter and the Compromise were part of the laws.

But when were doctors ever wanting to prove the unlawfulness of law which interferes with the purposes of a despot and the convictions of the bigot?

“Novus rex, nova lex,” muttered the Catholics, lifting up their heads and hearts once more out of the oppression and insults which they had unquestionably suffered at the hands of the triumphant Reformers. “There are many empty poppy-heads now flaunting high that shall be snipped off,” said others. “That accursed German Count Thurn and his fellows, whom the devil has sent from hell to Bohemia for his own purposes, shall be disposed of now,” was the general cry.

It was plain that heresy could no longer be maintained except by the sword. That which had been extorted by force would be plucked back by force. The succession of Ferdinand was in brief a warshout to be echoed by all the Catholics of Europe. Before the end of the year the Protestant churches of Brunnau were sealed up. Those at Klostergrab were demolished in three days by command of the Archbishop of Prague. These dumb walls preached in their destruction more stirring sermons than perhaps would ever have been heard within them had they stood. This tearing in pieces of the Imperial patent granting liberty of Protestant worship, this summary execution done upon senseless bricks and mortar, was an act of defiance to the Reformed religion everywhere. Protestantism was struck in the face, spat upon, defied.

The effect was instantaneous. Thurn and the other defenders of the Protestant faith were as prompt in action as the Catholics had been in words. A few months passed away. The Emperor was in Vienna, but his ten stadholders were in Prague. The fateful 23rd of May 1618 arrived.

Slawata, a Bohemian Protestant, who had converted himself to the Roman Church in order to marry a rich widow, and who converted his peasants by hunting them to mass with his hounds, and Martinitz, the two stadholders who at Ferdinand’s coronation had endeavoured to prevent him from including the Majesty-Letter among the privileges he was swearing to support, and who were considered the real authors of the royal letters revoking all religious rights of Protestants, were the most obnoxious of all. They were hurled from the council-chamber window of the Hradschin. The unfortunate secretary

Fabricius was tossed out after them. Twenty-eight ells deep they fell, and all escaped unhurt by the fall; Fabricius being subsequently ennobled by a grateful emperor with the well-won title of Baron Summerset.

Page 2864

The Thirty Years' War, which in reality had been going on for several years already, is dated from that day. A provisional government was established in Prague by the Estates under Protestant guidance, a college of thirty directors managing affairs.

The Window-Tumble, as the event has always been called in history, excited a sensation in Europe. Especially the young king of France, whose political position should bring him rather into alliance with the rebels than the Emperor, was disgusted and appalled. He was used to rebellion. Since he was ten years old there had been a rebellion against himself every year. There was rebellion now. But his ministers had never been thrown out of window. Perhaps one might take some day to tossing out kings as well. He disapproved the process entirely.

Thus the great conflict of Christendom, so long impending, seemed at last to have broken forth in full fury on a comparatively insignificant incident. Thus reasoned the superficial public, as if the throwing out of window of twenty stadholders could have created a general war in Europe had not the causes of war lain deep and deadly in the whole framework of society.

The succession of Ferdinand to the throne of the holy Wenzel, in which his election to the German Imperial crown was meant to be involved, was a matter which concerned almost every household in Christendom. Liberty of religion, civil franchise, political charters, contract between government and subject, right to think, speak, or act, these were the human rights everywhere in peril. A compromise between the two religious parties had existed for half a dozen years in Germany, a feeble compromise by which men had hardly been kept from each others' throats. That compromise had now been thrown to the winds. The vast conspiracy of Spain, Rome, the House of Austria, against human liberty had found a chief in the docile, gloomy pupil of the Jesuits now enthroned in Bohemia, and soon perhaps to wield the sceptre of the Holy Roman Empire. There was no state in Europe that had not cause to put hand on sword-hilt. "Distrust and good garrisons," in the prophetic words of Barneveld, would now be the necessary resource for all intending to hold what had been gained through long years of toil, martyrdom, and hard fighting.

The succession of Ferdinand excited especial dismay and indignation in the Palatinate. The young elector had looked upon the prize as his own. The marked advance of Protestant sentiment throughout the kingdom and its neighbour provinces had seemed to render the succession of an extreme Papist impossible. When Frederic had sued for and won the hand of the fair Elizabeth, daughter of the King of Great Britain, it was understood that the alliance would be more brilliant for her than it seemed. James with his usual vanity spoke of his son-in-law as a future king.

It was a golden dream for the Elector and for the general cause of the Reformed religion. Heidelberg enthroned in the ancient capital of the Wenzels, Maximilians, and Rudolphs, the Catechism and Confession enrolled among the great statutes of the land,

this was progress far beyond flimsy Majesty-Letters and Compromises, made only to be torn to pieces.

Page 2865

Through the dim vista of futurity and in ecstatic vision no doubt even the Imperial crown might seem suspended over the Palatine's head. But this would be merely a midsummer's dream. Events did not whirl so rapidly as they might learn to do centuries later, and—the time for a Protestant to grasp at the crown of Germany could then hardly be imagined as ripening.

But what the Calvinist branch of the House of Wittelsbach had indeed long been pursuing was to interrupt the succession of the House of Austria to the German throne. That a Catholic prince must for the immediate future continue to occupy it was conceded even by Frederic, but the electoral votes might surely be now so manipulated as to prevent a slave of Spain and a tool of the Jesuits from wielding any longer the sceptre of Charlemagne.

On the other hand the purpose of the House of Austria was to do away with the elective principle and the prescriptive rights of the Estates in Bohemia first, and afterwards perhaps to send the Golden Bull itself to the limbo of wornout constitutional devices. At present however their object was to secure their hereditary sovereignty in Prague first, and then to make sure of the next Imperial election at Frankfurt. Time afterwards might fight still more in their favour, and fix them in hereditary possession of the German throne.

The Elector-Palatine had lost no time. His counsellors even before the coronation of Ferdinand at Prague had done their best to excite alarm throughout Germany at the document by which Archdukes Maximilian and Albert had resigned all their hereditary claims in favour of Ferdinand and his male children. Should there be no such issue, the King of Spain claimed the succession for his own sons as great-grandchildren of Emperor Maximilian, considering himself nearer in the line than the Styrian branch, but being willing to waive his own rights in favour of so ardent a Catholic as Ferdinand. There was even a secret negotiation going on a long time between the new king of Bohemia and Philip to arrange for the precedence of the Spanish males over the Styrian females to the hereditary Austrian states, and to cede the province of Alsace to Spain.

It was not wonderful that Protestant Germany should be alarmed. After a century of Protestantism, that Spain should by any possibility come to be enthroned again over Germany was enough to raise both Luther and Calvin from their graves. It was certainly enough to set the lively young palatine in motion. So soon as the election of Frederic was proclaimed, he had taken up the business in person. Fond of amusement, young, married to a beautiful bride of the royal house of England, he had hitherto left politics to his counsellors.

Page 2866

Finding himself frustrated in his ambition by the election of another to the seat he had fondly deemed his own, he resolved to unseat him if he could, and, at any rate, to prevent the ulterior consequences of his elevation. He made a pilgrimage to Sedan, to confer with that irrepressible intriguer and Huguenot chieftain, the Duc de Bouillon. He felt sure of the countenance of the States-General, and, of course, of his near relative the great stadholder. He was resolved to invite the Duke of Lorraine to head the anti-Austrian party, and to stand for the kingship of the Romans and the Empire in opposition to Ferdinand. An emissary sent to Nancy came back with a discouraging reply. The Duke not only flatly refused the candidacy, but warned the Palatine that if it really came to a struggle he could reckon on small support anywhere, not even from those who now seemed warmest for the scheme. Then Frederic resolved to try his cousin, the great Maximilian of Bavaria, to whom all Catholics looked with veneration and whom all German Protestants respected. Had the two branches of the illustrious house of Wittelsbach been combined in one purpose, the opposition to the House of Austria might indeed have been formidable. But what were ties of blood compared to the iron bands of religious love and hatred? How could Maximilian, sternest of Papists, and Frederick V., flightiest of Calvinists, act harmoniously in an Imperial election? Moreover, Maximilian was united by ties of youthful and tender friendship as well as by kindred and perfect religious sympathy to his other cousin, King Ferdinand himself. The case seemed hopeless, but the Elector went to Munich, and held conferences with his cousin. Not willing to take No for an answer so long as it was veiled under evasive or ornamental phraseology, he continued to negotiate with Maximilian through his envoys Camerarius and Secretary Neu, who held long debates with the Duke's chief councillor, Doctor Jocher. Camerarius assured Jocher that his master was the Hercules to untie the Gordian knot, and the lion of the tribe of Judah. How either the lion of Judah or Hercules were to untie the knot which was popularly supposed to have been cut by the sword of Alexander did not appear, but Maximilian at any rate was moved neither by entreaties nor tropes. Being entirely averse from entering himself for the German crown, he grew weary at last of the importunity with which the scheme was urged. So he wrote a short billet to his councillor, to be shown to Secretary Neu.

"Dear Jocher," he said, "I am convinced one must let these people understand the matter in a little plainer German. I am once for all determined not to let myself into any misunderstanding or even amplifications with the House of Austria in regard to the succession. I think also that it would rather be harmful than useful to my house to take upon myself so heavy a burthen as the German crown."

This time the German was plain enough and produced its effect. Maximilian was too able a statesman and too conscientious a friend to wish to exchange his own proud position as chief of the League, acknowledged head of the great Catholic party, for the slippery, comfortless, and unmeaning throne of the Holy Empire, which he considered Ferdinand's right.

Page 2867

The chiefs of the anti-Austrian party, especially the Prince of Anhalt and the Margrave of Anspach, in unison with the Heidelberg cabinet, were forced to look for another candidate. Accordingly the Margrave and the Elector-Palatine solemnly agreed that it was indispensable to choose an emperor who should not be of the House of Austria nor a slave of Spain. It was, to be sure, not possible to think of a Protestant prince. Bavaria would not oppose Austria, would also allow too much influence to the Jesuits. So there remained no one but the Duke of Savoy. He was a prince of the Empire. He was of German descent, of Saxon race, a great general, father of his soldiers, who would protect Europe against a Turkish invasion better than the bastions of Vienna could do. He would be agreeable to the Catholics, while the Protestants could live under him without anxiety because the Jesuits would be powerless with him. It would be a master-stroke if the princes would unite upon him. The King of France would necessarily be pleased with it, the King of Great Britain delighted.

At last the model candidate had been found. The Duke of Savoy having just finished for a second time his chronic war with Spain, in which the United Provinces, notwithstanding the heavy drain on their resources, had allowed him 50,000 florins a month besides the soldiers under Count Ernest of Nassau, had sent Mansfeld with 4000 men to aid the revolted estates in Bohemia. Geographically, hereditarily, necessarily the deadly enemy of the House of Austria, he listened favourably to the overtures made to him by the princes of the Union, expressed undying hatred for the Imperial race, and thought the Bohemian revolt a priceless occasion for expelling them from power. He was informed by the first envoy sent to him, Christopher van Dohna, that the object of the great movement now contemplated was to raise him to the Imperial throne at the next election, to assist the Bohemian estates, to secure the crown of Bohemia for the Elector-Palatine, to protect the Protestants of Germany, and to break down the overweening power of the Austrian house.

The Duke displayed no eagerness for the crown of Germany, while approving the election of Frederic, but expressed entire sympathy with the enterprise. It was indispensable however to form a general federation in Europe of England, the Netherlands, Venice, together with Protestant Germany and himself, before undertaking so mighty a task. While the negotiations were going on, both Anspach and Anhalt were in great spirits. The Margrave cried out exultingly, “In a short time the means will be in our hands for turning the world upside down.” He urged the Prince of Anhalt to be expeditious in his decisions and actions. “He who wishes to trade,” he said, “must come to market early.”

Page 2868

There was some disappointment at Heidelberg when the first news from Turin arrived, the materials for this vast scheme for an overwhelming and universal European war not seeming to be at their disposition. By and by the Duke's plans seem to deepen and broaden. He told Mansfeld, who, accompanied by Secretary Neu, was glad at a pause in his fighting and brandschatzing in Bohemia to be employed on diplomatic business, that on the whole he should require the crown of Bohemia for himself. He also proposed to accept the Imperial crown, and as for Frederic, he would leave him the crown of Hungary, and would recommend him to round himself out by adding to his hereditary dominions the province of Alsace, besides Upper Austria and other territories in convenient proximity to the Palatinate.

Venice, it had been hoped, would aid in the great scheme and might in her turn round herself out with Friuli and Istria and other tempting possessions of Ferdinand, in reward for the men and money she was expected to furnish. That republic had however just concluded a war with Ferdinand, caused mainly by the depredations of the piratical Uscoques, in which, as we have seen, she had received the assistance of 4000 Hollanders under command of Count John of Nassau. The Venetians had achieved many successes, had taken the city of Gortz, and almost reduced the city of Gradiska. A certain colonel Albert Waldstein however, of whom more might one day be heard in the history of the war now begun, had beaten the Venetians and opened a pathway through their ranks for succour to the beleaguered city. Soon afterwards peace was made on an undertaking that the Uscoques should be driven from their haunts, their castles dismantled, and their ships destroyed.

Venice declined an engagement to begin a fresh war.

She hated Ferdinand and Matthias and the whole Imperial brood, but, as old Barbarigo declared in the Senate, the Republic could not afford to set her house on fire in order to give Austria the inconvenience of the smoke.

Meantime, although the Elector-Palatine had magnanimously agreed to use his influence in Bohemia in favour of Charles Emmanuel, the Duke seems at last to have declined proposing himself for that throne. He knew, he said, that King James wished that station for his son-in-law. The Imperial crown belonged to no one as yet after the death of Matthias, and was open therefore to his competition.

Anhalt demanded of Savoy 15,000 men for the maintenance of the good cause, asserting that "it would be better to have the Turk or the devil himself on the German throne than leave it to Ferdinand."

Page 2869

The triumvirate ruling at Prague-Thurn, Ruppa, and Hohenlohe—were anxious for a decision from Frederic. That simple-hearted and ingenuous young elector had long been troubled both with fears lest after all he might lose the crown of Bohemia and with qualms of conscience as to the propriety of taking it even if he could get it. He wrestled much in prayer and devout meditation whether as anointed prince himself he were justified in meddling with the anointment of other princes. Ferdinand had been accepted, proclaimed, crowned. He artlessly sent to Prague to consult the Estates whether they possessed the right to rebel, to set aside the reigning dynasty, and to choose a new king. At the same time, with an eye to business, he stipulated that on account of the great expense and trouble devolving upon him the crown must be made hereditary in his family. The impression made upon the grim Thurn and his colleagues by the simplicity of these questions may be imagined. The splendour and width of the Savoyard's conceptions fascinated the leaders of the Union. It seemed to Anspach and Anhalt that it was as well that Frederic should reign in Hungary as in Bohemia, and the Elector was docile. All had relied however on the powerful assistance of the great defender of the Protestant faith, the father-in-law of the Elector, the King of Great Britain. But James had nothing but cold water and Virgilian quotations for his son's ardour. He was more under the influence of Gondemar than ever before, more eagerly hankering for the Infanta, more completely the slave of Spain. He pledged himself to that government that if the Protestants in Bohemia continued rebellious, he would do his best to frustrate their designs, and would induce his son-in-law to have no further connection with them. And Spain delighted his heart not by immediately sending over the Infanta, but by proposing that he should mediate between the contending parties. It would be difficult to imagine a greater farce. All central Europe was now in arms. The deepest and gravest questions about which men can fight: the right to worship God according to their conscience and to maintain civil franchises which have been earned by the people with the blood and treasure of centuries, were now to be solved by the sword, and the pupil of Buchanan and the friend of Buckingham was to step between hundreds of thousands of men in arms with a classical oration. But James was very proud of the proposal and accepted it with alacrity.

"You know, my dear son," he wrote to Frederic, "that we are the only king in Europe that is sought for by friend and foe for his mediation. It would be for this our lofty part very unbecoming if we were capable of favouring one of the parties. Your suggestion that we might secretly support the Bohemians we must totally reject, as it is not our way to do anything that we would not willingly confess to the whole world."

And to do James justice, he had never fed Frederic with false hopes, never given a penny for his great enterprise, nor promised him a penny. He had contented himself with suggesting from time to time that he might borrow money of the States-General. His daughter Elizabeth must take care of herself, else what would become of her brother's marriage to the daughter of Spain.

Page 2870

And now it was war to the knife, in which it was impossible that Holland, as well as all the other great powers should not soon be involved. It was disheartening to the cause of freedom and progress, not only that the great kingdom on which the world, had learned to rely in all movements upward and onward should be neutralized by the sycophancy of its monarch to the general oppressor, but that the great republic which so long had taken the lead in maintaining the liberties of Europe should now be torn by religious discord within itself, and be turning against the great statesman who had so wisely guided her councils and so accurately foretold the catastrophe which was now upon the world.

Meantime the Emperor Matthias, not less forlorn than through his intrigues and rebellions his brother Rudolph had been made, passed his days in almost as utter retirement as if he had formally abdicated. Ferdinand treated him as if in his dotage. His fair young wife too had died of hard eating in the beginning of the winter to his inexpressible grief, so that there was nothing left to solace him now but the Rudolphian Museum.

He had made but one public appearance since the coronation of Ferdinand in Prague. Attended by his brother Maximilian, by King Ferdinand, and by Cardinal Khlesl, he had towards the end of the year 1617 paid a visit to the Elector John George at Dresden. The Imperial party had been received with much enthusiasm by the great leader of Lutheranism. The Cardinal had seriously objected to accompanying the Emperor on this occasion. Since the Reformation no cardinal had been seen at the court of Saxony. He cared not personally for the pomps and glories of his rank, but still as prince of the Church he had settled right of precedence over electors. To waive it would be disrespectful to the Pope, to claim it would lead to squabbles. But Ferdinand had need of his skill to secure the vote of Saxony at the next Imperial election. The Cardinal was afraid of Ferdinand with good reason, and complied. By an agreeable fiction he was received at court not as cardinal but as minister, and accommodated with an humble place at table. Many looking on with astonishment thought he would have preferred to dine by himself in retirement. But this was not the bitterest of the mortifications that the pastor and guide of Matthias was to suffer at the hands of Ferdinand before his career should be closed. The visit at Dresden was successful, however. John George, being a claimant, as we have seen, for the Duchies of Cleve and Julich, had need of the Emperor. The King had need of John George’s vote. There was a series of splendid balls, hunting parties, carousings.

Page 2871

The Emperor was an invalid, the King was abstemious, but the Elector was a mighty drinker. It was not his custom nor that of his councillors to go to bed. They were usually carried there. But it was the wish of Ferdinand to be conciliatory, and he bore himself as well as he could at the banquet. The Elector was also a mighty hunter. Neither of his Imperial guests cared for field sports, but they looked out contentedly from the window of a hunting-lodge, before which for their entertainment the Elector and his courtiers slaughtered eight bears, ten stags, ten pigs, and eleven badgers, besides a goodly number of other game; John George shooting also three martens from a pole erected for that purpose in the courtyard. It seemed proper for him thus to exhibit a specimen of the skill for which he was justly famed. The Elector before his life closed, so says the chronicle, had killed 28,000 wild boars, 208 bears, 3543 wolves, 200 badgers, 18,967 foxes, besides stags and roedeer in still greater number, making a grand total of 113,629 beasts. The leader of the Lutheran party of Germany had not lived in vain.

Thus the great chiefs of Catholicism and of Protestantism amicably disported themselves in the last days of the year, while their respective forces were marshalling for mortal combat all over Christendom. The Elector certainly loved neither Matthias nor Ferdinand, but he hated the Palatine. The chief of the German Calvinists disputed that Protestant hegemony which John George claimed by right. Indeed the immense advantage enjoyed by the Catholics at the outbreak of the religious war from the mutual animosities between the two great divisions of the Reformed Church was already terribly manifest. What an additional power would it derive from the increased weakness of the foe, should there be still other and deeper and more deadly schisms within one great division itself!

“The Calvinists and Lutherans,” cried the Jesuit Scioppius, “are so furiously attacking each other with calumnies and cursings and are persecuting each other to such extent as to give good hope that the devilish weight and burthen of them will go to perdition and shame of itself, and the heretics all do bloody execution upon each other. Certainly if ever a golden time existed for exterminating the heretics, it is the present time.”

The Imperial party took their leave of Dresden, believing themselves to have secured the electoral vote of Saxony; the Elector hoping for protection to his interests in the duchies through that sequestration to which Barneveld had opposed such vigorous resistance. There had been much slavish cringing before these Catholic potentates by the courtiers of Dresden, somewhat amazing to the ruder churls of Saxony, the common people, who really believed in the religion which their prince had selected for them and himself.

And to complete the glaring contrast, Ferdinand and Matthias had scarcely turned their backs before tremendous fulminations upon the ancient church came from the Elector and from all the doctors of theology in Saxony.

Page 2872

For the jubilee of the hundredth anniversary of the Reformation was celebrated all over Germany in the autumn of this very year, and nearly at the exact moment of all this dancing, and fuddling, and pig shooting at Dresden in honour of emperors and cardinals. And Pope Paul V. had likewise ordained a jubilee for true believers at almost the same time.

The Elector did not mince matters in his proclamation from any regard to the feelings of his late guests. He called on all Protestants to rejoice, “because the light of the Holy Gospel had now shone brightly in the electoral dominions for a hundred years, the Omnipotent keeping it burning notwithstanding the raging and roaring of the hellish enemy and all his scaly servants.”

The doctors of divinity were still more emphatic in their phraseology. They called on all professors and teachers of the true Evangelical churches, not only in Germany but throughout Christendom, to keep the great jubilee. They did this in terms not calculated certainly to smother the flames of religious and party hatred, even if it had been possible at that moment to suppress the fire. “The great God of Heaven,” they said, “had caused the undertaking of His holy instrument Mr. Doctor Martin Luther to prosper. Through His unspeakable mercy he has driven away the Papal darkness and caused the sun of righteousness once more to beam upon the world. The old idolatries, blasphemies, errors, and horrors of the benighted Popedom have been exterminated in many kingdoms and countries. Innumerable sheep of the Lord Christ have been fed on the wholesome pasture of the Divine Word in spite of those monstrous, tearing, ravenous wolves, the Pope and his followers. The enemy of God and man, the ancient serpent, may hiss and rage. Yes, the Roman antichrist in his frantic blusterings may bite off his own tongue, may fulminate all kinds of evils, bans, excommunications, wars, desolations, and burnings, as long and as much as he likes. But if we take refuge with the Lord God, what can this inane, worn-out man and water-bubble do to us?” With more in the same taste.

The Pope’s bull for the Catholic jubilee was far more decorous and lofty in tone, for it bewailed the general sin in Christendom, and called on all believers to flee from the wrath about to descend upon the earth, in terms that were almost prophetic. He ordered all to pray that the Lord might lift up His Church, protect it from the wiles of the enemy, extirpate heresies, grant peace and true unity among Christian princes, and mercifully avert disasters already coming near.

But if the language of Paul V. was measured and decent, the swarm of Jesuit pamphleteers that forthwith began to buzz and to sting all over Christendom were sufficiently venomous. Scioppius, in his Alarm Trumpet to the Holy War, and a hundred others declared that all heresies and heretics were now to be extirpated, the one true church to be united and re-established, and that the only road to such a consummation was a path of blood.

Page 2873

The Lutheran preachers, on the other hand, obedient to the summons from Dresden, vied with each other in every town and village in heaping denunciations, foul names, and odious imputations on the Catholics; while the Calvinists, not to be behindhand with their fellow Reformers, celebrated the jubilee, especially at Heidelberg, by excluding Papists from hope of salvation, and bewailing the fate of all churches sighing under the yoke of Rome.

And not only were the Papists and the Reformers exchanging these blasts and counterblasts of hatred, not less deadly in their effects than the artillery of many armies, but as if to make a thorough exhibition of human fatuity when drunk with religious passion, the Lutherans were making fierce paper and pulpit war upon the Calvinists. Especially Hoe, court preacher of John George, ceaselessly hurled savage libels against them. In the name of the theological faculty of Wittenberg, he addressed a "truehearted warning to all Lutheran Christians in Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and other provinces, to beware of the erroneous Calvinistic religion." He wrote a letter to Count Schlick, foremost leader in the Bohemian movement, asking whether "the unquiet Calvinist spirit, should it gain ascendency, would be any more endurable than the Papists. Oh what woe, what infinite woe," he cried, "for those noble countries if they should all be thrust into the jaws of Calvinism!"

Did not preacher Hoe's master aspire to the crown of Bohemia himself? Was he not furious at the start which Heidelberg had got of him in the race for that golden prize? Was he not mad with jealousy of the Palatine, of the Palatine's religion, and of the Palatine's claim to "hegemony" in Germany?

Thus embittered and bloodthirsty towards each other were the two great sections of the Reformed religion on the first centennial jubilee of the Reformation. Such was the divided front which the anti-Catholic party presented at the outbreak of the war with Catholicism.

Ferdinand, on the other hand, was at the head of a comparatively united party. He could hardly hope for more than benevolent neutrality from the French government, which, in spite of the Spanish marriages, dared not wholly desert the Netherlands and throw itself into the hands of Spain; but Spanish diplomacy had enslaved the British king, and converted what should have been an active and most powerful enemy into an efficient if concealed ally. The Spanish and archiducal armies were enveloping the Dutch republic, from whence the most powerful support could be expected for the Protestant cause. Had it not been for the steadiness of Barneveld, Spain would have been at that moment established in full panoply over the whole surface of those inestimable positions, the disputed duchies. Venice was lukewarm, if not frigid; and Savoy, although deeply pledged by passion and interest to the downfall of the House of Austria, was too dangerously situated herself, too distant, too poor, and too Catholic to be very formidable.

Page 2874

Ferdinand was safe from the Turkish side. A twenty years' peace, renewable by agreement, between the Holy Empire and the Sultan had been negotiated by those two sons of bakers, Cardinal Khlesl and the Vizier Etmekdschifade. It was destined to endure through all the horrors of the great war, a stronger protection to Vienna than all the fortifications which the engineering art could invent. He was safe too from Poland, King Sigmund being not only a devoted Catholic but doubly his brother-in-law.

Spain, therefore, the Spanish Netherlands, the Pope, and the German League headed by Maximilian of Bavaria, the ablest prince on the continent of Europe, presented a square, magnificent phalanx on which Ferdinand might rely. The States-General, on the other hand, were a most dangerous foe. With a centennial hatred of Spain, splendidly disciplined armies and foremost navy of the world, with an admirable financial system and vast commercial resources, with a great stadholder, first captain of the age, thirsting for war, and allied in blood as well as religion to the standard-bearer of the Bohemian revolt; with councils directed by the wisest and most experienced of living statesman, and with the very life blood of her being derived from the fountain of civil and religious liberty, the great Republic of the United Netherlands—her Truce with the hereditary foe just expiring was, if indeed united, strong enough at the head of the Protestant forces of Europe to dictate to a world in arms.

Alas! was it united?

As regarded internal affairs of most pressing interest, the electoral vote at the next election at Frankfurt had been calculated as being likely to yield a majority of one for the opposition candidate, should the Savoyard or any other opposition candidate be found. But the calculation was a close one and might easily be fallacious. Supposing the Palatine elected King of Bohemia by the rebellious estates, as was probable, he could of course give the vote of that electorate and his own against Ferdinand, and the vote of Brandenburg at that time seemed safe. But Ferdinand by his visit to Dresden had secured the vote of Saxony, while of the three ecclesiastical electors, Cologne and Mayence were sure for him. Thus it would be three and three, and the seventh and decisive vote would be that of the Elector-Bishop of Treves. The sanguine Frederic thought that with French influence and a round sum of money this ecclesiastic might be got to vote for the opposition candidate. The ingenious combination was not destined to be successful, and as there has been no intention in the present volume to do more than slightly indicate the most prominent movements and mainsprings of the great struggle so far as Germany is concerned, without entering into detail, it may be as well to remind the reader that it proved wonderfully wrong. Matthias died on the 20th March, 1619, the election of a new emperor took place at Frankfurt On the 28th of the following August, and not only did Saxony and all three ecclesiastical electors vote for Ferdinand, but Brandenburg likewise, as well as the Elector-Palatine himself, while Ferdinand, personally present in the assembly as Elector of Bohemia, might according to the Golden Bull have given the seventh vote for himself had he chosen to do so. Thus the election was unanimous.

Page 2875

Strange to say, as the electors proceeded through the crowd from the hall of election to accompany the new emperor to the church where he was to receive the popular acclaim, the news reached them from Prague that the Elector-Palatine had been elected King of Bohemia.

Thus Frederic, by voting for Ferdinand, had made himself voluntarily a rebel should he accept the crown now offered him. Had the news arrived sooner, a different result and even a different history might have been possible.

CHAPTER XIV.

Barneveld connected with the East India Company, but opposed to the West India Company—Carleton comes from Venice inimical to Barneveld—Maurice openly the Chieftain of the Contra-Remonstrants—Tumults about the Churches—“Orange or Spain” the Cry of Prince Maurice and his Party—They take possession of the Cloister Church—“The Sharp Resolve”—Carleton’s Orations before the States-General.

King James never forgave Barneveld for drawing from him those famous letters to the States in which he was made to approve the Five Points and to admit the possibility of salvation under them. These epistles had brought much ridicule upon James, who was not amused by finding his theological discussions a laughing-stock. He was still more incensed by the biting criticisms made upon the cheap surrender of the cautionary towns, and he hated more than ever the statesman who, as he believed, had twice outwitted him.

On the other hand, Maurice, inspired by his brother-in-law the Duke of Bouillon and by the infuriated Francis Aerssens, abhorred Barneveld’s French policy, which was freely denounced by the French Calvinists and by the whole orthodox church. In Holland he was still warmly sustained except in the Contra-Remonstrant Amsterdam and a few other cities of less importance. But there were perhaps deeper reasons for the Advocate’s unpopularity in the great commercial metropolis than theological pretexts. Barneveld’s name and interests were identified with the great East India Company, which was now powerful and prosperous beyond anything ever dreamt of before in the annals of commerce. That trading company had already founded an empire in the East. Fifty ships of war, fortresses guarded by 4000 pieces of artillery and 10,000 soldiers and sailors, obeyed the orders of a dozen private gentlemen at home seated in a back parlour around a green table. The profits of each trading voyage were enormous, and the shareholders were growing rich beyond their wildest imaginings. To no individual so much as to Holland’s Advocate was this unexampled success to be ascribed. The vast prosperity of the East India Company had inspired others with the ambition to found a similar enterprise in the West. But to the West India Company then projected and especially favoured in Amsterdam, Barneveld was firmly opposed. He considered it as bound up with the spirit of military adventure and conquest, and as

likely to bring on prematurely and unwisely a renewed conflict with Spain. The same reasons which had caused him to urge the Truce now influenced his position in regard to the West India Company.

Page 2876

Thus the clouds were gathering every day more darkly over the head of the Advocate. The powerful mercantile interest in the great seat of traffic in the Republic, the personal animosity of the Stadholder, the execrations of the orthodox party in France, England, and all the Netherlands, the anger of the French princes and all those of the old Huguenot party who had been foolish enough to act with the princes in their purely selfish schemes against the, government, and the overflowing hatred of King James, whose darling schemes of Spanish marriages and a Spanish alliance had been foiled by the Advocate's masterly policy in France and in the duchies, and whose resentment at having been so completely worsted and disarmed in the predestination matter and in the redemption of the great mortgage had deepened into as terrible wrath as outraged bigotry and vanity could engender; all these elements made up a stormy atmosphere in which the strongest heart might have quailed. But Barneveld did not quail. Doubtless he loved power, and the more danger he found on every side the less inclined he was to succumb. But he honestly believed that the safety and prosperity of the country he had so long and faithfully served were identified with the policy which he was pursuing. Arrogant, overbearing, self-concentrated, accustomed to lead senates and to guide the councils and share the secrets of kings, familiar with and almost an actor in every event in the political history not only of his own country but of every important state in Christendom during nearly two generations of mankind, of unmatched industry, full of years and experience, yet feeling within him the youthful strength of a thousand intellects compared to most of those by which he was calumniated, confronted, and harassed; he accepted the great fight which was forced upon him. Irascible, courageous, austere, contemptuous, he looked around and saw the Republic whose cradle he had rocked grown to be one of the most powerful and prosperous among the states of the world, and could with difficulty imagine that in this supreme hour of her strength and her felicity she was ready to turn and rend the man whom she was bound by every tie of duty to cherish and to revere.

Sir Dudley Carleton, the new English ambassador to the States, had arrived during the past year red-hot from Venice. There he had perhaps not learned especially to love the new republic which had arisen among the northern lagunes, and whose admission among the nations had been at last accorded by the proud Queen of the Adriatic, notwithstanding the objections and the intrigues both of French and English representatives. He had come charged to the brim with the political spite of James against the Advocate, and provided too with more than seven vials of theological wrath. Such was the King's revenge for Barneveld's recent successes. The supporters in the Netherlands of the civil authority over the Church were moreover to be instructed by the political head of the English Church that such supremacy, although highly proper for a king, was "thoroughly unsuitable for a many-headed republic." So much for church government. As for doctrine, Arminianism and Vorstianism were to be blasted with one thunderstroke from the British throne.

Page 2877

"In Holland," said James to his envoy, "there have been violent and sharp contestations amongst the towns in the cause of religion . . . . . If they shall be unhappily revived during your time, you shall not forget that you are the minister of that master whom God hath made the sole protector of His religion."

There was to be no misunderstanding in future as to the dogmas which the royal pope of Great Britain meant to prescribe to his Netherland subjects. Three years before, at the dictation of the Advocate, he had informed the States that he was convinced of their ability to settle the deplorable dissensions as to religion according to their wisdom and the power which belonged to them over churches and church servants. He had informed them of his having learned by experience that such questions could hardly be decided by the wranglings of theological professors, and that it was better to settle them by public authority and to forbid their being brought into the pulpit or among common people. He had recommended mutual toleration of religious difference until otherwise ordained by the public civil authority, and had declared that neither of the two opinions in regard to predestination was in his opinion far from the truth or inconsistent with Christian faith or the salvation of souls.

It was no wonder that these utterances were quite after the Advocate's heart, as James had faithfully copied them from the Advocate's draft.

But now in the exercise of his infallibility the King issued other decrees. His minister was instructed to support the extreme views of the orthodox both as to government and dogma, and to urge the National Synod, as it were, at push of pike. "Besides the assistance," said he to Carleton, "which we would have you give to the true professors of the Gospel in your discourse and conferences, you may let fall how hateful the maintenance of these erroneous opinions is to the majesty of God, how displeasing unto us their dearest friends, and how disgraceful to the honour and government of that state."

And faithfully did the Ambassador act up to his instructions. Most sympathetically did he embody the hatred of the King. An able, experienced, highly accomplished diplomatist and scholar, ready with tongue and pen, caustic, censorious, prejudiced, and partial, he was soon foremost among the foes of the Advocate in the little court of the Hague, and prepared at any moment to flourish the political and theological goad when his master gave the word.

Nothing in diplomatic history is more eccentric than the long sermons upon abstruse points of divinity and ecclesiastical history which the English ambassador delivered from time to time before the States-General in accordance with elaborate instructions drawn up by his sovereign with his own hand. Rarely has a king been more tedious, and he

bestowed all his tediousness upon My Lords the States-General. Nothing could be more dismal than these discourses, except perhaps the contemporaneous and interminable orations of Grotius to the states of Holland, to the magistrates of Amsterdam, to the states of Utrecht; yet Carleton was a man of the world, a good debater, a ready writer, while Hugo Grotius was one of the great lights of that age and which shone for all time.

Page 2878

Among the diplomatic controversies of history, rarely refreshing at best, few have been more drouthy than those once famous disquisitions, and they shall be left to shrivel into the nothingness of the past, so far as is consistent with the absolute necessities of this narrative.

The contest to which the Advocate was called had become mainly a personal and a political one, although the weapons with which it was fought were taken from ecclesiastical arsenals. It was now an unequal contest.

For the great captain of the country and of his time, the son of William the Silent, the martial stadholder, in the fulness of his fame and vigour of his years, had now openly taken his place as the chieftain of the Contra-Remonstrants. The conflict between the civil and the military element for supremacy in a free commonwealth has never been more vividly typified than in this death-grapple between Maurice and Barneveld.

The aged but still vigorous statesman, ripe with half a century of political lore, and the high-born, brilliant, and scientific soldier, with the laurels of Turnhout and Nieuwpoort and of a hundred famous sieges upon his helmet, reformer of military science, and no mean proficient in the art of politics and government, were the representatives and leaders of the two great parties into which the Commonwealth had now unhappily divided itself. But all history shows that the brilliant soldier of a republic is apt to have the advantage, in a struggle for popular affection and popular applause, over the statesman, however consummate. The general imagination is more excited by the triumphs of the field than by those of the tribune, and the man who has passed many years of life in commanding multitudes with necessarily despotic sway is often supposed to have gained in the process the attributes likely to render him most valuable as chief citizen of a flee commonwealth. Yet national enthusiasm is so universally excited by splendid military service as to forbid a doubt that the sentiment is rooted deeply in our nature, while both in antiquity and in modern times there are noble although rare examples of the successful soldier converting himself into a valuable and exemplary magistrate.

In the rivalry of Maurice and Barneveld however for the national affection the chances were singularly against the Advocate. The great battles and sieges of the Prince had been on a world’s theatre, had enchained the attention of Christendom, and on their issue had frequently depended, or seemed to depend, the very existence of the nation. The labours of the statesman, on the contrary, had been comparatively secret. His noble orations and arguments had been spoken with closed doors to assemblies of colleagues—rather envoys than senators—were never printed or even reported, and could be judged of only by their effects; while his vast labours in directing both the internal administration and especially the foreign affairs of the Commonwealth had been by their very nature as secret as they were perpetual and enormous.

Page 2879

Moreover, there was little of what we now understand as the democratic sentiment in the Netherlands. There was deep and sturdy attachment to ancient traditions, privileges, special constitutions extorted from a power acknowledged to be superior to the people. When partly to save those chartered rights, and partly to overthrow the horrible ecclesiastical tyranny of the sixteenth century, the people had accomplished a successful revolt, they never dreamt of popular sovereignty, but allowed the municipal corporations, by which their local affairs had been for centuries transacted, to unite in offering to foreign princes, one after another, the crown which they had torn from the head of the Spanish king. When none was found to accept the dangerous honour, they had acquiesced in the practical sovereignty of the States; but whether the States-General or the States-Provincial were the supreme authority had certainly not been definitely and categorically settled. So long as the States of Holland, led by the Advocate, had controlled in great matters the political action of the States-General, while the Stadholder stood without a rival at the head of their military affairs, and so long as there were no fierce disputes as to government and dogma within the bosom of the Reformed Church, the questions which were now inflaming the whole population had been allowed to slumber.

The termination of the war and the rise of Arminianism were almost contemporaneous. The Stadholder, who so unwillingly had seen the occupation in which he had won so much glory taken from him by the Truce, might perhaps find less congenial but sufficiently engrossing business as champion of the Church and of the Union.

The new church—not freedom of worship for different denominations of Christians, but supremacy of the Church of Heidelberg and Geneva—seemed likely to be the result of the overthrow of the ancient church. It is the essence of the Catholic Church to claim supremacy over and immunity from the civil authority, and to this claim for the Reformed Church, by which that of Rome had been supplanted, Barneveld was strenuously opposed.

The Stadholder was backed, therefore, by the Church in its purity, by the majority of the humbler classes—who found in membership of the oligarchy of Heaven a substitute for those democratic aspirations on earth which were effectually suppressed between the two millstones of burgher aristocracy and military discipline—and by the States-General, a majority of which were Contra-Remonstrant in their faith.

If the sword is usually an overmatch for the long robe in political struggles, the cassock has often proved superior to both combined. But in the case now occupying our attention the cassock was in alliance with the sword. Clearly the contest was becoming a desperate one for the statesman.

Page 2880

And while the controversy between the chiefs waged hotter and hotter, the tumults around the churches on Sundays in every town and village grew more and more furious, ending generally in open fights with knives, bludgeons, and brickbats; preachers and magistrates being often too glad to escape with a whole skin. One can hardly be ingenuous enough to consider all this dirking, battering, and fisticuffing as the legitimate and healthy outcome of a difference as to the knotty point whether all men might or might not be saved by repentance and faith in Christ.

The Greens and Blues of the Byzantine circus had not been more typical of fierce party warfare in the Lower Empire than the greens and blues of predestination in the rising commonwealth, according to the real or imagined epigram of Prince Maurice.

“Your divisions in religion,” wrote Secretary Lake to Carleton, “have, I doubt not, a deeper root than is discerned by every one, and I doubt not that the Prince Maurice’s carriage doth make a jealousy of affecting a party under the pretence of supporting one side, and that the States fear his ends and aims, knowing his power with the men of war; and that howsoever all be shadowed under the name of religion there is on either part a civil end, of the one seeking a step of higher authority, of the other a preservation of liberty.”

And in addition to other advantages the Contra-Remonstrants had now got a good cry —an inestimable privilege in party contests.

“There are two factions in the land,” said Maurice, “that of Orange and that of Spain, and the two chiefs of the Spanish faction are those political and priestly Arminians, Uytenbogaert and Oldenbarneveld.”

Orange and Spain! the one name associated with all that was most venerated and beloved throughout the country, for William the Silent since his death was almost a god; the other ineradicably entwined at that moment with, everything execrated throughout the land. The Prince of Orange’s claim to be head of the Orange faction could hardly be disputed, but it was a master stroke of political malice to fix the stigma of Spanish partisanship on the Advocate. If the venerable patriot who had been fighting Spain, sometimes on the battle-field and always in the council, ever since he came to man’s estate, could be imagined even in a dream capable of being bought with Spanish gold to betray his country, who in the ranks of the Remonstrant party could be safe from such accusations? Each party accused the other of designs for altering or subverting the government. Maurice was suspected of what were called Leicestrian projects, “Leycestrana consilia”—for the Earl’s plots to gain possession of Leyden and Utrecht had never been forgotten—while the Prince and those who acted with him asserted distinctly that it was the purpose of Barneveld to pave the way for restoring the Spanish sovereignty and the Popish religion so soon as the Truce had reached its end?

Page 2881

Spain and Orange. Nothing for a faction fight could be neater. Moreover the two words rhyme in Netherlandish, which is the case in no other language, “Spanje-Oranje.” The sword was drawn and the banner unfurled.

The “Mud Beggars” of the Hague, tired of tramping to Ryswyk of a Sunday to listen to Henry Rosaeus, determined on a private conventicle in the capital. The first barn selected was sealed up by the authorities, but Epoch Much, book-keeper of Prince Maurice, then lent them his house. The Prince declared that sooner than they should want a place of assembling he would give them his own. But he meant that they should have a public church to themselves, and that very soon. King James thoroughly approved of all these proceedings. At that very instant such of his own subjects as had seceded from the Established Church to hold conventicles in barns and breweries and backshops in London were hunted by him with bishops’ pursuivants and other beagles like vilest criminals, thrown into prison to rot, or suffered to escape from their Fatherland into the trans-Atlantic wilderness, there to battle with wild beasts and savages, and to die without knowing themselves the fathers of a more powerful United States than the Dutch Republic, where they were fain to seek in passing a temporary shelter. He none the less instructed his envoy at the Hague to preach the selfsame doctrines for which the New England Puritans were persecuted, and importunately and dictatorially to plead the cause of those Hollanders who, like Bradford and Robinson, Winthrop and Cotton, maintained the independence of the Church over the State.

Logic is rarely the quality on which kings pride themselves, and Puritanism in the Netherlands, although under temporary disadvantage at the Hague, was evidently the party destined to triumph throughout the country. James could safely sympathize therefore in Holland with what he most loathed in England, and could at the same time feed fat the grudge he owed the Advocate. The calculations of Barneveld as to the respective political forces of the Commonwealth seem to have been to a certain extent defective.

He allowed probably too much weight to the Catholic party as a motive power at that moment, and he was anxious both from that consideration and from his honest natural instinct for general toleration; his own broad and unbigoted views in religious matters, not to force that party into a rebellious attitude dangerous to the state. We have seen how nearly a mutiny in the important city of Utrecht, set on foot by certain Romanist conspirators in the years immediately succeeding the Truce, had subverted the government, had excited much anxiety amongst the firmest allies of the Republic, and had been suppressed only by the decision of the Advocate and a show of military force.

He had informed Carleton not long after his arrival that in the United Provinces, and in Holland in particular, were many sects and religions of which, according to his expression, “the healthiest and the richest part were the Papists, while the Protestants did not make up one-third part of the inhabitants.”

Page 2882

Certainly, if these statistics were correct or nearly correct, there could be nothing more stupid from a purely political point of view than to exasperate so influential a portion of the community to madness and rebellion by refusing them all rights of public worship. Yet because the Advocate had uniformly recommended indulgence, he had incurred more odium at home than from any other cause. Of course he was a Papist in disguise, ready to sell his country to Spain, because he was willing that more than half the population of the country should be allowed to worship God according to their conscience. Surely it would be wrong to judge the condition of things at that epoch by the lights of to-day, and perhaps in the Netherlands there had before been no conspicuous personage, save William the Silent alone, who had risen to the height of toleration on which the Advocate essayed to stand. Other leading politicians considered that the national liberties could be preserved only by retaining the Catholics in complete subjection.

At any rate the Advocate was profoundly convinced of the necessity of maintaining harmony and mutual toleration among the Protestants themselves, who, as he said, made up but one-third of the whole people. In conversing with the English ambassador he divided them into “Puritans and double Puritans,” as they would be called, he said, in England. If these should be at variance with each other, he argued, the Papists would be the strongest of all. “To prevent this inconvenience,” he said, “the States were endeavouring to settle some certain form of government in the Church; which being composed of divers persecuted churches such as in the beginning of the wars had their refuge here, that which during the wars could not be so well done they now thought seasonable for a time of truce; and therefore would show their authority in preventing the schism of the Church which would follow the separation of those they call Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants.”

There being no word so offensive to Carleton’s sovereign as the word Puritan, the Ambassador did his best to persuade the Advocate that a Puritan in Holland was a very different thing from a Puritan in England. In England he was a noxious vermin, to be hunted with dogs. In the Netherlands he was the governing power. But his arguments were vapourous enough and made little impression on Barneveld. “He would no ways yield,” said Sir Dudley.

Meantime the Contra-Remonstrants of the Hague, not finding sufficient accommodation in Enoch Much’s house, clamoured loudly for the use of a church. It was answered by the city magistrates that two of their persuasion, La Motte and La Faille, preached regularly in the Great Church, and that Rosaeus had been silenced only because he refused to hold communion with Uytenbogaert. Maurice insisted that a separate church should be assigned them. “But this is open schism,” said Uytenbogaert.

Page 2883

Early in the year there was a meeting of the Holland delegation to the States-General, of the state council, and of the magistracy of the Hague, of deputies from the tribunals, and of all the nobles resident in the capital. They sent for Maurice and asked his opinion as to the alarming situation of affairs. He called for the register-books of the States of Holland, and turning back to the pages on which was recorded his accession to the stadholderate soon after his father's murder, ordered the oath then exchanged between himself and the States to be read aloud.

That oath bound them mutually to support the Reformed religion till the last drop of blood in their veins.

"That oath I mean to keep," said the Stadholder, "so long as I live."

No one disputed the obligation of all parties to maintain the Reformed religion. But the question was whether the Five Points were inconsistent with the Reformed religion. The contrary was clamorously maintained by most of those present: In the year 1586 this difference in dogma had not arisen, and as the large majority of the people at the Hague, including nearly all those of rank and substance, were of the Remonstrant persuasion, they naturally found it not agreeable to be sent out of the church by a small minority. But Maurice chose to settle the question very summarily. His father had been raised to power by the strict Calvinists, and he meant to stand by those who had always sustained William the Silent. "For this religion my father lost his life, and this religion will I defend," said he.

"You hold then," said Barneveld, "that the Almighty has created one child for damnation and another for salvation, and you wish this doctrine to be publicly preached."

"Did you ever hear any one preach that?" replied the Prince.

"If they don't preach it, it is their inmost conviction," said the other. And he proceeded to prove his position by copious citations.

"And suppose our ministers do preach this doctrine, is there anything strange in it, any reason why they should not do so?"

The Advocate expressed his amazement and horror at the idea.

"But does not God know from all eternity who is to be saved and who to be damned; and does He create men for any other end than that to which He from eternity knows they will come?"

And so they enclosed themselves in the eternal circle out of which it was not probable that either the soldier or the statesman would soon find an issue.

"I am no theologian," said Barneveld at last, breaking off the discussion.

“Neither am I,” said the Stadholder. “So let the parsons come together. Let the Synod assemble and decide the question. Thus we shall get out of all this.”

Next day a deputation of the secessionists waited by appointment on Prince Maurice. They found him in the ancient mediaeval hall of the sovereign counts of Holland, and seated on their old chair of state. He recommended them to use caution and moderation for the present, and to go next Sunday once more to Ryswyk. Afterwards he pledged himself that they should have a church at the Hague, and, if necessary, the Great Church itself.

Page 2884

But the Great Church, although a very considerable Catholic cathedral before the Reformation, was not big enough now to hold both Henry Rosaeus and John Uytenbogaert. Those two eloquent, learned, and most pugnacious divines were the respective champions in the pulpit of the opposing parties, as were the Advocate and the Stadholder in the council. And there was as bitter personal rivalry between the two as between the soldier and statesman.

“The factions begin to divide themselves,” said Carleton, “betwixt his Excellency and Monsieur Barneveld as heads who join to this present difference their ancient quarrels. And the schism rests actually between Uytenbogaert and Rosaeus, whose private emulation and envy (both being much applauded and followed) doth no good towards the public pacification.” Uytenbogaert repeatedly offered, however, to resign his functions and to leave the Hague. “He was always ready to play the Jonah,” he said.

A temporary arrangement was made soon afterwards by which Rosaeus and his congregation should have the use of what was called the Gasthuis Kerk, then appropriated to the English embassy.

Carleton of course gave his consent most willingly. The Prince declared that the States of Holland and the city magistracy had personally affronted him by the obstacles they had interposed to the public worship of the Contra-Remonstrants. With their cause he had now thoroughly identified himself.

The hostility between the representatives of the civil and military authority waxed fiercer every hour. The tumults were more terrible than ever. Plainly there was no room in the Commonwealth for the Advocate and the Stadholder. Some impartial persons believed that there would be no peace until both were got rid of. “There are many words among this free-spoken people,” said Carleton, “that to end these differences they must follow the example of France in Marshal d’Ancre’s case, and take off the heads of both chiefs.”

But these decided persons were in a small minority. Meantime the States of Holland met in full assembly; sixty delegates being present.

It was proposed to invite his Excellency to take part in the deliberations. A committee which had waited upon him the day before had reported him as in favour of moderate rather than harsh measures in the church affair, while maintaining his plighted word to the seceders.

Barneveld stoutly opposed the motion.

“What need had the sovereign states of Holland of advice from a stadholder, from their servant, their functionary?” he cried.

But the majority for once thought otherwise. The Prince was invited to come. The deliberations were moderate but inconclusive. He appeared again at an adjourned meeting when the councils were not so harmonious.

Barneveld, Grotius, and other eloquent speakers endeavoured to point out that the refusal of the seceders to hold communion with the Remonstrant preachers and to insist on a separation was fast driving the state to perdition. They warmly recommended mutual toleration and harmony. Grotius exhausted learning and rhetoric to prove that the Five Points were not inconsistent with salvation nor with the constitution of the United Provinces.

Page 2885

The Stadholder grew impatient at last and clapped his hand on his rapier.

“No need here,” he said, “of flowery orations and learned arguments. With this good sword I will defend the religion which my father planted in these Provinces, and I should like to see the man who is going to prevent me!”

The words had an heroic ring in the ears of such as are ever ready to applaud brute force, especially when wielded by a prince. The argumentum ad ensem, however, was the last plea that William the Silent would have been likely to employ on such an occasion, nor would it have been easy to prove that the Reformed religion had been “planted” by one who had drawn the sword against the foreign tyrant, and had made vast sacrifices for his country’s independence years before abjuring communion with the Roman Catholic Church.

When swords are handled by the executive in presence of civil assemblies there is usually but one issue to be expected.

Moreover, three whales had recently been stranded at Scheveningen, one of them more than sixty feet long, and men wagged their beards gravely as they spoke of the event, deeming it a certain presage of civil commotions. It was remembered that at the outbreak of the great war two whales had been washed ashore in the Scheldt. Although some free-thinking people were inclined to ascribe the phenomenon to a prevalence of strong westerly gales, while others found proof in it of a superabundance of those creatures in the Polar seas, which should rather give encouragement to the Dutch and Zealand fisheries, it is probable that quite as dark forebodings of coming disaster were caused by this accident as by the trumpet-like defiance which the Stadholder had just delivered to the States of Holland.

Meantime the seceding congregation of the Hague had become wearied of the English or Gasthuis Church, and another and larger one had been promised them. This was an ancient convent on one of the principal streets of the town, now used as a cannon-foundry. The Prince personally superintended the preparations for getting ready this place of worship, which was thenceforth called the Cloister Church. But delays were, as the Contra-Remonstrants believed, purposely interposed, so that it was nearly Midsummer before there were any signs of the church being fit for use.

They hastened accordingly to carry it, as it were, by assault. Not wishing peaceably to accept as a boon from the civil authority what they claimed as an indefeasible right, they suddenly took possession one Sunday night of the Cloister Church.

It was in a state of utter confusion—part monastery, part foundry, part conventicle. There were few seats, no altar, no communion-table, hardly any sacramental furniture, but a pulpit was extemporized. Rosaeus preached in triumph to an enthusiastic

congregation, and three children were baptized with the significant names of William, Maurice, and Henry.

Page 2886

On the following Monday there was a striking scene on the Voorhout. This most beautiful street of a beautiful city was a broad avenue, shaded by a quadruple row of limetrees, reaching out into the thick forest of secular oaks and beeches—swarming with fallow-deer and alive with the notes of singing birds—by which the Hague, almost from time immemorial, has been embowered. The ancient cloisterhouse and church now reconverted to religious uses—was a plain, rather insipid structure of red brick picked out with white stone, presenting three symmetrical gables to the street, with a slender belfry and spire rising in the rear.

Nearly adjoining it on the north-western side was the elegant and commodious mansion of Barneveld, purchased by him from the representatives of the Arenberg family, surrounded by shrubberies and flower-gardens; not a palace, but a dignified and becoming abode for the first citizen of a powerful republic.

On that midsummer's morning it might well seem that, in rescuing the old cloister from the military purposes to which it had for years been devoted, men had given an even more belligerent aspect to the scene than if it had been left as a foundry. The miscellaneous pieces of artillery and other fire-arms lying about, with piles of cannon-ball which there had not been time to remove, were hardly less belligerent and threatening of aspect than the stern faces of the crowd occupied in thoroughly preparing the house for its solemn destination. It was determined that there should be accommodation on the next Sunday for all who came to the service. An army of carpenters, joiners, glaziers, and other workmen-assisted by a mob of citizens of all ranks and ages, men and women, gentle and simple were busily engaged in bringing planks and benches; working with plane, adze, hammer and saw, trowel and shovel, to complete the work.

On the next Sunday the Prince attended public worship for the last time at the Great Church under the ministration of Uytenbogaert. He was infuriated with the sermon, in which the bold Remonstrant bitterly inveighed against the proposition for a National Synod. To oppose that measure publicly in the very face of the Stadholder, who now considered himself as the Synod personified, seemed to him flat blasphemy. Coming out of the church with his step-mother, the widowed Louise de Coligny, Princess of Orange, he denounced the man in unmeasured terms. "He is the enemy of God," said Maurice. At least from that time forth, and indeed for a year before, Maurice was the enemy of the preacher.

On the following Sunday, July 23, Maurice went in solemn state to the divine service at the Cloister Church now thoroughly organized. He was accompanied by his cousin, the famous Count William Lewis of Nassau, Stadholder of Friesland, who had never concealed his warm sympathy with the Contra-Remonstrants, and by all the chief officers of his household and members of his staff. It was an imposing demonstration

Page 2887

and meant for one. As the martial stadholder at the head of his brilliant cavalcade rode forth across the drawbridge from the Inner Court of the old moated palace—where the ancient sovereign Dirks and Florences of Holland had so long ruled their stout little principality—along the shady and stately Kneuterdyk and so through the Voorhout, an immense crowd thronged around his path and accompanied him to the church. It was as if the great soldier were marching to siege or battle-field where fresher glories than those of Sluys or Geertruidenberg were awaiting him.

The train passed by Barneveld's house and entered the cloister. More than four thousand persons were present at the service or crowded around the doors vainly attempting to gain admission into the overflowing aisles; while the Great Church was left comparatively empty, a few hundred only worshipping there. The Cloister Church was thenceforth called the Prince's Church, and a great revolution was beginning even in the Hague.

The Advocate was wroth as he saw the procession graced by the two stadholders and their military attendants. He knew that he was now to bow his head to the Church thus championed by the chief personage and captain-general of the state, to renounce his dreams of religious toleration, to sink from his post of supreme civic ruler, or to accept an unequal struggle in which he might utterly succumb. But his iron nature would break sooner than bend. In the first transports of his indignation he is said to have vowed vengeance against the immediate instruments by which the Cloister Church had, as he conceived, been surreptitiously and feloniously seized. He meant to strike a blow which should startle the whole population of the Hague, send a thrill of horror through the country, and teach men to beware how they trifled with the sovereign states of Holland, whose authority had so long been undisputed, and with him their chief functionary.

He resolved—so ran the tale of the preacher Trigland, who told it to Prince Maurice, and has preserved it in his chronicle—to cause to be seized at midnight from their beds four men whom he considered the ringleaders in this mutiny, to have them taken to the place of execution on the square in the midst of the city, to have their heads cut off at once by warrant from the chief tribunal without any previous warning, and then to summon all the citizens at dawn of day, by ringing of bells and firing of cannon, to gaze on the ghastly spectacle, and teach them to what fate this pestilential schism and revolt against authority had brought its humble tools. The victims were to be Enoch Much, the Prince's book-keeper, and three others, an attorney, an engraver, and an apothecary, all of course of the Contra-Remonstrant persuasion. It was necessary, said the Advocate, to make once for all an example, and show that there was a government in the land.

Page 2888

He had reckoned on a ready adhesion to this measure and a sentence from the tribunal through the influence of his son-in-law, the Seignior van Veenhuyzen, who was president of the chief court. His attempt was foiled however by the stern opposition of two Zealand members of the court, who managed to bring up from a bed of sickness, where he had long been lying, a Holland councillor whom they knew to be likewise opposed to the fierce measure, and thus defeated it by a majority of one.

Such is the story as told by contemporaries and repeated from that day to this. It is hardly necessary to say that Barneveld calmly denied having conceived or even heard of the scheme. That men could go about looking each other in the face and rehearsing such gibberish would seem sufficiently dispiriting did we not know to what depths of credulity men in all ages can sink when possessed by the demon of party malice.

If it had been narrated on the Exchange at Amsterdam or Flushing during that portentous midsummer that Barneveld had not only beheaded but roasted alive, and fed the dogs and cats upon the attorney, the apothecary, and the engraver, there would have been citizens in plenty to devour the news with avidity.

But although the Advocate had never imagined such extravagances as these, it is certain that he had now resolved upon very bold measures, and that too without an instant's delay. He suspected the Prince of aiming at sovereignty not only over Holland but over all the provinces and to be using the Synod as a principal part of his machinery. The gauntlet was thrown down by the Stadholder, and the Advocate lifted it at once. The issue of the struggle would depend upon the political colour of the town magistracies. Barneveld instinctively felt that Maurice, being now resolved that the Synod should be held, would lose no time in making a revolution in all the towns through the power he held or could plausibly usurp. Such a course would, in his opinion, lead directly to an unconstitutional and violent subversion of the sovereign rights of each province, to the advantage of the central government. A religious creed would be forced upon Holland and perhaps upon two other provinces which was repugnant to a considerable majority of the people. And this would be done by a majority vote of the States-General, on a matter over which, by the 13th Article of the fundamental compact—the Union of Utrecht—the States-General had no control, each province having reserved the disposition of religious affairs to itself. For let it never be forgotten that the Union of the Netherlands was a compact, a treaty, an agreement between sovereign states. There was no pretence that it was an incorporation, that the people had laid down a constitution, an organic law. The people were never consulted, did not exist, had not for political purposes been invented. It was the great primal defect of their institutions, but the Netherlanders would have been centuries before their age had they been able to remedy that defect. Yet the Netherlanders would have been much behind even that age of bigotry had they admitted the possibility in a free commonwealth, of that most sacred and important of all subjects that concern humanity, religious creed—the relation of man to his Maker—to be regulated by the party vote of a political board.

Page 2889

It was with no thought of treason in his heart or his head therefore that the Advocate now resolved that the States of Holland and the cities of which that college was composed should protect their liberties and privileges, the sum of which in his opinion made up the sovereignty of the province he served, and that they should protect them, if necessary, by force. Force was apprehended. It should be met by force. To be forewarned was to be forearmed. Barneveld forewarned the States of Holland.

On the 4th August 1617, he proposed to that assembly a resolution which was destined to become famous. A majority accepted it after brief debate. It was to this effect.

The States having seen what had befallen in many cities, and especially in the Hague, against the order, liberties, and laws of the land, and having in vain attempted to bring into harmony with the States certain cities which refused to co-operate with the majority, had at last resolved to refuse the National Synod, as conflicting with the sovereignty and laws of Holland. They had thought good to set forth in public print their views as to religious worship, and to take measures to prevent all deeds of violence against persons and property. To this end the regents of cities were authorized in case of need, until otherwise ordained, to enrol men-at-arms for their security and prevention of violence. Furthermore, every one that might complain of what the regents of cities by strength of this resolution might do was ordered to have recourse to no one else than the States of Holland, as no account would be made of anything that might be done or undertaken by the tribunals.

Finally, it was resolved to send a deputation to Prince Maurice, the Princess-Widow, and Prince Henry, requesting them to aid in carrying out this resolution.

Thus the deed was done. The sword was drawn. It was drawn in self-defence and in deliberate answer to the Stadholder's defiance when he rapped his sword hilt in face of the assembly, but still it was drawn. The States of Holland were declared sovereign and supreme. The National Synod was peremptorily rejected. Any decision of the supreme courts of the Union in regard to the subject of this resolution was nullified in advance. Thenceforth this measure of the 4th August was called the "Sharp Resolve." It might prove perhaps to be double-edged.

It was a stroke of grim sarcasm on the part of the Advocate thus solemnly to invite the Stadholder's aid in carrying out a law which was aimed directly at his head; to request his help for those who meant to defeat with the armed hand that National Synod which he had pledged himself to bring about.

The question now arose what sort of men-at-arms it would be well for the city governments to enlist. The officers of the regular garrisons had received distinct orders from Prince Maurice as their military superior to refuse any summons to act in matters proceeding from the religious question. The Prince, who had chief authority over all the

regular troops, had given notice that he would permit nothing to be done against “those of the Reformed religion,” by which he meant the Contra-Remonstrants and them only.

Page 2890

In some cities there were no garrisons, but only train-bands. But the train bands (Schutters) could not be relied on to carry out the Sharp Resolve, for they were almost to a man Contra-Remonstrants. It was therefore determined to enlist what were called "Waartgelders;" soldiers, inhabitants of the place, who held themselves ready to serve in time of need in consideration of a certain wage; mercenaries in short.

This resolution was followed as a matter of course by a solemn protest from Amsterdam and the five cities who acted with her.

On the same day Maurice was duly notified of the passage of the law. His wrath was great. High words passed between him and the deputies. It could hardly have been otherwise expected. Next-day he came before the Assembly to express his sentiments, to complain of the rudeness with which the resolution of 4th August had been communicated to him, and to demand further explanations. Forthwith the Advocate proceeded to set forth the intentions of the States, and demanded that the Prince should assist the magistrates in carrying out the policy decided upon. Reinier Pauw, burgomaster of Amsterdam, fiercely interrupted the oration of Barneveld, saying that although these might be his views, they were not to be held by his Excellency as the opinions of all. The Advocate, angry at the interruption, answered him sternly, and a violent altercation, not unmixed with personalities, arose. Maurice, who kept his temper admirably on this occasion, interfered between the two and had much difficulty in quieting the dispute. He then observed that when he took the oath as stadholder these unfortunate differences had not arisen, but all had been good friends together. This was perfectly true, but he could have added that they might all continue good friends unless the plan of imposing a religious creed upon the minority by a clerical decision were persisted in. He concluded that for love of one of the two great parties he would not violate the oath he had taken to maintain the Reformed religion to the last drop of his blood. Still, with the same 'petitio principii' that the Reformed religion and the dogmas of the Contra-Remonstrants were one and the same thing, he assured the Assembly that the authority of the magistrates would be sustained by him so long as it did not lead to the subversion of religion.

Clearly the time for argument had passed. As Dudley Carleton observed, men had been disputing 'pro aris' long enough. They would soon be fighting 'pro focis.'

In pursuance of the policy laid down by the Sharp Resolution, the States proceeded to assure themselves of the various cities of the province by means of Waartgelders. They sent to the important seaport of Brielle and demanded a new oath from the garrison. It was intimated that the Prince would be soon coming there in person to make himself master of the place, and advice was given to the magistrates to be beforehand

Page 2891

with him. These statements angered Maurice, and angered him the more because they happened to be true. It was also charged that he was pursuing his Leicestrian designs and meant to make himself, by such steps, sovereign of the country. The name of Leicester being a byword of reproach ever since that baffled noble had a generation before left the Provinces in disgrace, it was a matter of course that such comparisons were excessively exasperating. It was fresh enough too in men's memory that the Earl in his Netherland career had affected sympathy with the strictest denomination of religious reformers, and that the profligate worldling and arrogant self-seeker had used the mask of religion to cover flagitious ends. As it had indeed been the object of the party at the head of which the Advocate had all his life acted to raise the youthful Maurice to the stadholderate expressly to foil the plots of Leicester, it could hardly fail to be unpalatable to Maurice to be now accused of acting the part of Leicester.

He inveighed bitterly on the subject before the state council: The state council, in a body, followed him to a meeting of the States-General. Here the Stadholder made a vehement speech and demanded that the States of Holland should rescind the "Sharp Resolution," and should desist from the new oaths required from the soldiery. Barneveld, firm as a rock, met these bitter denunciations. Speaking in the name of Holland, he repelled the idea that the sovereign States of that province were responsible to the state council or to the States-General either. He regretted, as all regretted, the calumnies uttered against the Prince, but in times of such intense excitement every conspicuous man was the mark of calumny.

The Stadholder warmly repudiated Leicestrian designs, and declared that he had been always influenced by a desire to serve his country and maintain the Reformed religion. If he had made mistakes, he desired to be permitted to improve in the future.

Thus having spoken, the soldier retired from the Assembly with the state council at his heels.

The Advocate lost no time in directing the military occupation of the principal towns of Holland, such as Leyden, Gouda, Rotterdam, Schoonhoven, Hoorn, and other cities.

At Leyden especially, where a strong Orange party was with difficulty kept in obedience by the Remonstrant magistracy, it was found necessary to erect a stockade about the town-hall and to plant caltrops and other obstructions in the squares and streets.

The broad space in front; of the beautiful medieval seat of the municipal government, once so sacred for the sublime and pathetic scenes enacted there during the famous siege and in the magistracy of Peter van der Werff, was accordingly enclosed by a solid palisade of oaken planks, strengthened by rows of iron bars with barbed prongs: The entrenchment was called by the populace the Arminian Fort, and the iron spear heads

were baptized Barneveld's teeth. Cannon were planted at intervals along the works, and a company or two of the Waartgelders, armed from head to foot, with snaphances on their shoulders, stood ever ready to issue forth to quell any disturbances. Occasionally a life or two was lost of citizen or soldier, and many doughty blows were interchanged.

Page 2892

It was a melancholy spectacle. No commonwealth could be more fortunate than this republic in possessing two such great leading minds. No two men could be more patriotic than both Stadholder and Advocate. No two men could be prouder, more overbearing, less conciliatory.

"I know *Mons*. Barneveld well," said Sir Ralph Winwood, "and know that he hath great powers and abilities, and malice itself must confess that man never hath done more faithful and powerful service to his country than he. But 'finis coronat opus' and 'il di lodi lacera; oportet imperatorem stantem mori.'"

The cities of Holland were now thoroughly "waartgeldered," and Barneveld having sufficiently shown his "teeth" in that province departed for change of air to Utrecht. His failing health was assigned as the pretext for the visit, although the atmosphere of that city has never been considered especially salubrious in the dog-days.

Meantime the Stadholder remained quiet, but biding his time. He did not choose to provoke a premature conflict in the strongholds of the Arminians as he called them, but with a true military instinct preferred making sure of the ports. Amsterdam, Enkhuyzen, Flushing, being without any effort of his own within his control, he quietly slipped down the river Meuse on the night of the 29th September, accompanied by his brother Frederic Henrys and before six o'clock next morning had introduced a couple of companies of trustworthy troops into Brielle, had summoned the magistrates before him, and compelled them to desist from all further intention of levying mercenaries. Thus all the fortresses which Barneveld had so recently and in such masterly fashion rescued from the grasp of England were now quietly reposing in the hands of the Stadholder.

Maurice thought it not worth his while for the present to quell the mutiny—as he considered it the legal and constitutional defence of vested right—as great jurists like Barneveld and Hugo Grotius accounted the movement—at its "fountain head Leyden or its chief stream Utrecht;" to use the expression of Carleton. There had already been bloodshed in Leyden, a burgher or two having been shot and a soldier stoned to death in the streets, but the Stadholder deemed it unwise to precipitate matters. Feeling himself, with his surpassing military knowledge and with a large majority of the nation at his back, so completely master of the situation, he preferred waiting on events. And there is no doubt that he was proving himself a consummate politician and a perfect master of fence. "He is much beloved and followed both of soldiers and people," said the English ambassador, "he is a man 'innoxiae popularitatis' so as this jealousy cannot well be fastened upon him; and in this cause of religion he stirred not until within these few months he saw he must declare himself or suffer the better party to be overborne."

The chief tribunal-high council so called-of the country soon gave evidence that the "Sharp Resolution" had judged rightly in reckoning on its hostility and in nullifying its decisions in advance.

Page 2893

They decided by a majority vote that the Resolution ought not to be obeyed, but set aside. Amsterdam, and the three or four cities usually acting with her, refused to enlist troops.

Rombout Hoogerbeets, a member of the tribunal, informed Prince Maurice that he "would no longer be present on a bench where men disputed the authority of the States of Holland, which he held to be the supreme sovereignty over him."

This was plain speaking; a distinct enunciation of what the States' right party deemed to be constitutional law.

And what said Maurice in reply?

"I, too, recognize the States of Holland as sovereign; but we might at least listen to each other occasionally."

Hoogerbeets, however, deeming that listening had been carried far enough, decided to leave the tribunal altogether, and to resume the post which he had formerly occupied as Pensionary or chief magistrate of Leyden.

Here he was soon to find himself in the thick of the conflict. Meantime the States-General, in full assembly, on 11th November 1617, voted that the National Synod should be held in the course of the following year. The measure was carried by a strict party vote and by a majority of one. The representatives of each province voting as one, there were four in favour of to three against the Synod. The minority, consisting of Holland, Utrecht, and Overyssel, protested against the vote as an outrageous invasion of the rights of each province, as an act of flagrant tyranny and usurpation.

The minority in the States of Holland, the five cities often named, protested against the protest.

The defective part of the Netherland constitutions could not be better illustrated. The minority of the States of Holland refused to be bound by a majority of the provincial assembly. The minority of the States-General refused to be bound by the majority of the united assembly.

This was reducing politics to an absurdity and making all government impossible. It is however quite certain that in the municipal governments a majority had always governed, and that a majority vote in the provincial assemblies had always prevailed. The present innovation was to govern the States-General by a majority.

Yet viewed by the light of experience and of common sense, it would be difficult to conceive of a more preposterous proceeding than thus to cram a religious creed down the throats of half the population of a country by the vote of a political assembly. But it was the seventeenth and not the nineteenth century.

Moreover, if there were any meaning in words, the 13th Article of Union, reserving especially the disposition over religious matters to each province, had been wisely intended to prevent the possibility of such tyranny.

When the letters of invitation to the separate states and to others were drawing up in the general assembly, the representatives of the three states left the chamber. A solitary individual from Holland remained however, a burgomaster of Amsterdam.

Page 2894

Uytenbogaert, conversing with Barneveld directly afterwards, advised him to accept the vote. Yielding to the decision of the majority, it would be possible, so thought the clergyman, for the great statesman so to handle matters as to mould the Synod to his will, even as he had so long controlled the States-Provincial and the States-General.

“If you are willing to give away the rights of the land,” said the Advocate very sharply, “I am not.”

Probably the priest’s tactics might have proved more adroit than the stony opposition on which Barneveld was resolved.

But it was with the aged statesman a matter of principle, not of policy. His character and his personal pride, the dignity of opinion and office, his respect for constitutional law, were all at stake.

Shallow observers considered the struggle now taking place as a personal one. Lovers of personal government chose to look upon the Advocate’s party as a faction inspired with an envious resolve to clip the wings of the Stadholder, who was at last flying above their heads.

There could be no doubt of the bitter animosity between the two men. There could be no doubt that jealousy was playing the part which that master passion will ever play in all the affairs of life. But there could be no doubt either that a difference of principle as wide as the world separated the two antagonists.

Even so keen an observer as Dudley Carleton, while admitting the man’s intellectual power and unequalled services, could see nothing in the Advocate’s present course but prejudice, obstinacy, and the insanity of pride. “He doth no whit spare himself in pains nor faint in his resolution,” said the Envoy, “wherein notwithstanding he will in all appearance succumb ere afore long, having the disadvantages of a weak body, a weak party, and a weak cause.” But Carleton hated Barneveld, and considered it the chief object of his mission to destroy him, if he could. In so doing he would best carry out the wishes of his sovereign.

The King of Britain had addressed a somewhat equivocal letter to the States-General on the subject of religion in the spring of 1617. It certainly was far from being as satisfactory as, the epistles of 1613 prepared under the Advocate’s instructions, had been, while the exuberant commentary upon the royal text, delivered in full assembly by his ambassador soon after the reception of the letter, was more than usually didactic, offensive, and ignorant. Sir Dudley never omitted an opportunity of imparting instruction to the States-General as to the nature of their constitution and the essential dogmas on which their Church was founded. It is true that the great lawyers and the great theologians of the country were apt to hold very different opinions from his upon those

important subjects, but this was so much the worse for the lawyers and theologians, as time perhaps might prove.

Page 2895

The King in this last missive had proceeded to unsay the advice which he had formerly bestowed upon the States, by complaining that his earlier letters had been misinterpreted. They had been made use of, he said, to authorize the very error against which they had been directed. They had been held to intend the very contrary of what they did mean. He felt himself bound in conscience therefore, finding these differences ready to be “hatched into schisms,” to warn the States once more against pests so pernicious.

Although the royal language was somewhat vague so far as enunciation of doctrine, a point on which he had once confessed himself fallible, was concerned, there was nothing vague in his recommendation of a National Synod. To this the opposition of Barneveld was determined not upon religious but upon constitutional grounds. The confederacy did not constitute a nation, and therefore there could not be a national synod nor a national religion.

Carleton came before the States-General soon afterwards with a prepared oration, wearisome as a fast-day sermon after the third turn of the hour-glass, pragmatical as a schoolmaster’s harangue to fractious little boys.

He divided his lecture into two heads—the peace of the Church, and the peace of the Provinces—starting with the first. “A Jove principium,” he said, “I will begin with that which is both beginning and end. It is the truth of God’s word and its maintenance that is the bond of our common cause. Reasons of state invite us as friends and neighbours by the preservation of our lives and property, but the interest of religion binds us as Christians and brethren to the mutual defence of the liberty of our consciences.”

He then proceeded to point out the only means by which liberty of conscience could be preserved. It was by suppressing all forms of religion but one, and by silencing all religious discussion. Peter Titelman and Philip *ii*. could not have devised a more pithy formula. All that was wanting was the axe and faggot to reduce uniformity to practice. Then liberty of conscience would be complete.

“One must distinguish,” said the Ambassador, “between just liberty and unbridled license, and conclude that there is but one truth single and unique. Those who go about turning their brains into limbecks for distilling new notions in religious matters only distract the union of the Church which makes profession of this unique truth. If it be permitted to one man to publish the writings and fantasies of a sick spirit and for another moved by Christian zeal to reduce this wanderer ‘ad sanam mentem;’ why then ‘patet locus adversus utrumque,’ and the common enemy (the Devil) slips into the fortress.” He then proceeded to illustrate this theory on liberty of conscience by allusions to Conrad Vorstius.

This infamous sectary had in fact reached such a pitch of audacity, said the Ambassador, as not only to inveigh against the eternal power of God but to indulge in irony against the honour of his Majesty King James.

Page 2896

And in what way had he scandalized the government of the Republic? He had dared to say that within its borders there was religious toleration. He had distinctly averred that in the United Provinces heretics were not punished with death or with corporal chastisement.

“He declares openly,” said Carleton, “that contra haereticos etiam vere dictos (ne dum falso et calumniose sic traductos) there is neither sentence of death nor other corporal punishment, so that in order to attract to himself a great following of birds of the name feather he publishes to all the world that here in this country one can live and die a heretic, unpunished, without being arrested and without danger.”

In order to suppress this reproach upon the Republic at which the Ambassador stood aghast, and to prevent the Vorstian doctrines of religious toleration and impunity of heresy from spreading among “the common people, so subject by their natures to embrace new opinions,” he advised of course that “the serpent be sent back to the nest where he was born before the venom had spread through the whole body of the Republic.”

A week afterwards a long reply was delivered on part of the States-General to the Ambassador’s oration. It is needless to say that it was the work of the Advocate, and that it was in conformity with the opinions so often exhibited in the letters to Caron and others of which the reader has seen many samples.

That religious matters were under the control of the civil government, and that supreme civil authority belonged to each one of the seven sovereign provinces, each recognizing no superior within its own sphere, were maxims of state always enforced in the Netherlands and on which the whole religious controversy turned.

“The States-General have always cherished the true Christian Apostolic religion,” they said, “and wished it to be taught under the authority and protection of the legal government of these Provinces in all purity, and in conformity with the Holy Scriptures, to the good people of these Provinces. And My Lords the States and magistrates of the respective provinces, each within their own limits, desire the same.”

They had therefore given express orders to the preachers “to keep the peace by mutual and benign toleration of the different opinions on the one side and the other at least until with full knowledge of the subject the States might otherwise ordain. They had been the more moved to this because his Majesty having carefully examined the opinions of the learned hereon each side had found both consistent with Christian belief and the salvation of souls.”

Page 2897

It was certainly not the highest expression of religious toleration for the civil authority to forbid the clergymen of the country from discussing in their pulpits the knottiest and most mysterious points of the schoolmen lest the “common people” should be puzzled. Nevertheless, where the close union of Church and State and the necessity of one church were deemed matters of course, it was much to secure subordination of the priesthood to the magistracy, while to enjoin on preachers abstention from a single exciting cause of quarrel, on the ground that there was more than one path to salvation, and that mutual toleration was better than mutual persecution, was; in that age, a stride towards religious equality. It was at least an advance on Carleton’s dogma, that there was but one unique and solitary truth, and that to declare heretics not punishable with death was an insult to the government of the Republic.

The States-General answered the Ambassador’s plea, made in the name of his master, for immediate and unguaranteed evacuation of the debatable land by the arguments already so often stated in the Advocate’s instructions to Caron. They had been put to great trouble and expense already in their campaigning and subsequent fortification of important places in the duchies. They had seen the bitter spirit manifested by the Spaniards in the demolition of the churches and houses of Mulheim and other places. “While the affair remained in its present terms of utter uncertainty their Mightinesses,” said the States-General, “find it most objectionable to forsake the places which they have been fortifying and to leave the duchies and all their fellow-religionists, besides the rights of the possessory princes a prey to those who have been hankering for the territories for long years, and who would unquestionably be able to make themselves absolute masters of all within a very few days.”

A few months later Carleton came before the States-General again and delivered another elaborate oration, duly furnished to him by the King, upon the necessity of the National Synod, the comparative merits of Arminianism and Contra-Remonstrantism, together with a full exposition of the constitutions of the Netherlands.

It might be supposed that Barneveld and Grotius and Hoogerbeets knew something of the law and history of their country.

But James knew much better, and so his envoy endeavoured to convince his audience.

He received on the spot a temperate but conclusive reply from the delegates of Holland. They informed him that the war with Spain—the cause of the Utrecht Union—-was not begun about religion but on account of the violation of liberties, chartered rights and privileges, not the least of which rights was that of each province to regulate religious matters within its borders.

Page 2898

A little later a more vehement reply was published anonymously in the shape of a pamphlet called ‘The Balance,’ which much angered the Ambassador and goaded his master almost to frenzy. It was deemed so blasphemous, so insulting to the Majesty of England, so entirely seditious, that James, not satisfied with inditing a rejoinder, insisted through Carleton that a reward should be offered by the States for the detection of the author, in order that he might be condignly punished. This was done by a majority vote, 1000 florins being offered for the discovery of the author and 600 for that of the printer.

Naturally the step was opposed in the States-General; two deputies in particular making themselves conspicuous. One of them was an audacious old gentleman named Brinius of Gelderland, “much corrupted with Arminianism,” so Carleton informed his sovereign. He appears to have inherited his audacity through his pedigree, descending, as it was ludicrously enough asserted he did, from a chief of the Caninefates, the ancient inhabitants of Gelderland, called Brinio. And Brinio the Caninefat had been as famous for his stolid audacity as for his illustrious birth; “Erat in Caninefatibus stolidae audaciae Brinio claritate natalium insigni.”

The patronizing manner in which the Ambassador alluded to the other member of the States-General who opposed the decree was still more diverting. It was “Grotius, the Pensioner of Rotterdam, a young petulant brain, not unknown to your Majesty,” said Carleton.

Two centuries and a half have rolled away, and there are few majesties, few nations, and few individuals to whom the name of that petulant youth is unknown; but how many are familiar with the achievements of the able representative of King James?

Nothing came of the measure, however, and the offer of course helped the circulation of the pamphlet.

It is amusing to see the ferocity thus exhibited by the royal pamphleteer against a rival; especially when one can find no crime in ‘The Balance’ save a stinging and well-merited criticism of a very stupid oration.

Gillis van Ledenberg was generally supposed to be the author of it. Carleton inclined, however, to suspect Grotius, “because,” said he, “having always before been a stranger to my house, he has made me the day before the publication thereof a complimentary visit, although it was Sunday and church time; whereby the Italian proverb, ’Chi ti caresse piu che suole,’ &c.,’ is added to other likelihoods.”

It was subsequently understood however that the pamphlet was written by a Remonstrant preacher of Utrecht, named Jacobus Taurinus; one of those who had been doomed to death by the mutinous government in that city seven years before.

Page 2899

It was now sufficiently obvious that either the governments in the three opposition provinces must be changed or that the National Synod must be imposed by a strict majority vote in the teeth of the constitution and of vigorous and eloquent protests drawn up by the best lawyers in the country. The Advocate and Grotius recommended a provincial synod first and, should that not succeed in adjusting the differences of church government, then the convocation of a general or oecumenical synod. They resisted the National Synod because, in their view, the Provinces were not a nation. A league of seven sovereign and independent Mates was all that legally existed in the Netherlands. It was accordingly determined that the governments should be changed, and the Stadholder set himself to prepare the way for a thorough and, if possible, a bloodless revolution. He departed on the 27th November for a tour through the chief cities, and before leaving the Hague addressed an earnest circular letter to the various municipalities of Holland.

A more truly dignified, reasonable, right royal letter, from the Stadholder's point of view, could not have been indited. The Imperial "we" breathing like a morning breeze through the whole of it blew away all legal and historical mistiness.

But the clouds returned again nevertheless. Unfortunately for Maurice it could not be argued by the pen, however it might be proved by the sword, that the Netherlands constituted a nation, and that a convocation of doctors of divinity summoned by a body of envoys had the right to dictate a creed to seven republics.

All parties were agreed on one point. There must be unity of divine worship. The territory of the Netherlands was not big enough to hold two systems of religion, two forms of Christianity, two sects of Protestantism. It was big enough to hold seven independent and sovereign states, but would be split into fragments—resolved into chaos—should there be more than one Church or if once a schism were permitted in that Church. Grotius was as much convinced of this as Gomarus. And yet the 13th Article of the Union stared them all in the face, forbidding the hideous assumptions now made by the general government. Perhaps no man living fully felt its import save Barneveld alone. For groping however dimly and hesitatingly towards the idea of religious liberty, of general toleration, he was denounced as a Papist, an atheist, a traitor, a miscreant, by the fanatics for the sacerdotal and personal power. Yet it was a pity that he could never contemplate the possibility of his country's throwing off the swaddling clothes of provincialism which had wrapped its infancy. Doubtless history, law, tradition, and usage pointed to the independent sovereignty of each province. Yet the period of the Truce was precisely the time when a more generous constitution, a national incorporation might have been constructed to take the place of the loose confederacy

Page 2900

by which the gigantic war had been fought out. After all, foreign powers had no connection with the States, and knew only the Union with which and with which alone they made treaties, and the reality of sovereignty in each province was as ridiculous as in theory it was impregnable. But Barneveld, under the modest title of Advocate of one province, had been in reality president and prime minister of the whole commonwealth. He had himself been the union and the sovereignty. It was not wonderful that so imperious a nature objected to transfer its powers to the Church, to the States-General, or to Maurice.

Moreover, when nationality assumed the unlovely form of rigid religious uniformity; when Union meant an exclusive self-governed Church enthroned above the State, responsible to no civic authority and no human law, the boldest patriot might shiver at emerging from provincialism.

CHAPTER XV.

The Commonwealth bent on Self-destruction—Evils of a Confederate System of Government—Rem Bischop's House sacked—Aerssens' unceasing Efforts against Barneveld—The Advocate's Interview with Maurice—The States of Utrecht raise the Troops—The Advocate at Utrecht—Barneveld urges mutual Toleration—Barneveld accused of being Partisan of Spain—Carleton takes his Departure.

It is not cheerful after widely contemplating the aspect of Christendom in the year of supreme preparation to examine with the minuteness absolutely necessary the narrow theatre to which the political affairs of the great republic had been reduced.

That powerful commonwealth, to which the great party of the Reformation naturally looked for guidance in the coming conflict, seemed bent on self-destruction. The microcosm of the Netherlands now represented, alas! the war of elements going on without on a world-wide scale. As the Calvinists and Lutherans of Germany were hotly attacking each other even in sight of the embattled front of Spain and the League, so the Gomarites and the Arminians by their mutual rancour were tearing the political power of the Dutch Republic to shreds and preventing her from assuming a great part in the crisis. The consummate soldier, the unrivalled statesman, each superior in his sphere to any contemporary rival, each supplementing the other, and making up together, could they have been harmonized, a double head such as no political organism then existing could boast, were now in hopeless antagonism to each other. A mass of hatred had been accumulated against the Advocate with which he found it daily more and more difficult to struggle. The imperious, rugged, and suspicious nature of the Stadholder had been steadily wrought upon by the almost devilish acts of Francis Aerssens until he had come to look upon his father's most faithful adherent, his own

early preceptor in statesmanship and political supporter, as an antagonist, a conspirator, and a tyrant.

Page 2901

The soldier whose unrivalled ability, experience, and courage in the field should have placed him at the very head of the great European army of defence against the general crusade upon Protestantism, so constantly foretold by Barneveld, was now to be engaged in making bloodless but mischievous warfare against an imaginary conspiracy and a patriot foe.

The Advocate, keeping steadily in view the great principles by which his political life had been guided, the supremacy of the civil authority in any properly organized commonwealth over the sacerdotal and military, found himself gradually forced into mortal combat with both. To the individual sovereignty of each province he held with the tenacity of a lawyer and historian. In that he found the only clue through the labyrinth which ecclesiastical and political affairs presented. So close was the tangle, so confused the medley, that without this slender guide all hope of legal issue seemed lost.

No doubt the difficulty of the doctrine of individual sovereignty was great, some of the provinces being such slender morsels of territory, with resources so trivial, as to make the name of sovereignty ludicrous. Yet there could be as little doubt that no other theory was tenable. If so powerful a mind as that of the Advocate was inclined to strain the theory to its extreme limits, it was because in the overshadowing superiority of the one province Holland had been found the practical remedy for the imbecility otherwise sure to result from such provincial and meagre federalism.

Moreover, to obtain Union by stretching all the ancient historical privileges and liberties of the separate provinces upon the Procrustean bed of a single dogma, to look for nationality only in common subjection to an infallible priesthood, to accept a Catechism as the palladium upon which the safety of the State was to depend for all time, and beyond which there was to be no further message from Heaven—such was not healthy constitutionalism in the eyes of a great statesman. No doubt that without the fervent spirit of Calvinism it would have been difficult to wage war with such immortal hate as the Netherlands had waged it, no doubt the spirit of republican and even democratic liberty lay hidden within that rigid husk, but it was dishonour to the martyrs who had died by thousands at the stake and on the battle field for the rights of conscience if the only result of their mighty warfare against wrong had been to substitute a new dogma for an old one, to stifle for ever the right of free enquiry, theological criticism, and the hope of further light from on high, and to proclaim it a libel on the Republic that within its borders all heretics, whether Arminian or Papist, were safe from the death penalty or even from bodily punishment. A theological union instead of a national one and obtained too at the sacrifice of written law and immemorial tradition, a congress in which clerical deputations from all the provinces and from foreign nations should prescribe to all Netherlanders an immutable creed and a shadowy constitution, were not the true remedies for the evils of confederacy, nor, if they had been, was the time an appropriate one for their application.

Page 2902

It was far too early in the world's history to hope for such redistribution of powers and such a modification of the social compact as would place in separate spheres the Church and the State, double the sanctions and the consolations of religion by removing it from the pollutions of political warfare, and give freedom to individual conscience by securing it from the interference of government.

It is melancholy to see the Republic thus perversely occupying its energies. It is melancholy to see the great soldier becoming gradually more ardent for battle with Barneveld and Uytenbogaert than with Spinola and Bucquoy, against whom he had won so many imperishable laurels. It is still sadder to see the man who had been selected by Henry *iv*. as the one statesman of Europe to whom he could confide his great projects for the pacification of Christendom, and on whom he could depend for counsel and support in schemes which, however fantastic in some of their details, had for their object to prevent the very European war of religion against which Barneveld had been struggling, now reduced to defend himself against suspicion hourly darkening and hatred growing daily more insane.

The eagle glance and restless wing, which had swept the whole political atmosphere, now caged within the stifling limits of theological casuistry and personal rivalry were afflicting to contemplate.

The evils resulting from a confederate system of government, from a league of petty sovereignties which dared not become a nation, were as woefully exemplified in the United Provinces as they were destined to be more than a century and a half later, and in another hemisphere, before that most fortunate and sagacious of written political instruments, the American Constitution of 1787, came to remedy the weakness of the old articles of Union.

Meantime the Netherlands were a confederacy, not a nation. Their general government was but a committee.

It could ask of, but not command, the separate provinces. It had no dealings with nor power over the inhabitants of the country; it could say "Thou shalt" neither to state nor citizen; it could consult only with corporations—fictitious and many-headed personages—itself incorporate. There was no first magistrate, no supreme court, no commander-in-chief, no exclusive mint nor power of credit, no national taxation, no central house of representation and legislation, no senate. Unfortunately it had one church, and out of this single matrix of centralism was born more discord than had been produced by all the centrifugal forces of provincialism combined.

Page 2903

There had been working substitutes found, as we well know, for the deficiencies of this constitution, but the Advocate felt himself bound to obey and enforce obedience to the laws and privileges of his country so long as they remained without authorized change. His country was the Province of Holland, to which his allegiance was due and whose servant he was. That there was but one church paid and sanctioned by law, he admitted, but his efforts were directed to prevent discord within that church, by counselling moderation, conciliation, mutual forbearance, and abstention from irritating discussion of dogmas deemed by many thinkers and better theologians than himself not essential to salvation. In this he was much behind his age or before it. He certainly was not with the majority.

And thus, while the election of Ferdinand had given the signal of war all over Christendom, while from the demolished churches in Bohemia the tocsin was still sounding, whose vibrations were destined to be heard a generation long through the world, there was less sympathy felt with the call within the territory of the great republic of Protestantism than would have seemed imaginable a few short years before. The capture of the Cloister Church at the Hague in the summer of 1617 seemed to minds excited by personal rivalries and minute theological controversy a more momentous event than the destruction of the churches in the Klostergrab in the following December. The triumph of Gomarism in a single Dutch city inspired more enthusiasm for the moment than the deadly buffet to European Protestantism could inspire dismay.

The church had been carried and occupied, as it were, by force, as if an enemy's citadel. It seemed necessary to associate the idea of practical warfare with a movement which might have been a pacific clerical success. Barneveld and those who acted with him, while deploring the intolerance out of which the schism had now grown to maturity, had still hoped for possible accommodation of the quarrel. They dreaded popular tumults leading to oppression of the magistracy by the mob or the soldiery and ending in civil war. But what was wanted by the extreme partisans on either side was not accommodation but victory.

"Religious differences are causing much trouble and discontents in many cities," he said. "At Amsterdam there were in the past week two assemblages of boys and rabble which did not disperse without violence, crime, and robbery. The brother of Professor Episcopius (Rem Bischop) was damaged to the amount of several thousands. We are still hoping that some better means of accommodation may be found."

Page 2904

The calmness with which the Advocate spoke of these exciting and painful events is remarkable. It was exactly a week before the date of his letter that this riot had taken place at Amsterdam; very significant in its nature and nearly tragical in its results. There were no Remonstrant preachers left in the city, and the people of that persuasion were excluded from the Communion service. On Sunday morning, 17th February (1617), a furious mob set upon the house of Rem Bischop, a highly respectable and wealthy citizen, brother of the Remonstrant professor Episcopius, of Leyden. The house, an elegant mansion in one of the principal streets, was besieged and after an hour's resistance carried by storm. The pretext of the assault was that Arminian preaching was going on within its walls, which was not the fact. The mistress of the house, half clad, attempted to make her escape by the rear of the building, was pursued by the rabble with sticks and stones, and shrieks of "Kill the Arminian harlot, strike her dead," until she fortunately found refuge in the house of a neighbouring carpenter. There the hunted creature fell insensible on the ground, the master of the house refusing to give her up, though the maddened mob surged around it, swearing that if the "Arminian harlot"—as respectable a matron as lived in the city—were not delivered over to them, they would tear the house to pieces. The hope of plunder and of killing Rem Bischop himself drew them at last back to his mansion. It was thoroughly sacked; every portable article of value, linen, plate, money, furniture, was carried off, the pictures and objects of art destroyed, the house gutted from top to bottom. A thousand spectators were looking on placidly at the work of destruction as they returned from church, many of them with Bible and Psalm-book in their hands. The master effected his escape over the roof into an adjoining building. One of the ringleaders, a carpenter by trade, was arrested carrying an armful of valuable plunder. He was asked by the magistrate why he had entered the house. "Out of good zeal," he replied; "to help beat and kill the Arminians who were holding conventicle there." He was further asked why he hated the Arminians so much. "Are we to suffer such folk here," he replied, "who preach the vile doctrine that God has created one man for damnation and another for salvation?"—thus ascribing the doctrine of the church of which he supposed himself a member to the Arminians whom he had been plundering and wished to kill.

Rem Bischop received no compensation for the damage and danger; the general cry in the town being that the money he was receiving from Barneveld and the King of Spain would make him good even if not a stone of the house had been left standing. On the following Thursday two elders of the church council waited upon and informed him that he must in future abstain from the Communion service.

Page 2905

It may well be supposed that the virtual head of the government liked not the triumph of mob law, in the name of religion, over the civil authority. The Advocate was neither democrat nor demagogue. A lawyer, a magistrate, and a noble, he had but little sympathy with the humbler classes, which he was far too much in the habit of designating as rabble and populace. Yet his anger was less against them than against the priests, the foreigners, the military and diplomatic mischief-makers, by whom they were set upon to dangerous demonstrations. The old patrician scorned the arts by which highborn demagogues in that as in every age affect adulation for inferiors whom they despise. It was his instinct to protect, and guide the people, in whom he recognized no chartered nor inherent right to govern. It was his resolve, so long as breath was in him, to prevent them from destroying life and property and subverting the government under the leadership of an inflamed priesthood.

It was with this intention, as we have just seen, and in order to avoid bloodshed, anarchy, and civil war in the streets of every town and village, that a decisive but in the Advocate's opinion a perfectly legal step had been taken by the States of Holland. It had become necessary to empower the magistracies of towns to defend themselves by enrolled troops against mob violence and against an enforced synod considered by great lawyers as unconstitutional.

Aerssens resided in Zealand, and the efforts of that ex-ambassador were unceasing to excite popular animosity against the man he hated and to trouble the political waters in which no man knew better than he how to cast the net.

"The States of Zealand," said the Advocate to the ambassador in London, "have a deputation here about the religious differences, urging the holding of a National Synod according to the King's letters, to which some other provinces and some of the cities of Holland incline. The questions have not yet been defined by a common synod, so that a national one could make no definition, while the particular synods and clerical personages are so filled with prejudices and so bound by mutual engagements of long date as to make one fear an unfruitful issue. We are occupied upon this point in our assembly of Holland to devise some compromise and to discover by what means these difficulties may be brought into a state of tranquillity."

It will be observed that in all these most private and confidential utterances of the Advocate a tone of extreme moderation, an anxious wish to save the Provinces from dissensions, dangers, and bloodshed, is distinctly visible. Never is he betrayed into vindictive, ambitious, or self-seeking expressions, while sometimes, although rarely, despondent in mind. Nor was his opposition to a general synod absolute. He was probably persuaded however, as we have just seen, that it should of necessity be preceded by provincial ones, both in due regard to the laws of the land and to the true definition of the points to be submitted to its decision. He had small hope of a successful result from it.

Page 2906

The British king gave him infinite distress. As towards France so towards England the Advocate kept steadily before him the necessity of deferring to powerful sovereigns whose friendship was necessary to the republic he served, however misguided, perverse, or incompetent those monarchs might be.

“I had always hoped,” he said, “that his Majesty would have adhered to his original written advice, that such questions as these ought to be quietly settled by authority of law and not by ecclesiastical persons, and I still hope that his Majesty’s intention is really to that effect, although he speaks of synods.”

A month later he felt even more encouraged. “The last letter of his Majesty concerning our religious questions,” he said, “has given rise to various constructions, but the best advised, who have peace and unity at heart, understand the King’s intention to be to conserve the state of these Provinces and the religion in its purity. My hope is that his Majesty’s good opinion will be followed and adopted according to the most appropriate methods.”

Can it be believed that the statesman whose upright patriotism, moderation, and nobleness of purpose thus breathed through every word spoken by him in public or whispered to friends was already held up by a herd of ravening slanderers to obloquy as a traitor and a tyrant?

He was growing old and had suffered much from illness during this eventful summer, but his anxiety for the Commonwealth, caused by these distressing and superfluous squabbles, were wearing into him more deeply than years or disease could do.

“Owing to my weakness and old age I can’t go up-stairs as well as I used,” he said,—-[Barneveld to Caron 31 July and 21 Aug. 1617. (H. Arch. *Ms*.)]—“and these religious dissensions cause me sometimes such disturbance of mind as will ere long become intolerable, because of my indisposition and because of the cry of my heart at the course people are pursuing here. I reflect that at the time of Duke Casimir and the Prince of Chimay exactly such a course was held in Flanders and in Lord Leicester’s time in the city of Utrecht, as is best known to yourself. My hope is fixed on the Lord God Almighty, and that He will make those well ashamed who are laying anything to heart save his honour and glory and the welfare of our country with maintenance of its freedom and laws. I mean unchangeably to live and die for them . . . . Believe firmly that all representations to the contrary are vile calumnies.”

Before leaving for Vianen in the middle of August of this year (1617) the Advocate had an interview with the Prince. There had been no open rupture between them, and Barneveld was most anxious to avoid a quarrel with one to whose interests and honour he had always been devoted. He did not cling to power nor office. On the contrary, he had repeatedly importuned the States to accept his resignation, hoping that perhaps these unhappy dissensions might be quieted

Page 2907

by his removal from the scene. He now told the Prince that the misunderstanding between them arising from these religious disputes was so painful to his heart that he would make and had made every possible effort towards conciliation and amicable settlement of the controversy. He saw no means now, he said, of bringing about unity, unless his Excellency were willing to make some proposition for arrangement. This he earnestly implored the Prince to do, assuring him of his sincere and upright affection for him and his wish to support such measures to the best of his ability and to do everything for the furtherance of his reputation and necessary authority. He was so desirous of this result, he said, that he would propose now as he did at the time of the Truce negotiations to lay down all his offices, leaving his Excellency to guide the whole course of affairs according to his best judgment. He had already taken a resolution, if no means of accommodation were possible, to retire to his Gunterstein estate and there remain till the next meeting of the assembly; when he would ask leave to retire for at least a year; in order to occupy himself with a revision and collation of the charters, laws, and other state papers of the country which were in his keeping, and which it was needful to bring into an orderly condition. Meantime some scheme might be found for arranging the religious differences, more effective than any he had been able to devise.

His appeal seems to have glanced powerlessly upon the iron reticence of Maurice, and the Advocate took his departure disheartened. Later in the autumn, so warm a remonstrance was made to him by the leading nobles and deputies of Holland against his contemplated withdrawal from his post that it seemed a dereliction of duty on his part to retire. He remained to battle with the storm and to see “with anguish of heart,” as he expressed it, the course religious affairs were taking.

The States of Utrecht on the 26th August resolved that on account of the gathering of large masses of troops in the countries immediately adjoining their borders, especially in the Episcopate of Cologne, by aid of Spanish money, it was expedient for them to enlist a protective force of six companies of regular soldiers in order to save the city from sudden and overwhelming attack by foreign troops.

Even if the danger from without were magnified in this preamble, which is by no means certain, there seemed to be no doubt on the subject in the minds of the magistrates. They believed that they had the right to protect and that they were bound to protect their ancient city from sudden assault, whether by Spanish soldiers or by organized mobs attempting, as had been done in Rotterdam, Oudewater, and other towns, to overawe the civil authority in the interest of the Contra-Remonstrants.

Page 2908

Six nobles of Utrecht were accordingly commissioned to raise the troops. A week later they had been enlisted, sworn to obey in all things the States of Utrecht, and to take orders from no one else. Three days later the States of Utrecht addressed a letter to their Mightinesses the States-General and to his Excellency the Prince, notifying them that for the reasons stated in the resolution cited the six companies had been levied. There seemed in these proceedings to be no thought of mutiny or rebellion, the province considering itself as acting within its unquestionable rights as a sovereign state and without any exaggeration of the imperious circumstances of the case.

Nor did the States-General and the Stadholder at that moment affect to dispute the rights of Utrecht, nor raise a doubt as to the legality of the proceedings. The committee sent thither by the States-General, the Prince, and the council of state in their written answer to the letter of the Utrecht government declared the reasons given for the enrolment of the six companies to be insufficient and the measure itself highly dangerous. They complained, but in very courteous language, that the soldiers had been levied without giving the least notice thereof to the general government, without asking its advice, or waiting for any communication from it, and they reminded the States of Utrecht that they might always rely upon the States-General and his Excellency, who were still ready, as they had been seven years before (1610), to protect them against every enemy and any danger.

The conflict between a single province of the confederacy and the authority of the general government had thus been brought to a direct issue; to the test of arms. For, notwithstanding the preamble to the resolution of the Utrecht Assembly just cited, there could be little question that the resolve itself was a natural corollary of the famous “Sharp Resolution,” passed by the States of Holland three weeks before. Utrecht was in arms to prevent, among other things at least, the forcing upon them by a majority of the States-General of the National Synod to which they were opposed, the seizure of churches by the Contra-Remonstrants, and the destruction of life and property by inflamed mobs.

There is no doubt that Barneveld deeply deplored the issue, but that he felt himself bound to accept it. The innate absurdity of a constitutional system under which each of the seven members was sovereign and independent and the head was at the mercy of the members could not be more flagrantly illustrated. In the bloody battles which seemed impending in the streets of Utrecht and in all the principal cities of the Netherlands between the soldiers of sovereign states and soldiers of a general government which was not sovereign, the letter of the law and the records of history were unquestionably on the aide of the provincial and against the general authority. Yet to nullify the authority of the States-General by force of arms at this supreme moment was to stultify all government whatever. It was an awful dilemma, and it is difficult here fully to sympathize with the Advocate, for he it was who inspired, without dictating, the course of the Utrecht proceedings.

Page 2909

With him patriotism seemed at this moment to dwindle into provincialism, the statesman to shrink into the lawyer.

Certainly there was no guilt in the proceedings. There was no crime in the heart of the Advocate. He had exhausted himself with appeals in favour of moderation, conciliation, compromise. He had worked night and day with all the energy of a pure soul and a great mind to assuage religious hatreds and avert civil dissensions. He was overpowered. He had frequently desired to be released from all his functions, but as dangers thickened over the Provinces, he felt it his duty so long as he remained at his post to abide by the law as the only anchor in the storm. Not rising in his mind to the height of a national idea, and especially averse from it when embodied in the repulsive form of religious uniformity, he did not shrink from a contest which he had not provoked, but had done his utmost to avert. But even then he did not anticipate civil war. The enrolling of the Waartgelders was an armed protest, a symbol of legal conviction rather than a serious effort to resist the general government. And this is the chief justification of his course from a political point of view. It was ridiculous to suppose that with a few hundred soldiers hastily enlisted—and there were less than 1800 Waartgelders levied throughout the Provinces and under the orders of civil magistrates—a serious contest was intended against a splendidly disciplined army of veteran troops, commanded by the first general of the age.

From a legal point of view Barneveld considered his position impregnable.

The controversy is curious, especially for Americans, and for all who are interested in the analysis of federal institutions and of republican principles, whether aristocratic or democratic. The States of Utrecht replied in decorous but firm language to the committee of the States-General that they had raised the six companies in accordance with their sovereign right so to do, and that they were resolved to maintain them. They could not wait as they had been obliged to do in the time of the Earl of Leicester and more recently in 1610 until they had been surprised and overwhelmed by the enemy before the States-General and his Excellency the Prince could come to their rescue. They could not suffer all the evils of tumults, conspiracies, and foreign invasion, without defending themselves.

Making use, they said, of the right of sovereignty which in their province belonged to them alone, they thought it better to prevent in time and by convenient means such fire and mischief than to look on while it kindled and spread into a conflagration, and to go about imploring aid from their fellow confederates who, God better it, had enough in these times to do at home. This would only be to bring them as well as this province into trouble, disquiet, and expense. “My Lords the States of Utrecht have conserved and continually exercised this right of sovereignty in its entireness ever since renouncing the King of Spain. Every contract, ordinance, and instruction of the States-General has been in conformity with it, and the States of Utrecht are convinced that the States of not one of their confederate provinces would yield an atom of its sovereignty.”

Page 2910

They reminded the general government that by the 1st article of the “Closer Union” of Utrecht, on which that assembly was founded, it was bound to support the States of the respective provinces and strengthen them with counsel, treasure, and blood if their respective rights, more especially their individual sovereignty, the most precious of all, should be assailed. To refrain from so doing would be to violate a solemn contract. They further reminded the council of state that by its institution the States-Provincial had not abdicated their respective sovereignties, but had reserved it in all matters not specifically mentioned in the original instruction by which it was created.

Two days afterwards Arnold van Randwyck and three other commissioners were instructed by the general government to confer with the States of Utrecht, to tell them that their reply was deemed unsatisfactory, that their reasons for levying soldiers in times when all good people should be seeking to restore harmony and mitigate dissension were insufficient, and to request them to disband those levies without prejudice in so doing to the laws and liberties of the province and city of Utrecht.

Here was perhaps an opening for a compromise, the instruction being not without ingenuity, and the word sovereignty in regard either to the general government or the separate provinces being carefully omitted. Soon afterwards, too, the States-General went many steps farther in the path of concession, for they made another appeal to the government of Utrecht to disband the Waartgelders on the ground of expediency, and in so doing almost expressly admitted the doctrine of provincial sovereignty. It is important in regard to subsequent events to observe this virtual admission.

“Your Honours lay especial stress upon the right of sovereignty as belonging to you alone in your province,” they said, “and dispute therefore at great length upon the power and authority of the Generality, of his Excellency, and of the state council. But you will please to consider that there is here no question of this, as our commissioners had no instructions to bring this into dispute in the least, and most certainly have not done so. We have only in effect questioned whether that which one has an undoubted right to do can at all times be appropriately and becomingly done, whether it was fitting that your Honours, contrary to custom, should undertake these new levies upon a special oath and commission, and effectively complete the measure without giving the slightest notice thereof to the Generality.”

It may fairly be said that the question in debate was entirely conceded in this remarkable paper, which was addressed by the States-General, the Prince-Stadholder, and the council of state to the government of Utrecht. It should be observed, too, that while distinctly repudiating the intention of disputing the sovereignty of that province, they carefully abstain from using the word in relation to themselves, speaking only of the might and authority of the Generality, the Prince, and the council.

Page 2911

There was now a pause in the public discussion. The soldiers were not disbanded, as the States of Utrecht were less occupied with establishing the soundness of their theory than with securing its practical results. They knew very well, and the Advocate knew very well, that the intention to force a national synod by a majority vote of the Assembly of the States-General existed more strongly than ever, and they meant to resist it to the last. The attempt was in their opinion an audacious violation of the fundamental pact on which the Confederacy was founded. Its success would be to establish the sacerdotal power in triumph over the civil authority.

During this period the Advocate was resident in Utrecht. For change of air, ostensibly at least, he had absented himself from the seat of government, and was during several weeks under the hands of his old friend and physician Dr. Saul. He was strictly advised to abstain altogether from political business, but he might as well have attempted to abstain from food and drink. Gillis van Ledenberg, secretary of the States of Utrecht, visited him frequently. The proposition to enlist the Waartgelders had been originally made in the Assembly by its president, and warmly seconded by van Ledenberg, who doubtless conferred afterwards with Barneveld in person, but informally and at his lodgings.

It was almost inevitable that this should be the case, nor did the Advocate make much mystery as to the course of action which he deemed indispensable at this period. Believing it possible that some sudden and desperate attempt might be made by evil disposed people, he agreed with the States of Utrecht in the propriety of taking measures of precaution. They were resolved not to look quietly on while soldiers and rabble under guidance perhaps of violent Contra-Remonstrant preachers took possession of the churches and even of the city itself, as had already been done in several towns.

The chief practical object of enlisting the six companies was that the city might be armed against popular tumults, and they feared that the ordinary military force might be withdrawn.

When Captain Hartvelt, in his own name and that of the other officers of those companies, said that they were all resolved never to use their weapons against the Stadholder or the States-General, he was answered that they would never be required to do so. They, however, made oath to serve against those who should seek to trouble the peace of the Province of Utrecht in ecclesiastical or political matters, and further against all enemies of the common country. At the same time it was deemed expedient to guard against a surprise of any kind and to keep watch and ward.

“I cannot quite believe in the French companies,” said the Advocate in a private billet to Ledenberg. “It would be extremely well that not only good watch should be kept at the city gates, but also that one might from above and below the river Lek be assuredly advised from the nearest cities if any soldiers are coming up or down, and that the same

might be done in regard to Amersfoort." At the bottom of this letter, which was destined to become historical and will be afterwards referred to, the Advocate wrote, as he not unfrequently did, upon his private notes, "When read, burn, and send me back the two enclosed letters."

Page 2912

The letter lies in the Archives unburned to this day, but, harmless as it looked, it was to serve as a nail in more than one coffin.

In his confidential letters to trusted friends he complained of “great physical debility growing out of heavy sorrow,” and described himself as entering upon his seventy-first year and no longer fit for hard political labour. The sincere grief, profound love of country, and desire that some remedy might be found for impending disaster, is stamped upon all his utterances whether official or secret.

“The troubles growing out of the religious differences,” he said, “are running into all sorts of extremities. It is feared that an attempt will be made against the laws of the land through extraordinary ways, and by popular tumults to take from the supreme authority of the respective provinces the right to govern clerical persons and regulate clerical disputes, and to place it at the disposition of ecclesiastics and of a National Synod.

“It is thought too that the soldiers will be forbidden to assist the civil supreme power and the government of cities in defending themselves from acts of violence which under pretext of religion will be attempted against the law and the commands of the magistrates.

“This seems to conflict with the common law of the respective provinces, each of which from all times had right of sovereignty and supreme authority within its territory and specifically reserved it in all treaties and especially in that of the Nearer Union . . . . The provinces have always regulated clerical matters each for itself. The Province of Utrecht, which under the pretext of religion is now most troubled, made stipulations to this effect, when it took his Excellency for governor, even more stringent than any others. As for Holland, she never imagined that one could ever raise a question on the subject . . . . All good men ought to do their best to prevent the enemies to the welfare of these Provinces from making profit out of our troubles.”

The whole matter he regarded as a struggle between the clergy and the civil power for mastery over the state, as an attempt to subject provincial autonomy to the central government purely in the interest of the priesthood of a particular sect. The remedy he fondly hoped for was moderation and union within the Church itself. He could never imagine the necessity for this ferocious animosity not only between Christians but between two branches of the Reformed Church. He could never be made to believe that the Five Points of the Remonstrance had dug an abyss too deep and wide ever to be bridged between brethren lately of one faith as of one fatherland. He was unceasing in his prayers and appeals for “mutual toleration on the subject of predestination.” Perhaps the bitterness, almost amounting to frenzy, with which abstruse points of casuistry were then debated, and which converted differences of opinion upon metaphysical divinity into deadly hatred and thirst for blood, is already obsolete or on the road to become so. If so, then was Barneveld in advance of his age, and it would

have been better for the peace of the world and the progress of Christianity if more of his contemporaries had placed themselves on his level.

Page 2913

He was no theologian, but he believed himself to be a Christian, and he certainly was a thoughtful and a humble one. He had not the arrogance to pierce behind the veil and assume to read the inscrutable thoughts of the Omnipotent. It was a cruel fate that his humility upon subjects which he believed to be beyond the scope of human reason should have been tortured by his enemies into a crime, and that because he hoped for religious toleration he should be accused of treason to the Commonwealth.

“Believe and cause others to believe,” he said, “that I am and with the grace of God hope to continue an upright patriot as I have proved myself to be in these last forty-two years spent in the public service. In the matter of differential religious points I remain of the opinions which I have held for more than fifty years, and in which I hope to live and die, to wit, that a good Christian man ought to believe that he is predestined to eternal salvation through God’s grace, giving for reasons that he through God’s grace has a firm belief that his salvation is founded purely on God’s grace and the expiation of our sins through our Saviour Jesus Christ, and that if he should fall into any sins his firm trust is that God will not let him perish in them, but mercifully turn him to repentance, so that he may continue in the same belief to the last.”

These expressions were contained in a letter to Caron with the intention doubtless that they should be communicated to the King of Great Britain, and it is a curious illustration of the spirit of the age, this picture of the leading statesman of a great republic unfolding his religious convictions for private inspection by the monarch of an allied nation. More than anything else it exemplifies the close commixture of theology, politics, and diplomacy in that age, and especially in those two countries.

Formerly, as we have seen, the King considered a too curious fathoming of divine mysteries as highly reprehensible, particularly for the common people. Although he knew more about them than any one else, he avowed that even his knowledge in this respect was not perfect. It was matter of deep regret with the Advocate that his Majesty had not held to his former positions, and that he had disowned his original letters.

“I believe my sentiments thus expressed,” he said, “to be in accordance with Scripture, and I have always held to them without teasing my brains with the precise decrees of reprobation, foreknowledge, or the like, as matters above my comprehension. I have always counselled Christian moderation. The States of Holland have followed the spirit of his Majesty’s letters, but our antagonists have rejected them and with seditious talk, sermons, and the spreading of infamous libels have brought matters to their present condition. There have been excesses on the other side as well.”

Page 2914

He then made a slight, somewhat shadowy allusion to schemes known to be afloat for conferring the sovereignty upon Maurice. We have seen that at former periods he had entertained this subject and discussed it privately with those who were not only friendly but devoted to the Stadholder, and that he had arrived at the conclusion that it would not be for the interest of the Prince to encourage the project. Above all he was sternly opposed to the idea of attempting to compass it by secret intrigue. Should such an arrangement be publicly discussed and legally completed, it would not meet with his unconditional opposition.

“The Lord God knows,” he said, “whether underneath all these movements does not lie the design of the year 1600, well known to you. As for me, believe that I am and by God’s grace hope to remain, what I always was, an upright patriot, a defender of the true Christian religion, of the public authority, and of all the power that has been and in future may be legally conferred upon his Excellency. Believe that all things said, written, or spread to the contrary are falsehoods and calumnies.”

He was still in Utrecht, but about to leave for the Hague, with health somewhat improved and in better spirits in regard to public matters.

“Although I have entered my seventy-first year,” he said, “I trust still to be of some service to the Commonwealth and to my friends . . . . Don’t consider an arrangement of our affairs desperate. I hope for better things.”

Soon after his return he was waited upon one Sunday evening, late in October—being obliged to keep his house on account of continued indisposition—by a certain solicitor named Nordlingen and informed that the Prince was about to make a sudden visit to Leyden at four o’clock next morning.

Barneveld knew that the burgomasters and regents were holding a great banquet that night, and that many of them would probably have been indulging in potations too deep to leave them fit for serious business. The agitation of people’s minds at that moment made the visit seem rather a critical one, as there would probably be a mob collected to see the Stadholder, and he was anxious both in the interest of the Prince and the regents and of both religious denominations that no painful incidents should occur if it was in his power to prevent them.

He was aware that his son-in-law, Cornelis van der Myle, had been invited to the banquet, and that he was wont to carry his wine discreetly. He therefore requested Nordlingen to proceed to Leyden that night and seek an interview with van der Myle without delay. By thus communicating the intelligence of the expected visit to one who, he felt sure, would do his best to provide for a respectful and suitable reception of the Prince, notwithstanding the exhilarated condition in which the magistrates would probably find themselves, the Advocate hoped to prevent any riot or tumultuous

demonstration of any kind. At least he would act conformably to his duty and keep his conscience clear should disasters ensue.

Page 2915

Later in the night he learned that Maurice was going not to Leyden but to Delft, and he accordingly despatched a special messenger to arrive before dawn at Leyden in order to inform van der Myle of this change in the Prince's movements. Nothing seemed simpler or more judicious than these precautions on the part of Barneveld. They could not fail, however, to be tortured into sedition, conspiracy, and treason.

Towards the end of the year a meeting of the nobles and knights of Holland under the leadership of Barneveld was held to discuss the famous Sharp Resolution of 4th August and the letters and arguments advanced against it by the Stadholder and the council of state. It was unanimously resolved by this body, in which they were subsequently followed by a large majority of the States of Holland, to maintain that resolution and its consequences and to oppose the National Synod. They further resolved that a legal provincial synod should be convoked by the States of Holland and under their authority and supervision. The object of such synod should be to devise "some means of accommodation, mutual toleration, and Christian settlement of differences in regard to the Five Points in question."

In case such compromise should unfortunately not be arranged, then it was resolved to invite to the assembly two or three persons from France, as many from England, from Germany, and from Switzerland, to aid in the consultations. Should a method of reconciliation and mutual toleration still remain undiscovered, then, in consideration that the whole Christian world was interested in composing these dissensions, it was proposed that a "synodal assembly of all Christendom," a Protestant oecumenical council, should in some solemn manner be convoked.

These resolutions and propositions were all brought forward by the Advocate, and the draughts of them in his handwriting remain. They are the unimpeachable evidences of his earnest desire to put an end to these unhappy disputes and disorders in the only way which he considered constitutional.

Before the close of the year the States of Holland, in accordance with the foregoing advice of the nobles, passed a resolution, the minutes of which were drawn up by the hand of the Advocate, and in which they persisted in their opposition to the National Synod. They declared by a large majority of votes that the Assembly of the States-General without the unanimous consent of the Provincial States were not competent according to the Union of Utrecht—the fundamental law of the General Assembly—to regulate religious affairs, but that this right belonged to the separate provinces, each within its own domain.

They further resolved that as they were bound by solemn oath to maintain the laws and liberties of Holland, they could not surrender this right to the Generality, nor allow it to be usurped by any one, but in order to settle the question of the Five Points, the only cause known to them of the present disturbances, they were content under: their own authority to convoke a provincial synod within three months, at their own cost, and to

invite the respective provinces, as many of them as thought good, to send to this meeting a certain number of pious and learned theologians.

Page 2916

It is difficult to see why the course thus unanimously proposed by the nobles of Holland, under guidance of Barneveld, and subsequently by a majority of the States of that province, would not have been as expedient as it was legal. But we are less concerned with that point now than with the illustrations afforded by these long buried documents of the patriotism and sagacity of a man than whom no human creature was ever more foully slandered.

It will be constantly borne in mind that he regarded this religious controversy purely from a political, legal, and constitutional—and not from a theological-point of view. He believed that grave danger to the Fatherland was lurking under this attempt, by the general government, to usurp the power of dictating the religious creed of all the provinces. Especially he deplored the evil influence exerted by the King of England since his abandonment of the principles announced in his famous letter to the States in the year 1613. All that the Advocate struggled for was moderation and mutual toleration within the Reformed Church. He felt that a wider scheme of forbearance was impracticable. If a dream of general religious equality had ever floated before him or before any one in that age, he would have felt it to be a dream which would be a reality nowhere until centuries should have passed away. Yet that moderation, patience, tolerance, and respect for written law paved the road to that wider and loftier region can scarcely be doubted.

Carleton, subservient to every changing theological whim of his master, was as vehement and as insolent now in enforcing the intolerant views of James as he had previously been in supporting the counsels to tolerance contained in the original letters of that monarch.

The Ambassador was often at the Advocate’s bed-side during his illness that summer, enforcing, instructing, denouncing, contradicting. He was never weary of fulfilling his duties of tuition, but the patient Barneveld; haughty and overbearing as he was often described to be, rarely used a harsh or vindictive word regarding him in his letters.

“The ambassador of France,” he said, “has been heard before the Assembly of the States-General, and has made warm appeals in favour of union and mutual toleration as his Majesty of Great Britain so wisely did in his letters of 1613 . . . . If his Majesty could only be induced to write fresh letters in similar tone, I should venture to hope better fruits from them than from this attempt to thrust a national synod upon our necks, which many of us hold to be contrary to law, reason, and the Act of Union.”

So long as it was possible to hope that the action of the States of Holland would prevent such a catastrophe, he worked hard to direct them in what he deemed the right course.

“Our political and religious differences,” he said, “stand between hope and fear.”

The hope was in the acceptance of the Provincial Synod—the fear lest the National Synod should be carried by a minority of the cities of Holland combining with a majority of the other Provincial States.

Page 2917

“This would be in violation,” he said, “of the so-called Religious Peace, the Act of Union, the treaty with the Duke of Anjou, the negotiations of the States of Utrecht, and with Prince Maurice in 1590 with cognizance of the States-General and those of Holland for, the governorship of that province, the custom of the Generality for the last thirty years according to which religious matters have always been left to the disposition of the States of each province . . . . Carleton is strenuously urging this course in his Majesty’s name, and I fear that in the present state of our humours great troubles will be the result.”

The expulsion by an armed mob, in the past year, of a Remonstrant preacher at Oudewater, the overpowering of the magistracy and the forcing on of illegal elections in that and other cities, had given him and all earnest patriots grave cause for apprehension. They were dreading, said Barneveld, a course of crimes similar to those which under the Earl of Leicester’s government had afflicted Leyden and Utrecht.

“Efforts are incessant to make the Remonstrants hateful,” he said to Caron, “but go forward resolutely and firmly in the conviction that our friends here are as animated in their opposition to the Spanish dominion now and by God’s grace will so remain as they have ever proved themselves to be, not only by words, but works. I fear that Mr. Carleton gives too much belief to the enviers of our peace and tranquillity under pretext of religion, but it is more from ignorance than malice.”

Those who have followed the course of the Advocate’s correspondence, conversation, and actions, as thus far detailed, can judge of the gigantic nature of the calumny by which he was now assailed. That this man, into every fibre of whose nature was woven undying hostility to Spain, as the great foe to national independence and religious liberty throughout the continent of Europe, whose every effort, as we have seen, during all these years of nominal peace had been to organize a system of general European defence against the war now actually begun upon Protestantism, should be accused of being a partisan of Spain, a creature of Spain, a pensioner of Spain, was enough to make honest men pray that the earth might be swallowed up. If such idiotic calumnies could be believed, what patriot in the world could not be doubted? Yet they were believed. Barneveld was bought by Spanish gold. He had received whole boxes full of Spanish pistoles, straight from Brussels! For his part in the truce negotiations he had received 120,000 ducats in one lump.

“It was plain,” said the greatest man in the country to another great man, “that Barneveld and his party are on the road to Spain.”

“Then it were well to have proof of it,” said the great man.

“Not yet time,” was the reply. “We must flatten out a few of them first.”

Page 2918

Prince Maurice had told the Princess-Dowager the winter before (8th December 1616) that those dissensions would never be decided except by use of weapons; and he now mentioned to her that he had received information from Brussels, which he in part believed, that the Advocate was a stipendiary of Spain. Yet he had once said, to the same Princess Louise, of this stipendiary that "the services which the Advocate had rendered to the House of Nassau were so great that all the members of that house might well look upon him not as their friend but their father." Councillor van Maldere, President of the States of Zealand, and a confidential friend of Maurice, was going about the Hague saying that "one must string up seven or eight Remonstrants on the gallows; then there might be some improvement."

As for Arminius and Uytenbogaert, people had long told each other and firmly believed it, and were amazed when any incredulity was expressed in regard to it, that they were in regular and intimate correspondence with the Jesuits, that they had received large sums from Rome, and that both had been promised cardinals' hats. That Barneveld and his friend Uytenbogaert were regular pensioners of Spain admitted of no dispute whatever. "It was as true as the Holy Evangel." The ludicrous chatter had been passed over with absolute disdain by the persons attacked, but calumny is often a stronger and more lasting power than disdain. It proved to be in these cases.

"You have the plague mark on your flesh, oh pope, oh pensioner," said one libeller. "There are letters safely preserved to make your process for you. Look out for your head. Many have sworn your death, for it is more than time that you were out of the world. We shall prove, oh great bribed one, that you had the 120,000 little ducats." The preacher Uytenbogaert was also said to have had 80,000 ducats for his share. "Go to Brussels," said the pamphleteer; "it all stands clearly written out on the register with the names and surnames of all you great bribe-takers."

These were choice morsels from the lampoon of the notary Danckaerts.

"We are tortured more and more with religious differences," wrote Barneveld; "with acts of popular violence growing out of them the more continuously as they remain unpunished, and with ever increasing jealousies and suspicions. The factious libels become daily more numerous and more impudent, and no man comes undamaged from the field. I, as a reward for all my troubles, labours, and sorrows, have three double portions of them. I hope however to overcome all by God's grace and to defend my actions with all honourable men so long as right and reason have place in the world, as to which many begin to doubt. If his Majesty had been pleased to stick to the letters of 1613, we should never have got into these difficulties . . . . It were better in my opinion that Carleton should be instructed to negotiate in the spirit of those epistles rather than to torment us with the National Synod, which will do more harm than good."

Page 2919

It is impossible not to notice the simplicity and patience with which the Advocate, in the discharge of his duty as minister of foreign affairs, kept the leading envoys of the Republic privately informed of events which were becoming day by day more dangerous to the public interests and his own safety. If ever a perfectly quiet conscience was revealed in the correspondence of a statesman, it was to be found in these letters.

Calmly writing to thank Caron for some very satisfactory English beer which the Ambassador had been sending him from London, he proceeded to speak again of the religious dissensions and their consequences. He sent him the letter and remonstrance which he had felt himself obliged to make, and which he had been urged by his ever warm and constant friend the widow of William the Silent to make on the subject of "the seditious libels, full of lies and calumnies got up by conspiracy against him." These letters were never published, however, until years after he had been in his grave.

"I know that you are displeased with the injustice done me," he said, "but I see no improvement. People are determined to force through the National Synod. The two last ones did much harm. This will do ten times more, so intensely embittered are men's tempers against each other." Again he deplored the King's departure from his letters of 1613, by adherence to which almost all the troubles would have been spared.

It is curious too to observe the contrast between public opinion in Great Britain, including its government, in regard to the constitution of the United Provinces at that period of domestic dissensions and incipient civil war and the general impressions manifested in the same nation two centuries and a half later, on the outbreak of the slavery rebellion, as to the constitution of the United States.

The States in arms against the general government on the other side of the Atlantic were strangely but not disingenuously assumed to be sovereign and independent, and many statesmen and a leading portion of the public justified them in their attempt to shake off the central government as if it were but a board of agency established by treaty and terminable at pleasure of any one of among sovereigns and terminable at pleasure of any one of them.

Yet even a superficial glance at the written constitution of the Republic showed that its main object was to convert what had been a confederacy into an Incorporation; and that the very essence of its renewed political existence was an organic law laid down by a whole people in their primitive capacity in place of a league banding together a group of independent little corporations. The chief attributes of sovereignty—the rights of war and peace, of coinage, of holding armies and navies, of issuing bills of credit, of foreign relations, of regulating and taxing foreign commerce—having been taken from the separate States by the united people thereof and bestowed upon a government provided with a single executive head, with a supreme tribunal, with a popular house of representatives and a senate, and with power to deal directly with the life and property of every individual in the land, it was strange indeed that the feudal, and in America

utterly unmeaning, word Sovereign should have been thought an appropriate term for the different States which had fused themselves three-quarters of a century before into a Union.

Page 2920

When it is remembered too that the only dissolvent of this Union was the intention to perpetuate human slavery, the logic seemed somewhat perverse by which the separate sovereignty of the States was deduced from the constitution of 1787.

On the other hand, the Union of Utrecht of 1579 was a league of petty sovereignties; a compact less binding and more fragile than the Articles of Union made almost exactly two hundred years later in America, and the worthlessness of which, after the strain of war was over, had been demonstrated in the dreary years immediately following the peace of 1783. One after another certain Netherland provinces had abjured their allegiance to Spain, some of them afterwards relapsing under it, some having been conquered by the others, while one of them, Holland, had for a long time borne the greater part of the expense and burthen of the war.

“Holland,” said the Advocate, “has brought almost all the provinces to their liberty. To receive laws from them or from their clerical people now is what our State cannot endure. It is against her laws and customs, in the enjoyment of which the other provinces and his Excellency as Governor of Holland are bound to protect us.”

And as the preservation of chattel slavery in the one case seemed a legitimate ground for destroying a government which had as definite an existence as any government known to mankind, so the resolve to impose a single religious creed upon many millions of individuals was held by the King and government of Great Britain to be a substantial reason for imagining a central sovereignty which had never existed at all. This was still more surprising as the right to dispose of ecclesiastical affairs and persons had been expressly reserved by the separate provinces in perfectly plain language in the Treaty of Union.

“If the King were better informed,” said Barneveld, “of our system and laws, we should have better hope than now. But one supposes through notorious error in foreign countries that the sovereignty stands with the States-General which is not the case, except in things which by the Articles of Closer Union have been made common to all the provinces, while in other matters, as religion, justice, and polity, the sovereignty remains with each province, which foreigners seem unable to comprehend.”

Early in June, Carleton took his departure for England on leave of absence. He received a present from the States of 3000 florins, and went over in very ill-humour with Barneveld. “Mr. Ambassador is much offended and prejudiced,” said the Advocate, “but I know that he will religiously carry out the orders of his Majesty. I trust that his Majesty can admit different sentiments on predestination and its consequences, and that in a kingdom where the supreme civil authority defends religion the system of the Puritans will have no foothold.”

Certainly James could not be accused of allowing the system of the Puritans much foothold in England, but he had made the ingenious discovery that Puritanism in Holland was a very different thing from Puritanism in the Netherlands.

Page 2921

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Acts of violence which under pretext of religion
Adulation for inferiors whom they despise
Calumny is often a stronger and more lasting power than disdain
Created one child for damnation and another for salvation
Depths of credulity men in all ages can sink
Devote himself to his gout and to his fair young wife
Furious mob set upon the house of Rem Bischop
Highborn demagogues in that as in every age affect adulation
In this he was much behind his age or before it
Logic is rarely the quality on which kings pride themselves
Necessity of deferring to powerful sovereigns
Not his custom nor that of his councillors to go to bed
Partisans wanted not accommodation but victory
Puritanism in Holland was a very different thing from England
Seemed bent on self-destruction
Stand between hope and fear
The evils resulting from a confederate system of government
To stifle for ever the right of free enquiry

THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v9, 1618

CHAPTER XVI.

Maurice revolutionizes the Provinces—Danckaert's libellous Pamphlet —Barneveld's Appeal to the Prince—Barneveld'a Remonstrance to the States—The Stadholder at Amsterdam—The Treaty of Truce nearly expired—King of Spain and Archduke Albert—-Scheme for recovering the Provinces—Secret Plot to make Maurice Sovereign.

Early in the year (1618) Maurice set himself about revolutionizing the provinces on which he could not yet thoroughly rely. The town of Nymegen since its recovery from the Spaniards near the close of the preceding century had held its municipal government, as it were, at the option of the Prince. During the war he had been, by the

terms of surrender, empowered to appoint and to change its magistracy at will. No change had occurred for many years, but as the government had of late fallen into the hands of the Barneveldians, and as Maurice considered the Truce to be a continuance of the war, he appeared suddenly, in the city at the head of a body of troops and surrounded by his lifeguard. Summoning the whole board of magistrates into the townhouse, he gave them all notice to quit, disbanding them like a company of mutinous soldiery, and immediately afterwards appointed a fresh list of functionaries in their stead.

This done, he proceeded to Arnhem, where the States of Gelderland were in session, appeared before that body, and made a brief announcement of the revolution which he had so succinctly effected in the most considerable town of their province. The Assembly, which seems, like many other assemblies at precisely this epoch, to have had an extraordinary capacity for yielding to gentle violence, made but little resistance to the extreme measures now undertaken by the Stadholder, and not only highly applauded the subjugation of Nymegen, but listened with sympathy to his arguments against the Waartgelders and in favour of the Synod.

Page 2922

Having accomplished so much by a very brief visit to Gelderland, the Prince proceeded, to Overyssel, and had as little difficulty in bringing over the wavering minds of that province into orthodoxy and obedience. Thus there remained but two provinces out of seven that were still “waartgeldered” and refused to be “synodized.”

It was rebellion against rebellion. Maurice and his adherents accused the States’ right party of mutiny against himself and the States-General. The States’ right party accused the Contra-Remonstrants in the cities of mutiny against the lawful sovereignty of each province.

The oath of the soldiery, since the foundation of the Republic, had been to maintain obedience and fidelity to the States-General, the Stadholder, and the province in which they were garrisoned, and at whose expense they were paid. It was impossible to harmonize such conflicting duties and doctrines. Theory had done its best and its worst. The time was fast approaching, as it always must approach, when fact with its violent besom would brush away the fine-spun cobwebs which had been so long undisturbed.

“I will grind the Advocate and all his party into fine meal,” said the Prince on one occasion.

A clever caricature of the time represented a pair of scales hung up in a great hall. In the one was a heap of parchments, gold chains, and magisterial robes; the whole bundle being marked the “holy right of each city.” In the other lay a big square, solid, ironclasped volume, marked “Institutes of Calvin.” Each scale was respectively watched by Gomarus and by Arminius. The judges, gowned, furred, and ruffed, were looking decorously on, when suddenly the Stadholder, in full military attire, was seen rushing into the apartment and flinging his sword into the scale with the Institutes.

The civic and legal trumpery was of course made to kick the beam.

Maurice had organized his campaign this year against the Advocate and his party as deliberately as he had ever arranged the details of a series of battles and sieges against the Spaniard. And he was proving himself as consummate master in political strife as in the great science of war.

He no longer made any secret of his conviction that Barneveld was a traitor to his country, bought with Spanish gold. There was not the slightest proof for these suspicions, but he asserted them roundly. “The Advocate is travelling straight to Spain,” he said to Count Cuylenborg. “But we will see who has got the longest purse.”

And as if it had been a part of the campaign, a prearranged diversion to the more direct and general assault on the entrenchments of the States’ right party, a horrible personal onslaught was now made from many quarters upon the Advocate. It was an age of

pamphleteering, of venomous, virulent, unscrupulous libels. And never even in that age had there been anything to equal the savage attacks upon this great statesman. It moves the gall of an honest man, even after the lapse of two centuries and a half, to turn over those long forgotten pages and mark the depths to which political and theological party spirit could descend. That human creatures can assimilate themselves so closely to the reptile, and to the subtle devil within the reptile, when a party end is to be gained is enough to make the very name of man a term of reproach.

Page 2923

Day by day appeared pamphlets, each one more poisonous than its predecessor. There was hardly a crime that was not laid at the door of Barneveld and all his kindred. The man who had borne a matchlock in early youth against the foreign tyrant in days when unsuccessful rebellion meant martyrdom and torture; who had successfully guided the councils of the infant commonwealth at a period when most of his accusers were in their cradles, and when mistake was ruin to the republic; he on whose strong arm the father of his country had leaned for support; the man who had organized a political system out of chaos; who had laid down the internal laws, negotiated the great indispensable alliances, directed the complicated foreign policy, established the system of national defence, presided over the successful financial administration of a state struggling out of mutiny into national existence; who had rocked the Republic in its cradle and ever borne her in his heart; who had made her name beloved at home and honoured and dreaded abroad; who had been the first, when the great Taciturn had at last fallen a victim to the murderous tyrant of Spain, to place the youthful Maurice in his father's place, and to inspire the whole country with sublime courage to persist rather than falter in purpose after so deadly a blow; who was as truly the founder of the Republic as William had been the author of its independence,—was now denounced as a traitor, a pope, a tyrant, a venal hucksterer of his country's liberties. His family name, which had long been an ancient and knightly one, was defiled and its nobility disputed; his father and mother, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, accused of every imaginable and unimaginable crime, of murder, incest, robbery, bastardy, fraud, forgery, blasphemy. He had received waggon-loads of Spanish pistoles; he had been paid 120,000 ducats by Spain for negotiating the Truce; he was in secret treaty with Archduke Albert to bring 18,000 Spanish mercenaries across the border to defeat the machinations of Prince Maurice, destroy his life, or drive him from the country; all these foul and bitter charges and a thousand similar ones were rained almost daily upon that grey head.

One day the loose sheets of a more than commonly libellous pamphlet were picked up in the streets of the Hague and placed in the Advocate's hands. It was the work of the drunken notary Danckaerts already mentioned, then resident in Amsterdam, and among the papers thus found was a list of wealthy merchants of that city who had contributed to the expense of its publication. The opposition of Barneveld to the West India Corporation could never be forgiven. The Advocate was notified in this production that he was soon to be summoned to answer for his crimes. The country was weary of him, he was told, and his life was forfeited.

Page 2924

Stung at last beyond endurance by the persistent malice of his enemies, he came before the States of Holland for redress. Upon his remonstrance the author of this vile libel was summoned to answer before the upper tribunal at the Hague for his crime. The city of Amsterdam covered him with the shield ‘de non evocando,’ which had so often in cases of less consequence proved of no protective value, and the notary was never punished, but on the contrary after a brief lapse of time rewarded as for a meritorious action.

Meantime, the States of Holland, by formal act, took the name and honour of Barneveld under their immediate protection as a treasure belonging specially to themselves. Heavy penalties were denounced upon the authors and printers of these libellous attacks, and large rewards offered for their detection. Nothing came, however, of such measures.

On the 24th April the Advocate addressed a frank, dignified, and conciliatory letter to the Prince. The rapid progress of calumny against him had at last alarmed even his steadfast soul, and he thought it best to make a last appeal to the justice and to the clear intellect of William the Silent’s son.

“Gracious Prince,” he said, “I observe to my greatest sorrow an entire estrangement of your Excellency from me, and I fear lest what was said six months since by certain clerical persons and afterwards by some politicians concerning your dissatisfaction with me, which until now I have not been able to believe, must be true. I declare nevertheless with a sincere heart to have never willingly given cause for any such feeling; having always been your very faithful servant and with God’s help hoping as such to die. Ten years ago during the negotiations for the Truce I clearly observed the beginning of this estrangement, but your Excellency will be graciously pleased to remember that I declared to you at that time my upright and sincere intention in these negotiations to promote the service of the country and the interests of your Excellency, and that I nevertheless offered at the time not only to resign all my functions but to leave the country rather than remain in office and in the country to the dissatisfaction of your Excellency.”

He then rapidly reviewed the causes which had produced the alienation of which he complained and the melancholy divisions caused by the want of mutual religious toleration in the Provinces; spoke of his efforts to foster a spirit of conciliation on the dread subject of predestination, and referred to the letter of the King of Great Britain deprecating discussion and schism on this subject, and urging that those favourable to the views of the Remonstrants ought not to be persecuted. Referring to the intimate relations which Uytenbogaert had so long enjoyed with the Prince, the Advocate alluded to the difficulty he had in believing that his Excellency intended to act in opposition to the efforts of the States of Holland in the cause of mutual toleration, to the manifest detriment of the country and of many of its best and truest patriots and the greater number of the magistrates in all the cities.

Page 2925

He reminded the Prince that all attempts to accommodate these fearful quarrels had been frustrated, and that on his departure the previous year to Utrecht on account of his health he had again offered to resign all his offices and to leave Holland altogether rather than find himself in perpetual opposition to his Excellency.

“I begged you in such case,” he said, “to lend your hand to the procuring for me an honourable discharge from My Lords the States, but your Excellency declared that you could in no wise approve such a step and gave me hope that some means of accommodating the dissensions would yet be proposed.”

“I went then to Vianen, being much indisposed; thence I repaired to Utrecht to consult my old friend Doctor Saulo Saul, in whose hands I remained six weeks, not being able, as I hoped, to pass my seventieth birthday on the 24th September last in my birthplace, the city of Amersfoort. All this time I heard not one single word or proposal of accommodation. On the contrary it was determined that by a majority vote, a thing never heard of before, it was intended against the solemn resolves of the States of Holland, of Utrecht, and of Overyssel to bring these religious differences before the Assembly of My Lords the States-General, a proceeding directly in the teeth of the Act of Union and other treaties, and before a Synod which people called National, and that meantime every effort was making to discredit all those who stood up for the laws of these Provinces and to make them odious and despicable in the eyes of the common people.

“Especially it was I that was thus made the object of hatred and contempt in their eyes. Hundreds of lies and calumnies, circulated in the form of libels, seditious pamphlets, and lampoons, compelled me to return from Utrecht to the Hague. Since that time I have repeatedly offered my services to your Excellency for the promotion of mutual accommodation and reconciliation of differences, but without success.”

He then alluded to the publication with which the country was ringing, ‘The Necessary and Living Discourse of a Spanish Counsellor’, and which was attributed to his former confidential friend, now become his deadliest foe, ex-Ambassador Francis Aerssens, and warned the Prince that if he chose, which God forbid, to follow the advice of that seditious libel, nothing but ruin to the beloved Fatherland and its lovers, to the princely house of Orange-Nassau and to the Christian religion could be the issue. “The Spanish government could desire no better counsel,” he said, “than this which these fellows give you; to encourage distrust and estrangement between your Excellency and the nobles, the cities, and the magistrates of the land and to propose high and haughty imaginings which are easy enough to write, but most difficult to practise, and which can only enure to the advantage of Spain. Therefore most respectfully I beg your Excellency not to believe these fellows, but to reject their counsels . . .

Page 2926

. Among them are many malignant hypocrites and ambitious men who are seeking their own profit in these changes of government—many utterly ragged and beggarly fellows and many infamous traitors coming from the provinces which have remained under the dominion of the Spaniard, and who are filled with revenge, envy, and jealousy at the greater prosperity and bloom of these independent States than they find at home.

“I fear,” he said in conclusion, “that I have troubled your Excellency too long, but to the fulfilment of my duty and discharge of my conscience I could not be more brief. It saddens me deeply that in recompense for my long and manifold services I am attacked by so many calumnious, lying, seditious, and fraudulent libels, and that these indecencies find their pretext and their food in the evil disposition of your Excellency towards me. And although for one-and-thirty years long I have been able to live down such things with silence, well-doing, and truth, still do I now find myself compelled in this my advanced old age and infirmity to make some utterances in defence of myself and those belonging to me, however much against my heart and inclinations.”

He ended by enclosing a copy of the solemn state paper which he was about to lay before the States of Holland in defence of his honour, and subscribed himself the lifelong and faithful servant of the Prince.

The Remonstrance to the States contained a summary review of the political events of his life, which was indeed nothing more nor less than the history of his country and almost of Europe itself during that period, broadly and vividly sketched with the hand of a master. It was published at once and strengthened the affection of his friends and the wrath of his enemies. It is not necessary to our purpose to reproduce or even analyse the document, the main facts and opinions contained in it being already familiar to the reader. The frankness however with which, in reply to the charges so profusely brought against him of having grown rich by extortion, treason, and corruption, of having gorged himself with plunder at home and bribery from the enemy, of being the great pensioner of Europe and the Marshal d’Ancre of the Netherlands—he alluded to the exact condition of his private affairs and the growth and sources of his revenue, giving, as it were, a kind of schedule of his property, has in it something half humorous, half touching in its simplicity.

He set forth the very slender salaries attached to his high offices of Advocate of Holland, Keeper of the Seals, and other functions. He answered the charge that he always had at his disposition 120,000 florins to bribe foreign agents withal by saying that his whole allowance for extraordinary expenses and trouble in maintaining his diplomatic and internal correspondence was exactly 500 florins yearly. He alluded to the slanders circulated as to his wealth and its sources by those who envied him for his position and hated him for his services.

Page 2927

“But I beg you to believe, My Lords,” he continued, “that my property is neither so great nor so small as some people represent it to be.

“In the year ’75 I married my wife,” he said. “I was pleased with her person. I was likewise pleased with the dowry which was promptly paid over to me, with firm expectation of increase and betterment . . . . I ac knowledge that forty-three years ago my wife and myself had got together so much of real and personal property that we could live honourably upon it. I had at that time as good pay and practice as any advocate in the courts which brought me in a good 4000 florins a year; there being but eight advocates practising at the time, of whom I was certainly not the one least employed. In the beginning of the year ’77 I came into the service of the city of Rotterdam as ’Pensionary. Upon my salary from that town I was enabled to support my family, having then but two children. Now I can clearly prove that between the years 1577 and 1616 inclusive I have inherited in my own right or that of my wife, from our relatives, for ourselves and our children by lawful succession, more than 400 Holland morgens of land (about 800 acres), more than 2000 florins yearly of redeemable rents, a good house in the city of Delft, some houses in the open country, and several thousand florins in ready money. I have likewise reclaimed in the course of the past forty years out of the water and swamps by dyking more than an equal number of acres to those inherited, and have bought and sold property during the same period to the value of 800,000 florins; having sometimes bought 100,000 florins’ worth and sold 60,000 of it for 160,000, and so on.”

It was evident that the thrifty Advocate during his long life had understood how to turn over his money, and it was not necessary to imagine “waggon-loads of Spanish pistoles” and bribes on a gigantic scale from the hereditary enemy in order to account for a reasonable opulence on his part.

“I have had nothing to do with trade,” he continued, “it having been the custom of my ancestors to risk no money except where the plough goes. In the great East India Company however, which with four years of hard work, public and private, I have helped establish, in order to inflict damage on the Spaniards and Portuguese, I have adventured somewhat more than 5000 florins . . . . Now even if my condition be reasonably good, I think no one has reason to envy me. Nevertheless I have said it in your Lordships’ Assembly, and I repeat it solemnly on this occasion, that I have pondered the state of my affairs during my recent illness and found that in order to leave my children unencumbered estates I must sell property to the value of 60,000 or 70,000 florins. This I would rather do than leave the charge to my children. That I should have got thus behindhand through bad management, I beg your Highnesses not to believe. But I have inherited, with the succession of four persons whose

Page 2928

only heir I was and with that of others to whom I was co-heir, many burthens as well. I have bought property with encumbrances, and I have dyked and bettered several estates with borrowed money. Now should it please your Lordships to institute a census and valuation of the property of your subjects, I for one should be very well pleased. For I know full well that those who in the estimates of capital in the year 1599 rated themselves at 50,000 or 60,000 florins now may boast of having twice as much property as I have. Yet in that year out of patriotism I placed myself on the list of those liable for the very highest contributions, being assessed on a property of 200,000 florins."

The Advocate alluded with haughty contempt to the notorious lies circulated by his libellers in regard to his lineage, as if the vast services and unquestioned abilities of such a statesman would not have illustrated the obscurest origin. But as he happened to be of ancient and honourable descent, he chose to vindicate his position in that regard.

"I was born in the city of Amersfoort," he said, "by the father's side an Oldenbarneveld; an old and noble race, from generation to generation steadfast and true; who have been duly summoned for many hundred years to the assembly of the nobles of their province as they are to this day. By my mother's side I am sprung from the ancient and knightly family of Amersfoort, which for three or four hundred years has been known as foremost among the nobles of Utrecht in all state affairs and as landed proprietors."

It is only for the sake of opening these domestic and private lights upon an historical character whose life was so pre-eminently and almost exclusively a public one that we have drawn some attention to this stately defence made by the Advocate of his birth, life, and services to the State. The public portions of the state paper belong exclusively to history, and have already been sufficiently detailed.

The letter to Prince Maurice was delivered into his hands by Cornelis van der Myle, son-in-law of Barneveld.

No reply to it was ever sent, but several days afterwards the Stadholder called from his open window to van der Myle, who happened to be passing by. He then informed him that he neither admitted the premises nor the conclusion of the Advocate's letter, saying that many things set down in it were false. He furthermore told him a story of a certain old man who, having in his youth invented many things and told them often for truth, believed them when he came to old age to be actually true and was ever ready to stake his salvation upon them. Whereupon he shut the window and left van der Myle to make such application of the parable as he thought proper, vouchsafing no further answer to Barneveld's communication.

Dudley Carleton related the anecdote to his government with much glee, but it may be doubted whether this bold way of giving the lie to a venerable statesman through his son-in-law would have been accounted as triumphant argumentation anywhere out of a barrack.

Page 2929

As for the Remonstrance to the States of Holland, although most respectfully received in that assembly except by the five opposition cities, its immediate effect on the public was to bring down a fresh “snow storm”—to use the expression of a contemporary—of pamphlets, libels, caricatures, and broadsheets upon the head of the Advocate. In every bookseller’s and print shop window in all the cities of the country, the fallen statesman was represented in all possible ludicrous, contemptible, and hateful shapes, while hags and blind beggars about the streets screeched filthy and cursing ballads against him, even at his very doors.

The effect of energetic, uncompromising calumny has rarely been more strikingly illustrated than in the case of this statesman. Blackened daily all over by a thousand trowels, the purest and noblest character must have been defiled, and it is no wonder that the incrustation upon the Advocate’s fame should have lasted for two centuries and a half. It may perhaps endure for as many more: Not even the vile Marshal d’Ancre, who had so recently perished, was more the mark of obloquy in a country which he had dishonoured, flouted, and picked to the bone than was Barneveld in a commonwealth which he had almost created and had served faithfully from youth to old age. It was even the fashion to compare him with Concini in order to heighten the wrath of the public, as if any parallel between the ignoble, foreign paramour of a stupid and sensual queen, and the great statesman, patriot, and jurist of whom civilization will be always proud, could ever enter any but an idiot’s brain.

Meantime the Stadholder, who had so successfully handled the Assembly of Gelderland and Overyssel, now sailed across the Zuiderzee from Kampen to Amsterdam. On his approach to the stately northern Venice, standing full of life and commercial bustle upon its vast submerged forest of Norwegian pines, he was met by a fleet of yachts and escorted through the water gates of the into the city.

Here an immense assemblage of vessels of every class, from the humble gondola to the bulky East Indianian and the first-rate ship of war, gaily bannered with the Orange colours and thronged from deck to topmast by enthusiastic multitudes, was waiting to receive their beloved stadholder. A deafening cannonade saluted him on his approach. The Prince was escorted to the Square or Dam, where on a high scaffolding covered with blue velvet in front of the stately mediaeval town-hall the burgomasters and board of magistrates in their robes of office were waiting to receive him. The strains of that most inspiriting and suggestive of national melodies, the ‘Wilhelmus van Nassouwen,’ rang through the air, and when they were silent, the chief magistrate poured forth a very eloquent and tedious oration, and concluded by presenting him with a large orange in solid gold; Maurice having succeeded to the principality a few months before on the death of his half-brother Philip William.

Page 2930

The “Blooming in Love,” as one of the Chambers of “Rhetoric” in which the hard-handed but half-artistic mechanics and shopkeepers of the Netherlands loved to disport themselves was called, then exhibited upon an opposite scaffold a magnificent representation of Jupiter astride upon an eagle and banding down to the Stadholder as if from the clouds that same principality. Nothing could be neater or more mythological.

The Prince and his escort, sitting in the windows of the town-hall, the square beneath being covered with 3000 or 4000 burgher militia in full uniform, with orange plumes in their hats and orange scarves on their breasts, saw still other sights. A gorgeous procession set forth by the “Netherlandish Academy,” another chamber of rhetoric, and filled with those emblematic impersonations so dear to the hearts of Netherlanders, had been sweeping through all the canals and along the splendid quays of the city. The Maid of Holland, twenty feet high, led the van, followed by the counterfeit presentment of each of her six sisters. An orange tree full of flowers and fruit was conspicuous in one barge, while in another, strangely and lugubriously enough, lay the murdered William the Silent in the arms of his wife and surrounded by his weeping sons and daughters all attired in white satin.

In the evening the Netherland Academy, to improve the general hilarity, and as if believing exhibitions of murder the most appropriate means of welcoming the Prince, invited him to a scenic representation of the assassination of Count Florence V. of Holland by Gerrit van Velsen and other nobles. There seemed no especial reason for the selection, unless perhaps the local one; one of the perpetrators of this crime against an ancient predecessor of William the Silent in the sovereignty of Holland having been a former lord proprietor of Amsterdam and the adjacent territories, Gysbrecht van Amatel.

Maurice returned to the Hague. Five of the seven provinces were entirely his own. Utrecht too was already wavering, while there could be no doubt of the warm allegiance to himself of the important commercial metropolis of Holland, the only province in which Barneveld’s influence was still paramount.

Owing to the watchfulness and distrust of Barneveld, which had never faltered, Spain had not secured the entire control of the disputed duchies, but she had at least secured the head of a venerated saint. “The bargain is completed for the head of the glorious Saint Lawrence, which you know I so much desire,” wrote Philip triumphantly to the Archduke Albert. He had, however, not got it for nothing.

The Abbot of Glamart in Julich, then in possession of that treasure, had stipulated before delivering it that if at any time the heretics or other enemies should destroy the monastery his Majesty would establish them in Spanish Flanders and give them the same revenues as they now enjoyed in Julich. Count Herman van den Berg was to give a guarantee to that effect.

Page 2931

Meantime the long controversy in the duchies having tacitly come to a standstill upon the basis of ‘uti possidetis,’ the Spanish government had leisure in the midst of their preparation for the general crusade upon European heresy to observe and enjoy the internal religious dissensions in their revolted provinces. Although they had concluded the convention with them as with countries over which they had no pretensions, they had never at heart allowed more virtue to the conjunction “as,” which really contained the essence of the treaty, than grammatically belonged to it. Spain still chose to regard the independence of the Seven Provinces as a pleasant fiction to be dispelled when, the truce having expired by its own limitation, she should resume, as she fully meant to do, her sovereignty over all the seventeen Netherlands, the United as well as the obedient. Thus at any rate the question of state rights or central sovereignty would be settled by a very summary process. The Spanish ambassador was wroth, as may well be supposed, when the agent of the rebel provinces received in London the rank, title, and recognition of ambassador. Gondemar at least refused to acknowledge Noel de Caron as his diplomatic equal or even as his colleague, and was vehement in his protestations on the subject. But James, much as he dreaded the Spanish envoy and fawned upon his master, was not besotted enough to comply with these demands at the expense of his most powerful ally, the Republic of the Netherlands. The Spanish king however declared his ambassador’s proceedings to be in exact accordance with his instructions. He was sorry, he said, if the affair had caused discontent to the King of Great Britain; he intended in all respects to maintain the Treaty of Truce of which his Majesty had been one of the guarantors, but as that treaty had but a few more years to run, after which he should be reinstated in his former right of sovereignty over all the Netherlands, he entirely justified the conduct of Count Gondemar.

It may well be conceived that, as the years passed by, as the period of the Truce grew nearer and the religious disputes became every day more envenomed, the government at Madrid should look on the tumultuous scene with saturnine satisfaction. There was little doubt now, they thought, that the Provinces, sick of their rebellion and that fancied independence which had led them into a whirlpool of political and religious misery, and convinced of their incompetence to govern themselves, would be only too happy to seek the forgiving arms of their lawful sovereign. Above all they must have learned that their great heresy had carried its chastisement with it, that within something they called a Reformed Church other heresies had been developed which demanded condign punishment at the hands of that new Church, and that there could be neither rest for them in this world nor salvation in the next except by returning to the bosom of their ancient mother.

Page 2932

Now was the time, so it was thought, to throw forward a strong force of Jesuits as skirmishers into the Provinces by whom the way would be opened for the reconquest of the whole territory.

“By the advices coming to us continually from thence,” wrote the King of Spain to Archduke Albert, “we understand that the disquiets and differences continue in Holland on matters relating to their sects, and that from this has resulted the conversion of many to the Catholic religion. So it has been taken into consideration whether it would not be expedient that some fathers of the company of Jesuits be sent secretly from Rome to Holland, who should negotiate concerning the conversion of that people. Before taking a resolution, I have thought best to give an account of this matter to your Highness. I should be glad if you would inform me what priests are going to Holland, what fruits they yield, and what can be done for the continuance of their labours. Please to advise me very particularly together with any suggestions that may occur to you in this matter.”

The Archduke, who was nearer the scene, was not so sure that the old religion was making such progress as his royal nephew or those who spoke in his name believed. At any rate, if it were not rapidly gaining ground, it would be neither for want of discord among the Protestants nor for lack of Jesuits to profit by it.

“I do not understand,” said he in reply, “nor is it generally considered certain that from the differences and disturbances that the Hollanders are having among themselves there has resulted the conversion of any of them to our blessed Catholic faith, because their disputes are of certain points concerning which there are different opinions within their sect. There has always been a goodly number of priests here, the greater part of whom belong to the Company. They are very diligent and fervent, and the Catholics derive much comfort from them. To send more of them would do more harm than good. It might be found out, and then they would perhaps be driven out of Holland or even chastised. So it seems better to leave things as they are for the present.”

The Spanish government was not discouraged however, but was pricking up its ears anew at strange communications it was receiving from the very bosom of the council of state in the Netherlands. This body, as will be remembered, had been much opposed to Barneveld and to the policy pursued under his leadership by the States of Holland. Some of its members were secretly Catholic and still more secretly disposed to effect a revolution in the government, the object of which should be to fuse the United Provinces with the obedient Netherlands in a single independent monarchy to be placed under the sceptre of the son of Philip *iii*.

A paper containing the outlines of this scheme had been sent to Spain, and the King at once forwarded it in cipher to the Archduke at Brussels for his opinion and co-operation.

Page 2933

“You will see,” he said, “the plan which a certain person zealous for the public good has proposed for reducing the Netherlanders to my obedience. . . . . You will please advise with Count Frederic van den Berg and let me know with much particularity and profound secrecy what is thought, what is occurring, and the form in which this matter ought to be negotiated, and the proper way to make it march.”

Unquestionably the paper was of grave importance. It informed the King of Spain that some principal personages in the United Netherlands, members of the council of state, were of opinion that if his Majesty or Archduke Albert should propose peace, it could be accomplished at that moment more easily than ever before. They had arrived at the conviction that no assistance was to be obtained from the King of France, who was too much weakened by tumults and sedition at home, while nothing good could be expected from the King of England. The greater part of the Province of Gelderland, they said, with all Friesland, Utrecht, Groningen, and Overyssel were inclined to a permanent peace. Being all of them frontier provinces, they were constantly exposed to the brunt of hostilities. Besides this, the war expenses alone would now be more than 3,000,000 florins a year. Thus the people were kept perpetually harassed, and although evil-intentioned persons approved these burthens under the pretence that such heavy taxation served to free them from the tyranny of Spain, those of sense and quality reproved them and knew the contrary to be true. “Many here know,” continued these traitors in the heart of the state council, “how good it would be for the people of the Netherlands to have a prince, and those having this desire being on the frontier are determined to accept the son of your Majesty for their ruler.” The conditions of the proposed arrangement were to be that the Prince with his successors who were thus to possess all the Netherlands were to be independent sovereigns not subject in any way to the crown of Spain, and that the great governments and dignities of the country were to remain in the hands then holding them.

This last condition was obviously inserted in the plan for the special benefit of Prince Maurice and Count Lewis, although there is not an atom of evidence that they had ever heard of the intrigue or doubt that, if they had, they would have signally chastised its guilty authors.

It was further stated that the Catholics having in each town a church and free exercise of their religion would soon be in a great majority. Thus the political and religious counter-revolution would be triumphantly accomplished.

It was proposed that the management of the business should be entrusted to some gentleman of the country possessing property there who “under pretext of the public good should make people comprehend what a great thing it would be if they could obtain this favour from the Spanish King, thus extricating themselves from so many calamities and miseries, and obtaining free traffic and a prince of their own.” It would be necessary for the King and Archduke to write many letters and promise great rewards to persons who might otherwise embarrass the good work.

Page 2934

The plot was an ingenious one. There seemed in the opinion of these conspirators in the state council but one great obstacle to its success. It should be kept absolutely concealed from the States of Holland. The great stipendiary of Spain, John of Barneveld, whose coffers were filled with Spanish pistoles, whose name and surname might be read by all men in the account-books at Brussels heading the register of mighty bribe-takers, the man who was howled at in a thousand lampoons as a traitor ever ready to sell his country, whom even Prince Maurice “partly believed” to be the pensionary of Philip, must not hear a whisper of this scheme to restore the Republic to Spanish control and place it under the sceptre of a Spanish prince.

The States of Holland at that moment and so long as he was a member of the body were Barneveld and Barneveld only; thinking his thoughts, speaking with his tongue, writing with his pen. Of this neither friend nor foe ever expressed a doubt. Indeed it was one of the staple accusations against him.

Yet this paper in which the Spanish king in confidential cipher and profound secrecy communicated to Archduke Albert his hopes and his schemes for recovering the revolted provinces as a kingdom for his son contained these words of caution.

“The States of Holland and Zealand will be opposed to the plan,” it said. “If the treaty come to the knowledge of the States and Council of Holland before it has been acted upon by the five frontier provinces the whole plan will be demolished.”

Such was the opinion entertained by Philip himself of the man who was supposed to be his stipendiary. I am not aware that this paper has ever been alluded to in any document or treatise private or public from the day of its date to this hour. It certainly has never been published, but it lies deciphered in the Archives of the Kingdom at Brussels, and is alone sufficient to put to shame the slanderers of the Advocate’s loyalty.

Yet let it be remembered that in this very summer exactly at the moment when these intrigues were going on between the King of Spain and the class of men most opposed to Barneveld, the accusations against his fidelity were loudest and rifest.

Before the Stadholder had so suddenly slipped down to Brielle in order to secure that important stronghold for the Contra-Remonstrant party, reports had been carefully strewn among the people that the Advocate was about to deliver that place and other fortresses to Spain.

Brielle, Flushing, Rammekens, the very cautionary towns and keys to the country which he had so recently and in such masterly manner delivered from the grasp of the hereditary ally he was now about to surrender to the ancient enemy.

Page 2935

The Spaniards were already on the sea, it was said. Had it not been for his Excellency's watchfulness and promptitude, they would already under guidance of Barneveld and his crew have mastered the city of Brielle. Flushing too through Barneveld's advice and connivance was open at a particular point, in order that the Spaniards, who had their eye upon it, might conveniently enter and take possession of the place. The air was full of wild rumours to this effect, and already the humbler classes who sided with the Stadholder saw in him the saviour of the country from the treason of the Advocate and the renewed tyranny of Spain.

The Prince made no such pretence, but simply took possession of the fortress in order to be beforehand with the Waartgelders. The Contra-Remonstrants in Brielle had desired that "men should see who had the hardest fists," and it would certainly have been difficult to find harder ones than those of the hero of Nieuwpoort.

Besides the Jesuits coming in so skilfully to triumph over the warring sects of Calvinists, there were other engineers on whom the Spanish government relied to effect the reconquest of the Netherlands. Especially it was an object to wreak vengeance on Holland, that head and front of the revolt, both for its persistence in rebellion and for the immense prosperity and progress by which that rebellion had been rewarded. Holland had grown fat and strong, while the obedient Netherlands were withered to the marrow of their bones. But there was a practical person then resident in Spain to whom the Netherlands were well known, to whom indeed everything was well known, who had laid before the King a magnificent scheme for destroying the commerce and with it the very existence of Holland to the great advantage of the Spanish finances and of the Spanish Netherlands. Philip of course laid it before the Archduke as usual, that he might ponder it well and afterwards, if approved, direct its execution.

The practical person set forth in an elaborate memoir that the Hollanders were making rapid progress in commerce, arts, and manufactures, while the obedient provinces were sinking as swiftly into decay. The Spanish Netherlands were almost entirely shut off from the sea, the rivers Scheldt and Meuse being hardly navigable for them on account of the control of those waters by Holland. The Dutch were attracting to their dominions all artisans, navigators, and traders. Despising all other nations and giving them the law, they had ruined the obedient provinces. Ostend, Nieuwpoort, Dunkerk were wasting away, and ought to be restored.

"I have profoundly studied forty years long the subjects of commerce and navigation," said the practical person, "and I have succeeded in penetrating the secrets and acquiring, as it were, universal knowledge—let me not be suspected of boasting—of the whole discovered world and of the ocean. I have been assisted by study of the best works of geography and history, by my own labours, and by those of my late father, a man of illustrious genius and heroical conceptions and very zealous in the Catholic faith."

Page 2936

The modest and practical son of an illustrious but anonymous father, then coming to the point, said it would be the easiest thing in the world to direct the course of the Scheldt into an entirely new channel through Spanish Flanders to the sea. Thus the Dutch ports and forts which had been constructed with such magnificence and at such vast expense would be left high and dry; the Spaniards would build new ones in Flanders, and thus control the whole navigation and deprive the Hollanders of that empire of the sea which they now so proudly arrogated. This scheme was much simpler to carry out than the vulgar might suppose, and, when. accomplished, it would destroy the commerce, navigation, and fisheries of the Hollanders, throwing it all into the hands of the Archdukes. This would cause such ruin, poverty, and tumults everywhere that all would be changed. The Republic of the United States would annihilate itself and fall to pieces; the religious dissensions, the war of one sect with another, and the jealousy of the House of Nassau, suspected of plans hostile to popular liberties, finishing the work of destruction. "Then the Republic," said the man of universal science, warming at sight of the picture he was painting, "laden with debt and steeped in poverty, will fall to the ground of its own weight, and thus debilitated will crawl humbly to place itself in the paternal hands of the illustrious house of Austria."

It would be better, he thought, to set about the work, before the expiration of the Truce. At any rate, the preparation for it, or the mere threat of it, would ensure a renewal of that treaty on juster terms. It was most important too to begin at once the construction of a port on the coast of Flanders, looking to the north.

There was a position, he said, without naming it, in which whole navies could ride in safety, secure from all tempests, beyond the reach of the Hollanders, open at all times to traffic to and from England, France, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Russia—a perfectly free commerce, beyond the reach of any rights or duties claimed or levied by the insolent republic. In this port would assemble all the navigators of the country, and it would become in time of war a terror to the Hollanders, English, and all northern peoples. In order to attract, protect, and preserve these navigators and this commerce, many great public edifices must be built, together with splendid streets of houses and impregnable fortifications. It should be a walled and stately city, and its name should be Philipopolis. If these simple projects, so easy of execution, pleased his Majesty, the practical person was ready to explain them in all their details.

His Majesty was enchanted with the glowing picture, but before quite deciding on carrying the scheme into execution thought it best to consult the Archduke.

The reply of Albert has not been preserved. It was probably not enthusiastic, and the man who without boasting had declared himself to know everything was never commissioned to convert his schemes into realities. That magnificent walled city, Philipopolis, with its gorgeous streets and bristling fortresses, remained unbuilt, the Scheldt has placidly flowed through its old channel to the sea from that day to this, and

the Republic remained in possession of the unexampled foreign trade with which rebellion had enriched it.

Page 2937

These various intrigues and projects show plainly enough however the encouragement given to the enemies of the United Provinces and of Protestantism everywhere by these disastrous internal dissensions. But yesterday and the Republic led by Barneveld in council and Maurice of Nassau in the field stood at the head of the great army of resistance to the general crusade organized by Spain and Rome against all unbelievers. And now that the war was absolutely beginning in Bohemia, the Republic was falling upon its own sword instead of smiting with it the universal foe.

It was not the King of Spain alone that cast longing eyes on the fair territory of that commonwealth which the unparalleled tyranny of his father had driven to renounce his sceptre. Both in the Netherlands and France, among the extreme orthodox party, there were secret schemes, to which Maurice was not privy, to raise Maurice to the sovereignty of the Provinces. Other conspirators with a wider scope and more treasonable design were disposed to surrender their country to the dominion of France, stipulating of course large rewards and offices for themselves and the vice-royalty of what should then be the French Netherlands to Maurice.

The schemes were wild enough perhaps, but their very existence, which is undoubted, is another proof, if more proof were wanted, of the lamentable tendency, in times of civil and religious dissension, of political passion to burn out the very first principles of patriotism.

It is also important, on account of the direct influence exerted by these intrigues upon subsequent events of the gravest character, to throw a beam of light on matters which were thought to have been shrouded for ever in impenetrable darkness.

Langerac, the States' Ambassador in Paris, was the very reverse of his predecessor, the wily, unscrupulous, and accomplished Francis Aerssens. The envoys of the Republic were rarely dull, but Langerac was a simpleton. They were renowned for political experience, skill, familiarity with foreign languages, knowledge of literature, history, and public law; but he was ignorant, spoke French very imperfectly, at a court where not a human being could address him in his own tongue, had never been employed in diplomacy or in high office of any kind, and could carry but small personal weight at a post where of all others the representative of the great republic should have commanded deference both for his own qualities and for the majesty of his government. At a period when France was left without a master or a guide the Dutch ambassador, under a becoming show of profound respect, might really have governed the country so far as regarded at least the all important relations which bound the two nations together. But Langerac was a mere picker-up of trifles, a newsmonger who wrote a despatch to-day with information which a despatch was written on the morrow to contradict, while in itself conveying additional intelligence absolutely certain

Page 2938

to be falsified soon afterwards. The Emperor of Germany had gone mad; Prince Maurice had been assassinated in the Hague, a fact which his correspondents, the States-General, might be supposed already to know, if it were one; there had been a revolution in the royal bed-chamber; the Spanish cook of the young queen had arrived from Madrid; the Duke of Nevers was behaving very oddly at Vienna; such communications, and others equally startling, were the staple of his correspondence.

Still he was honest enough, very mild, perfectly docile to Barneveld, dependent upon his guidance, and fervently attached to that statesman so long as his wheel was going up the hill. Moreover, his industry in obtaining information and his passion for imparting it made it probable that nothing very momentous would be neglected should it be laid before him, but that his masters, and especially the Advocate, would be enabled to judge for themselves as to the attention due to it.

“With this you will be apprised of some very high and weighty matters,” he wrote privately and in cipher to Barneveld, “which you will make use of according to your great wisdom and forethought for the country’s service.”

He requested that the matter might also be confided to M. van der Myle, that he might assist his father-in-law, so overburdened with business, in the task of deciphering the communication. He then stated that he had been “very earnestly informed three days before by M. du Agean”—member of the privy council of France—“that it had recently come to the King’s ears, and his Majesty knew it to be authentic, that there was a secret and very dangerous conspiracy in Holland of persons belonging to the Reformed religion in which others were also mixed. This party held very earnest and very secret correspondence with the factious portion of the Contra-Remonstrants both in the Netherlands and France, seeking under pretext of the religious dissensions or by means of them to confer the sovereignty upon Prince Maurice by general consent of the Contra-Remonstrants. Their object was also to strengthen and augment the force of the same religious party in France, to which end the Duc de Bouillon and M. de Chatillon were very earnestly co-operating. Langerac had already been informed by Chatillon that the Contra-Remonstrants had determined to make a public declaration against the Remonstrants, and come to an open separation from them.

“Others propose however,” said the Ambassador, “that the King himself should use the occasion to seize the sovereignty of the United Provinces for himself and to appoint Prince Maurice viceroy, giving him in marriage Madame Henriette of France.” The object of this movement would be to frustrate the plots of the Contra-Remonstrants, who were known to be passionately hostile to the King and to France, and who had been constantly traversing the negotiations of M. du Maurier. There was a disposition to send a special and solemn embassy to the States, but

Page 2939

it was feared that the British king would at once do the same, to the immense disadvantage of the Remonstrants. “M. de Barneveld,” said the envoy, “is deeply sympathized with here and commiserated. The Chancellor has repeatedly requested me to present to you his very sincere and very hearty respects, exhorting you to continue in your manly steadfastness and courage.” He also assured the Advocate that the French ambassador, M. du Maurier, enjoyed the entire confidence of his government, and of the principal members of the council, and that the King, although contemplating, as we have seen, the seizure of the sovereignty of the country, was most amicably disposed towards it, and so soon as the peace of Savoy was settled “had something very good for it in his mind.” Whether the something very good was this very design to deprive it of independence, the Ambassador did not state. He however recommended the use of sundry small presents at the French court—especially to Madame de Luynes, wife of the new favourite of Lewis since the death of Concini, in which he had aided, now rising rapidly to consideration, and to Madame du Agean—and asked to be supplied with funds accordingly. By these means he thought it probable that at least the payment to the States of the long arrears of the French subsidy might be secured.

Three weeks later, returning to the subject, the Ambassador reported another conversation with M. du Agean. That politician assured him, “with high protestations,” as a perfectly certain fact that a Frenchman duly qualified had arrived in Paris from Holland who had been in communication not only with him but with several of the most confidential members of the privy council of France. This duly qualified gentleman had been secretly commissioned to say that in opinion of the conspirators already indicated the occasion was exactly offered by these religious dissensions in the Netherlands for bringing the whole country under the obedience of the King. This would be done with perfect ease if he would only be willing to favour a little the one party, that of the Contra-Remonstrants, and promise his Excellency “perfect and perpetual authority in the government with other compensations.”

The proposition, said du Agean, had been rejected by the privy councillors with a declaration that they would not mix themselves up with any factions, nor assist any party, but that they would gladly work with the government for the accommodation of these difficulties and differences in the Provinces.

“I send you all this nakedly,” concluded Langerac, “exactly as it has been communicated to me, having always answered according to my duty and with a view by negotiating with these persons to discover the intentions as well of one side as the other.”

The Advocate was not profoundly impressed by these revelations. He was too experienced a statesman to doubt that in times when civil and religious passion was running high there was never lack of fishers in troubled waters, and that if a body of

conspirators could secure a handsome compensation by selling their country to a foreign prince, they would always be ready to do it.

Page 2940

But although believed by Maurice to be himself a stipendiary of Spain, he was above suspecting the Prince of any share in the low and stupid intrigue which du Agean had imagined or disclosed. That the Stadholder was ambitious of greater power, he hardly doubted, but that he was seeking to acquire it by such corrupt and circuitous means, he did not dream. He confidentially communicated the plot as in duty bound to some members of the States, and had the Prince been accused in any conversation or statement of being privy to the scheme, he would have thought himself bound to mention it to him. The story came to the ears of Maurice however, and helped to feed his wrath against the Advocate, as if he were responsible for a plot, if plot it were, which had been concocted by his own deadliest enemies. The Prince wrote a letter alluding to this communication of Langerac and giving much alarm to that functionary. He thought his despatches must have been intercepted and proposed in future to write always by special courier. Barneveld thought that unnecessary except when there were more important matters than those appeared to him to be and requiring more haste.

“The letter of his Excellency,” said he to the Ambassador, “is caused in my opinion by the fact that some of the deputies to this assembly to whom I secretly imparted your letter or its substance did not rightly comprehend or report it. You did not say that his Excellency had any such design or project, but that it had been said that the Contra-Remonstrants were entertaining such a scheme. I would have shown the letter to him myself, but I thought it not fair, for good reasons, to make M. du Agean known as the informant. I do not think it amiss for you to write yourself to his Excellency and tell him what is said, but whether it would be proper to give up the name of your author, I think doubtful. At all events one must consult about it. We live in a strange world, and one knows not whom to trust.”

He instructed the Ambassador to enquire into the foundation of these statements of du Agean and send advices by every occasion of this affair and others of equal interest. He was however much more occupied with securing the goodwill of the French government, which he no more suspected of tampering in these schemes against the independence of the Republic than he did Maurice himself. He relied and he had reason to rely on their steady good offices in the cause of moderation and reconciliation. “We are not yet brought to the necessary and much desired unity,” he said, “but we do not despair, hoping that his Majesty’s efforts through M. du Maurier, both privately and publicly, will do much good. Be assured that they are very agreeable to all rightly disposed people . . . . My trust is that God the Lord will give us a happy issue and save this country from perdition.” He approved of the presents to the two ladies as suggested by Langerac if by so doing the payment of the arrearages could be furthered. He was still hopeful and confident in the justice of his cause and the purity of his conscience. “Aerssens is crowing like a cock,” he said, “but the truth will surely prevail.”

Page 2941

CHAPTER XVII.

A Deputation from Utrecht to Maurice—The Fair at Utrecht—Maurice and the States' Deputies at Utrecht—Ogle refuses to act in Opposition to the States—The Stadholder disbands the Waartgelders— The Prince appoints forty Magistrates—The States formally disband the Waartgelders.

The eventful midsummer had arrived. The lime-tree blossoms were fragrant in the leafy bowers overshadowing the beautiful little rural capital of the Commonwealth. The anniversary of the Nieuwpoort victory, July 2, had come and gone, and the Stadholder was known to be resolved that his political campaign this year should be as victorious as that memorable military one of eighteen years before.

Before the dog-days should begin to rage, the fierce heats of theological and political passion were to wax daily more and more intense.

The party at Utrecht in favour of a compromise and in awe of the Stadholder sent a deputation to the Hague with the express but secret purpose of conferring with Maurice. They were eight in number, three of whom, including Gillis van Ledenberg, lodged at the house of Daniel Tressel, first clerk of the States-General.

The leaders of the Barneveld party, aware of the purport of this mission and determined to frustrate it, contrived a meeting between the Utrecht commissioners and Grotius, Hoogerbeets, de Haan, and de Lange at Tressel's house.

Grotius was spokesman. Maurice had accused the States of Holland of mutiny and rebellion, and the distinguished Pensionary of Rotterdam now retorted the charges of mutiny, disobedience, and mischief-making upon those who, under the mask of religion, were attempting to violate the sovereignty of the States, the privileges and laws of the province, the authority of the, magistrates, and to subject them to the power of others. To prevent such a catastrophe many cities had enlisted Waartgelders. By this means they had held such mutineers to their duty, as had been seen at Leyden, Haarlem, and other places. The States of Utrecht had secured themselves in the same way. But the mischiefmakers and the ill-disposed had been seeking everywhere to counteract these wholesome measures and to bring about a general disbanding of these troops. This it was necessary to resist with spirit. It was the very foundation of the provinces' sovereignty, to maintain which the public means must be employed. It was in vain to drive the foe out of the country if one could not remain in safety within one's own doors. They had heard with sorrow that Utrecht was thinking of cashiering its troops, and the speaker proceeded therefore to urge with all the eloquence he was master of the necessity of pausing before taking so fatal a step.

The deputies of Utrecht answered by pleading the great pecuniary burthen which the maintenance of the mercenaries imposed upon that province, and complained that there was no one to come to their assistance, exposed as they were to a sudden and overwhelming attack from many quarters. The States-General had not only written but sent commissioners to Utrecht insisting on the disbandment. They could plainly see the displeasure of the Prince. It was a very different affair in Holland, but the States of Utrecht found it necessary of two evils to choose the least.

Page 2942

They had therefore instructed their commissioners to request the Prince to remove the foreign garrison from their capital and to send the old companies of native militia in their place, to be in the pay of the episcopate. In this case the States would agree to disband the new levies.

Grotius in reply again warned the commissioners against communicating with Maurice according to their instructions, intimated that the native militia on which they were proposing to rely might have been debauched, and he held out hopes that perhaps the States of Utrecht might derive some relief from certain financial measures now contemplated in Holland.

The Utrechters resolved to wait at least several days before opening the subject of their mission to the Prince. Meantime Ledenberg made a rough draft of a report of what had occurred between them and Grotius and his colleagues which it was resolved to lay secretly before the States of Utrecht. The Hollanders hoped that they had at last persuaded the commissioners to maintain the Waartgelders.

The States of Holland now passed a solemn resolution to the effect that these new levies had been made to secure municipal order and maintain the laws from subversion by civil tumults. If this object could be obtained by other means, if the Stadholder were willing to remove garrisons of foreign mercenaries on whom there could be no reliance, and supply their place with native troops both in Holland and Utrecht, an arrangement could be made for disbanding the Waartgelders.

Barneveld, at the head of thirty deputies from the nobles and cities, waited upon Maurice and verbally communicated to him this resolution. He made a cold and unsatisfactory reply, although it seems to have been understood that by according twenty companies of native troops he might have contented both Holland and Utrecht.

Ledenberg and his colleagues took their departure from the Hague without communicating their message to Maurice. Soon afterwards the States-General appointed a commission to Utrecht with the Stadholder at the head of it.

The States of Holland appointed another with Grotius as its chairman.

On the 25th July Grotius and Pensionary Hoogerbeets with two colleagues arrived in Utrecht.

Gillis van Ledenberg was there to receive them. A tall, handsome, bald-headed, well-featured, mild, gentlemanlike man was this secretary of the Utrecht assembly, and certainly not aware, while passing to and fro on such half diplomatic missions between two sovereign assemblies, that he was committing high-treason. He might well imagine however, should Maurice discover that it was he who had prevented the commissioners from conferring with him as instructed, that it would go hard with him.

Ledenberg forthwith introduced Grotius and his committee to the Assembly at Utrecht.

While these great personages were thus holding solemn and secret council, another and still greater personage came upon the scene.

Page 2943

The Stadholder with the deputation from the States-General arrived at Utrecht.

Evidently the threads of this political drama were converging to a catastrophe, and it might prove a tragical one.

Meantime all looked merry enough in the old episcopal city. There were few towns in Lower or in Upper Germany more elegant and imposing than Utrecht. Situate on the slender and feeble channel of the ancient Rhine as it falters languidly to the sea, surrounded by trim gardens and orchards, and embowered in groves of beeches and limetrees, with busy canals fringed with poplars, lined with solid quays, and crossed by innumerable bridges; with the stately brick tower of St. Martin's rising to a daring height above one of the most magnificent Gothic cathedrals in the Netherlands; this seat of the Anglo-Saxon Willebrord, who eight hundred years before had preached Christianity to the Frisians, and had founded that long line of hard-fighting, indomitable bishops, obstinately contesting for centuries the possession of the swamps and pastures about them with counts, kings, and emperors, was still worthy of its history and its position.

It was here too that sixty-one years before the famous Articles of Union were signed. By that fundamental treaty of the Confederacy, the Provinces agreed to remain eternally united as if they were but one province, to make no war nor peace save by unanimous consent, while on lesser matters a majority should rule; to admit both Catholics and Protestants to the Union provided they obeyed its Articles and conducted themselves as good patriots, and expressly declared that no province or city should interfere with another in the matter of divine worship.

From this memorable compact, so enduring a landmark in the history of human freedom, and distinguished by such breadth of view for the times both in religion and politics, the city had gained the title of cradle of liberty: 'Cunabula libertatis'.

Was it still to deserve the name? At that particular moment the mass of the population was comparatively indifferent to the terrible questions pending. It was the kermis or annual fair, and all the world was keeping holiday in Utrecht. The pedlars and itinerant merchants from all the cities and provinces had brought their wares jewellery and crockery, ribbons and laces, ploughs and harrows, carriages and horses, cows and sheep, cheeses and butter firkins, doublets and petticoats, guns and pistols, everything that could serve the city and country-side for months to come—and displayed them in temporary booths or on the ground, in every street and along every canal. The town was one vast bazaar. The peasant-women from the country, with their gold and silver tiaras and the year's rent of a comfortable farm in their earrings and necklaces, and the sturdy Frisian peasants, many of whom had borne their matchlocks in the great wars which had lasted through their own and their fathers' lifetime, trudged through

Page 2944

the city, enjoying the blessings of peace. Bands of music and merry-go-rounds in all the open places and squares; open-air bakeries of pancakes and waffles; theatrical exhibitions, raree-shows, jugglers, and mountebanks at every corner—all these phenomena which had been at every kermis for centuries, and were to repeat themselves for centuries afterwards, now enlivened the atmosphere of the grey, episcopal city. Pasted against the walls of public edifices were the most recent placards and counter-placards of the States-General and the States of Utrecht on the great subject of religious schisms and popular tumults. In the shop-windows and on the bookstalls of Contra-Remonstrant tradesmen, now becoming more and more defiant as the last allies of Holland, the States of Utrecht, were gradually losing courage, were seen the freshest ballads and caricatures against the Advocate. Here an engraving represented him seated at table with Grotius, Hoogerbeets, and others, discussing the National Synod, while a flap of the picture being lifted put the head of the Duke of Alva on the legs of Barneveld, his companions being transformed in similar manner into Spanish priests and cardinals assembled at the terrible Council of Blood-with rows of Protestant martyrs burning and hanging in the distance. Another print showed Prince Maurice and the States-General shaking the leading statesmen of the Commonwealth in a mighty sieve through which came tumbling head foremost to perdition the hated Advocate and his abettors. Another showed the Arminians as a row of crest-fallen cocks rained upon by the wrath of the Stadholder—Arminians by a detestable pun being converted into “Arme haenen” or “Poor cocks.” One represented the Pope and King of Spain blowing thousands of ducats out of a golden bellows into the lap of the Advocate, who was holding up his official robes to receive them, or whole carriage-loads of Arminians starting off bag and baggage on the road to Rome, with Lucifer in the perspective waiting to give them a warm welcome in his own dominions; and so on, and so on. Moving through the throng, with iron calque on their heads and halberd in hand, were groups of Waartgelders scowling fiercely at many popular demonstrations such as they had been enlisted to suppress, but while off duty concealing outward symptoms of wrath which in many instances perhaps would have been far from genuine.

For although these mercenaries knew that the States of Holland, who were responsible for the pay of the regular troops then in Utrecht, authorized them to obey no orders save from the local authorities, yet it was becoming a grave question for the Waartgelders whether their own wages were perfectly safe, a circumstance which made them susceptible to the atmosphere of Contra-Remonstrantism which was steadily enwrapping the whole country. A still graver question was whether such resistance as they could offer to the renowned Stadholder, whose name was magic to every soldier’s heart not

Page 2945

only in his own land but throughout Christendom, would not be like parrying a lance's thrust with a bulrush. In truth the senior captain of the Waartgelders, Harteveld by name, had privately informed the leaders of the Barneveld party in Utrecht that he would not draw his sword against Prince Maurice and the States-General. "Who asks you to do so?" said some of the deputies, while Ledenberg on the other hand flatly accused him of cowardice. For this affront the Captain had vowed revenge.

And in the midst of this scene of jollity and confusion, that midsummer night, entered the stern Stadholder with his fellow commissioners; the feeble plans for shutting the gates upon him not having been carried into effect.

"You hardly expected such a guest at your fair," said he to the magistrates, with a grim smile on his face as who should say, "And what do you think of me now I have came?"

Meantime the secret conference of Grotius and colleagues with the States of Utrecht proceeded. As a provisional measure, Sir John Ogle, commander of the forces paid by Holland, had been warned as to where his obedience was due. It had likewise been intimated that the guard should be doubled at the Amersfoort gate, and a watch set on the river Lek above and below the city in order to prevent fresh troops of the States-General from being introduced by surprise.

These precautions had been suggested a year before, as we have seen, in a private autograph letter from Barneveld to Secretary Ledenberg.

Sir John Ogle had flatly refused to act in opposition to the Stadholder and the States-General, whom he recognized as his lawful superiors and masters, and he warned Ledenberg and his companions as to the perilous nature of the course which they were pursuing. Great was the indignation of the Utrechters and the Holland commissioners in consequence.

Grotius in his speech enlarged on the possibility of violence being used by the Stadholder, while some of the members of the Assembly likewise thought it likely that he would smite the gates open by force. Grotius, when reproved afterwards for such strong language towards Prince Maurice, said that true Hollanders were no courtiers, but were wont to call everything by its right name.

He stated in strong language the regret felt by Holland that a majority of the States of Utrecht had determined to disband the Waartgelders which had been constitutionally enlisted according to the right of each province under the 1st Article of the Union of Utrecht to protect itself and its laws.

Next day there were conferences between Maurice and the States of Utrecht and between him and the Holland deputies. The Stadholder calmly demanded the disbandment and the Synod. The Hollanders spoke of securing first the persons and rights of the magistracy.

“The magistrates are to be protected,” said Maurice, “but we must first know how they are going to govern. People have tried to introduce five false points into the Divine worship. People have tried to turn me out of the stadholdership and to drive me from the country. But I have taken my measures. I know well what I am about. I have got five provinces on my side, and six cities of Holland will send deputies to Utrecht to sustain me here.”

Page 2946

The Hollanders protested that there was no design whatever, so far as they knew, against his princely dignity or person. All were ready to recognize his rank and services by every means in their power. But it was desirable by conciliation and compromise, not by stern decree, to arrange these religious and political differences.

The Stadholder replied by again insisting on the Synod. "As for the Waartgelders," he continued, "they are worse than Spanish fortresses. They must away."

After a little further conversation in this vein the Prince grew more excited.

"Everything is the fault of the Advocate," he cried.

"If Barneveld were dead," replied Grotius, "all the rest of us would still deem ourselves bound to maintain the laws. People seem to despise Holland and to wish to subject it to the other provinces."

"On the contrary," cried the Prince, "it is the Advocate who wishes to make Holland the States-General."

Maurice was tired of argument. There had been much ale-house talk some three months before by a certain blusterous gentleman called van Ostrum about the necessity of keeping the Stadholder in check. "If the Prince should undertake," said this pot-valiant hero, "to attack any of the cities of Utrecht or Holland with the hard hand, it is settled to station 8000 or 10,000 soldiers in convenient places. Then we shall say to the Prince, if you don't leave us alone, we shall make an arrangement with the Archduke of Austria and resume obedience to him. We can make such a treaty with him as will give us religious freedom and save us from tyranny of any kind. I don't say this for myself, but have heard it on good authority from very eminent persons."

This talk had floated through the air to the Stadholder.

What evidence could be more conclusive of a deep design on the part of Barneveld to sell the Republic to the Archduke and drive Maurice into exile? Had not Esquire van Ostrum solemnly declared it at a tavern table? And although he had mentioned no names, could the "eminent personages" thus cited at second hand be anybody but the Advocate?

Three nights after his last conference with the Hollanders, Maurice quietly ordered a force of regular troops in Utrecht to be under arms at half past three o'clock next morning. About 1000 infantry, including companies of Ernest of Nassau's command at Arnhem and of Brederode's from Vianen, besides a portion of the regular garrison of the place, had accordingly been assembled without beat of drum, before half past three in the morning, and were now drawn up on the market-place or Neu. At break of day the Prince himself appeared on horseback surrounded by his staff on the Neu or Neude, a

large, long, irregular square into which the seven or eight principal streets and thoroughfares of the town emptied themselves. It was adorned by public buildings and other handsome edifices, and the tall steeple of St. Martin's with its beautiful open-work spire, lighted with the first rays of the midsummer sun, looked tranquilly down upon the scene.

Page 2947

Each of the entrances to the square had been securely guarded by Maurice's orders, and cannon planted to command all the streets. A single company of the famous Waartgelders was stationed in the Neu or near it. The Prince rode calmly towards them and ordered them to lay down their arms. They obeyed without a murmur. He then sent through the city to summon all the other companies of Waartgelders to the Neu. This was done with perfect promptness, and in a short space of time the whole body of mercenaries, nearly 1000 in number, had laid down their arms at the feet of the Prince.

The snaphances and halberds being then neatly stacked in the square, the Stadholder went home to his early breakfast. There was an end to those mercenaries thenceforth and for ever. The faint and sickly resistance to the authority of Maurice offered at Utrecht was attempted nowhere else.

For days there had been vague but fearful expectations of a "blood bath," of street battles, rioting, and plunder. Yet the Stadholder with the consummate art which characterized all his military manoeuvres had so admirably carried out his measure that not a shot was fired, not a blow given, not a single burgher disturbed in his peaceful slumbers. When the population had taken off their nightcaps, they woke to find the awful bugbear removed which had so long been appalling them. The Waartgelders were numbered with the terrors of the past, and not a cat had mewed at their disappearance.

Charter-books, parchments, 13th Articles, Barneveld's teeth, Arminian forts, flowery orations of Grotius, tavern talk of van Ostrum, city immunities, States' rights, provincial laws, Waartgelders and all—the martial Stadholder, with the orange plume in his hat and the sword of Nieuwpoort on his thigh, strode through them as easily as through the whirligigs and mountebanks, the wades and fritters, encumbering the streets of Utrecht on the night of his arrival.

Secretary Ledenberg and other leading members of the States had escaped the night before. Grotius and his colleagues also took a precipitate departure. As they drove out of town in the twilight, they met the deputies of the six opposition cities of Holland just arriving in their coach from the Hague. Had they tarried an hour longer, they would have found themselves safely in prison.

Four days afterwards the Stadholder at the head of his body-guard appeared at the town-house. His halberdmen tramped up the broad staircase, heralding his arrival to the assembled magistracy. He announced his intention of changing the whole board then and there. The process was summary. The forty members were required to supply forty other names, and the Prince added twenty more. From the hundred candidates thus furnished the Prince appointed forty magistrates such as suited himself. It is needless to say that but few of the old bench remained, and that those few were devoted to the Synod, the States-General, and the Stadholder. He furthermore announced that these new magistrates were to hold office for life, whereas the board

had previously been changed every year. The cathedral church was at once assigned for the use of the Contra-Remonstrants.

Page 2948

This process was soon to be repeated throughout the two insubordinate provinces Utrecht and Holland.

The Prince was accused of aiming at the sovereignty of the whole country, and one of his grief's against the Advocate was that he had begged the Princess-Widow, Louise de Coligny, to warn her son-in-law of the dangers of such ambition. But so long as an individual, sword in hand, could exercise such unlimited sway over the whole municipal, and provincial organization of the Commonwealth, it mattered but little whether he was called King or Kaiser, Doge or Stadholder. Sovereign he was for the time being at least, while courteously acknowledging the States-General as his sovereign.

Less than three weeks afterwards the States-General issued a decree formally disbanding the Waartgelders; an almost superfluous edict, as they had almost ceased to exist, and there were none to resist the measure. Grotius recommended complete acquiescence. Barneveld's soul could no longer animate with courage a whole people.

The invitations which had already in the month of June been prepared for the Synod to meet in the city of Dortor Dordtrecht-were now issued. The States of Holland sent back the notification unopened, deeming it an unwarrantable invasion of their rights that an assembly resisted by a large majority of their body should be convoked in a city on their own territory. But this was before the disbandment of the Waartgelders and the general change of magistracies had been effected.

Earnest consultations were now held as to the possibility of devising some means of compromise; of providing that the decisions of the Synod should not be considered binding until after having been ratified by the separate states. In the opinion of Barneveld they were within a few hours' work of a favourable result when their deliberations were interrupted by a startling event.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Fruitless Interview between Barneveld and Maurice—The Advocate, warned of his Danger, resolves to remain at the Hague—Arrest of Barneveld, of Qrotius, and of Hoogerbeets—The States-General assume the Responsibility in a "Billet"—The States of Holland protest— The Advocate's Letter to his Family—Audience of Boississe—Mischief-making of Aerssens—The French Ambassadors intercede for Barneveld—The King of England opposes their Efforts—Langerac's Treachery to the Advocate—Maurice continues his Changes in the Magistracy throughout the Country—Vote of Thanks by the States of Holland.

The Advocate, having done what he believed to be his duty, and exhausted himself in efforts to defend ancient law and to procure moderation and mutual toleration in religion,

was disposed to acquiesce in the inevitable. His letters giving official and private information of those grave events were neither vindictive nor vehement.

“I send you the last declaration of My Lords of Holland,” he said to Caron, “in regard to the National Synod, with the counter-declaration of Dordtrecht and the other five cities. Yesterday was begun the debate about cashiering the enrolled soldiers called Waartgelders. To-day the late M. van Kereburg was buried.”

Page 2949

Nothing could be calmer than his tone. After the Waartgelders had been disbanded, Utrecht revolutionized by main force, the National Synod decided upon, and the process of changing the municipal magistracies everywhere in the interest of Contra-Remonstrants begun, he continued to urge moderation and respect for law. Even now, although discouraged, he was not despondent, and was disposed to make the best even of the Synod.

He wished at this supreme moment to have a personal interview with the Prince in order to devise some means for calming the universal agitation and effecting, if possible, a reconciliation among conflicting passions and warring sects. He had stood at the side of Maurice and of Maurice's great father in darker hours even than these. They had turned to him on all trying and tragical occasions and had never found his courage wavering or his judgment at fault. "Not a friend to the House of Nassau, but a father," thus had Maurice with his own lips described the Advocate to the widow of William the Silent. Incapable of an unpatriotic thought, animated by sincere desire to avert evil and procure moderate action, Barneveld saw no reason whatever why, despite all that had been said and done, he should not once more hold council with the Prince. He had a conversation accordingly with Count Lewis, who had always honoured the Advocate while differing with him on the religious question. The Stadholder of Friesland, one of the foremost men of his day in military and scientific affairs, in administrative ability and philanthropic instincts, and, in a family perhaps the most renowned in Europe for heroic qualities and achievements, hardly second to any who had borne the name, was in favour of the proposed interview, spoke immediately to Prince Maurice about it, but was not hopeful as to its results. He knew his cousin well and felt that he was at that moment resentful, perhaps implacably so, against the whole Remonstrant party and especially against their great leader.

Count Lewis was small of stature, but dignified, not to say pompous, in demeanour. His style of writing to one of lower social rank than himself was lofty, almost regal, and full of old world formality.

"Noble, severe, right worshipful, highly learned and discreet, special good friend," he wrote to Barneveld; "we have spoken to his Excellency concerning the expediency of what you requested of us this forenoon. We find however that his Excellency is not to be moved to entertain any other measure than the National Synod which he has himself proposed in person to all the provinces, to the furtherance of which he has made so many exertions, and which has already been announced by the States-General.

"We will see by what opportunity his Excellency will appoint the interview, and so far as lies in us you may rely on our good offices. We could not answer sooner as the French ambassadors had audience of us this forenoon and we were visiting his Excellency in the afternoon. Wishing your worship good evening, we are your very good friend."

Page 2950

Next day Count William wrote again. “We have taken occasion,” he said, “to inform his Excellency that you were inclined to enter into communication with him in regard to an accommodation of the religious difficulties and to the cashiering of the Waartgelders. He answered that he could accept no change in the matter of the National Synod, but nevertheless would be at your disposal whenever your worship should be pleased to come to him.”

Two days afterwards Barneveld made his appearance at the apartments of the Stadholder. The two great men on whom the fabric of the Republic had so long rested stood face to face once more.

The Advocate, with long grey beard and stern blue eye, haggard with illness and anxiety, tall but bent with age, leaning on his staff and wrapped in black velvet cloak—-an imposing magisterial figure; the florid, plethoric Prince in brown doublet, big russet boots, narrow ruff, and shabby felt hat with its string of diamonds, with hand clutched on swordhilt, and eyes full of angry menace, the very type of the high-born, imperious soldier—thus they surveyed each other as men, once friends, between whom a gulf had opened.

Barneveld sought to convince the Prince that in the proceedings at Utrecht, founded as they were on strict adherence to the laws and traditions of the Provinces, no disrespect had been intended to him, no invasion of his constitutional rights, and that on his part his lifelong devotion to the House of Nassau had suffered no change. He repeated his usual incontrovertible arguments against the Synod, as illegal and directly tending to subject the magistracy to the priesthood, a course of things which eight-and-twenty years before had nearly brought destruction on the country and led both the Prince and himself to captivity in a foreign land.

The Prince sternly replied in very few words that the National Synod was a settled matter, that he would never draw back from his position, and could not do so without singular disservice to the country and to his own disreputation. He expressed his displeasure at the particular oath exacted from the Waartgelders. It diminished his lawful authority and the respect due to him, and might be used per indirectum to the oppression of those of the religion which he had sworn to maintain. His brow grew black when he spoke of the proceedings at Utrecht, which he denounced as a conspiracy against his own person and the constitution of the country.

Barneveld used in vain the powers of argument by which he had guided kings and republics, cabinets and assemblies, during so many years. His eloquence fell powerless upon the iron taciturnity of the Stadholder. Maurice had expressed his determination and had no other argument to sustain it but his usual exasperating silence.

The interview ended as hopelessly as Count Lewis William had anticipated, and the Prince and the Advocate separated to meet no more on earth.

Page 2951

“You have doubtless heard already,” wrote Barneveld to the ambassador in London, “of all that has been passing here and in Utrecht. One must pray to God that everything may prosper to his honour and the welfare of the country. They are resolved to go through with the National Synod, the government of Utrecht after the change made in it having consented with the rest. I hope that his Majesty, according to your statement, will send some good, learned, and peace-loving personages here, giving them wholesome instructions to help bring our affairs into Christian unity, accommodation, and love, by which his Majesty and these Provinces would be best served.”

Were these the words of a baffled conspirator and traitor? Were they uttered to produce an effect upon public opinion and avert a merited condemnation by all good men? There is not in them a syllable of reproach, of anger, of despair. And let it be remembered that they were not written for the public at all. They were never known to the public, hardly heard of either by the Advocate’s enemies or friends, save the one to whom they were addressed and the monarch to whom that friend was accredited. They were not contained in official despatches, but in private, confidential outpourings to a trusted political and personal associate of many years. From the day they were written until this hour they have never been printed, and for centuries perhaps not read.

He proceeded to explain what he considered to be the law in the Netherlands with regard to military allegiance. It is not probable that there was in the country a more competent expounder of it; and defective and even absurd as such a system was, it had carried the Provinces successfully through a great war, and a better method for changing it might have been found among so law-loving and conservative a people as the Netherlanders than brute force.

“Information has apparently been sent to England,” he said, “that My Lords of Holland through their commissioners in Utrecht dictated to the soldiery standing at their charges something that was unreasonable. The truth is that the States of Holland, as many of them as were assembled, understanding that great haste was made to send his Excellency and some deputies from the other provinces to Utrecht, while the members of the Utrecht assembly were gone to report these difficulties to their constituents and get fresh instructions from them, wishing that the return of those members should be waited for and that the Assembly of Holland might also be complete—a request which was refused—sent a committee to Utrecht, as the matter brooked no delay, to give information to the States of that province of what was passing here and to offer their good offices.

Page 2952

“They sent letters also to his Excellency to move him to reasonable accommodation without taking extreme measures in opposition to those resolutions of the States of Utrecht which his Excellency had promised to conform with and to cause to be maintained by all officers and soldiers. Should his Excellency make difficulty in this, the commissioners were instructed to declare to him that they were ordered to warn the colonels and captains standing in the payment of Holland, by letter and word of mouth, that they were bound by oath to obey the States of Holland as their paymasters and likewise to carry out the orders of the provincial and municipal magistrates in the places where they were employed. The soldiery was not to act or permit anything to be done against those resolutions, but help to carry them out, his Excellency himself and the troops paid by the States of Holland being indisputably bound by oath and duty so to do.”

Doubtless a more convenient arrangement from a military point of view might be imagined than a system of quotas by which each province in a confederacy claimed allegiance and exacted obedience from the troops paid by itself in what was after all a general army. Still this was the logical and inevitable result of State rights pushed to the extreme and indeed had been the indisputable theory and practice in the Netherlands ever since their revolt from Spain. To pretend that the proceedings and the oath were new because they were embarrassing was absurd. It was only because the dominant party saw the extreme inconvenience of the system, now that it was turned against itself, that individuals contemptuous of law and ignorant of history denounced it as a novelty.

But the strong and beneficent principle that lay at the bottom of the Advocate’s conduct was his unflagging resolve to maintain the civil authority over the military in time of peace. What liberal or healthy government would be possible otherwise? Exactly as he opposed the subjection of the magistracy by the priesthood or the mob, so he now defended it against the power of the sword. There was no justification whatever for a claim on the part of Maurice to exact obedience from all the armies of the Republic, especially in time of peace. He was himself by oath sworn to obey the States of Holland, of Utrecht, and of the three other provinces of which he was governor. He was not commander-in-chief. In two of the seven provinces he had no functions whatever, military or civil. They had another governor.

Yet the exposition of the law, as it stood, by the Advocate and his claim that both troops and Stadholder should be held to their oaths was accounted a crime. He had invented a new oath—it was said—and sought to diminish the power of the Prince. These were charges, unjust as they were, which might one day be used with deadly effect.

“We live in a world where everything is interpreted to the worst,” he said. “My physical weakness continues and is increased by this affliction. I place my trust in God the Lord and in my upright and conscientious determination to serve the country, his Excellency, and the religion in which through God’s grace I hope to continue to the end.”

Page 2953

On the 28th August of a warm afternoon, Barneveld was seated on a porcelain seat in an arbor in his garden. Councillor Berkhout, accompanied by a friend, called to see him, and after a brief conversation gave him solemn warning that danger was impending, that there was even a rumour of an intention to arrest him.

The Advocate answered gravely, “Yes, there are wicked men about.”

Presently he lifted his hat courteously and said, “I thank you, gentlemen, for the warning.”

It seems scarcely to have occurred to him that he had been engaged in anything beyond a constitutional party struggle in which he had defended what in his view was the side of law and order. He never dreamt of seeking safety in flight. Some weeks before, he had been warmly advised to do as both he and Maurice had done in former times in order to escape the stratagems of Leicester, to take refuge in some strong city devoted to his interests rather than remain at the Hague. But he had declined the counsel. “I will await the issue of this business,” he said, “in the Hague, where my home is, and where I have faithfully served my masters. I had rather for the sake of the Fatherland suffer what God chooses to send me for having served well than that through me and on my account any city should fall into trouble and difficulties.”

Next morning, Wednesday, at seven o’clock, Uytenbogaert paid him a visit. He wished to consult him concerning a certain statement in regard to the Synod which he desired him to lay before the States of Holland. The preacher did not find his friend busily occupied at his desk, as usual, with writing and other work. The Advocate had pushed his chair away from the table encumbered with books and papers, and sat with his back leaning against it, lost in thought. His stern, stoical face was like that of a lion at bay.

Uytenbogaert tried to arouse him from his gloom, consoling him by reflections on the innumerable instances, in all countries and ages, of patriotic statesmen who for faithful service had reaped nothing but ingratitude.

Soon afterwards he took his leave, feeling a presentiment of evil within him which it was impossible for him to shake off as he pressed Barneveld’s hand at parting.

Two hours later, the Advocate went in his coach to the session of the States of Holland. The place of the Assembly as well as that of the States-General was within what was called the Binnenhof or Inner Court; the large quadrangle enclosing the ancient hall once the residence of the sovereign Counts of Holland. The apartments of the Stadholder composed the south-western portion of the large series of buildings surrounding this court. Passing by these lodgings on his way to the Assembly, he was accosted by a chamberlain of the Prince and informed that his Highness desired to speak with him. He followed him towards the room where such interviews were usually held, but in the antechamber was met by Lieutenant Nythof, of

Page 2954

the Prince's bodyguard. This officer told him that he had been ordered to arrest him in the name of the States-General. The Advocate demanded an interview with the Prince. It was absolutely refused. Physical resistance on the part of a man of seventy-two, stooping with age and leaning on a staff, to military force, of which Nythof was the representative, was impossible. Barneveld put a cheerful face on the matter, and was even inclined to converse. He was at once carried off a prisoner and locked up in a room belonging to Maurice's apartments.

Soon afterwards, Grotius on his way to the States-General was invited in precisely the same manner to go to the Prince, with whom, as he was informed, the Advocate was at that moment conferring. As soon as he had ascended the stairs however, he was arrested by Captain van der Meulen in the name of the States-General, and taken to a chamber in the same apartments, where he was guarded by two halberdmen. In the evening he was removed to another chamber where the window shutters were barred, and where he remained three days and nights. He was much cast down and silent. Pensionary Hoogerbeets was made prisoner in precisely the same manner. Thus the three statesmen—culprits as they were considered by their enemies—were secured without noise or disturbance, each without knowing the fate that had befallen the other. Nothing could have been more neatly done. In the same quiet way orders were sent to secure Secretary Ledenberg, who had returned to Utrecht, and who now after a short confinement in that city was brought to the Hague and imprisoned in the Hof.

At the very moment of the Advocate's arrest his son-in-law van der Myle happened to be paying a visit to Sir Dudley Carleton, who had arrived very late the night before from England. It was some hours before he or any other member of the family learned what had befallen.

The Ambassador reported to his sovereign that the deed was highly applauded by the well disposed as the only means left for the security of the state. "The Arminians," he said, "condemn it as violent and insufferable in a free republic."

Impartial persons, he thought, considered it a superfluous proceeding now that the Synod had been voted and the Waartgelders disbanded.

While he was writing his despatch, the Stadholder came to call upon him, attended by his cousin Count Lewis William. The crowd of citizens following at a little distance, excited by the news with which the city was now ringing, mingled with Maurice's gentlemen and bodyguards and surged up almost into the Ambassador's doors.

Carleton informed his guests, in the course of conversation, as to the general opinion of indifferent judges of these events. Maurice replied that he had disbanded the

Waartgelders, but it had now become necessary to deal with their colonel and the chief captains, meaning thereby Barneveld and the two other prisoners.

Page 2955

The news of this arrest was soon carried to the house of Barneveld, and filled his aged wife, his son, and sons-in-law with grief and indignation. His eldest son William, commonly called the Seignior van Groeneveld, accompanied by his two brothers-in-law, Veenhuyzen, President of the Upper Council, and van der Myle, obtained an interview with the Stadholder that same afternoon.

They earnestly requested that the Advocate, in consideration of his advanced age, might on giving proper bail be kept prisoner in his own house.

The Prince received them at first with courtesy. “It is the work of the States-General,” he said, “no harm shall come to your father any more than to myself.”

Veenhuyzen sought to excuse the opposition which the Advocate had made to the Cloister Church.

The word was scarcely out of his mouth when the Prince fiercely interrupted him—“Any man who says a word against the Cloister Church,” he cried in a rage, “his feet shall not carry him from this place.”

The interview gave them on the whole but little satisfaction. Very soon afterwards two gentlemen, Asperen and Schagen, belonging to the Chamber of Nobles, and great adherents of Barneveld, who had procured their enrolment in that branch, forced their way into the Stadholder’s apartments and penetrated to the door of the room where the Advocate was imprisoned. According to Carleton they were filled with wine as well as rage, and made a great disturbance, loudly demanding their patron’s liberation. Maurice came out of his own cabinet on hearing the noise in the corridor, and ordered them to be disarmed and placed under arrest. In the evening however they were released.

Soon afterwards van der Myle fled to Paris, where he endeavoured to make influence with the government in favour of the Advocate. His departure without leave, being, as he was, a member of the Chamber of Nobles and of the council of state, was accounted a great offence. Uytenbogaert also made his escape, as did Taurinus, author of The Balance, van Moersbergen of Utrecht, and many others more or less implicated in these commotions.

There was profound silence in the States of Holland when the arrest of Barneveld was announced. The majority sat like men distraught. At last Matenesse said, “You have taken from us our head, our tongue, and our hand, henceforth we can only sit still and look on.”

The States-General now took the responsibility of the arrest, which eight individuals calling themselves the States-General had authorized by secret resolution the day before (28th August). On the 29th accordingly, the following “Billet,” as it was entitled,

was read to the Assembly and ordered to be printed and circulated among the community. It was without date or signature.

Page 2956

“Whereas in the course of the changes within the city of Utrecht and in other places brought about by the high and mighty Lords the States-General of the United Netherlands, through his Excellency and their Lordships’ committee to him adjoined, sundry things have been discovered of which previously there had been great suspicion, tending to the great prejudice of the Provinces in general and of each province in particular, not without apparent danger to the state of the country, and that thereby not only the city of Utrecht, but various other cities of the United Provinces would have fallen into a blood bath; and whereas the chief ringleaders in these things are considered to be John van Barneveld, Advocate of Holland, Rombout Hoogerbeets, and Hugo Grotius, whereof hereafter shall declaration and announcement be made, therefore their High Mightinesses, in order to prevent these and similar inconveniences, to place the country in security, and to bring the good burghers of all the cities into friendly unity again, have resolved to arrest those three persons, in order that out of their imprisonment they may be held to answer duly for their actions and offences.”

The deputies of Holland in the States-General protested on the same day against the arrest, declaring themselves extraordinarily amazed at such proceedings, without their knowledge, with usurpation of their jurisdiction, and that they should refer to their principals for instructions in the matter.

They reported accordingly at once to the States of Holland in session in the same building. Soon afterwards however a committee of five from the States-General appeared before the Assembly to justify the proceeding. On their departure there arose a great debate, the six cities of course taking part with Maurice and the general government. It was finally resolved by the majority to send a committee to the Stadholder to remonstrate with, and by the six opposition cities another committee to congratulate him, on his recent performances.

His answer was to this effect:

“What had happened was not by his order, but had been done by the States-General, who must be supposed not to have acted without good cause. Touching the laws and jurisdiction of Holland he would not himself dispute, but the States of Holland would know how to settle that matter with the States-General.”

Next day it was resolved in the Holland assembly to let the affair remain as it was for the time being. Rapid changes were soon to be expected in that body, hitherto so staunch for the cause of municipal laws and State rights.

Meantime Barneveld sat closely guarded in the apartments of the Stadholder, while the country and very soon all Europe were ringing with the news of his downfall, imprisonment, and disgrace. The news was a thunder-bolt to the lovers of religious liberty, a ray of dazzling sunlight after a storm to the orthodox.

Page 2957

The showers of pamphlets, villanous lampoons, and libels began afresh. The relatives of the fallen statesman could not appear in the streets without being exposed to insult, and without hearing scurrilous and obscene verses against their father and themselves, in which neither sex nor age was spared, howled in their ears by all the ballad-mongers and broadsheet vendors of the town. The unsigned publication of the States-General, with its dark allusions to horrible discoveries and promised revelations which were never made, but which reduced themselves at last to the gibberish of a pot-house bully, the ingenious libels, the powerfully concocted and poisonous calumnies, caricatures, and lampoons, had done their work. People stared at each other in the streets with open mouths as they heard how the Advocate had for years and years been the hireling of Spain, whose government had bribed him largely to bring about the Truce and kill the West India Company; how his pockets and his coffers were running over with Spanish ducats; how his plot to sell the whole country to the ancient tyrant, drive the Prince of Orange into exile, and bring every city of the Netherlands into a “blood-bath,” had, just in time, been discovered.

And the people believed it and hated the man they had so lately honoured, and were ready to tear him to pieces in the streets. Men feared to defend him lest they too should be accused of being stipendiaries of Spain. It was a piteous spectacle; not for the venerable statesman sitting alone there in his prison, but for the Republic in its lunacy, for human nature in its meanness and shame. He whom Count Lewis, although opposed to his politics, had so lately called one of the two columns on which the whole fabric of the States reposed, Prince Maurice being the other, now lay prostrate in the dust and reviled of all men.

“Many who had been promoted by him to high places,” said a contemporary, “and were wont to worship him as a god, in hope that he would lift them up still higher, now deserted him, and ridiculed him, and joined the rest of the world in heaping dirt upon him.”

On the third day of his imprisonment the Advocate wrote this letter to his family:—

“My very dear wife, children, children-in-law, and grandchildren,—I know that you are sorrowful for the troubles which have come upon me, but I beg you to seek consolation from God the Almighty and to comfort each other. I know before the Lord God of having given no single lawful reason for the misfortunes which have come upon me, and I will with patience await from His Divine hand and from my lawful superiors a happy issue, knowing well that you and my other well-wishers will with your prayers and good offices do all that you can to that end.

“And so, very dear wife, children, children-in-law, and grandchildren, I commend you to God’s holy keeping.

“I have been thus far well and honourably treated and accommodated, for which I thank his princely Excellency.

Page 2958

“From my chamber of arrest, last of August, anno 1618.

“Your dear husband, father, father-in-law, and grand father,

“*Johnof Barneveld*.”

On the margin was written:

“From the first I have requested and have at last obtained materials for writing.”

A fortnight before the arrest, but while great troubles were known to be impending, the French ambassador extraordinary, de Boississe, had audience before the Assembly of the States-General. He entreated them to maintain the cause of unity and peace as the foundation of their state; “that state,” he said, “which lifts its head so high that it equals or surpasses the mightiest republics that ever existed, and which could not have risen to such a height of honour and grandeur in so short a time, but through harmony and union of all the provinces, through the valour of his Excellency, and through your own wise counsels, both sustained by our great king, whose aid is continued by his son.”—-“The King my master,” he continued, “knows not the cause of your disturbances. You have not communicated them to him, but their most apparent cause is a difference of opinion, born in the schools, thence brought before the public, upon a point of theology. That point has long been deemed by many to be so hard and so high that the best advice to give about it is to follow what God’s Word teaches touching God’s secrets; to wit, that one should use moderation and modesty therein and should not rashly press too far into that which he wishes to be covered with the veil of reverence and wonder. That is a wise ignorance to keep one’s eyes from that which God chooses to conceal. He calls us not to eternal life through subtle and perplexing questions.”

And further exhorting them to conciliation and compromise, he enlarged on the effect of their internal dissensions on their exterior relations. “What joy, what rapture you are preparing for your neighbours by your quarrels! How they will scorn you! How they will laugh! What a hope do you give them of revenging themselves upon you without danger to themselves! Let me implore you to baffle their malice, to turn their joy into mourning, to unite yourselves to confound them.”

He spoke much more in the same vein, expressing wise and moderate sentiments. He might as well have gone down to the neighbouring beach when a south-west gale was blowing and talked of moderation to the waves of the German Ocean. The tempest of passion and prejudice had risen in its might and was sweeping all before it. Yet the speech, like other speeches and intercessions made at this epoch by de Boississe and by the regular French ambassador, du Maurier, was statesmanlike and reasonable. It is superfluous to say that it was in unison with the opinions of Barneveld, for Barneveld had probably furnished the text of the oration. Even as he had a few years before supplied the letters which King James had signed

Page 2959

and subsequently had struggled so desperately to disavow, so now the Advocate's imperious intellect had swayed the docile and amiable minds of the royal envoys into complete sympathy with his policy. He usually dictated their general instructions. But an end had come to such triumphs. Dudley Carleton had returned from his leave of absence in England, where he had found his sovereign hating the Advocate as doctors hate who have been worsted in theological arguments and despots who have been baffled in their imperious designs. Who shall measure the influence on the destiny of this statesman caused by the French-Spanish marriages, the sermons of James through the mouth of Carleton, and the mutual jealousy of France and England?

But the Advocate was in prison, and the earth seemed to have closed over him. Hardly a ripple of indignation was perceptible on the calm surface of affairs, although in the States-General as in the States of Holland his absence seemed to have reduced both bodies to paralysis.

They were the more easily handled by the prudent, skilful, and determined Maurice.

The arrest of the four gentlemen had been communicated to the kings of France and Great Britain and the Elector-Palatine in an identical letter from the States-General. It is noticeable that on this occasion the central government spoke of giving orders to the Prince of Orange, over whom they would seem to have had no legitimate authority, while on the other hand he had expressed indignation on more than one occasion that the respective states of the five provinces where he was governor and to whom he had sworn obedience should presume to issue commands to him.

In France, where the Advocate was honoured and beloved, the intelligence excited profound sorrow. A few weeks previously the government of that country had, as we have seen, sent a special ambassador to the States, M. de Boississe, to aid the resident envoy, du Maurier, in his efforts to bring about a reconciliation of parties and a termination of the religious feud. Their exertions were sincere and unceasing. They were as steadily countermined by Francis Aerssens, for the aim of that diplomatist was to bring about a state of bad feeling, even at cost of rupture, between the Republic and France, because France was friendly to the man he most hated and whose ruin he had sworn.

During the summer a bitter personal controversy had been going on, sufficiently vulgar in tone, between Aerssens and another diplomatist, Barneveld's son-in-law, Cornelis van der Myle. It related to the recall of Aerssens from the French embassy of which enough has already been laid before the reader. Van der Myle by the production of the secret letters of the Queen-Dowager and her counsellors had proved beyond dispute that it was at the express wish of the French government that the Ambassador had retired, and that indeed they had distinctly refused to receive him, should he return.

Foul words resulting in propositions for a hostile meeting on the frontier, which however came to nothing, were interchanged and Aerssens in the course of his altercation with the son-inlaw had found ample opportunity for venting his spleen upon his former patron the now fallen statesman.

Page 2960

Four days after the arrest of Barneveld he brought the whole matter before the States-General, and the intention with which he thus raked up the old quarrel with France after the death of Henry, and his charges in regard to the Spanish marriages, was as obvious as it was deliberate.

The French ambassadors were furious. Boississe had arrived not simply as friend of the Advocate, but to assure the States of the strong desire entertained by the French government to cultivate warmest relations with them. It had been desired by the Contra-Remonstrant party that deputies from the Protestant churches of France should participate in the Synod, and the French king had been much assailed by the Catholic powers for listening to those suggestions. The Papal nuncius, the Spanish ambassador, the envoy of the Archduke, had made a great disturbance at court concerning the mission of Boississe. They urged with earnestness that his Majesty was acting against the sentiments of Spain, Rome, and the whole Catholic Church, and that he ought not to assist with his counsel those heretics who were quarrelling among themselves over points in their heretical religion and wishing to destroy each other.

Notwithstanding this outcry the weather was smooth enough until the proceedings of Aerssens came to stir up a tempest at the French court. A special courier came from Boississe, a meeting of the whole council, although it was Sunday, was instantly called, and the reply of the States-General to the remonstrance of the Ambassador in the Aerssens affair was pronounced to be so great an affront to the King that, but for overpowering reasons, diplomatic intercourse would have at once been suspended. “Now instead of friendship there is great anger here,” said Langerac. The king forbade under vigorous penalties the departure of any French theologians to take part in the Synod, although the royal consent had nearly been given. The government complained that no justice was done in the Netherlands to the French nation, that leading personages there openly expressed contempt for the French alliance, denouncing the country as “Hispaniolized,” and declaring that all the council were regularly pensioned by Spain for the express purpose of keeping up the civil dissensions in the United Provinces.

Aerssens had publicly and officially declared that a majority of the French council since the death of Henry had declared the crown in its temporal as well as spiritual essence to be dependent on the Pope, and that the Spanish marriages had been made under express condition of the renunciation of the friendship and alliance of the States.

Such were among the first-fruits of the fall of Barneveld and the triumph of Aerssens, for it was he in reality who had won the victory, and he had gained it over both Stadholder and Advocate. Who was to profit by the estrangement between the Republic and its powerful ally at a moment too when that great kingdom was at last beginning to emerge from the darkness and nothingness of many years, with the faint glimmering dawn of a new great policy?

Page 2961

Barneveld, whose masterful statesmanship, following out the traditions of William the Silent, had ever maintained through good and ill report cordial and beneficent relations between the two countries, had always comprehended, even as a great cardinal-minister was ere long to teach the world, that the permanent identification of France with Spain and the Roman League was unnatural and impossible.

Meantime Barneveld sat in his solitary prison, knowing not what was passing on that great stage where he had so long been the chief actor, while small intriguers now attempted to control events.

It was the intention of Aerssens to return to the embassy in Paris whence he had been driven, in his own opinion, so unjustly. To render himself indispensable, he had begun by making himself provisionally formidable to the King's government. Later, there would be other deeds to do before the prize was within his grasp.

Thus the very moment when France was disposed to cultivate the most earnest friendship with the Republic had been seized for fastening an insult upon her. The Twelve Years' Truce with Spain was running to its close, the relations between France and Spain were unusually cold, and her friendship therefore more valuable than ever.

On the other hand the British king was drawing closer his relations with Spain, and his alliance was demonstrably of small account. The phantom of the Spanish bride had become more real to his excited vision than ever, so that early in the year, in order to please Gondemar, he had been willing to offer an affront to the French ambassador.

The Prince of Wales had given a splendid masquerade at court, to which the envoy of his Most Catholic Majesty was bidden. Much to his amazement the representative of the Most Christian King received no invitation, notwithstanding that he had taken great pains to procure one. M. de la Boderie was very angry, and went about complaining to the States' ambassador and his other colleagues of the slight, and darkened the lives of the court functionaries having charge of such matters with his vengeance and despair. It was represented to him that he had himself been asked to a festival the year before when Count Gondemar was left out. It was hinted to him that the King had good reasons for what he did, as the marriage with the daughter of Spain was now in train, and it was desirable that the Spanish ambassador should be able to observe the Prince's disposition and make a more correct report of it to his government. It was in vain. M. de la Boderie refused to be comforted, and asserted that one had no right to leave the French ambassador uninvited to any "festival or triumph" at court. There was an endless disturbance. De la Boderie sent his secretary off to Paris to complain to the King that his ambassador was of no account in London, while much favour was heaped upon the Spaniard. The Secretary returned with instructions from Lewis that the Ambassador was to come home immediately, and he went off accordingly in dudgeon. "I could see that he was in the highest degree indignant," said Caron, who saw him

before he left, “and I doubt not that his departure will increase and keep up the former jealousy between the governments.”

Page 2962

The ill-humor created by this event lasted a long time, serving to neutralize or at least perceptibly diminish the Spanish influence produced in France by the Spanish marriages. In the autumn, Secretary de Puysieux by command of the King ordered every Spaniard to leave the French court. All the “Spanish ladies and gentlemen, great and small,” who had accompanied the Queen from Madrid were included in this expulsion with the exception of four individuals, her Majesty’s father confessor, physician, apothecary, and cook.

The fair young queen was much vexed and shed bitter tears at this calamity, which, as she spoke nothing but Spanish, left her isolated at the court, but she was a little consoled by the promise that thenceforth the King would share her couch. It had not yet occurred to him that he was married.

The French envoys at the Hague exhausted themselves in efforts, both private and public, in favour of the prisoners, but it was a thankless task. Now that the great man and his chief pupils and adherents were out of sight, a war of shameless calumny was began upon him, such as has scarcely a parallel in political history.

It was as if a whole tribe of noxious and obscene reptiles were swarming out of the earth which had suddenly swallowed him. But it was not alone the obscure or the anonymous who now triumphantly vilified him. Men in high places who had partaken of his patronage, who had caressed him and grovelled before him, who had grown great through his tuition and rich through his bounty, now rejoiced in his ruin or hastened at least to save themselves from being involved in it. Not a man of them all but fell away from him like water. Even the great soldier forgot whose respectful but powerful hand it was which, at the most tragical moment, had lifted him from the high school at Leyden into the post of greatest power and responsibility, and had guided his first faltering footsteps by the light of his genius and experience. Francis Aerssens, master of the field, had now become the political tutor of the mature Stadholder. Step by step we have been studying the inmost thoughts of the Advocate as revealed in his secret and confidential correspondence, and the reader has been enabled to judge of the wantonness of the calumny which converted the determined antagonist into the secret friend of Spain. Yet it had produced its effect upon Maurice.

He told the French ambassadors a month after the arrest that Barneveld had been endeavouring, during and since the Truce negotiations, to bring back the Provinces, especially Holland, if not under the dominion of, at least under some kind of vassalage to Spain. Persons had been feeling the public pulse as to the possibility of securing permanent peace by paying tribute to Spain, and this secret plan of Barneveld had so alienated him from the Prince as to cause him to attempt every possible means of diminishing or destroying altogether his authority. He had spread through many cities that Maurice wished to make himself master of the state by using the religious dissensions to keep the people weakened and divided.

Page 2963

There is not a particle of evidence, and no attempt was ever made to produce any, that the Advocate had such plan, but certainly, if ever, man had made himself master of a state, that man was Maurice. He continued however to place himself before the world as the servant of the States-General, which he never was, either theoretically or in fact.

The French ambassadors became every day more indignant and more discouraged. It was obvious that Aerssens, their avowed enemy, was controlling the public policy of the government. Not only was there no satisfaction to be had for the offensive manner in which he had filled the country with his ancient grievances and his nearly forgotten charges against the Queen-Dowager and those who had assisted her in the regency, but they were repulsed at every turn when by order of their sovereign they attempted to use his good offices in favour of the man who had ever been the steady friend of France.

The Stadholder also professed friendship for that country, and referred to Colonel-General Chatillon, who had for a long time commanded the French regiments in the Netherlands, for confirmation of his uniform affection for those troops and attachment to their sovereign.

He would do wonders, he said, if Lewis would declare war upon Spain by land and sea.

“Such fruits are not ripe,” said Boississe, “nor has your love for France been very manifest in recent events.”

“Barneveld,” replied the Prince, “has personally offended me, and has boasted that he would drive me out of the country like Leicester. He is accused of having wished to trouble the country in order to bring it back under the yoke of Spain. Justice will decide. The States only are sovereign to judge this question. You must address yourself to them.”

“The States,” replied the ambassadors, “will require to be aided by your counsels.”

The Prince made no reply and remained chill and “impregnable.” The ambassadors continued their intercessions in behalf of the prisoners both by public address to the Assembly and by private appeals to the Stadholder and his influential friends. In virtue of the intimate alliance and mutual guarantees existing between their government and the Republic they claimed the acceptance of their good offices. They insisted upon a regular trial of the prisoners according to the laws of the land, that is to say, by the high court of Holland, which alone had jurisdiction in the premises. If they had been guilty of high-treason, they should be duly arraigned. In the name of the signal services of Barneveld and of the constant friendship of that great magistrate for France, the King demanded clemency or proof of his crimes. His Majesty complained through his ambassadors of the little respect shown for his counsels and for his friendship. “In times past you found ever prompt and favourable action in your time of need.”

“This discourse,” said Maurice to Chatillon, “proceeds from evil intention.”

Page 2964

Thus the prisoners had disappeared from human sight, and their enemies ran riot in slandering them. Yet thus far no public charges had been made.

“Nothing appears against them,” said du Maurier, “and people are beginning to open their mouths with incredible freedom. While waiting for the condemnation of the prisoners, one is determined to dishonour them.”

The French ambassadors were instructed to intercede to the last, but they were steadily repulsed—while the King of Great Britain, anxious to gain favour with Spain by aiding in the ruin of one whom he knew and Spain knew to be her determined foe, did all he could through his ambassador to frustrate their efforts and bring on a catastrophe. The States-General and Maurice were now on as confidential terms with Carleton as they were cold and repellent to Boississe and du Maurier.

“To recall to them the benefits of the King,” said du Maurier, “is to beat the air. And then Aerssens bewitches them, and they imagine that after having played runaway horses his Majesty will be only too happy to receive them back, caress them, and, in order to have their friendship, approve everything they have been doing right or wrong.”

Aerssens had it all his own way, and the States-General had just paid him 12,000 francs in cash on the ground that Langerac’s salary was larger than his had been when at the head of the same embassy many years before.

His elevation into the body of nobles, which Maurice had just stocked with five other of his partisans, was accounted an additional affront to France, while on the other hand the Queen-Mother, having through Epernon’s assistance made her escape from Blois, where she had been kept in durance since the death of Concini, now enumerated among other grievances for which she was willing to take up arms against her son that the King’s government had favoured Barneveld.

It was strange that all the devotees of Spain—Mary de’ Medici, and Epernon, as well as James I. and his courtiers—should be thus embittered against the man who had sold the Netherlands to Spain.

At last the Prince told the French ambassadors that the “people of the Provinces considered their persistent intercessions an invasion of their sovereignty.” Few would have anything to say to them. “No one listens to us, no one replies to us,” said du Maurier, “everyone visiting us is observed, and it is conceived a reproach here to speak to the ambassadors of France.”

Certainly the days were changed since Henry *iv*. leaned on the arm of Barneveld, and consulted with him, and with him only, among all the statesmen of Europe on his great schemes for regenerating Christendom and averting that general war which, now that

the great king had been murdered and the Advocate imprisoned, had already begun to ravage Europe.

Page 2965

Van der Myle had gone to Paris to make such exertions as he could among the leading members of the council in favour of his father-in-law. Langerac, the States' ambassador there, who but yesterday had been turning at every moment to the Advocate for light and warmth as to the sun, now hastened to disavow all respect or regard for him. He scoffed at the slender sympathy van der Myle was finding in the bleak political atmosphere. He had done his best to find out what he had been negotiating with the members of the council and was glad to say that it was so inconsiderable as to be not worth reporting. He had not spoken with or seen the King. Jeannin, his own and his father-in-law's principal and most confidential friend, had only spoken with him half an hour and then departed for Burgundy, although promising to confer with him sympathetically on his return. "I am very displeased at his coming here," said Langerac, ". . . . but he has found little friendship or confidence, and is full of woe and apprehension."

The Ambassador's labours were now confined to personally soliciting the King's permission for deputations from the Reformed churches of France to go to the Synod, now opened (13th November) at Dordtrecht, and to clearing his own skirts with the Prince and States-General of any suspicion of sympathy with Barneveld.

In the first object he was unsuccessful, the King telling him at last "with clear and significant words that this was impossible, on account of his conscience, his respect for the Catholic religion, and many other reasons."

In regard to the second point he acted with great promptness.

He received a summons in January 1619 from the States-General and the Prince to send them all letters that he had ever received from Barneveld. He crawled at once to Maurice on his knees, with the letters in his hand.

"Most illustrious, high-born Prince, most gracious Lord," he said; "obeying the commands which it has pleased the States and your princely Grace to give me, I send back the letters of Advocate Barneveld. If your princely Grace should find anything in them showing that the said Advocate had any confidence in me, I most humbly beg your princely Grace to believe that I never entertained any affection for, him, except only in respect to and so far as he was in credit and good authority with the government, and according to the upright zeal which I thought I could see in him for the service of My high and puissant Lords the States-General and of your princely Grace."

Greater humbleness could be expected of no ambassador. Most nobly did the devoted friend and pupil of the great statesman remember his duty to the illustrious Prince and their High Mightinesses. Most promptly did he abjure his patron now that he had fallen into the abyss.

“Nor will it be found,” he continued, “that I have had any sympathy or communication with the said Advocate except alone in things concerning my service. The great trust I had in him as the foremost and oldest counsellor of the state, as the one who so confidentially instructed me on my departure for France, and who had obtained for himself so great authority that all the most important affairs of the country were entrusted to him, was the cause that I simply and sincerely wrote to him all that people were in the habit of saying at this court.

Page 2966

“If I had known in the least or suspected that he was not what he ought to be in the service of My Lords the States and of your princely Grace and for the welfare and tranquillity of the land, I should have been well on my guard against letting myself in the least into any kind of communication with him whatever.”

The reader has seen how steadily and frankly the Advocate had kept Langerac as well as Caron informed of passing events, and how little concealment he made of his views in regard to the Synod, the Waartgelders, and the respective authority of the States-General and States-Provincial. Not only had Langerac no reason to suspect that Barneveld was not what he ought to be, but he absolutely knew the contrary from that most confidential correspondence with him which he was now so abjectly repudiating. The Advocate, in a protracted constitutional controversy, had made no secret of his views either officially or privately. Whether his positions were tenable or flimsy, they had been openly taken.

“What is more,” proceeded the Ambassador, “had I thought that any account ought to be made of what I wrote to him concerning the sovereignty of the Provinces, I should for a certainty not have failed to advise your Grace of it above all.”

He then, after profuse and maudlin protestations of his most dutiful zeal all the days of his life for “the service, honour, reputation, and contentment of your princely Grace,” observed that he had not thought it necessary to give him notice of such idle and unfounded matters, as being likely to give the Prince annoyance and displeasure. He had however always kept within himself the resolution duly to notify him in case he found that any belief was attached to the reports in Paris. “But the reports,” he said, “were popular and calumnious inventions of which no man had ever been willing or able to name to him the authors.”

The Ambassador’s memory was treacherous, and he had doubtless neglected to read over the minutes, if he had kept them, of his wonderful disclosures on the subject of the sovereignty before thus exculpating himself. It will be remembered that he had narrated the story of the plot for conferring sovereignty upon Maurice not as a popular calumny flying about Paris with no man to father it, but he had given it to Barneveld on the authority of a privy councillor of France and of the King himself. “His Majesty knows it to be authentic,” he had said in his letter. That letter was a pompous one, full of mystery and so secretly ciphered that he had desired that his friend van der Myle, whom he was now deriding for his efforts in Paris to save his father-inlaw from his fate, might assist the Advocate in unravelling its contents. He had now discovered that it had been idle gossip not worthy of a moment’s attention.

The reader will remember too that Barneveld, without attaching much importance to the tale, had distinctly pointed out to Langerac that the Prince himself was not implicated in the plot and had instructed the Ambassador to communicate the story to Maurice. This advice had not been taken, but he had kept the perilous stuff upon his breast. He now

sought to lay the blame, if it were possible to do so, upon the man to whom he had communicated it and who had not believed it.

Page 2967

The business of the States-General, led by the Advocate's enemies this winter, was to accumulate all kind of tales, reports, and accusations to his discredit on which to form something like a bill of indictment. They had demanded all his private and confidential correspondence with Caron and Langerae. The ambassador in Paris had been served, moreover, with a string of nine interrogatories which he was ordered to answer on oath and honour. This he did and appended the reply to his letter.

The nine questions had simply for their object to discover what Barneveld had been secretly writing to the Ambassador concerning the Synod, the enlisted troops, and the supposed projects of Maurice concerning the sovereignty. Langerac was obliged to admit in his replies that nothing had been written except the regular correspondence which he endorsed, and of which the reader has been able to see the sum and substance in the copious extracts which have been given.

He stated also that he had never received any secret instructions save the marginal notes to the list of questions addressed by him, when about leaving for Paris in 1614, to Barneveld. Most of these were of a trivial and commonplace nature.

They had however a direct bearing on the process to be instituted against the Advocate, and the letter too which we have been examining will prove to be of much importance. Certainly pains enough were taken to detect the least trace of treason in a very loyal correspondence. Langerac concluded by enclosing the Barneveld correspondence since the beginning of the year 1614, protesting that not a single letter had been kept back or destroyed. "Once more I recommend myself to mercy, if not to favour," he added, "as the most faithful, most obedient, most zealous servant of their High Mightinesses and your princely Grace, to whom I have devoted and sacrificed my honour and life in most humble service; and am now and forever the most humble, most obedient, most faithful servant of my most serene, most illustrious, most highly born Prince, most gracious Lord and princeliest Grace."

The former adherent of plain Advocate Barneveld could hardly find superlatives enough to bestow upon the man whose displeasure that prisoner had incurred.

Directly after the arrest the Stadholder had resumed his tour through the Provinces in order to change the governments. Sliding over any opposition which recent events had rendered idle, his course in every city was nearly the same. A regiment or two and a train of eighty or a hundred waggons coming through the city-gate preceded by the Prince and his body-guard of 300, a tramp of halberdmen up the great staircase of the town-hall, a jingle of spurs in the assembly-room, and the whole board of magistrates were summoned into the presence of the Stadholder. They were then informed that the world had no further need of their services, and were allowed to bow themselves out of the presence. A new list was then announced, prepared beforehand by Maurice on the suggestion of those on whom he could rely. A faint resistance was here and there attempted by magistrates and burghers who could not forget in a moment the rights of

self-government and the code of laws which had been enjoyed for centuries. At Hoorn, for instance, there was deep indignation among the citizens. An imprudent word or two from the authorities might have brought about a “blood-bath.”

Page 2968

The burgomaster ventured indeed to expostulate. They requested the Prince not to change the magistracy. “This is against our privileges,” they said, “which it is our duty to uphold. You will see what deep displeasure will seize the burghers, and how much disturbance and tumult will follow. If any faults have been committed by any member of the government, let him be accused and let him answer for them. Let your Excellency not only dismiss but punish such as cannot properly justify themselves.”

But his Excellency summoned them all to the town-house and as usual deposed them all. A regiment was drawn up in half-moon on the square beneath the windows. To the magistrates asking why they were deposed, he briefly replied, “The quiet of the land requires it. It is necessary to have unanimous resolutions in the States-General at the Hague. This cannot be accomplished without these preliminary changes. I believe that you had good intentions and have been faithful servants of the Fatherland. But this time it must be so.”

And so the faithful servants of the Fatherland were dismissed into space. Otherwise how could there be unanimous voting in parliament? It must be regarded perhaps as fortunate that the force of character, undaunted courage, and quiet decision of Maurice enabled him to effect this violent series of revolutions with such masterly simplicity. It is questionable whether the Stadholder’s commission technically empowered him thus to trample on municipal law; it is certain that, if it did, the boasted liberties of the Netherlands were a dream; but it is equally true that, in the circumstances then existing, a vulgar, cowardly, or incompetent personage might have marked his pathway with massacres without restoring tranquillity.

Sometimes there was even a comic aspect to these strokes of state. The lists of new magistrates being hurriedly furnished by the Prince’s adherents to supply the place of those evicted, it often happened that men not quahified by property, residence, or other attributes were appointed to the government, so that many became magistrates before they were citizens.

On being respectfully asked sometimes who such a magistrate might be whose face and name were equally unknown to his colleagues and to the townsmen in general; “Do I know the fellows?” he would say with a cheerful laugh. And indeed they might have all been dead men, those new functionaries, for aught he did know. And so on through Medemblik and Alkmaar, Brielle, Delft, Monnikendam, and many other cities progressed the Prince, sowing new municipalities broadcast as he passed along. At the Hague on his return a vote of thanks to the Prince was passed by the nobles and most of the cities for the trouble he had taken in this reforming process. But the unanimous vote had not yet been secured, the strongholds of Arminianism, as it was the fashion to call them, not being yet reduced.

Page 2969

The Prince, in reply to the vote of thanks, said that “in what he had done and was going to do his intention sincerely and uprightly had been no other than to promote the interests and tranquillity of the country, without admixture of anything personal and without prejudice to the general commonwealth or the laws and privileges of the cities.” He desired further that “note might be taken of this declaration as record of his good and upright intentions.”

But the sincerest and most upright intentions may be refracted by party atmosphere from their aim, and the purest gold from the mint elude the direct grasp through the clearest fluid in existence. At any rate it would have been difficult to convince the host of deposed magistrates hurled from office, although recognized as faithful servants of the Fatherland, that such violent removal had taken place without detriment to the laws and privileges.

And the Stadholder went to the few cities where some of the leaven still lingered.

He arrived at Leyden on the 22nd October, “accompanied by a great suite of colonels, ritmeesters, and captains,” having sent on his body-guard to the town strengthened by other troops. He was received by the magistrates at the “Prince’s Court” with great reverence and entertained by them in the evening at a magnificent banquet.

Next morning he summoned the whole forty of them to the town-house, disbanded them all, and appointed new ones in their stead; some of the old members however who could be relied upon being admitted to the revolutionized board.

The populace, mainly of the Stadholder’s party, made themselves merry over the discomfited “Arminians”. They hung wisps of straw as derisive wreaths of triumph over the dismantled palisade lately encircling the town-hall, disposed of the famous “Oldenbarneveld’s teeth” at auction in the public square, and chased many a poor cock and hen, with their feathers completely plucked from their bodies, about the street, crying “Arme haenen, arme haenen”—Arminians or poor fowls—according to the practical witticism much esteemed at that period. Certainly the unfortunate Barneveldians or Arminians, or however the Remonstrants might be designated, had been sufficiently stripped of their plumes.

The Prince, after having made proclamation from the town-house enjoining “modesty upon the mob” and a general abstention from “perverseness and petulance,” went his way to Haarlem, where he dismissed the magistrates and appointed new ones, and then proceeded to Rotterdam, to Gouda, and to Amsterdam.

It seemed scarcely necessary to carry, out the process in the commercial capital, the abode of Peter Plancius, the seat of the West India Company, the head-quarters of all most opposed to the Advocate, most devoted to the Stadholder. But although the majority of the city government was an overwhelming one, there was still a respectable

minority who, it was thought possible, might under a change of circumstances effect much mischief and even grow into a majority.

Page 2970

The Prince therefore summoned the board before him according to his usual style of proceeding and dismissed them all. They submitted without a word of remonstrance.

Ex-Burgomaster Hooft, a man of seventy-two-father of the illustrious Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, one of the greatest historians of the Netherlands or of any country, then a man of thirty-seven-shocked at the humiliating silence, asked his colleagues if they had none of them a word to say in defence of their laws and privileges.

They answered with one accord “No.”

The old man, a personal friend of Barneveld and born the same year, then got on his feet and addressed the Stadholder. He spoke manfully and well, characterizing the summary deposition of the magistracy as illegal and unnecessary, recalling to the memory of those who heard him that he had been thirty-six years long a member of the government and always a warm friend of the House of Nassau, and respectfully submitting that the small minority in the municipal government, while differing from their colleagues and from the greater number of the States-General, had limited their opposition to strictly constitutional means, never resorting to acts of violence or to secret conspiracy.

Nothing could be more truly respectable than the appearance of this ancient magistrate, in long black robe with fur edgings, high ruff around his thin, pointed face, and decent skull-cap covering his bald old head, quavering forth to unsympathetic ears a temperate and unanswerable defence of things which in all ages the noblest minds have deemed most valuable.

His harangue was not very long. Maurice’s reply was very short.

“Grandpapa,” he said, “it must be so this time. Necessity and the service of the country require it.”

With that he dismissed the thirty-six magistrates and next day appointed a new board, who were duly sworn to fidelity to the States-General. Of course a large proportion of the old members were renominated.

Scarcely had the echo of the Prince’s footsteps ceased to resound through the country as he tramped from one city to another, moulding each to his will, when the States of Holland, now thoroughly reorganized, passed a solemn vote of thanks to him for all that he had done. The six cities of the minority had now become the majority, and there was unanimity at the Hague. The Seven Provinces, States-General and States-Provincial, were as one, and the Synod was secured. Whether the prize was worth the sacrifices which it had cost and was still to cost might at least be considered doubtful.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

Affection of his friends and the wrath of his enemies
Depths theological party spirit could descend
Extraordinary capacity for yielding to gentle violence
Human nature in its meanness and shame
It had not yet occurred to him that he was married

BOOKRAGS

Page 2971

Make the very name of man a term of reproach
Never lack of fishers in troubled waters
Opposed the subjection of the magistracy by the priesthood
Pot-valiant hero
Resolve to maintain the civil authority over the military
Tempest of passion and prejudice
The effect of energetic, uncompromising calumny
Yes, there are wicked men about

THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v10, 1618-19

CHAPTER XIX.

Rancour between the Politico-Religious Parties—Spanish Intrigues Inconsistency of James—Brewster and Robinson's Congregation at Leyden—They decide to leave for America—Robinson's Farewell Sermon and Prayer at Parting.

During this dark and mournful winter the internal dissensions and, as a matter of course, the foreign intrigues had become more dangerous than ever. While the man who for a whole generation had guided the policy of the Republic and had been its virtual chief magistrate lay hidden from all men's sight, the troubles which he had sought to avert were not diminished by his removal from the scene. The extreme or Gomarist party which had taken a pride in secret conventicles where they were in a minority, determined, as they said, to separate Christ from Belial and, meditating the triumph which they had at last secured, now drove the Arminians from the great churches. Very soon it was impossible for these heretics to enjoy the rights of public worship anywhere. But they were not dismayed. The canons of Dordtrecht had not yet been fulminated. They avowed themselves ready to sacrifice worldly goods and life itself in defence of the Five Points. In Rotterdam, notwithstanding a garrison of fifteen companies, more than a thousand Remonstrants assembled on Christmas-day in the

Exchange for want of a more appropriate place of meeting and sang the 112th Psalm in mighty chorus. A clergyman of their persuasion accidentally passing through the street was forcibly laid hands upon and obliged to preach to them, which he did with great unction. The magistracy, where now the Contra-Remonstrants had the control, forbade, under severe penalties, a repetition of such scenes. It was impossible not to be reminded of the days half a century before, when the early Reformers had met in the open fields or among the dunes, armed to the teeth, and with outlying pickets to warn the congregation of the approach of Red Rod and the functionaries of the Holy Inquisition.

In Schoonhoven the authorities attempted one Sunday by main force to induct a Contra-Remonstrant into the pulpit from which a Remonstrant had just been expelled. The women of the place turned out with their distaffs and beat them from the field. The garrison was called out, and there was a pitched battle in the streets between soldiers, police officers, and women, not much to the edification certainly of the Sabbath-loving community on either side, the victory remaining with the ladies.

Page 2972

In short it would be impossible to exaggerate the rancour felt between the different politico-religious parties. All heed for the great war now raging in the outside world between the hostile elements of Catholicism and Protestantism, embattled over an enormous space, was lost in the din of conflict among the respective supporters of conditional and unconditional damnation within the pale of the Reformed Church. The earthquake shaking Europe rolled unheeded, as it was of old said to have done at Cannae, amid the fierce shock of mortal foes in that narrow field.

The respect for authority which had so long been the distinguishing characteristic of the Netherlanders seemed to have disappeared. It was difficult—now that the time-honoured laws and privileges in defence of which, and of liberty of worship included in them, the Provinces had made war forty years long had been trampled upon by military force—for those not warmed by the fire of Gomarus to feel their ancient respect for the magistracy. The magistracy at that moment seemed to mean the sword.

The Spanish government was inevitably encouraged by the spectacle thus presented. We have seen the strong hopes entertained by the council at Madrid, two years before the crisis now existing had occurred. We have witnessed the eagerness with which the King indulged the dream of recovering the sovereignty which his father had lost, and the vast schemes which he nourished towards that purpose, founded on the internal divisions which were reducing the Republic to impotence. Subsequent events had naturally made him more sanguine than ever. There was now a web of intrigue stretching through the Provinces to bring them all back under the sceptre of Spain. The imprisonment of the great stipendiary, the great conspirator, the man who had sold himself and was on the point of selling his country, had not terminated those plots. Where was the supposed centre of that intrigue? In the council of state of the Netherlands, ever fiercely opposed to Barneveld and stuffed full of his mortal enemies. Whose name was most familiar on the lips of the Spanish partisans engaged in these secret schemes? That of Adrian Manmaker, President of the Council, representative of Prince Maurice as first noble of Zealand in the States-General, chairman of the committee sent by that body to Utrecht to frustrate the designs of the Advocate, and one of the twenty-four commissioners soon to be appointed to sit in judgment upon him.

The tale seems too monstrous for belief, nor is it to be admitted with certainty, that Manmaker and the other councillors implicated had actually given their adhesion to the plot, because the Spanish emissaries in their correspondence with the King assured him of the fact. But if such a foundation for suspicion could have been found against Barneveld and his friends, the world would not have heard the last of it from that hour to this.

It is superfluous to say that the Prince was entirely foreign to these plans. He had never been mentioned as privy to the little arrangements of Councillor du Agean and others, although he was to benefit by them. In the Spanish schemes he seems to have been considered as an impediment, although indirectly they might tend to advance him.

Page 2973

“We have managed now, I hope, that his Majesty will be recognized as sovereign of the country,” wrote the confidential agent of the King of Spain in the Netherlands, Emmanuel Sueyro, to the government of Madrid. “The English will oppose it with all their strength. But they can do nothing except by making Count Maurice sovereign of Holland and duke of Julich and Cleve. Maurice will also contrive to make himself master of Wesel, so it is necessary for the Archduke to be beforehand with him and make sure of the place. It is also needful that his Majesty should induce the French government to talk with the Netherlanders and convince them that it is time to prolong the Truce.”

This was soon afterwards accomplished. The French minister at Brussels informed Archduke Albert that du Maurier had been instructed to propose the prolongation, and that he had been conferring with the Prince of Orange and the States-General on the subject. At first the Prince had expressed disinclination, but at the last interview both he and the States had shown a desire for it, and the French King had requested from the Archduke a declaration whether the Spanish government would be willing to treat for it. In such case Lewis would offer himself as mediator and do his best to bring about a successful result.

But it was not the intention of the conspirators in the Netherlands that the Truce should be prolonged. On the contrary the negotiation for it was merely to furnish the occasion for fully developing their plot. “The States and especially those of Zealand will reply that they no longer wish the Truce,” continued Sueyro, “and that they would prefer war to such a truce. They desire to put ships on the coast of Flanders, to which the Hollanders are opposed because it would be disagreeable to the French. So the Zealanders will be the first to say that the Netherlanders must come back to his Majesty. This their President Hanmaker has sworn. The States of Overyssel will likewise give their hand to this because they say they will be the first to feel the shock of the war. Thus we shall very easily carry out our design, and as we shall concede to the Zealanders their demands in regard to the navigation they at least will place themselves under the dominion of his Majesty as will be the case with Friesland as well as Overyssel.”

It will be observed that in this secret arrangement for selling the Republic to its ancient master it was precisely the Provinces and the politicians most steadily opposed to Barneveld that took the lead. Zealand, Friesland, Overyssel were in the plot, but not a word was said of Utrecht. As for Holland itself, hopes were founded on the places where hatred to the Advocate was fiercest.

“Between ourselves,” continued the agent, “we are ten here in the government of Holland to support the plan, but we must not discover ourselves for fear of suffering what has happened to Barneveld.”

Page 2974

He added that the time for action had not yet come, and that if movements were made before the Synod had finished its labours, “The Gomarists would say that they were all sold.” He implored the government at Madrid to keep the whole matter for the present profoundly secret because “Prince Maurice and the Gomarists had the forces of the country at their disposition.” In case the plot was sprung too suddenly therefore, he feared that with the assistance of England Maurice might, at the head of the Gomarists and the army, make himself sovereign of Holland and Duke of Cleve, while he and the rest of the Spanish partisans might be in prison with Barneveld for trying to accomplish what Barneveld had been trying to prevent.

The opinions and utterances of such a man as James I. would be of little worth to our history had he not happened to occupy the place he did. But he was a leading actor in the mournful drama which filled up the whole period of the Twelve Years’ Truce. His words had a direct influence on great events. He was a man of unquestionable erudition, of powers of mind above the average, while the absolute deformity of his moral constitution made him incapable of thinking, feeling, or acting rightly on any vital subject, by any accident or on any occasion. If there were one thing that he thoroughly hated in the world, it was the Reformed religion. If in his thought there were one term of reproach more loathsome than another to be applied to a human creature, it was the word Puritan. In the word was subversion of all established authority in Church and State—revolution, republicanism, anarchy. “There are degrees in Heaven,” he was wont to say, “there are degrees in Hell, there must be degrees on earth.”

He forbade the Calvinist Churches of Scotland to hold their customary Synod in 1610, passionately reviling them and their belief, and declaring “their aim to be nothing else than to deprive kings and princes of their sovereignty, and to reduce the whole world to a popular form of government where everybody would be master.”

When the Prince of Neuburg embraced Catholicism, thus complicating matters in the duchies and strengthening the hand of Spain and the Emperor in the debateable land, he seized the occasion to assure the agent of the Archduke in London, Councillor Boissetot, of his warm Catholic sympathies. “They say that I am the greatest heretic in the world!” he exclaimed; “but I will never deny that the true religion is that of Rome even if corrupted.” He expressed his belief in the real presence, and his surprise that the Roman Catholics did not take the chalice for the blood of Christ. The English bishops, he averred, drew their consecration through the bishops in Mary Tudor’s time from the Pope.

As Philip *ii*., and Ferdinand *ii*. echoing the sentiments of his illustrious uncle, had both sworn they would rather reign in a wilderness than tolerate a single heretic in their dominions, so James had said “he would rather be a hermit in a forest than a king over such people as the pack of Puritans were who overruled the lower house.”

Page 2975

For the Netherlanders he had an especial hatred, both as rebels and Puritans. Soon after coming to the English throne he declared that their revolt, which had been going on all his lifetime and of which he never expected to see the end, had begun by petition for matters of religion. “His mother and he from their cradles,” he said, “had been haunted with a Puritan devil, which he feared would not leave him to his grave. And he would hazard his crown but he would suppress those malicious spirits.” It seemed a strange caprice of Destiny that assigned to this hater of Netherlanders, of Puritans, and of the Reformed religion, the decision of disputed points between Puritans and anti-Puritans in the Reformed Church of the Netherlands.

It seemed stranger that his opinions should be hotly on the side of the Puritans.

Barneveld, who often used the expression in later years, as we have seen in his correspondence, was opposed to the Dutch Puritans because they had more than once attempted subversion of the government on pretext of religion, especially at the memorable epoch of Leicester’s government.

The business of stirring up these religious conspiracies against the magistracy he was apt to call “Flanderizing,” in allusion to those disastrous days and to the origin of the ringleaders in those tumults. But his main object, as we have seen, was to effect compromises and restore good feeling between members of the one church, reserving the right of disposing over religious matters to the government of the respective provinces.

But James had remedied his audacious inconsistency by discovering that Puritanism in England and in the Netherlands resembled each other no more than certain letters transposed into totally different words meant one and the same thing. The anagrammatic argument had been neatly put by Sir Dudley Carleton, convincing no man. Puritanism in England “denied the right of human invention or imposition in religious matters.” Puritanism in the Netherlands denied the right of the legal government to impose its authority in religious matters. This was the great matter of debate in the Provinces. In England the argument had been settled very summarily against the Puritans by sheriffs’ officers, bishops’ pursuivants, and county jails.

As the political tendencies, so too the religious creed and observances of the English Puritans were identical with that of the Contra-Remonstrants, whom King James had helped to their great triumph. This was not very difficult to prove. It so happened that there were some English Puritans living at that moment in Leyden. They formed an independent society by themselves, which they called a Congregational Church, and in which were some three hundred communicants. The length of their residence there was almost exactly coeval with the Twelve Years’ Truce. They knew before leaving England that many relics of the Roman ceremonial, with which they were dissatisfied,

Page 2976

and for the discontinuance of which they had in vain petitioned the crown—the ring, the sign of the cross, white surplices, and the like—besides the whole hierarchical system, had been disused in the Reformed Churches of France, Switzerland, and the United Provinces, where the forms of worship in their view had been brought more nearly to the early apostolic model. They admitted for truth the doctrinal articles of the Dutch Reformed Churches. They had not come to the Netherlands without cause. At an early period of King James's reign this congregation of seceders from the establishment had been wont to hold meetings at Scrooby in Nottinghamshire, once a manor of the Archbishop of York, but then the residence of one William Brewster. This was a gentleman of some fortune, educated at Cambridge, a good scholar, who in Queen Elizabeth's time had been in the service of William Davison when Secretary of State. He seemed to have been a confidential private secretary of that excellent and unlucky statesman, who found him so discreet and faithful as to deserve employment before all others in matters of trust and secrecy. He was esteemed by Davison "rather as a son than a servant," and he repaid his confidence by doing him many faithful offices in the time of his troubles. He had however long since retired from connection with public affairs, living a retired life, devoted to study, meditation, and practical exertion to promote the cause of religion, and in acts of benevolence sometimes beyond his means.

The pastor of the Scrooby Church, one John Robinson, a graduate of Cambridge, who had been a benefited clergyman in Norfolk, was a man of learning, eloquence, and lofty intellect. But what were such good gifts in the possession of rebels, seceders, and Puritans? It is needless to say that Brewster and Robinson were baited, persecuted, watched day and night, some of the congregation often clapped into prison, others into the stocks, deprived of the means of livelihood, outlawed, famished, banned. Plainly their country was no place for them. After a few years of such work they resolved to establish themselves in Holland, where at least they hoped to find refuge and toleration.

But it proved as difficult for them to quit the country as to remain in it. Watched and hunted like gangs of coiners, forgers, or other felons attempting to flee from justice, set upon by troopers armed with "bills and guns and other weapons," seized when about to embark, pillaged and stripped by catchpoles, exhibited as a show to grinning country folk, the women and children dealt with like drunken tramps, led before magistrates, committed to jail; Mr. Brewster and six other of the principal ones being kept in prison and bound over to the assizes; they were only able after attempts lasting through two years' time to effect their escape to Amsterdam. After remaining there a year they had removed to Leyden, which they thought "a fair and beautiful city, and of a sweet situation."

Page 2977

They settled in Leyden in the very year in which Arminius was buried beneath the pavement of St. Peter's Church in that town. It was the year too in which the Truce was signed. They were a singularly tranquil and brotherly community. Their pastor, who was endowed with remarkable gentleness and tact in dealing with his congregation, settled amicably all their occasional disputes. The authorities of the place held them up as a model. To a Walloon congregation in which there were many troublesome and litigious members they said: "These English have lived among us ten years, and yet we never had any suit or accusation against any of them, but your quarrels are continual."

Although many of them were poor, finding it difficult to earn their living in a foreign land among people speaking a strange tongue, and with manners and habits differing from their own, and where they were obliged to learn new trades, having most of them come out of an agricultural population, yet they enjoyed a singular reputation for probity. Bakers and butchers and the like willingly gave credit to the poorest of these English, and sought their custom if known to be of the congregation. Mr. Brewster, who had been reduced almost to poverty by his charities and munificent aid to his struggling brethren, earned his living by giving lessons in English, having first composed a grammar according to the Latin model for the use of his pupils. He also set up a printing establishment, publishing many controversial works prohibited in England, a proceeding which roused the wrath of Carleton, impelling him to do his best to have him thrown into prison.

It was not the first time that this plain, mechanical, devout Englishman, now past middle age, had visited the Netherlands. More than twenty-five years before he had accompanied William Davison on his famous embassy to the States, as private secretary.

When the keys of Flushing, one of the cautionary towns, were committed to the Ambassador, he confided them to the care of Brewster, who slept with them under his pillow. The gold chain which Davison received as a present from the provincial government on leaving the country was likewise placed in his keeping, with orders to wear it around his neck until they should appear before the Queen. To a youth of ease and affluence, familiar with ambassadors and statesmen and not unknown at courts, had succeeded a mature age of obscurity, deep study, and poverty. No human creature would have heard of him had his career ended with his official life. Two centuries and a half have passed away and the name of the outlawed Puritan of Scrooby and Leyden is still familiar to millions of the English race.

All these Englishmen were not poor. Many of them occupied houses of fair value, and were admitted to the freedom of the city. The pastor with three of his congregation lived in a comfortable mansion, which they had purchased for the considerable sum of 8000 florins, and on the garden of which they subsequently erected twenty-one lesser tenements for the use of the poorer brethren.

Page 2978

Mr. Robinson was himself chosen a member of the famous university and admitted to its privileges. During his long residence in Leyden, besides the daily care of his congregation, spiritual and temporal, he wrote many learned works.

Thus the little community, which grew gradually larger by emigration from England, passed many years of tranquillity. Their footsteps were not dogged by constables and pursuivants, they were not dragged daily before the magistrates, they were not thrown into the town jails, they were not hunted from place to place with bows and bills and mounted musketeers. They gave offence to none, and were respected by all. "Such was their singleheartedness and sincere affection one towards another," says their historian and magistrate, "that they came as near the primitive pattern of the first churches as any other church of these later times has done, according to their rank and quality."

Here certainly were English Puritans more competent than any men else in the world to judge if it were a slander upon the English government to identify them with Dutch Puritans. Did they sympathize with the party in Holland which the King, who had so scourged and trampled upon themselves in England, was so anxious to crush, the hated Arminians? Did they abhor the Contra-Remonstrants whom James and his ambassador Carleton doted upon and whom Barneveld called "Double Puritans" and "Flanderizers?"

Their pastor may answer for himself and his brethren.

"We profess before God and men," said Robinson in his Apologia, "that we agree so entirely with the Reformed Dutch Churches in the matter of religion as to be ready to subscribe to all and each of their articles exactly as they are set forth in the Netherland Confession. We acknowledge those Reformed Churches as true and genuine, we profess and cultivate communion with them as much as in us lies. Those of us who understand the Dutch language attend public worship under their pastors. We administer the Holy Supper to such of their members as, known to us, appear at our meetings." This was the position of the Puritans. Absolute, unqualified accordance with the Contra-Remonstrants.

As the controversy grew hot in the university between the Arminians and their adversaries, Mr. Robinson, in the language of his friend Bradford, became "terrible to the Arminians . . . . who so greatly molested the whole state and that city in particular."

When Episcopius, the Arminian professor of theology, set forth sundry theses, challenging all the world to the onset, it was thought that "none was fitter to buckle with them" than Robinson. The orthodox professor Polyander so importuned the English Puritan to enter the lists on behalf of the Contra-Remonstrants that at last he consented and overthrew the challenger, horse and man, in three successive encounters. Such at least was the account given by his friend and admirer the historian. "The Lord did so

help him to defend the truth and foil this adversary as he put him to an apparent nonplus in this great and public audience. And the like he did a second or third time upon such like occasions," said Bradford, adding that, if it had not been for fear of offending the English government, the university would have bestowed preferments and honours upon the champion.

Page 2979

We are concerned with this ancient and exhausted controversy only for the intense light it threw, when burning, on the history which occupies us.

Of the extinct volcano itself which once caused such devastation, and in which a great commonwealth was well-nigh swallowed up, little is left but slag and cinders. The past was made black and barren with them. Let us disturb them as little as possible.

The little English congregation remained at Leyden till toward the end of the Truce, thriving, orderly, respected, happy. They were witnesses to the tumultuous, disastrous, and tragical events which darkened the Republic in those later years, themselves unobserved and unmolested. Not a syllable seems to remain on record of the views or emotions which may have been excited by those scenes in their minds, nor is there a trace left on the national records of the Netherlands of their protracted residence on the soil.

They got their living as best they might by weaving, printing, spinning, and other humble trades; they borrowed money on mortgages, they built houses, they made wills, and such births, deaths, and marriages as occurred among them were registered by the town-clerk.

And at last for a variety of reasons they resolved to leave the Netherlands. Perhaps the solution of the problem between Church and State in that country by the temporary subjection of State to Church may have encouraged them to realize a more complete theocracy, if a sphere of action could be found where the experiment might be tried without a severe battle against time-hallowed institutions and vested rights. Perhaps they were appalled by the excesses into which men of their own religious sentiments had been carried by theological and political passion. At any rate depart they would; the larger half of the congregation remaining behind however till the pioneers should have broken the way, and in their own language “laid the stepping-stones.”

They had thought of the lands beneath the Equator, Raleigh having recently excited enthusiasm by his poetical descriptions of Guiana. But the tropical scheme was soon abandoned. They had opened negotiations with the Stadholder and the States-General through Amsterdam merchants in regard to settling in New Amsterdam, and offered to colonize that country if assured of the protection of the United Provinces. Their petition had been rejected. They had then turned their faces to their old master and their own country, applying to the Virginia Company for a land-patent, which they were only too happy to promise, and to the King for liberty of religion in the wilderness confirmed under his broad seal, which his Majesty of course refused. It was hinted however that James would connive at them and not molest them if they carried themselves peaceably. So they resolved to go without the seal, for, said their magistrate very wisely, “if there should be a purpose or desire to wrong them, a seal would not serve their turn though it were as broad as the house-floor.”

Page 2980

Before they left Leyden, their pastor preached to them a farewell sermon, which for loftiness of spirit and breadth of vision has hardly a parallel in that age of intolerance. He laid down the principle that criticism of the Scriptures had not been exhausted merely because it had been begun; that the human conscience was of too subtle a nature to be imprisoned for ever in formulas however ingeniously devised; that the religious reformation begun a century ago was not completed; and that the Creator had not necessarily concluded all His revelations to mankind.

The words have long been familiar to students of history, but they can hardly be too often laid to heart.

Noble words, worthy to have been inscribed over the altar of the first church to be erected by the departing brethren, words to bear fruit after centuries should go by. Had not the deeply injured and misunderstood Grotius already said, “If the trees we plant do not shade us, they will yet serve for our descendants?”

Yet it is passing strange that the preacher of that sermon should be the recent champion of the Contra-Remonstrants in the great controversy; the man who had made himself so terrible to the pupils of the gentle and tolerant Arminius.

And thus half of that English congregation went down to Delftshaven, attended by the other half who were to follow at a later period with their beloved pastor. There was a pathetic leave-taking. Even many of the Hollanders, mere casual spectators, were in tears.

Robinson, kneeling on the deck of the little vessel, offered a prayer and a farewell. Who could dream that this departure of an almost nameless band of emigrants to the wilderness was an epoch in the world’s history? Yet these were the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, the founders of what was to be the mightiest republic of modern history, mighty and stable because it had been founded upon an idea.

They were not in search of material comfort and the chances of elevating their condition, by removing from an overpeopled country to an organized Commonwealth, offering a wide field for pauper labourers. Some of them were of good social rank and highest education, most of them in decent circumstances, none of them in absolute poverty. And a few years later they were to be joined by a far larger company with leaders and many brethren of ancient birth and landed possessions, men of “education, figure; and estate,” all ready to convert property into cash and to place it in joint-stock, not as the basis of promising speculation, but as the foundation of a church.

It signifies not how much or how little one may sympathize with their dogma or their discipline now. To the fact that the early settlement of that wilderness was by self-sacrificing men of earnestness and faith, who were bent on “advancing the Gospel of Christ in remote parts of the world,” in the midst of savage beasts, more savage men,

and unimaginable difficulties and dangers, there can be little doubt that the highest forms of Western civilization are due. Through their provisional theocracy, the result of the independent church system was to establish the true purport of the Reformation, absolute religious equality. Civil and political equality followed as a matter of course.

Page 2981

Two centuries and a half have passed away.

There are now some seventy or eighty millions of the English-speaking race on both sides the Atlantic, almost equally divided between the United Kingdom and the United Republic, and the departure of those outcasts of James has interest and significance for them all.

Most fitly then, as a distinguished American statesman has remarked, does that scene on board the little English vessel, with the English pastor uttering his farewell blessing to a handful of English exiles for conscience sake; depicted on canvas by eminent artists, now adorn the halls of the American Congress and of the British Parliament. Sympathy with one of the many imperishable bonds of union between the two great and scarcely divided peoples.

We return to Barneveld in his solitary prison.

CHAPTER XX.

Barneveld's Imprisonment—Ledenberg's Examination and Death— Remonstrance of De Boississe—Aerssens admitted to the order of Knights—Trial of the Advocate—-Barneveld's Defence—The States proclaim a Public Fast—Du Maurier's Speech before the Assembly— Barneveld's Sentence—Barneveld prepares for Death—Goes to Execution.

The Advocate had been removed within a few days after the arrest from the chamber in Maurice's apartments, where he had originally been confined, and was now in another building.

It was not a dungeon nor a jail. Indeed the commonplace and domestic character of the scenery in which these great events were transacted has in it something pathetic. There was and still remains a two-storied structure, then of modern date, immediately behind the antique hall of the old Counts within the Binnenhof. On the first floor was a courtroom of considerable extent, the seat of one of the chief tribunals of justice The story above was divided into three chambers with a narrow corridor on each side. The first chamber, on the north-eastern side, was appropriated for the judges when the state prisoners should be tried. In the next Hugo Grotius was imprisoned. In the third was Barneveld. There was a tower at the north-east angle of the building, within which a winding and narrow staircase of stone led up to the corridor and so to the prisoners' apartments. Rombout Hoogerbeets was confined in another building.

As the Advocate, bent with age and a life of hard work, and leaning on his staff, entered the room appropriated to him, after toiling up the steep staircase, he observed—

"This is the Admiral of Arragon's apartment."

It was true. Eighteen years before, the conqueror of Nieuwpoort had assigned this lodging to the chief prisoner of war in that memorable victory over the Spaniards, and now Maurice's faithful and trusted counsellor at that epoch was placed in durance here, as the result of the less glorious series of victories which had just been achieved.

Page 2982

It was a room of moderate dimensions, some twenty-five feet square, with a high vaulted roof and decently furnished. Below and around him in the courtyard were the scenes of the Advocate's life-long and triumphant public services. There in the opposite building were the windows of the beautiful "Hall of Truce," with its sumptuous carvings and gildings, its sculptures and portraits, where he had negotiated with the representatives of all the great powers of Christendom the famous Treaty which had suspended the war of forty years, and where he was wont almost daily to give audience to the envoys of the greatest sovereigns or the least significant states of Europe and Asia, all of whom had been ever solicitous of his approbation and support.

Farther along in the same building was the assembly room of the States-General, where some of the most important affairs of the Republic and of Europe had for years been conducted, and where he had been so indispensable that, in the words of a contemporary who loved him not, "absolutely nothing could be transacted in his absence, all great affairs going through him alone."

There were two dull windows, closely barred, looking northward over an irregular assemblage of tile-roofed houses and chimney-stacks, while within a stone's throw to the west, but unseen, was his own elegant mansion on the Voorhout, surrounded by flower gardens and shady pleasure grounds, where now sat his aged wife and her children all plunged in deep affliction.

He was allowed the attendance of a faithful servant, Jan Franken by name, and a sentinel stood constantly before his door. His papers had been taken from him, and at first he was deprived of writing materials.

He had small connection with the outward world. The news of the municipal revolution which had been effected by the Stadholder had not penetrated to his solitude, but his wife was allowed to send him fruit from their garden. One day a basket of fine saffron pears was brought to him. On slicing one with a knife he found a portion of a quill inside it. Within the quill was a letter on thinnest paper, in minutest handwriting in Latin. It was to this effect.

"Don't rely upon the States of Holland, for the Prince of Orange has changed the magistracies in many cities. Dudley Carleton is not your friend."

A sergeant of the guard however, before bringing in these pears, had put a couple of them in his pocket to take home to his wife. The letter, copies of which perhaps had been inserted for safety in several of them, was thus discovered and the use of this ingenious device prevented for the future.

Secretary Ledenberg, who had been brought to the Hague in the early days of September, was the first of the prisoners subjected to examination. He was much

depressed at the beginning of it, and is said to have exclaimed with many sighs, “Oh Barneveld, Barneveld, what have you brought us to!”

Page 2983

He confessed that the Waartgelders at Utrecht had been enlisted on notification by the Utrecht deputies in the Hague with knowledge of Barneveld, and in consequence of a resolution of the States in order to prevent internal tumults. He said that the Advocate had advised in the previous month of March a request to the Prince not to come to Utrecht; that the communication of the message, in regard to disbanding the Waartgelders, to his Excellency had been postponed after the deputies of the States of Holland had proposed a delay in that disbandment; that those deputies had come to Utrecht of their own accord; . . . . that they had judged it possible to keep everything in proper order in Utrecht if the garrison in the city paid by Holland were kept quiet, and if the States of Utrecht gave similar orders to the Waartgelders; for they did not believe that his Excellency would bring in troops from the outside. He said that he knew nothing of a new oath to be demanded of the garrison. He stated that the Advocate, when at Utrecht, had exhorted the States, according to his wont, to maintain their liberties and privileges, representing to them that the right to decide on the Synod and the Waartgelders belonged to them. Lastly, he denied knowing who was the author of The Balance, except by common report.

Now these statements hardly amounted to a confession of abominable and unpardonable crimes by Ledenberg, nor did they establish a charge of high-treason and corrupt correspondence with the enemy against Barneveld. It is certain that the extent of the revelations seemed far from satisfactory to the accusers, and that some pressure would be necessary in order to extract anything more conclusive. Lieutenant Nythof told Grotius that Ledenberg had accordingly been threatened with torture, and that the executioner had even handled him for that purpose. This was however denied by the judges of instruction who had been charged with the preliminary examination.

That examination took place on the 27th September. After it had been concluded, Ledenberg prayed long and earnestly on returning to prison. He then entrusted a paper written in French to his son Joost, a boy of eighteen, who did not understand that language. The youth had been allowed to keep his father company in his confinement, and slept in the same room.

The next night but one, at two o’clock, Joost heard his father utter a deep groan. He was startled, groped in the darkness towards his bed and felt his arm, which was stone cold. He spoke to him and received no answer. He gave the alarm, the watch came in with lights, and it was found that Ledenberg had given himself two mortal wounds in the abdomen with a penknife and then cut his throat with a table-knife which he had secreted, some days before, among some papers.

The paper in French given to his son was found to be to this effect.

Page 2984

“I know that there is an inclination to set an example in my person, to confront me with my best friends, to torture me, afterwards to convict me of contradictions and falsehoods as they say, and then to found an ignominious sentence upon points and trifles, for this it will be necessary to do in order to justify the arrest and imprisonment. To escape all this I am going to God by the shortest road. Against a dead man there can be pronounced no sentence of confiscation of property. Done 17th September (o. s.) 1618.”

The family of the unhappy gentleman begged his body for decent burial. The request was refused. It was determined to keep the dead secretary above ground and in custody until he could be tried, and, if possible, convicted and punished. It was to be seen whether it were so easy to baffle the power of the States-General, the Synod, and the Stadholder, and whether “going to God by the shortest road” was to save a culprit’s carcass from ignominy, and his property from confiscation.

The French ambassadors, who had been unwearied in their endeavour to restore harmony to the distracted Commonwealth before the arrest of the prisoners, now exerted themselves to throw the shield of their sovereign’s friendship around the illustrious statesman and his fellow-sufferers.

“It is with deepest sorrow,” said de Boississe, “that I have witnessed the late hateful commotions. Especially from my heart I grieve for the arrest of the Seignior Barneveld, who with his discretion and wise administration for the past thirty years has so drawn the hearts of all neighbouring princes to himself, especially that of the King my master, that on taking up my pen to apprize him of these events I am gravely embarrassed, fearing to infringe on the great respect due to your Mightinesses or against the honour and merits of the Seignior Barneveld. . . . My Lords, take heed to your situation, for a great discontent is smouldering among your citizens. Until now, the Union has been the chief source of your strength. And I now fear that the King my master, the adviser of your renowned Commonwealth, maybe offended that you have taken this resolution after consulting with others, and without communicating your intention to his ambassador . . . . It is but a few days that an open edict was issued testifying to the fidelity of Barneveld, and can it be possible that within so short a time you have discovered that you have been deceived? I summon you once more in the name of the King to lay aside all passion, to judge these affairs without partiality, and to inform me what I am to say to the King. Such very conflicting accounts are given of these transactions that I must beg you to confide to me the secret of the affair. The wisest in the land speak so strongly of these proceedings that it will be no wonder if the King my master should give me orders to take the Seignior Barneveld under his protection. Should this prove to be the case, your Lordships will excuse my course . . . I beg you earnestly in your wisdom not to give cause of offence to neighbouring princes, especially to my sovereign, who wishes from his heart to maintain your dignity and interests and to assure you of his friendship.”

Page 2985

The language was vigorous and sincere, but the Ambassador forgot that the France of to-day was not the France of yesterday; that Louis XIII. was not Henry *iv*.; that it was but a cheerful fiction to call the present King the guide and counsellor of the Republic, and that, distraught as she was by the present commotions, her condition was strength and tranquillity compared with the apparently decomposing and helpless state of the once great kingdom of France. De Boississe took little by his demonstration.

On the 12th December both de Boississe and du Maurier came before the States-General once more, and urged a speedy and impartial trial for the illustrious prisoners. If they had committed acts of treason and rebellion, they deserved exemplary punishment, but the ambassadors warned the States-General with great earnestness against the dangerous doctrine of constructive treason, and of confounding acts dictated by violence of party spirit at an excited period with the crime of high-treason against the sovereignty of the State.

“Barneveld so honourable,” they said, “for his immense and long continued services has both this Republic and all princes and commonwealths for his witnesses. It is most difficult to believe that he has attempted the destruction of his fatherland, for which you know that he has toiled so faithfully.”

They admitted that so grave charges ought now to be investigated. “To this end,” said the ambassadors, “you ought to give him judges who are neither suspected nor impassioned, and who will decide according to the laws of the land, and on clear and undeniable evidence . . . . So doing you will show to the whole world that you are worthy to possess and to administer this Commonwealth to whose government God has called you.”

Should they pursue another and a sterner course, the envoys warned the Assembly that the King would be deeply offended, deeming it thus proved how little value they set upon his advice and his friendship.

The States-General replied on the 19th December, assuring the ambassadors that the delay in the trial was in order to make the evidence of the great conspiracy complete, and would not tend to the prejudice of the prisoners “if they had a good consciousness of their innocence.” They promised that the sentence upon them when pronounced would give entire satisfaction to all their allies and to the King of France in particular, of whom they spoke throughout the document in terms of profound respect. But they expressed their confidence that “his Majesty would not place the importunate and unfounded solicitations of a few particular criminals or their supporters before the general interests of the dignity and security of the Republic.”

On the same day the States-General addressed a letter filled with very elaborate and courteous commonplaces to the King, in which they expressed a certainty that his Majesty would be entirely satisfied with their actions.

Page 2986

The official answer of the States-General to the ambassadors, just cited, gave but little comfort to the friends of the imprisoned statesman and his companions. Such expressions as “ambitious and factious spirits,”—“authors and patrons of the faction,”—-“attempts at novelty through changes in religion, in justice and in the fundamental laws of all orders of polity,” and the frequent mention of the word “conspiracy” boded little good.

Information of this condition of affairs was conveyed to Hoogerbeets and Grotius by means of an ingenious device of the distinguished scholar, who was then editing the Latin works of the Hague poet, Janus Secundus.

While the sheets were going through the press, some of the verses were left out, and their place supplied by others conveying the intelligence which it was desired to send to the prisoners. The pages which contained the secret were stitched together in such wise that in cutting the book open they were not touched but remained closed. The verses were to this effect. “The examination of the Advocate proceeds slowly, but there is good hope from the serious indignation of the French king, whose envoys are devoted to the cause of the prisoners, and have been informed that justice will be soon rendered. The States of Holland are to assemble on the 15th January, at which a decision will certainly be taken for appointing judges. The preachers here at Leyden are despised, and men are speaking strongly of war. The tumult which lately occurred at Rotterdam may bring forth some good.”

The quick-wited Grotius instantly discovered the device, read the intelligence thus communicated in the proofsheets of Secundus, and made use of the system to obtain further intelligence.

Hoogerbeets laid the book aside, not taking much interest at that time in the works of the Hague poet. Constant efforts made to attract his attention to those poems however excited suspicion among his keepers, and the scheme was discovered before the Leyden pensionary had found the means to profit by it.’

The allusions to the trial of the Advocate referred to the preliminary examination which took place, like the first interrogatories of Grotius and Hoogerbeets, in the months of November and December.

The thorough manner in which Maurice had reformed the States of Holland has been described. There was one department of that body however which still required attention. The Order of Knights, small in number but potential in influence, which always voted first on great occasions, was still through a majority of its members inclined to Barneveld. Both his sons-in-law had seats in that college. The Stadholder had long believed in a spirit of hostility on the part of those nobles towards himself. He knew that a short time before this epoch there had been a scheme for introducing his

young brother, Frederic Henry, into the Chamber of Knights. The Count had become proprietor of the barony of Naaldwyk, a

Page 2987

property which he had purchased of the Counts of Arenberg, and which carried with it the hereditary dignity of Great Equerry of the Counts of Holland. As the Counts of Holland had ceased to exist, although their sovereignty had nearly been revived and conferred upon William the Silent, the office of their chief of the stables might be deemed a sinecure. But the jealousy of Maurice was easily awakened, especially by any movement made or favoured by the Advocate. He believed that in the election of Frederic Henry as a member of the College of Knights a plan lay concealed to thrust him into power and to push this elder brother from his place. The scheme, if scheme it were, was never accomplished, but the Prince's rancour remained.

He now informed the nobles that they must receive into their body Francis Aerssens, who had lately purchased the barony of Sommelsdyk, and Daniel de Hartaing, Seignior of Marquette. With the presence of this deadly enemy of Barneveld and another gentleman equally devoted to the Stadholder's interest it seemed probable that the refractory majority of the board of nobles would be overcome. But there were grave objections to the admission of these new candidates. They were not eligible. The constitution of the States and of the college of nobles prescribed that Hollanders only of ancient and noble race and possessing estates in the province could sit in that body. Neither Aerssens nor Hartaing was born in Holland or possessed of the other needful qualifications. Nevertheless, the Prince, who had just remodelled all the municipalities throughout the Union which offered resistance to his authority, was not to be checked by so trifling an impediment as the statutes of the House of Nobles. He employed very much the same arguments which he had used to "good papa" Hooft. "This time it must be so." Another time it might not be necessary. So after a controversy which ended as controversies are apt to do when one party has a sword in his hand and the other is seated at a green-baize-covered table, Sommelsdyk and Marquette took their seats among the knights. Of course there was a spirited protest. Nothing was easier for the Stadholder than to concede the principle while trampling it with his boot-heels in practice.

"Whereas it is not competent for the said two gentlemen to be admitted to our board," said the nobles in brief, "as not being constitutionally eligible, nevertheless, considering the strong desire of his Excellency the Prince of Orange, we, the nobles and knights of Holland, admit them with the firm promise to each other by noble and knightly faith ever in future for ourselves and descendants to maintain the privileges of our order now violated and never again to let them be directly or indirectly infringed."

And so Aerssens, the unscrupulous plotter, and dire foe of the Advocate and all his house, burning with bitter revenge for all the favours he had received from him during many years, and the author of the venomous pamphlets and diatribes which had done so much of late to blacken the character of the great statesman before the public, now

associated himself officially with his other enemies, while the preliminary proceedings for the state trials went forward.

Page 2988

Meantime the Synod had met at Dordtrecht. The great John Bogerman, with fierce, handsome face, beak and eye of a bird of prey, and a deluge of curly brown beard reaching to his waist, took his seat as president. Short work was made with the Armenians. They and their five Points were soon thrust out into outer darkness.

It was established beyond all gainsaying that two forms of Divine worship in one country were forbidden by God's Word, and that thenceforth by Netherland law there could be but one religion, namely, the Reformed or Calvinistic creed.

It was settled that one portion of the Netherlanders and of the rest of the human race had been expressly created by the Deity to be for ever damned, and another portion to be eternally blessed. But this history has little to do with that infallible council save in the political effect of its decrees on the fate of Barneveld. It was said that the canons of Dordtrecht were likely to shoot off the head of the Advocate. Their sessions and the trial of the Advocate were simultaneous, but not technically related to each other.

The conclusions of both courts were preordained, for the issue of the great duel between Priesthood and State had been decided when the military chieftain threw his sword into the scale of the Church.

There had been purposely a delay, before coming to a decision as to the fate of the state prisoners, until the work of the Synod should have approached completion.

It was thought good that the condemnation of the opinions of the Arminians and the chastisement of their leaders should go hand-in-hand.

On the 23rd April 1619, the canons were signed by all the members of the Synod. Arminians were pronounced heretics, schismatics, teachers of false doctrines. They were declared incapable of filling any clerical or academical post. No man thenceforth was to teach children, lecture to adolescents, or preach to the mature, unless a subscriber to the doctrines of the unchanged, unchangeable, orthodox church. On the 30th April and 1st May the Netherland Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism were declared to be infallible. No change was to be possible in either formulary.

Schools and pulpits were inexorably bound to the only true religion.

On the 6th May there was a great festival at Dordtrecht in honour of the conclusion of the Synod. The canons, the sentence, and long prayers and orations in Latin by President Bogerman gladdened the souls of an immense multitude, which were further enlivened by the decree that both Creed and Catechism had stood the test of several criticisms and come out unchanged by a single hair. Nor did the orator of the occasion forget to render thanks "to the most magnanimous King James of Great Britain, through whose godly zeal, fiery sympathy, and truly royal labour God had so often refreshed the weary Synod in the midst of their toil."

The Synod held one hundred and eighty sessions between the 13th November 1618 and 29th May 1619, all the doings of which have been recorded in chronicles innumerable. There need be no further mention of them here.

Page 2989

Barneveld and the companions of his fate remained in prison.

On the 7th March the trial of the great Advocate began. He had sat in prison since the 18th of the preceding August. For nearly seven months he had been deprived of all communication with the outward world save such atoms of intelligence as could be secretly conveyed to him in the inside of a quill concealed in a pear and by other devices. The man who had governed one of the most important commonwealths of the world for nearly a generation long—during the same period almost controlling the politics of Europe—had now been kept in ignorance of the most insignificant everyday events. During the long summer-heat of the dog-days immediately succeeding his arrest, and the long, foggy, snowy, icy winter of Holland which ensued, he had been confined in that dreary garret-room to which he had been brought when he left his temporary imprisonment in the apartments of Prince Maurice.

There was nothing squalid in the chamber, nothing specially cruel or repulsive in the arrangements of his captivity. He was not in fetters, nor fed upon bread and water. He was not put upon the rack, nor even threatened with it as Ledenberg had been. He was kept in a mean, commonplace, meagerly furnished, tolerably spacious room, and he was allowed the services of his faithful domestic servant John Franken. A sentinel paced day and night up the narrow corridor before his door. As spring advanced, the notes of the nightingale came through the prison-window from the neighbouring thicket. One day John Franken, opening the window that his master might the better enjoy its song, exchanged greeting with a fellow-servant in the Barneveld mansion who happened to be crossing the courtyard. Instantly workmen were sent to close and barricade the windows, and it was only after earnest remonstrances and pledges that this resolve to consign the Advocate to darkness was abandoned.

He was not permitted the help of lawyer, clerk, or man of business. Alone and from his chamber of bondage, suffering from bodily infirmities and from the weakness of advancing age, he was compelled to prepare his defence against a vague, heterogeneous collection of charges, to meet which required constant reference, not only to the statutes, privileges, and customs of the country and to the Roman law, but to a thousand minute incidents out of which the history of the Provinces during the past dozen years or more had been compounded.

It is true that no man could be more familiar with the science and practice of the law than he was, while of contemporary history he was himself the central figure. His biography was the chronicle of his country. Nevertheless it was a fearful disadvantage for him day by day to confront two dozen hostile judges comfortably seated at a great table piled with papers, surrounded by clerks with bags full of documents and with a library of authorities and precedents duly marked and dog’s-eared and ready to their hands, while his only library and chronicle lay in his brain. From day to day, with frequent intermissions, he was led down through the narrow turret-stairs to a wide

chamber on the floor immediately below his prison, where a temporary tribunal had been arranged for the special commission.

Page 2990

There had been an inclination at first on the part of his judges to treat him as a criminal, and to require him to answer, standing, to the interrogatories propounded to him. But as the terrible old man advanced into the room, leaning on his staff, and surveying them with the air of haughty command habitual to him, they shrank before his glance; several involuntarily, rising uncovered, to salute him and making way for him to the fireplace about which many were standing that wintry morning.

He was thenceforth always accommodated with a seat while he listened to and answered ‘ex tempore’ the elaborate series of interrogatories which had been prepared to convict him.

Nearly seven months he had sat with no charges brought against him. This was in itself a gross violation of the laws of the land, for according to all the ancient charters of Holland it was provided that accusation should follow within six weeks of arrest, or that the prisoner should go free. But the arrest itself was so gross a violation of law that respect for it was hardly to be expected in the subsequent proceedings. He was a great officer of the States of Holland. He had been taken under their especial protection. He was on his way to the High Council. He was in no sense a subject of the States-General. He was in the discharge of his official duty. He was doubly and trebly sacred from arrest. The place where he stood was on the territory of Holland and in the very sanctuary of her courts and House of Assembly. The States-General were only as guests on her soil, and had no domain or jurisdiction there whatever. He was not apprehended by any warrant or form of law. It was in time of peace, and there was no pretence of martial law. The highest civil functionary of Holland was invited in the name of its first military officer to a conference, and thus entrapped was forcibly imprisoned.

At last a board of twenty-four commissioners was created, twelve from Holland and two from each of the other six provinces. This affectation of concession to Holland was ridiculous. Either the law ’de non evocando’—according to which no citizen of Holland could be taken out of the province for trial—was to be respected or it was to be trampled upon. If it was to be trampled upon, it signified little whether more commissioners were to be taken from Holland than from each of the other provinces, or fewer, or none at all. Moreover it was pretended that a majority of the whole board was to be assigned to that province. But twelve is not a majority of twenty-four. There were three fascals or prosecuting officers, Leeuwen of Utrecht, Sylla of Gelderland, and Antony Duyck of Holland. Duyck was notoriously the deadly enemy of Barneveld, and was destined to succeed to his offices. It would have been as well to select Francis Aerssens himself.

Page 2991

It was necessary to appoint a commission because there was no tribunal appertaining to the States-General. The general government of the confederacy had no power to deal with an individual. It could only negotiate with the sovereign province to which the individual was responsible, and demand his punishment if proved guilty of an offence. There was no supreme court of appeal. Machinery was provided for settling or attempting to settle disputes among the members of the confederacy, and if there was a culprit in this great process it was Holland itself. Neither the Advocate nor any one of his associates had done any act except by authority, express or implied, of that sovereign State. Supposing them unquestionably guilty of blackest crimes against the Generality, the dilemma was there which must always exist by the very nature of things in a confederacy. No sovereign can try a fellow sovereign. The subject can be tried at home by no sovereign but his own.

The accused in this case were amenable to the laws of Holland only.

It was a packed tribunal. Several of the commissioners, like Pauw and Muis for example, were personal enemies of Barneveld. Many of them were totally ignorant of law. Some of them knew not a word of any language but their mother tongue, although much of the law which they were to administer was written in Latin.

Before such a court the foremost citizen of the Netherlands, the first living statesman of Europe, was brought day by day during a period of nearly three months; coming down stairs from the mean and desolate room where he was confined to the comfortable apartment below, which had been fitted up for the commission.

There was no bill of indictment, no arraignment, no counsel. There were no witnesses and no arguments. The court-room contained, as it were, only a prejudiced and partial jury to pronounce both on law and fact without a judge to direct them, or advocates to sift testimony and contend for or against the prisoner’s guilt. The process, for it could not be called a trial, consisted of a vast series of rambling and tangled interrogatories reaching over a space of forty years without apparent connection or relevancy, skipping fantastically about from one period to another, back and forthwith apparently no other intent than to puzzle the prisoner, throw him off his balance, and lead him into self-contradiction.

The spectacle was not a refreshing one. It was the attempt of a multitude of pigmies to overthrow and bind the giant.

Barneveld was served with no articles of impeachment. He asked for a list in writing of the charges against him, that he might ponder his answer. The demand was refused. He was forbidden the use of pen and ink or any writing materials. His papers and books were all taken from him.

Page 2992

He was allowed to consult neither with an advocate nor even with a single friend. Alone in his chamber of bondage he was to meditate on his defence. Out of his memory and brain, and from these alone, he was to supply himself with the array of historical facts stretching over a longer period than the lifetime of many of his judges, and with the proper legal and historical arguments upon those facts for the justification of his course. That memory and brain were capacious and powerful enough for the task. It was well for the judges that they had bound themselves, at the outset, by an oath never to make known what passed in the courtroom, but to bury all the proceedings in profound secrecy forever. Had it been otherwise, had that been known to the contemporary public which has only been revealed more than two centuries later, had a portion only of the calm and austere eloquence been heard in which the Advocate set forth his defence, had the frivolous and ignoble nature of the attack been comprehended, it might have moved the very stones in the streets to mutiny. Hateful as the statesman had been made by an organized system of calumny, which was continued with unabated vigour and increased venom sine he had been imprisoned, there was enough of justice and of gratitude left in the hearts of Netherlanders to resent the tyranny practised against their greatest man, and the obloquy thus brought against a nation always devoted to their liberties and laws.

That the political system of the country was miserably defective was no fault of Barneveld. He was bound by oath and duty to administer, not make the laws. A handful of petty feudal sovereignties such as had once covered the soil of Europe, a multitude of thriving cities which had wrested or purchased a mass of liberties, customs, and laws from their little tyrants, all subjected afterwards, without being blended together, to a single foreign family, had at last one by one, or two by two, shaken off that supremacy, and, resuming their ancient and as it were decapitated individualities, had bound themselves by treaty in the midst of a war to stand by each other, as if they were but one province, for purposes of common defence against the common foe.

There had been no pretence of laying down a constitution, of enacting an organic law. The day had not come for even the conception of a popular constitution. The people had not been invented. It was not provinces only, but cities, that had contracted with each other, according to the very first words of the first Article of Union. Some of these cities, like Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp, were Catholic by overwhelming majority, and had subsequently either fallen away from the confederacy or been conquered.

Page 2993

And as if to make assurance doubly sure, the Articles of Union not only reserved to each province all powers not absolutely essential for carrying on the war in common, but by an express article (the 13th), declared that Holland and Zealand should regulate the matter of religion according to their own discretion, while the other provinces might conform to the provisions of the “Religious Peace” which included mutual protection for Catholics and Protestants—or take such other order as seemed most conducive to the religious and secular rights of the inhabitants. It was stipulated that no province should interfere with another in such matters, and that every individual in them all should remain free in his religion, no man being molested or examined on account of his creed. A farther declaration in regard to this famous article was made to the effect that no provinces or cities which held to the Roman Catholic religion were to be excluded from the League of Union if they were ready to conform to its conditions and comport themselves patriotically. Language could not be devised to declare more plainly than was done by this treaty that the central government of the League had neither wish nor right to concern itself with the religious affairs of the separate cities or provinces. If it permitted both Papists and Protestants to associate themselves against the common foe, it could hardly have been imagined, when the Articles were drawn, that it would have claimed the exclusive right to define the minutest points in a single Protestant creed.

And if the exclusively secular parts of the polity prevailing in the country were clumsy, irregular, and even monstrous, and if its defects had been flagrantly demonstrated by recent events, a more reasonable method of reforming the laws might have been found than the imprisonment of a man who had faithfully administered them forty years long.

A great commonwealth had grown out of a petty feudal organism, like an oak from an acorn in a crevice, gnarled and distorted, though wide-spreading and vigorous. It seemed perilous to deal radically with such a polity, and an almost timid conservatism on the part of its guardians in such an age of tempests might be pardonable.

Moreover, as before remarked, the apparent imbecility resulting from confederacy and municipalism combined was for a season remedied by the actual preponderance of Holland. Two-thirds of the total wealth and strength of the seven republics being concentrated in one province, the desired union seemed almost gained by the practical solution of all in that single republic. But this was one great cause of the general disaster.

Page 2994

It would be a thankless and tedious task to wander through the wilderness of interrogatories and answers extending over three months of time, which stood in the place of a trial. The defence of Barneveld was his own history, and that I have attempted to give in the preceding pages. A great part of the accusation was deduced from his private and official correspondence, and it is for this reason that I have laid such copious extracts from it before the reader. No man except the judges and the States-General had access to those letters, and it was easy therefore, if needful, to give them a false colouring. It is only very recently that they have been seen at all, and they have never been published from that day to this.

Out of the confused mass of documents appertaining to the trial, a few generalizations can be made which show the nature of the attack upon him. He was accused of having permitted Arminius to infuse new opinions into the University of Leyden, and of having subsequently defended the appointment of Vorstius to the same place. He had opposed the National Synod. He had made drafts of letters for the King of Great Britain to sign, recommending mutual toleration on the five disputed points regarding predestination. He was the author of the famous Sharp Resolution. He had recommended the enlistment by the provinces and towns of Waartgelders or mercenaries. He had maintained that those mercenaries as well as the regular troops were bound in time of peace to be obedient and faithful, not only to the Generality and the stadholders, but to the magistrates of the cities and provinces where they were employed, and to the states by whom they were paid. He had sent to Leyden, warning the authorities of the approach of the Prince. He had encouraged all the proceedings at Utrecht, writing a letter to the secretary of that province advising a watch to be kept at the city gates as well as in the river, and ordering his letter when read to be burned. He had received presents from foreign potentates. He had attempted to damage the character of his Excellency the Prince by declaring on various occasions that he aspired to the sovereignty of the country. He had held a ciphered correspondence on the subject with foreign ministers of the Republic. He had given great offence to the King of Great Britain by soliciting from him other letters in the sense of those which his Majesty had written in 1613, advising moderation and mutual toleration. He had not brought to condign punishment the author of ‘The Balance’, a pamphlet in which an oration of the English ambassador had been criticised, and aspersions made on the Order of the Garter. He had opposed the formation of the West India Company. He had said many years before to Nicolas van Berk that the Provinces had better return to the dominion of Spain. And in general, all his proceedings had tended to put the Provinces into a “blood bath.”

There was however no accusation that he had received bribes from the enemy or held traitorous communication with him, or that he had committed any act of high-treason.

Page 2995

His private letters to Caron and to the ambassadors in Paris, with which the reader has been made familiar, had thus been ransacked to find treasonable matter, but the result was meagre in spite of the minute and microscopic analysis instituted to detect traces of poison in them.

But the most subtle and far-reaching research into past transactions was due to the Greffier Cornelis Aerssens, father of the Ambassador Francis, and to a certain Nicolas van Berk, Burgomaster of Utrecht.

The process of tale-bearing, hearsay evidence, gossip, and invention went back a dozen years, even to the preliminary and secret conferences in regard to the Treaty of Truce.

Readers familiar with the history of those memorable negotiations are aware that Cornelis van Aerssens had compromised himself by accepting a valuable diamond and a bill of exchange drawn by Marquis Spinola on a merchant in Amsterdam, Henry Beekman by name, for 80,000 ducats. These were handed by Father Neyen, the secret agent of the Spanish government, to the Greffier as a prospective reward for his services in furthering the Truce. He did not reject them, but he informed Prince Maurice and the Advocate of the transaction. Both diamond and bill of exchange were subsequently deposited in the hands of the treasurer of the States-General, Joris de Bie, the Assembly being made officially acquainted with the whole course of the affair.

It is passing strange that this somewhat tortuous business, which certainly cast a shade upon the fair fame of the elder Aerssens, and required him to publish as good a defence as he could against the consequent scandal, should have furnished a weapon wherewith to strike at the Advocate of Holland some dozen years later.

But so it was. Krauwels, a relative of Aerssens, through whom Father Neyen had first obtained access to the Greffier, had stated, so it seemed, that the monk had, in addition to the bill, handed to him another draft of Spinola's for 100,000 ducats, to be given to a person of more consideration than Aerssens. Krauwels did not know who the person was, nor whether he took the money. He expressed his surprise however that leading persons in the government "even old and authentic beggars"—should allow themselves to be so seduced as to accept presents from the enemy. He mentioned two such persons, namely, a burgomaster at Delft and a burgomaster at Haarlem. Aerssens now deposed that he had informed the Advocate of this story, who had said, "Be quiet about it, I will have it investigated," and some days afterwards on being questioned stated that he had made enquiry and found there was something in it.

Page 2996

So the fact that Cornelis Aerssens had taken bribes, and that two burgomasters were strongly suspected by Aerssens of having taken bribes, seems to have been considered as evidence that Barneveld had taken a bribe. It is true that Aerssens by advice of Maurice and Barneveld had made a clean breast of it to the States-General and had given them over the presents. But the States-General could neither wear the diamond nor cash the bill of exchange, and it would have been better for the Greffier not to contaminate his fingers with them, but to leave the gifts in the monk's palm. His revenge against the Advocate for helping him out of his dilemma, and for subsequently advancing his son Francis in a brilliant diplomatic career, seems to have been—when the clouds were thickening and every man's hand was against the fallen statesman—to insinuate that he was the anonymous personage who had accepted the apocryphal draft for 100,000 ducats.

The case is a pregnant example of the proceedings employed to destroy the Advocate.

The testimony of Nicolas van Berk was at any rate more direct.

On the 21st December 1618 the burgomaster testified that the Advocate had once declared to him that the differences in regard to Divine Worship were not so great but that they might be easily composed; asking him at the same time "whether it would not be better that we should submit ourselves again to the King of Spain." Barneveld had also referred, so said van Berk, to the conduct of the Spanish king towards those who had helped him to the kingdom of Portugal. The Burgomaster was unable however to specify the date, year, or month in which the Advocate had held this language. He remembered only that the conversation occurred when Barneveld was living on the Spui at the Hague, and that having been let into the house through the hall on the side of the vestibule, he had been conducted by the Advocate down a small staircase into the office.

The only fact proved by the details seems to be that the story had lodged in the tenacious memory of the Burgomaster for eight years, as Barneveld had removed from the Spui to Arenberg House in the Voorhout in the year 1611.

No other offers from the King of Spain or the Archdukes had ever been made to him, said van Berk, than those indicated in this deposition against the Advocate as coming from that statesman. Nor had Barneveld ever spoken to him upon such subjects except on that one occasion.

It is not necessary and would be wearisome to follow the unfortunate statesman through the long line of defence which he was obliged to make, in fragmentary and irregular form, against these discursive and confused assaults upon him. A continuous argument might be built up with the isolated parts which should be altogether impregnable. It is superfluous.

Page 2997

Always instructive to his judges as he swept at will through the record of nearly half a century of momentous European history, in which he was himself a conspicuous figure, or expounding the ancient laws and customs of the country with a wealth and accuracy of illustration which testified to the strength of his memory, he seemed rather like a sage expounding law and history to a class of pupils than a criminal defending himself before a bench of commissioners. Moved occasionally from his austere simplicity, the majestic old man rose to a strain of indignant eloquence which might have shaken the hall of a vast assembly and found echo in the hearts of a thousand hearers as he denounced their petty insults or ignoble insinuations; glaring like a caged lion at his tormentors, who had often shrunk before him when free, and now attempted to drown his voice by contradictions, interruptions, threats, and unmeaning howls.

He protested, from the outset and throughout the proceedings, against the jurisdiction of the tribunal. The Treaty of Union on which the Assembly and States-General were founded gave that assembly no power over him. They could take no legal cognizance of his person or his acts. He had been deprived of writing materials, or he would have already drawn up his solemn protest and argument against the existence of the commission. He demanded that they should be provided for him, together with a clerk to engross his defence. It is needless to say that the demand was refused.

It was notorious to all men, he said, that on the day when violent hands were laid upon him he was not bound to the States-General by oath, allegiance, or commission. He was a well-known inhabitant of the Hague, a householder there, a vassal of the Commonwealth of Holland, enfeoffed of many notable estates in that country, serving many honourable offices by commission from its government. By birth, promotion, and conferred dignities he was subject to the supreme authority of Holland, which for forty years had been a free state possessed of all the attributes of sovereignty, political, religious, judicial, and recognizing no superior save God Almighty alone.

He was amenable to no tribunal save that of their Mightinesses the States of Holland and their ordinary judges. Not only those States but the Prince of Orange as their governor and vassal, the nobles of Holland, the colleges of justice, the regents of cities, and all other vassals, magistrates, and officers were by their respective oaths bound to maintain and protect him in these his rights.

After fortifying this position by legal argument and by an array of historical facts within his own experience, and alluding to the repeated instances in which, sorely against his will, he had been solicited and almost compelled to remain in offices of which he was weary, he referred with dignity to the record of his past life. From the youthful days when he had served as a volunteer at his own expense in the perilous sieges of Haarlem and Leyden down to the time of his arrest, through an unbroken course of honourable and most arduous political services, embassies, and great negotiations, he had ever maintained the laws and liberties of the Fatherland and his own honour unstained.

Page 2998

That he should now in his seventy-second year be dragged, in violation of every privilege and statute of the country, by extraordinary means, before unknown judges, was a grave matter not for himself alone but for their Mightinesses the States of Holland and for the other provinces. The precious right ‘de non evocando’ had ever been dear to all the provinces, cities, and inhabitants of the Netherlands. It was the most vital privilege in their possession as well in civil as criminal, in secular as in ecclesiastical affairs.

When the King of Spain in 1567, and afterwards, set up an extraordinary tribunal and a course of extraordinary trials, it was an undeniable fact, he said, that on the solemn complaint of the States all princes, nobles, and citizens not only in the Netherlands but in foreign countries, and all foreign kings and sovereigns, held those outrages to be the foremost and fundamental reason for taking up arms against that king, and declaring him to have forfeited his right of sovereignty.

Yet that monarch was unquestionably the born and accepted sovereign of each one of the provinces, while the General Assembly was but a gathering of confederates and allies, in no sense sovereign. It was an unimaginable thing, he said, that the States of each province should allow their whole authority and right of sovereignty to be transferred to a board of commissioners like this before which he stood. If, for example, a general union of France, England, and the States of the United Netherlands should be formed (and the very words of the Act of Union contemplated such possibility), what greater absurdity could there be than to suppose that a college of administration created for the specific purposes of such union would be competent to perform acts of sovereignty within each of those countries in matters of justice, polity, and religion?

It was known to mankind, he said, that when negotiations were entered into for bestowing the sovereignty of the Provinces on France and on England, special and full powers were required from, and furnished by, the States of each individual province.

Had the sovereignty been in the assembly of the States-General, they might have transferred it of their own motion or kept it for themselves.

Even in the ordinary course of affairs the commissioners from each province to the General Assembly always required a special power from their constituents before deciding any matter of great importance.

In regard to the defence of the respective provinces and cities, he had never heard it doubted, he said, that the states or the magistrates of cities had full right to provide for it by arming a portion of their own inhabitants or by enlisting paid troops. The sovereign counts of Holland and bishops of Utrecht certainly possessed and exercised that right for many hundred years, and by necessary tradition it passed to the states succeeding to their ancient sovereignty.

Page 2999

He then gave from the stores of his memory innumerable instances in which soldiers had been enlisted by provinces and cities all over the Netherlands from the time of the abjuration of Spain down to that moment. Through the whole period of independence in the time of Anjou, Matthias, Leicester, as well as under the actual government, it had been the invariable custom thus to provide both by land and sea and on the rivers against robbers, rebels, pirates, mischief-makers, assailing thieves, domestic or foreign. It had been done by the immortal William the Silent on many memorable occasions, and in fact the custom was so notorious that soldiers so enlisted were known by different and peculiar nicknames in the different provinces and towns.

That the central government had no right to meddle with religious matters was almost too self-evident an axiom to prove. Indeed the chief difficulty under which the Advocate laboured throughout this whole process was the monstrous assumption by his judges of a political and judicial system which never had any existence even in imagination. The profound secrecy which enwrapped the proceedings from that day almost to our own and an ignorant acquiescence of a considerable portion of the public in accomplished facts offer the only explanation of a mystery which must ever excite our wonder. If there were any impeachment at all, it was an impeachment of the form of government itself. If language could mean anything whatever, a mere perusal of the Articles of Union proved that the prisoner had never violated that fundamental pact. How could the general government prescribe an especial formulary for the Reformed Church, and declare opposition to its decrees treasonable, when it did not prohibit, but absolutely admitted and invited, provinces and cities exclusively Catholic to enter the Union, guaranteeing to them entire liberty of religion?

Barneveld recalled the fact that when the stadholdership of Utrecht thirty years before had been conferred on Prince Maurice the States of that province had solemnly reserved for themselves the disposition over religious matters in conformity with the Union, and that Maurice had sworn to support that resolution.

Five years later the Prince had himself assured a deputation from Brabant that the States of each province were supreme in religious matters, no interference the one with the other being justifiable or possible. In 1602 the States General in letters addressed to the States of the obedient provinces under dominion of the Archdukes had invited them to take up arms to help drive the Spaniards from the Provinces and to join the Confederacy, assuring them that they should regulate the matter of religion at their good pleasure, and that no one else should be allowed to interfere therewith.

Page 3000

The Advocate then went into an historical and critical disquisition, into which we certainly have no need to follow him, rapidly examining the whole subject of predestination and conditional and unconditional damnation from the days of St. Augustine downward, showing a thorough familiarity with a subject of theology which then made up so much of the daily business of life, political and private, and lay at the bottom of the terrible convulsion then existing in the Netherlands. We turn from it with a shudder, reminding the reader only how persistently the statesman then on his trial had advocated conciliation, moderation, and kindness between brethren of the Reformed Church who were not able to think alike on one of the subtlest and most mysterious problems that casuistry has ever propounded.

For fifty years, he said, he had been an enemy of all compulsion of the human conscience. He had always opposed rigorous ecclesiastical decrees. He had done his best to further, and did not deny having inspired, the advice given in the famous letters from the King of Great Britain to the States in 1613, that there should be mutual toleration and abstinence from discussion of disputed doctrines, neither of them essential to salvation. He thought that neither Calvin nor Beza would have opposed freedom of opinion on those points. For himself he believed that the salvation of mankind would be through God's unmerited grace and the redemption of sins though the Saviour, and that the man who so held and persevered to the end was predestined to eternal happiness, and that his children dying before the age of reason were destined not to Hell but to Heaven. He had thought fifty years long that the passion and sacrifice of Christ the Saviour were more potent to salvation than God's wrath and the sin of Adam and Eve to damnation. He had done his best practically to avert personal bickerings among the clergy. He had been, so far as lay in his power, as friendly to Remonstrants as to Contra-Remonstrants, to Polyander and Festus Hommius as to Uytenbogaert and Episcopius. He had almost finished a negotiation with Councillor Kromhout for the peaceable delivery of the Cloister Church on the Thursday preceding the Sunday on which it had been forcibly seized by the Contra-Remonstrants.

When asked by one of his judges how he presumed to hope for toleration between two parties, each of which abhorred the other's opinions, and likened each other to Turks and devil-worshippers, he replied that he had always detested and rebuked those mutual revilings by every means in his power, and would have wished to put down such calumniators of either persuasion by the civil authority, but the iniquity of the times and the exasperation of men's humours had prevented him.

Page 3001

Being perpetually goaded by one judge after another as to his disrespectful conduct towards the King of Great Britain, and asked why his Majesty had not as good right to give the advice of 1617 as the recommendation of tolerance in 1613, he scrupulously abstained, as he had done in all his letters, from saying a disrespectful word as to the glaring inconsistency between the two communications, or to the hostility manifested towards himself personally by the British ambassador. He had always expressed the hope, he said, that the King would adhere to his original position, but did not dispute his right to change his mind, nor the good faith which had inspired his later letters. It had been his object, if possible, to reconcile the two different systems recommended by his Majesty into one harmonious whole.

His whole aim had been to preserve the public peace as it was the duty of every magistrate, especially in times of such excitement, to do. He could never comprehend why the toleration of the Five Points should be a danger to the Reformed religion. Rather, he thought, it would strengthen the Church and attract many Lutherans, Baptists, Catholics, and other good patriots into its pale. He had always opposed the compulsory acceptance by the people of the special opinions of scribes and doctors. He did not consider, he said, the difference in doctrine on this disputed point between the Contra-Remonstrants and Remonstrants as one-tenth the value of the civil authority and its right to make laws and ordinances regulating ecclesiastical affairs.

He believed the great bulwark of the independence of the country to be the Reformed Church, and his efforts had ever been to strengthen that bulwark by preventing the unnecessary schism which might prove its ruin. Many questions of property, too, were involved in the question—the church buildings, lands and pastures belonging to the Counts of Holland and their successors—the States having always exercised the right of church patronage—'jus patronatus'—a privilege which, as well as inherited or purchased advowsons, had been of late flagrantly interfered with.

He was asked if he had not said that it had never been the intention of the States-General to carry on the war for this or that religion.

He replied that he had told certain clergymen expressing to him their opinion that the war had been waged solely for the furtherance of their especial shade of belief, that in his view the war had been undertaken for the conservation of the liberties and laws of the land, and of its good people. Of that freedom the first and foremost point was the true Christian religion and liberty of conscience and opinion. There must be religion in the Republic, he had said, but that the war was carried on to sustain the opinion of one doctor of divinity or another on—differential points was something he had never heard of and could never believe. The good citizens of the country had as much right to hold by Melancthon as by Calvin or Beza. He knew that the first proclamations in regard to the war declared it to be undertaken for freedom of conscience, and so to his, own knowledge it had been always carried on.

Page 3002

He was asked if he had not promised during the Truce negotiations so to direct matters that the Catholics with time might obtain public exercise of their religion.

He replied that this was a notorious falsehood and calumny, adding that it ill accorded with the proclamation against the Jesuits drawn up by himself some years after the Truce. He furthermore stated that it was chiefly by his direction that the discourse of President Jeannin—urging on part of the French king that liberty of worship might be granted to the Papists—was kept secret, copies of it not having been furnished even to the commissioners of the Provinces.

His indignant denial of this charge, especially taken in connection with his repeated assertions during the trial, that among the most patriotic Netherlanders during and since the war were many adherents of the ancient church, seems marvellously in contradiction with his frequent and most earnest pleas for liberty of conscience. But it did not appear contradictory even to his judges nor to any contemporary. His position had always been that the civil authority of each province was supreme in all matters political or ecclesiastical. The States-General, all the provinces uniting in the vote, had invited the Catholic provinces on more than one occasion to join the Union, promising that there should be no interference on the part of any states or individuals with the internal affairs religious or otherwise of the provinces accepting the invitation. But it would have been a gross contradiction of his own principle if he had promised so to direct matters that the Catholics should have public right of worship in Holland where he knew that the civil authority was sure to refuse it, or in any of the other six provinces in whose internal affairs he had no voice whatever. He was opposed to all tyranny over conscience, he would have done his utmost to prevent inquisition into opinion, violation of domicile, interference with private worship, compulsory attendance in Protestant churches of those professing the Roman creed. This was not attempted. No Catholic was persecuted on account of his religion. Compared with the practice in other countries this was a great step in advance. Religious tolerance lay on the road to religious equality, a condition which had hardly been imagined then and scarcely exists in Europe even to this day. But among the men in history whose life and death contributed to the advancement of that blessing, it would be vain to deny that Barneveld occupies a foremost place.

Moreover, it should be remembered that religious equality then would have been a most hazardous experiment. So long as Church and State were blended, it was absolutely essential at that epoch for the preservation of Protestantism to assign the predominance to the State. Should the Catholics have obtained religious equality, the probable result would before long have been religious inequality, supremacy of the Catholics in the Church,

Page 3003

and supremacy of the Church over the State. The fruits of the forty years' war would have become dust and ashes. It would be mere weak sentimentalism to doubt—after the bloody history which had just closed and the awful tragedy, then reopening—that every spark of religious liberty would have soon been trodden out in the Netherlands. The general onslaught of the League with Ferdinand, Maximilian of Bavaria, and Philip of Spain at its head against the distracted, irresolute, and wavering line of Protestantism across the whole of Europe was just preparing. Rather a wilderness to reign over than a single heretic, was the war-cry of the Emperor. The King of Spain, as we have just been reading in his most secret, ciphered despatches to the Archduke at Brussels, was nursing sanguine hopes and weaving elaborate schemes for recovering his dominion over the United Netherlands, and proposing to send an army of Jesuits thither to break the way to the reconquest. To play into his hands then, by granting public right of worship to the Papists, would have been in Barneveld's opinion like giving up Julich and other citadels in the debatable land to Spain just as the great war between Catholicism and Protestantism was breaking out. There had been enough of burning and burying alive in the Netherlands during the century which had closed. It was not desirable to give a chance for their renewal now.

In regard to the Synod, Barneveld justified his course by a simple reference to the 13th Article of the Union. Words could not more plainly prohibit the interference by the States-General with the religious affairs of any one of the Provinces than had been done by that celebrated clause. In 1583 there had been an attempt made to amend that article by insertion of a pledge to maintain the Evangelical, Reformed, religion solely, but it was never carried out. He disdained to argue so self-evident a truth, that a confederacy which had admitted and constantly invited Catholic states to membership, under solemn pledge of noninterference with their religious affairs, had no right to lay down formulas for the Reformed Church throughout all the Netherlands. The oath of stadholder and magistrates in Holland to maintain the Reformed religion was framed before this unhappy controversy on predestination had begun, and it was mere arrogant assumption on the part of the Contra-Remonstrants to claim a monopoly of that religion, and to exclude the Remonstrants from its folds.

He had steadily done his utmost to assuage those dissensions while maintaining the laws which he was sworn to support. He had advocated a provincial synod to be amicably assisted by divines from neighbouring countries. He had opposed a National Synod unless unanimously voted by the Seven Provinces, because it would have been an open violation of the fundamental law of the confederacy, of its whole spirit, and of liberty of conscience. He admitted that he had himself drawn up a protest on the part of three provinces (Holland,

Page 3004

Utrecht, and Overyssel) against the decree for the National Synod as a breach of the Union, declaring it to be therefore null and void and binding upon no man. He had dictated the protest as oldest member present, while Grotius as the youngest had acted as scribe. He would have supported the Synod if legally voted, but would have preferred the convocation, under the authority of all the provinces, of a general, not a national, synod, in which, besides clergy and laymen from the Netherlands, deputations from all Protestant states and churches should take part; a kind of Protestant oecumenical council.

As to the enlistment, by the States of a province, of soldiers to keep the peace and suppress tumults in its cities during times of political and religious excitement, it was the most ordinary of occurrences. In his experience of more than forty years he had never heard the right even questioned. It was pure ignorance of law and history to find it a novelty.

To hire temporarily a sufficient number of professional soldiers, he considered a more wholesome means of keeping the peace than to enlist one portion of the citizens of a town against another portion, when party and religious spirit was running high. His experience had taught him that the mutual hatred of the inhabitants, thus inflamed, became more lasting and mischievous than the resentment caused through suppression of disorder by an armed and paid police of strangers.

It was not only the right but the most solemn duty of the civil authority to preserve the tranquillity, property, and lives of citizens committed to their care. “I have said these fifty years,” said Barneveld, “that it is better to be governed by magistrates than mobs. I have always maintained and still maintain that the most disastrous, shameful, and ruinous condition into which this land can fall is that in which the magistrates are overcome by the rabble of the towns and receive laws from them. Nothing but perdition can follow from that.”

There had been good reason to believe that the French garrisons as well as some of the train bands could not be thoroughly relied upon in emergencies like those constantly breaking out, and there had been advices of invasion by sympathizers from neighbouring countries. In many great cities the civil authority had been trampled upon and mob rule had prevailed. Certainly the recent example in the great commercial capital of the country—where the house of a foremost citizen had been besieged, stormed, and sacked, and a virtuous matron of the higher class hunted like a wild beast through the streets by a rabble grossly ignorant of the very nature of the religious quibble which had driven them mad, pelted with stones, branded with vilest names, and only saved by accident from assassination, while a church-going multitude looked calmly on—with constantly recurring instances in other important cities were sufficient reasons for the authorities to be watchful.

Page 3005

He denied that he had initiated the proceedings at Utrecht in conversation with Ledenberg or any one else, but he had not refused, he said, his approval of the perfectly legal measures adopted for keeping the peace there when submitted to him. He was himself a born citizen of that province, and therefore especially interested in its welfare, and there was an old and intimate friendship between Utrecht and Holland. It would have been painful to him to see that splendid city in the control of an ignorant mob, making use of religious problems, which they did not comprehend, to plunder the property and take the lives of peaceful citizens more comfortably housed than themselves.

He had neither suggested nor controlled the proceedings at Utrecht. On the contrary, at an interview with the Prince and Count William on the 13th July, and in the presence of nearly thirty members of the general assembly, he had submitted a plan for cashiering the enlisted soldiery and substituting for them other troops, native-born, who should be sworn in the usual form to obey the laws of the Union. The deputation from Holland to Utrecht, according to his personal knowledge, had received no instructions personal or oral to authorize active steps by the troops of the Holland quota, but to abstain from them and to request the Prince that they should not be used against the will and commands of the States of Utrecht, whom they were bound by oath to obey so long as they were in garrison there.

No man knew better than he whether the military oath which was called new-fangled were a novelty or not, for he had himself, he said, drawn it up thirty years before at command of the States-General by whom it was then ordained. From that day to this he had never heard a pretence that it justified anything not expressly sanctioned by the Articles of Union, and neither the States of Holland nor those of Utrecht had made any change in the oath. The States of Utrecht were sovereign within their own territory, and in the time of peace neither the Prince of Orange without their order nor the States-General had the right to command the troops in their territory. The governor of a province was sworn to obey the laws of the province and conform to the Articles of the General Union.

He was asked why he wrote the warning letter to Ledenberg, and why he was so anxious that the letter should be burned; as if that were a deadly offence.

He said that he could not comprehend why it should be imputed to him as a crime that he wished in such turbulent times to warn so important a city as Utrecht, the capital of his native province, against tumults, disorders, and sudden assaults such as had often happened to her in times past. As for the postscript requesting that the letter might be put in the fire, he said that not being a member of, the government of that province he was simply unwilling to leave a record that “he had been too curious in aliens republics, although that could hardly be considered a grave offence.”

Page 3006

In regard to the charge that he had accused Prince Maurice of aspiring to the sovereignty of the country, he had much to say. He had never brought such accusation in public or private. He had reason to believe however—he had indeed convincing proofs—that many people, especially those belonging to the Contra-Remonstrant party, cherished such schemes. He had never sought to cast suspicion on the Prince himself on account of those schemes. On the contrary, he had not even formally opposed them. What he wished had always been that such projects should be discussed formally, legally, and above board. After the lamentable murder of the late Prince he had himself recommended to the authorities of some of the cities that the transaction for bestowing the sovereignty of Holland upon William, interrupted by his death, "should be completed in favour of Prince Maurice in despite of the Spaniard." Recently he had requested Grotius to look up the documents deposited in Rotterdam belonging to this affair, in order that they might be consulted.

He was asked whether according to Buzenval, the former French ambassador, Prince Maurice had not declared he would rather fling himself from the top of the Hague tower than accept the sovereignty. Barneveld replied that the Prince according to the same authority had added "under the conditions which had been imposed upon his father;" a clause which considerably modified the self-denying statement. It was desirable therefore to search the acts for the limitations annexed to the sovereignty.

Three years long there had been indications from various sources that a party wished to change the form of government. He had not heard nor ever intimated that the Prince suggested such intrigues. In anonymous pamphlets and common street and tavern conversations the Contra-Remonstrants were described by those of their own persuasion as "Prince's Beggars" and the like. He had received from foreign countries information worthy of attention, that it was the design of the Contra-Remonstrants to raise the Prince to the sovereignty. He had therefore in 1616 brought the matter before the nobles and cities in a communication setting forth to the best of his recollection that under these religious disputes something else was intended. He had desired ripe conclusions on the matter, such as should most conduce to the service of the country. This had been in good faith both to the Prince and the Provinces, in order that, should a change in the government be thought desirable, proper and peaceful means might be employed to bring it about. He had never had any other intention than to sound the inclinations of those with whom he spoke, and he had many times since that period, by word of mouth and in writing, so lately as the month of April last assured the Prince that he had ever been his sincere and faithful servant and meant to remain so to the end of his life, desiring therefore that he would explain to him his wishes and intentions.

Page 3007

Subsequently he had publicly proposed in full Assembly of Holland that the States should ripely deliberate and roundly declare if they were discontented with the form of government, and if so, what change they would desire. He had assured their Mightinesses that they might rely upon him to assist in carrying out their intentions whatever they might be. He had inferred however from the Prince's intimations, when he had broached the subject to him in 1617, that he was not inclined towards these supposed projects, and had heard that opinion distinctly expressed from the mouth of Count William.

That the Contra-Remonstrants secretly entertained these schemes, he had been advised from many quarters, at home and abroad. In the year 1618 he had received information to that effect from France. Certain confidential counsellors of the Prince had been with him recently to confer on the subject. He had told them that, if his Excellency chose to speak to him in regard to it, would listen to his reasoning about it, both as regarded the interests of the country and the Prince himself, and then should desire him to propose and advocate it before the Assembly, he would do so with earnestness, zeal, and affection. He had desired however that, in case the attempt failed, the Prince would allow him to be relieved from service and to leave the country. What he wished from the bottom of his heart was that his Excellency would plainly discover to him the exact nature of his sentiments in regard to the business.

He fully admitted receiving a secret letter from Ambassador Langerac, apprising him that a man of quality in France had information of the intention of the Contra-Remonstrants throughout the Provinces, should they come into power, to raise Prince Maurice to the sovereignty. He had communicated on the subject with Grotius and other deputies in order that, if this should prove to be the general inclination, the affair might be handled according to law, without confusion or disorder. This, he said, would be serving both the country and the Prince most judiciously.

He was asked why he had not communicated directly with Maurice. He replied that he had already seen how unwillingly the Prince heard him allude to the subject, and that moreover there was another clause in the letter of different meaning, and in his view worthy of grave consideration by the States.

No question was asked him as to this clause, but we have seen that it referred to the communication by du Agean to Langerac of a scheme for bestowing the sovereignty of the Provinces on the King of France. The reader will also recollect that Barneveld had advised the Ambassador to communicate the whole intelligence to the Prince himself.

Page 3008

Barneveld proceeded to inform the judges that he had never said a word to cast suspicion upon the Prince, but had been actuated solely by the desire to find out the inclination of the States. The communications which he had made on the subject were neither for discrediting the Prince nor for counteracting the schemes for his advancement. On the contrary, he had conferred with deputies from great cities like Dordtrecht, Enkhuyzen, and Amsterdam, most devoted to the Contra-Remonstrant party, and had told them that, if they chose to propose the subject themselves, he would conduct himself to the best of his abilities in accordance with the wishes of the Prince.

It would seem almost impossible for a statesman placed in Barneveld's position to bear himself with more perfect loyalty both to the country and to the Stadholder. His duty was to maintain the constitution and laws so long as they remained unchanged. Should it appear that the States, which legally represented the country, found the constitution defective, he was ready to aid in its amendment by fair public and legal methods.

If Maurice wished to propose himself openly as a candidate for the sovereignty, which had a generation before been conferred upon his father, Barneveld would not only acquiesce in the scheme, but propose it.

Should it fail, he claimed the light to lay down all his offices and go into exile.

He had never said that the Prince was intriguing for, or even desired, the sovereignty. That the project existed among the party most opposed to himself, he had sufficient proof. To the leaders of that party therefore he suggested that the subject should be publicly discussed, guaranteeing freedom of debate and his loyal support so far as lay within his power.

This was his answer to the accusation that he had meanly, secretly, and falsely circulated statements that the Prince was aspiring to the sovereignty.

[Great pains were taken, in the course of the interrogatories, to elicit proof that the Advocate had concealed important diplomatic information from the Prince. He was asked why, in his secret instructions to Ambassador Langerac, he ordered him by an express article to be very cautious about making communications to the Prince. Searching questions were put in regard to these secret instructions, which I have read in the Archives, and a copy of which now lies before me. They are in the form of questions, some of them almost puerile ones, addressed to Barneveld by the Ambassador then just departing on his mission to France in 1614, with the answers written in the margin by the Advocate. The following is all that has reference to the Prince: "Of what matters may I ordinarily write to his Excellency?" Answer—"Of all great and important matters." It was difficult to find much that was treasonable in that.]

Among the heterogeneous articles of accusation he was asked why he had given no attention to those who had so, frequently proposed the formation of the West India Company.

Page 3009

He replied that it had from old time been the opinion of the States of Holland, and always his own, that special and private licenses for traffic, navigation, and foreign commerce, were prejudicial to the welfare of the land. He had always been most earnestly opposed to them, detesting monopolies which interfered with that free trade and navigation which should be common to all mankind. He had taken great pains however in the years 1596 and 1597 to study the nature of the navigation and trade to the East Indies in regard to the nations to be dealt with in those regions, the nature of the wares bought and sold there, the opposition to be encountered from the Spaniards and Portuguese against the commerce of the Netherlanders, and the necessity of equipping vessels both for traffic and defence, and had come to the conclusion that these matters could best be directed by a general company. He explained in detail the manner in which he had procured the blending of all the isolated chambers into one great East India Corporation, the enormous pains which it had cost him to bring it about, and the great commercial and national success which had been the result. The Admiral of Aragon, when a prisoner after the battle of Nieuwpoort, had told him, he said, that the union of these petty corporations into one great whole had been as disastrous a blow to the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal as the Union of the Provinces at Utrecht had been. In regard to the West India Company, its sole object, so far as he could comprehend it, had been to equip armed vessels, not for trade but to capture and plunder Spanish merchantmen and silver fleets in the West Indies and South America. This was an advantageous war measure which he had favoured while the war lasted. It was in no sense a commercial scheme however, and when the Truce had been made—the company not having come into existence—he failed to comprehend how its formation could be profitable for the Netherlanders. On the contrary it would expressly invite or irritate the Spaniards into a resumption of the war, an object which in his humble opinion was not at all desirable.

Certainly these ideas were not especially reprehensible, but had they been as shallow and despicable as they seem to us enlightened, it is passing strange that they should have furnished matter for a criminal prosecution.

It was doubtless a disappointment for the promoters of the company, the chief of whom was a bankrupt, to fail in obtaining their charter, but it was scarcely high-treason to oppose it. There is no doubt however that the disapprobation with which Barneveld regarded the West India Company, the seat of which was at Amsterdam, was a leading cause of the deadly hostility entertained for him by the great commercial metropolis.

It was bad enough for the Advocate to oppose unconditional predestination and the damnation of infants, but to frustrate a magnificent system of privateering on the Spaniards in time of truce was an unpardonable crime.

Page 3010

The patience with which the venerable statesman submitted to the taunts, ignorant and insolent cross-questionings, and noisy interruptions of his judges, was not less remarkable than the tenacity of memory which enabled him thus day after day, alone, unaided by books, manuscripts, or friendly counsel, to reconstruct the record of forty years, and to expound the laws of the land by an array of authorities, instances, and illustrations in a manner that would be deemed masterly by one who had all the resources of libraries, documents, witnesses, and secretaries at command.

Only when insidious questions were put tending to impute to him corruption, venality, and treacherous correspondence with the enemy—for they never once dared formally to accuse him of treason—did that almost superhuman patience desert him.

He was questioned as to certain payments made by him to a certain van der Vecken in Spanish coin. He replied briefly at first that his money transactions with that man of business extended over a period of twenty or thirty years, and amounted to many hundred thousands of florins, growing out of purchases and sales of lands, agricultural enterprises on his estates, moneys derived from his professional or official business and the like. It was impossible for him to remember the details of every especial money payment that might have occurred between them.

Then suddenly breaking forth into a storm of indignation; he could mark from these questions, he said, that his enemies, not satisfied with having wounded his heart with their falsehoods, vile forgeries, and honour-robbing libels, were determined to break it. This he prayed that God Almighty might avert and righteously judge between him and them.

It was plain that among other things they were alluding to the stale and senseless story of the sledge filled with baskets of coin sent by the Spanish envoys on their departure from the Hague, on conclusion of the Truce, to defray expenses incurred by them for board and lodging of servants, forage of horses, and the like-which had accidentally stopped at Barneveld’s door and was forthwith sent on to John Spronssen, superintendent of such affairs. Passing over this wanton bit of calumny with disgust, he solemnly asserted that he had never at any period of his life received one penny nor the value of one penny from the King of Spain, the Archdukes, Spinola, or any other person connected with the enemy, saving only the presents publicly and mutually conferred according to invariable custom by the high contracting parties, upon the respective negotiators at conclusion of the Treaty of Truce. Even these gifts Barneveld had moved his colleagues not to accept, but proposed that they should all be paid into the public treasury. He had been overruled, he said, but that any dispassionate man of tolerable intelligence could imagine him, whose whole life had been a perpetual offence to Spain, to be in suspicious

Page 3011

relations with that power seemed to him impossible. The most intense party spirit, yea, envy itself, must confess that he had been among the foremost to take up arms for his country's liberties, and had through life never faltered in their defence. And once more in that mean chamber, and before a row of personal enemies calling themselves judges, he burst into an eloquent and most justifiable sketch of the career of one whom there was none else to justify and so many to assail.

From his youth, he said, he had made himself by his honourable and patriotic deeds hopelessly irreconcilable with the Spaniards. He was one of the advocates practising in the Supreme Court of Holland, who in the very teeth of the Duke of Alva had proclaimed him a tyrant and had sworn obedience to the Prince of Orange as the lawful governor of the land. He was one of those who in the same year had promoted and attended private gatherings for the advancement of the Reformed religion. He had helped to levy, and had contributed to, funds for the national defence in the early days of the revolt. These were things which led directly to the Council of Blood and the gibbet. He had borne arms himself on various bloody fields and had been perpetually a deputy to the rebel camps. He had been the original mover of the Treaty of Union which was concluded between the Provinces at Utrecht. He had been the first to propose and to draw up the declaration of Netherland independence and the abjuration of the King of Spain. He had been one of those who had drawn and passed the Act establishing the late Prince of Orange as stadholder. Of the sixty signers of these memorable declarations none were now living save himself and two others. When the Prince had been assassinated, he had done his best to secure for his son Maurice the sovereign position of which murder had so suddenly deprived the father. He had been member of the memorable embassies to France and England by which invaluable support for the struggling Provinces had been obtained.

And thus he rapidly sketched the history of the great war of independence in which he had ever been conspicuously employed on the patriotic side. When the late King of France at the close of the century had made peace with Spain, he had been sent as special ambassador to that monarch, and had prevailed on him, notwithstanding his treaty with the enemy, to continue his secret alliance with the States and to promise them a large subsidy, pledges which had been sacredly fulfilled. It was on that occasion that Henry, who was his debtor for past services, professional, official, and perfectly legitimate, had agreed, when his finances should be in better condition, to discharge his obligations; over and above the customary diplomatic present which he received publicly in common with his colleague Admiral Nassau. This promise, fulfilled a dozen years later, had been one of the senseless charges of corruption brought against him. He had been

Page 3012

one of the negotiators of the Truce in which Spain had been compelled to treat with her revolted provinces as with free states and her equals. He had promoted the union of the Protestant princes and their alliance with France and the United States in opposition to the designs of Spain and the League. He had organized and directed the policy by which the forces of England, France, and Protestant Germany had possessed themselves of the debateable land. He had resisted every scheme by which it was hoped to force the States from their hold of those important citadels. He had been one of the foremost promoters of the East India Company, an organization which the Spaniards confessed had been as damaging to them as the Union of the Provinces itself had been.

The idiotic and circumstantial statements, that he had conducted Burgomaster van Berk through a secret staircase of his house into his private study for the purpose of informing him that the only way for the States to get out of the war was to submit themselves once more to their old masters, so often forced upon him by the judges, he contradicted with disdain and disgust. He had ever abhorred and dreaded, he said, the House of Spain, Austria, and Burgundy. His life had passed in open hostility to that house, as was known to all mankind. His mere personal interests, apart from higher considerations, would make an approach to the former sovereign impossible, for besides the deeds he had already alluded to, he had committed at least twelve distinct and separate acts, each one of which would be held high-treason by the House of Austria, and he had learned from childhood that these are things which monarchs never forget. The tales of van Berk were those of a personal enemy, falsehoods scarcely worth contradicting.

He was grossly and enormously aggrieved by the illegal constitution of the commission. He had protested and continued to protest against it. If that protest were unheeded, he claimed at least that those men should be excluded from the board and the right to sit in judgment upon his person and his deeds who had proved themselves by words and works to be his capital enemies, of which fact he could produce irrefragable evidence. He claimed that the Supreme Court of Holland, or the High Council, or both together, should decide upon that point. He held as his personal enemies, he said, all those who had declared that he, before or since the Truce down to the day of his arrest, had held correspondence with the Spaniards, the Archdukes, the Marquis Spinola, or any one on that side, had received money, money value, or promises of money from them, and in consequence had done or omitted to do anything whatever. He denounced such tales as notorious, shameful, and villainous falsehoods, the utterers and circulators of them as wilful liars, and this he was ready to maintain in every appropriate way for the vindication of the truth and his own honour. He declared solemnly before God Almighty to the States-General

Page 3013

and to the States of Holland that his course in the religious matter had been solely directed to the strengthening of the Reformed religion and to the political security of the provinces and cities. He had simply desired that, in the awful and mysterious matter of predestination, the consciences of many preachers and many thousands of good citizens might be placed in tranquillity, with moderate and Christian limitations against all excesses.

From all these reasons, he said, the commissioners, the States-General, the Prince, and every man in the land could clearly see, and were bound to see, that he was the same man now that he was at the beginning of the war, had ever been, and with God's help should ever remain.

The proceedings were kept secret from the public and, as a matter of course, there had been conflicting rumours from day to day as to the probable result of these great state trials. In general however it was thought that the prisoner would be acquitted of the graver charges, or that at most he would be permanently displaced from all office and declared incapable thenceforth to serve the State. The triumph of the Contra-Remonstrants since the Stadholder had placed himself at the head of them, and the complete metamorphosis of the city governments even in the strongholds of the Arminian party seemed to render the permanent political disgrace of the Advocate almost a matter of certainty.

The first step that gave rise to a belief that he might be perhaps more severely dealt with than had been anticipated was the proclamation by the States-General of a public fast and humiliation for the 17th April.

In this document it was announced that "Church and State—during several years past having been brought into great danger of utter destruction through certain persons in furtherance of their ambitious designs—had been saved by the convocation of a National Synod; that a lawful sentence was soon to be expected upon those who had been disturbing the Commonwealth; that through this sentence general tranquillity would probably be restored; and that men were now to thank God for this result, and pray to Him that He would bring the wicked counsels and stratagems of the enemy against these Provinces to naught."

All the prisoners were asked if they too would like in their chambers of bondage to participate in the solemnity, although the motive for the fasting and prayer was not mentioned to them. Each of them in his separate prison room, of course without communication together, selected the 7th Psalm and sang it with his servant and door-keeper.

From the date of this fast-day Barneveld looked upon the result of his trial as likely to be serious.

Many clergymen refused or objected to comply with the terms of this declaration. Others conformed with it greedily, and preached lengthy thanksgiving sermons, giving praise to God that, He had confounded the devices of the ambitious and saved the country from the “blood bath” which they had been preparing for it.

Page 3014

The friends of Barneveld became alarmed at the sinister language of this proclamation, in which for the first time allusions had been made to a forthcoming sentence against the accused.

Especially the staunch and indefatigable du Maurier at once addressed himself again to the States-General. De Boississe had returned to France, having found that the government of a country torn, weakened, and rendered almost impotent by its own internecine factions, was not likely to exert any very potent influence on the fate of the illustrious prisoner.

The States had given him to understand that they were wearied with his perpetual appeals, intercessions, and sermons in behalf of mercy. They made him feel in short that Lewis XIII. and Henry *iv*. were two entirely different personages.

Du Maurier however obtained a hearing before the Assembly on the 1st May, where he made a powerful and manly speech in presence of the Prince, urging that the prisoners ought to be discharged unless they could be convicted of treason, and that the States ought to show as much deference to his sovereign as they had always done to Elizabeth of England. He made a personal appeal to Prince Maurice, urging upon him how much it would redound to his glory if he should now in generous and princely fashion step forward in behalf of those by whom he deemed himself to have been personally offended.

His speech fell upon ears hardened against such eloquence and produced no effect.

Meantime the family of Barneveld, not yet reduced to despair, chose to take a less gloomy view of the proclamation. Relying on the innocence of the great statesman, whose aims, in their firm belief, had ever been for the welfare and glory of his fatherland, and in whose heart there had never been kindled one spark of treason, they bravely expected his triumphant release from his long and, as they deemed it, his iniquitous imprisonment.

On this very 1st of May, in accordance with ancient custom, a may-pole was erected on the Voorhout before the mansion of the captive statesman, and wreaths of spring flowers and garlands of evergreen decorated the walls within which were such braised and bleeding hearts. These demonstrations of a noble hypocrisy, if such it were, excited the wrath, not the compassion, of the Stadholder, who thought that the aged matron and her sons and daughters, who dwelt in that house of mourning, should rather have sat in sackcloth with ashes on their heads than indulge in these insolent marks of hope and joyful expectation.

It is certain however that Count William Lewis, who, although most staunch on the Contra-Remonstrant side, had a veneration for the Advocate and desired warmly to save him, made a last and strenuous effort for that purpose.

It was believed then, and it seems almost certain, that, if the friends of the Advocate had been willing to implore pardon for him, the sentence would have been remitted or commuted. Their application would have been successful, for through it his guilt would seem to be acknowledged.

Page 3015

Count William sent for the Fiscal Duyck. He asked him if there were no means of saving the life of a man who was so old and had done the country so much service. After long deliberation, it was decided that Prince Maurice should be approached on the subject. Duyck wished that the Count himself would speak with his cousin, but was convinced by his reasoning that it would be better that the Fiscal should do it. Duyck had a long interview accordingly with Maurice, which was followed by a very secret one between them both and Count William. The three were locked up together, three hours long, in the Prince's private cabinet. It was then decided that Count William should go, as if of his own accord, to the Princess-Dowager Louise, and induce her to send for some one of Barneveld's children and urge that the family should ask pardon for him. She asked if this was done with the knowledge of the Prince of Orange, or whether he would not take it amiss. The Count eluded the question, but implored her to follow his advice.

The result was an interview between the Princess and Madame de Groeneveld, wife of the eldest son. That lady was besought to apply, with the rest of the Advocate's children, for pardon to the Lords States, but to act as if it were done of her own impulse, and to keep their interview profoundly secret.

Madame de Groeneveld took time to consult the other members of the family and some friends. Soon afterwards she came again to the Princess, and informed her that she had spoken with the other children, and that they could not agree to the suggestion. "They would not move one step in it—no, not if it should cost him his head."

The Princess reported the result of this interview to Count William, at which both were so distressed that they determined to leave the Hague.

There is something almost superhuman in the sternness of this stoicism. Yet it lay in the proud and highly tempered character of the Netherlanders. There can be no doubt that the Advocate would have expressly dictated this proceeding if he had been consulted. It was precisely the course adopted by himself. Death rather than life with a false acknowledgment of guilt and therefore with disgrace. The loss of his honour would have been an infinitely greater triumph to his enemies than the loss of his head.

There was no delay in drawing up the sentence. Previously to this interview with the widow of William the Silent, the family of the Advocate had presented to the judges three separate documents, rather in the way of arguments than petitions, undertaking to prove by elaborate reasoning and citations of precedents and texts of the civil law that the proceedings against him were wholly illegal, and that he was innocent of every crime.

No notice had been taken of those appeals.

Page 3016

Upon the questions and answers as already set forth the sentence soon followed, and it may be as well that the reader should be aware, at this point in the narrative, of the substance of that sentence so soon to be pronounced. There had been no indictment, no specification of crime. There had been no testimony or evidence. There had been no argument for the prosecution or the defence. There had been no trial whatever. The prisoner was convicted on a set of questions to which he had put in satisfactory replies. He was sentenced on a preamble. The sentence was a string of vague generalities, intolerably long, and as tangled as the interrogatories. His proceedings during a long career had on the whole tended to something called a “blood bath”—but the blood bath had never occurred.

With an effrontery which did not lack ingenuity, Barneveld’s defence was called by the commissioners his confession, and was formally registered as such in the process and the sentence; while the fact that he had not been stretched upon the rack during his trial, nor kept in chains for the eight months of his imprisonment, were complacently mentioned as proofs of exceptionable indulgence.

“Whereas the prisoner John of Barneveld,” said the sentence, “without being put to the torture and without fetters of iron, has confessed . . . to having perturbed religion, greatly afflicted the Church of God, and carried into practice exorbitant and pernicious maxims of State . . . inculcating by himself and accomplices that each province had the right to regulate religious affairs within its own territory, and that other provinces were not to concern themselves therewith”—therefore and for many other reasons he merited punishment.

He had instigated a protest by vote of three provinces against the National Synod. He had despised the salutary advice of many princes and notable personages. He had obtained from the King of Great Britain certain letters furthering his own opinions, the drafts of which he had himself suggested, and corrected and sent over to the States’ ambassador in London, and when written out, signed, and addressed by the King to the States-General, had delivered them without stating how they had been procured.

Afterwards he had attempted to get other letters of a similar nature from the King, and not succeeding had defamed his Majesty as being a cause of the troubles in the Provinces. He had permitted unsound theologians to be appointed to church offices, and had employed such functionaries in political affairs as were most likely to be the instruments of his own purposes. He had not prevented vigorous decrees from being enforced in several places against those of the true religion. He had made them odious by calling them Puritans, foreigners, and “Flanderizers,” although the United Provinces had solemnly pledged to each other their lives, fortunes, and blood by various conventions, to some of which the prisoner was himself a party, to maintain the Reformed, Evangelical, religion only, and to, suffer no change in it to be made for evermore.

Page 3017

In order to carry out his design and perturb the political state of the Provinces he had drawn up and caused to be enacted the Sharp Resolution of 4th August 1617. He had thus nullified the ordinary course of justice. He had stimulated the magistrates to disobedience, and advised them to strengthen themselves with freshly enlisted military companies. He had suggested new-fangled oaths for the soldiers, authorizing them to refuse obedience to the States-General and his Excellency. He had especially stimulated the proceedings at Utrecht. When it was understood that the Prince was to pass through Utrecht, the States of that province not without the prisoner's knowledge had addressed a letter to his Excellency, requesting him not to pass through their city. He had written a letter to Ledenberg suggesting that good watch should be held at the town gates and up and down the river Lek. He had desired that Ledenberg having read that letter should burn it. He had interfered with the cashiering of the mercenaries at Utrecht. He had said that such cashiering without the consent of the States of that province was an act of force which would justify resistance by force.

Although those States had sent commissioners to concert measures with the Prince for that purpose, he had advised them to conceal their instructions until his own plan for the disbandment could be carried out. At a secret meeting in the house of Tresel, clerk of the States-General, between Grotius, Hoogerbeets, and other accomplices, it was decided that this advice should be taken. Report accordingly was made to the prisoner. He had advised them to continue in their opposition to the National Synod.

He had sought to calumniate and blacken his Excellency by saying that he aspired to the sovereignty of the Provinces. He had received intelligence on that subject from abroad in ciphered letters.

He had of his own accord rejected a certain proposed, notable alliance of the utmost importance to this Republic.

> [This refers, I think without doubt, to the conversation between King James and Caron at the end of the year 1815.]

He had received from foreign potentates various large sums of money and other presents.

All "these proceedings tended to put the city of Utrecht into a blood-bath, and likewise to bring the whole country, and the person of his Excellency into the uttermost danger."

This is the substance of the sentence, amplified by repetitions and exasperating tautology into thirty or forty pages.

It will have been perceived by our analysis of Barneveld's answers to the commissioners that all the graver charges which he was now said to have confessed had been indignantly denied by him or triumphantly justified.

It will also be observed that he was condemned for no categorical crime—lese-majesty, treason, or rebellion. The commissioners never ventured to assert that the States-General were sovereign, or that the central government had a right to prescribe a religious formulary for all the United Provinces. They never dared to say that the prisoner had been in communication with the enemy or had received bribes from him.

Page 3018

Of insinuation and implication there was much, of assertion very little, of demonstration nothing whatever.

But supposing that all the charges had been admitted or proved, what course would naturally be taken in consequence? How was a statesman who adhered to the political, constitutional, and religious opinions on which he had acted, with the general acquiescence, during a career of more than forty years, but which were said to be no longer in accordance with public opinion, to be dealt with? Would the commissioners request him to retire honourably from the high functions which he had over and over again offered to resign? Would they consider that, having fairly impeached and found him guilty of disturbing the public peace by continuing to act on his well-known legal theories, they might deprive him summarily of power and declare him incapable of holding office again?

The conclusion of the commissioners was somewhat more severe than either of these measures. Their long rambling preamble ended with these decisive words:

“Therefore the judges, in name of the Lords States-General, condemn the prisoner to be taken to the Binnenhof, there to be executed with the sword that death may follow, and they declare all his property confiscated.”

The execution was to take place so soon as the sentence had been read to the prisoner.

After the 1st of May Barneveld had not appeared before his judges. He had been examined in all about sixty times.

In the beginning of May his servant became impatient. “You must not be impatient,” said his master. “The time seems much longer because we get no news now from the outside. But the end will soon come. This delay cannot last for ever.”

Intimation reached him on Saturday the 11th May that the sentence was ready and would soon be pronounced.

“It is a bitter folk,” said Barneveld as he went to bed. “I have nothing good to expect of them.” Next day was occupied in sewing up and concealing his papers, including a long account of his examination, with the questions and answers, in his Spanish arm-chair. Next day van der Meulen said to the servant, “I will bet you a hundred florins that you’ll not be here next Thursday.”

The faithful John was delighted, not dreaming of the impending result.

It was Sunday afternoon, 12th May, and about half past five o’clock. Barneveld sat in his prison chamber, occupied as usual in writing, reviewing the history of the past, and doing his best to reduce into something like order the rambling and miscellaneous

interrogatories, out of which his trial had been concocted, while the points dwelt in his memory, and to draw up a concluding argument in his own defence. Work which according to any equitable, reasonable, or even decent procedure should have been entrusted to the first lawyers of the country—preparing the case upon the law and the facts with the documents

Page 3019

before them, with the power of cross-questioning witnesses and sifting evidence, and enlightened by constant conferences with the illustrious prisoner himself—came entirely upon his own shoulders, enfeebled as he was by age, physical illness, and by the exhaustion of along imprisonment. Without books, notes of evidence, or even copies of the charges of which he stood accused, he was obliged to draw up his counter-arguments against the impeachment and then by aid of a faithful valet to conceal his manuscript behind the tapestry of the chamber, or cause them to be sewed up in the lining of his easy-chair, lest they should be taken from him by order of the judges who sat in the chamber below.

While he was thus occupied in preparations for his next encounter with the tribunal, the door opened, and three gentlemen entered. Two were the prosecuting officers of the government, Fiscal Sylla and Fiscal van Leeuwen. The other was the provost-marshal, Carel de Nijs. The servant was directed to leave the room.

Barneveld had stepped into his dressing-room on hearing footsteps, but came out again with his long furred gown about him as the three entered. He greeted them courteously and remained standing, with his hands placed on the back of his chair and with one knee resting carelessly against the arm of it. Van Leeuwen asked him if he would not rather be seated, as they brought a communication from the judges. He answered in the negative. Von Leeuwen then informed him that he was summoned to appear before the judges the next morning to hear his sentence of death.

“The sentence of death!” he exclaimed, without in the least changing his position; “the sentence of death! the sentence of death!” saying the words over thrice, with an air of astonishment rather than of horror. “I never expected that! I thought they were going to hear my defence again. I had intended to make some change in my previous statements, having set some things down when beside myself with choler.”

He then made reference to his long services. Van Leeuwen expressed himself as well acquainted with them. “He was sorry,” he said, “that his lordship took this message ill of him.”

“I do not take it ill of you,” said Barneveld, “but let them,” meaning the judges, “see how they will answer it before God. Are they thus to deal with a true patriot? Let me have pen, ink, and paper, that for the last time I may write farewell to my wife.”

“I will go ask permission of the judges,” said van Leenwen, “and I cannot think that my lord’s request will be refused.”

While van Leeuwen was absent, the Advocate exclaimed, looking at the other legal officer:

“Oh, Sylla, Sylla, if your father could only have seen to what uses they would put you!”

Sylla was silent.

Permission to write the letter was soon received from de Voogt, president of the commission. Pen, ink, and paper were brought, and the prisoner calmly sat down to write, without the slightest trace of discomposure upon his countenance or in any of his movements.

Page 3020

While he was writing, Sylla said with some authority, “Beware, my lord, what you write, lest you put down something which may furnish cause for not delivering the letter.”

Barneveld paused in his writing, took the glasses from his eyes, and looked Sylla in the face.

“Well, Sylla,” he said very calmly, “will you in these my last moments lay down the law to me as to what I shall write to my wife?”

He then added with a half-smile, “Well, what is expected of me?”

“We have no commission whatever to lay down the law,” said van Leeuwen. “Your worship will write whatever you like.”

While he was writing, Anthony Walaeus came in, a preacher and professor of Middelburg, a deputy to the Synod of Dordtrecht, a learned and amiable man, sent by the States-General to minister to the prisoner on this supreme occasion; and not unworthy to be thus selected.

The Advocate, not knowing him, asked him why he came.

“I am not here without commission,” said the clergyman. “I come to console my lord in his tribulation.”

“I am a man,” said Barneveld; “have come to my present age, and I know how to console myself. I must write, and have now other things to do.”

The preacher said that he would withdraw and return when his worship was at leisure.

“Do as you like,” said the Advocate, calmly going on with his writing.

When the letter was finished, it was sent to the judges for their inspection, by whom it was at once forwarded to the family mansion in the Voorhout, hardly a stone’s throw from the prison chamber.

Thus it ran:

“Very dearly beloved wife, children, sons-in-law, and grandchildren, I greet you altogether most affectionately. I receive at this moment the very heavy and sorrowful tidings that I, an old man, for all my services done well and faithfully to the Fatherland for so many years (after having performed all respectful and friendly offices to his Excellency the Prince with upright affection so far as my official duty and vocation would permit, shown friendship to many people of all sorts, and wittingly injured no man), must prepare myself to die to-morrow.

“I console myself in God the Lord, who knows all hearts, and who will judge all men. I beg you all together to do the same. I have steadily and faithfully served My Lords the States of Holland and their nobles and cities. To the States of Utrecht as sovereigns of my own Fatherland I have imparted at their request upright and faithful counsel, in order to save them from tumults of the populace, and from the bloodshed with which they had so long been threatened. I had the same views for the cities of Holland in order that every one might be protected and no one injured.

“Live together in love and peace. Pray for me to Almighty God, who will graciously hold us all in His holy keeping.

“From my chamber of sorrow, the 12th May 1619.

Page 3021

“Your very dear husband, father, father-in-law, and grandfather,

“*Johnof Barneveld*.”

It was thought strange that the judges should permit so simple and clear a statement, an argument in itself, to be forwarded. The theory of his condemnation was to rest before the public on his confessions of guilt, and here in the instant of learning the nature of the sentence in a few hours to be pronounced upon him he had in a few telling periods declared his entire innocence. Nevertheless the letter had been sent at once to its address.

So soon as this sad business had been disposed of, Anthony Walaeus returned. The Advocate apologized to the preacher for his somewhat abrupt greeting on his first appearance. He was much occupied and did not know him, he said, although he had often heard of him. He begged him, as well as the provost-marshal, to join him at supper, which was soon brought.

Barneveld ate with his usual appetite, conversed cheerfully on various topics, and pledged the health of each of his guests in a glass of beer. Contrary to his wont he drank at that repast no wine. After supper he went out into the little ante-chamber and called his servant, asking him how he had been faring. Now John Franken had just heard with grief unspeakable the melancholy news of his master’s condemnation from two soldiers of the guard, who had been sent by the judges to keep additional watch over the prisoner. He was however as great a stoic as his master, and with no outward and superfluous manifestations of woe had simply implored the captain-at-arms, van der Meulen, to intercede with the judges that he might be allowed to stay with his lord to the last. Meantime he had been expressly informed that he was to say nothing to the Advocate in secret, and that his master was not to speak to him in a low tone nor whisper in his ear.

When the Advocate came out into the ante-chamber and looking over his shoulder saw the two soldiers he at once lowered his voice.

“Hush-speak low,” he whispered; “this is too cruel.” John then informed him of van der Meulen’s orders, and that the soldiers had also been instructed to look to it sharply that no word was exchanged between master and man except in a loud voice.

“Is it possible,” said the Advocate, “that so close an inspection is held over me in these last hours? Can I not speak a word or two in freedom? This is a needless mark of disrespect.”

The soldiers begged him not to take their conduct amiss as they were obliged strictly to obey orders.

He returned to his chamber, sat down in his chair, and begged Walaeus to go on his behalf to Prince Maurice.

“Tell his Excellency,” said he, “that I have always served him with upright affection so far as my office, duties, and principles permitted. If I, in the discharge of my oath and official functions, have ever done anything contrary to his views, I hope that he will forgive it, and that he will hold my children in his gracious favour.”

Page 3022

It was then ten o'clock. The preacher went downstairs and crossed the courtyard to the Stadholder's apartments, where he at once gained admittance.

Maurice heard the message with tears in his eyes, assuring Walaeus that he felt deeply for the Advocate's misfortunes. He had always had much affection for him, he said, and had often warned him against his mistaken courses. Two things, however, had always excited his indignation. One was that Barneveld had accused him of aspiring to sovereignty. The other that he had placed him in such danger at Utrecht. Yet he forgave him all. As regarded his sons, so long as they behaved themselves well they might rely on his favour.

As Walaeus was about to leave the apartment, the Prince called him back.

"Did he say anything of a pardon?" he asked, with some eagerness.

"My Lord," answered the clergyman, "I cannot with truth say that I understood him to make any allusion to it."

Walaeus returned immediately to the prison chamber and made his report of the interview. He was unwilling however to state the particulars of the offence which Maurice declared himself to have taken at the acts of the Advocate.

But as the prisoner insisted upon knowing, the clergyman repeated the whole conversation.

"His Excellency has been deceived in regard to the Utrecht business," said Barneveld, "especially as to one point. But it is true that I had fear and apprehension that he aspired to the sovereignty or to more authority in the country. Ever since the year 1600 I have felt this fear and have tried that these apprehensions might be rightly understood."

While Walaeus had been absent, the Reverend Jean la Motte (or Lamotius) and another clergyman of the Hague had come to the prisoner's apartment. La Motte could not look upon the Advocate's face without weeping, but the others were more collected. Conversation now ensued among the four; the preachers wishing to turn the doomed statesman's thought to the consolations of religion.

But it was characteristic of the old lawyer's frame of mind that even now he looked at the tragical position in which he found himself from a constitutional and controversial point of view. He was perfectly calm and undaunted at the awful fate so suddenly and unexpectedly opened before his eyes, but he was indignant at what he esteemed the ignorance, injustice, and stupidity of the sentence to be pronounced against him.

“I am ready enough to die,” he said to the three clergymen, “but I cannot comprehend why I am to die. I have done nothing except in obedience to the laws and privileges of the land and according to my oath, honour, and conscience.”

“These judges,” he continued, “come in a time when other maxims prevail in the State than those of my day. They have no right therefore to sit in judgment upon me.”

The clergymen replied that the twenty-four judges who had tried the case were no children and were conscientious men; that it was no small thing to condemn a man, and that they would have to answer it before the Supreme Judge of all.

Page 3023

“I console myself,” he answered, “in the Lord my God, who knows all hearts and shall judge all men. God is just.

“They have not dealt with me,” he continued, “as according to law and justice they were bound to deal. They have taken away from me my own sovereign lords and masters and deposed them. To them alone I was responsible. In their place they have put many of my enemies who were never before in the government, and almost all of whom are young men who have not seen much or read much. I have seen and read much, and know that from such examples no good can follow. After my death they will learn for the first time what governing means.”

“The twenty-four judges are nearly all of them my enemies. What they have reproached me with, I have been obliged to hear. I have appealed against these judges, but it has been of no avail. They have examined me in piecemeal, not in statesmanlike fashion. The proceedings against me have been much too hard. I have frequently requested to see the notes of my examination as it proceeded, and to confer upon it with aid and counsel of friends, as would be the case in all lands governed by law. The request was refused. During this long and wearisome affliction and misery I have not once been allowed to speak to my wife and children. These are indecent proceedings against a man seventy-two years of age, who has served his country faithfully for three-and-forty years. I bore arms with the volunteers at my own charges at the siege of Haarlem and barely escaped with life.”

It was not unnatural that the aged statesman’s thoughts should revert in this supreme moment to the heroic scenes in which he had been an actor almost a half-century before. He could not but think with bitterness of those long past but never forgotten days when he, with other patriotic youths, had faced the terrible legions of Alva in defence of the Fatherland, at a time when the men who were now dooming him to a traitor’s death were unborn, and who, but for his labours, courage, wisdom, and sacrifices, might have never had a Fatherland to serve, or a judgment-seat on which to pronounce his condemnation.

Not in a spirit of fretfulness, but with disdainful calm, he criticised and censured the proceedings against himself as a violation of the laws of the land and of the first principles of justice, discussing them as lucidly and steadily as if they had been against a third person.

The preachers listened, but had nothing to say. They knew not of such matters, they said, and had no instructions to speak of them. They had been sent to call him to repentance for his open and hidden sins and to offer the consolations of religion.

“I know that very well,” he said, “but I too have something to say notwithstanding.” The conversation then turned upon religious topics, and the preachers spoke of predestination.

Page 3024

“I have never been able to believe in the matter of high predestination,” said the Advocate. “I have left it in the hands of God the Lord. I hold that a good Christian man must believe that he through God’s grace and by the expiation of his sin through our Redeemer Jesus Christ is predestined to be saved, and that this belief in his salvation, founded alone on God’s grace and the merits of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, comes to him through the same grace of God. And if he falls into great sins, his firm hope and confidence must be that the Lord God will not allow him to continue in them, but that, through prayer for grace and repentance, he will be converted from evil and remain in the faith to the end of his life.”

These feelings, he said, he had expressed fifty-two years before to three eminent professors of theology in whom he confided, and they had assured him that he might tranquilly continue in such belief without examining further. “And this has always been my creed,” he said.

The preachers replied that faith is a gift of God and not given to all men, that it must be given out of heaven to a man before he could be saved. Hereupon they began to dispute, and the Advocate spoke so earnestly and well that the clergymen were astonished and sat for a time listening to him in silence.

He asked afterwards about the Synod, and was informed that its decrees had not yet been promulgated, but that the Remonstrants had been condemned.

“It is a pity,” said he. “One is trying to act on the old Papal system, but it will never do. Things have gone too far. As to the Synod, if My Lords the States of Holland had been heeded there would have been first a provincial synod and then a national one.”—“But,” he added, looking the preachers in the face, “had you been more gentle with each other, matters would not have taken so high a turn. But you have been too fierce one against the other, too full of bitter party spirit.”

They replied that it was impossible for them to act against their conscience and the supreme authority. And then they asked him if there was nothing that troubled him in, his conscience in the matters for which he must die; nothing for which he repented and sorrowed, and for which he would call upon God for mercy.

“This I know well,” he said, “that I have never willingly done wrong to any man. People have been ransacking my letters to Caron—confidential ones written several years ago to an old friend when I was troubled and seeking for counsel and consolation. It is hard that matter of impeachment against me to-day should be sought for thus.”

And then he fell into political discourse again on the subject of the Waartgelders and the State rights, and the villainous pasquils and libels that had circulated so long through the country.

Page 3025

“I have sometimes spoken hastily, I confess,” he said; “but that was when I was stung by the daily swarm of infamous and loathsome pamphlets, especially those directed against my sovereign masters the States of Holland. That I could not bear. Old men cannot well brush such things aside. All that was directly aimed at me in particular I endeavoured to overcome with such patience as I could muster. The disunion and mutual enmity in the country have wounded me to the heart. I have made use of all means in my power to accommodate matters, to effect with all gentleness a mutual reconciliation. I have always felt a fear lest the enemy should make use of our internal dissensions to strike a blow against us. I can say with perfect truth that ever since the year ’77 I have been as resolutely and unchangeably opposed to the Spaniards and their adherents, and their pretensions over these Provinces, as any man in the world, no one excepted, and as ready to sacrifice property and shed my blood in defence of the Fatherland. I have been so devoted to the service of the country that I have not been able to take the necessary care of my own private affairs.”

So spoke the great statesman in the seclusion of his prison, in the presence of those clergymen whom he respected, at a supreme moment, when, if ever, a man might be expected to tell the truth. And his whole life which belonged to history, and had been passed on the world’s stage before the eyes of two generations of spectators, was a demonstration of the truth of his words.

But Burgomaster van Berk knew better. Had he not informed the twenty-four commissioners that, twelve years before, the Advocate wished to subject the country to Spain, and that Spinola had drawn a bill of exchange for 100,000 ducats as a compensation for his efforts?

It was eleven o’clock. Barneveld requested one of the brethren to say an evening prayer. This was done by La Motte, and they were then requested to return by three or four o’clock next morning. They had been directed, they said, to remain with him all night. “That is unnecessary,” said the Advocate, and they retired.

His servant then helped his master to undress, and he went to bed as usual. Taking off his signet-ring, he gave it to John Franken.

“For my eldest son,” he said.

The valet sat down at the head of his bed in order that his master might speak to him before he slept. But the soldiers ordered him away and compelled him to sit in a distant part of the room.

An hour after midnight, the Advocate having been unable to lose himself, his servant observed that Isaac, one of the soldiers, was fast asleep. He begged the other, Tilman Schenk by name, to permit him some private words with his master. He had probably last messages, he thought, to send to his wife and children, and the eldest son, M. de

Groeneveld, would no doubt reward him well for it. But the soldier was obstinate in obedience to the orders of the judges.

Page 3026

Barneveld, finding it impossible to sleep, asked his servant to read to him from the Prayer-book. The soldier called in a clergyman however, another one named Hugo Bayerus, who had been sent to the prison, and who now read to him the Consolations of the Sick. As he read, he made exhortations and expositions, which led to animated discussion, in which the Advocate expressed himself with so much fervour and eloquence that all present were astonished, and the preacher sat mute a half-hour long at the bed-side.

“Had there been ten clergymen,” said the simple-hearted sentry to the valet, “your master would have enough to say to all of them.”

Barneveld asked where the place had been prepared in which he was to die.

“In front of the great hall, as I understand,” said Bayerus, “but I don’t know the localities well, having lived here but little.”

“Have you heard whether my Grotius is to die, and Hoogerbeets also?” he asked?

“I have heard nothing to that effect,” replied the clergyman.

“I should most deeply grieve for those two gentlemen,” said Barneveld, “were that the case. They may yet live to do the land great service. That great rising light, de Groot, is still young, but a very wise and learned gentleman, devoted to his Fatherland with all zeal, heart, and soul, and ready to stand up for her privileges, laws, and rights. As for me, I am an old and worn-out man. I can do no more. I have already done more than I was really able to do. I have worked so zealously in public matters that I have neglected my private business. I had expressly ordered my house at Loosduinen” [a villa by the seaside] “to be got ready, that I might establish myself there and put my affairs in order. I have repeatedly asked the States of Holland for my discharge, but could never obtain it. It seems that the Almighty had otherwise disposed of me.”

He then said he would try once more if he could sleep. The clergyman and the servant withdrew for an hour, but his attempt was unsuccessful. After an hour he called for his French Psalm Book and read in it for some time. Sometime after two o’clock the clergymen came in again and conversed with him. They asked him if he had slept, if he hoped to meet Christ, and if there was anything that troubled his conscience.

“I have not slept, but am perfectly tranquil,” he replied. “I am ready to die, but cannot comprehend why I must die. I wish from my heart that, through my death and my blood, all disunion and discord in this land may cease.”

He bade them carry his last greetings to his fellow prisoners. “Say farewell for me to my good Grotius,” said he, “and tell him that I must die.”

The clergymen then left him, intending to return between five and six o’clock.

He remained quiet for a little while and then ordered his valet to cut open the front of his shirt. When this was done, he said, “John, are you to stay by me to the last?”

Page 3027

“Yes,” he replied, “if the judges permit it.”

“Remind me to send one of the clergymen to the judges with the request,” said his master.

The faithful John, than whom no servant or friend could be more devoted, seized the occasion, with the thrift and stoicism of a true Hollander, to suggest that his lord might at the same time make some testamentary disposition in his favour.

“Tell my wife and children,” said the Advocate, “that they must console each other in mutual love and union. Say that through God’s grace I am perfectly at ease, and hope that they will be equally tranquil. Tell my children that I trust they will be loving and friendly to their mother during the short time she has yet to live. Say that I wish to recommend you to them that they may help you to a good situation either with themselves or with others. Tell them that this was my last request.”

He bade him further to communicate to the family the messages sent that night through Walaeus by the Stadholder.

The valet begged his master to repeat these instructions in presence of the clergyman, or to request one of them to convey them himself to the family. He promised to do so.

“As long as I live,” said the grateful servant, “I shall remember your lordship in my prayers.”

“No, John,” said the Advocate, “that is Popish. When I am dead, it is all over with prayers. Pray for me while I still live. Now is the time to pray. When one is dead, one should no longer be prayed for.”

La Motte came in. Barneveld repeated his last wishes exactly as he desired them to be communicated to his wife and children. The preacher made no response. “Will you take the message?” asked the prisoner. La Motte nodded, but did not speak, nor did he subsequently fulfil the request.

Before five o’clock the servant heard the bell ring in the apartment of the judges directly below the prison chamber, and told his master he had understood that they were to assemble at five o’clock.

“I may as well get up then,” said the Advocate; “they mean to begin early, I suppose. Give me my doublet and but one pair of stockings.”

He was accustomed to wear two or three pair at a time.

He took off his underwaistcoat, saying that the silver bog which was in one of the pockets was to be taken to his wife, and that the servant should keep the loose money

there for himself. Then he found an opportunity to whisper to him, “Take good care of the papers which are in the apartment.” He meant the elaborate writings which he had prepared during his imprisonment and concealed in the tapestry and within the linings of the chair.

As his valet handed him the combs and brushes, he said with a smile, “John, this is for the last time.”

When he was dressed, he tried, in rehearsal of the approaching scene, to pull over his eyes the silk skull-cap which he usually wore under his hat. Finding it too tight he told the valet to put the nightcap in his pocket and give it him when he should call for it. He then swallowed a half-glass of wine with a strengthening cordial in it, which he was wont to take.

Page 3028

The clergymen then re-entered, and asked if he had been able to sleep. He answered no, but that he had been much consoled by many noble things which he had been reading in the French Psalm Book. The clergymen said that they had been thinking much of the beautiful confession of faith which he had made to them that evening. They rejoiced at it, they said, on his account, and had never thought it of him. He said that such had always been his creed.

At his request Walaeus now offered a morning prayer Barneveld fell on his knees and prayed inwardly without uttering a sound. La Motte asked when he had concluded, “Did my Lord say Amen?”—“Yes, Lamotius,” he replied; “Amen.”—“Has either of the brethren,” he added, “prepared a prayer to be offered outside there?”

La Motte informed him that this duty had been confided to him. Some passages from Isaiah were now read aloud, and soon afterwards Walaeus was sent for to speak with the judges. He came back and said to the prisoner, “Has my Lord any desire to speak with his wife or children, or any of his friends?” It was then six o’clock, and Barneveld replied:

“No, the time is drawing near. It would excite a new emotion.” Walaeus went back to the judges with this answer, who thereupon made this official report:

“The husband and father of the petitioners, being asked if he desired that any of the petitioners should come to him, declared that he did not approve of it, saying that it would cause too great an emotion for himself as well as for them. This is to serve as an answer to the petitioners.”

Now the Advocate knew nothing of the petition. Up to the last moment his family had been sanguine as to his ultimate acquittal and release. They relied on a promise which they had received or imagined that they had received from the Stadholder that no harm should come to the prisoner in consequence of the arrest made of his person in the Prince’s apartments on the 8th of August. They had opened this tragical month of May with flagstaffs and flower garlands, and were making daily preparations to receive back the revered statesman in triumph.

The letter written by him from his “chamber of sorrow,” late in the evening of 12th May, had at last dispelled every illusion. It would be idle to attempt to paint the grief and consternation into which the household in the Voorhout was plunged, from the venerable dame at its head, surrounded by her sons and daughters and children’s children, down to the humblest servant in their employment. For all revered and loved the austere statesman, but simple and benignant father and master.

No heed had been taken of the three elaborate and argumentative petitions which, prepared by learned counsel in name of the relatives, had been addressed to the

judges. They had not been answered because they were difficult to answer, and because it was not intended that the accused should have the benefit of counsel.

Page 3029

An urgent and last appeal was now written late at night, and signed by each member of the family, to his Excellency the Prince and the judge commissioners, to this effect:

“The afflicted wife and children of M. van Barneveld humbly show that having heard the sorrowful tidings of his coming execution, they humbly beg that it may be granted them to see and speak to him for the last time.”

The two sons delivered this petition at four o’clock in the morning into the hands of de Voogd, one of the judges. It was duly laid before the commission, but the prisoner was never informed, when declining a last interview with his family, how urgently they had themselves solicited the boon.

Louise de Coligny, on hearing late at night the awful news, had been struck with grief and horror. She endeavoured, late as it was, to do something to avert the doom of one she so much revered, the man on whom her illustrious husband had leaned his life long as on a staff of iron. She besought an interview of the Stadholder, but it was refused. The wife of William the Silent had no influence at that dire moment with her stepson. She was informed at first that Maurice was asleep, and at four in the morning that all intervention was useless.

The faithful and energetic du Maurier, who had already exhausted himself in efforts to save the life of the great prisoner, now made a last appeal. He, too, heard at four o’clock in the morning of the 13th that sentence of death was to be pronounced. Before five o’clock he made urgent application to be heard before the Assembly of the States-General as ambassador of a friendly sovereign who took the deepest interest in the welfare of the Republic and the fate of its illustrious statesman. The appeal was refused. As a last resource he drew up an earnest and eloquent letter to the States-General, urging clemency in the name of his king. It was of no avail. The letter may still be seen in the Royal Archives at the Hague, drawn up entirely in du Maurier’s clear and beautiful handwriting. Although possibly a, first draft, written as it was under such a mortal pressure for time, its pages have not one erasure or correction.

It was seven o’clock. Barneveld having observed by the preacher (La Motte’s) manner that he was not likely to convey the last messages which he had mentioned to his wife and children, sent a request to the judges to be allowed to write one more letter. Captain van der Meulen came back with the permission, saying he would wait and take it to the judges for their revision.

The letter has been often published.

“Must they see this too? Why, it is only a line in favour of John,” said the prisoner, sitting quietly down to write this letter:

“Very dear wife and children, it is going to an end with me. I am, through the grace of God, very tranquil. I hope that you are equally so, and that you may by mutual love, union, and peace help each other to overcome all things, which I pray to the Omnipotent as my last request. John Franken has served me faithfully for many years and throughout all these my afflictions, and is to remain with me to the end. He deserves to be recommended to you and to be furthered to good employments with you or with others. I request you herewith to see to this.

Page 3030

“I have requested his Princely Excellency to hold my sons and children in his favour, to which he has answered that so long as you conduct yourselves well this shall be the case. I recommend this to you in the best form and give you all into God’s holy keeping. Kiss each other and all my grandchildren, for the last time in my name, and fare you well. Out of the chamber of sorrow, 13th May 1619. Your dear husband and father,

John of Barneveld.

“P.S. You will make John Franken a present in memory of me.”

Certainly it would be difficult to find a more truly calm, courageous, or religious spirit than that manifested by this aged statesman at an hour when, if ever, a human soul is tried and is apt to reveal its innermost depths or shallows. Whatever Gomarus or Bogerman, or the whole Council of Dordtrecht, may have thought of his theology, it had at least taught him forgiveness of his enemies, kindness to his friends, and submission to the will of the Omnipotent. Every moment of his last days on earth had been watched and jealously scrutinized, and his bitterest enemies had failed to discover one trace of frailty, one manifestation of any vacillating, ignoble, or malignant sentiment.

The drums had been sounding through the quiet but anxiously expectant town since four o’clock that morning, and the tramp of soldiers marching to the Inner Court had long been audible in the prison chamber.

Walaeus now came back with a message from the judges. “The high commissioners,” he said, “think it is beginning. Will my Lord please to prepare himself?”

“Very well, very well,” said the prisoner. “Shall we go at once?”

But Walaeus suggested a prayer. Upon its conclusion, Barneveld gave his hand to the provost-marshal and to the two soldiers, bidding them adieu, and walked downstairs, attended by them, to the chamber of the judges. As soon as he appeared at the door, he was informed that there had been a misunderstanding, and he was requested to wait a little. He accordingly went upstairs again with perfect calmness, sat down in his chamber again, and read in his French Psalm Book. Half an hour later he was once more summoned, the provost-marshal and Captain van der Meulen reappearing to escort him. “Mr. Provost,” said the prisoner, as they went down the narrow staircase, “I have always been a good friend to you.”—“It is true,” replied that officer, “and most deeply do I grieve to see you in this affliction.”

He was about to enter the judges’ chamber as usual, but was informed that the sentence would be read in the great hall of judicature. They descended accordingly to the basement story, and passed down the narrow flight of steps which then as now connected the more modern structure, where the Advocate had been imprisoned and tried, with what remained of the ancient palace of the Counts of Holland. In the centre

of the vast hall—once the banqueting chamber of those petty sovereigns; with its high vaulted roof of cedar which had so often in ancient days rung with the sounds of mirth and revelry—was a great table at which the twenty-four judges and the three prosecuting officers were seated, in their black caps and gowns of office. The room was lined with soldiers and crowded with a dark, surging mass of spectators, who had been waiting there all night.

Page 3031

A chair was placed for the prisoner. He sat down, and the clerk of the commission, Pots by name, proceeded at once to read the sentence. A summary of this long, rambling, and tiresome paper has been already laid before the reader. If ever a man could have found it tedious to listen to his own death sentence, the great statesman might have been in that condition as he listened to Secretary Pots.

During the reading of the sentence the Advocate moved uneasily on his seat, and seemed about to interrupt the clerk at several passages which seemed to him especially preposterous. But he controlled himself by a strong effort, and the clerk went steadily on to the conclusion.

Then Barneveld said:

“The judges have put down many things which they have no right to draw from my confession. Let this protest be added.”

“I thought too,” he continued, “that My Lords the States-General would have had enough in my life and blood, and that my wife and children might keep what belongs to them. Is this my recompense for forty-three years’ service to these Provinces?”

President de Voogd rose:

“Your sentence has been pronounced,” he said. “Away! away!” So saying he pointed to the door into which one of the great windows at the south-eastern front of the hall had been converted.

Without another word the old man rose from his chair and strode, leaning on his staff, across the hall, accompanied by his faithful valet and the provost and escorted by a file of soldiers. The mob of spectators flowed out after him at every door into the inner courtyard in front of the ancient palace.

Etext editor’s bookmarks:

Better to be governed by magistrates than mobs
Burning with bitter revenge for all the favours he had received
Death rather than life with a false acknowledgment of guilt
Enemy of all compulsion of the human conscience
Heidelberg Catechism were declared to be infallible
I know how to console myself
Implication there was much, of assertion very little
John Robinson
Magistracy at that moment seemed to mean the sword
Only true religion

Rather a wilderness to reign over than a single heretic
William Brewster

THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v11, 1619-23

CHAPTER XXI.

Barneveld's Execution—The Advocate's Conduct on the Scaffold—The Sentence printed and sent to the Provinces—The Proceedings irregular and inequitable.

Page 3032

In the beautiful village capital of the “Count’s Park,” commonly called the Hague, the most striking and picturesque spot then as now was that where the transformed remains of the old moated castle of those feudal sovereigns were still to be seen. A three-storied range of simple, substantial buildings in brown brickwork, picked out with white stone in a style since made familiar both in England and America, and associated with a somewhat later epoch in the history of the House of Orange, surrounded three sides of a spacious inner paved quadrangle called the Inner Court, the fourth or eastern side being overshadowed by a beechen grove. A square tower flanked each angle, and on both sides of the south-western turret extended the commodious apartments of the Stadholder. The great gateway on the south-west opened into a wide open space called the Outer Courtyard. Along the north-west side a broad and beautiful sheet of water, in which the walls, turrets, and chapel-spires of the enclosed castle mirrored themselves, was spread between the mass of buildings and an umbrageous promenade called the Vyverberg, consisting of a sextuple alley of lime-trees and embowering here and there a stately villa. A small island, fringed with weeping willows and tufted all over with lilacs, laburnums, and other shrubs then in full flower, lay in the centre of the miniature lake, and the tall solid tower of the Great Church, surmounted by a light openwork spire, looked down from a little distance over the scene.

It was a bright morning in May. The white swans were sailing tranquilly to and fro over the silver basin, and the mavis, blackbird, and nightingale, which haunted the groves surrounding the castle and the town, were singing as if the daybreak were ushering in a summer festival.

But it was not to a merry-making that the soldiers were marching and the citizens thronging so eagerly from every street and alley towards the castle. By four o’clock the Outer and Inner Courts had been lined with detachments of the Prince’s guard and companies of other regiments to the number of 1200 men. Occupying the north-eastern side of the court rose the grim, time-worn front of the ancient hall, consisting of one tall pyramidal gable of ancient grey brickwork flanked with two tall slender towers, the whole with the lancet-shaped windows and severe style of the twelfth century, excepting a rose-window in the centre with the decorated mullions of a somewhat later period.

In front of the lower window, with its Gothic archway hastily converted into a door, a shapeless platform of rough, unhewn planks had that night been rudely patched together. This was the scaffold. A slight railing around it served to protect it from the crowd, and a heap of coarse sand had been thrown upon it. A squalid, unclean box of unplaned boards, originally prepared as a coffin for a Frenchman who some time before had been condemned to death for murdering the son of Goswyn Meurskens, a Hague tavern-keeper, but pardoned by the Stadholder—lay on the scaffold. It was recognized from having been left for a long time, half forgotten, at the public execution-place of the Hague.

Page 3033

Upon this coffin now sat two common soldiers of ruffianly aspect playing at dice, betting whether the Lord or the Devil would get the soul of Barneveld. Many a foul and ribald jest at the expense of the prisoner was exchanged between these gamblers, some of their comrades, and a few townsmen, who were grouped about at that early hour. The horrible libels, caricatures, and calumnies which had been circulated, exhibited, and sung in all the streets for so many months had at last thoroughly poisoned the minds of the vulgar against the fallen statesman.

The great mass of the spectators had forced their way by daybreak into the hall itself to hear the sentence, so that the Inner Courtyard had remained comparatively empty.

At last, at half past nine o'clock, a shout arose, "There he comes! there he comes!" and the populace flowed out from the hall of judgment into the courtyard like a tidal wave.

In an instant the Binnenhof was filled with more than three thousand spectators.

The old statesman, leaning on his staff, walked out upon the scaffold and calmly surveyed the scene. Lifting his eyes to Heaven, he was heard to murmur, "O God! what does man come to!" Then he said bitterly once more: "This, then, is the reward of forty years' service to the State!"

La Motte, who attended him, said fervently: "It is no longer time to think of this. Let us prepare your coming before God."

"Is there no cushion or stool to kneel upon?" said Barneveld, looking around him.

The provost said he would send for one, but the old man knelt at once on the bare planks. His servant, who waited upon him as calmly and composedly as if he had been serving him at dinner, held him by the arm. It was remarked that neither master nor man, true stoics and Hollanders both, shed a single tear upon the scaffold.

La Motte prayed for a quarter of an hour, the Advocate remaining on his knees.

He then rose and said to John Franken, "See that he does not come near me," pointing to the executioner who stood in the background grasping his long double-handed sword. Barneveld then rapidly unbuttoned his doublet with his own hands and the valet helped him off with it. "Make haste! make haste!" said his master.

The statesman then came forward and said in a loud, firm voice to the people:

"Men, do not believe that I am a traitor to the country. I have ever acted uprightly and loyally as a good patriot, and as such I shall die."

The crowd was perfectly silent.

He then took his cap from John Franken, drew it over his eyes, and went forward towards the sand, saying:

“Christ shall be my guide. O Lord, my heavenly Father, receive my spirit.”

As he was about to kneel with his face to the south, the provost said:

“My lord will be pleased to move to the other side, not where the sun is in his face.”

Page 3034

He knelt accordingly with his face towards his own house. The servant took farewell of him, and Barneveld said to the executioner:

“Be quick about it. Be quick.”

The executioner then struck his head off at a single blow.

Many persons from the crowd now sprang, in spite of all opposition, upon the scaffold and dipped their handkerchiefs in his blood, cut wet splinters from the boards, or grubbed up the sand that was steeped in it; driving many bargains afterwards for these relics to be treasured, with various feelings of sorrow, joy, glutted or expiated vengeance.

It has been recorded, and has been constantly repeated to this day, that the Stadholder, whose windows exactly faced the scaffold, looked out upon the execution with a spy-glass; saying as he did so:

“See the old scoundrel, how he trembles! He is afraid of the stroke.”

But this is calumny. Colonel Hauterive declared that he was with Maurice in his cabinet during the whole period of the execution, that by order of the Prince all the windows and shutters were kept closed, that no person wearing his livery was allowed to be abroad, that he anxiously received messages as to the proceedings, and heard of the final catastrophe with sorrowful emotion.

It must be admitted, however, that the letter which Maurice wrote on the same morning to his cousin William Lewis does not show much pathos.

“After the judges,” he said, “have been busy here with the sentence against the Advocate Barneveld for several days, at last it has been pronounced, and this morning, between nine o’clock and half past, carried into execution with the sword, in the Binnenhof before the great hall.

“The reasons they had for this you will see from the sentence, which will doubtless be printed, and which I will send you.

“The wife of the aforesaid Barneveld and also some of his sons and sons-in-law or other friends have never presented any supplication for his pardon, but till now have vehemently demanded that law and justice should be done to him, and have daily let the report run through the people that he would soon come out. They also planted a may-pole before their house adorned with garlands and ribbands, and practised other jollities and impertinences, while they ought to have conducted themselves in a humble and lowly fashion. This is no proper manner of behaving, and moreover not a practical one to move the judges to any favour even if they had been thereto inclined.”

The sentence was printed and sent to the separate provinces. It was accompanied by a declaration of the States-General that they had received information from the judges of various points, not mentioned in the sentence, which had been laid to the charge of the late Advocate, and which gave much reason to doubt whether he had not perhaps turned his eyes toward the enemy. They could not however legally give judgment to that effect without a sharper investigation, which on account of his great age and for other reasons it was thought best to spare him.

Page 3035

A meaner or more malignant postscript to a state paper recounting the issue of a great trial it would be difficult to imagine. The first statesman of the country had just been condemned and executed on a narrative, without indictment of any specified crime. And now, by a kind of apologetic after-thought, six or eight individuals calling themselves the States-General insinuated that he had been looking towards the enemy, and that, had they not mercifully spared him the rack, which is all that could be meant by their sharper investigation, he would probably have confessed the charge.

And thus the dead man's fame was blackened by those who had not hesitated to kill him, but had shrunk from enquiring into his alleged crime.

Not entirely without semblance of truth did Grotius subsequently say that the men who had taken his life would hardly have abstained from torturing him if they had really hoped by so doing to extract from him a confession of treason.

The sentence was sent likewise to France, accompanied with a statement that Barneveld had been guilty of unpardonable crimes which had not been set down in the act of condemnation. Complaints were also made of the conduct of du Maurier in thrusting himself into the internal affairs of the States and taking sides so ostentatiously against the government. The King and his ministers were indignant with these rebukes, and sustained the Ambassador. Jeannin and de Boississe expressed the opinion that he had died innocent of any crime, and only by reason of his strong political opposition to the Prince.

The judges had been unanimous in finding him guilty of the acts recorded in their narrative, but three of them had held out for some time in favour of a sentence of perpetual imprisonment rather than decapitation.

They withdrew at last their opposition to the death penalty for the wonderful reason that reports had been circulated of attempts likely to be made to assassinate Prince Maurice. The Stadholder himself treated these rumours and the consequent admonition of the States-General that he would take more than usual precautions for his safety with perfect indifference, but they were conclusive with the judges of Barneveld.

"Republica poscit exemplum," said Commissioner Junius, one of the three, as he sided with the death-warrant party.

The same Doctor Junius a year afterwards happened to dine, in company of one of his fellow-commissioners, with Attorney-General Sylla at Utrecht, and took occasion to ask them why it was supposed that Barneveld had been hanging his head towards Spain, as not one word of that stood in the sentence.

The question was ingenuous on the part of one learned judge to his colleagues in one of the most famous state trials of history, propounded as a bit of after-dinner casuistry, when the victim had been more than a year in his grave.

But perhaps the answer was still more artless. His brother lawyers replied that the charge was easily to be deduced from the sentence, because a man who breaks up the foundation of the State makes the country indefensible, and therefore invites the enemy to invade it. And this Barneveld had done, who had turned the Union, religion, alliances, and finances upside down by his proceedings.

Page 3036

Certainly if every constitutional minister, accused by the opposition party of turning things upside down by his proceedings, were assumed to be guilty of deliberately inviting a hostile invasion of his country, there would have been few from that day to this to escape hanging.

Constructive treason could scarcely go farther than it was made to do in these attempts to prove, after his death, that the Advocate had, as it was euphuistically expressed, been looking towards the enemy.

And no better demonstrations than these have ever been discovered.

He died at the age of seventy-one years seven months and eighteen days.

His body and head were huddled into the box upon which the soldiers had been shaking the dice, and was placed that night in the vault of the chapel in the Inner Court.

It was subsequently granted as a boon to the widow and children that it might be taken thence and decently buried in the family vault at Amersfoort.

On the day of the execution a formal entry was made in the register of the States of Holland.

“Monday, 13th May 1619. To-day was executed with the sword here in the Hague, on a scaffold thereto erected in the Binnenhof before the steps of the great hall, Mr. John of Barneveld, in his life Knight, Lord of Berkel, Rodenrys, &c., Advocate of Holland and West Friesland, for reasons expressed in the sentence and otherwise, with confiscation of his property, after he had served the State thirty-three years two months and five days since 8th March 1586.; a man of great activity, business, memory, and wisdom—-yes, extraordinary in every respect. He that stands let him see that he does not fall, and may God be merciful to his soul. Amen?”

A year later-on application made by the widow and children of the deceased to compound for the confiscation of his property by payment of a certain sum, eighty florins or a similar trifle, according to an ancient privilege of the order of nobility—the question was raised whether he had been guilty of high-treason, as he had not been sentenced for such a crime, and as it was only in case of sentence for lese-majesty that this composition was disallowed. It was deemed proper therefore to ask the court for what crime the prisoner had been condemned. Certainly a more sarcastic question could not have been asked. But the court had ceased to exist. The commission had done its work and was dissolved. Some of its members were dead. Letters however were addressed by the States-General to the individual commissioners requesting them to assemble at the Hague for the purpose of stating whether it was because the prisoners had committed lese-majesty that their property had been confiscated. They never assembled. Some of them were perhaps ignorant of the exact nature of that crime.

Several of them did not understand the words. Twelve of them, among whom were a few jurists, sent written answers to the questions proposed. The question was, “Did you confiscate the property because the crime was lese-majesty?” The reply was, “The crime was lese-majesty, although not so stated in the sentence, because we confiscated the property.” In one of these remarkable documents this was stated to be “the unanimous opinion of almost all the judges.”

Page 3037

The point was referred to the commissioners, some of whom attended the court of the Hague in person, while others sent written opinions. All agreed that the criminal had committed high-treason because otherwise his property would not have been confiscated.

A more wonderful example of the argument in a circle was never heard of. Moreover it is difficult to understand by what right the high commission, which had been dissolved a year before, after having completed its work, could be deemed competent to emit afterwards a judicial decision. But the fact is curious as giving one more proof of the irregular, unphilosophical, and inequitable nature of these famous proceedings.

CHAPTER XXII.

Grotius urged to ask Forgiveness—Grotius shows great Weakness—Hoogerbeets and Grotius imprisoned for Life—Grotius confined at Loevestein—Grotius' early Attainments—Grotius' Deportment in Prison—Escape of Grotius—Deventer's Rage at Grotius' Escape.

Two days after the execution of the Advocate, judgment was pronounced upon Gillis van Ledenberg. It would have been difficult to try him, or to extort a confession of high-treason from him by the rack or otherwise, as the unfortunate gentleman had been dead for more than seven months.

Not often has a court of justice pronounced a man, without trial, to be guilty of a capital offence. Not often has a dead man been condemned and executed. But this was the lot of Secretary Ledenberg. He was sentenced to be hanged, his property declared confiscated.

His unburied corpse, reduced to the condition of a mummy, was brought out of its lurking-place, thrust into a coffin, dragged on a hurdle to the Golgotha outside the Hague, on the road to Ryswyk, and there hung on a gibbet in company of the bodies of other malefactors swinging there in chains.

His prudent scheme to save his property for his children by committing suicide in prison was thus thwarted.

The reading of the sentence of Ledenberg, as had been previously the case with that of Barneveld, had been heard by Grotius through the open window of his prison, as he lay on his bed. The scaffold on which the Advocate had suffered was left standing, three executioners were still in the town, and there was every reason for both Grotius and Hoogerbeets to expect a similar doom. Great efforts were made to induce the friends of the distinguished prisoners to sue for their pardon. But even as in the case of the

Barneveld family these attempts were fruitless. The austere stoicism both on the part of the sufferers and their relatives excites something like wonder.

Three of the judges went in person to the prison chamber of Hoogerbeets, urging him to ask forgiveness himself or to allow his friends to demand it for him.

“If my wife and children do ask,” he said, “I will protest against it. I need no pardon. Let justice take its course. Think not, gentlemen, that I mean by asking for pardon to justify your proceedings.”

Page 3038

He stoutly refused to do either. The judges, astonished, took their departure, saying:

“Then you will fare as Barneveld. The scaffold is still standing.”

He expected consequently nothing but death, and said many years afterwards that he knew from personal experience how a man feels who goes out of prison to be beheaded.

The wife of Grotius sternly replied to urgent intimations from a high source that she should ask pardon for her husband, “I shall not do it. If he has deserved it, let them strike off his head.”

Yet no woman could be more devoted to her husband than was Maria van Reigersbergen to Hugo de Groot, as time was to prove. The Prince subsequently told her at a personal interview that “one of two roads must be taken, that of the law or that of pardon.”

Soon after the arrest it was rumoured that Grotius was ready to make important revelations if he could first be assured of the Prince’s protection.

His friends were indignant at the statement. His wife stoutly denied its truth, but, to make sure, wrote to her husband on the subject.

“One thing amazes me,” she said; “some people here pretend to say that you have stated to one gentleman in private that you have something to disclose greatly important to the country, but that you desired beforehand to be taken under the protection of his Excellency. I have not chosen to believe this, nor do I, for I hold that to be certain which you have already told me—that you know no secrets. I see no reason therefore why you should require the protection of any man. And there is no one to believe this, but I thought best to write to you of it. Let me, in order that I may contradict the story with more authority, have by the bearer of this a simple Yes or No. Study quietly, take care of your health, have some days’ patience, for the Advocate has not yet been heard.”

The answer has not been preserved, but there is an allusion to the subject in an unpublished memorandum of Grotius written while he was in prison.

It must be confessed that the heart of the great theologian and jurist seems to have somewhat failed him after his arrest, and although he was incapable of treachery—even if he had been possessed of any secrets, which certainly was not the case—he did not show the same Spartan firmness as his wife, and was very far from possessing the heroic calm of Barneveld. He was much disposed to extricate himself from his unhappy plight by making humble, if not abject, submission to Maurice. He differed from his wife in thinking that he had no need of the Prince’s protection. “I begged the Chamberlain, Matthew de Cors,” he said, a few days after his arrest, “that I might be allowed to speak

with his Excellency of certain things which I would not willingly trust to the pen. My meaning was to leave all public employment and to offer my service to his Excellency in his domestic affairs. Thus I hoped that the motives for my imprisonment would cease. This was afterwards misinterpreted as if I had had wonderful things to reveal."

Page 3039

But Grotius towards the end of his trial showed still greater weakness. After repeated refusals, he had at last obtained permission of the judges to draw up in writing the heads of his defence. To do this he was allowed a single sheet of paper, and four hours of time, the trial having lasted several months. And in the document thus prepared he showed faltering in his faith as to his great friend's innocence, and admitted, without any reason whatever, the possibility of there being truth in some of the vile and anonymous calumnies against him.

"The friendship of the Advocate of Holland I had always highly prized," he said, "hoping from the conversation of so wise and experienced a person to learn much that was good . . . . I firmly believed that his Excellency, notwithstanding occasional differences as to the conduct of public affairs, considered him a true and upright servant of the land . . . . I have been therefore surprised to understand, during my imprisonment, that the gentlemen had proofs in hand not alone of his correspondence with the enemy, but also of his having received money from them.

"He being thus accused, I have indicated by word of mouth and afterwards resumed in writing all matters which I thought—the above-mentioned proofs being made good—-might be thereto indirectly referred, in order to show that for me no friendships were so dear as the preservation of the freedom of the land. I wish that he may give explanation of all to the contentment of the judges, and that therefore his actions—which, supposing the said correspondence to be true, are subject to a bad interpretation—may be taken in another sense."

Alas! could the Advocate—among whose first words after hearing of his own condemnation to death were, "And must my Grotius die too?" adding, with a sigh of relief when assured of the contrary, "I should deeply grieve for that; he is so young and may live to do the State much service." could he have read those faltering and ungenerous words from one he so held in his heart, he would have felt them like the stab of Brutus.

Grotius lived to know that there were no such proofs, that the judges did not dare even allude to the charge in their sentence, and long years afterwards he drew a picture of the martyred patriot such as one might have expected from his pen.

But these written words of doubt must have haunted him to his grave.

On the 18th May 1619—on the fifty-first anniversary, as Grotius remarked, of the condemnation of Egmont and Hoorn by the Blood Tribunal of Alva—the two remaining victims were summoned to receive their doom. The Fiscal Sylla, entering de Groot's chamber early in the morning to conduct him before the judges, informed him that he was not instructed to communicate the nature of the sentence. "But," he said, maliciously, "you are aware of what has befallen the Advocate."

“I have heard with my own ears,” answered Grotius, “the judgment pronounced upon Barneveld and upon Ledenberg. Whatever may be my fate, I have patience to bear it.”

Page 3040

The sentence, read in the same place and in the same manner as had been that upon the Advocate, condemned both Hoogerbeets and Grotius to perpetual imprisonment.

The course of the trial and the enumeration of the offences were nearly identical with the leading process which has been elaborately described.

Grotius made no remark whatever in the court-room. On returning to his chamber he observed that his admissions of facts had been tortured into confessions of guilt, that he had been tried and sentenced against all principles and forms of law, and that he had been deprived of what the humblest criminal could claim, the right of defence and the examination of testimony. In regard to the penalty against him, he said, there was no such thing as perpetual imprisonment except in hell. Alluding to the leading cause of all these troubles, he observed that it was with the Stadholder and the Advocate as Cato had said of Caesar and Pompey. The great misery had come not from their being enemies, but from their having once been friends.

On the night of 5th June the prisoners were taken from their prison in the Hague and conveyed to the castle of Loevestein.

This fortress, destined thenceforth to be famous in history and—from its frequent use in after-times as a state-prison for men of similar constitutional views to those of Grotius and the Advocate—to give its name to a political party, was a place of extraordinary strength. Nature and art had made it, according to military ideas of that age, almost impregnable. As a prison it seemed the very castle of despair. “Abandon all hope ye who enter” seemed engraven over its portal.

Situate in the very narrow, acute angle where the broad, deep, and turbid Waal—the chief of the three branches into which the Rhine divides itself on entering the Netherlands—mingles its current with the silver Meuse whose name it adopts as the united rivers roll to the sea, it was guarded on many sides by these deep and dangerous streams. On the land-side it was surrounded by high walls and a double foss, which protected it against any hostile invasion from Brabant. As the Twelve Years’ Truce was running to its close, it was certain that pains would be taken to strengthen the walls and deepen the ditches, that the place might be proof against all marauders and land-robbers likely to swarm over from the territory of the Archdukes. The town of Gorcum was exactly opposite on the northern side of the Waal, while Worcum was about a league’s distance from the castle on the southern side, but separated from it by the Meuse.

The prisoners, after crossing the drawbridge, were led through thirteen separate doors, each one secured by iron bolts and heavy locks, until they reached their separate apartments.

Page 3041

They were never to see or have any communication with each other. It had been accorded by the States-General however that the wives of the two gentlemen were to have access to their prison, were to cook for them in the castle kitchen, and, if they chose to inhabit the fortress, might cross to the neighbouring town of Gorcum from time to time to make purchases, and even make visits to the Hague. Twenty-four stuivers, or two shillings, a day were allowed by the States-General for the support of each prisoner and his family. As the family property of Grotius was at once sequestered, with a view to its ultimate confiscation, it was clear that abject indigence as well as imprisonment was to be the lifelong lot of this illustrious person, who had hitherto lived in modest affluence, occupying the most considerable of social positions.

The commandant of the fortress was inspired from the outset with a desire to render the prisoner's situation as hateful as it was in his power to make it. And much was in his power. He resolved that the family should really live upon their daily pittance. Yet Madame de Groot, before the final confiscation of her own and her husband's estates, had been able to effect considerable loans, both to carry on process against government for what the prisoners contended was an unjust confiscation, and for providing for the household on a decent scale and somewhat in accordance with the requirements of the prisoner's health. Thus there was a wearisome and ignoble altercation, revived from day to day, between the Commandant and Madame de Groot. It might have been thought enough of torture for this virtuous and accomplished lady, but twenty-nine years of age and belonging to one of the eminent families of the country, to see her husband, for his genius and accomplishments the wonder of Europe, thus cut off in the flower of his age and doomed to a living grave. She was nevertheless to be subjected to the perpetual inquisition of the market-basket, which she was not ashamed with her maid to take to and from Gorcum, and to petty wrangles about the kitchen fire where she was proud to superintend the cooking of the scanty fare for her husband and her five children.

There was a reason for the spite of the military jailer. Lieutenant Prouninx, called Deventer, commandant of Loevestein, was son of the notorious Gerard Prouninx, formerly burgomaster of Utrecht, one of the ringleaders of the Leicester faction in the days when the Earl made his famous attempts upon the four cities. He had sworn revenge upon all those concerned in his father's downfall, and it was a delight therefore to wreak a personal vengeance on one who had since become so illustrious a member of that party by which the former burgomaster had been deposed, although Grotius at the time of Leicester's government had scarcely left his cradle.

Thus these ladies were to work in the kitchen and go to market from time to time, performing this menial drudgery under the personal inspection of the warrior who governed the garrison and fortress, but who in vain attempted to make Maria van Reigersbergen tremble at his frown.

Page 3042

Hugo de Groot, when thus for life immured, after having already undergone a preliminary imprisonment of nine months, was just thirty-six years of age. Although comparatively so young, he had been long regarded as one of the great luminaries of Europe for learning and genius. Of an ancient and knightly race, his immediate ancestors had been as famous for literature, science, and municipal abilities as their more distant progenitors for deeds of arms in the feudal struggles of Holland in the middle ages.

His father and grandfather had alike been eminent for Hebrew, Greek, and Latin scholarship, and both had occupied high positions in the University of Leyden from its beginning. Hugo, born and nurtured under such quickening influences, had been a scholar and poet almost from his cradle. He wrote respectable Latin verses at the age of seven, he was matriculated at Leyden at the age of eleven. That school, founded amid the storms and darkness of terrible war, was not lightly to be entered. It was already illustrated by a galaxy of shining lights in science and letters, which radiated over Christendom. His professors were Joseph Scaliger, Francis Junius, Paulus Merula, and a host of others. His fellow-students were men like Scriverius, Vossius, Baudius, Daniel Heinsius. The famous soldier and poet Douza, who had commanded the forces of Leyden during the immortal siege, addressed him on his admission to the university as “Magne peer magni dignissime cura parentis,” in a copy of eloquent verses.

When fourteen years old, he took his bachelor’s degree, after a rigorous examination not only in the classics but astronomy, mathematics, jurisprudence, and theology, at an age when most youths would have been accounted brilliant if able to enter that high school with credit.

On leaving the University he was attached to the embassy of Barneveld and Justinus van Nassau to the court of Henry *iv*. Here he attracted the attention of that monarch, who pointed him out to his courtiers as the “miracle of Holland,” presented him with a gold chain with his miniature attached to it, and proposed to confer on him the dignity of knighthood, which the boy from motives of family pride appears to have refused. While in France he received from the University of Orleans, before the age of fifteen, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in a very eulogistic diploma. On his return to Holland he published an edition of the poet Johannes Capella with valuable annotations, besides giving to the public other learned and classical works and several tragedies of more or less merit. At the age of seventeen he was already an advocate in full practice before the supreme tribunals of the Hague, and when twenty-three years old he was selected by Prince Maurice from a list of three candidates for the important post of Fiscal or Attorney-General of Holland. Other civic dignities, embassies, and offices of various kinds, had been thrust upon him one after another,

Page 3043

in all of which he had acquitted himself with dignity and brilliancy. He was but twenty-six when he published his argument for the liberty of the sea, the famous Mare Liberum, and a little later appeared his work on the Antiquity of the Batavian Republic, which procured for him in Spain the title of “Hugo Grotius, auctor damnatus.” At the age of twenty-nine he had completed his Latin history of the Netherlands from the period immediately preceding the war of independence down to the conclusion of the Truce, 1550-1609—a work which has been a classic ever since its appearance, although not published until after his death. A chief magistrate of Rotterdam, member of the States of Holland and the States-General, jurist, advocate, attorney-general, poet, scholar, historian, editor of the Greek and Latin classics, writer of tragedies, of law treatises, of theological disquisitions, he stood foremost among a crowd of famous contemporaries. His genius, eloquence, and learning were esteemed among the treasures not only of his own country but of Europe. He had been part and parcel of his country’s history from his earliest manhood, and although a child in years compared to Barneveld, it was upon him that the great statesman had mainly relied ever since the youth’s first appearance in public affairs. Impressible, emotional, and susceptive, he had been accused from time to time, perhaps not entirely without reason, of infirmity of purpose, or at least of vacillation in opinion; but his worst enemies had never assailed the purity of his heart or integrity of his character. He had not yet written the great work on the ‘Rights of War and Peace’, which was to make an epoch in the history of civilization and to be the foundation of a new science, but the materials lay already in the ample storehouse of his memory and his brain.

Possessed of singular personal beauty—which the masterly portraits of Miereveld attest to the present day—tall, brown-haired; straight-featured, with a delicate aquiline nose and piercing dark blue eyes, he was also athletic of frame and a proficient in manly exercises. This was the statesman and the scholar, of whom it is difficult to speak but in terms of affectionate but not exaggerated eulogy, and for whom the Republic of the Netherlands could now find no better use than to shut him up in the grim fortress of Loevestein for the remainder of his days. A commonwealth must have deemed itself rich in men which, after cutting off the head of Barneveld, could afford to bury alive Hugo Grotius.

His deportment in prison was a magnificent moral lesson. Shut up in a kind of cage consisting of a bedroom and a study, he was debarred from physical exercise, so necessary for his mental and bodily health. Not choosing for the gratification of Lieutenant Deventer to indulge in weak complaints, he procured a huge top, which he employed himself in whipping several hours a day; while for intellectual employment he plunged once more into those classical, juridical, and theological studies which had always employed his leisure hours from childhood upwards.

Page 3044

It had been forbidden by the States-General to sell his likeness in the shops. The copper plates on which they had been engraved had as far as possible been destroyed.

The wish of the government, especially of his judges, was that his name and memory should die at once and for ever. They were not destined to be successful, for it would be equally difficult to-day to find an educated man in Christendom ignorant of the name of Hugo Grotius, or acquainted with that of a single one of his judges.

And his friends had not forgotten him as he lay there living in his tomb. Especially the learned Scriverius, Vossius, and other professors, were permitted to correspond with him at intervals on literary subjects, the letters being subjected to preliminary inspection. Scriverius sent him many books from his well-stocked library, de Groot's own books and papers having been confiscated by the government. At a somewhat later period the celebrated Orientalist Erpenius sent him from time to time a large chest of books, the precious freight being occasionally renewed and the chest passing to and from Loevestein by way of Gorcum. At this town lived a sister of Erpenius, married to one Daatselaer, a considerable dealer in thread and ribbons, which he exported to England. The house of Daatselaer became a place of constant resort for Madame de Groot as well as the wife of Hoogerbeets, both dames going every few days from the castle across the Waal to Gorcum, to make their various purchases for the use of their forlorn little households in the prison. Madame Daatselaer therefore received and forwarded into Loevestein or into Holland many parcels and boxes, besides attending to the periodical transmission of the mighty chest of books.

Professor Vossius was then publishing a new edition of the tragedies of Seneca, and at his request Grotius enriched that work, from his prison, with valuable notes. He employed himself also in translating the moral sentences extracted by Stobaeus from the Greek tragedies; drawing consolation from the ethics and philosophy of the ancient dramatists, whom he had always admired, especially the tragedies of Euripides; he formed a complete moral anthology from that poet and from the works of Sophocles, Menander, and others, which he translated into fluent Dutch verse. Becoming more and more interested in the subject, he executed a masterly rhymed translation of the 'Theban Brothers' of Euripides, thus seeking distraction from his own tragic doom in the portraiture of antique, distant, and heroic sorrow.

Turning again to legal science, he completed an Introduction to the Jurisprudence of Holland, a work which as soon as published became thenceforward a text-book and an oracle in the law courts and the high schools of the country. Not forgetting theology, he composed for the use of the humbler classes, especially for sailors, in whose lot, so exposed to danger and temptation, he ever took deep interest, a work on the proofs of Christianity in easy and familiar rhyme—a book of gold, as it was called at once, which became rapidly popular with those for whom it was designed.

Page 3045

At a somewhat later period Professor Erpenius, publishing a new edition of the New Testament in Greek, with translations in Arabic, Syriac, and Ethiopian, solicited his friend's help both in translations and in the Latin commentaries and expositions with which he proposed to accompany the work. The prisoner began with a modest disclaimer, saying that after the labours of Erasmus and Beza, Maldonatus and Jasenius, there was little for him to glean. Becoming more enthusiastic as he went on, he completed a masterly commentary on the Four Evangelists, a work for which the learned and religious world has ever recognized a kind of debt of gratitude to the castle of Loevestein, and hailed in him the founder of a school of manly Biblical criticism.

And thus nearly two years wore away. Spinning his great top for exercise; soothing his active and prolific brain with Greek tragedy, with Flemish verse, with jurisprudence, history, theology; creating, expounding, adorning, by the warmth of his vivid intellect; moving the world, and doing good to his race from the depths of his stony sepulchre; Hugo Grotius rose superior to his doom and took captivity captive. The man is not to be envied who is not moved by so noble an example of great calamity manfully endured.

The wife of Hoogerbeets, already advanced in years, sickened during the imprisonment and died at Loevestein after a lingering illness, leaving six children to the care of her unfortunate husband. Madame de Groot had not been permitted by the prison authorities to minister to her in sickness, nor to her children after her death.

Early in the year 1621 Francis Aerssens, Lord of Sommelsdyk, the arch enemy of Barneveld and of Grotius, was appointed special ambassador to Paris. The intelligence —although hardly unexpected, for the stratagems of Aerssens had been completely successful—moved the prisoner deeply. He felt that this mortal enemy, not glutted with vengeance by the beheading of the Advocate and the perpetual imprisonment of his friend, would do his best at the French court to defame and to blacken him. He did what he could to obviate this danger by urgent letters to friends on whom he could rely.

At about the same time Muis van Holy, one of the twenty-four commissioners, not yet satisfied with the misery he had helped to inflict, informed the States-General that Madame de Groot had been buying ropes at Gorcum. On his motion a committee was sent to investigate the matter at Castle Loevestein, where it was believed that the ropes had been concealed for the purpose of enabling Grotius to make his escape from prison.

Lieutenant Deventer had heard nothing of the story. He was in high spirits at the rumour however, and conducted the committee very eagerly over the castle, causing minute search to be made in the apartment of Grotius for the ropes which, as they were assured by him and his wife, had never existed save in the imagination of Judge Muis. They succeeded at least in inflicting much superfluous annoyance on their victims, and in satisfying themselves that it would be as easy for the prisoner to fly out of the fortress on wings as to make his escape with ropes, even if he had them.

Page 3046

Grotius soon afterwards addressed a letter to the States-General denouncing the statement of Muis as a fable, and these persistent attempts to injure him as cowardly and wicked.

A few months later Madame de Groot happened to be in the house of Daatselaer on one of her periodical visits to Gorcum. Conversation turning on these rumours March of attempts at escape, she asked Madame Daatselaer if she would not be much embarrassed, should Grotius suddenly make his appearance there.

“Oh no,” said the good woman with a laugh; “only let him come. We will take excellent care of him.”

At another visit one Saturday, 20th March, (1621) Madame de Groot asked her friend why all the bells of Gorcum march were ringing.

“Because to-morrow begins our yearly fair,” replied Dame Daatselaer.

“Well, I suppose that all exiles and outlaws may come to Gorcum on this occasion,” said Madame de Groot.

“Such is the law, they say,” answered her friend.

“And my husband might come too?”

“No doubt,” said Madame Daatselaer with a merry laugh, rejoiced at finding the wife of Grotius able to speak so cheerfully of her husband in his perpetual and hopeless captivity. “Send him hither. He shall have, a warm welcome.”

“What a good woman you are!” said Madame de Groot with a sigh as she rose to take leave. “But you know very well that if he were a bird he could never get out of the castle, so closely, he is caged there.”

Next morning a wild equinoctial storm was howling around the battlements of the castle. Of a sudden Cornelia, daughter of the de Groots, nine years of age, said to her mother without any reason whatever,

“To-morrow Papa must be off to Gorcum, whatever the weather may be.”

De Groot, as well as his wife, was aghast at the child’s remark, and took it as a direct indication from Heaven.

For while Madame Daatselaer had considered the recent observations of her visitor from Loevestein as idle jests, and perhaps wondered that Madame de Groot could be frivolous and apparently lighthearted on so dismal a topic, there had been really a hidden meaning in her words.

For several weeks past the prisoner had been brooding over a means of escape. His wife, whose every thought was devoted to him, had often cast her eyes on the great chest or trunk in which the books of Erpenius had been conveyed between Loevestein and Gorcum for the use of the prisoner. At first the trunk had been carefully opened and its contents examined every time it entered or left the castle. As nothing had ever been found in it save Hebrew, Greek, and Latin folios, uninviting enough to the Commandant, that warrior had gradually ceased to inspect the chest very closely, and had at last discontinued the practice altogether.

Page 3047

It had been kept for some weeks past in the prisoner's study. His wife thought—-although it was two finger breadths less than four feet in length, and not very broad or deep in proportion—that it might be possible for him to get into it. He was considerably above middle height, but found that by curling himself up very closely he could just manage to lie in it with the cover closed. Very secretly they had many times rehearsed the scheme which had now taken possession of their minds, but had not breathed a word of it to any one. He had lain in the chest with the lid fastened, and with his wife sitting upon the top of it, two hours at a time by the hour-glass. They had decided at last that the plan, though fraught with danger, was not absolutely impossible, and they were only waiting now for a favourable opportunity. The chance remark of the child Cornelia settled the time for hazarding the adventure. By a strange coincidence, too, the commandant of the fortress, Lieutenant Deventer, had just been promoted to a captaincy, and was to go to Heusden to receive his company. He left the castle for a brief absence that very Sunday evening. As a precautionary measure, the trunk filled with books had been sent to Gorcum and returned after the usual interval only a few days before.

The maid-servant of the de Groots, a young girl of twenty, Elsje van Houwening by name, quick, intelligent, devoted, and courageous, was now taken into their confidence. The scheme was explained to her, and she was asked if she were willing to take the chest under her charge with her master in it, instead of the usual freight of books, and accompany it to Gorcum.

She naturally asked what punishment could be inflicted upon her in case the plot were discovered.

"None legally," answered her master; "but I too am innocent of any crime, and you see to what sufferings I have been condemned."

"Whatever come of it," said Elsje stoutly; "I will take the risk and accompany my master."

Every detail was then secretly arranged, and it was provided beforehand, as well as possible, what should be said or done in the many contingencies that might arise.

On Sunday evening Madame de Groot then went to the wife of the Commandant, with whom she had always been on more friendly terms than with her malicious husband. She had also recently propitiated her affections by means of venison and other dainties brought from Gorcum. She expressed the hope that, notwithstanding the absence of Captain Deventer, she might be permitted to send the trunk full of books next day from the castle.

"My husband is wearing himself out," she said, "with his perpetual studies. I shall be glad for a little time to be rid of some of these folios."

The Commandant’s wife made no objection to this slight request.

On Monday morning the gale continued to beat with unabated violence on the turrets. The turbid Waal, swollen by the tempest, rolled darkly and dangerously along the castle walls.

Page 3048

But the die was cast. Grotius rose betimes, fell on his knees, and prayed fervently an hour long. Dressed only in linen underclothes with a pair of silk stockings, he got into the chest with the help of his wife. The big Testament of Erpenius, with some bunches of thread placed upon it, served him as a pillow. A few books and papers were placed in the interstices left by the curves of his body, and as much pains as possible taken to prevent his being seriously injured or incommoded during the hazardous journey he was contemplating. His wife then took solemn farewell of him, fastened the lock, which she kissed, and gave the key to Elsje.

The usual garments worn by the prisoner were thrown on a chair by the bedside and his slippers placed before it. Madame de Groot then returned to her bed, drew the curtains close, and rang the bell.

It was answered by the servant who usually waited on the prisoner, and who was now informed by the lady that it had been her intention to go herself to Gorcum, taking charge of the books which were valuable. As the weather was so tempestuous however, and as she was somewhat indisposed, it had been decided that Elsje should accompany the trunk.

She requested that some soldiers might be sent as usual to take it down to the vessel. Two or three of the garrison came accordingly, and seeing the clothes and slippers of Grotius lying about, and the bed-curtains closed, felt no suspicion.

On lifting the chest, however, one of them said, half in jest:

“The Arminian must be in it himself, it seems so heavy!”

“Not the Arminian,” replied Madame de Groot, in a careless voice, from the bed; “only heavy Arminian books.”

Partly lifting, partly dragging the ponderous box, the soldiers managed to get it down the stairs and through the thirteen barred and bolted doors. Four several times one or other of the soldiers expressed the opinion that Grotius himself must be locked within it, but they never spoke quite seriously, and Elsje was ever ready to turn aside the remark with a jest. A soldier’s wife, just as the box was approaching the wharf, told a story of a malefactor who had once been carried out of the castle in a chest.

“And if a malefactor, why not a lawyer?” she added. A soldier said he would get a gimlet and bore a hole into the Arminian. “Then you must get a gimlet that will reach to the top of the castle, where the Arminian lies abed and asleep,” said Elsje.

Not much heed was given to this careless talk, the soldiers, before leaving the chamber of Grotius, having satisfied themselves that there were no apertures in the chest save

the keyhole, and that it would be impossible by that means alone for sufficient air to penetrate to keep a man enclosed in it from smothering.

Madame Deventer was asked if she chose to inspect the contents of the trunk, and she enquired whether the Commandant had been wont so to do. When told that such search had been for a long time discontinued, as nothing had ever been found there but books, she observed that there was no reason why she should be more strict than her husband, and ordered the soldiers to take their heavy load to the vessel.

Page 3049

Elsje insisted that the boatmen should place a doubly thick plank for sliding the box on board, as it seemed probable, she said, that the usual one would break in two, and then the valuable books borrowed of Professor Erpenius would be damaged or destroyed. The request caused much further grumbling, but was complied with at last and the chest deposited on the deck. The wind still continued to blow with great fury, and as soon as the sails were set the vessel heeled over so much, that Elsje implored the skipper to cause the box to be securely lashed, as it seemed in imminent danger, at the first lurch of the vessel, of sliding into the sea.

This done, Elsje sat herself down and threw her white handkerchief over her head, letting it flutter in the wind. One of the crew asked her why she did so, and she replied that the servant in the castle had been tormenting her, saying that she would never dare to sail to Gorcum in such tempestuous weather, and she was now signalling him that she had been as good as her word. Whereupon she continued to wave the handkerchief.

In reality the signal was for her mistress, who was now straining her eyes from the barred window which looked out upon the Waal, and with whom the maid had agreed that if all went prosperously she would give this token of success. Otherwise she would sit with her head in her hands.

During the voyage an officer of the garrison, who happened to be on board, threw himself upon the chest as a convenient seat, and began drumming and pounding with his heels upon it. The ever watchful Elsje, feeling the dreadful inconvenience to the prisoner of these proceedings, who perhaps was already smothering and would struggle for air if not relieved, politely addressed the gentleman and induced him to remove to another seat by telling him that, besides the books, there was some valuable porcelain in the chest which might easily be broken.

No further incident occurred. The wind, although violent, was favourable, and Gorcum in due time was reached. Elsje insisted upon having her own precious freight carried first into the town, although the skipper for some time was obstinately bent on leaving it to the very last, while all the other merchandise in the vessel should be previously unshipped.

At last on promise of payment of ten stuivers, which was considered an exorbitant sum, the skipper and son agreed to transport the chest between them on a hand-barrow. While they were trudging with it to the town, the son remarked to his father that there was some living thing in the box. For the prisoner in the anguish of his confinement had not been able to restrain a slight movement.

“Do you hear what my son says?” cried the skipper to Elsje. “He says you have got something alive in your trunk.”

“Yes, yes,” replied the cheerful maid-servant; “Arminian books are always alive, always full of motion and spirit.”

Page 3050

They arrived at Daatselaer's house, moving with difficulty through the crowd which, notwithstanding the boisterous weather, had been collected by the annual fair. Many people were assembled in front of the building, which was a warehouse of great resort, while next door was a book-seller's shop thronged with professors, clergymen, and other literary persons. The carriers accordingly entered by the backway, and Elsje, deliberately paying them their ten stuivers, and seeing them depart, left the box lying in a room at the rear and hastened to the shop in front.

Here she found the thread and ribbon dealer and his wife, busy with their customers, unpacking and exhibiting their wares. She instantly whispered in Madame Daatselaer's ear, "I have got my master here in your back parlour."

The dame turned white as a sheet, and was near fainting on the spot. It was the first imprudence Elsje had committed. The good woman recovered somewhat of her composure by a strong effort however, and instantly went with Elsje to the rear of the house.

"Master! master!" cried Elsje, rapping on the chest.

There was no answer.

"My God! my God!" shrieked the poor maid-servant. "My poor master is dead."

"Ah!" said Madame Daatselaer, "your mistress has made a bad business of it. Yesterday she had a living husband. Now she has a dead one."

But soon there was a vigorous rap on the inside of the lid, and a cry from the prisoner:

"Open the chest! I am not dead, but did not at first recognize your voice."

The lock was instantly unfastened, the lid thrown open, and Grotius arose in his linen clothing, like a dead man from his coffin.

The dame instantly accompanied the two through a trapdoor into an upper room.

Grotius asked her if she was always so deadly pale.

"No," she replied, "but I am frightened to see you here. My lord is no common person. The whole world is talking of you. I fear this will cause the loss of all my property and perhaps bring my husband into prison in your place."

Grotius rejoined: "I made my prayers to God before as much as this had been gained, and I have just been uttering fervent thanks to Him for my deliverance so far as it has been effected. But if the consequences are to be as you fear, I am ready at once to get into the chest again and be carried back to prison."

But she answered, “No; whatever comes of it, we have you here and will do all that we can to help you on.”

Grotius being faint from his sufferings, the lady brought him a glass of Spanish wine, but was too much flustered to find even a cloak or shawl to throw over him. Leaving him sitting there in his very thin attire, just as he had got out of the chest, she went to the front warehouse to call her husband. But he prudently declined to go to his unexpected guest. It would be better in the examination sure to follow, he said, for him to say with truth that he had not seen him and knew nothing of the escape, from first to last.

Page 3051

Grotius entirely approved of the answer when told to him. Meantime Madame Daatselaer had gone to her brother-in-law van der Veen, a clothier by trade, whom she found in his shop talking with an officer of the Loevestein garrison. She whispered in the clothier's ear, and he, making an excuse to the officer, followed her home at once. They found Grotius sitting where he had been left. Van der Veen gave him his hand, saying:

"Sir, you are the man of whom the whole country is talking?"

"Yes, here I am," was the reply, "and I put myself in your hands—"

"There isn't a moment to lose," replied the clothier. "We must help you away at once."

He went immediately in search of one John Lambertsen, a man in whom he knew he could confide, a Lutheran in religion, a master-mason by occupation. He found him on a scaffold against the gable-end of a house, working at his trade.

He told him that there was a good deed to be done which he could do better than any man, that his conscience would never reproach him for it, and that he would at the same time earn no trifling reward.

He begged the mason to procure a complete dress as for a journeyman, and to follow him to the house of his brother-in-law Daatselaer.

Lambertsen soon made his appearance with the doublet, trunk-hose, and shoes of a bricklayer, together with trowel and measuring-rod. He was informed who his new journeyman was to be, and Grotius at once put on the disguise.

The doublet did not reach to the waistband of the trunkhose, while those nether garments stopped short of his knees; the whole attire belonging to a smaller man than the unfortunate statesman. His delicate white hands, much exposed by the shortness of the sleeves, looked very unlike those of a day-labourer, and altogether the new mason presented a somewhat incongruous and wobegone aspect. Grotius was fearful too lest some of the preachers and professors frequenting the book-shop next door would recognize him through his disguise. Madame Daatselaer smeared his face and hands with chalk and plaster however and whispered encouragement, and so with a felt hat slouched over his forehead and a yardstick in his hand, he walked calmly forth into the thronged marketplace and through the town to the ferry, accompanied by the friendly Lambertsen. It had been agreed that van der Veen should leave the house in another direction and meet them at the landing-place.

When they got to the ferry, they found the weather as boisterous as ever. The boatmen absolutely refused to make the dangerous crossing of the Merwede over which their

course lay to the land of Altona, and so into the Spanish Netherlands, for two such insignificant personages as this mason and his scarecrow journeyman.

Lambertsen assured them that it was of the utmost importance that he should cross the water at once. He had a large contract for purchasing stone at Altona for a public building on which he was engaged. Van der Veen coming up added his entreaties, protesting that he too was interested in this great stone purchase, and so by means of offering a larger price than they at first dared to propose, they were able to effect their passage.

Page 3052

After landing, Lambertsen and Grotius walked to Waalwyk, van der Veen returning the same evening to Gorcum. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when they reached Waalwyk, where a carriage was hired to convey the fugitive to Antwerp. The friendly mason here took leave of his illustrious journeyman, having first told the driver that his companion was a disguised bankrupt fleeing from Holland into foreign territory to avoid pursuit by his creditors. This would explain his slightly concealing his face in passing through a crowd in any village.

Grotius proved so ignorant of the value of different coins in making small payments on the road, that the honest waggoner, on being occasionally asked who the odd-looking stranger was, answered that he was a bankrupt, and no wonder, for he did not know one piece of money from another. For, his part he thought him little better than a fool.

Such was the depreciatory opinion formed by the Waalwyk coachman as to the "rising light of the world" and the "miracle of Holland." They travelled all night and, arriving on the morning of the 21st within a few leagues of Antwerp, met a patrol of soldiers, who asked Grotius for his passport. He enquired in whose service they were, and was told in that of "Red Rod," as the chief bailiff of Antwerp was called. That functionary happened to be near, and the traveller approaching him said that his passport was on his feet, and forthwith told him his name and story.

Red Rod treated him at once with perfect courtesy, offered him a horse for himself with a mounted escort, and so furthered his immediate entrance to Antwerp. Grotius rode straight to the house of a banished friend of his, the preacher Grevinkhoven. He was told by the daughter of that clergyman that her father was upstairs ministering at the bedside of his sick wife. But so soon as the traveller had sent up his name, both the preacher and the invalid came rushing downstairs to fall upon the neck of one who seemed as if risen from the dead.

The news spread, and Episcopius and other exiled friends soon thronged to the house of Grevinkhoven, where they all dined together in great glee, Grotius, still in his journeyman's clothes, narrating the particulars of his wonderful escape.

He had no intention of tarrying in his resting-place at Antwerp longer than was absolutely necessary. Intimations were covertly made to him that a brilliant destiny might be in store for him should he consent to enter the service of the Archdukes, nor were there waning rumours, circulated as a matter of course by his host of enemies, that he was about to become a renegade to country and religion. There was as much truth in the slanders as in the rest of the calumnies of which he had been the victim during his career. He placed on record a proof of his loyal devotion to his country in the letters which he wrote from Antwerp within a week of his arrival there. With his subsequent history, his appearance and long residence

Page 3053

at the French court as ambassador of Sweden, his memorable labours in history, diplomacy, poetry, theology, the present narrative is not concerned. Driven from the service of his Fatherland, of which his name to all time is one of the proudest garlands, he continued to be a benefactor not only to her but to all mankind. If refutation is sought of the charge that republics are ungrateful, it will certainly not be found in the history of Hugo Grotius or John of Barneveld.

Nor is there need to portray the wrath of Captain Deventer when he returned to Castle Loevestein.

“Here is the cage, but your bird is flown,” said corpulent Maria Grotius with a placid smile. The Commandant solaced himself by uttering imprecations on her, on her husband, and on Elsje van Houwening. But these curses could not bring back the fugitive. He flew to Gorcum to browbeat the Daatselaers and to search the famous trunk. He found in it the big New Testament and some skeins of thread, together with an octavo or two of theology and of Greek tragedies; but the Arminian was not in it, and was gone from the custody of the valiant Deventer for ever.

After a brief period Madame de Groot was released and rejoined her husband. Elsje van Houwening, true heroine of the adventure, was subsequently married to the faithful servant of Grotius, who during the two years’ imprisonment had been taught Latin and the rudiments of law by his master, so that he subsequently rose to be a thriving and respectable advocate at the tribunals of Holland.

The Stadholder, when informed of the escape of the prisoner, observed, “I always thought the black pig was deceiving me,” making not very complimentary allusion to the complexion and size of the lady who had thus aided the escape of her husband.

He is also reported as saying that it “is no wonder they could not keep Grotius in prison, as he has more wit than all his judges put together.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

Barneveld’s Sons plot against Maurice—The Conspiracy betrayed to Maurice—Escape of Stoutenburg—Groeneveld is arrested—Mary of Barneveld appeals to the Stadholder—Groeneveld condemned to Death—Execution of Groeneveld.

The widow of Barneveld had remained, since the last scene of the fatal tragedy on the Binnenhof, in hopeless desolation. The wife of the man who during a whole generation of mankind had stood foremost among the foremost of the world, and had been one of

those chief actors and directors in human affairs to whom men's eyes turned instinctively from near and from afar, had led a life of unbroken prosperity. An heiress in her own right, Maria van Utrecht had laid the foundation of her husband's wealth by her union with the rising young lawyer and statesman. Her two sons and two daughters had grown up around her, all four being married into the leading families of the land, and with apparently long lives of prosperity

Page 3054

and usefulness before them. And now the headsman's sword had shivered all this grandeur and happiness at a blow. The name of the dead statesman had become a word of scoffing and reproach; vagabond mountebanks enacted ribald scenes to his dishonour in the public squares and streets; ballad-mongers yelled blasphemous libels upon him in the very ears of his widow and children. For party hatred was not yet glutted with the blood it had drunk.

It would be idle to paint the misery of this brokenhearted woman.

The great painters of the epoch have preserved her face to posterity; the grief-stricken face of a hard-featured but commanding and not uncomely woman, the fountains of whose tears seem exhausted; a face of austere and noble despair. A decorous veil should be thrown over the form of that aged matron, for whose long life and prosperity Fate took such merciless vengeance at last.

For the woes of Maria of Barneveld had scarcely begun. Desolation had become her portion, but dishonour had not yet crossed her threshold. There were sterner strokes in store for her than that which smote her husband on the scaffold.

She had two sons, both in the prime of life. The eldest, Reinier, Lord of Groeneveld, who had married a widow of rank and wealth, Madame de Brandwyk, was living since the death of his father in comparative ease, but entire obscurity. An easy-tempered, genial, kindly gentleman, he had been always much beloved by his friends and, until the great family catastrophe, was popular with the public, but of an infirm and vacillating character, easily impressed by others, and apt to be led by stronger natures than his own. He had held the lucrative office of head forester of Delfland of which he had now been deprived.

The younger son William, called, from an estate conferred on him by his father, Lord of Stoutenburg, was of a far different mould. We have seen him at an earlier period of this narrative attached to the embassy of Francis Aerssens in Paris, bearing then from another estate the unmusical title of Craimgepolder, and giving his subtle and dangerous chief great cause of complaint by his irregular, expensive habits. He had been however rather a favourite with Henry *iv*., who had so profound a respect for the father as to consult him, and him only of all foreign statesmen, in the gravest affairs of his reign, and he had even held an office of honour and emolument at his court. Subsequently he had embraced the military career, and was esteemed a soldier of courage and promise. As captain of cavalry and governor of the fortress of Bergen op Zoom, he occupied a distinguished and lucrative position, and was likely, so soon as the Truce ran to its close, to make a name for himself in that gigantic political and religious war which had already opened in Bohemia, and in which it was evident the Republic would soon be desperately involved. His wife, Walburg de Marnix, was daughter to one

of the noblest characters in the history of the Netherlands, or of any history, the illustrious Sainte-Aldegonde. Two thousand florins a year from his father's estate had been settled on him at his marriage, which, in addition to his official and military income, placed him in a position of affluence.

Page 3055

After the death of his father the family estates were confiscated, and he was likewise deprived of his captaincy and his governorship. He was reduced at a blow from luxury and high station to beggary and obscurity. At the renewal of the war he found himself, for no fault of his own, excluded from the service of his country. Yet the Advocate almost in his last breath had recommended his sons to the Stadholder, and Maurice had sent a message in response that so long as the sons conducted themselves well they might rely upon his support.

Hitherto they had not conducted themselves otherwise than well. Stoutenburg, who now dwelt in his house with his mother, was of a dark, revengeful, turbulent disposition. In the career of arms he had a right to look forward to success, but thus condemned to brood in idleness on the cruel wrongs to himself and his house it was not improbable that he might become dangerous.

Years long he fed on projects of vengeance as his daily bread. He was convinced that his personal grievances were closely entwined with the welfare of the Commonwealth, and he had sworn to avenge the death of his father, the misery of his mother, and the wrongs which he was himself suffering, upon the Stadholder, whom he considered the author of all their woe. To effect a revolution in the government, and to bring back to power all the municipal regents whom Maurice had displaced so summarily, in order, as the son believed, to effect the downfall of the hated Advocate, this was the determination of Stoutenburg.

He did not pause to reflect whether the arm which had been strong enough to smite to nothingness the venerable statesman in the plenitude of his power would be too weak to repel the attack of an obscure and disarmed partisan. He saw only a hated tyrant, murderer, and oppressor, as he considered him, and he meant to have his life.

He had around him a set of daring and desperate men to whom he had from time to time half confided his designs. A certain unfrocked preacher of the Remonstrant persuasion, who, according to the fashion of the learned of that day, had translated his name out of Hendrik Sleet into Henricus Slatius, was one of his most unscrupulous instruments. Slatius, a big, swarthy, shag-eared, beetle-browed Hollander, possessed learning of no ordinary degree, a tempestuous kind of eloquence, and a habit of dealing with men; especially those of the humbler classes. He was passionate, greedy, overbearing, violent, and loose of life. He had sworn vengeance upon the Remonstrants in consequence of a private quarrel, but this did not prevent him from breathing fire and fury against the Contra-Remonstrants also, and especially against the Stadholder, whom he affected to consider the arch-enemy of the whole Commonwealth.

Another twelvemonth went by. The Advocate had been nearly four years in his grave. The terrible German war was in full blaze. The Twelve Years' Truce had expired, the Republic was once more at war, and Stoutenburg, forbidden at the head of his troop to

campaign with the Stadholder against the Archdukes, nourished more fiercely than ever his plan against the Stadholder’s life.

Page 3056

Besides the ferocious Slatius he had other associates. There was his cousin by marriage, van der Dussen, a Catholic gentleman, who had married a daughter of Elias Barneveld, and who shared all Stoutenburg's feelings of resentment towards Maurice. There was Korenwinder, another Catholic, formerly occupying an official position of responsibility as secretary of the town of Berkel, a man of immense corpulence, but none the less an active and dangerous conspirator.

There was van Dyk, a secretary of Bleiswyk, equally active and dangerous, and as lean and hungry as Korenwinder was fat. Stoutenburg, besides other rewards, had promised him a cornetcy of cavalry, should their plans be successful. And there was the brother-in-law of Slatius, one Cornelis Gerritaen, a joiner by trade, living at Rotterdam, who made himself very useful in all the details of the conspiracy.

For the plot was now arranged, the men just mentioned being its active agents and in constant communication with Stoutenburg.

Korenwinder and van Dyk in the last days of December 1622 drew up a scheme on paper, which was submitted to their chief and met with his approval. The document began with a violent invective against the crimes and tyranny of the Stadholder, demonstrated the necessity of a general change in the government, and of getting rid of Maurice as an indispensable preliminary, and laid down the means and method of doing this deed.

The Prince was in the daily habit of driving, unattended by his body-guard, to Ryswyk, about two miles from the Hague. It would not be difficult for a determined band of men divided into two parties to set upon him between the stables and his coach, either when alighting from or about to enter it—the one party to kill him while the other protected the retreat of the assassins, and beat down such defence as the few lackeys of the Stadholder could offer.

The scheme, thus mapped out, was submitted to Stoutenburg, who gave it his approval after suggesting a few amendments. The document was then burnt. It was estimated that twenty men would be needed for the job, and that to pay them handsomely would require about 6000 guilders.

The expenses and other details of the infamous plot were discussed as calmly as if it had been an industrial or commercial speculation. But 6000 guilders was an immense sum to raise, and the Seigneur de Stoutenburg was a beggar. His associates were as forlorn as himself, but his brother-in-law, the ex-Ambassador van der Myle, was living at Beverwyk under the supervision of the police, his property not having been confiscated. Stoutenburg paid him a visit, accompanied by the Reverend Slatius, in hopes of getting funds from him, but at the first obscure hint of the infamous design van der Myle faced them with such looks, gestures, and words of disgust and indignation that the

murderous couple recoiled, the son of Barneveld saying to the expreacher: “Let us be off, Slaet,’tis a mere cur. Nothing is to be made of him.”

Page 3057

The other son of Barneveld, the Seigneur de Groeneveld, had means and credit. His brother had darkly hinted to him the necessity of getting rid of Maurice, and tried to draw him into the plot. Groeneveld, more unstable than water, neither repelled nor encouraged these advances. He joined in many conversations with Stoutenburg, van Dyk, and Korenwinder, but always weakly affected not to know what they were driving at. "When we talk of business," said van Dyk to him one day, "you are always turning off from us and from the subject. You had better remain." Many anonymous letters were sent to him, calling on him to strike for vengeance on the murderer of his father, and for the redemption of his native land and the Remonstrant religion from foul oppression.

At last yielding to the persuasions and threats of his fierce younger brother, who assured him that the plot would succeed, the government be revolutionized, and that then all property would be at the mercy of the victors, he agreed to endorse certain bills which Korenwinder undertook to negotiate. Nothing could be meaner, more cowardly, and more murderous than the proceedings of the Seigneur de Groeneveld. He seems to have felt no intense desire of vengeance upon Maurice, which certainly would not have been unnatural, but he was willing to supply money for his assassination. At the same time he was careful to insist that this pecuniary advance was by no means a free gift, but only a loan to be repaid by his more bloodthirsty brother upon demand with interest. With a businesslike caution, in ghastly contrast with the foulness of the contract, he exacted a note of hand from Stoutenburg covering the whole amount of his disbursements. There might come a time, he thought, when his brother's paper would be more negotiable than it was at that moment.

Korenwinder found no difficulty in discounting Groeneveld's bills, and the necessary capital was thus raised for the vile enterprise. Van Dyk, the lean and hungry conspirator, now occupied himself vigorously in engaging the assassins, while his corpulent colleague remained as treasurer of the company. Two brothers Blansaerts, woollen manufacturers at Leyden—one of whom had been a student of theology in the Remonstrant Church and had occasionally preached—and a certain William Party, a Walloon by birth, but likewise a woollen worker at Leyden, agreed to the secretary's propositions. He had at first told, them that their services would be merely required for the forcible liberation of two Remonstrant clergymen, Niellius and Poppius, from the prison at Haarlem. Entertaining his new companions at dinner, however, towards the end of January, van Dyk, getting very drunk, informed them that the object of the enterprise was to kill the Stadholder; that arrangements had been made for effecting an immediate change in the magistracies in all the chief cities of Holland so soon as the deed was done; that all the recently deposed regents would enter the Hague at once, supported by a train of armed peasants from the country; and that better times for the oppressed religion, for the Fatherland, and especially for everyone engaged in the great undertaking, would begin with the death of the tyrant. Each man taking direct part in the assassination would receive at least 300 guilders, besides being advanced to offices of honour and profit according to his capacity.

Page 3058

The Blansaerts assured their superior that entire reliance might be placed on their fidelity, and that they knew of three or four other men in Leyden “as firm as trees and fierce as lions,” whom they would engage—a fustian worker, a tailor, a chimney-sweeper, and one or two other mechanics. The looseness and utter recklessness with which this hideous conspiracy was arranged excites amazement. Van Dyk gave the two brothers 100 pistoles in gold—a coin about equal to a guinea—for their immediate reward as well as for that of the comrades to be engaged. Yet it seems almost certain from subsequent revelations that they were intending all the time to deceive him, to take as much money as they could get from him, “to milk, the cow as long as she would give milk,” as William Party expressed it, and then to turn round upon and betray him. It was a dangerous game however, which might not prove entirely successful.

Van Dyk duly communicated with Stoutenburg, who grew more and more feverish with hatred and impatience as the time for gratifying those passions drew nigh, and frequently said that he would like to tear the Stadholder to pieces with his own hands. He preferred however to act as controlling director over the band of murderers now enrolled.

For in addition to the Leyden party, the Reverend Slatius, supplied with funds by van Dyk, had engaged at Rotterdam his brother-in-law Gerritsen, a joiner, living in that city, together with three sailors named respectively Dirk, John, and Herman.

The ex-clergyman’s house was also the arsenal of the conspiracy, and here were stored away a stock of pistols, snaphances, and sledge-hammers—together with that other death-dealing machinery, the whole edition of the ‘Clearshining Torch’, an inflammatory, pamphlet by Slatius—all to be used on the fatal day fast approaching.

On the 1st February van Dyk visited Slatius at Rotterdam. He found Gerritsen hard at work.

There in a dark back kitchen, by the lurid light of the fire in a dim wintry afternoon, stood the burly Slatius, with his swarthy face and heavy eyebrows, accompanied by his brother-in-law the joiner, both in workman’s dress, melting lead, running bullets, drying powder, and burnishing and arranging the fire-arms and other tools to be used in the great crime now so rapidly maturing. The lean, busy, restless van Dyk, with his adust and sinister visage, came peering in upon the couple thus engaged, and observed their preparations with warm approval.

He recommended that in addition to Dirk, John, and Herman, a few more hardy seafaring men should be engaged, and Slatius accordingly secured next day the services of one Jerome Ewouts and three other sailors. They were not informed of the exact nature of the enterprise, but were told that it was a dangerous although not a desperate one, and sure to be of great service to the Fatherland. They received, as all

the rest had done, between 200 and 300 guilders in gold, that they would all be promoted to be captains and first mates.

Page 3059

It was agreed that all the conspirators should assemble four days later at the Hague on Sunday, the 5th February, at the inn of the “Golden Helmet.” The next day, Monday the 6th, had been fixed by Stoutenburg for doing the deed. Van Dyk, who had great confidence in the eloquence of William Party, the Walloon wool manufacturer, had arranged that he should make a discourse to them all in a solitary place in the downs between that city and the sea-shore, taking for his theme or brief the Clearshining Torch of Slatius.

On Saturday that eminent divine entertained his sister and her husband Gerritsen, Jerome Ewouts, who was at dinner but half informed as to the scope of the great enterprise, and several other friends who were entirely ignorant of it. Slatius was in high spirits, although his sister, who had at last become acquainted with the vile plot, had done nothing but weep all day long. They had better be worms, with a promise of further reward and an intimation she said, and eat dirt for their food, than crawl in so base a business. Her brother comforted her with assurances that the project was sure to result in a triumph for religion and Fatherland, and drank many healths at his table to the success of all engaged in it. That evening he sent off a great chest filled with arms and ammunition to the “Golden Helmet” at the Hague under the charge of Jerome Ewouts and his three mates. Van Dyk had already written a letter to the landlord of that hostelry engaging a room there, and saying that the chest contained valuable books and documents to be used in a lawsuit, in which he was soon to be engaged, before the supreme tribunal.

On the Sunday this bustling conspirator had John Blansaert and William Party to dine with him at the “Golden Helmet” in the Hague, and produced seven packages neatly folded, each containing gold pieces to the amount of twenty pounds sterling. These were for themselves and the others whom they had reported as engaged by them in Leyden. Getting drunk as usual, he began to bluster of the great political revolution impending, and after dinner examined the carbines of his guests. He asked if those weapons were to be relied upon. “We can blow a hair to pieces with them at twenty paces,” they replied. “Ah! would that I too could be of the party,” said van Dyk, seizing one of the carbines. “No, no,” said John Blansaert, “we can do the deed better without you than with you. You must look out for the defence.”

Van Dyk then informed them that they, with one of the Rotterdam sailors, were to attack Maurice as he got out of his coach at Ryswyk, pin him between the stables and the coach, and then and there do him to death. “You are not to leave him,” he cried, “till his soul has left his body.”

The two expressed their hearty concurrence with this arrangement, and took leave of their host for the night, going, they said, to distribute the seven packages of blood-money. They found Adam Blansaert waiting for them in the downs, and immediately divided the whole amount between themselves and him—the chimney-sweeper, tailor,

and fustian worker, “firm as trees and fierce as lions,” having never had any existence save in their fertile imaginations.

Page 3060

On Monday, 6th February, van Dyk had a closing interview with Stoutenburg and his brother at the house of Groeneveld, and informed them that the execution of the plot had been deferred to the following day. Stoutenburg expressed disgust and impatience at the delay. “I should like to tear the Stadholder to pieces with my own hands!” he cried. He was pacified on hearing that the arrangements had been securely made for the morrow, and turning to his brother observed, “Remember that you can never retract. You are in our power and all your estates at our mercy.” He then explained the manner in which the magistracies of Leyden, Gouda, Rotterdam, and other cities were to be instantly remodelled after the death of Maurice, the ex-regents of the Hague at the head of a band of armed peasants being ready at a moment’s warning to take possession of the political capital.

Prince Frederic Henry moreover, he hinted darkly and falsely, but in a manner not to be mistaken, was favourable to the movement, and would after the murder of Maurice take the government into his hands.

Stoutenburg then went quietly home to pass the day and sleep at his mother’s house awaiting the eventful morning of Tuesday.

Van Dyk went back to his room at the “Golden Helmet” and began inspecting the contents of the arms and ammunition chest which Jerome Ewouts and his three mates had brought the night before from Rotterdam. He had been somewhat unquiet at having seen nothing of those mariners during the day; when looking out of window, he saw one of them in conference with some soldiers. A minute afterwards he heard a bustle in the rooms below, and found that the house was occupied by a guard, and that Gerritsen, with the three first engaged sailors Dirk, Peter, and Herman, had been arrested at the Zotje. He tried in vain to throw the arms back into the chest and conceal it under the bed, but it was too late. Seizing his hat and wrapping himself in his cloak, with his sword by his side, he walked calmly down the stairs looking carelessly at the group of soldiers and prisoners who filled the passages. A waiter informed the provost-marshal in command that the gentleman was a respectable boarder at the tavern, well known to him for many years. The conspirator passed unchallenged and went straight to inform Stoutenburg.

The four mariners, last engaged by Slatius at Rotterdam, had signally exemplified the danger of half confidences. Surprised that they should have been so mysteriously entrusted with the execution of an enterprise the particulars of which were concealed from them, and suspecting that crime alone could command such very high prices as had been paid and promised by the ex-clergyman, they had gone straight to the residence of the Stadholder, after depositing the chest at the “Golden Helmet.”

Finding that he had driven as usual to Ryswyk, they followed him thither, and by dint of much importunity obtained an audience. If the enterprise was a patriotic one, they

reasoned, he would probably know of it and approve it. If it were criminal, it would be useful for them to reveal and dangerous to conceal it.

Page 3061

They told the story so far as they knew it to the Prince and showed him the money, 300 florins apiece, which they had already received from Slatius. Maurice hesitated not an instant. It was evident that a dark conspiracy was afoot. He ordered the sailors to return to the Hague by another and circuitous road through Voorburg, while he lost not a moment himself in hurrying back as fast as his horses would carry him. Summoning the president and several councillors of the chief tribunal, he took instant measures to take possession of the two taverns, and arrest all the strangers found in them.

Meantime van Dyk came into the house of the widow Barneveld and found Stoutenburg in the stable-yard. He told him the plot was discovered, the chest of arms at the "Golden Helmet" found. "Are there any private letters or papers in the bog?" asked Stoutenburg. "None relating to the affair," was the answer.

"Take yourself off as fast as possible," said Stoutenburg. Van Dyk needed no urging. He escaped through the stables and across the fields in the direction of Leyden. After skulking about for a week however and making very little progress, he was arrested at Hazerswoude, having broken through the ice while attempting to skate across the inundated and frozen pastures in that region.

Proclamations were at once made, denouncing the foul conspiracy in which the sons of the late Advocate Barneveld, the Remonstrant clergyman Slatius, and others, were the ringleaders, and offering 4000 florins each for their apprehension. A public thanksgiving for the deliverance was made in all the churches on the 8th February.

On the 12th February the States-General sent letters to all their ambassadors and foreign agents, informing them of this execrable plot to overthrow the Commonwealth and take the life of the Stadholder, set on foot by certain Arminian preachers and others of that faction, and this too in winter, when the ice and snow made hostile invasion practicable, and when the enemy was encamped in so many places in the neighbourhood. "The Arminians," said the despatch, "are so filled with bitterness that they would rather the Republic should be lost than that their pretended grievances should go unredressed." Almost every pulpit shook with Contra-Remonstrant thunder against the whole society of Remonstrants, who were held up to the world as rebels and prince-murderers; the criminal conspiracy being charged upon them as a body. Hardly a man of that persuasion dared venture into the streets and public places, for fear of being put to death by the rabble. The Chevalier William of Nassau, natural son of the Stadholder, was very loud and violent in all the taverns and tap-rooms, drinking mighty draughts to the damnation of the Arminians.

Many of the timid in consequence shrank away from the society and joined the Contra-Remonstrant Church, while the more courageous members, together with the leaders of that now abhorred communion, published long and stirring appeals to the universal sense of justice, which was outraged by the spectacle of a whole sect being punished for a crime committed by a few individuals, who had once been unworthy members of it.

Page 3062

Meantime hue and cry was made after the fugitive conspirators. The Blansaerts and William Party having set off from Leyden towards the Hague on Monday night, in order, as they said, to betray their employers, whose money they had taken, and whose criminal orders they had agreed to execute, attempted to escape, but were arrested within ten days. They were exhibited at their prison at Amsterdam to an immense concourse at a shilling a peep, the sums thus collected being distributed to the poor. Slatius made his way disguised as a boor into Friesland, and after various adventures attempted to cross the Bourtange Moors to Lingen. Stopping to refresh himself at a tavern near Koevorden, he found himself in the tap-room in presence of Quartermaster Blau and a company of soldiers from the garrison. The dark scowling boor, travel-stained and weary, with felt hat slouched over his forbidding visage, fierce and timorous at once like a hunted wild beast, excited their suspicion. Seeing himself watched, he got up, paid his scot, and departed, leaving his can of beer untasted. This decided the quartermaster, who accordingly followed the peasant out of the house, and arrested him as a Spanish spy on the watch for the train of specie which the soldiers were then conveying into Koevorden Castle.

Slatius protested his innocence of any such design, and vehemently besought the officer to release him, telling him as a reason for his urgency and an explanation of his unprepossessing aspect—that he was an oculist from Amsterdam, John Hermansen by name, that he had just committed a homicide in that place, and was fleeing from justice.

The honest quartermaster saw no reason why a suspected spy should go free because he proclaimed himself a murderer, nor why an oculist should escape the penalties of homicide. “The more reason,” he said, “why thou shouldst be my prisoner.” The ex-preacher was arrested and shut up in the state prison at the Hague.

The famous engraver Visser executed a likeness on copper-plate of the grim malefactor as he appeared in his boor’s disguise. The portrait, accompanied by a fiercely written broadsheet attacking the Remonstrant Church, had a great circulation, and deepened the animosity against the sect upon which the unfrocked preacher had sworn vengeance. His evil face and fame thus became familiar to the public, while the term Hendrik Slaet became a proverb at pot-houses, being held equivalent among tipplers to shirking the bottle.

Korenwinder, the treasurer of the association, coming to visit Stoutenburg soon after van Dyk had left him, was informed of the discovery of the plot and did his best to escape, but was arrested within a fortnight’s time.

Page 3063

Stoutenburg himself acted with his usual promptness and coolness. Having gone straightway to his brother to notify him of the discovery and to urge him to instant flight, he contrived to disappear. A few days later a chest of merchandise was brought to the house of a certain citizen of Rotterdam, who had once been a fiddler, but was now a man of considerable property. The chest, when opened, was found to contain the Seigneur de Stoutenburg, who in past times had laid the fiddler under obligations, and in whose house he now lay concealed for many days, and until the strictness with which all roads and ferries in the neighbourhood were watched at first had somewhat given way. Meantime his cousin van der Dussen had also effected his escape, and had joined him in Rotterdam. The faithful fiddler then, for a thousand florins, chartered a trading vessel commanded by one Jacob Beltje to take a cargo of Dutch cheese to Wesel on the Rhine. By this means, after a few adventures, they effected their escape, and, arriving not long afterwards at Brussels, were formally taken under the protection of the Archduchess Isabella.

Stoutenburg afterwards travelled in France and Italy, and returned to Brussels. His wife, loathing his crime and spurning all further communication with him, abandoned him to his fate. The daughter of Marnix of Sainte-Aldegonde had endured poverty, obscurity, and unmerited obloquy, which had become the lot of the great statesman's family after his tragic end, but she came of a race that would not brook dishonour. The conspirator and suborner of murder and treason, the hirer and companion of assassins, was no mate for her.

Stoutenburg hesitated for years as to his future career, strangely enough keeping up a hope of being allowed to return to his country.

Subsequently he embraced the cause of his country's enemies, converted himself to the Roman Church, and obtained a captaincy of horse in the Spanish service. He was seen one day, to the disgust of many spectators, to enter Antwerp in black foreign uniform, at the head of his troopers, waving a standard with a death's-head embroidered upon it, and wearing, like his soldiers, a sable scarf and plume. History disdains to follow further the career of the renegade, traitor, end assassin.

When the Seigneur de Groeneveld learned from his younger brother, on the eventful 6th of February, that the plot had been discovered, he gave himself up for lost. Remorse and despair, fastening upon his naturally feeble character, seemed to render him powerless. His wife, of more hopeful disposition than himself and of less heroic mould than Walburg de Marnix, encouraged him to fly. He fled accordingly, through the desolate sandy downs which roll between the Hague and the sea, to Scheveningen, then an obscure fishing village on the coast, at a league's distance from the capital. Here a fisherman, devoted to him and his family, received him in his hut, disguised him in boatman's attire, and went with him to the strand, proposing to launch his pinkie, put out at once to sea, and to land him on the English coast, the French coast, in Hamburg —where he would.

Page 3064

The sight of that long, sandy beach stretching for more than seventy miles in an unbroken, melancholy line, without cove, curve, or indentation to break its cruel monotony, and with the wild waves of the German Ocean, lashed by a wintry storm, breaking into white foam as far as the eye could reach, appalled the fugitive criminal. With the certainty of an ignominious death behind him, he shrank abjectly from the terrors of the sea, and, despite the honest fisherman's entreaties, refused to enter the boat and face the storm. He wandered feebly along the coast, still accompanied by his humble friend, to another little village, where the fisherman procured a waggon, which took them as far as Sandvoort. Thence he made his way through Egmond and Petten and across the Marsdiep to Tegel, where not deeming himself safe he had himself ferried over to the neighbouring island of Vlieland. Here amongst the quicksands, whirlpools, and shallows which mark the last verge of habitable Holland, the unhappy fugitive stood at bay.

Meantime information had come to the authorities that a suspicious stranger had been seen at Scheveningen. The fisherman's wife was arrested. Threatened with torture she at last confessed with whom her husband had fled and whither. Information was sent to the bailiff of Vlieland, who with a party of followers made a strict search through his narrow precincts. A group of seamen seated on the sands was soon discovered, among whom, dressed in shaggy pea jacket with long fisherman's boots, was the Seigneur de Groeneveld, who, easily recognized through his disguise, submitted to his captors without a struggle. The Scheveningen fisherman, who had been so faithful to him, making a sudden spring, eluded his pursuers and disappeared; thus escaping the gibbet which would probably have been his doom instead of the reward of 4000 golden guilders which he might have had for betraying him. Thus a sum more than double the amount originally furnished by Groeneveld, as the capital of the assassination company, had been rejected by the Rotterdam boatman who saved Stoutenburg, and by the Scheveningen fisherman who was ready to save Groeneveld. On the 19th February, within less than a fortnight from the explosion of the conspiracy, the eldest son of Barneveld was lodged in the Gevangen Poort or state prison of the Hague.

The awful news of the 6th February had struck the widow of Barneveld as with a thunderbolt. Both her sons were proclaimed as murderers and suborners of assassins, and a price put upon their heads. She remained for days neither speaking nor weeping; scarcely eating, drinking, or sleeping. She seemed frozen to stone. Her daughters and friends could not tell whether she were dying or had lost her reason. At length the escape of Stoutenburg and the capture of Groeneveld seemed to rouse her from her trance. She then stooped to do what she had sternly refused to do when her husband was in the hands of the authorities. Accompanied by the wife and infant son of Groeneveld she obtained an audience of the stern Stadholder, fell on her knees before him, and implored mercy and pardon for her son.

Page 3065

Maurice received her calmly and not discourteously, but held out no hopes of pardon. The criminal was in the hands of justice, he said, and he had no power to interfere. But there can scarcely be a doubt that he had power after the sentence to forgive or to commute, and it will be remembered that when Barneveld himself was about to suffer, the Prince had asked the clergyman Walaeus with much anxiety whether the prisoner in his message had said nothing of pardon.

Referring to the bitter past, Maurice asked Madame de Barneveld why she not asked mercy for her son, having refused to do so for her husband.

Her answer was simple and noble:

“My husband was innocent of crime,” she said; “my son is guilty.”

The idea of pardon in this case was of course preposterous. Certainly if Groeneveld had been forgiven, it would have been impossible to punish the thirteen less guilty conspirators, already in the hands of justice, whom he had hired to commit the assassination. The spectacle of the two cowardly ringleaders going free while the meaner criminals were gibbeted would have been a shock to the most rudimentary ideas of justice. It would have been an equal outrage to pardon the younger Barnevelds for intended murder, in which they had almost succeeded, when their great father had already suffered for a constructive lese-majesty, the guilt of which had been stoutly denied. Yet such is the dreary chain of cause and effect that it is certain, had pardon been nobly offered to the statesman, whose views of constitutional law varied from those of the dominant party, the later crime would never have been committed. But Francis Aerssens—considering his own and other partisans lives at stake if the States’ right party did not fall—had been able to bear down all thoughts of mercy. He was successful, was called to the house of nobles, and regained the embassy of Paris, while the house of Barneveld was trodden into the dust of dishonour and ruin. Rarely has an offended politician’s revenge been more thorough than his. Never did the mocking fiend betray his victims into the hands of the avenger more sardonically than was done in this sombre tragedy.

The trials of the prisoners were rapidly conducted. Van Dyk, cruelly tortured, confessed on the rack all the details of the conspiracy as they were afterwards embodied in the sentences and have been stated in the preceding narrative. Groeneveld was not tortured. His answers to the interrogatories were so vague as to excite amazement at his general ignorance of the foul transaction or at the feebleness of his memory, while there was no attempt on his part to exculpate himself from the damning charge. That it was he who had furnished funds for the proposed murder and mutiny, knowing the purpose to which they were to be applied, was proved beyond all cavil and fully avowed by him.

On the 28th May, he, Korenwinder, and van Dyk were notified that they were to appear next day in the courthouse to hear their sentence, which would immediately afterwards be executed.

Page 3066

That night his mother, wife, and son paid him a long visit of farewell in his prison. The Gevangen Poort of the Hague, an antique but mean building of brown brick and commonplace aspect, still stands in one of the most public parts of the city. A gloomy archway, surmounted by windows grimly guarded by iron lattice-work, forms the general thoroughfare from the aristocratic Plaats and Kneuterdyk and Vyverberg to the inner court of the ancient palace. The cells within are dark, noisome, and dimly lighted, and even to this day the very instruments of torture, used in the trials of these and other prisoners, may be seen by the curious. Half a century later the brothers de Witt were dragged from this prison to be literally torn to pieces by an infuriated mob.

The misery of that midnight interview between the widow of Barneveld, her daughter-in-law, and the condemned son and husband need not be described. As the morning approached, the gaoler warned the matrons to take their departure that the prisoner might sleep.

“What a woful widow you will be,” said Groeneveld to his wife, as she sank choking with tears upon the ground. The words suddenly aroused in her the sense of respect for their name.

“At least for all this misery endured,” she said firmly, “do me enough honour to die like a gentleman.” He promised it. The mother then took leave of the son, and History drops a decorous veil henceforth over the grief-stricken form of Mary of Barneveld.

Next morning the life-guards of the Stadholder and other troops were drawn up in battle-array in the outer and inner courtyard of the supreme tribunal and palace. At ten o’clock Groeneveld came forth from the prison. The Stadholder had granted as a boon to the family that he might be neither fettered nor guarded as he walked to the tribunal. The prisoner did not forget his parting promise to his wife. He appeared full-dressed in velvet cloak and plumed hat, with rapier by his side, walking calmly through the inner courtyard to the great hall. Observing the windows of the Stadholder’s apartments crowded with spectators, among whom he seemed to recognize the Prince’s face, he took off his hat and made a graceful and dignified salute. He greeted with courtesy many acquaintances among the crowd through which he passed. He entered the hall and listened in silence to the sentence condemning him to be immediately executed with the sword. Van Dyk and Korenwinder shared the same doom, but were provisionally taken back to prison.

Groeneveld then walked calmly and gracefully as before from the hall to the scaffold, attended by his own valet, and preceded by the provost-marshal and assistants. He was to suffer, not where his father had been beheaded, but on the “Green Sod.” This public place of execution for ordinary criminals was singularly enough in the most elegant and frequented quarter of the Hague. A few rods from the Gevangen Poort, at the western end of the Vyverberg, on the edge of the cheerful triangle called the Plaats, and looking directly down the broad and stately Kneuterdyk, at the end of which stood

Aremberg House, lately the residence of the great Advocate, was the mean and sordid scaffold.

Page 3067

Groeneveld ascended it with perfect composure. The man who had been browbeaten into crime by an overbearing and ferocious brother, who had quailed before the angry waves of the North Sea, which would have borne him to a place of entire security, now faced his fate with a smile upon his lips. He took off his hat, cloak, and sword, and handed them to his valet. He calmly undid his ruff and wristbands of pointlace, and tossed them on the ground. With his own hands and the assistance of his servant he unbuttoned his doublet, laying breast and neck open without suffering the headsman's hands to approach him.

He then walked to the heap of sand and spoke a very few words to the vast throng of spectators.

"Desire of vengeance and evil counsel," he said, "have brought me here. If I have wronged any man among you, I beg him for Christ's sake to forgive me."

Kneeling on the sand with his face turned towards his father's house at the end of the Kneuterdyk, he said his prayers. Then putting a red velvet cap over his eyes, he was heard to mutter:

"O God! what a man I was once, and what am I now?"

Calmly folding his hands, he said, "Patience."

The executioner then struck off his head at a blow. His body, wrapped in a black cloak, was sent to his house and buried in his father's tomb.

Van Dyk and Korenwinder were executed immediately afterwards. They were quartered and their heads exposed on stakes. The joiner Gerritsen and the three sailors had already been beheaded. The Blansaerts and William Party, together with the grim Slatius, who was savage and turbulent to the last, had suffered on the 5th of May.

Fourteen in all were executed for this crime, including an unfortunate tailor and two other mechanics of Leyden, who had heard something whispered about the conspiracy, had nothing whatever to do with it, but from ignorance, apathy, or timidity did not denounce it. The ringleader and the equally guilty van der Dussen had, as has been seen, effected their escape.

Thus ended the long tragedy of the Barnevelds. The result of this foul conspiracy and its failure to effect the crime proposed strengthened immensely the power, popularity, and influence of the Stadholder, made the orthodox church triumphant, and nearly ruined the sect of the Remonstrants, the Arminians—most unjustly in reality, although with a pitiful show of reason—being held guilty of the crime of Stoutenburg and Slatius.

The Republic—that magnificent commonwealth which in its infancy had confronted, single-handed, the greatest empire of the earth, and had wrested its independence from

the ancient despot after a forty years' struggle—had now been rent in twain, although in very unequal portions, by the fiend of political and religious hatred. Thus crippled, she was to go forth and take her share in that awful conflict now in full blaze, and of which after-ages were to speak with a shudder as the Thirty Years' War.

Page 3068

Etext editor's bookmarks:

Argument in a circle
He that stands let him see that he does not fall
If he has deserved it, let them strike off his head
Misery had come not from their being enemies
O God! what does man come to!
Party hatred was not yet glutted with the blood it had drunk
Rose superior to his doom and took captivity captive
This, then, is the reward of forty years' service to the State
To milk, the cow as long as she would give milk

Etext editor's bookmarks, *entire John of Barneveld*, 1614-23:

Acts of violence which under pretext of religion
Adulation for inferiors whom they despise
Affection of his friends and the wrath of his enemies
And give advice. Of that, although always a spendthrift
Argument in a circle
Better to be governed by magistrates than mobs
Burning with bitter revenge for all the favours he had received
Calumny is often a stronger and more lasting power than disdain
Casual outbursts of eternal friendship
Changed his positions and contradicted himself day by day
Conciliation when war of extermination was intended
Considered it his special mission in the world to mediate
Created one child for damnation and another for salvation
Death rather than life with a false acknowledgment of guilt
Denoungced as an obstacle to peace
Depths theological party spirit could descend
Depths of credulity men in all ages can sink
Devote himself to his gout and to his fair young wife
Enemy of all compulsion of the human conscience
Extraordinary capacity for yielding to gentle violence
France was mourning Henry and waiting for Richelieu
Furious mob set upon the house of Rem Bischop
Hardly a sound Protestant policy anywhere but in Holland
He that stands let him see that he does not fall
Heidelberg Catechism were declared to be infallible
Highborn demagogues in that as in every age affect adulation
History has not too many really important and emblematic men
Human nature in its meanness and shame
I hope and I fear
I know how to console myself

If he has deserved it, let them strike off his head
Implication there was much, of assertion very little
In this he was much behind his age or before it
It had not yet occurred to him that he was married
John Robinson
King who thought it furious madness to resist the enemy
Logic is rarely the quality on which kings pride themselves
Magistracy at that moment seemed to mean the sword
Make the very name of man a term of reproach
Misery had come not from their being enemies

Page 3069

Mockery of negotiation in which nothing could be negotiated
More apprehension of fraud than of force
Necessity of deferring to powerful sovereigns
Never lack of fishers in troubled waters
Not his custom nor that of his councillors to go to bed
O God! what does man come to!
Only true religion
Opening an abyss between government and people
Opposed the subjection of the magistracy by the priesthood
Partisans wanted not accommodation but victory
Party hatred was not yet glutted with the blood it had drunk
Pot-valiant hero
Puritanism in Holland was a very different thing from England
Rather a wilderness to reign over than a single heretic
Resolve to maintain the civil authority over the military
Rose superior to his doom and took captivity captive
Seemed bent on self-destruction
Stand between hope and fear
Successful in this step, he is ready for greater ones
Tempest of passion and prejudice
That he tries to lay the fault on us is pure malice
The magnitude of this wonderful sovereign's littleness
The effect of energetic, uncompromising calumny
The evils resulting from a confederate system of government
This, then, is the reward of forty years' service to the State
This wonderful sovereign's littleness oppresses the imagination
To milk, the cow as long as she would give milk
To stifle for ever the right of free enquiry
William Brewster
Wise and honest a man, although he be somewhat longsome
Yes, there are wicked men about
Yesterday is the preceptor of To-morrow

Etext editor's bookmarks, *entire John of Barneveld* 1609-1623:

Abstinence from inquisition into consciences and private parlour
Acts of violence which under pretext of religion
Adulation for inferiors whom they despise
Advanced orthodox party-Puritans
Affection of his friends and the wrath of his enemies

Allowed the demon of religious hatred to enter into its body
Almost infinite power of the meanest of passions
And give advice. Of that, although always a spendthrift
And now the knife of another priest-led fanatic
Argument in a circle
Aristocracy of God's elect
As with his own people, keeping no back-door open
At a blow decapitated France
Atheist, a tyrant, because he resisted dictation from the clergy
Behead, torture, burn alive, and bury alive all heretics
Better to be governed by magistrates than mobs
Burning with bitter revenge for all the favours he had received
Calumny is often a stronger and more lasting power than disdain
Casual outbursts of eternal friendship
Changed his positions

Page 3070

and contradicted himself day by day
- Christian sympathy and a small assistance not being sufficient
- Conciliation when war of extermination was intended
- Conclusive victory for the allies seemed as predestined
- Considered it his special mission in the world to mediate
- Contained within itself the germs of a larger liberty
- Could not be both judge and party in the suit
- Covered now with the satirical dust of centuries
- Created one child for damnation and another for salvation
- Deadly hatred of Puritans in England and Holland
- Death rather than life with a false acknowledgment of guilt
- Denoungced as an obstacle to peace
- Depths of credulity men in all ages can sink
- Depths theological party spirit could descend
- Determined to bring the very name of liberty into contempt
- Devote himself to his gout and to his fair young wife
- Disputing the eternal damnation of young children
- Doctrine of predestination in its sternest and strictest sense
- Emperor of Japan addressed him as his brother monarch
- Enemy of all compulsion of the human conscience
- Epernon, the true murderer of Henry
- Estimating his character and judging his judges
- Everybody should mind his own business
- Extraordinary capacity for yielding to gentle violence
- Fate, free will, or absolute foreknowledge
- Father Cotton, who was only too ready to betray the secrets
- France was mourning Henry and waiting for Richelieu
- Furious mob set upon the house of Rem Bischop
- Give him advice if he asked it, and money when he required
- Great war of religion and politics was postponed
- Hardly a sound Protestant policy anywhere but in Holland
- He was not imperial of aspect on canvas or coin
- He who would have all may easily lose all
- He who spreads the snare always tumbles into the ditch himself
- He was a sincere bigot
- He that stands let him see that he does not fall
- Heidelberg Catechism were declared to be infallible
- Highborn demagogues in that as in every age affect adulation
- History has not too many really important and emblematic men
- Human nature in its meanness and shame
- I know how to console myself
- I hope and I fear

If he has deserved it, let them strike off his head
Impatience is often on the part of the non-combatants
Implication there was much, of assertion very little
In this he was much behind his age or before it
Intense bigotry of conviction
International friendship, the self-interest of each
It had not yet occurred to him that he was married
It was the true religion, and there was none other
James of England, who admired, envied, and hated Henry
Jealousy, that potent principle

Page 3071

Jesuit Mariana—justifying the killing of excommunicated kings
John Robinson
King who thought it furious madness to resist the enemy
King's definite and final intentions, varied from day to day
Language which is ever living because it is dead
Logic is rarely the quality on which kings pride themselves
Louis XIII.
Ludicrous gravity
Magistracy at that moment seemed to mean the sword
Make the very name of man a term of reproach
Misery had come not from their being enemies
Mockery of negotiation in which nothing could be negotiated
More apprehension of fraud than of force
More fiercely opposed to each other than to Papists
Most detestable verses that even he had ever composed
Necessity of deferring to powerful sovereigns
Neither kings nor governments are apt to value logic
Never lack of fishers in troubled waters
No man pretended to think of the State
No man can be neutral in civil contentions
No synod had a right to claim Netherlanders as slaves
None but God to compel me to say more than I choose to say
Not his custom nor that of his councillors to go to bed
O God! what does man come to!
Only true religion
Opening an abyss between government and people
Opposed the subjection of the magistracy by the priesthood
Outdoing himself in dogmatism and inconsistency
Partisans wanted not accommodation but victory
Party hatred was not yet glutted with the blood it had drunk
Philip *iv*.
Pot-valiant hero
Power the poison of which it is so difficult to resist
Practised successfully the talent of silence
Presents of considerable sums of money to the negotiators made
Priests shall control the state or the state govern the priests
Princes show what they have in them at twenty-five or never
Puritanism in Holland was a very different thing from England
Putting the cart before the oxen
Queen is entirely in the hands of Spain and the priests

Rather a wilderness to reign over than a single heretic
Religion was made the strumpet of Political Ambition
Religious toleration, which is a phrase of insult
Resolve to maintain the civil authority over the military
Rose superior to his doom and took captivity captive
Safest citadel against an invader and a tyrant is distrust
Schism in the Church had become a public fact
Secure the prizes of war without the troubles and dangers
Seemed bent on self-destruction
Senectus edam maorbus est
She declined to be his procuress
Small matter which human folly had dilated into a great one
Smooth words, in the plentiful lack of any substantial
So much in advance of

Page 3072

his time as to favor religious equality
Stand between hope and fear
Stroke of a broken table knife sharpened on a carriage wheel
Successful in this step, he is ready for greater ones
Tempest of passion and prejudice
That he tries to lay the fault on us is pure malice
That cynical commerce in human lives
The effect of energetic, uncompromising calumny
The evils resulting from a confederate system of government
The vehicle is often prized more than the freight
The voice of slanderers
The truth in shortest about matters of importance
The assassin, tortured and torn by four horses
The defence of the civil authority against the priesthood
The magnitude of this wonderful sovereign’s littleness
The Catholic League and the Protestant Union
Their own roofs were not quite yet in a blaze
Theological hatred was in full blaze throughout the country
Theology and politics were one
There was no use in holding language of authority to him
There was but one king in Europe, Henry the Bearnese
Therefore now denounced the man whom he had injured
They have killed him, ‘e ammazato,’ cried Concini
Things he could tell which are too odious and dreadful
Thirty Years’ War tread on the heels of the forty years
This wonderful sovereign’s littleness oppresses the imagination
This, then, is the reward of forty years’ service to the State
To milk, the cow as long as she would give milk
To stifle for ever the right of free enquiry
To look down upon their inferior and lost fellow creatures
Uncouple the dogs and let them run
Unimaginable outrage as the most legitimate industry
Vows of an eternal friendship of several weeks’ duration
What could save the House of Austria, the cause of Papacy
Whether repentance could effect salvation
Whether dead infants were hopelessly damned
Whose mutual hatred was now artfully inflamed

BOOKRAGS

END OF THE HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS BY MOTLEY

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY.

A *memoir*, Complete

By Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

Volume I.

NOTE.

The Memoir here given to the public is based on a biographical sketch prepared by the writer at the request of the Massachusetts Historical Society for its Proceedings. The questions involving controversies into which the Society could not feel called to enter are treated at considerable length in the following pages. Many details are also given which would have carried the paper written for the Society beyond the customary limits of such tributes to the memory of its deceased members. It is still but an outline which may serve a present need and perhaps be of some assistance to a future biographer.

Page 3073

I.

1814-1827. To AEt. 13. *Birth and early years*.

John Motley, the great-grandfather of the subject of this Memoir, came in the earlier part of the last century from Belfast in Ireland to Falmouth, now Portland, in the District, now the State of Maine. He was twice married, and had ten children, four of the first marriage and six of the last. Thomas, the youngest son by his first wife, married Emma, a daughter of John Wait, the first Sheriff of Cumberland County under the government of the United States. Two of their seven sons, Thomas and Edward, removed from Portland to Boston in 1802 and established themselves as partners in commercial business, continuing united and prosperous for nearly half a century before the firm was dissolved.

The earlier records of New England have preserved the memory of an incident which deserves mention as showing how the historian's life was saved by a quickwitted handmaid, more than a hundred years before he was born. On the 29th of August, 1708, the French and Indians from Canada made an attack upon the town of Haverhill, in Massachusetts. Thirty or forty persons were slaughtered, and many others were carried captive into Canada.

The minister of the town, Rev. Benjamin Rolfe, was killed by a bullet through the door of his house. Two of his daughters, Mary, aged thirteen, and Elizabeth, aged nine, were sleeping in a room with the maid-servant, Hagar. When Hagar heard the whoop of the savages she seized the children, ran with them into the cellar, and, after concealing them under two large washtubs, hid herself. The Indians ransacked the cellar, but missed the prey. Elizabeth, the younger of the two girls, grew up and married the Rev. Samuel Checkley, first minister of the "New South" Church, Boston. Her son, Rev. Samuel Checkley, Junior, was minister of the Second Church, and his successor, Rev. John Lothrop, or Lathrop, as it was more commonly spelled, married his daughter. Dr. Lothrop was great-grandson of Rev. John Lothrop, of Scituate, who had been imprisoned in England for nonconformity. The Checkleys were from Preston Capes, in Northamptonshire. The name is probably identical with that of the Chicheles or Chichleys, a well-known Northamptonshire family.

Thomas Motley married Anna, daughter of the Rev. John Lothrop, granddaughter of the Rev. Samuel Checkley, Junior, the two ministers mentioned above, both honored in their day and generation. Eight children were born of this marriage, of whom four are still living.

Page 3074

John Lothrop Motley, the second of these children, was born in Dorchester, now a part of Boston, Massachusetts, on the 15th of April, 1814. A member of his family gives a most pleasing and interesting picture, from his own recollections and from what his mother told him, of the childhood which was to develop into such rich maturity. The boy was rather delicate in organization, and not much given to outdoor amusements, except skating and swimming, of which last exercise he was very fond in his young days, and in which he excelled. He was a great reader, never idle, but always had a book in his hand,—a volume of poetry or one of the novels of Scott or Cooper. His fondness for plays and declamation is illustrated by the story told by a younger brother, who remembers being wrapped up in a shawl and kept quiet by sweetmeats, while he figured as the dead Caesar, and his brother, the future historian, delivered the speech of Antony over his prostrate body. He was of a most sensitive nature, easily excited, but not tenacious of any irritated feelings, with a quick sense of honor, and the most entirely truthful child, his mother used to say, that she had ever seen. Such are some of the recollections of those who knew him in his earliest years and in the most intimate relations.

His father's family was at this time living in the house No. 7 Walnut Street, looking down Chestnut Street over the water to the western hills. Near by, at the corner of Beacon Street, was the residence of the family of the first mayor of Boston, and at a little distance from the opposite corner was the house of one of the fathers of New England manufacturing enterprise, a man of superior intellect, who built up a great name and fortune in our city. The children from these three homes naturally became playmates. Mr. Motley's house was a very hospitable one, and Lothrop and two of his young companions were allowed to carry out their schemes of amusement in the garden and the garret. If one with a prescient glance could have looked into that garret on some Saturday afternoon while our century was not far advanced in its second score of years, he might have found three boys in cloaks and doublets and plumed hats, heroes and bandits, enacting more or less impromptu melodramas. In one of the boys he would have seen the embryo dramatist of a nation's life history, John Lothrop Motley; in the second, a famous talker and wit who has spilled more good things on the wasteful air in conversation than would carry a "diner-out" through half a dozen London seasons, and waked up somewhat after the usual flowering-time of authorship to find himself a very agreeable and cordially welcomed writer,—Thomas Gold Appleton. In the third he would have recognized a champion of liberty known wherever that word is spoken, an orator whom to hear is to revive all the traditions of the grace, the address, the commanding sway of the silver-tongued eloquence of the most renowned speakers,—-Wendell Phillips.

Page 3075

Both of young Motley's playmates have furnished me with recollections of him and of those around him at this period of his life, and I cannot do better than borrow freely from their communications. His father was a man of decided character, social, vivacious, witty, a lover of books, and himself not unknown as a writer, being the author of one or more of the well remembered "Jack Downing" letters. He was fond of having the boys read to him from such authors as Channing and Irving, and criticised their way of reading with discriminating judgment and taste. Mrs. Motley was a woman who could not be looked upon without admiration. I remember well the sweet dignity of her aspect, her "regal beauty," as Mr. Phillips truly styles it, and the charm of her serene and noble presence, which made her the type of a perfect motherhood. Her character corresponded to the promise of her gracious aspect. She was one of the fondest of mothers, but not thoughtlessly indulgent to the boy from whom she hoped and expected more than she thought it wise to let him know. The story used to be current that in their younger days this father and mother were the handsomest pair the town of Boston could show. This son of theirs was "rather tall," says Mr. Phillips, "lithe, very graceful in movement and gesture, and there was something marked and admirable in the set of his head on his shoulders,"—a peculiar elegance which was most noticeable in those later days when I knew him. Lady Byron long afterwards spoke of him as more like her husband in appearance than any other person she had met; but Mr. Phillips, who remembers the first bloom of his boyhood and youth, thinks he was handsomer than any portrait of Byron represents the poet. "He could not have been eleven years old," says the same correspondent, "when he began writing a novel. It opened, I remember, not with one solitary horseman, but with two, riding up to an inn in the valley of the Housatonic. Neither of us had ever seen the Housatonic, but it sounded grand and romantic. Two chapters were finished."

There is not much remembered of the single summer he passed at Mr. Green's school at Jamaica Plain. From that school he went to Round Hill, Northampton, then under the care of Mr. Cogswell and Mr. Bancroft. The historian of the United States could hardly have dreamed that the handsome boy of ten years was to take his place at the side of his teacher in the first rank of writers in his own department. Motley came to Round Hill, as one of his schoolmates tells me, with a great reputation, especially as a declaimer. He had a remarkable facility for acquiring languages, excelled as a reader and as a writer, and was the object of general admiration for his many gifts. There is some reason to think that the flattery he received was for a time a hindrance to his progress and the development of his character. He obtained praise too easily, and learned to trust too much to his genius. He had everything to spoil him,—beauty,

precocious intelligence, and a personal charm which might have made him a universal favorite. Yet he does not seem to have been generally popular at this period of his life. He was wilful, impetuous, sometimes supercilious, always fastidious. He would study as he liked, and not by rule. His school and college mates believed in his great possibilities through all his forming period, but it may be doubted if those who counted most confidently on his future could have supposed that he would develop the heroic power of concentration, the long-breathed tenacity of purpose, which in after years gave effect to his brilliant mental endowments. "I did wonder," says Mr. Wendell Phillips, "at the diligence and painstaking, the drudgery shown in his historical works. In early life he had no industry, not needing it. All he cared for in a book he caught quickly,—the spirit of it, and all his mind needed or would use. This quickness of apprehension was marvellous." I do not find from the recollections of his schoolmates at Northampton that he was reproached for any grave offences, though he may have wandered beyond the prescribed boundaries now and then, and studied according to his inclinations rather than by rule. While at that school he made one acquisition much less common then than now,—a knowledge of the German language and some degree of acquaintance with its literature, under the guidance of one of the few thorough German scholars this country then possessed, Mr. George Bancroft.

II.

1827-1831. AEt. 13-17. *College life*.

Such then was the boy who at the immature, we might almost say the tender, age of thirteen entered Harvard College. Though two years after me in college standing, I remember the boyish reputation which he brought with him, especially that of a wonderful linguist, and the impression which his striking personal beauty produced upon us as he took his seat in the college chapel. But it was not until long after this period that I became intimately acquainted with him, and I must again have recourse to the classmates and friends who have favored me with their reminiscences of this period of his life. Mr. Phillips says:

"During our first year in college, though the youngest in the class, he stood third, I think, or second in college rank, and ours was an especially able class. Yet to maintain this rank he neither cared nor needed to make any effort. Too young to feel any responsibilities, and not yet awake to any ambition, he became so negligent that he was 'rusticated' [that is, sent away from college for a time]. He came back sobered, and worked rather more, but with no effort for college rank thenceforward."

I must finish the portrait of the collegian with all its lights and shadows by the help of the same friends from whom I have borrowed the preceding outlines.

Page 3077

He did not care to make acquaintances, was haughty in manner and cynical in mood, at least as he appeared to those in whom he felt no special interest. It is no wonder, therefore, that he was not a popular favorite, although recognized as having very brilliant qualities. During all this period his mind was doubtless fermenting with projects which kept him in a fevered and irritable condition. "He had a small writing-table," Mr. Phillips says, "with a shallow drawer; I have often seen it half full of sketches, unfinished poems, soliloquies, a scene or two of a play, prose portraits of some pet character, *etc*. These he would read to me, though he never volunteered to do so, and every now and then he burnt the whole and began to fill the drawer again."

My friend, Mr. John Osborne Sargent, who was a year before him in college, says, in a very interesting letter with which he has favored me:

"My first acquaintance with him [Motley] was at Cambridge, when he came from Mr. Cogswell's school at Round Hill. He then had a good deal of the shyness that was just pronounced enough to make him interesting, and which did not entirely wear off till he left college. . . I soon became acquainted with him, and we used to take long walks together, sometimes taxing each other's memory for poems or passages from poems that had struck our fancy. Shelley was then a great favorite of his, and I remember that Praed's verses then appearing in the 'New Monthly' he thought very clever and brilliant, and was fond of repeating them. You have forgotten, or perhaps never knew, that Motley's first appearance in print was in the 'Collegian.' He brought me one day, in a very modest mood, a translation from Goethe, which I was most happy to oblige him by inserting. It was very prettily done, and will now be a curiosity. . . . How it happened that Motley wrote only one piece I do not remember. I had the pleasure about that time of initiating him as a member of the Knights of the Square Table,—always my favorite college club, for the reason, perhaps, that I was a sometime Grand Master. He was always a genial and jovial companion at our supper- parties at Fresh Pond and Gallagher's."

We who live in the days of photographs know how many faces belong to every individual. We know too under what different aspects the same character appears to those who study it from different points of view and with different prepossessions. I do not hesitate, therefore, to place side by side the impressions of two of his classmates as to one of his personal traits as they observed him at this period of his youth.

"He was a manly boy, with no love for or leaning to girls' company; no care for dress; not a trace of personal vanity. . . . He was, or at least seemed, wholly unconscious of his rare beauty and of the fascination of his manner; not a trace of pretence, the simplest and most natural creature in the world."

Look on that picture and on this:—

Page 3078

“He seemed to have a passion for dress. But as in everything else, so in this, his fancy was a fitful one. At one time he would excite our admiration by the splendor of his outfit, and perhaps the next week he would seem to take equal pleasure in his slovenly or careless appearance.”

It is not very difficult to reconcile these two portraitures. I recollect it was said by a witty lady of a handsome clergyman well remembered among us, that he had dressy eyes. Motley so well became everything he wore, that if he had sprung from his bed and slipped his clothes on at an alarm of fire, his costume would have looked like a prince’s undress. His natural presentment, like that of Count D’Orsay, was of the kind which suggests the intentional effects of an elaborate toilet, no matter how little thought or care may have been given to make it effective. I think the “passion for dress” was really only a seeming, and that he often excited admiration when he had not taken half the pains to adorn himself that many a youth less favored by nature has wasted upon his unblest exterior only to be laughed at.

I gather some other interesting facts from a letter which I have received from his early playmate and school and college classmate, Mr. T. G. Appleton.

“In his Sophomore year he kept abreast of the prescribed studies, but his heart was out of bounds, as it often had been at Round Hill when chasing squirrels or rabbits through forbidden forests. Already his historical interest was shaping his life. A tutor coming-by chance, let us hope—to his room remonstrated with him upon the heaps of novels upon his table.

“‘Yes,’ said Motley, ’I am reading historically, and have come to the novels of the nineteenth century. Taken in the lump, they are very hard reading.’”

All Old Cambridge people know the Brattle House, with its gambrel roof, its tall trees, its perennial spring, its legendary fame of good fare and hospitable board in the days of the kindly old bon vivant, Major Brattle. In this house the two young students, Appleton and Motley, lived during a part of their college course.

“Motley’s room was on the ground floor, the room to the left of the entrance. He led a very pleasant life there, tempering his college duties with the literature he loved, and receiving his friends amidst elegant surroundings, which added to the charm of his society. Occasionally we amused ourselves by writing for the magazines and papers of the day. Mr. Willis had just started a slim monthly, written chiefly by himself, but with the true magazine flavor. We wrote for that, and sometimes verses in the corner of a paper called ‘The Anti-Masonic Mirror,’ and in which corner was a woodcut of Apollo, and inviting to destruction ambitious youths by the legend underneath,—

‘Much yet remains unsung.’

Page 3079

These pieces were usually dictated to each other, the poet recumbent upon the bed and a classmate ready to carry off the manuscript for the paper of the following day. ‘Blackwood’s’ was then in its glory, its pages redolent of ‘mountain dew’ in every sense; the humor of the Shepherd, the elegantly brutal onslaughts upon Whigs and Cockney poets by Christopher North, intoxicated us youths.“It was young writing, and made for the young. The opinions were charmingly wrong, and its enthusiasm was half Glenlivet. But this delighted the boys. There were no reprints then, and to pass the paper-cutter up the fresh inviting pages was like swinging over the heather arm in arm with Christopher himself. It is a little singular that though we had a college magazine of our own, Motley rarely if ever wrote for it. I remember a translation from Goethe, ‘The Ghost-Seer,’ which he may have written for it, and a poem upon the White Mountains. Motley spoke at one of the college exhibitions an essay on Goethe so excellent that Mr. Joseph Cogswell sent it to Madam Goethe, who, after reading it, said, ’I wish to see the first book that young man will write.’”

Although Motley did not aim at or attain a high college rank, the rules of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, which confine the number of members to the first sixteen of each class, were stretched so as to include him,—a tribute to his recognized ability, and an evidence that a distinguished future was anticipated for him.

III.

1832-1833. AEt. 18-19. *Study and travel in Europe*.

Of the two years divided between the Universities of Berlin and Gottingen I have little to record. That he studied hard I cannot doubt; that he found himself in pleasant social relations with some of his fellow-students seems probable from the portraits he has drawn in his first story, “Morton’s Hope,” and is rendered certain so far as one of his companions is concerned. Among the records of the past to which he referred during his last visit to this country was a letter which he took from a collection of papers and handed me to read one day when I was visiting him. The letter was written in a very lively and exceedingly familiar vein. It implied such intimacy, and called up in such a lively way the gay times Motley and himself had had together in their youthful days, that I was puzzled to guess who could have addressed him from Germany in that easy and off-hand fashion. I knew most of his old friends who would be likely to call him by his baptismal name in its most colloquial form, and exhausted my stock of guesses unsuccessfully before looking at the signature. I confess that I was surprised, after laughing at the hearty and almost boyish tone of the letter, to read at the bottom of the page the signature of Bismarck. I will not say that I suspect Motley of having drawn the portrait of his friend in one of the characters of “Morton’s Hope,” but it is not hard to point out traits in one of them which we can believe may have belonged to the great Chancellor at an earlier period of life than that at which the world contemplates his overshadowing proportions.

Page 3080

Hoping to learn something of Motley during the two years while we had lost sight of him, I addressed a letter to His Highness Prince Bismarck, to which I received the following reply:—

Foreign office, *Berlin*, March 11, 1878.

Sir,—I am directed by Prince Bismarck to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st of January, relating to the biography of the late Mr. Motley. His Highness deeply regrets that the state of his health and pressure of business do not allow him to contribute personally, and as largely as he would be delighted to do, to your depicting of a friend whose memory will be ever dear to him. Since I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Mr. Motley at Varzin, I have been intrusted with communicating to you a few details I have gathered from the mouth of the Prince. I enclose them as they are jotted down, without any attempt of digestion.

I have the honor to be
Your obedient servant,
Lothair Bucher.

“Prince Bismarck said:—

“’I met Motley at Gottingen in 1832, I am not sure if at the beginning of Easter Term or Michaelmas Term. He kept company with German students, though more addicted to study than we members of the fighting clubs (corps). Although not having mastered yet the German language, he exercised a marked attraction by a conversation sparkling with wit, humor, and originality. In autumn of 1833, having both of us migrated from Gottingen to Berlin for the prosecution of our studies, we became fellow-lodgers in the house No. 161 Friedrich Strasse. There we lived in the closest intimacy, sharing meals and outdoor exercise. Motley by that time had arrived at talking German fluently; he occupied himself not only in translating Goethe’s poem “Faust,” but tried his hand even in composing German verses. Enthusiastic admirer of Shakespeare, Byron, Goethe, he used to spice his conversation abundantly with quotations from these his favorite authors. A pertinacious arguer, so much so that sometimes he watched my awakening in order to continue a discussion on some topic of science, poetry, or practical life, cut short by the chime of the small hours, he never lost his mild and amiable temper. Our faithful companion was Count Alexander Keyserling, a native of Courland, who has since achieved distinction as a botanist.“’Motley having entered the diplomatic service of his country, we had frequently the opportunity of renewing our friendly intercourse; at Frankfort he used to stay with me, the welcome guest of my wife; we also met at Vienna, and, later, here. The last time I saw him was in 1872 at Varzin, at the celebration of my “silver wedding,” namely, the twenty-fifth anniversary.“’The most striking feature of his handsome and delicate appearance was uncommonly large and beautiful eyes. He never entered a drawing-room without exciting the curiosity and

Page 3081

sympathy of the ladies.'"

It is but a glimpse of their young life which the great statesman gives us, but a bright and pleasing one. Here were three students, one of whom was to range in the flowery fields of the loveliest of the sciences, another to make the dead past live over again in his burning pages, and a third to extend an empire as the botanist spread out a plant and the historian laid open a manuscript.

IV.

1834-1839. 2*Et*. 20-25.

Return to America.—*Study of law*.—*Marriage*.—*His first novel*, "*Morton's hope*."

Of the years passed in the study of law after his return from Germany I have very little recollection, and nothing of importance to record. He never became seriously engaged in the practice of the profession he had chosen. I had known him pleasantly rather than intimately, and our different callings tended to separate us. I met him, however, not very rarely, at one house where we were both received with the greatest cordiality, and where the attractions brought together many both young and old to enjoy the society of its charming and brilliant inmates. This was at No. 14 Temple Place, where Mr. Park Benjamin was then living with his two sisters, both in the bloom of young womanhood. Here Motley found the wife to whom his life owed so much of its success and its happiness. Those who remember Mary Benjamin find it hard to speak of her in the common terms of praise which they award to the good and the lovely. She was not only handsome and amiable and agreeable, but there was a cordial frankness, an openhearted sincerity about her which made her seem like a sister to those who could help becoming her lovers. She stands quite apart in the memory of the friends who knew her best, even from the circle of young persons whose recollections they most cherish. Yet hardly could one of them have foreseen all that she was to be to him whose life she was to share. They were married on the 2d of March, 1837. His intimate friend, Mr. Joseph Lewis Stackpole, was married at about the same time to her sister, thus joining still more closely in friendship the two young men who were already like brothers in their mutual affection.

Two years after his marriage, in 1839, appeared his first work, a novel in two volumes, called "Morton's Hope." He had little reason to be gratified with its reception. The general verdict was not favorable to it, and the leading critical journal of America, not usually harsh or cynical in its treatment of native authorship, did not even give it a place among its "Critical Notices," but dropped a small-print extinguisher upon it in one of the pages of its "List of New Publications." Nothing could be more utterly disheartening than the unqualified condemnation passed upon the story. At the same time the critic

says that “no one can read ‘Morton’s Hope’ without perceiving it to have been written by a person of uncommon resources of mind and scholarship.”

Page 3082

It must be confessed that, as a story, “Morton’s Hope” cannot endure a searching or even a moderately careful criticism. It is wanting in cohesion, in character, even in a proper regard to circumstances of time and place; it is a map of dissected incidents which has been flung out of its box and has arranged itself without the least regard to chronology or geography. It is not difficult to trace in it many of the influences which had helped in forming or deforming the mind of the young man of twenty-five, not yet come into possession of his full inheritance of the slowly ripening qualities which were yet to assert their robust independence. How could he help admiring Byron and falling into more or less unconscious imitation of his moods if not of his special affectations? Passion showing itself off against a dark foil of cynicism; sentiment, ashamed of its own self-betrayal, and sneering at itself from time to time for fear of the laugh of the world at its sincerity,—how many young men were spoiled and how many more injured by becoming bad copies of a bad ideal! The blood of Don Juan ran in the veins of Vivian Grey and of Pelham. But if we read the fantastic dreams of Disraeli, the intellectual dandyisms of Bulwer, remembering the after careers of which these were the preludes, we can understand how there might well be something in those earlier efforts which would betray itself in the way of thought and in the style of the young men who read them during the plastic period of their minds and characters. Allow for all these influences, allow for whatever impressions his German residence and his familiarity with German literature had produced; accept the fact that the story is to the last degree disjointed, improbable, impossible; lay it aside as a complete failure in what it attempted to be, and read it, as “Vivian Grey” is now read, in the light of the career which it heralded.

“Morton’s Hope” is not to be read as a novel: it is to be studied as an autobiography, a prophecy, a record of aspirations, disguised under a series of incidents which are flung together with no more regard to the unities than a pack of shuffled playing-cards. I can do nothing better than let him picture himself, for it is impossible not to recognize the portrait. It is of little consequence whether every trait is an exact copy from his own features, but it is so obvious that many of the lines are direct transcripts from nature that we may believe the same thing of many others. Let us compare his fictitious hero’s story with what we have read of his own life.

In early boyhood Morton amused himself and astonished those about him by enacting plays for a puppet theatre. This was at six years old, and at twelve we find him acting in a play with other boys, just as Motley’s playmates have already described him. The hero may now speak for himself, but we shall all perceive that we are listening to the writer’s own story.

Page 3083

“I was always a huge reader; my mind was essentially craving and insatiable. Its appetite was enormous, and it devoured too greedily for health. I rejected all guidance in my studies. I already fancied myself a misanthrope. I had taken a step very common for boys of my age, and strove with all my might to be a cynic.”

He goes on to describe, under the perfectly transparent mask of his hero, the course of his studies. “To poetry, like most infants, I devoted most of my time.” From modern poetry he went back to the earlier sources, first with the idea of systematic reading and at last through Chaucer and Gower and early ballads, until he lost himself “in a dismal swamp of barbarous romances and lying Latin chronicles. I got hold of the Bibliotheca Monastica, containing a copious account of Anglo-Norman authors, with notices of their works, and set seriously to reading every one of them.” One profit of his antiquarianism, however, was, as he says, his attention to foreign languages,—French, Spanish, German, especially in their earliest and rudest forms of literature. From these he ascended to the ancient poets, and from Latin to Greek. He would have taken up the study of the Oriental languages, but for the advice of a relative, who begged him seriously to turn his attention to history. The paragraph which follows must speak for itself as a true record under a feigned heading.

“The groundwork of my early character was plasticity and fickleness. I was mortified by this exposure of my ignorance, and disgusted with my former course of reading. I now set myself violently to the study of history. With my turn of mind, and with the preposterous habits which I had been daily acquiring, I could not fail to make as gross mistakes in the pursuit of this as of other branches of knowledge. I imagined, on setting out, a system of strict and impartial investigation of the sources of history. I was inspired with the absurd ambition, not uncommon to youthful students, of knowing as much as their masters. I imagined it necessary for me, stripling as I was, to study the authorities; and, imbued with the strict necessity of judging for myself, I turned from the limpid pages of the modern historians to the notes and authorities at the bottom of the page. These, of course, sent me back to my monastic acquaintances, and I again found myself in such congenial company to a youthful and ardent mind as Florence of Worcester and Simeon of Durham, the Venerable Bede and Matthew Paris; and so on to Gregory and Fredegarius, down to the more modern and elegant pages of Froissart, Hollinshed, Hooker, and Stowe. Infant as I was, I presumed to grapple with masses of learning almost beyond the strength of the giants of history. A spendthrift of my time and labor, I went out of my way to collect materials, and to build for myself, when I should have known that older and abler architects had already appropriated all that was worth preserving; that the

Page 3084

edifice was built, the quarry exhausted, and that I was, consequently, only delving amidst rubbish.“This course of study was not absolutely without its advantages. The mind gained a certain proportion of vigor even by this exercise of its faculties, just as my bodily health would have been improved by transporting the refuse ore of a mine from one pit to another, instead of coining the ingots which lay heaped before my eyes. Still, however, my time was squandered. There was a constant want of fitness and concentration of my energies. My dreams of education were boundless, brilliant, indefinite; but alas! they were only dreams. There was nothing accurate and defined in my future course of life. I was ambitious and conceited, but my aspirations were vague and shapeless. I had crowded together the most gorgeous and even some of the most useful and durable materials for my woof, but I had no pattern, and consequently never began to weave.“I had not made the discovery that an individual cannot learn, nor be, everything; that the world is a factory in which each individual must perform his portion of work:—happy enough if he can choose it according to his taste and talent, but must renounce the desire of observing or superintending the whole operation. . . .“From studying and investigating the sources of history with my own eyes, I went a step further; I refused the guidance of modern writers; and proceeding from one point of presumption to another, I came to the magnanimous conviction that I could not know history as I ought to know it unless I wrote it for myself. . . .“It would be tedious and useless to enlarge upon my various attempts and various failures. I forbear to comment upon mistakes which I was in time wise enough to retrieve. Pushing out as I did, without compass and without experience, on the boundless ocean of learning, what could I expect but an utter and a hopeless shipwreck?“Thus I went on, becoming more learned, and therefore more ignorant, more confused in my brain, and more awkward in my habits, from day to day. I was ever at my studies, and could hardly be prevailed upon to allot a moment to exercise or recreation. I breakfasted with a pen behind my ear, and dined in company with a folio bigger than the table. I became solitary and morose, the necessary consequence of reckless study; talked impatiently of the value of my time, and the immensity of my labors; spoke contemptuously of the learning and acquirements of the whole world, and threw out mysterious hints of the magnitude and importance of my own project.“In the midst of all this study and this infant authorship the perusal of such masses of poetry could not fail to produce their effect. Of a youth whose mind, like mine at that period, possessed some general capability, without perhaps a single prominent and marked talent, a proneness to imitation

Page 3085

is sure to be the besetting sin. I consequently, for a large portion of my earlier life, never read a work which struck my fancy, without planning a better one upon its model; for my ambition, like my vanity, knew no bounds. It was a matter of course that I should be attacked by the poetic mania. I took the infection at the usual time, went through its various stages, and recovered as soon as could be expected. I discovered soon enough that emulation is not capability, and he is fortunate to whom is soonest revealed the relative extent of his ambition and his powers.“My ambition was boundless; my dreams of glory were not confined to authorship and literature alone; but every sphere in which the intellect of man exerts itself revolved in a blaze of light before me. And there I sat in my solitude and dreamed such wondrous dreams! Events were thickening around me which were soon to change the world, but they were unmarked by me. The country was changing to a mighty theatre, on whose stage those who were as great as I fancied myself to be were to enact a stupendous drama in which I had no part. I saw it not; I knew it not; and yet how infinitely beautiful were the imaginations of my solitude! Fancy shook her kaleidoscope each moment as chance directed, and lo! what new, fantastic, brilliant, but what unmeaning visions. My ambitious anticipations were as boundless as they were various and conflicting. There was not a path which leads to glory in which I was not destined to gather laurels. As a warrior I would conquer and overrun the world. As a statesman I would reorganize and govern it. As a historian I would consign it all to immortality; and in my leisure moments I would be a great poet and a man of the world.“In short, I was already enrolled in that large category of what are called young men of genius,—men who are the pride of their sisters and the glory of their grandmothers,—men of whom unheard-of things are expected, till after long preparation comes a portentous failure, and then they are forgotten; subsiding into indifferent apprentices and attorneys’ clerks.“Alas for the golden imaginations of our youth! They are bright and beautiful, but they fade. They glitter brightly enough to deceive the wisest and most cautious, and we garner them up in the most secret caskets of our hearts; but are they not like the coins which the Dervise gave the merchant in the story? When we look for them the next morning, do we not find them withered leaves?”

The ideal picture just drawn is only a fuller portraiture of the youth whose outlines have been already sketched by the companions of his earlier years. If his hero says, “I breakfasted with a pen behind my ear and dined in company with a folio bigger than the table,” one of his family says of the boy Motley that “if there were five minutes before dinner, when he came into the parlor he always took up some book near at hand and began to read until dinner was announced.” The same unbounded thirst for knowledge, the same history of various attempts and various failures, the same ambition, not yet fixed in its aim, but showing itself in restless effort, belong to the hero of the story and its narrator.

Page 3086

Let no man despise the first efforts of immature genius. Nothing can be more crude as a novel, nothing more disappointing, than “Morton’s Hope.” But in no other of Motley’s writings do we get such an inside view of his character with its varied impulses, its capricious appetites, its unregulated forces, its impatient grasp for all kinds of knowledge. With all his university experiences at home and abroad, it might be said with a large measure of truth that he was a self-educated man, as he had been a self-taught boy. His instincts were too powerful to let him work quietly in the common round of school and college training. Looking at him as his companions describe him, as he delineates himself ’mutato nomine,’ the chances of success would have seemed to all but truly prophetic eyes very doubtful, if not decidedly against him. Too many brilliant young novel-readers and lovers of poetry, excused by their admirers for their shortcomings on the strength of their supposed birthright of “genius,” have ended where they began; flattered into the vain belief that they were men at eighteen or twenty, and finding out at fifty that they were and always had been nothing more than boys. It was but a tangled skein of life that Motley’s book showed us at twenty-five, and older men might well have doubted whether it would ever be wound off in any continuous thread. To repeat his own words, he had crowded together the materials for his work, but he had no pattern, and consequently never began to weave.

The more this first work of Motley’s is examined, the more are its faults as a story and its interest as a self-revelation made manifest to the reader. The future historian, who spared no pains to be accurate, falls into the most extraordinary anachronisms in almost every chapter. Brutus in a bob-wig, Othello in a swallow-tail coat, could hardly be more incongruously equipped than some of his characters in the manner of thought, the phrases, the way of bearing themselves which belong to them in the tale, but never could have belonged to characters of our Revolutionary period. He goes so far in his carelessness as to mix up dates in such a way as almost to convince us that he never looked over his own manuscript or proofs. His hero is in Prague in June, 1777, reading a letter received from America in less than a fortnight from the date of its being written; in August of the same year he is in the American camp, where he is found in the company of a certain Colonel Waldron, an officer of some standing in the Revolutionary Army, with whom he is said to have been constantly associated for some three months, having arrived in America, as he says, on the 15th of May, that is to say, six weeks or more before he sailed, according to his previous account. Bohemia seems to have bewitched his chronology as it did Shakespeare’s geography. To have made his story a consistent series of contradictions, Morton should have sailed from that Bohemian seashore which may be found in “A Winter’s Tale,” but not in the map of Europe.

Page 3087

And yet in the midst of all these marks of haste and negligence, here and there the philosophical student of history betrays himself, the ideal of noble achievement glows in an eloquent paragraph, or is embodied in a loving portrait like that of the professor and historian Harlem. The novel, taken in connection with the subsequent developments of the writer's mind, is a study of singular interest. It is a chaos before the creative epoch; the light has not been divided from the darkness; the firmament has not yet divided the waters from the waters. The forces at work in a human intelligence to bring harmony out of its discordant movements are as mysterious, as miraculous, we might truly say, as those which give shape and order to the confused materials out of which habitable worlds are evolved. It is too late now to be sensitive over this unsuccessful attempt as a story and unconscious success as a self-portraiture. The first sketches of Paul Veronese, the first patterns of the Gobelin tapestry, are not to be criticised for the sake of pointing out their inevitable and too manifest imperfections. They are to be carefully studied as the earliest efforts of the hand which painted the Marriage at Cana, of the art which taught the rude fabrics made to be trodden under foot to rival the glowing canvas of the great painters. None of Motley's subsequent writings give such an insight into his character and mental history. It took many years to train the as yet undisciplined powers into orderly obedience, and to bring the unarranged materials into the organic connection which was needed in the construction of a work that should endure. There was a long interval between his early manhood and the middle term of life, during which the slow process of evolution was going on. There are plants which open their flowers with the first rays of the sun; there are others that wait until evening to spread their petals. It was already the high noon of life with him before his genius had truly shown itself; if he had not lived beyond this period, he would have left nothing to give him a lasting name.

V.

1841-1842. AEt. 27-28.

First diplomatic appointment, *secretary of legation to the Russian mission*.—*Brief residence at st*. *Petersburg*.—*Letter to his mother*. —*Return*.

In the autumn of 1841, Mr. Motley received the appointment of Secretary of Legation to the Russian Mission, Mr. Todd being then the Minister. Arriving at St. Petersburg just at the beginning of winter, he found the climate acting very unfavorably upon his spirits if not upon his health, and was unwilling that his wife and his two young children should be exposed to its rigors. The expense of living, also, was out of proportion to his income, and his letters show

Page 3088

that he had hardly established himself in St. Petersburg before he had made up his mind to leave a place where he found he had nothing to do and little to enjoy. He was homesick, too, as a young husband and father with an affectionate nature like his ought to have been under these circumstances. He did not regret having made the experiment, for he knew that he should not have been satisfied with himself if he had not made it. It was his first trial of a career in which he contemplated embarking, and in which afterwards he had an eventful experience. In his private letters to his family, many of which I have had the privilege of looking over, he mentions in detail all the reasons which influenced him in forming his own opinion about the expediency of a continued residence at St. Petersburg, and leaves the decision to her in whose judgment he always had the greatest confidence. No unpleasant circumstance attended his resignation of his secretaryship, and though it must have been a disappointment to find that the place did not suit him, as he and his family were then situated, it was only at the worst an experiment fairly tried and not proving satisfactory. He left St. Petersburg after a few months' residence, and returned to America. On reaching New York he was met by the sad tidings of the death of his first-born child, a boy of great promise, who had called out all the affections of his ardent nature. It was long before he recovered from the shock of this great affliction. The boy had shown a very quick and bright intelligence, and his father often betrayed a pride in his gifts and graces which he never for a moment made apparent in regard to his own.

Among the letters which he wrote from St. Petersburg are two miniature ones directed to this little boy. His affectionate disposition shows itself very sweetly in these touching mementos of a love of which his first great sorrow was so soon to be born. Not less charming are his letters to his mother, showing the tenderness with which he always regarded her, and full of all the details which he thought would entertain one to whom all that related to her children was always interesting. Of the letters to his wife it is needless to say more than that they always show the depth of the love he bore her and the absolute trust he placed in her, consulting her at all times as his nearest and wisest friend and adviser,—one in all respects fitted "To warn, to comfort, and command."

I extract a passage from one of his letters to his mother, as much for the sake of lending a character of reality to his brief residence at St. Petersburg as for that of the pleasant picture it gives us of an interior in that Northern capital.

Page 3089

“We entered through a small vestibule, with the usual arrangement of treble doors, padded with leather to exclude the cold and guarded by two ‘proud young porters’ in severe cocked hats and formidable batons, into a broad hall,—threw off our furred boots and cloaks, ascended a carpeted marble staircase, in every angle of which stood a statuesque footman in gaudy coat and unblemished unmentionables, and reached a broad landing upon the top thronged as usual with servants. Thence we passed through an antechamber into a long, high, brilliantly lighted, saffron-papered room, in which a dozen card-tables were arranged, and thence into the receiving room. This was a large room, with a splendidly inlaid and polished floor, the walls covered with crimson satin, the cornices heavily incrusted with gold, and the ceiling beautifully painted in arabesque. The massive fauteuils and sofas, as also the drapery, were of crimson satin with a profusion of gilding. The ubiquitous portrait of the Emperor was the only picture, and was the same you see everywhere. This crimson room had two doors upon the side facing the three windows: The innermost opened into a large supper-room, in which a table was spread covered with the usual refreshments of European parties,—tea, ices, lemonade, and *et cetera*s,—and the other opened into a ball-room which is a sort of miniature of the ‘salle blanche’ of the Winter Palace, being white and gold, and very brilliantly lighted with ‘ormolu’ chandeliers filled with myriads of candles. This room (at least forty feet long by perhaps twenty-five) opened into a carpeted conservatory of about the same size, filled with orange-trees and japonica plants covered with fruit and flowers, arranged very gracefully into arbors, with luxurious seats under the pendent boughs, and with here and there a pretty marble statue gleaming through the green and glossy leaves. One might almost have imagined one’s self in the ‘land of the cypress and myrtle’ instead of our actual whereabout upon the polar banks of the Neva. Wandering through these mimic groves, or reposing from the fatigues of the dance, was many a fair and graceful form, while the brilliantly lighted ballroom, filled with hundreds of exquisitely dressed women (for the Russian ladies, if not very pretty, are graceful, and make admirable toilettes), formed a dazzling contrast with the tempered light of the ‘Winter Garden.’ The conservatory opened into a library, and from the library you reach the antechamber, thus completing the ‘giro’ of one of the prettiest houses in St. Petersburg. I waltzed one waltz and quadrilled one quadrille, but it was hard work; and as the sole occupation of these parties is dancing and card-playing—-conversation apparently not being customary—they are to me not very attractive.”

He could not be happy alone, and there were good reasons against his being joined by his wife and children.

Page 3090

"With my reserved habits," he says, "it would take a great deal longer to become intimate here than to thaw the Baltic. I have only to 'knock that it shall be opened to me,' but that is just what I hate to do. . . . 'Man delights not me, no, nor woman neither.'"

Disappointed in his expectations, but happy in the thought of meeting his wife and children, he came back to his household to find it clad in mourning for the loss of its first-born.

VI.

1844. AEt. 30. *Letter to park Benjamin.—Political views and feelings*.

A letter to Mr. Park Benjamin, dated December 17, 1844, which has been kindly lent me by Mrs. Mary Lanman Douw of Poughkeepsie, gives a very complete and spirited account of himself at this period. He begins with a quiet, but tender reference to the death of his younger brother, Preble, one of the most beautiful youths seen or remembered among us, "a great favorite," as he says, "in the family and in deed with every one who knew him." He mentions the fact that his friends and near connections, the Stackpoles, are in Washington, which place he considers as exceptionally odious at the time when he is writing. The election of Mr. Polk as the opponent of Henry Clay gives him a discouraged feeling about our institutions. The question, he thinks, is now settled that a statesman can never again be called to administer the government of the country. He is almost if not quite in despair "because it is now proved that a man, take him for all in all, better qualified by intellectual power, energy and purity of character, knowledge of men, a great combination of personal qualities, a frank, high-spirited, manly bearing, keen sense of honor, the power of attracting and winning men, united with a vast experience in affairs, such as no man (but John Quincy Adams) now living has had and no man in this country can ever have again,—I say it is proved that a man better qualified by an extraordinary combination of advantages to administer the government than any man now living, or any man we can ever produce again, can be beaten by anybody. . . . . It has taken forty years of public life to prepare such a man for the Presidency, and the result is that he can be beaten by anybody,—Mr. Polk is anybody,—he is Mr. Quelconque."

I do not venture to quote the most burning sentences of this impassioned letter. It shows that Motley had not only become interested most profoundly in the general movements of parties, but that he had followed the course of political events which resulted in the election of Mr. Polk with careful study, and that he was already looking forward to the revolt of the slave States which occurred sixteen years later. The letter is full of fiery eloquence, now and then extravagant and even violent in expression, but throbbing with a generous heat which shows the excitable spirit

Page 3091

of a man who wishes to be proud of his country and does not wish to keep his temper when its acts make him ashamed of it. He is disgusted and indignant to the last degree at seeing “Mr. Quelconque” chosen over the illustrious statesman who was his favorite candidate. But all his indignation cannot repress a sense of humor which was one of his marked characteristics. After fatiguing his vocabulary with hard usage, after his unsparing denunciation of “the very dirty politics” which he finds mixed up with our popular institutions, he says,—it must be remembered that this was an offhand letter to one nearly connected with him,—

“All these things must in short, to use the energetic language of the Balm of Columbia advertisement, ’bring every generous thinking youth to that heavy sinking gloom which not even the loss of property can produce, but only the loss of hair, which brings on premature decay, causing many to shrink from being uncovered, and even to shun society, to avoid the jests and sneers of their acquaintances. The remainder of their lives is consequently spent in retirement.’”

He continues:—

“Before dropping the subject, and to show the perfect purity of my motives, I will add that I am not at all anxious about the legislation of the new government. I desired the election of Clay as a moral triumph, and because the administration of the country, at this moment of ten thousand times more importance than its legislation, would have been placed in pure, strong, and determined hands.”

Then comes a dash of that satirical and somewhat cynical way of feeling which he had not as yet outgrown. He had been speaking about the general want of attachment to the Union and the absence of the sentiment of loyalty as bearing on the probable dissolution of the Union.

> “I don’t mean to express any opinions on these matters,—I haven’t got any. It seems to me that the best way is to look at the hodge-podge, be good-natured if possible, and laugh,
>
> > ’As from the height of contemplation
> > We view the feeble joints men totter on.’

I began a tremendous political career during the election, having made two stump speeches of an hour and a half each,—after you went away,—one in Dedham town-hall and one in Jamaica Plain, with such eminent success that many invitations came to me from the surrounding villages, and if I had continued in active political life I might have risen to be vote-distributor, or fence-viewer, or selectman, or hog-reeve, or something of the kind.”

The letter from which the above passages are quoted gives the same portrait of the writer, only seen in profile, as it were, which we have already seen drawn in full face in the story of “Morton’s Hope.” It is charged with that ‘saeva indignatio’ which at times verges on misanthropic contempt for its objects, not unnatural to a high-spirited

Page 3092

young man who sees his lofty ideals confronted with the ignoble facts which strew the highways of political life. But we can recognize real conviction and the deepest feeling beneath his scornful rhetoric and his bitter laugh. He was no more a mere dilettante than Swift himself, but now and then in the midst of his most serious thought some absurd or grotesque image will obtrude itself, and one is reminded of the lines on the monument of Gay rather than of the fierce epitaph of the Dean of Saint Patrick's.

VII.

1845-1847. AEt. 31-33.

First historical and critical essays.—*Peter the great*.—*Novels of Balzac*.—*Polity of the puritans*.

Mr. Motley's first serious effort in historical composition was an article of fifty pages in "The North American Review" for October, 1845. This was nominally a notice of two works, one on Russia, the other "A Memoir of the Life of Peter the Great." It is, however, a narrative rather than a criticism, a rapid, continuous, brilliant, almost dramatic narrative. If there had been any question as to whether the young novelist who had missed his first mark had in him the elements which might give him success as an author, this essay would have settled the question. It shows throughout that the writer has made a thorough study of his subject, but it is written with an easy and abundant, yet scholarly freedom, not as if he were surrounded by his authorities and picking out his material piece by piece, but rather as if it were the overflow of long-pursued and well-remembered studies recalled without effort and poured forth almost as a recreation.

As he betrayed or revealed his personality in his first novel, so in this first effort in another department of literature he showed in epitome his qualities as a historian and a biographer. The hero of his narrative makes his entrance at once in his character as the shipwright of Saardam, on the occasion of a visit of the great Duke of Marlborough. The portrait instantly arrests attention. His ideal personages had been drawn in such a sketchy way, they presented so many imperfectly harmonized features, that they never became real, with the exception, of course, of the story-teller himself. But the vigor with which the presentment of the imperial ship-carpenter, the sturdy, savage, eager, fiery Peter, was given in the few opening sentences, showed the movement of the hand, the glow of the color, that were in due time to display on a broader canvas the full-length portraits of William the Silent and of John of Barneveld. The style of the whole article is rich, fluent, picturesque, with light touches of humor here and there, and perhaps a trace or two of youthful jauntiness, not quite as yet outgrown. His illustrative poetical quotations are mostly from Shakespeare,—from Milton and Byron also in a passage or

two,—and now and then one is reminded that he is not unfamiliar with Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus" and the "French Revolution" of the same unmistakable writer, more perhaps by the way in which phrases borrowed from other authorities are set in the text than by any more important evidence of unconscious imitation.

Page 3093

The readers who had shaken their heads over the unsuccessful story of “Morton’s Hope” were startled by the appearance of this manly and scholarly essay. This young man, it seemed, had been studying,—studying with careful accuracy, with broad purpose. He could paint a character with the ruddy life-blood coloring it as warmly as it glows in the cheeks of one of Van der Helst’s burgomasters. He could sweep the horizon in a wide general outlook, and manage his perspective and his lights and shadows so as to place and accent his special subject with its due relief and just relations. It was a sketch, or rather a study for a larger picture, but it betrayed the hand of a master. The feeling of many was that expressed in the words of Mr. Longfellow in his review of the “Twice-Told Tales” of the unknown young writer, Nathaniel Hawthorne: “When a new star rises in the heavens, people gaze after it for a season with the naked eye, and with such telescopes as they may find. . . . This star is but newly risen; and erelong the observation of numerous star-gazers, perched up on arm-chairs and editor’s tables, will inform the world of its magnitude and its place in the heaven of”—not poetry in this instance, but that serene and unclouded region of the firmament where shine unchanging the names of Herodotus and Thucydides. Those who had always believed in their brilliant schoolmate and friend at last felt themselves justified in their faith. The artist that sent this unframed picture to be hung in a corner of the literary gallery was equal to larger tasks. There was but one voice in the circle that surrounded the young essayist. He must redeem his pledge, he can and will redeem it, if he will only follow the bent of his genius and grapple with the heroic labor of writing a great history.

And this was the achievement he was already meditating.

In the mean time he was studying history for its facts and principles, and fiction for its scenery and portraits. In “The North American Review” for July, 1847, is a long and characteristic article on Balzac, of whom he was an admirer, but with no blind worship. The readers of this great story-teller, who was so long in obtaining recognition, who “made twenty assaults upon fame and had forty books killed under him” before he achieved success, will find his genius fully appreciated and fairly weighed in this discriminating essay. A few brief extracts will show its quality.

“Balzac is an artist, and only an artist. In his tranquil, unimpassioned, remorseless diagnosis of morbid phenomena, in his cool method of treating the morbid anatomy of the heart, in his curiously accurate dissection of the passions, in the patient and painful attention with which, stethoscope in hand, finger on pulse, eye everywhere, you see him watching every symptom, alive to every sound and every breath, and in the scientific accuracy with which he portrays the phenomena which have been the subject of his investigation,—in

Page 3094

all this calm and conscientious study of nature he often reminds us of Goethe. Balzac, however, is only an artist . . . He is neither moral nor immoral, but a calm and profound observer of human society and human passions, and a minute, patient, and powerful delineator of scenes and characters in the world before his eyes. His readers must moralize for themselves. . . . It is, perhaps, his defective style more than anything else which will prevent his becoming a classic, for style above all other qualities seems to embalm for posterity. As for his philosophy, his principles, moral, political, or social, we repeat that he seems to have none whatever. He looks for the picturesque and the striking. He studies sentiments and sensations from an artistic point of view. He is a physiognomist, a physiologist, a bit of an anatomist, a bit of a mesmerist, a bit of a geologist, a Flemish painter, an upholsterer, a micrological, misanthropical, sceptical philosopher; but he is no moralist, and certainly no reformer."

Another article contributed by Mr. Motley to "The North American Review" is to be found in the number for October, 1849. It is nominally a review of Talvi's (Mrs. Robinson's) "Geschichte der Colonisation von New England," but in reality an essay on the Polity of the Puritans,—an historical disquisition on the principles of self-government evolved in New England, broad in its views, eloquent in its language. Its spirit is thoroughly American, and its estimate of the Puritan character is not narrowed by the nearsighted liberalism which sees the past in the pitiless light of the present,—which looks around at high noon and finds fault with early dawn for its long and dark shadows. Here is a sentence or two from the article:—

"With all the faults of the system devised by the Puritans, it was a practical system. With all their foibles, with all their teasing, tyrannical, and arbitrary notions, the Pilgrims were lovers of liberty as well as sticklers for authority. . . . Nowhere can a better description of liberty be found than that given by Winthrop, in his defence of himself before the General Court on a charge of arbitrary conduct. 'Nor would I have you mistake your own liberty,' he says. 'There is a freedom of doing what we list, without regard to law or justice; this liberty is indeed inconsistent with authority; but civil, moral, and federal liberty consists in every man's enjoying his property and having the benefit of the laws of his country; which is very consistent with a due subjection to the civil magistrate.' . . ."We enjoy an inestimable advantage in America. One can be a republican, a democrat, without being a radical. A radical, one who would uproot, is a man whose trade is dangerous to society. Here is but little to uproot. The trade cannot flourish. All classes are conservative by necessity, for none can wish to change the structure of our polity. . .

Page 3095

“The country without a past cannot be intoxicated by visions of the past of other lands. Upon this absence of the past it seems to us that much of the security of our institutions depends. Nothing interferes with the development of what is now felt to be the true principle of government, the will of the people legitimately expressed. To establish that great truth, nothing was to be torn down, nothing to be uprooted. It grew up in New England out of the seed unconsciously planted by the first Pilgrims, was not crushed out by the weight of a thousand years of error spread over the whole continent, and the Revolution was proclaimed and recognized.”

VIII.

1847-1849. AEt. 33-35.

Joseph Lewis Stackpole, *the friend of Motley*. *His sudden death*.—*Motley in the Massachusetts house of representatives*.—*Second novel*, “*Merry-mount*, A *romance of the Massachusetts colony*.”

The intimate friendships of early manhood are not very often kept up among our people. The eager pursuit of fortune, position, office, separates young friends, and the indoor home life imprisons them in the domestic circle so generally that it is quite exceptional to find two grown men who are like brothers,—or rather unlike most brothers, in being constantly found together. An exceptional instance of such a more than fraternal relation was seen in the friendship of Mr. Motley and Mr. Joseph Lewis Stackpole. Mr. William Amory, who knew them both well, has kindly furnished me with some recollections, which I cannot improve by changing his own language.

“Their intimacy began in Europe, and they returned to this country in 1835. In 1837 they married sisters, and this cemented their intimacy, which continued to Stackpole’s death in 1847. The contrast in the temperament of the two friends—the one sensitive and irritable, and the other always cool and good-natured—only increased their mutual attachment to each other, and Motley’s dependence upon Stackpole. Never were two friends more constantly together or more affectionately fond of each other. As Stackpole was about eight years older than Motley, and much less impulsive and more discreet, his death was to his friend irreparable, and at the time an overwhelming blow.”

Mr. Stackpole was a man of great intelligence, of remarkable personal attractions, and amiable character. His death was a loss to Motley even greater than he knew, for he needed just such a friend, older, calmer, more experienced in the ways of the world, and above all capable of thoroughly understanding him and exercising a wholesome influence over his excitable nature without the seeming of a Mentor preaching to a Telemachus. Mr. Stackpole was killed by a railroad accident on the 20th of July, 1847.

Page 3096

In the same letter Mr. Amory refers to a very different experience in Mr. Motley's life,—-his one year of service as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, 1849.

"In respect to the one term during which he was a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, I can recall only one thing, to which he often and laughingly alluded. Motley, as the Chairman of the Committee on Education, made, as he thought, a most masterly report. It was very elaborate, and, as he supposed, unanswerable; but Boutwell, then a young man from some country town [Groton, Mass.], rose, and as Motley always said, demolished the report, so that he was unable to defend it against the attack. You can imagine his disgust, after the pains he had taken to render it unassailable, to find himself, as he expressed it, 'on his own dunghill,' ignominiously beaten. While the result exalted his opinion of the speech-making faculty of a Representative of a common school education, it at the same time cured him of any ambition for political promotion in Massachusetts."

To my letter of inquiry about this matter, Hon. George S. Boutwell courteously returned the following answer:—

Boston, October 14, 1878.

My dear sir,—As my memory serves me, Mr. Motley was a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives in the year 1847 1849. It may be well to consult the manual for that year. I recollect the controversy over the report from the Committee on Education.

His failure was not due to his want of faculty or to the vigor of his opponents.

In truth he espoused the weak side of the question and the unpopular one also. His proposition was to endow the colleges at the expense of the fund for the support of the common schools. Failure was inevitable. Neither Webster nor Choate could have carried the bill.

Very truly,
Geo. S. *Boutwell*.

No one could be more ready and willing to recognize his own failures than Motley. He was as honest and manly, perhaps I may say as sympathetic with the feeling of those about him, on this occasion, as was Charles Lamb, who, sitting with his sister in the front of the pit, on the night when his farce was damned at its first representation, gave way to the common feeling, and hissed and hooted lustily with the others around him. It was what might be expected from his honest and truthful nature, sometimes too severe in judging itself.

The commendation bestowed upon Motley's historical essays in "The North American Review" must have gone far towards compensating him for the ill success of his earlier venture. It pointed clearly towards the field in which he was to gather his laurels. And it was in the year following the publication of the first essay, or about that time (1846), that he began collecting materials for a history of Holland. Whether to tell the story of men that have lived and of events that have happened, or to create the characters and invent the incidents of an imaginary tale be the higher task, we need not stop to discuss. But the young author was just now like the great actor in Sir Joshua's picture, between the allurements of Thalia and Melpomene, still doubtful whether he was to be a romancer or a historian.

Page 3097

The tale of which the title is given at the beginning of this section had been written several years before the date of its publication. It is a great advance in certain respects over the first novel, but wants the peculiar interest which belonged to that as a partially autobiographical memoir. The story is no longer disjointed and impossible. It is carefully studied in regard to its main facts. It has less to remind us of “Vivian Grey” and “Pelham,” and more that recalls “Woodstock” and “Kenilworth.” The personages were many of them historical, though idealized; the occurrences were many of them such as the record authenticated; the localities were drawn largely from nature. The story betrays marks of haste or carelessness in some portions, though others are elaborately studied. His preface shows that the reception of his first book had made him timid and sensitive about the fate of the second, and explains and excuses what might be found fault with, to disarm the criticism he had some reason to fear.

That old watch-dog of our American literature, “The North American Review,” always ready with lambent phrases in stately “Articles” for native talent of a certain pretension, and wagging its appendix of “Critical Notices” kindly at the advent of humbler merit, treated “Merry-Mount” with the distinction implied in a review of nearly twenty pages. This was a great contrast to the brief and slighting notice of “Morton’s Hope.” The reviewer thinks the author’s descriptive power wholly exceeds his conception of character and invention of circumstances.

“He dwells, perhaps, too long and fondly upon his imagination of the landscape as it was before the stillness of the forest had been broken by the axe of the settler; but the picture is so finely drawn, with so much beauty of language and purity of sentiment, that we cannot blame him for lingering upon the scene. . . . The story is not managed with much skill, but it has variety enough of incident and character, and is told with so much liveliness that few will be inclined to lay it down before reaching the conclusion. . . . The writer certainly needs practice in elaborating the details of a consistent and interesting novel; but in many respects he is well qualified for the task, and we shall be glad to meet him again on the half-historical ground he has chosen. His present work, certainly, is not a fair specimen of what he is able to accomplish, and its failure, or partial success, ought only to inspirit him for further effort.”

The “half-historical ground” he had chosen had already led him to the entrance into the broader domain of history. The “further effort” for which he was to be inspirited had already begun. He had been for some time, as was before mentioned, collecting materials for the work which was to cast all his former attempts into the kindly shadow of oblivion, save when from time to time the light of his brilliant after success is thrown upon them to illustrate the path by which it was at length attained.

Page 3098

IX.

1850. AEt. 36. *Plan of* A *history*.—*Letters*.

The reputation of Mr. Prescott was now coextensive with the realm of scholarship. The histories of the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella and of the conquest of Mexico had met with a reception which might well tempt the ambition of a young writer to emulate it, but which was not likely to be awarded to any second candidate who should enter the field in rivalry with the great and universally popular historian. But this was the field on which Mr. Motley was to venture.

After he had chosen the subject of the history he contemplated, he found that Mr. Prescott was occupied with a kindred one, so that there might be too near a coincidence between them. I must borrow from Mr. Ticknor's beautiful life of Prescott the words which introduce a letter of Motley's to Mr. William Amory, who has kindly allowed me also to make use of it.

"The moment, therefore, that he [Mr. Motley] was aware of this condition of things, and the consequent possibility that there might be an untoward interference in their plans, he took the same frank and honorable course with Mr. Prescott that Mr. Prescott had taken in relation to Mr. Irving, when he found that they had both been contemplating a 'History of the Conquest of Mexico.' The result was the same. Mr. Prescott, instead of treating the matter as an interference, earnestly encouraged Mr. Motley to go on, and placed at his disposition such of the books in his library as could be most useful to him. How amply and promptly he did it, Mr. Motley's own account will best show. It is in a letter dated at Rome, 26th February, 1859, the day he heard of Mr. Prescott's death, and was addressed to his intimate friend, Mr. William Amory, of Boston, Mr. Prescott's much-loved brother-in-law.""It seems to me but as yesterday," Mr. Motley writes, "though it must be now twelve years ago, that I was talking with our ever-lamented friend Stackpole about my intention of writing a history upon a subject to which I have since that time been devoting myself. I had then made already some general studies in reference to it, without being in the least aware that Prescott had the intention of writing the 'History of Philip the Second.' Stackpole had heard the fact, and that large preparations had already been made for the work, although 'Peru' had not yet been published. I felt naturally much disappointed. I was conscious of the immense disadvantage to myself of making my appearance, probably at the same time, before the public, with a work not at all similar in plan to 'Philip the Second,' but which must of necessity traverse a portion of the same ground."My first thought was inevitably, as it were, only of myself. It seemed to me that I had nothing to do but to abandon at once a cherished dream, and probably to renounce authorship.

Page 3099

For I had not first made up my mind to write a history, and then cast about to take up a subject. My subject had taken me up, drawn me on, and absorbed me into itself. It was necessary for me, it seemed, to write the book I had been thinking much of, even if it were destined to fall dead from the press, and I had no inclination or interest to write any other. When I had made up my mind accordingly, it then occurred to me that Prescott might not be pleased that I should come forward upon his ground. It is true that no announcement of his intentions had been made, and that he had not, I believe, even commenced his preliminary studies for Philip. At the same time I thought it would be disloyal on my part not to go to him at once, confer with him on the subject, and if I should find a shadow of dissatisfaction on his mind at my proposition, to abandon my plan altogether.“I had only the slightest acquaintance with him at that time. I was comparatively a young man, and certainly not entitled on any ground to more than the common courtesy which Prescott never could refuse to any one. But he received me with such a frank and ready and liberal sympathy, and such an open-hearted, guileless expansiveness, that I felt a personal affection for him from that hour. I remember the interview as if it had taken place yesterday. It was in his father’s house, in his own library, looking on the garden-house and garden,—honored father and illustrious son,—-alas! all numbered with the things that were! He assured me that he had not the slightest objection whatever to my plan, that he wished me every success, and that, if there were any books in his library bearing on my subject that I liked to use, they were entirely at my service. After I had expressed my gratitude for his kindness and cordiality, by which I had been in a very few moments set completely at ease, —so far as my fears of his disapprobation went,—I also very naturally stated my opinion that the danger was entirely mine, and that it was rather wilful of me thus to risk such a collision at my first venture, the probable consequence of which was utter shipwreck. I recollect how kindly and warmly he combated this opinion, assuring me that no two books, as he said, ever injured each other, and encouraging me in the warmest and most earnest manner to proceed on the course I had marked out for myself.“Had the result of that interview been different,—had he distinctly stated, or even vaguely hinted, that it would be as well if I should select some other topic, or had he only sprinkled me with the cold water of conventional and commonplace encouragement,—I should have gone from him with a chill upon my mind, and, no doubt, have laid down the pen at once; for, as I have already said, it was not that I cared about writing a history, but that I felt an inevitable impulse to write one particular history.“You know how kindly he always

Page 3100

spoke of and to me; and the generous manner in which, without the slightest hint from me, and entirely unexpected by me, he attracted the eyes of his hosts of readers to my forthcoming work, by so handsomely alluding to it in the Preface to his own, must be almost as fresh in your memory as it is in mine.“And although it seems easy enough for a man of world-wide reputation thus to extend the right hand of fellowship to an unknown and struggling aspirant, yet I fear that the history of literature will show that such instances of disinterested kindness are as rare as they are noble.”

It was not from any feeling that Mr. Motley was a young writer from whose rivalry he had nothing to apprehend. Mr. Amory says that Prescott expressed himself very decidedly to the effect that an author who had written such descriptive passages as were to be found in Mr. Motley’s published writings was not to be undervalued as a competitor by any one. The reader who will turn to the description of Charles River in the eighth chapter of the second volume of “Merry-Mount,” or of the autumnal woods in the sixteenth chapter of the same volume, will see good reason for Mr. Prescott’s appreciation of the force of the rival whose advent he so heartily and generously welcomed.

X.

1851-1856. AEt. 37-42. *Historical studies in Europe*.-*Letter from Brussels*.

After working for several years on his projected “History of the Dutch Republic,” he found that, in order to do justice to his subject, he must have recourse to the authorities to be found only in the libraries and state archives of Europe. In the year 1851 he left America with his family, to begin his task over again, throwing aside all that he had already done, and following up his new course of investigations at Berlin, Dresden, the Hague, and Brussels during several succeeding years. I do not know that I can give a better idea of his mode of life during this busy period, his occupations, his state of mind, his objects of interest outside of his special work, than by making the following extracts from a long letter to myself, dated Brussels, 20th November, 1853.

After some personal matters he continued:—

“I don’t really know what to say to you. I am in a town which, for aught I know, may be very gay. I don’t know a living soul in it. We have not a single acquaintance in the place, and we glory in the fact. There is something rather sublime in thus floating on a single spar in the wide sea of a populous, busy, fuming, fussy world like this. At any rate it is consonant to both our tastes. You may suppose, however, that I find it rather difficult to amuse my friends out of the incidents of so isolated an existence. Our daily career is very regular and monotonous. Our life is as stagnant as a Dutch canal. Not that I complain of it,—on the contrary,

Page 3101

the canal may be richly freighted with merchandise and be a short cut to the ocean of abundant and perpetual knowledge; but, at the same time, few points rise above the level of so regular a life, to be worthy of your notice. You must, therefore, allow me to meander along the meadows of commonplace. Don't expect anything of the impetuous and boiling style. We go it weak here. I don't know whether you were ever in Brussels. It is a striking, picturesque town, built up a steep promontory, the old part at the bottom, very dingy and mouldy, the new part at the top, very showy and elegant. Nothing can be more exquisite in its way than the grande place in the very heart of the city, surrounded with those toppling, zigzag, ten-storied buildings bedizened all over with ornaments and emblems so peculiar to the Netherlands, with the brocaded Hotel de Ville on one side, with its impossible spire rising some three hundred and seventy feet into the air and embroidered to the top with the delicacy of needle- work, sugarwork, spider-work, or what you will. I haunt this place because it is my scene, my theatre. Here were enacted so many deep tragedies, so many stately dramas, and even so many farces, which have been familiar to me so long that I have got to imagine myself invested with a kind of property in the place, and look at it as if it were merely the theatre with the coulisses, machinery, drapery, *etc*., for representing scenes which have long since vanished, and which no more enter the minds of the men and women who are actually moving across its pavements than if they had occurred in the moon. When I say that I knew no soul in Brussels I am perhaps wrong. With the present generation I am not familiar. 'En revanche,' the dead men of the place are my intimate friends. I am at home in any cemetery. With the fellows of the sixteenth century I am on the most familiar terms. Any ghost that ever flits by night across the moonlight square is at once hailed by me as a man and a brother. I call him by his Christian name at once. When you come out of this place, however, which, as I said, is in the heart of the town,—the antique gem in the modern setting,—you may go either up or down. If you go down, you will find yourself in the very nastiest complications of lanes and culs-de-sac possible, a dark entanglement of gin-shops, beer-houses, and hovels, through which charming valley dribbles the Senne (whence, I suppose, is derived Senna), the most nauseous little river in the world, which receives all the outpourings of all the drains and houses, and is then converted into beer for the inhabitants, all the many breweries being directly upon its edge. If you go up the hill instead of down, you come to an arrangement of squares, palaces, and gardens as trim and fashionable as you will find in Europe. Thus you see that our Cybele sits with her head crowned with very stately towers and her feet in a tub of very dirty water."My habits here for the present

Page 3102

year are very regular. I came here, having, as I thought, finished my work, or rather the first Part (something like three or four volumes, 8vo), but I find so much original matter here, and so many emendations to make, that I am ready to despair. However, there is nothing for it but to penelopize, pull to pieces, and stitch away again. Whatever may be the result of my labor, nobody can say that I have not worked like a brute beast,—but I don't care for the result. The labor is in itself its own reward and all I want. I go day after day to the archives here (as I went all summer at the Hague), studying the old letters and documents of the fifteenth century. Here I remain among my fellow-worms, feeding on these musty mulberry-leaves, out of which we are afterwards to spin our silk. How can you expect anything interesting from such a human cocoon? It is, however, not without its amusement in a mouldy sort of way, this reading of dead letters. It is something to read the real, bona fide signs-manual of such fellows as William of Orange, Count Egmont, Alexander Farnese, Philip *ii*., Cardinal Granvelle, and the rest of them. It gives a 'realizing sense,' as the Americans have it. . . . There are not many public resources of amusement in this place,—if we wanted them,—which we don't. I miss the Dresden Gallery very much, and it makes me sad to think that I shall never look at the face of the Sistine Madonna again,—that picture beyond all pictures in the world, in which the artist certainly did get to heaven and painted a face which was never seen on earth—so pathetic, so gentle, so passionless, so prophetic. . . . There are a few good Rubenses here,—but the great wealth of that master is in Antwerp. The great picture of the Descent from the Cross is free again, after having been ten years in the repairing room. It has come out in very good condition. What a picture? It seems to me as if I had really stood at the cross and seen Mary weeping on John's shoulder, and Magdalen receiving the dead body of the Saviour in her arms. Never was the grand tragedy represented in so profound and dramatic a manner. For it is not only in his color in which this man so easily surpasses all the world, but in his life-like, flesh-and-blood action,—the tragic power of his composition. And is it not appalling to think of the 'large constitution of this man,' when you reflect on the acres of canvas which he has covered? How inspiriting to see with what muscular, masculine vigor this splendid Fleming rushed in and plucked up drowning Art by the locks when it was sinking in the trashy sea of such creatures as the Luca Giordanos and Pietro Cortonas and the like. Well might Guido exclaim, 'The fellow mixes blood with his colors! . . . How providentially did the man come in and invoke living, breathing, moving men and women out of his canvas! Sometimes he is ranting and exaggerated, as are all men of great genius who wrestle with Nature so boldly. No doubt

Page 3103

his heroines are more expansively endowed than would be thought genteel in our country, where cryptogams are so much in fashion, nevertheless there is always something very tremendous about him, and very often much that is sublime, pathetic, and moving. I defy any one of the average amount of imagination and sentiment to stand long before the Descent from the Cross without being moved more nearly to tears than he would care to acknowledge. As for color, his effects are as sure as those of the sun rising in a tropical landscape. There is something quite genial in the cheerful sense of his own omnipotence which always inspired him. There are a few fine pictures of his here, and I go in sometimes of a raw, foggy morning merely to warm myself in the blaze of their beauty."

I have been more willing to give room to this description of Rubens's pictures and the effect they produced upon Motley, because there is a certain affinity between those sumptuous and glowing works of art and the prose pictures of the historian who so admired them. He was himself a colorist in language, and called up the image of a great personage or a splendid pageant of the past with the same affluence, the same rich vitality, that floods and warms the vast areas of canvas over which the full-fed genius of Rubens disported itself in the luxury of imaginative creation.

XI.

1856-1857. AEt. 42-43.

Publication of his first historical work, "*Rise of the Dutch republic*." —*Its reception*.—*Critical notices*.

The labor of ten years was at last finished. Carrying his formidable manuscript with him,—and how formidable the manuscript which melts down into three solid octavo volumes is, only writers and publishers know,—he knocked at the gate of that terrible fortress from which Lintot and Curll and Tonson looked down on the authors of an older generation. So large a work as the "History of the Rise of the Dutch Republic," offered for the press by an author as yet unknown to the British public, could hardly expect a warm welcome from the great dealers in literature as merchandise. Mr. Murray civilly declined the manuscript which was offered to him, and it was published at its author's expense by Mr. John Chapman. The time came when the positions of the first-named celebrated publisher and the unknown writer were reversed. Mr. Murray wrote to Mr. Motley asking to be allowed to publish his second great work, the "History of the United Netherlands," expressing at the same time his regret at what he candidly called his mistake in the first instance, and thus they were at length brought into business connection as well as the most agreeable and friendly relations. An American edition was published by the Harpers at the same time as the London one.

If the new work of the unknown author found it difficult to obtain a publisher, it was no sooner given to the public than it found an approving, an admiring, an enthusiastic world of readers, and a noble welcome at the colder hands of the critics.

Page 3104

“The Westminster Review” for April, 1856, had for its leading article a paper by Mr. Froude, in which the critic awarded the highest praise to the work of the new historian. As one of the earliest as well as one of the most important recognitions of the work, I quote some of its judgments.

“A history as complete as industry and genius can make it now lies before us of the first twenty years of the Revolt of the United Provinces; of the period in which those provinces finally conquered their independence and established the Republic of Holland. It has been the result of many years of silent, thoughtful, unobtrusive labor, and unless we are strangely mistaken, unless we are ourselves altogether unfit for this office of criticising which we have here undertaken, the book is one which will take its place among the finest histories in this or in any language. . . . All the essentials of a great writer Mr. Motley eminently possesses. His mind is broad, his industry unwearied. In power of dramatic description no modern historian, except perhaps Mr. Carlyle, surpasses him, and in analysis of character he is elaborate and distinct. His principles are those of honest love for all which is good and admirable in human character wherever he finds it, while he unaffectedly hates oppression, and despises selfishness with all his heart.”

After giving a slight analytical sketch of the series of events related in the history, Mr. Froude objects to only one of the historian’s estimates, that, namely, of the course of Queen Elizabeth.

“It is ungracious, however,” he says, “even to find so slight a fault with these admirable volumes. Mr. Motley has written without haste, with the leisurely composure of a master. . . . We now take our leave of Mr. Motley, desiring him only to accept our hearty thanks for these volumes, which we trust will soon take their place in every English library. Our quotations will have sufficed to show the ability of the writer. Of the scope and general character of his work we have given but a languid conception. The true merit of a great book must be learned from the book itself. Our part has been rather to select varied specimens of style and power. Of Mr. Motley’s antecedents we know nothing. If he has previously appeared before the public, his reputation has not crossed the Atlantic. It will not be so now. We believe that we may promise him as warm a welcome among ourselves as he will receive even in America; that his place will be at once conceded to him among the first historians in our common language.”

The faithful and unwearied Mr. Allibone has swept the whole field of contemporary criticism, and shown how wide and universal was the welcome accorded to the hitherto unknown author. An article headed “Prescott and Motley,” attributed to M. Guizot, which must have been translated, I suppose, from his own language, judging by its freedom from French idioms, is to be found in “The Edinburgh Review” for January, 1857. The praise, not unmingled with criticisms, which that great historian bestowed upon Motley is less significant than the fact that he superintended a translation of the “Rise of the Dutch Republic,” and himself wrote the Introduction to it.

Page 3105

A general chorus of approbation followed or accompanied these leading voices. The reception of the work in Great Britain was a triumph. On the Continent, in addition to the tribute paid to it by M. Guizot, it was translated into Dutch, into German, and into Russian. At home his reception was not less hearty. "The North American Review," which had set its foot on the semi-autobiographical medley which he called "Morton's Hope," which had granted a decent space and a tepid recognition to his "semi-historical" romance, in which he had already given the reading public a taste of his quality as a narrator of real events and a delineator of real personages,—this old and awe-inspiring New England and more than New England representative of the Fates, found room for a long and most laudatory article, in which the son of one of our most distinguished historians did the honors of the venerable literary periodical to the new-comer, for whom the folding-doors of all the critical headquarters were flying open as if of themselves. Mr. Allibone has recorded the opinions of some of our best scholars as expressed to him.

Dr. Lieber wrote a letter to Mr. Allibone in the strongest terms of praise. I quote one passage which in the light of after events borrows a cruel significance:—

"Congress and Parliament decree thanks for military exploits, —rarely for diplomatic achievements. If they ever voted their thanks for books,—and what deeds have influenced the course of human events more than some books?—Motley ought to have the thanks of our Congress; but I doubt not that he has already the thanks of every American who has read the work. It will leave its distinct mark upon the American mind."

Mr. Everett writes:—

"Mr. Motley's 'History of the Dutch Republic' is in my judgment a work of the highest merit. Unwearying research for years in the libraries of Europe, patience and judgment in arranging and digesting his materials, a fine historical tact, much skill in characterization, the perspective of narration, as it may be called, and a vigorous style unite to make it a very capital work, and place the name of Motley by the side of those of our great historical trio,—Bancroft, Irving, and Prescott."

Mr. Irving, Mr. Bancroft, Mr. Sumner, Mr. Hillard, united their voices in the same strain of commendation. Mr. Prescott, whose estimate of the new history is of peculiar value for obvious reasons, writes to Mr. Allibone thus:—

"The opinion of any individual seems superfluous in respect to a work on the merits of which the public both at home and abroad have pronounced so unanimous a verdict. As Motley's path crosses my own historic field, I may be thought to possess some advantage over most critics in my familiarity with the ground."However this may be, I can honestly bear my testimony to the extent of his researches and to the accuracy with which he has given the results

Page 3106

of them to the public. Far from making his book a mere register of events, he has penetrated deep below the surface and explored the cause of these events. He has carefully studied the physiognomy of the times and given finished portraits of the great men who conducted the march of the revolution. Every page is instinct with the love of freedom and with that personal knowledge of the working of free institutions which could alone enable him to do justice to his subject. We may congratulate ourselves that it was reserved for one of our countrymen to tell the story-better than it had yet been told—of this memorable revolution, which in so many of its features bears a striking resemblance to our own."

The public welcomed the work as cordially as the critics. Fifteen thousand copies had already been sold in London in 1857. In America it was equally popular. Its author saw his name enrolled by common consent among those of the great writers of his time. Europe accepted him, his country was proud to claim him, scholarship set its jealously guarded seal upon the result of his labors, the reading world, which had not cared greatly for his stories, hung in delight over a narrative more exciting than romances; and the lonely student, who had almost forgotten the look of living men in the solitude of archives haunted by dead memories, found himself suddenly in the full blaze of a great reputation.

XII.

1856-1857. AEt. 42-43. *Visit to America*.—*Residence in Boylston place*.

He visited this country in 1856, and spent the winter of 1856-57 in Boston, living with his family in a house in Boylston Place. At this time I had the pleasure of meeting him often, and of seeing the changes which maturity, success, the opening of a great literary and social career, had wrought in his character and bearing. He was in every way greatly improved; the interesting, impulsive youth had ripened into a noble manhood. Dealing with great themes, his own mind had gained their dignity. Accustomed to the company of dead statesmen and heroes, his own ideas had risen to a higher standard. The flattery of society had added a new grace to his natural modesty. He was now a citizen of the world by his reputation; the past was his province, in which he was recognized as a master; the idol's pedestal was ready for him, but he betrayed no desire to show himself upon it.

XIII.

1858-1860. AEt. 44-46. *Return to England*.—*Social relations*.—*Lady* HARCOURT'S *letter*.

Page 3107

During the years spent in Europe in writing his first history, from 1851 to 1856, Mr. Motley had lived a life of great retirement and simplicity, devoting himself to his work and to the education of his children, to which last object he was always ready to give the most careful supervision. He was as yet unknown beyond the circle of his friends, and he did not seek society. In this quiet way he had passed the two years of residence in Dresden, the year divided between Brussels and the Hague, and a very tranquil year spent at Vevay on the Lake of Geneva. His health at this time was tolerably good, except for nervous headaches, which frequently recurred and were of great severity. His visit to England with his manuscript in search of a publisher has already been mentioned.

In 1858 he revisited England. His fame as a successful author was there before him, and he naturally became the object of many attentions. He now made many acquaintances who afterwards became his kind and valued friends. Among those mentioned by his daughter, Lady Harcourt, are Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Carlisle, Lady William Russell, Lord and Lady Palmerston, Dean Milman, with many others. The following winter was passed in Rome, among many English and American friends.

“In the course of the next summer,” his daughter writes to me, “we all went to England, and for the next two years, marked chiefly by the success of the ‘United Netherlands,’ our social life was most agreeable and most interesting. He was in the fulness of his health and powers; his works had made him known in intellectual society, and I think his presence, on the other hand, increased their effects. As no one knows better than you do, his belief in his own country and in its institutions at their best was so passionate and intense that it was a part of his nature, yet his refined and fastidious tastes were deeply gratified by the influences of his life in England, and the spontaneous kindness which he received added much to his happiness. At that time Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister; the weekly receptions at Cambridge House were the centre of all that was brilliant in the political and social world, while Lansdowne House, Holland House, and others were open to the ‘sommites’ in all branches of literature, science, rank, and politics. . . . It was the last year of Lord Macaulay’s life, and as a few out of many names which I recall come Dean Milman, Mr. Froude (whose review of the ‘Dutch Republic’ in the ‘Westminster’ was one of the first warm recognitions it ever received), the Duke and Duchess of Argyll, Sir William Stirling Maxwell, then Mr. Stirling of Keir, the Sheridan family in its different brilliant members, Lord Wensleydale, and many more.”

There was no society to which Motley would not have added grace and attraction by his presence, and to say that he was a welcome guest in the best houses of England is only saying that these houses are always open to those whose abilities, characters, achievements, are commended to the circles that have the best choice by the personal gifts which are nature’s passport everywhere.

Page 3108

XIV.

1859. AEt. 45.

Letter to Mr. Francis H. *Underwood.—Plan of Mr. Motley's historical works.—Second great work*, "*History of the united Netherlands*."

I am enabled by the kindness of Mr. Francis H. Underwood to avail myself of a letter addressed to him by Mr. Motley in the year before the publication of this second work, which gives us an insight into his mode of working and the plan he proposed to follow. It begins with an allusion which recalls a literary event interesting to many of his American friends.

Rome, March 4, 1859.

F. H. *Underwood*, ESQ.

My dear Sir,—. . . I am delighted to hear of the great success of "The Atlantic Monthly." In this remote region I have not the chance of reading it as often as I should like, but from the specimens which I have seen I am quite sure it deserves its wide circulation. A serial publication, the contents of which are purely original and of such remarkable merit, is a novelty in our country, and I am delighted to find that it has already taken so prominent a position before the reading world. . .

> The whole work [his history], of which the three volumes already published form a part, will be called "The Eighty Years' War for Liberty."
>
> Epoch I. is the Rise of the Dutch Republic.
>
> Epoch *ii*. Independence Achieved. From the Death of William the Silent till the Twelve Years' Truce. 1584-1609.
>
> Epoch *iii*. Independence Recognized. From the Twelve Years' Truce to the Peace of Westphalia. 1609-1648.

My subject is a very vast one, for the struggle of the United Provinces with Spain was one in which all the leading states of Europe were more or less involved. After the death of William the Silent, the history assumes world-wide proportions. Thus the volume which I am just about terminating . . . is almost as much English history as Dutch. The Earl of Leicester, very soon after the death of Orange, was appointed governor of the provinces, and the alliance between the two countries almost amounted to a political union. I shall try to get the whole of the Leicester administration, terminating with the grand drama of the Invincible Armada, into one volume; but I doubt,

my materials are so enormous. I have been personally very hard at work, nearly two years, ransacking the British State Paper Office, the British Museum, and the Holland archives, and I have had two copyists constantly engaged in London, and two others at the Hague. Besides this, I passed the whole of last winter at Brussels, where, by special favor of the Belgian Government, I was allowed to read what no one else has ever been permitted to see,—the great mass of copies

Page 3109

taken by that government from the Simancas archives, a translated epitome of which has been published by Gachard. This correspondence reaches to the death of Philip *ii*., and is of immense extent and importance. Had I not obtained leave to read the invaluable and, for my purpose, indispensable documents at Brussels, I should have gone to Spain, for they will not be published these twenty years, and then only in a translated and excessively abbreviated and unsatisfactory form. I have read the whole of this correspondence, and made very copious notes of it. In truth, I devoted three months of last winter to that purpose alone.The materials I have collected from the English archives are also extremely important and curious. I have hundreds of interesting letters never published or to be published, by Queen Elizabeth, Burghley, Walsingham, Sidney, Drake, Willoughby, Leicester, and others. For the whole of that portion of my subject in which Holland and England were combined into one whole, to resist Spain in its attempt to obtain the universal empire, I have very abundant collections. For the history of the United Provinces is not at all a provincial history. It is the history of European liberty. Without the struggle of Holland and England against Spain, all Europe might have been Catholic and Spanish. It was Holland that saved England in the sixteenth century, and, by so doing, secured the triumph of the Reformation, and placed the independence of the various states of Europe upon a sure foundation. Of course, the materials collected by me at the Hague are of great importance. As a single specimen, I will state that I found in the archives there an immense and confused mass of papers, which turned out to be the autograph letters of Olden Barneveld during the last few years of his life; during, in short, the whole of that most important period which preceded his execution. These letters are in such an intolerable handwriting that no one has ever attempted to read them. I could read them only imperfectly myself, and it would have taken me a very long time to have acquired the power to do so; but my copyist and reader there is the most patient and indefatigable person alive, and he has quite mastered the handwriting, and he writes me that they are a mine of historical wealth for me. I shall have complete copies before I get to that period, one of signal interest, and which has never been described. I mention these matters that you may see that my work, whatever its other value may be, is built upon the only foundation fit for history,—original contemporary documents. These are all unpublished. Of course, I use the contemporary historians and pamphleteers,—Dutch, Spanish, French, Italian, German, and English,—but the most valuable of my sources are manuscript ones. I have said the little which I have said in order to vindicate the largeness of the subject. The kingdom of Holland is a small power now, but

Page 3110

the Eighty Years' War, which secured the civil and religious independence of the Dutch Commonwealth and of Europe, was the great event of that whole age.The whole work will therefore cover a most remarkable epoch in human history, from the abdication of Charles Fifth to the Peace of Westphalia, at which last point the political and geographical arrangements of Europe were established on a permanent basis,—in the main undisturbed until the French Revolution. . . .I will mention that I received yesterday a letter from the distinguished M. Guizot, informing me that the first volume of the French translation, edited by him, with an introduction, has just been published. The publication was hastened in consequence of the appearance of a rival translation at Brussels. The German translation is very elegantly and expensively printed in handsome octavos; and the Dutch translation, under the editorship of the archivist general of Holland, Bakhuyzen v. d. Brink, is enriched with copious notes and comments by that distinguished scholar.There are also three different piratical reprints of the original work at Amsterdam, Leipzig, and London. I must add that I had nothing to do with the translation in any case. In fact, with the exception of M. Guizot, no one ever obtained permission of me to publish translations, and I never knew of the existence of them until I read of it in the journals. . . . I forgot to say that among the collections already thoroughly examined by me is that portion of the Simancas archives still retained in the Imperial archives of France. I spent a considerable time in Paris for the purpose of reading these documents. There are many letters of Philip *ii*. there, with apostilles by his own hand. . . . I would add that I am going to pass this summer at Venice for the purpose of reading and procuring copies from the very rich archives of that Republic, of the correspondence of their envoys in Madrid, London, and Brussels during the epoch of which I am treating.

I am also not without hope of gaining access to the archives of the Vatican here, although there are some difficulties in the way.

With kind regards . . .
I remain very truly yours,
J. L. *Motley*.

XV.

1860. *At*. 46.

Publication of the first two volumes of the "*History of the united Netherlands*."—*Their reception*.

We know something of the manner in which Mr. Motley collected his materials. We know the labors, the difficulties, the cost of his toils among the dusty records of the

past. What he gained by the years he spent in his researches is so well stated by himself that I shall borrow his own words:—

Page 3111

“Thanks to the liberality of many modern governments of Europe, the archives where the state secrets of the buried centuries have so long mouldered are now open to the student of history. To him who has patience and industry, many mysteries are thus revealed which no political sagacity or critical acumen could have divined. He leans over the shoulder of Philip the Second at his writing-table, as the King spells patiently out, with cipher-key in hand, the most concealed hieroglyphics of Parma, or Guise, or Mendoza. He reads the secret thoughts of ‘Fabius’ [Philip *ii*.] as that cunctative Roman scrawls his marginal apostilles on each dispatch; he pries into all the stratagems of Camillus, Hortensius, Mucius, Julius, Tullius, and the rest of those ancient heroes who lent their names to the diplomatic masqueraders of the sixteenth century; he enters the cabinet of the deeply pondering Burghley, and takes from the most private drawer the memoranda which record that minister’s unutterable doubtings; he pulls from the dressing-gown folds of the stealthy, soft-gliding Walsingham the last secret which he has picked from the Emperor’s pigeon-holes or the Pope’s pocket, and which not Hatton, nor Buckhurst, nor Leicester, nor the Lord Treasurer is to see,—nobody but Elizabeth herself; he sits invisible at the most secret councils of the Nassaus and Barneveld and Buys, or pores with Farnese over coming victories and vast schemes of universal conquest; he reads the latest bit of scandal, the minutest characteristic of king or minister, chronicled by the gossiping Venetians for the edification of the Forty; and after all this prying and eavesdropping, having seen the cross-purposes, the bribings, the windings in the dark, he is not surprised if those who were systematically deceived did not always arrive at correct conclusions.”

The fascination of such a quest is readily conceivable. A drama with real characters, and the spectator at liberty to go behind the scenes and look upon and talk with the kings and queens between the acts; to examine the scenery, to handle the properties, to study the “make up” of the imposing personages of full-dress histories; to deal with them all as Thackeray has done with the Grand Monarque in one of his caustic sketches,—-this would be as exciting, one might suppose, as to sit through a play one knows by heart at Drury Lane or the Theatre Francais, and might furnish occupation enough to the curious idler who was only in search of entertainment. The mechanical obstacles of half-illegible manuscript, of antiquated forms of speech, to say nothing of the intentional obscurities of diplomatic correspondence, stand, however, in the way of all but the resolute and unwearied scholar. These difficulties, in all their complex obstinacy, had been met and overcome by the heroic efforts, the concentrated devotion, of the new laborer in the unbroken fields of secret history.

Without stopping to take breath, as it were,—for his was a task ’de longue haleine,’—he proceeded to his second great undertaking.

Page 3112

The first portion—consisting of two volumes—of the “History of the United Netherlands” was published in the year 1860. It maintained and increased the reputation he had already gained by his first history.

“The London Quarterly Review” devoted a long article to it, beginning with this handsome tribute to his earlier and later volumes:—

“Mr. Motley’s ‘History of the Rise of the Dutch Republic’ is already known and valued for the grasp of mind which it displays, for the earnest and manly spirit in which he has communicated the results of deep research and careful reflection. Again he appears before us, rich with the spoils of time, to tell the story of the United Netherlands from the time of William the Silent to the end of the eventful year of the Spanish Armada, and we still find him in every way worthy of this ‘great argument.’ Indeed, it seems to us that he proceeds with an increased facility of style, and with a more complete and easy command over his materials. These materials are indeed splendid, and of them most excellent use has been made. The English State Paper Office, the Spanish archives from Simancas, and the Dutch and Belgian repositories, have all yielded up their secrets; and Mr. Motley has enjoyed the advantage of dealing with a vast mass of unpublished documents, of which he has not failed to avail himself to an extent which places his work in the foremost rank as an authority for the period to which it relates. By means of his labor and his art we can sit at the council board of Philip and Elizabeth, we can read their most private dispatches. Guided by his demonstration, we are enabled to dissect out to their ultimate issues the minutest ramifications of intrigue. We join in the amusement of the popular lampoon; we visit the prison-house; we stand by the scaffold; we are present at the battle and the siege. We can scan the inmost characters of men and can view them in their. habits as they lived.”

After a few criticisms upon lesser points of form and style, the writer says:—

“But the work itself must be read to appreciate the vast and conscientious industry bestowed upon it. His delineations are true and life-like, because they are not mere compositions written to please the ear, but are really taken from the facts and traits preserved in those authentic records to which he has devoted the labor of many years. Diligent and painstaking as the humblest chronicler, he has availed himself of many sources of information which have not been made use of by any previous historical writer. At the same time he is not oppressed by his materials, but has sagacity to estimate their real value, and he has combined with scholarly power the facts which they contain. He has rescued the story of the Netherlands from the domain of vague and general narrative, and has labored, with much judgment and ability, to unfold the ‘Belli causas, et vitia, et modos,’ and to assign to every man and every event their

Page 3113

own share in the contest, and their own influence upon its fortunes. We do not wonder that his earlier publication has been received as a valuable addition, not only to English, but to European literature."

One or two other contemporary criticisms may help us with their side lights. A critic in "The Edinburgh Review" for January, 1861, thinks that "Mr. Motley has not always been successful in keeping the graphic variety of his details subordinate to the main theme of his work." Still, he excuses the fault, as he accounts it, in consideration of the new light thrown on various obscure points of history, and—

"it is atoned for by striking merits, by many narratives of great events faithfully, powerfully, and vividly executed, by the clearest and most life-like conceptions of character, and by a style which, if it sacrifices the severer principles of composition to a desire to be striking and picturesque, is always vigorous, full of animation, and glowing with the genuine enthusiasm of the writer. Mr. Motley combines as an historian two qualifications seldom found united,—to great capacity for historical research he adds much power of pictorial representation. In his pages we find characters and scenes minutely set forth in elaborate and characteristic detail, which is relieved and heightened in effect by the artistic breadth of light and shade thrown across the broader prospects of history. In an American author, too, we must commend the hearty English spirit in which the book is written; and fertile as the present age has been in historical works of the highest merit, none of them can be ranked above these volumes in the grand qualities of interest, accuracy, and truth."

A writer in "Blackwood" (May, 1861) contrasts Motley with Froude somewhat in the way in which another critic had contrasted him with Prescott. Froude, he says, remembers that there are some golden threads in the black robe of the Dominican. Motley "finds it black and thrusts it farther into the darkness."

Every writer carries more or less of his own character into his book, of course. A great professor has told me that there is a personal flavor in the mathematical work of a man of genius like Poisson. Those who have known Motley and Prescott would feel sure beforehand that the impulsive nature of the one and the judicial serenity of the other would as surely betray themselves in their writings as in their conversation and in their every movement. Another point which the critic of "Blackwood's Magazine" has noticed has not been so generally observed: it is what he calls "a dashing, offhand, rattling style,"—"fast" writing. It cannot be denied that here and there may be detected slight vestiges of the way of writing of an earlier period of Motley's literary life, with which I have no reason to think the writer just mentioned was acquainted. Now and then I can trace in the turn of a phrase, in the twinkle of an

Page 3114

epithet, a faint reminiscence of a certain satirical levity, airiness, jauntiness, if I may hint such a word, which is just enough to remind me of those perilous shallows of his early time through which his richly freighted argosy had passed with such wonderful escape from their dangers and such very slight marks of injury. That which is pleasant gayety in conversation may be quite out of place in formal composition, and Motley's wit must have had a hard time of it struggling to show its spangles in the processions while his gorgeous tragedies went sweeping by.

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY.

A MEMOIR

By Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

Volume *ii*.

XVI.

1860-1866. AEt. 46-52.

Residence in England.—*Outbreak of the civil war*.—*Letters to the London* "*Times*."—*Visit to America*.—*Appointed minister to Austria*.—*Lady* HARCOURT'S *letter*.—*Miss Motley's memorandum*.

The winter of 1859-60 was passed chiefly at Oatlands Hotel, Walton-on-Thames. In 1860 Mr. Motley hired the house No. 31 Hertford Street, May Fair, London. He had just published the first two volumes of his "History of the Netherlands," and was ready for the further labors of its continuation, when the threats, followed by the outbreak, of the great civil contention in his native land brought him back from the struggles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the conflict of the nineteenth.

His love of country, which had grown upon him so remarkably of late years, would not suffer him to be silent at such a moment. All around him he found ignorance and prejudice. The quarrel was like to be prejudged in default of a champion of the cause which to him was that of Liberty and Justice. He wrote two long letters to the London "Times," in which he attempted to make clear to Englishmen and to Europe the nature and conditions of our complex system of government, the real cause of the strife, and the mighty issues at stake. Nothing could have been more timely, nothing more needed. Mr. William Everett, who was then in England, bears strong testimony to the effect these letters produced. Had Mr. Motley done no other service to his country, this alone would entitle him to honorable remembrance as among the first defenders of the

flag, which at that moment had more to fear from what was going on in the cabinet councils of Europe than from all the armed hosts that were gathering against it.

He returned to America in 1861, and soon afterwards was appointed by Mr. Lincoln Minister to Austria. Mr. Burlingame had been previously appointed to the office, but having been objected to by the Austrian Government for political reasons, the place unexpectedly left vacant was conferred upon Motley, who had no expectation of any diplomatic appointment when he left Europe. For some interesting particulars relating to his residence in Vienna I must refer to the communications addressed to me by his daughter, Lady Harcourt, and her youngest sister, and the letters I received from him while at the Austrian capital. Lady Harcourt writes:—

Page 3115

“He held the post for six years, seeing the civil war fought out and brought to a triumphant conclusion, and enjoying, as I have every reason to believe, the full confidence and esteem of Mr. Lincoln to the last hour of the President’s life. In the first dark years the painful interest of the great national drama was so all-absorbing that literary work was entirely put aside, and with his countrymen at home he lived only in the varying fortunes of the day, his profound faith and enthusiasm sustaining him and lifting him above the natural influence of a by no means sanguine temperament. Later, when the tide was turning and success was nearing, he was more able to work. His social relations during the whole period of his mission were of the most agreeable character. The society of Vienna was at that time, and I believe is still, the absolute reverse of that of England, where all claims to distinction are recognized and welcomed. There the old feudal traditions were still in full force, and diplomatic representatives admitted to the court society by right of official position found it to consist exclusively of an aristocracy of birth, sixteen quarterings of nobility being necessary to a right of presentation to the Emperor and Empress. The society thus constituted was distinguished by great charm and grace of manner, the exclusion of all outer elements not only limiting the numbers, but giving the ease of a family party within the charmed circle. On the other hand, larger interests suffered under the rigid exclusion of all occupations except the army, diplomacy, and court place. The intimacy among the different members of the society was so close that, beyond a courtesy of manner that never failed, the tendency was to resist the approach of any stranger as a ‘gene’. A single new face was instantly remarked and commented on in a Vienna saloon to an extent unknown in any other large capital. This peculiarity, however, worked in favor of the old resident. Kindliness of feeling increased with familiarity and grew into something better than acquaintance, and the parting with most sincere and affectionately disposed friends in the end was deeply felt on both sides. Those years were passed in a pleasant house in the Weiden Faubourg, with a large garden at the back, and I do not think that during this time there was one disagreeable incident in his relations to his colleagues, while in several cases the relations, agreeable with all, became those of close friendship. We lived constantly, of course, in diplomatic and Austrian society, and during the latter part of the time particularly his house was as much frequented and the centre of as many dancing and other receptions as any in the place. His official relations with the Foreign Office were courteous and agreeable, the successive Foreign Ministers during his stay being Count Richberg, Count Mensdorff, and Baron Beust. Austria was so far removed from any real contact with our own country that, though the interest

Page 3116

in our war may have been languid, they did not pretend to a knowledge which might have inclined them to controversy, while an instinct that we were acting as a constituted government against rebellion rather inclined them to sympathy. I think I may say that as he became known among them his keen patriotism and high sense of honor and truth were fully understood and appreciated, and that what he said always commanded a sympathetic hearing among men with totally different political ideas, but with chivalrous and loyal instincts to comprehend his own. I shall never forget his account of the terrible day when the news of Mr. Lincoln's death came. By some accident a rumor of it reached him first through a colleague. He went straight to the Foreign Office for news, hoping against hope, was received by Count Mensdorff, who merely came forward and laid his arm about his shoulder with an intense sympathy beyond words."

Miss Motley, the historian's youngest daughter, has added a note to her sister's communication:—

"During his residence in Vienna the most important negotiations which he had to carry on with the Austrian Government were those connected with the Mexican affair. Maximilian at one time applied to his brother the Emperor for assistance, and he promised to accede to his demand. Accordingly a large number of volunteers were equipped and had actually embarked at Trieste, when a dispatch from Seward arrived, instructing the American Minister to give notice to the Austrian Government that if the troops sailed for Mexico he was to leave Vienna at once. My father had to go at once to Count Mensdorff with these instructions, and in spite of the Foreign Minister being annoyed that the United States Government had not sooner intimated that this extreme course would be taken, the interview was quite amicable and the troops were not allowed to sail. We were in Vienna during the war in which Denmark fought alone against Austria and Prussia, and when it was over Bismarck came to Vienna to settle the terms of peace with the Emperor. He dined with us twice during his short stay, and was most delightful and agreeable. When he and my father were together they seemed to live over the youthful days they had spent together as students, and many were the anecdotes of their boyish frolics which Bismarck related."

XVII.

1861-1863. AEt. 47-49. *Letters from Vienna*.

Soon after Mr. Motley's arrival in Vienna I received a long letter from him, most of which relates to personal matters, but which contains a few sentences of interest to the general reader as showing his zealous labors, wherever he found himself, in behalf of the great cause then in bloody debate in his own country:

November 14, 1861.

Page 3117

. . . What can I say to you of cis-Atlantic things? I am almost ashamed to be away from home. You know that I had decided to remain, and had sent for my family to come to America, when my present appointment altered my plans. I do what good I can. I think I made some impression on Lord John Russell, with whom I spent two days soon after my arrival in England, and I talked very frankly and as strongly as I could to Palmerston, and I have had long conversations and correspondences with other leading men in England. I have also had an hour's [conversation] with Thouvenel in Paris. I hammered the Northern view into him as soundly as I could. For this year there will be no foreign interference with us. I don't anticipate it at any time, unless we bring it on ourselves by bad management, which I don't expect. Our fate is in our own hands, and Europe is looking on to see which side is strongest,—when it has made the discovery it will back it as also the best and the most moral. Yesterday I had my audience with the Emperor. He received me with much cordiality, and seemed interested in a long account which I gave him of our affairs. You may suppose I inculcated the Northern views. We spoke in his vernacular, and he asked me afterwards if I was a German. I mention this not from vanity, but because he asked it with earnestness, and as if it had a political significance. Of course I undeceived him. His appearance interested me, and his manner is very pleasing.

I continued to receive long and interesting letters from him at intervals during his residence as Minister at Vienna. Relating as they often did to public matters, about which he had private sources of information, his anxiety that they should not get into print was perfectly natural. As, however, I was at liberty to read his letters to others at my discretion, and as many parts of these letters have an interest as showing how American affairs looked to one who was behind the scenes in Europe, I may venture to give some extracts without fear of violating the spirit of his injunctions, or of giving offence to individuals. The time may come when his extended correspondence can be printed in full with propriety, but it must be in a future year and after it has passed into the hands of a younger generation. Meanwhile these few glimpses at his life and records of his feelings and opinions will help to make the portrait of the man we are studying present itself somewhat more clearly.

*Legation*of *the* U. S. A., *Vienna*, January 14, 1862.

My dear Holmes,—I have two letters of yours, November 29 and December 17, to express my thanks for. It is quite true that it is difficult for me to write with the same feeling that inspires you, —that everything around the inkstand within a radius of a thousand miles is full of deepest interest to writer and reader. I don't even intend to try to

Page 3118

amuse you with Vienna matters. What is it to you that we had a very pleasant dinner-party last week at Prince Esterhazy's, and another this week at Prince Liechtenstein's, and that to-morrow I am to put on my cocked hat and laced coat to make a visit to her Imperial Majesty, the Empress Mother, and that to-night there is to be the first of the assembly balls, the Vienna Almack's, at which—I shall be allowed to absent myself altogether?It strikes me that there is likely to be left a fair field for us a few months longer, say till midsummer. The Trent affair I shall not say much about, except to state that I have always been for giving up the prisoners. I was awfully afraid, knowing that the demand had gone forth,—

"Send us your prisoners or you'll hear of it,"

that the answer would have come back in the Hotspur vein—

'And if the Devil come and roar for them,
We will not send them."

The result would have been most disastrous, for in order to secure a most trifling advantage,—that of keeping Mason and Slidell at Fort Warren a little longer,—we should have turned our backs on all the principles maintained by us when neutral, and should have been obliged to accept a war at an enormous disadvantage. . . .But I hardly dared to hope that we should have obtained such a victory as we have done. To have disavowed the illegal transaction at once,—before any demand came from England,—to have placed that disavowal on the broad ground of principle which we have always cherished, and thus with a clear conscience, and to our entire honor, to have kept ourselves clear from a war which must have given the Confederacy the invincible alliance of England,—was exactly what our enemies in Europe did not suppose us capable of doing. But we have done it in the handsomest manner, and there is not one liberal heart in this hemisphere that is not rejoiced, nor one hater of us and of our institutions that is not gnashing his teeth with rage.

The letter of ten close pages from which I have quoted these passages is full of confidential information, and contains extracts from letters of leading statesmen. If its date had been 1762, I might feel authorized in disobeying its injunctions of privacy. I must quote one other sentence, as it shows his animus at that time towards a distinguished statesman of whom he was afterwards accused of speaking in very hard terms by an obscure writer whose intent was to harm him. In speaking of the Trent affair, Mr. Motley says: "The English premier has been foiled by our much maligned Secretary of State, of whom, on this occasion at least, one has the right to say, with Sir Henry Wotton,—

'His armor was his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill.'"

“He says at the close of this long letter:

Page 3119

'I wish I could bore you about something else but American politics. But there is nothing else worth thinking of in the world. All else is leather and prunella. We are living over again the days of the Dutchmen or the seventeenth-century Englishmen.'"

My next letter, of fourteen closely written pages, was of similar character to the last. Motley could think of nothing but the great conflict. He was alive to every report from America, listening too with passionate fears or hopes, as the case might be, to the whispers not yet audible to the world which passed from lip to lip of the statesmen who were watching the course of events from the other side of the Atlantic with the sweet complacency of the looker-on of Lucretius; too often rejoicing in the storm that threatened wreck to institutions and an organization which they felt to be a standing menace to the established order of things in their older communities.

A few extracts from this very long letter will be found to have a special interest from the time at which they were written.

Legation of U. S. A., *Vienna*, February 26, 1862.

My dear Holmes,—. . . I take great pleasure in reading your prophecies, and intend to be just as free in hazarding my own, for, as you say, our mortal life is but a string of guesses at the future, and no one but an idiot would be discouraged at finding himself sometimes far out in his calculations. If I find you signally right in any of your predictions, be sure that I will congratulate and applaud. If you make mistakes, you shall never hear of them again, and I promise to forget them. Let me ask the same indulgence from you in return. This is what makes letter- writing a comfort and journalizing dangerous. . . The ides of March will be upon us before this letter reaches you. We have got to squash the rebellion soon, or be squashed forever as a nation. I don't pretend to judge military plans or the capacities of generals. But, as you suggest, perhaps I can take a more just view of the whole picture of the eventful struggle at this great distance than do those absolutely acting and suffering on the scene. Nor can I resist the desire to prophesy any more than you can do, knowing that I may prove utterly mistaken. I say, then, that one great danger comes from the chance of foreign interference. What will prevent that?

Our utterly defeating the Confederates in some great and conclusive battle; or,

Our possession of the cotton ports and opening them to European trade; or,

A most unequivocal policy of slave emancipation.

Any one of these three conditions would stave off recognition by foreign powers, until we had ourselves abandoned the attempt to reduce the South to obedience.

Page 3120

The last measure is to my mind the most important. The South has, by going to war with the United States government, thrust into our hands against our will the invincible weapon which constitutional reasons had hitherto forbidden us to employ. At the same time it has given us the power to remedy a great wrong to four millions of the human race, in which we had hitherto been obliged to acquiesce. We are threatened with national annihilation, and defied to use the only means of national preservation. The question is distinctly proposed to us, Shall Slavery die, or the great Republic? It is most astounding to me that there can be two opinions in the free States as to the answer.If we do fall, we deserve our fate. At the beginning of the contest, constitutional scruples might be respectable. But now we are fighting to subjugate the South; that is, Slavery. We are fighting for nothing else that I know of. We are fighting for the Union. Who wishes to destroy the Union? The slaveholder, nobody else. Are we to spend twelve hundred millions, and raise six hundred thousand soldiers, in order to protect slavery? It really does seem to me too simple for argument. I am anxiously waiting for the coming Columbus who will set this egg of ours on end by smashing in the slavery end. We shall be rolling about in every direction until that is done. I don't know that it is to be done by proclamation. Rather perhaps by facts. . . . Well, I console myself with thinking that the people—the American people, at least —is about as wise collectively as less numerous collections of individuals, and that the people has really declared emancipation, and is only puzzling how to carry it into effect. After all, it seems to be a law of Providence, that progress should be by a spiral movement; so that when it seems most tortuous, we may perhaps be going ahead. I am firm in the faith that slavery is now wriggling itself to death. With slavery in its pristine vigor, I should think the restored Union neither possible nor desirable. Don't understand me as not taking into account all the strategical considerations against premature governmental utterances on this great subject. But are there any trustworthy friends to the Union among the slaveholders? Should we lose many Kentuckians and Virginians who are now with us, if we boldly confiscated the slaves of all rebels? —and a confiscation of property which has legs and so confiscates itself, at command, is not only a legal, but would prove a very practical measure in time of war. In brief, the time is fast approaching, I think, when 'Thorough' should be written on all our banners. Slavery will never accept a subordinate position. The great Republic and Slavery cannot both survive. We have been defied to mortal combat, and yet we hesitate to strike. These are my poor thoughts on this great subject. Perhaps you will think them crude. I was much struck with what you quote from Mr. Conway, that if emancipation

Page 3121

was proclaimed on the Upper Mississippi it would be known to the negroes of Louisiana in advance of the telegraph. And if once the blacks had leave to run, how many whites would have to stay at home to guard their dissolving property?You have had enough of my maunderings. But before I conclude them, may I ask you to give all our kindest regards to Lowell, and to express our admiration for the Yankee Idyl. I am afraid of using too extravagant language if I say all I think about it. Was there ever anything more stinging, more concentrated, more vigorous, more just? He has condensed into those few pages the essence of a hundred diplomatic papers and historical disquisitions and Fourth of July orations. I was dining a day or two since with his friend Lytton (Bulwer's son, attache here) and Julian Fane (secretary of the embassy), both great admirers of him,—and especially of the "Biglow Papers;" they begged me to send them the Mason and Slidell Idyl, but I wouldn't,—I don't think it is in English nature (although theirs is very cosmopolitan and liberal) to take such punishment and come up smiling. I would rather they got it in some other way, and then told me what they thought voluntarily.I have very pleasant relations with all the J. B.'s here. They are all friendly and well disposed to the North,—I speak of the embassy, which, with the ambassador and——dress, numbers eight or ten souls, some of them very intellectual ones. There are no other J. B.'s here. I have no fear at present of foreign interference. We have got three or four months to do our work in,—a fair field and no favor. There is no question whatever that the Southern commissioners have been thoroughly snubbed in London and Paris. There is to be a blockade debate in Parliament next week, but no bad consequences are to be apprehended. The Duke de Gramont (French ambassador, and an intimate friend of the Emperor) told my wife last night that it was entirely false that the Emperor had ever urged the English government to break the blockade. "Don't believe it,—don't believe a word of it," he said. He has always held that language to me. He added that Prince Napoleon had just come out with a strong speech about us, —you will see it, doubtless, before you get this letter,—but it has not yet reached us.Shall I say anything of Austria,—what can I say that would interest you? That's the reason why I hate to write. All my thoughts are in America. Do you care to know about the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, that shall be King hereafter of Mexico (if L. N. has his way)? He is next brother to the Emperor, but although I have had the honor of private audiences of many archdukes here, this one is a resident of Trieste.He is about thirty,—has an adventurous disposition,—some imagination,—a turn for poetry,—has voyaged a good deal about the world in the Austrian ship-of-war,—for

Page 3122

in one respect he much resembles that unfortunate but anonymous ancestor of his, the King of Bohemia with the seven castles, who, according to Corporal Trim, had such a passion for navigation and sea-affairs, “with never a seaport in all his dominions.” But now the present King of Bohemia has got the sway of Trieste, and is Lord High Admiral and Chief of the Marine Department. He has been much in Spain, also in South America; I have read some travels, “Reise Skizzen,” of his—printed, not published. They are not without talent, and he ever and anon relieves his prose jog-trot by breaking into a canter of poetry. He adores bull-fights, and rather regrets the Inquisition, and considers the Duke of Alva everything noble and chivalrous, and the most abused of men. It would do your heart good to hear his invocations to that deeply injured shade, and his denunciations of the ignorant and vulgar protestants who have defamed him. (N.B. Let me observe that the R. of the D. R. was not published until long after the “Reise Skizzen” were written.) ’Du armer Alva! weil du dem Willen deines Herrn unerschiitterlich treu vast, weil die festbestimmten grundsatze der Regierung,’ *etc*., *etc*., *etc*. You can imagine the rest. Dear me! I wish I could get back to the sixteenth and seventeenth century. . . . But alas! the events of the nineteenth are too engrossing.If Lowell cares to read this letter, will you allow me to “make it over to him jointly,” as Captain Cuttle says. I wished to write to him, but I am afraid only you would tolerate my writing so much when I have nothing to say. If he would ever send me a line I should be infinitely obliged, and would quickly respond. We read the “Washers of the Shroud” with fervid admiration.Always remember me most sincerely to the Club, one and all. It touches me nearly when you assure me that I am not forgotten by them. To-morrow is Saturday and the last of the month.—[See Appendix A.]—We are going to dine with our Spanish colleague. But the first bumper of the Don’s champagne I shall drain to the health of my Parker House friends.

From another long letter dated August 31, 1862, I extract the following passages:—

“I quite agree in all that you said in your last letter. ’The imp of secession can’t reenter its mother’s womb.’ It is merely childish to talk of the Union ‘as it was.’ You might as well bring back the Saxon Heptarchy. But the great Republic is destined to live and flourish, I can’t doubt. . . . Do you remember that wonderful scene in Faust in which Mephistopheles draws wine for the rabble with a gimlet out of the wooden table; and how it changes to fire as they drink it, and how they all go mad, draw their knives, grasp each other by the nose, and think they are cutting off bunches of grapes at every blow, and how foolish they all look when they awake from the spell and see how the Devil has been mocking them? It always

Page 3123

seems to me a parable of the great Secession.“I repeat, I can’t doubt as to the ultimate result. But I dare say we have all been much mistaken in our calculations as to time. Days, months, years, are nothing in history. Men die, man is immortal, practically, even on this earth. We are so impatient, —and we are always watching for the last scene of the tragedy. Now I humbly opine that the drop is only about falling on the first act, or perhaps only the prologue. This act or prologue will be called, in after days, War for the status quo. Such enthusiasm, heroism, and manslaughter as status quo could inspire, has, I trust, been not entirely in vain, but it has been proved insufficient.“I firmly believe that when the slaveholders declared war on the United States government they began a series of events that, in the logical chain of history, cannot come to a conclusion until the last vestige of slavery is gone. Looking at the whole field for a moment dispassionately, objectively, as the dear Teutonic philosophers say, and merely as an exhibition of phenomena, I cannot imagine any other issue. Everything else may happen. This alone must happen.“But after all this isn’t a war. It is a revolution. It is n’t strategists that are wanted so much as believers. In revolutions the men who win are those who are in earnest. Jeff and Stonewall and the other Devil-worshippers are in earnest, but it was not written in the book of fate that the slaveholders’ rebellion should be vanquished by a pro-slavery general. History is never so illogical. No, the coming ‘man on horseback’ on our side must be a great strategist, with the soul of that insane lion, mad old John Brown, in his belly. That is your only Promethean recipe:—

> ’et insani leonis
> Vim stomacho apposuisse nostro.’

“I don’t know why Horace runs so in my head this morning. . . .

“There will be work enough for all; but I feel awfully fidgety just now about Port Royal and Hilton Head, and about affairs generally for the next three months. After that iron-clads and the new levies must make us invincible.”

In another letter, dated November 2, 1862, he expresses himself very warmly about his disappointment in the attitude of many of his old English friends with reference to our civil conflict. He had recently heard the details of the death of “the noble Wilder Dwight.”

“It is unnecessary,” he says, “to say how deeply we were moved. I had the pleasure of knowing him well, and I always appreciated his energy, his manliness, and his intelligent cheerful heroism. I look back upon him now as a kind of heroic type of what a young New Englander ought to be and was. I tell you that one of these days —after a generation of mankind has passed away—these youths will take their places in our history, and be regarded by the

Page 3124

young men and women now unborn with the admiration which the Philip Sidneys and the Max Piccolominis now inspire. After all, what was your Chevy Chace to stir blood with like a trumpet? What noble principle, what deathless interest, was there at stake? Nothing but a bloody fight between a lot of noble gamekeepers on one side and of noble poachers on the other. And because they fought well and hacked each other to pieces like devils, they have been heroes for centuries."

The letter was written in a very excited state of feeling, and runs over with passionate love of country and indignation at the want of sympathy with the cause of freedom which he had found in quarters where he had not expected such coldness or hostile tendencies.

From a letter dated Vienna, September 22, 1863.

. . . "When you wrote me last you said on general matters this: 'In a few days we shall get the news of the success or failure of the attacks on Port Hudson and Vicksburg. If both are successful, many will say that the whole matter is about settled.' You may suppose that when I got the great news I shook hands warmly with you in the spirit across the Atlantic. Day by day for so long we had been hoping to hear the fall of Vicksburg. At last when that little concentrated telegram came, announcing Vicksburg and Gettysburg on the same day and in two lines, I found myself almost alone. . . . There was nobody in the house to join in my huzzahs but my youngest infant. And my conduct very much resembled that of the excellent Philip *ii*. when he heard the fall of Antwerp,—for I went to her door, screeching through the key-hole 'Vicksburg is ours!' just as that other 'pere de famille,' more potent, but I trust not more respectable than I, conveyed the news to his Infanta. (Fide, for the incident, an American work on the Netherlands, i. p. 263, and the authorities there cited.) It is contemptible on my part to speak thus frivolously of events which will stand out in such golden letters so long as America has a history, but I wanted to illustrate the yearning for sympathy which I felt. You who were among people grim and self-contained usually, who, I trust, were falling on each other's necks in the public streets, shouting, with tears in their eyes and triumph in their hearts, can picture my isolation."I have never faltered in my faith, and in the darkest hours, when misfortunes seemed thronging most thickly upon us, I have never felt the want of anything to lean against; but I own I did feel like shaking hands with a few hundred people when I heard of our Fourth of July, 1863, work, and should like to have heard and joined in an American cheer or two."I have not much to say of matters here to interest you. We have had an intensely hot, historically hot, and very long and very dry summer. I never knew before what a drought meant. In Hungary the suffering is great,

Page 3125

and the people are killing the sheep to feed the pigs with the mutton. Here about Vienna the trees have been almost stripped of foliage ever since the end of August. There is no glory in the grass nor verdure in anything.“In fact, we have nothing green here but the Archduke Max, who firmly believes that he is going forth to Mexico to establish an American empire, and that it is his divine mission to destroy the dragon of democracy and reestablish the true Church, the Right Divine, and all sorts of games. Poor young man! . . .“Our information from home is to the 12th. Charleston seems to be in ‘articulo mortis,’ but how forts nowadays seem to fly in the face of Scripture. Those founded on a rock, and built of it, fall easily enough under the rain of Parrotts and Dahlgrens, while the house built of sand seems to bid defiance to the storm.”

In quoting from these confidential letters I have been restrained from doing full justice to their writer by the fact that he spoke with such entire freedom of persons as well as events. But if they could be read from beginning to end, no one could help feeling that his love for his own country, and passionate absorption of every thought in the strife upon which its existence as a nation depended, were his very life during all this agonizing period. He can think and talk of nothing else, or, if he turns for a moment to other subjects, he reverts to the one great central interest of “American politics,” of which he says in one of the letters from which I have quoted, “There is nothing else worth thinking of in the world.”

But in spite of his public record as the historian of the struggle for liberty and the champion of its defenders, and while every letter he wrote betrayed in every word the intensity of his patriotic feeling, he was not safe against the attacks of malevolence. A train laid by unseen hands was waiting for the spark to kindle it, and this came at last in the shape of a letter from an unknown individual,—a letter the existence of which ought never to have been a matter of official recognition.

XVIII.

1866-1867. AEt. 52-43. *Resignation of his office*.—*Causes of his resignation*.

It is a relief to me that just here, where I come to the first of two painful episodes in this brilliant and fortunate career, I can preface my statement with the generous words of one who speaks with authority of his predecessor in office.

The Hon. John Jay, Ex-Minister to Austria, in the tribute to the memory of Motley read at a meeting of the New York Historical Society, wrote as follows:—

Page 3126

“In singular contrast to Mr. Motley’s brilliant career as an historian stands the fact recorded in our diplomatic annals that he was twice forced from the service as one who had forfeited the confidence of the American government. This society, while he was living, recognized his fame as a statesman, diplomatist, and patriot, as belonging to America, and now that death has closed the career of Seward, Sumner, and Motley, it will be remembered that the great historian, twice humiliated, by orders from Washington, before the diplomacy and culture of Europe, appealed from the passions of the hour to the verdict of history.“Having succeeded Mr. Motley at Vienna some two years after his departure, I had occasion to read most of his dispatches, which exhibited a mastery of the subjects of which they treated, with much of the clear perception, the scholarly and philosophic tone and decided judgment, which, supplemented by his picturesque description, full of life and color, have given character to his histories. They are features which might well have served to extend the remark of Madame de Stael that a great historian is almost a statesman. I can speak also from my own observation of the reputation which Motley left in the Austrian capital. Notwithstanding the decision with which, under the direction of Mr. Seward, he had addressed the minister of foreign affairs, Count Mensdorff, afterwards the Prince Diedrickstein, protesting against the departure of an Austrian force of one thousand volunteers, who were about to embark for Mexico in aid of the ill-fated Maximilian, —a protest which at the last moment arrested the project,—Mr. Motley and his amiable family were always spoken of in terms of cordial regard and respect by members of the imperial family and those eminent statesmen, Count de Beust and Count Andrassy. His death, I am sure, is mourned to-day by the representatives of the historic names of Austria and Hungary, and by the surviving diplomats then residing near the Court of Vienna, wherever they may still be found, headed by their venerable Doyen, the Baron de Heckeren.”

The story of Mr. Motley’s resignation of his office and its acceptance by the government is this.

The President of the United States, Andrew Johnson, received a letter professing to be written from the Hotel Meurice, Paris, dated October 23, 1866, and signed “George W. M’Crackin, of New York.” This letter was filled with accusations directed against various public agents, ministers, and consuls, representing the United States in different countries. Its language was coarse, its assertions were improbable, its spirit that of the lowest of party scribblers. It was bitter against New England, especially so against Massachusetts, and it singled out Motley for the most particular abuse. I think it is still questioned whether there was any such person as the one named,—at any rate, it bore the characteristic marks of those

Page 3127

vulgar anonymous communications which rarely receive any attention unless they are important enough to have the police set on the track of the writer to find his rathole, if possible. A paragraph in the “Daily Advertiser” of June 7, 1869, quotes from a Western paper a story to the effect that one William R. M’Crackin, who had recently died at----- confessed to having written the M’ Crackin letter. Motley, he said, had snubbed him and refused to lend him money. “He appears to have been a Bohemian of the lowest order.” Between such authorship and the anonymous there does not seem to be much to choose. But the dying confession sounds in my ears as decidedly apocryphal. As for the letter, I had rather characterize it than reproduce it. It is an offence to decency and a disgrace to the national record on which it is found. This letter of “George W. M’Crackin” passed into the hands of Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State. Most gentlemen, I think, would have destroyed it on the spot, as it was not fit for the waste-basket. Some, more cautious, might have smothered it among the piles of their private communications. If any notice was taken of it, one would say that a private note to each of the gentlemen attacked might have warned him that there were malicious eavesdroppers about, ready to catch up any careless expression he might let fall and make a scandalous report of it to his detriment.

The secretary, acquiescing without resistance in a suggestion of the President, saw fit to address a formal note to several of the gentlemen mentioned in the M’Crackin letter, repeating some of its offensive expressions, and requesting those officials to deny or confirm the report that they had uttered them.

A gentleman who is asked whether he has spoken in a “malignant” or “offensive” manner, whether he has “railed violently and shamefully” against the President of the United States, or against anybody else, might well wonder who would address such a question to the humblest citizen not supposed to be wanting in a common measure of self-respect. A gentleman holding an important official station in a foreign country, receiving a letter containing such questions, signed by the prime minister of his government, if he did not think himself imposed upon by a forgery, might well consider himself outraged. It was a letter of this kind which was sent by the Secretary of State to the Minister Plenipotentiary to the Empire of Austria. Not quite all the vulgar insolence of the M’Crackin letter was repeated. Mr. Seward did not ask Mr. Motley to deny or confirm the assertion of the letter that he was a “thorough flunky” and “un-American functionary.” But he did insult him with various questions suggested by the anonymous letter,—questions that must have been felt as an indignity by the most thick-skinned of battered politicians.

Page 3128

Mr. Motley was very sensitive, very high-spirited, very impulsive, very patriotic, and singularly truthful. The letter of Mr. Seward to such a man was like a buffet on the cheek of an unarmed officer. It stung like the thrust of a stiletto. It roused a resentment that could not find any words to give it expression. He could not wait to turn the insult over in his mind, to weigh the exact amount of affront in each question, to take counsel, to sleep over it, and reply to it with diplomatic measure and suavity. One hour had scarcely elapsed before his answer was written. As to his feelings as an American, he appeals to his record. This might have shown that if he erred it was on the side of enthusiasm and extravagant expressions of reverence for the American people during the heroic years just passed. He denounces the accusations as pitiful fabrications and vile calumny. He blushes that such charges could have been uttered; he is deeply wounded that Mr. Seward could have listened to such falsehood. He does not hesitate to say what his opinions are with reference to home questions, and especially to that of reconstruction.

“These opinions,” he says, “in the privacy of my own household, and to occasional American visitors, I have not concealed. The great question now presenting itself for solution demands the conscientious scrutiny of every American who loves his country and believes in the human progress of which that country is one of the foremost representatives. I have never thought, during my residence at Vienna, that because I have the honor of being a public servant of the American people I am deprived of the right of discussing within my own walls the gravest subjects that can interest freemen. A minister of the United States does not cease to be a citizen of the United States, as deeply interested as others in all that relates to the welfare of his country.”

Among the “occasional American visitors” spoken of above must have been some of those self-appointed or hired agents called “interviewers,” who do for the American public what the Venetian spies did for the Council of Ten, what the familiars of the Inquisition did for the priesthood, who invade every public man’s privacy, who listen at every key-hole, who tamper with every guardian of secrets; purveyors to the insatiable appetite of a public which must have a slain reputation to devour with its breakfast, as the monster of antiquity called regularly for his tribute of a spotless virgin.

The “interviewer” has his use, undoubtedly, and often instructs and amuses his public with gossip they could not otherwise listen to. He serves the politician by repeating the artless and unstudied remarks which fall from his lips in a conversation which the reporter has been invited to take notes of. He tickles the author’s vanity by showing him off as he sits in his library unconsciously uttering the engaging items of self-portraiture which, as he

Page 3129

well knows, are to be given to the public in next week's illustrated paper. The feathered end of his shaft titillates harmlessly enough, but too often the arrowhead is crusted with a poison worse than the Indian gets by mingling the wolf's gall with the rattlesnake's venom. No man is safe whose unguarded threshold the mischief-making questioner has crossed. The more unsuspecting, the more frank, the more courageous, the more social is the subject of his vivisection, the more easily does he get at his vital secrets, if he has any to be extracted. No man is safe if the hearsay reports of his conversation are to be given to the public without his own careful revision. When we remember that a proof-text bearing on the mighty question of the future life, words of supreme significance, uttered as they were in the last hour, and by the lips to which we listen as to none other,—that this text depends for its interpretation on the position of a single comma, we can readily see what wrong may be done by the unintentional blunder of the most conscientious reporter. But too frequently it happens that the careless talk of an honest and high-minded man only reaches the public after filtering through the drain of some reckless hireling's memory,—one who has played so long with other men's characters and good name that he forgets they have any value except to fill out his morning paragraphs.

Whether the author of the scandalous letter which it was disgraceful to the government to recognize was a professional interviewer or only a malicious amateur, or whether he was a paid "spotter," sent by some jealous official to report on the foreign ministers as is sometimes done in the case of conductors of city horsecars, or whether the dying miscreant before mentioned told the truth, cannot be certainly known. But those who remember Mr. Hawthorne's account of his consular experiences at Liverpool are fully aware to what intrusions and impertinences and impositions our national representatives in other countries are subjected. Those fellow-citizens who "often came to the consulate in parties of half a dozen or more, on no business whatever, but merely to subject their public servant to a rigid examination, and see how he was getting on with his duties," may very possibly have included among them some such mischief-maker as the author of the odious letter which received official recognition. Mr. Motley had spoken in one of his histories of "a set of venomous familiars who glided through every chamber and coiled themselves at every fireside." He little thought that under his own roof he himself was to be the victim of an equally base espionage.

Page 3130

It was an insult on the part of the government to have sent Mr. Motley such a letter with such questions as were annexed to it. No very exact rule can be laid down as to the manner in which an insult shall be dealt with. Something depends on temperament, and his was of the warmer complexion. His first impulse, he says, was to content himself with a flat denial of the truth of the accusations. But his scrupulous honesty compelled him to make a plain statement of his opinions, and to avow the fact that he had made no secret of them in conversation under conditions where he had a right to speak freely of matters quite apart from his official duties. His answer to the accusation was denial of its charges; his reply to the insult was his resignation.

It may be questioned whether this was the wisest course, but wisdom is often disconcerted by an indignity, and even a meek Christian may forget to turn the other cheek after receiving the first blow until the natural man has asserted himself by a retort in kind. But the wrong was committed; his resignation was accepted; the vulgar letter, not fit to be spread out on these pages, is enrolled in the records of the nation, and the first deep wound was inflicted on the proud spirit of one whose renown had shed lustre on the whole country.

That the burden of this wrong may rest where it belongs, I quote the following statement from Mr. Jay's paper, already referred to.

"It is due to the memory of Mr. Seward to say, and there would seem now no further motive for concealing the truth, that I was told in Europe, on what I regarded as reliable authority, that there was reason to believe that on the receipt of Mr. Motley's resignation Mr. Seward had written to him declining to accept it, and that this letter, by a telegraphic order of President Johnson, had been arrested in the hands of a dispatch agent before its delivery to Mr. Motley, and that the curt letter of the 18th of April had been substituted in its stead."

The Hon. John Bigelow, late Minister to France, has published an article in "The International Review" for July-August, 1878, in which he defends his late friend Mr. Seward's action in this matter at the expense of the President, Mr. Andrew Johnson, and not without inferences unfavorable to the discretion of Mr. Motley. Many readers will think that the simple record of Mr. Seward's unresisting acquiescence in the action of the President is far from being to his advantage. I quote from his own conversation as carefully reported by his friend Mr. Bigelow. "Mr. Johnson was in a state of intense irritation, and more or less suspicious of everybody about him."—"Instead of throwing the letter into the fire," the President handed it to him, the secretary, and suggested answering it, and without a word, so far as appears, he simply answered, "Certainly, sir." Again, the secretary having already written to Mr. Motley that "his answer was satisfactory," the

Page 3131

President, on reaching the last paragraph of Mr. Motley's letter, in which he begged respectfully to resign his post, "without waiting to learn what Mr. Seward had done or proposed to do, exclaimed, with a not unnatural asperity, 'Well, let him go,' and 'on hearing this,' said Mr. Seward, laughing, 'I did not read my dispatch.'" Many persons will think that the counsel for the defence has stated the plaintiff's case so strongly that there is nothing left for him but to show his ingenuity and his friendship for the late secretary in a hopeless argument. At any rate, Mr. Seward appears not to have made the slightest effort to protect Mr. Motley against his coarse and jealous chief at two critical moments, and though his own continuance in office may have been more important to the State than that of the Vicar of Bray was to the Church, he ought to have risked something, as it seems to me, to shield such a patriot, such a gentleman, such a scholar, from ignoble treatment; he ought to have been as ready to guard Mr. Motley from wrong as Mr. Bigelow has shown himself to shield Mr. Seward from reproach, and his task, if more delicate, was not more difficult. I am willing to accept Mr. Bigelow's loyal and honorable defence of his friend's memory as the best that could be said for Mr. Seward, but the best defence in this case is little better than an impeachment. As for Mr. Johnson, he had held the weapon of the most relentless of the 'Parcae' so long that his suddenly clipping the thread of a foreign minister's tenure of office in a fit of jealous anger is not at all surprising.

Thus finished Mr. Motley's long and successful diplomatic service at the Court of Austria. He may have been judged hasty in resigning his place; he may have committed himself in expressing his opinions too strongly before strangers, whose true character as spies and eavesdroppers he was too high-minded to suspect. But no caution could have protected him against a slanderer who hated the place he came from, the company he kept, the name he had made famous, to whom his very look and bearing —such as belong to a gentleman of natural refinement and good breeding —- must have been a personal grievance and an unpardonable offence.

I will add, in illustration of what has been said, and as showing his feeling with reference to the matter, an extract from a letter to me from Vienna, dated the 12th of March, 1867.

. . . "As so many friends and so many strangers have said so much that is gratifying to me in public and private on this very painful subject, it would be like affectation, in writing to so old a friend as you, not to touch upon it. I shall confine myself, however, to one fact, which, so far as I know, may be new to you.

"Geo. W. M'Cracken is a man and a name utterly unknown to me.

Page 3132

“With the necessary qualification which every man who values truth must make when asserting such a negation,—viz., to the very best of my memory and belief,—I never set eyes on him nor heard of him until now, in the whole course of my life. Not a member of my family or of the legation has the faintest recollection of any such person. I am quite convinced that he never saw me nor heard the sound of my voice. That his letter was a tissue of vile calumnies, shameless fabrications, and unblushing and contemptible falsehoods, —by whomsoever uttered,—I have stated in a reply to what ought never to have been an official letter. No man can regret more than I do that such a correspondence is enrolled in the capital among American state papers. I shall not trust myself to speak of the matter. It has been a sufficiently public scandal.”

XIX.

1867-1868. AEt. 53-54.

Last two volumes of the “*History of the united Netherlands*.”*—General criticisms of Dutch scholars on Motley’s historical works*.

In his letter to me of March 12, 1867, just cited, Mr. Motley writes:—

> “My two concluding volumes of the United Netherlands are passing rapidly through the press. Indeed, Volume *iii*. is entirely printed and a third of Volume *iv*.
>
> “If I live ten years longer I shall have probably written the natural sequel to the first two works,—viz., the Thirty Years’ War. After that I shall cease to scourge the public.
>
> “I don’t know whether my last two volumes are good or bad; I only know that they are true—but that need n’t make them amusing.
>
> “Alas! one never knows when one becomes a bore.”

In 1868 the two concluding volumes of the “History of the Netherlands” were published at the same time in London and in New York. The events described and the characters delineated in these two volumes had, perhaps, less peculiar interest for English and American readers than some of those which had lent attraction to the preceding ones. There was no scene like the siege of Antwerp, no story like that of the Spanish Armada. There were no names that sounded to our ears like those of Sir Philip Sidney and Leicester and Amy Robsart. But the main course of his narrative flowed on with the same breadth and depth of learning and the same brilliancy of expression. The monumental work continued as nobly as it had begun. The facts had been slowly, quietly gathered, one by one, like pebbles from the empty channel of a brook. The style was fluent, impetuous, abundant, impatient, as it were, at times, and leaping the sober

boundaries prescribed to it, like the torrent which rushes through the same channel when the rains have filled it.

Page 3133

Thus there was matter for criticism in his use of language. He was not always careful in the construction of his sentences. He introduced expressions now and then into his vocabulary which reminded one of his earlier literary efforts. He used stronger language at times than was necessary, coloring too highly, shading too deeply in his pictorial delineations. To come to the matter of his narrative, it must be granted that not every reader will care to follow him through all the details of diplomatic intrigues which he has with such industry and sagacity extricated from the old manuscripts in which they had long lain hidden. But we turn a few pages and we come to one of those descriptions which arrest us at once and show him in his power and brilliancy as a literary artist. His characters move before us with the features of life; we can see Elizabeth, or Philip, or Maurice, not as a name connected with events, but as a breathing and acting human being, to be loved or hated, admired or despised, as if he or she were our contemporary. That all his judgments would not be accepted as final we might easily anticipate; he could not help writing more or less as a partisan, but he was a partisan on the side of freedom in politics and religion, of human nature as against every form of tyranny, secular or priestly, of noble manhood wherever he saw it as against meanness and violence and imposture, whether clad in the soldier's mail or the emperor's purple. His sternest critics, and even these admiring ones, were yet to be found among those who with fundamental beliefs at variance with his own followed him in his long researches among the dusty annals of the past.

The work of the learned M. Groen van Prinsterer,—[Maurice et Barnevelt, Etude Historique. Utrecht, 1875.]—devoted expressly to the revision and correction of what the author considers the erroneous views of Mr. Motley on certain important points, bears, notwithstanding, such sincere and hearty tribute to his industry, his acquisitions, his brilliant qualities as a historian, that some extracts from it will be read, I think, with interest.

> "My first interview, more than twenty years ago, with Mr. Lothrop Motley, has left an indelible impression on my memory.

"It was the 8th of August, 1853. A note is handed me from our eminent archivist Bakhuyzen van den Brink. It informs me that I am to receive a visit from an American, who, having been struck by the analogies between the United Provinces and the United States, between Washington and the founder of our independence, has interrupted his diplomatic career to write the life of William the First; that he has already given proof of ardor and perseverance, having worked in libraries and among collections of manuscripts, and that he is coming to pursue his studies at the Hague."While I am surprised and delighted with this intelligence, I am informed that Mr. Motley himself is waiting for my answer. My eagerness

Page 3134

to make the acquaintance of such an associate in my sympathies and my labors may be well imagined. But how shall I picture my surprise, in presently discovering that this unknown and indefatigable fellow-worker has really read, I say read and reread, our Quartos, our Folios, the enormous volumes of Bor, of van Meteren, besides a multitude of books, of pamphlets, and even of unedited documents. Already he is familiar with the events, the changes of condition, the characteristic details of the life of his and my hero. Not only is he acquainted with my Archives, but it seems as if there was nothing in this voluminous collection of which he was ignorant. . . .“In sending me the last volume of his ’History of the Foundation of the Republic of the Netherlands,’ Mr. Motley wrote to me: ’Without the help of the Archives I could never have undertaken the difficult task I had set myself, and you will have seen at least from my numerous citations that I have made a sincere and conscientious study of them.’ Certainly in reading such a testimonial I congratulated myself on the excellent fruit of my labors, but the gratitude expressed to me by Mr. Motley was sincerely reciprocated. The Archives are a scientific collection, and my ’Manual of National History,’ written in Dutch, hardly gets beyond the limits of my own country. And here is a stranger, become our compatriot in virtue of the warmth of his sympathies, who has accomplished what was not in my power. By the detail and the charm of his narrative, by the matter and form of a work which the universality of the English language and numerous translations were to render cosmopolitan, Mr. Motley, like that other illustrious historian, Prescott, lost to science by too early death, has popularized in both hemispheres the sublime devotion of the Prince of Orange, the exceptional and providential destinies of my country, and the benedictions of the Eternal for all those who trust in Him and tremble only at his Word.”

The old Dutch scholar differs in many important points from Mr. Motley, as might be expected from his creed and his life-long pursuits. This I shall refer to in connection with Motley’s last work, “John of Barneveld.” An historian among archivists and annalists reminds one of Sir John Lubbock in the midst of his ant-hills. Undoubtedly he disturbs the ants in their praiseworthy industry, much as his attentions may flatter them. Unquestionably the ants (if their means of expressing themselves were equal to their apparent intellectual ability) could teach him many things that he has overlooked and correct him in many mistakes. But the ants will labor ingloriously without an observer to chronicle their doings, and the archivists and annalists will pile up facts forever like so many articulates or mollusks or radiates, until the vertebrate historian comes with his generalizing ideas, his beliefs, his prejudices, his idiosyncrasies of all kinds, and brings the facts into a more or less imperfect, but still organic series of relations. The history which is not open to adverse criticism is worth little, except as material, for it is written without taking cognizance of those higher facts about which men must differ; of which Guizot writes as follows, as quoted in the work of M. Groen van Prinsterer himself.

Page 3135

“It is with facts that our minds are exercised, it has nothing but facts as its materials, and when it discovers general laws these laws are themselves facts which it determines. . . . In the study of facts the intelligence may allow itself to be crushed; it may lower, narrow, materialize itself; it may come to believe that there are no facts except those which strike us at the first glance, which come close to us, which fall, as we say, under our senses; a great and gross error; there are remote facts, immense, obscure, sublime, very difficult to reach, to observe, to describe, and which are not any less facts for these reasons, and which man is not less obliged to study and to know; and if he fails to recognize them or forgets them, his thought will be prodigiously abashed, and all his ideas carry the stamp of this deterioration.”

In that higher region of facts which belongs to the historian, whose task it is to interpret as well as to transcribe, Mr. Motley showed, of course, the political and religious school in which he had been brought up. Every man has a right to his “personal equation” of prejudice, and Mr. Motley, whose ardent temperament gave life to his writings, betrayed his sympathies in the disputes of which he told the story, in a way to insure sharp criticism from those of a different way of thinking. Thus it is that in the work of M. Groen van Prinsterer, from which I have quoted, he is considered as having been betrayed into error, while his critic recognizes “his manifest desire to be scrupulously impartial and truth-telling.” And M. Fruin, another of his Dutch critics, says, “His sincerity, his perspicacity, the accuracy of his laborious researches, are incontestable.”

Some of the criticisms of Dutch scholars will be considered in the pages which deal with his last work, “The Life of John of Barneveld.”

XX.

1868-1869. AEt. 54-55.

Visit to America.—*Residence at no*. 2 *Park street*, *Boston*.—*Address on the coming presidential election*.—*Address on historic progress and American democracy*.—-*Appointed minister to England*.

In June, 1868, Mr. Motley returned with his family to Boston, and established himself in the house No. 2 Park Street. During his residence here he entered a good deal into society, and entertained many visitors in a most hospitable and agreeable way.

On the 20th of October, 1868, he delivered an address before the Parker Fraternity, in the Music Hall, by special invitation. Its title was “Four Questions for the People, at the Presidential Election.” This was of course what is commonly called an electioneering speech, but a speech full of noble sentiments and eloquent expression. Here are two of its paragraphs:—

Page 3136

“Certainly there have been bitterly contested elections in this country before. Party spirit is always rife, and in such vivid, excitable, disputatious communities as ours are, and I trust always will be, it is the very soul of freedom. To those who reflect upon the means and end of popular government, nothing seems more stupid than in grand generalities to deprecate party spirit. Why, government by parties and through party machinery is the only possible method by which a free government can accomplish the purpose of its existence. The old republics of the past may be said to have fallen, not because of party spirit, but because there was no adequate machinery by which party spirit could develop itself with facility and regularity.“And if our Republic be true to herself, the future of the human race is assured by our example. No sweep of overwhelming armies, no ponderous treatises on the rights of man, no hymns to liberty, though set to martial music and resounding with the full diapason of a million human throats, can exert so persuasive an influence as does the spectacle of a great republic, occupying a quarter of the civilized globe, and governed quietly and sagely by the people itself.”

A large portion of this address is devoted to the proposition that it is just and reasonable to pay our debts rather than to repudiate them, and that the nation is as much bound to be honest as is the individual. “It is an awful thing,” he says, “that this should be a question at all,” but it was one of the points on which the election turned, for all that.

In his advocacy of the candidate with whom, and the government of which he became the head, his relations became afterwards so full of personal antagonism, he spoke as a man of his ardent nature might be expected to speak on such an occasion. No one doubts that his admiration of General Grant’s career was perfectly sincere, and no one at the present day can deny that the great captain stood before the historian with such a record as one familiar with the deeds of heroes and patriots might well consider as entitling him to the honors too often grudged to the living to be wasted on the dead. The speaker only gave voice to the widely prevailing feelings which had led to his receiving the invitation to speak. The time was one which called for outspoken utterance, and there was not a listener whose heart did not warm as he heard the glowing words in which the speaker recorded the noble achievements of the soldier who must in so many ways have reminded him of his favorite character, William the Silent.

On the 16th of December of this same year, 1868, Mr. Motley delivered an address before the New York Historical Society, on the occasion of the sixty-fourth anniversary of its foundation. The president of the society, Mr. Hamilton Fish, introduced the speaker as one “whose name belongs to no single country, and to no single age. As a statesman and diplomatist and patriot, he belongs to America; as a scholar, to the world of letters; as a historian, all ages will claim him in the future.”

Page 3137

His subject was “Historic Progress and American Democracy.” The discourse is, to use his own words, “a rapid sweep through the eons and the centuries,” illustrating the great truth of the development of the race from its origin to the time in which we are living. It is a long distance from the planetary fact of the obliquity of the equator, which gave the earth its alternation of seasons, and rendered the history, if not the existence of man and of civilization a possibility, to the surrender of General Lee under the apple-tree at Appomattox Court-House. No one but a scholar familiar with the course of history could have marshalled such a procession of events into a connected and intelligible sequence. It is indeed a flight rather than a march; the reader is borne along as on the wings of a soaring poem, and sees the rising and decaying empires of history beneath him as a bird of passage marks the succession of cities and wilds and deserts as he keeps pace with the sun in his journey.

Its eloquence, its patriotism, its crowded illustrations, drawn from vast resources of knowledge, its epigrammatic axioms, its occasional pleasantries, are all characteristic of the writer.

Mr. Gulian C. Verplanck, the venerable senior member of the society, proposed the vote of thanks to Mr. Motley with words of warm commendation.

Mr. William Cullen Bryant rose and said:—

“I take great pleasure in seconding the resolution which has just been read. The eminent historian of the Dutch Republic, who has made the story of its earlier days as interesting as that of Athens and Sparta, and who has infused into the narrative the generous glow of his own genius, has the highest of titles to be heard with respectful attention by the citizens of a community which, in its origin, was an offshoot of that renowned republic. And cheerfully has that title been recognized, as the vast audience assembled here to-night, in spite of the storm, fully testifies; and well has our illustrious friend spoken of the growth of civilization and of the improvement in the condition of mankind, both in the Old World—the institutions of which he has so lately observed—-and in the country which is proud to claim him as one of her children.”

Soon after the election of General Grant, Mr. Motley received the appointment of Minister to England. That the position was one which was in many respects most agreeable to him cannot be doubted. Yet it was not with unmingled feelings of satisfaction, not without misgivings which warned him but too truly of the dangers about to encompass him, that he accepted the place. He writes to me on April 16, 1869:—

“I feel anything but exultation at present,—rather the opposite sensation. I feel that I am placed higher than I deserve, and at the same time that I am taking greater responsibilities than ever were assumed by me before. You will be indulgent to my mistakes and shortcomings,—and who can expect to avoid them? But the world will be

cruel, and the times are threatening. I shall do my best,—but the best may be poor enough,—and keep ‘a heart for any fate.’”

XXI.

Page 3138

1869-1870. AEt. 55-56. *Recall from the English mission.—Its alleged and its probable reasons*.

The misgivings thus expressed to me in confidence, natural enough in one who had already known what it is to fall on evil days and evil tongues, were but too well justified by after events. I could have wished to leave untold the story of the English mission, an episode in Motley's life full of heart-burnings, and long to be regretted as a passage of American history. But his living appeal to my indulgence comes to me from his grave as a call for his defence, however little needed, at least as a part of my tribute to his memory. It is little needed, because the case is clear enough to all intelligent readers of our diplomatic history, and because his cause has been amply sustained by others in many ways better qualified than myself to do it justice. The task is painful, for if a wrong was done him it must be laid at the doors of those whom the nation has delighted to honor, and whose services no error of judgment or feeling or conduct can ever induce us to forget. If he confessed him, self-liable, like the rest of us, to mistakes and shortcomings, we must remember that the great officers of the government who decreed his downfall were not less the subjects of human infirmity.

The outline to be filled up is this: A new administration had just been elected. The "Alabama Treaty," negotiated by Motley's predecessor, Mr. Reverdy Johnson, had been rejected by the Senate. The minister was recalled, and Motley, nominated without opposition and unanimously confirmed by the Senate, was sent to England in his place. He was welcomed most cordially on his arrival at Liverpool, and replied in a similar strain of good feeling, expressing the same kindly sentiments which may be found in his instructions. Soon after arriving in London he had a conversation with Lord Clarendon, the British Foreign Secretary, of which he sent a full report to his own government. While the reported conversation was generally approved of in the government's dispatch acknowledging it, it was hinted that some of its expressions were stronger than were required by the instructions, and that one of its points was not conveyed in precise conformity with the President's view. The criticism was very gently worded, and the dispatch closed with a somewhat guarded paragraph repeating the government's approbation.

This was the first offence alleged against Mr. Motley. The second ground of complaint was that he had shown written minutes of this conversation to Lord Clarendon to obtain his confirmation of its exactness, and that he had—as he said, inadvertently,—omitted to make mention to the government of this circumstance until some weeks after the time of the interview.

Page 3139

He was requested to explain to Lord Clarendon that a portion of his presentation and treatment of the subject discussed at the interview immediately after his arrival was disapproved by the Secretary of State, and he did so in a written communication, in which he used the very words employed by Mr. Fish in his criticism of the conversation with Lord Clarendon. An alleged mistake; a temperate criticism, coupled with a general approval; a rectification of the mistake criticised. All this within the first two months of Mr. Motley's official residence in London.

No further fault was found with him, so far as appears, in the discharge of his duties, to which he must have devoted himself faithfully, for he writes to me, under the date of December 27, 1870: "I have worked harder in the discharge of this mission than I ever did in my life." This from a man whose working powers astonished the old Dutch archivist, Groen van Prinsterer, means a good deal.

More than a year had elapsed since the interview with Lord Clarendon, which had been the subject of criticism. In the mean time a paper of instructions was sent to Motley, dated September 25, 1869, in which the points in the report of his interview which had been found fault with are so nearly covered by similar expressions, that there seemed no real ground left for difference between the government and the minister. Whatever over-statement there had been, these new instructions would imply that the government was now ready to go quite as far as the minister had gone, and in some points to put the case still more strongly. Everything was going on quietly. Important business had been transacted, with no sign of distrust or discontent on the part of the government as regarded Motley. Whatever mistake he was thought to have committed was condoned by amicable treatment, neutralized by the virtual indorsement of the government in the instructions of the 25th of September, and obsolete as a ground of quarrel by lapse of time. The question about which the misunderstanding, if such it deserves to be called, had taken place, was no longer a possible source of disagreement, as it had long been settled that the Alabama case should only be opened again at the suggestion of the British government, and that it should be transferred to Washington whenever that suggestion should again bring it up for consideration.

Such was the aspect of affairs at the American Legation in London. No foreign minister felt more secure in his place than Mr. Motley. "I thought myself," he says in the letter of December 27, "entirely in the confidence of my own government, and I know that I had the thorough confidence and the friendship of the leading personages in England." All at once, on the first of July, 1870, a letter was written by the Secretary of State, requesting him to resign. This gentle form of violence is well understood in the diplomatic service. Horace Walpole says, speaking of Lady Archibald Hamilton: "They have civilly asked her and grossly forced her to ask civilly to go away, which she has done, with a pension of twelve hundred a year." Such a request is like the embrace of the "virgin" in old torture-chambers. She is robed in soft raiment, but beneath it are the knife-blades which are ready to lacerate and kill the victim, if he awaits the pressure of the machinery already in motion.

Page 3140

Mr. Motley knew well what was the logical order in an official execution, and saw fit to let the government work its will upon him as its servant. In November he was recalled.

The recall of a minister under such circumstances is an unusual if not an unprecedented occurrence. The government which appoints a citizen to represent the country at a foreign court assumes a very serious obligation to him. The next administration may turn him out and nothing will be thought of it. He may be obliged to ask for his passports and leave all at once if war is threatened between his own country and that which he represents. He may, of course, be recalled for gross misconduct. But his dismissal is very serious matter to him personally, and not to be thought of on the ground of passion or caprice. Marriage is a simple business, but divorce is a very different thing. The world wants to know the reason of it; the law demands its justification. It was a great blow to Mr. Motley, a cause of indignation to those who were interested in him, a surprise and a mystery to the world in general.

When he, his friends, and the public, all startled by this unexpected treatment, looked to find an explanation of it, one was found which seemed to many quite sufficient. Mr. Sumner had been prominent among those who had favored his appointment. A very serious breach had taken place between the President and Mr. Sumner on the important San Domingo question. It was a quarrel, in short, neither more nor less, at least so far as the President was concerned. The proposed San Domingo treaty had just been rejected by the Senate, on the thirtieth day of June, and immediately thereupon,—the very next day,—the letter requesting Mr. Motley's resignation was issued by the executive. This fact was interpreted as implying something more than a mere coincidence. It was thought that Sumner's friend, who had been supported by him as a candidate for high office, who shared many of his political ideas and feelings, who was his intimate associate, his fellow-townsman, his companion in scholarship and cultivation, his sympathetic co-laborer in many ways, had been accounted and dealt with as the ally of an enemy, and that the shaft which struck to the heart of the sensitive envoy had glanced from the 'aes triplex' of the obdurate Senator.

Mr. Motley wrote a letter to the Secretary of State immediately after his recall, in which he reviewed his relations with the government from the time of his taking office, and showed that no sufficient reason could be assigned for the treatment to which he had been subjected. He referred finally to the public rumor which assigned the President's hostility to his friend Sumner, growing out of the San Domingo treaty question, as the cause of his own removal, and to the coincidence between the dates of the rejection of the treaty and his dismissal, with an evident belief that these two occurrences were connected by something more than accident.

Page 3141

To this, a reply was received from the Secretary of State's office, signed by Mr. Fish, but so objectionable in its tone and expressions that it has been generally doubted whether the paper could claim anything more of the secretary's hand than his signature. It travelled back to the old record of the conversation with Lord Clarendon, more than a year and a half before, took up the old exceptions, warmed them over into grievances, and joined with them whatever the 'captatores verborum,' not extinct since Daniel Webster's time, could add to their number. This was the letter which was rendered so peculiarly offensive by a most undignified comparison which startled every well-bred reader. No answer was possible to such a letter, and the matter rested until the death of Mr. Motley caused it to be brought up once more for judgment.

The Honorable John Jay, in his tribute to the memory of Mr. Motley, read at a meeting of the New York Historical Society, vindicated his character against the attacks of the late executive in such a way as to leave an unfavorable impression as to the course of the government. Objection was made on this account to placing the tribute upon the minutes of the society. This led to a publication by Mr. Jay, entitled "Motley's Appeal to History," in which the propriety of the society's action is questioned, and the wrong done to him insisted upon and further illustrated.

The defence could not have fallen into better hands. Bearing a name which is, in itself, a title to the confidence of the American people, a diplomatist familiar with the rights, the customs, the traditions, the courtesies, which belong to the diplomatic service, the successor of Mr. Motley at Vienna, and therefore familiar with his official record, not self-made, which too commonly means half-made, but with careful training added to the instincts to which he had a right by inheritance, he could not allow the memory of such a scholar, of such a high-minded lover of his country, of so true a gentleman as Mr. Motley, to remain without challenge under the stigma of official condemnation. I must refer to Mr. Jay's memorial tribute as printed in the newspapers of the day, and to his "Appeal" published in "The International Review," for his convincing presentation of the case, and content myself with a condensed statement of the general and special causes of complaint against Mr. Motley, and the explanations which suggest themselves, as abundantly competent to show the insufficiency of the reasons alleged by the government as an excuse for the manner in which he was treated.

The grounds of complaint against Mr. Motley are to be looked for:—

1. In the letter of Mr. Fish to Mr. Moran, of December 30, 1870.

2. In Mr. Bancroft Davis's letter to the New York "Herald" of January 4, 1878, entitled, "Mr. Sumner, the Alabama Claims and their Settlement."

3. The reported conversations of General Grant.

Page 3142

4. The reported conversations of Mr. Fish.

In considering Mr. Fish's letter, we must first notice its animus. The manner in which Dickens's two old women are brought in is not only indecorous, but it shows a state of feeling from which nothing but harsh interpretation of every questionable expression of Mr. Motley's was to be expected.

There is not the least need of maintaining the perfect fitness and rhetorical felicity of every phrase and every word used by him in his interview with Lord Clarendon. It is not to be expected that a minister, when about to hold a conversation with a representative of the government to which he is accredited, will commit his instructions to memory and recite them, like a school-boy "speaking his piece." He will give them more or less in his own language, amplifying, it may be, explaining, illustrating, at any rate paraphrasing in some degree, but endeavoring to convey an idea of their essential meaning. In fact, as any one can see, a conversation between two persons must necessarily imply a certain amount of extemporization on the part of both. I do not believe any long and important conference was ever had between two able men without each of them feeling that he had not spoken exactly in all respects as he would if he could say all over again.

Doubtless, therefore, Mr. Motley's report of his conversation shows that some of his expressions might have been improved, and others might as well have been omitted. A man does not change his temperament on taking office. General Jackson still swore "by the Eternal," and his illustrious military successor of a more recent period seems, by his own showing, to have been able to sudden impulses of excitement. It might be said of Motley, as it was said of Shakespeare by Ben Jonson, "aliquando sufflaminandus erat." Yet not too much must be made of this concession. Only a determination to make out a case could, as it seems to me, have framed such an indictment as that which the secretary constructed by stringing together a slender list of pretended peccadillos. One instance will show the extreme slightness which characterizes many of the grounds of inculpation:—

The instructions say, "The government, in rejecting the recent convention, abandons neither its own claims nor those of its citizens," *etc*.

Mr. Motley said, in the course of his conversation, "At present, the United States government, while withdrawing neither its national claims nor the claims of its individual citizens against the British government," *etc*.

Mr. Fish says, "The determination of this government not to abandon its claims nor those of its citizens was stated parenthetically, and in such a subordinate way as not necessarily to attract the attention of Lord Clarendon."

What reported conversation can stand a captious criticism like this? Are there not two versions of the ten commandments which were given out in the thunder and smoke of

Sinai, and would the secretary hold that this would have been a sufficient reason to recall Moses from his “Divine Legation” at the court of the Almighty?

Page 3143

There are certain expressions which, as Mr. Fish shows them apart from their connection, do very certainly seem in bad taste, if not actually indiscreet and unjustifiable. Let me give an example:—

"Instead of expressing the hope entertained by this government that there would be an early, satisfactory, and friendly settlement of the questions at issue, he volunteered the unnecessary, and from the manner in which it was thrust in, the highly objectionable statement that the United States government had no insidious purposes,'" *etc*.

This sounds very badly as Mr. Fish puts it; let us see how it stands in its proper connection:—

"He [Lord Clarendon] added with some feeling, that in his opinion it would be highly objectionable that the question should be hung up on a peg, to be taken down at some convenient moment for us, when it might be difficult for the British government to enter upon its solution, and when they might go into the debate at a disadvantage. These were, as nearly as I can remember, his words, and I replied very earnestly that I had already answered that question when I said that my instructions were to propose as brief a delay as would probably be requisite for the cooling of passions and for producing the calm necessary for discussing the defects of the old treaty and a basis for a new one. The United States government had no insidious purposes," *etc*.

Is it not evident that Lord Clarendon suggested the idea which Mr. Motley repelled as implying an insidious mode of action? Is it not just as clear that Mr. Fish's way of reproducing the expression without the insinuation which called it forth is a practical misstatement which does Mr. Motley great wrong?

One more example of the method of wringing a dry cloth for drops of evidence ought to be enough to show the whole spirit of the paper.

Mr. Fish, in his instructions:—

"It might, indeed, well have occurred in the event of the selection by lot of the arbitrator or umpire in different cases, involving however precisely the same principles, that different awards, resting upon antagonistic principles, might have been made."

Mr. Motley, in the conversation with Lord Clarendon:—

"I called his lordship's attention to your very judicious suggestion that the throwing of the dice for umpires might bring about opposite decisions in cases arising out of identical principles. He agreed entirely that no principle was established by the treaty, but that the throwing of dice or drawing of lots was not a new invention on that occasion, but a not uncommon method in arbitrations. I only expressed the opinion that such an aleatory process seemed an unworthy method in arbitrations," *etc*.

Mr. Fish, in his letter to Mr. Moran:—

Page 3144

“That he had in his mind at that interview something else than his letter of instructions from this department would appear to be evident, when he says that ’he called his lordship’s attention to your [my] very judicious suggestion that the throwing of dice for umpire might bring about opposite decisions.’ The instructions which Mr. Motley received from me contained no suggestion about throwing of dice.’ That idea is embraced in the suggestive words ‘aleatory process’ (adopted by Mr. Motley), but previously applied in a speech made in the Senate on the question of ratifying the treaty.”

Charles Sumner’s Speech on the Johnson-Clarendon Treaty, April 13, 1869:

“In the event of failure to agree, the arbitrator is determined ’by lot’ out of two persons named by each side. Even if this aleatory proceeding were a proper device in the umpirage of private claims, it is strongly inconsistent with the solemnity which belongs to the present question.”

It is “suggestive” that the critical secretary, so keen in detecting conversational inaccuracies, having but two words to quote from a printed document, got one of them wrong. But this trivial comment must not lead the careful reader to neglect to note how much is made of what is really nothing at all. The word aleatory, whether used in its original and limited sense, or in its derived extension as a technical term of the civil law, was appropriate and convenient; one especially likely to be remembered by any person who had read Mr. Sumner’s speech,—and everybody had read it; the secretary himself doubtless got the suggestion of determining the question “by lot” from it. What more natural than that it should be used again when the subject of appealing to chance came up in conversation? It “was an excellent good word before it was ill-sorted,” and we were fortunate in having a minister who was scholar enough to know what it meant. The language used by Mr. Motley conveyed the idea of his instructions plainly enough, and threw in a compliment to their author which should have saved this passage at least from the wringing process. The example just given is, like the concession of belligerency to the insurgents by Great Britain, chiefly important as “showing animus.”

It is hardly necessary to bring forward other instances of virtual misrepresentation. If Mr. Motley could have talked his conversation over again, he would very probably have changed some expressions. But he felt bound to repeat the interview exactly as it occurred, with all the errors to which its extemporaneous character exposed it. When a case was to be made out against him, the secretary wrote, December 30, 1870:

Page 3145

“Well might he say, as he did in a subsequent dispatch on the 15th of July, 1869, that he had gone beyond the strict letter of his instructions. He might have added, in direct opposition to their temper and spirit.”

Of the same report the secretary had said, June 28, 1869: “Your general presentation and treatment of the several subjects discussed in that interview meet the approval of this department.” This general approval is qualified by mild criticism of a single statement as not having been conveyed in “precise conformity” to the President’s view. The minister was told he might be well content to rest the question on the very forcible presentation he had made of the American side of the question, and that if there were expressions used stronger than were required by his instructions, they were in the right direction. The mere fact that a minute of this conversation was confidentially submitted to Lord Clarendon in order that our own government might have his authority for the accuracy of the record, which was intended exclusively for its own use, and that this circumstance was overlooked and not reported to the government until some weeks afterward, are the additional charges against Mr. Motley. The submission of the dispatch containing an account of the interview, the secretary says, is not inconsistent with diplomatic usage, but it is inconsistent with the duty of a minister not to inform his government of that submission. “Mr. Motley submitted the draft of his No. 8 to Lord Clarendon, and failed to communicate that fact to his government.” He did inform Mr. Fish, at any rate, on the 30th of July, and alleged “inadvertence” as the reason for his omission to do it before.

Inasmuch as submitting the dispatch was not inconsistent with diplomatic usage, nothing seems left to find fault with but the not very long delay in mentioning the fact, or in his making the note “private and confidential,” as is so frequently done in diplomatic correspondence.

Such were the grounds of complaint. On the strength of the conversation which had met with the general approval of the government, tempered by certain qualifications, and of the omission to report immediately to the government the fact of its verification by Lord Clarendon, the secretary rests the case against Mr. Motley. On these grounds it was that, according to him, the President withdrew all right to discuss the Alabama question from the minister whose dismissal was now only a question of time. But other evidence comes in here.

Mr. Motley says:—

“It was, as I supposed, understood before my departure for England, although not publicly announced, that the so-called Alabama negotiations, whenever renewed, should be conducted at Washington, in case of the consent of the British government.”

Mr. Sumner says, in his “Explanation in Reply to an Assault:”—

Page 3146

“The secretary in a letter to me at Boston, dated at Washington, October 9, 1869, informs the that the discussion of the question was withdrawn from London ’because (the italics are the secretary’s) we think that when renewed it can be carried on here with a better prospect of settlement, than where the late attempt at a convention which resulted so disastrously and was conducted so strangely was had;’ and what the secretary thus wrote he repeated in conversation when we met, carefully making the transfer to Washington depend upon our advantage here, from the presence of the Senate,—thus showing that the pretext put forth to wound Mr. Motley was an afterthought.”

Again we may fairly ask how the government came to send a dispatch like that of September 25, 1869, in which the views and expressions for which Mr. Motley’s conversation had been criticised were so nearly reproduced, and with such emphasis that Mr. Motley says, in a letter to me, dated April 8, 1871, “It not only covers all the ground which I ever took, but goes far beyond it. No one has ever used stronger language to the British government than is contained in that dispatch. . . . It is very able and well worth your reading. Lord Clarendon called it to me ’Sumner’s speech over again.’ It was thought by the English cabinet to have ’out-Sumnered Sumner,’ and now our government, thinking that every one in the United States had forgotten the dispatch, makes believe that I was removed because my sayings and doings in England were too much influenced by Sumner!” Mr. Motley goes on to speak of the report that an offer of his place in England was made to Sumner “to get him out of the way of San Domingo.” The facts concerning this offer are now sufficiently known to the public.

Here I must dismiss Mr. Fish’s letter to Mr. Moran, having, as I trust, sufficiently shown the spirit in which it was written and the strained interpretations and manifest overstatements by which it attempts to make out its case against Mr. Motley. I will not parade the two old women, whose untimely and unseemly introduction into the dress-circle of diplomacy was hardly to have been expected of the high official whose name is at the bottom of this paper. They prove nothing, they disprove nothing, they illustrate nothing—except that a statesman may forget himself. Neither will I do more than barely allude to the unfortunate reference to the death of Lord Clarendon as connected with Mr. Motley’s removal, so placidly disposed of by a sentence or two in the London “Times” of January 24, 1871. I think we may consider ourselves ready for the next witness.

Page 3147

Mr. J. C. Bancroft Davis, Assistant Secretary of State under President Grant and Secretary Fish, wrote a letter to the New York “Herald,” under the date of January 4, 1878, since reprinted as a pamphlet and entitled “Mr. Sumner, the Alabama Claims and their Settlement.” Mr. Sumner was never successfully attacked when living,—except with a bludgeon,—and his friends have more than sufficiently vindicated him since his death. But Mr. Motley comes in for his share of animadversion in Mr. Davis’s letter. He has nothing of importance to add to Mr. Fish’s criticisms on the interview with Lord Clarendon. Only he brings out the head and front of Mr. Motley’s offending by italicizing three very brief passages from his conversation at this interview; not discreetly, as it seems to me, for they will not bear the strain that is put upon them. These are the passages:—

1. “but that such, measures must always be taken with a full view of the grave responsibilities assumed.” 2. “and as being the fountain head of the disasters which had been caused to the American people.” 3. “as the fruits of the proclamation.”

1. It is true that nothing was said of responsibility in Mr. Motley’s instructions. But the idea was necessarily involved in their statements. For if, as Mr. Motley’s instructions say, the right of a power “to define its own relations,” *etc*., when a civil conflict has arisen in another state depends on its (the conflict’s) having “attained a sufficient complexity, magnitude, and completeness,” inasmuch as that Power has to judge whether it has or has not fulfilled these conditions, and is of course liable to judge wrong, every such act of judgment must be attended with grave responsibilities. The instructions say that “the necessity and propriety of the original concession of belligerency by Great Britain at the time it was made have been contested and are not admitted.” It follows beyond dispute that Great Britain may in this particular case have incurred grave responsibilities; in fact, the whole negotiations implied as much. Perhaps Mr. Motley need not have used the word “responsibilities.” But considering that the government itself said in dispatch No. 70, September 25, 1869, “The President does not deny, on the contrary he maintains, that every sovereign power decides for itself on its responsibility whether or not it will, at a given time, accord the status of belligerency,” *etc*., it was hardly worth while to use italics about Mr. Motley’s employment of the same language as constituting a grave cause of offence.

2. Mr. Motley’s expression, “as being the fountain head of the disasters,” is a conversational paraphrase of the words of his instructions, “as it shows the beginning and the animus of that course of conduct which resulted so disastrously,” which is not “in precise conformity” with his instructions, but is just such a variation as is to be expected when one is talking with another and using the words that suggest themselves at the moment, just as the familiar expression, “hung up on a peg,” probably suggested itself to Lord Clarendon.

Page 3148

3. “The fruits of the proclamation” is so inconsiderable a variation on the text of the instructions, “supplemented by acts causing direct damage,” that the secretary’s hint about want of precise conformity seems hardly to have been called for.

It is important to notice this point in the instructions: With other powers Mr. Motley was to take the position that the “recognition of the insurgents’ state of war” was made “no ground of complaint;” with Great Britain that the cause of grievance was “not so much” placed upon the issuance of this recognition as upon her conduct under, and subsequent to, such recognition.

There is no need of maintaining the exact fitness of every expression used by Mr. Motley. But any candid person who will carefully read the government’s dispatch No. 70, dated September 25, 1869, will see that a government holding such language could find nothing in Mr. Motley’s expressions in a conversation held at his first official interview to visit with official capital punishment more than a year afterwards. If Mr. Motley had, as it was pretended, followed Sumner, Mr. Fish had “out-Sumnered” the Senator himself.

Mr. Davis’s pamphlet would hardly be complete without a mysterious letter from an unnamed writer, whether a faithless friend, a disguised enemy, a secret emissary, or an injudicious alarmist, we have no means of judging for ourselves. The minister appears to have been watched by somebody in London, as he was in Vienna. This somebody wrote a private letter in which he expressed “fear and regret that Mr. Motley’s bearing in his social intercourse was throwing obstacles in the way of a future settlement.” The charge as mentioned in Mr. Davis’s letter is hardly entitled to our attention. Mr. Sumner considered it the work of an enemy, and the recollection of the M’Crackin letter might well have made the government cautious of listening to complaints of such a character. This Somebody may have been one whom we should call Nobody. We cannot help remembering how well ‘Outis’ served ‘Oduxseus’ of old, when he was puzzled to extricate himself from an embarrassing position. ’Stat nominis umbra’ is a poor showing for authority to support an attack on a public servant exposed to every form of open and insidious abuse from those who are prejudiced against his person or his birthplace, who are jealous of his success, envious of his position, hostile to his politics, dwarfed by his reputation, or hate him by the divine right of idiosyncrasy, always liable, too, to questioning comment from well-meaning friends who happen to be suspicious or sensitive in their political or social relations.

The reported sayings of General Grant and of Mr. Fish to the correspondents who talked with them may be taken for what they are worth. They sound naturally enough to have come from the speakers who are said to have uttered them. I quote the most important part of the Edinburgh letter, September 11, 1877, to the New York “Herald.” These are the words attributed to General Grant:—

Page 3149

“Mr. Motley was certainly a very able, very honest gentleman, fit to hold any official position. But he knew long before he went out that he would have to go. When I was making these appointments, Mr. Sumner came to me and asked me to appoint Mr. Motley as minister to the court of St. James. I told him I would, and did. Soon after Mr. Sumner made that violent speech about the Alabama claims, and the British government was greatly offended. Mr. Sumner was at the time chairman of the committee on foreign affairs. Mr. Motley had to be instructed. The instructions were prepared very carefully, and after Governor Fish and I had gone over them for the last time I wrote an addendum charging him that above all things he should handle the subject of the Alabama claims with the greatest delicacy. Mr. Motley instead of obeying his explicit instructions, deliberately fell in line with Sumner, and thus added insult to the previous injury. As soon as I heard of it I went over to the State Department and told Governor Fish to dismiss Motley at once. I was very angry indeed, and I have been sorry many a time since that I did not stick to my first determination. Mr. Fish advised delay because of Sumner’s position in the Senate and attitude on the treaty question. We did not want to stir him up just then. We dispatched a note of severe censure to Motley at once and ordered him to abstain from any further connection with that question. We thereupon commenced negotiations with the British minister at Washington, and the result was the joint high commission and the Geneva award. I supposed Mr. Motley would be manly enough to resign after that snub, but he kept on till he was removed. Mr. Sumner promised me that he would vote for the treaty. But when it was before the Senate he did all he could to beat it.”

General Grant talked again at Cairo, in Egypt.

“Grant then referred to the statement published at an interview with him in Scotland, and said the publication had some omissions and errors. He had no ill-will towards Mr. Motley, who, like other estimable men, made mistakes, and Motley made a mistake which made him an improper person to hold office under me.”“It is proper to say of me that I killed Motley, or that I made war upon Sumner for not supporting the annexation of San Domingo. But if I dare to answer that I removed Motley from the highest considerations of duty as an executive; if I presume to say that he made a mistake in his office which made him no longer useful to the country; if Fish has the temerity to hint that Sumner’s temper was so unfortunate that business relations with him became impossible, we are slandering the dead.”

“Nothing but Mortimer.” Those who knew both men—the Ex-President and the late Senator—would agree, I do not doubt, that they would not be the most promising pair of human beings to make harmonious members of a political

Page 3150

happy family. “Cedant arma togae,” the life-long sentiment of Sumner, in conflict with “Stand fast and stand sure,” the well-known device of the clan of Grant, reminds one of the problem of an irresistible force in collision with an insuperable resistance. But the President says,—or is reported as saying,—“I may be blamed for my opposition to Mr. Sumner’s tactics, but I was not guided so much by reason of his personal hatred of myself, as I was by a desire to protect our national interests in diplomatic affairs.”

“It would be useless,” says Mr. Davis in his letter to the “Herald,” “to enter into a controversy whether the President may or may not have been influenced in the final determination of the moment for requesting Motley’s resignation by the feeling caused by Sumner’s personal hostility and abuse of himself.” Unfortunately, this controversy had been entered into, and the idleness of suggesting any relation of cause and effect between Mr. Motley’s dismissal and the irritation produced in the President’s mind by the rejection of the San Domingo treaty—which rejection was mainly due to Motley’s friend Sumner’s opposition —strongly insisted upon in a letter signed by the Secretary of State. Too strongly, for here it was that he failed to remember what was due to his office, to himself, and to the gentleman of whom he was writing; if indeed it was the secretary’s own hand which held the pen, and not another’s.

We might as well leave out the wrath of Achilles from the Iliad, as the anger of the President with Sumner from the story of Motley’s dismissal. The sad recital must always begin with M----------. He was, he is reported as saying, “very angry indeed” with Motley because he had, fallen in line with Sumner. He couples them together in his conversation as closely as Chang and Eng were coupled. The death of Lord Clarendon would have covered up the coincidence between the rejection of the San Domingo treaty and Mr. Motley’s dismissal very neatly, but for the inexorable facts about its date, as revealed by the London “Times.” It betrays itself as an afterthought, and its failure as a defence reminds us too nearly of the trial in which Mr. Webster said suicide is confession.

It is not strange that the spurs of the man who had so lately got out of the saddle should catch in the scholastic robe of the man on the floor of the Senate. But we should not have looked for any such antagonism between the Secretary of State and the envoy to Great Britain. On the contrary, they must have had many sympathies, and it must have cost the secretary pain, as he said it did, to be forced to communicate with Mr. Moran instead of with Mr. Motley.

He, too, was inquired of by one of the emissaries of the American Unholy Inquisition. His evidence is thus reported:

Page 3151

“The reason for Mr. Motley’s removal was found in considerations of state. He misrepresented the government on the Alabama question, especially in the two speeches made by him before his arrival at his post.”

These must be the two speeches made to the American and the Liverpool chambers of commerce. If there is anything in these short addresses beyond those civil generalities which the occasion called out, I have failed to find it. If it was in these that the reason of Mr. Motley’s removal was to be looked for, it is singular that they are not mentioned in the secretary’s letter to Mr. Moran, or by Mr. Davis in his letter to the New York “Herald.” They must have been as unsuccessful as myself in the search after anything in these speeches which could be construed into misinterpretation of the government on the Alabama question.

We may much more readily accept “considerations of state” as a reason for Mr. Motley’s removal. Considerations of state have never yet failed the axe or the bowstring when a reason for the use of those convenient implements was wanted, and they are quite equal to every emergency which can arise in a republican autocracy. But for the very reason that a minister is absolutely in the power of his government, the manner in which that power is used is always open to the scrutiny, and, if it has been misused, to the condemnation, of a tribunal higher than itself; a court that never goes out of office, and which no personal feelings, no lapse of time, can silence.

The ostensible grounds on which Mr. Motley was recalled are plainly insufficient to account for the action of the government. If it was in great measure a manifestation of personal feeling on the part of the high officials by whom and through whom the act was accomplished, it was a wrong which can never be repaired and never sufficiently regretted.

Stung by the slanderous report of an anonymous eavesdropper to whom the government of the day was not ashamed to listen, he had quitted Vienna, too hastily, it may be, but wounded, indignant, feeling that he had been unworthily treated. The sudden recall from London, on no pretext whatever but an obsolete and overstated incident which had ceased to have any importance, was under these circumstances a deadly blow. It fell upon “the new-healed wound of malice,” and though he would not own it, and bore up against it, it was a shock from which he never fully recovered.

“I hope I am one of those,” he writes to me from the Hague, in 1872, “who ‘fortune’s buffets and rewards can take with equal thanks.’ I am quite aware that I have had far more than I deserve of political honors, and they might have had my post as a voluntary gift on my part had they remembered that I was an honorable man, and not treated me as a detected criminal deserves to be dealt with.”

Mr. Sumner naturally felt very deeply what he considered the great wrong done to his friend. He says:—

Page 3152

“How little Mr. Motley merited anything but respect and courtesy from the secretary is attested by all who know his eminent position in London, and the service he rendered to his country. Already the London press, usually slow to praise Americans when strenuous for their country, has furnished its voluntary testimony. The ’Daily News’ of August 16, 1870, spoke of the insulted minister in these terms:—“’We are violating no confidence in saying that all the hopes of Mr. Motley’s official residence in England have been amply fulfilled, and that the announcement of his unexpected and unexplained recall was received with extreme astonishment and unfeigned regret. The vacancy he leaves cannot possibly be filled by a minister more sensitive to the honor of his government, more attentive to the interests of his country, and more capable of uniting the most vigorous performance of his public duties with the high-bred courtesy and conciliatory tact and temper that make those duties easy and successful. Mr. Motley’s successor will find his mission wonderfully facilitated by the firmness and discretion that have presided over the conduct of American affairs in this country during too brief a term, too suddenly and unaccountably concluded.’”

No man can escape being found fault with when it is necessary to make out a case against him. A diplomatist is watched by the sharpest eyes and commented on by the most merciless tongues. The best and wisest has his defects, and sometimes they would seem to be very grave ones if brought up against him in the form of accusation. Take these two portraits, for instance, as drawn by John Quincy Adams. The first is that of Stratford Canning, afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe:—

“He is to depart to-morrow. I shall probably see him no more. He is a proud, high-tempered Englishman, of good but not extraordinary parts; stubborn and punctilious, with a disposition to be overbearing, which I have often been compelled to check in its own way. He is, of all the foreign ministers with whom I have had occasion to treat, the man who has most severely tried my temper. Yet he has been long in the diplomatic career, and treated with governments of the most opposite characters. He has, however, a great respect for his word, and there is nothing false about him. This is an excellent quality for a negotiator. Mr. Canning is a man of forms, studious of courtesy, and tenacious of private morals. As a diplomatic man, his great want is suppleness, and his great virtue is sincerity.”

The second portrait is that of the French minister, Hyde de Neuville:—

Page 3153

“No foreign minister who ever resided here has been so universally esteemed and beloved, nor have I ever been in political relations with any foreign statesman of whose moral qualities I have formed so good an opinion, with the exception of Count Romanzoff. He has not sufficient command of his temper, is quick, irritable, sometimes punctilious, occasionally indiscreet in his discourse, and tainted with Royalist and Bourbon prejudices. But he has strong sentiments of honor, justice, truth, and even liberty. His flurries of temper pass off as quickly as they rise. He is neither profound nor sublime nor brilliant; but a man of strong and good feelings, with the experience of many vicissitudes of fortune, a good but common understanding, and good intentions biassed by party feelings, occasional interests, and personal affections.”

It means very little to say that a man has some human imperfections, or that a public servant might have done some things better. But when a questionable cause is to be justified, the victim’s excellences are looked at with the eyes of Liliput and his failings with those of Brobdingnag.

The recall of a foreign minister for alleged misconduct in office is a kind of capital punishment. It is the nearest approach to the Sultan’s bowstring which is permitted to the chief magistrate of our Republic. A general can do nothing under martial law more peremptory than a President can do with regard to the public functionary whom he has appointed with the advice and consent of the Senate, but whom he can officially degrade and disgrace at his own pleasure for insufficient cause or for none at all. Like the centurion of Scripture, he says Go, and he goeth. The nation’s representative is less secure in his tenure of office than his own servant, to whom he must give warning of his impending dismissal.

“A breath unmakes him as a breath has made.”

The chief magistrate’s responsibility to duty, to the fellow-citizen at his mercy, to his countrymen, to mankind, is in proportion to his power. His prime minister, the agent of his edicts, should feel bound to withstand him if he seeks to gratify a personal feeling under the plea of public policy, unless the minister, like the slaves of the harem, is to find his qualification for office in leaving his manhood behind him.

The two successive administrations, which treated Mr. Motley in a manner unworthy of their position and cruel, if not fatal to him, have been heard, directly or through their advocates. I have attempted to show that the defence set up for their action is anything but satisfactory. A later generation will sit in judgment upon the evidence more calmly than our own. It is not for a friend, like the writer, to anticipate its decision, but unless the reasons alleged to justify his treatment, and which have so much the air of afterthoughts, shall seem stronger to that future tribunal than they do to him, the verdict will be that Mr. Motley was twice sacrificed to personal feelings which should never have been cherished by the heads of the government, and should never have been countenanced by their chief advisers.

Page 3154

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY.

A MEMOIR

By Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

Volume *iii*.

XXII.

1874. AEt. 60. "*Life of John of Barneveld*."—*Criticisms*.—*Groen van Prinsterer*.

The full title of Mr. Motley's next and last work is "The Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Advocate of Holland; with a View of the Primary Causes and Movements of the Thirty Years' War."

In point of fact this work is a history rather than a biography. It is an interlude, a pause between the acts which were to fill out the complete plan of the "Eighty Years' Tragedy," and of which the last act, the Thirty Years' War, remains unwritten. The "Life of Barneveld" was received as a fitting and worthy continuation of the series of intellectual labor in which he was engaged. I will quote but two general expressions of approval from the two best known British critical reviews. In connection with his previous works, it forms, says "The London Quarterly," "a fine and continuous story, of which the writer and the nation celebrated by him have equal reason to be proud; a narrative which will remain a prominent ornament of American genius, while it has permanently enriched English literature on this as well as on the other side of the Atlantic."

"The Edinburgh Review" speaks no less warmly: "We can hardly give too much appreciation to that subtile alchemy of the brain which has enabled him to produce out of dull, crabbed, and often illegible state papers, the vivid, graphic, and sparkling narrative which he has given to the world."

In a literary point of view, M. Groen van Prinsterer, whose elaborate work has been already referred to, speaks of it as perhaps the most classical of Motley's productions, but it is upon this work that the force of his own and other Dutch criticisms has been chiefly expended.

The key to this biographical history or historical biography may be found in a few sentences from its opening chapter.

"There have been few men at any period whose lives have been more closely identical than his [Barneveld's] with a national history. There have been few great men in any history whose names have become less familiar to the world, and lived less in the

mouths of posterity. Yet there can be no doubt that if William the Silent was the founder of the independence of the United Provinces, Barneveld was the founder of the Commonwealth itself. . . .“Had that country of which he was so long the first citizen maintained until our own day the same proportional position among the empires of Christendom as it held in the seventeenth century, the name of John of Barneveld would have perhaps been as familiar to all men as it is at this moment to nearly every inhabitant of the Netherlands.

Page 3155

Even now political passion is almost as ready to flame forth, either in ardent affection or enthusiastic hatred, as if two centuries and a half had not elapsed since his death. His name is so typical of a party, a polity, and a faith, so indelibly associated with a great historical cataclysm, as to render it difficult even for the grave, the conscientious, the learned, the patriotic, of his own compatriots to speak of him with absolute impartiality.“A foreigner who loves and admires all that is great and noble in the history of that famous republic, and can have no hereditary bias as to its ecclesiastical or political theories, may at least attempt the task with comparative coldness, although conscious of inability to do thorough justice to a most complex subject.”

With all Mr. Motley’s efforts to be impartial, to which even his sternest critics bear witness, he could not help becoming a partisan of the cause which for him was that of religious liberty and progress, as against the accepted formula of an old ecclesiastical organization. For the quarrel which came near being a civil war, which convulsed the state, and cost Barneveld his head, had its origin in a difference on certain points, and more especially on a single point, of religious doctrine.

As a great river may be traced back until its fountainhead is found in a thread of water streaming from a cleft in the rocks, so a great national movement may sometimes be followed until its starting-point is found in the cell of a monk or the studies of a pair of wrangling professors.

The religious quarrel of the Dutchmen in the seventeenth century reminds us in some points of the strife between two parties in our own New England, sometimes arraying the “church” on one side against the “parish,” or the general body of worshippers, on the other. The portraits of Gomarus, the great orthodox champion, and Arminius, the head and front of the “liberal theology” of his day, as given in the little old quarto of Meursius, recall two ministerial types of countenance familiar to those who remember the earlier years of our century.

Under the name of “Remonstrants” and “Contra-Remonstrants,”—Arminians and old-fashioned Calvinists, as we should say,—the adherents of the two Leyden professors disputed the right to the possession of the churches, and the claim to be considered as representing the national religion. Of the seven United Provinces, two, Holland and Utrecht, were prevailingly Arminian, and the other five Calvinistic. Barneveld, who, under the title of Advocate, represented the province of Holland, the most important of them all, claimed for each province a right to determine its own state religion. Maurice the Stadholder, son of William the Silent, the military chief of the republic, claimed the right for the States-General. ’Cujus regio ejus religio’ was then the accepted public doctrine of Protestant nations. Thus the provincial and the general governments were

Page 3156

brought into conflict by their creeds, and the question whether the republic was a confederation or a nation, the same question which has been practically raised, and for the time at least settled, in our own republic, was in some way to be decided. After various disturbances and acts of violence by both parties, Maurice, representing the States-General, pronounced for the Calvinists or Contra-Remonstrants, and took possession of one of the great churches, as an assertion of his authority. Barneveld, representing the Arminian or Remonstrant provinces, levied a body of mercenary soldiers in several of the cities. These were disbanded by Maurice, and afterwards by an act of the States-General. Barneveld was apprehended, imprisoned, and executed, after an examination which was in no proper sense a trial. Grotius, who was on the Arminian side and involved in the inculpated proceedings, was also arrested and imprisoned. His escape, by a stratagem successfully repeated by a slave in our own times, may challenge comparison for its romantic interest with any chapter of fiction. How his wife packed him into the chest supposed to contain the folios of the great oriental scholar Erpenius, how the soldiers wondered at its weight and questioned whether it did not hold an Arminian, how the servant-maid, Elsje van Houwening, quick-witted as Morgiana of the “Forty Thieves,” parried their questions and convoyed her master safely to the friendly place of refuge,—all this must be read in the vivid narrative of the author.

The questions involved were political, local, personal, and above all religious. Here is the picture which Motley draws of the religious quarrel as it divided the people:—

“In burghers’ mansions, peasants’ cottages, mechanics’ back-parlors; on board herring-smacks, canal-boats, and East Indiamen; in shops, counting-rooms, farm-yards, guard-rooms, alehouses; on the exchange, in the tennis court, on the mall; at banquets, at burials, christenings, or bridals; wherever and whenever human creatures met each other, there was ever to be found the fierce wrangle of Remonstrant and Contra-Remonstrant, the hissing of red-hot theological rhetoric, the pelting of hostile texts. The blacksmith’s iron cooled on the anvil, the tinker dropped a kettle half mended, the broker left a bargain unclinched, the Scheveningen fisherman in his wooden shoes forgot the cracks in his pinkie, while each paused to hold high converse with friend or foe on fate, free- will, or absolute foreknowledge; losing himself in wandering mazes whence there was no issue. Province against province, city against city, family against family; it was one vast scene of bickering, denunciation, heart-burnings, mutual excommunication and hatred.”

The religious grounds of the quarrel which set these seventeenth-century Dutchmen to cutting each other’s throats were to be looked for in the “Five Points” of the Arminians as arrayed against the “Seven Points” of the Gomarites, or Contra-Remonstrants. The most important of the differences which were to be settled by fratricide seem to have been these:—

Page 3157

According to the Five Points, “God has from eternity resolved to choose to eternal life those who through his grace believe in Jesus Christ,” *etc*. According to the Seven Points, “God in his election has not looked at the belief and the repentance of the elect,” *etc*. According to the Five Points, all good deeds must be ascribed to God’s grace in Christ, but it does not work irresistibly. The language of the Seven Points implies that the elect cannot resist God’s eternal and unchangeable design to give them faith and steadfastness, and that they can never wholly and for always lose the true faith. The language of the Five Points is unsettled as to the last proposition, but it was afterwards maintained by the Remonstrant party that a true believer could, through his own fault, fall away from God and lose faith.

It must be remembered that these religious questions had an immediate connection with politics. Independently of the conflict of jurisdiction, in which they involved the parties to the two different creeds, it was believed or pretended that the new doctrines of the Remonstrants led towards Romanism, and were allied with designs which threatened the independence of the country. “There are two factions in the land,” said Maurice, “that of Orange and that of Spain, and the two chiefs of the Spanish faction are those political and priestly Arminians, Uytenbogaert and Oldenbarneveld.”

The heads of the two religious and political parties were in such hereditary, long-continued, and intimate relations up to the time when one signed the other’s death-warrant, that it was impossible to write the life of one without also writing that of the other. For his biographer John of Barneveld is the true patriot, the martyr, whose cause was that of religious and political freedom. For him Maurice is the ambitious soldier who hated his political rival, and never rested until this rival was brought to the scaffold.

The questions which agitated men’s minds two centuries and a half ago are not dead yet in the country where they produced such estrangement, violence, and wrong. No stranger could take them up without encountering hostile criticism from one party or the other. It may be and has been conceded that Mr. Motley writes as a partisan,—a partisan of freedom in politics and religion, as he understands freedom. This secures him the antagonism of one class of critics. But these critics are themselves partisans, and themselves open to the cross-fire of their antagonists. M. Groen van Prinsterer, “the learned and distinguished” editor of the “Archives et Correspondance” of the Orange and Nassau family, published a considerable volume, before referred to, in which many of Motley’s views are strongly controverted. But he himself is far from being in accord with “that eminent scholar,” M. Bakhuyzen van den Brink, whose name, he says, is celebrated enough to need no comment, or with M. Fruin, of whose impartiality and erudition he himself speaks in the strongest terms. The ground upon which he is attacked is thus stated in his own words:—

Page 3158

“People have often pretended to find in my writings the deplorable influence of an extreme Calvinism. The Puritans of the seventeenth century are my fellow-religionists. I am a sectarian and not an historian.”

It is plain enough to any impartial reader that there are at least plausible grounds for this accusation against Mr. Motley’s critic. And on a careful examination of the formidable volume, it becomes obvious that Mr. Motley has presented a view of the events and the personages of the stormy epoch with which he is dealing, which leaves a battle-ground yet to be fought over by those who come after him. The dispute is not and cannot be settled.

The end of all religious discussion has come when one of the parties claims that it is thinking or acting under immediate Divine guidance. “It is God’s affair, and his honor is touched,” says William Lewis to Prince Maurice. Mr. Motley’s critic is not less confident in claiming the Almighty as on the side of his own views. Let him state his own ground of departure:—

“To show the difference, let me rather say the contrast, between the point of view of Mr. Motley and my own, between the Unitarian and the Evangelical belief. I am issue of *Calvin*, child of the Awakening (reveil). Faithful to the device of the Reformers: Justification by faith alone, and the Word of God endures eternally. I consider history from the point of view of Merle d’Aubigne, Chalmers, Guizot. I desire to be disciple and witness of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

He is therefore of necessity antagonistic to a writer whom he describes in such words as these:—

> “Mr. Motley is liberal and rationalist.
>
> “He becomes, in attacking the principle of the Reformation, the passionate opponent of the Puritans and of Maurice, the ardent apologist of Barnevelt and the Arminians.
>
> “It is understood, and he makes no mystery of it, that he inclines towards the vague and undecided doctrine of the Unitarians.”

What M. Groen’s idea of Unitarians is may be gathered from the statement about them which he gets from a letter of De Tocqueville.

“They are pure deists; they talk about the Bible, because they do not wish to shock too severely public opinion, which is prevailingly Christian. They have a service on Sundays; I have been there. At it they read verses from Dryden or other English poets on the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. They deliver a discourse on some point of morality, and all is said.”

In point of fact the wave of protest which stormed the dikes of Dutch orthodoxy in the seventeenth century stole gently through the bars of New England Puritanism in the eighteenth.

“Though the large number,” says Mr. Bancroft, “still acknowledged the fixedness of the divine decrees, and the resistless certainty from all eternity of election and of reprobation, there were not wanting, even among the clergy, some who had modified the sternness of the ancient doctrine by making the self-direction of the active powers of man with freedom of inquiry and private judgment the central idea of a protest against Calvinism.”

Page 3159

Protestantism, cut loose from an infallible church, and drifting with currents it cannot resist, wakes up once or oftener in every century, to find itself in a new locality. Then it rubs its eyes and wonders whether it has found its harbor or only lost its anchor. There is no end to its disputes, for it has nothing but a fallible vote as authority for its oracles, and these appeal only to fallible interpreters.

It is as hard to contend in argument against “the oligarchy of heaven,” as Motley calls the Calvinistic party, as it was formerly to strive with them in arms.

To this “aristocracy of God’s elect” belonged the party which framed the declaration of the Synod of Dort; the party which under the forms of justice shed the blood of the great statesman who had served his country so long and so well. To this chosen body belonged the late venerable and truly excellent as well as learned M. Groen van Prinsterer, and he exercised the usual right of examining in the light of his privileged position the views of a “liberal” and “rationalist” writer who goes to meeting on Sunday to hear verses from Dryden. This does not diminish his claim for a fair reading of the “intimate correspondence,” which he considers Mr. Motley has not duly taken into account, and of the other letters to be found printed in his somewhat disjointed and fragmentary volume.

This “intimate correspondence” shows Maurice the Stadholder indifferent and lax in internal administration and as being constantly advised and urged by his relative Count William of Nassau. This need of constant urging extends to religious as well as other matters, and is inconsistent with M. Groen van Prinsterer’s assertion that the question was for Maurice above all religious, and for Barneveld above all political. Whether its negative evidence can be considered as neutralizing that which is adduced by Mr. Motley to show the Stadholder’s hatred of the Advocate may be left to the reader who has just risen from the account of the mock trial and the swift execution of the great and venerable statesman. The formal entry on the record upon the day of his “judicial murder” is singularly solemn and impressive:—

“Monday, 13th May, 1619. To-day was executed with the sword here in the Hague, on a scaffold thereto erected in the Binnenhof before the steps of the great hall, Mr. John of Barneveld, in his life Knight, Lord of Berkel, Rodenrys, *etc*., Advocate of Holland and West Friesland, for reasons expressed in the sentence and otherwise, with confiscation of his property, after he had served the state thirty- three years two months and five days, since 8th March, 1586; a man of great activity, business, memory, and wisdom,—-yea, extraordinary in every respect. He that stands let him see that he does not fall.”

Maurice gave an account of the execution of Barneveld to Count William Lewis on the same day in a note “painfully brief and dry.”

Page 3160

Most authors write their own biography consciously or unconsciously. We have seen Mr. Motley portraying much of himself, his course of life and his future, as he would have had it, in his first story. In this, his last work, it is impossible not to read much of his own external and internal personal history told under other names and with different accessories. The parallelism often accidentally or intentionally passes into divergence. He would not have had it too close if he could, but there are various passages in which it is plain enough that he is telling his own story.

Mr. Motley was a diplomatist, and he writes of other diplomatists, and one in particular, with most significant detail. It need not be supposed that he intends the “arch intriguer” Aerssens to stand for himself, or that he would have endured being thought to identify himself with the man of whose “almost devilish acts” he speaks so freely. But the sagacious reader—and he need not be very sharp-sighted—will very certainly see something more than a mere historical significance in some of the passages which I shall cite for him to reflect upon. Mr. Motley’s standard of an ambassador’s accomplishments may be judged from the following passage:—

“That those ministers [those of the Republic] were second to the representatives of no other European state in capacity and accomplishment was a fact well known to all who had dealings with them, for the states required in their diplomatic representatives knowledge of history and international law, modern languages, and the classics, as well as familiarity with political customs and social courtesies; the breeding of gentlemen, in short, and the accomplishments of scholars.”

The story of the troubles of Aerssens, the ambassador of the United Provinces at Paris, must be given at some length, and will repay careful reading.

“Francis Aerssens . . . continued to be the Dutch ambassador after the murder of Henry *iv*. . . . He was beyond doubt one of the ablest diplomatists in Europe. Versed in many languages, a classical student, familiar with history and international law, a man of the world and familiar with its usages, accustomed to associate with dignity and tact on friendliest terms with sovereigns, eminent statesmen, and men of letters; endowed with a facile tongue, a fluent pen, and an eye and ear of singular acuteness and delicacy; distinguished for unflagging industry and singular aptitude for secret and intricate affairs;—he had by the exercise of these various qualities during a period of nearly twenty years at the court of Henry the Great been able to render inestimable services to the Republic which he represented.“He had enjoyed the intimacy and even the confidence of Henry *iv*., so far as any man could be said to possess that monarch’s confidence, and his friendly relations and familiar access to the king gave him political advantages

Page 3161

superior to those of any of his colleagues at the same court.“Acting entirely and faithfully according to the instructions of the Advocate of Holland, he always gratefully and copiously acknowledged the privilege of being guided and sustained in the difficult paths he had to traverse by so powerful and active an intellect. I have seldom alluded in terms to the instructions and dispatches of the chief, but every position, negotiation, and opinion of the envoy —and the reader has seen many of them is pervaded by their spirit.“It had become a question whether he was to remain at his post or return. It was doubtful whether he wished to be relieved of his embassy or not. The States of Holland voted ’to leave it to his candid opinion if in his free conscience he thinks he can serve the public any longer. If yes, he may keep his office one year more. If no, he may take leave and come home.’“Surely the States, under the guidance of the Advocate, had thus acted with consummate courtesy towards a diplomatist whose position, from no apparent fault of his own, but by the force of circumstances,—and rather to his credit than otherwise, —was gravely compromised.”

The Queen, Mary de’ Medici, had a talk with him, got angry, “became very red in the face,” and wanted to be rid of him.

“Nor was the envoy at first desirous of remaining. . . . Nevertheless, he yielded reluctantly to Barneveld’s request that he should, for the time at least, remain at his post. Later on, as the intrigues against him began to unfold themselves, and his faithful services were made use of at home to blacken his character and procure his removal, he refused to resign, as to do so would be to play into the hands of his enemies, and, by inference at least, to accuse himself of infidelity to his trust. . . .“It is no wonder that the ambassador was galled to the quick by the outrage which those concerned in the government were seeking to put upon him. How could an honest man fail to be overwhelmed with rage and anguish at being dishonored before the world by his masters for scrupulously doing his duty, and for maintaining the rights and dignity of his own country? He knew that the charges were but pretexts, that the motives of his enemies were as base as the intrigues themselves, but he also knew that the world usually sides with the government against the individual, and that a man’s reputation is rarely strong enough to maintain itself unsullied in a foreign land when his own government stretches forth its hand, not to shield, but to stab him. . . .

> “‘I know,’ he said, that this plot has been woven partly here in Holland and partly here by good correspondence in order to drive me from my post.

Page 3162

“’But as I have discovered this accurately, I have resolved to offer to my masters the continuance of my very humble service for such time and under such conditions as they may think good to prescribe. I prefer forcing my natural and private inclinations to giving an opportunity for the ministers of this kingdom to discredit us, and to my enemies to succeed in injuring me, and by fraud and malice to force me from my post. . . . I am truly sorry, being ready to retire, wishing to have an honorable testimony in recompense of my labors, that one is in such hurry to take advantage of my fall. . . . What envoy will ever dare to speak with vigor if he is not sustained by the government at home? . . . My enemies have misrepresented my actions, and my language as passionate, exaggerated, mischievous, but I have no passion except for the service of my superiors.’“Barneveld, from well-considered motives of public policy, was favoring his honorable recall. But he allowed a decorous interval of more than three years to elapse in which to terminate his affairs, and to take a deliberate departure from that French embassy to which the Advocate had originally promoted him, and in which there had been so many years of mutual benefit and confidence between the two statesmen. He used no underhand means. He did not abuse the power of the States-General which he wielded to cast him suddenly and brutally from the distinguished post which he occupied, and so to attempt to dishonor him before the world. Nothing could be more respectful and conciliatory than the attitude of the government from first to last towards this distinguished functionary. The Republic respected itself too much to deal with honorable agents whose services it felt obliged to dispense with as with vulgar malefactors who had been detected in crime. . . .“This work aims at being a political study. I would attempt to exemplify the influence of individual humors and passions—-some of them among the highest, and others certainly the basest that agitate humanity—upon the march of great events, upon general historical results at certain epochs, and upon the destiny of eminent personages.”

Here are two suggestive portraits:—

“The Advocate, while acting only in the name of a slender confederacy, was in truth, so long as he held his place, the prime minister of European Protestantism. There was none other to rival him, few to comprehend him, fewer still to sustain him. As Prince Maurice was at that time the great soldier of Protestantism, without clearly scanning the grandeur of the field in which he was a chief actor, or foreseeing the vastness of its future, so the Advocate was its statesman and its prophet. Could the two have worked together as harmoniously as they had done at an earlier day, it would have been a blessing for the common weal of Europe. But, alas! the evil genius of jealousy,

Page 3163

which so often forbids cordial relations between soldier and statesman, already stood shrouded in the distance, darkly menacing the strenuous patriot, who was wearing his life out in exertions for what he deemed the true cause of progress and humanity. . . .“All history shows that the brilliant soldier of a republic is apt to have the advantage, in a struggle for popular affection and popular applause, over the statesman, however consummate. . . . The great battles and sieges of the prince had been on a world’s theatre, had enchained the attention of Christendom, and on their issue had frequently depended, or seemed to depend, the very existence of the nation. The labors of the statesman, on the contrary, had been comparatively secret. His noble orations and arguments had been spoken with closed doors to assemblies of colleagues, rather envoys than senators, . . while his vast labors in directing both the internal administration and especially the foreign affairs of the commonwealth had been by their very nature as secret as they were perpetual and enormous.”

The reader of the “Life of Barneveld” must judge for himself whether in these and similar passages the historian was thinking solely of Maurice, the great military leader, of Barneveld, the great statesman, and of Aerssens, the recalled ambassador. He will certainly find that there were “burning questions” for ministers to handle then as now, and recognize in “that visible atmosphere of power the poison of which it is so difficult to resist” a respiratory medium as well known to the nineteenth as to the seventeenth century.

XXIII.

1874-1877. AEt. 60-63.

Death of Mrs. *Motley*.—*Last visit to America*.—*Illness and death*.-*Lady* HARCOURT’S *communication*.

On the last day of 1874, the beloved wife, whose health had for some years been failing, was taken from him by death. She had been the pride of his happier years, the stay and solace of those which had so tried his sensitive spirit. The blow found him already weakened by mental suffering and bodily infirmity, and he never recovered from it. Mr. Motley’s last visit to America was in the summer and autumn of 1875. During several weeks which he passed at Nahant, a seaside resort near Boston, I saw him almost daily. He walked feebly and with some little difficulty, and complained of a feeling of great weight in the right arm, which made writing laborious. His handwriting had not betrayed any very obvious change, so far as I had noticed in his letters. His features and speech were without any paralytic character. His mind was clear except when, as on one or two occasions, he complained of some confused feeling, and walked a few minutes in the open air to compose himself. His thoughts were always tending to revert to the almost worshipped companion

Page 3164

from whom death had parted him a few months before. Yet he could often be led away to other topics, and in talking of them could be betrayed into momentary cheerfulness of manner. His long-enduring and all-pervading grief was not more a tribute to the virtues and graces of her whom he mourned than an evidence of the deeply affectionate nature which in other relations endeared him to so many whose friendship was a title to love and honor.

I have now the privilege of once more recurring to the narrative of Mr. Motley's daughter, Lady Harcourt.

"The harassing work and mental distress of this time [after the recall from England], acting on an acutely nervous organization, began the process of undermining his constitution, of which we were so soon to see the results. It was not the least courageous act of his life, that, smarting under a fresh wound, tired and unhappy, he set his face immediately towards the accomplishment of fresh literary labor. After my sister's marriage in January he went to the Hague to begin his researches in the archives for John of Barneveld. The Queen of the Netherlands had made ready a house for us, and personally superintended every preparation for his reception. We remained there until the spring, and then removed to a house more immediately in the town, a charming old-fashioned mansion, once lived in by John de Witt, where he had a large library and every domestic comfort during the year of his sojourn. The incessant literary labor in an enervating climate with enfeebled health may have prepared the way for the first break in his constitution, which was to show itself soon after. There were many compensations in the life about him. He enjoyed the privilege of constant companionship with one of the warmest hearts and finest intellects which I have ever known in a woman,—the 'ame d'elite' which has passed beyond this earth. The gracious sentiment with which the Queen sought to express her sense of what Holland owed him would have been deeply felt even had her personal friendship been less dear to us all. From the King, the society of the Hague, and the diplomatic circle we had many marks of kindness. Once or twice I made short journeys with him for change of air to Amsterdam, to look for the portraits of John of Barneveld and his wife; to Bohemia, where, with the lingering hope of occupying himself with the Thirty Years' War, he looked carefully at the scene of Wallenstein's death near Prague, and later to Varzin in Pomerania for a week with Prince Bismarck, after the great events of the Franco-German war. In the autumn of 1872 we moved to England, partly because it was evident that his health and my mother's required a change; partly for private reasons to be near my sister and her children. The day after our arrival at Bournemouth occurred the rupture of a vessel on the lungs, without any apparently sufficient cause. He recovered enough to revise and complete his manuscript, and we thought him better, when

Page 3165

at the end of July, in London, he was struck down by the first attack of the head, which robbed him of all after power of work, although the intellect remained untouched. Sir William Gull sent him to Cannes for the winter, where he was seized with a violent internal inflammation, in which I suppose there was again the indication of the lesion of blood-vessels. I am nearing the shadow now,—the time of which I can hardly bear to write. You know the terrible sorrow which crushed him on the last day of 1874,—the grief which broke his heart and from which he never rallied. From that day it seems to me that his life may be summed up in the two words,—patient waiting. Never for one hour did her spirit leave him, and he strove to follow its leading for the short and evil days left and the hope of the life beyond. I think I have never watched quietly and reverently the traces of one personal character remaining so strongly impressed on another nature. With herself—depreciation and unselfishness she would have been the last to believe how much of him was in her very existence; nor could we have realized it until the parting came. Henceforward, with the mind still there, but with the machinery necessary to set it in motion disturbed and shattered, he could but try to create small occupations with which to fill the hours of a life which was only valued for his children's sake. Kind and loving friends in England and America soothed the passage, and our gratitude for so many gracious acts is deep and true. His love for children, always a strong feeling, was gratified by the constant presence of my sister's babies, the eldest, a little girl who bore my mother's name, and had been her idol, being the companion of many hours and his best comforter. At the end the blow came swiftly and suddenly, as he would have wished it. It was a terrible shock to us who had vainly hoped to keep him a few years longer, but at least he was spared what he had dreaded with a great dread, a gradual failure of mental or bodily power. The mind was never clouded, the affections never weakened, and after a few hours of unconscious physical struggle he lay at rest, his face beautiful and calm, without a trace of suffering or illness. Once or twice he said, 'It has come, it has come,' and there were a few broken words before consciousness fled, but there was little time for messages or leave- taking. By a strange coincidence his life ended near the town of Dorchester, in the mother country, as if the last hour brought with it a reminiscence of his birthplace, and of his own dearly loved mother. By his own wish only the dates of his birth and death appear upon his gravestone, with the text chosen by himself, 'In God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.'"

XXIV.

CONCLUSION.—HIS CHARACTER.—HIS LABORS.—HIS REWARD.

In closing this restricted and imperfect record of a life which merits, and in due time will, I trust, receive an ampler tribute, I cannot refrain from adding a few thoughts which naturally suggest themselves, and some of which may seem quite unnecessary to the

reader who has followed the story of the historian and diplomatist’s brilliant and eventful career.

Page 3166

Mr. Motley came of a parentage which promised the gifts of mind and body very generally to be accounted for, in a measure at least, wherever we find them, by the blood of one or both of the parents. They gave him special attractions and laid him open to not a few temptations. Too many young men born to shine in social life, to sparkle, it may be, in conversation, perhaps in the lighter walks of literature, become agreeable idlers, self-indulgent, frivolous, incapable of large designs or sustained effort, lose every aspiration and forget every ideal. Our gilded youth want such examples as this of Motley, not a solitary, but a conspicuous one, to teach them how much better is the restlessness of a noble ambition than the narcotized stupor of club-life or the vapid amusement of a dressed-up intercourse which too often requires a questionable flavor of forbidden license to render it endurable to persons of vivacious character and temperament.

It would seem difficult for a man so flattered from his earliest days to be modest in his self-estimate; but Motley was never satisfied with himself. He was impulsive, and was occasionally, I have heard it said, over excited, when his prejudices were roughly handled. In all that related to the questions involved in our civil war, he was, no doubt, very sensitive. He had heard so much that exasperated him in the foreign society which he had expected to be in full sympathy with the cause of liberty as against slavery, that he might be excused if he showed impatience when he met with similar sentiments among his own countrymen. He felt that he had been cruelly treated by his own government, and no one who conceives himself to have been wronged and insulted must be expected to reason in naked syllogisms on the propriety of the liberties which have been taken with his name and standing. But with all his quickness of feeling, his manners were easy and courteous, simply because his nature was warm and kindly, and with all his natural fastidiousness there was nothing of the coxcomb about him.

He must have had enemies, as all men of striking individuality are sure to have; his presence cast more uncouth patriots into the shade; his learning was a reproach to the ignorant, his fame was too bright a distinction; his high-bred air and refinement, which he could not help, would hardly commend him to the average citizen in an order of things in which mediocrity is at a premium, and the natural nobility of presence, which rarely comes without family antecedents to account for it, is not always agreeable to the many whose two ideals are the man on horseback and the man in his shirt-sleeves. It may well be questioned whether Washington, with his grand manner, would be nearly as popular with what are called “the masses” as Lincoln, with his homely ways and broad stories. The experiment of universal suffrage must render the waters of political and social life more or less turbid even if they remain

Page 3167

innoxious. The Cloaca Maxima can hardly mingle its contents with the stream of the Aqua Claudia, without taking something from its crystal clearness. We need not go so far as one of our well-known politicians has recently gone in saying that no great man can reach the highest position in our government, but we can safely say that, apart from military fame, the loftiest and purest and finest personal qualities are not those which can be most depended upon at the ballot-box. Strange stories are told of avowed opposition to Mr. Motley on the ground of the most trivial differences in point of taste in personal matters,—so told that it is hard to disbelieve them, and they show that the caprices which we might have thought belonged exclusively to absolute rulers among their mistresses or their minions may be felt in the councils of a great people which calls itself self-governing. It is perfectly true that Mr. Motley did not illustrate the popular type of politician. He was too high-minded, too scholarly, too generously industrious, too polished, too much at home in the highest European circles, too much courted for his personal fascinations, too remote from the trading world of caucus managers. To degrade him, so far as official capital punishment could do it, was not merely to wrong one whom the nation should have delighted to honor as showing it to the world in the fairest flower of its young civilization, but it was an indignity to a representative of the highest scholarship of native growth, which every student in the land felt as a discouragement to all sound learning and noble ambition.

If he was disappointed in his diplomatic career, he had enough, and more than enough, to console him in his brilliant literary triumphs. He had earned them all by the most faithful and patient labor. If he had not the “frame of adamant” of the Swedish hero, he had his “soul of fire.” No labors could tire him, no difficulties affright him. What most surprised those who knew him as a young man was, not his ambition, not his brilliancy, but his dogged, continuous capacity for work. We have seen with what astonishment the old Dutch scholar, Groen van Prinsterer, looked upon a man who had wrestled with authors like Bor and Van Meteren, who had grappled with the mightiest folios and toiled undiscouraged among half-illegible manuscript records. Having spared no pains in collecting his materials, he told his story, as we all know, with flowing ease and stirring vitality. His views may have been more or less partial; Philip the Second may have deserved the pitying benevolence of poor Maximilian; Maurice may have wept as sincerely over the errors of Arminius as any one of “the crocodile crew that believe in election;” Barneveld and Grotius may have been on the road to Rome; none of these things seem probable, but if they were all proved true in opposition to his views, we should still have the long roll of glowing tapestry he has woven for us, with all its life-like portraits, its almost moving pageants, its sieges where we can see the artillery flashing, its battle-fields with their smoke and fire,—pictures which cannot fade, and which will preserve his name interwoven with their own enduring colors.

Page 3168

Republics are said to be ungrateful; it might be truer to say that they are forgetful. They forgive those who have wronged them as easily as they forget those who have done them good service. But History never forgets and never forgives. To her decision we may trust the question, whether the warm-hearted patriot who had stood up for his country nobly and manfully in the hour of trial, the great scholar and writer who had reflected honor upon her throughout the world of letters, the high-minded public servant, whose shortcomings it taxed the ingenuity of experts to make conspicuous enough to be presentable, was treated as such a citizen should have been dealt with. His record is safe in her hands, and his memory will be precious always in the hearts of all who enjoyed his friendship.

APPENDIX.

A.

The Saturday club.

This club, of which we were both members, and which is still flourishing, came into existence in a very quiet sort of way at about the same time as “The Atlantic Monthly,” and, although entirely unconnected with that magazine, included as members some of its chief contributors. Of those who might have been met at some of the monthly gatherings in its earlier days I may mention Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Lowell, Motley, Whipple, Whittier; Professors Agassiz and Peirce; John S. Dwight; Governor Andrew, Richard H. Dana, Junior, Charles Sumner. It offered a wide gamut of intelligences, and the meetings were noteworthy occasions. If there was not a certain amount of “mutual admiration” among some of those I have mentioned it was a great pity, and implied a defect in the nature of men who were otherwise largely endowed. The vitality of this club has depended in a great measure on its utter poverty in statutes and by-laws, its entire absence of formality, and its blessed freedom from speech-making.

That holy man, Richard Baxter, says in his Preface to Alleine’s “Alarm:”—

“I have done, when I have sought to remove a little scandal, which I foresaw, that I should myself write the Preface to his Life where himself and two of his friends make such a mention of my name, which I cannot own; which will seem a praising him for praising me. I confess it looketh ill-favoredly in me. But I had not the power of other men’s writings, and durst not forbear that which was his due.”

I do not know that I have any occasion for a similar apology in printing the following lines read at a meeting of members of the Saturday Club and other friends who came together to bid farewell to Motley before his return to Europe in 1857.

A *parting health*

Yes, we knew we must lose him,—though friendship may claim
To blend her green leaves with the laurels of fame,
Though fondly, at parting, we call him our own,
’T is the whisper of love when the bugle has blown.

Page 3169

As the rider that rests with the spur on his heel,
As the guardsman that sleeps in his corselet of steel,
As the archer that stands with his shaft on the string,
He stoops from his toil to the garland we bring.

What pictures yet slumber unborn in his loom
Till their warriors shall breathe and their beauties shall bloom,
While the tapestry lengthens the life-glowing dyes
That caught from our sunsets the stain of their skies!

In the alcoves of death, in the charnels of time,
Where flit the dark spectres of passion and crime,
There are triumphs untold, there are martyrs unsung,
There are heroes yet silent to speak with his tongue!

Let us hear the proud story that time has bequeathed
From lips that are warm with the freedom they breathed!
Let him summon its tyrants, and tell us their doom,
Though he sweep the black past like Van Tromp with his broom!

The dream flashes by, for the west-winds awake
On pampas, on prairie, o'er mountain and lake,
To bathe the swift bark, like a sea-girdled shrine
With incense they stole from the rose and the pine.

So fill a bright cup with the sunlight that gushed
When the dead summer's jewels were trampled and crushed;
the true knight of learning,—the world holds him dear,—

Love bless him, joy crown him, God speed his career!

B.

Habits and methods of study.

Mr. Motley's daughter, Lady Harcourt, has favored me with many interesting particulars which I could not have learned except from a member of his own family. Her description of his way of living and of working will be best given in her own words:—

"He generally rose early, the hour varying somewhat at different parts of his life, according to his work and health. Sometimes when much absorbed by literary labor he would rise before seven, often lighting his own fire, and with a cup of tea or coffee writing until the family breakfast hour, after which his work was immediately resumed, and he usually sat over his writing-table until late in the afternoon, when he would take a

short walk. His dinner hour was late, and he rarely worked at night. During the early years of his literary studies he led a life of great retirement. Later, after the publication of the ‘Dutch Republic’ and during the years of official place, he was much in society in England, Austria, and Holland. He enjoyed social life, and particularly dining out, keenly, but was very moderate and simple in all his personal habits, and for many years before his death had entirely given up smoking. His work, when not in his own library, was in the Archives of the Netherlands, Brussels, Paris, the English State Paper Office, and the British Museum, where

Page 3170

he made his own researches, patiently and laboriously consulting original manuscripts and reading masses of correspondence, from which he afterwards sometimes caused copies to be made, and where he worked for many consecutive hours a day. After his material had been thus painfully and toilfully amassed, the writing of his own story was always done at home, and his mind, having digested the necessary matter, always poured itself forth in writing so copiously that his revision was chiefly devoted to reducing the over-abundance. He never shrank from any of the drudgery of preparation, but I think his own part of the work was sheer pleasure to him."

I should have mentioned that his residence in London while minister was at the house No. 17 Arlington Street, belonging to Lord Yarborough.

C.

Sir William GULL's *account of his illness*.

I have availed myself of the permission implied in the subjoined letter of Sir William Gull to make large extracts from his account of Mr. Motley's condition while under his medical care. In his earlier years he had often complained to me of those "nervous feelings connected with the respiration" referred to by this very distinguished physician. I do not remember any other habitual trouble to which he was subject.

74 *Brook street*, *Grosvenor square*, W.
February 13, 1878.
My dear sir,—I send the notes of Mr. Motley's last illness, as I promised. They are too technical for general readers, but you will make such exception as you require. The medical details may interest your professional friends. Mr. Motley's case was a striking illustration that the renal disease of so-called Bright's disease may supervene as part and parcel of a larger and antecedent change in the blood-vessels in other parts than the kidney. . . . I am, my dear sir,

Yours very truly,
William W. *Gull*.

To *Oliver Wendell Holmes*, ESQ.

I first saw Mr. Motley, I believe, about the year 1870, on account of some nervous feelings connected with the respiration. At that time his general health was good, and all he complained of was occasionally a feeling of oppression about the chest. There were no physical signs of anything abnormal, and the symptoms quite passed away in the course of time, and with the use of simple antispasmodic remedies, such as camphor and the like. This was my first interview with Mr. Motley, and I was naturally

glad to have the opportunity of making his acquaintance. I remember that in our conversation I jokingly said that my wife could hardly forgive him for not making her hero, Henri *iv*., a perfect character, and the earnestness with which he replied ‘au serieux,’ I assure you I have fairly recorded the facts. After this date I did not see Mr. Motley for some time.

Page 3171

He had three slight attacks of haemoptysis in the autumn of 1872, but no physical signs of change in the lung tissue resulted. So early as this I noticed that there were signs of commencing thickening in the heart, as shown by the degree and extent of its impulse. The condition of his health, though at that time not very obviously failing, a good deal arrested my attention, as I thought I could perceive in the occurrence of the haemoptysis, and in the cardiac hypertrophy, the early beginnings of vascular degeneration.In August, 1873, occurred the remarkable seizure, from the effects of which Mr. Motley never recovered. I did not see him in the attack, but was informed, as far as I can remember, that he was on a casual visit at a friend's house at luncheon (or it might have been dinner), when he suddenly became strangely excited, but not quite unconscious. . . . I believed at the time, and do so still, that there was some capillary apoplexy of the convolutions. The attack was attended with some hemiplegic weakness on the right side, and altered sensation, and ever after there was a want of freedom and ease both in the gait and in the use of the arm of that side. To my inquiries from time to time how the arm was, the patient would always flex and extend it freely, but nearly always used the expression, "There is a bedevilment in it;" though the handwriting was not much, if at all, altered.

In December, 1873, Mr. Motley went by my advice to Cannes. I wrote the following letter at the time to my friend Dr. Frank, who was practising there:—

[This letter, every word of which was of value to the practitioner who was to have charge of the patient, relates many of the facts given above, and I shall therefore only give extracts from it.]

December 29, 1873.

My dear Dr. *Frank*,—My friend Mr. Motley, the historian and late American Minister, whose name and fame no doubt you know very well, has by my advice come to Cannes for the winter and spring, and I have promised him to give you some account of his case. To me it is one of special interest, and personally, as respects the subject of it, of painful interest. I have known Mr. Motley for some time, but he consulted me for the present condition about midsummer.. . . If I have formed a correct opinion of the pathology of the case, I believe the smaller vessels are degenerating in several parts of the vascular area, lung, brain, and kidneys. With this view I have suggested a change of climate, a nourishing diet, *etc*.; and it is to be hoped, and I trust expected, that by great attention to the conditions of hygiene, internal and external, the progress of degeneration may be retarded. I have no doubt you will find, as time goes on, increasing evidence of renal change, but this is rather a coincidence and consequence than a cause, though

Page 3172

no doubt when the renal change has reached a certain point, it becomes in its own way a factor of other lesions. I have troubled you at this length because my mind is much occupied with the pathology of these cases, and because no case can, on personal grounds, more strongly challenge our attention.

Yours very truly,
William W. *Gull*.

During the spring of 1874, whilst at Cannes, Mr. Motley had a sharp attack of nephritis, attended with fever; but on returning to England in July there was no important change in the health. The weakness of the side continued, and the inability to undertake any mental work. The signs of cardiac hypertrophy were more distinct. In the beginning of the year 1875 I wrote as follows:—

February 20, 1875.

My dear Mr. *Motley*,—. . . The examination I have just made appears to indicate that the main conditions of your health are more stable than they were some months ago, and would therefore be so far in favor of your going to America in the summer, as we talked of. The ground of my doubt has lain in the possibility of such a trip further disordering the circulation. Of this, I hope, there is now less risk.

On the 4th of June, 1875, I received the following letter:—

CALVERLY *park hotel*, *Tunbridge Wells*,
June 4, 1875.

My dear sir William,—I have been absent from town for a long time, but am to be there on the 9th and 10th. Could I make an appointment with you for either of those days? I am anxious to have a full consultation with you before leaving for America. Our departure is fixed for the 19th of this month. I have not been worse than usual of late. I think myself, on the contrary, rather stronger, and it is almost impossible for me not to make my visit to America this summer, unless you should absolutely prohibit it. If neither of those days should suit you, could you kindly suggest another day? I hope, however, you can spare me half an hour on one of those days, as I like to get as much of this bracing air as I can. Will you kindly name the hour when I may call on you, and address me at this hotel. Excuse this slovenly note in pencil, but it fatigues my head and arm much more to sit at a writing-table with pen and ink.

Always most sincerely yours,
My dear Sir William,
J. L. *Motley*.

On Mr. Motley’s return from America I saw him, and found him, I thought, rather better in general health than when he left England.

Page 3173

In December, 1875, Mr. Motley consulted me for trouble of vision in reading or walking, from sensations like those produced by flakes of falling snow coming between him and the objects he was looking at. Mr. Bowman, one of our most excellent oculists, was then consulted. Mr. Bowman wrote to me as follows: "Such symptoms as exist point rather to disturbed retinal function than to any brain-mischief. It is, however, quite likely that what you fear for the brain may have had its counterpart in the nerve-structures of the eye, and as he is short-sighted, this tendency may be further intensified."

> Mr. Bowman suggested no more than such an arrangement of glasses as might put the eyes, when in use, under better optic conditions.

The year 1876 was passed over without any special change worth notice. The walking powers were much impeded by the want of control over the right leg. The mind was entirely clear, though Mr. Motley did not feel equal, and indeed had been advised not to apply himself, to any literary work. Occasional conversations, when I had interviews with him on the subject of his health, proved that the attack which had weakened the movements of the right side had not impaired the mental power. The most noticeable change which had come over Mr. Motley since I first knew him was due to the death of Mrs. Motley in December, 1874. It had in fact not only profoundly depressed him, but, if I may so express it, had removed the centre of his thought to a new world. In long conversations with me of a speculative kind, after that painful event, it was plain how much his point of view of the whole course and relation of things had changed. His mind was the last to dogmatize on any subject. There was a candid and childlike desire to know, with an equal confession of the incapacity of the human intellect. I wish I could recall the actual expressions he used, but the sense was that which has been so well stated by Hooker in concluding an exhortation against the pride of the human intellect, where he remarks:—"Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High; whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of His Name, yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know Him, not indeed as He is, neither can know Him; and our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence, when we confess without confession that His glory is inexplicable, His greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above and we upon earth; therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few."Mrs. Motley's illness was not a long one, and the nature of it was such that its course could with certainty be predicted. Mr. Motley and her children passed the remaining days of her life, extending over about a month, with her, in the mutual under standing that she was soon to part from them. The character of the illness,

Page 3174

and the natural exhaustion of her strength by suffering, lessened the shock of her death, though not the loss, to those who survived her.The last time I saw Mr. Motley was, I believe, about two months before his death, March 28, 1877. There was no great change in his health, but he complained of indescribable sensations in his nervous system, and felt as if losing the whole power of walking, but this was not obvious in his gait, although he walked shorter distances than before. I heard no more of him until I was suddenly summoned on the 29th of May into Devonshire to see him. The telegram I received was so urgent, that I suspected some rupture of a blood- vessel in the brain, and that I should hardly reach him alive; and this was the case. About two o'clock in the day he complained of a feeling of faintness, said he felt ill and should not recover; and in a few minutes was insensible with symptoms of ingravescent apoplexy. There was extensive haemorrhage into the brain, as shown by post-mortem examination, the cerebral vessels being atheromatous. The fatal haemorrhage had occurred into the lateral ventricles, from rupture of one of the middle cerebral arteries.

I am, my dear Sir,
Yours very truly,
William W. *Gull*.

E.

From the proceedings of the Massachusetts society.

At a meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society, held on Thursday, the 14th of June, 1877, after the reading of the records of the preceding meeting, the president, the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, spoke as follows:

"Our first thoughts to-day, gentlemen, are of those whom we may not again welcome to these halls. We shall be in no mood, certainly, for entering on other subjects this morning until we have given some expression to our deep sense of the loss—the double loss—which our Society has sustained since our last monthly meeting."—-[Edmund Quincy died May 17. John Lothrop Motley died May 29.]

After a most interesting and cordial tribute to his friend, Mr. Quincy, Mr. Winthrop continued:

"The death of our distinguished associate, Motley, can hardly have taken many of us by surprise. Sudden at the moment of its occurrence, we had long been more or less prepared for it by his failing health. It must, indeed, have been quite too evident to those who had seen him, during the last two or three years, that his life-work was finished. I think he so regarded it himself."Hopes may have been occasionally revived in the hearts of his friends, and even in his own heart, that his long-cherished purpose

of completing a History of the Thirty Years' War, as the grand consummation of his historical labors,—for which all his other volumes seemed to him to have been but the preludes and overtures, —might still be accomplished. But

Page 3175

such hopes, faint and flickering from his first attack, had well-nigh died away. They were like Prescott's hopes of completing his 'Philip the Second,' or like Macaulay's hopes of finishing his brilliant 'History of England.'"But great as may be the loss to literature of such a crowning work from Motley's pen, it was by no means necessary to the completeness of his own fame. His 'Rise of the Dutch Republic,' his 'History of the United Netherlands,' and his 'Life of John of Barneveld,' had abundantly established his reputation, and given him a fixed place among the most eminent historians of our country and of our age."No American writer, certainly, has secured a wider recognition or a higher appreciation from the scholars of the Old World. The universities of England and the learned societies of Europe have bestowed upon him their largest honors. It happened to me to be in Paris when he was first chosen a corresponding member of the Institute, and when his claims were canvassed with the freedom and earnestness which peculiarly characterize such a candidacy in France. There was no mistaking the profound impression which his first work had made on the minds of such men as Guizot and Mignet. Within a year or two past, a still higher honor has been awarded him from the same source. The journals not long ago announced his election as one of the six foreign associates of the French Academy of Moral and Political Sciences,—a distinction which Prescott would probably have attained had he lived a few years longer, until there was a vacancy, but which, as a matter of fact, I believe, Motley was the only American writer, except the late Edward Livingston, of Louisiana, who has actually enjoyed."Residing much abroad, for the purpose of pursuing his historical researches, he had become the associate and friend of the most eminent literary men in almost all parts of the world, and the singular charms of his conversation and manners had made him a favorite guest in the most refined and exalted circles."Of his relations to political and public life, this is hardly the occasion or the moment for speaking in detail. Misconstructions and injustices are the proverbial lot of those who occupy eminent position. It was a duke of Vienna, if I remember rightly, whom Shakespeare, in his 'Measure for Measure,' introduces as exclaiming,—

> 'O place and greatness, millions of false eyes
> Are stuck upon thee! Volumes of report
> Run with these false and most contrarious quests
> Upon thy doings! Thousand 'stapes of wit
> Make thee the father of their idle dream,
> And rack thee in their fancies!'

Page 3176

“I forbear from all application of the lines. It is enough for me, certainly, to say here, to-day, that our country was proud to be represented at the courts of Vienna and London successively by a gentleman of so much culture and accomplishment as Mr. Motley, and that the circumstances of his recall were deeply regretted by us all.“His fame, however, was quite beyond the reach of any such accidents, and could neither be enhanced nor impaired by appointments or removals. As a powerful and brilliant historian we pay him our unanimous tribute of admiration and regret, and give him a place in our memories by the side of Prescott and Irving. I do not forget how many of us lament him, also, as a cherished friend.“He died on the 29th ultimo, at the house of his daughter, Mrs. Sheridan, in Dorsetshire, England, and an impressive tribute to his memory was paid, in Westminster Abbey, on the following Sunday, by our Honorary Member, Dean Stanley. Such a tribute, from such lips, and with such surroundings, leaves nothing to be desired in the way of eulogy. He was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, by the side of his beloved wife.“One might well say of Motley precisely what he said of Prescott, in a letter from Rome to our associate, Mr. William Amory, immediately on hearing of Prescott’s death: ’I feel inexpressibly disappointed —-speaking now for an instant purely from a literary point of view —that the noble and crowning monument of his life, for which he had laid such massive foundations, and the structure of which had been carried forward in such a grand and masterly manner, must remain uncompleted, like the unfinished peristyle of some stately and beautiful temple on which the night of time has suddenly descended. But, still, the works which his great and untiring hand had already thoroughly finished will remain to attest his learning and genius, —a precious and perpetual possession for his country.”
……

The President now called on Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who said:—

“The thoughts which suggest themselves upon this occasion are such as belong to the personal memories of the dear friends whom we have lost, rather than to their literary labors, the just tribute to which must wait for a calmer hour than the present, following so closely as it does on our bereavement.”
……
“His first literary venture of any note was the story called ‘Morton’s Hope; or, The Memoirs of a Provincial.’ This first effort failed to satisfy the critics, the public, or himself. His personality pervaded the characters and times which he portrayed, so that there was a discord between the actor and his costume. Brilliant passages could not save it; and it was plain enough that he must ripen into something better before the world would give him

Page 3177

the reception which surely awaited him if he should find his true destination.“The early failures of a great writer are like the first sketches of a great artist, and well reward patient study. More than this, the first efforts of poets and story-tellers are very commonly palimpsests: beneath the rhymes or the fiction one can almost always spell out the characters which betray the writer’s self. Take these passages from the story just referred to: “’Ah! flattery is a sweet and intoxicating potion, whether we drink it from an earthen ewer or a golden chalice. . . . Flattery from man to woman is expected: it is a part of the courtesy of society; but when the divinity descends from the altar to burn incense to the priest, what wonder if the idolater should feel himself transformed into a god!’

> “He had run the risk of being spoiled, but he had a safeguard in his aspirations.

“‘My ambitious anticipations,’ says Morton, in the story, were as boundless as they were various and conflicting. There was not a path which leads to glory in which I was not destined to gather laurels. As a warrior, I would conquer and overrun the world; as a statesman, I would reorganize and govern it; as a historian, I would consign it all to immortality; and, in my leisure moments, I would be a great poet and a man of the world.’

> “Who can doubt that in this passage of his story he is picturing his own visions, one of the fairest of which was destined to become reality?

“But there was another element in his character, which those who knew him best recognized as one with which he had to struggle hard, —that is, a modesty which sometimes tended to collapse into self- distrust. This, too, betrays itself in the sentences which follow those just quoted:—“‘In short,’ says Morton, ’I was already enrolled in that large category of what are called young men of genius, . . . men of whom unheard-of things are expected; till after long preparation comes a portentous failure, and then they are forgotten. . . . Alas! for the golden imaginations of our youth. . . . They are all disappointments. They are bright and beautiful, but they fade.’” …….

The President appointed Professor Lowell to write the Memoir of Mr. Quincy, and Dr. Holmes that of Mr. Motley, for the Society’s “Proceedings.”

Professor William Everett then spoke as follows:

“There is one incident, sir, in Mr. Motley’s career that has not been mentioned to-day, which is, perhaps, most vividly remembered by those of us who were in Europe at the

outbreak of our civil war in 1861. At that time, the ignorance of Englishmen, friendly or otherwise, about America, was infinite: they knew very little of us, and that little wrong. Americans were overwhelmed with questions, taunts, threats, misrepresentations,

Page 3178

the outgrowth of ignorance, and ignoring worse than ignorance, from every class of Englishmen. Never was an authoritative exposition of our hopes and policy worse needed; and there was no one to do it. The outgoing diplomatic agents represented a bygone order of things; the representatives of Mr. Lincoln's administration had not come. At that time of anxiety, Mr. Motley, living in England as a private person, came forward with two letters in the 'Times,' which set forth the cause of the United States once and for all. No unofficial, and few official, men could have spoken with such authority, and been so certain of obtaining a hearing from Englishmen. Thereafter, amid all the clouds of falsehood and ridicule which we had to encounter, there was one lighthouse fixed on a rock to which we could go for foothold, from which we could not be driven, and against which all assaults were impotent."There can be no question that the effect produced by these letters helped, if help had been needed, to point out Mr. Motley as a candidate for high diplomatic place who could not be overlooked. Their value was recognized alike by his fellow-citizens in America and his admirers in England; but none valued them more than the little band of exiles, who were struggling against terrible odds, and who rejoiced with a great joy to see the stars and stripes, whose centennial anniversary those guns are now celebrating, planted by a hand so truly worthy to rally every American to its support."

G.

Poem by William Cullen Bryant.

I cannot close this Memoir more appropriately than by appending the following poetical tribute:—

In memory of John Lothrop Motley.

By William Cullen Bryant.

Sleep, Motley, with the great of ancient days,
Who wrote for all the years that yet shall be.
Sleep with Herodotus, whose name and praise
Have reached the isles of earth's remotest sea.
Sleep, while, defiant of the slow delays
Of Time, thy glorious writings speak for thee
And in the answering heart of millions raise
The generous zeal for Right and Liberty.
And should the days o'ertake us, when, at last,
The silence that—ere yet a human pen
Had traced the slenderest record of the past
Hushed the primeval languages of men

Upon our English tongue its spell shall cast,
Thy memory shall perish only then.

PG EDITOR’S BOOKMARKS OF HOLME’S MOTLEY:

Page 3179

A great historian is almost a statesman
Admired or despised, as if he or she were our contemporary
Alas! one never knows when one becomes a bore
All classes are conservative by necessity
Already looking forward to the revolt of the slave States
American Unholy Inquisition
An order of things in which mediocrity is at a premium
Attacked by the poetic mania
Becoming more learned, and therefore more ignorant
best defence in this case is little better than an impeachment
Better is the restlessness of a noble ambition
Blessed freedom from speech-making
But not thoughtlessly indulgent to the boy
But after all this isn’t a war It is a revolution
Can never be repaired and never sufficiently regretted
Cold water of conventional and commonplace encouragement
Considerations of state have never yet failed the axe
Considerations of state as a reason
Could paint a character with the ruddy life-blood coloring
Emulation is not capability
Everything else may happen This alone must happen
Excused by their admirers for their shortcomings
Excuses to disarm the criticism he had some reason to fear
Fear of the laugh of the world at its sincerity
Fitted “To warn, to comfort, and command”
Flattery is a sweet and intoxicating potion
Forget those who have done them good service
Fortune’s buffets and rewards can take with equal thanks
He was not always careful in the construction of his sentences
His learning was a reproach to the ignorant
His dogged, continuous capacity for work
History never forgets and never forgives
How many more injured by becoming bad copies of a bad ideal
Ignoble facts which strew the highways of political life
In revolutions the men who win are those who are in earnest
Indoor home life imprisons them in the domestic circle
Intellectual dandyisms of Bulwer
Irresistible force in collision with an insuperable resistance
It is n’t strategists that are wanted so much as believers
John Quincy Adams
Kindly shadow of oblivion
Manner in which an insult shall be dealt with
Mediocrity is at a premium

Misanthropical, sceptical philosopher
Most entirely truthful child whe had ever seen
Motley was twice sacrificed to personal feelings
Nearsighted liberalism
No great man can reach the highest position in our government
No two books, as he said, ever injured each other
No man is safe (from news reporters)
Not a single acquaintance in the place, and we glory in the fact
Only foundation fit for history,—original contemporary document
Our mortal life is but a string of guesses at the future
Over excited, when his prejudices were roughly handled
Plain enough that he is telling his own story
Played so long with other men’s characters and good name
Progress should be by a spiral movement
Public which must have a slain reputation to devour

Page 3180

Radical, one who would uproot, is a man whose trade is dangerous
Reasonable to pay our debts rather than to repudiate them
Recall of a foreign minister for alleged misconduct in office
Republics are said to be ungrateful
Sees the past in the pitiless light of the present
Self-educated man, as he had been a self-taught boy
Shall Slavery die, or the great Republic?
Solitary and morose, the necessary consequence of reckless study
Spirit of a man who wishes to be proud of his country
Studied according to his inclinations rather than by rule
Style above all other qualities seems to embalm for posterity
Suicide is confession
Talked impatiently of the value of my time
The fellow mixes blood with his colors!
The loss of hair, which brings on premature decay
The personal gifts which are nature's passport everywhere
The nation is as much bound to be honest as is the individual
The dead men of the place are my intimate friends
They knew very little of us, and that little wrong
This Somebody may have been one whom we should call Nobody
Twenty assaults upon fame and had forty books killed under him
Unequivocal policy of slave emancipation
Vain belief that they were men at eighteen or twenty
Visible atmosphere of power the poison of which
Weight of a thousand years of error
Wonders whether it has found its harbor or only lost its anchor
Wringing a dry cloth for drops of evidence

Etext editor's bookmarks the complete history of the Netherlands: [Including the Memoir of Motley by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.]

1566, the last year of peace
A pleasantry called voluntary contributions or benevolences
A good lawyer is a bad Christian
A terrible animal, indeed, is an unbridled woman
A common hatred united them, for a time at least
A penal offence in the republic to talk of peace or of truce
A most fatal success
A country disinherited by nature of its rights
A free commonwealth—was thought an absurdity

A hard bargain when both parties are losers
A burnt cat fears the fire
A despot really keeps no accounts, nor need to do so
A sovereign remedy for the disease of liberty
A pusillanimous peace, always possible at any period
A man incapable of fatigue, of perplexity, or of fear
A truce he honestly considered a pitfall of destruction
A great historian is almost a statesman
Able men should be by design and of purpose suppressed
About equal to that of England at the same period
Absolution for incest was afforded at thirty-six livres
Abstinence from unproductive consumption
Abstinence from inquisition into consciences and private parlour
Absurd affectation of candor
Accepting a new tyrant in place of the one so long ago deposed
Accustomed to the faded gallantries
Achieved the greatness to which they had not been

Page 3181

born
Act of Uniformity required Papists to assist
Acts of violence which under pretext of religion
Admired or despised, as if he or she were our contemporary
Adulation for inferiors whom they despise
Advanced orthodox party-Puritans
Advancing age diminished his tendency to other carnal pleasures
Advised his Majesty to bestow an annual bribe upon Lord Burleigh
Affecting to discredit them
Affection of his friends and the wrath of his enemies
Age when toleration was a vice
Agreements were valid only until he should repent
Alas! the benighted victims of superstition hugged their chains
Alas! we must always have something to persecute
Alas! one never knows when one becomes a bore
Alexander’s exuberant discretion
All Italy was in his hands
All fellow-worms together
All business has been transacted with open doors
All reading of the scriptures (forbidden)
All the majesty which decoration could impart
All denounced the image-breaking
All claimed the privilege of persecuting
All his disciples and converts are to be punished with death
All Protestants were beheaded, burned, or buried alive
All classes are conservative by necessity
All the ministers and great functionaries received presents
All offices were sold to the highest bidder
Allow her to seek a profit from his misfortune
Allowed the demon of religious hatred to enter into its body
Almost infinite power of the meanest of passions
Already looking forward to the revolt of the slave States
Altercation between Luther and Erasmus, upon predestination
Always less apt to complain of irrevocable events
American Unholy Inquisition
Amuse them with this peace negotiation
An inspiring and delightful recreation (auto-da-fe)
An hereditary papacy, a perpetual pope-emperor
An age when to think was a crime
An unjust God, himself the origin of sin
An order of things in which mediocrity is at a premium
Anarchy which was deemed inseparable from a non-regal form

Anatomical study of what has ceased to exist
And give advice. Of that, although always a spendthrift
And now the knife of another priest-led fanatic
And thus this gentle and heroic spirit took its flight
Angle with their dissimulation as with a hook
Announced his approaching marriage with the Virgin Mary
Annual harvest of iniquity by which his revenue was increased
Anxiety to do nothing wrong, the senators did nothing at all
Are apt to discharge such obligations—(by) ingratitude
Are wont to hang their piety on the bell-rope
Argument in a circle
Argument is exhausted and either action or compromise begins
Aristocracy of God’s elect
Arminianism
Arrested on suspicion, tortured till confession
Arrive at their end by fraud, when violence will not avail them
Artillery
As logical as men in their cups are prone to be
As the old woman had told the Emperor Adrian

Page 3182

As if they were free will not make them free
As lieve see the Spanish as the Calvinistic inquisition
As ready as papists, with age, fagot, and excommunication
As with his own people, keeping no back-door open
As neat a deception by telling the truth
At a blow decapitated France
At length the twig was becoming the tree
Atheist, a tyrant, because he resisted dictation from the clergy
Attachment to a half-drowned land and to a despised religion
Attacked by the poetic mania
Attacking the authority of the pope
Attempting to swim in two waters
Auction sales of judicial ermine
Baiting his hook a little to his appetite
Barbara Blomberg, washerwoman of Ratisbon
Batavian legion was the imperial body guard
Beacons in the upward path of mankind
Beating the Netherlanders into Christianity
Beautiful damsel, who certainly did not lack suitors
Because he had been successful (hated)
Becoming more learned, and therefore more ignorant
Been already crimination and recrimination more than enough
Before morning they had sacked thirty churches
Began to scatter golden arguments with a lavish hand
Beggars of the sea, as these privateersmen designated themselves
Behead, torture, burn alive, and bury alive all heretics
Being the true religion, proved by so many testimonies
Believed in the blessed advent of peace
Beneficent and charitable purposes (War)
best defence in this case is little better than an impeachment
Bestowing upon others what was not his property
Better to be governed by magistrates than mobs
Better is the restlessness of a noble ambition
Beware of a truce even more than of a peace
Bigotry which was the prevailing characteristic of the age
Bishop is a consecrated pirate
Blessed freedom from speech-making
Blessing of God upon the Devil’s work
Bold reformer had only a new dogma in place of the old ones
Bomb-shells were not often used although known for a century

Breath, time, and paper were profusely wasted and nothing gained
Brethren, parents, and children, having wives in common
Bribed the Deity
Bungling diplomatists and credulous dotards
Burned, strangled, beheaded, or buried alive (100,000)
Burned alive if they objected to transubstantiation
Burning with bitter revenge for all the favours he had received
Burning of Servetus at Geneva
Business of an officer to fight, of a general to conquer
But the habit of dissimulation was inveterate
But after all this isn’t a war It is a revolution
But not thoughtlessly indulgent to the boy
Butchery in the name of Christ was suspended
By turns, we all govern and are governed
Calling a peace perpetual can never make it so
Calumny is often a stronger and more lasting power than disdain
Can never be repaired and never sufficiently regretted
Canker of a long peace
Care neither for words nor menaces in any matter

Page 3183

Cargo of imaginary gold dust was exported from the James River
Casting up the matter “as pinchingly as possibly might be”
Casual outbursts of eternal friendship
Certain number of powers, almost exactly equal to each other
Certainly it was worth an eighty years’ war
Changed his positions and contradicted himself day by day
Character of brave men to act, not to expect
Charles the Fifth autocrat of half the world
Chief seafaring nations of the world were already protestant
Chieftains are dwarfed in the estimation of followers
Children who had never set foot on the shore
Christian sympathy and a small assistance not being sufficient
Chronicle of events must not be anticipated
Claimed the praise of moderation that their demands were so few
Cold water of conventional and commonplace encouragement
College of “peace-makers,” who wrangled more than all
Colonel Ysselstein, “dismissed for a homicide or two”
Compassing a country’s emancipation through a series of defeats
Conceding it subsequently, after much contestation
Conceit, and procrastination which marked the royal character
Conciliation when war of extermination was intended
Conclusive victory for the allies seemed as predestined
Conde and Coligny
Condemned first and inquired upon after
Condemning all heretics to death
Conflicting claims of prerogative and conscience
Conformity of Governments to the principles of justice
Confused conferences, where neither party was entirely sincere
Considerable reason, even if there were but little justice
Considerations of state have never yet failed the axe
Considerations of state as a reason
Considered it his special mission in the world to mediate
Consign to the flames all prisoners whatever (Papal letter)
Constant vigilance is the price of liberty
Constitute themselves at once universal legatees
Constitutional governments, move in the daylight
Consumer would pay the tax, supposing it were ever paid at all
Contained within itself the germs of a larger liberty
Contempt for treaties however solemnly ratified
Continuing to believe himself invincible and infallible

Converting beneficent commerce into baleful gambling
Could handle an argument as well as a sword
Could paint a character with the ruddy life-blood coloring
Could not be both judge and party in the suit
Could do a little more than what was possible
Country would bear his loss with fortitude
Courage of despair inflamed the French
Courage and semblance of cheerfulness, with despair in his heart
Court fatigue, to scorn pleasure
Covered now with the satirical dust of centuries
Craft meaning, simply, strength
Created one child for damnation and another for salvation
Crescents in their caps: Rather Turkish than Popish
Crimes and cruelties such as Christians only could imagine
Criminal whose guilt had been established by the hot

Page 3184

iron
Criminals buying Paradise for money
Cruelties exercised upon monks and papists
Crusades made great improvement in the condition of the serfs
Culpable audacity and exaggerated prudence
Customary oaths, to be kept with the customary conscientiousness
Daily widening schism between Lutherans and Calvinists
Deadliest of sins, the liberty of conscience
Deadly hatred of Puritans in England and Holland
Deal with his enemy as if sure to become his friend
Death rather than life with a false acknowledgment of guilt
Decline a bribe or interfere with the private sale of places
Decrees for burning, strangling, and burying alive
Deeply criminal in the eyes of all religious parties
Defeated garrison ever deserved more respect from friend or foe
Defect of enjoying the flattery, of his inferiors in station
Delay often fights better than an army against a foreign invader
Demanding peace and bread at any price
Democratic instincts of the ancient German savages
Denies the utility of prayers for the dead
Denoungced as an obstacle to peace
Depths theological party spirit could descend
Depths of credulity men in all ages can sink
Despised those who were grateful
Despot by birth and inclination (Charles V.)
Determined to bring the very name of liberty into contempt
Devote himself to his gout and to his fair young wife
Difference between liberties and liberty
Difficult for one friend to advise another in three matters
Diplomacy of Spain and Rome—meant simply dissimulation
Diplomatic adroitness consists mainly in the power to deceive
Disciple of Simon Stevinus
Dismay of our friends and the gratification of our enemies
Disordered, and unknit state needs no shaking, but propping
Disposed to throat-cutting by the ministers of the Gospel
Dispute between Luther and Zwingli concerning the real presence
Disputing the eternal damnation of young children
Dissenters were as bigoted as the orthodox
Dissimulation and delay
Distinguished for his courage, his cruelty, and his corpulence
Divine right of kings
Divine right

Do you want peace or war? I am ready for either
Doctrine of predestination in its sternest and strictest sense
Don John of Austria
Don John was at liberty to be King of England and Scotland
Done nothing so long as aught remained to do
Drank of the water in which, he had washed
Draw a profit out of the necessities of this state
During this, whole war, we have never seen the like
Dying at so very inconvenient a moment
Each in its turn becoming orthodox, and therefore persecuting
Eat their own children than to forego one high mass
Eight thousand human beings were murdered
Elizabeth, though convicted, could always confute
Elizabeth (had not) the faintest idea of religious freedom
Eloquence of the biggest guns
Emperor of Japan addressed him as his brother monarch

Page 3185

Emulation is not capability
Endure every hardship but hunger
Enemy of all compulsion of the human conscience
England hated the Netherlands
English Puritans
Englishmen and Hollanders preparing to cut each other’s throats
Enmity between Lutherans and Calvinists
Enormous wealth (of the Church) which engendered the hatred
Enriched generation after generation by wealthy penitence
Enthusiasm could not supply the place of experience
Envying those whose sufferings had already been terminated
Epernon, the true murderer of Henry
Erasmus of Rotterdam
Erasmus encourages the bold friar
Establish not freedom for Calvinism, but freedom for conscience
Estimating his character and judging his judges
Even the virtues of James were his worst enemies
Even to grant it slowly is to deny it utterly
Even for the rape of God’s mother, if that were possible
Ever met disaster with so cheerful a smile
Ever-swarming nurseries of mercenary warriors
Every one sees what you seem, few perceive what you are
Everybody should mind his own business
Everything else may happen This alone must happen
Everything was conceded, but nothing was secured
Evil is coming, the sooner it arrives the better
Evil has the advantage of rapidly assuming many shapes
Excited with the appearance of a gem of true philosophy
Excused by their admirers for their shortcomings
Excuses to disarm the criticism he had some reason to fear
Executions of Huss and Jerome of Prague
Exorcising the devil by murdering his supposed victims
Extraordinary capacity for yielding to gentle violence
Fable of divine right is invented to sanction the system
Faction has rarely worn a more mischievous aspect
Famous fowl in every pot
Fanatics of the new religion denounced him as a godless man
Fate, free will, or absolute foreknowledge
Father Cotton, who was only too ready to betray the secrets
Fear of the laugh of the world at its sincerity

Fed on bear’s liver, were nearly poisoned to death
Felix Mants, the anabaptist, is drowned at Zurich
Fellow worms had been writhing for half a century in the dust
Ferocity which even Christians could not have surpassed
Few, even prelates were very dutiful to the pope
Fiction of apostolic authority to bind and loose
Fifty thousand persons in the provinces (put to death)
Financial opposition to tyranny is apt to be unanimous
Find our destruction in our immoderate desire for peace
Fishermen and river raftsmen become ocean adventurers
Fitted “To warn, to comfort, and command”
Fitter to obey than to command
Five great rivers hold the Netherland territory in their coils
Flattery is a sweet and intoxicating potion
Fled from the land of oppression to the land of liberty
Fool who useth not wit because he hath it not
For myself I am unworthy of the honor (of martyrdom)
For faithful service, evil recompense

Page 3186

For women to lament, for men to remember
For us, looking back upon the Past, which was then the Future
For his humanity towards the conquered garrisons (censured)
Forbidding the wearing of mourning at all
Forbids all private assemblies for devotion
Force clerical—the power of clerks
Foremost to shake off the fetters of superstition
Forget those who have done them good service
Forgiving spirit on the part of the malefactor
Fortune’s buffets and rewards can take with equal thanks
Four weeks’ holiday—the first in eleven years
France was mourning Henry and waiting for Richelieu
French seem madmen, and are wise
Friendly advice still more intolerable
Full of precedents and declamatory commonplaces
Furious fanaticism
Furious mob set upon the house of Rem Bischop
Furnished, in addition, with a force of two thousand prostitutes
Future world as laid down by rival priesthoods
Gallant and ill-fated Lamoral Egmont
Gaul derided the Roman soldiers as a band of pigmies
German-Lutheran sixteenth-century idea of religious freedom
German finds himself sober—he believes himself ill
German Highland and the German Netherland
Gigantic vices are proudly pointed to as the noblest
Give him advice if he asked it, and money when he required
Glory could be put neither into pocket nor stomach
God has given absolute power to no mortal man
God, whose cause it was, would be pleased to give good weather
God alone can protect us against those whom we trust
God of wrath who had decreed the extermination of all unbeliever
God of vengeance, of jealousy, and of injustice
God Save the King! It was the last time
Gold was the only passkey to justice
Gomarites accused the Arminians of being more lax than Papists
Govern under the appearance of obeying
Great transactions of a reign are sometimes paltry things
Great science of political equilibrium
Great Privilege, the Magna Charta of Holland
Great error of despising their enemy

Great war of religion and politics was postponed
Great battles often leave the world where they found it
Guarantees of forgiveness for every imaginable sin
Guilty of no other crime than adhesion to the Catholic faith
Habeas corpus
Had industry been honoured instead of being despised
Haereticis non servanda fides
Hair and beard unshorn, according to ancient Batavian custom
Halcyon days of ban, book and candle
Hanged for having eaten meat-soup upon Friday
Hanging of Mary Dyer at Boston
Hangman is not the most appropriate teacher of religion
Happy to glass themselves in so brilliant a mirror
Hard at work, pouring sand through their sieves
Hardly a distinguished family in Spain not placed in mourning
Hardly a sound Protestant policy anywhere but in Holland
Hardly an inch of French soil that had not two possessors
Having conjugated his paradigm conscientiously

Page 3187

He had omitted to execute heretics
He did his best to be friends with all the world
He was a sincere bigot
He that stands let him see that he does not fall
He was not always careful in the construction of his sentences
He would have no persecution of the opposite creed
He came as a conqueror not as a mediator
He who spreads the snare always tumbles into the ditch himself
He who would have all may easily lose all
He knew men, especially he knew their weaknesses
He had never enjoyed social converse, except at long intervals
He would have no Calvinist inquisition set up in its place
He who confessed well was absolved well
He did his work, but he had not his reward
He sat a great while at a time. He had a genius for sitting
He was not imperial of aspect on canvas or coin
He often spoke of popular rights with contempt
He spent more time at table than the Bearnese in sleep
Heidelberg Catechism were declared to be infallible
Henry the Huguenot as the champion of the Council of Trent
Her teeth black, her bosom white and liberally exposed (Eliz.)
Heresy was a plant of early growth in the Netherlands
Heretics to the English Church were persecuted
Hibernian mode of expressing himself
High officers were doing the work of private, soldiers
Highborn demagogues in that as in every age affect adulation
Highest were not necessarily the least slimy
His inordinate arrogance
His own past triumphs seemed now his greatest enemies
His imagination may have assisted his memory in the task
His insolence intolerable
His learning was a reproach to the ignorant
His invectives were, however, much stronger than his arguments
His personal graces, for the moment, took the rank of virtues
His dogged, continuous capacity for work
Historical scepticism may shut its eyes to evidence
History is a continuous whole of which we see only fragments
History is but made up of a few scattered fragments
History never forgets and never forgives
History has not too many really important and emblematic men

History shows how feeble are barriers of paper
Holland was afraid to give a part, although offering the whole
Holland, England, and America, are all links of one chain
Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands
Holy institution called the Inquisition
Honor good patriots, and to support them in venial errors
Hope delayed was but a cold and meagre consolation
Hope deferred, suddenly changing to despair
How many more injured by becoming bad copies of a bad ideal
Hugo Grotius
Human nature in its meanness and shame
Human ingenuity to inflict human misery
Human fat esteemed the sovereignst remedy (for wounds)
Humanizing effect of science upon the barbarism of war
Humble ignorance as the safest creed
Humility which was but the cloak to his pride
Hundred thousand men had laid down their lives by

Page 3188

her decree
I did never see any man behave himself as he did
I know how to console myself
I am a king that will be ever known not to fear any but God
I hope and I fear
I would carry the wood to burn my own son withal
I regard my country’s profit, not my own
I will never live, to see the end of my poverty
Idea of freedom in commerce has dawned upon nations
Idiotic principle of sumptuary legislation
Idle, listless, dice-playing, begging, filching vagabonds
If he had little, he could live upon little
If to do be as grand as to imagine what it were good to do
If he has deserved it, let them strike off his head
Ignoble facts which strew the highways of political life
Ignorance is the real enslaver of mankind
Imagined, and did the work of truth
Imagining that they held the world’s destiny in their hands
Impatience is often on the part of the non-combatants
Implication there was much, of assertion very little
Imposed upon the multitudes, with whom words were things
Impossible it is to practise arithmetic with disturbed brains
Impossible it was to invent terms of adulation too gross
In revolutions the men who win are those who are in earnest
In character and general talents he was beneath mediocrity
In times of civil war, to be neutral is to be nothing
In Holland, the clergy had neither influence nor seats
In this he was much behind his age or before it
Incur the risk of being charged with forwardness than neglect
Indecision did the work of indolence
Indignant that heretics had been suffered to hang
Individuals walking in advance of their age
Indoor home life imprisons them in the domestic circle
Indulging them frequently with oracular advice
Inevitable fate of talking castles and listening ladies
Infamy of diplomacy, when diplomacy is unaccompanied by honesty
Infinite capacity for pecuniary absorption
Informer, in case of conviction, should be entitled to one half
Inhabited by the savage tribes called Samoyedes
Innocent generation, to atone for the sins of their forefathers
Inquisition of the Netherlands is much more pitiless
Inquisition was not a fit subject for a compromise

Inquisitors enough; but there were no light vessels in The Armada
Insane cruelty, both in the cause of the Wrong and the Right
Insensible to contumely, and incapable of accepting a rebuff
Insinuate that his orders had been hitherto misunderstood
Insinuating suspicions when unable to furnish evidence
Intellectual dandyisms of Bulwer
Intelligence, science, and industry were accounted degrading
Intense bigotry of conviction
Intentions of a government which did not know its own intentions
International friendship, the self-interest of each
Intolerable tendency to puns
Invaluable gift which no human being can acquire, authority
Invented such Christian formulas as these (a curse)

Page 3189

Inventing long speeches for historical characters
Invincible Armada had not only been vanquished but annihilated
Irresistible force in collision with an insuperable resistance
It was the true religion, and there was none other
It is not desirable to disturb much of that learned dust
It had not yet occurred to him that he was married
It is n’t strategists that are wanted so much as believers
It is certain that the English hate us (Sully)
Its humility, seemed sufficiently ironical
James of England, who admired, envied, and hated Henry
Jealousy, that potent principle
Jesuit Mariana—justifying the killing of excommunicated kings
John Castel, who had stabbed Henry *iv*.
John Wier, a physician of Grave
John Robinson
John Quincy Adams
Judas Maccabaeus
July 1st, two Augustine monks were burned at Brussels
Justified themselves in a solemn consumption of time
Kindly shadow of oblivion
King who thought it furious madness to resist the enemy
King had issued a general repudiation of his debts
King set a price upon his head as a rebel
King of Zion to be pinched to death with red-hot tongs
King was often to be something much less or much worse
King’s definite and final intentions, varied from day to day
Labored under the disadvantage of never having existed
Labour was esteemed dishonourable
Language which is ever living because it is dead
Languor of fatigue, rather than any sincere desire for peace
Leading motive with all was supposed to be religion
Learn to tremble as little at priestcraft as at swordcraft
Leave not a single man alive in the city, and to burn every house
Let us fool these poor creatures to their heart’s content
Licences accorded by the crown to carry slaves to America
Life of nations and which we call the Past
Like a man holding a wolf by the ears
Little army of Maurice was becoming the model for Europe
Little grievances would sometimes inflame more than vast
Local self-government which is the life-blood of liberty

Logic of the largest battalions
Logic is rarely the quality on which kings pride themselves
Logical and historical argument of unmerciful length
Long succession of so many illustrious obscure
Longer they delay it, the less easy will they find it
Look through the cloud of dissimulation
Look for a sharp war, or a miserable peace
Looking down upon her struggle with benevolent indifference
Lord was better pleased with adverbs than nouns
Loud, nasal, dictatorial tone, not at all agreeable
Louis XIII.
Loving only the persons who flattered him
Ludicrous gravity
Luther’s axiom, that thoughts are toll-free
Lutheran princes of Germany, detested the doctrines of Geneva
Luxury had blunted the fine instincts of patriotism
Made peace—and had been at war ever since
Made no breach in royal and Roman infallibility

Page 3190

Made to swing to and fro over a slow fire
Magistracy at that moment seemed to mean the sword
Magnificent hopefulness
Maintaining the attitude of an injured but forgiving Christian
Make sheep of yourselves, and the wolf will eat you
Make the very name of man a term of reproach
Man is never so convinced of his own wisdom
Man who cannot dissemble is unfit to reign
Man had only natural wrongs (No natural rights)
Man had no rights at all He was property
Mankind were naturally inclined to calumny
Manner in which an insult shall be dealt with
Many greedy priests, of lower rank, had turned shop-keepers
Maritime heretics
Matter that men may rather pray for than hope for
Matters little by what name a government is called
Meantime the second civil war in France had broken out
Mediocrity is at a premium
Meet around a green table except as fencers in the field
Men were loud in reproof, who had been silent
Men fought as if war was the normal condition of humanity
Men who meant what they said and said what they meant
Mendacity may always obtain over innocence and credulity
Military virtue in the support of an infamous cause
Misanthropical, sceptical philosopher
Misery had come not from their being enemies
Mistake to stumble a second time over the same stone
Mistakes might occur from occasional deviations into sincerity
Mockery of negotiation in which nothing could be negotiated
Modern statesmanship, even while it practises, condemns
Monasteries, burned their invaluable libraries
Mondragon was now ninety-two years old
Moral nature, undergoes less change than might be hoped
More accustomed to do well than to speak well
More easily, as he had no intention of keeping the promise
More catholic than the pope
More fiercely opposed to each other than to Papists
More apprehension of fraud than of force
Most detestable verses that even he had ever composed
Most entirely truthful child whe had ever seen

Motley was twice sacrificed to personal feelings
Much as the blind or the deaf towards colour or music
Myself seeing of it methinketh that I dream
Names history has often found it convenient to mark its epochs
National character, not the work of a few individuals
Nations tied to the pinafores of children in the nursery
Natural to judge only by the result
Natural tendency to suspicion of a timid man
Nearsighted liberalism
Necessary to make a virtue of necessity
Necessity of extirpating heresy, root and branch
Necessity of deferring to powerful sovereigns
Necessity of kingship
Negotiated as if they were all immortal
Neighbour’s blazing roof was likely soon to fire their own
Neither kings nor governments are apt to value logic
Neither wished the convocation, while both affected an eagerness
Neither ambitious nor greedy
Never peace well made, he observed, without a mighty

Page 3191

war
Never did statesmen know better how not to do
Never lack of fishers in troubled waters
New Years Day in England, 11th January by the New Style
Night brings counsel
Nine syllables that which could be more forcibly expressed in on
No one can testify but a householder
No man can be neutral in civil contentions
No law but the law of the longest purse
No two books, as he said, ever injured each other
No retrenchments in his pleasures of women, dogs, and buildings
No great man can reach the highest position in our government
No man is safe (from news reporters)
No man could reveal secrets which he did not know
No authority over an army which they did not pay
No man pretended to think of the State
No synod had a right to claim Netherlanders as slaves
No qualities whatever but birth and audacity to recommend him
No generation is long-lived enough to reap the harvest
No man ever understood the art of bribery more thoroughly
No calumny was too senseless to be invented
None but God to compel me to say more than I choose to say
Nor is the spirit of the age to be pleaded in defence
Not a friend of giving details larger than my ascertained facts
Not distinguished for their docility
Not to let the grass grow under their feet
Not a single acquaintance in the place, and we glory in the fact
Not safe for politicians to call each other hard names
Not his custom nor that of his councillors to go to bed
Not of the genus Reptilia, and could neither creep nor crouch
Not strong enough to sustain many more such victories
Not to fall asleep in the shade of a peace negotiation
Not many more than two hundred Catholics were executed
Not upon words but upon actions
Not for a new doctrine, but for liberty of conscience
Not of the stuff of which martyrs are made (Erasmus)
Not so successful as he was picturesque
Nothing could equal Alexander’s fidelity, but his perfidy
Nothing cheap, said a citizen bitterly, but sermons
Nothing was so powerful as religious difference
Notre Dame at Antwerp
Nowhere was the persecution of heretics more relentless

Nowhere were so few unproductive consumers
O God! what does man come to!
Obscure were thought capable of dying natural deaths
Obstinate, of both sexes, to be burned
Octogenarian was past work and past mischief
Of high rank but of lamentably low capacity
Often much tyranny in democracy
Often necessary to be blind and deaf
Oldenbarneveld; afterwards so illustrious
On the first day four thousand men and women were slaughtered
One-half to Philip and one-half to the Pope and Venice (slaves)
One-third of Philip’s effective navy was thus destroyed
One golden grain of wit into a sheet of infinite platitude
One could neither cry nor laugh within the Spanish dominions
One of the most contemptible and mischievous of kings (James I)

Page 3192

Only healthy existence of the French was in a state of war
Only true religion
Only citadel against a tyrant and a conqueror was distrust
Only kept alive by milk, which he drank from a woman’s breast
Only foundation fit for history,—original contemporary document
Opening an abyss between government and people
Opposed the subjection of the magistracy by the priesthood
Oration, fertile in rhetoric and barren in facts
Orator was, however, delighted with his own performance
Others that do nothing, do all, and have all the thanks
Others go to battle, says the historian, these go to war
Our pot had not gone to the fire as often
Our mortal life is but a string of guesses at the future
Outdoing himself in dogmatism and inconsistency
Over excited, when his prejudices were roughly handled
Panegyrists of royal houses in the sixteenth century
Pardon for crimes already committed, or about to be committed
Pardon for murder, if not by poison, was cheaper
Partisans wanted not accommodation but victory
Party hatred was not yet glutted with the blood it had drunk
Passion is a bad schoolmistress for the memory
Past was once the Present, and once the Future
Pathetic dying words of Anne Boleyn
Patriotism seemed an unimaginable idea
Pauper client who dreamed of justice at the hands of law
Paving the way towards atheism (by toleration)
Paying their passage through, purgatory
Peace founded on the only secure basis, equality of strength
Peace was desirable, it might be more dangerous than war
Peace seemed only a process for arriving at war
Peace and quietness is brought into a most dangerous estate
Peace-at-any-price party
Peace, in reality, was war in its worst shape
Peace was unattainable, war was impossible, truce was inevitable
Peace would be destruction
Perfection of insolence
Perpetually dropping small innuendos like pebbles
Persons who discussed religious matters were to be put to death
Petty passion for contemptible details
Philip *ii*. gave the world work enough

Philip of Macedon, who considered no city impregnable
Philip *iv*.
Philip, who did not often say a great deal in a few words
Picturesqueness of crime
Placid unconsciousness on his part of defeat
Plain enough that he is telling his own story
Planted the inquisition in the Netherlands
Played so long with other men’s characters and good name
Plea of infallibility and of authority soon becomes ridiculous
Plundering the country which they came to protect
Poisoning, for example, was absolved for eleven ducats
Pope excommunicated him as a heretic
Pope and emperor maintain both positions with equal logic
Portion of these revenues savoured much of black-mail
Possible to do, only because we see that it has been done
Pot-valiant hero
Power the poison of which it is so difficult to resist

Page 3193

Power to read and write helped the clergy to much wealth
Power grudged rather than given to the deputies
Practised successfully the talent of silence
Pray here for satiety, (said Cecil) than ever think of variety
Preferred an open enemy to a treacherous protector
Premature zeal was prejudicial to the cause
Presents of considerable sums of money to the negotiators made
Presumption in entitling themselves Christian
Preventing wrong, or violence, even towards an enemy
Priests shall control the state or the state govern the priests
Princes show what they have in them at twenty-five or never
Prisoners were immediately hanged
Privileged to beg, because ashamed to work
Proceeds of his permission to eat meat on Fridays
Proclaiming the virginity of the Virgin’s mother
Procrastination was always his first refuge
Progress should be by a spiral movement
Promises which he knew to be binding only upon the weak
Proposition made by the wolves to the sheep, in the fable
Protect the common tranquillity by blood, purse, and life
Provided not one Huguenot be left alive in France
Public which must have a slain reputation to devour
Purchased absolution for crime and smoothed a pathway to heaven
Puritanism in Holland was a very different thing from England
Put all those to the torture out of whom anything can be got
Putting the cart before the oxen
Queen is entirely in the hands of Spain and the priests
Questioning nothing, doubting nothing, fearing nothing
Quite mistaken: in supposing himself the Emperor’s child
Radical, one who would uproot, is a man whose trade is dangerous
Rarely able to command, having never learned to obey
Rashness alternating with hesitation
Rather a wilderness to reign over than a single heretic
Readiness to strike and bleed at any moment in her cause
Readiness at any moment to defend dearly won liberties
Rearing gorgeous temples where paupers are to kneel
Reasonable to pay our debts rather than to repudiate them
Rebuked him for his obedience
Rebuked the bigotry which had already grown
Recall of a foreign minister for alleged misconduct in office

Reformer who becomes in his turn a bigot is doubly odious
Reformers were capable of giving a lesson even to inquisitors
Religion was made the strumpet of Political Ambition
Religion was rapidly ceasing to be the line of demarcation
Religion was not to be changed like a shirt
Religious toleration, which is a phrase of insult
Religious persecution of Protestants by Protestants
Repentance, as usual, had come many hours too late
Repentant males to be executed with the sword
Repentant females to be buried alive
Repose under one despot guaranteed to them by two others
Repose in the other world, “Repos ailleurs”
Republic, which lasted two centuries
Republics are said to be ungrateful
Repudiation of national debts was never heard of before

Page 3194

Requires less mention than Philip *iii* himself
Resolve to maintain the civil authority over the military
Resolved thenceforth to adopt a system of ignorance
Respect for differences in religious opinions
Result was both to abandon the provinces and to offend Philip
Revocable benefices or feuds
Rich enough to be worth robbing
Righteous to kill their own children
Road to Paris lay through the gates of Rome
Rose superior to his doom and took captivity captive
Round game of deception, in which nobody was deceived
Royal plans should be enforced adequately or abandoned entirely
Ruinous honors
Rules adopted in regard to pretenders to crowns
Sacked and drowned ten infant princes
Sacrificed by the Queen for faithfully obeying her orders
Safest citadel against an invader and a tyrant is distrust
Sages of every generation, read the future like a printed scroll
Saint Bartholomew’s day
Sale of absolutions was the source of large fortunes to the priests
Same conjury over ignorant baron and cowardly hind
Scaffold was the sole refuge from the rack
Scepticism, which delights in reversing the judgment of centuries
Schism in the Church had become a public fact
Schism which existed in the general Reformed Church
Science of reigning was the science of lying
Scoffing at the ceremonies and sacraments of the Church
Secret drowning was substituted for public burning
Secure the prizes of war without the troubles and dangers
Security is dangerous
Seeking protection for and against the people
Seem as if born to make the idea of royalty ridiculous
Seemed bent on self-destruction
Seems but a change of masks, of costume, of phraseology
Sees the past in the pitiless light of the present
Self-assertion—the healthful but not engaging attribute
Self-educated man, as he had been a self-taught boy
Selling the privilege of eating eggs upon fast-days
Senectus edam maorbus est
Sent them word by carrier pigeons

Sentiment of Christian self-complacency
Sentimentality that seems highly apocryphal
Served at their banquets by hosts of lackeys on their knees
Seven Spaniards were killed, and seven thousand rebels
Sewers which have ever run beneath decorous Christendom
Shall Slavery die, or the great Republic?
Sharpened the punishment for reading the scriptures in private
She relieth on a hope that will deceive her
She declined to be his procuress
She knew too well how women were treated in that country
Shift the mantle of religion from one shoulder to the other
Shutting the stable-door when the steed is stolen
Sick soldiers captured on the water should be hanged
Sick and wounded wretches were burned over slow fires
Simple truth was highest skill
Sixteen of their best ships had been sacrificed
Slain four hundred and ten men with his own hand
Slavery was both voluntary and compulsory

Page 3195

Slender stock of platitudes
Small matter which human folly had dilated into a great one
Smooth words, in the plentiful lack of any substantial
So much responsibility and so little power
So often degenerated into tyranny (Calvinism)
So much in advance of his time as to favor religious equality
So unconscious of her strength
Soldier of the cross was free upon his return
Soldiers enough to animate the good and terrify the bad
Solitary and morose, the necessary consequence of reckless study
Some rude lessons from that vigorous little commonwealth
Sometimes successful, even although founded upon sincerity
Sonnets of Petrarch
Sovereignty was heaven-born, anointed of God
Spain was governed by an established terrorism
Spaniards seem wise, and are madmen
Sparing and war have no affinity together
Spendthrift of time, he was an economist of blood
Spirit of a man who wishes to be proud of his country
St. Peter’s dome rising a little nearer to the clouds
St. Bartholomew was to sleep for seven years longer
Stake or gallows (for) heretics to transubstantiation
Stand between hope and fear
State can best defend religion by letting it alone
States were justified in their almost unlimited distrust
Steeped to the lips in sloth which imagined itself to be pride
Storm by which all these treasures were destroyed (in 7 days)
Strangled his nineteen brothers on his accession
Strength does a falsehood acquire in determined and skilful hand
String of homely proverbs worthy of Sancho Panza
Stroke of a broken table knife sharpened on a carriage wheel
Studied according to his inclinations rather than by rule
Style above all other qualities seems to embalm for posterity
Subtle and dangerous enemy who wore the mask of a friend
Succeeded so well, and had been requited so ill
Successful in this step, he is ready for greater ones
Such a crime as this had never been conceived (bankruptcy)
Such an excuse was as bad as the accusation
Suicide is confession
Superfluous sarcasm

Suppress the exercise of the Roman religion
Sure bind, sure find
Sword in hand is the best pen to write the conditions of peace
Take all their imaginations and extravagances for truths
Talked impatiently of the value of my time
Tanchelyn
Taxation upon sin
Taxed themselves as highly as fifty per cent
Taxes upon income and upon consumption
Tempest of passion and prejudice
Ten thousand two hundred and twenty individuals were burned
Tension now gave place to exhaustion
That vile and mischievous animal called the people
That crowned criminal, Philip the Second
That unholy trinity—Force; Dogma, and Ignorance
That cynical commerce in human lives
That he tries to lay the fault on us is pure malice
The tragedy of Don Carlos
The worst were encouraged with their good success
The history of the Netherlands is history of liberty

Page 3196

The great ocean was but a Spanish lake
The divine speciality of a few transitory mortals
The sapling was to become the tree
The nation which deliberately carves itself in pieces
The expenses of James's household
The Catholic League and the Protestant Union
The blaze of a hundred and fifty burning vessels
The magnitude of this wonderful sovereign's littleness
The defence of the civil authority against the priesthood
The assassin, tortured and torn by four horses
The Gaul was singularly unchaste
The vivifying becomes afterwards the dissolving principle
The bad Duke of Burgundy, Philip surnamed "the Good,"
The greatest crime, however, was to be rich
The more conclusive arbitration of gunpowder
The disunited provinces
The noblest and richest temple of the Netherlands was a wreck
The voice of slanderers
The calf is fat and must be killed
The illness was a convenient one
The egg had been laid by Erasmus, hatched by Luther
The perpetual reproductions of history
The very word toleration was to sound like an insult
The most thriving branch of national industry (Smuggler)
The pigmy, as the late queen had been fond of nicknaming him
The slightest theft was punished with the gallows
The art of ruling the world by doing nothing
The wisest statesmen are prone to blunder in affairs of war
The Alcoran was less cruel than the Inquisition
The People had not been invented
The small children diminished rapidly in numbers
The busy devil of petty economy
The record of our race is essentially unwritten
The truth in shortest about matters of importance
The time for reasoning had passed
The effect of energetic, uncompromising calumny
The evils resulting from a confederate system of government
The vehicle is often prized more than the freight
The faithful servant is always a perpetual ass
The dead men of the place are my intimate friends

The loss of hair, which brings on premature decay
The personal gifts which are nature’s passport everywhere
The nation is as much bound to be honest as is the individual
The fellow mixes blood with his colors!
Their existence depended on war
Their own roofs were not quite yet in a blaze
Theological hatred was in full blaze throughout the country
Theology and politics were one
There is no man who does not desire to enjoy his own
There was but one king in Europe, Henry the Bearnese
There are few inventions in morals
There was no use in holding language of authority to him
There was apathy where there should have been enthusiasm
There is no man fitter for that purpose than myself
Therefore now denounced the man whom he had injured
These human victims, chained and burning at the stake
They had come to disbelieve in the mystery of kingcraft
They chose to compel no man’s conscience
They could not invent or imagine toleration

Page 3197

They knew very little of us, and that little wrong
They have killed him, ‘e ammazato,’ cried Concini
They were always to deceive every one, upon every occasion
They liked not such divine right nor such gentle-mindedness
They had at last burned one more preacher alive
Things he could tell which are too odious and dreadful
Thirty thousand masses should be said for his soul
Thirty-three per cent. interest was paid (per month)
Thirty Years’ War tread on the heels of the forty years
This Somebody may have been one whom we should call Nobody
This, then, is the reward of forty years’ service to the State
This obstinate little republic
This wonderful sovereign’s littleness oppresses the imagination
Those who fish in troubled waters only to fill their own nets
Those who “sought to swim between two waters”
Those who argue against a foregone conclusion
Thought that all was too little for him
Thousands of burned heretics had not made a single convert
Three hundred fighting women
Three hundred and upwards are hanged annually in London
Three or four hundred petty sovereigns (of Germany)
Throw the cat against their legs
Thus Hand-werpen, hand-throwing, became Antwerp
Time and myself are two
Tis pity he is not an Englishman
To think it capable of error, is the most devilish heresy of all
To stifle for ever the right of free enquiry
To attack England it was necessary to take the road of Ireland
To hear the last solemn commonplaces
To prefer poverty to the wealth attendant upon trade
To shirk labour, infinite numbers become priests and friars
To doubt the infallibility of Calvin was as heinous a crime
To negotiate with Government in England was to bribe
To milk, the cow as long as she would give milk
To work, ever to work, was the primary law of his nature
To negotiate was to bribe right and left, and at every step
To look down upon their inferior and lost fellow creatures
Toil and sacrifices of those who have preceded us
Tolerate another religion that his own may be tolerated
Tolerating religious liberty had never entered his mind

Toleration—that intolerable term of insult
Toleration thought the deadliest heresy of all
Torquemada's administration (of the inquisition)
Torturing, hanging, embowelling of men, women, and children
Tranquil insolence
Tranquillity rather of paralysis than of health
Tranquillity of despotism to the turbulence of freedom
Triple marriages between the respective nurseries
Trust her sword, not her enemy's word
Twas pity, he said, that both should be heretics
Twenty assaults upon fame and had forty books killed under him
Two witnesses sent him to the stake, one witness to the rack
Tyrannical spirit of Calvinism
Tyranny, ever young and ever old, constantly reproducing herself
Uncouple the dogs and let them run
Under the name of religion (so many crimes)

Page 3198

Understood the art of managing men, particularly his superiors
Undue anxiety for impartiality
Unduly dejected in adversity
Unequivocal policy of slave emancipation
Unimaginable outrage as the most legitimate industry
Universal suffrage was not dreamed of at that day
Unlearned their faith in bell, book, and candle
Unproductive consumption being accounted most sagacious
Unproductive consumption was alarmingly increasing
Unremitted intellectual labor in an honorable cause
Unwise impatience for peace
Upon their knees, served the queen with wine
Upon one day twenty-eight master cooks were dismissed
Upper and lower millstones of royal wrath and loyal subserviency
Use of the spade
Usual phraseology of enthusiasts
Usual expedient by which bad legislation on one side countered
Utter disproportions between the king’s means and aims
Utter want of adaptation of his means to his ends
Uttering of my choler doth little ease my grief or help my case
Uunmeaning phrases of barren benignity
Vain belief that they were men at eighteen or twenty
Valour on the one side and discretion on the other
Villagers, or villeins
Visible atmosphere of power the poison of which
Volatile word was thought preferable to the permanent letter
Vows of an eternal friendship of several weeks’ duration
Waiting the pleasure of a capricious and despotic woman
Walk up and down the earth and destroy his fellow-creatures
War was the normal and natural condition of mankind
War was the normal condition of Christians
War to compel the weakest to follow the religion of the strongest
Was it astonishing that murder was more common than fidelity?
Wasting time fruitlessly is sharpening the knife for himself
We were sold by their negligence who are now angry with us
We believe our mothers to have been honest women
We are beginning to be vexed
We must all die once
We have been talking a little bit of truth to each other
We have the reputation of being a good housewife

We mustn’t tickle ourselves to make ourselves laugh
Wealth was an unpardonable sin
Wealthy Papists could obtain immunity by an enormous fine
Weapons
Weary of place without power
Weep oftener for her children than is the usual lot of mothers
Weight of a thousand years of error
What exchequer can accept chronic warfare and escape bankruptcy
What could save the House of Austria, the cause of Papacy
What was to be done in this world and believed as to the next
When persons of merit suffer without cause
When all was gone, they began to eat each other
When the abbot has dice in his pocket, the convent will play
Whether dead infants were hopelessly damned
Whether murders or stratagems, as if they were acts of virtue
Whether repentance could effect salvation
While one’s friends urge moderation
Who the “people” exactly were

Page 3199

Who loved their possessions better than their creed
Whole revenue was pledged to pay the interest, on his debts
Whose mutual hatred was now artfully inflamed by partisans
William of Nassau, Prince of Orange
William Brewster
Wise and honest a man, although he be somewhat longsome
Wiser simply to satisfy himself
Wish to sell us the bear-skin before they have killed the bear
Wish to appear learned in matters of which they are ignorant
With something of feline and feminine duplicity
Wonder equally at human capacity to inflict and to endure misery
Wonders whether it has found its harbor or only lost its anchor
Word peace in Spanish mouths simply meant the Holy Inquisition
Word-mongers who, could clothe one shivering thought
Words are always interpreted to the disadvantage of the weak
Work of the aforesaid Puritans and a few Jesuits
World has rolled on to fresher fields of carnage and ruin
Worn crescents in their caps at Leyden
Worn nor caused to be worn the collar of the serf
Worship God according to the dictates of his conscience
Would not help to burn fifty or sixty thousand Netherlanders
Wrath of the Jesuits at this exercise of legal authority
Wrath of bigots on both sides
Wrath of that injured personage as he read such libellous truths
Wringing a dry cloth for drops of evidence
Write so illegibly or express himself so awkwardly
Writing letters full of injured innocence
Yes, there are wicked men about
Yesterday is the preceptor of To-morrow
You must show your teeth to the Spaniard